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Buddhism Course

Chan Khoon San

Sabbadanam dhammadanam jinati.
The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts.

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Cover Design by Chan Khoon San
Cover photo shows the huge image of a seated Buddha carved into a high rock face of reddish colour which rises on the hillside to the south-west of Jehanabad near Mingora in the Swat Valley (ancient Uddiyana) of Northern Pakistan. This well-preserved Buddha figure dated 7-8th century AD is 7 metres in height and is certainly the most impressive sculpture that was seen by the author in the Gandhara region during a tour of Northern Pakistan in August 2005.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all my spiritual teachers who have helped me in one way or another in my progress towards understanding the *Dhamma*, in particular, the following teachers below:

Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre, Yangon, Myanmar

- Chanmyay Sayadaw Bhadanta Janakabhivamsa,
- Sayadaw U Sobhita
- Sayadaw U Rewata,
- Sayadaw U Wathawa,
- Sayadaw U Kittidhaja,
- Sayadaw U Rakkhita Dhamma,
- Ven. U Nyanaramsi,
- Ven. Ariya Nani,
- Mr. Khin Maung Win (formerly Sayadaw U Khemissara), and
- Mr. Jeff Oliver (formerly Ven. U Dhammarakkhita)

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- Venerable Saranankara Mahathera

Ngakyanpyan Dhamma Yeiktha, Yangon, Myanmar

- Sayadaw U Dhammapiya

Santisukharama Meditation Centre, Kota Tinggi, Johore

- Venerable Sujiva

Preface

Over the last few years, several readers have indicated to me that the articles in the Introductory Course in Buddhism were too brief and should be expanded to provide more details. This new book entitled "Buddhism Course" is a carefully researched and upgraded version. It contains 17 chapters dealing with most of the relevant topics on Buddhism, such as: Life of the Buddha, Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Noble Path, Dependent Origin, Law of *Kamma*, Death and Rebirth, Five Destinations, World Cycles when Buddhas Appear, Ten Bases of Meritorious Action, Buddhist *Vipassana* Meditation, Recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* and the Three Baskets (*Tipitaka*) in Buddhism.

In this book, reference material from various has been utilized to provide readers with some new interesting articles on Buddhism. "Death and Rebirth" describes the modes of death and objects presented to the mind before death such as the five visions of a dying person followed by the modes of birth. "Five Destinations (*Pancagati*)" describes in detail the Thirty-one Planes of Existence or planes of rebirth recognized in Buddhist Cosmology. "World Cycles When Buddhas Appear" describes the conditions for the rare appearance of a Buddha as well as the perfections (*parami*) that an aspirant has to practise to achieve the status of *Pacceka* Buddha and *Maha Arahant*. "Recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*" describes in detail the Nine Supreme Virtue of the Buddha, the Six Virtues of the *Dhamma* and the Nine Virtues of the *Sangha*, respectively. Understanding of the virtues of the Triple Gem is a condition for success in the practice of the meditation of Mindfulness of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*.

"Three Baskets (*Tipitaka*) in Buddhism" is the longest article containing 50 pages chronicling the history of how the Pali Canon was preserved over the last 2500 years of its existence through the Buddhist Councils, starting from the Council of Rajagaha three months after *Parinibbana* to the Sixth Council in Yangon 2500 years later in 1956. Although a bit lengthy, the author decided to publish it

in this book to enable the reader to know, understand and appreciate the crucial role of the *Sangh*a in the preservation, propagation and perpetuation of the Buddha *Sasana*.

Many articles have been expanded with detailed explanatory notes added, notably in Chapter I – Life of the Buddha, Chapter IV – Dependent Origination and Chapter XII – "Transference of Merits to Departed Relatives".

The compilation of this book was a labour of love and a source of joy. It is hoped that readers will find pleasure in reading the articles and benefit from them.

Acknowledgements & Sharing of Merits

I am grateful to Sis Wooi Kheng Choo and Sis Christine Lee Chin Har of Subang Jaya Buddhist Association for proof-reading the manuscript and making many useful suggestions for improvement. The assistance of Mr. Tey Seng Heng, my former colleague at Applied Agricultural Research Sdn. Bhd. in the computer work is gratefully acknowledged. Finally, I wish to thank the various individuals and societies for their support in the publication of this book so that it can be used as a Buddhism Course that will lead to better understanding of Buddhist history and doctrine.

May the merits of this *Dhammadana* be shared with relatives, friends and all beings. *Sadhu*! *Sadhu*! *Sadhu*!

Bro. Chan Khoon San, June 2006

About the Author

Bro. Chan Khoon San was born on 8 August 1941 in Penang where he received his early education. After completing sixth form in 1960, he joined the Malayan Teachers College at Brinsford Lodge, UK where he underwent two years teacher training. On completion of the course, he taught briefly from 1964 to 1967. In 1968, he entered the University of Malaya and graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Chemistry in 1971. From 1971 till his retirement in 1996, he worked as a Research Chemist in a large plantation company. He is married with two grown-up daughters.

After retiring in 1996, Bro. Chan went to Myanmar to pursue the intensive practice of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation under the guidance of **Chanmyay Sayadaw Bhadanta Janakabhivamsa** at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre in Yangon. In 1998, he went for his second retreat at the countryside centre in Hmawbi, where he practised under the guidance of **Venerable Sayadaw U Indaka**. Since then, he has gone for regular annual retreats at Hmawbi practising under **Ven**erable **U Nyanaramsi** and other instructors, during the cold season from December to February. For the rest of the year, he teaches Buddhism at various Buddhist societies in the Klang Valley. Since 1997, he has organized several Buddhist pilgrimages to India and has also written a book entitled **'Buddhist Pilgrimage'** describing the holy shrines of Buddhism in India today.

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I

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

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1. The Birth

In the seventh century BC, the northern part of India was divided into sixteen principal states or *mahajanapadas*, eight of which were kingdoms and the remaining republics. The names of these states are listed in *Anguttara* I, 213 and *Vinaya* Texts 2, 146. Among the kingdoms, the most powerful were Magadha and Kosala. According to Rhys Davids, **Magadha** occupied the district now called **Bihar** and had its capital at **Rajagaha**. In the Buddha's time, it had eighty thousand villages under the rule of King **Bimbisara** and afterwards, his son **Ajatasattu**. It covered an area of 300 *yojanas* or about 2400 miles in circumference. The **Kosalas** were the ruling clan in the kingdom whose capital was **Savatthi** that is now part of the ruins called **Sahet-Mahet** near **Balrampur** in **Uttar Pradesh**. Their ruler was King **Pasenadi**. To the north across the present Indo-Nepalese border, was the little **Sakyan** republic, a vassal state of Kosala. Its chief was **Suddhodana** and he had his capital at **Kapilavatthu**.

According to the Theravada tradition, the Buddha was born on the full-moon day of **Wesakha** (late April-May) in **623 BC**, although this date is disputed by other traditions (**Note 1**). His mother was **Mahamaya Devi**, chief consort of **King Suddhodana**. Already fifty-six years old (**Note 2**) and in the final stage of pregnancy carrying the ***Bodhisatta*** or future Buddha for ten full months, she was traveling in state to her parents' home in **Devadaha** to deliver her first child in keeping with the ancient tradition of her **Koliyan** clan. Along the way, the entourage passed **Lumbini Garden**, a pleasure grove of Sala trees, which were then in full bloom. Seeing the immense splendour, she decided to stop there and admire the flowering trees and plants. Soon she began to experience the unmistakable signs of impending birth. Quickly she summoned her female attendants to cordon off the area with curtains. Then holding on to the branch of a Sala tree with her right hand for support, she gave birth to the *Bodhisatta* while standing up.

In 249 BC, the great **Mauryan Emperor Asoka** (c. 273-236 BC) visited Lumbini as part of his pilgrimage to the sacred Buddhist places. To commemorate his visit, he built a stone pillar that bore an

inscription in **Brahmi** script to record the event for posterity. The inscription engraved in five lines reads (**Translation**):

"*Twenty years after his coronation, King Piyadassi, Beloved of the Gods, visited this spot in person and worshipped at this place because here Buddha Sakyamuni was born. He caused to make a stone (capital) representing a horse and he caused this stone pillar to be erected. Because the Buddha was born here, he made the village of Lumbini free from taxes and subject to pay only one-eighth of the produce as land revenue instead of the usual rate*."

After the **Muslim conquest** of northern India during the 12th century AD that led to the indiscriminate pillaging and desecration of Buddhist shrines and monasteries, Lumbini was abandoned and eventually engulfed by the *tarai* (forests). In 1886, the German archeologist, **Dr. Alois A. Fuhrer**, while wandering in the Nepalese *tarai* in search of the legendary site, came across a stone pillar and ascertained beyond doubt that it was indeed the birthplace of the Buddha. The **Lumbini Pillar** (or Rummindei pillar) stands today majestically proclaiming that here the Buddha was born.

2. The Prediction

When the good news reached the capital of **Kapilavatthu**, **t**here was great rejoicing among the people over the birth of their new-born prince. An ascetic named **Asita,** also known as **Kaladevila** the Hermit, being the royal tutor visited the palace to see the royal baby. The overjoyed King brought the child to him to pay reverence, but to the King's surprise, the child's feet turned and planted themselves on the matted locks of the ascetic's head. The ascetic, realizing this astonishing and extraordinary power and glory of the *Bodhisatta*, instantly rose from his seat and saluted him. Witnessing the marvelous scene, the King also bowed down before his own son.

Asita was an expert in distinguishing the **marks of greatness** and as soon as he examined the child, he confidently proclaimed the child's future supremacy among mankind. Then seeing his own impending death, tears came to his eyes. The Sakyans, seeing him cry, thought that misfortune would befall on the prince. But Asita reassured them that the prince's future was secure, as he would surely become a **Buddha**. He was sad because he would die soon and be reborn in a **Formless Realm** thereby missing the opportunity to meet the Buddha and listen to His *Dhamma*.

In order to ensure that someone in his family would not miss this rare opportunity, he related his prediction to his nephew **Nalaka**. On Asita's advice, Nalaka renounced the world and when the *Bodhisatta* attained **Supreme Enlightenment** thirty-five years later, Nalaka came to see the Buddha to ask some questions. After listening to the Buddha's answers, Nalaka became an ***Arahant***. A full account of Asita's prediction and Nalaka's meeting with the Buddha is given in the ***Nalaka Sutta*** of the ***Sutta Nipata*** (Group of Discourses).

Five days after the *Bodhisatta's* birth, the king held a ceremony to choose a suitable name for the newborn prince. According to the *Jataka* Commentaries, many learned Brahmins were invited to the **Naming Ceremony**. Among them were eight experts who could foretell the child's future just by examining the marks and characteristics of his body. Seven of them raised two fingers to indicate that the child would grow up to become either a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. But the eighth, Sudatta of the **Kondanna** clan who was the youngest and who excelled the others in knowledge, raised one finger and confidently declared that the prince would renounce the world and become a Buddha. Consequently the Brahmins gave him the name of **Siddhattha** meaning "wish-fulfilled". His family name was **Gotama**. On the seventh day, Prince Siddhattha's mother died. Her younger sister, **Maha Pajapati Gotami** who was also married to King Suddhodana became his foster mother.

3. The Ploughing Ceremony

During the Buddha's time, the main economic activity of his country was farming. As such, a festival was held every year to promote agriculture whereby the King and his noblemen would lead the common folk in ploughing the fields to prepare them for planting. On the appointed day, the King took his young son along, accompanied by the nurses to take care of the child. Placing the child on a couch with a canopy overhead under the cool shade of a solitary rose-apple tree to be cared for by the nurses, the King went to participate in the Ploughing Festival. At the height of the festival, the nurses became distracted by the gaiety and abandoned their posts to watch the spectacle.

Left alone, instead of crying or running after the nurses, the *Bodhisatta* sat cross-legged on the ground and concentrating on the **inhaling and exhaling** of his breath, achieved one-pointedness of mind by which he developed the **First *Jhana*** (mental absorption). He must have been absorbed in this ecstatic concentration for a long time because when the nurses realized their mistake, it was past noon. Rushing back to the rose-apple tree, they were amazed to see the child sitting cross-legged in deep meditation. On hearing of this remarkable event, the King hurried to the scene and seeing the miracle, he saluted his son, saying, "This, dear child, is my second salutation." Many years later, after struggling for six years in search of Enlightenment, the memory of this childhood experience convinced the *Bodhisatta* to **abandon the path of self-mortification** by recognizing that this indeed was the way to Enlightenment.

4. Prince Siddhatta's Youth

Although the Pali Scriptures provide little information about the *Bodhisatta's* early years, one can surmise that during his boyhood, he would have studied under Brahmin tutors just like his father before him. Under them he would have studied together with the

other Sakyan princes all the **Brahmanical literature** including the *Vedas* (scriptures), *Negamas* (codes), *Puranas* (mythology), *Itihasas* (history) and others. This is borne out in the *suttas* that reveal the Buddha's familiarity and insight of Brahmin codes and lore. As a member of the **warrior caste** (*khattiya*), he was specially trained in the art of warfare excelling in archery and dexterity skills.

Prince Siddhatta grew up in great comfort and luxury. In *Anguttara* Book of Threes, 38, the Buddha described the luxuries he was showered upon by his father during his youth. He was delicately nurtured and wore the best clothes made from Kasi silk. Day and night, a white umbrella was held over him to shelter him from heat and cold, dust or chaff or dew. He had three palaces; one for the winter, one for the summer and one for the rainy season. In the rains palace, female minstrels were provided for his entertainment. For the four months of the rains, he never went down to the lower palace. Though meals of broken rice with lentil soup were given to the servants and retainers in other people's houses, in his father's house white rice and meat were given to them.

When Prince Siddhattha reached sixteen years of age, his father decided to install him on the throne and arrange for his marriage. As soon as word went out that King Suddhodana was looking for a princess to marry his son, the Sakyan aristocrats made derogatory remarks saying that although the prince was handsome, he did not possess any craft that would enable him to support a family. Thereupon, the *Bodhisatta* gave a spectacular display of his dexterity and archery skills, which so impressed his royal relatives that they all sent their own daughters beautifully dressed and adorned for him to choose as his bride. Among the Sakyan princesses, the one chosen to be his consort was his beautiful cousin, Princess **Yasodhara** whose maiden name was **Bhaddakaccana**, also of the same age. She was the daughter of the **Koliyan** ruler of **Devadaha** kingdom, **Suppabuddha** (his mother's brother) and Queen **Amita** (his father's sister). She earned the name of Yasodhara because of her pristine fame and great retinue (*Yaso* = great retinue and repute, *dhara* = bearer). After his happy marriage, he led a luxurious life, blissfully unaware of the vicissitudes of life outside the palace gates.

5. The Four Signs and the Great Renunciation

With the march of time, the *Bodhisatta* became increasingly disenchanted with life in the palace and he would seek solace by going out to visit the royal garden. On four occasions, while riding to the royal garden, he encountered successively the strange sights of a **decrepit old man,** a **diseased man,** a **corpse** and a **serene-looking ascetic**. The first three sights brought him face to face with the stark realities of the true nature of existence. They are called "***samvega nimitta***", signs that give rise to a sense of religious urgency. As he contemplated on them, seeing that he too was not immune from ageing, sickness and death, the **vanity of youth, health** and **life** entirely left him. The last sight provided a ray of hope for a **means of escape** from the suffering of existence. It is called "***padhana nimitta***", sign that gives rise to a sense of meditative exertion in order to escape from old age, sickness and death.

When King Suddhodana came to know of these encounters, he became worried that his son would renounce the secular life as predicted by the royal astrologers. To prevent his son from leaving the royal life, he built high walls around the palace, fitted massive doors at the city gate, and increased the strength of guards, attendants and dancing girls to look after the prince. But the *Bodhisatta's samvega* (religious urgency) had been aroused. Sensual pleasures no longer appealed to him. Realizing the futility of sensual pleasures so highly sought after by ordinary people and the value of renunciation that the wise take delight in, he decided to renounce the world in search of the Deathless. It was with this deep sense of religious urgency that the *Bodhisatta* received the news that a son had been born to him. Normally an ordinary father would have rejoiced at it. But the *Bodhisatta*, having made the decision to renounce the world after much deliberation, saw it as an impediment and remarked, "*An **impediment (rahu)** has been born; a **fetter** has arisen*." The king, hearing this, named his grandson, **Rahula**.

According to the Commentaries, the **Great Renunciation** took place at midnight on the full moon of **Asalha** (July/August) when the *Bodhisatta* was **twenty-nine years old**. Earlier in the evening, he had been entertained by a female troupe of musicians, dancers and

singers but he took no delight in it and fell asleep. Seeing the master asleep, the entertainers stopped the show and started to rest. Very soon, they too fell asleep. When the *Bodhisatta* awoke, he saw these women sleeping like corpses in a cemetery, their musical instruments and belongings strewn about, some with saliva flowing out of their mouths, some grinding their teeth, some talking confusedly, some snoring, some with their garments in disarray exposing their bodies, their hair loose and tangled. When the *Bodhisatta* saw the change in them, he was filled with **loathsomeness** and uttered, "How oppressive it is; how terrible indeed!" His mind was made up, "This very day I must depart from here." Leaving the palace, he went to the stable and ordered his charioteer **Channa** to saddle his favourite horse **Kanthaka** for his departure immediately.

While Channa was making preparations, the *Bodhisatta* went to the bedroom to have a look at his newborn son before leaving. He saw his wife asleep with her arm resting on the child's head. He wanted to remove the mother's hand and cradle his son in his arms but decided against it for fear that it would awaken his wife and jeopardize his plan of renunciation. Knowing that both mother and child would be well taken care of by his father, the *Bodhisatta* left, vowing to return to see his son again only after attaining Enlightenment. Mounting his horse Kanthaka and letting Channa hold on to the tail, the *Bodhisatta* rode out of Kapilavatthu by the **East Gate** and journeyed into the night. They traveled the whole night without stopping and arrived next day on the bank of the **Anoma River** in the country of the **Mallas**. Here the *Bodhisatta* cut off his hair and beard with his sword and handing over his garments and ornaments to Channa, he donned the simple robe of an ascetic. Although Channa wanted to renounce too in order to serve him, the *Bodhisatta* forbade it and asked him to return to the palace with the horse. But Kanthaka, seeing his master leaving them, died of a broken heart and Channa returned alone to Kapilavatthu to break the news to King Suddhodana.

6. The Search and Struggle for Enlightenment

After becoming an ascetic, the *Bodhisatta* spent a week at the nearby mango grove called **Anupiya** before proceeding to **Rajagaha** to look for a suitable teacher to help him realize his goal. Even when he arrived at Rajagaha where **King Bimbisara** offered him half the kingdom, he rejected the offer, stating that he wanted to find a way to end old age, sickness and death, promising that he would return after he had found the answer. As a seeker of Truth and Peace, he approached **Alara Kalama** of Vesali, an ascetic of repute and speedily learnt his doctrine and developed the 7th *Arupa Jhana*, the Realm of Nothingness, a very advanced stage of concentration. Dissatisfied with Kalama's system, he left him and approached **Uddaka Ramaputta** of Rajgir where he mastered his doctrine and attained the highest stage of mundane concentration, namely, the 8th *Arupa Jhana*, the Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception.

Again he was not satisfied with the results and he left it to pursue his search. He was seeking for ***Nibbana*****,** the complete cessation of suffering. He found that nobody was competent to teach him what he sought as all were enmeshed in ignorance. Though disappointed, he was not discouraged in seeking for the incomparable state of Supreme Peace. He continued to wander and arrived in due course at **Uruvela** forest by the banks of the **Neranjara River**, where he resolved to settle down for his meditation and to achieve his desired goal on his own.

Hearing of his renunciation, **Kondanna,** the Brahmin who predicted that he would become a Buddha and **Bhaddiya**, **Vappa, Mahanama** and **Assaji**, sons of four other sages, also renounced the world to join his company. For six long years, Siddhatta led a superhuman struggle practising all forms of severe austerities. In the Greater Discourse on the Lion's Roar in the *Majjhima Nikaya*, the Buddha related to the Venerable Sariputta how he practised the **extremes** of **asceticism**, coarse living, scruples and seclusion in dreaded places like forests, groves and cemeteries when he was a *Bodhisatta*. The Venerable Nagasamala who was standing behind the Blessed One fanning him said that he could feel the hairs on his body standing on ends as he listened to the discourse and wanted to know its name. To

this the Buddha replied that it should be remembered as "**The Hair-raising Discourse**". The extreme austerities took a heavy toll on his delicate body. It was almost reduced to a skeleton and resulted in the exhaustion of his energy. He was so emaciated that when he touched his belly skin, he could feel his backbone. He was on the verge of death, having gone beyond any ascetic or Brahmin in the practice of self-mortification. Yet all these proved futile and he began to look for another path to Enlightenment.

He remembered the time during his childhood when he was enrapt in *Jhana*, secluded from sensual desires. Then following up that memory, there came the recognition that it was the way to Enlightenment. Realizing that Enlightenment could not be gained with an exhausted body, he abandoned self-mortification and adopted the ***Majjhima Patipada*** or **Middle Path**, which is the Path between the two extremes of sensual pleasure and self-mortification. His decision to take some food, however, disappointed the five Ascetics who attended on him. At a crucial time when help would have been most welcome, his only companions left him, but he was not discouraged. After a substantial meal of milk rice offered by **Sujata**, a generous lady, he sat under the famous **Pipal tree at Bodhgaya** to meditate with the earnest wish and firm determination not to rise from his seat until he attained **Buddhahood.**

7. The Enlightenment and the Seven Weeks After

On the eve of **Vesakha in 588 BC**, while meditating with mind tranquillized and purified, in the first watch of night (6pm-10pm) he developed that supernormal knowledge which enabled him to **remember his past lives,** thereby dispelling the ignorance with regard to the past. In the second watch (10pm-2am), he developed the clairvoyant **supernormal vision,** which enabled him to see the death and rebirth of beings thereby dispelling the ignorance with regard to the **future**. In the last watch (2am-6am), he developed the supernormal knowledge with regard to **destruction of defilements** and comprehending things as they truly are, realized the Four Noble

Truths, thus attaining **Perfect Enlightenment.** The famous Pipal tree is now called the ***Bodhi*** tree for it was under this tree that Prince Siddhatta attained *Sambodhi* or Perfect Wisdom. Having in his **35th year attained Buddhahood,** that supreme state of Perfection, He devoted the remainder of his life to serve humanity and to lead men by the Noble Eightfold Path to the cessation of all suffering.

After the Enlightenment, for seven weeks the Buddha fasted, and spent His time under the *Bodhi* tree and in its neighborhood.

1) The whole of the first week, the Buddha sat under the ***Bodhi*** tree in one posture experiencing the Bliss of Emancipation.

2) During the second week, as a mark of gratitude to the *Bodhi* tree that sheltered Him during His struggle for Enlightenment, the Buddha stood gazing at it with unblinking eyes (*Animisalocana*).

3) During the third week, the Buddha paced up and down on a jewelled promenade (***Ratana Cankamana***) near the Bodhi tree.

4) The fourth week He spent in a jewelled chamber (***Ratanaghara***) meditating on the ***Abhidhamma*** and rays of six colours emanated from his body. (**Note 3**)

5) The fifth week was spent under the **Ajapala Banyan** tree in the vicinity of the *Bodhi* tree. Here He declared the qualities of a true Brahmin in answer to the question by a conceited Brahmin.

6) The Buddha spent the sixth week under the **Mucalinda** tree. At that time, there arose a great rainstorm with cold winds and gloom for seven days. Thereupon Mucalinda, the Serpent King of the lake, came out and coiled himself around the body of the Buddha and sheltered the Lord's head with his large hood.

7) The Buddha spent the seventh week under the **Rajayatana** tree where two merchant brothers, **Tapussa and Bhallika** from Ukkala (Orissa) offered Him rice cakes and honey. When the Buddha finished His meal, they prostrated themselves before His feet and sought refuge in the Buddha and the *Dhamma.* Thus, they were the first lay disciples who took the two-fold refuge.

8. The Buddha Propounds the Teaching (*Dhamma*)

After His meal, the Buddha began to contemplate and was reluctant to teach the *Dhamma* to the people. He thought that people would not be able to understand His noble and deep teaching for they were shrouded by ignorance. Thereupon, **Brahma Sahampati** came and invited Him to teach the *Dhamma* saying that there will be those who could understand the *Dhamma*. On surveying the world, the Buddha perceived that there were beings that could understand and realize the *Dhamma* and He accepted the invitation of Brahma Sahampati to teach the Dhamma. The first person that came to His mind was Alara Kalama but a deity informed Him that Alara Kalama had died seven days ago. Then He thought of Uddaka Ramaputta and again a deity informed Him that Uddaka had died the previous evening. Finally He thought of the five ascetics who attended on Him during His struggle for Enlightenment. With His supernormal vision, He perceived that they were staying in Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares (present day Varanasi).

On the 50th day after His Enlightenment, the Buddha proceeded to **Benares** to expound the *Dhamma* to his friends, the 5 Ascetics, namely **Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji.** He arrived at the **Deer Park** in **Isipatana** on the full-moon day of ***Asalha***, 2 months after Vesakha and delivered His First Discourse, the *Dhammacakkkapavattana Sutta* or **Discourse on Turning the Wheel of *Dhamma*** which led to the Five Ascetics attaining *Sotapatti,* the first stage of sainthood, and all became monks under the Buddha. Later the Buddha preached the ***Anattalakkhana Sutta*** or **Discourse on Non-Self**, hearing which all attained *Arahantship* or final stage of sainthood.

The Buddha also succeeded in expounding His *Dhamma* to a rich young man**, Yasa** and his fifty-four friends who joined the Holy Order and became *Arahants*. **Yasa's parents and his wife** also attained *Sotapatti* and became the first lay disciples who took the Threefold Refuge of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha.* Thus, within a short period of time there were sixty monks, all of them *Arahants*. Lord Buddha dispatched them in various directions to spread the *Dhamma*. Lord Buddha himself also left Benares and journeyed to

Uruvela. On the way, He met a group of **thirty young noblemen** called ***Bhaddavaggi*** or the fortunate group because they were princely brothers having a good life. While they were merry-making in the forest, a hired woman ran off with the valuables of one of the brothers. The thirty princes while searching for the woman saw the Buddha. In the encounter, the Buddha succeeded in preaching the *Dhamma* to them. They were established variously, in the first, second and third stages of sainthood and entered the Order. These monks were half brothers of King Pasenadi of Kosala and as they usually resided in Paveyya City in the western part of Kosala, they were known as the **Paveyyaka monks**. They realized *Arahantship* at a later date after hearing the *Anamatagga Sutta* or **Discourse on the Endless Rounds of Existence**, while the Buddha was dwelling in Veluvana monastery in Rajagaha. It was on their account that the Buddha allowed monks to hold the **Kathina** ceremony (**Note 4**) every year after the rains retreat or *vassa*.

At that time in Uruvela, there were 3 matted hair ascetic brothers**: Uruvela Kassapa, Nadi Kassapa and Gaya Kassapa** living separately with 500, 300 and 200 disciples respectively. With much effort and at times using His psychic powers, the Buddha succeeded in convincing them to enter the Order. Knowing that they were all fire-worshippers, the Buddha delivered to them the ***Adittapariyaya Sutta*** or **Fire Discourse**, hearing which all attained *Arahantship.* Accompanied by His retinue of 1000 *Arahants*, all former matted hair ascetics, the Buddha proceeded to Rajagaha to meet King Bimbisara in accordance with the promise He made before His Enlightenment. When King Bimbisara and the Brahmin citizens saw the Buddha with Uruvela Kassapa whom they held in high esteem, they were not sure who the leader was. Reading their minds, the Buddha questioned Kassapa who acknowledged the Buddha as His Master by rising in the air and paying homage to the Buddha three times. Later on the Buddha preached the ***Maha Narada Kassapa Jataka*** followed by a graduated discourse, at the end of which one hundred and ten thousand Brahmins headed by Bimbisara attained the first stage of sainthood. Later on, King Bimbisara offered his Bamboo Grove (*Veluvana*) for the use of the Buddha and His disciples, the first gift of a place of residence. The Buddha spent three successive *vassas* and three other *vassas* in this famous park.

9. Conversion of Sariputta and Moggallana

Not far from Rajagaha in the village of **Nalaka**, there lived a very intelligent Brahmin youth named **Upatissa** also known as **Sariputta,** scion of the leading family of the village. He had a very intimate friend in **Kolita** also known as **Moggallana**, the son of the leading family of another village. Together they had left the luxury of the household life and became ascetics under a teacher named **Sanjaya**. Very soon, they became dissatisfied with his teaching and returned to their own villages, with the understanding that whosoever discovered the Path of Release should teach the other. It was at this time that the **Venerable Assaji**, one of the first 5 disciples, was on alms round in Rajagaha. Impressed by his calm and serene manner, Upatissa offered his seat and water to the Venerable Assaji when the latter was having his meal. On being asked by Upatissa to teach him the doctrine, Ven. Assaji uttered a four-line stanza, skillfully summing up the Master's Teaching of cause and effect:

"*Ye dhamma hetuppabhava – tesam hetu tathagato*
Aha tesan ca yo nirodho – evam vadi Maha-Samano."

"Of things that proceed from a cause – their cause the Tathagata has told. And also their cessation -- Thus teaches the Great Ascetic."

Immediately on hearing half the stanza consisting of two lines, Upatissa attained *Sotapatti,* the first stage of sainthood. In accordance with the agreement, he returned to his friend Kolita, who also attained *Sotapatti* after hearing the whole stanza. Accompanied by their followers, the two friends went to see the Buddha and requested for admission into the Order. The Venerable Moggallana attained *Arahantship* after one week but the Venerable Sariputta passed a fortnight in reviewing and analyzing with insight all levels of consciousness, attaining *Arahantship* while fanning the Buddha who was giving a discourse to the wandering ascetic **Dighanakha**. That very evening, the Buddha summoned all His disciples to His presence and conferred the titles of **First** and **Second Chief Disciples** of the *Sangha* respectively on the **Venerables Sariputta** and **Maha Moggallana**.

At this, some monks were displeased and complained among themselves that the Buddha should have given the rank of Chief Disciples to those who ordained first such as the five Ascetics or to Yasa and his friends or the thirty *Bhaddavaggiya* (fortunate) monks or else to the three Kassapa brothers. Instead He had bypassed all those Great Elders and given the title to the 'youngest monks' i.e. those who ordained last. When the Buddha came to know of this, He assembled the monks and explained His choice. When Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Maha Moggallana many aeons ago, at the time of **Buddha Anomaddassin**, were born as the Brahmin youth Sarada and merchant Sirivaddhaka, they made the aspiration to become Chief Disciples. So what the Buddha had done was to give them what they had aspired for, while the other senior monks did not make the aspiration to become Chief Disciples. (**Note 5**)

10. The Buddha Visits His Birthplace

King Suddhodana knowing that the Buddha was preaching the *Dhamma* in Rajagaha, dispatched nine courtiers on nine successive occasions to invite the Buddha to Kapilavatthuu but on every occasion, the courtier was converted by the Buddha and attained *Arahantship*. After the attainment they became indifferent to worldly affairs and so did not convey the message to the Buddha. Finally another courtier **Kaludayi,** a childhood friend of the Buddha, was chosen to carry the invitation. He agreed to go as he was granted permission to enter the Order. On meeting the Buddha and hearing the *Dhamma,* he too attained *Arahantship* but he remembered his promise to the old King and conveyed the message to the Buddha.

When the Buddha returned to Kapilavatthu, He had to exhibit His psychic powers to subdue the pride of His relatives and elderly Sakyans who did not pay Him due reverence. His father, on seeing the miracles saluted Him for the third time. The Buddha then proceeded to preach to them the *Vessantara Jataka*. He continued preaching to his father on several occasions and the aged king

succeeded in reaching the 3rd Stage of Sainthood. The Buddha succeeded in persuading His stepbrother **Nanda** and cousin **Ananda** to join the Holy Order.

When the Buddha visited the palace, **Princess Yasodhara** and her son **Rahula** came to pay their respects and the latter was admitted into the Order though at a tender age of seven years only. When King Suddhodana heard about the ordination of his beloved grandson, he felt aggrieved and requested the Buddha not to approve the ordination of any minor without prior consent of the parents. The Buddha agreed to this request and made it a *Vinaya* rule. Before he died, King Suddhodana heard the *Dhamma* from the Buddha and attained *Arahantship*. He passed away after experiencing the bliss of Emancipation for seven days as a lay *Arahant* when the Buddha was forty years old. After the death of the king, **Maha Pajapati Gotami and Princess Yasodhara** joined the Order of Nuns formed by the Buddha and later attained *Arahantship.*

11. The Buddha's Ministry

The Buddha's ministry was a great success lasting for **45 years** and was generously supported by many lay disciples, ranging from kings to commoners. His chief male lay-supporter (*dayaka*) was the millionaire **Sudatta,** commonly known as **Anathapindika** (feeder of the poor) who donated the famous **Jetavana Monastery** at **Savatthi** where the Buddha spent nineteen rainy seasons and gave many discourses found in the Scriptures. His chief female lay-supporter (*dayika*) was the **Lady Visakha** who donated the **Pubbarama Monastery** in the east of Savatthi where the Buddha spent six rainy seasons. The Buddha was so skillful in His preaching of the *Dhamma* that He even succeeded in converting the notorious killer **Angulimala** to join the Order while He was in Savatthi.

In the course of His ministry for forty-five years, the Buddha was indefatigable. He traveled on foot with a company of monks all over

Northern India, from **Vesali** in the east to **Kuru (Delhi)** in the west, preaching the *Dhamma* for the benefit of mankind. Although His motive was pure and selfless, yet He faced strong opposition, mainly from the leaders of other religious sects and the traditional Brahmin caste. Within the Order too, the Buddha also face some problems especially from His cousin and brother-in-law **Devadatta,** who was always plotting against Him in order to take over the Order but was never successful. In the end, Devadatta left the Order but just before his death, he repented and desired to see the Buddha. Before he could enter Jetavana monastery where the Buddha was residing, he was swallowed into the swampy ground just outside the gate. At the last moment, he took refuge in the Buddha.

12. The *Parinibbana* and Final Admonition to the Monks

Three months before His *Parinibbana* (passing away wherein the elements of clinging do not arise again), Lord Buddha relinquished the will to live at the Capala Shrine in Vesali. Summoning all the local monks to the assembly hall of the Gabled House, he delivered his **Final Admonition** in which he exhorted them to thoroughly learn, develop, practise and propagate those **Teachings**, which he had **direct knowledge** in order that the Holy Life may last long. "And what, *Bhikkhus*, are these Teachings? Verily, they are the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*), the Four Right Efforts (*Sammappadhana*), the Four Bases of Success (*Iddhipada*), the Five Faculties (*Indriya*), the Five Powers (*Bala*), the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhanga*), and the Eight Constituents of the Path (*Magganga*)." (Note: These are the 37 Requisites of Enlightenment that must be developed in order to attain Enlightenment.)

From Vesali, the Buddha took the journey on foot to his final resting place in Kusinara, instructing the monks in the *Dhamma* along the way. He had His last meal from **Cunda** the smith**,** while His last convert was the wandering ascetic named **Subhadda** to whom the Buddha preached the **Lion's Roar** in which He declared the Noble Eightfold Path to be the true way to *Nibbana*, namely:

"*In whatsoever Teaching and Discipline, Subhadda, there is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is there found the true ascetic of the first nor second, third nor fourth degree of saintliness. But in whatsoever Teaching and Discipline, there is found the Noble Eightfold Path, therein is found the true ascetic of the first and second, third and fourth degree of saintliness. Now in this Teaching and Discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path; and in it alone is found also the true ascetic of the first and second, third and fourth degree of saintliness.* Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers; but if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of Arahants*." (* i.e. the *sotapanna, sakadagamin, anagamin* and *arahant* respectively)

The Buddha's ***Parinibbana*** took place on the full-moon day of Wesakha under the shade of two Sala trees in the Sala Grove of the Mallas. It was His **eightieth year** in **543 BC**. His famous last message to His disciples was: "*Behold, O disciples, I exhort you. Subject to decay are all component things. Accomplish all your duties with heedfulness.*"

Thus, ended the life of the noblest being the world has ever known. As a man He was born. As an extraordinary man He lived. As a Buddha, He passed away. In the annals of history, no man is recorded as having so consecrated himself to the welfare of all beings, irrespective of caste, class or creed as the **Supreme Buddha,** endowed with Omniscience and Great Compassion. Although the Buddha is gone, yet the ***Dhamma*** that he taught for forty-five years still remains, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of his far-sighted and faithful disciples who codified His Teachings and **transmitted them orally** over five centuries before they were finally **written on palm leaves** in the island of Sri Lanka, far away, from its birthplace. The story of how this *Dhamma* Treasury called the "***Tipitaka*** or Three Baskets" containing the teachings and practices leading to the end of suffering has remained **intact and unadulterated**, spreading beyond the borders of its narrower home, is a fascinating chronicle that is told in Chapter XVII. It is a living testament of the **religious zeal** and **dedication** of the ancient monks in preserving, propagating and perpetuating the Teachings of Lord Buddha, from his *Mahaparinibbana* till the present day.

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14. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: According to the Theravada tradition, the Buddha passed into *Parinibbana* (Final Passing Away) on the full-moon day of Wesakha (April-May) in **543BC** in Kusinara. As he was eighty years old, the year of his birth was **623BC**. These dates have been accepted in all Theravada countries as well as the World Fellowship of Buddhists. In the *Sangha,* monks count the passage of years by the number of *vassas* or rainy seasons, so the first rainy season (July-October) after *Parinibbana* is reckoned as Year 1 of the Buddha Era (BE), which means that 543BC is 1 BE. To convert the Gregorian calendar to the Buddhist calendar, just add 544 to the current year e.g. 1956AD was celebrated as the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha Era.

However European scholars in the early 20th century had rejected this chronology after they noted a discrepancy between the Theravadin dating of Asoka's coronation and the date of that event, which may be calculated from ancient Greek sources, e.g., the Indika written around 300BC by Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador to the Mauryan court of Chandragupta, grandfather of Asoka. The Greek sources place Asoka's

coronation approximately sixty years later than the Pali sources. The year of *Parinibbana* was recalculated as **483BC** and most scholars have accepted this as the correct version. Both versions belong to the so-called **'long chronology'** because they accept the Theravadin claim that Asoka was consecrated **218 years** after *Parinibbana*.

At a conference held near Gottingen, Germany in 1988, a new breed of scholars proposed another chronology based on the re-interpretation of ***Acariyaparampara*** or the **lineage of five teachers** preceding Ven. Mahinda listed in the *Mahavamsa* by Geiger. **The idea is nothing new**. **In 1881**, **T. W. Rhys Davids** noted that the period of 236 years for the five teachers prior to the Third Council was too long and proposed a shorter period of 150 years between the Third Council and the *Parinibbana*. This idea would place the Buddha's *Parinibbana* around **400BC** instead of **483BC.** This re-dating is based on the reasoning that a **modern clergyman** who ordains a pupil would have been ordained **thirty or forty years** before; and **four such intervals** would fill out, not 238 years, but about 150 years; and a similar argument applies with reasonable certainty to the case in point. However this assumption appears to have ignored the fact that the *Acariyas* (teachers) lived to a **ripe old age** due to a **simple lifestyle** and **mental purity** unlike the modern clergymen. So this new theory appears flawed.

Note: The ***Acariyaparampara*** or lineage of teachers provides the number of years or *vassas* as a monk of each teacher beginning with Ven. Upali (74), Ven. Dasaka (64), Ven. Sonaka (64), Ven. Siggava (76), Ven. Moggaliputta (80) and Ven. Mahinda (60 years).

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Note 2: According to the Commentaries, Queen Mahamaya had reached the **third portion of the second stage of life** when she conceived the *Bodhisatta*. As the human lifespan then was one hundred years and divided into 3 stages, the length of each stage was 33 years 4 months. Each stage was further sub-divided into 3 portions with each portion representing 11 years. Thus Queen Mahamaya was 55 years 4 months when she conceived. Adding 10 months of pregnancy, she would be 56 years 2 months when she gave birth to the *Bodhisatta.*

Note 3: The Commentaries explain that when the Buddha contemplated on the Great *Patthana* or Conditional Relations, his Omniscience found the opportunity to display its extensive brilliance in this all-embracing treatise with its unlimited number of permutations (just as a whale can frolic in the deep ocean but not in a pond). As the Buddha applied his mind to the most subtle and profound points of the *Patthana*, there arose great rapture in the mind. Because of the rapture, his blood became clearer; because of the clearer blood, his skin became clearer. Because of the clearer skin, rays of different colours emanated from his body and traveled outwards in all directions. **Blue** light radiated from the blue parts (of the Buddha's physical frame) such as the hair and pupils of the eye; **yellow and golden** rays from the skin; **white** rays from bones, teeth and white portions of the eye; **red** rays from eyes, flesh and blood. From the various unascertainable parts of the Buddha's body, rays of **light and dark** colours and resulting from the mixture of the colours, sparkling and **glittering colours** shone forth. Thus the six rays of **blue, gold, white, red, darkish and glittering colours** radiated outwards in the direction of all ten quarters up till today, a time when the Buddha's Teachings still shines forth.

Note 4: The Paveyyaka monks returned to their city and retired to the forest where they took up ascetic practices or *dhutanga*, namely: living in the forest (*arannakanga*), going for alms (*pindapatikanga*), wearing robes made from rags taken from a dust heap or cemetery (*pansukulikanga*), wearing only three robes (*tecivarikanga*). In this way, they passed thirteen whole years. In the end, desiring to see their Master and pay homage, they started on their journey to Savatthi where the Buddha was residing. Since the distance was too far, they had to stop at Saketa, a distance of 6 *yojanas* or 72 miles from Savatthi, due to the start of the *vassa* or rains retreat. In spite of their eagerness to see the Buddha, they had to take up residence at Saketa because it was an offence for monks to be away from their residence for more than 3 days during the *vassa*. As soon as the *vassa* was over, they immediately resumed journey although the rains had not stopped. Travelling through the countryside in the rain and mud, their robes became soaked and soiled when they arrived at Savatthi to pay homage to the Buddha. Seeing their exhaustion and uncomfortable position, Buddha was filled with compassion and gave permission to hold the *Kathina* ceremony. The *Kathina*, literally 'hard' refers to the stock of cloth presented by the faithful to be made up into robes for the use of the *Sangha* during the ensuing year. The whole of this cotton cloth must be dyed, sewn together and made into robes and then formally declared to be not only common property of the *Sangha* but also available for immediate distribution, all on one and the same day.

Note 5: According to the *Dhammapada* Commentary (Buddhist Legends Book I, Story 8), the Chief disciples made their aspiration one *asankheyya* and 100,000 world cycles ago (Chapter VIII, 10), during the Dispensation of the Buddha Anomadassin. Thereafter they had to fulfill the Ten *Paramis* (Perfections) over that immense period of time before becoming Chief Disciples in the Dispensation of the Buddha Gotama. To become a Great Disciple (*Maha Arahant*), the aspirant has to fulfill the Perfections for 100,000 world cycles.

One hundred thousand world cycles ago, Ven. Kondanna had made the aspiration to be the first to realize the *Dhamma* when he performed *dana* for seven days to the Buddha Padumuttara. Ninety-one world cycles ago, he was born as a farmer named Culakala and enjoyed offering his first crop to the Buddha Vipassi, which he did nine times. However his elder brother Mahakala had no such desire but in the end he also gave alms. In the present Dispensation, Culakala was born as Kondanna and was the first to realize the *Dhamma* when our Lord Gotama Buddha preached the First Sermon in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Sarnath while his brother Mahakala was born as the wandering ascetic Subhadda and was the last to be ordained by the Buddha. He attained *Arahantship* after the Buddha had passed into *Parinibbana* in Kusinara.

Ven. Yasa and his fifty-four friends aspired to *Arahantship* many world cycles ago in the presence of a certain Buddha and they also performed many meritorious deeds.

The thirty *Bhaddavaggiya* monks too aspired to *Arahantship* in the presence of former Buddhas. Later on before the appearance of the Buddha, they were born as thirty drunkards. Hearing the admonition by the *Bodhisatta* in the Tundila Jataka, they turn over a new leaf and observed the five precepts for 60,000 years.

Aspiring to *Arahantship*, the Kassapa brothers performed meritorious deeds. Ninety-two world cycles ago, there appeared during that world cycle, two successive Buddhas, Tissa and Phussa. The Kassapa brothers were brothers of the Buddha Phussa and taking their thousand followers performed *dana* and observed the Ten Precepts for three months. After death, they were reborn as *devas* and spent ninety-two world cycles in successive rebirths in the *deva* realms. Thus the three brothers, aspiring to *Arahantship* performed meritorious deeds during that period and achieved what they aspired for.

II

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

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1. What are the Four Noble Truths?

After 6 years of strenuous striving in His last life, the Buddha finally realized the Truth when He attained Supreme Enlightenment under the *Bodhi* tree in Bodhgaya, India. This monumental event happened on the full-moon day of Wesak in 588 BC. This topic of the "Four Noble Truths" is the very heart and core of Buddhism. These Truths, made known by the Buddha after His Enlightenment, constitute the essence of the *Dhamma* (Teaching), pervading every aspect and every part of it. The Four Noble Truths are:

a) The Noble Truth of *Dukkha* or Suffering (*Dukkha Sacca*)

b) The Noble Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* (*Samudaya Sacca*)

c) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of *Dukkha* (*Nirodha Sacca*)

d) The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha* (*Magga Sacca*)

2. Why are they called Noble Truths?

a) They are truths because they are **real** and form an **incontrovertible** fact of life. Whether Buddhas arise or not, they exist in the world. It is the Buddhas who reveal them to mankind.

b) They are called Noble (*Ariya*) because they were discovered by the **Greatest Noble Person** i.e. one who is utterly remote from all defilements. Alternatively, they are Noble Truths owing to the establishment of nobleness by the discovery and penetration of them i.e. those who have penetrated the Four Noble Truths are called ***Ariyas* or Noble Ones.**

3. Noble Truth of Suffering

a) Birth *(Jati)* is suffering

According to Buddhism, the duration of each phenomenon consists of 3 phases, namely: genesis, static or development, and dissolution. The moment of **genesis is birth,** the moment of **dissolution is death** and the **static phase is ageing**.

By the birth of a being is meant the genesis of the new mind and matter after death upon dissolution of the old existence i.e. the first germ of life in the new existence. No suffering or pain as such exists, of course, at the first moment of genesis but since birth serves as the **basis for later appearance of physical and mental suffering** throughout the whole of the ensuing existence, birth is considered as suffering.

b) Ageing *(Jara*) is suffering

Ageing means becoming grey-haired, toothless, wrinkled, bent, deaf and poor in eyesight. In other words, decay has set in, very recognizably, in the aggregates of mind and matter of a particular existence. Ageing of the mind is not so apparent and indications of it such as failing memory and senility become noticeable only when one becomes very old and then only to those close to oneself.

Ageing is concerned with just the **static moment** of the aggregates of mind and matter and has no essence of pain or suffering in it. But because of ageing, there occurs failing of vitality, impairment of the sense faculties, weakening of health, loss of youth, strength and good looks, people are really afraid of growing old. Since it forms the **source of physical and mental suffering**, ageing is said to be fearful *dukkha.*

c) Death *(Marana*) is suffering

Death is the **extinction** of the life-principle, which has been in ceaseless operation since the time of birth in a particular existence. All mortals are in constant fear of death. But death is not by itself pain or suffering as it is the moment of dissolution of the life-principle of the aggregates of mind and matter. However, when death comes, one has to abandon the physical body and leave behind one's family and friends together with one's properties. The thought of leaving the present existence and the uncertainty of the future is very frightening. As death draws near, all mortal beings are subjected to severe attacks of disease and illness, which rack the body with unbearable pain. Death, which is the **basis for all such physical and mental agony**, has thus been named *dukkha* by the Buddha.

d) Sorrow *(Soka)* is suffering

Sorrow is the **burning in the mind** of one affected by the five kinds of misfortune (*byasana*), namely: loss of relatives, destruction of property or possessions, deterioration of health and longevity, lapses in morality and deviation from right view to wrong view. This sorrow is a form of mental displeasure (*domanassa*) but has **inner consuming** as its characteristic and as such is **intrinsic suffering**, *dukkha-dukkha*. Overwhelming distress occasioned by sorrow can cause heartburn leading to premature ageing and even death. Being thus a basis for other physical pains too, sorrow is fearsome and is therefore named *dukkha* by the Buddha.

e) Lamentation *(Parideva*) is suffering

Lamentation is wailing by one affected by loss of relatives, property and any other losses or suffering. Absent-mindedly and hysterically, the distressed one clamours, proclaiming the virtues of the dead and the quality of the lost property or denouncing the enemy or agency responsible for the loss. In reality, lamentation is merely the **material quality of sound** and therefore not suffering in essence.

But such wailing and hysterical proclamations produce physical discomfort and pain. The Buddha had therefore declared lamentation as suffering. To cry is to be subjected to pain which is therefore suffering.

f) Physical pain *(Dukkha)* is suffering

Bodily pains such as stiffness, aches, soreness, tiredness, itchiness, and feeling hot or cold are suffering. These physical pains are true intrinsic suffering called *dukkha-dukkha*. Even animals flee to safety at the slightest hint of getting beaten or shot at because they are afraid of physical pain. It is important to know that sickness and disease come under this category of physical pain. Physical pain is generally followed by mental distress and for thus serving as a **cause for mental pain** it is named *dukkha*, dreadful suffering.

g) Mental displeasure *(Domanassa)* is suffering

The Pali word "*domanassa*" means bad-mindedness or **mental pain.** It denotes all sorts of mental aversion or displeasure such as worry, anxiety, depression, dislike, hate, fear, misery, etc. Mental displeasure also is intrinsic suffering that not only **oppresses** the mind but also tortures the body such as causing stress, insomnia, and loss of appetite with consequent impairment of health and even the advent of death. It is a truly formidable *dukkha.*

h) Despair *(Upayasa)* is suffering

Despair is ill-humour or dejection produced by **excessive mental agony** in one affected by loss of loved ones, property and any other losses or suffering. It causes repeated bemoaning over the loss resulting in **burning of the mind** and physical distress and can even lead to insanity or suicide. Despair is therefore suffering because of the intense burning of the mind and physical pain accompanying it. People, accordingly recognize the state of despair as a fearsome *dukkha.*

As an illustration, **sorrow** ***(soka)*** is like cooking of oil or dye-solution in a pot over a slow fire. **Lamentation** ***(parideva)*** is like its boiling over when cooking over a quick fire. **Despair** ***(upayasa)*** is like what remains in the pot after it has boiled over and being unable to do so any more**,** goes on cooking in the pot till it dries up.

i) <u>Association with the hateful is suffering</u>

Association with the hateful is meeting with **disagreeable beings** or **undesirable objects**. Such meeting is not itself unbearable pain but in such situations, reaction sets in at once in the form of mental disturbance and physical discomposure. As it serves as a cause of mental and physical distress, the Buddha designated it as *dukkha*, dreadful suffering.

j) <u>Separation from the beloved is suffering</u>

Separation from the beloved is not itself a painful feeling. However when separation takes place, by death or while still alive, from beloved ones or when parted from one's treasured possessions, mental agony sets in at once. As it promotes various mental afflictions, the Buddha had called the separation from the **loved ones** and **desirable objects**, *dukkha,* dreadful suffering.

k) <u>Not getting what one desires is suffering</u>

Not getting what one desires is not itself a painful feeling. But the **unfulfilled desire** often results in great disappointment, despair, and may even lead to suicide. Suffering also arises out of desire for some unobtainable object such as the desire to be free from suffering. Without practising and developing the Noble Eightfold Path, freedom from suffering is unobtainable by mere wishing and not getting what one wants causes mental anguish. Here the object of one's desire also includes the worldly gains and wealth that cannot be attained by mere desiring. Not getting them as one desires is also *dukkha.*

l) <u>In short, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are suffering</u>

A sentient being is made up of the Five Aggregates or Groups that form the objects of clinging or grasping. The Five Aggregates of Clinging or Grasping ***(Upadana-khanda)*** are:

i) The aggregate of matter or material forms ***(Rupa-khanda)***
ii) The aggregate of feeling ***(Vedana-khanda)***
iii) The aggregate of perception ***(Sanna-khanda)***
iv) The aggregate of volitional activities ***(Sankhara-khanda)***
v) The aggregate of consciousness ***(Vinnana-khanda)***

All sentient beings exist as such only with these five aggregates forming their substantive mass. They cling to their **body,** which is merely an aggregate of material forms, regarding it as "I, my body, permanent, etc." Hence the group of material forms is called an aggregate of clinging. The mental groups made up of **feeling, perception, mental activities** and **consciousness** are also grasped at, taking them to be "I, my mind, it is I who thinks, permanent, etc." Hence they are also called aggregates of clinging.

The Five Aggregates of Clinging at the moment of seeing

i) The eye and the visible object are the **Material Aggregate**.
ii) Feeling pleasant, unpleasant or neutral is the **Feeling Aggregate**.
iii) Recognizing or remembering the object is the **Perception Aggregate.**
iv) To will to see and turning the attention on the object is the **Volitional Activities Aggregate**.
v) Just knowing that an object is seen is the **Consciousness Aggregate**.

4. Suffering because of the Five Aggregates of Clinging

a) ***Dukkha-dukkha* or Intrinsic suffering**
The eleven types of suffering, starting from the suffering of birth to the suffering of not getting what one wants, are all obvious types of suffering known as *dukkha-dukkha* or intrinsic suffering. They arise only because there are the 5 aggregates of clinging; without them, such suffering will not arise.

In short, because there is body or the material aggregate, physical and mental sufferings dependent on the body arise. Because there are feeling, perception, volitional activities and consciousness aggregates, physical and mental sufferings based on them also arise. Thus the 5 Aggregates of Clinging are ***dukkha-dukkha*, intrinsic suffering**. Cases of *dukkha* not so obvious that occur as a result of the operation of the Law of Change are called ***viparinama dukkha,*** suffering due to change.

b) ***Viparinama dukkha* or Suffering due to change**
Pleasurable physical sensations arising from agreeable tactile impressions (touch) are called pleasant bodily feelings. Joyful states of mind arising from reviewing pleasurable sense objects are called pleasant mental feelings. These 2 forms of happy states please all beings. All beings go after these states all the time, even at the risk of their lives and when these are attained, their happiness knows no bound.

However, while they are rejoicing with blissful contentment, if the sense objects that have given them so much happiness and delight **disappear or get destroyed**, great would be their agitation followed by agony. When the wealth which they have accumulated in the form of money or property suddenly get lost through one reason or another; when death or separation comes to their loved ones; intense grief and distress ensue, which can even cause derangement. Thus, these 2 forms of happiness namely pleasant physical and mental feelings are also a type of suffering because of change. Because they

arise dependent on the five aggregates, the five Aggregates of Clinging are *viparinama dukkha***, suffering due to change.**

c) ***Sankhara dukkha*** **or Suffering due to conditioning**

The word *sankhara* in "*Sabbe sankhara dukkha* or all **conditioned things** are suffering" here means conditioned things or resultants of determining conditions. It has a different meaning from the *sankhara* in "*sankharakkhanda*" which means **volitional activities.**

The five Aggregates of Clinging are always in a state of flux, impermanent and none of them are self-existing. They arise out of various causes. They are **conditioned.** Their existence depends on certain conditions and when these conditions and causes cease to exist, they too cease to exist. As death awaits constantly, having to rely on the impermanent aggregates of clinging for physical substance or support is dreadful, like living in a building which shows signs of collapsing any moment.

The transitory nature of the five Aggregates of Clinging require constant effort at **conditioning** for the maintenance of the status quo, e.g., the body needs constant feeding in order to survive, feelings of happiness require constant contact with agreeable sense objects. Even the everyday **medial neutral feelings** need effort at conditioning, e.g., without adequate rain, there is a shortage of water and everyone suffers the effect of the drought. This implies laborious effort, which of course is *dukkha*. Therefore, the five Aggregates of Clinging are *sankhara dukkha***, suffering due to conditioning.**

SUMMARY

The five Aggregates of Clinging are **intrinsic suffering**, suffering due to **change** and suffering due to **conditioning.** In short**,** the five Aggregates of Clinging are the Noble Truth of Suffering.

5. Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering

According to the Buddha, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering is "***Tanha***" or Craving which leads from birth to birth, which accompanied by pleasure and greed, finds ever fresh delight now here, now there, everywhere. What is this "*Tanha*" or Craving? It is of three kinds:

- ***Kama-tanha***, the **sensual** craving, the desire for enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.
- ***Bhava-tanha***, craving for **eternal existence**, holding the eternity-belief.
- ***Vibhava-tanha***, craving for **non-existence** (self-annihilation), believing that there is nothing after death.

Where does this *tanha*, craving arise and take root?

"Wherever in the world, there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this ***tanha,*** craving arises and takes root."

What are the delightful and pleasurable things in this world?

They may be summarized as the following:

- The six sense **bases**: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
- The six sense **objects**: visible object, sound, smell, taste, touch and mind objects.
- The six types of **consciousness** viz. seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking consciousness.
- The six types of sense impressions or **contacts**.
- The six types of **feeling** (*vedana*)**, perception** (*sanna*)**, volition** (*cetana*)**, craving** (*tanha*)**, initial application** (*vitakka*) and **sustained application** (*vicara*) arising from six types of contact.

Each of the above objects is attractive and pleasurable. This craving arises and takes root in whatever is **delightful, attractive** and **pleasurable**. This is called the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

6. *Kama-Tanha* or Sensual Craving

Sensual craving is craving for pleasurable sense objects whether belonging to one's own person or to other persons. They include:

i) Beautiful sight and visible objects such as appearance, form or body.
ii) Pleasing sound and sound objects such as voices and persons making the sound.
iii) Delightful smell and its source such as perfume and persons using it.
iv) Delicious taste and the food producing the taste, men and women who prepare and serve the delicious food.
v) Tactile sensations of rapture and objects producing such sensations
vi) Wishing to be born as a *deva*, a man, a woman, longing to enjoy the sensual pleasures as a *deva* or as a human being. Taking delight in such pleasurable thoughts is also sensual craving.

Because of **ignorance (*avijja*)** or **"*not knowing things as they truly are*,"** one holds the **erroneous perception, thought and view** called Illusion of Perception (*sanna-vipallasa*), Illusion of Thought (*citta-vipallasa*) and Illusion of View (*ditthi-vipallasa*) by considering:

- The impermanent as permanent
- Suffering as happiness
- Non-self as self
- The loathsome as beautiful

Thus thinking what is unpleasant to be pleasant, liking is developed for it. Liking it and desiring it leads to craving which drives one into activities in order to fulfill the craving. Such activities are the ***kamma* (causes)** and ***sankhara* (volitional activities)** responsible for the formation of new aggregates of mind and matter in the new existence. Influenced by craving, even the death consciousness clings tenaciously to objects seen at death's door, and after it vanishes, the rebirth consciousness arises holding on to the last seen objects to give rise to a new being consisting of the 5 Aggregates of Clinging which are suffering. Thus *Kama-Tanha*, sensual craving, is the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

7. *Bhava-Tanha* or Craving for Eternal Existence

This is the craving based on the **belief in the permanence** or stability of existence. It is the craving accompanied by the wrong view that the soul or living entity does not perish even when the physical body dissolves away. It enters into a new body and remains there. Even if the world crumbles and breaks up, it remains eternal and never perishes.

Religions outside the Teaching of the Buddha mostly hold this view of **eternalism.** Some believe that when a person dies, he remains permanently in heaven or suffers eternal damnation in hell according to the God's wish. Others believe that a being **transmigrates** from one existence to another according to *kamma* and exists permanently. For instance, a bird on a tree flies to another tree when the first tree falls down. When the second tree falls down again, it flies to a third tree. Likewise, the soul or living entity, on dissolution of a gross body or form on which it is dependent, moves on to another coarse body, itself remaining **everlasting, undestroyed**.

Bhava-Tanha*,** craving for eternal existence takes delight in the view that the soul or living entity is permanent and enduring. This "I" which has been in permanent existence since eternity feels the sensations and will go on feeling them. Believing thus, it takes delight in every object experienced by the 6 senses and also in objects one hopes to come to enjoy in the future. So it wishes to enjoy a prosperous life now and in future; to be born in good happy existences; to enjoy the good life of human or celestial being. Some wish to be born always a man, some a woman. All these wishes are **craving for existence**. Because of this craving, a conditioning influence or potential power is built up for the arising of a new life consisting of the **five Aggregates of Clinging** that are suffering. Thus ***Bhava-tanha, craving for eternal existence, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

8. *Vibhava-Tanha* or Craving for non-existence

This is the craving based on the belief that there is existence only while alive, there is **nothing after death**. It is the craving which is accompanied by the **wrong view of non-existence** which holds that nothing remains after death; there is **complete annihilation**. This craving likes the idea that after death, existence is annihilated without any special effort. The reason is that one who holds this view shrinks from the practice of meritorious deeds and **does not abstain from evil deeds**. The evil deeds committed are also numerous. If new life occurs after death, these evil deeds will bear unwholesome effects that they cannot relish. Only if nothing happens after death and there is no new existence will their misdeeds be without effect and they can escape scot-free from all consequences of their evil actions. Hence this great appeal of the nihilistic view.

At the same time, holding that the time for enjoying is now, the present life before death, they are too eager to go after any desirable object of pleasure. Hence they go all out in pursuit of their pleasure without thinking of the consequences. Such ardent **pursuit of sensual** pleasures leads to commission of ***kamma*** **(causes)** and ***sankhara*** **(volitional activities)** every act of which constitutes to formation of new life. Each time there is delight in, and enjoyment of pleasures of the present life, the **sensual craving** is imparted to the consciousness. Even at death, it clings to the objects seen at death's door, and after it vanishes, the rebirth consciousness arises holding on to the last seen objects to give rise to a new birth of the **five Aggregates of Clinging**, which are suffering. Thus *Vibhava-Tanha,* Craving for non-existence, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

SUMMARY

The true cause of suffering lies in the **three cravings** namely: craving for **sensual pleasure**, craving for **eternal existence,** and craving for **non-existence.**

9. Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

According to the Buddha who had completely realized the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; it is the complete fading away and extinction of this Craving; its forsaking and giving up; the liberation and detachment from it. The truth of the cessation of suffering is then **the extinction of its origin, craving.** In Buddhism, there are 4 stages in the extinction of craving.

a) **First Stage of Sainthood**

One who has realized the First Stage of Sainthood is called a ***sotapanna*** or stream-winner because he has entered the stream that leads to *Nibbana.* The stream represents the Noble Eightfold Path. A *sotapanna* has **unshakeable faith** in the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. He neither violates the 5 precepts or commits the heinous crimes (see Chapter V, Part 8 b). He has also **destroyed self-illusion** (*sakkaya ditthi*), **doubts** (*vicikiccha*) and **false practices** (*silabbata paramasa*) that do not lead to the end of suffering. As he has not eradicated all the fetters that bind him to existence, he will suffer not more than **seven rebirths** in the sense sphere. For the *sotapanna*, the doors of the woeful states are closed forever and he will never revert to a world-ling again. He will eventually attain *Arahantship* and enter *Nibbana*.

There are three types of *sotapannas,* depending on the number of rebirths before they attain *Arahantship* and enter *Nibbana* namely:

- *Ekabiji-sotapanna* = enters *Nibbana* after one life.
- *Kolamkola-sotapanna* = enters *Nibbana* after two to six lives.
- *Sattakkhattu-parama-sotapanna* = enters *Nibbana* after seven lives.

b) **Second Stage of Sainthood**

One who has realized the Second Stage of Sainthood is called a ***sakadagamin***, which literally means 'once returner'. The Second Sainthood knowledge further weakens the grosser forms of sensual craving and ill-will to the extent that he will suffer not more than

one rebirth in the sensual plane before he attains *Arahantship.* Compared to the *sotapanna*, the *sakadagamin* has less greed or lust (*raga*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). Thus he is nobler than the *sotapanna.*

c) **Third Stage of Sainthood**

One who has realized the Third Stage of Sainthood is called an ***anagamin***. Since this stage of sainthood destroys the fetters of ill-will and sensual craving, an *anagamin* will no longer experience anger, hatred, worry, despair, fear, and any other unpleasant mental feeling; neither will he crave and enjoy sense pleasures. However, the subtle forms of craving (such as existence in the fine material plane) and ignorance are still dormant. Thereafter, he is not reborn in the sensual plane but in the Pure Abodes where he attains the Final Stage of Sainthood and lives till the end of his life. '*Anagamin*' literally means **'non-returner'**, one who will not be reborn in the sensual realms.

d) **Final Stage of Sainthood**

One who has realized the Final Stage of Sainthood is called an ***Arahant***. An *Arahant* has completely destroyed all forms of craving and eradicated all the ***Samyojanas* or Fetters** (**Note 1**) that bind one to existence. As his mind is always free from all defilements, it is at the purest state, making him the noblest one. He is a true Saint, worthy of respect by men and *devas* and worthy of receiving alms which are offered to him with the intention of enjoying the benefits in the present life as well as in future lives.

An *Arahant*, literally meaning a **Worthy One**, does not accumulate fresh *kamma* and he is not subject to rebirth because the conditions for his rebirth have been destroyed. The *Arahant* understands:

"Birth is exhausted, the Holy Life has been lived out, what was to be done is done, there is no more of this to come".

The *Arahant* has completely realized ***Nibbana***, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

10. References

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11. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: *Samyojana* means fetter that binds beings to the wheel of existence and to the rounds of misery. There are ten fetters, namely:

i) *Sakkayaditthi* = false view of a personality taking the complex combination of psycho-physical aggregates as a person or self or I.
ii) *Vicikiccha* = skeptical doubt about the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Sangha*, the Training, past lives, future lives, both the past and future lives, and Dependent Origination.
iii) *Silabatta-paramasa* = adherence to the false view that one becomes pure and thus be liberated by bovine and canine morality or by rites and rituals.
iv) *Kamaraga* = attachment to sensuous objects, namely visible object, sound, odours, taste, tangible object, mind object.
v) *Patigha* = ill-will, anger, aversion.
vi) *Mana* = conceit or pride.
vii) *Uddhacca* = restlessness.
viii) *Ruparaga* = attachment to the *rupa-jhanas* (the form absorptions) and *rupa*-existence (existence in the form realms).
ix) *Aruparaga* = attachment to the *arupa-jhanas* (formless absorptions) and *arupa*-existence (existence in the formless realms).
x) *Avijja* = ignorance (see Chapter IV, Part 5.XI for a full definition).

Fetters Nos. i, ii, iii are eliminated at the First Stage of Sainthood (*Sotapanna*), Nos. iv, v are only weakened at the 2nd Stage (*Sakadagamin*) but eliminated at the 3rd Stage (*Anagamin*) while the remaining fetters are all eliminated at the 4th Stage of Sainthood (*Arahant*).

III
NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

CONTENTS

1. Noble Truth of the Path leading to Cessation of Suffering
2. Right View (*Samma-ditthi*)
3. Right Thought (*Samma-sankappa*)
4. Right Speech (*Samma-vaca*)
5. Right Action (*Samma-kammanta*)
6. Right Livelihood (*Samma-ajiva*)
7. Right Effort (*Samma-vayama*)
8. Right Mindfulness (*Samma-sati*)
9. Right Concentration (*Samma-samadhi*)
10. References
11. Explanatory Notes

1. Noble Truth of Path leading to Cessation of Suffering

"There are two extremes namely: Indulgence in **Sensual Pleasure** which is base, common, vulgar, unholy and unprofitable; or **Self-mortification** which is painful, unholy and unprofitable. Both these two extremes, the Perfect One has avoided, and has found out the **Middle Path,** which makes one both to see and to know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to Enlightenment, to ***Nibbana*.** It is the **Noble Eightfold Path,** the way that leads to the cessation of suffering, namely:"

(a)	Right View	*Samma-ditthi*	Wisdom
(b)	Right Thought	*Samma-sankappa*	Wisdom
(c)	Right Speech	*Samma-vaca*	Morality
(d)	Right Action	*Samma-kammanta*	Morality
(e)	Right Livelihood	*Samma-ajiva*	Morality
(f)	Right Effort	*Samma-vayama*	Concentration
(g)	Right Mindfulness	*Samma-sati*	Concentration
(h)	Right Concentration	*Samma-samadhi*	Concentration

2. Right View

a) Right understanding of the **Ten Subjects** (*dasavatthu)* as taught by the Buddha, namely:

i There is moral significance in **almsgiving.**
ii There is moral significance in **large offerings**.
iii There is moral significance in **small gifts**.
iv There is the result of well-done and ill-done ***kamma* (action).**
v There is moral significance in what is done to one's **mother**.
vi There is moral significance in what is done to one's **father.**
vii There are beings of **instantaneous rebirth.**
viii There is **this world.**
ix There is **another world**.

- There are in this world sages and recluses of right attainment, of right practice, who having realized by their own **super knowledge** the truth regarding this world and other worlds, make it known to others.

b) Right view of the **Law of *Kamma*** i.e. all beings are owners of their *Kamma* and will reap the corresponding results.

c) Right view through penetration into the **true nature** of mental and physical processes (*nama-rupa pariccheda nana*).

d) Right view through penetration into the **root cause** and other causes of the physical and mental processes leading to realization of the **cause and effect** relationship (*paccaya pariggaha nana*).

e) Right view by realization of **Insight Wisdom** (***Vipassana Nana*).** There are 10 stages of this mundane Insight Wisdom beginning from the Knowledge of Comprehension (***Sammasana Nana***) to the Knowledge of Conformity (***Anuloma Nana***)

f) Right View by attainment of the **Four Stages of Sainthood (*Ariya Magga Nana*)**

Now, in understanding wrong view as wrong and right view as right, one practises **'Right View'.** In making efforts to overcome wrong view and arouse right view, one practises **'Right Effort'.** In overcoming wrong view with attentive mind and dwelling with attentive mind in the possession of right view, one practises **'Right Mindfulness'.** Hence, there are 3 Factors that accompany and follow right view, namely: Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

3. Right Thought

a) Thought free from lust ***(Nekkhama**-sankappa*)
b) Thought free from ill-will ***(Abyapada**-sankappa)*
c) Thought free from cruelty ***(Avihimsa**-sankappa)*

'Thought' here does not mean thinking or conceptualizing. It is used in the technical sense of directing the mind to the object or the **application** of the mind (consciousness & mental factors) on the object (*vitakka*).

Now, in understanding wrong thought as wrong, and right thought as right, one practises **Right View**. In making efforts to overcome evil thought and to arouse right thought, one practises **Right Effort.** In overcoming evil thoughts with attentive mind and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right thought, one practises **Right Mindfulness**. Hence there are 3 Factors that accompany and follow Right Thought, namely: Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

4. Right Speech

a) Refraining from **false** speech.
b) Refraining from **slanderous** speech.
c) Refraining from **harsh** words and **abusive** language.
d) Refraining from **frivolous** talk or **vain** talk.

Now, in understanding wrong speech as wrong, and right speech as right, one practises **Right View.** In making efforts to overcome evil speech and arouse right speech, one practises **Right Effort.** In overcoming wrong speech with attentive mind and dwelling in possession of right speech with attentive mind, one practises **Right Mindfulness**. Hence there are 3 Factors that accompany and follow Right Speech, namely: Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

5. Right Action

a) Refraining from injuring or **killing** any living being.
b) Refraining from **taking what is not given**.
c) Refraining from **wrong conduct** in (sexual) pleasures, intoxicants and gambling.

- **Immoral** physical and verbal actions such as deceit, trickery, usury and ungratefulness are considered wrong speech and actions.

Now, in understanding wrong action as wrong, and right action as right, one practises **Right View.** In making efforts to overcome wrong action and arouse right action, one practises **Right Effort.** In overcoming wrong action with attentive mind and dwelling in possession of right action with attentive mind, one practises **Right Mindfulness**. Hence there are 3 Factors that accompany and follow Right Action, namely**:** Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

6. Right Livelihood

Refraining from trading in the 5 kinds of merchandise, namely:
(a) Weapons
(b) Living beings
(c) Meat
(d) Intoxicants
(e) Poisons

In general, one should refrain from livelihood based on **wrong conduct** to be avoided under Right Action and Right Speech.

Now, in understanding wrong livelihood as wrong, and right livelihood as right, one practises **Right View**. In making efforts to overcome wrong livelihood and to establish right livelihood, one practises **Right Effort.** In overcoming wrong livelihood with

attentive mind and dwelling in possession of right livelihood, one practises **Right Mindfulness.** Hence there are 3 Factors that accompany and follow Right Livelihood, namely: Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

7. Right Effort

Right effort is concerned with the development of the mind. There are **Four Great Efforts**, namely: the effort to avoid, the effort to overcome, the effort to develop, and the effort to maintain.

a) **The Effort to Avoid**
Here one arouses the will to **avoid the arising of evil**, unwholesome states of mind that have not yet arisen. He makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives. How? By watching over and restraining his senses, e.g., by noting seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, at the moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking.

b) **The Effort to Overcome**
Here one arouses the will to **overcome the evil,** unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen. He makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives. How? He does not retain any thought of greed, ill-will, delusion or any other unwholesome states that may have arisen. He abandons them, dispels them, destroys them and causes them to disappear e.g. by noting them mindfully as they arise.

c) **The Effort to Develop**
Here one rouses the will to **arouse wholesome** states of mind that have not arisen. He makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives. How? He develops the 7 Factors of Enlightenment,

namely: Mindfulness (*Sati*), Investigation of physical and mental processes (*Dhammavicaya*), Energy (*Viriya*), Pleasurable Interest (*Piti*), Tranquility (*Passadhi*), Concentration (*Samadhi*) and Equanimity (*Upekkha*).

d) **The Effort to Maintain**
Here one rouses the will to **maintain the wholesome** states of mind that have already arisen and not allow them to disappear, but develop them to full maturity (*bhavana*). He makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives. How? By applying the mind firmly on the object of concentration either in Tranquility or Insight Meditation.

These four are the Right Efforts that are explained with reference to their four functions, namely: avoiding, overcoming, developing, maintaining. But in reality, there is only one factor here **— effort.** When one tries to attain any one of the purities, the effort so exercised covers these four functions automatically.

8. Right Mindfulness

Right Mindfulness is the quality of **complete awareness** developed through the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness.** Here one dwells in contemplation of the Body, contemplation of Feeling, contemplation of the Mind and contemplation of Mind Objects: ardent, mindful and clearly comprehending, after putting away greed and hatred.

a) **How does one dwell in contemplation of the Body?**
Through mindfulness of Respiration, the Four Postures, Clear Comprehension, 32 Parts of the Body, the Four Elements and Meditation on Corpses. (Refer to Chapter XV, 5)

b) **How does one dwell in contemplation of Feeling?**
Through Mindfulness of pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling and neutral feeling, one beholds how feelings arise; beholds how feelings pass away; beholds the arising and passing away of feelings. Thus one understands that the expression 'I feel' is only a conventional expression. One understands that in the ultimate sense, there are only feelings but no 'I' or 'Self' who experiences the feelings.

c) **How does one dwell in contemplation of the Mind?**
Through Mindfulness of the Mental States such as the greedy mind, angry mind, deluded mind, contracted mind, distracted mind, concentrated mind, developed mind, freed mind, and their opposing states. Thus one beholds how consciousness arises; beholds how consciousness passes away; beholds the arising and passing away of consciousness. Thus one understands that the Mind is not a permanent entity. When the greedy mind arises, there is only greedy mind but no 'I' or 'Self' who is greedy.

d) **How does one dwell in contemplation of Mind Objects?**
i) Through Mindfulness of Mind Objects, namely:
ii) The five mental hindrances, namely: sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, distraction and doubts.
iii) The five Aggregates of Clinging.
iv) The six Sense Bases and their Objects.
v) The seven Factors of Enlightenment.
vi) The Four Noble Truths.

Thus one beholds how mind objects arise; beholds how mind objects pass away; beholds the arising and passing away of mind objects. One understands that mind objects are impermanent, suffering and not 'Self' or 'I'. Through the application of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, one develops **Right View** by the realization of **Insight Wisdom** leading finally to the realization of the **Path & Fruition Knowledge** (*Magga Phala Nana*) and the attainment of ***Nibbana*****,** the cessation of all suffering. The meditation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is called ***Satipatthana Vipassana*** meditation and is described in Chapter XV.

9. Right Concentration

This is **one-pointedness** of mind developed through **Tranquility** meditation by **fixed** concentration (*Jhana*) with the mind only on the meditation object, to the exclusion of all others, or the **momentary** concentration developed by **Insight** meditation through the application of the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness**. According to the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, the mundane *jhana* concentration may be classed as the path of right concentration if it forms the basis for the development of *Vipassana* (See Explanatory **Note 1** on the Path of Right Concentration)

Right Concentration is present in all wholesome consciousness and hence is accompanied by at least Right Thought (application of mind), Right Effort and Right Mindfulness. The three factors**:** Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration form the **Concentration group** of the Eightfold Noble Path by which one penetrates into the **true nature** of mental and physical processes thereby attaining **Right View by realization of Insight Wisdom.**

10. References

1) The Noble Eightfold Path and Its Factors Explained by the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw.

2) The Word of the Buddha by the Venerable Nyanatiloka.

11. Explanatory Notes

The Path of Right Concentration (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* by the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma, pages 96-99)

According to the *Suttas*, there are four kinds of right concentration:

i) The first *jhana* consisting of five factors namely: *vitakka* – directing the mind towards an object or thinking of the meditation object; *vicara* – repeated investigation on the object which has manifested; *piti* – rapture or joy; *sukha* – happiness or pleasant feeling; *ekaggata* – one-pointedness of calm mind;

ii) After fading away of *vitakka* and *vicara*, only three factors remain – *piti*, *sukha* and *ekaggata* to form the second *jhana*.

iii) Then without *piti*, the two factors *sukha* and *ekaggata* constitute the third *jhana.*

iv) In the fourth *jhana*, *sukha* is replaced by *upekkha* (equanimity) so that *upekkha* and *ekaggata* form the two factors of the fourth *jhana.*

These 4 types of *jhanas* may be mundane (*lokiya*) *jhanas* known as *rupavacara* or supra-mundane (*lokuttara*) *jhanas* accompanied by the noble path (*magga*) consciousness. The supra-mundane *jhana* concentration is the path of noble right concentration. **The mundane *jhana* concentration may be classed as the path of right concentration if it forms the basis for the development of *Vipassana***. Based on this statement, there are certain people who say that *Vipassana* can be developed only after achieving purification of mind through attaining *jhanic* concentration and not otherwise. This is a one-sided dogmatic view.

The *Visuddhi Magga*, etc. have explicitly stated that **access concentration** in the neighbourhood of *jhana*, having the capacity to suppress the hindrances, can help attain the purification of view, thus leading to the development of *vipassana*; that by so developing, attainment can be made up to the stage of *Arahantship*; that there are many who have achieved thus. In the *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, etc. there is very clear teaching that *Arahantship* may be achieved by contemplation of such objects as bodily postures, etc., which can only cause **access concentration** to come about.

The *Anussatithana Sutta* of *Anguttara Nikaya* states that the concentration, which develops out of recollections of the virtues of the Buddha, etc. is adequate to be used as a basic concentration for the development of higher knowledge up to the state of *Arahantship*.

These authorities state further that the innumerable people by the millions who became liberated during the course of discourses given by the Buddha were not at all skilled in *jhanas* and probably many were not equipped with *jhana* attainments. But they must have achieved purification of mind (*citta visuddhi*), because their mind then was described as "**responsive, tender, free from hindrances, exultant and pure**."

In view of such consideration, definitions given in the teachings of right concentration in terms of the four *jhanas* should be regarded as superlative method of description; the access concentration, although described as an inferior way, may also be taken as right concentration, which can accomplish the purification of mind. The said access concentration has the same characteristics of suppressing the hindrances as the first *jhana*. They are similar too in having the same five factors of *jhana*, namely: *vitakka*, *vicara*, *piti*, *sukha*, *ekaggata*. Consequently we can take it that the Buddha had included both the **proper access** and the **nominal access concentration** under the category of the first *jhana* as an inferior way of definition.

There are three kinds of *samadhi* (concentrations): **Momentary** (*khanika*), **Access** (*upacara*) and **Absorption** (*appana*). The momentary concentration mentioned here refers to the fairly calm state before access concentration is attained in the course of meditating upon tranquility meditation objects (*samatha kammathana*) and also to the *vipassana samadhi*. And of these two, the *vipassana samadhi*, having the same characteristic of suppressing the hindrances as access concentration is also called **access concentration (nominal)** as explained above. That this *vipassana* momentary concentration, when it becomes strongly developed, can keep the mind well tranquilized just like the absorption concentration, has been clearly borne out by the personal experiences of yogis practising *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation.

IV

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (*PATICCA SAMUPPADA*)

CONTENTS

1. What is the Law of Dependent Origination?
2. How does the Law of Dependent Origination work?
3. Question of the First Cause
4. Dependent Origination is different from direct causation
5. Dependent Origination to explain the Origin of Suffering
6. Reverse Order of Dependent Origination to explain the Cessation of Suffering.
7. References
8. Explanatory Notes

1. What is the Law of Dependent Origination?

According to this law, every phenomenon owes its origin to another phenomenon prior to it. It may simply be expressed as "depending on this, this originates". An example of Dependent Origination in nature is given below:

There being clouds in the sky it rains.
It having rained, the road becomes slippery.
The road becoming slippery, a man falls down.
The man having fallen down becomes injured.

Here a shower of rain depends on the clouds in the sky.
The road becoming slippery depends on the rain.
The fall of the man depends on the road becoming slippery.
The injury of the man depends upon his fall:

Conversely:
If there were no clouds in the sky, it would not have rained.
Then the road would not have become slippery.
Then the man would not have fallen.
Then he would not have become injured.

2. How does the Law of Dependent Origination work?

In this chain of events, we see one incident depends on one prior to it and gives rise to one after it. Everything that we find in this world can be brought in a chain of dependence like this. 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. Thus the process goes on. Anything can be traced upwards to where it originated from and everything can also be traced downwards to that which is produced depending on it.

3. Question of the First Cause

Here an objection can be raised as to what was the **first cause** or where does the process of **causation end**?

In primitive times, people saw the wonders of nature and became curious to get some satisfactory explanation of them. Being ignorant of the Law of Dependent Origination and out of fear of the unknown forces of nature, they naturally tried to explain them by superstitious belief in gods or goddesses. The primitive man believed that the wind blows because the Wind God goes in a procession to get married. If science had accepted it and did not trace it according to the Law of Dependent Origination, we would not have known that the movement of wind is due to differences of atmospheric pressure.

A theistic or superstitious explanation puts an end to all free inquiry. We cannot ask, who created the God or depending on what the God originates. Here there is an absolute check in the advancement of knowledge. The Law of Dependent Origination does not investigate into the first cause, for the very concept of a 'first cause' means a stop to further advancement of knowledge. Regarding the first **beginning of beings**, the Buddha has said: *"Inconceivable, monks, is the beginning of this Samsara (cycle of birth and death), not to be discovered is any first beginning of beings who obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, are running and faring in this round of rebirths".*

4. Dependent Origination is different from direct causation

The **Law of Causation** as understood by Aristotle and others considers the cause and effect as **two distinct events**, one producing the other. According to Dependent Origination, two events cannot be considered as quite distinct from one another, for there are links of the same process, which admits of no break. No single event in the world is ever isolated. **A cause by itself cannot stand.**

Example:
Clay is the cause of the pot; the medieval logicians assert. Yes, clay is necessary to produce the pot but alone it is not sufficient. If there were no water, no wheel, no potter, no intention of the potter to make a pot, the pot would not have been produced. All these are unavoidable for the production of the pot. If one of them were absent, the pot could not have been produced. Therefore it is not correct to say that the clay is the cause of the pot. The correct expression is '**Depending on clay, the pot is produced**'. Thus the most scientific and rational explanation of a phenomenon is only possible according to the Law of Dependent Origination.

5. Dependent Origination to explain Origin of Suffering

Of all the Teachings of Buddhism, none has given rise to greater misunderstanding, to more contradictory and absurd interpretations, than the doctrine of Dependent Origination. In many cases, there were attempts to present Dependent Origination as an explanation of the primeval beginning of all things and one saw in '**Ignorance**', the **first cause** out of which in the course of time, all conscious and physical life had evolved. All that in spite of the Buddha's repeated and definite declaration that an absolute first beginning of existence is something **unthinkable,** that all such speculation may lead to insanity and that one could never imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and Craving for existence. Why then did the Buddha teach the doctrine of Dependent Origination?

It was to show through which **causes and conditions**, **suffering** comes into being, now and hereafter. It is only through knowing the origin or cause of suffering, that suffering can be removed. The Buddha meditated over the cause of death, decay and misery as He traced them upstream in the chain of Dependent Origination. (The traditional formula of Dependent Origination is given in **Note 1**).

I. What do Decay (*Jara*) and Death (*Marana*) depend on?
They depend on rebirth. After a person is born (*jati*), decay (*jara*), death (*marana*) will follow as a consequence. This is because every ultimate reality has the characteristics of arising (*uppada*), existing (*thiti*) and dissolving (*bhanga*). After arising, existing and dissolving must inevitably follow **Arising is birth**, **existing is decay** and **dissolving is death**. So decay and death must inevitably follow rebirth. They are the **primary effects** of rebirth As a consequence of rebirth, sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkha*), grief (*domanassa*) and despair (*upayasa*) may also arise. These five types of suffering are not primary or inevitable consequences of rebirth. They are **secondary effects** and may or may not arise depending on conditions. They are absent in *brahma-loka* and may also be unknown to the embryo, which dies in the womb or in an egg.

II. What does Rebirth (*Jati*) depend on?
Rebirth depends on Becoming. The Process of Becoming is of two kinds: (i) ***Kamma*-Process** (*kamma-bhava*) being the active side of existence, and (ii) **Rebirth Process** (*uppatti-bhava*), being the passive *kamma*-resultant side of existence. Here 'Becoming' means ***kamma-bhava***, the *Kamma* Process that conditions rebirth. The Buddha describes it as (1) **unwholesome actions** that lead to rebirth in the woeful states, (2) **wholesome actions** that lead to rebirth in the happy sensual and material planes, and (3) **imperturbable actions (*anenjhabi*)** that lead to rebirth in the formless planes. According to the Buddha, all beings are born of their *kamma*. Although volition is present whenever there is bodily, verbal or mental action, in the case of an *Arahant* that volition is **not accompanied by craving** at the end of each impulsive moment, and it completely disappears without leaving any trace and without transforming it into ***kamma***. Hence there is no rebirth for the *Arahant*. In this sense we should understand that ***kamma-bhava*** is the condition for rebirth. In the ever-repeated rounds of rebirth, no ego-entity or soul is to be found except these conditionally arising and passing away phenomena.

III. <u>What does the Process of Becoming (*Bhava*) depend on</u>?

The Process of Becoming depends on Clinging (***Upadana***). All beings except the *Arahant* cling to existence and sensual pleasures. There are four kinds of Clinging, namely: (1) **sensuous** clinging (*kamupadana*), (2) clinging to **wrong views** (*ditthupadana*), (3) clinging to **rites and rituals** (*silabbatupadana*) that do not lead to the end of suffering and (4) clinging to **ego-belief** (*attupadana*). Clinging cannot condition the rebirth process directly. It can only condition new *kamma*-processes of becoming. When one is clinging to something due to strong attachment, he will act in one way or another to hold on to the object. In doing so, **new *kamma*-processes** of becoming are performed.

IV. <u>What does Clinging (*Upadana*) depend on</u>?

Clinging depends on Craving (***Tanha***). There are three kinds of craving, namely: (1) **sensuous** craving, (2) craving for **existence** and (3) craving for **non-existence**. The first kind of craving (*kama-tanha*) is tied to six kinds of sensual objects. The craving for existence (*bhava-tanha*) is craving for sensuous pleasures associated with the view of eternalism. The craving for non-existence (*vibhava-tanha*) is craving for sensuous pleasures associated with the view that nothing remains after death, only complete annihilation. Thus *tanha* refers to the six types of craving for the six sense objects. ***Tanha*** is essentially the desire to get an object while the strong attachment or clinging, which develops after getting the object is ***upadana***. All the four types of clinging arise as a result of craving. Sensuous clinging arises as a result of craving for sensuous objects. The clinging to wrong view of the personality or of the self arises due to attachment (*tanha*) to oneself. The clinging to rites and rituals arises from the desire to better oneself out of attachment to the self. Thus the causal relation that **craving conditions clinging** is well justified.

V. What does Craving (*Tanha*) depend on?

Craving depends on Feeling. When there is pleasant feeling, there is craving to enjoy it. Even painful feeling may be a condition to craving, as dependent on painful feeling there may arise the desire and craving for the pain to go away and be replaced by pleasant or even neutral feeling. Neutral feeling (*upekkha vedana*) is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It is not an absence of feeling, but a kind of subtle pleasure that implies only the absence of unbearable pain.

VI. What does Feeling (*Vedana*) depend on?

Feeling depends on Contact (*Phassa*). Whenever the six sense objects (visible object, sound, taste, smell, touch, thought) impinge on the six sense organs (eye, ear, tongue, nose, body, mind) there arise the six types of consciousness (seeing, hearing, etc.). The conjunction of the three is Contact (*Phassa*) and this gives rise to feeling (*vedana*). *Phassa* and *vedana* arise simultaneously in the same consciousness. However, *phassa* is regarded as the cause and *vedana* the result. In accordance with the six types of consciousness, there are six types of contact and six types of feeling. The impact on the sense organs leads to feeling that may be pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent depending on the nature of the sense-object. If the object is agreeable, there arises pleasant feeling; if disagreeable, unpleasant feeling; if neither agreeable nor disagreeable, the feeling is neutral.

VII. What does Contact (*Phassa*) depend on?

Contact depends on the Six Bases (*Salayatana*), namely: eye and visual object, ear and sound, nose and odour, tongue and taste, body and tactile object, mind and mind-object, without which there would not be any consciousness of the external objects and mental-contact. Again the cause-effect relationship is evident, without a being, soul, creator or chance happening being involved.

VIII. What do the Six Bases (*Salayatana*) depend on?
The Six Bases depend on Mentality and Materiality (*Nama-rupa*). The Six Bases are a name for the **five pairs of physical** sense organs and sense objects and **one pair** of mind and mind-object, the mind being a collective term for the 89 or 101 kinds of consciousness (***citta***) enumerated in the *Abhidhamma* or Higher Philosophy. The 5 physical sense bases are derived from Materiality while the mind base consists of Mentality.

IX. What do Mentality and Materiality (*Nama-rupa*) depend on?
Mentality and Materiality depend on Consciousness (*Vinnana*). The arising of a being consisting of mentality and matter depends on the **Rebirth Consciousness**, for if this consciousness were not to arise, mentality and matter would not arise in the womb (for mammals), egg (for reptiles, birds, fishes) or in beings of spontaneous birth (hell beings, ghosts, demons, deities, brahmas). There is no ego-entity or soul to be found except these conditionally arising and passing away phenomena.

X. What does Consciousness (*Vinnana*) depend on?
Consciousness depends on Volitional Activities (***sankhara***). Here consciousness means those classes of consciousness (including the rebirth consciousness) that are the results of **volitional or intentional actions** done in a former existence. It is very important, but hard to understand how Volitional Activities gives rise to rebirth consciousness. According to the Buddha, on the extinction of the last consciousness together with all mentality and matter, it is ***kamma* that causes** the arising of the rebirth consciousness (as result or ***vipaka***), together with the new mentality and matter in beings who have not eradicated all the defilements. Lack of this understanding usually leads to **wrong views**, namely: the belief in the reincarnation of souls or the belief in annihilation after death. (See details in Chapter VI, .3).

XI. What do Volitional Activities (*Sankhara*) depend on?

Volitional Activities depend upon Ignorance (***Avijja***). According to the *Suttanta* method, ignorance is unknowing of the Four Noble Truths. According to the *Abhidhamma* method, there are eight important objects, which are covered or veiled by *avijja* so that their true nature is not known, namely: the Four Noble Truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way leading to the cessation of suffering, and unknowing about the past, unknowing about the future, unknowing about the past and future, unknowing about dependent origination.

Volitional Activities are those, either moral or immoral, which are **rooted in Ignorance.** They are also called *kamma*-formations and provide the *kammic* cause for rebirth, thereby prolonging the cycle of birth and death or *samsara.* ***Sankhara*** is the same as ***kamma-bhava*** described in the second chain, in the sense that both condition the rebirth process. The only difference is that *sankhara* pertains to the **past** while *kamma-bhava* pertains to the **present** (**Note 2**).

Because of ignorance of *kamma* and its results, people perform all sorts of unwholesome activities for immediate self-benefit. Because of delusion thinking that sensual pleasures and *jhanic* ecstasy are real forms of happiness, people perform *dana, sila* and *bhavana* so that they can attain such happiness in this life or in future lives through rebirth as men, *devas* or brahmas. Thus people accumulate both moral and immoral *kamma* (*sankhara*) as a result of ignorance.

This is how the Noble Truth of the **Origin of Suffering** is explained by the formula of **Dependent Origination**. When the Four Noble Truths are fully comprehended, **Ignorance** is completely eradicated. Concerning the cause of Ignorance, the Buddha has stated that the origin of Ignorance cannot be found in this endless cycle of rebirths.

6. Reverse Order of Dependent Origination to explain the Cessation of Suffering

i) Without Ignorance, there are no Volitional Activities.
ii) Without Volitional Activities, there is no Consciousness.
iii) Without Consciousness, there are no Mentality and Matter.
iv) Without Mentality and Matter, there are no Six Sense Bases.
v) Without the Six Sense Bases, there is no Contact.
vi) Without Contact, there is no Feeling.
vii) Without Feeling, there is no Craving.
viii) Without Craving, there is no Clinging.
ix) Without Clinging, there is no Becoming.
x) Without Becoming, there is no Birth.
xi) Without Birth, there is no Decay, Death and Suffering.

This is how the Noble Truth of the **Extinction of Suffering** is explained by the formula of Dependent Origination. When a person fully comprehends the Four Noble Truth, he becomes an *Arahant*. For the *Arahant* who has completely eradicated Ignorance, the chain of Dependent Origination, also called the **Wheel of Existence** is broken and there is no more rebirth and suffering.

7. References

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3) The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma (Chapter VIII, Paccaya) by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon. Published by Mehm Tay Zar Mon, Yadanar Min Literature, 15/19 U Wisara Qr., Dagon, Yangon.

8. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: The traditional sequence for the formula of Dependent Origination (*Paticca Samuppada*) is as follows:

i) Through Ignorance conditioned are the Mental Formations (*Avijja paccaya sankhara*)
ii) Through the Mental Formations conditioned is Consciousness (*Sankhara paccaya vinnanam*)
iii) Through Consciousness conditioned are Mentality and Materiality (*Vinnana paccaya Nama-rupam*)
iv) Through Mentality and Materiality conditioned are the Six Sense Bases (*Nama-rupa paccaya Salayatanam*)
v) Through the Six Sense Bases conditioned is Contact (*Salayatana paccaya Phasso*)
vi) Through Contact conditioned is Feeling (*Phassa paccaya Vedana*)
vii) Through Feeling conditioned is Craving (*Vedana paccaya Tanha*)
viii) Through Craving conditioned is Clinging (*Tanha paccaya Upadanam*)
ix) Through Clinging is conditioned the Process of Becoming (*Upadana paccaya Bhavo*)
x) Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth (*Bhava paccaya Jati*)
xi) Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (*Jati paccaya Jara-maranam*)

Note 2: ***Sankhara*** means rebirth-producing volitions (*cetana*) or *kamma*-formations. It is of three types, namely:

a) ***Punnabhi-sankhara***: Wholesome *kamma*-formations of the sense sphere and *rupa jhanas* that lead to rebirth in the happy sensual planes of man and *devas* and the form planes of *brahmas* respectively..
b) ***Apunnabhi-sankhara***: Unwholesome *kamma*-formations that lead to rebirth in the four woeful planes.
c) ***Anenjabhi-sankhara****:* Imperturbable *kamma*-formations of the four *arupa jhanas* that lead to rebirth in the formless planes.

In *Abhidhamma*, *sankhara* represents the 29 types of *kamma* associated with: 8 moral consciousness of the sense sphere, 5 *jhanas* of the form sphere, 12 immoral consciousness and 4 *jhanas* of the formless sphere. Thus *sankhara* and *kammabhava* are the same except that ***sankhara*** pertains to the **past life** while ***kammabhava*** pertains to the **present life**.

V

LAW OF *KAMMA*

CONTENTS

1. The Five Universal Laws
2. The Importance of Understanding the Law of *Kamma*
3. What is *Kamma*?
4. How does the Law of *Kamma* Operate?
5. What is the Cause of *Kamma*?
6. Who is the Doer of *Kamma*? Who Reaps the *Vipaka*?
7. Where is all the *Kamma*?
8. Classification of *Kamma*
9. Is One Bound to Reap All that One Has Sown in Just Proportion?
10. Lessons Learnt from *Kamma*
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1. The Five Universal Laws

In Buddhism, there are 5 universal orders or laws (*Niyamas*) that operate in the physical and mental realms. They are:

a) ***Utu Niyama***: the **caloric** or physical inorganic order, e.g., seasonal changes of weather, nature of heat, energy, chemical reactions, etc.

b) ***Bija Niyama***: **germinal** or physical organic order, e.g., rice from rice seeds, sweet taste of sugar, different ways of plant propagation, etc.

c) ***Kamma Niyama*****: moral** or cause and effect order. Moral and immoral acts produce desirable and undesirable results.

d) ***Citta Niyama*****:** order of mind or **psychic** law, e.g., processes of consciousness, power of mind, telepathy, mind reading, recollection of past lives, divine eye, psychic power, etc.

e) ***Dhamma Niyama***: order of the **norm**, e.g., the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a *Bodhisatta* in his last birth, gravitation and other similar laws of nature.

Every mental and physical phenomenon can be explained by these all-embracing 5 orders that are laws in themselves. ***Kamma*** as such is only one of these 5 orders that demand no giver, nor enforcer, as is the case with all natural laws.

2. The Importance of Understanding the Law of *Kamma*

The **Law of *Kamma*** is a fundamental doctrine in Buddhism. Although this belief was prevalent in India before the advent of the Buddha, it was the Buddha who explained and formulated this doctrine in its complete form, which we have today.

Puzzled by the seemingly inexplicable, apparent disparity that existed among humanity, the young **Brahmin Subha** approached the Buddha and asked him to explain the reason for the **cause of inequality**: "What is the cause and condition why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, un-influential and influential, poor and wealthy, lowborn and highborn, stupid and wise."

The Buddha's reply was:
"All living beings are **owners** of their actions (*kammasaka*), **heirs** of their actions (*kammadayada*); they **originate** from their actions (*kammayoni*), are **related** to their actions (*kammabandhu*), have their actions as their **refuge** (*kammapatisarana*). It is action (*kamma*) that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior." (*Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* No. 135, *Culakammavibhanga Sutta*)

The **Expositor (**p 87)**,** a commentary of the *Abhidhamma* elaborates: "Depending on the **difference in *kamma*** appear the differences in the destiny of being without legs, with two legs, four legs, many legs, with perception, without perception, with neither perception nor non-perception. Depending on the difference in *kamma* appear the differences in the **birth** of beings, high and low, base and exalted, happy and miserable. Depending on the difference in *kamma* appears the difference in the **individual features** of beings as beautiful and ugly, highborn or lowborn, well built or deformed. Depending on the difference in kamma appears the difference in **worldly conditions** of beings, such as gain and loss, fame and disgrace, blame and praise, happiness and misery."

Thus, from the Buddhist standpoint, our present mental, moral intellectual and temperamental differences are, for the most part, due to our own actions and tendencies, both **past and present**. Although Buddhism attributes this variation to *kamma,* as being the chief cause among a variety, it does not, however, assert that everything is due to *kamma.* The Law of *Kamma,* important as it is, is only one of the twenty-four conditions described in the *Patthana* or Conditional Relations, one of the treatises in the *Abhidhamma*.

3. What is *Kamma*?

The Pali term ***kamma*** (Sanskrit: *karma*) literally means action or doing. Any kind of **volitional or intentional action** whether mental, verbal or physical is regarded as *kamma*. It covers all that is included in the phrase: **'thought, word or deed'.** Generally speaking, all good and bad actions constitute *kamma*. In its ultimate sense, *kamma* means all **moral and immoral volition** (*kusala- akusala cetana*).

In *Anguttara iii, 415*, the Buddha says: *"I declare, O Bhikkhus, that cetana* (volition) *is kamma. Having willed one acts by body, speech, and thought."* (Refer to **Note 1** for an explanation of *cetana*).

Involuntary, unintentional or unconscious actions, though technically deeds, do not constitute *kamma*, because volition, the most important factor in determining *kamma*, is absent. Without volition, **a deed is sterile**; it produces no reaction of moral significance. ***Kamma*** is not fate nor is it predestination, imposed on us by some mysterious unknown power controlling our lives. It is one's own doing that reacts on one's own self, and so it is possible to divert the course of our *kamma* to some extent. How far one diverts it will depend on one-self. So we have a certain amount of free will. The past influences the present but does not dominate it for *kamma* is both **past and present deeds**.

4. How does the Law of *Kamma* Operate?

***Kamma* is action and *vipaka*, fruit or result is its reaction**. *Kamma* is the cause and *vipaka* is the effect. According to the Law of *Kamma*, every volitional activity is accompanied by its due effect.

The *Samyutta Nikaya* I, 227 states:
According to the seed that's sown, so is the fruit ye reap therefrom.
Doer of good will gather good, Doer of evil, evil reaps.
Sown is the seed, and thou shall taste the fruit thereof.

Kamma is a law in itself that operates in its own field without the intervention of an external independent ruling agency. The Law of *Kamma* acts in the following manner.

a) All immoral actions give immoral resultants. There are ten immoral actions, namely: bodily action of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; verbal action of lying, slandering, harsh speech, frivolous chatter; mental action of greed, ill-will and delusion.

b) All moral actions give moral resultants. Abstention of the ten immoral actions listed above, constitute moral action. In addition there are also ten bases of meritorious action, namely: charity, morality, mind culture, reverence, service, transference of merits, rejoicing in others' merits, teaching the *Dhamma*, listening to the *Dhamma* and forming right views. (Chapter XI)

c) A person does moral/immoral actions and he gets moral/immoral resultants. It is not possible for one person to perform moral/immoral actions and another person to receive the moral/immoral results.

d) In judging each moral or immoral action, we consider these four '**fields of *kamma***', namely: 1) as one's own act, 2) as instigating another, 3) as consenting to another's instigation, and 4) as commending the act.

5. What is the Cause of *Kamma*?

Ignorance (*avijja*) or 'not knowing things as they truly are' is the chief cause of *kamma*. "**Dependent on Ignorance arise Volitional Activities** (*sankhara*)" states the Buddha in *Paticca Samuppada* or Dependent Origination. Associated with ignorance is its ally **craving *(tanha)*,** another root cause of *kamma*. Unwholesome actions are conditioned by these two causes.

All good deeds of a world-ling, though associated with the three wholesome roots of generosity, loving-kindness and knowledge are nevertheless regarded as *kamma* because the two unwholesome roots of ignorance and craving are dormant in them. No *kamma* is accumulated by one who has eradicated craving and has understood 'things as they truly are'.

Buddhas and *Arahants* do not accumulate fresh *kamma* as they have eradicated ignorance and craving, the root causes of *kamma.* "They have destroyed the germ, their desires no longer grow." (*Te khina bija*, *avirulhicchanda.* – Stanza 14, *Ratana Sutta*). Although volition is present whenever there is bodily, verbal or mental action, in the case of an *Arahant*, that volition is not accompanied by craving at the end of each impulsive moment, and it completely disappears without leaving any trace and without transforming it into *kamma.* Hence there is no rebirth for the *Arahant*. However, they will still receive the results of their past *kamma*.

6. Who is the Doer of *Kamma*? Who Reaps the *Vipaka*?

The answer is given in the ***Visuddhi Magga*** (Path of Purification).

"*No doer is there who does the deed.*
Nor is there one who feels the fruit."

According to Buddhism, there are two types of truth – conventional truth and absolute truth. For conventional purposes, we use such terms as man, woman, animal, being, self and so forth. In reality, there is no unchanging entity or any being in the form of a man, woman, animal or anything permanent that can be called a self. The so-called fleeting form consists only of **mental and material processes** that are **constantly changing**, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments. This so-called being is a combination of five Aggregates (*khandas*) that are the aggregates of Matter, Feeling, Perception, Mental Formations and Consciousness. There is no doer apart from the action, no thinker apart from the thought. Who then is the doer of *kamma*? Who feels the effect?

Volition or intention (cetana) is itself the doer.
Feeling (vedana) feels the fruit or effect.

Apart from these mental processes, there is none to sow and none to reap. So *kamma* is not an accretion of the self or soul since there is no permanent self or soul to begin with.

7. Where is all the *Kamma* Stored?

An action (*kamma*) once performed, is finished as far as its performance is concerned. It is also irreversible. What remains of the action is its **potential,** the inevitability of its result (*vipaka*). Even within a lifetime, a person has performed a lot of actions, either moral or immoral. So he must have accumulated a lot *kamma.* Where is all this *kamma* stored? In answer to this question by King Milinda, the Ven. Nagasena replied:

"Kamma is not stored somewhere in this fleeting consciousness nor in any part of the body. But dependent on mind and body, it rests, manifesting itself at the opportune moment, just as mangoes are not said to be stored somewhere in the mango tree, but dependent on the mango tree they lie, springing up in due season".

In the same way, fire is not stored in a match but under the right conditions of friction, the match will produce fire. *Kamma* is an individual potential that is transmitted from one existence to another.

8. Classification of *Kamma*

Kamma is classified four-fold according to its function, priority of effect, time of taking effect and the plane where the effects take place.

a) **Function**

There are four classes of *kamma* according to function. Every birth is conditioned by past good or bad *kamma*, which predominates at the moment of death. The *kamma* that conditions future birth is called **Reproductive** *kamma.* Now another *kamma* may intervene to assist and maintain or to weaken and obstruct the fruition of the Reproductive *kamma*. Such actions are called **Supportive** or **Obstuctive** *kamma* respectively.

According to the Law of *Kamma,* the potential energy of the Reproductive *kamma* may be totally annulled by a more powerful opposing past *kamma*, which seeking an opportunity may quite unexpectedly operate, just as a counteractive force can obstruct the path of a flying arrow and bring it to the ground. Such an action is called **Destructive** *kamma*, which is more powerful than the other two in that it not only obstructs but also destroys the whole force.

b) **Priority of Effect**

First is ***Garuka* or Weighty** *kamma*, which produces its effect in this life or the next for certain. Among the weighty or serious actions, the moral ones are the *Jhanas* or Mental Absorptions while the immoral ones are the five immediately effective heinous crimes, namely: matricide, patricide, murder of an *Arahant*, wounding of a Buddha and creating a schism in the *Sangha* or Monastic Order.

In the absence of a Weighty *kamma* to condition the next birth, a **Death Proximate** *kamma* may operate. This is the action one does or recollects immediately before the dying moment. Owing to its significance in determining the future birth, the custom of reminding the dying person of his good deeds and making him perform wholesome actions still prevails in Buddhist countries.

Habitual *kamma* is next in priority of effect. It is the action one constantly performs and recollects and which one has great liking.

The last is **Cumulative** *kamma* that embraces all that cannot be included in the above three. This is, as it were, the reserve fund of a particular being.

c) **Time of Taking Effect**

There are moral and immoral actions that produce their effects in this very life or in a subsequent life or in any life in the course of one's wandering in *Samsara.* These actions are **Immediately** Effective, **Subsequently** Effective and **Indefinitely** Effective *kamma.* When such actions that should produce their effects in this life or subsequent lives do not operate, they are termed **Ineffective.**

d) **Plane where Effects Take Place**

The last classification is according to the plane in which the effects take place, namely:

i) **Immoral actions** that ripen in the Sensual Plane (*Kamaloka*) of misery, namely: hell, animal, ghost and demon realms.

ii) **Moral actions** that ripen in the Sensual Plane (*Kamaloka*) of happiness, namely the human and the six celestial realms. In *Abhidhamma*, they are the eight types of wholesome consciousness (***sobhana citta***) pertaining to the Sensual Sphere. (Refer to Chapter XI, 2)

iii) **Moral actions** that ripen in the Form Plane (*Rupaloka*) of *Brahmas* with form. They are the *rupa-jhanas*, namely: the first, second, third and fourth *jhana*.

iv) **Moral actions** that ripen in the Formless Plane (*Arupaloka*) of *Brahmas* possessing mind only but without form. They are the *arupa-jhanas*, namely: Realm of Infinite Space, Realm of Infinite Consciousness, Realm of Nothingness, and Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception.

9. Is One Bound to Reap All That One Has Sown in Just Proportion?

While the Law of *Kamma* states that we reap what we sow, there is another aspect of *kamma* that is also very important, namely, that ***kamma*-results can be modified**. This means that the Law of *Kamma* does not operate with mechanical rigidity but allows for modifications in the ripening of the fruit. It is this dynamic aspect of *kamma* that the Buddha declared in *Anguttarra* I, 249 as follows:

"If anyone says that a man must reap everything according to his deeds, in this case there is no religious life, nor is there an opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of sorrow".

"But if anyone says that what a man reaps accords with his deeds, in that case there is a religious life, and an opportunity is afforded for the entire extinction of sorrow".

These statements by the Buddha tell us that *kamma* is **not fate or predestination**. Nor is one bound to reap all that one has sown in just proportion. We can explain this by the simile of the billiard ball, whose direction can be changed or even stopped by sending another billiard ball to hit it at an appropriate angle. Like any physical event, the mental process constituting a *kammic* action does not exist in isolation. Thus its efficacy in producing a result depends not only on its own potential but also upon the potential of other *kammas*. We see for example, that a particular *kamma* either moral, or immoral, may sometimes have its result **strengthened** by supportive *kamma*, **weakened** by obstructive *kamma,* or even **annulled** by destructive *kamma*. The occurrence of the result can also be **delayed** if the condition for ripening is not complete; and that delay may again give chance for obstructive or destructive *kamma* to operate.

Besides **external conditions**, the **spiritual quality** of the mind from which the volition arises can affect the results. To one rich in moral or spiritual qualities, a single offence may not entail the weighty results the same offence will have for one who is poor in such protective virtues. The Buddha compares this with the taste of water

from a cup wherein a lump of salt has been added against the taste of water from the Ganges River in which the same lump of salt has been thrown in. Thus although Angulimala killed many people before he met the Buddha, and his action would have landed him in the woeful states in future existences, his attainment of *Arahantship* effectively closed the door to future rebirth and suffering, although he would still have to bear the dire consequences while he lived.

So complicated is the web of *kammic* conditioning that the Buddha declared *kamma*-result to be one of the **"four unthinkables",** that are beyond the range of thought and should not be speculated upon. But though the working of *kamma* is beyond our intellect, the important practical message is clear: the fact that ***kamma*-results are modifiable** frees man from the shackles of predestination and fatalism and keeps the road to liberation constantly open before him. Everyone has a certain amount of **free will** to mould one's life or modify one's actions. Even the most vicious person can become a virtuous person if he wants to change his life and makes the effort to do so. However, everything in this world, including man himself is subject to conditions and without the necessary conditions, nothing can arise.

10. Lessons Learnt from *Kamma*

The *kamma* doctrine of the Buddha is a teaching of moral and spiritual responsibility for oneself and others. The more we understand the Law of *Kamma*, the more we realize how careful we must act in thought, speech and deeds if we wish to accumulate wholesome *kamma*. For when a certain thought, speech or deed is performed regularly, there is a definite tendency to repeat the act. Thus each act, mental or physical tends to produce its like and be in turn produced, a condition called ***asevana*** or **habitual recurrence**. Wholesome actions performed regularly tend to increase the tendencies to goodness while unwholesome actions performed regularly tend to do the opposite. The advice given by the Buddha in the *Dhammapada* sums up the lessons to learnt from *kamma*.

