

# A Discourse on the Sammāparibbājaniya Sutta

by  
The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw  
of  
Burma



An English rendering by  
U On Pe (Tet Toe)

Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organisation  
Mahāsi Translation Committee, Rangoon



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Edited by  
Bhikkhu Pesala

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## Editor's Foreword

A number of the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's lectures have been translated into English for the benefit of a wider audience. Most of these valuable books have been reprinted before in Malaysia, but this new edition has been prepared for worldwide distribution.

The Venerable Sayādaw's discourses were addressed to meditators practising intensively at Mahāsi Sāsana Yeikthā, in Rangoon. They therefore contain many Pāli words which, though familiar to those who have heard regular discourses, may not be so familiar to others. I have prepared this edition of the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta bearing in mind that it will be read by many who may be unfamiliar with Pāli terms. Nevertheless many Pāli terms remain for the benefit of those who are familiar with them.

In the footnotes, references are to the page numbers of the Pāli texts of the Pali Text Society which, in the translations, are given at the top of the page or sometimes in the body of the text. But in the case of the Dhammapada or Suttanipāta, references are simply given to verse numbers.

This edition, which was first published in 1981, was not completed before now due to the large number of changes required. Even now, I am hesitant to publish it with so many alterations from the original without being able to consult the translators. I apologise for any errors I may have introduced in my attempt to fill in the many gaps that I found in the translation of the Pāli verses of the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta. I hope that readers will benefit from the Sayādaw's teachings in spite of any shortcomings in this edition.

The discourses were delivered in Burmese, and the recorded discourses were later translated to English and published in book form. They were never written as books, but I have done my best to adapt them.

Bhikkhu Pesala  
September 2021

## Preface

First, it seems appropriate to summarise the events leading to the exposition of this discourse by the Blessed One, thereafter throwing light on the essence of this discourse. This, it is hoped, will bring greater appreciation of the precious Dhamma expounded by the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw of Burma, an illustrious disciple of the Buddha whose intellectual and spiritual achievements in the field of Buddhism stand prominent in the world today.

During the period between the fourth and fifth rains-retreats, on the full-moon day of the month of June, after his achievement of enlightenment, the Buddha went into retreat and seated himself under the pleasant foliage of a majestic tree in the great forest in the neighbourhood of Kapilavatthu. At that time, five hundred monks who were formerly princes of the Sakyan clan, and who had by then achieved the stage of Stream-winning, being intent on gaining higher insight, sought for and received the sublime teaching of the Blessed One. Having done so, they each retreated to suitable secluded spots such as the cool shade of ancient trees, ravines, and valleys in the forest to continue meditation practice. After strenuous meditation they attained Arahantship in the evening of the very same day.

Having attained Arahantship, the first monk who became an Arahant made his way to the Buddha to pay obeisance and report his accomplishment of the final goal. After taking his seat in an appropriate place before the Buddha, he looked back to see if there was any other person present. On seeing a monk coming he dismissed his original intention of reporting his spiritual attainment. He therefore remained in his sitting posture and immersed himself in deep silence. Then another monk followed suit, then another and another. In this way, there was a continuous stream of all five hundred newly-fledged Arahants paying homage to the Buddha and taking a seat. When all of these Arahants had thus assembled at the feet of the Exalted One, *devas* and *brahmās* from the ten-thousand world systems appeared successively to pay respectful homage to the Blessed One and the five hundred Arahants. It is stated that there were only a few who failed to make their appearance on this auspicious occasion. The huge congregation of a multitude of *devas* and *brahmās* is known as the great occasion (Mahāsamaya). At this congregation, the Buddha solemnly proclaimed the number of *devas* who were present and the respective celestial abodes from where



they came to join the assembly. The words uttered by the Buddha were given the name of the Mahāsamaya Sutta and were recited as such at the First Buddhist Council.

The impact of the Buddha's announcement on the *devas* and *brahmās* brought about a fitting composure in them. They were in a state of bliss, mentally strong, firm, and receptive. The Buddha then delivered a series of discourses, six in number, the essence of each discourse being intended to suit the natural tendency and disposition of the respective *devas* or *brahmās*. Of these six discourses, the first is the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta — the Discourse on the Correct Homeless Life — which is specifically meant for those *devas* and *brahmās* who have the natural tendency to indulge in sensual pleasures or, in other words, who are dominated by the habit of lust or sensual desire. The subject matter of this discourse is presented here for the benefit of all.

In this discourse, all the questions were put to the Blessed One by the Nimitta Buddha, a created image of the Buddha. The discourse begins with the Nimitta Buddha eulogising the noble qualities and supreme attributes of the Lord Buddha in the following way, "All sentient beings in this universe are not only drifting along with the tide of sensual desires but are also drowned in them. It is because of their attachment to sensual existence that they are thus adrift and submerged in the raging flood of existence. This is the result of wrong view, only those who have confidence in the teaching of the Buddha in this dispensation will have the chance of being liberated from this whirlpool. Wrong believers are simply drifting and sinking. Not knowing the truth of the law of impermanence *etc.*, they are carried away by the rush of turbulent waters of darkest ignorance. The Buddha, however, has escaped from the four whirlpools and reached the other shore, the safe haven of nibbāna. With the attainment of Arahantship, all clinging and desires become extinct, which is known as *sa-upādisesanibbāna*. This means peace and serenity unperturbed by the sensual pleasures of existence, *i.e.* annihilation of all defilements while the body and mind still remain. For this reason, the mind of the Blessed One is absolutely calm, tranquil and unruffled without the slightest taint of defilements."

Following this eulogy, the Nimitta Buddha posed a question, "How should a bhikkhu, who leads a holy life of solitude in the forest after

renouncing household life and discarding all worldly pleasures, conduct himself well to escape from this mundane world and all fetters?"

Thereafter, the questions and answers cover a wide range of human thought, explaining right and wrong from the Buddhist point of view. Beginning with the good advice to dispel erroneous views such as beliefs in omens, bad dreams, weird sounds and various other kinds of superstitions such as fatalism, supernatural occurrences portending good or evil, prophesy and propitiation of spirits, and blind belief in astrology, it comprehends the method of extinguishing human passions, evil desires, greed, attachment, and lust. Furthermore, the method of following the right path has been elucidated; how the path and fruition knowledge can be achieved through insight meditation and how freedom from the three kinds of becoming can be gained.

This discourse gives a comprehensive treatment of the fundamental principles of Buddhism. It also prescribes the way to overcome conceit arising from egotism, animosity, and sceptical doubt. Moreover, it shows us how to devote ourselves to the practice of insight meditation to get rid of these human imperfections and shortcomings, which will only accumulate demerits. It enjoins us to practise the contemplations on loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy, and equanimity, and to diligently follow the Noble Eightfold Path to gain the realisation of the Four Noble Truths *i.e.* the cessation of suffering — *nibbāna*.

The meditation exercises to be employed are also explained in brief. The ten fetters (*samyojana*) that bind men to continued existence, and which can only be got rid of by Arahantship, are outlined. While listening to this discourse with concentrated attention, one billion *devas* and *brahmās* attained Arahantship. The number of those who achieved various stages of insight knowledge was, however, innumerable.

It is really surprising that the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw, the author of this discourse in its Burmese version, has been able to compress into a small volume the various aspects of the noble Dhamma, which serves as an antidote to all ills and misery.

Min Swe, Secretary

Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization

Mahāsi Sāsana Yeikthā, April 1981

May all beings be well and happy.

# A Discourse on the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta

## The Correct Homeless Life

### Introduction

This discourse was delivered by the Buddha to the *devas* and *brahmās* who still had the habit of passion. In this discourse the Created Image of the Buddha (Nimitta Buddha) put the following questions in accordance with the wishes of the real Buddha.

*“Pucchāmi muṇiṃ pahūtapaññaṃ,  
tiṇṇaṃ pāraṅgataṃ parinibbutaṃ t̥hitattaṃ.  
Nikkhamma gharā panujja kāme,  
kathaṃ bhikkhu sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“I pose this question to the Master who is fully endowed with great and all-embracing wisdom, who has a stable and peaceful mind, free from the fire of defilements: ‘How would a bhikkhu who has renounced sensuality properly live a homeless life?’”

These were the words of adoration to the Buddha. The Buddha had profound and immeasurable wisdom, knowing all the Dhamma. All the beings in the world have been drifting in the current of sensual passion and are being drowned in it. They are drifting and sinking in lust for life and also in erroneous beliefs. When the Buddha’s Dhamma is shedding its light, the believers in the Dhamma have a chance of swimming across the current of erroneous beliefs. All other beings are drifting and sinking in the currents of ignorance, which blind them to the truth about impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. The Buddha has already swum across the four currents and arrived at the other shore — the peace of nibbāna. The state of being free from all kinds of defilements, having arrived at the stage of Arahantship, is called *sa-upādisesanibbāna*. The Buddha had peace from that and thus his mind was stable. The above verse is in adoration of the Buddha, the following is the gist of the question.

Renouncing passion in all its manifestations, the bhikkhu has taken to the forest after discarding the society of the laity who are building families. How would a bhikkhu properly lead a homeless life?”

## Discard All Superstitions

To this question the real Buddha gave an answer beginning with the following verse:

*“Yassa maṅgalā samūhatā, uppātā supinā ca lakkhaṇā ca.  
So maṅgaladosavippahīno, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who has discarded all superstitions, all beliefs in auspicious signs, dreams, and omens, would properly lead a homeless life.”

The Buddha said that that bhikkhu had discarded all superstitions, or secular auspicious signs (*maṅgala*), by means of Arahantship. Superstition consists in belief in misfortune in regard to lightning strikes, mysterious fires *etc.*, and in both good and bad luck in dreams, peculiar marks on domestic animals, and on tools and appliances. The Buddha said that the bhikkhu had discarded all superstitious beliefs and was able to practise the Dhamma well.

According to this verse, the thirty-eight genuine auspicious signs should be observed, not neglected. The auspicious signs that should be rejected are superstitious beliefs falling into three categories: signs that are seen (*diṭṭha-maṅgalā*), signs that are heard (*śuta-maṅgalā*) and signs that are smelt or touched (*muta-maṅgalā*).

### Auspicious Sights

Auspicious sights (*diṭṭha-maṅgalā*) refers to the superstitious belief in fortune or misfortune according to fortuitous or ominous sights. For instance, the sights of a swallow, a lark, a bird that speaks human words, a pregnant woman, an unmarried male or female, a pot full of water, a thoroughbred horse, a large bull ... such sights are considered to bring good fortune, *i.e.* they are auspicious signs. Such superstitions prevail in India even today, and some in Burma too. In ancient times, the sight of a beggar was taken to be a bad omen.

#### A Brief Story of *Diṭṭhamaṅgalikā*

In the *Mātaṅga Jātaka*, the rich man’s daughter, *Diṭṭhamaṅgalikā*, carefully looked at the hands and feet of her many suitors and was displeased. She told each one of them that he was of a lower caste and drove them out. Then she washed her face because, she said, she had seen a bad sight. She was in the habit of denigrating people

for their low caste. She drove them away, saying that seeing them was a bad omen. Due to this habit of screening people by sight, labelling them generally as a bad omen this daughter of the rich man was named *Diṭṭhamaṅgalikā* — “Believer in visible omens.”

At that time the Bodhisatta was born as a beggar, and his name was *Mātaṅga*. Beggars were not allowed to live in the city. One day *Mātaṅga* went into the city on some business. Beggars were required to put on rags when they entering the city. They were also required to make a sound so that others of higher caste were warned of their approach. *Mātaṅga* put on dark clothes, carried a basket in one hand and a small bell in the other to warn of his approach. He was also required to pay respects to the passers-by.

