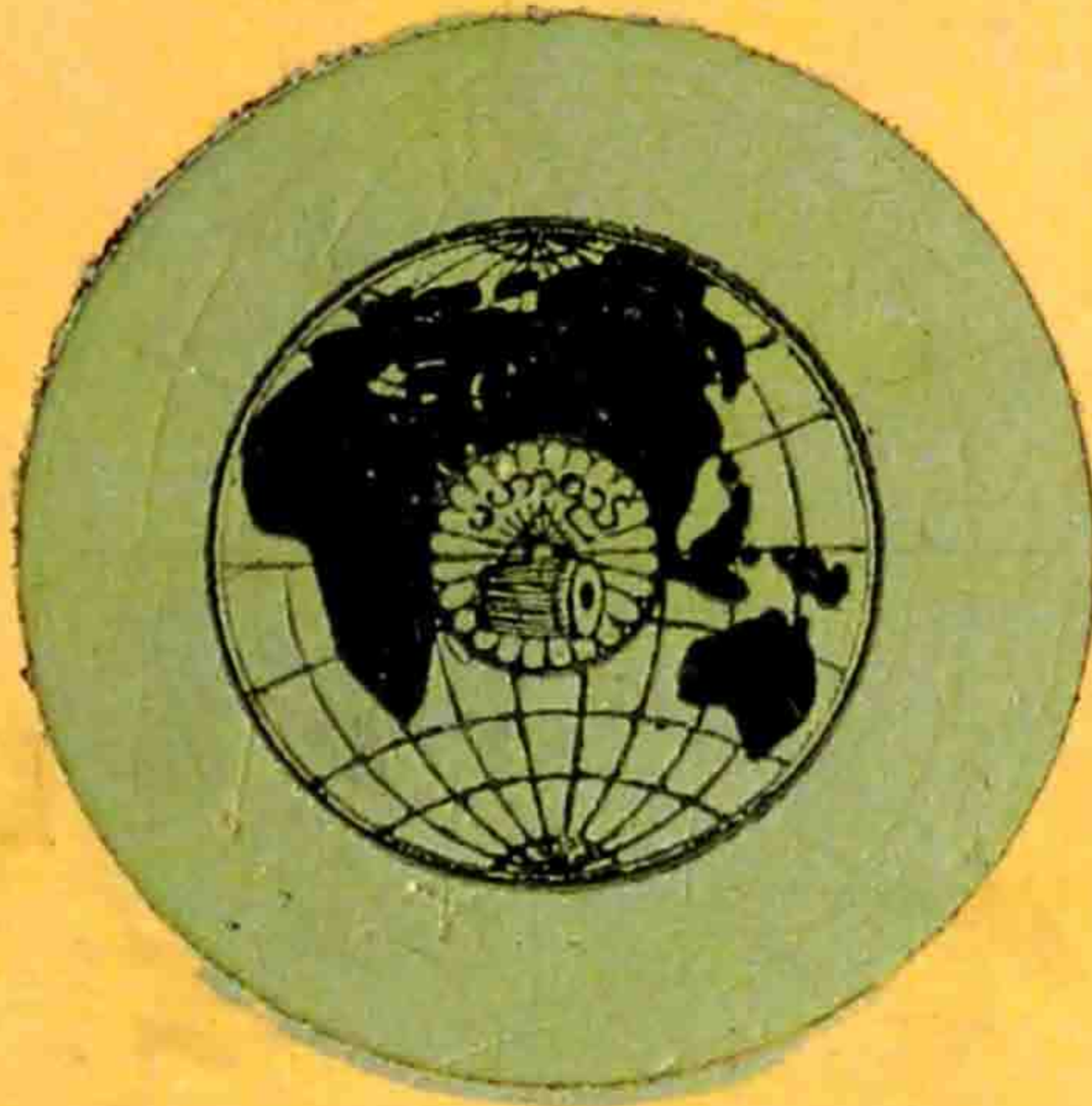


A discourse on

# SALLEKHA SUTTA

by

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw  
of  
Burma



Translated by U Aye Maung



**Buddhasāsana Nuggaha Organization**

**Mahasi Thathana Yeiktha**

**Rangoon**

**A DISCOURSE ON**

**SALLEKHA SUTTA**

*by*

**THE VENERABLE MAHASI SAYADAW**

**of**

**BURMA**

**Translated by U Aye Maung**

*First printed and published in the Socialist  
Republic of the Union of Burma,  
September, 1981*

**F. A**

**(a)**



FIRST PUBLISHED 1981

Religious Publication Permission

No. 244

First Impression, 1000

Cover by—Aung Thar

( Dhammadāna )

11856

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*Published by* — U Thein Han (Exemption No. 96),  
Buddhasāsana Nuggaha Organiza-  
tion.

No. 16, Thathana Yeiktha Road,  
Kokkine, Rangoon, Burma.

*Printed by* —U Tin Maung (0256-Perm)  
Sarpay-paungku Press, No. 90, A,B,  
Wayzayantar Street, (8) Yatkwet,  
South Okkalapa, Rangoon.

(b)



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# DISCOURSE ON SALLEKHA SUTTA

## INTRODUCTION

This book is the English translation of a series of talks which the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw gave on Sallekha sutta during the years 1969–70. It is an elaboration of an important teaching of the Buddha in Majjhima nikāya. The Pali text of the sutta covers only eight pages but the transcripts of the twelve talks came out in a two-volume publication in Burmese. This is no wonder for, as is well known to everyone who has heard his talks or read his writings, the Ven. Sayadaw is very thorough and careful about small things or details and he spares no pains to make the Buddha's teaching clear to all people.

In his introduction to the sutta the Ven. Sayadaw says: "The self-training leading to this goal (the lessening of defilements or kilesa) forms the subject of Sallekha sutta. The sutta is beneficial to meditators and non-meditators alike; it is helpful to all those who wish to overcome immoral desires and cultivate good, wholesome desires." In other words, this sutta is not meant only for those who possess a high level of intellectual or spiritual capacity. Here the Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw presents a sharp contrast to some Buddhist teachers who wish

## INTRODUCTION

to confine the higher teachings of the Buddha to the intellectual elite.

Once a Sayadaw is reported to have said, "People memorize Satipaṭṭhāna sutta; they make it a basis for vipassanā practice. All this is ridiculous. It is not in the least proper for the common people to study Satipaṭṭhāna teaching." This skepticism is to be much deplored for it is largely responsible for ignorance or at best superficial knowledge of the Buddha's teaching even in a predominantly Buddhist country like Burma.

Of course we should have respect for the Buddha's teaching but it does not follow that we should regard it as too sacred and profound for ordinary people. If the Dhamma is supposed to be above the comprehension of the common men, the Buddha would not have proclaimed it to mankind. Some insist that the higher doctrines are intended only for the bhikkhus. But this view is not in accord with the Pitaka and the commentaries which mention cases of lay disciples who attained advanced stages on the holy path through the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā.

In point of fact, the dhamma of Sallekha sutta is not like the Vinaya rules which the Buddha laid down exclusively for the bhikkhus. Nor is it intended only for the lay followers



## INTRODUCTION

as is the *Singalovāda sutta* of *Digha nikāya*. The sutta represents the essence of the Dhamma that is universally applicable. The study of the sutta will benefit everyone because it points out the best way of dealing with moral evils that have bedeviled mankind through the ages and led to much suffering.

It speaks volumes for the high quality of the Ven. Sayadaw's sharp intellect that he brings home to us important points implicit in the teachings of the Buddha but which are never explicitly mentioned in the Pitaka or the commentaries.

Thus the Ven. Sayadaw broke new grounds in the teaching of *vipassanā* when he advised his yogi disciples to note the rising and falling of the abdomen in meditational practice. This teaching has run the gauntlet of criticism on the ground that it lacks scriptural authority, that it is against the traditional instruction of *vipassanā* teachers. But there can be no denying the fact that it agrees with *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, that it is but a corollary of the Buddha's instruction about the contemplation of the body: *Kāye kāya nupassi vihāreti.*" Despite all the criticism the practice has benefited many yogis in Burma as well as in other countries.

*Sallekha sutta* is hard to understand and but for a very learned and highly experienced

## INTRODUCTION

vipassana teacher like the Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, it is equally hard to explain clearly the teaching of the Buddha in the sutta. It deals with *jhāna*, *magga*, *phala*, etc., and needless to say, today there are many Buddhists who do not know what these varieties of religious experience are all about. In fact, even some yogis who practise vipassanā are not free from misconceptions about them. As the Ven. Sayadaw points out, many of them meditate in the hope of having some unusual experience and they regard any such experience as proof of spiritual attainment.

Indeed ignorance about vipassanā practice is widespread. Many people do not distinguish it from *jhāna*, they confuse its goal with its by-products such as visions, rapture, psychic powers and so forth. It is said that an Arahant is necessarily a holy man who can fly in the air and this old-established belief prevails even among college-educated Buddhists. No wonder that nowadays there are bogus meditation teachers who unscrupulously exploit mass ignorance and credulity for their own ends.

Real vipassanā experience may defy understanding and description but the Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw's discourse on Sallekha sutta leaves no room for confusion or misconception about the goal which is no other than the extinction of defilements. Childer's Dictionary of the Pāli

## INTRODUCTION

Language translates *Sallekha* as the destruction of *kilesa* and the Ven. Sayādaw describes Sallekha practice that forms the basis of vipassanā as the way of life designed to root out defilements.

The Ven. Sayādaw's discourse is thosed highly informative, illuminating and auindei-tative and it will be invaluable to all thore who seek enlightenment about the Buddha's way to the end of defilements and suffering.

U Aye Maung,  
Translator

## DISCOURSE ON SALLEKHA SUTTA

A true follower of the Buddha should have few desires. He should be content with what he has and he should try to lessen his defilements.

He should have little desire for material possessions or attendants. He should not want to speak of his accomplishments in the study of scriptures or in the practice of meditation. He should keep the depth of his learning or his spiritual attainments to himself. A true Ariya (the Noble One) does not reveal his spiritual insight although he wants to share it with other people. It is only the religious impostor who calls himself an Ariya or an Arahāt.

Contentment is also essential to spiritual development. One should be satisfied with whatever one has, whether good or bad. Equally essential is the effort to lessen one's defilements (*kilesā*). The self-training leading to this goal forms the subject of Sallekha sutta. The sutta is beneficial to meditators and non-meditators alike; it is helpful to all those who wish to overcome immoral desires and cultivate good, wholesome desires.



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

### THE QUESTIONS OF THERA CUNDA

On one occasion while the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery at Sāvattī, Mahā Cunda, the Arahāt who was the younger brother of Sāriputta entered a transcendental state of mind called *phalāsamāpatti*. The Arahāt usually spent his time in one of these states when he had nothing else to do such as discussion or preaching of the Dhamma. Sometimes, he might abide in *jhānasamāpatti* or *nirodhasamāpatti* where all the mental activities are suspended. Or, he might dwell in *Arahāttasamāpatti* that keeps him absorbed in the peace of *Nibbāna*. After passing away the whole day in this state of mind, the thera Cunda approached the Buddha in the evening and after paying due respects, he asked the following question.

“O Buddha, there are many false views in regard to the theory of ego (*atta*) or the theory of the world (*loka*). O Buddha, does a monk dispel these false views or completely renounce them just as he begins to reflect on them?”

### THE QUESTION NEEDS EXPLANATION

Before the rise of Buddhism, a being was called *atta* or *loka* (world). There are three lokas, viz., *sattaloka* (the world of beings), *saṅkhārāloka* (the phenomenal world) and *okāsaloka* (the physical world). *Atta* and *loka*

## FALSE VIEWS ABOUT ATTA

mean essentially the same thing, viz., a living being.

### FALSE VIEWS ABOUT ATTA

Some people regard the physical body as *atta* or ego or soul. For example, when they bend, stretch or move their hands or feet they believe that it is they themselves who perform these movements. On this view, *atta* is identified with the physical body.

According to some people, *atta* is not the human body but *atta* includes the body and its relation to the latter is like the relation of a tree to its shadow. The movement of any part of the body is done not by *atta* but by the body that belongs to it. The movement occurs in accordance with the desire of *atta*. This view identifies *atta* with the mind.

Then, there is the view that the physical body depends on *atta* just like the scent of a flower depending on the flower. This view, too, makes mind identical with *atta*.

Some people believe that *atta* is inherent in the body. They say that *atta* pervades the whole body, its size being dependent on the size of the body. Some say that *atta* lies quietly in the cavity of the heart like the flame of a

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

fire burning in a calm atmosphere. These beliefs about *atta* loom large in ancient Indian literature and similar beliefs about the soul are to be found in other countries.

The belief in *atta* does not prevail in a Buddhist country like Burma because Buddhism rejects it. Yet some people still believe in the existence of *atta* or spirit (Burmese: *leikpya*) in the body. Some women speak of the spirit being scared or seized by the devil. Many people describe *atta* as a living entity that enters or leaves the body.

There are four kinds of ego-belief that center on the physical body. The first belief regards the body as the ego while the other three beliefs identify it with the mind. Or, the latter three beliefs may have nothing to do with mind or body because today those who believe in the ego insist that the ego is neither the body nor the mind. Despite all their negations, their belief centers on the mind and the body.