*Do not **disregard evil lightly**, saying: "It will not come nigh unto me"; by the falling of drops even a water jar is filled; likewise the fool, gathering little by little, fills himself with evil. (Verse 121)*

*Do not **disregard merit,** saying: "It will not come nigh unto me"; by the falling of drops even a water jar is filled; likewise the wise man, gathering little by little, fills himself with good. (Verse 122)*

According to Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, by the declaration: "All living beings are **owners** of their actions, **heirs** of their actions; they **originate** from their actions, are **related** to their actions, have their actions as their **refuge**", the Buddha also meant that the wholesome and unwholesome actions performed once by a being during his lifetime, may ripen even after a lapse of thousands of existences or world cycles. The wholesome *kammas* that yield good results and unwholesome *kammas* that yield bad results always **accompany** the life-continuum of a being. Therefore one should always love and **esteem good conduct** more than one's own life by performing meritorious actions. On the other hand one should always **shun evil conduct** more than the danger of death and refrain from evil deeds.

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12. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: There are fifty kinds of concomitants in ***Sankharakkhandha*** (Group of mental formations), and the relation between *cetana* and the remaining forty-nine concomitants may be explained by the following example: Suppose in a harbour there are forty-nine barges fully loaded with goods, and there is only one big steamer, which has to tow these forty-nine barges from one riverine port to another. Now the spectators on the bank of the river may say: "This steamer has towed such and such a barge and gone to the mid-stream and will call at such and such a port." Similarly, *cetana* sometimes drags *lobha* out and unfailingly drives it towards the object of greed. Sometimes it drags *dosa* out and unfailingly drives it towards the object of hatred. The cases of the remaining forty-nine concomitants of *Sankharakkhandha* may be considered likewise."

Cetana is also compared to a class monitor or a general. A class monitor prepares and studies his lessons and at the same time causes the junior pupils to prepare their lessons and study them. A general also fights the battle himself and causes his soldiers to fight simultaneously.

In his *Ahara Dipani* (Manual of Nutriment) Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw elaborately expounded the **immense power of *cetana*** as follows: "The *dhamma* which **incessantly urges or causes** the mind and its associate concomitants to become restless and chase various kinds of objects is called *cetana.* Try to discern that mind is restless and ever fleeting. When one encounters an object of *lobha* (greed), it is *cetana*, which drags that *lobha* out and invariably directs it towards the object of greed. It also urges or causes one to enjoy sensuous pleasures. Similar processes take place in the cases of *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion)."

"Worldlings naturally possess very little *cetana* in respect of *saddha* (faith). *panna* (wisdom), *dana* (almsgiving), *sila* (morality), and *bhavana* (mental concentration). As regards them it urges, drives or causes the mind in a weak manner and not very quickly. There has to be a lot of external means or support, such as reflecting on the dangers of arising in hells to arouse urgency or ***samvega***, and of the advantages of performing wholesome volitional actions for *cetana* to urge or drive the mind towards them, because mind delights in evil (*Dhammapada* 116). When *cetana* has to cause a person to go to a place where he desires to go very much, it acts very quickly; but if it has to cause him to go to a place where he does not like to go, it acts very slowly."

VI

DEATH AND REBIRTH

CONTENTS

1. Difference between Rebirth and Reincarnation
2. How Rebirth Takes Place
3. The Re-linking or Rebirth Consciousness.
4. Modes of Death
5. Objects Presented to the Mind before Death
6. Five Visions of a Dying Person
7. The Dying Consciousness
8. Modes of Birth
9. Four Planes of Existence.
10. References

1. Difference between Rebirth and Reincarnation

All religions believe in an after-life. However the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth should be differentiated from the transmigration and reincarnation of other systems, because Buddhism denies the existence of a transmigrating permanent soul, created by a God or emanating from a *Paramatma* (Supreme or Universal Soul).

Buddhism does not believe in any sort of transmigration. There is nothing that comes out of one body and enters another. Events take place according to the Law of Dependent Origination or *Paticca Samuppada.* Everything comes into existence depending on an instance previous to it and everything must also give rise to an instance, depending on itself.

In the *Paticca Samuppada*, the Buddha mentioned that **Craving** gives rise to **Clinging,** that to **Becoming** (or the continuity of the life-process actuated by ***Kamma***) and that to **Birth**. The Craving of the dying man must give rise to Clinging, that to the continuity of the life-process of Becoming through *Kamma* (*Kammabhava*), and that to Birth. This is in line with the Second Noble Truth whereby craving gives rise to a new being consisting of the five aggregates of clinging which are suffering.

2. How Rebirth Takes Place

Starting with the conception of a human, the Buddha said that a germ of life is planted only when **three conditions** are met. Mother and father must unite, it is the mother's period (ovum is ripe) and "**the being to be born** " is present. For a being to be born here, a being with craving for Becoming must die somewhere. It should not be taken to mean that "a being to be born or soul is waiting for the egg and sperm to unite and then enter it." Parents only provide us with the **cellular material** in the rebirth process. This does not mean that all beings require parents for their birth because there are beings that are **reborn spontaneously,** depending on their *Kamma.*

Death according to Buddhism is the cessation of the psycho-physical life of any one individual existence. It takes place by the passing away of the life faculty (*jivitindriya*), heat and consciousness. Death is not the complete annihilation of a being, for though that life-span ended, the force that hitherto actuated it is not destroyed.

The instant death occurs, a new mental process called the Rebirth Consciousness (*patisandhi citta*) conditioned by the **Reproductive *Kamma*** (or *kamma-bhava*, the *kamma* process of becoming) arises together with three *kamma*-produced material groups constituting the **body, sex and base** (seat of consciousness). They condition the arising of mental & material processes of the embryo, now called a being in the conventional sense. The Rebirth Consciousness and the 3 *kamma*-produced material groups are collectively termed **"the being to be born."** This term is used only in this particular connection, and must not be mistaken for a permanent soul waiting to enter a suitable womb to be reborn.

3. The Re-linking or Rebirth Consciousness

According to the Buddha's teaching of Dependent Origination, "Through the Process of Becoming (*kamma-bhava*), conditioned is Rebirth." To understand this relationship, we need to realize that in reality, there is no such thing called a being, only mental & material processes called *nama-rupa*. Even during one's lifetime, these *nama-rupas* arise and pass away continuously.

Death is the extinction of the **last consciousness** on dissolution of the old *nama-rupa*. Rebirth is the **immediate arising** of a new consciousness called the rebirth or re-linking consciousness, together with the new *nama-rupa.* It is called **re-linking** consciousness because it joins the new existence with the old one. The arising, of the rebirth consciousness is conditioned by the last ***kamma*** before death. If this *kamma* is wholesome, rebirth will take place in a happy existence. If unwholesome, rebirth will take place in an unhappy existence. This is what the Buddha meant when He said that '**all beings are born of their *Kamma (Kammayoni)***'.

It is very important to realize that:

(a) There is no soul or permanent entity that leaves the old body and enters another new body. Lack of this understanding usually leads to the belief in the transmigration of souls or reincarnation, namely: the **wrong view of eternity.**

(b) As Volitional Activities or *Kamma* depend on Ignorance and Craving, beings that have not completely eradicated these defilements will still accumulate *Kamma* and undergo rebirth after death. Lack of this understanding usually leads to the **wrong belief in annihilation** after death, which is held by modern materialists.

4. Modes of Death

Death can occur due to the following **four causes**.
(a) Exhaustion of the force of the **Reproductive *Kamma*** that gave rise to the birth in question.
(b) Expiration of the **lifespan**.
(c) Simultaneous exhaustion of **both** Reproductive *Kamma* and expiration of lifespan.
(d) Action of a **stronger *Kamma*** that suddenly cuts off the power of the Reproductive *Kamma* before expiry of the life-term.

The first three types of death are called **Timely Death** while the last one is called **Untimely Death.** An oil lamp, for instance, may get extinguished owing to any one of the following 4 causes:
(i) The exhaustion of the wick,
(ii) The exhaustion of oil,
(iii) Simultaneous exhaustion of both wick and oil, and
(iv) Some extraneous cause like a gust of wind.

The death of a person may similarly be caused by the above-mentioned four ways.

5. Objects Presented to the Mind before Death

To the dying man is presented a ***Kamma, Kamma Nimitta*** or ***Gati Nimitta.*** By ***Kamma*** is meant some action of his, whether good or bad. The most powerful are **Weighty *Kamma***. If this is absent, he may recollect the action done immediately before death called **Death Proximate *Kamma.*** If this is also absent, a **Habitual *Kamma*** is presented to him, such as stealing in the case of a thief or healing the sick in the case of a good physician. Failing all these, some casual act, one of the cumulative reserves of the endless past or **Cumulative *Kamma*** becomes the object of the dying thought. Among the skillful actions lay Buddhists are taught to do at their last moments are the performance of the ten meritorious actions such as chanting the Three Refuges and Five Precepts mentally, recalling one's pilgrimage to the holy places to arouse faith, listening to the *Dhamma* (tape recording or monks chanting), recollections of the Virtues of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, recollections of one's Virtues or Generosity, practicing mental culture such as Loving Kindness or the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*). Such wholesome actions will condition the arising of wholesome mental states to determine the last *Kamma* process before death and lead to rebirth in happy realms. As death can strike at any moment, one should be prepared to face this eventuality.

Kamma Nimitta is any sight, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea which was obtained at the time of commission of the *Kamma,* such as knives in the case of a butcher, patients in the case of a doctor, an object of worship such as the Buddha image or Bodhi tree in the case of a devotee, or happy memories of one's pilgrimage to India.

Gati Nimitta is some sign of the place where one is destined to be reborn, an event that invariably happens to dying persons. If these indications of future birth are bad, they could be turned into good by influencing the thoughts of the dying man, so that his good thoughts may now act as the Proximate *Kamma* and influence the type of Reproductive *Kamma* to condition his rebirth. These symbols of one's destiny may be hellish fires, mountainous regions, mother's womb, celestial mansions, etc.

6. Five Visions of a Dying Person

According to Venerable Dr. Rastrapal Mahathera, the five visions of a dying person may be **hellish fires** for those who are bound for rebirth in hell, **animals and forests** for those bound for rebirth as animals, **dark apparitions** for those bound for rebirth as ghosts, **deceased parents and relatives** for those bound for rebirth as humans and **celestial mansions and chariots** for those bound for rebirth in the celestial realms. Chinese folk-lore, too, abound with stories about dying people who claim to hear the sound of chains or see visions of King Yama's guards with hideous faces resembling horses or bulls coming with chains to take them to the underworld for judgment. *Gati-nimitta*, being always a physical sight, is presented to the mind-door as a dream. Psychologically these mental stages may be termed as **illusion, hallucination or delusion**. Therefore people whose minds are lucid and unconfused at their dying moments may not experience any death-bed vision at all.

Readers who wish to know more about death-bed visions of a dying man should read the booklet by Venerable Dr. Rastrapal Mahathera (Ref. No. 3) in which the author narrated his personal experience with a dying layman who underwent various death-bed visions and how the author helped to allay his fears, leading to a happy ending.

7. The Dying Consciousness

Taking for the object an action (*kamma*) or sign of action (*kamma nimitta*) or sign of destiny (*gati nimitta*), the dying consciousness runs its course even if the death is an instantaneous one. In *Abhidhamma*, a normal thought process runs for seventeen thought-moments (*citta*), in which the ***Javana* process** lasts for seven thought-moments. This *Javana* stage is the most important from an ethical standpoint. It is at this psychological stage that good or evil is actually done i.e. *kamma* is performed. Commentators say that within the brief duration of a flash of lightning, there may be

billions of *cittas* or thought-moments. In the thought process before death, the *Javana* process is weak and runs for only five thought-moments. This last *Javana*-process is very important as it determines the **reproductive *kamma*** of the next life. Next the registering consciousness which identifies the object may or may not follow. After this, occurs the death-consciousness (*cuticitta*), the last thought-moment to be experienced in the present life.

On death the last consciousness passes away conditioning the arising of a new consciousness called **Rebirth Consciousness *(Patisandhi)*** in a new body or form of birth. And that new consciousness, too, immediately passes away and subsequent consciousness arise one after another in a stream, like a flux, like the flow of a river. This renewed life-flux inherits all past experiences. This new being is **neither absolutely the same** as the past one owing to its different composition, **nor totally different**, being the identical stream of *Kammic* energy.

The transition of the flux is instantaneous. There is no room for an **intermediate state** or *antarabhava*. According to the ***Kathavatthu*** (Points of Controversy) certain sects such as Pubbaseliya and Sammatiya held that there is an interim stage where a being awaits re-conception for a week or longer. The counter argument is based on the **Buddha's dictum** that there are three states of becoming (*bhava*) only — the Sensual, the Form and the Formless Worlds. Hence Buddhists do not believe that the spirit of the deceased person takes lodgment in a certain intermediate state until it finds a suitable place or womb for its reincarnation. **Rebirth takes place immediately,** and there is no difference in time whether one is born in a heaven or in a state of misery, as an animal or as a human. What actually conditions rebirth is not the death consciousness (*cuticitta*) but the last *Javana* process described earlier. If it is wholesome, rebirth takes place in a happy realm; if unwholesome, rebirth takes place in a woeful state of existence. Understanding this and the fact that death can strike at any moment in one's life, one should always be **heedful** and practise as many skillful actions as possible to face this eventuality before it is too late.

8. Modes of Birth

There are four modes of birth, namely:

(a) **Egg-born** creatures such as birds, reptiles and fish.
(b) **Womb-born** creatures such as humans, mammals and some earth-bound deities.
(c) **Moisture-born** creatures such as certain insects that take moisture as material for their growth.
(d) Creatures having **spontaneous births.** They are generally invisible to the human eye. Conditioned by past *Kamma,* they appear suddenly, independently of parents. *Brahmas, devas, petas, asuras* and hell-beings belong to this class.

There are **nine material groups** that are produced by *Kamma,* namely: base or seat of consciousness, life principle, male sex, female sex and five sensitive material qualities of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. They are **fully developed** in beings that are **born spontaneously**. As such, beings of spontaneous birth do not need parents to provide the material layer or cells for their birth.

9. Four Planes of Existence

The four planes of existence are:
a) Sensual plane of misery (***apaya*** or ***kamaduggati bhumi***)
b) Sensual plane of bliss (***kamasugati bhumi***)
c) Fine material or form plane (***rupa bhumi***)
d) Non-material or formless plane (***arupa bhumi***)

- The sensual plane of misery comprises **four states**, namely: *niraya* or hell, animal kingdom*, peta* or ghost world and the host of *asuras* or demons. Rebirth in any of these four woeful states is conditioned by **unwholesome reproductive *kamma*** that predominates at the moment of death.

- In all **seven sensual states of bliss** comprising the human world and the six heavenly realms, rebirth as a normal human being or *deva*, is conditioned by **superior wholesome reproductive *kamma.*** However, rebirth as a degraded human being who is blind, deaf, dumb, retarded or deformed by birth, or as an earth-bound degraded *asura* of the lower realm of Four Great Kings, is conditioned by **inferior wholesome reproductive *kamma.*** (Refer to Chapter XI, Types of Wholesome *Kamma*).

- In the form or ***rupa*** plane, rebirth in one of the **sixteen states of *Brahma* gods** that possess form is conditioned by the type of mental absorption of the form plane (***rupa jhana***) that one has attained to.

- In the formless or ***arupa*** plane, rebirth in one of the **four states of Formless *Brahma* gods** is conditioned by the type of mental absorption of the formless plane (a*rupa jhana*) that one has attained to.

- In total, the four planes comprise **thirty-one** states of existence, details of which are provided in the next chapter.

10. References

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VII
FIVE DESTINATIONS (*PANCAGATI*)

CONTENTS

1. Hell (*Niraya*)
2. Animal Realm (*Tiracchana*)
3. Ghost Realm (*Peta*)
4. Human Realm (*Manussa*)
5. World of Gods (*Devas and Brahmas*)
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10. Explanatory Notes

What are the Five Destinations?

In the *Mahasihananda Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* 130, the Buddha mentioned five destinations (*pancagati*) for rebirth. What are the five? **Hell**, the **animal** realm, the realm of **ghosts, human beings** and **gods**. Hell, animal and ghost realms are woeful states of existence (*duggati*) while the realms of humans and gods are happy states of existence (*sugati*). Here "gods" include the **sensuous gods** (*devas*), the non-sensuous gods of the **form plane** (*rupa brahmas*), and the non-sensuous gods of the **formless plane** (*arupa brahmas*).

Hell or *niraya* is believed to exist below the earth's surface. For example, the ***Lohakumbhi* (Iron Cauldron)** hell of hot molten metal mentioned in the *Dhammapada* Commentary**,** where the four rich lads had to suffer for committing adultery, is said to be situated below the earth's crust. The animal, ghost, and human realms exist on the surface of the earth. These realms are not separate, but the beings move about in their own worlds. The gods are believed to live above the earth and high up in the sky in celestial mansions that travel swiftly through the sky (*Vimanavatthu* or Mansion Stories).

1. Hell (*Niraya*)

In Buddhism, beings are born in hell due to their accumulation of weighty bad *kamma*. There they undergo unlimited suffering that is hard to endure and dreadful, terrible and heart-rending. The Buddha said that the suffering of one stabbed incessantly by three hundred spears compared to the suffering in hell is like a small stone compared to the Himalayas. However, the hell beings do not suffer eternally unlike what is taught in other religions. Upon the exhaustion of their evil *kamma,* beings may be reborn in good states as a result of their past good *kamma*. According to the Commentaries, there are **eight major hells**, namely:

a) **Eight Major Hells**

i) ***Sanjiva*** where beings are cut into pieces and killed for many thousands of years and they revive there again and again to undergo this torture. Hence the name ***Sanjiva,*** the **Revival Hell.**

ii) ***Kalasutta*** where they are split like wood with burning saws along a mark made by a black thread. Hence the name ***Kalasutta*** the **Black Thread Hell.**

iii) ***Sanghata*** where they are crushed to death over and over again by iron rollers. Hence the name ***Sanghata,*** the **Crushing Hell.**

iv) ***Roruva*** where there is terrible screaming by beings constantly consumed by flames and smoke entering their bodies through the nine orifices. Hence the name ***Roruva*****,** the **Screaming Hell**.

v) ***Maharoruva*** where the screams are greater because of the awfulness of the fire torture by being baked in a huge mass of fire. Hence the name *Maharo**ruva,*** the **Great Screaming Hell.**

vi) ***Tapana*** where beings are pierced with giant red hot skewers and roasted over a fire, firmly held and unable to move. Hence the name *Tapana****,*** the **Roasting Hell.**

vii) ***Mahatapana*** where beings are forced by fiery weapons to climb up a burning mountain until they fall down only to be strung up again on fiery iron bars, firmly held and unable to move while being roasted. Hence the name ***Mahatapana,*** the **Extreme Roasting Hell.**

viii) ***Avici*** the lowest and greatest hell, a hundred *yojanas* (one yojana is about 8 miles) square encircled by an iron wall with iron roof above and incandescent floor of glowing iron. Here, beings are attacked by blazing fires that rush incessantly from one side and strike at the opposite side. The heat is so terrible that it is said that even the bones melt there. Since there is no intermission of suffering here, it is called ***Avici,*** the **Hell without Intermission.**

b) **Minor Hells**

Each great hell is surrounded on each of its four sides by five minor hells bringing the total number of hells to **8 + 8 × 4 × 5 = 168**. The terrible sufferings of beings in these minor hells are described in the ***Devaduta Sutta*** of the ***Majjhima Nikaya*.** Yet in all cases, the beings do not die but undergo the torture repeatedly so long as the evil ***kamma*** has not yet exhausted its results. The minor hells are:

i) ***Milhakupa* or excrement pit hell**, where beings are pierced by a horrible horde of worms.

ii) ***Kukkula* or hot embers hell**, where beings are cooked like mustard seeds.

iii) **Forest of Simbali Trees** bristling with long, sharp, burning, blazing thorns which pierce and tear the flesh of beings who are forced to climb up and down those trees.

iv) **Forest of Sword-leaf Trees** whose razor-sharp leaves, stirred by the wind, cut off the hands and feet, ears and noses of beings who enter it.

v) **Terrible river *Vetarani*** whose running water is caustic. Beings fall into it and are swept upstream and downstream constantly being attacked by the caustic water. Next the being is pulled out with hooks and his mouth prised opened with red-hot tongs. He is fed with a red-hot iron ball that burns his lips, mouth, throat, stomach and it passes out below carrying with it his large and small intestines. To quench his thirst, molten copper is poured into his mouth that burns his lips, mouth, throat, stomach and it passes out below carrying with it his large and small intestines.

2. Animals (*Tiracchana*)

Tiracchana means **'going horizontally'** and aptly describes the animal mode of movement. Birth in the animal plane is full of **suffering, violence and great fear.** Born in the wild, smaller animals live in constant fear of being **eaten up** by larger animals that in turn are constantly being harassed or **hunted to extinction** by humans for sport or commercial purposes. They suffer from heat and cold, flood and drought, and there is no one to tend to them when they are sick and wounded. Domesticated animals fare no better. Most are **bred and killed** for their meat, fur, horns, bones, skin and so on. In less developed countries, they become **beasts of burden**, bound by many ropes, yoked to carriage-shaft, plough or cart, shoulders bruised, beaten with whips and sticks, some carrying crushing loads. Household pets would appear to have a relatively better life only if they have kind and understanding owners otherwise they would have to scavenge the streets for food and face the danger of being killed or injured by fast moving vehicles. Life is **truly suffering** for these dumb creatures.

3. Ghosts (*Peta*)

Petas are ghostly beings absolutely **devoid of happiness**. They live a life of misery, being subjected to incessant pain and suffering, lack of food and clothing, much like human dregs living in abject poverty. Thus they restlessly search for food here and there, hence the name *peta* – **those gone on and on**. In appearance they are generally described as **extremely emaciated** and have large heads with eyes and cheeks sunken, their faces darkened by long disheveled hair. Their bodies have only skin, bones and tendons remaining, skeletons visible and rib-spaces sunken. But this is not always the case. Descriptions of *petas* and *petis* (female ghosts) in the *Samyutta* and *Petavatthu* show that they come in **various shapes and sizes** depending on their past unwholesome *kamma*. In fact, the sightings of *petas* narrated in *Samyutta* took place in broad daylight!

In the ***Samyutta Nidana Vagga***, Kindred Sayings on Lakkhana's Questions, the descriptions of various *petas,* which Ven. Maha Moggallana saw clairvoyantly ranged from a skeleton to a lump of flesh going through the air chased by vultures, crows and falcons pecking at them; or a man or woman bristling with sword-blades, arrows or spears that kept falling and piercing their bodies causing them to scream in pain as they go through the air. In the *Petavatthu*, the appearances of the *petas* and *petis* are also highly variable: one had a beautiful complexion but had worms in his putrid smelling mouth, another was ox-faced, another was red-eyed with fangs while others were emaciated with protruding veins and ribs, or with a body the size of a tree trunk and tongue sticking out of his parched throat. There was even a *peti* who lived in a mansion enjoying celestial comfort by day and suffering at night – being devoured by a black dog, which cast her bones into a lotus pond and she regained her life each time as a result of *kamma*.

These vivid descriptions evidently highlight the extreme suffering experienced by *Petas* as a result of their unwholesome *kamma*. According to *Milinda-Panha,* there are **four classes** of *Petas:*

a) ***Vantasikas*** who feed on what have been **vomited** by others.

b) ***Khuppipasinos*** who suffer from being continually tormented by **extreme hunger and thirst** for very long periods of time.

c) ***Nijjhamatanhikas*** who are consumed by thirst, being tormented by a **continual burning feeling** within their bodies.

d) ***Paradattupa-jivi*** who depend on what others offer for them. They remember their living relatives and see what they do. Only this class of *Petas* can receive and **share in the merits** when offerings are made on their behalf (see **Transference of Merits** to Departed Relatives in Chapter XII.12).

Notes on *Asuras* (Titans)

According to *Kathavatthu* – Points of Controversy Book VIII, the ***Kalakanja asuras*** resemble the *Petas* in ugly and frightful shape,

sex-life, diet, lifespan, and intermarry with them. It is said that their bodies resemble dried leaves with scarcely any flesh and blood and cover a space of **three *gavutas*** (see explanation below). Their eyeballs jut out from their heads like crabs. Their mouths are as small as a needle's eye and are situated on top of their heads so that they have to bend their heads downward whenever they want to eat or drink. Being **consumed by anger,** these demons or angry ghosts like to **attack one another** with burning weapons of their own *kammic* productions and are thus tormented, such torment being the resultants of their past evil actions. These *asuras* of the woeful plane belong to a class of *Petas* who are more powerful but are unhappy beings. They are different from the ***asuras devas*** led by King Vepacitti who originally inhabited *Tavatimsa* heaven but were defeated by Sakka, king of *devas* and driven to another part of the heavens. Vepacitti's *asuras* are a **class of *devas*** and intermarry with *devas*. In later Buddhist tradition, the *asuras* or titans were added as a separate unhappy realm to give **four woeful states.**

***Gavuta*:** In early Vedic times, a *gavuta* was about 6 feet. Nowadays it is reckoned as ¼ of a *yojana*, a *yojana* being about 8 miles.

4. Human Realm (*Manussa*)

While the woeful realms and heavenly realms are dominated by suffering and bliss respectively, the **human world** is a mixture of both suffering and happiness. Thus a person is born either rich or poor, good looking or ugly, powerful or weak, wise or stupid, etc. according to his or her own good or bad past actions (supportive or obstructive *kamma*). However, to be born as a human being, the reproductive *kamma* that conditions the rebirth consciousness (*patisandhi*) must be wholesome with **two or three good roots** (Please refer to Chapter XI). People do not realize how difficult it is to be born as a human. By looking at the present human population, they think that there are many human beings on earth. By looking at the vastness of the heavens, they think that there are many inhabitants in the *deva* worlds. However, if they observe the animal

realm closely, they will realize that just the numbers of insects in a forest alone far exceed the human population. As for the *deva* worlds, it is said that although they are very extensive, the inhabitants are few.

From the discourse about the **blind turtle and the yoke** (*Samyutta* v, 455), one should appreciate how difficult and rare it is to be born as a human being. Birth as a human is one of the **five best opportunities** that are difficult to obtain (*dullabho*), the other four being**: encountering a Buddha**; ordaining as a ***bhikkhu***; attaining **confidence** in the Triple Gem; and **hearing the True *Dhamma*** (Doctrine). These five opportunities are important because it is through them that release from suffering can be obtained. Birth as a human being is important first of all because it means that one has escaped from the woeful states which involve great suffering. But it does not mean that ordinary happiness is the reason why human existence is so fortunate. If this were so, the Buddha would have included the *deva* and *brahma* states where the celestial pleasures far surpass anything on earth. Human existence is mentioned because it is the best state in which one can perform meritorious actions. This is not possible in the lower worlds because their inhabitants do not possess any good roots or they are in such pain that they cannot think of anything else. In the heavens, there is so much pleasure to enjoy that their inhabitants find it difficult to appreciate the Truth of Suffering. Moreover, their lifespans are so long that it is difficult for them to understand impermanence (*anicca*).

Bodhisattas prefer the human realm because they have the opportunity to develop the **Requisites of Buddhahood** (*paramis*) to the highest level. They are always born as human beings in their last birth where they attain Supreme Enlightenment and become Buddhas. We are most fortunate to be human beings now because although the Buddha has passed into *Parinibbana,* the Buddha *Sasana* is still available whereby we can hear the True *Dhamma* and attain confidence (*saddha*) even as lay folk. For those who become *bhikkhus*, they have obtained all the five best opportunities that are hard to come by.

5. World of Gods (*Devas & Brahmas*)

The gods of the **sensuous** plane are called ***Devas*** while the gods of the higher **non-sensuous planes** are called ***Brahmas.*** There are two types of Brahma gods, namely: those who possess **form (*rupa*)** and those who are **formless (*arupa*).**

A) The Six Sensuous Heavens (*Devaloka*)

There are six *deva* realms and they are situated above the earth. Except for the first two lower heavens, the rest are too far away to have any close connection with the earth.

i) ***Catumaharajika* (Four Great Kings):** This is the lowest of the heavenly realms where the four Guardian Deities reside with their followers. These Four Great Kings protect the four quarters of the world and are: (1) **Dhatarattha**, king of the East, sovereign lord of *Ghandhabbas* (heavenly musicians), (2) **Virulha,** king of the South where the *Petas* reside, sovereign lord of *Kumbhanas* (deformed *asuras*), (3) **Virupakkha,** king of the West, sovereign lord of the *Nagas* (serpents), and (4) **Kuvera** also called Vessavana, king of the North and sovereign lord of the *Yakkhas* (ogres or genie).

ii) ***Tavatimsa* (Heaven of Thirty-Three):** This is the next higher heaven where Sakka, king of gods reside. The original residents were the *Asura devas* but they were driven away by 33 new *devas* led by Sakka who did not want to share the kingdom with the *Asuras* who were addicted to drinking. Hence the name Tavatimsa.

iii) ***Yama* (Heaven of *Yama* Gods):** This is a realm of great happiness presided by the divine king Suyama or Yama. The *Yama* gods are different from the *Yama Rajah* of Hell who is a *Vemanika-Peta*, a *deva* for half a month and a *peta* the other half-month.

iv) ***Tusita*** **(Heaven of Delight):** This is the heaven where the *Bodhisatta Mettaya* is believed to be dwelling, waiting for the opportune time to be reborn as a human being and become the next Buddha.

v) ***Nimmarati*** **(Gods who enjoy their own creations):** This is the realm of *Devas* who have the power to create objects of sensual pleasure at will according to their desires.

vi) ***Paranimmita-vasavati*** **(Gods who control the creation of others):** The highest of the six sensuous heavens is ***Paranimmita-vasavati***, the realm of gods who bring under their sway things created by others. Incidentally, the god ***Mara*****,** well known for opposing the Buddha and *Arahants*, lives in this realm. However, the ruler of this realm is a righteous king – the ***Vasavati Deva***. *Mara* and his retinue reside in a separate corner of the realm like a rebel leader.

B) The Sixteen Form Realms (*Rupa Brahma*)

i) **Three Planes of the First *Jhana:*** The lowest is called ***Brahma-parisajja*** or Brahma's retinue and the second is called ***Brahma-purohita*** or Brahma's ministers. The highest of these three planes is ***Maha-Brahma*** or Great *Brahmas.* They are so called because they exceed others in happiness, beauty and lifespan on account of their superior mental development. Those who develop the first *Jhana* to a normal extent are born in the first plane; those who have develop to a medium degree are born in the second plane; while those who have perfect control of the first *Jhana* are born as *Maha-brahmas*. The three divisions of the other *Jhanic* planes should be similarly understood.

ii) **Three Planes of the Second *Jhana:*** In order of mastery of the second *Jhana*, the *brahmas* of the second *Jhanic* planes are: ***Parittabha***, the gods of minor lustre; ***Appamanabha***, the gods of infinite lustre; and ***Abhassara,*** the gods of radiant lustre.

iii) **The Planes of the Third *Jhana*:** In order of mastery of the third *Jhana*, the *brahmas* of the third *Jhanic* planes are: ***Paritta-subha***, the gods of minor aura; ***Appamana-subha***, the gods of infinite aura; and ***Subha-kinha***, the gods of steady aura.

iv) **Seven Planes of the Fourth** *Jhana*: The planes of the fourth *Jhana* are ***Vehapphala***, the gods of great reward; ***Asanna-satta***, the unconscious beings; and the five planes of ***Suddhavasa***, the pure abodes where ***Anagamins* or Non-Returners** are reborn. Here again, depending on the predominant faculty, rebirth takes place as follows:
- Faculty of faith - ***Aviha***, the durable heaven
- Faculty of effort- ***Atappa***, the serene heaven
- Faculty of mindfulness - ***Sudassa***, the beautiful heaven
- Faculty of concentration - ***Sudassi***, the clear-sighted heaven
- Faculty of Wisdom - ***Akanittha***, the supreme heaven.

C) The Four Formless Realms (*Arupa Brahma*)

Beings, who, practise tranquility meditation by passing beyond all form perceptions and attain ***Arupa Jhana*** or Formless States of Absorption are reborn in the formless realms possessing mind only and no material quality at all. The four formless realms, according to their *Arupa Jhanas* are:
- *Akasananca-bhumi* – Realm of Infinite Space
- *Vinnanancayatana-bhumi* -- Realm of Infinite Consciousness
- *Akincannayatana-bhumi* – Realm of Nothingness
- *N'evanna-nasannayatana-bhumi* – Realm of Neither-Perception nor Non-Perception

How do we get the 31 states of existence?

If the *asuras* are considered as a separate state of existence, there are now 4 woeful states (hell, animal, ghost, *asura*), 7 happy sensuous states (human and 6 *deva* states), 16 form states (Form *brahmas*) and 4 formless states (Formless *brahmas*). Total = 31 states of existence.

6. Lifespan of Hell Beings and *Petas*

a) Hell beings, animals and *petas* do not have fixed lifespan. Their lifespan varies according to their individual *kamma*. Some are short-lived like the case of the monk Tissa who was reborn as a flea on his new robe and expired after seven days or the case of Queen Mallika who had to suffer seven days in hell due to an immoral deed but was reborn again as a celestial *deva* on account of her good *kamma*. On the other hand, Devadatta had to suffer in Avici hell for an aeon for his weighty bad *kamma* of causing a schism in the *Sangha*.

b) Human beings also do not have fixed lifespan. The age-limit rises from ten years to an exceedingly great age and then falls back to ten years again. According to the Chronicle of Buddhas (*Buddhavamsa*), the lifespan of humans in the present world cycle was 40,000 years at the time of Kakusandha Buddha, 30,000 years at the time of Konagamana Buddha, 20,000 years at the time of Kassapa Buddha and 80-100 years at the time of Gotama Buddha. Although the earth-bound deities and degraded *asuras* both belong to the *Catumaharajika* plane, they too do not have fixed lifespan.

c) *Devas* & *Brahmas* in celestial planes have fixed lifespan.

7. Lifespan of Celestial *Devas*

Deva **Plane**	**Lifespan** ***deva*-years**	**Human years per *deva*-day**	**Lifespan human yrs**
Catumaharajika	500	50	9 million
Tavatimsa	1000	100	36 million
Yama	2000	200	144 million
Tusita	4000	400	576 million
Nimmarati	8000	800	2314 million
Paranimmita vasavati	16000	1600	9216 million

How to calculate the lifespan of *devas* in terms of human years

30 celestial days make a celestial month and 12 celestial months make a celestial year. A celestial day in *Catumaharajika* is equivalent to 50 years on earth. So one year in *Catumaharajika* is equivalent to 360 x 50 = 18000 years on earth. Multiply this by 500 *deva*-years gives *Catumaharajika* lifespan of 9 million human years. For each higher plane, the lifespan is doubled and the duration of a celestial day is also doubled. In terms of human years, *deva* lifespan increases 4 times for each higher plane.

How long did the Buddha preached to His mother in heaven?

According to the Texts, Lord Buddha preached the Higher Philosophy (*Abhidhamma*) to His mother in *Tavatimsa* heaven continuously for three months without stopping. No human being would be able to listen to the whole sermon without a break. But as 100 years on earth is just 1 day in *Tavatimsa*, 3 months on earth is only **3.6 minutes** in *Tavatimsa*! To the gods, it would be a short discourse. They would have no difficulty listening attentively to it.

8. Lifespan of *Brahmas*

***Brahma* Plane**	**Name of Plane**	**Lifespan**
First *Jhana*	Brahma's retinue	1/3 incalculable epoch
(3 form planes)	Brahma's ministers	1/2 incalculable epoch
	Great Brahma	1 incalculable epoch
Second *Jhana*	Minor Lustre	2 world cycles
(3 form planes)	Infinite Lustre	4 world cycles
	Radiant Lustre	8 world cycles
Third *Jhana*	Minor Aura	16 world cycles
(3 form planes)	Infinite Aura	32 world cycles
	Steady Aura	64 world cycles

Fourth *Jhana*	Great Reward	500 world cycles
(7 form planes)	*Unconscious Beings	500 world cycles
	(**Asanna-satta* in Explanatory Notes)	
	Five Pure Abodes, namely:	
	Durable realm	1000 world cycles
	Serene realm	2000 world cycles
	Beautiful realm	4000 world cycles
	Clear-sighted realm	8000 world cycles
	Highest realm	16000 world cycles
Arupa Jhana	Infinite Space	20000 world cycles
(4 formless planes)	Infinite Consciousness	40000 world cycles
	Nothingness	60000 world cycles
	Neither Perception nor Non-perception	84000 world cycles

For a description of the various time-periods given above, namely, incalculable epoch (*asankheyya*-kappa) and world cycle (*maha-kappa*), please refer to Chapter VIII on Buddhist Timescale.

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10. Explanatory Notes

***Asanna-satta* (Non-Percipient or Unconscious Beings)**

The *Asanna-sattas* are the inhabitants of the eleventh *Brahmaloka* who pass their existence in a state of total unconsciousness. They possess only '*rupa*' or material qualities and are without any '*nama*' or mental qualities. In the Buddhist Philosophy of Relations (Manuals of Buddhism), the Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw explains that for such beings, the preceding consciousness is that of the decease (*cuti-citta* or the dying-thought) from the previous life in the *kamaloka* (sensuous plane) and the succeeding thought is that of the rebirth (*patisandhi*) in the following life in the *kamaloka*. Between these two classes of consciousness, the **total suspension of thought** of the unconscious being occurs for the whole term of life amounting to **500 *kappas***.

According the seventh and last treatise of the *Abhidhamma Pita*ka called the ***Patthana* (Conditional Relations)**, in every process of thought, each preceding mental state relates to the succeeding mental state by causing the succeeding mental state to arise immediately after its ceasing, in accordance with the fixed order of mental process by the **Relation of Immediate Contiguity**. In the case of the unconscious being, the faculty of the preceding consciousness in causing a succeeding consciousness to arise in an immediate following instant has only been delayed for 500 *kappas* through certain highly cultivated contemplations and resolutions.

As an illustration, only the Buddha and certain *Arahants* and *Anagamins* who have mastered all the eight absorptions (*jhanas*) are able to develop the ***Nirodha-samapatti–vithi*** or '**attainment of cessation**' whereby all consciousness and mental activity are temporarily suspended. The person will remain in this state of cessation of consciousness, mental concomitants and mind-produced material qualities till the end of the period he has resolved to remain in this state. Though he does not breathe, eat, drink or know anything, he is still alive. At the time of 'sustained cessation' (*nirodha-samapatti*), the preceding consciousness is that of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (the eighth *jhana* or fourth *arupa jhana*), and the succeeding consciousness is that of the *Ariyan* fruition i.e. *Arahatta* or *Anagami* fruition consciousness (depending on the stage of sainthood of the person). Between these two classes of consciousness, the total suspension of thought occurs for one day, or for two, or three…or even for seven days.

VIII
WORLD CYCLES WHEN BUDDHAS APPEAR

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16. Explanatory Notes

1. Buddhist Timescale

In the Buddhist system of timescale, the word "***kappa***" meaning "cycle or aeon" is used to denote certain time-periods that repeat themselves in **cyclical order**. Four time-cycles are distinguished; a great aeon (*maha-kappa*), an incalculable aeon (*asankheyya-kappa*), an included aeon (*antara-kappa*) and a lifespan (*ayu-kappa*).

2. Great Aeon or World Cycle (*Maha-kappa*)

A *maha kappa* or aeon is generally taken to mean a **world cycle**. How long is a world cycle? In *Samyutta* ii, Chapter XV, the Buddha used the parables of the hill and mustard-seed for comparison:

- Suppose there was a solid mass, of rock or hill, one *yojana* (eight miles) wide, one *yojana* across and one *yojana* high and every hundred years, a man was to stroke it once with a piece of silk. That mass of rock would be worn away and ended sooner than would an aeon.
- Suppose there was a city of iron walls, one *yojana* in length, one *yojana* in width, one *yojana* high and filled with mustard-seeds to the brim. There-from a man was to take out every hundred years a mustard-seed. That great pile of mustard-seed would be emptied and ended sooner than would an aeon.

How long in time has been the succession of aeons in the past?

According to the Buddha: *"So long, brother, is an aeon. And of aeons thus long more than one has passed, more than a hundred have passed, more than a thousand, more than a hundred thousand. How is this? Incalculable is the beginning, brother, of this faring on. The earliest point is not revealed of the running on, the faring on, of beings cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving."*

3. Incalculable Aeon or Epoch (*Asankheyya-kappa*)

According to *Anguttara* ii, 142, there are four periods called **incalculable epochs** (*asankheyya-kappa*) within a great aeon or world cycle (*maha-kappa*). The duration of each of these epochs cannot be enumerated even by taking hundreds of thousands (*lakhs*) of years as a unit, hence the name "incalculable aeon". These four incalculable epochs are:

(i) **Enveloping Epoch – period of destruction** or dissolution of the world system. In the Sun Discourse (*Anguttara* iv, 99), the Buddha described the destruction of the world by fire that even reaches the realm of Great *Brahma*. It commences with the falling of the great rain and terminates with the extinction of flames if the world system is to be dissolved by fire; or the receding of floods if dissolved by water; or the cessation of storms if dissolved by air. An elaborate description of the dissolution of the world by fire, water or the air element is given in the chapter on the recollection of past life in the *Visuddhi Magga* or Path of Liberation.

(ii) **Enveloped Epoch** – period when the world system is **completely destroyed** or in a **state of void**. This is the period beginning from the moment of dissolution of the world by fire, water or the air element till the falling of the great rain that heralds the evolution of a new world.

(iii) **Developing Epoch** – period of **evolution.** This is the period beginning from the falling of the great rain that heralds the evolution of a new world to the appearance of the sun, moon, stars and planets.

(iv) **Developed Epoch** – period of **continuance** after having been reinstated. This is the period beginning from the appearance of the sun, moon, stars and planets to the falling of the great rain that heralds the dissolution of the world.

Explanation of Lifespan in First, Second & Third *Jhana* Planes

- Regarding the destruction of the world by the **three great elements**, **fire** destroys the world up to the three planes of the First *Jhana*. According to the commentators, the maximum lifespan in the First *Jhana* planes is 1 incalculable epoch because these planes exist only during one epoch, the developed epoch.

- After being destroyed seven times consecutively by fire, the world will be destroyed by **water** on the eighth time when the destruction reaches the three planes of the **Second *Jhana***. Hence the maximum lifespan in the Second *Jhana* planes is 8 world cycles.

- After being destroyed in regular cycles seven times by fire and once by water, the world will be destroyed by **wind** on the 64th time when the destruction reaches the **Third *Jhana* planes.** Hence the maximum lifespan in the Third *Jhana* planes is 64 world cycles.

What is the cause of destruction and evolution of the world?

In the Manual of Cosmic Order, the Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw writes: "Without a known beginning, and without end, the world or physical universe continues the same whether world-lords or supreme beings (*issara*) appear or not. Not made, not created by any such, not even a hundred, not even a thousand, not even a hundred thousand world-lords would be able to remove it. By the **law of heat** (*utu niyama*), by the **law of natural causation** (*dhamma niyama*), the order of the physical universe is maintained."

4. Included Aeon or Era (*Antara-kappa*)

During the developed epoch, human lifespan can increase or decrease depending on their morality. When morality is on the rise, human lifespan increases till it reaches an exceedingly great age of **80,000 years** at the **peak of human morality**. When immorality prevails, human lifespan decreases till it reaches a minimum of **10 years** at the **base of human bestiality**. Details of these two periods of increase and decrease in the human lifespan are found in *the Cakkavati-Sihananda Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya*.

The duration of one cycle in which the lifespan of humans rises from ten years to an exceeding great age and then falls to ten years again is called an ***antara-kappa***, an **included era**.

How long is an included era?

In the Manual of Cosmic Order, the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw used the sands of the Ganges for comparison: "If a man were to count the number of years by the grains of sand, picked up one by one from one league of the Ganges, the sands would be exhausted sooner than the years of one included era were all counted."

At the completion of **64 included eras**, the **developed epoch** comes to an end. Since there are no living beings (in human and celestial realms) during the other three epochs, they are not reckoned in terms of included eras. But as all four incalculable epochs are of the same duration, the Commentaries equate **one incalculable epoch** (*asankheyya-kappa*) with **64 included eras** (*antara-kappa*).

In some Pali Texts, one incalculable epoch is quoted as containing either **64 or 20 included eras.** This is because there is another type of included era reckoned in terms of the lifespan in Avici Hell that is **one-eightieth** of a world cycle or **one-twentieth** of an incalculable epoch. In this way, we can assume that one incalculable epoch is equal to 64 included eras of human beings or 20 included eras of Avici hell beings.

5. Human Lifespan (*Ayu Kappa*)

The Pali word "***ayu-kappa***" literally means lifecycle or **lifespan**. If the lifespan is 100 years, then an *ayu kappa* is one century; if lifespan is 1000 years, an *ayu kappa* is one millennium. When the Buddha said, "Ananda, I have developed the four *Iddhipadas* (bases of psychic power). If I so desire, I can live either a whole ***kappa*** or a little more than a *kappa*", the *kappa* should be taken to mean *ayu-kappa*, the lifespan of humans, which was 100 years during that period. This is the interpretation provided by the Commentaries on the statement of the Buddha taken from the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*.

6. World Cycles when Buddhas Appear (*Buddha Kappa*)

An aeon or world cycle in which there is no Buddha is called a *suñña kappa* (empty or void aeon). An aeon in which one or more Buddhas appear is called a Buddha *kappa*. By the word *kappa* standing alone, a *Maha-kappa* is meant. There are five types of Buddha *kappas*, namely:

- *Sara-kappa* in which one Buddha appears
- *Manda-kappa* in which two Buddhas appear
- *Vara-kappa* in which three Buddhas appear
- *Saramanda-kappa* in which four Buddhas appear
- *Bhadda-kappa* in which five Buddhas appear

The present *kappa* is a *Bhadda* (auspicious) *kappa*; of its five Buddhas, four have appeared, namely: Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa and Gotama (Sakyamuni), the fifth Mettaya has yet to appear. The interval of time that elapses between one Buddha *kappa* and the next can vary from one *kappa* to one *asankheyya* of *kappas*.

'*Asankheyya*' literally means **'innumerable'** while Childers' Pali Dictionary defines *asankheyya* as the highest of the numerals $\mathbf{10^{140}}$ or 1 followed by 140 zeros! An *asankheyya* of *kappas*, $\mathbf{10^{140}}$ or

innumerable number of world cycles is a mind-boggling time period that defies the imagination! It should not be confused with *asankheyya-kappa*, which is just ¼ of a *kappa*. Our Lord Buddha Gotama received his confirmation when as the hermit Sumedha, he made his aspiration to become a Supreme Buddha at the feet of Dipankara Buddha, four *asankheyyas* of *kappas* and one hundred thousand *kappas* ago. Since then there have been 11 Buddha *kappas*, the present one being the eleventh.

7. Twenty Four Buddhas Preceding Lord Gotama Buddha

It should not be construed that there were no Buddha *kappas* before that of Dipankara Buddha or that no more Buddhas will arise after the present *kappa*. The numbers of Buddhas who have come and gone in the past, or who will come and go in the future, are as countless as the sands of the Ganges. The names of the twenty-four Buddhas who preceded our Lord Gotama beginning from Lord Dipankara and time intervals are listed below.

- 4 *asankheyyas* of *kappas* + 100,000 *kappas* ago: **Tanhankara, Medhankara, Saranankara, Dipankara**

- 3 *asankheyyas* of *kappas* + 100,000 *kappas* ago: **Kondanna**

- 2 *asankheyyas* of *kappas* + 100,000 *kappas* ago: **Mangala, Sumana, Revata, Sobhita**

- 1 *asankheyya* of *kappas* + 100,000 *kappas* ago: **Anomadassin, Paduma, Narada**

- 100,000 *kappas* ago: **Padumuttara**

- 30,000 *kappas* ago: **Sumedha, Sujata**

- 18,000 *kappas* ago: **Piyadassin, Atthadassin, Dhammadassin**
- 94 *kappas* ago: **Siddhattha**
- 92 *kappas* ago: **Tissa, Phussa**
- 91 *kappas* ago: **Vipassin**
- 31 *kappas* ago: **Sikhin, Vessabhu**
- Present *kappa*: **Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa, Gotama**

8. Eight Qualifications of a *Bodhisatta* (Future Buddha)

Let alone becoming a Supremely Enlightened Buddha, even the stage of development of one to receive the prophecy of Buddhahood and be confirmed as a *Bodhisatta* or Future Buddha, can be realized only when one is endowed with eight qualifications, namely:

(i) Must be a human being
(ii) Must be a male person
(iii) Must have fulfilled all conditions such as Perfections necessary for realization of *Arahantship* in that very life.
(iv) Must meet with a living Buddha.
(v) Must be a *Kammavadi* ascetic (one who believes in the Law of *Kamma*) or a member of the community of *bhikkhus* during the dispensation of a Buddha.
(vi) Must be endowed with *jhana* attainments
(vii) Act of merit i.e. must be prepared to lay down his life for the sake of the Buddha.
(viii) Must possess wholesome desire (*chanda*) strong enough to aspire after Buddhahood even though he fully knows that he has to suffer much through repeated births, even in woeful states, to reach the ultimate goal.

Only those who are endowed with these eight qualifications are eligible to receive the *Niyata Vivaranam* or definite assurance of becoming a Buddha. Even when as a *Bodhisatta*, it is so difficult to receive the prophecy of Buddhahood, what can be said of Buddhahood itself, which takes a minimum time of four *asankheyyas* and a *lakh of kappas* for the future Buddha to develop the Perfections to their highest levels without any regard for even own his life!

Why does a *Bodhisatta* aspire to become a Buddha, which is so difficult, when he can easily obtain Enlightenment for himself?

It is because of his Great Compassion (*Mahakaruna*). "*What is the use of crossing over alone, being a man aware of my strength? Having reached Omniscience (as a Buddha), I will cause the world together with the devas to cross over.*" (Chronicle of Buddhas I, 56)

9. Length of Time to Cultivate the Perfections (*Paramis*)

"***Paramo***" means highest and is used to designate a *Bodhisatta* because he is the highest of being, endowed with extraordinary virtues of *dana, sila,* etc. Although he has the ability to attain *Arahantship* in that very life, yet he **chooses to postpone** it in order to gain Supreme Enlightenment out of **Great Compassion** to save others by teaching them the way to escape from the cycle of *Samsara*.

The ten noble qualities, which the *Bodhisatta* has to practise and fulfill for an enormous period of time, are called the **Ten *Paramis*** or Perfections. According to the Commentaries, once a person has been confirmed as a *Bodhisatta* (future Buddha), he has to fulfill the ten *Paramis* or Perfections, namely: (i) ***Dana*** (generosity) (ii) ***Sila*** (morality) (iii) ***Nekkhama*** (renunciation) (iv) ***Panna*** (wisdom) (v) ***Viriya*** (effort) (vi) ***Khanti*** (patience) (vii) ***Sacca*** (truthfulness) (viii) ***Adhitthana*** (resolution) (ix) ***Metta*** (loving-kindness) (x) ***Upekkha*** (equanimity).

Fulfilling the above perfections by sacrificing one's external properties is called ordinary perfections (***Parami***). Fulfilling them by sacrificing one's limbs and other organs of the body is called middle perfections (***Upaparami***). Fulfilling them by sacrificing even one's life is called highest perfections (***Paramattha-Parami***). Thus the ten perfections in three grades give thirty perfections.

For Lord Gotama Buddha, the minimum period of time required to accomplish the ten *Paramis* was 4 *asankheyyas* of *kappas* + 100,000 *kappas*. The 4 *asankheyyas* of *kappas* should not be construed as one continuous period but as **4 separate intervals of Buddha-*kappas*** between Lord Dipankara Buddha and Lord Padumuttara Buddha. According to the Commentary, the period of time to fulfill the *Paramis* depends on the type of *Bodhisatta.* This is because different *Bodhisattas* have **different levels of maturity** although they all possess the eight qualifications of a *Bodhisatta*. The three types of *Bodhisattas* are:

(i) ***Pannadhika*** or **wisdom** predominant *Bodhisatta* is one with the factor of predominant wisdom always present in his endeavours and becomes a Buddha after fulfilling the Perfections for 4 *asankheyyas* and 100,000 world cycles.

(ii) ***Saddhadhika*** or **faith** predominant *Bodhisatta* is one who relies more on faith rather than wisdom in his endeavours and becomes a Buddha after fulfilling the Perfections for 8 *asankheyyas* and 100,000 world cycles.

(iii) ***Viriyadhika*** or **effort** predominant *Bodhisatta* is one who relies solely in his own effort, placing less emphasis on faith or wisdom, in his endeavours and becomes a Buddha after fulfilling the Perfections for 16 *asankheyyas* and 100,000 world cycles.

It must be emphasized that these 3 designations apply to *Bodhisattas* only. Once they become Supremely Enlightened Buddhas, they are **all identical** in respect of Wisdom, Faith and Energy. One cannot say which Buddha is more accomplished than the other in each of these aspects.

10. Reasons for the Differences in Time to Fulfill *Paramis*

Concerning the reasons for the different length of time necessary to fulfill the *Paramis*, the **Commentator Dhammapala** and others are of the opinion that the difference in duration is due to the different **degrees of maturity** of Perfections among the different *Bodhisattas*. They explained that at the time of receiving the definite prophecy from a Buddha, the *Bodhisattas* are of three different human types:

(i) ***Ugghatittanu Bodhisatta***
(ii) ***Vipancittanu Bodhisatta***
(iii) ***Neyya Bodhisatta.***

All three types of *Bodhisattas* have the capacity to attain *Arahantship* together with the six ***Abhinnas*** (**Note 1**) and ***Patisambhida Nana*** (**Note 2**) if they wish to achieve the enlightenment of a Disciple in that very life. However they differ in the speed of attainment because they belong to **three different types** of individuals or ***puggala*** **(Note 3**).

With ***Uggatittanu Bodhisattas***, the degree of maturity of their Perfections leading to enlightenment is **so strong** that they have to practise only **4** ***asankheyyas*** and 100,000 world cycles to accomplish the Perfections. With ***Vipancittanu Bodhisattas***, the degree of maturity of their Perfections is **medial** and they have to practise **8** ***asankheyyas*** and 100,000 world cycles to accomplish the Perfections. With ***Neyya Bodhisattas***, the degree of maturity of their Perfections is weak and so they have to practise **16** ***asankheyyas*** and 100,000 world cycles to accomplish the Perfections. To sum up:

- *Uggatittanu Bodhisattas* are identified with *Pannadhika Bodhisattas* (Wisdom predominant).
- ***Vipancittanu*** *Bodhisattas* are identified with ***Saddhadhika*** *Bodhisattas* (Faith predominant).
- ***Neyya*** *Bodhisattas* are identified with ***Viriyadhika*** *Bodhisattas* (Effort predominant).

11. Rare is the Appearance of a Buddha.

Kiccho manussapatilabho – Hard it is to be born as a human being.
Kiccham maccana jivitam – Hard is the life of a mortal.
Kiccham saddhammasavanam – Hard it is to hear the True Doctrine.
Kiccho buddhanam uppado – Rare is the appearance of a Buddha.
(***Dhammapada* 182**)

To be born as a **human being** is one of the **rare opportunities**. According to the Buddha, the number of beings who are reborn as humans is like the **dust on his thumbnail**, while the number of beings reborn in the four woeful states is like the whole earth. As an example, just the **krill population** in the Southern Ocean (estimated at 600 trillion) exceeds the human population (6 billion) by a ratio of 100,000:1. Truly it is hard to be born as a human being!