While *Mātaṅga* was walking on the road, the rich man’s daughter, *Diṭṭhamaṅgalikā*, came riding on a horse-cart to the bank of the river to take a bath and to picnic with her attendants. When she heard the bell, she looked and saw the man. “Who is this man?” she asked, and was told that the man was a beggar. Then she felt that it was a bad omen occurring at the time of going to the auspicious bathing ceremony and picnicking on the riverside. She turned back immediately and returned home to wash her face. Her attendants were angry with *Mātaṅga* for having spoilt the fun and beat him up. If you want to know the full story, please look up the [Mātaṅga Jātaka](#), Story No.497 of the book of *Jātaka*. *Diṭṭhamaṅgalikā*’s story can also be found in the [Citta-Sambhūta Jātaka](#), Story No.498.

## Auspicious Sounds

Auspicious sounds (*suta-maṅgalā*) is superstition regarding the hearing of sounds. Sounds of joy and laughter are taken to be auspicious, and sounds of weeping and mourning are bad omens. The cry of an owl, for instance is auspicious, but the cry of a night bird is a bad omen.

## Auspicious Contacts or Odours

Auspicious contact (*muta-maṅgalā*) is superstition relating to smells and physical contacts. A sweet smell or a pleasant touch is considered to be auspicious, and conversely a bad smell or an unpleasant touch is a bad omen. According to the caste system in India, physical contact, however slight, with a beggar or a low-caste person is considered to be

a bad omen. Once, a low-caste student had a slight touch with his high-caste teacher by mere accident, but the teacher could not forgive him and thrashed him soundly, according to a paper I happened to read.

### **Choosing Auspicious Days Is Useless**

Included in such beliefs are the superstitious reckoning of auspicious and inauspicious days according to the movement of stars and other astrological calculations, when the occasion for an alms-giving ceremony or a wedding is to be determined. Auspicious dates are chosen for the occasion of ceremonial laying of foundation-stones of a new building, such as a house or a monastery. These are, after all, superstitious practices. It does not matter whether a certain time is auspicious or inauspicious, as long as the construction is carried out properly according to the plans. If the construction is not done properly it won't be successful despite the fact that it had been started on an auspicious date. In the same way, a marriage contracted on an auspicious date may fail if the partners cannot maintain a good relationship, and they will be separated. Such cases are many, just as some pagodas and monasteries remain uncompleted.

Personally, I regard this practice of choosing auspicious dates as useless. Nowadays, most people in Rangoon don't seem to care for auspicious days and usually choose Sundays to hold their ceremonies. That is a rational method. Sunday is an official holiday; so any ceremony held on any other day cannot attract as large an attendance as is desired.

### **Dispelling False Beliefs is Important**

According to this verse, it is important to dispel false beliefs regarding such secular auspicious signs or superstitions. In fact, good fortune and misfortune are related to one's merits and demerits of the past. They are also related to one's wholesome and unwholesome deeds of the present. The benefits of one's merits will engender good fortune, and the effect of one's demerits will constitute misfortune. So we should believe unreservedly in our own kamma. That would then be the right view of the ownership of one's actions (*kammassakatā-sammā-dit̐thi*). Belief in superstitions contradicts it, and is a form of wrong view. So the main thing is to dispel such wrong view. All false beliefs can be dispelled by the path of Stream-winning. However, since a Stream-winner may be married he cannot be completely rid of all the superstitious beliefs. While still living in human society,

one feels obliged to conform to practices of secular auspicious signs to a certain extent. We don't believe in auspicious or inauspicious days, but we feel obliged to permit religious ceremonies to be held on days chosen by lay disciples as auspicious. The same is the case with foundation-laying ceremonies for new monasteries. We make such concessions because we do not wish to sow doubts in the minds of lay disciples if the construction doesn't work out according to plan.

As a matter of fact, there is no connection whatsoever between good results and auspicious times chosen after astrological calculations. Once, during the time of the Buddha, a certain man in the city of Sāvatti asked for the hand of the daughter of another man for his son and fixed the date of the wedding. Then only he approached his heretic teacher and asked if the date he had chosen was the right one. The teacher took offence for not having been consulted before the date was chosen and said that the date was not the right one. "If you hold the wedding ceremony on that day, there will be great destruction," the cunning teacher said. So the man did not go to the bride's house on the appointed day. He went only the following day with his son. The bride's parents were angry at the man's non-appearance and married their daughter to another young man. When the man arrived the next day with his son, they were roundly abused and driven out.

The news of this incident spread and reached the ears of the Buddha's disciples who fell to discussing it. When the Buddha came and asked what the topic of discussion was, he was told the story. The Buddha said that such an incident was not new, for a precedent had occurred in the past. He then related the story in the Nakkhatta Jātaka (Jā.49). The wise man in that story said in the following verse:

*"Nakkhattaṃ patimānennataṃ, attho bālaṃ upacchagā.  
Attho atthassa nakkhattaṃ, kiṃ karissanti tārakā."*

"Benefits will approach and pass the fool who waits for an auspicious time according to the planets. Getting the benefit desired is the same as getting it at an astrologically favourable time. What can the planets do?"

This verse is noteworthy. In the present time there are instances of failure to get good results from failing to get things done in good time, or rather at a time when it is advisable to do the work. Two or three years ago, a certain woman from Mergui came to Rangoon to get her

eye-disease treated, but she was a little late because she waited for an auspicious date for departure from her home town. The doctors said that the disease could not be cured because they were consulted too late. I heard about this incident from a lay disciple. This is an incident to remember in the matter of waiting for an auspicious time.

The bhikkhu who has discarded all beliefs in secular auspicious signs will not be disturbed by them any longer, and will thus attain perpetual happiness. The Buddha said that such a bhikkhu had rid himself of these undesirable beliefs and notions, he can carry out good work in human society.

Furthermore, you should get rid of all the superstitions relating to lightning strikes, mysterious fires, or similar disasters. Such disasters are seldom met with. Then superstitions about dreams must also be dispelled. The scriptures say that dreams occur to eminent people on the eve of some great events of good or bad effect. To the ordinary person, however, dreams are of no significance; they are mere reflections of their fears and fantasies. Whatever they may be, all dreams are to be disregarded. When one reaches the stage of Arahantship, one would not have any dreams at all. We all should strive to reach that stage.

Here, one may pause to reflect. This discourse was delivered to an audience of *devas* and *brahmās*, and these celestial beings never have occasion to dream, so they wouldn't have any notions connected with dreams and wouldn't be interested in the dreams of human beings. We may wonder how the *devas* and *brahmās* would understand about dreams, but there are quite a lot of *devas*, such as the guardian *devas* of trees, who are living on the earth. Their lives are so closely related to the lives of human beings that they may have occasions for dreams. The Buddha's advice to dispel superstitious beliefs based on dreams was appropriate for such terrestrial deities.

Again, the Buddha's advice on beliefs regarding the peculiar marks on domestic animals, tools and appliances, and other things in daily use, was probably meant for the *devas* living on the earth and having estates just like human beings. According to the masters of the Vedas, certain marks on the property or on servants are responsible for good or bad luck of the owners. All such beliefs are superstitions, and they must be completely discarded.

Such beliefs presuppose the desire for making progress in life and they are usually held by those who have excessive desire. There



may have been some such beings among the *devas* and *brahmās* whom the Buddha was addressing. When they heard the Buddha say that the bhikkhu who had discarded all these superstitions could remain content, they would probably have greater confidence in the noble bhikkhus and would at the same time strive to discard such superstitions of their own. They would, therefore, undertake meditation practice and gain greater adoration of the bhikkhus and the Dhamma. Thus they would achieve pure joy and immediately attain the Noble Path and its Fruition.

### **Bhikkhus and Secular Auspicious Signs**

According to this sermon, all the monks in the Buddha's dispensation who have taken the monastic vows should discard all the beliefs about secular auspicious signs. They should not encourage people to hold such beliefs. Yet there are some monks who give lectures to promote such beliefs; they have teach people how to make propitiations to ward off ill effects indicated by dreams or signs or other things; they give instructions to do something such as carrying certain tokens, charms or amulets, in order to gain prosperity in business or promotion in official positions. Those who want to ward off ill luck, to become rich, or gain promotion, approach such teachers. Such monks become powerful and prosperous. According to this verse, such practices should be discontinued, and instead, one should strive for the attainment of morality, concentration, and wisdom. If one can discard all these false beliefs, one can be free from all attachments and achieve the highest happiness.

To sum up, the question was, "How does a bhikkhu who has gone into the forest after renouncing sensuality perform his religious duty?" The answer was, "The bhikkhu who has discarded all superstitious beliefs in secular auspicious signs would properly lead the homeless life."

May you all be able to strive to attain insights leading to the achievement of nibbāna after discarding all superstitious beliefs.

### **Abstain from Sensual Pleasures**

I will continue the discourse with the third verse.

*"Rāgaṃ vinayetha mānusesu, dibbesu kāmesu cāpi bhikkhu.  
Atikkamma bhavaṃ samecca dhammaṃ, sammā so loke  
paribhajjeyya."*

“The bhikkhu who has renounced sensual pleasures in the human and celestial realms, who has passed beyond existence, and understood the Dhamma, would properly lead a homeless life.”

One who has renounced the pleasures of the human world and put on the saffron robes to become a bhikkhu would not yet be free from passion. Sensual desire should be got rid of, but how? Practising meditation to gain concentration and thus making one’s mind pure could bring one to the stage of the first *jhāna* which would diminish sensual desire. However, sensuality would not be completely eradicated yet. If the circumstances are favourable, these desires would show up again. That is why there have been instances in which some individuals who had attained supernormal powers fell from that stage when they revelled in the voices of women. They fell from the sky while they were flying in the air. The concentration of *jhāna* alone would not be a safe guarantee against sensual desire. One must also employ that concentration as a basis for cultivating insight.

### Getting Rid of Passion Completely

The way to get rid of sensual desire and passion completely is to observe the state of mind in *jhāna*. It is the same as the way in which the meditators in this audience mindfully observe the various acts of seeing, hearing, and knowing. When one attains the stage Non-returning by means of mindfulness of the psycho-physical phenomena, there will be no occasion for passion to occur, and thus all ramifications of sensuality and craving will be eliminated.

When one practises to attain the concentration of *jhāna* one must try to attain access-concentration, a state of calm near to the attainment of *jhāna*. Using access-concentration as a basis, one may successfully practise insight meditation. If one does not have an opportunity to achieve access-concentration, one should make observations of the physical and mental activities and try to attain momentary-concentration, which is of the same strength as access-concentration as is testified to in the various Commentaries.

When momentary-concentration reaches full strength, one will come to know mental and physical phenomena separately; one will realise the difference between cause and effect; one will personally know the nature of phenomena in accordance with their three

characteristics — impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. One will thus progress in mindfulness along the stages of the path until one becomes a Non-returner. At that stage, sensuality and craving are eliminated. A Non-returner, therefore, has no desire for human pleasures. Nor does he or she long for the pleasures of the celestial world. Thus he or she achieves genuine peace and serenity.

### **Misery Due to Sensuality and Passion**

Today, people are suffering from all kinds of misery as a result of their desires for things, both animate and inanimate. They want to enjoy things they have enjoyed before, and strive to get them. After getting them, they try their utmost to keep them from loss or destruction. They have to worry about food, clothing, and shelter besides being called upon to render social services. While thus engaged they may commit several misdeeds such as killing, stealing, lying *etc.*

There are also instances of belligerence and war between countries. So the Buddha said in the Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya (Sutta No.14) that kings quarrel among themselves because of their greed, lust, and desires. So do Brahmins and rich men. So do parents and their children, brothers and sisters, and other near relatives. These quarrels may even end in fights with weapons, resulting in deaths.