Similarly, there are four kinds of ego-belief in connection with feeling; (1) the belief that identifies the ego with feeling, "It is I (ego) who feels pain. It is I (ego) who feels happy or unhappy", (2) the belief that the ego is not identical with feeling but that it has the latter

## THEORIES OF LOKA

as its property, (3) the belief that makes the feeling dependent on the ego and (4) the belief that makes the ego dependent on feeling.

Likewise, we have four kinds of ego-belief in regard to perception (*saññā*), another four ego-beliefs in regard to formations (*saṅkhāra*) and still another four ego-beliefs bearing on consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

In short, there are four kinds of ego-belief corresponding to each of the five *khandhas* and so, we have altogether twenty kinds of belief about the ego. These ego-beliefs are called *attadiṭṭhi* or *sakkāyadiṭṭhai*. Ordinary people or worldlings are usually not free from the ego-belief. The only difference is that some are dominated by it while some do not hold fast to it. We can get rid of it completely only when we attain the first stage of holiness (*Sotāpattimagga*).

## THEORIES OF LOKA

Here, *loka* is another term for *atta*. There were eight different theories about *loka* current in India in the time of the Buddha.

(1) The first theory is that *loka* or *atta* is indestructible, that it exists for ever. This is the eternity-view (*sassatadiṭṭhi*). Its adherents hold that although the physical body is destroyed



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

at death, its essence or *atta* does not share its fate. The *atta* passes on to another body and continues to exist there. It is never subject to destruction. This view is somewhat like the belief of some Burmese people who have no knowledge of Buddhism. For them, conception marks the arrival of a living being in the mother's womb while death means the departure of the ego-entity for a new abode. Those who are firmly attached to this belief do not practise meditation and so they cannot hope for spiritual progress. The belief is, indeed, a major impediment on the way to *Nibbāna*. It is not, however, a deep-seated belief among Burmese Buddhists. They accept the teaching that life is devoid of a permanent *atta*, that it is only a succession of cause and effect or of psycho-physical states. They believe that the psycho-physical process comes to an end with the extinction of its cause, viz., the defilements consequent on the attainment of four stages of knowledge through meditation.

The eternity-belief of the Burmese people, therefore, does not pose a serious threat to spiritual progress. Yet, even though it is not deep-rooted, one cannot remove it completely until one becomes a *Sotāpanna*.

(2) Opposed to the eternity-belief is nihilism (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*). According to this belief, the ego-entity only exists until the dissolution of the

## THEORIES OF LOKA

body after which it is annihilated. In the time of the Buddha, there were only a few people who held this belief, but today the belief is gaining ground because non-Buddhists have put forward specious arguments for it. They reject the idea of a future life on the ground that it does not admit of empirical investigation. Nihilism has become popular, probably because of their persuasive art of writing and the strong human desire to enjoy life fully here and now.

In reality, there is no immortal soul or annihilation after death (or) there is neither immortality nor complete annihilation. Buddhism denies the ego-entity and recognizes only the psycho-physical process conditioned by the law of cause and effect. There is only the continuity of cause and effect such as ignorance causing kamma-formations (*saṅkhāra*), the *sankhāra* in turn causing consciousness for a new life and so forth. Death is not a mystery for it means the final dissolution of the psycho-physical organism that is subject to the process of ceaseless disintegration. Death is not, however, annihilation. Because of defilements and conditioned by *kamma*, physical and mental events take place in unbroken succession as before in a new place and a new life.

Rebirth is neither the transmigration of the soul nor the transfer of consciousness and

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

corporeality from one life to another. The physical and mental phenomena arise continually and always pass away. It is not the eye-consciousness that sees nor the ear-consciousness that hears. Each consciousness arises at the appropriate moment and passes away immediately. There is, however, a causal connection between any two consecutive units of consciousness.

Likewise, death destroys completely all corporeality and consciousness but there arise new psycho-physical phenomena of existence in a new life and these are causally related to those in the previous life. The rebirth-consciousness and other psycho-physical factors contributing to the new life arise as a result of the attachment to any sign or vision (*nimitta*) relating to his *kamma* or future life at the moment of one's death. Thus, there are only physical and mental phenomena in terms of cause and effect. Since there is no ego-entity, it is a mistake to believe in an immortal soul that survives death and it is equally wrong to speak of annihilation. The psycho-physical process will continue so long as it is not free from defilements. It will come to an end completely only in the case of an accomplished Arahant who passes away, after having been liberated from all attachments. The decease of the Arahant or his *parinibbāna* is not anni-

## THEORIES OF LOKA

hilation. It means only the complete cessation of suffering inherent in the psycho-physical process. This process should be studied through Buddhist scriptures and through the practice of meditation.

(3) According to the third theory, *atta* or *loka* is eternal and also non-eternal. This theory assumes the eternity of the creator of the universe but denies this attribute to his creatures. It is labelled *ekaccasassatavāda* in Brahmajāla sutta. Although the theory says that most creatures are impermanent, it does not accept annihilation at death. It holds that *atta* transmigrates to another abode after the dissolution of the physical body. Hence, it belongs to the group of eternity-beliefs.

(4) The fourth theory says that *loka* or *atta* is neither eternal nor non-eternal. It is hard to understand this view. It is a speculation that makes no sense. Since it says nothing definitely about the *atta*, it is also called *amaravikkhepavāda*, *amara* being the name of a species of fish that is hard to grasp.

(5) The fifth theory says that *atta* or *loka* is finite. In other words, a living being is a world of its own. The *atta* which pervades the body of a being is limited in size to that of the respective body. Thus, the *atta* of a



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

human being is supposed to be at most a fathom in height and from two and a half feet to three feet in girth. Some say that *atta* lies in the cavity of the heart and that its size depends on that of its habitat. It is also said that *atta* is as small as an electron (*paramānumrū*) when it is in search of a new abode.

(6) The next theory is that *atta* or *loka* is infinitely great. It rejects the idea of an individual soul in each living being and holds that every being is a part of the great Soul (*paramatta*) of God who created the Universe. The *paramatta* is infinitely great and pervades the whole universe and so *atta* too is infinitely great. These theories which insist on the infinity or otherwise of *atta* are to be found in modern Indian religious books. Buddhist commentaries attribute them to illusion about the size of the counter-image (*paṭibhāganimitta*) that arises during the practice of concentration (*kasīna*) and passes for *atta* or *loka*. But the illusion occurs only to a few individuals at a higher stage of *jhāna* or mental absorption. The beliefs that I have mentioned are those of common people.

(7) Some believe that *atta* or *loka* is finite as well as infinite. This is somewhat like the *ekaccasassatavāda* (theory 3). It apparently means that some, that is, the *attas* of those created

by God are finite while the *paramatta* of God is infinite.

(8) Again some say that *atta* or *loka* is neither finite nor infinite. This too is a nonsensical speculation (like theory 4), an *amara-vikkhepavāda* that gives no definite answer.

All these theories are absurd because they revolve about *atta* which does not exist. They make confusion worse confounded just like the speculations about the non-existent horn of the hare or the hair of the tortoise. Yet these theories appealed to those who were not the followers of the Buddha. So, the thera Mahācunda asked the Buddha whether a monk can completely overcome these beliefs just at the beginning of his meditation.

In other words, the question of thera Cunda was whether the attainment of concentration (*samādhi*) or joy (*piti*) or the seeing of light at the early stage of meditation meant the elimination of false views about *loka* or *atta*.

There was ground for raising such a question. Some people believed that concentration (*samādhi*) or mental absorption (*jhāna*) or joy (*piti*) or other varieties of experience that are termed *upakkilesā* (defilements of insight) would suffice to ensure the conquest of false beliefs and the

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attainment of Arahatship. Cunda's question was designed to enlighten such deluded and conceited people.

The practice of meditation has an air of holiness and any experience that is somewhat unusual is likely to be mistaken for an extraordinary insight. In the absence of a good guide or a proper teacher, the yogi tends to overestimate himself and have illusions about his spiritual attainments on the basis of his trivial and slightly unusual experience. This is not peculiar to the present age. Even in the time of the Buddha, among those who practised meditation under the expert guidance of the Blessed One and the great Arahats like Sāriputta who gave instructions in both theory and practice, there were some yogis who harboured delusions because of their unusual experiences. It is safe to assume that nowadays the number of such yogis may be very great.

In reality, the attainment of spiritual goal means discrimination between corporeality and consciousness, realization of their constant arising and passing away and clear understanding of the impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*) and insubstantiality or non-self (*anatta*) of existence. Above all, the yogi must have illumination as regards the nature of phenomenal existence, viz., its.

## THE BUDDHA'S REPLY

state of flux and dissolution; illumination resulting from disenchantment, weariness and equanimity. It is only when he has these illuminations or insight knowledge (*ñāṇa*) that the yogi can see Nibbāna. It is only when he thus sees Nibbāna at least on the first path of holiness (*Sotāpattimagga*) that he can get rid of the false views about *atta* or *loka*.

## THE BUDDHA'S REPLY

The Buddha's reply to the question of Cunda is as follows.

"Cunda, it is true that in this world there are many false views about *atta* or *loka*. These views stem from five groups of mind-body complex (*khandhas*), they lie dormant in the five *khandhas*, they constantly focus on the five *khandhas*. But if a man knows, "This set of five *khandhas* is not mine, it is not my *atta*," if he thus sees things as they really are with his insight-knowledge, he will completely rid himself of the false views."

It is hard to understand both the question and the answer. Cunda asked whether it was possible to overcome the wrong views just as one begins to reflect on them. But what is the beginning of reflection? The Buddha's answer is that contemplation of the insubstantiality of the five *khandhas* means the elimination of the wrong views. But how is one to contemplate it?



## SALLEKHA SUITA

In order to be free from wrong views about *atta* or *loka*, we should know their mainspring as well as the misconceptions about it that give rise to these views. So, according to the Buddha's teaching, these wrong beliefs will dominate us if we naively regard the five *khandhas* as our belonging or as our *atta* and we will overcome them when we contemplate the impersonality of the *khandhas*.

The five *khandhas* are to be found in the body of every living being. They are (1) corporeality (*rūpa*) (2) feeling (*vedanā*) (3) perception (*saññā*) (4) mental formations (*sankhāra*) and (5) consciousness (*viññāna*). The first group refers to the whole physical body that is made up of billions of infinitesimal particles of physical matter. The second group is the group of feelings, pleasant or unpleasant, that depend on our contact with the external world. Perception is the mental phenomenon that helps us to remember the sense-objects; *sankhāras* are mental formations that give rise to bodily, verbal or mental behaviour. This group includes sensorial contact (*phassa*), reflection (*manasikāra*), volition (*cetanā*), greed (*lobha*), ill-will or anger (*doṣa*) and other mental factors numbering fifty. As for the last group viz., consciousness, there are many kinds of it as determined by the corresponding sense-organs such as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.

## FIVE KHANDHAS

Thus we have physical and mental groups: (*nāma-rūpa*) the physical being the corporeality and the mental comprising the four groups of psychic activities.

### THE FIVE KHANDHAS IN ACTION

The five *khandhas* become active when there is contact between the senses and their respective objects. When any object is seen, the eye together with the whole body plus the visual object constitute the corporeality (*rūpa*), the pleasant or unpleasant feeling at the sight is *vedanā*, cognition of the object is *saññā*, paying attention to the object or making any effort to see it represents the *saṅkhāra* and the awareness of the object seen is *viññāṇa*. Whenever we see, only these five *khandhas* occur and there is no *atta* besides them. Yet, people usually identify each of the five *khandhas* involved in the event of seeing with their *atta* or ego-entity. When a man sees himself, he regards the visual object as his ego-entity and when he sees some living being, he considers it the ego-entity of somebody. Thus, the ego-belief is rooted in the human tendency to identify the five *khandhas* with ego-entity at the moment of seeing.

Likewise, the five *khandhas* come into play when we hear or smell or taste or touch or think. Again, we have the ego-illusion that stems from the human tendency to regard the

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*khandhas* as the ego-entity. Most of the ordinary people are under the influence of the ego-belief that has its origin in consciousness since they usually make their ego identical with their mental activities and stages such as emotions, e.g. happiness or unhappiness, feelings, memory, perception, intention, effort, and so forth.

### POTENTIAL DEFILEMENTS

In his reply to Cunda, the Buddha said that the erroneous views about ego "arise, lie dormant and occur constantly". They arise because of misconceptions about the *khandhas* at the moment of seeing, etc. They arise not once or twice but repeatedly. They lie dormant in the sense that although they may not arise at the moment of seeing, etc., because of wise reflection (*yonisomanasikāra*) etc., they are ready to do so under certain circumstances. The five *khandhas* which become manifest when we see, etc., leave a clear impression on us and reflections on such impressions may give rise to greed, ill-will, ignorance, conceit and so forth. There may also prevail a false view which identifies our experience with the ego ("It was I who saw," etc). Thus, the potential for the ego-belief lies in the clear memory of sense-objects.

### AVERTING DEFILEMENT POTENTIAL THROUGH CONTEMPLATION

In order to counter the latent defilements, we should contemplate the arising and passing

## AVERTING DEFILEMENT

away of *khandhas*, their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality (*anicca, dukkha and anatta*). We should try to see them as they really are. We should note, "seeing, seeing" at the moment of seeing and in the same way we must be mindful of other sensations that result from hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. The objects of introspection in regard to the sense of touch are manifold. For this sensation is involved at the moment of walking, sitting, lying, bending, etc. The feelings of warmth, painfulness, itchiness or tiredness, too, stem from the sense of touch. There are also numerous objects of contemplation at the moment of consciousness of mental events ("intending", "knowing" "thinking" etc). Pleasure, joy, sorrow, anger, craving and other emotions may also be the objects of introspection.