Yet even when a being arises in the world of men, he is liable to die at any moment from the time of conception in the womb up to the end of his lifespan. To stay alive, he has to constantly take care of his body and mind, which consist of the five aggregates. In the **Simile of the Poisonous Snakes** (*Salayatana Samyutta*, *Asivisa Vagga*)**,** the Buddha compares the four elements of the body to four poisonous snakes. The five aggregates are compared to five murderous enemies, while the craving for pleasure is compared to a treacherous friend with a sword waiting to cut off one's head. This parable serves to illustrate that **a mortal's life is full of difficulties**.

After being warned by a **good friend** about these dangers, the person concerned wants to escape from all these dangers. To reach safety, he has to cross a wide river using a **raft** and striving with arms and legs. This way he reaches the **other shore** where he becomes the **noble man**. Here the **good friend** who warns us of the dangers of existence is the Buddha. The wide river is a simile for the floods (*ogha*) that sweep beings into the ocean of *Samsara*. The raft that takes us to safety is the **Noble Eightfold Path.** But it will not take one across the wide river unless one strives with arms and legs, a simile for **intense, mindful** and **continuous effort**. The other shore is ***Nibbana*** and the noble man represents the ***Arahant***.

It is difficult to get the opportunity to hear the True Doctrine. All religions of the world teach their adherents to perform charity (*dana*) and observe its moral code (*sila*). Some religions also teach mental cultivation through the practice of concentration (*samatha*). Such teachings may lead to happy existences in the human, *deva* and *brahma* realms but they only serve to prolong one's existence in *Samasara*, which is full of suffering. There have been such teachings even before the appearance of the Buddha and we have heard them in our past lives. But it is only during a Buddha *Sasana* that one gets the opportunity to hear teachings about the true nature of body and mind especially the noble *dhamma* of *Satipatthana Vipassana* (Foundations of Mindfulness), the practice of which leads one to the realization of Path and Fruition knowledge (*Magga-phala nana*) and *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering.

The opportunity to escape from suffering by the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path through the *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation only comes with the appearance of a Supreme Buddha. For only a **Supreme Buddha** is able teach this **Noble *Dhamma*** to his disciples of the ***Sangha***, who then preserve and propagate it to mankind. Considering the enormous period of time and superhuman efforts to attain Buddhahood after an aspirant is confirmed as a *Bodhisatta*, the **appearance of a Buddha** in the world is very **rare**.

Good Buddhists who now regularly attend talks and meditation lessons where *Satipatthana Vipassana* is taught should consider themselves indeed fortunate, to be able to benefit from the Noble *Dhamma* of the **Buddha** preserved by the ***Sangha*** till the present day. Indeed, the best way one can **honour the Buddha** is to practise this Noble *Dhamma* diligently in order to free oneself from the cycle of *Samsara*. This is because a Buddha appears in the world to fulfill a **vow** he made when he was a *Bodhisatta* -- to teach the Noble *Dhamma* to mankind so that they may be free from suffering.

12. Eight Unfortunate Existences in *Samsara*

The *Dasuttara Sutta* of *Digha Nikaya* and the commentary of the *Anguttara Nikaya* enumerate **eight existences**, which are considered as unfortunate when a Supreme Buddha appears. These eight unfortunate existences in *Samsara* or the cycle of births are:

a) Existence in an abode of continuous suffering (**hell**) and being unable to perform meritorious action, as one is continuously suffering severe and painful tortures.
b) Existence as an **animal** living always in fear and being unable to perform meritorious action, as one cannot perceive what is good or bad.
c) Existence as a ***Peta*** or ghost and being unable to perform meritorious action, as one is continuously suffering from severe thirst and hunger.
d) Existence as an **unconscious being** (*asanna satta*) in an abode of Brahmas and being unable to perform meritorious action or listen to the *Dhamma*, as one lacks consciousness.
e) Existence as a Brahma in the **formless plane** and being unable to see the Buddha and listen to the *Dhamma* because one does not possess the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.
f) Existence in a **remote border region** which is not accessible to the *Sangha* or other disciples of the Buddha and being unable to perform meritorious action, as one has no opportunity to listen to the *Dhamma*.
g) Existence as a **holder of wrong views** is a very unfortunate existence because one is unable to listen to the *Dhamma* and perform meritorious action, even though one lives in the Middle Country (*Majjhimadesa*) where a Buddha appears and His *Dhamma* reverberates throughout the land.
h) Existence as a **deformed human** or **degraded *deva*** of the *Catumaharajika* realm, whose rebirth consciousness is devoid of the three good roots (***ahetuka***) so that one is unable to understand or practise the *Dhamma*, even though one is living in the Middle Country and does not hold any wrong view.

13. The Fulfillment of the Perfections by *Pacceka* Buddhas, Chief Disciples and Great Disciples

A) Three Types of Buddhas (Enlightened Beings)

The fourfold insight knowledge of the Path (*Magga-nana*) with or without accompaniment of Omniscience (*Sabbannuta-nana*) is called Enlightenment (*Bodhi*). The fourfold insight knowledge of the Path is the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Enlightenment is of three kinds:

i) ***Samma-sambodhi***: Supreme Enlightenment consisting of the fourfold insight knowledge of the Path (*Magga-nana*) with the accompaniment of Omniscience (*Sabbannuta-nana*). It is achieved by oneself without a teacher's help and has the distinctive power of removing mental defilements as well as habitual tendencies (*vasana*) of past existences. The Supremely Enlightened Buddha is called a ***Samma Sambuddha***. The minimum period to accomplish the Perfections (*Paramis*) is four *asankheyyas* and a *lakh* of *kappas* (a *lakh* = 100,000).

ii) ***Pacceka-Bodhi***: Enlightenment consisting of the fourfold insight knowledge of the Path (*Magga-nana*) by oneself without a teacher's help. Such a Buddha is called a ***Pacceka* Buddha** or Lone Buddha– 'an enlightened one who is on his own' because he does not reveal the *Dhamma* or preach it to the people. So he is **alone in enlightenment** because he does not possess the ability to share it with others. The period to accomplish the Perfections (*Paramis*) is two *asankheyyas* and a *lakh* of *kappas*

iii) ***Savaka-Bodhi***: Enlightenment consisting of the fourfold insight knowledge of the Path (*Magga-nana*) achieved only with the help of a teacher. Such a Buddha is called a ***Savaka Buddha*** and refers to the *Arahants* who attained enlightenment as Disciples of the Buddha. The period to accomplish the Perfections (*Paramis*) is one *asankheyya* and a *lakh* of *kappas* for the Chief Disciples while for the great Disciples it is one *lakh of kappas.*

B) The *Pacceka* Buddha

In the hierarchy of enlightened beings, the *Pacceka* Buddha ranks below the *Sammasambuddha* but above the Chief Disciples (*Savaka*). In the Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning, the commentary to the *Khuddakapatha* VI, 42-43, a *Pacceka* Buddha is higher than the Chief Disciples but lower than a *Samma Sambuddha* in terms of greatness of qualities; "*for even several hundred disciples like Sariputta and Moggallana cannot be compared to a hundredth part of a Pacceka Buddha's qualities. But compared to the Samma Sambuddha, even all the Pacceka Buddhas of Jambudipa combined cannot exhibit a fraction of a Fully Enlightened One's qualities*."

Pacceka Buddhas attain enlightenment by themselves but **do not enlighten others**. They comprehend only the essence of **meaning** (*attha*), not the essence of **idea** (*dhamma*) and are unable to put the supramundane *dhamma* into concepts and teach it. However, they possess supernormal powers (***iddhi***) and attainments (***samapatti***) and can influence others indirectly to enter a religious life. In the story of the *Bodhisatta* Sankha in Illustrator VI, 129, it is related that his son Susima approached the *Pacceka* Buddhas at Isipatana and asked for training towards enlightenment. All they could do was to ordain him and train him in the simple essentials of good conduct because they were unable to instruct him in a meditation subject. Eventually he attained enlightenment by himself as a *Pacceka* Buddha.

Regarding the **time of their appearance**, *Suttanipata* Commentary states that *Pacceka* Buddhas arise without having to come to know *Samma Sambuddhas* and at times of the birth of a *Samma Buddha.* Only in times **when there are no *Samma Sambuddhas*** that it is possible to attain *Pacceka* Buddhahood. Many *Pacceka* Buddhas can appear at one time. In *Isigili Sutta* of *Majjhima Niklaya*, it is mentioned that five hundred *Pacceka* Buddhas lived in the caves at **Isigili**, one of the five mountains near Rajagaha. Although this group of *Pacceka* Buddhas is mentioned as living together, it is more for practical considerations and is not connected with their practice towards enlightenment, which has to be acquired individually without instructions from others.

The person who aspires to become a *Pacceka* Buddha, called a ***Pacceka Bodhisatta***, must possess **five qualifications**, namely:

i) Must be a human being
ii) Must be a male person
iii) Must meet with an enlightened person, i.e. Buddha, a *Pacceka* Buddha or an *Arahant*.
iv) The aspirant must have renounced the household life.
v) Must possess wholesome desire (*chanda*) strong enough to aspire for the goal even though he fully knows that he has to suffer much through repeated births, even in woeful states.

C. The *Savaka* Buddhas – Chief Disciples and Great Disciples

The qualifications for the Disciples are: **meritorious act** and **desire.**

- For Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Maha Moggallana, they made their earnest wish for **Chief Discipleship** and were confirmed by Lord **Anomadassin** Buddha, one *asankheyya* of *kappas* and 100,000 *kappas* ago. Thereafter they accomplished the *Paramis* and achieved their desired goals in the present aeon under Lord Gotama Buddha.

- For the **80 eminent male** and **13 eminent female** disciples they aspired to be Great Disciples, **100,000 *kappas*** ago. Each aspirant saw in the company of a Buddha, a particular *Maha Arahant*, whose qualities he/she admired most and whom he/she wished to emulate. Then the aspirant gave alms usually for seven days and expressed the hope of becoming such a *Maha Arahant* in the company of a future Buddha. Thereafter he/she obtained a definite prophecy called ***Niyata-byakarana***, from the existing Buddha. Buddha **Padumuttara** who appeared 100,000 *kappas* ago was the **source of the *Maha Arahants***. Thereafter the aspirants accomplished the *Paramis* and achieved their desired goals in the present aeon during the Lord Gotama Buddha.

14. The Pre-eminent Disciples of the Buddha

In *Samyutta* II, 155, the Buddha had pointed out that the group of *bhikkhus* who followed each of these *Maha Arahants*, possessed the **same special qualifications** as that particular *Maha Arahant*, just as "like attracts like."

Thus in *Anguttara Nikaya* I, 23, we read that the Buddha singled out for honour the **pre-eminent disciples** (*etadagga*) in the particular branches of the *Dhamma*, thereby fulfilling the wish they had made in the past. Some notable personalities are named below together with their field of pre-eminence:

- Sariputta – First Chief Disciple, foremost in wisdom
- Mahamoggallana – Second Chief Disciple, foremost in psychic powers
- Mahakassapa – foremost in ascetic practices
- Mahakaccayana – foremost in exegesis (exposition and analysis)
- Mahakotthita – foremost in knowledge of Discrimination
- Ananda – foremost in wide learning, retentive memory, good behavior, resoluteness, attending to the Buddha
- Upali – foremost in knowledge of the Discipline
- Punna Mantaniputta – foremost in the preaching of the *Dhamma*
- Kumara Kassapa – foremost in brilliant speaking
- Revata Khadiravaniya – foremost among forest recluses
- Anuruddha – foremost in the divine eye or clairvoyance
- Subhuti – foremost of those worthy of offerings
- Sivali – foremost of those who receive offerings
- Maha Kappina – foremost of admonishers of monks
- Bahiya – fastest to win *Arahantship* just on hearing an address, without previous study
- Rahula – foremost among monks anxious for training

For more details about the eminent male and female disciples of the Buddha, the reader should refer to "Pen Portraits – Ninety Three Eminent Disciples of the Buddha" by **C. de Saram**[7].

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15. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: The word '***abhinna***' is a combination of two words: '*abhi*'= higher and '*nana*'= knowledge. So '*abhinna*' means **higher knowledge** or **super intellect.** The six *abhinnas* are (1) Psychic Powers (*Iddhi-vidha*), (2) Divine Ear (*Dibba-sota*), (3) Penetration of others' minds (*Cittapariya nana* or *cetopariya*), (4) Divine Eye (*Dibba-cakkhu*), (5) Recollection of past lives (*Pubbenivasanussati*), (6) Extinction of cankers (*Asavakkhaya*). The first five knowledges are mundane and can be attained through intense tranquility meditation (*Samatha*) while the last knowledge is supramundane and can only be attained by Insight meditation (*Vipassana*).

Note 2*:* '***Patisambhida nana***' means the Knowledge of Discrimination. There are four *Patisambhidas*, namely:

a) ***Attha-patisambhida*** = Discrimination of meaning: Meaning is a term for the fruit of a cause (*hetu*), in particular the five things, namely, (i) anything conditionally produced, (ii) *nibbana,* (iii) the meaning of what is spoken, (iv) *kamma*-result, and (v) functional consciousness. Understanding of difference in meaning **e.g. suffering, resolution, exertion, non-distraction,** is discrimination of meaning.

b) ***Dhamma-patisambhida*** = Discrimination of law: Law is a term for a condition (*paccaya*). Since a condition is necessary for something to happen, it is therefore called 'law (*dhamma*)', in particular the five things, namely, (i) any cause that produces fruit, (ii) the Noble Eightfold Path, (iii) what is spoken, (iv) what is profitable, and (v) what is unprofitable. Understanding of difference in law **e.g. craving, faith faculty, energy faculty, concentration faculty,** is discrimination of law.

c) ***Nirutti-patisambhida*** = Discrimination of language: This is knowledge of enunciation of language dealing with meaning and law. Understanding of difference in language used in the **four examples** for meaning, and **four examples** for law, is discrimination of language.

d) ***Patibhana-patisambhida*** = Discrimination of perspicuity (clarity or lucidity or non-ambiguity): In the examples given above, there is lucidity in the understanding of **four sorts of meaning**, lucidity in the understanding of **four sorts of law,** lucidity in the understanding of

eight sorts of language. The understanding of the difference in perspicuity is knowledge of the discrimination of perspicuity.

(References: The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*) Chapter XIV, 21 and the Path of Discrimination (*Patisambhidamagga*) Chapters XXV-XXVIII, both treatises translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli)

Note 3: According to the *Puggala-Pannatti* (Designation of Human Types) Chapter IV, 5 and *Anguttara* Book of Fours No. 133, beings who are fortunate to encounter the Buddha *Sasana* or Dispensation, can be classified into four types, namely:

a) ***Ugghatitannu***: the person who comprehends the doctrine at the time of its pronouncement and is said to be **quick in acquiring**. Examples of persons of such superior wisdom are Ven. **Sariputta** who attained the 1st stage of Sainthood immediately upon hearing the first two lines of a four-line stanza uttered by Ven. **Assaji**; Ven. **Maha Moggalana** who attained the 1st stage of Sainthood immediately upon hearing the whole stanza repeated by Ven. Sariputta; Ven. **Bahiya Daruciriya** who attained *Arahantship* immediately upon hearing a brief sermon from the Buddha and was singled out as **foremost** to gain the goal of *Arahantship* by grasping a single sentence.

b) ***Vipancitannu***: the person whose comprehension of the doctrine comes when the meaning of what is briefly uttered is analysed in detail i.e. he **learns by full details**.

c) ***Neyya***: the person to whom comprehension of the doctrine comes by recitation, questioning, and earnest attention and by serving, cultivating and waiting upon lovely friends i.e. he has to be **led on by instructions**.

d) ***Padaparama***: the person to whom comprehension of the doctrine would not come in this life, however much he may hear and bear in mind or recite i.e. **he who learns by heart**, is word-perfect but without understanding it.

Note: In *Abhidhamma*, the first three types of persons are those who are born with the three good roots (***tihetuka***) of non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion while the fourth type person is born with only two good roots (***dvihetuka***) and lacking the root of wisdom or non-delusion.

IX

TAKING OF REFUGE

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1. Meaning of Refuge (*Sarana*)

'*Sarana*' in Pali means 'refuge' and is defined as 'a shelter or protection from danger or trouble; a person, thing or course that provides protection'.

The late **Most Venerable Ledi Sayadaw** in his "*Uttama Purisa Dipani*", defined '*sarana*' as follows:

"If one pays respect or reverence to a certain object or person, and if that act of respect or reverence amounts to a *kusala kamma* (**wholesome action**), which can save one from the danger of rebirth in the woeful plane, then that object or person amounts to '*sarana*' and thus is worthy of reverence and respect.

"On the other hand, if one pays respect or reverence to a certain object or person with the idea that it will save one from the danger of rebirth in the woeful plane, but in actual fact that act of respect or reverence does not amount to a *kusala kamma* of sufficient strength to possess the quality of saving one from rebirth in the woeful plane, then that object or person does not amount to a '*sarana*' and is not worthy of respect or reverence."

The Venerable Sayadaw then proceeded to give a simile as follows:

"The virtues of **untainted morality** (*sila*), **concentration** (*samadhi*), and **wisdom** (*panna*) may be compared to the **fertility** in the soil. The refuge-objects such as the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* may be compared to the **soil** itself wherein that quality of fertility exists. The **volition** (*cetana*) arising in the mind of an individual through taking refuge in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* are like **seeds** planted in the fertile soil. Individuals or objects that do not possess untainted *sila, samadhi*, and *panna*, are like **barren soil** devoid of fertility. To approach them and to pay one's respect or reverence to them is like sowing one's seeds on barren soil. They do not amount to *kusala kamma* and thus are futile.

2. Origin of Taking of Refuge

According to the Scriptures, soon after Enlightenment the Buddha spent seven days each at the Bodhi Tree, as well as other places in the vicinity, namely: the Goatherds' Banyan tree, the Mucalinda Tree and lastly, the Rajayatana Tree. At the last location, two merchants, **Tapussa** and **Bhalluka** from Ukkala (Burma) offered him rice cake and honey. After the Buddha had accepted their offering and eaten it, the two merchants said: "We go for refuge to the Blessed One (Buddha), and to the Law (*Dhamma*). Beginning from today let the Blessed One count us as followers who have gone to him for refuge for as long as breath lasts." Since they were the first followers in the world, they took only two refuges because the Order of monks or *Sangha* was not yet established.

Later the Buddha traveled to Deer Park in modern-day Sarnath where He preached the First Sermon to the five ascetics who later attained *Arahantship*. The Buddha also expounded His *Dhamma* to a rich young man**,** Yasa and his fifty-four friends who joined the Holy Order and became *Arahants*. **Yasa's parents and his wife** became *Sotapannas* and were the first lay disciples to take the Three Refuges of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* because the Holy Order had come into being.

3. Act of Taking Refuge

The act of taking refuge is the pathway of entry into the Buddha *Sasana* (Buddha's Dispensation or Teaching). After thrice reciting the **Opening Salutation** of '*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-Sambuddhassa*' which means 'Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Supremely Enlightened One', refuge is taken by reciting the formula of refuge three times:

Buddham Saranam Gacchami — I go to the Buddha for refuge.
Dhammam Saranam Gacchami — I go to the *Dhamma* for refuge.
Sangham Saranam Gacchami — I go to the *Sangha* for refuge

Dutiyampi, Buddham Saranam Gacchami.
For the second time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.
Dutiyampi, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami.
For the second time, I go to the *Dhamma* for refuge.
Dutiyampi, Sangham Saranam Gacchami.
For the second time, I go to the *Sangha* for refuge.

Tatiyampi, Buddham Saranam Gacchami.
For the third time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.
Tatiyampi, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami.
For the third time, I go to the *Dhamma* for refuge.
Tatiyampi, Sangham Saranam Gacchami.
For the third time, I go to the *Sangha* for refuge.

According to *Khuddakapatha* Commentary, the Buddha pronounced this formula in Deer Park, Isipatana for the purpose of admitting new disciples into the Order when He dispatched the sixty *Arahants* in various directions to spread the *Dhamma*. It is to be recited by the new disciple before admission into the Order.

4. Why We Need to Take Refuge

All beings, except the Noble disciples who have realized the Four Noble Truths, are shrouded in ignorance and are generally unaware of the dangers of existence, taking what is **impermanent**, **non-self** and **suffering** as permanent, self and pleasurable. The Buddha arises in the world to teach beings the **Four Noble Truth**s, the complete realization of which will liberate them from all kinds of suffering.

a) **Dangers of Present Life**
According to the **Noble Truth of Suffering**, birth leads to old age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. At any moment, our body is subject to disease, accident and injury. Natural disasters such as fire, flood, drought and earthquake can happen anytime and cause immense hardships and death. Everywhere, man

is exposed to accidents, crime, exploitation, war, health hazards, economic failures and all sorts of crises. Even if we can escape these dangers, there is one thing that we cannot escape from – **death**. Even then, we cannot be sure where or when death will strike.

b) **Dangers of Future Lives**

The harm and dangers besetting us do not end with our death. According to Buddha's Teaching, beings who have not eradicated craving are subject to rebirth that can take place either in happy or woeful states, namely: happy existences in the human or heavenly realms called *Sugati* or woeful existences in hell, animal, ghost and demon realms called *Duggati*.

The danger of future lives is rebirth in the woeful states, not only because of their **inherent suffering**, but also because **escape therefrom is extremely difficult.** A fortunate rebirth depends on the performance of meritorious actions. Beings in the woeful states have very little opportunity to acquire merit, so the tendency is to be reborn again and again in such states. The Buddha states that: "*If a yoke with a hole were floating at random in the ocean, and a blind turtle living in the ocean were to surface once every hundred years - the chance of the turtle pushing his neck through the hole in the yoke would still be greater than that of a being in woeful destination regaining human status.*"

Therefore, rebirth in the woeful state is a grave danger in future lives, from which we need protection. We cannot obliterate these woeful realms so the only way is to avoid them. According to the Law of *Kamma*, wholesome actions produce desirable results while unwholesome actions produce undesirable results. In order to avoid unhappy rebirth, we must avoid generating unwholesome ***kamm****a*. In this, we need the **guidance** of someone who truly understands how the Law of *Kamma* operates. Even when we can discriminate right from wrong, our actions do not always follow the wholesome path because the mind is difficult to control. To learn the right course of discipline, we need guidance from someone who understands the subtle workings of the mind and who is able to teach us how to liberate the mind.

c) **Dangers of the General Course of Existence *(Samsara)***
The dangers to which we are exposed are much greater than those of the present life or the risk of a fall into the woeful state in future lives. The real danger is the suffering, existence after existence, of birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Besides this **intrinsic** suffering, there is also suffering due to **change** and suffering due to the **conditioned nature** of existence.

No relief can be found anywhere, neither in Heaven nor in the Form and Formless realms because life there is also **impermanent** and **subject to conditions.** This implies only one way of escape: to turn away from all forms of existence, even the most sublime. According to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, it is the **craving for existence** (***bhava-tanha***) that causes rebirth which in turn gives ground for craving to resume and perpetuate the cycle of *Samsara.* At the hub of this wheel of existence is **ignorance (*avijja***), the underlying cause of craving. To eradicate craving, the ignorance that supports it has to be dispelled by wisdom, the penetrating knowledge that allows us to **'*see things as they really are*'.** To develop such wisdom, we need the proper method and someone who can guide us.

From the foregoing, we definitely need to take refuge to protect us from the three types of dangers threatening us. The commentary uses another Pali word '***himsati*** (to crush)' to explain the word '***sarana*** (refuge)' as follows: '*when people have gone for refuge, then by that very going for refuge, it crushes, dispels, removes, stops their fear, anguish, suffering, risk of unhappy rebirth and defilement*'.

5. The Three Refuges (*Tisarana*)

In Buddhism, there are 3 refuges that together can provide protection from the three types of dangers mentioned. They are: the **Buddha, *Dhamma*** and ***Sangha.*** They are not separate refuges, each sufficient in itself but inter-related members of a single effective refuge. As a simple analogy, if we are sick and want to get well, we need a **doctor** to diagnose our sickness and prescribe a remedy. We need **medicine** to cure our sickness and we need **attendants** to look after

our requirements. The doctor and attendants alone cannot cure us. The most they can do is to give the right medicine and make sure we take it. The **medicine is the actual remedy** that restores our health. Similarly, to seek relief from suffering, we rely on the **Buddha as the physician** who can find out the cause of our suffering and show us how to get well. The ***Dhamma* is the medicine** to cure our affliction and the ***Sangha* are the attendants** who help us to take the medicine. To get well, we must take the medicine ourselves. So to get rid of suffering, we must practise the *Dhamma*, for the ***Dhamma*** is the actual refuge that leads to the cessation of suffering. The efficacy of the act of taking refuge is proportional to the degree of understanding of the Three Refuges and our confidence in them.

a) **The Buddha Refuge**

Historically the word "Buddha" refers to a person named Siddhatta Gotama who lived in India around the 5th century BC. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we take refuge in this person for He is the **teacher and founder of Buddhism**. However, in going to Him for refuge, we do not take refuge in Him merely in the physical being.

The Buddha becomes a refuge because of His attainment of Supreme Enlightenment. He is also the **enlightener of others**. Those who realize this state are called Buddhas. This is the supra-mundane aspect of the refuge-object. So when we take refuge in the Buddha, we rely on Him as a refuge because He embodies supreme enlightenment or Buddhahood which is the sum total of the qualities possessed by those who attain supreme enlightenment, namely:

- The **destruction of all defilements totally** (every defilement destroyed without residue) and **finally** (can never arise again).

- The **acquisition of all virtues.** Buddha's virtues are numerous but two stand out as paramount: **great wisdom** and **great compassion**, both of which he utilized for the welfare of others.

- When we take refuge in the Buddha, we resort to Him as the supreme embodiment of **purity, wisdom and compassion,** the

peerless leader who can guide us to safety out of the perilous ocean of *Samsara.*

b) **The *Dhamma* Refuge**

There are two aspects of the *Dhamma*, namely: the mundane level, signifying the **Teaching of the Buddha** as found in Scriptures called the *Tipitaka.* These teachings serve as guidelines for a course of practice called the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of a mundane path and a supra-mundane path, the latter being reached at **realization** of the Four Noble Truths. The supra-mundane path consciousness uproots the associated defilements, arising only once at each of the four stages of enlightenment, namely: *Sotapanna* (stream-enterer), *Sakadagamin* (once-returner), *Anagamin* (non-returner) and *Arahant* or final stage of sainthood. Each path consciousness is followed by several moments of fruition consciousness marking the **tranquillization** of the defilements uprooted by the preceding path moment. Both **path and fruition consciousness** form the supra-mundane aspect of the *Dhamma.* In this way, it can be said that the *Dhamma* is the actual refuge.

c) The *Sangha* Refuge

At the conventional level, *Sangha* means the *Bhikkhu Sangha*, the community of ordained monks who observe the 227 monastic rules promulgated by the Buddha and share the same (right) view. The *Bhikkhu Sangha* forms an unbroken lineage extending back 2500 years, serving as custodians of the *Dhamma*. The *bhikkhu* (alms-man) lifestyle allows the *Sangha* to fulfill the function of **preservation, perpetuation and practice** of the Buddha's Teaching. However, the *Bhikkhu Sangha* is not the *Sangha* Refuge. The *Sangha* Refuge is the *Ariya Sangha*, the noble community made up of those persons who have attained any of the four stages of sainthood. The noble disciples (Buddhist saints) are permanently free from wrong views and doubt, the Buddha's teaching has taken root in them and they do not have to depend on others for any remaining work to be done to reach the final goal. By virtue of this inner mastery, they possess the qualifications to **guide others** towards the goal.

6. Factors that Enhance the Taking of Refuge

The taking of refuge is an expression of one's commitment to the Triple Gem and become a **bona fide** Buddhist. However, this is only the verbal expression of taking refuge. The scriptures make it clear that taking refuge involves more than reciting the formula of refuge. The Commentaries define the act of taking refuge as a **mental act**, namely: **'***An act of consciousness devoid of defilements, motivated by confidence in and reverence for the Triple Gem, taking it as the supreme resort*'. So the taking of refuge should be undertaken with **confidence and reverence** in the Triple Gem taking it as the supreme refuge that it is the sole source of deliverance. Three factors play essential roles in the act of taking refuge.

a) **Understanding**
It is through understanding the Truth of Suffering that makes one look for a refuge. The mind must also be able to grasp the **supreme attributes of the Three Refuges** in order to arouse confidence in them (see Chapter XVI on the Recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*). Such understanding will bring a deeper commitment to the refuge and spur one towards the course of practice.

b) **Wholesome Desire**
Taking refuge is an act of volition. It is a voluntary decision based on a wholesome desire (*dhammachanda*) to get rid of suffering. The stronger the desire, the more will be the urgency to practise the Buddha's teaching.

c) **Confidence & Reverence**
The faculty of wisdom must be balanced by faith. Wisdom without faith can make one easily **skeptical** while faith without wisdom can make one easily **gullible**. In taking refuge, one's faith must be based on **confidence** or **trust** in the protective power of the Three Refuges together with a clear understanding of their qualities and functions. **Confidence** gives rise to **reverence,** veneration born from a growing awareness of the sublime and lofty nature of the Triple Gem. As one experiences the transforming effects of the *Dhamma* in one's life, reverence awakens devotion to the Triple Gem, making the mind more inclined and devoted to the practice of the Buddha's teaching.

7. Corruptions and Breach of Refuge

Corruptions of refuge are factors that make refuge taking impure, insincere and ineffective. There are three factors that defile the act of taking refuge, namely:

(a) **Ignorance**
Here one does not understand the reasons for taking refuge, the meaning of taking refuge or the qualities of the refuge-objects.

(b) **Doubt**
Here one does not possess confidence in the Triple Gem. One's commitment to the refuge is then tainted by perplexity, suspicion and indecision.

(c) **Wrong Views**
This means a **wrong** understanding of the act of taking refuge or the refuge-objects. Here one thinks that the mere act of taking refuge is a sufficient guarantee of liberation; - or one believes that the Buddha is a god with the power to save one; - or the *Dhamma* teaches the existence of an eternal soul; - or the *Sangha* functions as an intermediary body who can mediate one's salvation.

However, even though the refuge act is defiled by these corruptions, the refuge act is still intact and one remains a Buddhist follower as long as one regards the Triple Gem as his supreme resort. But one's attitude is wrong and has to be corrected by seeking proper advice from a teacher who can help one to overcome the ignorance, doubts and wrong views.

Breach of refuge is the breaking of one's commitment to the Three Refuges. This can only happen to ordinary worldlings but not to *Ariyas* or Noble Disciples whose confidence in the Triple Gem is permanently established and unshakable. For the same reason, the ***Ariya's*** refuge act cannot be corrupted too. In the case of an ordinary worldling, breach of refuge occurs when the **person dies** and he cannot take refuge anymore. Such breach is considered **faultless. Faulty or reprehensible** breach occurs when one regards another

teacher as superior to the Buddha, another religious system as superior to the *Dhamma* or another spiritual community as superior to the *Ariya Sangha*. Breaking the commitment to any one of the three refuge-objects breaks the commitment to all of them.

By adopting an attitude that bestows the status of supreme reliance upon anything outside the Triple Gem, one cuts off the taking of refuge and relinquishes one's claim to be a disciple of the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. In order to become valid once more, the act of taking **refuge must be renewed,** preferably by confessing one's lapse and then by going through the entire act of taking refuge.

8. Benefits of Taking Refuge

By taking refuge in the Triple Gem, one declares one's willingness to be guided by the Buddha's teaching. But once we have made the initial commitment by taking refuge, it is necessary to put the teaching into actual practice because the Buddha's teaching is **not a system of salvation by faith**. As discussed earlier, the simple act of taking refuge enables one to balance the wisdom faculty with confidence and devotion in the practice, thereby acting as a condition for the realization of *Nibbana.*

For those who regularly take refuge in the Triple Gem with **understanding, confidence, and reverence** that very act of refuge crushes, dispels, removes and stops their fear, sorrow, suffering, defilement and risk of unhappy rebirth.

For the newcomer to the religion, the simple act of taking refuge arouses faith or *saddha*, the leader of wholesome mental states. In times of great distress or fear, just the chanting of "*Buddham Saranam Gacchami*" is sufficient to calm the mind by anchoring it to a **powerful wholesome object**. Buddhist children should be taught to take refuge in the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* every night before they sleep to develop confidence and ensure freedom from nightmares and other disturbances.

Once, the author asked the members of his *Sutta* study class, some of whom are experienced yogis, what they would do if the airplane they were traveling in was about to crash. Would they close their eyes and meditate or recite the Three Refuges? The majority said that it would be easier to chant "*Buddham Saranam Gacchami*" to keep calm in such a terrifying situation. Such is the power of the Three Refuges, **simple yet effective in times of need.**

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X

FIVE PRECEPTS (*PANCASILA*)

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1. Five Vices and Five Virtues

In many *suttas* regarding lay practice (*Anguttara* iii, 203), the Buddha explicitly warned of the **five vices,** which are dangers and enemies, and lead to hell. What are the five?

i) Killing living beings
ii) Taking what is not given
iii) Sexual misconduct
iv) Telling lies
v) Partaking of intoxicants

- One who has these five vices lives the home-life **without self-confidence.**
- One who has these five vices **breeds hatred** in this life or breeds hatred in the life hereafter, feels in his mind **pain and grief.**
- One who has these five vices is termed **'vicious'** and **arises in hell**.

In the same *suttas*, the Buddha spoke of the advantages of cultivation of the five virtues, which are the Five Precepts, namely:

i) Abstention from killing living beings
ii) Abstention from taking what is not given
iii) Abstention from sexual misconduct
iv) Abstention from telling lies
v) Abstention from partaking of intoxicants

- One who has these five virtues lives the home-life with **complete self-confidence.**
- One who has these five virtues **breeds no hatred** in this life, or in the life hereafter, nor does he feel pain and grief.
- One who has these five virtues is called **virtuous** and arises in the **happy plane** of existence.

The Five Precepts or Virtues (*Pancasila*) form the very core of moral discipline for the lay disciple. *Dhammapada* verse 183 summarizes the Teaching of the Buddhas as: "Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind." Thus by learning to avoid evil through the precepts, one initially begins to check the gross defilements and avoid transgressions of bodily and verbal actions.

2. Self-Responsibility in Moral Training

The Five Precepts form the actual **practice of morality** for the layman. They are the **minimum** ethical code, which are **mandatory** for all lay disciples. They are undertaken immediately after the taking of the Three Refuges at every Buddhist service or ceremony and are administered by a monk if one is present; otherwise the lay disciples can do it by themselves. It is usual for devout lay disciples to undertake the Five Precepts as part of their daily recitation. The Five Precepts are undertaken by reciting the following:

i) *Panatipata veramani-sikkhapadam samadiyami.*
The taking of life I undertake the training rule to abstain.

ii) *Adinnadana veramani-sikkhapadam samadiyami.*
The taking of things not given I undertake the training rule to abstain

iii) *Kamesu micchacara veramani-sikkhapadam samadiyami.*
Sexual misconduct I undertake the training rule to abstain.

iv) *Musavada veramani-sikkhapadam samadiyami.*
False speech I undertake the training rule to abstain.

v) *Sura meraya majja pamadatthana veramani-sikkhapadam* ***samadiyami.***
Intoxicating liquors, spirits and drugs that cause heedlessness I undertake the training rule to abstain.

The words **'*veramani-sikkhapadam samadiyami*'** mean 'abstinence-training rule I undertake' are shared by all five and shows that they are **not commandments** imposed externally but training rules or precepts which one takes upon oneself through **one's initiative** and endeavors to follow with awareness and understanding. The emphasis here as throughout the entire path, is on **self-responsibility**.

3. Precepts are Indispensable in Moral Training

There are some who argue that since moral training is one's own responsibility, it is enough simply to have good intentions and let oneself be guided by one's sense of what is right or wrong. Having a set of rules of conduct is at best superfluous and worse still, they can lead to a dogmatic concept of morality or to a constricting and legalistic system of ethics. Although it is true that morality cannot be equated with a set of rules, yet these rules are necessary because they form the **actual practice of morality** by which one can curb the grosser forms of defilements.

The precepts help to cultivate moral behavior by a process involving the substitution of opposites. The actions prohibited by the precepts such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and partaking of intoxicants are all rooted in **greed, hatred and delusion** and when we succumb to them, we strengthen these evil roots that they become dominant traits. By undertaking to observe the precepts, we weaken the grip of these evil roots by dispelling them with wholesome mental volitions. Consequently a process of substitution takes place in which the defilements are replaced by wholesome or moral states, which increasingly become more ingrained as we go on with the training. Each time the precepts are upheld, each time the moral volitions become strengthened, until eventually morality becomes a **habitual trait** through the **condition of repetition (*asevana paccaya*).**

The cultivation of good traits takes place by habitual recurrence and many passages are found in the scriptures exhorting wholesome cultivation by repetition. Thus even though at first, a practice arouses resistance from within, if it is repeated over and over again with understanding and development, the qualities it calls into play, such as wholesome volitions in the case of precepts, slowly become the dominant mental trait. Therefore, the Five Precepts are **indispensable** in the **cultivation of virtue** for the lay disciple.

4. *Dhamma* Way to Compare Oneself with Another

Once when the Buddha was in the village of Veludvara in Kosala country, He was asked by the villagers to teach them how to attain to the heavenly world where the virtuous are reborn. Thereupon the Buddha taught them to reflect on the *Dhamma* way to compare oneself with another, which leads to right understanding in the observance of the Five Precepts.

- **On the matter of killing**: Every person wishes to live and not to die; everyone is fond of pleasure and adverse to pain.

- If someone were to kill us, it would not be pleasing or delightful to us. Also if one kills another who wants to live and not to die, it would not be pleasing or delightful to the other person.

- So something that is not pleasing to oneself must also be not pleasing to another. Therefore something that is not pleasing to one-self should not be imposed on another.

As a result of this reflection, he himself abstains from killing living beings. He encourages others so to abstain and he speaks in praise of so abstaining. Thus his bodily conduct is absolutely pure in these three aspects. By similar reflection and reasoning, one acquires a better understanding and appreciation of each of the precepts.

In the case of the **fifth precept**, although the partaking of intoxicants appears to involve oneself only, it is the most dangerous because it can lead to the violation of all the precepts thereby causing **more harm** to **oneself and others**. Thus one who keeps the Five Precepts is an asset to oneself and others. In fact, in *Anguttara* iv, 245, the Buddha has compared the meticulous observance of the Five Precepts as five great gifts. By doing so, one gives **fearlessness, loving kindness and goodwill** to all beings by one's virtues.

5. First Precept: Abstention from Killing Living Beings

The word **'*panatipata*'** is derived from two words: **'*pana*'** which means 'living being' and **'*atipata*'** which means 'striking down', hence killing or destroying. According to the *Atthasalini* or Expositor, for killing to take place five conditions must be met.

i) The being must be alive.
ii) There must be knowledge that it is a living being.
iii) There must be intention to cause its death.
iv) Action must be taken to cause its death
v) Death must result from such action.

If all these conditions are fulfilled, then the precept has been broken.

Conditions for Killing

- The first important point to note is that there must be an **intention or volition** to kill. Volition is the mental factor responsible for the action (*kamma*). Without intention, there is no transgression as when we accidentally kill an ant while trying to pull it away from our body to prevent it from biting us. Killing is classified as immoral bodily action since it generally occurs via the body, but what really performs the act is the **mind using the body as its instrument**.

- The second important point is that the **action taken** to cause death need not occur directly through the body. It can be carried out by giving a **command** to kill by way of words, writing or gesture. The one who issues such a command becomes responsible for the action as soon as it achieves the intention of killing a living being. In extreme cases, killing can be effected by **occult practices or supernormal powers.**

- The third important point to note is that the precept is broken only when one is **aware** that the object of one's action is a **living being**. Thus if someone washes vegetables without knowing that there are caterpillars on the leaves and kills them, the precept is not broken.

- Lastly, the being must **die as a result** of this action. Thus if a killer is chasing his victim with a knife intent on killing him, but the latter accidentally trips on a rock and breaks his head resulting in death, although the victim died, his death was **accidental** and no killing has taken place.

Causes of Killing

Acts of killing can originate from **all three evil roots** of greed, hatred and delusion. The **proximate cause** of killing is always **hatred** accompanied by delusion because the force that drives the act is the impulse to destroy the being's life, a form of hatred. Although greed and hate cannot function simultaneously, **greed** accompanied by delusion can be the motivating factor in cases of killing to gain material benefits or high status for oneself, to eliminate threats to one's comfort and security, and to obtain enjoyment in hunting and fishing for sport. Killing motivated by hatred is seen in cases of vicious murder and manslaughter. Killing motivated by delusion is seen in cases of animal sacrifices done out of **wrong views** and killing the followers of other religions thinking it is a **religious duty.**

Factors Affecting the Gravity of the Act of Killing

The gravity of the act of killing depends mainly on the **qualities of the victim.** When the qualities are equal, the gravity varies according to the strength of the **defilements** and the **efforts** of the killer.

- With regard to moral qualities, **human victims** are said to possess moral qualities while **animal victims** are said to possess no moral quality; so the killing of a human is graver than the killing of an animal.

- Among humans, the most serious or gravest is the killing of one's **mother, father** or an ***Arahant***. To kill a person with superior spiritual qualities or to kill one's benefactor is more blameworthy than to kill an immoral or an unrelated person.

- In the case of animal victims, the gravity of the act generally depends on it **size;** the larger the animal, the more blameworthy the killing. Other factors that determined moral gravity are: whether it has an **owner** or is **ownerless**, **domesticated** or **wild**, **gentle** or **vicious** temperament. The moral gravity would be greater in the three former cases and lesser in the latter three.

- With regard to **defilements and effort**, a **cold-blooded murder**, intended and planned in advance and rooted in strong greed or hatred carries more weight compared to **impulsive killing** carried out in a fit of rage or in self-defense. The unwholesome volitions involved in the thinking and planning of the murder far outweigh those involved in an impulsive killing. The presence of **cruelty or torture** and the obtaining of **sadistic pleasure** from the killing further increase its gravity.

6. Second Precept: Abstention from Taking What is Not Given

The word **'*adinna*'** means **'what is not given'** and signifies the property of another in which he has **legal and blameless ownership**. Thus no offence is committed if the article has no legal owner such as firewood collected to make a fire or fruits gathered from the wilds. Blameless ownership becomes applicable in cases where a person has legal possession of an article but does so by improper means or uses it for unethical purposes, e.g., the **confiscation of property of drug traffickers, weapons**, which are used for destructive purposes. According to the *Atthasalini***,** five conditions must be met to break this precept.

i) An article belonging to another legally and blamelessly.
ii) Knowledge that the article belongs to another.
iii) There must be the intention to steal.
iv) Action must be taken to steal.
v) By the action, the article must be taken.

Types of Taking what is Not Given

Taking what is not given can be divided into many types.

i) The **most blatant,** involving threats or force, are daylight robbery, extortion, purse snatching, kidnapping.
ii) The second type is stealing or **secretly taking** the article without the owner's knowledge such as housebreaking, burglary and pick-pocketing.
iii) The third type is **fraud,** laying false claims or cheating by confidence tricksters to gain someone's possessions.
iv) The fourth type is **deceit** when dishonest traders cheat their customers by false weights and measures or supply products of lower quality than specified.
v) The fifth type is **forgery** when people pass counterfeit money as real or sell counterfeit gold and jewelry.

vi) The last type, though **seemingly slight**, is very common and occurs when employees take small items from their company for their own use without paying for it.

Causes of Taking what is Not Given

The act of taking what is not given can be rooted in **greed or hatred**, both being accompanied by delusion. Generally stealing is caused by greed. Hatred occurs when one person deprives another of an article, not so much because he wants it but because he resents the other's possession of it and wants to make the **victim suffer** through its loss.

Factors affecting the Gravity of Taking what is Not Given

The gravity of the act of taking what is not given is determined mainly by the **moral qualities** of the victim and the **value of the article** taken. Firstly, stealing from a morally virtuous person or a benefactor is more blameworthy than stealing from an immoral person or an unrelated person.

Secondly, stealing a valuable article is more blameworthy than stealing an article of little value. However, the value of an article need **not be equated** to its cash value. Thus, stealing an alms-bowl from a meditative monk who uses it to collect food is definitely more severe than stealing several thousand dollars from a rich man. Similarly, stealing the lecture notes from a student preparing for his exams will cause more grief to the victim than stealing his TV set.

The mental **volitions** behind the action and the **force of defilements** also contribute to the gravity of the act, with hatred being considered more severe than greed.

7. Third Precept: Abstention from Sexual Misconduct

This precept enjoins abstinence from improper or illicit sexual relations. The *Atthasalini* defines sexual misconduct as the volition arising in the **body-door**, through the unlawful intention of **trespassing upon a person** to whom one has no right of going. There are four conditions for wrong conduct in sexual pleasures.

i) There must be a man or woman with whom it is improper to have sexual intercourse.
ii) There must be intention to have sexual intercourse with such a person.
iii) Action must be taken to have such an intercourse.
iv) There must be enjoyment from contact of the sexual organs.

With reference to the first condition, there are twenty kinds of women with whom men should have no sexual relations. They can be divided into three groups, namely: women under the **guardianship** of parents, family members, relatives and authorities charged with their care; **married or betrothed** women; *bhikkhunis* and religious women **observing the Holy Life**. For all women, a man **forbidden by tradition** or under **religious rules** is prohibited as a partner. For any unwilling partner who is drugged or forced to have sexual intercourse under threat of violence or coercion, conditions (ii) & (iv) exclude them from violation of the precept.

Causes of Sexual Misconduct

The root cause of sexual misconduct is always **greed or lust**, accompanied by delusion.

Factors affecting the Gravity of Sexual Misconduct

The gravity of the offence is determined by the **degree of lust** motivating the action and the **qualities of the person** against whom the transgression is committed. When the lust is very strong, even incest and rape can be committed, the most serious being the rape of a female *Arahant.*

8. Fourth Precept: Abstention from False Speech

The characteristic of 'lying or falsehood' is the volition of one desirous of representing to others an **untrue thing as true**, which sets up a **corresponding intimation**. Four conditions must be met to break this precept.

i) The statement must be untrue.
ii) There must be an intention to deceive.
iii) An effort must be made to deceive.
iv) The other person must know the meaning of what is expressed.

False speech is expressed through **speech, writing, or bodily gestures** or even conveyed **through a third party** who may or may not be aware of the falsehood. Since intention is required, if someone makes a false statement believing it to be true, no transgression has occurred. But if one makes a false statement with **intention to deceive** and the other party **understands** what is expressed, then the **precept is broken** whether deception has occurred or not.

Causes of False Speech

The root causes of false speech are **greed, hatred and delusion**.

i) Greed is the root cause when false speech is used to obtain **material gain or status** for oneself or someone dear to oneself.

ii) Hatred is the root cause when false speech is used to **cause loss and bring harm and suffering to others.**

iii) Delusion is the root cause when it is used neither for one's gain nor to cause loss and harm to others, but for the sake of **enjoyment** such as lying for the sake of a joke, exaggeration to spice up a story, or flattery to please others, etc.

Gravity of the Act of False Speech

The gravity of the act of false speech depends on three factors, namely: **degree of benefits destroyed, motivation** and **recipient** of the false speech.

i) The gravity is light if little benefit is destroyed and heavy if a large benefit is destroyed as a result of the false speech.

ii) Falsehood is also less severe if the motivation is to save oneself or another from material loss or harm while it becomes more severe if the motivation is to cause material loss or harm to others.

iii) With regard to the recipient of the false speech, the gravity is greater if the recipient is a morally superior person or is one's benefactor while the gravity is less if the recipient has low moral qualities.

iv) The worst cases of falsehood are lying in a way that **defames the Buddha** and the ***Arahants*** or making **false claims of attainments** of *Jhana* (mental absorptions) or *Magga & Phala* (path & fruition). In the case of a monk, such falsehood leads to expulsion from the *Sangha.*

9. Fifth Precept: Abstention from Partaking of Intoxicants

The taking of intoxicants is defined as the volition leading to the **bodily act of ingesting** the intoxicant such as the drinking of alcohol, smoking of opium and marijuana, sniffing of cocaine or glue, injection of heroin into the veins, etc. There are four conditions for the partaking of intoxicants.

i) There must be an intoxicant.
ii) There must be the intention of taking it.
iii) Action must be taken to ingest it.
iv) There must be actual ingestion of the intoxicant.

Condition (iv) states clearly that the precept is broken once the intoxicant is **ingested intentionally**. It does not matter whether one is intoxicated or not as a result of the action. In taking medicines containing alcohol or intoxicating drugs for medical reasons, no breach of the precept is committed. This is because one's intention is to take the medicine to cure one's sickness.

Concerning the use of alcohol in medicine by monks, the Buddha allowed strong drink to be added to decoctions of oil as medicine. However certain monks used to add too much strong drink into their decoctions and they got drunk after consuming the medicinal oils. To prevent this from happening, the Buddha allowed monks to drink decoctions of oil containing strong drink in them, **provided neither the colour, nor the smell, nor the taste** of strong drink shall be sensible or detectable (*Vinaya* Texts, *Mahavagga* 14).

Thus the drinking of herbal wines containing mainly hard liquor or the adding of alcohol to food to enhance its taste should be discouraged even though some may think that there is no violation of the precept here. Knowing that it is an intoxicant and still taking it for its flavor/taste shows that one is not practising self-control. As for alcoholic herbal products, one should switch to equivalent products that do not contain alcohol.

It is known that intoxicants even in small amounts can make one less sensitive, heedless and easily swayed by the defilements. As one

starts to enjoy getting high on intoxicants, the effect becomes addictive and usage increases. Then, either they dull the mind or heighten the defilements that one loses the sense of shame and fear in performing immoral activities. **Without shame and fear,** there is no morality and a person **loses all restraints** in his conduct. Indeed, the breaking of the fifth precept is the most dangerous as it can lead to the breaking of all the remaining precepts. **Abstaining from intoxicants** therefore **prevents the misfortunes** that result from the use of intoxicants, namely: loss of wealth, quarrels and crimes, disease, loss of reputation through shameless behavior, negligence and madness.

Causes of Partaking of Intoxicants

The motivation for taking intoxicants **is greed accompanied by delusion.** No gradations of moral weight are given.

10. Benefits of 'Moderate Drinking': Fact or Fallacy?

Several studies have shown that people who drink one to two ounces of alcohol per day tend to live longer than people who drink more than this amount or who don't drink at all. (One ounce of alcohol is equivalent to a 30 ml glass of wine, one can of beer or one mixed drink.) Based on these findings, some physicians even began to encourage their patients to drink 'moderately'.

In his 1991 widely-acclaimed book entitled 'Program for Reversing Heart Disease, pages 277-278', the famous heart physician, Dr. Dean Ornish **refuted this fallacy** by citing the following facts:

i) First, subsequent, more careful analyses of the studies revealed that many of the people who did not drink at all chose to abstain because a number of them were in ill health or were recovering alcoholics. They died earlier not because they abstained from alcohol but because **they were sicker** to begin with.

ii) Second, one reason why people who drink 'moderately' may have lived longer is that they often have **more social support** than the non-drinkers. In Western culture, 'Happy Hour' is a socially acceptable way to take a break from work and relax with friends, family or spouses. Dr. Ornish suspects that the same benefits would also result from social support in activities not centred on drinking.

iii) Third, alcohol has a **direct, toxic effect** on the muscle of the heart, as well as other organs, especially the liver. Even drinking less than one drink per day has been found to double the risk of haemorrhagic stroke when compared with not drinking at all. A study of 87,526 female nurses found that women who consumed three to nine drinks per week had 3.7 times the risk of bleeding into their brains compared with non-drinkers.

iv) Fourth, in America, somewhere between 50 and 80 percent of all **fatal traffic accidents** are alcohol related (see news clip below).

v) Fifth, although alcohol does raise your HDL (good cholesterol), this is only half the story. There are two types of HDL, namely: HDL_2 and HDL_3. HDL_2 helps to protect against coronary heart disease but HDL_3 does not. **Alcohol raises HDL_3**.

vi) Sixth, a study of over 7,188 women aged twenty-five to seventy-four years found that moderate alcohol consumption was associated with 50 and 100 percent **elevation** in the risk of **breast cancer.**

'Responsible drinking' proponent jailed

Sunday Star, August 13, 2000: Seattle, USA

A prominent US author who championed 'moderate drinking' over abstinence as a way to handle alcoholism was sentenced on Friday to four years and six months in jail for a deadly car crash she caused while driving drunk. During the trial in Ellensburg, Washington, Audrey Kishline, 43, had pleaded guilty to driving while intoxicated

in April and crashing her small truck head-on into a car whose two occupants were killed. Kishline had three times the legal limit of alcohol in her blood and was driving east in the west bound lanes of a crowded inter-state highway. The victims were a man and his 12-year daughter.

Six years ago, Kishline founded the national Moderation Management (MM) movement after finding abstinence-based programmes, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), 'demoralising'. Instead of accepting the AA rule that alcoholism is a lifelong affliction that can only be handled with constant sobriety, Kishline advocated a theory of responsible drinking. She outlined her ideas in the 1995 book *Moderate Drinking: The Moderation Management Guide for People Who Want to Reduce Their Drinking.* MM members were asked to follow a nine-step programme that includes 30 days of abstinence, followed by the establishment of personal 'drinking limits'. The MM guidelines also specify a 'zero tolerance' for drinking and driving. --dpa

11. Factors that Enhance the Keeping of Precepts

The abstentions of the Five Precepts are basically the mental factors of Right Action, Right Speech and Right Livelihood. They are accompanied by wholesome volitions called **morality of volition** that **dispels the unwholesome intentions** to break the precepts. Thus, morality does not function alone. It has a number of associates that function together to form the properties of morality. The mental factors that help to uphold the keeping of precepts are **moral shame & fear, faith, understanding, mindfulness, effort and patience.**

- **Moral shame (*hiri)*** and **moral fear (*ottappa*)** to do evil are the proximate causes of morality. Shame makes a person recoil from committing immoral deeds because a good man does not want his conscience to be defiled by evil. Fear stops one from evil because of fear of the dire consequences. Without them,

morality neither arises nor persists. They differentiate man from beast and prevent mankind from committing acts of bestiality even at the time of very low civilization. So ***hiri*** and ***ottappa*** are known as ***Lokapala Dhamma***, *Dhamma* that guards the world.

- **Faith (*saddha*)** is belief in the **Law of *Kamma*** i.e. good results will follow the good deeds of keeping the precepts while breaking the precepts will lead to suffering. Faith cleanses the mind of impurities that motivate the breaking of precepts.

- The keeping of precepts should not be undertaken as a blind dogmatic submission to external rules but as a fully conscious **process of moral training guided by understanding (*panna*)**. Once we understand for ourselves what kinds of actions are wholesome and unwholesome, why one should be pursued and the other abandoned, and the consequences of keeping and breaking the precepts, we will begin to appreciate and observe the precepts properly.

- **Mindfulness *(sati)*** is awareness or attentiveness of our **bodily and mental processes**. With mindfulness, one is **able to check** what feelings and states of mind that are impelling one towards certain courses of action and what thoughts form the motivation or volition. One who is mindful will not forget his undertaking of the precepts, so one can avoid the unwholesome and develop the wholesome.

- **Effort *(viriya)*** here means **Right Effort**, the application of energy to **steer the mind** away from unwholesome states towards wholesome states. Effort does the work of moral training guided by **mindfulness** and **understanding.**

- The last factor is **patience *(khanti)***, which is non-hate. Patience enables one to **endure** the offensive actions of others without becoming angry or seeking retaliation thereby curbing the defilements of greed and hatred, the root causes of transgressions of precepts.