Those who commit misdeeds due to sensual desire go to hell and suffer agony, or are reborn as hungry ghosts, where they suffer hunger and thirst, or in the animal world where they endure various kinds of misery. In short, beings in the world undergo all kinds of suffering simply because of their desire, craving, and obsession. So sensual desire is indeed a terrible affliction.

However, most people consider these desires and feelings as the best thing in life. So they are constantly in search of opportunities to increase these desires and feelings to enjoy them all the more. They think that such enjoyment of pleasures makes for happiness. However, if you are objective, you will see that the so-called happiness is not very much compared with the amount of trouble one has to go through to gain such pleasures. Therefore, the Buddha taught that the pleasures of both the human and celestial worlds should be renounced.

Of the two — earthly and celestial pleasures — none among us has any personal experience of the latter. It is seldom that people

commit misdeeds to get celestial pleasures; only they commit all sorts of misdeeds to get earthly pleasures. So it is advisable to try to lessen the occasions for earning misdeeds to get earthly pleasures. How should we try to reduce such misdeeds? Of course, by making a note of all the physical and mental activities and thus acquire a deep knowledge of their true nature. If we cannot do this and just let ourselves go, then we should not fail to make a note of the arising of the desires for pleasures, and then reject them as they occur. We should know that these pleasures will push us down to hell; they are simply terrible.

There are some who are under the impression that by renouncing the secular life and entering monkhood they will gain celestial pleasures in the next existence, and they hope for a life of pleasure in the celestial realms. Entertaining such hopes is improper, and if any desire for celestial existence occurs, you should be instantly brush it aside. If you cannot get rid of it by making a note of it, you should reject it after serious consideration. If you cannot do that, you will get human and celestial existences again and again, and thus suffer all kinds of misery inherent in these existences. Then, as you won't be free from misdeeds, you will go to hell and other lower realms, and suffer untold misery there. Now that you have a precious human existence, you should not fail to take this opportunity of attaining the stage of Non-returning through the intensive practice of insight meditation.

If you attain that exalted stage of Non-returning, you will be quite safe. In the present existence you will not suffer misery due to sensual pleasures simply because you have no craving for them. Then after you have passed away, you will attain the Brahmā realms. There, you will gain mental as well as physical bliss. Even then, there is still some suffering resulting from physical and mental activities. To be free of this the Buddha continued thus, "The wisdom of Arahantship, which sees the Four Noble Truths, overcomes and surpasses the state of continuous existences."

Do not be complacent after having attained the stage of Non-returner. Try to attain the final stage of Arahantship, which sees the Four Noble Truths. When one attains this stage, one will be rid of hankering after the three planes of existence, namely sensual, form, and formless becoming. After getting rid of this desire for

existence the Arahant has no more rebirth. After passing away from the present existence the Arahant attains cessation without remainder (*anupādisesanibbāna*), the state of genuine peace. That is the state of supreme happiness. The Arahant spends the remainder of the present existence without suffering any misery resulting from defilements, and so is genuinely happy.

So the Buddha said, “The bhikkhu who has overcome and surpassed the hankering for the three planes of existence lives properly in this world.”

To really know the Four Noble Truths doesn't mean knowing them from learning by heart; such knowledge would not enable one to overcome the three types of becoming. We mean that one would attain the stage of Non-returner after completely rejecting sensual desire, and then continuing the intensive practice of insight meditation, one attains a full and deep knowledge of the Four Noble Truths through the wisdom of Arahantship. We advise the meditators to persist in their efforts to climb the steep path towards the final stage by way of insight meditation.

Of course, there is no need to repeat here the process of insight meditation, but I will tell you briefly about the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths as described in the Commentaries.

## **Contemplate the Noble Truths**

Of the four truths, only two should be contemplated. They are the truth of suffering and the truth of the cause of suffering. The other two, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering, need not be observed. To be free and detached from all kinds of suffering is to realise nibbāna which is the truth of cessation, the most desired objective. To achieve this objective, the Noble Eightfold Path must be followed, and that is also the most desired objective. Knowing the nature of these two truths, one has only to wish for the attainment of them. Having set one's wish on them one has to observe the truth of suffering as a prelude to the attainment of nibbāna, and that is the path of insight meditation.

Observing the truth of suffering involves making a mental note of all the physical and mental activities as they occur and seeing their impermanent nature. Failing to see the impermanence of these activities would lead to an obsession with permanence, happiness,

and self. Such obsession is called the aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*). Observing the impermanence of things by making a mental note of them as they occur will bring correct knowledge, and that kind of observation is the same as following the path of insight. With the development of this correct observation, the cessation of suffering will be reached in due course.

I wish to mention what some say about insight meditation. They say that the practice of insight meditation entails trouble and discomfort. This view is wrong due to failing to understand the true nature of the path of insight. Some think that realising nibbāna means the ultimate death and is, therefore, a dangerous state. That is also ignorance, which is a wrong view of the cessation of suffering. Regarding the physical and mental activities such as seeing, hearing, *etc.*, as good, and the cessation of them as bad, is nothing but delusion (*moha*). The truth is that the physical and mental activities of an organism are in constant flux, and due to their instability they are suffering. One should make an effort to see this truth through insight meditation.

When one realises the truth of suffering, one will be free from any desire for these mental and physical activities. That freedom from craving is in fact the renunciation of pleasure, which leads to liberation from the cycle of becoming. Existences are the result of craving, attachment, becoming, birth, old age, and death, which are the various kinds of misery bound up with existence. This freedom, even if only for a moment, is achieved by insight. Making a mental note and thus gaining insight is the path of insight and renouncing in this way the attachment, desire, and obsession is achieving the cessation of suffering from moment to moment.

When insight is developed, one eventually realises the truth of cessation, and thus attains nibbāna. The first stage is that of the Stream-winner, the second is that of the Once-returner, and when the third stage of the Non-returner is reached, all desires for sensual pleasures are eliminated. Continuing on from that third stage, one goes on to the final stage of Arahantship by means of insight. Attainment of that stage means the achievement of the cessation of suffering, whence all kinds of misery are eliminated and rebirth is precluded. The knowledge of Arahantship, full insight into the Four Noble Truths, makes one an Arahant who transcends all the three worlds and thus achieves genuine peace and happiness.

May you all be able to achieve genuine peace and happiness by transcending the three worlds of existence through insight meditation.

## Reject Prejudice and Hatred

Now I will discuss the fourth verse.

*“Vipit̐thikatvāna pesuṇāni, kodhaṃ kadariyaṃ jaheyya bhikkhu.  
Anurodhavirodhavippahīno, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu should turn his back on gossip and slander, and eschew anger and malice. He who also rejects prejudice and hatred, would properly lead a homeless life.”

The meaning of this verse is that a bhikkhu must reject anger, prejudice, favouritism, affection, attachment, ill-will, *etc.* Such a bhikkhu will have no attachment to the world, and will thus live purely, peacefully, and happily.

In the six discourses of the Mahāsamaya Sutta, one verse is sufficient for the purpose but several more were given by way of repetition. Those who have enough intelligence will wonder why there should be such repetition. The reason is that the *devas* and *brahmās* who had sufficient intelligence to understand the first verse gained realisation soon after it was said, but those with less intelligence only understood the meaning after the second or third verse, as the case may be. That must be why the Buddha taught his Dhamma in similar verses bearing the same meaning.

In the previous verses the Buddha taught that one must reject sensual desire and transcend the three worlds. If one has rejected sensual desire, it goes without saying that one has rejected all the defilements such as anger, delusion, conceit, wrong view, *etc.* In the present verse the advice is to reject gossip, anger, malice, and prejudice. Compared to the previous verse this one, which refers to gossip, may seem inferior, but we should note that it was intended for the *devas* whose intelligence was inferior.

## Gossip Must Be Rejected

Gossip is intended to create misunderstanding between those who love and respect one another. To tell someone the faults of one or more persons, whether the allegations are correct or not, is gossip. Or, like the Brahmin Vassakāra, to make one doubt about another’s motives

and thus create misunderstanding between them is also gossip. This has been referred to in my discourse on the Sallekha Sutta. Gossip and slander must be got rid of by means of the path of the Non-returner (as referred to in the Visuddhimagga). We must try to attain the stage of the Non-returner to get rid of the habit of gossip and slander. Since it has been said that when one has reached the stage of the Stream-winner one would not resort to any misdeed that would pull one down to hell, a Stream-winner would not tell white lies. The object of the slanderer is to alienate two people who love and respect each other, and if they are alienated, the purpose of the slanderer is achieved. That misdeed will also pull the slanderer down to hell or one of the lower realms. A Stream-winner will never commit such a misdeed.

Although one may not yet be a Non-returner, it is best to avoid telling about other people's faults or demeaning others. Avoiding such misdeeds, one should work hard to attain the stage of a Non-returner in due course.

### **Anger Must Be Rejected**

Anger, too, can be completely got rid of only when one reaches the stage of a Non-returner, but if one could reject anger as much as possible before attaining that exalted stage it would be very much better. When anger arises, one should dispel it either by making a mental note of it or by discerning it. It should be nipped in the bud or it could acquire such strength that the angry person might resort to abusive speech or even physical acts of aggression. One should, therefore, cut off anger before it becomes visible to others through one's speech and actions. We should develop this practice of rejecting anger until we reach the stage of a Non-returner.

### **Meanness Must Be Rejected**

Meanness and envy should also be rejected. A monk could be mean: in connection with 1) the monastery, 2) his supporters, 3) almsfood and gifts, 4) religious teachings, or 5) prestige.

Meanness is an attempt to deter others from sharing the things that are one's own possession. The commentaries say that this attitude is rejected when one reaches the stage of a Stream-winner.

Even if one has not yet reached this stage, one should reject meanness through meditation. Meanness should be rejected



particularly in one's relationship with those who are engaged in the practice of morality. In brief, I would say, "Turning one's back on gossip, one must reject anger and envy."

Turning one's back on gossip means, of course, abandoning the habit of gossiping. "Turning one's back on slander" is a direct translation from Pāḷi.

### Acquiescence and Opposition Must Be Rejected

It is right and proper to acquiesce in the wishes of another person in his interest and for his good. By acquiescence which should be avoided is meant complying with the wishes of another person with lascivious intent and for the gratification of lust. Opposition is a demonstration of anger and hatred; that should be avoided. Anger and hatred are synonymous.

Anger can be completely rejected only when one attains the stage of a Non-returner. Compliance with the wishes of another under the instigation of desire and lust is, of course, the work of desire, and desire is eliminated only when one attains the final stage of purity, that is Arahantship. We should work hard for the attainment of the final stage. With the elimination of desire on the attainment of Arahantship, one dispels all defilements. Thus one is free from all attachment and can live properly in the world.

May you all meditate hard to dispel uncharitable attitudes such as slander, gossip, and desire. May you achieve the ultimate goal of nibbāna.

### One Must Abide in Equanimity

*"Hitvāna piyañca appiyañca, anupādāya anissito kuhiñci.  
Saṃyojaniyehi vippamutto, sammā so loke paribbajeyya."*

"The bhikkhu who is striving for liberation from the misery of *saṃsāra* eschews pleasing and displeasing things and beings through meditation to reach the path of Arahantship, would properly lead a homeless life."

For a monk, there should be no pleasing or displeasing things. People suffer immense misery because of pleasing and displeasing things. In reference to this the Dhammapada says:

*"Mā piyehi samāgañchi, appiyehi kudācanaṃ.  
Piyānaṃ adassanaṃ dukkhaṃ, appiyānañca dassanaṃ."*

“Do not associate with the loved, and never with the unloved; not seeing the loved and seeing the unloved are both painful.” (Dhp. v 210)

Just coming across pleasing beings or things does not matter as much as falling in love with them. Likewise, merely coming across disagreeable beings or things is not so harmful as hating them. If one’s beloved children are separated from one by death or other circumstances, one feels miserable. Similarly, if one’s treasured possessions such as jewellery or other valuables are stolen or destroyed by a fire, flood, or storm, one may also suffer grief and despair. It is better not to have such treasures at all, since if one has them one will probably be attached to them.