But the beginner in meditation cannot introspect every physical or mental event; nor can he develop the power of concentration by so doing. So, he should begin with a few physical activities such as sitting or touching. Or, he can practise in-and-out breathing and watch the nostril-tip, noting the inhalation and exhalation. But the best method that we recommend is that of watching the abdominal motion, i.e., the rising and falling of the abdomen. But the yogi's mindfulness is not confined to abdo-

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minal motion. While watching the abdominal rising and falling, you should also note pains, aches, bending, stretching, etc. In short, you should watch all mental and physical events. Begin with the abdominal motion but as you get used to mindfulness, you should extend it to all other psycho-physical phenomena.

As you gain practice in mindfulness, you will become aware of only the phenomena such as seeing and hearing without any sign of permanence, pleasant or unpleasant character or ego-entity. Initially, you will see the corporeality as the known object and the mind as the knowing subject but with the development of concentration, you will find only cause and effect. Further strengthening of the power of concentration will then lead you to realize the perpetual arising and passing away of phenomena at every moment.

“ THIS IS NOT I ”

Then you will come to know the impermanence of the five *khandhas* and this knowledge is an antidote to conceit just as awareness of imminent death is bound to counter inordinate pride. So, whenever the yogi realizes that everything is transitory, he knows, “This is not I.” Moreover, he is fully aware of the unsatisfactoriness of everything that arises and invariably passes away. He does not regard



## “ THIS IS NOT I ”

any sense-object as his belonging, an object of attachment or as something on which he can depend. So, whenever he is aware of the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of things, he reflects, “This is not mine.” Again, since everything which the yogi watches conflicts with his desire and passes away in accordance with their nature, he comes to realize the futility and impersonality of the *khandhas*.

This realization of *anatta* (non-existence of ego) is of paramount importance. Whenever the yogi contemplates the three marks of the *khandhas* and knows, “This is not mine. This I am not,” he will have no ego-illusion about them. He will not regard himself as the subject who sees or hears and so, through meditation he will for the time being free himself from the belief in ego-entity.

But this temporary elimination of the ego-illusion does not mean its complete eradication. The illusion will arise whenever the yogi fails to contemplate the *khandhas*. Insight-knowledge of the three marks of *khandhas* together with their arising and passing away will in due course lead to *bhaṅgañāṇa* which makes the yogi see only the dissolution of all phenomena. Then, he will find the sense-object as well as the consciousness that he notes continually vanishing. He understands clearly that everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory, insubstantial and

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unworthy of attachment. Later on there arises "*bhayañāṇa*," i.e., knowledge of the terrifying character of the *khandhas*. This gives rise to knowledge of their defects (*ūdināvañāṇa*) which in turn leads to weariness or disgust (*nibbin-dañāṇa*). Then the yogi wants to renounce the five *khandhas* (*muñcitukamyatañāṇa*) and he exerts more effort to contemplate (*paṭisaṅkhā-rañāṇa*). This results in detachment from the *khandhas* (*saṅkhārupekkhāñāṇa*). With the maturity of this knowledge there emerges the *Sotāpatti-maggañāṇa* when the yogi sees the peace of *Nibbāna* wherein all the physical and mental phenomena become totally extinct. At this stage, insight into the three signs of existence suffices to eliminate the ego-belief. According to Sallekha sutta, the knowledge ("This is not mine" "This I am not" "This is not my *atta*") is sufficient to overcome the ego-illusion. Once one has seen the *Nibbāna*, it is not possible for anyone to have illusion about the *khandhas*. The illusion is completely eliminated and hence, the Buddha's reply to Cunda that we have already quoted.

### HOW TO CONTEMPLATE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE BELIEF

It is easy to know through book-learning, hearing a sermon or memorization that the *khandhas* do not belong to the ego, that as

## ELIMINATION OF BELIEF

such, they are unworthy of attachment. But neither this hearsay knowledge nor the intellectual acceptance of the fact in itself helps us to remove defilements. It is only the intuitive, empirical knowledge that will ensure their riddance.

So, through constant introspection the yogi notes that everything that arises passes away immediately and he gains an insight into the impermanence of all phenomena, their frightful aspect and unsatisfactoriness. He knows well that there is nothing internally or externally that belongs to the ego and so he becomes free from attachment.

Moreover, this insight helps him to overcome egocentric pride. Pride is due to ignorance of the transitory nature of existence. Ordinary people do not observe the arising and passing away of psycho-physical phenomena and they believe that the physical body and consciousness last a lifetime, that the man who now sees and hears is the same individual who saw and heard before. This illusion of permanence and identity is the mainspring of pride and uppishness. But, for the yogi who is aware of the ceaseless dissolution of mind-body complex, there is no cause for conceit.

Since every physical or mental phenomenon arises and vanishes instantly, there is no reason

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to believe in a living ego-entity. The object known as well as the knowing consciousness is always subject to dissolution and the only reality is the ceaseless flux of psycho-physical elements that are passing away.

When the yogi develops his insight knowledge everything that arises disappears as soon as he notes it. If the mind wanders while observing the rising and falling of the abdomen, the yogi instantly notes it and it (the wandering mind) disappears. If he has a sensation of heat in a certain part of the body, he directs his attention to it and it is gone the next moment together with the consciousness that focuses on it. Certainly, the perpetual dissolution of the psycho-physical phenomena cannot represent a living ego-entity, a man or a woman with a permanent self. Recognition of this fact is the real insight-knowledge of the impersonality of existence.

Some yogis say that they see the ceaseless arising and passing away of the objects of introspection but that they are not well aware of what is happening to the introspecting mind. In that case, they are not yet free from ego-belief in regard to the subjective role of consciousness. But those who constantly observe every physical or mental phenomenon that stems from the six senses in accordance with the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna sutta find all

## FIRST JHANA AND CONCEIT

sense-objects as well as the observing consciousness constantly passing away and so they become fully aware of the impermanence of everything. Then after passing through the successive stages of insight-knowledge, the yogi attains the first path of holiness and sees *Nibbāna*, the cessation of all psycho-physical phenomena. Only then will he be free from all misconceptions about *atta* or *loka*. This is what the Buddha taught when he replied to Cunda.

In short, it is the insight-knowledge of the continuous flux of all psycho-physical phenomena together with the three marks of existence that brings home to the yogi the futility of attachment, conceit and ego-belief and makes him see *Nibbāna* on the first path of holiness. It is only then that he is wholly free from false beliefs. The development of concentration or the mere knowledge of the arising and passing away of everything or the emergence of insight-knowledge in itself does not mean the elimination of the beliefs. On the contrary, the yogi who is wedded to such beliefs tends to overestimate himself as a result of his attainment of *jhāna*. This is pointed out in the further dialogues of the Buddha.

## FIRST JHĀNA AND CONCEIT

“Cunda, I will tell you about the cause of misconception and conceit in connection with



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the practice of meditation. Among my disciples, there are some monks who have attained the first *jhāna* that is characterized by joy (*pīti*) and freedom from sensuous desire, hindrances and discursive thinking.”

*Jhāna* is the concentration of attention on one single object such as earth, water, in-and-out-breathing, an organ of the body or a corpse. This state of consciousness involving concentration and tranquility is the *samatha jhāna*. The other *jhāna* is the *vipassanā jhāna* which has as its object the contemplation and insight-knowledge of the three marks of existence, namely, *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

### ATTRIBUTES OF THE FIRST JHĀNA

In the first *jhāna* the yogi is free from sensuous desires that always dominate ordinary people and even embarrass the meditators who have not yet developed concentration. The first *jhāna* also ensures freedom from the other four hindrances viz., ill-will, torpor and laziness, restlessness and worry and doubt. This freedom is enjoyed not only while the yogi is absorbed in *jhāna* but also just before and just after his attainment of this state of consciousness.

Freedom from hindrances is followed by joy (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*). The yogi has an indescribable feeling of ecstasy pervading his

## ATTRIBUTES OF THE FIRST JHĀNA

whole body. He is completely free from stiffness, tiredness and other physical discomforts.

Thus, besides his freedom from hindrances the yogi has five attributes indicating his absorption in the first *jhāna*, viz., ecstatic rapture, intense joy, very active thought conception (*vitakka*), discursive thinking (*vicāra*) and one-pointedness of mind *ekaggatā* or *samādhi*. The body of the yogi who is absorbed in the first *jhāna* is motionless, tough and composed. This state of jhānic consciousness may last two or three hours; or it may last the whole day or the whole night. There is no collapsing or swaying of the body. It is a mistake to regard, as some people do, lying or rolling on the floor as a sign of spiritual attainment. These attainments designated by such terms as *jhāna*, *migga* or *phala* are *appana javana* which we may translate as attainment-impulsion for the commentaries define it as maintenance and strengthening of bodily postures such as sitting and standing.

Because of the freedom from hindrances and the five varieties of experience that characterize the first *jhāna*, the yogi tends to be elated and conceited. But in his reply to Cunda, the Buddha says unequivocally that the attainment of the first *jhāna* does not mean the lessening of defilements.

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There are grounds for delusion on the part of the yogi who is absorbed in the first *jhāna*. He hopes to have some unusual experience and so if he does have such experience, he tends to be deluded into a false sense of attainment. Some have delusions because they are misguided by incompetent teachers. In the case of some yogis, relative freedom from hindrances and joy and other experience are satisfying enough to give cause for self-complacency.

In fact, however, this *jhānic* experience is a far cry from the higher insight-knowledge of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. It is by no means to be confused with the practice of *sallekha* that helps to lesson defilements. For the first *jhāna* can only keep off the defilements, whereas, through the *sallekha* practice the yogi can eventually remove them, root and branch. Yet, the attainment of this *jhāna* tends to give the yogi the impression of being a *Sotāpanna* or an *Arahat*. There were bhikkhus subject to such illusions in the time of the Buddha and after his *parinibbāna*.

### FIVE HUNDRED DELUDED MONKS

Once five hundred monks meditated in the forest according to the instructions of the Buddha. When they became absorbed in *jhāna*, they found themselves without any defilement

## STORY OF THERA MAHĀNĀGA

and so being convinced of their spiritual attainment, they came to report to the Buddha. At the monastery gate they met Ānānda who informed them of the Buddha's instruction that they should see the Teacher only after visiting the cemetery. So, the monks went to the cemetery. It appeared that in those days corpses were left unburied at the cemetery. The corpses to be burnt were apparently in a fresh condition at the time of the monks' visit. At the sight of the decomposed corpses, the monks were filled with disgust. Yet, they could not help lusting for the bodies of women who had died recently. Only then did they realize that they were not yet wholly free from defilements. Then the Buddha emitted divine rays from his abode and preached a sermon. On hearing the sermon, all the monks became Arahats.

## STORY OF THERA MAHĀNĀGA

About three or four hundred years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, there lived in southern Sri Lanka an Arahata called Dhammadinna. At that time there was an elderly monk named Mahānāga who regarded himself as an Arahata. One day, Dhammadinna went to the elderly monk and asked many questions to which the latter answered easily. Dhammadinna complimented the monk on his deep wisdom and

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inquired of him when he first became an Arahāt. He said he had been an Arahāt for more than sixty years. Did he possess psychic powers? Yes, he did. At the request of his interlocutor, the monk created a big elephant. Would he now will that the elephant trumpet and rush towards him? He willed accordingly but as the animal came rushing, he became frightened and was about to run away when Dhammadinna seized the fringe of his robe and said, "Sir, would an Arahāt have any fear?" Only then did Mahānāga know that he was a mere worldling. He meditated in accordance with the instructions of Dhammadinna and became a real Arahāt.

### STORY OF THERA CULASUMA

The story of another ill-informed yogi monk is told in the commentary on Sallekha sutta. He was called Culasuma and he dwelt at a forest retreat that turned out many Arahats in those days. Culasuma, too, considered himself an Arahāt. At the request of Dhammadinna, he created a lake and a big lotus flower with a girl dancing and singing sweetly on it. Dhammadinna told the monk to watch the dancing girl for a moment and went into a room. Then while the monk was watching the girl of his own making, the sensual desire that had been lying dormant for sixteen years began to rear



## UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES

its ugly head. Being disillusioned, the monk meditated according to Dhammadinna's instructions and attained real Arahantship.

### UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES

These stories point to the misconceptions current in ancient India when the Buddhist religion was flourishing. The yogi monks of those days were spiritually advanced and endowed with psychic powers. Their misconception was due to unusual power of concentration. Nowadays, some yogis have illusions without making any spiritual progress. When the yogi who correctly practises gains an insight into the arising and passing away of all mental phenomena, he is overwhelmed with a variety of unusual experiences such as seeing the light, rapture, tranquility, joy, faith and so forth. In the *Visuddhimagga*, the yogi is assured of these experiences. If the practice of meditation does not bring about these experiences, the question arises as to whether the method is correct or whether the yogi is lacking in effort. On the other hand, the yogi who has such experiences may overestimate his attainments.

### PRESENT BLISS

The first *jhāna* is not the practice of *sallekhadhamma* that helps to root out the defile-

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

ments. In the Sallekha sutta, the Buddha terms it *diṭṭhadhamma-ukhavihāra*, that is, living in bliss here and now.