12. Consequences of Breaking & Keeping the Five Precepts

According to the Discourse on the Bad Effects of Evil Deeds, *Anguttara* iv, 247, **breaking of precepts** when pursued, practised, increased, causes one to arise in hell, in the animal world and in the world of ghosts. If reborn as a human being, the following are the very least results:

- Killing will lead to **shortening of one's life**.
- Stealing will lead to **loss of one's wealth**.
- Sexual misconduct will breed **rivalry and hatred.**
- False speech will cause one to be **falsely accused**.
- Partaking of intoxicants will cause one to be **afflicted with insanity.**

On the other hand, the **observance of the Five Precepts** leads to the accumulation of wholesome *kamma* tending to rebirth in the happy realms of humans or deities. If reborn as a human being, the following are the results:

- Abstention from killing will lead to **longevity.**
- Abstention from stealing will lead to **prosperity.**
- Abstention from sexual misconduct will lead to **popularity.**
- Abstention from lying will cause one to have a **good reputation**.
- Abstention from partaking of intoxicants will lead to **mindfulness and wisdom.**

In the *Mahaparinibbana sutta*, the Buddha expounded to the villagers of Pataligama the **five blessings** gained by one who observes the precepts and who is established in morality.

i) He acquires **much wealth** as a result of his diligence.
ii) He acquires a **good reputation** and fame.
iii) He approaches and enters any assembly of nobles, brahmins, householders and monks with **complete self-confidence**, without any fear or hesitation.
iv) He lives the full span of life and **dies undeluded**.
v) After death, he is **reborn** in the **happy realms** of humans or *devas.*

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XI
TEN BASES OF MERITORIOUS ACTION (*DASA PUNNA-KIRIYA VATTHU*)

INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

1. Unwholesome and Wholesome Roots (*Akusala Kusala Hetu*)
2. Meritorious Action (*Punna-kiriya*)
3. Ten Bases of Meritorious Action (*Dasa Punna-kiriya Vatthu*)
4. Types of Wholesome *Kamma*
5. Classification of Individuals (*Puggala-bheda*)
6. References

1. Unwholesome and Wholesome Roots (*Akusala Kusala Hetu*)

Three roots of evil have been taught by the Buddha to be the basic causes of all suffering. They are:

- **Greed (*Lobha*),**
- **Hate (*Dosa*) and**
- **Delusion (*Moha*)**

These three terms comprise the entire range of evil, whether of lesser or greater intensity: from a faint tendency to the coarsest manifestation.

There are also three roots of everything good:

- **Non-Greed (*Alobha*)** = unselfishness, generosity, renunciation
- **Non-Hate (*Adosa*)** = loving kindness, patience, compassion
- **Non-Delusion (*Amoha*)** = knowledge, insight, wisdom.

2. Meritorious Action (*Punna-kiriya*)

All actions originate from the mind. The body and speech function merely as doors by which the mind expresses itself. The ancients defined ***punna* or merit** as: 'that which purifies or cleanses the mind'. From the description of the roots of good and evil, it becomes clear that the good or wholesome roots are the causes of merit. Thus meritorious actions are volitional or mental actions accompanied by the 3 wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion. Conversely, demeritorious actions are volitional actions accompanied by the 3 unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion. In simple language, they constitute wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* respectively.

In *Abhidhamma*, there are **eight types** of **wholesome consciousness** (***sobhana citta***) pertaining to the Sensual Sphere (*Kamavacara*). Four of them contain only two wholesome roots (non-greed, non-

hate) while another four contain all three wholesome roots (non-greed, non-hate, **non-delusion or understanding**). Each group is further sub-divided according to whether they are **prompted** or **unprompted** and whether they are **accompanied by joy** or **indifference.** In the ultimate sense, these 8 types of wholesome consciousness comprise all the meritorious actions or wholesome *kamma* pertaining to the Sensual Sphere. These eight types of wholesome consciousness are shown below.

a) Accompanied by joy, prompted, with understanding
b) Accompanied by joy, prompted, without understanding
c) Accompanied by joy, unprompted, with understanding
d) Accompanied by joy, unprompted, without understanding
e) Accompanied by indifference, prompted, with understanding
f) Accompanied by indifference, prompted, without understanding
g) Accompanied by indifference, unprompted, with understanding
h) Accompanied by indifference, unprompted without understanding

3. Ten Bases of Meritorious Action (*Dasa Punna-kiriya Vatthu*)

If one wants to accumulate wholesome *kamma* in this life, there are ten bases or ways (*Dasa vatthu*) of meritorious action (*Punna-kiriya*) that produce good effects and which should be performed by all means.

i) ***Dana***: giving charity or generosity
ii) ***Sila***: morality i.e. observing 5 precepts, 8 or 10 precepts, etc.
iii) ***Bhavana***: meditation i.e. both tranquility and insight
iv) ***Apacayana***: reverence to elders and holy persons
v) ***Veyyavacca***: service in wholesome deeds
vi) ***Pattidana***: sharing or transference of merits
vii) ***Pattanumodana***: rejoicing in others' merits
viii) ***Dhamma-savana***: listening to the Doctrine
ix) ***Dhamma-desana***: teaching the Doctrine
x) ***Ditthijukamma***: straightening out one's view.

The ten bases of meritorious action can be classified into 3 groups:

- *Dana* or **Generosity** group: *Dana,* Sharing of merits and Rejoicing in others' merits.

- *Sila* or **Morality** group: *Sila*, Reverence and Service

- *Bhavana* or **Meditation** group: Meditation, Listening to the Doctrine, Teaching the Doctrine and Straightening one's view

(a) The *Dana* group represents '*alobha*' which means generosity or renunciation. It opposes **jealousy** and **stinginess or selfishness**.

(b) The *Sila* group represents '*adosa*' which means good-will. It opposes **attachment (*lobha*)** and **anger (*dosa*)**.

(c) The *Bhavana* group represents '*amoha*' which means wisdom or understanding. It opposes **delusion** and **wrong views**.

The ten bases of meritorious action are performed with the eight types of wholesome consciousness unless one attains *Jhana* (absorption) or *Magga* (Path consciousness) in meditation. So they generally give rise to wholesome *kamma* pertaining to the Sensual Sphere.

4. Types of Wholesome *Kamma*

(a) Two-Root and Three-Root Wholesome *Kamma*

If one performs a wholesome deed with the knowledge of *Kamma* and its effects, then the wholesome consciousness is associated with understanding. The volition will be accompanied with all three wholesome roots: non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion. So **three-root**

(***tihetuka***) wholesome *kamma* is acquired. Better still, if during the performance of moral deeds, one can develop **insight knowledge** by reasoning that everything is impermanent, suffering and non-self. The wholesome *kamma* acquired is again accompanied by the three good roots.

On the other hand, if one performs a wholesome deed without any knowledge of *Kamma* and its effects, he is doing it **without any understanding.** Then the volition will not be accompanied by non-delusion, but only the two roots of non-greed and non-hate. So **two-root** (***dvihetuka***) *kamma* is acquired.

(b) **Superior and Inferior Wholesome *Kamma***

In the performance of the ten bases of meritorious action, one's **volition** or intention **before and after** the moral action is very important. If one can develop wholesome consciousness before and after the moral action, then the moral volition behind the moral action is surrounded by other good volitions and consequently its **potentiality is strengthened.** The wholesome *kamma* acquired will be **superior** (*ukkatha*).

To acquire this type of superior *kamma*, one should think of the moral action in advance and feel glad for having the chance to do it. Again after performing the action, one should reflect on it and be full of joy thinking about the good aspects of the deed.

On the other hand, if one feels lazy or reluctant or jealous or stingy before a moral action such as giving charity, and regrets doing the moral action afterwards, then the moral volition of giving charity will be surrounded by other unwholesome volitions and consequently its **potentiality will be weakened.** The wholesome *kamma* acquired in this case is **inferior** (*omaka*).

Thus, four types of wholesome *kamma* are acquired in performing the ten bases of meritorious action, namely:

i) **Superior Three-Root *Kamma***
ii) **Inferior Three-Root *Kamma***
iii) **Superior Two-Root *Kamma***
iv) **Inferior Two-Root *Kamma***

Each of the four types can be performed with **joy** or **indifference** making a total of eight types of wholesome consciousness. Of the four, (i) is **best.** If it conditions the rebirth consciousness, the person will be reborn with **three wholesome roots** (*tihetuka*) in the happy realms of humans and *devas* and will possess the ability to attain *Jhana* (Mental Absorption) and *Magga* (Path Consciousness).

(ii) and (iii) are **somewhat equal**. If it conditions the rebirth consciousness, the person will be reborn with **two wholesome roots** (***dvihetuka***) in the happy realms of humans and *devas*. But he will not possess the ability to attain *Jhana* and *Magga.*

(iv) is the poorest. If it conditions the rebirth consciousness, the person will be reborn in the happy course of existence (*sugati*) but without any good root ***(ahetuka***) as a human being with deformities or as an earth-bound degraded *deva* in the lower realm of *Catumaharajika* or the Four Great Kings.

5. Classification of Individuals (*Puggala-bheda*)

Puggala means individual or person. In *Abhidhamma*, individuals are classified into twelve types, consisting of four types of *puthujjana* (world-lings) and eight types of *ariya-puggala* (noble individuals), namely:

i) ***Duggati ahetuka puggala*** – refers to individuals born in the woeful states of existence i.e. the four lower worlds, namely, animal, ghost, demon realm and hell. Such individuals do not possess any of the three good roots in their consciousness, namely: non-greed (*alobha*), non-hate (*adosa*) and non-delusion (*amoha*). Hence they are termed '***ahetuka* or rootless**'.

ii) ***Sugati ahetuka puggala*** – refers to individuals who are born with deformities in the happy realm of human world or the lower realm of *Catumaharajika* but do not possess any good root.
iii) ***Dvihetuka puggala*** – refers to human beings and *devas* who are born with only two good roots, namely: non-greed and non-hate. Such individuals cannot attain *jhanas* (mental absorptions) and *maggas* (path consciousness) in the present life however much they try. However, they may become '*tihetuka puggala*' in the next life as a result of their meditation efforts in the present life, and then attain *jhanas* and *maggas* easily if they meditate again.
iv) ***Tihetuka puggala*** – refers to human beings and *devas* who are born with all three good roots: non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion. Such individuals may attain all the *jhanas* and all the *maggas* if they strenuously practise tranquility and insight meditations. Thus, three-rooted worldlings can attain the various stages sainthood by the practice of *Vipassana* meditation.
v) ***Sotapatti maggatha*** – path consciousness of 1st Sainthood
vi) ***Sotapatti phalattha*** – fruition consciousness of 1st Sainthood
vii) ***Sakadagami maggattha*** – path consciousness of 2nd Sainthood
viii) ***Sakadagami phalattha*** – fruition consciousness of 2nd Sainthood
ix) ***Anagami maggattha*** – path consciousness of 3rd Sainthood
x) ***Anagami phalattha*** – fruition consciousness of 3rd Sainthood
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XII
TEN BASES OF MERITORIOUS ACTION

PART ONE: THE *DANA* GROUP

CONTENTS

1. Giving (*Dana*)
2. Factors that Strengthen the Beneficial Results of *Dana*
3. Volition of the Donor
4. Purity of the Recipient
5. Offering to the Order (*Sanghika Dana*)
6. Types of Gifts
7. Giving of Money for New Work (*Nava Kamma*)
8. Gifts to Avoid
9. Advantages of *Dana*
10. Sharing or Transference of Merits (*Patti-dana*)
11. Transference of Merits to Departed Relatives
12. For Whom Are the Food Offerings in *Pattidana* Intended?
13. Can *Petas* partake of food and drink offered to them?
14. What Type of Beings Can Receive the Merits?
15. Chinese custom of burning paper money and paper models of clothes, houses, etc., as offerings to the Departed
16. Rejoicing in Others' Merits (*Pattanumodana*)
17. References

1. Giving (*Dana*)

Dana literally means **giving.** The practice of *dana* is universally recognized as one of the most basic virtues. Although not a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path or a requisite of enlightenment, yet it claims a place of special eminence in the Buddha's teaching, being the beginning of the path to liberation. When the Buddha preaches to a newcomer, he starts his graduated teaching with an exposition on the virtues of giving (*danakatha*). Only after the person has come to appreciate this virtue would he introduce the other aspects of his teaching. Giving is the first of the Ten *Paramis* perfected by a Buddha. Among the Ten Bases of Meritorious Action, giving also comes first. Therefore, in the march towards enlightenment, one initially has to practise giving. This is because it is the best weapon against greed, the main cause of our suffering. Second, giving accompanied by wholesome volitions will lead to happy rebirth and less suffering in our next life. Third and most important, when giving is accompanied by the intention for the noble state, it acts as a condition for the development of morality, concentration and wisdom, the three stages of the Noble Eightfold Path that lead to the end of suffering.

2. Factors that Strengthen the Beneficial Results of *Dana*

The cultivation of merits is like farming. According to the Manual of Right Views by the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, for the fructification of the cultivation, there are several causes or conditions for success:

i) Root (*Hetu*) cause
ii) Supporting (*Paccaya*) cause
iii) Constituent (*Sambhara*) cause

A **wise cultivator** will always choose the **best quality seeds** to sow. He will choose **good, fertile land** to till and plant his crop. He will also choose the **proper season** to ensure adequate rainfall, sunlight,

wind, etc. for the plants to grow and ripen. In this way, he will be able to get a **good harvest**. Similarly, the act of giving involves three factors, namely:

- Volition of the donor must be accompanied by two or three of the **wholesome roots**, which are the **root causes (*hetu*)**
- Purity of the recipient which is the **supporting cause (*paccaya*)**
- Kind & size of the gift which is the **constituent cause (*sambhara*)**

3. Volition of Donor

The volition of the donor is the most important factor. It is the root cause without which no act of giving can be accomplished. It is like the seeds without which there is no crop to plant. As the crop yield depends primarily on the seed quality, the beneficial results also depend on the **quality of the volitions** of the donor **before, during and after** the act of giving.

- ***Pubba-cetana***: Those volitions before the act occur in the mind during the acquisition and preparation of the gift.

- ***Munca-cetana***: Those volitions during the act at the actual time of giving. It is this relinquishing volition (***munca-cetana***) that forms the true element of giving.

- ***Apara-cetana***: Volitions after the act are those which occur in the mind whenever the act is recollected with joy.

As discussed in the previous section (Types of Wholesome *Kamma*, pages 81 to 83), these volitions should be accompanied by understanding of the law of cause and effect and the donor should feel **glad before the act** of offering, possess a **clear, pure mind** during the offering and **rejoice** after having made the offering.

a) **Inferior, Medium and Superior Grades of Volitions**

Again according to their different intensities, volitions are threefold, namely: **Inferior** (*Hina),* **Medium** (*Majjhima*) and **Superior** (*Panita*). They are Inferior when the **four factors of Potency (*Iddhipadas*),** namely: **desire-to-do** (*chanda*), **consciousness** (*citta*), **effort** (*viriya*) and **investigative knowledge** (*vimansa*) are weak during the act of giving. Volitions can also be Medium or Superior when these four factors are moderate or intense respectively.

Again volitions become weak when the charity is given with the impure and defiled thought which hopes for worldly pleasures in this existence, in subsequent existences in the human or *deva* realms, and in the final emancipation of one's self alone. They become intense when given with the desire of attaining the four paths (*magga*), the four fruitions (*phala*) and *Nibbana*, and with the desire that that all sentient beings may escape from suffering and attain *Nibbana.* To practise this way is to fulfill the **Perfection of Giving**, which is the highest order. These grades are applicable to the practice of the other bases of meritorious actions such as morality and meditation.

b) ***Sappurisa Dana***

Like the wise farmer choosing the best seeds to plant, the wise donor should cultivate the five principles of the **Worthy Person's (*Sappurisa*)** practice of giving, namely:

i) ***Saddha Dana****:* Giving with faith in the law of cause and effect.

ii) ***Sakkacca Dana****:* Giving with respect seeing that the gift is prepared with great care.

iii) ***Kala Dana****:* Giving at the proper time, such as: food before noontime, robes during *Kathina*, offerings to a guest monk, etc.

iv) ***Anaggahita-citta Dana***: Giving liberally without attachment whatsoever to the gift. The motive is purely to assist recipient.

v) ***Anupaghata Dana***: Giving without affecting in any way one's dignity and the dignity of others.

Every one of the ***Sappurisa Dana*** will result in great wealth and prosperity. In addition giving with **faith,** results in clear and handsome appearance. Giving with **care and respect** brings the blessing of retinue such as wife, children, servants and followers who are attentive and respectful. **Timely** giving ensures that the beneficial results will come at the right time and in abundance. Giving **without attachment** to the gift ensures that one is well disposed to enjoy the fruits of one's good deeds and is able to do so in full. Lastly, as a result of giving **without showing off or belittling others**, one's property will be fully protected against the five destructive elements, namely: water, fire, thieves, confiscation by authorities or kings, and disobedient children.

4. Purity of the Recipient

The purity of the recipient is another factor that strengthens the beneficial results of *dana*. It is compared to the fertility of the field in which the cultivator plants his crop. Thus the person, being or group to whom the meritorious deed is addressed is referred to as a **field of merit** (*punnakhettam*). In the *Dakkhinavibhanga Sutta, Majjhima* iii, 256, the Buddha enumerated fourteen grades of offering to individuals according to the **purity of the recipient**. The highest ranking goes to the *Samma Sambuddha*, next the *Pacceka Buddha* and then the eight individual persons who have attained each of the four Paths and four Fruitions. After them comes a non-Buddhist ascetic who has attained the five supernormal powers and who believes in the law of cause & effect. The last three are a virtuous person, a non-virtuous person and an animal in descending order.

The reason for this differentiation is that when offering to an individual, the purity of the recipient is important. This is because there are **Four Purifications of Offering.**

i) Offering **purified by donor** but not by recipient. Even if the recipient has no moral virtue but if the donor is virtuous and makes an offering that is rightly acquired, with good wholesome volitions before, during and after the act of giving, having full faith in the law of cause & effect, then the *dana* is purified by the donor and will bring good results.

ii) Offering **purified by recipient** but not by donor. Even if the donor has no moral virtue and makes an offering that is not rightly acquired, without any good wholesome volitions before, during and after the act of giving, and without faith in the law of cause & effect, yet if the recipient is morally virtuous, then the *dana* is purified by the recipient and will bring good results.

iii) Offering **neither purified by donor nor recipient.** When the donor has no moral virtue and makes an offering of ill-gotten wealth to an immoral recipient, without any good wholesome volitions before, during and after the act of giving, and without any faith in the law of cause & effect, then the *dana* has no purity and will not bring any good result, just like poor seeds planted in poor soil will not grow properly and will produce poor yield.

iv) Offering **purified by both donor and recipient.** When the donor of moral virtue makes an offering that is rightfully acquired to a morally virtuous recipient, with good wholesome volitions before, during and after the act of giving and with full faith in the law of cause & effect, then the *dana* is purified by both donor and recipient, and will bring the best results, just like good seeds planted in good soil will grow well and produce the best yield.

5. Offering to the Order (*Sanghika Dana*)

Offerings made to the Holy Order or *Ariya Sangha* bears great fruit because it is an **'incomparable field of merits in the world.'** Offerings to the Order (*Sanghika dana*) can be divided into 7 grades when the Buddha was alive and the Order of Nuns existed.

i) Offering made to the Order of both monks and nuns led by the Buddha.

ii) Offering made to the Order of both monks and nuns after the *Parinibbana* of the Buddha.

iii) Offering made to the Order of monks only

iv) Offering made to the Order of nuns only

v) Offering made to a group of monks and nuns (but with the whole Order in mind) after requesting the *Sangha* to nominate the number of monks and nuns one can afford to give to.

vi) Offering made to a group of monks (but with the whole Order in mind) after requesting the *Sangha* to nominate the number of monks one can afford to give to.

vii) Offering made to a group of nuns (but with the whole Order in mind) after requesting the *Sangha* to nominate the number of nuns one can afford to give to.

Nowadays, only 2 types of *Sanghika dana* can be performed, namely the whole Order of monks in the monastery or a group representing them. **Even one monk can represent the whole order**, if the donor can afford to give to one monk only.

In a *Sanghika dana*, the purity of the individual monks is not important because they do not attend in their individual capacities. They merely act as symbols **(*nimitta*)** to help the donor recall to mind the *Ariya Sangha*, such as the Chief Disciples and the Great *Arahants* during the Buddha's time. In the Commentaries, there is

an account of one monk of immoral conduct who was sent to represent the *Sangha.* Although the donor was aware of the monk's bad habits, yet he continued to serve the monk with great respect and care, treating him specially, as one might to a representative of the *Ariya Sangha*. In this way, the donor acquired vast merits as his intention was to donate to the *Sangha* as a whole.

In fact, in the *Dakkhinavibhanga Sutta*, the Buddha advised thus: "In future times, Ananda, there will be members of the clan who are 'yellow-necks', immoral, of evil character. People will give gifts to those immoral persons for the **sake of the *Sangha*.** Even then, I say, an offering made to the *Sangha* is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way does a gift to a person individually ever have greater fruit than an offering made to the *Sangha."*

6. Types of Gifts

The third factor involved in giving is the gift itself, which can be either **immaterial or material**. Teaching of the Buddha *Dhamma* in the form of talks, writing, or meditation instructions is the **immaterial gift of the *Dhamma.*** The Buddha said that the gift of *Dhamma* excels all other gifts. Those who are not qualified to teach the *Dhamma* can donate *Dhamma* books for free distribution in order to propagate the *Dhamma*. In *Anguttara* iv, 245, the Buddha mentioned **five great gifts** comprising the meticulous observance of the Five Precepts. By doing so, one gives fearlessness, love and benevolence to all beings by one's virtue.

Because the material gift is an important feature in the act of giving, the Scriptures mention different types of *dana* depending on the different objects to be offered.

(a) For special observance by monks, the *Vinaya* or Disciplinary Code prescribes the **four requisites**, namely: robes, food, medicines and dwelling**,** each of which has a wide range. The

limits are set by the *Vinaya* rules to keep the *Bhikkhu Sangha* pure and strong. Lay people who understand the monk's rules can earn vast merit by donating the proper things at the proper time to the *Sangha.*

(b) The *Suttas* or Discourses mention **ten kinds of gifts**, namely: food, drink, clothing, dwelling place, means of conveyance, flowers, perfumed powder, scented ointment, beds and lighting.

(c) In *Abhidhamma*, which deals with physical and mental phenomena, everything in the world can be classified according to the six sense bases and their sense-objects. So the gifts are of six kinds corresponding to the **six kinds of sense-objects**, namely: gift of visible object, of sound, of smell, of taste, of touch and of mind object or *dhamma*. ***Dhamma-dana*** of this type is made through rendering assistance to those afflicted with organic diseases such as weak eyesight, poor hearing, loss of limbs, etc. Helping others to improve their eyesight is ***cakkhu (dhamma) dana***. Helping them to improve their hearing is ***sota (dhamma) dana***. The promotion of the longevity of others is ***jivita dana.*** Among this category are praise-worthy acts of donating blood and body organs to others such as kidney, liver, heart or eyes.

7. Giving of Money for New Work (*Nava Kamma*)

The 10th precept forbids monks and novices from accepting silver and gold from devotees. According to *Khuddakapatha* Commentary, 'silver is a *kahapana* (coin), or it can be a metal *masaka* (penny) or a wooden *masaka* or a clay *masaka*, and so on, of any kind as employed in commerce anywhere'. In modern context, this includes money and credit cards as well. Thus monks of the *Theravada* tradition, who followed this interpretation, do not accept money.

According **Mahavagga VI, 34, 21 of Vinaya Texts**, the Buddha allowed the laity to deposit gold (money) with a ***kappiya-karaka*** (**suitable agent**) for the purpose of providing what is allowable for the monk and the monk may accept what is allowable. But the monk cannot, on any pretext whatsoever, accept or seek for gold (money).

To lay devotees, it is more convenient and practical to give money, as they do not know the actual needs of the monk. Sometimes they see the monk receiving so many robes, bottles of vitamins, soap, etc. that they do not know what to offer. Instead, they donate money so that it can be kept for use later on when the need arises. As the monk cannot accept the cash donation, it is handed for safekeeping to a trustworthy lay attendant who acts as a ***kappiya karaka***. Thereafter, any **new work or fresh undertaking** utilizing the money is called ***Nava Kamma***. They may be the purchasing of food, new robes or medicine, the building of *viharas*, the purchasing of *Dhamma* books, or for purposes of propagating the *Dhamma*. All transactions involving money is carried out by the *kappiya karaka* upon being informed by the monk about the *Nava Kamma*.

<u>What to say when giving money:</u>

"Venerable Sir, we are entrusting this money to your *kappiya karaka* for your ***Nava Kamma*** (**New Work)** such as acquiring allowable requisites. Should Venerable Sir have any need of the requisites, please inform your *kappiya karaka*. *Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*"

8. Gifts to Avoid

The *Vinaya* or Disciplinary Code mentions five kinds of gifts which worldly people think are acts of merit but are actually **harmful, demeritorious** forms of giving. They are:

(a) Gift of intoxicants (*majja dana*) e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, drugs.

(b) Holding of festivals (*samajja dana*) with dancing, singing and shows. The Pali word '*samajja*' is derived from a mountain festival held annually in Rajagaha.

(c) Provision of sexual partners (*itthi dana*)

(d) Dispatch of bulls for mating with cows (*usabha dana*)

(e) Giving pornographic materials (*cittakamma dana*)

Although not mentioned above, other gifts such as weapons, poisons, living animals for breeding and slaughter, equipment for trapping, hunting or fishing, etc., should also be avoided.

9. Advantages of *Dana*

In *Anguttara* iv, 239, it is maintained that if a person after giving, aspires to be reborn in a certain place, his wish will be fulfilled only if he is virtuous and not otherwise.

Anguttara iii, 42, mentions that one who gives alms-food bestows on others **life, beauty, happiness, strength** and **intelligence**. Having bestowed them on others, he reaps the benefits of each quality, in heaven or in the human world.

In *Anguttara* iv, 79, the Buddha mentioned six visible results of giving, namely: The generous person and not the miser wins the

compassion of the compassionate *Arahants* first. *Arahants* visit him, accept alms, and preach to him first. A good reputation spreads about him. He can attend any assembly with confidence and dignity. On the breaking up of his body after death, he is reborn in the heavenly world.

In fact, the Buddha's answers to the questions of **Princess Sumana**, who was accompanied by 500 princesses in 500 chariots, sheds more light on the value of *dana* in *Anguttara* iii, 32.

Question 1
There are two lay disciples of equal faith (*saddha*), virtue (*sila*) and wisdom (*panna*), but one is generous while the other is not. If when they both die and are reborn in heaven, will there be any difference?

Answer: Yes, there will be a difference. The generous person when reborn in heaven will have a **long life-span**; his colour or complexion (*vanna*) will be **fair and beautiful**; he will enjoy much **comfort** in heaven; a **good report** will be spread everywhere about him; and he will become an **important** and well-known *deva* to be reckoned with. In these five ways, the generous person will be superior to one who is not when he is reborn in heaven.

Question 2
When they die in that heavenly state and are reborn among men, will there still be any difference?

Answer: Yes, there will still be these differences.

Question 3
Suppose these two leave the home life and become monks, will there still be a difference?

Answer: Yes, the one who is generous, when he leaves the home life will be superior to the one who is not generous in five ways, namely: in robes, alms-round, dwelling places and medicines**,** he

will always be provided with in great abundance while the one who is not generous will always find it hard to procure. In addition, the one who is generous is dear to his fellow *bhikkhus* and they will always promote his welfare.

Question 4
Suppose these two become *Arahants.* Will there be any difference?

Answer: No, in the state of *Arahantship*, there will be no difference, when comparing emancipation with emancipation.

Thus we can see the beneficial results of meritorious actions, whether one is reborn as a *deva,* a human being, or even become a monk later. One should always strive to be generous, for he who is generous is always happy, now or hereafter. Therefore, when performing *dana,* we should always keep in mind the Five Guiding Principles in order to obtain the maximum benefits from the meritorious action, namely:

(a) The donor observes the precepts and is of **good moral conduct.**
(b) The donor has **complete faith** in the law of cause & effect.
(c) The donor feels **glad before** the offering, possesses **a clear, pure mind** during the actual offering and **rejoices after** having made the offering.
(d) The recipient is **morally virtuous**.
(e) The materials offered have been acquired **rightly and justly.**

10. Sharing or Transference of Merits (*Patti-dana*)

The word *Patti* here means merit, gain or prospective reward of a good action. So *Patti-dana* literally means the giving away or sharing of one's merit. The *Atthasalini* provides this explanation:

"*The sharing of one's merit as basis of meritorious action should be recognized as the case of one, who having made a gift and an offering of perfume, etc., gives part of his merit thus: 'Let this share be for such an one!' or 'Let it be for all beings!' What then, will there be loss of merit to him who shares what he has attained? No. As when from a burning lamp a thousand lamps are lit, it would not be said that the original lamp was exhausted; the original light, being one with the added lights becomes increased, thus there is no decrease in our sharing what we have attained; on the contrary there is an increase. Thus it should be understood*".

a) **Sharing of Merits with All Beings**

The practice of sharing merits with all beings started as a result of a request by King Sakka. After the Buddha had explained to the *deva* king why 'the gift of the *Dhamma* surpasses all gifts' (*Dhammapada* 354), Sakka saluted the Buddha and asked that the merits of the sermon be bestowed upon all the *devas* present. Thereupon the Buddha instructed the monks to bestow the merits upon all beings whenever the *Dhamma* is taught to a congregation.

After the performance of *dana* or any good deed, one should share the merits acquired with all beings. The mental volition of sharing one's merit with others is associated with loving-kindness and compassion, which actually **strengthens the potentiality** of the merits. Those beings present such as living persons, departed relatives, *petas* and *devas*, who are aware of the good deeds and rejoice therein will also benefit. By rejoicing in the meritorious action, they **acquire wholesome *kamma***, which will bring them future happiness. Thus, the sharing of merits **benefits both parties**; the donor of the merits as well as the recipient who rejoices in the act. The sharing of merits should be done mentally or verbally so that those beings present are **aware of one's intentions** and **receive the merits whole-heartedly**.

11. Transference of Merits to Departed Relatives

Tirokutta Sutta (Outside-the-Walls Discourse) of *Khuddakapatha* is the earliest discourse expounded by the Buddha concerning the transference of merits to the departed. It sets the precedent of honouring and gaining benefits for departed relatives who are reborn as *Petas*. According to its Commentary, those *Petas* who were relatives of King Bimbisara in a previous existence had waited at his palace expecting him to share with them the merits of his offering to the Buddha. But the king was occupied with the thought of finding a place for the Buddha to stay and failed to transfer merits to them. That night they surrounded his palace and made a dreadful noise. Next morning, after the king had consulted the Buddha about the incident, he prepared a great offering for them.

12. For Whom Are the Food Offerings in *Pattidana* Intended?

Doubts have been raised about whether the food offering mentioned in *Tirokutta Sutta* was intended for the Buddha and Sangha or for the departed relatives of King Bimbisara. Various suttas were cited, namely *Sigalovada Sutta* (Digha 31) and *Janussoni Sutta* (Anguttara 10:177) to support the view that '**making offerings**' could mean '**offering food to departed relatives**.' In fact, honouring departed relatives was a Hindu custom that existed even before the Buddha's time. The practice is called '***shraddha***' and is mentioned in the *Janussoni Sutta*, *Anguttara* 10:177, where the Brahmin Janussoni asked the Buddha thus: "*Venerable Gotama! We Brahmins make almsgiving and funereal offerings (shraddha) thus: 'Be this a gift to our relatives. May they enjoy it*.'

As the ***shraddha*** ceremony is generally associated with Hindu funerals, it is often misunderstood as an Indian custom of honouring the departed by making material offerings to the dead. Hindus believe that when a person dies, he or she becomes a ***Preta*,** i.e. a departed spirit or ghost, which has no real body capable of enjoying

or suffering, and is consequently in a miserable plight. In order to help the spirit to obtain a complete body, relatives offer round balls of rice, flour etc. with accompaniments of sacred grass (*kusha* grass), flowers, and sprinkling of water, and with repetitions of mantras and texts from the Vedas, the whole ceremony being conducted, not in a temple, but at any sacred spot such as the margin of a river. On the first day after death a ***pinda* or round ball** (made from rice flour and milk) is offered with libations of water etc. on which the *Preta* is supposed to feed, and which endows it with the basis of the requisite body. Next day another *pinda* is offered with water, etc., which gives it perhaps, limbs such as arms and legs. Then it receives hands, feet etc. This goes on for 12 days and the offering of the *pinda* on the twelfth day gives the head. No sooner the *Preta* obtains a complete body then it becomes a ***Pitri*,** when instead of being regarded as impure, it is held to be a *deva* and practically worshipped as such in the *shraddha* ceremonies, the first of which takes place on the **twelfth day after death**. The family is now formally cleansed. A feast is offered to Brahmins, neighbours, and beggars – even the local cows are given fresh grass. (See **Reference 9** on Significance of Ancestor Worship)

The Sanskrit word '***shraddha***' means anything done in memory of the departed ancestors. One of the daily duties of the Hindu householder is to spend a few minutes thinking of departed ancestors and to do various acts of charity. It is believed that the **fruits of virtuous deeds** performed in the name of the dead help the *Pitris* in their onward journey and **accrue good effects to the living ones**. Gifts to deserving Brahmins (priests) for the benefit of the *Pitris*, in the proper time and place and with faith, are known as *shraddha.* Performance of *shraddha* and libations of water relieves the hunger and thirst of the departed soul during its yearlong journey to the *Pitri Loka*, the abode of *Pitris* or the souls of the ancestors. By the offering of the *shraddha*, the son helps his father to dwell in joy with the *Pitris.*

By now, it is clear that ***shraddha* is not feeding the Preta** to enable it to grow a body. The Buddha would not have approved of this practice. The Indian scholar **Bimala Churn Law**, in his book 'The Buddhist Conception of Spirits' mentioned that the Buddhist

transference of merits resembles the *shraddha* ceremonies of the Hindus in some ways. He says that according to the Hindu idea, the gifts are to be made to a Brahmin in person or even to a substitute for a *Brahmana*, and the merit depends on the number of people fed and clothed on behalf of the departed. The **fruit of the deeds is transferred to the departed**. In the Hindu *shraddha*, some articles of food and clothing are of course offered directly to the spirit, but they must be given away to a deserving man in order that the desired results may be produced. To perform *shraddha* offerings is the traditional Vedic duty of a son as an act of reverential homage to his departed ancestors. In *Sigalovada Sutta*, one of the duties of a son is to offer alms in honour of departed relatives, which is approved by the Buddha.

Returning to the *Tirokutta Sutta*, there is no doubt that the great offering made by King Bimbisara was a *shraddha ceremony* but with a difference. He had just been converted by the Buddha and attained the status of a Stream Winner. So it is only natural that he invited the Buddha and Sangha instead of Brahmin priests to partake the food offering given in honour of his departed relatives. **You can be sure that the food was intended for humans not ghosts!**

The Commentary states that three conditions must be fulfilled for the efficacy of *dana* made for the benefit of the *Peta*-relative:

a. The donor must make the offering expressly for the departed one's sake, saying: "Be this a gift to my departed relative so and so. May he/she be happy" Or in Pali: "*Idam me natinam hotu, sukhita hontu natayo*."
b. The recipient of the offering must be virtuous. In the commentary to *Dakkhina-vibhanga Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikaya*, there was a case of a *Peta*, who had not benefited from three offerings made to the same immoral recipient and cried: "This immoral person has robbed me! (i.e. of the benefits which might have arisen if the offering had been made to a virtuous person.)
c. The *Peta*-relative must actually appreciate and rejoice at the offering performed for his/her sake i.e. possess wholesome joy.

By inviting the Buddha and Sangha to partake the *dana* specially for the benefit of his departed relatives, King Bimbisara fulfilled two of

the three conditions. By rejoicing at the offering made expressedly for their sake, his departed relatives fulfilled the third condition. This way the ceremony becomes a *Pattidana* instead of a *Shraddha*. So the *Peta* relatives of King Bimbisara were relieved of their suffering and attained celestial rebirth.

According to the Commentary, as soon as he offered drinking water, food, clothing and seats for their sake and shared the merits with them, there appeared in that order, water for the *Petas* to quench their thirst, celestial food to eat, celestial clothes on their bodies and celestial mansions and vehicles for their use, whereupon they lost their ghostly forms and gained the forms of celestial beings. In terms of the **Law of Kamma**, it was the wholesome joy generated by the *Pattidana* that provided the conditions for their wholesome rebirth from *Petas* to *Devas*, which was instantaneous.

13. Can *Petas* partake of food, drink and clothes offered to them?

Some Buddhists may interpret the phrase: "There is no trading, buying or selling, with gold or the like. *Petas* live and subsist on what is food for *Petas* or what reaches them through offerings made here (for their benefit by friends and relatives)" to mean that the *Petas* live on the food offered to them by friends and relatives. In fact it is a common practice among the Chinese to place choice food as offering on the altar of their departed relatives during their death anniversary, at the graves during Cheng Beng or during the seventh lunar month Hungry Ghost Festival in the belief that the departed ones can partake in their favorite fare. This popular Chinese belief of feeding the ghosts originated from Taoism. The Mahayana *Ullambana* Festival, which coincides with the Taoist Hungry Ghost Festival, is entirely different, being essentially a 'transference-of-merits' ceremony.

There are also people who believe that unseen beings can partake of food and drinks by sucking the essence (*chi*) out of food, saying that

food which have been offered have a rather 'flat taste'. This line of reasoning is not logical. It is a scientific fact that cooked food that has been left standing for some time and turned cold will normally lose their taste due to chemical oxidation of the substances that give the taste. In fact, there is a story in the *Vinaya* about a monk who lived in a cemetery and subsisted on the food left for 'departed spirits' by their living relatives. Probably the food was nutritious because he looked so healthy after eating them that the lay people criticized him, wrongly suspecting that he might also be feeding on human flesh. Because of this incident, the Buddha set the rule that a monk, who puts in his mouth any nutriment that has not been proffered to him, commits an offence (*Pacittiya* 40). The story certainly dispels the myth that unseen beings can suck the essence out of food.

Coming to burning of paper clothes burnt as offerings, one must realized that even Devas don't wear cotton, silk, terrylene, dacron or woolen clothes although the suttas say that they look magnificent in their dresses. The garments on their bodies are basically **kammic manifestations** just like the mansions they live in or the carraiges they travel in. *Petas* who belong to the *Apaya* (Woeful) class of beings would be expected to be naked or very poorly dressed (probably worse than beggars) on account of their bad kamma. It is only by wholesome rebirth from *petas* to *devas* (which was instantaneous) that allowed celestial apparel to appear on their bodies when offering of robes were made for their sake.

14. What Type of Beings Can Receive the Offerings (Merits)?

In the ***Janussoni Sutta***, *Anguttara* v, 269, the Brahmin Janussoni asked the Buddha: "Venerable Gotama! We Brahmins make almsgiving and funereal offerings (***shraddha***) thus: 'Be this a gift to our relatives. May they enjoy it.' O Venerable Gotama! How is it? Will this gift reach our relatives who are dead? Will they enjoy it?"

According to the Buddha, it will reach them if they are in an opportune place, but not otherwise. The inopportune places are:

- **Hell**, there he survives and subsists on the kind of nutriment that the denizens of hell have. (*See note on nutriment)
- **Animal world**, there he survives and subsists on the kind of nutriment that creatures conceived in the animal womb have.
- **Human world**, there he survives and subsists on the kind of nutriment that human beings have.
- **Heavenly world**, there he survives and subsists on the kind of nutriment that devas have.

The **opportune place** is the Ghost Realm. There he survives and subsists on the kind of nutriment that denizens of the Ghost Realm have or else there he survives and subsists on what his friends or his companions or his relatives and kin offer up for his sake from here (in this existence).

From this sutta it has been argued that the offerings are material food to the departed relatives, not inviting the Sangha for food offering and transfering merits to the departed. If **transference of merits** was meant here, then the merits could reach a departed relative born as a deva, who could also benefit by feeling honoured. However there is another condition that is often overlooked. According to the *Milinda-Panha*, of the different types of *Petas*, only those *Petas* who depend on what others give (***Paradatta-upajivi***) and who remember their living relatives and see what they do, can receive and share in the merits. This means that the ***Peta* must be present** during the whole proceeding to receive the merits and rejoice therefrom.

We can also rule out the presence of devas. According to **Payasi Sutta** (Digha No. 23), upon rebirth in heaven, devas would be so enchanted with the pleasures available in their new existence that they would not want to return to their old homes on earth, which they consider to be unclean and revolting like a cesspit, So they would not be aware of the offering and would not be able to receive the merits. Even those born as earth-bound devas (*rukkha deva*) would be living on trees in the forest. They would also be unaware of the Pattidana and so are unable to receive the merits.

From the **Law of Kamma**, one would expect different *Petas* to suffer different degrees of deprivation since their individual kammas are different. It is likely that *Paradatta-upajivi Petas* might possess some **good kamma** that allow them to be reborn near their relatives. Such a condition will allow them to **rejoice** at seeing their friends and relatives perform offerings in their honour. The **volitions of rejoicing** at the offering to holy personages on their behalf **constitute strong wholesome kamma** and under favourable conditions, can lead to immediate rebirth as devas. Only through their wholesome kamma can they obtain reprieve from misery.

If one's relative is not reborn in the *Peta* world, who will enjoy the benefits of that gift? According to the Buddha, ***samsara* is so long** that it is impossible for the *Peta*-world to be devoid of one's relatives. Besides, the donor himself will benefit by his *Pattidana* because of the wholesome volitions associated with it, thereby strengthening the merit he has already made.

***Note on nutriment**
Human beings can commonly go without food and water for seven days only, but some devas, petas and those in the lower regions (apaya or hell), who have strong kamma-produced matter in their bodies, can do so for long periods of time. The reason is that their bodies can exist for a long time supported only by internal nutriment. This internal nutriment (oja) is what they survive and subsist on.

15. Chinese custom of burning paper money and paper models of clothes, houses, etc., as offerings to the Departed

Many traditional Chinese families follow the ritual of burning paper offerings such as 'Hell bank notes', paper models of clothes, cars, houses, etc., to departed relatives in the belief that they will receive the offerings via the smoke and be well provided for in the spirit world. If the departed person **rejoices** at his family's act of 'filial

piety' in performing these rites according to his wishes, would he be creating wholesome *kamma* that could give immediate benefits?

The fact that the deceased is happy that his family had performed the funeral rites according to his wishes does not necessarily mean he is creating wholesome *kamma*. His joy may be due to **attachment** and there is **no merit** in burning paper offerings thinking that the dead will receive them, a belief based on **delusion**. Though he rejoices in their act, it is unlikely that he is creating wholesome *kamma*.

Similarly, if the deceased were a victim of murder and his son sought revenge and killed or injured the murderer, the deceased might rejoice at the son's so-called 'filial piety of exacting justice and restoring honour' to the family. But there is no merit in the son's deed, which is an **act of hatred**. In fact, he is creating unwholesome *kamma* by rejoicing in the unwholesome act. Therefore one should be **cautious in interpreting** what really constitutes 'filial piety.'

In Pali there are three kinds of love, namely:
a) ***Metta* love** which is free from entanglement. It is peaceful and is the kind of love that wishes for the welfare and happiness of other sentient beings. *Metta* is a wholesome mental state.
b) ***Tanha* love**, which is love full of entanglement. *Tanha* love is craving. It is the lust between couples and is unwholesome.
c) ***Gehasita pema* love**, which is the kind of love between members of a household such as the love of parents for their children and vice versa, the love among siblings and relatives. **Attachment** is involved in this kind of love and becomes apparent when one of the members dies and this causes sorrow and lamentation in the family.

F**ilial piety** refers to the extreme respect that children are supposed to show their parents and belongs to *Gehasita pema* love. It involves many different things including taking **care of parents**, **burying them** properly after death, **bringing honor** to the family, and having a **male heir** to carry on the family name. According to the Buddha, children can never repay their debt of gratitude to their parents even if they were to carry them on their heads for a hundred years. So He taught the **proper way** to repay our parents with filial piety, loving kindness and gratitude in the *Mangala Sutta* and *Sigalovada Sutta*.

16. Rejoicing in Others' Merits (*Pattanumodana*)

The word ***Pattanumodana*** is derived from the combination of two words: ***Patti*** (merit) and ***Anumodana*** (rejoicing, approval, thanks). So *Pattanumodana* literally means rejoicing in others' merit. The *Atthasalini* calls it 'Thanksgiving' and defines it thus: "*Thanksgiving (or rejoicing in others' merit) as a basis of meritorious action is to be understood as giving thanks with the words 'Good, well-done!' when, for instance, others share their merits with us or when they perform another meritorious act*".

The mental volitions accompanying *Pattanumodana* is thus associated with **gladness (*mudita*)** and right view or understanding, when one **approves** of and **rejoices** in another's meritorious deed. One thereby gets a share of the merit gained by others. By saying '*Sadhu*', we verbally express our approval and thanksgiving thereby making the **other party feel glad** over his good deed. This wholesome volition will strengthen the potentiality of his acquired merit. Thus *Pattanumodana* **benefits both parties**; the doer of the meritorious deed and the one rejoicing in the other's merit. The results of *Pattumodana* are **success, beauty and joy** wherever one is born because its **cause is rejoicing** and **encouraging** others to perform meritorious actions.

The Stingy are Not Happy

King Pasenadi of Kosala once spent a large sum of money in an **unrivalled almsgiving** to the Buddha and the *Sangha.* At that time, two of his ministers were present. One was highly pleased and rejoiced in the meritorious act, thankful for the King's sharing of merits with all beings. The other was displeased and thought that the King had wasted his money on a group of idle monks. When the King came to know of this, he rewarded the minister who rejoiced at the act of almsgiving but banished the minister who did not appreciate the generous act. Taking into consideration their contrasting attitudes, the Buddha addressed this verse to the King:

"*Verily, misers go not to the celestial realm. Fools do not indeed praise liberality. The wise man rejoices in giving and thereby becomes happy thereafter.*" *Dhammapada 177*

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XIII
TEN BASES OF MERITORIOUS ACTION

PART TWO: THE *SILA* GROUP

CONTENTS

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1. Definition of Morality (*Sila*)

Morality or *Sila* is the **foundation of all meritorious actions** without which there can be no act of merit. This is because volitions without morality lack the wholesome mental factors of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion, the root causes of merit. Even in the act of giving, if both donor and recipient are immoral, the resultant effect will be poor and lacking. Morality is defined as the following:

(a) Morality of Volition, Abstention and Performance

According to the Noble Eightfold Path, the 3 path factors constituting morality are:

- **Right Action**, which is abstention from the wrong actions of killing living beings, stealing and sexual misconduct.

- **Right Speech**, which is abstention from the wrong speech of lying, slander, abusive words and frivolous talk.

- **Right Livelihood**, which is abstention from the wrong livelihood of trading in weapons, living beings, flesh, intoxicants, poisons, as well as any livelihood involving wrong actions and wrong speech.

The three mental factors of Right Action, Right Speech and Right Livelihood are known as the **Morality of Abstention**. The volitions that accompany them are known as **Morality of Volition**. The volition that causes one to fulfill duties towards one's elders or teachers such as Reverence and Service is known as Morality of Performance.

(b) Morality of Non-Greed, Non-Hate, Non-Delusion

- Greed prompts one to covet other's property giving rise to the wrong thought of **covetousness**. When one dispels such thought

with right effort, there arise in one the **dispelling volition** and **non-greed**. These mental factors are called Morality.

- Hate prompts one to wish to harm others giving rise to the wrong thought of **ill-will.** When one dispels such thought with right effort, there arise in one the **dispelling volition** and **non-hate**. These mental factors are called Morality.

- Delusion prompts one to believe in a permanent soul or disbelieve in the Law of *Kamma* giving rise to the wrong thought or **wrong view.** When one dispels such beliefs, there arise in one the **dispelling volition** and **non-delusion or right view.** These mental factors are called Morality.

The kinds of Morality described in (a) and (b) apply equally to monks and lay disciples. In addition, monks have to observe **Morality of Restraint** in order to prevent the arising of defilements and avoid the transgression of precepts.

(c) **Morality of Restraint (Applicable to Monks Only)**

There are 5 types of restraint observed by monks, namely:

i) Restraint through the ***Patimokkha*** or the **227 Fundamental Precepts** for Monks.
ii) Restraint through **Mindfulness**, which is guarding of the six sense doors.
iii) Restraint through **Wisdom**, which is guarding the mind by Insight Knowledge and using the four requisites by proper reflection of their functions.
iv) Restraint through **Patience** when faced with heat, cold, insects, or unpleasant conditions.
v) Restraint through **Energy** in avoiding wrong livelihood prohibited by the Code of Discipline.

2. Characteristic, Function, Manifestation and Proximate Cause of Morality

- Morality has the **characteristic** of **composing (*silana*)** one's physical & verbal actions by orientating them in the right direction. A person who observes the precepts watches closely over his physical and verbal actions so that they take place in an orderly manner under his control. In an immoral person, his physical and verbal actions take place in a haphazard manner without any control or direction. Morality also has the characteristic of **upholding** by serving as a basis or **foundation** for all acts of merit because no act of merit can be accomplished without it.

- The **function** of morality is twofold, namely: (i) **prevents** one from **misconduct** through body and speech, (ii) helps one to achieve the **quality of blamelessness** in virtuous persons.

- Morality is **manifested as purity** in bodily action, purity in verbal action and purity in mental action.

- The **proximate cause** of morality is **moral shame (*hiri*)** and **moral dread (*ottappa*)** of doing an immoral act. Although listening to the *Dhamma* promotes the arising of morality, it serves only as a remote cause. It is only through shame & dread that the precepts are observed. Without them, morality neither arises nor persists.

- Shame arises from **within** and dread arises from **without.** Suppose, for instance, there is an iron rod, one end of which is red-hot and the other end smeared with filth. The filthy end one would not touch owing to disgust, and the hot end out of fear. Shame is compared with the former and dread with the latter.

3. Morality for the Lay Disciple

For lay people, the basic morality one has to observe is the Five Precepts. The Five Precepts are **mandatory** because killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and taking intoxicants are immoral and invariably lead to rebirth in the lower planes of existence. The morality group comprising Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood form a set of **Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path** called ***Ajivatthamaka Sila***, which is abstaining from: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, abusing, frivolous talk and wrong livelihood. These are the precepts to be fulfilled at the initial stage of the Noble Eightfold Path.

When the Buddha first appeared in the world, it was still enveloped in the darkness of greed, hate and delusion and the people were bereft of morality. In order to inculcate morality, He initially taught abstentions from wrong speech, wrong actions and wrong livelihood to best suit their coarse minds. Later on, when the grosser forms of evil had been removed from their habits, the Buddha no longer made use of it. Instead He taught the **Five Precepts** and **Eight Precepts** to further purify their minds.

4. Five Precepts and Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path

At first sight, the Five Precepts appear to be inferior to the Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path, which have four verbal restraints compared to only one restraint (from lying) in the Five Precepts. However, of the 4 types of wrong speech, lying is the most serious as it forms the basis of breach of all the verbal restraints. The Buddha taught that for one who commits falsehood, there is no misdeed which he is not liable to perpetuate while one who **abstains from lying**, **can easily observe Right Speech.** How could one who does not tell lies indulge in slandering, abusing and frivolous talks, especially since the Buddha had warned that habitual indulgence in them would lead to rebirth in the lower worlds.

What about the **absence of Right Livelihood** in the Five Precepts? The answer to this lies in the fact that for one who observes the Five Precepts, no special effort is required to refrain from wrong livelihood which means earning one's living by the wrong means of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. By observing the Five Precepts meticulously, one **automatically avoids these misdeeds**, let alone makes a living from them! Therefore **no question arises** that the Five Precepts are inferior to the Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path.

In other words, observance of the Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path is necessary for those who are still poor in morality in order to rid them of their debased habits. For the virtuous lay disciple who is well established in the **Three Refuges** and **Five Precepts** there is no special need for them to observe the Precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path. The analogy is similar to the case of a **fierce animal**, which has to be tied up or put in a cage to prevent it from causing harm while a **tame animal** is allowed to roam freely.

5. Eight Precepts

The Eight Precepts are called ***Atthanga Uposatha Sila*** (*Atthanga* means eight) because they are usually observed by the laity on special days called ***Uposatha,*** translated simply as "**Day of Fasting or Abstinence**."

Nowadays, the lay people observe 4 *Uposatha* days in each month, namely: **new moon, 8th waxing, full moon,** and **8th waning days**. In Buddhist countries, virtuous lay disciples take the opportunity where possible, to observe Eight Precepts, visit the monastery to perform *dana,* listen to *Dhamma* talks and engage in meditation on an *Uposatha* Day. The Eight Precepts are:

- Abstention from [1]killing; [2]stealing; [3]telling lies; and [4]taking intoxicants. These four precepts are **mandatory abstentions** called ***Varitta Sila.***

- Abstention from [5]all sexual activity; [6]taking food after mid-day; [7]dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows & the use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics and jewelry that aim to beautify and adorn the person; [8]high and luxurious seats and beds.

The first category is called ***Varitta Sila*** or **Morality of Abstention** because their actions invariably lead to rebirth in the lower worlds. However the second category of actions may, or may not, lead to rebirth in the lower worlds depending whether they are done with mind **accompanied or unaccompanied by wrong view.** Lay Noble disciples (*Ariyas*) such as Visakha and Anathapindika, who have not eradicated sensual craving, enjoy lawful sexual relations with their spouses, eat after mid-day, dance, sing, enjoy music, beautify themselves and sleep in luxurious beds. But since they do so with mind **unaccompanied by wrong views**, their actions will not result in rebirth in the lower worlds.

The *Ariya's* attitude towards sensual pleasures differs from that of the ordinary worldling. The Scriptures compare it to that of a clean Brahmin who, pursued by a mad elephant, seeks refuge with loathing and reluctance in a pile of excreta. When oppressed by sensual craving, the lay *Ariya* who has not eradicated this defilement, deals with the sense object with mind free from wrong view. On the contrary, the ordinary worldling indulges in sensual pleasures generally with mind accompanied by wrong view.

When a person who has taken refuge in the Triple Gem observes the Five Precepts, he would be a **virtuous lay disciple** of the Buddha. If he makes further effort to observe the Eight Precepts, it is for the purpose of practising the holy life at a higher level. In this sense, the second category of four additional precepts, are **voluntary** and are considered as ***Caritta Sila*** or **Morality of Performance.** For monks and novices, the Buddha had strictly forbidden them to indulge in such acts and their **mandatory avoidance** constitutes ***Varitta Sila.***

6. Ten Precepts

The Ten Precepts is an extension of the Eight Precepts whereby the **single precept** of abstaining from dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows & the use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics and jewelry is split into **two precepts**, namely:

- Abstaining from dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows
- Abstaining from the use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry

These make nine precepts and another precept of abstaining from receiving gold and silver (***Jatarupa rajata patiggahana***) makes it ten. According to the ***Khuddakapatha Commentary***: "Silver is a *kahapana* (coin), or it can be a metal *masaka* (penny), or a wooden *masaka*, or a clay *masaka,* and so on, of any kind as employed in **commerce** anywhere". In modern context, this includes **money**. The Ten Precepts are mandatory for monks and novices but not for lay disciples where their observance constitutes ***Caritta Sila*, Morality of Performance.**

7. Grades and Types of Morality

Like all meritorious actions, the grade of morality is determined by the intensities of the four factors of Potency (*Iddhipadas*), namely: **desire, effort, mind or will and investigative knowledge**. When these elements are weak, medium or strong, the corresponding morality is **Inferior, Medium or Superior** respectively. Morality practised out of a desire for fame is of Inferior grade. That practised out of a desire for the fruits of merit is of Medium grade. That undertaken for the noble state, through understanding that one should cultivate these practices with pure wholesome volition solely for their nobleness, is Superior morality.

Between the two types of morality, **Morality of Performance (*Caritta Sila*)** can be accomplished only when one is endowed with faith and effort. Faith is the belief in the Law of Kamma i.e. good results will follow the good actions of practising morality. Effort means the relentless energy one applies to the practice of morality in keeping with the faith, namely: Right Effort. For **Morality of Avoidance** (***Varitta Sila***), faith alone is adequate to refrain from doing the demeritorious actions prohibited by the Buddha.