However, most people think that is very good to possess and enjoy pleasant things and people; that it is enjoyable and lovely. So they are constantly on the lookout for them. In other words, they are looking for suffering. That is like creating misery for oneself.

People would undoubtedly be happy not to meet with disagreeable things or their enemies. If one should meet with them, it is good to avoid malice and develop tolerance. An obnoxious smell is more difficult to tolerate than an unpleasant sight; and a painful sensation is worse than a bad smell. A painful sensation can cause fatigue, injury, or disability, it can even result in death. It is obviously best not to experience any disagreeable things, but if one has to experience them, one must endure them with courage.

One should forbear unpleasant objects and people by making a constant note of them as they really are; this noting will prevent the development of hatred. If one feels any hatred or ill-will, one should immediately make a note of that feeling and thus get rid of it.

If one is able to achieve the stage of a Non-returner by making a note of the arising and passing away of hatred in this way, then anger is abandoned. At that stage, one would no longer have any feeling of hatred for unpleasant people or things that one meets with, and one can remain in peace and happiness. Again, when one reaches the stage of an Arahant, one gets rid of lust, which is often mistaken for love. One would not then be affected by any pleasant thing and would remain always in a peaceful and happy state. We should all strive to attain that stage of perfection.

If one is free from liking and disliking, one is free from defilements. The Buddha reiterated this message in another way so that the audience of celestial beings would understand more fully.

### **One Must Be Free from Obsession**

It is clearly stated in the teaching on mindfulness that if one diligently practises meditation by making a note of the breathing, or the constant changes in the body, or various sensations, or the changing mental phenomena, then there would be no opportunity for lust or desire to arise. Neither would one have any egoistic obsession. So if one wants to be free from obsessions, one must practise meditation, making a constant note of the ever-changing physical phenomena, feelings, thoughts, and mental objects.

At the beginning of meditation practice one will not discover anything unusual, but as one continues and develops concentration one would be able to distinguish between mind and matter. One would also discern cause and effect, and the ever-changing characteristic of all phenomena. One would therefore be convinced that these phenomena are unsatisfactory and that they occur of their own accord, and not in accordance with one's wishes. In other words, one would realise the three general characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self. When one is fully convinced of this, one will be free from obsessions, and eventually one would gain the path and fruition of Arahantship, and become a perfected one.

### **Be Free from Fetters**

If one is free from obsessions, one is released from the fetters that bind one to the round of rebirths. The Pāli says: "*Samyojanīyehi vippanutto*," meaning "Being free from the fetter of attachment for things animate or inanimate." These fetters are a heap of defilements. The Arahants have cut off these fetters, so they are free from the round of rebirths. Such bhikkhus can live properly in the world.

To summarise the preceding verses: the first verse relates to abandoning all superstitions, the second verse to the renunciation of passion, and the current verse relates to getting rid of the obsessions of liking and disliking.

## Do Not Delight in Sensual Objects

*“Na so upadisu sārameti, ādānesu vineyya chandarāgaṃ.  
So anissito anaññaneyyo, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who is striving to escape from rebirth does not delight in sensual objects, which give rise to pleasure and suffering, being detached and not led by others, he would properly lead a homeless life.”

Ordinary people are under the impression that physical and mental phenomena are a ‘self’ or ‘soul’ that exists throughout one’s life and which gives stability and happiness. They think of other people in the same way. Whenever they see, hear, touch, or think of people, they think of them as permanent. They see women as women, men as men, and are pleased with the sight. By contrast, the meditator who practises constant mindfulness of phenomena, sees impermanence, suffering, and absence of any self. The meditator finds that they are entirely devoid of essence, and does not feel attracted to the sensual objects.

### Avoid Attachment

The notion of self is referred to in this verse by the word *‘ādānesu.’* This is the same as the aggregates of attachment, which are the basis of suffering. If people are under the impression that there is a self, and are attached to it, they will have desires and obsessions, and so will not be able to rid themselves of these desires and obsessions.

These discourses on the Buddha’s teachings are given to help people free themselves from such desires and obsessions, and to encourage them to strive for release from rebirth, but most people are still attached to them. Until they are fully convinced of the emptiness of all phenomena, they will continue to have these desires and obsessions. If, on the other hand, they are thoroughly convinced through insight arising in meditation, they will be able to abandon them.

The meditator who makes a note of the incessant arising and passing away of all phenomena such as ‘seeing’ when seeing, or ‘hearing’ when hearing, will barely have a chance to entertain desire or lust. However, it must be remembered that until one attains the perfection of Arahantship, the final stage on the path to purity, one may have such desires at times. We should therefore work hard to attain perfection so that no desires will trouble us.

## **To Be Known by Oneself**

That bhikkhu must know by himself without depending on the instructions of another. To know something, in this context means to know by one's own conviction, from one's own personal experience, without a teacher's instruction or guidance, after eliminating such defilements as craving and wrong view. The verse means, "That bhikkhu lives in this world well, and is convinced of the utter lack of essence in desires and lust for the sense aggregates, whether one's own or those of others." Here, it means that one who knows through such conviction is an Arahant, and that as such, he or she lives the remaining portion of his or her life well and properly.

### **Do No Harm by Body, Speech, or Thought**

*"Vacasā manasā ca kammunā ca, aviruddho sammā veditvā  
dhammaṃ.*

*Nibbānapadābhi patthayāno, sammā so loke paribbajeyya."*

"The bhikkhu, who is striving to attain nibbāna, who does no harm with physical, verbal, or mental misdeeds, would properly lead a homeless life."

The person who is striving to escape from suffering must act considerately; that is without contravening the first three precepts: 1) refraining from killing, 2) refraining from stealing, 3) refraining from infidelity or sexual misconduct.

It should be noted that torture and cruelty that stop short of killing are also contrary to this precept. So too, stealing includes actions that ruin others or prevent them from getting the just results of their efforts or merits. Refraining from such acts means to behave properly. In other words, one must refrain from any actions that would incur the blame of noble-minded and virtuous people.

Furthermore, one's speech must avoid the four kinds of incorrect speech: 1) telling lies, 2) divisive speech, 3) abuse, 4) frivolous and useless talk. One must speak only the truth; one's speech must be conducive to unity and mutual understanding; one's words must be chosen not to cause offence; and should be worthy of note.

Thus, one is following the precept to refrain from incorrect speech. One must refrain from unwholesome speech; if one does so, one is considered to have achieved virtue regarding speech.

Then one must also refrain from three unwholesome mental actions: 1) covetousness, 2) malevolence, 3) disbelief in the law of causation, *i.e.* the law of kamma and its result.

A monk must refrain from lustful, malicious, and cruel thoughts. If he does so, then he is regarded as having thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma-vitakka*), loving-kindness (*avyāpāda-vitakka*), and harmlessness (*avihimsa-vitakka*). Of the three kinds of mental restraint, renunciation implies the intention to develop concentration or insight. To cultivate the thought of renunciation one must practise meditation, especially insight meditation.

### A Short Course of Insight Practice

Instructions for the practice of insight meditation have been given so often that they have become rather commonplace, but I feel that I must repeat them here to refresh the memory of those who have neglected the practice. The cognition of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching is nothing but the contemplation of mental and physical phenomena. When one is mindful of these, one will know from one's own observations that the unknowing material phenomena and the mental phenomena that knows are two distinct things. One will be convinced of the law of cause and effect, and also that these mental and physical phenomena are in a constant flux — that they are impermanent. Furthermore, one will understand that this instability breeds suffering, and that these phenomena cannot be controlled by anyone or anything. They occur and disappear all by themselves, or in other words, they are void of self. To be fully convinced of these facts through one's own insight one must constantly make a note of these mental and physical phenomena.

One cannot possibly make a note of all these phenomena fully and completely in the beginning. So one must start the practice by making a note of the various kinds of tactile impressions. While one is concentrating on such a tactile sensation, a thought might occur; then one must promptly make a note of that. Then, perhaps, an unbearable feeling of discomfort might occur; that too must be noted promptly. In brief, all mental and physical phenomena must be noted as they occur. If nothing occurs, then the meditator must return to the primary meditation object — the rising and falling of the abdomen. If one practises like this, one must be regarded as doing good mental actions.

As one goes on noting these phenomena, one will be convinced of their impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature, and since one is convinced of this, there will be no reason for craving to arise. Since craving has been eliminated, at least at that moment, then the causes for the beginning of a new existence and its undesirable consequences will also be momentarily eliminated. This is the momentary realisation of the truth of cessation. Every time that insight meditation is practised, the truth of the path is being cultivated. Thus meditation develops insight into the Four Noble Truths and, eventually, the meditator will achieve the final stage of insight and attain the highest perfection of an Arahant.

Thus, the verse says that the bhikkhu who acts in accordance with good physical, verbal, and mental actions will come to the realisation of the truth.

### **Neither Death nor Life Are Cherished**

It is said that the Arahant does not have any desire for life. Such a noble person is awaiting the time of his passing away into nibbāna. It is like a worker who does not enjoy his work; he does not wish to be unemployed, nor does he want to be working, he is simply waiting for payday to come around. The Arahants do not want to carry the burden of their bodies, doing the daily chores such as washing and cleaning, eating, drinking, and other bodily functions, which cause inconvenience, discomfort, or even pain if illness sets in. Although the body might be ailing, the mind of an Arahant remains unperturbed. To him, even the natural bodily functions such as inhaling and exhaling entail discomfort, and thus the burden of bearing the body is undesirable. The Arahants are therefore awaiting the time for discarding this burden and attaining the eternal peace of nibbāna.

To the ordinary worldling, the body is looked upon as a source of pleasure because by means of it one can see what one wishes to see, hear what one wants to hear, smell what one wants to smell, taste what one wants to taste, feel what one wants to touch. They can also give free rein to their fantasies and imagination. So they want to keep their bodies; they do not want their bodies to be destroyed. By contrast, the Arahants take these so-called pleasures as occasions for discomfort or distress. They know that genuine happiness comes about only through the bliss of nibbāna. While they are living their final life,

they are not at all attached to any of the senses, so they can abide in perfect peace and contentment. The Buddha therefore said that the bhikkhu who knows the truth wants only nibbāna, which means the cessation of suffering, and he lives in this world properly.

The occasion for today's gathering is the water-pouring ceremony for the new building for female meditators. Today's discourse is my instruction to those meditators who will stay and practise in that new building. If they act according to good deeds and speech, they will achieve morality. If they practise meditation constantly to develop concentration and insight, they will achieve good mental deeds. If they achieve this, they will in due course realise the Four Noble Truths and attain the bliss of nibbāna. May they all attain that final stage of cessation of suffering and achieve peace and happiness.

### A Bhikkhu Must Not Be Proud

*“Yo vandati manti nunnameyya, akkuṭṭhopi na sandiyetha bhikkhu.  
Laddhā parabhojanaṃ na majje, Sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who is not proud because people pay respect to him, and feels no ill-will when abused, nor become intoxicated due to receiving alms, would properly lead a homeless life.”

A bhikkhu must not be proud because people make obeisance to him. It is customary for people to bow to monks. If a bhikkhu thinks highly of himself simply because people pay respects to him, then that is pride.

### Do Not Be Angry at Abuse or Criticism

A bhikkhu must not be angry if people abuse him or criticise him. He must not react to people's disrespect with anger or malice. These two passages taken together mean that the bhikkhu should not be affected by favourable or unfavourable behaviour of people. He must be able to ignore both praise and blame.