While the' yogi is absorbed in *jhāna*, his consciousness is fixed on a single object. With his mind free from all unwholesome distractions, he is calm and peaceful. This state may last continuously for two or three hours.

The Buddha pointed out, too, how illusion and self-complacency may arise from the second *jhāna* with its three characteristics, viz., rapture, joy and one-pointedness of mind, or from the third *jhāna* with its joy and one-pointedness of mind or from the fourth *jhāna* with its equanimity and one-pointedness of mind. Of course, the second, the third and the fourth *jhānas* are more sublime than the preceding states of consciousness but they ensure only bliss in the present life and are by no means to be equated with *sallekha* practice that is designed to eliminate defilements.

Nor is *sallekha* practice synonymous with the *jhāna* of *ākāsañācāyatana* (sphere of unbounded space), *jhāna* of *viññāṇañcāyatana* (sphere of unbounded consciousness), *jhāna* of *akiñcaññāyatana* (sphere of nothingness) and *jhāna* of *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana* (sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception). These *jhānas* do not

## JHANA IN VIPASSANA

help to overcome defilements. They cause only peaceful bliss and as such are termed *santā-vihāra*.

## JHĀNA IN VIPASSANA

Insight – meditation (*vipassanā*) and *jhāna* have some characteristics in common. When the practice of mindfulness is well established at the exploratory stage (*sammāsanañāṇa*) there are conception of object (*vitakka*), repeated reflection (*vicāra*) joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and concentration of attention (*samādhi*.) Thus, whenever the yogi observes any phenomenon, his insight-meditation is somewhat like the first *jhāna* with its five characteristics.

When the yogi gains insight-knowledge of the arising and passing away of all phenomena, he is barely aware of an arising object without thought perception or reflection. He has intense joy, rapture and tranquility. So his meditation is somewhat like the second *jhāna* with its three attributes.

The disappearance of the light, etc., (*upakkilesā*: defilements of the mind) marks an advance in the insight-knowledge of the arising and passing away of phenomena. Then there is no joy but happiness is very intense. The mind is tranquil and free from distractions. The yogi

shares the joy and the one-pointedness of mind that are characteristics of the third *jhāna*.

The higher levels of insight-knowledge such as "*bhaṅgañāṇa*" wherein the yogi sees only the passing away usually have nothing to do with joy. They are characterized by equanimity and one-pointedness of mind. The former is especially pronounced in the *saṅkhārupekkhañāṇa*. At this stage the insight-meditation is akin to the fourth *jhāna* with its two attributes of equanimity and one-pointedness of mind.

Furthermore, at times the yogi's whole body disappears, giving him the impression of being in space. At that moment he is like a person absorbed in *akāsānañcāyatana jhāna*. At other times, attention is fixed exclusively on consciousness and then the yogi's state of consciousness resembles *viññāṇanañcāyatana jhāna*. On occasion, it seems as though he were watching nothingness, a state somewhat like *ākincaññāyatana jhāna*. Sometimes the consciousness may be so transcendental that it becomes non-existent, a state on a par with that of *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna*.

These characteristics which the insight-meditation has in common with *jhāna* often leads to self-complacency which is an obstacle to spiritual progress. So in meditation it is necessary to note these unusual experiences and reject them.

## SALLIKHA WAY OF LIFE

In the Sallekha sutta the Buddha after pointing out the misleading character of the *jhāna*, proceeds to spell out the *sallekha* practice that is calculated to stamp out the defilements.

### SALEKHA WAY OF LIFE

The sutta mentions forty four kinds of unwholesome acts, speech and thoughts which we must avoid in order to overcome defilements. These are as follows.

- (1) Causing harm to a living being - *vihimsa*.
- (2) Killing - *pānātipāta*. (3) Stealing - - *adinnādāna*.
- (4) Unchastity - - *abrahmacariya*. (5) Lying - - *musāvāda*.
- (6) Slandering - - *pisunavācā*. (7) Abusive or harsh language - - *pharusavācā*.
- (8) Frivolous talk - - *samphappalāpa*. (9) Covetousness - - *abhijjhā*.
- (10) ill-will - - *vyāpāda*. (11) Wrong views - - *micchādiṭṭhi*.
- (12) Wrong intention - *micchāsankappa*.
- (13) Wrong speech - - *micchāvācā*. (14) Wrong action - - *micchākammanta*.
- (15) Wrong livelihood - *micchā-jiva*.
- (16) Wrong effort - - *micchā vāyāma*.
- (17) Wrong mindfulness - - *micchāsati*.
- (18) Wrong concentration - - *micchāsamādhi*.
- (19) Wrong reflection - - *micchāñāṇa*.
- (20) False sense of freedom - *micchāvimutti*.
- (21) torpor and lethargy - - *thina-middha*.
- (22) Restlessness - - *uddhicca*.
- (23) Doubt - - *vicikicchā*.
- (24) Anger - - *kodha*.
- (25) Enmity - - *upanāha*.
- (26) Ingratitude - - *makkha*.
- (27) Vying with people of upper crust - - *palāsa*.
- (28) Envy



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*ṣṣā*. (29) Miserliness - - *macchariya*. (30) Hypocrisy and boastfulness - - *sāṭheyya*. (31) Concealment of one's fault and deception - - *māyā*. (32) Lack of respect for those who are worthy of respect - - *thambha*. (33) Excessive conceit - - *atimāna*. (34) Intractability - - *dubbacatā dovacassatā*. (35) Bad friendship - - *pāpamittā*. (36) Forgetting to do good things - - *pamāda*. (37) Lack of faith - - *asaddhatā*. (38) Having no shame in doing evil - - *ahīrika*. (39) Having no fear of the consequences of the evil deeds - - *anottappa*. (40) Intellectual poverty - - *appasutata*. (41) Laziness - - *kosajja*. (42) Unmindfulness - - *mutthassacca*. (43) Lack of insight knowledge - - *duppaññatā*. (44) Bigotry - - *sandiṭṭhiparāmāsa*.

### ELABORATION OF SALLEKHA PRACTICE

*Jhāna* in itself does not ensure the total extinction of these defilements. Their total extinction calls for complete self-training in respect of morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*) that run counter to them. To this end, the yogi must attain at least the the first stage of the holy path. At this stage, wrong views, bigotry, skepticism, the wish to kill, in short, all the defilements that can land a man in the lower worlds are rooted out. This extinction is of paramount importance. Concentration, *jhāna*, psychic powers and special illumination count for little without the extinction of defilements.

## AVIHIMSA OR NON-VIOLENCE

For the non-Buddhist yogi, the attainment of *jhāna* and its preservation till death mean rebirth and longevity in the world of Brahmas. But in due course of time, he will return to the *deva* or human worlds and then his bent for sensual pleasures and evil deeds may again land him on the lower planes of existence. Moreover the Buddhist yogi who is complacent because of his *jhānic* attainment does not fare any better than the *jhānic* non-Buddhist yogi in that he is still in danger of descent into the nether worlds. But should he practise meditation on the basis of *jhāna*, he can free himself from such a danger. So, the Buddha told disciples not to remain self-assured over *jhānas* but to practise the *Sallekha-dhamma* that would ensure the total eradication of unwholesome propensities.

## AVIHIMSA OR NON-VIOLENCE

The first precept that the Buddha enjoined on his disciples is that of inoffensiveness or non-violence (*ahimsa*). We should avoid hurting any living being if only because we do not wish to be hurt and the doctrine of *ahimsa* is acceptable to all living beings.

India has a high regard for this doctrine of *ahimsa*. It tops the list of five major rules of conduct binding on the Jains. But the Jains go to extreme in their interpretation of *ahimsa*. From their point of view, cold water, green

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grass or plant and earth are animate and so we should not hurt them. The Vinaya rules forbidding the destruction of plant and grass and digging of earth were designed to avoid controversy and ill-will. In reality, grass, plants and earth are not living beings and a non-bhikku who cuts the plants or digs the earth is by no means doing any evil. But the Buddha-dhamma insists that we should not hurt any living being, whether big or small, that is sensitive to pain and pleasure.

Inoffensiveness is more enobling than *jhāna* and in order to understand this, we should remember that there are three levels of this defilement or offensiveness. First, we have the kind of offensiveness labelled *vītikkamakilesā* which means hurting a living being physically or by word of mouth. The antidote against this kind of defilement is morality. A man who pays regard to his moral character will not hurt other people. He may have ill-will but because of his moral sense he does not give vent to it physically or verbally.

The aggressive thoughts which we harbour are called *pariyuṣṭhāna kilesā*. We have to overcome this kind of defilement through *upacāra-samādhi* and *oppanā-samādhi jhānas*, i.e., initial stage of concentration and attainment concentration associated with *jhāna*. Concentration.

## AVIHIMSA OR NON-VIOLENCE

on an object or in-and-out breathing, too, helps to counteract unwholesome thoughts. This is overcoming defilements by repression (*vikkhambhana-pahāna*) which the commentaries liken to the pushing aside of moss in a pond by a pot thrown into it. The yogi may be free from ill-will in his post-*jhānic* state of consciousness for many years, but just like the surface of water that is again covered with moss, the mind of the yogi will be defiled when there is cause for defilement as in the case of the two Sinhalese monks with supernormal powers.

Lying dormant in a person who does not contemplate the psycho-physical phenomena that arise from the six senses or who has not yet reached the Anāgāmi stage are aggressive desires that become manifest under favourable circumstances. The Pāli term for this is *anusayakilesā*. A physical or mental event that escapes our notice leaving us unaffected may make us ill-tempered when it is recalled. Such latent defilements have to be eliminated through insight-knowledge. The yogi who constantly watches all psycho-physical phenomena will take no offence in the face of an offensive sense-object. To him everything is momentary, subject to *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. So neither his sense-contact nor any recollection of it makes him angry. This is the way to overcome aggressiveness through meditation (*tadaṅga pahāna*).

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Every object which a person fails to watch is a potential source of ill-will. But meditation is the basic *sallekha* practice that enables one to stamp out its cause. Once a man attains the first stage of holiness, he is free from the gross forms of ill-will that may consign him to the nether worlds. At the second, i.e., the *Sakadāgāmi* stage, the ill-will becomes still weaker while at the *Anāgāmi* stage it becomes completely extinct. The *sallekha* practice requires the yogi to avoid aggressiveness till the attainment of the *Anāgāmi* stage. Hence, its superiority over *jhāna*.

The yogis at our meditation center are dedicated to the *sallekha* way of life. *Sallekha* practice is part and parcel of their morality. They constantly watch all the feelings and sensations that stem from contact with the external world and every moment of their awareness means suppression of aggressiveness, and in due course, they eradicate it completely. This accords with the Buddha's teaching in the *Sallekha* sutta.

"Other people may do harm to a living being. But we will not harm any living thing. Thus, you should practise the *Sallekha dhamma* that will lessen the defilements."

This teaching also applies to the other 33 defilements. It concerns the practical phase of the *Sallekha dhamma*. The Buddha preached, too, its reflective phase.

## THOUGHT ABOUT SALLEKHA DHAMMA

### THOUGHT ABOUT SALLEKHA DHAMMA

“Cunda, I say that even the mere thought of wholesome *dhammas* is very beneficial to you.”

The mere thought about *dāna* (alms-giving), *sila* (morality), and *bhāvanā* (mind development) is highly beneficial. The mere intention to observe the moral precepts, to hear a sermon or to practice meditation is conducive to earthly or heavenly bliss. On his death bed, Maṅḡhakuṇḍali, a rich man's son saw the Buddha and he was so much full of wholesome thoughts that he became a *deva* in Tavatimsa, one of the celestial abodes. A frog, too, was once carried away by the Buddha's sermon and on its death became a denizen of the *deva* world. Just after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, a woman of Rājagaha city was intent on offering some flowers to a *thūpa* (pagoda) but on the way she was gored to death by a bull. Then, she found herself with a golden chariot among the retinue of Sakka, the king of gods.

In view of this meritorious character of wholesome thoughts, it is hardly necessary to dwell on the benefits that result from carrying them into effect. Prosperity in the human or *deva* world is rooted in such wholesome thoughts. These thoughts result in doing deeds which in.



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turn lead to happiness on earth and in the *deva* world. The effort to become a Buddha or an Arahant also originates with wholesome thoughts. The yogis meditating here (at this center) are motivated by such thoughts and in due course they will have the illumination that they seek. So, even the conception of a wholesome idea, thought or desire is very important. The Buddha says:

“Cunda, the mere thought of *ahimsa* (inoffensiveness) is beneficial. You should cultivate the thought, ‘Other people may hurt, a living being, but I will not hurt any being.’”

### PARIKKAMANAVĀRA

Another method of approach to the *Sallekha* way of life is that of avoidance. Here in the sutta, the Buddha cites the examples of a good road and a good harbour. Suppose there are two roads, one good and the other bad, or two harbours, one good and the other bad. One can avoid the bad road and the bad harbour by going along the good road and by using the good harbour. Similarly, if one follows the path of non-violence, it means one avoids the path of aggressiveness. Although the sutta refers to aggressive persons (*vihimsakassa*) the Buddha’s teaching applies to unaggressive persons as well. For, although a man does not now commit aggression either physically or by word of mouth,

## UPARIBHĀGAVĀRA

He might have committed it in his previous existences and he may commit it in future by force of circumstances. No one is wholly free from the defilement of aggressiveness until one attains *Anāgāmi* stage or *Arahatship*. So, we should practise the *Sallekhadhamma* and strive to attain the higher stages of Ariyas that will help to wipe out the defilements.