The morality observed by the laity is called ***Gahattha Sila*** or the **Householder's Morality**. With regard to this, the ***Visuddhi Magga*** or Path of Purification says:

'*The Five Precepts as a permanent undertaking, the Ten Precepts where possible and the Eight Precepts on an Uposatha Day, are the morality to be observed by the lay disciple*'.

8. Benefits of Morality

By abstaining from immoral speech, actions and livelihood, one achieves the quality of blamelessness with **non-remorse** as the benefit. One who observes the precepts is dear and loved by his companions in the life of purity who hold him in high esteem. Non-remorse leads to joy (*piti*) and bliss (*sukha*), followed by tranquillity (*passadhi*), the proximate cause of concentration (*samadhi*). With concentrated mind, one is able to penetrate into the true nature of things (*yathabhuta-nana*) through Insight (*vipassana*) and attain the Path & Fruition Knowledge (*magga-phala nana*). Thus morality has many benefits, beginning with non-remorse and ending with the realization of *Nibbana.*

The Buddha also mentioned the following **5 benefits** gained by one who observes the precepts and is established in morality.

i) Acquires a **large fortune** as a result of diligence.
ii) Acquires a **good reputation** and fame.

iii) Able to approach and enter any assembly of nobles, brahmins, householders or recluses with **complete self-assurance**, without fear or hesitation.
iv) Lives the **full life-span** and **dies unconfused** without fear or remorse.
v) After death, one is **reborn in the happy realms** of the human or celestial worlds.

9. Reverence (*Apacayana*)

According to the definition of *Sila*, **reverence (*apacayana*)** falls under the Morality of Performance. The *Atthasalini* defines reverence or respect thus:

'*Respect as a basis of meritorious action should be known in such acts as going to meet an elderly person, taking his bowl and robe for him, saluting him, showing him the way*'.

This explanation implies a humble attitude of mind that is **free of conceit**, accompanied by intimation through **act and speech of respect** for elders. This means that one should hold them in veneration in our thoughts, address them reverentially, use polite speech, bow to them, rise in their presence and offer one's seat, serve them first and generally treat them with the **greatest respect**.

In *Samyutta* I, 177, the Buddha elaborated further on this virtue when He subdued the pride of a brahmin named Pridestiff in Savatthi. This young man showed neither respect to his mother, nor to his father, nor to his teacher, nor to his eldest brother, which was probably the reason why he got this name. Once when the Buddha was preaching to a large congregation, Pridestiff was entertaining conceited thoughts about himself. At that moment, the Buddha read his thoughts and addressed him in verse, showing Pridestiff that his mind was like an open book.

Thereupon Pridestiff was humbled, and to the astonishment of the crowd, prostrated himself before the Buddha. After the Buddha had asked him to return to his seat, Pridestiff asked these questions:

"*To whom should one show humility? Whom treat with reverence? Whom should one offer honour and respect? To worship whom is well?*"

To which the Buddha replied:

"*To **mother** and to **father** one should show* humility; to ***eldest brother*** *and fourthly to your **teacher.** These, one should show reverence. These, one should show honour and respect. To worship them is well. The **Arahants**, stainless, cool, having done what is to be done, Those peerless ones who are docile, immune and sane. Subdue your pride and hold them in veneration.*"

a) **Reverence among Lay People**

Among the laity, **parents come first** because they bring their children into the world and raise them with care and affection, always desiring their welfare and success. In *Anguttara* i, 62, the Buddha said that even if one should carry his mother on one shoulder and his father on the other shoulder for a hundred years serving them dutifully, one could never repay them. But if one could incite one's parents to **practise generosity** and **morality** and establish them in **faith in the Triple Gem** and **wisdom**, one does repay what is due to one's parents. Among the Ten Subjects of Right View, understanding that there are results of one's actions (*kamma*) towards one's mother and father constitutes Right View. Therefore, one should always hold them in veneration in one's thoughts, speech and action.

Older brothers, sisters and relatives deserve our respect because they were the ones who protected and helped us when our parents were busy. Our **teachers** also deserve our respect because they taught us how to read & write and educated us in the arts & sciences

so that we are not illiterate. In the East, respect for an older person is considered a sign of proper upbringing. By being respectful to elders, one gains much benefit because they will provide the best advice based on their experiences, which they will not share with a disrespectful person. For one behaving dutifully and respecting the elders, four things increase: **lifespan, beauty, comfort and strength.**

For Buddhists, the **highest veneration** goes to the Triple Gem, that supreme resort consisting of the **Buddha, *Dhamma*** and ***Sangha*** because they are the most worthy objects of veneration (see Going for Refuge). For this reason, members of the *Sangha* are held in veneration by virtuous lay disciples, who reverentially salute and prostrate themselves when they meet a monk, serving him with care and respect. Through such acts of reverence, the lay disciple benefits by casting away pride and conceit. The monk is also happy to preach the *Dhamma* to such people who are considered as **proper resort** (***gocara***).

b) **Reverence among Members of the *Sangha***

When someone becomes a monk, he leaves the home life and becomes a homeless one. His **preceptor**, who now 'raises' him in the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* (Teaching and Discipline) is considered as the **father** while the pupil is considered as the son. The pupil has to observe a strict, mandatory code of conduct towards the preceptor, performing acts of **reverence and service** as stipulated in the *Vinaya*, failure of which can constitute ***dukkata*** or minor offences.

There is also a code of conduct regulating the behavior of a junior monk towards his seniors e.g. a junior monk must address a senior monk as '***Bhante*** or **Venerable Sir**' but the senior addresses the junior as '***Avuso or*** **Friend**'. Thus a monk is required to remember the date and time of his ordination so that he would know his status when meeting another monk and behave accordingly.

Similarly, **novices** are required to **act reverentially** to any monk they meet even though the latter is newly ordained. In this way, the harmony of the *Sangha* is preserved. Incidentally, no monk is allowed to ordain new monks i.e. act as preceptor unless he has undergone 10 years rains-retreat (*vassa*) and is well-versed in the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*. In Myanmar, a monk of 10 years standing or above is addressed as '**Sayadaw**'.

10. Humble or Dutiful Service (*Veyyavacca*)

Childers' Pali Dictionary translates '***veyyacacca***' as service or duty performed by an inferior to a superior. This implies a **humble attitude** of mind free from conceit, when performing an act of service to another party. The Atthasalini defines it thus:

"*Dutifulness as basis of meritorious action should be known in those acts by which we carry out duties great and small towards our elders, when, for instance, we take the bowl from a bhikkhu who has been seen to enter the village for alms and fill it with food in the village, and present it to him, or go quickly and take the bowl, etc., on hearing the summons, 'Go and bring the bhikkhu's bowl'.*"

a) **Humble Service among Lay People**

For lay people, service means serving one's parents and elders dutifully and carrying out the job to their satisfaction. Other types of humble service include ministering to the sick and unfortunate in old folks and welfare homes, by attending patiently to their needs. Humble service of nursing the sick is highly praised by the Buddha. All types of **humble deeds** to the community, temples, such as performing humble services of helping to keep the monastery clean, cooking, serving food and drinks, washing dishes, etc., also constitute ***veyyavacca*** in addition to those defined above. The fruits

of humble service are obtaining **help in time** of need, **accomplishment** of one's wishes and having a **retinue.**

b) **Dutifulness among Monks**

For monks, there are certain duties to be performed towards one's preceptor or teacher, such as: attend to his needs, wash his alms-bowl, take care of his robes, offer him a drink during a meal, prepare his bath, keep his room clean, etc. In return, the preceptor is required to train the disciple in the Teaching and Discipline and provide him with the necessaries such as an alms-bowl, robes and other articles, which the pupil does not possess. If the pupil is sick, the preceptor is required to nurse him until he recovers. Such duties are mandatory for monks, unless exemption is granted by the preceptor e.g. as in the case of a pupil who wishes to practise intensive meditation.

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XIV
TEN BASES OF MERITORIOUS ACTION

PART THREE: THE *BHAVANA* GROUP

CONTENTS

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1. The Miracle of the Power of the Doctrine (*Dhamma*)

Once, while the Buddha was residing at Nalanda in Pavarika's mango grove, the lay disciple **Kevaddha** approached the Buddha and implored him to appoint one of the monks to perform miracles so that the city of Nalanda would become much more confident in the Buddha and more people would become his disciples. However, the Buddha rejected his request saying that he did not teach the *Dhamma* to the monks this way "Go, monks, and perform superhuman feats and miracles for the white-clothed laity."

The Buddha gave the same answer when asked the second time. At the third request, the Buddha told him about the three kinds of miracles which he had known and realized by his own insight. The first was the miracle of **psychic power** (*iddhi patihariya*) consisting in the ability to become many and pass through walls, to fly through the air and walk on water, and even to visit the Brahma world. It was rejected by the Buddha because it could be mistaken as the black art called **Gandhari magic**. The second, the miracle of **mind reading** (*adesana patihariya*) was also rejected because it might be mistaken as practice of *cintamani* or 'jewel of thought' charm called **Manika magic**. He recommended the performance of the third miracle, the miracle of the **power of the Teaching** (*anusasani patihariya*) as it involves the practice in Morality, Concentration and Wisdom leading finally to the extinction of defilements (*Asavakkhaya Nana*) and the realization of *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering. This is the **greatest miracle** that can only exist during a Buddha *sasana.*

2. Teaching the Doctrine (*Dhamma-desana*)

The *Atthasalini* defines teaching the Doctrine as follows:
"*From a desire for gain, thinking, 'Thus they will know me to be a preacher', someone preaches a sermon. That sermon is not of much fruit. One who makes the attainment of emancipation the chief motive, not a desire for honour, and so preaches the Doctrine in*

which he is proficient -- this is the basis of meritorious action consisting of teaching."

a) **The Pure and Proper Manner of Teaching**

In *Samyutta* ii, 199, the Buddha differentiated two types of *Dhamma* teachers, namely:

- The **impure and improper manner** of teaching by a monk with such a type of mind: "People will be satisfied with my teaching and they will obey me and support me."
- The **pure and proper manner** of teaching by a monk with such type of mind: "After the people have listened to my teaching, they will understand and appreciate the *Dhamma* and begin to practise morality, concentration and wisdom according to the Noble Eightfold Path so that they may be free from suffering." Thus he teaches the doctrine to others because it leads to liberation and because of his compassion for them.

b) **Story of the Golden Fish with a Stinking Breath**

Teaching for fame and gain can lead to great suffering as shown in the case of a monk named Kapila mentioned in *Dhammapada* 334-337. During the Dispensation of Buddha Kassapa, two brothers entered the monkhood. The older brother undertook meditation and very soon attained *Arahantship*. The younger brother named Kapila, took up study of the *Tipitaka* and became very proficient in scriptural knowledge, gaining a large following and through his following, great offerings. Thereupon he became so conceited with his knowledge that he would pronounce a thing said by others, even when it was right, to be wrong and vice versa.

The kindly monks would admonish him quoting from the Doctrine and Discipline, but Kapila was so intoxicated by the pride of knowledge that he would snub and disparage them. Even his older brother could not change his attitude. Thus did the monk Kapila

adopt an evil mode of conduct and retard the Teaching of the Buddha Kassapa. When he died, he was reborn in *Avici* Hell where he underwent great suffering. Because his evil *kamma* had not been exhausted, he was reborn this time as a fish in the Aciravati river in Savatthi where it was caught and brought before the Buddha. As soon as the fish opened its mouth, it emitted a foul odour and the whole place stank. Thereupon the Buddha related the past life of the fish when he was the monk Kapila. Because he preached the *Dhamma* and recited praises of the Buddha, he received a golden hue on his body, but because he reviled and abused the good monks, he inherited a stinking mouth. After that, the fish died and was reborn in *Avici* Hell.

3. Teaching of the *Dhamma* by Lay Disciples and Benefits

Although lay people are generally less proficient than monks, they can still teach the *Dhamma* to their fellow Buddhists in the manner recommended by the Buddha in *Anguttara* iv, 219. He can do that by teaching his fellow Buddhists to achieve the level that **he himself has achieved.**

- Thus when he has achieved **faith** himself, he strives to encompass faith in another.
- When he has achieved **morality** himself, he strives to encompass morality in another.
- When he has achieved **renunciation** himself, he strives to encompass renunciation in another.
- When he longs himself to **see the monks;** longs himself to **hear** the Good *Dhamma;* is **mindful** himself of the *Dhamma* he has heard**; reflects** himself upon its meaning**; knows** himself both the letter and spirit of the *Dhamma***;** and **walks in conformity** therewith**;** and strives to teach another what he has achieved, then the lay disciple helps his own welfare as well as the welfare of another.

Benefits of Teaching the *Dhamma*

- From this proper manner of teaching, a lay disciple who wishes to teach out of compassion for others will surely practise the *Dhamma* himself in order to experience its benefits before he is proficient to teach. Thus he progresses in the *Dhamma.* The fruit of a proper and pure manner of teaching is **success** in the attainment of Path and Fruition Knowledge because the *Dhamma* is the **cause of success**.

- Of all gifts, the gift of *Dhamma* is the best. Therefore those who have made progress in the *Dhamma* and devote their time to teaching the *Dhamma* to adults or school children truly deserve our praise for propagating the Buddha's Teachings in a modern society that is plagued by materialism and wrong views. Such teachers are loved and respected by the Buddhist community.

4. Listening to the Doctrine (*Dhamma-savana*)

The *Atthasalini* defines listening to the *Dhamma* as such:

"One who listens to the doctrine, thinking, 'They will take me, thus listening, for one of the faithful'-- this does not yield much fruit. Another, out of softness of heart, suffusing good, listens, thinking, 'There will be much fruit for me!' This is the basis of meritorious action consisting of listening to the Doctrine".

In *Anguttara* i, 129, the Buddha described 3 types of listeners, namely:

- The **topsy-turvy brained** listener is one who pays no attention throughout the whole talk. He is compared to a pot that is overturned in which any water poured thereon runs off.

- The **scatter-brained** listener is one who pays attention throughout the whole talk but cannot be bothered to remember

anything afterwards. It is like piling food and other things on this person's lap. When he rises from his seat, he scatters them all over the place through **absent-mindedness.**

- The man of **comprehensive mind** is one who pays full attention throughout the talk and when he rises from his seat, he still **remembers** all that he has heard. He is compared to an upright pot, which accumulates all the water that is poured into it.

Story of a *deva* who was distracted during the First Sermon

Paying full attention while listening to the *Dhamma* is paramount if one wishes to benefit from the talk. This is illustrated in the Discourse on *Hemavata Sutta* by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, concerning a *deva* named **Satagiri**. When the Buddha preached the First Sermon at Deer Park in Isipatana two months after His Enlightenment, Satagiri was among the millions of celestial beings present, but instead of listening attentively to the Buddha, he diverted his attention to looking for his absent friend **Hemavata** from among the audience. At the end of the Sermon, the Venerable Kondanna and 18 crores of *devas* and *Brahmas* attained the stage of *Sotapanna* but Satagiri failed to achieve similar realization owing to his distraction.

Later on, he met his friend Hemavata above the city of **Rajagaha** and both had a discussion about the Buddha. A merchant's daughter named **Kali overheard** their conversation and **listened attentively** as Satagiri spoke in praise of the Buddha's virtues. In the process, she **attained** the stage of *Sotapanna*. Among female lay disciples, the Buddha named her **chief** among those who achieved **firm faith**, **even by listening to another** (i.e. from hearsay). Regarding the two *devas*, both then proceeded with their followers to worship the Buddha who was now in the Uruvela forest. There, Hemavata posed several questions to the Buddha. Upon hearing the Buddha's answers, Hemavata and Satagiri together with their 1000 followers all became *Sotapannas.*

5. Proper Way of Listening to a Sermon and the Benefits

The way to conduct oneself while listening to a sermon is described in Kindred Sayings on Kassapa, *Samyutta* ii, 220, as follows:

- A sermon must be attended to so that one may **profit** from it. Such an attitude will **foster full attention** to what is being preached so that one will not miss a word of what is spoken in order to understand the meaning of each and every word uttered. This means that the listener must listen carefully with **full mental involvement**, and the words of the *Dhamma* must be **adhered to** in practice.

- By attending to a sermon this way, one's mind will be **calm and absorbed** in the sermon; one will be free from interference and thus attain **purity of mind**. The Scriptures provide many cases of realization of the *Dhamma* this way by people who listened attentively to a sermon by the Buddha or an *Arahant.*

- According to the commentaries, people who can attain the first and higher stages of enlightenment through mere hearing of a discourse do not exist anymore nowadays. However, one can gain knowledge by **listening attentively to the wise** when one is unable to think out or reason by oneself. This kind of knowledge is called ***Sutamaya Panna*** (wisdom derived through hearing) while the knowledge acquired through reasoning is called ***Cintamaya Panna*** (wisdom derived from thinking) and the experiential or insight knowledge gained through meditation is called ***Bhavanamaya Panna*** (wisdom derived from meditation). According to the *Mangala Sutta*, "Association with the wise is the highest blessing", because when one listens attentively to the words of the wise, one acquires wisdom from them.

- In worldly matters, *Cintamaya Panna* and *Sutamaya Panna* are very extensive in nature. All the arts and sciences one learned at school and university, were acquired through listening, and thus constitute *Sutamaya Panna*. All various crafts and professions acquired through one's reasoning and research and not through

asking or hearing from others constitute *Cintamaya Panna*. Thus to achieve worldly knowledge to enable one to be successful, **attentive listening** followed by **reasoning or research** on the subject is crucial.

6. Straightening One's Views (*Ditthijukamma*)

Straightening one's views or beliefs is the moral volition of correcting one's wrong views and establishing right understanding (*samma-ditthi*) of the Ten Subjects, the Law of *Kamma*, *Vipassana* or Insight Knowledge and the supra-mundane knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (refer to Right View in Chapter III, Noble Eightfold Path).

7. Types of Wrong Views (*Miccha-ditthi*)

In the *Brahmajala Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya,* the Buddha enumerated **62 kinds of wrong views**, all of which can be categorized as follows: eternity-belief, evasiveness or eel-wriggling, belief that things arise without any cause, annihilation-belief, and the belief that the highest bliss is sensual pleasure or *jhanic* bliss. Among these wrong views, the Buddha highlighted **3 kinds of wrong views**, which when taken up or embraced by people, will lead them to extremes and become ***akiriya-ditthi*** holders (**View of the Inefficacy of Action**). They are:

i) ***Pubbekata-hetu ditthi***

The view that all sensations experienced by beings in the present existence are caused and conditioned only by the volitional actions done by them in their past existences, i.e. **belief in past *kamma* only**.

ii) ***Issaranimma-hetu ditthi***
The view that all sensations experienced by beings in the present existence are caused by a **supreme-being** or **creator god**.

iii) ***Ahetu-apaccaya ditthi***
The view that all sensations experienced by beings in the present existence come into existence on their own, **without any cause or condition**.

In *Anguttara* i, 173, the Buddha refuted all these wrong views thus:

- There will be persons who, conditioned by their past volitional activities, will kill living beings, steal, commit sexual misconduct, tell lies, slander, use harsh speech, talk foolishly, are greedy, hateful, and hold wrong views. This is because they do not believe in the efficacy of present actions or present ***kamma***. So there is **no desire (*chanda*) or effort (*viriya*)** to differentiate what actions should be done and what actions should be avoided. In such persons there cannot arise righteous beliefs that are conducive to the cessation of defilements.

- By the same token, those who believe in a **creator-god** or those who believe that **things arise without causes or conditions** will kill living beings, steal, commit sexual misconduct, etc. This is because they do not believe in the efficacy of present actions (present *kamma*). So there **is no desire or effort** to differentiate what actions should be done and what actions should be avoided. In such persons there cannot arise righteous beliefs that are conducive to the cessation of defilements.

- In this world, there are such things as **'hearing the discourse delivered by the wise'** and **'wise consideration,'** which are the conditions to become wise and virtuous. If those three views which reject all present causes are correct, then those things called 'hearing the discourse' and 'wise consideration' will become fruitless and useless, because the holders of those views

believe that 'to become a wise man or a fool' is solely caused by their past *kamma*, or by the creator-god or by no cause at all i.e. at random. However, we all know this to be false.

8. Advantages of Straightening One's Views.

By straightening one's views, one acquires Right View, which leads to happy existences and *Nibbana* while wrong view leads to woeful states and suffering. Like all conditioned things, Right View arises through certain causes and conditions, such as:

a) **Attentive listening** to any teaching, instruction and talk about truth in conformity with the truth, namely the Four Noble Truths.

b) **Wise attention** by reflection or consideration that accords with the truth, namely by considering:

i) The **impermanent** as impermanent, not as permanent
ii) **Suffering** as suffering, not as pleasurable
iii) **Non-self** as non-self, not as self
iv) **Loathsome** as loathsome, not as beautiful

c) **Three kinds of Right View** should be understood, namely:

i) Right understanding of the Ten Subjects (refer to Right View in Chapter III, the Noble Eightfold Path)
ii) Right understanding of the Law of *Kamma,* namely: that all beings are owners of their *kamma* or actions done by them in the **past and present**, and will reap the corresponding results.
iii) Right understanding of the true nature of physical & mental processes, their cause/effect relationship, *Vipassana* or insight knowledge and supra-mundane knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

The first two types of understanding can be acquired through listening, but the last types can only be acquired by *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation. Buddhist Meditation, which is part of the *Bhavana* Group, is treated in the next chapter.

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XV
BUDDHIST *VIPASSANA* MEDITATION

CONTENTS

1. Types of Mental Development or Meditation (*Bhavana*)
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1. Types of Mental Development or Meditation (*Bhavana*)

The Pali word ***'bhavana'*** means **development** or cultivation. In the Scriptures, it denotes the practical methods of mental development or meditation. There are two kinds of *bhavana*, namely:

(a) *Samatha Bhavana* or Tranquillity Meditation

'*Samatha*' means tranquility, which is the concentrated, unshaken, undefiled and peaceful state of mind. It is called calm because it calms down the five hindrances (*nivaranas*) including passions. When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, all the hindrances such as **sensual desire, ill-will, sloth & torpor, restlessness & remorse, and sceptical doubts** are absent from the mind which is absorbed in the object. When the mind is purified from all these hindrances, the meditator feels calm, tranquil, happy and peaceful. The result of *Samatha* meditation therefore is some degree of happiness through the attainment of deep concentration (***samadhi***) such as **Access (*Upacara*)** or **Fixed (*Appana*)** Concentration called ***Jhana*,** but it does not enable a meditator to rightly understand the bodily and mental phenomena as they really are.

(b) *Vipassana Bhavana* or Insight Meditation

The Pali word ***'Vipassana'*** is derived from two words: 'Vi' which means 'in various ways' and 'passana' which means 'seeing'. Thus ***Vipassana*** means '**seeing in various ways**' and when applied to meditation, it refers to seeing all objects or phenomena as **impermanent** (*anicca*), **suffering** (*dukkha*) and **non-self** (***anatta***). The principle of *Vipassana* meditation is to observe, any mental or physical process that arises predominantly within the present moment. Thus the concentration is not fixed on a single object but the **momentary concentration (*khanika samadhi*)** that arises when the mind is free from the hindrances. At this stage, the mind is able to note whatever objects that arise predominantly, thereby revealing their **true nature (*yathabhuta*).**

2. Objects of Meditation in *Samatha* Meditation

As consciousness cannot arise without an object, we need suitable objects for mental development. The object of meditation is called '***kammatthana***' literally meaning **'working ground'** for the mind. Unlike ***Vipassana*** where the object is **real** and possesses the marks of impermanence, suffering and non-self, in ***Samatha*** the object is a fixed, unchanging concept which induces the mind to be absorbed in it thereby attaining *samadhi* or concentration. The Buddha prescribed forty objects for tranquillity meditation. They comprise the following seven classes:

- **10 *Kasinas*,** namely: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Blue, Yellow, Red, White, Space, and Light. *Kasina* means 'whole' or 'complete.' It is so called because it should be observed wholly in meditation.

- **10 Loathsome Objects**, namely, 10 kinds of human corpses.

- **10 Recollections**, namely: recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Sangha*, Morality, Liberality, *Devas* or Deities, Peace, Death, 32 Parts of the Body, and Breathing.

- **4 Divine Abidings**, namely: Loving Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity.

- **4 Formless Realms**, namely: Realm of Infinite Space, Infinite Consciousness, Nothingness, and Neither Perception nor Non-Perception.

- **1** Perception of the Loathsomeness of Food.

- **1** Analysis of the Four Elements.

In terms of inducing concentration, the meditation objects are of two kinds; those that induce only **access** (***upacara***) concentration and those that induce both access and **fixed** (***appana***) concentration or *Jhana.* Of the forty subjects, ten are capable of inducing access concentration only, namely: the first eight Recollections, Perception

of the Loathsomeness of Food and Analysis of the Four Elements. The other thirty can induce fixed concentration or *Jhana.*

3. Purpose of *Vipassana* or Insight Meditation

The purpose of *Vipassana* Meditation is to attain the cessation of suffering through rightly understanding bodily and mental processes and their true nature. For this, we need some degree of concentration. This concentration can be attained through constant and uninterrupted mindfulness of body-mind processes.

So here, we come to understand the difference between *Samatha* and *Vipassana* meditation. The purpose of *Samatha* meditation is to attain peace and happiness through deep concentration. So a *Samatha* meditator has to lay stress on concentration of mind. For this, he needs only a **single, fixed object** to concentrate on. On the other hand, a *Vipassana* meditator has to lay stress on the **right understanding** of body-mind processes and their **true nature**. So, whatever bodily or mental process that arises must be observed as it is. Thus we have a **variety of objects** of meditation. In fact, any physical and mental process can be the object of meditation. The purpose and results of *Samatha* and *Vipassana* meditation are different. So the methods are also different.

4. Role of Mindfulness in *Vipassana* Meditation

Vipassana meditation is also known as Mindfulness meditation because this type of meditation was taught by the Buddha in the *Satipatthana Sutta* or the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. The Pali word ***'Sati'*** means 'mindfulness or awareness of what is happening in one's body & mind at the moment' while ***'patthana'*** means 'setting firmly or closely'. So *Satipatthana* means firm, close, steadfast

establishment of **mindfulness** on the **present phenomenon** which one is observing; not events that have passed away nor events that have not arisen.

As ***Sati* or mindfulness** plays the key role in *Vipassana* meditation, it is important to clearly understand what *Sati* is, in terms of its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause.

- The **Characteristic** of *Sati* is ***'apilana'*** which is **'not floating away'** from the object. What is meant is that *Sati* does not stay on the surface and float away but sinks and penetrates into the object. Thus in *Vipassana* meditation, one must note the object attentively and precisely to sink into it. Superficial noting may make the mind more distracted and float away.

- The **Function** of *Sati* is ***'asammoha'*** which is **'non-confusion'** with regard to the object. This means that the noting mind should neither lose sight nor be forgetful of the object that is under observation. The noting mind keeps tracking the object without any miss.

- The **Manifestation** of *Sati* is ***'visayabhimukha'*** or **'coming face to face'** with the object. This means *Sati* sets the mind to be directly face-to-face with the object so that one can see the object clearly and be able to distinguish its distinctive features. Another manifestation of *Sati* is ***'arakkha'*** or **'guarding'.** *Sati* protects the mind from defilements. No defilement can enter when there is *Samma Sati* (Right Mindfulness). It is like closing the door to defilements just as one closes the window from wind and rain.

- The **Proximate Cause** of *Sati* is ***'thirasanna'*** or **'steadfast perception'**. The stronger the perception of the object with regard to its characteristic such as heat, cold, hardness, tension, etc., the stronger the *Sati* will be. It means to know or to recognize the object as it is, in its true nature.

5. Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*)

In the *Satipatthana Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya*, the Buddha described the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which is Right Mindfulness as follows: "*Here bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the **body as a body,** ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating **feelings as feelings,** ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating **mind as mind,** ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating **mind-objects as mind-objects**, ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world".*

- According to the commentary, **'*bhikkhu*'** is a term for a person who practises the *Dhamma* to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

- The contemplation must be accompanied by three factors: ardent or **strong effort**, **clear comprehension** and **mindfulness.**

- The contemplation must be free from covetousness and grief, which stands for **sensual desire and ill-will**, the principal hindrances that must be overcome for the practice to succeed.

Altogether there are **21 sections** or subjects taught by the Buddha:

Contemplation of the Body is classified into 14 sections:
1) Mindfulness of Breathing (*Anapanasati*)
2) The Four Postures: Standing, Walking, Sitting, and Lying Down
3) Clear Comprehension of Daily Activities
4) Repulsiveness of the 32 Parts of the Body
5) The Four Material Elements
6) – 14) Nine Cemetery Contemplations

15) **Contemplation of Feelings** is classified as one section.

16) **Contemplation of Consciousness** is classified as one section.

Contemplation of *Dhammas,* Mind Objects consists of 5 sections:
17) Five Hindrances
18) Five Aggregates
19) Six Internal and Six External Sense Bases
20) Seven Factors of Enlightenment
21) Four Noble Truths

6. Practical *Vipassana* Meditation

(a) Morality

Before a person begins to meditate, he must observe morality to refrain from unwholesome speech and action. In a meditation retreat, the observance of the **Eight Precepts** enables one to have more time to devote to meditation and not busy oneself with unnecessary activities such as beautifying oneself or indulging in any kind of entertainment. The Eight Precepts also contain abstentions from food after mid-day, sexual contact and the use of luxurious beds and chairs, to curb our sensual desires. When the Eight Precepts are fully observed, our moral conduct will be purified. Purification of moral conduct or *sila vissudhi* is the **pre-requisite** of a meditator to make progress in meditation. When *sila* if purified, the mind becomes wholesome and steady and can easily focus on the object of meditation leading to deep concentration, which in turn gives rise to insight wisdom in meditation.

(b) Sitting Meditation

The Buddha suggested that either a forest place under a tree or any other **quiet** place is suitable for meditation. The meditator should sit

comfortably with legs crossed in an upright position, not too stiff but **relaxed**. It is important to choose a position that is **comfortable** for a long time because to achieve peace of mind, the body must be at peace. For those with back problems, sitting on a chair is quite acceptable. The meditation is done with the **eyes closed.**

For the meditation object, the most commonly taught in Malaysia is the **rising & falling** movement of the abdomen. This abdominal movement is ***vayo-dhatu*** (wind element). When we breathe in, the abdomen rises; when we breathe out, the abdomen falls. In this way, we follow the rising & falling movements and direct our attention on them by making a **mental note of** 'rising, falling', 'rising, falling'. The 'rising, falling' movement is called the **primary object**, meaning the starting object, and the meditator must not be attached to it. When other objects become more prominent such as thinking or wandering mind, we must mentally note 'thinking, thinking' or 'wandering, wandering' until the thinking or wandering stops. After the mental processes have ceased, the noting mind naturally returns to the primary object, the abdominal movements. The same technique of noting should also be applied to **all other bodily or mental phenomena** when they become more predominant than the 'rising, falling' such as stiffness, itchiness, pain, anger, joy, sleepiness, etc.

(c) **Mental Noting (Labeling)**

Mental noting or labeling is very useful in meditation. This means to **say mentally the word** of that which one is experiencing in the body and mind at the present moment. The words one uses are not as important as the mindfulness itself. If one is able to observe or be aware of any phenomena **without analyzing, thinking or judging**, then one may drop the noting and just observe. We note objects as long as they are **predominant**, i.e. until they are displaced, change or disappear. For example, a pain may be noted for half an hour or so. A desirous thought might be noted 20 or 30 times by mentally noting 'desire, desire', before it fades away.

(d) **Walking Meditation**

In a retreat, it is standard practice to **alternate** periods of sitting meditation with periods of walking meditation of about the same duration, usually an hour, one after another. Walking meditation is practised with the eyes open, looking not at one's feet, but at the floor two meters in front, keeping the head down to avoid the tendency to look around and become distracted. Hands should be held in front or at the back with palms joined to avoid swinging the arms during walking. The meditator should choose a lane **twenty paces long** and walk slowly back and forth along it.

Before walking, the meditator should **note 'standing'** by focussing on the pressure on the feet, the tightness of the legs supporting the standing posture. Next, he should **note the intention** to walk. Walking meditation consists of paying attention to the walking process. If one is moving fairly rapidly, make a mental note of the movement of the legs, 'Left, right, left, right'. If one is moving more slowly, note the **lifting, pushing and dropping** of each foot. When concentration becomes stronger, one should **slow down** further to note more steps such as lifting, raising, pushing, dropping and touching of the foot on the floor. During walking, attention should be **focused on the foot** so that one becomes aware of the sensations such as lightness, heaviness, motion, hot, cold, etc. Do not look at the feet or visualize th**em** in your mind while you are noting the movements or sensations. Notice what processes occur when you stop at the end of the lane, when you stand still, when you turn and begin walking again.

As in sitting meditation, the mind can be invaded by **thinking** or wandering during walking meditation. The **meditator should stop** walking the moment he realizes this, and note the thinking or wandering until it stops. After the **thinking process has ceased**, the meditator may resume walking. In daily life, walking meditation can be very helpful. A short period of say, 10 minutes of walking meditation before sitting, serves to focus the mind. Beyond this advantage, the mindfulness developed in walking meditation is useful to us as we walk from place to place in the course of a normal day.

(e) **Daily Activities**

Mindfulness of daily activities is the **very life** of a meditator. The faculty of mindfulness becomes powerful by constant and uninterrupted **awareness of every mental and physical activity** throughout the day's practice, while failure to note daily activities creates wide gaps of non-mindfulness. The **duty** of a *Vipassana* meditator is to be mindful the moment he wakes up and throughout the day. He should try to be mindful when changing his clothes, brushing his teeth, washing the face, urinating, defecating, drinking water, opening and closing doors, stretching the hands, eating, drinking, bathing, washing clothes, etc. In fact, the mindfulness of daily activities is **crucial to the success** of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation because the yogi will always be **mindful of body and mind** throughout the period he is awake, which is what *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation is all about.

At **Chanmyay Yeiktha** Meditation Centre in Yangon (**Note 1**), yogis are asked to take 4 or 5 activities each day and perform them extremely slowly, noting mindfully all the mental and material processes throughout and report what they observed. The objective is to make it a habit to be **patient and mindful** and in this way, concentration will develop and the yogi will make good progress. During a retreat, all one has to do is to be mindful. There is **no need to hurry**. One should **not talk** unless absolutely necessary and this must be minimal. One should **not do reading or chanting** as they hinder one's progress.

7. Benefits of *Vipassana* Meditation

In *Anguttara* iv, 391, the Buddha spoke on the fruits of different meritorious deeds, with each yielding greater fruit than the previous one starting from *dana,* to taking refuge, to keeping precepts, to the practice of loving kindness and finally to the **practice of insight yielding the greatest fruit.** In *Dhammapada* 113, the Buddha said

that a single day's life of one who comprehends how all things rise and pass away is better than living a hundred years without such comprehension, namely the insight into the quick arising and passing away of bodily and mental processes, called ***udayavyaya nana.***

According to the Buddha, there are seven benefits to be derived from practising *Satipatthana Vipassana* Meditation, namely:

i) **Purification** of a being from all defilements
ii) Overcoming of **sorrow**
iii) Overcoming of **lamentation**
iv) Overcoming of **physical suffering** or bodily pain
v) Overcoming of **mental suffering** or mental pain
vi) Attainment of **Path and Fruition Knowledge**
vii) Attainment of ***Nibbana***

In the Discourse on the **Foundations of Mindfulness** (*Satipatthana Sutta*) in *Majjhima Nikaya* No. 10, the Buddha assured that: "If anyone were to develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for 7 years, one or two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return."

"Let alone 7 years, if anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for 6 years…for 5 years…for 4 years…for 3 years…for 2 years…for 1 year, one or two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return."

"Let alone 1 year, if anyone were to develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for 7 months…6 months…5 months…4 months…3 months…2 months…1 month…half a month. One or two fruits could be expected for him: final knowledge or if there is a trace of clinging left, or non-return."

(Note: Final knowledge is *Arahantship*, non-return is the stage of the *Anagamin*).

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4) In This Very Life. The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha by the Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita.
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9. Explanatory Notes

Note 1: '**Chanmyay Yeiktha**' in Myanmar means 'peaceful retreat'. Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre was established in 1971 by **Most Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa.** It functions mainly as a meditation centre but is also a monastery with local and foreign monks and nuns. It caters to all *Satipatthana Vipassana* yogis, Myanmar and foreigners alike. The main centre is located at **55-A, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Mayangone Township, Yangon 11061, Myanmar**. Foreigners are well catered for in a new 4-storey building complete with living quarters and meditation halls separately for male and female yogis. Two healthy meals are served daily, one at dawn, the other before noon; fruit juice or soft drinks are offered in the evening. Vegetarian food is available on request. Clean, safe, hot and cold drinking water is supplied.

Besides the Yangon centre, there is also a Chanmyay centre at **Hmawbi**, located in a cool and quiet farming region about an hour's drive to the north of Yangon. It is situated on about 17 acres of lush gardens with many large shady trees and bordered by small typical Myanmar villages. The Hmawbi centre is proving to be very popular and successful as more and more monks, nuns and lay people from all over the world arrive each year for long intensive practice of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation in a very conducive environment. Both these centers are truly great places to practice *Satipatthana Vipassana* Meditation under the guidance of very skillful and compassionate teachers.

XVI
RECOLLECTION OF THE BUDDHA, *DHAMMA* AND *SANGHA*

CONTENTS

1. Recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhanussati*)
2. Recollection of the Dhamma (*Dhammanussati*)
3. Recollection of the *Sangha* (*Sanghanussati*)
4. References

1. Recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhanussati*)

The recollection inspired by the Enlightened One is *Buddhanussati*. It is the term for mindfulness with the Buddha's Virtues as objects. It is the first of the Four Guardian Meditations**,** the other three being:

i) Development of **Loving Kindness** to dispel ill-will,
ii) **Loathsomeness of the Body** to dispel lust,
iii) **Mindfulness of Death** to dispel complacency and arouse religious urgency (*samvega*).

How to recollect the Buddha's virtues?

One begins the recollection by verbal recitation to familiarise with the objects. As concentration becomes better, one switches from verbal to mental recitation. When the concentration further deepens, the mind will settle on the virtues recollected instead of the words. So one should know the full meaning of the Virtues to reap the benefits i.e. *Buddhanussati* should be practised with faith and understanding. The traditional recitation of the Nine Virtues of the Buddha is:

"*Iti pi so Bhagava*, [1]*Araham,* [2]*Sammasambuddho,* [3]*Vijja carana* sampanno, [4]*Sugato,* [5]*Lokavidu,* [6]*Anuttaro purisadamma sarathi,* [7]*Sattha deva-manussanam*, [8]*Buddho*, [9]*Bhagava ti*."

"By this (reason), He, the Exalted One is [1]Worthy, [2]Supremely Enlightened, [3]Endowed with Knowledge and Conduct, [4]Well-gone, [5]Knower of worlds, [6]Incomparable charioteer of men to be tamed, [7]Teacher of gods and men, [8]Enlightened and [9]Exalted".

These **nine virtues** are now explained in detail.

1.1. Worthy or Accomplished (*Araham*)

The Exalted One is Worthy or Accomplished for the following reasons:

i) ***Araka*** = Far or Remote -- Far from all vices having completely expunged all traces of defilements by means of the Noble Path.

ii) ***Ari-hata*** = Enemies destroyed -- The enemies or defilements are destroyed by the Noble Eightfold Path.

iii) ***Ara-hata*** = Spokes destroyed -- This Wheel of *Samsara* (Rounds of Rebirth) whose **Hub** is made of ignorance and craving for existence, whose **Spokes** are *kamma* formations (*sankhara*) and the rest, whose **Rim** is ageing and death, has been revolving throughout time that has no beginning. By the penetration of this **Dependent Origination** in all aspects through **Omniscience**, the Buddha has cut off the spokes and destroyed the wheel.

iv) ***Arahati*** = Worthy of the requisites and the distinction of being accorded homage by gods and men because it is He who is most worthy of offerings.

v) ***A-raha-bhava*** = No secrecy -- Fools in the world flaunt their cleverness, yet do evil in secret and conceal them for fear of getting a bad name. The Perfect One has no such secret evildoing *(raha-bhava)*.

He is **accomplished** *(araham*) because He is **far** (*araka*) from defilements having **destroyed these enemies** (*ari-hata***)** and **cut off the spokes** (*ara-hata*) of the Wheel. He becomes most **worthy** (*arahati)* of offerings and has **no secrecy** (*a-raha*) of evil doing.

1.2. Supremely Enlightened (*Samma-sambuddho*)

Bodhi or Enlightenment is the Fourfold Insight Knowledge of the Path or the complete penetration of the Four Noble Truths. There are 3 kinds of enlightened beings called Buddhas.

i) ***Savaka*** or Disciple Buddha is one who attains Enlightenment with the help of a teacher. Such a person is also called an ***Arahant.***

ii) ***Pacceka*** or Private Buddha is one who attains **Enlightenment by himself** but does not reveal or preach it to the masses. Before becoming a *Pacceka* Buddha, the aspirant must fulfill the Ten Perfections for duration of 2 incalculable periods and 100,000 world cycles.

iii) ***Sammasambuddha*** or Supreme Buddha is one who attains Enlightenment with **Omniscience** and **Great Compassion** by himself i.e. discovered (*buddha*) all things rightly (*samma*) by himself (*samam*). Before attaining Supreme Enlightenment, the aspirant or *Bodhisatta* must fulfill the Ten Perfections for at least four incalculables (*asankheyya*) and 100,000 world cycles. The appearance of a Supreme Buddha is a very rare event!

(a) <u>Special Qualities of the Supreme Buddha</u>

A Supreme Buddha possesses 6 kinds of knowledge not shared by others. These Incomparable Qualities are:

i) *Asaya-anusaya Nana*: Knowledge of the **inclinations** and **latent/inherent tendencies** of all beings.
ii) *Indriya-paropariyatti Nana*: Knowledge of the mental faculties and their state of maturity in all beings.
iii) *Sabbannuta Nana*: Knowledge of **Omniscience** and Omnipotence.

iv) *Anavarana Nana*: Knowledge of penetrative clarity without obstruction i.e. **unrestricted** access to any objective field.
v) *Yamaka Patihariya Nana*: Knowledge of the **Twin Miracle.**
vi) *Maha Karuna Samapatti Nana*: Knowledge of the attainment of **Great Compassion** by which He looks at the world

(b) <u>The Five Eyes of the Buddha</u>

Another way to describe the Buddha's mental powers is to classify them under Five Eyes:

i) Buddha Eye: Incomparable qualities (a) and (b).
ii) *Dhamma* Eye: The Path Knowledges.
iii) *Samanta* or All-seeing Eye: Incomparable qualities (c) and (d).
iv) *Panna* or Wisdom Eye: Knowledge of the destruction of all defilements, also called *Asavakkhaya Nana.*
v) *Dibbacakkhu* Eye: Divine Eye by which He sees all the worlds.

(c) <u>What is Omniscient Knowledge?</u>

This is knowledge of the five *Neyya Dhammas* (*Neyya* = all that should be known) namely:

i) *Sankhara*: All conditioned things, mental and material.
ii) *Vikara*: Alteration or the arising and passing away of all mental and material phenomena.
iii) *Lakkhana*: General and specific characteristics of all mental and material phenomena.
iv) *Pannati*: All concepts, names and terms.
v) *Nibbana*: The extinction of craving, the Unconditioned.

With the power of **Omniscience**, a Buddha possesses 3 supreme qualities whereby He can enlighten others, namely:

- Knowledge of all truths.
- Knowledge of all teaching methods.
- The particular teaching method to suit the inclination and maturity of the disciple.

(d) Why the Buddha is called "Possessor of the Ten Powers"

In the "Greater Discourse on the Lion's Roar" (*Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* No. 12), the Buddha described the Ten Powers as follows:

i) Knowledge of what is **possible** and what is **not possible** e.g. possible for a man to become a Buddha but not possible for a woman. This knowledge arises from a complete understanding of the operation of the Five Universal Laws.
ii) Knowledge of past, present and future **fruition** of deeds, their **causes and conditions.**
iii) Knowledge of the practices leading to various destinations or **ways of rebirth**.
iv) Knowledge of the **world** as it really is, with its many and different elements e.g. four primary elements, eighteen elements of object, sense door and consciousness.
v) Knowledge of **inclinations and tendencies** (characters) of all beings i.e. beings are of inferior/superior inclinations and they gravitate towards those of similar inclinations.
vi) Knowledge of the state of **faculties** of beings i.e. degree of maturity of the five faculties of faith, wisdom, energy, concentration and mindfulness.
vii) Knowledge of the **defilements**, the **purification**, and **emergence** with regard to the attainments of meditation.
viii) Knowledge of the **remembrance of past lives** without limit.
ix) Knowledge of the **decease and rebirth** of beings.
x) Knowledge of the **destruction of the defilements** (*Asavakkhaya Nana*).

1.3. Endowed with Knowledge and Conduct
(*Vijjacarana Sampanno*)

(a) *Vijja*: Direct Knowledge

Bhayabherava Sutta of *the Majjhima Nikaya* describes three kinds of direct knowledge (Nos.1-3) while *Ambattha Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* adds five more to make eight kinds of direct knowledge.

i) Knowledge of the **remembrance of past lives** (*Pubbenivasanussati*).
ii) Knowledge of decease and rebirth of beings or the **Divine Eye** (*Dibbacakkhu).*
iii) Knowledge of the **extinction of cankers** (*Asavakkhaya*)
iv) **Insight knowledge** (*Vipassana*).
v) Knowledge of **psychic powers** (*Iddhivada*)
vi) **Divine ear** *(Dibbasota*).
vii) Knowledge of **reading the minds** of others (*Cetopariya*).
viii) Knowledge to **create replicas** of oneself (*Manomaya Iddhi).*

(b) *Carana*: Virtuous Conduct (consists of 15 factors)
First seven are called *saddhammas* (good states), possessed by all *Ariyas* or Noble Persons)
i) **Faith** in *Kamma,* Triple Gem, etc. (*Saddha*)
ii) **Mindfulness** in performing meritorious actions (*Sati*).
iii) **Shame** of doing evil (*Hiri*)
iv) **Dread** of doing evil (*Ottappa*)
v) **Effort** in abandoning unwholesome states and developing wholesome states *(Viriya*)
vi) Broad religious **knowledge** (*Bahussuta*)
vii) Understanding of the **Four Noble Truths** (*Panna*)
viii) Moderation in **eating** (*Bhojanga-mattannu*)
ix) Devotion to **wakefulness** (*Jagariyanuyoga*)
x) Guarding the doors of the **sense faculties** (*Indriya-samvara*)
xi) Restraint by **virtue** (*Sila-samvara*)
xii) First *Jhana* concentration
xiii) Second *Jhana* concentration
xiv) Third *Jhana* concentration
xv) Fourth *Jhana* concentration

The possession of **Direct Knowledge** shows the greatness of His **Omniscience** while the possession of **Conduct** shows the greatness of His **Compassion**. Through Omniscience, He knows what is beneficial or harmful to all beings. Through Compassion, He warns them of harm and exhorts them to good.

1.4. Well-Gone or Sublime One (*Sugato*)

He is called the Sublime One or **Well-Gone** (***sugata***) because of the following reasons.

(a) ***Sobhana Gamana* = Good Manner of Going**: He has gone without attachment in the direction of safety, by means of the Noble Eightfold Path.

(b) ***Sundara Gata* = Gone to Excellent Place,** Deathless *Nibbana.*

(c) ***Samma Gata* = Gone Rightly**: He has gone rightly without going back to the defilements abandoned at each Path, or He has gone rightly from the time of making His resolution up till the Enlightenment through fulfillment of the ten perfections and following the right path, the Noble Eightfold Path without deviating towards the two extremes: indulgence in sense pleasures or self-mortification.

(d) ***Samma Gadatta*** = **Speaking Rightly**: Of the six kinds of speech given below, He avoids the four types of speech unconnected with good, namely i, ii, iii, iv. Such speech as v, the Buddha speaks at the proper time. Such speech as vi, the Buddha knows the time to expound. The Six Kinds of Speeches are:

i) Untrue, unconnected with good, not pleasing to others. (Lies causing harm to others)
ii) Untrue, unconnected with good, pleasing to others. (Flattery)
iii) True, unconnected with good, not pleasing to others. (Bad worldly news)
iv) True, unconnected with good, pleasing to others. (Good worldly news)
v) True, **connected with good**, not pleasing to others. (Reprimanding wrong doing)
vi) True, **connected with good**, Pleasing to others. (Teaching the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*)

He is the **Well-gone One** (*sugato*) because of His good manner of going (*sobhana gamana*), having gone to an excellent place (*sundara gata*) and gone rightly (*samma gata*). He speaks rightly (*samma gadatta***)**, using only the right speech at the right time.

1.5. Knower of Worlds (*Lokavidu*)

He is Knower of Worlds because He has known them in all ways. There are three worlds, namely: World of the **Conditioned/ Formations** *(Sankhara-loka*), World of **Beings** *(Satta-loka*) and World of **Locations** *(Okasa-loka)*

(a) *Sankhara Loka*

The Pali word *"sankhara"* has two meaning. As one of the Five Aggregates, it means "volitional activities or efforts." Here it means formations or conditioned things i.e. things formed from conditions or resultants i.e. mental & material phenomena. The Buddha knows their causes & conditions, their formation & dissolution, etc.

- **Materiality:** constituents of matter & properties, four great elements & derived materiality, producers of material phenomena, etc.
- **Mentality:** Six types of consciousness conditioned by the sensory organs and contact with the sense objects. Because of contact, feelings arise thereby conditioning other mental and material phenomena.

"Within this fathom long body lie the world (formations), the arising, cessation, and the way leading to the cessation of the world." **Thus He is the knower of the world.**

(b) *Satta Loka*

The world of beings or all living creatures is what is meant here. He knows the beings in the 31 planes of existence, their habits, tendencies, whether of keen or dull faculties.

- *Apaya*/Woeful states: Hell, Ghost, Demon, Animal (4)
- Human realm (1)
- *Deva* realm: 4 Great Kings, *Tavatimsa, Yama, Tusita, Nimmarati, Paranimitta* `` (6)

- 1st *Jhana* Plane: *Maha Brahma*, Minister, Retinue (3)
- 2nd *Jhana* Plane: *Abhassara* or Gods of Radiance (3)
- 3rd *Jhana* Plane: *Subhakinha* or Gods of Lustre (3)
- 4th *Jhana* Plane: *Vehapphala* or Gods of Great Reward (1)
- *Asannasatta* or Unconscious beings (1)
- Pure Abodes where *Anagamins* are reborn (5)
- *Arupa* Plane: Four formless or mental realms (4)

Total Planes of Existence = 31

(c) *Okasa Loka*

The space-time continuum is what is meant here.

- The single complete universe consisting of the great earth, the oceans, mountains and continents, the various hells below the earth's surface, the six abodes of *devas* and twenty abodes of *Brahmas* in vertical position, the sun, moon and planets.

There are also **three other kinds of world systems**, namely:

- Ten-thousand-world-system which is called the realm of existence in which Buddhas appear and all *devas* and *Brahmas* therein form the audience of the Buddhas.

- Great-thousand-world-system which is called the realm of influence where the influence of the *parittas* and the Buddhas pervade and all *devas* and *Brahmas* therein accept it.

- Infinite-world-system which is called the realm of object and it means the one which serves as the objective field of knowledge of the Buddhas.

His knowledge of the three worlds is complete. So He is called Knower of Worlds.

1.6. Incomparable Charioteer of Men to be Tamed (*Annutaro Purisadamma Sarathi*)

(a) ***Annutaro*: He is **incomparable** because there is no one who can compare with Him in virtue, concentration, deliverance, and knowledge and vision of deliverance. In the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, the Buddha declared that He is without peer.

(b) ***Sarathi:* Charioteer**, trainer or breaker-in of human steer.

(c) ***Purisadamma:* Men to be tamed**, figuratively, the untrained mind (capable of committing the five heinous crimes), namely:

- Animal males such as the *naga* Aravala, the elephant Dhanapalaka and others.
- Human males such as the brahman student Ambattha, the Jain's son Saccaka.
- Non-human males such as the *yakkhas* Suciloma and Alavaka, Sakka Devaraja.

The Blessed One tamed and disciplined them by various disciplinary means as described: *"I discipline men to be tamed sometimes gently and I discipline them sometimes roughly. I also discipline them sometimes gently and roughly."* He can guide men so well that in a single session, they may go in **eight directions** (Four Paths & Four Fruitions) without hesitation. Thus He is called **Incomparable Charioteer of men to be tamed.**

1.7. Teacher of Gods and Men (*Sattha Devamanussanam*)

(a) ***Sattha*= Teacher**: People who want to progress require a teacher or leader to guide them to their goal. The Buddha taught the perfect way to self-development via the **Noble Eightfold Path** leading to the cessation of suffering. He is like the caravan leader who brings the caravan across the **dangerous wilderness (*Samsara*)** to a land of **safety (*Nibbana*).**

(b) ***Deva-Manusssanam* = Gods and men**: This term denotes those who are the **best** and also those who are **capable of progress** such as the Chief Disciples, the Venerable Sariputta and Moggallana, the great *Arahants,* innumerable *devas* and *Brahmas.* Even an animal, through listening to the Buddha's Teaching, acquired rebirth as a *deva* and attained Path & Fruition Knowledge after the Buddha taught him the Dhamma, as in the case of Manduka, the frog deity of Campa.

He bestows the blessings of the *Dhamma* on all of the gods, men and animals who are capable of progress. Thus He is the **Teacher of gods and men.**

1.8. Enlightened (*Buddho*)

According to *Niddesa* i. 143 and *Patisambhidamagga* i. 174, a "Buddha" is one who discovers the Four Noble Truths by himself and reaches omniscience therein and mastery of the powers. The derivation of the word and meanings are given below.

(a) ***Bujjhita* = Discoverer** of the Truths, thus he is enlightened ***(buddha***).

(b) ***Bodheta* = Enlightener** of the generation, thus he is enlightened (***buddha).***

(c) ***Buddhi* = Discovery** capable of discovering all ideas, which is omniscience, thus he is enlightened (***buddha***).

"Buddha" is not a name given by parents, friends, relatives, monks, brahmans or devas. "Buddha", signifies **final liberation**, a realistic description of Enlightened Ones together with their obtainment of **omniscience** under the enlightenment (***bodhi)*** tree.

Thus when two Brahmins (Dona and Sela), who were struck by His radiance and glory asked whether He was a *deva, gandhabba* or *yakkha,* the Buddha replied as follows:

"*As a lotus, fair and lovely, by the water is not soiled,*
By the world I am not soiled. Therefore, brahmin, I am the Buddha." (*Anguttara*, Book of Fours, Chapter 37)

"*Known are the things to be known, cultivated are the things to be cultivated, destroyed are the things to be destroyed. Therefore, brahmin, I am the Buddha.*" (*Sutta Nipata*, III.7, Sela)

1.9. Exalted or Blessed One (*Bhagava*)

Bhagavant is a term signifying the respect and veneration accorded to Him as the highest of all beings distinguished by His special qualities (refer to earlier meaning of *Anuttaro*). The derivation of the word and meanings are given below.

(a) ***Bhagehi*= Blessings:** He is called "**Blessed (*bhagava*)**" because He is associated with six blessings, namely: lordship, *dhamma*, fame, glory, wish and endeavour.

i) **Lordship** over His mind such as making the body minute, light, gigantic, arriving where he wants to go, producing what he wants, self-mastery, supernormal powers, immediate accomplishment at his wish when performing a task.

ii) ***Dhamma***, which are the nine Supra-mundane States, consisting of the eight Path & Fruition Knowledges and Nibbana.

iii) **Fame** *(yasa)*: The Buddha's exceedingly pure fame has spread to the three worlds by the power of His Truthfulness.

iv) **Glory** *(siri)*: He possesses the splendour of body, perfect in every respect, comforting those who behold His presence.

v) **Wish:** He succeeded in every wish He entertained e.g. the resolution at the feet of Dipankara Buddha, fulfillment of the Ten Perfections, attainment of Enlightenment.

vi) **Endeavour:** He possesses the **Right Effort**, which is the reason why the whole world venerates Him. His effort is described by His own words: *"Let the skin remain, let the sinews remain, let the bones remain, let the flesh and blood dry up. I shall not rest nor relax until I attain what I set out to do."*

(b) ***Bhaggava* = Abolishment:** He has abolished all kinds of defilements, stains and cankers, all kinds of misconduct, craving, wrong views, the five kinds of Maras*, etc. *(Maras of defilements, of the aggregates, of kamma-formations, Mara the deity, and Mara as death.)