To remain unaffected by respect and disrespect is not easy, and only Arahants can practise perfect equanimity. Ordinary bhikkhus whose observance of morality is excellent can remain unaffected to a great extent. The Buddha's discourse was referring to the Arahants, but it is also appropriate advice for the ordinary monks. To remain



perfectly equanimous one must practise constant mindfulness to expel pride or anger whenever it occurs. Even if one cannot always practise meditation, one should not over-react. Nowadays, showing respect by means of prostration primarily concerns the monks. In the Buddha's time, kings and high officials also received such homage in the form of kowtow. Government officers are now shown respect only by some form of salute. As for disrespect and abuse, this concerns everyone so this teaching should be noted by lay people too. They may have occasions when they need to restrain their pride and anger.

### **Do Not Be Vain from Abundance**

The bhikkhu must not be vain about the abundance of gifts that he receives from people. Monks do not have to concern themselves with earning their living. Whatever they need in the way of food, clothing, shelter, or medicine, charitable lay people are ready to provide. For monks who are well-known and influential, these things are in abundance. Such monks may feel vain, for they may think highly of themselves for having received an abundance of gifts, but they must not become vain on account of that.

In reference to this admonition to the monks that they should not be proud or offended by people's respect or lack of it, the Buddha said in the Alagaddūpama Sutta: "Monks, I had been giving discourses on suffering and the end of suffering, so I was abused, threatened and slandered merely to provoke me to anger and unhappiness, but I did not feel anger, distress, or dissatisfaction. Those who understood my discourses properly made obeisance and paid respects to me, but I did not feel pleased, glad, or elated. Bhikkhus, when people make obeisance to me I feel in this way: 'I, who am composed of the five aggregates, have become the Buddha, knowing all that is to be known, and those among the laity who understand me, make obeisance to me.' That is how I feel."

That was the Buddha's attitude towards the good and bad behaviour of others. The Buddha did not feel that the obeisance was for him, or for his delight, but it was the five aggregates that received the obeisance. He felt that way because he had realised the truth about things when he gained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

At that time and thenceforth, the Buddha had three supreme knowledges (*pariññā*), namely: *Ñātapariññā*, which means knowledge

that there is only mind and matter, and only causes and effects. This understanding is derived from constant noting of the ever-changing physical and mental phenomena. *Tiraṇapariññā*, which means knowledge of the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature of things and beings. This is also derived from the meditation practice. *Pahānapariññā*, which means knowledge that enables one to discard the wrong views of permanence, pleasure, and self, and all the defilements arising from these wrong views.

The three supreme knowledges were acquired by the Buddha during his career as a Bodhisatta until his final enlightenment. The understanding continued, of course, after his enlightenment, but it may be noted that these three deep insights had been acquired at an early stage. The Buddha wished the bhikkhus to strive for these knowledges by purification of their minds so he instructed them thus:

“Monks, you must not feel disgruntled due to the disrespectful attitude of people, nor elated by reverence shown to you. Do not labour under the mistaken notion, ‘They are worshipping me because I am worthy of reverence.’ You must understand, in accordance with the three supreme knowledges, that they are merely worshipping the five aggregates.”

This admonition was addressed to those bhikkhus who had not yet attained Arahantship. The Arahants have no need of such an admonition. In fact, this admonition was a reminder to the others to strive for the highest stage of purity. It is important for ordinary monks to look towards attaining the highest goal.

Those who have not yet achieved purification should maintain this right attitude when people worship them. This can be done through the practice of mindfulness. If the right attitude is maintained, then there would be no cause or occasion for vanity to arise. Just as one waters a flowering plant tenderly without being vain about it, because the plant is not oneself, so too, the five aggregates are not one’s self, so paying respect to them is no reason to be vain about the honour that they receive.

### **Contemplating Food**

The other method is to contemplate while taking food. How should one contemplate? A monk must not eat his meals for the sake of enjoyment. Lay people eat to gain strength and vigour so that they

can enjoy life. Some people take special food such as aphrodisiacs. Monks do not take food for such purposes as gaining virility and youthful vigour, nor for putting on weight, nor for improving their complexion. They take food only for maintaining their health, to allay the pangs of hunger and to enable the body to function normally, and thus to live the holy life and fulfil their religious duties.

Similar contemplation should be practised when making use of the monks' robes and the monastic dwelling. They are to be used for protecting the body from the extremes of cold and heat, from attacks by mosquitoes, scorpions, snakes, and so forth. If a monk contemplates in this way he will be content with the simplest food, robes, and dwelling place; and he will not need abundant property. He uses them only because he cannot manage without them to sustain life. Therefore, he will not be vain regarding good quality things that he might sometimes receive.

Another technique for preventing vanity is to contemplate on the thirty-two component parts of one's body. One will realise, if one contemplates deeply, that this body is loathsome and that sustaining it is a loathsome process. Searching clothing and shelter is also burdensome. Herein there is nothing to feel pleased about and therefore no reason for vanity. To contemplate in this way is necessary for those who are not yet Arahants.

The Arahants have already practised this kind of contemplation fully and reached the ultimate stage of purity. There is no need for them to do such contemplation since they have already discarded vanity. The Buddha's admonition was directed towards those who have not yet reached the final stage. So the last phrase of the verse says that the bhikkhu who has no attachment lives properly in the world.

This eighth verse was addressed to the monks, but lay people who worship them should also take a lesson from it and strive to rid themselves of pride and vanity, anger, and malice. May they, too, be able to strive for the attainment of nibbāna.

## The Bhikkhu Has Abandoned Greed

*“Lobhañca bhavañca vippahāya, virato chedanabandhanā ca  
bhikkhu.*

*So tiṇṇakathaṃkatho visallo, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu has abandoned greed as well as kamma which leads to renewed existence. He also refrains from harshness and cruelty. He who is free from the spike of defilements after overcoming all doubts, would properly lead a homeless life.”

In this verse, the things that should be abandoned are similar to those mentioned in the preceding verses, but a repetition is made here to emphasize the most important points for those who wish to realise the truth.

The verse says that greed must be abandoned. That is quite obvious to my audience here, but in those days, some *devas* and *brahmās* might not have had an opportunity of hearing the Buddha’s sermon previously. It was for the benefit of such beings that this point was repeated.

### The Way to Abandon Greed

The greed that must be abandoned is synonymous with craving (*taṇhā*), which is the cause of suffering (*samudaya-saccā*). It is essential to eradicate the cause of suffering. Desire, delight, attachment, are other names used in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. There are more than one hundred synonyms. This greed is to be eradicated by the path of Arahantship. Until this stage is reached, it should be restrained by means of morality. Greed arises in the mind, as do desire and lust, but morality must be observed to prevent its manifestation in action or speech. One who observes strict morality will obviously avoid the misdeeds of stealing, deception, bribery, and extortion.

To remove greed even further, one must eliminate greed, desire, and lust from the mind by striving to gain mental stability through meditation. For example, if one makes a constant note of the incoming and outgoing breath passing through the nostrils, desire or greed will not generally occur. Their arising will be suppressed. During the time when one has attained to *jhāna*, all aspects of greed will be totally excluded. Even after *jhāna* attainment it seldom occurs. That is why some of those who had attained *jhāna* thought that they had attained Arahantship, though they had not actually done so. In spite of their attainment of absorption, they could fall away from that attainment and give themselves over to desire if they should come across something desirable.

One must practise insight meditation to remove the latent hankering for delightful objects. We have already explained how to practise

insight meditation. If one makes a constant note of all phenomena as they occur, there will be no opportunity for greed to invade one's mind. If one is fully aware of the impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self characteristics of phenomena, there will no occasion for greed to arise. If the insight is fully developed one would achieve the Noble Path and reach the ultimate goal of nibbāna. On attaining the first stage of the path, that of a Stream-winner, one will eliminate all immoral forms of lust that can push one down to hell. On attaining the third stage, one will get rid of all desire and lust for sense pleasures, and at the final stage one will eradicate all desires and attachment to existence.

### Rejection of Becoming

Next, the verse says that the cause of new existences must be rejected. Once greed has been eradicated by means of Arahantship, the possibility for any new existence has been precluded. The Stream-winner is incapable of doing any evil deeds such as killing, stealing, lying, *etc.* that can lead to rebirth in the lower realms. Such a person will have only seven more existences in the higher realms of human beings or celestial realms, for the causes that could lead to rebirth beyond that limit have been removed. At the third stage, that of a Non-returner, one has eliminated the cause for any further existence in the sensual worlds, and on reaching the final stage of Arahantship, the possibility of a new existence of any kind has been completely eradicated. So when an Arahant passes away, he is said to have attained *parinibbāna* (the final release from the cycle of existence).

### Refraining from Cruelty

Next, the verse says that the bhikkhu must refrain from cruelty. Cruelty includes cutting off limbs, putting in chains, and imprisonment. In those days criminals were treated cruelly. They were subjected to all kinds of barbaric treatment, including amputation. Bhikkhus should obviously avoid all such brutality, since they are committed to maintaining the precepts relating to killing and torture. This behaviour is rejected when one has acquired the stage of a Stream-winner; when one attains Arahantship no trace of cruelty remains. The Buddha urged his disciples to attain the final stage in order to eradicate cruelty.

## Rejection of Doubts

The verse goes on to say that the bhikkhu must overcome all doubts and hesitation.

Doubts arise when one cannot decide between truth and falsehood. Uncertainty may arise regarding the Buddha's enlightenment, about the Path and its Fruition or nibbāna, or whether the practice of morality, concentration, and wisdom is truly effective. There might be doubts about the Buddha's disciples, about the law of kamma, or cause and effect. The bhikkhus should not entertain such doubts. These doubts can be totally removed only on attaining the stage of a Stream-winner, but before reaching that stage one can dispel doubts by listening to or studying discourses on the teachings of the Buddha.

Meditators who are engaged in intensive practice can dispel these doubts. When one comes to realise that mind and matter are distinct and separate, the doubts about mind and matter will be dispelled. For example, one realises that the bending of the arm is the effect of the intention to bend it, which is the cause. If one can realise that one will have no doubt about cause and effect. This is equivalent to dispelling doubts in respect to dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Then when one clearly perceives the constant flux of all phenomena, one will be convinced of their characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self, and there won't be any doubt about their instability. When one reaches the stage of a Stream-winner, all doubts will be dispelled.

## Be Free from Spikes

The Pāli term '*salla*' means 'arrow' or 'spike.' In this context the latter meaning seems more appropriate. What are the spikes referred to? They are *rāga*, *dosa*, and *moha*. Passion (*rāga*) is the same as greed (*lobha*); so once greed has been rejected, passion goes with it. In fact, once greed is eradicated, anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) disappear too. Those who are afflicted with passion suffer immense misery. Just as one suffers prolonged pain when one has been pierced by a spike, one who afflicted with passion suffers enduring misery. As long as one thinks that lust is enjoyable, one will strive to fulfil one's desire, and this quest is bound to entail endless discomfort and distress.

Similarly, one who is prone to anger does not like to be told to restrain it, and one who is overwhelmed by delusion takes

falsehood to be truth; imagining mind and matter — which are impermanent — to be eternal, and that the body is a self or ‘myself.’ Because of this delusion, such a person commits misdeeds unwittingly and so has to suffer the consequences in hell. Therefore the Buddha urged his disciples to free themselves from the spikes of the defilements.

### One Must Know the True Dhamma

*“Sārappaṃ attano veditvā, no ca bhikkhu hiṃseyya kañci loke.  
Yathāthiyaṃ veditvā dhammaṃ, sammā loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu knows what is appropriate and acts accordingly. He who does not ill-treat others for his own advantage, who knows the true Dhamma, would properly lead a homeless life.”