## UPARIBHĀGAVĀRA

Another aspect of the practice of non-violence (*ahimsa*) is its tendency to elevate the devotee to the higher worlds. In the *Sallekha sutta*, the Buddha says that all bad deeds lead to land the doer in the lower worlds, whereas all good deeds ensure rebirth in the higher worlds.

All bad deeds have their roots in greed (*lobha*) ill-will (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*.) Major misdeeds such as killing and stealing may lead to rebirth in the nether worlds. Minor misdeeds motivated by intention or ill-will do not cause much suffering to the wrong-doer but they tend to prolong the misery in the cycle of life.

Those who have committed gross misdeeds, such as killing have to suffer not only in the lower worlds but also in the human world where they may be reborn by virtue of their good *kamma*. Retribution follows for many life-times in the form of a short span of life, physical

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afflictions, poverty and so forth. Ill-health is often the kammic result of aggression which was committed in a previous existence. An evil deed will at best lead to rebirth as a poor, wretched *deva* in the heavenly abode and at worst it means damnation in Avici, the lowest hell. In the time of Kakusanna Buddha, one Māra, called Dusi, instantly landed in Avici hell because of his evil design against the Buddha and the Arahats.

On the other hand, good deeds such as *dāna* and *sila* tend to lead the doer up the successive levels of existence in the worlds of human beings, *devas* and *Brahmās*. They make accessible, too, the paths of holiness such as *Sotāpanna*, etc. Good deeds help to turn the doer into a rich man or a king as in the case of a flower-girl who offered the Buddha some food and before long became the queen of king Kosala.

When a bottle of oil is broken in water, the heavy pieces of glass sink, while the light oil rises up. Likewise, bad deeds tend to drag down a person whereas good deeds contribute to his uplift. A man who does good deeds will enjoy longevity, good health, beauty and so on. He will become a *deva* or a *Brahmā* in a future life. He can also attain the paths of holiness. The person who has thus made spiritual or material progress on the basis of his good deeds is well

## PARINIBBĀNAVĀRA

secure. So you should seek higher status, spiritual or otherwise, through the practice of non-aggression.

### PARINIBBĀNAVĀRA

We now come to the last aspect of *sallekha* practice, viz., that of extinguishing the fires of defilements.

In the Sallekha sutta, the Buddha says that there is no reason why a man who is wholly sunk in a quagmire will be able to save another man in a similar predicament. But it is reasonable to assume that a man who is not sunk in the quagmire can save another man who is not bogged down in the mud. Likewise, only the man who has disciplined himself, trained himself in the threefold division of the Eightfold Noble path and extinguished the fires of defilements, will be able to help another man in regard to discipline, training and extinction of defilements.

According to the commentaries, the quagmire in the sutta refers to sensual pleasures and a person who loves pleasure is likened to a man sunk in a quagmire. The implication is that a man who is mired in pleasure cannot save another man from a similar entanglement. This should be especially borne in mind by those who give instructions in meditation without having practised it as well as by those who are being guided by such teachers.

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The commentaries say that there are people who have become enlightened after hearing the speeches of the worldlings and that such enlightenment through proper reflection on proper speeches means deliverance by the Buddha. But such cases are exceptional.

Here, the substance of the Buddha's teaching is that one who is not free from the dangers of *samsāra* (life-cycle) and the lower worlds, cannot free others from such dangers, that one who has not overcome defilements cannot help others to do so. Just as a fire cannot be used for putting out another fire, so also a defilement cannot neutralize another defilement. Violence cannot extinguish violence. It can be ended only by non-violence.

Let us then vow that we will avoid violence; that we will cultivate thoughts of non-violence; that we will keep off violence with non-violence; that we will raise our status through non-violence and that we will put out the fire of defilement of violence with non-violence. These are the five *vāras* (aspects of *sallekha* practice) which the Buddha explains in the sutta.

### KAMMIC EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

The kammic effects of violence and non-violence are spelled out in the Culakamma-

## STORY OF THERA TISSA

vibhanga sutta of Majjhima-nikāya. Subha, a young man asked the Buddha why some people live long, who some live only a few years, why some are healthy and some unhealthy, why some are good-looking and some ugly and so forth. The Buddha says:

“All living beings have their own deeds (*kamma*) as their own possessions; they inherit their *kamma*; *kamma* is the main cause of their present condition. They have *kamma* as their main support. It is *kamma* which determines their lot in life.”

In response to the request of Subha, the Buddha enlarged on the *kammic* results of violence and non-violence. The gist of the Buddha's teaching is that those who treat others cruelly go to hell after death. On release from hell, they suffer from many diseases wherever they are reborn. On the other hand, *deva* world is the post-mortem destiny of the kind-hearted people who practise non-violence; and when they again become human beings, they are free from disease and healthy.

### THE STORY OF THERA PUTIGATTATISSA

The *kammic* consequence of cruelty and violence is evident in the story of bhikkhū Tissa who lived in Sāvatti city in the lifetime of the Buddha. While training himself



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in the spheres of morality, concentration and wisdom, the bhikkhu became ill. There appeared on his body boils that became bigger and bigger until they burst and turned into ugly ulcers. His bones decayed and gave way. His body was rotting and even his relatives and disciples ceased to look after him. This is no wonder because people usually have little patience even with their parents if they happen to be victims of chronic, incurable diseases.

Seeing Tissa in this sad plight and his potential for Arahatsip, the Buddha visited him. The monks nearby could no longer remain indifferent. The Buddha had the sick monk's garment removed, washed and dried. He was bathed in warm water and redressed. Then, as the monk lay on the bed, relieved and composed, the Buddha stood at the head of the bed and uttered a verse which may be translated in prose as follows:

"Tissa, before long you will be devoid of consciousness and cast off at the cemetery by your fellow-monks. Your body will lie there like a useless log."

By this verse, the Buddha reminded Tissa of the need to practise the *dhamma* since he had nothing else on which he could rely in his last

## RELICS OF THE ARAHAT

moment. Once he became lifeless, nobody would care for his corpse. It would become rotten and loathsome in a couple of days. It would be abandoned at the cemetery just as people take away only good timber for making chairs, bedstead, etc., and leave the odds and ends in the forest.

### THE RELICS OF THE ARAHAT

As he had had some training, Tissa became an Arahata on hearing the verse, and before long he passed away. The Buddha had the corpse burnt and the bones enshrined in a *cetiya* (pagoda). The bones left over after the cremation of a deceased Arahata are what we call his relics. Burmese Buddhists usually believe that the relics of the Arahats are spherical objects like those of the Buddha. This is not true. Only the Buddha's relics are somewhat like tiny balls as a result of his will. When we went to Calcutta to receive and convey the relics of the two chief disciples to Burma, we found them just like ordinary bones. There is no doubt that the relics of other Arahats, too, are nothing more than human bones. The popular belief that the relics of a revered saint turn up in the shape of balls after cremation is, therefore, to be taken with a grain of salt.

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### THE PREVIOUS LIFE OF TISSA

The monks asked the Buddha about the destiny of their late co-religionist. The Buddha said that he had attained *Nibbāna*. They asked the Buddha why Tissa had suffered so much despite his potentiality for sainthood.

According to the Buddha, Tissa was a fowler in the time of Kassapa Buddha. He killed and sold birds. As for the birds which remained unsold at the end of the day, he broke their wings and legs. Perhaps, what with nothing like cold storage in those days, there was no other way to keep the birds fresh and alive. For thus mutilating and killing the birds, he suffered for a long time in hell, and when he was reborn in the human world, he had many diseases and in his last existence his bad *kamma* was worked out to its bitter end. His attainment of Arahatsip was in part due to his offer of food to an Arahats together with a prayer for sainthood during his life as a fowler.

Those who are kind and avoid violence will be free from disease and ill health in a future life like thera Bakula. When I was in Moulmein, I met a woman whose health was simply amazing. She was in her early sixties and yet she had never taken any medicine and never had an ailment like headache or cold. The

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part of Moulmein in which I resided was malaria-infested and I had an attack every two or three months but the woman was immune although she had lived there the whole year. Her health was most probably due to the practice of non-violence and kindness in her previous existence.

So in order to enjoy good health and freedom from disease you should lead a life of non-violence and kindness.

### PĀṆĀTIPĀTA-TAKING LIFE

The abstinence from taking life is one of the five precepts and so it is familiar to Buddhists. But it needs elaboration.

The Pāli term for taking life is *pāṇātipāta*. *Pāṇa* means a living being or life; *ati* means "very quickly" and *pāta* means to make something fall. So *pāṇātipāta* literally means to cut off a life prematurely. As in the case of non-violence, the Buddha's discourse on abstinence from killing deals with its five aspects.

### SALLEKHA-VĀRA

Those who do not practise the Sallekha way of life leading to the elimination of defilements will not hesitate to take life. Yet such people are really afraid of death. The Buddha stresses the fact that every living being fears danger

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and death. This does not apply to the Arahats and the Ariyas at the *anāgāmi* stage but these saints are few and far between.

All over the world the law of the jungle reigns supreme. Big animals kill and eat small animals for their self-preservation. This is true of both land and sea animals. As the Buddha says, in the animal world, cannibalism at the expense of the weak is the order of the day. But animals are not worse than man in this respect. For man consumes many kinds of animals including the birds in the air and even the big whales in the distant seas.

To take life and preserve one's body at the sacrifice of other living beings is indeed downright injustice. Yet, people who kill for their own survival are much afraid of death. They are more afraid of being killed by others, or of being eaten by animals such as lions, tigers or big serpents. Once a group of Americans tried to catch dragons on an Indonesian island. These dragons are bigger than man. The Americans shot them dead or set traps to catch them alive. On one occasion a dragon came rushing to attack a woman among the hunters. The woman was much scared and she had a narrow escape only because her companion shot the dragon just in time. This shows how people fear death although they kill living beings cruelly.

## THOUGHTS ON NON-KILLING, ETC.

So, in accordance with the Buddha's teaching, we should avoid taking life, or in other words, adopt the *sallekha* practice that helps to lessen the defilement of killing. This is *Sallekhavāra*.

## THOUGHTS ON NON-KILLING, ETC.

As in the case of non-violence, we should bear in mind the other four aspects of non-killing. We should cultivate thoughts about it (*cittuppādavāra*), and follow the path of non-killing in order to avoid the path of killing (*parikkamanavāra*).

Then, there is the uplifting aspect of non-killing (*uparibhāgavāra*). Killing is an evil deed that leads to the nether worlds or to rebirth among the lower, wretched classes of human beings. Some people achieve success and wealth at the expense of other people's lives but their achievement is short-lived. They are bound to suffer in the cycle of life. On the other hand, non-killing leads to security and happiness on the higher planes of *samsāric* existence. Those who avoid killing will not revert to lower worlds. Let us then make ourselves spiritually progressive through abstinence from killing.

Finally, we have the aspect of non-killing that contributes to the extinction of defilements (*parinibbānavāra*.)



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### JHĀNA AND NON-KILLING

Abstinence from killing is moral practice and so, why is it described as superior to *jhāna*? According to the commentaries, the *jhānas* were in vogue prior to the rise of Buddhism and as such, they do not lead to higher spiritual attainments and *Nibbāna*. On the other hand, non-violence and non-killing received impetus from Buddhism as part of the way to full liberation. Hence, the Buddhist emphasis on Sallekha practice.

In the Pāli text which mentions the popular belief in the highly spiritual value of *jhānas*, reference is made to "some monks in this *sāsanā*" i.e., Buddhist religion. This, of course, means the Buddhist bhikkhus, and it might be argued that the Buddhist yogi too, is devoid of Sallekha practice if he becomes much self-assured and smug because of *jhānas*. In my opinion, self-complacency resulting from *jhānic* attainment is incompatible with real spiritual progress. It does not square with Sallekha practice that leads to the total destruction (*samuccheda pahāna*) of defilements.

I have already cited the cases of Mahānāga and Culasumaṇa, the two devotees of *jhāna* who were denied transcendental knowledge because of their self-assurance for sixty years. But for the instructions of Dhammadinna all their efforts

and aspirations would have been futile like those of the ascetics Alāra and Udaka. So, from the Buddhist point of view, *jhānic* attainment *per se* is not to be confused with Sallekha practice.

In Buddhist Sallekha training, one has to overcome evil through morality, concentration and wisdom or insight-knowledge (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*). We have to depend on *sīla* for the elimination of physical and verbal defilements such as killing, stealing, lying, abusing, and so forth. As for evil thoughts we should keep them off through concentration. We can develop the power of concentration by means of *kaṣiṇa* exercises or by fixing the mind on in-and-out breathing or by being absorbed in *jhāna*. Concentration on breathing may last five or ten minutes, *jhānic* absorption may go on for a couple of hours and all unwholesome thoughts are ruled out in these states of consciousness.

But the conquest of defilements through concentration is temporary. Repeated concentration on the repulsiveness of the internal organs of the human body will fill the yogi with aversion to a very good-looking man or woman but once he suspends his contemplation, he becomes attached to his sense-object. In other words, concentration provides only a temporary and not a permanent antidote against defilements.