(c) ***Bhagyava* = Fortunate** owing to the "fortunateness" to have reached the further shore of the ocean of perfection of the ten paramis, which produce mundane and supra-mundane bliss. His possession of fortunateness is shown in the following ways:

i) Excellence of **His physical body**, which bears all the marks of His merits.
ii) Excellence of **His *Dhamma*-body**, namely the nine supra-mundane states and all His Teachings over 45 years.
iii) **Esteem** by worldly people and those who resemble Him (*ariyas*)
iv) **Fit to be relied upon** by laymen, *bhikkhus* and *devas* because He always gives the best advice leading to mundane and supra-mundane bliss.

(d) ***Bhattava* = One who has frequented**, cultivated, developed such mundane and supramundane states such as the divine abidings, solitude, jhanas, and Nibbana as the void, the desireless and the signless, liberations and others as well.

(e) ***Bha-Ga-Va*:** This term is derived by combining the syllables "*Bha* from *bhava*", "*Ga* from *gamana*" and "*Va* from *vanta*" and denotes "<u>one who has rejected (*vanta*) going to (*gamana*) the kinds of becoming (*bhava*)</u>".

Thus He is the **Blessed One** (*bhagava***)** because of His possession of **blessings** (*bhagehi*)**, abolishment** (*bhaggava*)**, fortunateness** (*bhagyava*)**** and because He has **frequented (*bhattava*)** and **rejected going into the kinds of becoming** (*bha-ga-va*).

1.10. Benefits of *Buddhanussati*

When recollected with **faith and understanding**, Buddha's Virtues become the objects which condition the arising of wholesome mental states thereby preventing unwholesome states from arising. Through frequent and devoted meditation, one derives the following benefits:

i) Acquires **abundant faith,** which purifies the mind so that **mindfulness** and **concentration** is easily established.

ii) Productive of **joy** which is helpful in difficult times e.g. sickness, loss or facing hardships.

iii) Instills **confidence** in oneself thereby dispelling fear, anxiety, doubt and restlessness.

Owing to the profundity of Buddha's Virtues and the pre-occupation involved in recollecting the various kinds of virtue, the meditator does not attain to fixed concentration (*jhana*) but reaches only access concentration, which is sufficient to serve as a foundation for insight meditation practice. By virtue of this practice (*Buddhanussati* followed by *Vipassana* meditation), the meditator is assured of a happy destiny, should he/she fail to realize the **Path and Fruition** Knowledge in this very life.

2. Recollection of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammanussati*)

According to Childers' Dictionary of the Pali Language, the word "***dhamma***" has several meanings such as: nature, condition or cause, quality or characteristic, object, idea, thing or phenomena, doctrine, law, virtue, justice. Here it means the **Teaching of the Buddha**.
The *Dhamma* is threefold, namely:

(a) ***Pariyatti Dhamma*** = **Text** of the Buddha's Teaching or *Tipitaka* which contains all the Buddha's word (*vacana*) or **Doctrine.**

(b) ***Patipatti Dhamma*** = **Practice** of the Buddha's Teaching by the Noble Eightfold Path or training in morality, concentration and wisdom. This is the real value of the Buddha's word.

(c) ***Pativedha Dhamma*** = **Realization** of the Buddha's Teaching through the nine Noble Attainments namely: four Paths, four Fruitions and *Nibbana*. These nine stages are the ultimate goal secured with the aid of the Teaching & Practice.

The *Dhamma* as a subject of meditation includes only the Teachings (*Pariyatti*) and Noble Attainments (*Pativedha*) whereby one recollects the six virtues of this two-fold *dhamma* to establish mindfulness. The manner of recollection is similar to the Recollection of the Buddha but here one recites the six virtues of the *Dhamma* as below:

"[1]*Svakhato Bhagavata Dhammo,* [2]*Sanditthiko,* [3]*Akaliko,* [4]*Ehipassiko,* [5]*Opanayiko,* [6]*Paccattam Veditabbo Vennuhi ti*."

"[1]Well expounded is the Dhamma of the Exalted One, [2]visible here and now, [3]immediately effective, [4]inviting one to come and see, [5]leading onwards, [6]to be realized by the wise each for himself."

These **six virtues** are now explained in detail as follows.

2.1. Well Proclaimed (*Svakato*)

This virtue refers to the mundane *Dhamma* or **Doctrine** (*Pariyatti*) and the supra-mundane **Attainments** (*Pativedha*). The remaining virtues concern only the supra-mundane Attainments.

a) <u>The Doctrine as a pure & complete mode of religious life</u>

i) Good in beginning because it teaches **morality** as the essential beginning of a pure religious life. Good in middle because it teaches **concentration** by which one acquires calm & insight. Good in the end because it points to **full knowledge and *Nibbana*** as the goal.

ii) Good in the beginning by hearing it, one acquires **confidence**. Good in the middle by practising it, one overcomes the hindrances and achieves **calm and insight**. Good in the end by **realizing happiness** as the promised result.

iii) Announces the life of purity that is utterly **perfect** and **pure** in letter and in meaning.
- **Perfect:** connected with five *Dhammakkhandas* (aggregates of *dhamma*) namely; virtue, concentration, understanding, deliverance, knowledge & vision of deliverance.
- **Pure:** exists for purpose of **crossing over** the rounds of rebirth and is not concerned with worldly things.

iv) No perversion of meaning because things described here as **obstructions and outlets (i.e. noble paths) are actually so.** Other teachings are badly proclaimed because the things they described as obstructions and outlets are actually not e.g. eternalism & annihilation views, belief in self/soul, belief in creator not *kamma*.

b) Supra-mundane *Dhamma* or Nine Noble Attainments

The supra-mundane *Dhamma* is well proclaimed because the course of practice is a worthy approach to *Nibbana* and *Nibbana* is a worthy result of the practice.

i) The **Noble Path,** which is the middle path between two extremes, is well proclaimed in being proclaimed to be the **middle way.**
ii) The **Fruitions,** where defilements are tranquilized, are well proclaimed in being proclaimed to have **tranquilized defilement.**
iii) ***Nibbana*** whose individual essence is eternal, deathless, refuge, safety, etc. is well proclaimed in being proclaimed to have an individual essence that is **eternal, deathless, and so on.**

So the mundane *Dhamma* ***(****Pariyatti****)*** and the supra-mundane *Dhamma* (*Pativedha*) are well proclaimed.

2.2. Visible Here and Now (*Sanditthiko*)

(a) It can be **seen** by a Noble person himself when he has done away with greed, wrong views, etc. "So when greed has been abandoned, he does no harm to himself, or to others, or to both." This is the *Dhamma* **visible here and now.**

(b) When one has attained it, it is visible to him here and now through **reviewing knowledge** without having to rely on faith in others.

(c) ***Sanditthi*** means proper view **(Right View)**
- **Noble path** conquers defilements by means of the **proper view** associated with it.
- **Noble fruition** is the result of this proper view.
- ***Nibbana*** is the object of this proper view.
- So the ninefold supra-mundane *Dhamma* has the **proper view-*sanditthi***

(d) Supra-mundane *Dhamma* arrests fearful rounds of rebirth as soon as it is seen by penetration of the path & realization of *Nibbana*. So it is visible here and now since it is **worthy of being seen.**

2.3. Immediately Effective (*Akaliko*)

(a) Worldly virtue takes time to yield its fruit according to the **Law of *Kamma*** in which the result does not ripen immediately but is delayed.

(b) The supra-mundane state is not subject to time. Following the passing away of the Path consciousness, there arises immediately the Fruition consciousness which tranquilizes the defilements. It is ***akaliko,* immediately effective**.

2.4. Inviting One to Come and See (*Ehipassiko*)

(a) The reality & purity of the Noble Attainments make them the most precious things in the world. So they are worthy of invitation **to come and see.**

(b) It is "**not come & believe"** whereby one must have faith first. In the *Kalama Sutta*, the Buddha encouraged **proper enquiry** not blind faith or speculation.

(c) By practising insight meditation according to the Noble Eightfold Path, one can directly experience the Buddha's Teaching whereby confidence and faith is developed by "**seeing**" with **right view or understanding.**

2.5. Leading Onwards (*Opanayiko*)

The Noble Attainments lead a person out of the fearful cycle of births and death (*Samsara*). They **lead onwards** to *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering. The way onwards consists of four stages:

(a) **First Path & Fruition:** eliminates defilements that lead to rebirth in the woeful states, namely: wrong view of personality, sceptical doubts and adherence to rites and rituals. Thereafter this Noble person will suffer not more than **seven rebirths**. He is called a *Sotapanna* or **Stream-winner.**

(b) **Second Path & Fruition:** attenuates the grosser forms of sensual desire and ill-will to the extent that this Noble person will suffer no more than **one rebirth** in the sensual realm. He is called a *Sakadagamin* or **Once-returner**.

(c) **Third Path & Fruition:** eliminates sensual desire and ill-will but not the subtle forms of craving for rebirth in Brahma realm. This Noble person will not be reborn in the sensual plane but in the Pure Abodes. He is called an *Anagamin* or **Non-returner.**

(d) **Final Path & Fruition:** eliminates all types of craving and defilements that bind one to existence. For this Noble person ***"Birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived out, what was to be done is done, there is no more of this to come."*** He is called an ***Arahant*** or **Worthy** and has completely realized Nibbana, the cessation of all suffering.

2.6. To be Realized by the Wise, Each for Oneself (*Paccatam Veditabbo Vennuhi*)

According to the *Puggala Pannatti* (Classification of Individuals, See Reference 2), of the beings who encounter a Buddha Sasana (Religion), four classes can be distinguished.

(a) ***Ugghatitannu* (quick witted)**: a person who encounters a Buddha in person, and is capable of attaining Path & Fruition through the mere hearing of a short concise discourse.

(b) ***Vipancitannu* (medium witted)**: a person who is only capable of attaining when the short discourse is expounded to him at some length.

(c) ***Neyya* (slow witted)**: for such a person, it is necessary to study and take careful note of the discourse and then to practise the provisions therein for days, months, and years in order to attain. Period of practice is from 7 days to 30 or 60 years depending on the person's past *Parami* (Perfections).

(d) ***Padaparama* (dull witted)**: for such person, even though he encounters a Buddha *Sasana* and even though he puts in the utmost effort, he cannot attain within his lifetime. All he can do is to accumulate good habits and potential.

The first two classes can attain the 1st and higher stages of Path & Fruition through mere hearing of a discourse, like the Chief & Great Disciples, Bahiya, Visakha, Anathapindika, and others. These types of people hardly exist anymore nowadays. Only the **slow witted** and **dull witted** exist at present times.

- Noble Attainments can be experienced by **all kinds of wise persons** beginning with the quick witted. It is not in the province of fools and the dull witted.

- Each person must **experience them by himself.** For the pupil is not purified from his vices because his teacher has developed the Path. Nor can one pass on the Noble Attainments to another as one might share other types of merits.

- The Noble Attainments are not to be looked upon as something which can be obtained through the mercy of others. They should be developed, realized, and enjoyed by the wise, **each for oneself.**

2.7. Benefits of *Dhammanussati*

- Constant recollection of the Virtues of the *Dhamma*, helps to **overcome greed, hatred or delusion** in the mind.

- Being inspired by the *Dhamma*, **rectitude or uprightness** arises and the disciple overcomes the mental hindrances. But here also as in *Buddhanussati*, the meditator does not reach the absorption stage but only **access concentration** because the virtues of the *Dhamma* are so profound and the recollection of them requires intense effort and mindfulness.

- With the concentration obtained through *Dhammanussati*, one can develop **Insight** into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena that will finally lead one to the happiness of *Nibbana*.

3. Recollection of the *Sangha* (*Sanghanussati*)

The Pali word "*Sangha*" means a **congregation, order, fraternity.** According to the *Visuddhi Magga*, the members possess in common both virtue and right view. There must be a minimum of **four ordained monks** who follow the 227 monastic rules laid down by the Buddha. There are two kinds of *Sangha*, namely:

(a) ***Ariya Sangha*** (Noble Order): consists of monks who have realized one or more of the Path & Fruition stages (i.e. saints) and become **worthy of offerings**. The *Ariya Sangha* came into existence two months after Buddha's enlightenment, on the 5th waning day of *Vassa* after all the five ascetics were ordained.

(b) ***Puthujjana Sangha*** (Ordinary Order): consists of monks who are world-lings. They still **possess all ten fetters** that bind them to the rounds of rebirth but will always strive to reach the noble state.

Sanghanussati as a subject of meditation (like the *Sangha* Refuge) is confine only to the ***Ariya Sangha*** whereby one recollects the nine virtues of this Noble Order to establish mindfulness. The manner of recollection is similar to the Recollection of the Buddha but here one recites the nine virtues of the *Sangha* as follows:

"**[1]***Supatipanno Bhagavato savakasangho,* **[2]***ujupatipanno Bhagavato savakasangho,* **[3]***nayapatipanno Bhagavato savakasangho,* **[4]***samicipatpanno Bhagavato savakasangho; yadidam cattari purisa yugani attha purisa puggala, esa Bhagavato savakasangho;* **[5]***ahuneyyo,* **[6]***pahuneyyo,* **[7]***dakkhineyyo,* **[8]***anjali karaniyo,* **[9]***anuttaram punnakkhettam lokassa ti.*"

"Well attained is the Order of the Blessed One's disciples, upright is the Order of the Blessed One's disciples, true is the Order of the Blessed One's disciples, proper is the Order of the Blessed One's disciples. That is, the four pairs of persons, the eight individual persons, this is the Order of the Blessed One's disciples; worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of salutations, an incomparable field of merits for the world."

3.1. Good, Well Attained (*Supatipanno*)

(a) Well attained because it is the **right practice *(samma patipada)***, that does not turn from its goal i.e., will not return to the defilements abandoned.

(b) The way has no opposition; **opposing defilements are eliminated** at each path.

(c) Conforms with the **truth** regulated by the *Dhamma*

(d) They follow the **way** according to the well-proclaimed *Dhamma* & *Vinaya* (Teaching and Discipline) and exercise **immaculate conduct** e.g. Ven. Sariputta and the one meal at public house.

3.2. Upright or Straight Practice (*Ujupatipanno*)

(a) Avoiding two extremes, they have entered the middle path that is **upright** and lead **straight** to *Nibbana.*

(b) They have entered the way that **abandons** bodily, verbal & mental crookedness. Therefore **straight** and no deceit or hypocrisy, not even a single hint for the sake of livelihood.

3.3. True or Correct Practice (*Nayapatipanno*)

(a) Practising correctly the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to *Nibbana. Nibbana* is what is called "true".

(b) So true to the practice that they will give up their lives rather than break the precepts e.g. monk who died rather than destroy a plant.

3.4. Dutiful or Proper Practice (*Samicipatipanno*)

(a) Conduct is **dutiful and proper** with respect to the Teaching & Discipline.
(b) They make use of the four requisites offered by the laity like a **master or son** using his inheritance and not like a thief or a person owing a debt. It is called proper practice because it is the way of those worthy of proper acts of veneration.

Puthujjana or worldling monks worthy of respect

An ordinary monk who is vigorously striving is also **worthy of respect** because he possesses the five factors of a striver *(Padhaniya),* namely:

i) **Faith** in the enlightenment of the Buddha.
ii) Good **health and digestion.**
iii) Free from **deceit and hypocrisy.**
iv) Sustains **fourfold effort** to root out defilements.
v) Attained the insight into the quick arising and passing away of mental and material phenomena or the **fourth insight knowledge, *udayabbaya nana.***

Yadidam: That is to say or namely
cattari purisa yugani: the four pairs of persons
***attha purisa puggala*:** the eight individual persons

- 1st Path and 1st Fruition form one pair. So the 4 Paths and 4 Fruitions form four pairs of persons.
- Taken individually, they represent 8 persons (defined in terms of mental processes).

3.5. Worthy of Gifts (*Ahuneyyo*)

- Derived from the word ***"ahuna"*** or sacrifice, it is something **donated to the virtuous.**
- Term for the **four requisites.**
- *Sangha* is **worthy to receive** that gift because it bears great fruit.

3.6. Worthy of Hospitality (*Pahuneyyo*)

Gifts and services rendered with honour and respect to visiting friends, dear and beloved relatives from afar is **hospitality.**

- *Sangha* is encountered only during a Buddha era and is like a **rare visitor** with endearing and lovable qualities. Hence it is worthy of hospitality.
- As the *Sangha* is worthy to be placed first as the **guest of honour**, it is worthy of hospitality.

3.7. Worthy of Offerings (*Dakkhineyyo*)

A gift is said to be '*dakkhina*' (offering) when it is given out of **faith in the next world.**

(a) The *Sangha* purifies it by making it of great fruit that it may even be transferred to departed relatives who are capable of receiving the merit (transference of merit).

(b) In the Analysis of Offerings (*Majjhima* iii, 256), the Buddha enumerated 14 grades of offering according to the purity of the recipient, with the highest offering to the Buddha and the lowest to an animal. The reason is that when giving to an individual, purity of the individual is important. There are four purifications of offerings:
   i) Purified by **donor** but not by recipient
   ii) Purified by **recipient** but not by donor
   iii) Purified by both **donor and recipient**
   iv) **Not purified** by either donor or recipient.

(c) Offering to the *Sangha* is **more beneficial** than offering to an individual. Here, whoever represents the *Sangha* are mere representatives, who help to recall to memory the *Ariya Sangha* including the Chief and Great Arahants during the Buddha's time. Because of such purity of the *Sangha,* the offering bears great fruit. Therefore, the ***Sangha* is worthy of offerings.**

3.8. Worthy of Salutations (*Anjalikaraniyo*)

- People salute one another according to their culture or custom, as a greeting or out of politeness.

- The Buddhist performs reverential salutation to the *Sangha* by placing both hands (palms joined) on the head out of **respect for their virtue and purity.**

- Anyone can take on an appearance of respectability but will find it difficult to live up to the high standards of morality, tranquility, and insight wisdom over the long term.

- The *Sangha* is **worthy of reverential salutation** because they really live up to the practice of the *Dhamma & Vinaya* of the Buddha.

3.9. An Incomparable Field of Merits in the World (*Anuttaram Punnakkhetam Lokassa*)

Cultivation of merits is like farming. It requires several causes/conditions for success, namely:

a) Root (*hetu*) - seeds & cultivator
b) Supporting (*paccaya*) - fertility of the field
c) Constituents (*sambhara*) - water, sunlight, wind, drainage, rivers & creeks to feed the fields, etc.

- A clever cultivator will always use **good & viable seeds** to sow. He will choose fertile, suitable land to till and plant his crop at the right time and protect them against pests, weeds, and damage. These inputs alone won't ensure a good harvest without constituents such as water, sunlight, wind.

- The clever cultivator is like the **virtuous donor** who accomplishes his task with the four bases of success, namely: **desire, effort, mind, knowledge**. He knows which elements strengthen or weaken the beneficial results of offering: offering with or without faith, care & respect, timely, without attachment to offering, without belittling others.

- Good viable seeds are like **good mental volitions** before, during and after the act of offering. They are rooted in non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion.

- The time, water, sunlight and control measures are **constituents** such as the types of offerings or requisites, right time, etc.

- The fertile field is like the **virtue of the recipient** who has overcome greed, hatred and delusion. Given a choice of recipients, a wise person will choose the *Sangha* to receive offering because the "*Sangha* is the **best field of merit** in the world."

3.10. Benefits of *Sanghanussati*

- When one thus recollects the Virtues of the *Sangha*, one's mind is not invaded by **greed, hatred or delusion** but is upright and joyful, free from all hindrances.

- But here also as in *Buddhanussati*, the meditator does not reach the absorption stage but only **access concentration** because the Virtues of the *Sangha* are so profound and the recollection of them requires **intense effort and mindfulness**.

- One who constantly recollects the Virtues of the *Sangha* comes to have **respect and faith** in it, and is not overcome by fear or dread. One is able to bear pain, can form the idea that one is in

the company the *Sangha* and the mind aims at **attaining the virtues** of the *Sangha.*

- With the concentration obtained through *Sanghanussati*, one can develop **Insight** into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena that will finally lead one to the happiness of *Nibbana*. If one fails to reach *Arahantship* in the present life, certainly one is assured of a happy destiny.

4. References

1) The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*) by the Venerable Bhikkhu Nanamoli.
2) The Requisites of Enlightenment by the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw.
3) Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice by Ven. Paravahera Vajiranana Mahathera. Published by Buddhist Missionary Society, Jalan Berhala, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1975.

XVII
THREE BASKETS (*TIPITAKA*) IN BUDDHISM

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1. What is the *Tipitaka*?

The word of the Buddha, which is originally called the *Dhamma*, consists of three aspects, namely: Doctrine (*Pariyatti*), Practice (*Patipatti*) and Realization (*Pativedha*). The Doctrine is preserved in the Scriptures called the *Tipitaka*. English translators of the *Tipitaka* have estimated it to be eleven times the size of the Christian Bible. It contains the Teachings of the Buddha expounded from the time of His Enlightenment to *Parinibbana* over forty-five years.

Tipitaka in Pali means **Three Baskets** (*Ti* = Three, *Pitaka* = Basket), not in the sense of function of storing but of **handing down**, just like workers carry earth with the aid of baskets handed on from worker to worker, posted in a long line from point of removal to point of deposit, so the Baskets of Teachings are handed down over the centuries from teacher to pupil.

The Three Baskets are: Basket of **Discipline** (*Vinaya Pitaka*), which deals mainly with the rules and regulations of the Order of monks and nuns; Basket of **Discourses** (*Sutta Pitaka*) which contains the discourses delivered by the Buddha to individuals or assemblies of different ranks in the course of his ministry; Basket of **Ultimate Things** (*Abhidhamma Pitaka*) which consists of the four ultimate things: Mind (*Citta*), Mental-factors (*Cetasikas*), Matter (*Rupa*) and *Nibbana*. The contents of the Pali *Tipitaka* are shown in the Appendix.

According to **Ven. Sayadaw U Thittila**[1], the versions of the Pali Canon existing in Theravada countries such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos differ very slightly, with only a few minor grammatical forms and spelling. In substance and meaning and even the phrases used, they are in complete agreement. The Pali *Tipitaka* contains everything necessary to show forth the Path to the ultimate goal of *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering.

a) Each Tradition has its own Version of the *Tipitaka*

There are three versions of the *Tipitaka* adopted by the three branches of Buddhism in existence today, namely: (i) the **Pali *Tipitaka*** of the **Theravada** tradition, (ii) the vast **Mahayana *Tripitaka*** in Chinese consisting primarily of translations of Sanskrit Texts and (iii) the **Tibetan *Tripitaka*** in the Tibetan language, called the ***Kagyur*** (consisting of translations of Sanskrit Texts & the Four Great *Tantras*) and ***Tangyur*** (consisting of works of Indian and Tibetan scholars). Theravada, the orthodox Buddhist school which traces its origin to the Buddha's time, rejects the Mahayana and Tibetan scriptures as later creations that do not reflect the Buddha's Teachings.

According to **Warder**[2], although Mahayana claims to have been founded by the Buddha himself, the consensus of the evidence is that Mahayana teachings originated in South India somewhere in Andhra Pradesh during the 1st century AD. Several of its leading teachers were born in South India, studied there and afterwards went to the North to teach, one of whom was **Nagarjuna**. The idea that the sutras had been confined to the South was a convenient way for Mahayanists to explain to Buddhists in the North why it was that they had not heard these texts directly from their own teachers, without admitting that they were **recent fabrications**.

Another alternative explanation recorded by the Tibetan historian **Taranatha** was that though the Buddha had taught the Mahayana sutras, they were not in circulation in the world of men for many centuries, there being no competent teachers and no intelligent students. The sutras were transmitted secretly to various supernatural beings and preserved by the gods and *nagas* (dragons). These secret teachings were brought out from their hiding places when Mahayana teachers who were capable of interpreting these sacred texts appeared around the 2nd century AD. This is as good as admitting that no Mahayana texts existed until the 2nd century AD!

As pointed out by **Warder**[2], such fanciful accounts cannot be accepted as historical facts. Since everything about early Buddhism suggests that the Buddha's Teaching was never meant to be secret,

the possibility of a secret transmission amounts to an **aspersion** on the powers of the Buddha that he failed to do what others were able to accomplish 600 years later. Also, in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, the Buddha had declared that there was nothing with regard to the teaching that he held to the last with the closed fist of the teacher who keeps some things back.

The claim by Mahayana that there were no competent teachers and intelligent students during Buddha's time is aimed at **exalting their own status** and **disparaging** the accomplishments of the Chief Disciples and *Arahants*. In fact, one of the earliest Mahayana *sutras*, the ***Ratnakuta* Sutra** denounces the pupils (*Savakas* or *Arahants*) as not really 'sons' of the Buddha i.e. not really Buddhists! Practically every Mahayana *sutra* repeats this denunciation of the 'inferior (*hina*)' way of the pupil rather unpleasantly in sharp contrast to the **tolerance and understanding** characteristic of most of the earlier Buddhist texts that display the **true spirit** of the *Dhamma* taught by the Buddha.

b) Reliability of *Tipitaka* compared with other Religious Records

In 'The Life of the Buddha' by Ven. Bhikkhu **Nanamoli**[3], the Pali scholar, T.W. Rhys Davids, made the relevant observation that:

"The Buddha did not leave behind a number of deep simple sayings, from which his disciples subsequently expanded on to build up a system or systems of their own, but had himself thoroughly elaborated his doctrine and during his long career (45 years of ministry), he had ample time to repeat the principles and details of the system over and over again to his disciples, to test their knowledge of it until finally his leading disciples were accustomed to the subtlest metaphysical distinctions and trained in the wonderful command of memory which Indian ascetics then possessed. When these facts are recalled to mind, it will be seen that much more reliance may be placed upon the doctrinal parts of the Buddhist Scriptures than the corresponding late records of other religions."

2. Language of Buddha's Words (*Buddhavacana*)

In *Cullavagga* V, 33 of the **Book of Discipline**[4], the Buddha made an injunction allowing monks to learn his Teachings in '*saka nirutti*' or 'own dialect', which the great Pali commentator **Ven. Buddhaghosa** had interpreted to mean the **Magadhi** dialect spoken by the Buddha, and forbidding them to put the teachings into Sanskrit verses. It appears that two brothers, both *bhikkhus* named Yamelu and Tekula, once approached the Buddha complaining that monks of different castes and clans were corrupting the Buddha's words by preaching them in their own dialects. They wanted to put his words into Sanskrit verses (*chandaso*), but the Buddha forbade them with this injunction. For the last two thousand four hundred years, the term '*saka nirutti*' had signified the Magadhi language.

During the later part of the 19th century, Western scholars began to show an interest in Buddhism and when the Pali scholars **Rhys Davids** and **Oldenberg** began translating the ***Vinaya* Texts**[5] into English, they translated the Buddha's injunction as "I allow you, O *Bhikkhus*, to learn the words of the Buddha each in his own dialect", to mean **each monk's own dialect**. Most scholars have tended to accept this interpretation, except **Geiger**, who concurred with Ven. Buddhaghosa that it meant the Buddha's own language. Rhys Davids, on second thought, appears to have been convinced of the interpretation of Ven. Buddhaghosa. Consequently in his later works, he accepted '*saka nirutti*' as the Buddha's own language but with an ingenious modification. In his Foreword to the Pali-English Dictionary by T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede first published in London 1921-1925, he argues that the Pali of the canonical books is based on vernacular **Kosalan**, the Buddha's native dialect.

Recently, **Law**[6], in his book entitled 'A History of Pali Literature' is of the opinion that Buddhaghosa had taken the term '*chandasa*' indiscriminately as a synonym for the Sanskrit language and the term '*saka nirutti*' as a synonym for the Magadhi dialect used as a medium of instruction (*vacanamagga*) by the Buddha. According to Law, the Sanskrit language was divided into Vedic and current usage and the Buddha's injunction directed against Vedic only and not

current Sanskrit. "*It is beyond our comprehension how Buddhaghosa went so far as to suggest that by the term saka nirutti, the Buddha meant his own medium of instruction and nothing but the Magadhi dialect. It would be irrational, erroneous and dogmatic of the Buddha to promulgate this rule that Magadhi is the only correct form of speech to learn his teaching and that every other dialect would be the incorrect form*", wrote Law.

a) Medium of Instruction for Monks

Despite his strong sentiment, Law's argument does not appear to have taken into consideration the prevailing conditions with regard to the system of learning in ancient times. Back then, it was the custom for pupils who wish to study under a certain master to live with the master and learn the doctrine by oral tradition in the latter's language. **Venerable Buddhaghosa's** interpretation is certainly in consonance with the Indian spirit that there can be no other form of the Buddha's words than in which the Master himself had preached. In an oral tradition it is imperative for the pupils to be able to learn, recite and remember the teachings in a **common language**, for in this way any mistake or distortion can be quickly detected and corrected by rehearsing together in that language. This was what actually took place in the **Buddhist Councils** after the Buddha's *Parinibbana* to ensure that the true teachings were preserved. Just imagine the chaos if various dialects were employed to rehearse the Master's teachings in the Buddhist Councils. When these factors are considered, it certainly appears logical why the Buddha made this injunction allowing the monks to learn his teachings in the **common dialect** of his time, **Magadhi**, although his native dialect was **Kosalan**, the Sakyan kingdom being a vassal state of Kosala.

According to **Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala**[7], the Blessed One wished that the language used to convey the message of Buddha should be the language of the people, and not Sanskrit.

Sanskrit was and still is the language **exclusively** of Brahmins. In fact even in recent times before India became independent in 1947, high-caste Hindu teachers **would not teach Sanskrit** to children of low-caste Hindus and Untouchables in school! (Note: This happened to **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, the Greatest Champion of the Untouchables of India, while in high school because the Sanskrit teacher refused to teach Sanskrit to untouchables.)

Knowing well that the majority of the population in his time could not understand Sanskrit, the Buddha decided to use Magadhi as the medium of instruction in order to benefit the common people. So important is this point that the Buddha even made it an **offence** (*dukkata*) for monks to put his words in Sanskrit!

b) *Saka Nirutti* – Our Own Language

Lately, Indian scholar **Dr. Mauli Chand Prasad**[8] has come up with a more sensible reappraisal of the controversy. According to him, Magadhi was the most popular dialect or vernacular used for local communication during the Buddha's time in the same sense as Hindi is adopted in present day India as the '*nij bhasa*' (lit. own language). He translates the term '*saka nirutti*' to mean '**our own language**' and the Buddha's injunction as "I allow, O monks, the words of the Buddha to be learnt in (our) own language", **meaning Magadhi**. This interpretation is in consonance with Ven. Buddhaghosa's interpretation and at the same time vindicates the Buddha's stand in disapproving the proposals of the monks Yamelu and Tekula to put the words of the Buddha into Sanskrit verses. Thus the terms '*saka nirutti*' and '*nij bhasa*' convey the same sense. Despite a long lapse of time between their uses, both of them denote the dialect or vernacular adopted for local communication of their respective ages.

3. What is Pali?

According to **Childers**[9], Magadhi was one of the **Prakrits** or Aryan vernaculars of ancient India. It was spoken in the sixth century BC in Magadha, the region around modern Bihar, which was one of the most important centres of Indian civilization in the Buddha's time. Magadhi has been a dead language for about two thousand years. The word **'*pali*'** in Sanskrit means 'line, row or series' and the Theravada extended its use to mean a series of books that form the text of the Buddhist Scriptures. So the **Pali Text** is synonymous with the Scriptures of the Theravada tradition. ***Palibhasa*** therefore means the 'language of the texts', which of course is equivalent to saying '**Magadhi language**'. The term '*pali*' in the sense of the sacred texts is ancient enough, but the term '***Palibhasa***' as the language of the Scriptures is of modern introduction by the Singhalese from which the English word is derived. 'Magadhi' is the only name used in the old Theravada texts for the sacred language of Buddhism.

As a language, Pali is unique in the sense that it is **reserved entirely to one subject**, namely, the Buddha's Teachings. This has probably led some scholars to even speculate that it was a kind of ***lingua franca*** created by Buddhist monks, for how else can one explain this paradox? On the contrary, it may very well mean that the ancient Elders (*Theras*) had truly memorized the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* in the **original dialect** of the Buddha, which is now a dead language! Theravada monks are reputed to be the most orthodox so it is **highly improbable** that they would change the original language of the Buddha's teaching unlike the other sects who switched to Sanskrit or mixed Sanskrit, something **forbidden** by the Buddha! This second explanation is more logical given the **religious zeal**, **dedication** and **legendary memory skills** of the ancient monks in preserving and perpetuating the Teachings of the Buddha by oral tradition.

As a spoken dialect, Pali does not have its own script and in each of the countries in which it is the sacred language of the inhabitants, namely: Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand, it is written in the script of that country. In modern times, the Roman alphabets are widely used, so it is usual to print Pali texts in Roman letters, which are

clear, simple and easily computerized, leading to the widespread learning and dissemination of the Pali Texts.

a) The Origin and Home of Pali

There are many theories hatched by scholars regarding the original home of Pali. Early Pali scholars were of the opinion that literary Pali is the **vernacular Magadhi** used by the Buddha to preach the *Dhamma*. Later scholars based their opinion on philological grounds that Pali bears some resemblances to Paisaci, which they claimed is a western dialect while Magadhi is an eastern dialect. So Pali cannot be the Magadhi dialect spoken by the Buddha. But the **Magadhi** that scholars know of today is the language of the **Asoka Edicts** carved on rocks and pillars that were drafted by his scribes at the time when the majority of the populace could hardly read or write, as recent studies by **Salomon**[19] suggest that there was no written language during the Buddha's time. On the other hand, the dialect spoken by the Buddha was the **vernacular Magadhi** (**Note 1**) understood by the common people, by which the monks transmitted his Teaching and later became known as the Pali language of the Scriptures. An exhaustive review by the Indian scholar **Law**[5] concluded that it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion about the original home of Pali. According to **Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi**[10] current scholarly opinion holds that Pali was probably created as a kind of *lingua franca* for use by Buddhist monks in Northern India two hundred years after *Parinibbana* and may not be identical with the one used by the Buddha! Evidently these are scholars' conjectures and new theories are often proposed as **academic exercises**, many of which lack proper understanding of the **traditions and practices** of the *Sangha.*

b) Role of the Buddhist Councils in Maintaining the Language

Concerning the language of the Pali Canon, most Western scholars appeared to have ignored the role of the Buddhist Councils in ascertaining the medium of transmission of the Buddha's teaching. As the authority of the Scriptures rests on its **ratification by the**

Buddhist Councils, so the language employed by the Councils plays the prime role in the transmission of the Scriptures. All schools of Buddhism agree that the three Buddhist Councils are historical facts, so the pertinent question that one should asked is: "What dialect would the *Arahants* from the East or West, employ to rehearse the Buddha's teachings in the First, Second and Third Councils?

For the First Council, there is no doubt it was the **Magadhi dialect,** as all council members were conversant with that dialect having learnt from the Master himself. During the Second Council, monks from both the Eastern and Western regions got together to rehearse the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* at Vesali. All the eight senior monks selected to settle the Ten Points were disciples of Ven. Ananda and Ven. Anuraddha. The most senior monk, **Ven. Sabbakami** who adjudged the issue, lived during the Buddha's time. Having learnt the teachings from the two Great Disciples of the Buddha, they would have used the same dialect to rehearse the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* in the Second Council.

All the theories linking Pali with Ujjaini or Paisaci or even a new language created by the monks as a kind of *lingua franca* after the Second Council appeared to have ignored two important facts. Firstly the Theravadin monks (*Sthavarivada*) who convened the Buddhist Councils are reputed to be the **most orthodox** (so-called '**no changers'**) of all the schools in the observance of the monastic rules and would certainly have retained the *Vinaya* in its original form and language for their fortnightly *Uposatha* ceremony. Secondly, **Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa**, who convened the Third Council in Pataliputta would still maintain the original dialect in the tradition of his lineage of *Vinaya* teachers (*Acaryaparampara*). So when the ***Arahant*** **Mahinda** and other members of the *Sangha* were sent to propagate the religion in Sri Lanka, they would have transmitted the Teachings in the language of the Third Council in order to **maintain the lineage** and avoid any misinterpretation.

In the light of these facts, it is **improbable** and **irrational** that the ancient Elders would want to change the language of the Buddha's words let alone invent some new language that will lead to misinterpretation of the Blessed One's unique teachings.

4. The First Council

According to *Cullavagga Kh.* XI of the **Book of Discipline**[4], the Ven. Maha Kassapa, on seeing an unhealthy trend among some monks immediately upon the *Parinibbana* of the Buddha, decided to convene a Council to compile the ***Dhamma & Vinaya*** (Doctrine & Discipline) to prevent the true doctrine from being submerged by false doctrines. This historic event took place at Rajagaha (Rajgir) three months after the Buddha's ***Parinibbana***. Five hundred leading *Arahants* attended the **First Council**, which lasted over seven months outside the **Sattapanni** caves on top of Vebhara hill in **Rajagaha**. **Ven Maha Kassapa** presided over the meeting. **Ven. Upali** was chosen to rehearse the ***Vinaya Pitaka*** or Basket of Discipline. He began each account with the words '***Tena Samayena***' — 'the occasion was this'.

Although **Ven. Ananda** was not an *Arahant* before the convocation, he was chosen to rehearse the ***Sutta Pitaka*** or Basket of Discourses because of his moral purity and his knowledge of the Scriptures which he heard directly from the Buddha's own mouth when he was the Buddha's personal attendant. As he was expected to play a leading part in the assembly composed only of *Arahants*, Ven. Ananda made strenuous effort and attained *Arahantship* in an inclined position with feet off the ground as he lay down to rest after a whole night's practice of meditation on the eve of the First Council. The Book of Discipline states that he was the only disciple to attain *Arahantship* free from the postures of sitting, standing, walking or lying down. At the First Council, Ven. Ananda prefaced each discourse with an account of where and to whom it was spoken, beginning with the words '***Evam me sutam***' — 'thus have I heard'.

a) Was the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* recited in the First Council?

On the 3rd Basket of the *Tipitaka*, there is disagreement. According to **Warder**[2], Theravada and Mahasanghika versions did not mention the recitation of *Abhidhamma* but Sarvastavadin and Dhammagupta

sects said that Ananda recited the *Abhidhamma*. Other accounts mentioned that the ***Matikas*** or *Abhidhamma* Outlines were recited. There is no doubt about the recitation of the *Matikas* as the Pali Scriptures mentioned that the Buddha preached the *Abhidhamma* to his mother in heaven and taught them to Ven. **Sariputta** when he returned to earth daily for his meals. It is very likely that the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* as we know today consisted simply of some set of *Matika* headings, propounded by the Buddha himself when giving systematic instructions to his followers, and that this was later fully elaborated into *Abhidhamma* expositions. Since the agreement between the two oldest schools, Theravada and Mahasanghika, should establish the oldest available textual tradition, it would appear that only **two *Pitakas* were recited at the First Council** with the *Matikas* recited as part of the *Suttas* by Ven. Ananda.

With regard to doubts about the authenticity of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, one fact often overlooked is that the *Sutta Pitaka* too contains a considerable amount of pure *Abhidhamma*. This comprises all those numerous *suttas* and passages where ultimate (*paramattha*) terms are used, expressing the non-self (*anatta*) or functional way of thinking, for example, when dealing with the *khandhas, dhatus, ayatanas*, etc.

Concerning Ven. Sariputta's mastery and exposition of the *Dhamma*, the Buddha described it in *Nidana Samyutta* XII, 32. "The Essence of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammadhatu*) has been so well penetrated by Sariputta, O monks, that if I were to question him therein for one day in different words and phrases, Sariputta would reply likewise for one day in various words and phrases. And if I were to question him for one night, one day and a night, or for two days and nights, even up to seven days and nights, Sariputta would expound the matter for the same period of time in various words and phrases."

The **Expositor**[11] (*Atthasalini*) says: "Thus the giving of the method (*naya*) to the Chief Disciple who was endowed with analytical knowledge, was as though the Buddha stood on the edge of the shore and pointed out the ocean with his open hand. To the elder, the doctrine taught by the Blessed One in hundreds and thousands of methods became very clear."

Thereafter Ven. Sariputta repeated this doctrine to 500 select pupils, who memorized it. According to the Expositor, the textual order of the *Abhidhamma* originated with Ven. Sariputta who also laid down the numerical series in order to make it easy to learn, study, and teach the *Dhamma*.

It was then conveyed by oral tradition up till the time of the Third Council by the Elders: **Sariputta**, Bhaddaji, Sobhita, Piyapala, Piyadassi, Kosiyaputta, Siggava, Sandeha, **Moggaliputta Tissa**, Visudatta, Dhammiya, Dasaka, Sonaka, Revata and others. The reason why so many teachers were involved was because the *Abhidhamma* is a very profound teaching and required various teachers to memorize the various books. After that, it was conveyed by a succession of their pupils. Thus in India, it has been conveyed by an unbroken line of teachers. When Buddhism came to Sri Lanka, the Elders **Mahinda, Iddhiya, Uttiya**, **Bhaddanama** and **Sambala** brought it from India and from then on the *Abhidhamma* was conveyed in succession up till the Fourth Council when it was documented on palm leaves.

b) Charges against Venerable Ananda

After the recitation of the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*, the monks made five charges against Ven. Ananda. He explained the circumstances behind each incident and said that he did not see any fault on his part but acknowledged them as wrongdoing out of faith in the *Sangha.*

i) He did not ask the Buddha which of the lesser and minor precepts the monks could abolish after the Buddha was gone because he had not thought of asking through forgetfulness. As the Council was unable to agree as to what constituted the minor rules, Ven. Maha Kassapa finally ruled that no disciplinary rule laid by the Buddha should be changed, and no new ones should be introduced. No intrinsic reason was given. Ven. Maha Kassapa did say one thing, however: “If we changed the rules, people will say that Ven. Gotama's disciples changed the rules even before the fire from his funeral pyre has ceased burning.”

ii) He had stepped on the Buddha's robe while sewing but it was not out of disrespect and he did not see any fault in it.

iii) He had allowed the body of the Buddha to be saluted by women first whose weeping had smeared the body with tears because he did not want to detain them for too long.

iv) He did not plead to the Buddha to live out His lifespan because his (Ananda's) mind was under the influence of Mara.

v) He pleaded for the admission of women into the Order out of compassion for Mahapajapati Gotami who had nursed the Buddha in His infancy when His own mother died.

c) Imposition of Higher Penalty on Ven. Channa

The next item concerned the imposition of the higher penalty amounting to complete ostracism, which the Buddha had pronounced on **Ven. Channa** before His *Mahaparinibbana*. This monk was the charioteer of the Master when He was a prince and was very arrogant, having slighted every member of the Order. Ven. Ananda travelled to **Ghositarama** in **Kosambi** to inform Ven. Channa, who fainted and fell when he heard the decision of the *Sangha* to ostracize him. Thereafter, he was so seized with grief and repentance that he remained alone and became earnest, zealous and resolute in his practice until he eventually won *Arahantship*. With Ven. Channa's attainment of *Arahantship*, the punishment achieved the desired result that the Buddha wanted for him and it automatically lapsed.

d) Ven. Purana and the Eight Indulgences on Food

After the monks had completed the Rehearsal of the Doctrine and Discipline, **Ven. Purana** who was wandering in the Southern Hills (*Dakkhinagiri*) during the meeting, arrived at Rajagaha with a large

company of monks. When asked by the Elders whether he supported the Rehearsal and would learn the text so rehearsed by them, Ven. Purana replied that the Doctrine and Discipline were well rehearsed by the Elders but he, however, would only remember them as he had heard personally from the Buddha. According to some Chinese translations quoted by **Teitaro Suzuki**[12], Ven. Purana expressed his satisfaction with the general proceedings of the Council, except as to the insertion of the following **eight indulgences**, which he remembered had been approved by Buddha. The eight things were: (1) keeping food indoors; (2) cooking indoors; (3) cooking of one's own accord; (4) taking food of one's own accord; (5) receiving food when rising early in the morning; (6) carrying food home according to the wish of a giver; (7) having miscellaneous fruits; (8) eating things grown in a pond.

He pointed out that these indulgences were not against the rule that forbids the taking of remnant of food. Ven. Maha Kassapa explained that he was correct in saying so, but that Buddha permitted them only on account of a scarcity of food, when the *bhikkhus* could not get a sufficient supply of it in their alms-rounds, and that therefore when this circumstance was removed, Buddha again bade them to abstain from these eight indulgences. Ven. Purana, however, protested, declaring that Buddha, who was all-wise, would not permit what was otherwise forbidden, nor would he forbid what otherwise was permitted. To this Ven. Maha Kassapa replied: "The very reason of his being all-wise has enabled him to permit what otherwise was forbidden, and to forbid what otherwise was permitted. Ven. Purana, we will now make this decision: That whatever Buddha did not forbid shall not be forbidden, and whatever Buddha forbade shall not be disregarded. Let us train ourselves in accordance with the disciplinary rules established by Buddha."

There is no mention that Ven. Purana raised any further objection after Ven. Maha Kassapa's explanation. When the Mahisasaka seceded from Theravada, they incorporated these eight indulgences in their *Vinaya* and this incident of Ven. Purana has been misconstrued by certain scholars, as the seed of dissension to explain the reason for the secession.

e) Achievements of First Council

The first council called the Council of Rajagaha was held three months after the *Parinibbana* under the sponsorship of King Ajatasattu of Magadha during the eighth year of his reign. The proceedings achieved four results, namely:

i) Compilation of the *Vinaya Pitaka* by Ven. Upali.
ii) Compilation of the *Sutta Pitaka* by Ven. Ananda.
iii) Acknowledgement of Wrongdoing by Ven. Ananda.
iv) Imposition of Higher Penalty on Ven. Channa.

After the compilation of the Doctrine and Discipline for oral transmission, the senior monks or Elders would have devised a system whereby certain monks in the same locality would be charged with the duty to memorize certain portions of the Doctrine and Disciple in Magadhi and by combining all the portions memorized, the *Sangha* in that locality would be able to recite the whole Doctrine and Discipline together. This is confirmed by the Gopaka Moggallana *Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikaya* in which the Venerable Ananda attributed the harmony of the *Sangha* to the fact that monks in each village observed the practice of assembling every fortnight to recite the *Patimokkha*.

5. The Second Council

About a century after the *Parinibbana*, some shameless monks of the Vajjian clan at Vesali were indulging in the **Ten Points** or *Dasa Vatthuni* that were against the *Vinaya* or Rules of Discipline. **Venerable Yasa**, son of the Brahmin Kakandaka and *Vinaya* expert from Kosambi, who was staying in Kutagara Hall at the Mahavana saw them asking for money from the laity and objected to it. Still the laity gave money to the monks who divided the takings at the end of the day among themselves and gave Ven Yasa his due share. When he refused to accept the money and reprimanded them, they passed a motion of censure (*Patisaraniya kamma*) against him whereby he had to apologize to the laity for forbidding them to perform *dana* (charity) to the Vajjian monks. Ven. Yasa, fully conversant with the law, demanded another monk to accompany him as witness to the reconciliation with the laity of Vesali, during which he defended his own view before the laity and won them over. When the accompanying monk reported the matter to the Vajjian monks, they charged Ven Yasa with proclaiming a false doctrine to laymen and pronounced an Act of Suspension (*Ukkhepaniya kamma*), effectively expelling him from the *Sangha.*

a) Ten Points (*Dasa Vatthuni*) of the Vajjian Monks

The Ten Points or Indulgences that Ven. Yasa openly declared as unlawful were:

i) ***Singilona kappa***: The custom of putting salt in a horn vessel, in order to season unsalted foods when received. (Against *Pacittiya* 38 which prohibits the storing of food unless used as medicine)

ii) ***Dvangula kappa***: The custom of taking the midday meal, even after the prescribed time, as long as the sun's shadow had not pass the meridian by more than two-fingers' breadth. (Against *Pacittiya* 37 which prohibits eating after noon and before dawn)

iii) ***Gamantara kappa***: The custom of going into the village after the meal and there eating again, if invited. (Contrary to *Pacittiya* 35 which prohibits over-eating)

iv) ***Avasa kappa***: The custom of holding the *Uposatha* ceremony separately by monks dwelling in the same parish (*sima*). (Contravenes *Mahavagga* II, 8, 3: rules of residence in a parish)
v) ***Anumati kappa***: The carrying out of official acts by an incomplete chapter on the supposition that the consent of absent *bhikkhus* was obtained afterwards. (Unlawful according to *Mahavagga* IX, 3, 5)
vi) ***Acinna kappa***: It was permissible for a monk to do anything adopted as a practice by his preceptor. (Contrary to the rules)
vii) ***Amathita kappa***: The practice of drinking milk-curds even after the mealtime. (Against *Pacittiya* 35 which prohibits over-eating)
viii) ***Jalogi kappa***: The practice of drinking palm-juice, which is fermenting but is not yet toddy. (Against *Pacittiya* 51 which prohibits the drinking of intoxicants)
ix) ***Adasakam nisidanam***: The practice of using mats to sit on which were not of the prescribed size, if they were without fringe. (Contrary to *Pacittiya* 89 prohibiting the use of a fringed sitting cloth exceeding the prescribed size)
x) ***Jatarupam rajatam***: The practice of accepting gold and silver. (Prohibited in *Nissaggiya* 18, an offence involving forfeiture of the object relating to the offence)

After the Act of Suspension (*Ukkhepaniya kamma*) was pronounced, Ven Yasa went to Kosambi and sent messengers to the *bhikkhus* of the Western country, of Avanti and of the Southern country to enlist their support to stop the deterioration of the religion and ensure the preservation of the *Vinaya*. Next he went to the Ahoganga hill in the Upper Ganges to consult Ven. **Sambhuta Sanavasi** of Mathura and team up with sixty *bhikkhus* from the Western country (Pava) and eighty-eight from Avanti and the Southern country. Ven. Sambhuta Sanavasi advised them to consult Ven. **Revata** of Soreyya (Kanauj), a leading monk recognized for his piety and learning. Accompanied by him, they traveled to Soreyya to meet Ven. Revata. But he was aware of their mission and was on the way to Vesali to meet them. Both parties finally met at Sahajati where Ven. Yasa asked for his opinion regarding the Ten Points. Each one of them was declared to be unlawful by Ven. Revata.

b) Ten Points Declared Unlawful by Second Council

Meanwhile the Vajjian monks were following the developments of Ven. Yasa and they too went to Sahajati to enlist the support of Ven. Revata hoping to win him over with presents but he refused to accept them. So they induced his disciple, Uttara, to take up their cause but that too failed. When the *Sangha* met together to decide on the matter, Ven Revata suggested that it should be settled at the place where the dispute originated. So the elders went to Vesali where the *Sangha* assembled to settle the dispute but no progress was made due to much talk and fruitless discussion. So it was decided to settle the matter by referring it to a body of referees. Ven. Revata chose four *bhikkhus* of the East and four of the West. The referees of the East were the Venerable **Sabbakami**, **Salha**, **Khujjasobhita** and **Vasabhagamika**. Those of the West were the Venerable **Revata, Sambhuta Sanavasi**, **Yasa** and **Sumana**. Of the eight, six were pupils of Ven. Ananda (who lived to 120 years) while Ven. Vasabhagamika and Sumana were pupils of Ven. Anuruddha (said to have lived to 150 years). When the referees convened, Ven. Sabbakami, the most senior *Arahant* with 120 *vassas* (rains retreat) questioned by Ven. Revata, adjudged the Ten Points as unlawful according to the *Vinaya*. The same hearing was re-enacted before the full assembly and the verdict unanimously upheld.

According to **Mahavamsa**[13]**, a**fter settling this issue, Ven. Revata, chose seven hundred *Arahants* in order to hold a council to prevent the deterioration of the religion. The Council spent eight months rehearsing the *Dhamma & Vinaya* to ensure that the true doctrine was preserved and handed down to future generations. The Second Council is also called ***Yasatthera Sangiti*** (Elder Yasa's Rehearsal) because of the major role played by the Elder Yasa in his zeal to safeguard the *Vinaya.* It was held at **Valukarama** in **Vesali** a century after the *Parinibbana* during the reign of King Kalasoka.

6. The Great Schism

According to **Mahavamsa**[13], the Vajjian monks did not accept the verdict but held an assembly of their own attended by ten thousand calling it a ***Mahasangiti*** (great convocation) from which the sect derived its name **Mahasanghika.** From then on, further schisms led to the formation of different sub-sects, and in the course of time, 12 sub-sects arose from Theravada while 6 issued from Mahasanghika.

a) Five Theories of Mahadeva

According to the Sanskrit *Pratimoksa Sutra of Mahasamghikas* discovered by Rahula Sankrtyayana in Tibet in 1934 and translated into English by **Charles S. Prebish**[14], all its *Vinaya* rules, except the 75 *sekhiyas* rules of training for novices (67 in Mahasanghika) are exactly the same as the Theravadin *Vinaya*. This means that the schism did not result from the differences in *Vinaya* or Disciplinary Code. According to the Sammitiya School, the first schism took place a few decades after the Second Council. The founder of Mahasanghika was Bhadra also known as **Mahadeva**, who came out with five theories concerning the *Arahant*. According to information collected by Watters (see **Dutt**[15], page 28), Mahadeva was the son of a Brahmin merchant of Mathura who was ordained at Kukkutarama in Pataliputra. By his zeal and abilities, he soon became head of the establishment, with the ruling king as his friend and patron. With the king's help, he was able to oust the senior orthodox monks and put forward his five theories, namely:

i) *Arahants* are subject to **lust** when having an erotic dream. (*Atthi arahato rago ti*).
ii) *Arahants* may have residue of **ignorance**. (*Atthi arahato aññānanti*)
iii) *Arahants* may have still have **doubts**. (*Atthi arahato kankha ti*)
iv) *Arahants* may be excelled because they may **need other's help**. (*Atthi arahato paravitarana ti*)
v) Attainment of the Path is accompanied by an **exclamat**ion (as 'aho').

Rebuttal (Refer to *Kathavatthu*, Book II[16])

- Theravada completely rejected the first theory as the *Arahant* has **eradicated craving** and **ignorance** in his mental continuum. So lust cannot arise even while asleep.

- The second, third and fourth theories of Mahadeva maintained that (1) because an *Arahant* has no knowledge of such things of others as the name, family, etc., he is liable to be ignorant. (2) He is liable to get perplexed about facts concerning everyday life. (3) He is liable to be surpassed in such knowledge by others because it comes to him, is explained and disclosed by others. Theravada rejected them because those things mentioned are conventional truths having no bearing on the *Arahant's* knowledge and attainment since the *Arahant* is **absolutely free** from delusive **Ignorance** and skeptical **Doubt**.

- On the fifth theory, Theravada maintained that speech was not involved in the attainment of Path Consciousness.

- Obviously the Theravada elders would not accept these heretical views. With the help of the king, Mahadeva convened a great assembly (*Mahasangiti*) reportedly consisting of *Arahants* and non-*Arahants* that ratified his ideas and broke off from the original *Sangha* effectively creating the first schism. The idea that *Arahants* attended the *Mahasangiti* appears far-fetched since true ***Arahants*** would certainly have disagreed with these heretical propositions.

b) Primary Cause of Schism

Some scholars (see **Dutt[15]**) have theorized that the Vaisalians wanted a certain amount of latitude and freedom in the interpretation and observance of the rules and to introduce into their organization and general governance a democratic spirit, which was gradually disappearing from the *Sangha*. The exclusive power and privileges,

which the *Arahants* had claimed were looked upon with distrust and disfavour by the Vaisalians, who preferred a democratic rule to a monarchial government. The claim of the *Arahants* to become the exclusive members of the important Councils and to arrive at decisions, which were binding on non *Arahants* could not appeal to the Vajjians – a clan imbued with a democratic spirit.