### Do What Is Appropriate

There are monastic rules and duties that monks should follow. It is not enough to know what his duties are; he must also act accordingly. That is what the Pāli Commentary says. What I take it to mean is that a monk must know all that is appropriate to his life as a monk. That is, he must know not only the rules and regulations of the Order, but also how to practice the Dhamma, including right living, health and hygiene, *etc.* He should also know how to guide meditators in their practice, giving them exercises suited to their abilities and inclinations.

Then the monk must know how to maintain his health while he is engaged in the practice of meditation. He must know how to balance sitting meditation with walking meditation so that he is healthy. He must not practise so hard that his health is impaired, so if he is weak or fatigued, he should know when to lie down and take some rest. He must adjust his diet in accordance with the changing seasons. I think these are some of the things that are intended by the words, “appropriate for living.”

### Do Not Inconvenience Others

Then the verse says, “He must not ill-treat others for his own advantage.” One must behave properly and practise to achieve one’s goal, but one must not impose on others or cause them inconvenience.

## He Must Know the True Dhamma

Whatever happens does not happen without cause or reason, but happens in accordance with the natural laws of Dhamma. This is another way of stating the Four Noble Truths. So a monk should know the truth of suffering. This knowledge is called *pariññā-ṭṭivedha*, or realisation by direct knowledge. He must know the truth of the cause of suffering, and give up craving, lust, and attachment. This knowledge is known as *pahāna-ṭṭivedha*, or realisation by abandoning. He must also know the truth of cessation. This knowledge is called *sacchikiriyaṭṭivedha*, or the experience of realisation. Lastly, he must know the path leading to the end of suffering. This is realisation by development — *bhāvanā-ṭṭivedha*.

Realisation by direct knowledge means knowing the truth of suffering through meditation. In other words, it is knowing the truth of suffering through making a note of the incessant changes in the psycho-physical phenomena. Because people do not know that these changes constitute misery, but think that they are the reason for joy and happiness, they are enamoured by them. If one makes a constant note of these changes, then nothing will be found that is pleasing or delightful. On the contrary, they will be seen as something tiresome and terrible. So the true nature of mind and matter should be discerned, so that their characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self will be known empirically. *Pariññā-ṭṭivedha* means knowing empirically.

When one thus knows the real truth about these things, one will not hanker after them; one will reject them, and that rejection is *pahāna-ṭṭivedha*. Since one rejects lust, attachment to existence will not have a chance to crop up, and since attachment is absent there will be no chance of a new existence. No existence precludes birth, old age, and death. Such cessation of attachment is experienced from moment to moment as mental noting is made. It is called momentary cessation (*tadaṅga-nirodha*). This sort of cessation need not be anticipated, since it arises naturally as one develops insight. It is important that a meditator should work to achieve such momentary cessation.

When one has developed the meditation practice, one has been developing the Eightfold Noble Path. This is realisation by development. One can know how one has been developing the Path while meditating, like this. One makes an effort to note every changing



phenomenon, which is right effort. Mindfulness of the psycho-physical phenomena is itself right mindfulness, since the Buddha said that the four foundations of mindfulness constitute right mindfulness. By repeatedly noting each phenomenon the meditator gains momentary-concentration as his attention is fixed upon the object of meditation. Such momentary-concentration (*khaṇika-samādhī*) constitutes right concentration. The Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā says that without momentary-concentration one cannot gain insight. Since the mind is focused on one object in meditation, one sees things as they really are, which constitutes right view. As the mind of the meditator is directed towards observing the truth, one is bent on the right aim, which is right thought. So all of these five path factors are fulfilled by the meditator. As for the remaining three factors, namely, right speech, right action, and right livelihood, these are fulfilled by the undertaking of the precepts before taking up meditation practice. While meditating, this moral observance is not broken and becomes firmer through meditation. So the eightfold path is completely fulfilled while one is practising meditation.

There is another way to develop the path of morality. If one fails to make a note of the changing psycho-physical phenomena one will be under the delusion of permanence, pleasure, and self. Thus one will be inclined to tell lies, to use abusive language, to slander, or chatter, and thus break the precept of right speech. One may even commit killing, theft, or other immoral acts. Similarly, one may break the precepts to earn a living. If, on the other hand, one makes a note of the changing phenomena and contemplates their true characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self one will be able to act and live in the right way. So all the factors of the Path are fulfilled through meditation, which is called realisation by development.

Such an achievement is, in effect, the achievement of the Noble Path when one sees the Light of Dhamma and attains the highest state of purity. That is what the verse says of 'knowing the true Dhamma.' After knowing the truth about suffering, about attachment, and rejecting attachment, by developing the Noble Path one comes to the realisation of the ultimate state of cessation, thus achieving the purpose of attaining peace and tranquillity. This is knowing the Four Noble Truths.

The last phrase of the verse says, as usual, that the bhikkhu who has no attachment lives properly in the world.

## Some Latent Defilements Are Eradicated

*“Yassānusayā na santi keci, mūlā ca akusalā samūhatāse.  
So nirāso anāsisāno, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu whose latent defilements have been eradicated, who has destroyed the roots of evil, would properly lead a homeless life.”

### The Meaning of Latent Defilements

*Anusaya-kilesā* means dormant or latent defilements. What is lying dormant can arise when the opportunity is ripe. There are two kinds of latent defilements. One is dormant in the physical and mental make-up of a being, and can arise when there is a chance. The other kind is that which is dormant in the sense-object. Defilements can arise from any of the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking. Actually, lust, greed, desire, and other emotions that constitute defilements do not lie dormant in the sense-objects. It is by association with similar sense-objects experienced previously that defilements arise. When they arise, they do so in the physical and mental make-up of a being.

Latent defilements are of seven kinds: 1) sensual passion (*kāmarāga*), 2) desire for existence (*bhavarāga*), 3) ill-will (*paṭigha*), 4) conceit (*māna*), 5) wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), 6) doubt (*vicikicchā*), and 7) ignorance (*avijjā*).

These latent defilements can arise in the psyche of any worldling, so it is said that these are lying dormant in the ordinary person. When one has become a Stream-winner, wrong view and doubt have been removed. However, the other five remain. When one reaches the stage of a Non-returner, sensual passion and ill-will are expelled, only the other three remain. Finally, when one reaches the final stage and becomes an Arahant, all the seven latent defilements are eradicated.

### Dormant in the Senses

The way that latent defilements lie dormant in the senses is like this. If one does not observe and know the nature of the sense that are in constant flux, defilements will arise from an association of similar sense objects that have been experienced previously. So every person who is not practising meditation will entertain

defilements of all sorts whenever sense-objects impinge on their consciousness. They will think that the senses and the objects are permanent and will become attached to them, enjoying them.

However, the ardent meditator knows the nature of things and does not feel attached or pleased with any sense object, and thus avoids any kind of defilement. So there is no question of defilements lying dormant in an ardent meditator. On the other hand, those who fail to practise meditation diligently think that the sense-objects are lovely and delightful, and feel attached to them. If the sense-objects are unpleasant, they are displeased, or even angry.

### **An Arahant Is Free from Latent Defilements**

An Arahant is entirely free from latent defilements; not a trace of them is left. Defilements of all kinds, active as well as dormant have been eradicated. Furthermore the Arahant has uprooted greed, hatred, and delusion from which all kinds of misdeeds could arise. Lust, desire, and attachment spring from greed. Murder and cruelty arise out of anger and malice, and lassitude and fantasy spawn in the muddy pool of delusion.

The bhikkhu who has eradicated latent defilements and uprooted the roots of misdeeds, does not have any wants or wishes. Wants and wishes are, in fact, the product of greed, and since greed has been uprooted, there can be no occasion for them to arise. This is a reiteration that seemed to be required when the Buddha addressed his sermon to *devas* and *brahmās*.

The last phrase of the verse, says as usual, that the bhikkhu who has no attachment lives properly in the world.

May the audience understand the latent defilements and the misdeeds explained in this verse of the sutta and work for attainment of nibbāna in the shortest possible time.

### **The Bhikkhu Has Rejected Conceit**

*“Āsavakhiṇo pahīnamāno, sabbaṃ rāgapathaṃ upātivatto.  
Danto parinibbuto t̥hitatto, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu in whom all the outflows are destroyed, and who has rejected all conceit, who has overcome through insight the conditions that are like roads for desire and lust, would properly lead a homeless life.”

## Rejection of Outflows

Outflow (*āsava*) means that which flows. There are four kinds: 1) *Kāmāsava*, 2) *Bhavāsava*, 3) *Diṭṭhāsava*, and 4) *Avijjāsava*. *Kāmāsava* is the flowing of desires and lust from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Seeing and sight, hearing and sound, smelling and odour, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and thought, imagination and ideas: from all of these desire and lust can flow.

All of the outflows are also defilements. Flowing out of lust, desire, and sensuality is *kāmāsava*. Delight in existence is *bhavāsava*. Wrong views such as thinking impermanent things to be permanent, unsatisfactory things to be pleasurable, and things devoid of self to have a self is *avijjāsava*. We must all strive to dry up these flows, and as you know full well, that is to be done by means of meditation.

If one becomes a Stream-winner, one rejects the more obvious kinds of sensuality such as adultery and fornication, theft, telling lies, and taking liquor or narcotics. He has rejected false beliefs too, and whatever other delusion that could drag one down to hell.

The Once-returner is also free from these outflows. When one attains the stage of a Non-returner, one is fully rid of sensuality, but one still has some delight in existence, either corporeal or incorporeal. That is why the Non-returners usually pass on from the human or celestial realms to the material or immaterial brahmā realms. Only on attaining the stage Arahantship does one rid oneself completely of all the outflows. All greed, hatred, and delusion have then dried up.

## No Outflows Means No Conceit

When one is purified from the outflows one has become an Arahant, and an Arahant has removed all conceit. Pride or conceit (*māna*) is of nine kinds. There is the conceit of thinking oneself superior to others, thinking oneself equal to others, and also thinking that one is inferior to others. These three categories of conceit prevail in the higher, middle, and lower strata of society, so there are nine categories altogether. The Arahant has none of them.

## The Difference Between Humility and Inferiority Conceit

The question may be raised, "How can regarding oneself as inferior to others be called conceit?" To regard oneself as inferior must be humility, one might think, not conceit. However, it is not humility. It

is not taking a humble position in deference to others, it is perverse pride shown as insolence towards those more noble than oneself. It competes with others: "We are just ordinary monks, so we can behave as we like. We need not maintain dignity like senior monks." Among laymen, it is the attitude: "We are just ordinary folk. We can do as we wish; we do not need to maintain dignity like public officials and wealthy people." This may be called 'base pride.' Such pride is called '*hīna-māna*' in Pāli. Pride comparing oneself with equals is called '*sadisa-māna*,' pride of superiority is called '*seyya-māna*.'

### True Pride and False Pride

If one thinks highly of oneself because one deserves high esteem, one is said to have true pride (*yāthāva-māna*). If one does not deserve the esteem that one claims then it is false pride (*ayāthāva-māna*). When one has become a Stream-winner one has got rid of false pride, but true pride remains. True pride remains with the Once-returner too, and even with the Non-returner. Only the Arahant is free from pride altogether. This is one of the many attributes of the Arahant mentioned in this sutta.

### The Path of Passion

The next phrase in the verse refers to the path of passion (*rāgapatha*). All conditioned things are like a road leading to the development of passion. In other words, all the objects in the sensual, material, or immaterial realms that proliferate attachment, develop passion. In brief, whatever is not concerned with nibbāna, contributes to the increase of passion. It must be overcome.

### To Understand and Penetrate

All conditioned things, which are subject to impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, must be understood and penetrated by insight. As insight develops the meditator will distinguish between mind and matter, between cause and effect, and will realise the transitoriness of phenomena. Such penetrative understanding is momentary abandoning (*tadaṅga-pahāna*).