## THE PERMANENT REMEDY: INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE

It is only insight-knowledge ( *vipassanā* ) that enables us to overcome the defilements once and forever. As the yogi watches the sense-objects such as the sight, sound, etc., attentively, he finds them as well as the consciousness passing away constantly. There is nothing permanent to be found. No impression of visual objects or sound is left on his mind. He is not defiled by greed or ill-will in connection with his seeing or hearing. Nor does the recollection of any event lead to defilement since the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the sense-object is not apparent at the moment of seeing or hearing and the insight into the impermanence of every object and the cognizing consciousness leaves no room for unwholesome propensities. Watchfulness is essential, for the yogi cannot overcome the defilements stemming from sense-objects that escape his attention.

Constant watchfulness and the subsequent perfection of insight knowledge lead to contact with *Nibbāna* on the path of the Ariyas. Such an illumination roots out the respective defilements. At the *Sotāpatti* stage, the ego-belief and doubt become extinct; the *yōgi* no longer commits evil such as killing, stealing etc., that tends to land him in the lower worlds. True, he is not yet wholly free from greed and ill-will. He still craves for pleasant objects and he still

## THE PERMANENT REMEDY: INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE

takes offence at anything that displeases him. But his greed and ill-will are not base and pernicious enough to make him kill or steal. A true *Sotāpanna* is wholly free from evils that lead to the lower worlds.

This is then the way to conquer defilements through insight-knowledge. The Sallekha practice calls for such total conquest. Some yogis become complacent when they are absorbed in *jhāna*. Concentration on in-and-out breathing or any other object often results in rigidity of the whole body and total oblivion. To the instructor and to those around the yogi, this state of consciousness may mean absorption in *jhāna*. But, in the absence of insight-knowledge of *nāma* and *rūpa*, the distinction between them and their *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, such a state may indicate nothing more than deep concentration. Later on, the yogi may have serious moral lapses and betray his true character. This is because concentration by itself cannot stamp out defilements. For their total extinction we need insight-knowledge that leads to contact with *Nibbāna*. Total extinction of defilements is assured only when we find that we are not capable of, say, killing under any circumstances. If we are capable of killing under extenuating circumstances, it is safe to assume that our Sallekha practice is imperfect.

## THE ACT OF KILLING

We will now consider the constituent factors of the act of killing from the standpoint of Buddhist ethics. There are essential factors. (1) The object must be a living being. (2) There must be the awareness of its being a living being. (3) The doer must have the intent to kill. (4) There must be the effort to kill or to cause death such as striking, cutting, etc. (5) This effort must result in the destruction of life. If any one of these factors is lacking, it cannot be strictly called an act of killing. The destruction of grass or plants that are mistaken for living beings does not constitute an act of killing. It is, of course, unwholesome because it is motivated by ill-will. But it will produce no evil *kammic* effect worth speaking.

Nor is the destruction of a living being which you mistake for an inanimate object an act of killing since there is no intent to kill. No less *kammically* sterile, is your act that results accidentally in the death of a living being for it is an involuntary act. For example, when a morally scrupulous man is bitten by an ant, he will have to remove it. If his act accidentally leads to the death of the insect, it has no *kammic* effect because it is devoid of the volition (*cetanā*) to kill.

## CAUSING OTHERS TO KILL

Suppose the first four conditions are present but the subject fails to cause the death of his victim. It is a morally unwholesome act, its *kammic* gravity depending on the life quality of the victim. If the victim dies as a result of your effort, it is an act of killing, pure and simple, and you will have to pay for it according to his place in the universe. If the killer's volition is weak, the *kammic* effect is little. If it is strong, the effect is great. Again, the magnitude of the *kammic* effect is determined by the stress and strain involved in the effort to kill as well as by the moral character of the victim.

## CAUSING OTHERS TO KILL

An act of killing has *kammic* effect not only when you yourself kill but also when you incite another person to kill. If you show by signs your desire to cause the death of a living being, that too is an act of killing on your part. This is important and should be borne in mind by housewives. It is said that at the fish stalls in the bazaar, fish are usually kept alive and battered to death only on demand by customers. Buying fish that have already been killed by fishmongers may not produce any *kammic* effect. But to turn your back at the sight of live fish and buy it later on, after it has been done to death, does not make you *kammically* less guilty. So you should be-



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mindful when you are out shopping in the bazaar,

### MEAT FOR BHIKKHUS

A bhikkhu should avoid eating three kinds of meat. viz., the meat of an animal that he has seen being killed expressly for his meal; the meat of an animal which, he understands, has been killed for him; and the meat that has raised doubt as to whether the flesh of the animal has been intended for him. In some villages where there are no meat-vendors, the chicken curry which a layman serves a visiting monk is suspect. Unless he can remove his suspicion, it is not proper for the monk to eat. Eating the three kinds of questionable meat is not a *kammic* act of killing but according to the Vinaya rules, it is bad and constitutes a clerical offence.

According to the Jains, a man who eats the flesh of an animal which, he knows, has been killed for his food, will have to bear half the *kammic* consequence of killing. This view is not shared by Buddhism. But to eat knowing that the animal has been killed for you shows lack of compassion and may lead to further acts of killing for you. So, it is not proper for a bhikkhu to eat any meat that makes him suspect that the animal has been killed to provide food for him or for another monk or for the Sangha.

## MEAT FOR BHIKKHUS

It is said that the Sinhalese bhikkhus consider it improper to eat eggs. This is reasonable, for, when the eggs are to be offered as food, these have to be freshly boiled or fried for them. There is cause for misgiving even though the bhikkhu sees or hears nothing that makes him suspicious. There are eggs such as those preserved in salt or lime solution which one can eat with a clear conscience. The same is true of boiled eggs in the bazaar. Then there are unhatchable eggs which many people suppose to be lifeless. I, for one, have doubt about this view. The eggs may contain a living being that is destined to die in its embryonic state. For, the *kammic* destiny of some living beings is indeed very strange. Some are conceived in the rocks and crushed as they are in such a narrow place, they would suffer much and one wonders what evil *kamma* might have consigned them to this terrible fate. Perhaps, there may be such ill-fated living things in the unhatchable eggs. We assume, however, that those who eat eggs supposing them to be lifeless are not kammically guilty because the two essential factors, viz., the sign of life and the will to cause death are lacking.

Public feeding on festive occasions in some villages calls for reflection. There are no meat-sellers, and so, if people are to be served with meat, order has to be placed in advance for it.

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Thus, regrettably, the donor who is out to gain merit by giving alms has to bear at least in part the *kammic* responsibility for the slaughter of animals. It also raises the question of whether the bhikkhus should eat the meat-curry offered on such occasions. It is said that in some villages pigs are taken to the monastery to be killed on the eve of the religious feast. This is, of course, downright impropriety. Some thirty years ago, a friend of mine who was residing at a village monastery had to protest vehemently against the practice.

Again, we have to consider whether it is proper for the monks to eat *danbouk* (specially prepared rice with meat) supplied by hotels. Such kind of food is questionable in view of the possibility of some animals having been killed specially for the festive occasion. So, the best way to ensure strict conformity with the precept against taking life is to avoid eating meat. If we are not vegetarians, we should be very careful about our food in order to keep ourselves undefiled by any act of killing.

The best way to uproot the desire to kill is to watch all phenomena arising from the senses. Those who are not watchful will wish to destroy any being that offends them. But the ever watchful yogi who realizes *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, will not see or hear the offensive

## KAMMIC EFFECTS

object, let alone have the desire to destroy it. In the event of being bitten by an ant, the unmindful and vicious man will kill the insect instantly. The virtuous man suppresses the desire to kill and so, he will remove it. But the watchful yogi will be aware of pain, and he will note its arising and passing away. He will, therefore, have no ill-will, much less the desire to kill. If the pain is unbearable, he will attend to it but never with the desire to kill. Thus, his consciousness is invulnerable to unwholesome thoughts and he is always free from the defilement of killing.

## KAMMIC EFFECTS

The Buddha points out the kammic effects of killing and non-killing in his reply to Subha's question about the inequality of human beings. There are various causes of this inequality. We may explain it in terms of what we observe in regard to the influence of heredity and environmental factors such as food, etc. But even some identical twins do not have the same span of life and so observation of life does not by itself dispose of the problem of human differences. We have then to consider two explanations that have nothing to do with empirical data. One presupposes the Creator of the world while the other the law of *kamma*.

According to the first view, the world and all human beings were created by God or what

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the Hindus call Brahmā. The belief in the Creator arose long before the rise of Buddhism and it is mentioned in the Pāthika sutta of Digha Nikāya. Those who believe in the Creator hold that the brevity or longevity of a man's life is predetermined by his Creator.

### STILLBORN BABY

But it is difficult to answer the question, "Why do some babies die shortly after their birth?" These ill-fated babies are to be found among all people irrespective of their religion or irreligion. Notwithstanding all the best doctors and best child-care, civilized societies have still to contend with infant mortality. Many a woman with her strong maternal instinct devotes much attention to the care of her child, and yet, it does not survive for long. On the other hand, some village women have a lot of children although they do not care much for their offspring.

If we are to believe that a baby dies in accordance with the will of God, why has he shortened the life of an innocent human being? Why has he caused the unhappiness of the child's parents who have faithfully worshipped him?

### THE BUDDHA'S ANSWER

According to the Buddha, the man or the woman who cruelly kills another living being.

## THE BUDDHA'S ANSWER

is liable to land in hell where he suffers for millions of years. If after his release from hell, he is reborn as a human being, his lifetime will be comparatively short.

Here, the Buddha's discourse suggests only the possibility of the killer's suffering in hell. But every killer is not so condemned on his death. Some killers may be reborn in the human or *deva* worlds by virtue of their overwhelming good deeds. For example, the high ranking army officer in Nārada Jātaka was a butcher in his previous existence. But they have to pay for their evil *kamma* in due course, and suffer in hell for many years. If they are reborn as human beings, they do not live long. If their *kamma* is not good enough to ensure rebirth in the human world, they become animals, their life span is short and they usually die a violent death.

Thus, fowls and ducks are killed for human consumption and so are cattle, pigs and goats. The animals in the sea survive by eating the weak but they in turn, are eaten up by the more powerful species. The living things with the shortest span of life are the insects that live on cultivated plants. They are usually destroyed for fear of an acute shortage of food. This brevity of life in the animal world is, from the Buddhist point of view, largely due to acts of killing in a previous existences.



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In the human world, too, some are stillborn, some die immediately after birth and some die in their childhood or youth. Some die in accidents, some are murdered and the lives of some people are cut off by terrible diseases. All these premature deaths are due to evil *kamma* associated with killing.

There are many stories in the commentaries to show the kammic effect of killing. One is as follows.

### FOR KILLING A SHEEP

Long ago a prince in Benares vowed to the tree-deity that when he became king, he would offer the blood of 101 kings and their queens. On his wish being fulfilled, he captured all the kings and queens and set about making preparations for the sacrifice. The queen of the youngest king was called Dhammadinna. She made obeisance to her husband but not to the king. Then chided by the latter, she said that she paid respect only to her husband because he was her benefactor. Then she wept and laughed. When the king asked her whether she was crazy, she told the story of one of her previous lives.

Long ago, in one of her past existences, she was a house-wife. One day, while her husband was sleeping, some of his friends came, and she sent her slave girl to buy meat for the

## MATAKABHATTA JATAKA

guests. But no meat being available, she cut off the head of an ewe at the back of her house and prepared food for them. For this evil deed, she suffered in hell-fire and because of the kammic debt that still remained, she had been beheaded as many times as there were strands of wool on the body of the ewe. She wept because she was sorry for the king who would have to suffer like her for his bloody sacrifice. She laughed because she was happy at the thought that the suffering involved in the repayment of her kammic debt was now drawing to a close.

The king was shocked. He begged the captives for their forgiveness and released them.

## MATAKABHATTA JĀTAKA

This jātaka is the story of a brahmin who offered animal sacrifice for the welfare of the dead in accordance with the Vedic instructions. Matakabhatta means offering food for the dead. It involved the ritual killing of a sheep, performance of sacrifice and feasting. For this misdeed, the brahmin became a ram for 500 life-times and got his head chopped off in every life of existence. The Burmese saying about 500 lifetime of suffering for an evil *kamma* is apparently based on this jātaka.

What is then the kammic cause of the grief of the parents over the loss of their short-lived

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child? This is not hard to understand from the Buddhist point of view. Presumably, they were the parents of a killer in a previous existence. Probably, they approved of what their son or daughter had done, and hence their unhappiness in the present life.

### THE GOOD KAMMA OF NON-KILLING

According to the Buddha, one who avoid killing will enjoy longevity in a future life. This is what he says in Culakammavibhāṅga sutta of Majjhima Nikāya. The commentaries on Khuddakapāṭha and Itivuttaka also mention thirty two benefits that accrue to those who avoid killing. Among them are beauty, longevity, health, popularity, services of a good many attendants, freedom from worry and association with one's beloved.

Those who want to be good-looking in a future life should avoid killing. The commentaries mention eight characteristics of beauty, viz., absence of deformities, well-proportioned body, shapeliness of the feet, gracefulness, softness (of the skin), purity, good features and good form.

By longevity, the commentaries mean living a long life and dying naturally, that is, not to die by the hand of a murderer.