The reasons given by scholars obviously represent the grievances of the Vaisalian monks from the secular point of view. When examined in the context of the *Vinaya* which governs the monastic order, they appear spurious and without merit, as discussed below:

- As far as the constitution of the *Sangha* is concerned, the conduct of a *bhikkhu* is governed by the *Vinaya* rules drawn up by the Buddha himself. After his *Parinibbana*, no locus of authority competent to be a source of law could exist in the *Sangha* because the Buddha did not appoint anyone to succeed him. Instead He directed the monks to regard the Teaching and Discipline as their teacher after He was gone. Thus each member of the *Sangha* stood on an equal footing in relation to the rest. The elders could advise and instruct but not direct or compel; each member was a refuge unto himself, having the Teaching as his refuge. When a dispute arises over the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*, any decision should be arrived at through consensus by referring to the **Four Great Authorities** (**Note 2**). So the question of a democratic or a monarchial system of government does not arise.

- Secondly, *Arahants* by virtue of the eradication of greed, hatred and delusion have no interest in power or privileges. It is a well-known fact that within the *Sangha*, respect is accorded based on seniority not on attainment. In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, the Buddha had stressed that for the growth of the *bhikkhus* "*they should show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards the elder bhikkhus, those of long standing, long gone forth, the fathers and leaders of the Sangha, and deem it worthwhile to listen to them*".

- It appears that the Second Council followed this injunction by appointing the most senior *bhikkhus* present as referees to adjudge the Ten Points.

- As for the cause of the Schism, it is unlikely to be due to differences in the interpretation of v*inaya* (disciplinary rules). **Frauwallner**[17], who made a study of the similarities and divergences of the *vinaya* of six schools, namely: Theravada, Mahasanghika, Mula-sarvastivada, Mahisasaka, Dharmagupta and Sarvastivada, concluded: "*We can see at once that the agreement of the texts reaches deep into the particulars*."

- Hence there is no doubt that the theories proposed by Mahadeva were primarily responsible for the Schism. As these five theories were based on **worldly knowledge** and concepts, meant to create disrespect towards the *Arahants*, they were certainly unacceptable to the orthodox monks and this led to the Great Schism.

c) Transformation of the Buddha and his Doctrine by Mahayana

In the *Tipitaka*, the Buddha is not distinguished from any other *Arahant* except his extraordinary genius to be able to discover the Truths unaided, while others realized the Truths by his guidance. Theravada has remained closer to this conception though they later elevated His status to complete **'Omniscience'.** The Mahasanghika, having 'downgraded' the attainment of the *Arahant* found it desirable to make a clear distinction in the case of the Buddha.

According to the ***Kathavatthu***[15], the Mahasanghikas held the view that a Buddha exists everywhere in all directions of the firmament. Its offshoot, the Andhakas, even considered that a Buddha's daily habits notably speech, was supra-mundane. Out of indiscriminate affection for the Buddha, some even held that the excreta of the Exalted One excelled all other odorous things! Yet in spite of their

divergent views on the nature of the Buddha, the schismatic schools or ***Nikayas***, all aspired to the same goal — *Arahantship* as the ideal.

According to **Warder**[2], the Mahayana movement started with the appearance of *Sutras* of **anonymous** and **doubtful origin**, around the beginning of the Christian era in Andhra Pradesh in South India. The *Saddharma-pundarika* or '**Lotus of the Good Law**' claimed that after attaining Enlightenment, the Buddha decided to preach his doctrines in a modified form for the mediocre searchers of Truth to enable them to achieve their desired end. This modified teaching consists of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and Dependent Origination, subjects of the First Sermon. The Mahayana took this to mean that only an Omniscient One could realize the highest Truth while his disciples or *Savakas*, who could only attain perfection by observing the instructions of the discourse, realized only the absence of individual soul (***anatta***) and not the non-existence or **Emptiness** (***dhamma-sunnata***). According to **Rhys Davids**[18], "*Arahatship* is **explicitly condemned** and *Bodhisatship* held up as the goal at which every good Buddhist has to aim; and the whole exposition of this theory, so subversive of the original Buddhism, is actually placed in the mouth of Gotama himself."

Thus began the **transformation** of the Buddha and His *Dhamma* by Mahayanist logic and ratiocination that led step by step to Mahayana; from the humanism and **realization** of the Four Noble Truths and *Nibbana* of the original Teachings to the supernaturalism and **fantasy** of the Mahayana sutras and **Emptiness** doctrine in which long metaphysical and philosophical treatises in **Sanskrit** are created by scholars like Nagarjuna and Asvaghosa, which are **hardly intelligible** to the common masses, and are meant only for Sanskrit knowing scholars. Being well aware that the laity could hardly understand their abstract theories, the Mahayanist teachers created a new **Mahayana Pantheon** in order attract the masses to their 'Great Vehicle'. According to **Ven**. **Bhikkhu Kashyap**[1], "after a time, in the Mahayana tradition, the philosophical speculations were symbolized by various *Bodhisattas* and gods such as **Avalokitesvara** (*Bodhisatta* of Great Compassion), **Tara** (Goddess of Mercy), **Manjusri** (*Bodhisatta* of Meditation), and **Amitabha** (Buddha of *Sukhavati* or Western Paradise)."

7. Origin of the Eighteen *Nikayas* (Schools)

The **Eighteen *Nikayas*** or Schools of Buddhism arose sometime between one hundred to two hundred years after *Parinibbana* i.e., sometime between the Second and Third Buddhist Councils. They were called "***Hinayana***" (Mean or Inferior Vehicle), a contemptuous term tantamount to verbal abuse coined by followers of Mahayana who wanted to exalt their own doctrines and belittle the earlier forms of Buddhism. It should be pointed out that the Buddha had never preached any "superior or inferior vehicle" to his disciples, only the Noble Eightfold Path to end suffering. Due to its **derogatory nature**, the term '*Hinayana*' should be avoided when referring to the ***Nikayas*** or Early Schools of Buddhism.

According to the **Mahavamsa**[13], after the Second Council, (1) **Mahasanghika** seceded from the original *Sangha* and produced two schools (2) Gokulika and (3) Ekavyoharika. From Gokulika, arose (4) Pannatti and (5) Bahulika or Bahussutiya and from these the (6) Cetiya sect making with the Mahasanghika a total of six. From the (7) **Theravada**, two more groups seceded, namely (8) Mahimsasaka and (9) Vajjiputtaka. The latter produced (10) Dhammuttariya, (11) Bhaddayanika, (12) Channagarika and (13) Sammitiya while the former produced (14) Sabbathivada and (15) Dhammaguttika. From Sabbathivada, (16) Kassapiya split off and later produced (17) Samkantika and from this (18) Suttavada. (**Note 3**)

According to **Rhys Davids**[18], evidence from the Mahavastu, the main text of the **Lokuttaravadins** (an offshoot of the Mahasanghika furthest removed from Theravada) shows very little of its teaching that could not have been developed from Theravada. The difference was the prominence given to legendary matters and in the consequent inattention to ethical points. In fact, all the early schools looked upon *Arahantship* not *Bodhisattaship*, as the ideal of a good Buddhist. However their concept of the *Arahant* and other doctrinal matters differed from the Theravada giving rise to the composition of the ***Kathavatthu***[16] by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, President of the Third Council. The reader should refer to the *Kathavatthu* for the full refutation of the heretical views held by the various schools.

In most of the cases, the difference between one school and another may be ascribed to geographical factors rather than to doctrinal differences. The first serious differences before the Schism found the Buddhists tending to separate into a western group around the great triangle of **Kosambi–Mathura–Ujjaini** and an eastern group at **Vesali**. In the case of Theravada, events of the Second Council showed that the monks of the west, especially of **Kosambi** and **Avanti** dominated this group. The first group to secede, namely, the Mahasanghikas remained in and around **Pataliputta** as their main centre while Theravada dominated at **Avanti** and spread rapidly into Maharashtra, Andhra and down to the Chola country as well as **Ceylon**. Soon after the Second Council, **Mathura** became the first centre of the **Sabbathivadins** and from there their influence radiated all over Northern India, particularly in **Kashmir** and **Gandhara**. The **Kassapiyas** in fact were a group of Theravada cut off from the mainstream Theravada by the seceded Sabbathivadins and for a long time they maintained contact with their original base at **Sanchi** near Bhopal. More widespread were the **Sammitiyas**, who spread across Avanti and Gujarat to form their main centre at **Sindhu** while the **Lokuttaravadins** branched out as far away as **Bactria**.

The majority of the Eighteen *Nikayas* were short-lived but some grew in strength and survived for several centuries, notably: **Theravada**, **Sabbathivadin, Mahasanghika, Sammitiya** and **Lokottaravadins**. Hsuan Tsang who visited India in AD 629-645 estimated the Buddhist *bhikkhus* in India and the adjacent countries to the Northwest at less than two hundred thousand, ¾ of whom belonged to the above five *Nikayas* and the remaining ¼ belonged to Mahayana. Eventually the Mahayana expanded northwards and eastwards to Central Asia and China, eclipsing the *Nikayas*. Of the remaining *Nikayas*, Theravada established itself in Sri Lanka and Burma and has survived to this day after Buddhism disappeared from India following the Muslim conquest in the 12th century AD.

8. The Third Council

The Third Council was held **236 years** after *Parinibbana* during the reign of **Emperor Asoka.** The Mauryan king who ruled India from Kashmir to the Ganges valley and south almost to Madras had become a Buddhist and was doing everything within his power to aid Buddhism. This royal patronage attracted thousands of heretics to don the yellow robe for worldly gain. Although they dwelt with the *bhikkhus* yet they continued to preach their false doctrines and caused confusion in the religion. By reason of their great numbers and unruliness, the *bhikkhus* could not restrain them by the *Vinaya* rules so that no *Uposatha*-ceremony (fortnightly recitation of the *Patimokkha*) or *Pavarana* (invitation) was held for 7 years.

When Asoka sent his minister to investigate and settle the matter, the foolish official killed several monks. Hearing of the misdeed, Asoka was filled with remorse and doubts lingered in his mind whether he was responsible for the crime. He was told that the ***Arahant* Moggaliputta Tissa,** who was living in solitary retreat on the Ahoganga Mountain further up the Ganges, could resolve his doubt. Asoka had to invite the *Arahant* three times before the latter came to Pataliputra. There he was received with great honour by the king who accommodated him in Asokarama and for seven days, the king received instructions at the feet of the *Arahant*. The *bhikkhus* were then tested on their views and the heretics were expelled from the *Sangha*. The pure *bhikkhus* who remained performed the *Uposatha*-ceremony after a lapse of seven years.

a) Compiling the Final Recension of the *Tipitaka*

The *Arahant* Moggaliputta Tissa took the opportunity to hold the **Third Council** in order to compile the true doctrine. One thousand *Arahants* took part in the Council held at **Asokarama** in **Pataliputra** (modern Patna) in the 18th year of Asoka's reign, **236 years** after the *Parinibbana*. Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa presided over the meeting in which controversial doctrines of various Buddhist

sects were examined and refuted leading to the composition of the ***Kathavathu*** (Points of Controversy), one of the seven books of the ***Abhidhamma.*** The assembly took nine months to rehearse the Teaching after which the Pali *Tipitaka* was compiled and closed.

b) Propagation of the Religion outside India

With the Buddhist king Asoka being the supreme ruler of nearly all of India as the chief patron, the time was now ripe for expansion. Accordingly, Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, the recognized leader of Theravada, decided to send competent *Arahants* to propagate the Buddha's Teaching all over India and beyond. Each team was headed by an Elder and consisted of five monks, the quorum required to confer higher ordination in remote regions. The names of the Elders and the nine places where they were deputed are given in the **Mahavamsa**[13]. Archeology has confirmed the **historicity** of these missions. In *Stupa* No. 2 at Sanchi near Bhopal, were found two relic caskets from the 2nd or 1st century BC, inscribed with the names of some of the missionaries. In this way the Buddha's Teachings spread in the four directions after the Third Council.

	MISSIONARIES	**PLACE**
1.	Majjhantika Thera	Kasmira & Gandhara[1]
2.	Mahadeva Thera	Mahimsamandala[2]
3.	Rakkhita Thera	Vanavasi[3]
4.	Yonaka Dhammarakkhita Thera	Aparantaka[4]
5.	Maha Dhammarakkhita Thera	Maharattha[5]
6.	Maha Rakkhita Thera	Yonaka[6]
7.	Majjhima Thera	Himavantapadesa[7]
8.	Sonaka and Uttara Theras	Suvannabhumi[8]
9.	Mahinda, Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddasala Theras	Tambapannidipa[9]

[1]**Gandhara** comprises the districts of Peshawar & Rawalpindi in Pakistan. Kasmira is modern Kashmir.
[2]**Mahimsamandala** is generally taken as modern Mysore.
[3]**Vanavasi** was composed of coastal regions such as Kerala and Malabar.

[4]**Aparantaka** or the 'western ends' comprise the Mumbai (Bombay) region, northern Gujarat, Kachchh and Sind.
[5]**Mararattha** is modern Maharashtra.
[6]**Yonaka** (Sanskrit Yavana) together with the Kambojas means clans of foreign race in the northwest frontier included in Asoka's empire.
[7]**Himavantapadesa** is the Himalayan country.
[8]**Suvannabhumi** or 'golden land' is Bago (Pegu) and Mawlamyine (Moulmein) district in Mon state of Myanmar (Burma).
[9]**Tambapannidipa** is the island of Sri Lanka.

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c) Achievements of the Third Council

The Third Council **refuted and eliminated** all the tendencies which were no longer regarded as consistent with the faith and brought the Pali Canon to a close. However, its **greatest achievement** was the sending of missionaries to other countries to propagate the faith because prior to this, Buddhism was basically a local religion confined mainly to a few states of Northern India. Thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, the royal patronage of Emperor Asoka and the teams of highly dedicated missionaries, the Buddha *Sasana* has spread beyond the borders of its narrower home. Thus when Buddhism disappeared from India for six hundred years after the Muslim conquest during the 12th century AD, the light of the *Dhamma* still shone in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and other Theravada countries where the *Sasana* had been founded. Today we are witnessing a new phenomenon whereby monks from other Buddhist countries are returning to India to revive the Buddha *Sasana* in its country of origin!

Strangely enough, a story in the **Mahavamsa** written during the 6th century AD (**Note 4**) tells us that Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa was a Brahma-god called Tissa in his previous existence. At the time of the Second Council, the *Arahants*, foreseeing danger to the religion in the future, approached him for help as his lifespan in the Brahma realm was coming to an end. He consented to be born in the world of men in order to prevent the downfall of the Buddha's religion. Subsequent events appear to confirm the **prophecy** of the *Arahants* of the Second Council.

9. Committing the *Tipitaka* to Memory

The *Tipitaka*, which contains all the Teachings of the Buddha during his 45-years ministry, is about 11 times the size of the Bible. Its sheer volume has led some scholars to think that the First Council was pure fiction and that the huge mass of the *Vinaya* and *Sutta Pitaka* recited was impossible. It is just beyond the comprehension of the skeptical scholar that someone like Ven. Ananda could be able to remember so much! However monks with such prodigious memory are found in the *Sangha*. During the Sixth Buddhist Council held in Yangon in 1956, the late Venerable **Mingun Sayadaw Ashin Vicittasarabhivamsa** had committed the whole *Tipitaka* to memory and was able to answer all questions related to it when questioned by the chief questioner of the Synod, the late Venerable **Mahasi Sayadaw Ashin Sobhana**. Today, Myanmar has produced several living *Tipitakadharas*, or persons who have committed the whole *Tipitaka* to memory! (**Note 5**)

Recent studies by **Salomon**[19] suggest that there was no written language during the Buddha's time. The early Indian Brahmi and Karosthi scripts appeared to originate from the Mauryan era based on the testimony of **Megasthenes** to the absence of writing in the early Mauryan period and the persistent failure to find and identify actual specimens of pre-Asokan writing. However, such evidence is by no means conclusive. Although the art of writing was employed later to give instructions, it did not become popular, the emphasis of education being on the development of memory and the retentive power. Therefore, the **oral tradition** continued to be the established custom to transmit the Teaching. Monks were still required to memorize the Teaching even after the written language appeared, just as it is still practised today by Theravada monks in Burma.

Although the majority of the sects started to use Sanskrit or mixed-Sanskrit as the language of transmission, the **orthodox Theravada** kept strictly to Pali. Thus, Theravada monks became very adept in reciting the Pali texts, aided by their highly developed memory skills so well attested in ancient and modern India. With different groups of monks specializing in their respective sections of the *Tipitaka*, it

would not be difficult for them to recite the whole *Tipitaka* by **combining their expertise**. The Pali literature is replete with terms describing the areas of specialization of monks with respect to the *Tipitaka*, such as:

i) *Suttantika* or master of the *Sutta Pitaka*
ii) *Vinaya-dhara* or one versed in the *Vinaya* or Discipline
iii) *Matika-dhara* or one versed in *matika* or *Abhidhamma*
iv) *Digha-bhanaka* and *Majjhima-bhanaka* (Reciters of the *Digha* and *Majjhima Nikayas*)

This demonstrates that the ancient *theras* (monks) had developed a system whereby they could collectively preserve the entire *Tipitaka* intact from memory. Some of them were *Arahants*, and so by definition, '**pure ones**' free from lust, ill-will or aversion, and delusion. With such purity of mind, they were without doubt, capable of retaining perfectly the Buddha's words in their minds. Thus they ensured that the Buddha's teachings would be preserved faithfully for posterity.

10. Fourth Council: Committing the *Tipitaka* to Writing

Situated off the main road about 40 km from Kandy in Sri Lanka is a village called **Matale**. Although lesser known to ordinary tourists, it is well-known to Buddhist scholars because here one can find the **International Buddhist Library & Museum** and the historic **Aloka Cave**, site of the **Fourth Council**, where the Buddha's Teachings were committed from oral transmission into writing on ola palm leaves. Visitors to the Museum will be able to view the process in which ola leaves are dried, smoothened and observe the technique of writing with ink on the leaves. There is a showcase, where a set of the Pali *Tipitaka* written on ola leaves is kept.

According to the **History of the Religion**[20] (*Sasanavamsa*), at one time a famine arose in the island of Sinhala (Ceylon) and many monks left the island as they feared they would not be able to learn the three *Pitakas* due to lack of food. However, 60 monks stayed behind by the seashore and studied together living on roots, fruits and the like. Being oppressed by hunger and weakness, they lay down on the sandy ground while keeping their heads facing each other and without uttering a word they studied the scriptures in their minds. Thus did they preserve the three *Pitakas* together with the commentary for twelve years, and help the Religion forward. At the end of twelve years, 700 monks returned from India and studied the Teachings together with the 60 monks who had stayed behind. At that time they agreed with each other and did not differ. This was how the great Elders or *Mahatheras* (monks of twenty years standing or more) accomplished the difficult task of remembering precisely the three *Pitakas* orally in this way.

The zeal and dedication of the ancient *theras* in the learning of the canonical texts without missing a single word is illustrated by the following story. After he had learnt the Buddha's words from the **Elder Dhammarakkhita** of Yona country in India, the **Elder Tissa**, son of a landlord Punabbasu, took leave to return to Ceylon. While traveling to the port to board a ship to sail home, he had some doubts regarding a certain verse in the *Tipitaka*. So he retraced the journey

back to his teacher, a distance of 100 *yojanas* (1 *yojana* = 8 to 12 miles) in order to remove his doubt before his teacher. In this way, it should be understood how very difficult a task it was to bear in mind, the canonical texts without missing a single word. And whatever they could not learn by heart, they preserved by way of study, remembrance and the like, in order that it might neither disappear nor be confused. In this way, for a long time since the First Council, the succession of great Elders handed down the canonical texts even orally.

a) Documentation of the *Tipitaka* on Palm Leaves

According to records compiled by Ven. **Nanamoli** [21], four months after **Vattagamini Abhaya** became king of Lanka (104-88BC) his reign was interrupted by the rebellion of the Brahman Tissa, followed by famine, invasion by the Tamils and the king's exile. The *bhikkhus* from the **Mahavihara** or Great Monastery all dispersed to the south and to India. After fourteen years, the king returned and defeated the Tamils. With the restoration of the king, the *bhikkhus* returned to Sri Lanka. Filled with religious zeal, Vattagamini built the **Abhayagiri** *vihara* and offered it to the ***thera*** **Mahatissa** who had assisted him in his bid to regain his kingdom. Later on, the monks of the Abhayagiri seceded from the Mahavihara and became schismatic. Sensing insecurity, the Mahavihara took the precaution to commit the *Tipitaka* for the first time to writing, doing it in the provinces away from the king's presence.

About four hundred and fifty years after the *Parinibbana*, during the reign of King Vattagamini in **89 BC** (*see footnote), 500 great Elders held a Council presided by **Ven. Rakkhita Mahathera** and thinking, "In future, beings of poor mindfulness, wisdom and concentration, will not be able to bear in mind (the canonical texts) orally", decided that the three *Pitakas* together with the commentary should be written in books. It was a time when the *viharas* were deserted and oral transmission of the texts was difficult. The art of writing had, by this time developed substantially, so it was thought expedient and necessary to have the entire body of the Buddha's

teaching written down to prevent confusion or disappearance of the True Religion.

The historic event took place at the **Aloka cave** *Vihara* or ***Aluvihara*** in the Malaya country (Matale), a place in the island of Tambapanni (Ceylon). This council is considered to be the **Fourth** by the Theravada school although in India, another council held under the patronage of the **Kushan king Kanishka (Note 6)** around 100 AD is considered as the Fourth Council.

At the end of this Council, the texts along with the *Attha-kathas* (commentaries) were inscribed on ola palm leaves and the scriptures were thoroughly checked and rechecked to ensure their authenticity. This was how the three *Pitakas* were preserved. A visit to Aloka Cave will certainly evoke a deep sense of gratitude to the *Sangha* for their wisdom and compassion in authenticating and documenting the Buddha's teachings for future generations. Thanks to the foresight and indefatigable efforts of these great Elders, there is no room either now or in the future for self-styled 'progressive monks or scholars' to adulterate the pure Teaching.

*(The dates are calculated according to the Theravada tradition, which places the Buddha's *Parinibbana* in 543BC. Western sources place the Buddha's *Parinibbana* in 483BC, 60 years later.)

11. Fifth and Sixth Councils in Myanmar[22]

According to the **Mahavamsa**[13], at the end of the Third Council, missionary monks were sent to various countries neighbouring India by the Council President Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa to propagate the Buddha's Teaching. Two monks, **Ven. Sona** and **Ven. Uttara** were sent to Suvannabhumi, which is Bago and Mawlamyine (Moulmein) district in **Mon state of Myanmar**, with the objective of founding the Buddha *Sasana* there. They converted the Myanmar people in that region to the religion by preaching the *Brahmajala Sutta.* Thereafter the Buddha *Sasana* was firmly established in Myanmar for over two thousand years. Hence it is not surprising that Myanmar has taken the leading role in preserving, propagating and perpetuating the Buddha's Teaching in modern times by holding two Buddhist councils during the last two centuries.

a) The Fifth Council (*Panca Sangiti*)

According to the Theravada tradition, the Fifth Council took place in Mandalay, Myanmar in 1871AD during the reign of King Mindon. The chief objective of this Synod was to recite all the teachings of the Buddha and examine them in minute detail for errors, alterations and omissions. Three Great Elders, **Ven. Mahathera Jagarabhivamsa, Ven. Narindabhidhaja,** and **Ven. Mahathera Sumangalasami** led this council attended by 2,400 monks. Their joint *Dhamma* recitation (*Dhamma Sangiti*) lasted five months.

At the end of the Fifth Council, the entire *Tipitaka* was inscribed on 729 marble slabs in the Myanmar script for posterity. Each marble slab measured 1.68m high, 1.07m wide and about 0.13m thick and this monumental task was executed by many skillful craftsmen. Upon completion, each slab was housed in a beautiful miniature pagoda on a special site in the grounds of King Mindon's Kuthodaw Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill. According to the Guinness Book of Records, these 729 slabs represent the largest book in the world today.

b) The Sixth Council (*Chattha Sangiti*)

The Sixth Council was held from **1954 to 1956** under the auspices of the Burmese Government led by the then Prime Minister, U Nu. It was held at **Kaba Aye, Yangon** in the Maha Passana Guha, a huge assembly hall resembling the great cave at Sattapanni in Rajagaha, venue of the First Council. Like the preceding councils, the objective was to authenticate and preserve the genuine *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*. A total of 2473 monks from Myanmar and 144 monks from seven other countries, namely, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam took part in the Rehearsal.

Preliminary preparations lasted three years from 1951-1954 whereby the *Tipitaka* and its allied literature in all scripts were painstakingly examined with their differences noted, the necessary corrections made, and collated. It was found that there was not much difference in the content of any of the texts. Then having agreed upon the final version, approved unanimously by all the parties concerned, the full Assembly met on the **full-moon day of May 1954**. All the 40 books of authenticated, accepted version of the Pali *Pitaka* were chanted by 2600 *bhikkhu*s in five sessions spread out over two years from 1954 to 1956. The late **Mahasi Sayadaw Bhadanta Sobhana** acted as ***Pucchaka*** (Questioner) while the late **Mingun Sayadaw Bhadanta Vicittasarabhivamsa** acted as ***Vissajjhaka*** (Answerer) answering correctly all questions related to the *Tipitaka* from memory. Finally, after the Council had officially approved the texts, all of the books of the *Tipitaka* and their Commentaries were prepared for printing. This notable achievement was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the 2,600 monks and numerous lay people. Their noble task came to completion on the full-moon day of May 1956, to coincide with the **2,500th Anniversary** of the Lord Buddha's *Mahaparinibbana*. The version of the *Tipitaka* of this Council known as the **Sixth Synod Edition** has been recognized as the pristine teachings of the Buddha. It is the **most authoritative** rendering today. After the scriptures had been examined thoroughly several times, they were put into print, covering 52 treatises in 40 volumes, or 8026 pages in total. At the end of this Council, all the participating countries had the *Pali Tipitaka* rendered into their native scripts, with the exception of India.

Conclusion

The Buddhist Councils were crucial in ensuring that the true doctrines of the Buddha were preserved for future generations. Each council authenticated the Pali *Tipitaka* by rehearsing them in an assembly comprising hundreds of learned monks and *Arahants*, whereby false doctrines were purged and points of controversy settled. The Pali Canon or *Tipitaka* is generally considered to be the **oldest body** of Scriptures documenting the Buddha's teachings, somewhat older than its Sanskrit counterpart, though some Sanskrit scholars resist this opinion. According to **Childers**[9], the Pali version of the Buddhist Scriptures is the **only genuine** and **original** one.

When the Buddha made the injunction that monks were to learn his teaching in '*saka nirutti*' (own language) meaning **Magadhi**, the **common dialect** of the region in his time, it was in consonance with the ancient method of learning by oral tradition whereby pupils were required to learn the master's doctrine in the language that the latter preached by. In an oral tradition, mistakes and distortions are bound to arise frequently. By adopting a **common medium of instruction**, these mistakes and distortions can be quickly detected and corrected by rehearsing together. This was what actually took place in the Buddhist Councils after the Buddha's *Parinibbana* to ensure that the true teachings were preserved.

There is much controversy among scholars regarding the origin of Pali, the language of Theravada Scriptures. However to Theravada Buddhists, it is a non-issue. As pointed out by Sayadaw U Thittila[1], the Pali Canon contains everything necessary to show forth the Path to the ultimate goal of *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering. This can only mean one thing, namely, that the **Buddha's true teachings** have been preserved in its pristine form in the Pali Canon. For this we are indebted to the **religious zeal**, **dedication** and **prodigious memory** of the ancient monks (*Theras*) in preserving, propagating and perpetuating the Teachings of the Buddha, from his *Mahaparinibbana* till the present day.

Appendix

Contents of the *Tipitaka* or Three Baskets

a) *Vinaya Pitaka* or Basket of Discipline

Made up of rules of discipline laid down by the Buddha for regulating the conduct of disciples who have been ordained into the Order as *bhikkhus* (monks) and *bhikkhunis* (nuns)

Consists of 5 books, namely:

1) Major Offences (*Parajika*) ─ including explanation of how each rule was promulgated and listing special cases and exceptions.
2) Minor Offences (*Pacittiya*) ─ including explanations and exceptions.
3) Great Section (*Mahavagga*) ─ giving rules for admission into the *Sangha*, ordination, dress-code, residence, and rules for performance of special monastic activities.
4) Smaller Section (*Cullavagga*) ─ dealing with the treatment, offences, and duties of teachers and novices, with special rules for nuns.
5) Epitome of the *Vinaya Pitaka* (*Parivara*) ─ containing commentary primarily on the Great Section and stories about the events following the Buddha's Enlightenment.

b) *Sutta Pitaka* or Basket of Discourses

Contains the discourses delivered by the Buddha on various occasions as well as some discourse delivered by his disciples. It is divided into 5 Collections or *Nikayas*.

1) Collection of Long Discourses (*Digha Nikaya*) ─ 34 discourses divided into 3 sections dealing with training of the disciple.
2) Collection of Medium-Length Discourses (*Majjhima Nikaya*) ─ 152 discourses, many of which tell of the Buddha's austerities, Enlightenment and early teachings.
3) Collection of Connected Discourses (*Samyutta Nikaya*) ─ these are divided according to subject matter into 5 divisions

4) Collection of Discourses from Gradual Sayings (*Anguttara Nikaya*) ─ 9557 short discourses in 11 divisions, beginning with discourses on 1 subject in first division, 2 subjects in second division and moving up to discourses containing 11 subjects in the last division. The name *Anguttara* means 'increasing by one item'.
5) Collection of Short Discourses (*Khuddaka Nikaya*) ─ This is the biggest volume, made up of 15 books which contains the most exquisite parts of the entire canon:
    i) Shorter Texts (*Khuddaka Patha*)
    ii) The Way of Truth (*Dhammapada*)
    iii) Solemn Utterances (*Udana*)
    iv) Thus it was said (*Iti-vuttaka*)
    v) Collected Discourses (*Sutta Nipata*)
    vi) Stories of Celestial Mansions (*Vimana Vatthu*)
    vii) Stories of Departed Spirits (*Peta Vatthu*)
    viii) Psalms of the Brethen (*Theragatha*)
    ix) Psalms of the Sisters (*Therigatha*)
    x) Birth Stories (*Jataka*)
    xi) Expositions (*Niddesa*)
    xii) Analytical Knowledge (*Patisambhida*)
    xiii) Lives of Arahants (*Apadana*)
    xiv) Chronicle of Buddhas (*Buddhavamsa*)
    xv) Basket of Conduct (*Cariya Pitaka*)

c) *Abhidhamma Pitaka* or Basket of Ultimate Things

The *Abhidhamma* was incorporated as the Third Basket during the Third Council held in the 3rd century BC. It deals with the higher philosophy of the Buddha and contains these seven books:

1) Enumeration of Phenomena (*Dhammasangani*)
2) Book of Analysis (*Vibhanga*)
3) Treatise on the Elements (*Dhatukatha*)
4) Book of Human Types (*Puggala Pannati*)
5) Points of Controversy (*Kathavatthu*)
6) Book of Pairs (*Yamaka*)
7) Conditional Relations (*Patthana*)

Explanatory Notes

Note 1: Pali and Magadhi

Many theories have been proposed by scholars regarding the original home of Pali. According to **Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala**[7], **Oldenburg** is of opinion that Pali had for its home the country south of the Vindhya Mountains. Another noted critic of Pali **Dr. Franke** is of the view that the home of Pali may be found between the middle and western Vindhya mountains. Yet another critic **Dr. Windisch** differs in his conclusions with Franke and Oldenburg and says that the Buddha used the language of Magadha. Many Pali scholars are of the opinion that literary Pali is the vernacular Magadhi used by the Buddha to preach the *Dhamma* and the use of the word Pali as the name of the language in which the Buddhist texts are composed is **purely figurative** and that its real name is Magadhi.

The Blessed One wished that the language used to convey the message of Buddha should be the language of the people, and not Sanskrit. **Magadhi, Suraseni, Paisaci, Maharashtri, Prakrit** were the dialects spoken by the people at the time, and the Blessed One beautified the vernacular by inventing expressions and terms to expound His wonderful Doctrine of the ***Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma***. Pali may be called the **middle language** which was used by the Blessed One to expound the Doctrine of the Middle Path. The ornate and embellished Sanskrit and the vulgar Paisaci Prakrit He avoided, and made a **classic of purified Magadhi**, which was called Pali to designate the language that He used as different from existing dialects. Pali is the language of the Buddha which could easily be understood by the natives of Magadha, Kosala, Suraseni, Kasi, and Gandhara.

Sten Konow has shown the resemblances that exist between Pali words and Paisaci. **Sir George Grierson,** at one time Collector of Gaya and an expert of Hindi dialects, agrees with **Windisch** that literary Pali is Magadhi. He gives a list of the places where the Paisaci dialects were spoken, namely: Kancidesiya, Pandya Pancala; Gauda, Magadha, Vracada, Dakshinatya, Saurasena, Kaikeya, Sabara, Dravida. Pandya, Kekaya, Bahlika, Simhala, Nepala, Kuntala, Sudhesna, Bota, Gandhara, Haiva and Kannojana.

Says Dr. Grierson: "The first thing that strikes one about these three lists is the great extent of country that they cover. If we are to accept them in their entirety, Paisaci Prakrit was spoken over nearly the **whole of India** and also in Tibet." Since the time of the Blessed One the **Pali language** began spreading not only in India, but beyond. Wherever the Buddhist *Bhikkhus*

went there arose centres of literary culture, and they transplanted Indian art, agriculture, gardening, floriculture, architecture, etc.

Note 2: The Four Great Authorities (*Mahaparinibbana Sutta*)

During the journey to his final resting place in Kusinara, the Buddha stayed at the Ananda shrine in **Bhoganagara** (present day Kesariya) and taught the four standards by which his disciples would be able to decide whether a certain teaching was actually his words or not. These standards, called the **Four Great Authorities** are:

(a) A *bhikkhu* may say: "I heard and learned it from the **Blessed One's own lips**; this is the Law, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching".

(b) A *bhikkhu* may say: "In a certain dwelling place there is a community of elders and a chief; I heard and learned it from the **lips of that community**; this is the Law, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching".

(c) A *bhikkhu* may say: "In a certain dwelling place many elder *bhikkhus* live who are learned, expert in the traditions, memorizers of the Discipline, memorizers of the Codes; I heard and learned it from **those elders' own lips**; this is the Law, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching".

(d) A *bhikkhu* may say: "In a certain dwelling place an elder *bhikkhu* lives who is learned, expert in the traditions, memorizer of the Discipline, memorizer of the Codes; I heard and learned it from **that elder's own lips**; this is the Law, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching".

In such a case, the declaration of this *bhikkhu* should be neither approved nor disapproved but **carefully studied word by word** and then verified in the ***Vinaya* Disci**pline or confirmed in the ***Sutta* Discourses**.

If they are found to be **not verified** in the *Vinaya* or confirmed in the *Suttas*, one can conclude that they are not the Blessed One's word, they are **wrongly learned** by that *bhikkhu* or that community or by those elders or by that elder. One should accordingly **reject** them.

If however, they are found to be **verified** in the *Vinaya* and confirmed in the *Suttas*, one can conclude that they are the Blessed One's word, they are **rightly learned** by that *bhikkhu* or that community or by those elders or by that elder. One should accordingly **accept** them.

Note 3: Eighteen *Nikayas* (Ancient Schools of Buddhism)

A) Mahasanghika and Related Schools.

Mahasanghika or School of the **Great Assembly** (attended by ten thousand heretical monks) is acknowledged as the first *Nikaya* to secede from the original *Sangha* after the Second Council. They had their main centre at Pataliputta but later on migrated from Magadha in two streams, one northwards and the other towards the south. The southern group settled down in Andhra Pradesh around Amaravati and Dhanakataka, their branches concentrating at Nagarjunikonda, dwelling on the mountains around. The Pali version has been fully borne out by the inscriptions discovered in these areas, namely, the Pubbaseliyas, Uttaraseliyas or Aparaseliyas, Siddhatthikas and Rajagirikas, collectively designated as **Andhakas** by Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the *Kathavatthu*. Of the northern Mahasanghikas, he mentioned the Ekabboharikas, Gokulikas, Pannattivadins and Bahusuttika. However except for the Gokulikas, their views have not been referred to in the *Kathavatthu*, indicating perhaps they ceased to retain any practical importance at all.

1) **Gokulika** (Kukkulika) — The doctrine of this school considered the world to be red-hot with misery and devoid of happiness, a *kukkula*, due to the misunderstanding of the Fire Sermon.

2) **Ekavyoharika** (Ekavyavaharika) — This school was hardly known in later times and was probably reabsorbed into the Mahasanghika.

3) **Bahulika** (Bahusrutiya) — This school emphasized religious knowledge and erudition (*bahusutta* = learning).

4) **Cetiyavada** (Chaitiyavada) — This school emphasized the *cetiya* or shrine worship. It is identified with the **Lokottaravadins** because the Mahavastu, which is an avowed text of the Lokottaravadins, gives prominence to the worship of *cetiyas*.

5) **Pannattivada** (Prajnaptivada) — the concept (= *pannatti*) school

6) **Purvasaila** and **Aparasaila** (= Uttarasaila**)** — refer to the schools of Andhra country whose followers were called the “East-Cliffmen” and “Opposite Cliffmen” respectively. Part of the **Andhaka** schools.

B) **Theravada (Sthavira) and Related Schools**

Theravada means the doctrine of the Elders and was the original *Sangha* from which the other schools seceded. Its texts are written in Pali, recognized as the vernacular language used by the Buddha.

1) **Mahisasaka** — named after Mahisaka country where this school was formed. Like Theravada, the Mahisasaka adhere to the view that an *Arahant* is beyond the reach of any seduction and cannot relapse.

2) **Vajjiputaka** (Vatsiputriya) — probably formed by Vajjian monks who did not join the Mahasanghika but branched out independently later. They prepared a new recension of the *Abhidhamma* based on the belief of the existence of a personality or *puggala*, a belief shared by the Sammitiyas. Both schools were also called **Puggalavadins.**

3) **Dhammuttarika** (Dharmottariya**)** — Higher *Dhamma* school an offshoot of the Vajjiputtakas and were found in Aparanta on the coast of Maharastra at the port of Soparaka and places nearby.

4) **Bhaddayanika** (Bhadrayanika) — the "Auspicious" vehicle, an offshoot of Vajjiputtaka. To the Bhaddayanikas is attributed the doctrine of "*anupubbabhisamaya*" – that realization of the Four Noble Truths is acquired in segmentary order

5) **Channagarika** (Sannagarika) — School of six towns, an offshoot of Vajjiputtaka. To them is attributed the doctrine of *Dukkhaharoti,* the utterance of the word "*dukkha*" leads to knowledge (*nana*).

6) **Sammitiya** (Sammatiya) — from "***samma ditthi***" means the school of Right View. It ascribes its origin to Mahakaccana but Mahavamsa puts it as an offshoot of Vajjiputtaka. The only remarkable doctrine of the Sammitiyas is that regarding the nature of the *puggala*, which served as the carrier of the five kandhas or aggregates through births and rebirths of beings. Like the Sabbathivadins they also held that there is an *antarabhava* i.e. an intermediate state between the death of a being and its rebirth.

7) **Sabbathivada** (Sarvastivadin) — derived from "***sabba athi***" or "everything exists" and refers to the doctrine of this school. They held almost the same views about the human life and the universe as the Theravadins, in the non-existence of soul, in impermanence and the law of *Kamma*. However the Sabbathivadins believed in the reality of the five aggregates (*khandhas*) that compose a being as against the

Theravadin's view of their unreality. Thus they admitted the reality of *khandhas* as existing in all times – past, present and future.

8) **Dhammagutika** (Dharmagupta) — started in Gujarat and Sindhu and named after the Greek missionary Dhammarakkhita or Dharmagupta who was sent there after the Third Council. This explains why it was not mentioned in the *Kathavatthu*.

9) **Kassapiya** (Kasyapiya) — named after the founder Kassapagotta, who with Majjhima propagated Buddhism in the Himalayan region. It is identical with the **Haimavata** school.

10) **Samkantika** (Sautrantika) — This school denied the authority of *Abhidhamma* and admitted only that of the *suttas*. Hence they were closer to the **Suttavadins** who followed the doctrine of the *suttas.*

Note 4: Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa

According to **Mahavamsa**, the **Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa**, President of the Third Council, was a Brahma-god called Tissa in his previous existence. At the time of the Second Council, the *Arahants*, foreseeing danger to the religion in the future, approached him for help as his lifespan in the Brahma realm was coming to an end. He consented to be born in the world of men in order to prevent the downfall of the Buddha's religion and subsequently took rebirth as the son of the *brahmin* **Moggali** of Pataliputta. The Elders **Siggava** and **Candavajji**, both disciples of **Sonaka** (himself a disciple of **Dasaka**, who received ordination from **Ven. Upali**) had been entrusted with the task of converting him. From the time of Tissa's birth, therefore, for seven years, Siggava went daily to the house of Moggali, but not even one word of welcome like "Go further on", did he receive. In the eighth year someone said to him, "Go further on." As he went out he met Moggali, and on being asked whether he had received anything at his house, he said he had. Moggali inquired at home and the next day charged Siggava with lying. But hearing Siggava's explanation, he was greatly pleased and thereafter constantly offered Siggava hospitality at his house. One day, young **Tissa**, who was thoroughly proficient in the Vedas, was much annoyed at finding Siggava occupying his seat and spoke to him harshly. But Siggava started to talk to him and asked him a question from the **Citta Yamaka**. Tissa could not answer it and in order to learn the Buddha's teachings, he entered the Order under Siggava, becoming a *Sotapanna* or Stream-winner soon after. Siggava instructed him in the

Vinaya and Candavajji in the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma Pitakas*. In due course he attained *Arahantship* together with the supernormal powers and became the acknowledged leader of the monks at Pataliputta.

At the festival of dedication of the Asokarama and the other monasteries built by **King Asoka**, Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, in answer to a question by Asoka, said that even a lavish donor of gifts like him was not a kinsman of the Buddha but one becomes a kinsman of the Buddha's religion only by letting one's son or daughter enter the Order. Acting on this suggestion, Asoka had two of his children, **Mahinda** and **Sanghamitta** ordained. Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa acted as Mahinda's preceptor. Later, because of the great gains which accrued to the monks through Asoka's patronage of the Buddha's religion, the Order became corrupted as heretics donned the yellow robe for material gain and dwelt together with *the bhikkhus*. Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa committed the monks to the charge of Mahinda, and for seven years lived in solitary retreat in the **Ahoganga Mountain.**

Due to the great number of heretics and their unruliness, no *Uposatha* ceremony was held for seven years in all the monasteries. When Asoka sent his minister to investigate and settle the matter, the foolish official killed several monks. Hearing of the misdeed, Asoka was filled with remorse and doubts lingered in his mind whether he was responsible for the crime. He was told that Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, who was living in solitary retreat on the Ahoganga Mountain further up the Ganges, could resolve his doubt. From there Asoka sent for him to solve his doubts as to what measure of sin belonged to him owing to the killing of the monks by his minister. But Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa would not come until Asoka appealed to him that his services were needed to befriend the religion. The Elder traveled by boat to Pataliputta, and was met at the landing place by the king who helped him out by supporting him on his arm.

The king then led him to **Rativaddhana Park** and to test the Elder's faculty, begged him to perform a miracle, which the Elder consented to do and made the earth quake in a single region. To convince the king that the killing of the monks involved no guilt on himself, the Elder preached to him the **Tittira Jataka**. Within a week, with the aid of two *yakkhas*, the king had all the monks gathered together and held an assembly at the Asokarama. In the presence of Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, Asoka questioned the monks on their various doctrines, and all those holding heretical views were expelled from the Order, Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa decreeing that the **Vibhajjavada** alone contained the teaching of the Buddha. Later, in association with 1,000 *Arahants*, Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa convened the Third Council at Asokarama, and compiled the **Kathavatthu** (**Points of**

Controversy), in refutation of false views. This was in the seventeenth year of Asoka's reign and Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa was seventy-two years old. At the conclusion of the Council in nine months, Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa made arrangements, in the month of Kattika, for monks to go to the countries adjacent to India for the propagation of the religion.

Note 5: *Tipitakadharas* of Myanmar Today

- *Tipitakadhara* = Bearer of the *Tipitaka* ('recitation')
- *Tipitakakawida* = Bearer of the *Tipitaka* ('oral' and 'written')
- *Maha Tipitakakawida* = Passing the 'oral' and 'written' with distinction
- *Dhammabhandagarika* = Keeper of the *Dhamma* Treasure

The above Titles are awarded to successful Buddhist monks in Myanmar if the candidates can recite 8026 pages of the Buddhist Canon or *Tipitaka* and also pass the written examination, which includes the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. *Tipitakadhara* Selection Examination is the most extensive, most difficult and highest. No one passed any of the categories in 1948 when it was first held in Rangoon (Yangon) after the country gained Independence. The aim of the examination was to promote the emergence of the outstanding personalities who can memorize and recite the whole of the *Tipitaka* (8026 pages or about 2.4 million words in Myanmar Pali).

It is the longest examination in the world and the entire examination is spread over five years. In the first and second year, the candidates are examined in *Vinaya Pitaka* (2260 Pages) lasting a total of 20 days (3 days each for 5 volumes plus 5 days for the written part covering the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries). In the third year the candidates are examined in 3 volumes of the *Sutta Pitaka* (779 pages). In the fourth and the fifth years, the examination on the first five (1390 pages) and the last two (3597 pages) of seven volumes of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* is arranged. The total length of the examination used to be four years before.

The first successful candidate was Venerable U Vicittasarabhivamsa, who was later known as the 'Mingun Sayadaw'. He passed the *Vinaya* part in the 1950 Examination. In 1953 he completed the final part at that time of the *Pathika Vagga* of the *Sutta Pitaka* and became the first ever '*Tipitakadhara*' in Myanmar (Burma) at the age of 42 and his achievement was recorded in the Guinness Book of Records. Since then, more and more outstanding monks have been awarded full titles for their fabulous memory. Since 1948, the following candidates have earned the title of *Tipitakadhara*.

Title Holders	Titles*	Year	Age (First Title)
Ven. Vicittasarabhivamsa	1,3,4	1953	42
Ven. Nemainda	1,2,4	1959	32
Ven. Kosala	1,2,4	1963	36
Ven. Sumingalalankara	1,2	1973	27
Ven. Sirinandabhivamsa	1,2	1984	42
Ven. Vayameindabhivamsa	1,2	1995	39
Ven. Kondanna	1	1997	55
Ven. Silakhandabhivamsa	1,2	1998, 2000	34
Ven. Vamsapalalankara	1,2	1998, 2000	32
Ven. Indapala	1	2001	40
Ven. Sundara	1	2001	45

*1 = *Tipitakadhara*, 2 = *Tipitakakawida*, 3 = *Maha Tipitakakawida,*
*4 = *Dhammabhandagarika*

One may question the wisdom of arranging this extremely difficult examination now that we can put the *Tipitaka* texts on CD-ROM and there is no question of the *Tipitaka* texts disappearing from this world. But the actual rewards of the whole examination is reflected in the emergence of thousands of monks who have memorized all or some of the texts by heart and are able to help lay worshippers with their instant sermons and discourses, faster than the CD-Rom texts appear on the computer screen. Mastery of the Pali Canon will ensure that the monks transmit their knowledge with authority. So the ultimate aim of the *Tipitaka* Examination is to promote propagation of the Buddhist Teaching, which is the noblest of all the gifts, the Gift of the *Dhamma* in its purest form.

Reference: *Tipitaka* Golden Jubilee 1948/49 – 1997/98 Magazine, Religious Affairs Directorate Press, Myanmar, 1998

Note 6: King Kanishka of the Kushans

The **Kushans** belonged to the **Yueh-chih** tribe, who originally lived in the western frontier of China between Tun-huang and Chi-lien-shan. They were driven out of China by the Hsiung-nu (the powerful Asiatic Huns of North China) around 177BC and the greater part of the group migrated westward into present-day eastern Kyrgyzstan around Lake Issyk Kul, driving south the local nomadic **Sakas** or Scythians. Not long after this, the Yueh-chih faced another round of attack by the Hsiung-nu, forcing them to flee to **Sogdiana** (present day Uzbekistan, west of Ferghana) and **Bactria** (ancient

country lying between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus River in what is now Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), where they overran the local Sakas. They and related tribes are the Asiani and **Tokharians** of Western sources. In around 128BC, the Yueh-chih were recorded as living north of the **Oxus River** (Amu Darya) ruling over Bactria which they had divided into five divisions. A new dynasty, that of the Kushans was subsequently founded by one of the five chieftains named **Kujula Kadphises**, who united the other four divisions under his rule. Kujula Kadphises invaded **Parthia** (the country around Khorastan in Iran) and took **Kabul**. His son **V'ima Kadphises** succeeded him and inherited a large kingdom consisting of the Kushan homelands north of the Oxus and Kujula's conquest – Kabul, Kashmir, Gandhara and Taxila. V'ima increased these holdings with the subjugation of northern India as far as **Mathura**.

The most famous Kushan king was **Kanishka I** (ruled 78 – 102AD) whose capital was at Purusapura near modern **Peshawar**. Kanishka succeeded to a large empire and made it even larger by further conquest of India as far as Bihar in the east, Sindh and Baluchistan in the southwest. He was later converted to Buddhism and supported the **Sarvastivada**, one of the eighteen *Nikayas*, which dominated in Mathura and in the northwest. Daily he would invite monks to preach in his palace but found their views so contradictory that he became confused and consulted the Venerable **Parsva** about the true doctrine. At the latter's advice, Kanishka decided to convene a Council in which the various *Nikayas* were represented. The aim of the **Fourth Council** was to put an end to the dissensions in the *Sangha*. It was presided by **Vasumitra** and reportedly held in Jalandhar or Kashmir around 100AD. The Theravadins do not recognize this council and there is no mention of it in the Ceylonese Chronicles. According to the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang, after the treatises were composed, they were engraved on sheets of red copper and stored in stone boxes, which were deposited in a *stupa* built for the purpose. These texts have survived only in Chinese translations and adaptations.

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ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER XVI: Supramundane Dhamma is *Akaliko* (Immediately Effective)

Continued from page 250

Now certain scholars hold the view that after the attainment of Path, Fruition need not arise immediately but can be delayed. They arrive at this conclusion due to mis-interpretation of the terms 'Faith follower' and 'Dhamma follower' in *Alagaddupama Sutta* of Majjhima Nikaya.

1. Question: Is it Possible for One to Attain *Magga* (Path) and Not Experience *Phala* (Fruition) Immediately?

In the *Alagaddupama Sutta* or Discourse on the Simile of the Snake (*Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* No. 22), the Buddha mentioned two types of yogis who have entered the path, namely:

- **Faith followers** in whom the faculty of faith is predominant and who develop the noble path with faith in the lead; and **Dhamma followers** in whom the faculty of wisdom is predominant and who develop the noble path with wisdom in the lead.

- The Buddha said that: "those *bhikkhus* who are Faith followers or Dhamma followers are all headed for enlightenment."

Because of this statement, certain people have mis-interpreted it to mean that a person who has entered the path need not be a *sotapanna* but can be assured of becoming one before he dies. Otherwise the Buddha would have called them *sotapannas* instead of Faith or Dhamma followers. This is contradictory to the Scriptures, which say that the supra-mundane Dhamma is *akaliko,* immediately effective.

2. The Seven Kinds of Noble Persons

The *Puggala Pannatti* (Designation of Human Types, Chapter 7) defines seven kinds of noble persons, which are explained in the *Visuddhi Magga* (Path of Purification) XXI, 74 as follows:

When the **faith faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

1. He is called **Faith-follower** (*Saddhānusārī*) at the moment of the Stream-entry path;

2. In the other seven instances, i.e., the 3 higher paths and 4 fruitions, he is called **Faith- liberated one** (*Saddhāvimutta*).

When the **concentration faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

3. He is called **Body-witness** (*Kāya-sakkhī*) in all eight instances (4 paths and 4 fruitions). In A. IX, 44 it is said: "A monk enters and abides in the first *jhana* and to the extent of that sphere, abides with body attuned to it i.e. in contact with the body (*kayena phassitva*). The Buddha calls such a person a Body-witness. (The same is repeated with regard to the 7 higher *jhanas*).

4. He is called **Both-ways-liberated one** (*Ubhato-bhāga-vimutta*) when he has reached the highest fruition (*arahatta phala*) after also reaching the immaterial *jhanas*, i.e., he is liberated in both ways, by immaterial *jhana* and the noble path.

When **understanding** or the **wisdom faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

5. He is called **Dhamma-follower** (*Dhammānusārī*) at moment of Stream-entry path;

6. In the next six other instances, i.e., the 3 higher paths and 3 fruitions, he is called **Vision-attainer** (*Ditthippatta*).

7. In the case of the highest fruition, he is called **Wisdom-liberated one** (*Paññā-vimutta*).

From these descriptions (see also **Kitagiri Sutta**, *Majjhima Sutta* No. 70, 14-21), it appears that the names '**Faith follower**', '**Dhamma follower**' and '**Body witness**' are just conventional terms for ***nama-rupas*** (mental-physical aggregates) possessing different types of supramundane consciousness that exist only for one thought-moment. At the succeeding moment of Fruition, the ***nama-rupas*** have changed and they are now designated as **'Faith-liberated ones', 'Vision-attainers' and 'Body witness'** respectively.

By now it should be clear that the seven designations of noble persons (*ariya puggalas*) are just *pannatti* or **conventional terms** for the seven *nama-rupas* with different types of ***lokuttara cittas*** or supramundane consciousness. These *nama-rupas* being *paramatthas* or **absolute realities** last for one thought-moment only.

Those who hold on to the **concept of a permanent entity** seem to think that the Faith follower, Dhamma follower and Body witness are actually persons who have attained the Path but have not yet experienced the Fruition otherwise the Buddha would have called them sotapannas. This mis-interpretation is common among scholars who do not practice the *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation and are thus unaware of the impermanent nature of the body-mind complex or *nama-rupa*, which they take to be a 'person'.

3. Fruition Arises Immediately After Attainment of Path

According to the **Patthana** (Great Book of *Abhidhamma* in Manuals of Buddhism by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw Mahathera), all preceding classes of consciousness and their mental factors, are related to all succeeding classes of consciousness and their mental factors by the **Relation of Contiguity** (*Anantara Paccaya*). '*Anantara*' is so called because it causes such states of phenomena as are similar to its own to succeed in the immediately following instant. '*Paccaya*' is so called because it renders help. In the phrase 'similar to its own', the word 'similar' is meant to express similarity in respect of having the faculty of being conscious of an object. The path (*magga)* consciousness and fruition (*phala*) consciousness are related by this condition, as both are

supramundane in nature having **Nibbana as their object**. Therefore following the passing away of the path consciousness, there arises immediately the fruition consciousness. It is not possible for one to attain the *sotapatti* path and not realize the fruition (i.e. become a *sotapann*a) immediately but some time later as this would go against the Contiguity Relation. This is like saying that the arising of Fruition consciousness can be caused by ordinary mundane consciousness!

Furthermore in the **Upanisa Sutta** (Discourse on Immediate Causes) of *Samyutta Nidanavagga,* the Buddha has stated that the **Fruition consciousness** (*arahatta phala*) arises due to a cause; it does not arise without a cause. The immediate cause of its arising is the **Path consciousness** (*arahatta magga*). In the *Ratana Sutta* Stanza 5, that pure path the Supreme Buddha praised is described as '**concentration without interruption**' since it produces its fruit quite certainly straightaway next to its own occurrence.

So it is not possible for one to attain the Path (*Magga*) and not experience the Fruition (*Phala*) immediately. The Supramundane Dhamma is *akaliko* ─ **immediately effective**.