As insight develops, one reaches the stage of Stream-winning and abandons all strong forms of passion that could drag one down to hell. Later, at the stages of Non-returning and Arahantship, all passion is eradicated.

The attributes of the Arahant so far enumerated are removal of the outflows, abandoning of conceit and overcoming of passion. The third phrase of the verse says that an Arahant adopts a gentle and serene attitude, and because he is free from all defilements, his mind is stable.

### One Must Abandon Wildness

To acquire serenity is to be entirely free from the unruly states that constitute defilements. Physical and verbal misdeeds must be removed by morality, and sensual thoughts must be expelled by concentration. However, some wildness will remain in the form of latent defilements, which must be cut out by means of insight and the Noble Path. One Arahantship is reached even these latent tendencies have been removed. This is also an attribute of the Arahant.

Then the other attribute is mental stability. Mental stability can be achieved by ordinary concentration or *jhāna*, but in this context mental stability means that of an Arahant who has removed all defilements. An Arahant's mind is stable at all times; there is no difference between the time when he is engaged in deep meditation and when he is not. He can be in *jhāna* for a whole day or for a whole week.

The last phrase of the verse says, as usual, that the bhikkhu who has abandoned all attachment lives properly in the world.

This verse directs the meditators to strive to attain freedom from all defilements. May they be able to develop the meditation practice to gain the Path and Fruition, and thus reach the ultimate state of nibbāna.

### Being Full of Faith and Conviction

*“Saddho sutavā niyāmadassī, vaggagatesu na vaggasāri dhīro.  
Lobhaṃ dosaṃ vineyya paṭighaṃ, sammā soloke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu, being confident, and endowed with knowledge, who finds the Noble Path to be an inviolable doctrine, would properly lead a homeless life.”

### Must Have Faith and Conviction

Faith is generally traditional, that is, one embraces faith in a particular religion because one's parents do. That is quite good. Buddhist parents have taught their children since childhood to have faith in the true Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. They have taught them to worship the Buddha and the Saṅgha and to recite

“*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi,*” etc. That is why Buddhist children have learnt about the attributes of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha at a young age. These young people have some faith in the Three Gems and thus have taken refuge in them. So far, so good. Having faith and taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha can save them from states of misery. In the introduction to the Mahāsamaya Sutta, a Brahmā said to the Buddha:

“*Ye keci Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gatāse, na te gamissanti apāyabhūmiṃ.  
Pahāya manussaṃ dehaṃ, devakāyaṃ paripuressanti.*”

“Innumerable people who adore the Buddha do not go to the realms of misery. When they die as human beings, they become *devas*, thus increasing the *deva* population.”

If one adores the Buddha, it follows that one adores the Dhamma and the Saṅgha too. Those who have faith and take refuge in the Three Gems are saved from states of misery.

Buddhist children will be saved from states of misery and will go to the celestial world because they have learnt to gain merit by having faith and taking refuge in the Three Gems. They will be gaining merit from their reverence to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. So I say that it is quite good to be taught to believe in Buddhism. As these children grow up. They will have many opportunities to listen to discourses by good teachers, and to read Dhamma books. They will then probably gain greater faith. Such ordinary faith is called ‘*pasāda-saddhā,*’ and faith born of conviction is ‘*okappanā-saddhā.*’ Of course, the latter is more stable.

However, these two kinds of faith are not sufficient. One must become thoroughly convinced through direct experience, which faith is called ‘*avecca-pasāda-saddhā.*’ That kind of faith is held only by a Stream-winner or other Noble Ones. This conviction must be developed with the practice of insight whereby the meditator distinguishes mind and matter separately. Then he will know for himself, “There is only mind and matter, there is no person or being, which is just as the Buddha said.” Thus his faith will become really firm. When he goes on to realise the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self nature his faith will become even firmer. When he gains the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) the force of his faith becomes very great, but he must go on acquiring insight until

reaching the Noble Path. Only then will his faith become unshakeable. Only then will he find the true Buddha who pointed out the Way.

“One who sees the Dhamma, sees me,” said the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*. As one thus sees the Buddha, one’s faith in him is profound.

### **Must Be Endowed with Knowledge**

Then the bhikkhu must be endowed with knowledge. The term *‘sutavā’* relates to hearing; it is not followed directly by realisation. There are two kinds of *suta*: namely, *āgama suta*, knowledge gained from hearing the Dhamma, and *adhigama suta*, knowledge gained from one’s own experience. The latter may be called realising. So *‘suta’* here means knowledge gained from hearing and realising. It is good to learn all the three collections of the Pāli texts (*Tipiṭaka*), but if one has learnt just the instructions for working to gain morality, concentration, and wisdom, it is enough. The Commentaries say that it is enough to have learnt just one verse.

As regards knowledge gained by realisation, one has to acquire knowledge through meditation. One must aim to acquire the knowledge of the four stages of the Noble Path. One must be full of such spiritual knowledge.

### **The Noble Path Is the Ultimate Truth**

Once one has acquired realisation, one has come to realise the ultimate truth; that is, one has achieved the Noble Path. *Niyāma* means the natural order of things, or the immutable truth. Knowing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self is knowing the immutable truth. It is certain that one will gain the benefit of the Noble Path. That is why the four paths are called *niyāma*.

### **One Must Be Free from Wrong Views**

In brief, the beliefs that are opposed to right view are eternalism and annihilationism. The first belief is that the soul or self is indestructible, and the second is that there is nothing left after death. In this world, people are divided by their differing beliefs. The bhikkhu subscribes to none of the various wrong views. When one reaches the stage of the Stream-winner, all such wrong views are dispelled.



## Must Be Free from Greed

We have often talked about the rejection of greed and anger. Ill-will (*paṭigha*) is synonymous with anger (*dosa*). The repetition in this phrase of the verse is just reiteration. Ill-will is explained in the Abhidhamma Commentary as “a violent feeling.” Hence the mention here of *paṭigha* alongside *dosa*.

The last phrase of the verse is the refrain about the unattached bhikkhu living properly in this world.

## The Bhikkhu Has Escaped from the Three Cycles

*“Saṃsuddhajino vivaṭṭachado, dhammesu vasi pāragū anejo.  
Saṅkhāranirodhañānakusalo, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who has conquered the enemy of the defilements with the path of Arahantship which is the purest, and who has also escaped from the three cycles and all obscurations, would properly lead a homeless life.”

The path of Arahantship is the purest of all paths. With this, the dangers of all defilements are overcome. The bhikkhu has also escaped from the three cycles: namely the cycles of defilements, kamma, and results. He has also removed the obscurations of passion, anger, delusion, conceit, wrong view, ignorance, and misconduct.

All of the four noble paths are clean and pure, but the path of Arahantship has completely eradicated all defilements, and is therefore the purest. The bhikkhu who has conquered all defilements with the path of Arahantship is rid of all the consequences of the defilements. When this cycle has been got rid of, most of the cycles of kamma and results of kamma will go with it. Then the obscurations and hindrances such as passion, anger, and so forth are also removed. Misconduct can prevent one from reaching the higher realms of existence, so it is included among the impediments. Misconduct is got rid of when the entire mass of defilements has been abandoned.

The next phrase says that the bhikkhu has accomplished the Dhamma. What kind of Dhamma? The Commentary says that this means the Four Noble Truths. Other interpretations say that it is the attainment of *jhāna* and fruition of the Path. That is to say that

the bhikkhu can enter upon meditation and concentration, and abide in the fruition of the path (*phala-samāpatti*).

The next two phrases say that the bhikkhu reaches the other shore and is free of craving which is usually of an agitating nature.

The constant flux of life in the body is called *saṃsāra*. The existence of the psycho-physical phenomena or aggregates, which condition the appearance of life in any form, is taken as “this shore” and the non-existence of aggregates is taken as “the other shore.” As long as defilements prevail, the aggregates of mental and physical phenomena will continue, and one will remain adrift in the endless cycle of existence. If, with the attainment of Arahantship, one realises nibbāna, one has said to have reached “the other shore.” Craving is lust for all pleasurable sensations, and so it is always in a state of agitation. Agitation is ‘*jo*,’ so an Arahant is called ‘*ānejo*,’ one who is free of agitation.

The third phrase says, the bhikkhu has in him ‘*saṅkhāranirodha-ñāṇa-kusala*,’ which means the insight that sees nibbāna, which is the cessation of all conditioned things.

This insight is the knowledge of the four Noble Paths, progressing to Arahantship. The Commentary says that the bhikkhu has accomplished the knowledge of the Noble Path and that is because he has realised the four insights. Each path knowledge occurs once at a time, and so the bhikkhu has expert knowledge of each of the four as it occurs to him.

In this verse, the attribute of conquest of the defilements with Arahantship, the attribute of being free of the three cycles and the hindrances of defilements, the attribute of having reached “the other shore,” the attribute of being free of agitation caused by craving, and the full knowledge of nibbāna, which is the cessation of all conditioned things, are given. They are all the attributes of the Arahant.

How to strive for attainment of these attributes has been explained in the discourses on the earlier verses. It is for you to make the effort. The last phrase of the verse, the refrain, is that the bhikkhu who has abandoned all attachments lives properly in the world.

Now we will go on to the fifteenth verse.

## The Bhikkhu Lives in the Present

*“Atītesu angatesu cāpi, kappātīto aticcasuddhipañño  
Sabbāyatanehi vippamutto, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who has overcome the habit of thinking of the past and the future, who has very clear wisdom, who is free from all the senses, would properly lead a homeless life.”

He must be free from thoughts about the past and future. The conditioned things that occurred in the past are the past. The bhikkhu must abandon all attachment to the actions of mind and matter that have occurred in the past. Such attachment is due to the false belief that the five aggregates are self (I, myself, or mine). The actions in the past existence are not known, so they are not dwelt upon, but there are some who think, “I” existed before in the past life, and now “I” have come to live in the present life. However, people generally think more about the past within this existence. People think of their childhood days and remember what they ‘themselves’ did in the way of seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, touching and thinking. They often think of the actions of the immediate past. Such thoughts, owing to attachment are called life-span (*kappa*). It is necessary to abandon them.

The future is what will happen at a later time during this life. Thoughts about the future are also due to attachment to mind and matter. Some people hope to become rich in the future. So also they hope that they will be better off in their future existence. The bhikkhu must abandon such thoughts.

It may be asked whether or not one should think of the present with attachment. The answer is that such thoughts must also be overcome. Reference to the past and the future includes an indication to the present. The Pāḷi version admits of such an inference. For instance, if we say, in Pāḷi, “We adore the Buddha, we adore the Dhamma,” we mean to say that we adore the Saṅgha too. Minding the present actions in the meditation practice is, in effect, precluding thoughts with attachment of the present. When one is into meditation, there will be no chance for such thoughts to occur.

If one knows, in the course of mindfulness, that what has occurred is impermanent, that what is happening and fading out is instability, which means suffering or misery, and that these actions are automatic and uncontrollable, which means they are not-self (*anatta*), then selfish thoughts about the present will have no chance to occur. In the same way, thoughts about the past and future will have no chance to occur. They will be rejected, if only

for a moment, through meditation, and that is overcoming them by momentary abandonment (*tadaṅga-pahāna*). When one has developed the insight of the Noble Path, one will progress through the three stages to the final state of Arahantship. Once one has overcome these thoughts which are, in fact, stray and random, then one has gained the clearest insight.

The third phrase of the verse says that the bhikkhu has overcome the sense organs and sense objects. It amounts to overcome thoughts about the past, the present, and the future.

The sense organs are the basis for the arising of consciousness. Visual consciousness depends upon the eye and the sight. The latter two are called sense-faculties (*āyatanā*). So are ear and hearing, nose and smelling, tongue and tasting, body and touch, and the mind and ideas. They all arouse consciousness of feeling. In the case of body and touch, it is the tactile feeling of roughness or smoothness, which is contact with the earth element; and tautness, pressure, and vibration are the element of motion. The meditator observing abdominal movements will notice the action of the element of motion. All of these sense organs and their respective objects, twelve altogether, are called sense-faculties.