## KAMMA OF NON-KILLING

Health consists in freedom from disease, and endowment with strength, and agility. Popularity means being liked by other people and speaking inoffensively. So, one who avoids killing will have an unlimited number of attendants.

Freedom from worry is another kammic fruit that we can enjoy in a future existence, if we avoid killing. Everybody wants to live a care-free life and hence the popularity of books like "How to stop Worrying and Start Living." The best way to overcome worry is to lead a good moral life and practise the Satipaṭṭhāna meditation constantly. This way of life which the yogis at this meditation center follow faithfully is, as the Buddha says, the only bulwark against grief and anxiety.

Still another good kammic fruit is the non-separation from one's beloved like wife, children, etc., and form one's much-prized possessions. Equally good is the kammic fruit in the form of having a good number of attendants for a long time. We should avoid killing if we wish to be assured of union with our beloved, our attendants and our property in a future life.

Other kammic fruits of non-killing are courage, frankness, fearlessness and invulnerability.

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Thus in the commentary, we have twenty three kammic advantages of non-killing. It is easy to see the evil kammic fruits, of killing, for they are just the opposites of the benefits that have been mentioned. Thus, they are ugliness, short span of life, illness and so forth.

### THE BUDDH DAY

It is now 2514 years since the Buddha attained Parinibbāna. Since the Buddha passed away at the age of 80, today is the 2594th anniversary of his birth. Prince Siddhattha, the Bodhisatta was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Māyā. At 16, he married Princess Yasodharā and spent his life amid princely luxuries. At 29, he abandoned the palace and became an ascetic in search of the Dhamma that would free him from old age, sickness and death.

Old age, sickness and death are undesirable, and it is indeed a noble aspiration to dedicate oneself to the search for ways and means of conquering these evils of life. Good and wise men have been working for the welfare of humanity all through the ages as, for instance, in the field of medical research.

For aeons throughout his innumerable lives the Bodhisatta sought to work for the welfare

## THE BUDDHA DAY

of mankind. Of all the evils that beset human life the worst are old age, sickness and death and he set out to find the way to the conquest of these evils. He was then 29 years old and at this age, man is usually still in the prime of life. Nowadays, some men of this age are still students, trying to get an academic degree without as yet being able to do any worthwhile job. The Bodhisatta was an ascetic at 29, having renounced his wife and all his worldly wealth. To men and women of our age, the Bodhisatta's renunciation is awe-inspiring because it is indeed unthinkable for them.

For six years, the Bodhisatta practised austerities such as suppression of breathing, starvation and so forth. But self-mortification was not the way to Enlightenment and so after six years, he gave it up, followed the Middle Way and became the Buddha.

This is how he became the Buddha. Realizing the futility of asceticism, he broke his fast, practiced in-and-out breathing and attained *jhāna*. Then, on the full moon day of *Kason*, he ate the milkfood offered by Sujatā, the wife of a cattle-owner. In the evening, he went to sit under the *Bo* (banyan) tree at Buddhagayā. The place is about six miles south of Gayā in Central India, formerly called Majjhimadesa.



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Under the *Bo* tree, the Bodhisatta spread the eight handful of grass offered by a grass-cutter. In those days, it was customary for the ascetics to prepare a place in this way for sitting or lying down. There, the Bodhisatta took his seat, having first resolved to sit cross-legged until he attained Enlightenment. Then, Māra came to molest him. Māra did not like any one who practised the Dhamma and achieved liberation. On the day of renunciation, Māra had urged the Bodhisatta to return home. He had persistently followed the prince and kept an eye on his movements in order to find fault with him. He was now shocked by the determination of the prince. He did not relish the prospect of the prince's becoming a Buddha, the Buddha's preaching to men and *devas* and the liberation of those under his (Māra's) control. He could not remain indifferent to the resolution of the prince. He was somewhat like those who obstruct the followers of other religions, those who have waged religious wars in some countries.

Māra was influential in six realms of *devas*. So, he summoned all the *devas* and demons under his influence. They assumed horrible forms and they came, armed with various weapons and uttering piercing war-cries. The number of Māra's warriors was infinite. Māra himself came riding a big elephant and he had a weapon in each of his countless hands.

## THE BUDDHA DAY

They did their utmost to frighten the Bodhisatta but it was all in vain. The Bodhisatta sat unperturbed and self-possessed. Seeing this, Māra told the Bodhisatta to leave the place since it was his by virtue of his charitable acts and his followers supported him in an uproar that sounded like a big landslide. Then, Māra challenged the prince to produce evidence for his good deed. There was no one nearby to support the Bodhisatta. Sakka, Brahma and the Nāga king had deserted him on the approach of Māra's hosts. But the Bodhisatta was undaunted. He invoked the great earth that had borne witness to his acts of *dāna* when he was king Vessantarā. The great earth then shook in many ways as if like a living being it were testifying to the Bodhisatta's acts of *dāna* in his previous existence. Māra and his followers lost self-control and fled helter-skelter in the wake of the tremendous earthquake. Because of the Bodhisatta's perfections (*pāramī*), it was an extraordinary earthquake so that its tremors affected the atmosphere and caused the flight of the unearthly Māra and his followers.

Yet, there was no casualty. They just ran away out of fear. This is worthy of note for the detractors of the Buddha dhamma are reported to have said that owing to the invocation of the Bodhisatta, the god Vasundari caused Māra and his host to be drowned in a flood and that

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this shows lack of compassion on the part of the Bodhisatta. But the story is absurd and the god Vasundari is nowhere to be found in Theravāda literature.

Again, there is another question raised by those who have poor knowledge. Why was the Bodhisatta so much attached to his seat? Surely, there would have been no trouble if he had given way to Māra. But Māra came with his army not because he wanted the seat but because he was out to obstruct the Bodhisatta in his effort to become the Buddha. Every Bodhisatta attained full Enlightenment only under the *Bo* tree. Had he given up his seat, he would have broken his pledge and Māra would have triumphed over him. True, it is not the place but right effort that matters most and right effort leads to Enlightenment in any place but Māra would have molested the Bodhisatta wherever he was, and so, the Bodhisatta achieved victory by sticking to his resolution and invoking the great earth.

After defeating Māra, the Bodhisatta entered the *jhāna* which he had already attained and in the early part of the night acquired the extraordinary knowledge (*pubbenivāsa abhiññāṇa*) whereby he could recollect all his previous existences. He recalled his life as *Setaketu deva* in the *Tusita deva* world where he enjoyed celestial bliss for millions of years. Further

## DIBBA CAKKHU OR DIVINE EYE

back he remembered how as king Vessantarā he developed his generosity. In this way, he recalled his former lives as far back as that of hermit Sumedha when he heard the prophecy about his potential Buddhahood.

This knowledge of former lives is not supra-mundane but mundane knowledge and as such, it is accessible to non-Buddhist ascetics. Some can recall only a few former births and the maximum number of births that can be recalled is forty world-cycles. As for Buddhist disciples this knowledge means the ability to recall former existences beyond the period ranging from a few world cycles in the case of the chief disciples. As for the Buddha his range of recall was unlimited. He could recall not only his former existences but also those of other living beings.

## DIBBA CAKKHU OR KNOWLEDGE OF CELESTIAL-EYE

In the middle night watch, i.e., between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. the Buddha attained *dibba cakkhu* or knowledge of celestial (divine) eye. In point of fact *dibba cakkhu* is more powerful than the deva-eye since it can see things that are invisible to the celestial eye.

*Dibba-cakkhu* knowledge makes visible all the things that are beyond the range of the naked eye such as very small things, behind the walls, things far away, hell, *deva* world, *Brahmā* world,

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and so forth. Yet this knowledge too is not supramundane. It can be attained by non-Buddhist yogis but it does not suffice to make them Ariyas or Arahats. The Bodhisatta had not yet become the Buddha when he acquired this knowledge. He was still an ordinary yogi.

The extraordinary feature of the deva-eye which the Bodhisatta achieved was that unlike the deva-eye of other psychic persons, it had the unlimited power of seeing the infinite universe. It is said that through very powerful telescopes modern scientists have discovered millions of solar systems; and they believe that there may be many more beyond the range of their telescopes. But everything is visible to the deva-eye of the Bodhisatta. He can see all the planets around the sun and everything on them, etc., that are invisible to the scientist with his telescope.

So with his divine eye, the Bodhisatta saw how living beings were reborn according to their *kamma*; he saw the rebirth of those with good *kamma* in the higher worlds, the rebirth of those with bad *kamma* in the lower worlds. Such a knowledge regarding the cycle of life may be salutary and frightening indeed.

### DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

Then in the last watch of the night the Bodhisatta contemplated dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*).

## MEDITATION TO GAIN INSIGHT

The substance of his contemplation may be stated as follows:

Why this old age and death? It is because of new existence. Why this new existence? Because of *kamma* formations (*saṅkhāra*). Why this *kamma* formation? Because of clinging (*upadāna*) and so on. Clinging is due to craving (*taṇhā*) that in turn stems from feeling (*vedanā*). Again feeling is conditioned by sense-contact (*phassa*) which arises from six senses (*āyatana*). The six spheres of sense have their origin in corporeality and consciousness (*nāma-rupa*) i.e. mind and matter, which are rooted in consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Consciousness is conditioned by *nāma-rupa* and vice-versa. So, there is a new existence with old age, death and continual dissolution. The Bodhisatta also reflected on the dependent origination in terms of cause and effect with consciousness causing *nāmarupa*, *nāmarupa* causing the six senses and so forth. Thus he viewed life as a causal, conditioned process of suffering.

Then he reflected on the successive cessation of the links composing the wheel of life. Without the renewal of existence there would be no old age and death. Without consciousness there would be no *nāmarupa* and so forth.

## MEDITATION TO GAIN INSIGHT

After thus reflecting deeply on dependent origination, the Bodhisatta turned to insight



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meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) for the attainment of *asavakkhayañāṇa* or Arahatsip and supreme enlightenment. *Asavakkhayañāṇa* is so called because it leads to the extinction of all biases (*āsava*). *Vipassanā* means contemplation of the arising and passing away of all phenomena and the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of the five *upādānakhandhā*, that is, the five aggregates that form the object of clinging (*upādāna*).

People consider a man's body permanent and identical with the body which he had as a child. They think, "It is I; this is mine." Man clings to his physical body because of his ego belief (It is I) and attachment (This is mine). This illusion and attachment (*diṭṭhi* and *taṇhā*) form the basis of all clinging.

Human body is the collection of infinitesimally small particles of matter that are invisible to the naked eye. Even an eye-lash contains millions of physical units. Microscopic examination of a drop of blood will reveal five million cells. These scientific facts accord with the teaching of the Buddha. Each of the countless cells in the body again contains innumerable molecules. How can you then identify the human body with the ego? Nor can you speak of anything that is yours. Moreover, physical units are in perpetual flux; since it is said that the arising and vanishing of con-

## INSIGHT MEDITATION

consciousness occurs a billion times in the twinkling of an eye, we can assume that physical units arise and pass away fifty thousand million times at the same moment. Scientists say that the life of an atom lasts only one millionth part of a second. This is nearly in accord with the teaching of Buddha-dhamma which estimates the number of moments of physical disintegration in the twinkling of an eye at fifty thousand million. It is therefore a mistake to regard the human body as permanent, good or satisfactory when it is disintegrating so rapidly. We should practice meditation to see things as they are to gain an insight into *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of all matter.

The mental objects of clinging are those associated with feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. For each of these *khandhas* there is a corresponding clinging that stems from illusion and attachment. "It is I who feels. This is my feeling." "It is I who perceives. This is my memory." "It is I who does this. This is my intention." "It is I who knows. This is my knowledge," and so forth. To rid yourself of clinging, you have to watch constantly all the mental phenomena at the moment of seeing, hearing, etc.

As your power of concentration develops, you come to know clearly the nature of psycho-

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physical phenomena; later on you become aware of the ceaseless arising and passing away of phenomena. Then you realize their three outstanding marks, viz., *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. Such is the realization of the ordinary person. As for the Bodhisatta he had the insight knowledge that made him see internally and externally the nature of all psycho-physical phenomena in the whole universe.

### ENLIGHTENMENT

As he contemplates the arising-and-vanishing of the five *khandhas*, the Bodhisatta developed insight-knowledge stage by stage and attained the first stage (*Satapanna*) where he perceived *Nibbāna* on the path and fruition (*maggā* and *phala*) level. He saw *Nibbāna* again at the Sakadāgāmi stage and then again at the Anāgāmi stage. Finally, with the extinction of all defilements and the attainment of Arahatsip, he saw *Nibbāna* and became the omniscient Buddha.

For the Buddha's disciples, Arahatsip and realization of *Nibbāna* mean only extinction of all defilements. They were usually not free from predispositions or habits that were once interwoven with their *kilesās*. Some were Arahats without any psychic power. Some possessed only threefold knowledge, viz., knowledge that enabled them to recall former rebirths, divine-eye knowledge by which they could see all things

## THE BUDDHA'S PHYSICAL BODY

far and near, large and small and the Arahatta knowledge that ensured complete extinction of defilements. Some were Arahats with six paranormal powers, viz., the ability to create many kinds of things, the ability to hear distant sounds, the ability to know what other people are thinking plus the threefold knowledge that we have mentioned already. Besides these six kinds of transcendental knowledge, some Arahats possessed four kinds of analytical knowledge (*paṭisambhidāñāṇa*). But still, they were not free from predispositions, nor did they know all dhammas. As for the Buddha he was free from all defilements together with predispositions. He knew all the dhammas. Besides, he had all the attributes of Buddhahood. So, according to the commentaries, prince Siddhattha became the Buddha just before dawn on the day following the full-moon of Kason.