How can we overcome them and get free from them? You must abandon and escape from attachment due to regarding these sense-faculties as your own. You must escape from the attachment due to revelling in the senses. This escape or abandonment can be achieved through meditation. By the process of momentary abandonment one can reject all the defilements emanating from these sense-faculties, and eventually uproot all the defilements. This is also an attribute of the Arahant.

The last phrase of the verse, as usual, says that the bhikkhu who has no attachment whatsoever lives properly in the world.

### **Sense Faculties Revealed in Meditation**

The meditators here will certainly see the sense-faculties clearly as they are making a constant note of the flux of phenomena. While seeing, one knows clearly the eye and the sight, and also the sense occurring in the mind (*manāyatana*) is quite obvious. These three faculties are obvious while seeing. Sometimes, contact (*phassa*) from seeing, reaction to the sight, i.e. feeling (*vedanā*), or paying attention (*manasikāra*) to the

sight, striving or intending (*cetanā*) to see, are all obvious. Cognition of the sight is *saññā*. *Phassa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *cetanā*, and *manasikāra* are all mental faculties (*dhammāyatana*). In this way, while seeing, four sense-faculties are revealed. So too while hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, four faculties are revealed in each case. As for thinking or speculating, it is a mental faculty, too. Thinking, speculating or knowing as such is *dhammāyatana*, so in thinking there are only two faculties.

The meditator who has been making a note of phenomena is observing the faculties. When one's concentration is developed through meditation one sees faculties appear and disappear quickly, so one can contemplate their impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature. Thus, by the process of momentary abandonment, one can see the truth about the destruction of phenomena and come to the final stage of the Noble Path.

## Having Realised the Noble Truths

The sixteenth verse is as follows:

*“Aññāya padaṃ samecca dhammaṃ, vivaṭaṃ disvāna  
pahānamāsavānaṃ.  
Sabbupadhinaṃ parikkhayāno, sammā so loke paribbajeyya.”*

“The bhikkhu who has understood the Dhamma, who has seen the destruction of the outflows, and has dispelled all attachments, would properly lead a homeless life.”

The bhikkhu has known the Four Noble Truths one by one, and knows them all at once when he has acquired the final insight of the Noble Path. One can never acquire all the four at once. One has to graduate to the final stage, and when one has reached the final stage, all the four truths are revealed to him by his own insight.

## Five Kinds of Learning

The person who is learning meditation can have attachment because of craving, and wrong view because of attachment to the five aggregates of attachment. These factors are constantly changing, and that unstable condition makes for suffering. This is the truth of suffering (*dukkha-saccā*). There is attachment to these factors of suffering and that the truth of the arising of suffering (*samudaya-saccā*). In this way, one must learn about the Four Noble Truths from a teacher.

Knowledge acquired by learning is called *uggaha-paṭivedha*. Learning after further questions and inquiries is called *paripucchā-paṭivedha*. Learning by listening is called *savana-paṭivedha*. Learning by heart is called *dharana-paṭivedha*. Learning to know the truths about suffering and attachment through meditation is called *sammasana-paṭivedha*.

Before achieving the knowledge of the Noble Path, one must learn by applying the methods mentioned above. Even here, learning can be done for knowing only one truth at a time. So also the other two truths, the truth of cessation (*nirodha-saccā*), and the truth of the path (*magga-saccā*) can only be learnt separately. Furthermore, that knowledge is acquired only by the first four methods, and not by *sammasana-paṭivedha* or by the meditation method.

The listen and learn method can be illustrated thus: “*Nirodha* is the cessation of all the physical and mental elements, and such a state spells peace of the most adorable kind. The truth of the path is the way to that state, and is also most desirable.” The listener learns to appreciate this, and his or her mind is inclined toward that most adorable state by the most desirable path. Even by this method, one can only know one truth at each time.

### **Knowing Simultaneously the Four Noble Truths**

The moment that one has acquired the Noble Path, one knows all of the Four Noble Truths simultaneously. That is to say that when one has seen the light of nibbāna through the achievement of the truth of cessation, one knows the truth of suffering and the truth of the cause of suffering.

Knowing the truth about suffering and abandoning attachment after knowing about the true nature of attachment, one achieves the attainment of abandoning (*pahāna-paṭivedha*). As the truth of the path is in oneself, that is, one is practising meditation, one is said to have achieved the attainment of meditation (*bhāvanā-paṭivedha*). It is clear now that by means of the insight of the Noble Path, one knows all the Four Noble Truths. In other words, after one has come to know the three truths of suffering, its arising, and the path, and thus knows, abandons, and develops what is needed, one comes to realise the truth of cessation.

To reiterate, one does not know the Four Noble Truths at once when learning or practising meditation. It is only after realisation of the truth of cessation that one knows the four truths simultaneously.

## Further Explanation

Of the four, the truth of suffering and its cause are within the three cycles (*vaṭṭa*) whereas the path and cessation are beyond it. The latter two do not need insight meditation. Only the former two need it. In the Commentaries it is said clearly that in the case of the truth of suffering and its cause there is a need for insight meditation, but in the case of the truth of the path and the truth of cessation, there is no such need. Therefore, one who wishes to attain nibbāna, and has been constantly noting phenomena as they occur and fade away, knows the truth of suffering and its cause separately. In the meantime, as his or her mind is inclined toward attainment of the path and nibbāna, he or she is knowing the truth of the path and the truth of cessation separately.

When the insight knowledge develops and the stage of equanimity regarding formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) is reached, and as it develops further, one sees the light of nibbāna when the cessation of all conditioned things occurs. The moment that one reaches this stage, one knows all of the Four Noble Truths simultaneously.

The bhikkhu knows the truth separately before realising the last truth, and then he sees all the four together.

The second phrase of the verse says that the bhikkhu is free of all outflows, and realises the state of nibbāna. Then all the four attachments (*upadhi*) cease in him, and he is free from all attachment. *Upadhi* means something that is inherent, or permanently attached. What are the four? They are suffering occurring in the body, in the mind, the consequences of one's actions, and the suffering of conditioned things.

When there is the body, there are various kinds of inherent suffering. All of the defilements, sensual bondage (*kāmaguṇa*), and wholesome or unwholesome actions, generate suffering. There is a complete abandonment of these in the case of the bhikkhu who has already realised the ultimate truth.

Then the refrain, which says, as usual, that the bhikkhu who has abandoned all attachment lives properly in this world.

The fifteen verses, from the second to the sixteenth are the Buddha's answer to the first verse, which is the question put to him by the Nimitta Buddha, the counterpart Buddha. After the sixteenth and final verse, the Buddha's answer was complete. Now, in the seventeenth verse, the Nimitta Buddha praised the Buddha, and thanked him. This thanksgiving stanza is as follows:—

## All of Your Answers Are Correct

*“Addhā hi Bhagavā tatheva etaṃ, yo so evaṃ vihāri danto bhikkhu. Sabbasaṃyojanayogavātivatto, sammā so loke paribbajeyya”ti.*

“Most illustrious Buddha, all of your answers are correct. The bhikkhu who acts according to your answers will be free from the wild defilements, and will be gentle and serene. Having overcome all fetters and bondage, he would properly lead a homeless life.”

### The Ten Fetters

The *saṃyojana* are the fetters that bind one to *saṃsāra*, and prevent one from escaping from rebirth. Overcoming these fetters means not letting them occur; to be free of them. There are ten fetters:

1. Sensuality (*kāmarāga*). The person who has this fetter has to return to the sensual realms, even after he has reached the realms of form or the formless realms, because sensuality pulls him down and binds him there.

2. Attachment to existence (*bhavarāga*). One who has this fetter does not want the cessation of existence. He or she enjoys existence. Such a person will not be able to realise nibbāna, which is the cessation of existences.

3. Anger and malice (*paṭigha*). Such a person feels miserable whenever he or she comes across unpleasant and undesirable things.

4. Conceit (*māna*). A person who has this fetter thinks highly of himself or herself, whether or not there are reasons for such self-esteem.

5. Wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). Such a person entertains wrong views such as, “there is no result of kamma.”

6. Doubt (*vicikicchā*). One who is fettered by doubts always hesitates and is uncertain about the truth.

7. Attachment to rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*). Following wrong practises believing that they will produce good results. A person who has wrong view, doubt, and attachment to rituals is not safe from hell. Although he or she may be reborn in fortunate realms of existence due to wholesome deeds, he or she is still likely to fall down to hell.

8. Envy (*issā*). A person with this fetter lacks good-will for people who are successful and prosperous.



9. Meanness (*macchariya*). A person with meanness resents sharing his or her property, privileges, and associates with others in any way.

10. Ignorance (*avijjā*). As long as a person is not free from this fetter he or she cannot escape from *saṃsāra*.

The bhikkhu who has practised properly is, of course, free from all of these fetters.

Then there are the four bondage, which the bhikkhu has already overcome. 1) Sensuality, 2) Attachment to existence, 3) Wrong view, and 4) Ignorance. These are the same as the fetters described in the preceding paragraphs. So the bhikkhu has been made free from all the fetters and bondage.

### Summary

The Buddha's answers are all correct. The one who acts accordingly lives well and serenely. He is completely free from fetters and bondage.

The last phrase of the verse, the refrain, says: "So he lives properly in the world."

The seventeenth verse has now been explained, and the discourse on the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta has come to an end.

## Benefits from Listening to the Discourse

The benefits accruing from listening to this discourse are described in the Suttanipāta Commentary thus:

"On conclusion of the discourse, one billion *devas* and brahmas attained the stage of Arahantship. Those who reached the stages of Stream-winning, Once-returning, and Non-returning were innumerable.

One billion Arahants! The *devas* and brahmas who attended the discourse on this Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta attained the various stages of enlightenment in such staggering numbers. That is amazing! The reason is that this discourse is difficult to comprehend. Even a long discourse on each of the verses does not make it easy to understand. These *devas* and brahmas who comprehended the discourse and attained enlightenment were endowed with perfections.

Perfections (*pāramī*) is nothing other than learning and practising meditation. If those practising here now have not yet acquired perfections in this life-time, they will acquire it in their second, third, or subsequent life-time by continuing the practice.

If one gets to the celestial realms, one will be able to attend discourses delivered by celestial religious lecturers. There are also such lecturers in the world of brahmas.

### **Immediate Enlightenment In the Celestial Realms**

If one becomes a *deva*, one's body will be clean and pure, and one's intelligence will be equally clear and sharp. A *deva* can remember his or her religious practice in the previous existence, and it would be possible to gain immediate enlightenment. So the Buddha said:—

*“Dandho bhikkhave satuppādo, athakho so sato khippameva visesabhāgi hoti.”*

“Bhikkhus, memory of the religious practice during the past lifetime may be slow to come, but once it comes, it quickly makes for enlightenment of the person concerned.”

When one gets to the world of the *devas*, one may be conversing with other *devas* and making friends with them, and so one may not chance to recapitulate the past lifetime for quite some time. So there may be a delay, but once one gives time to recalling the past, one will remember one's efforts in religious practice during one's previous existence. Then one will immediately gain realisation of the Dhamma and reach the ultimate goal of nibbāna.

Therefore, those who are now engaged in the practice of the Dhamma will gain enlightenment during this lifetime, if conditions are favourable. Otherwise, they will certainly achieve enlightenment in their second or third existence. It is for you all to work unhesitatingly according to the exposition in the Sutta. May the audience be able to work for the attainment of nibbāna as expeditiously as possible.

*Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!*

*End of the discourse on the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta.*

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