## THE BUDDHA'S PHYSICAL BODY

With the attainment of Arahatship, the Buddha also achieved omniscience (*sabbaññutāñāṇa*) which enabled him to know everything by reflecting on whatever he wished to know. The sacred books tell us how he had omniscience and other kinds of extraordinary knowledge but it is worthy of note that they make no mention of anything extraordinary about the Buddha's physical body. The Buddha showed the extraordinary feature of

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This body only in the fourth week after the Enlightenment.

During the first week he continued to sit under the tree, absorbed in *Nibbānic* peace-tranquility of *Nibbāna*. During the second week he stood with his unblinking eyes fixed on his seat. He spent the third week pacing to and fro in west-east direction. In the fourth week, he pondered over Abhidhamma and as he reflected on *Patthāna*, he had the opportunity to exercise his intellect to its utmost. Then according to the commentary, the Buddha's physical body gave out rays of sixfold colour viz., blue, yellow, scarlet, white, orange and brilliancy. After the fourth week, the Buddha spent seven days under the Ajapala tree, another seven days under Kyeē tree near Mucalinda lake and another seven days under Linlun tree. He thus spent 21 days absorbed in *phalasangama* (fruit of *jhanic* or path attainment).

### FIRST SERMON AND PARINIBBĀNA

Fifty days after supreme enlightenment, the Buddha went to Migadavuna (deer) park near Benares and on the full moon day of wazo preached the first sermon (*Dhammacakkapavattana sutta*) to five disciples and *devas* and *Brahmas*. Then, for forty five years he wandered about the country and preached the Dhamma;

## HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

and at 80 he passed away at the Malla Ingim park near Kusinara.

### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

This account of the Buddha shows that the Buddha was a real human being who became the All-Enlightened Buddha through right effort; that there are records of the names of his father and mother, of his country, of places where he attained Enlightenment, preached the first sermon, passed away and so forth. All these facts and records from various sources form the historical back-ground of the Buddha. Such an eminent Teacher in the history of mankind has credibility and reliability that are lacking in those whose lives are shrouded in obscurity. Their historicity is open to question. So the commentary on Digha-nikāya says that people identified such obscure teachers with a *deva* or *Sakka* (King of devas) or *Māra* or *Brahma* and that they had neither faith in these teachers nor the desire to hear their sermons because *devas*, too, could work miracles like them.

Wise men do not give credence to any teacher of obscure origin. They dismiss him as a powerful *deva* or *Brahma*. As for the Buddha his birth-place, parents, etc., are well-known. King Asoka set up rock pillars to mark these historic places associated with the Buddha's life and as for his Dhamma we know where and to



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whom he preached a particular sutta. Moreover, there are the Buddha's relics that add to the historicity of the Buddha and the authenticity of his teaching.

### THE RELICS OF THE BUDDHA

For 45 years, the Buddha wandered all over central India and proclaimed the Dhamma. On the world map, the geographical area of his ministry was small and its duration was short. So, the number of people who came into contact with the Buddha was not very large. Accordingly, the Buddha willed that after his *parinibbāna* his relics be fragmented in order that after seeing them people might have wholesome thoughts. True to his will, his remains broke into pieces after cremation. There was only one *cetiya* or *stupa* to enshrine the relics of Kassapa and other Buddhas who lived for thousands of years but in the case of Gotama Buddha his relics were enshrined in eight stupas. It is said that there were 84000 such stupas in the time of king Asoka.

### SIZE AND COLOUR OF THE RELICS

The Buddha's relics have different sizes ranging from the size of a pea to that of a mustard seed. They have also different colours, yellow, white, etc., We can decide whether an object of popular Buddhist worship is really the Buddha's relic on the basis of what the

## STEALING AND ROBBING

commentaries may say about the colour, size, etc., of the relic. We have referred to the relics of the Buddha's two chief disciples which are ordinary human bones like the relics of other Arahats.

### STEALING AND ROBBING

Stealing is one of the 44 defilements. "Other people may steal or loot what is not given by the owner. We will avoid doing so." Thus you should practice Sallekha dhamma that helps to reduce defilements. So says Sallekha sutta.

Buddhists who faithfully follow the Buddha's teaching observe the five precepts and avoid stealing. We will now explain the second precept in detail.

The immoral act in question is *adinna-dāna* which literally means taking anything that is not given by the owner. This is, of course, stealing and stealing includes taking a person's property surreptitiously or taking it by force. The Vinaya pitaka spells out 25 kinds of stealing that are to be avoided by bhikkhus. It will take us far afield to dwell on them and so we will describe mainly stealing and killing.

Stealing is taking surreptitiously what belongs to another person without his knowledge while he is asleep or off his guard or absent elsewhere. To cheat a buyer by using false

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weights and measures, to fob off a worthless article on a buyer, to sell counterfeit gold and silver, not to pay due wages or conveyance charges or customs or taxes, etc., to refuse to repay loans of money or property or what is entrusted to one's care and to refuse to compensate for any damage or loss for which one is responsible. All these constitute acts of stealing.

Robbery is using force to obtain other people's property. It includes intimidation and extortion of money or property, excessive and coercive taxation, unlawful confiscation of property for the settlement of debt, court litigation for illegal ownership through false witnesses and false statements.

Stealing has five components. (1) A certain thing or property is in the possession of a certain person. (2) Recognition of its ownership by somebody. (3) The intent to steal or rob. (4) Commission of theft or robbery. (5) Successful removal of a certain thing or property, etc. An act will constitute theft, pure and simple, only when it involves all these ingredients. If the thing taken has no owner, it is not theft. Nor is it theft even in the case of the property of somebody if a person takes it thinking that it has no owner or that it belongs to him. But when a man

## STEALING AND ROBBING

knows that something he has taken belongs to another, he must return it or compensate for it. Otherwise, he has committed theft. If without any intention of stealing, a man takes another person's belonging because of his intimacy with the owner, it is not theft. Otherwise, it is an act of stealing. But it must be returned to the owner if he wants it. Otherwise, it is an act of stealing. As for the fourth component, one is guilty of theft or robbery whether one commits the misdeed oneself or causes another person to commit it. Again theft is committed as soon as, one takes a thing and displaces it with intent to steal. He may drop it when detected by the owner but that makes no difference. In the case of a bhikkhu, if the thing in question is worth 25 pyas, he ceases once and for ever to be a member of the order of the Sangha. Putting the stolen property in its original place does not absolve one of guilt. So what matters most is the word "etc" after displacement (in the last condition) which points to cases of theft that do not involve displacement. You commit theft when you decide not to pay due fees, due wages, due fares, etc., or when any one who ought to receive money from you gives up all hope for it. If the court gives the decision in your favour in the case of property which you unfairly acquire through litigation, you commit theft. Therefore, an act is theft if it fulfils these five conditions or if it involves

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taking another person's property surreptitiously or through deception or intimidation.

In the Sallekha sutta the Buddha points out the four phases of the practice of non-stealing. First, one makes the affirmation that one will avoid stealing (*sallekhavāra*). Secondly, one should cultivate thoughts, intentions, etc about non-stealing (*cittuppādavāra*). Then one should avoid the bad path of stealing by following the good path of non-stealing (*parikkāmanavāra*).

This third phase of sallekha practice is based on avoidance or abstention.

### ABSTENTION (VIRATI)

There are three kinds of abstention, viz., *sampatta virati*, *samādāna virati* and *samuccheda virati*. *Sampatta virati* is abstention from doing evil when occasion arises without any prior commitment to the observance of the moral precepts. As an example, the commentary cites the case of one Cakkana.

In Ceylon, a man named Cakkana went out to catch a rabbit because a physician had recommended the rabbit flesh as food for his sick mother. Seeing him, a rabbit ran away but it got entangled with a creeper. Cakkana caught the rabbit and then he had second thoughts about killing it. He considered it

## ABSTENTION (VIRATI)

improper to kill the animal for the sake of his mother. So he set it free, returned home and declared solemnly, "To my knowledge, I have never killed a living being in my life. May my mother recover from her illness because of the truth of what I say!" Then his mother instantly became well. Here in this story, Cakkana had not undertaken to observe the precepts. So he caught the rabbit, intending to kill it. But as an afterthought he released the animal. This abstinence from killing or stealing or lying, etc., when there is an opportunity or occasion for it is termed *sampatta virati*.

*Samādāna virati* is abstinence out of regard for one's commitment to morality. Here the story of a lay Buddhist in a hilly region is a case in point. After vowing to observe the precepts in the presence of Buddharakkhita thera, he ploughed the field. As the bullock which he had unyoked after ploughing did not come back, he went up a hill to look for it. There he was caught by a boa-constrictor. He thought of cutting the reptile's head with his knife. But he remembered the vow which he had taken before his much-revered bhikkhu. Resolving to give up his life rather than break his vow, he threw away his knife and the boa instantly let him off and slipped away. This is a case of abstinence to honour one's commitment to morality.



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*Samuccheda virati* refers to the abstinence involved in right speech, right action, and right livelihood of the eightfold Noble Path. From the moment this kind of abstinence is established on the Ariyan path, one has no desire to kill, steal and lie. One has no consciousness that is active enough to give rise to wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood. Such abstinence of the Ariyan path helps one to do away with unwholesome tendencies once and forever. In the time of the Buddha, Kujjuttarā, the slave-girl misappropriated four out of eight kyats that she was to spend on flowers for her mistress. One day, she heard the Buddha's sermon and became a *Sotāpanna*. From that time onwards, she spent all the money on the purchase of flowers and on being questioned by her mistress Queen Sāmāvatī, she did not lie but made her confession.

One who practises the Sallekha dhamma as taught by the Buddha will have to observe at least the five precepts. He must always abstain from killing, etc. If possible, he must devote himself to insight meditation in order to uproot all evils by means of *samuccheda*-abstinence. Constant mindfulness of all phenomena arising from the six senses means abstinence from evils. This needs some explanation.

Unmindfulness may give rise to the desire to kill, to steal, etc, in connection with what one

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sees, hears and so forth. If these desires are powerful, they may result in the actual commission of murder, theft, etc. As for the yogi who constantly watches everything that arises from the six senses, he is aware only of the consciousness and corporeality, their arising-and-passing away, pleasant nor unpleasant, still less something that will arouse in him the desire to kill, etc. Thus his abstinence from evil is assured. When this insight knowledge is well advanced it leads to the knowledge on the level of the Path and then the yogi is wholly free from the desire to speak, act or earn his living wrongfully.

These three kinds of abstinence mean diverting oneself from the path of stealing to that of non-stealing.

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Evil deeds usually lead to a lower, ignoble life, whereas good deeds are the mainspring of higher, noble life. So, the Buddha says that abstinence from stealing is conducive to our uplift. Unscrupulous men seize every opportunity to make themselves prosperous and achieve higher social status by stealing and robbing. We should, on the contrary, resolve to seek higher life by abstinence from stealing.

The Buddha also teaches that non-stealing contributes to the extinction of defilements.

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This is the nibbānic phase (*parinibbānavāra*) of non-stealing.

Buddhist laymen and women who observe the precept against stealing should remember that their observance is in accord with the Buddha's teaching in Sallekha sutta; and they should improve and perfect their practice as far as possible.

### THE KAMMIC EFFECTS OF STEALING AND NON-STEALING

The Buddha's teaching about kammic effects of killing and non-killing in the Aṅguttara-nikāya is as follows:

“Monks, through repeated stealing and robbing, one is liable to land in hell or in the animal world or in the world of *petas*. At the very least, stealing leads to damage and loss of property.”

One who steals or robs suffers in hell and may be reborn as an animal. In a certain town of Burma an elderly man received payment for a loan of K. 40 but he denied having received the money and demanded the settlement of debt. He swore, “May I be a buffaloe in the borrower's house after death if I do not speak the truth.” The borrower had to pay another 40 Kyats and on his death the money-lender did become a young buffaloe in the

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house of his former debtor. This was borne out by the animal's responsiveness when the daughter of its owner called it by his usual name. So, many people believe that the story is credible. The robber or the thief may also become a starving and miserable *peta*. If by virtue of good kamma he is back in the human world, the wealth which he has amassed is highly vulnerable. On the other hand, the kammic effect of non-stealing is just the opposite; rebirth in the *deva*-world and on return to the human world affluence that is indestructible and enduring.

These are the kammic effects of stealing and non-stealing mentioned in the Pāli pitaka. The commentaries on Khuddakapātha and Itivuttaka point out eleven kammic advantages of non-stealing viz., affluence, abundant wealth, an unlimited supply of consumer goods, fulfilment of every desire, increase of wealth, speedy acquisition of things desired, security of wealth, freedom from the five enemies that constitute a threat to the security of wealth, undisputed possession of property, that is, possession with no one to contest it, high rank and leadership, and peace and happiness.

Here, the five enemies that endanger the security of property are kings or rulers, thieves, water, fire and one's hated offspring. When we

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say that the king is one of the enemies posing a threat to our economic security, we mean unscrupulous kings. Usually, law-abiding kings help to promote the economic welfare of the people. Those who avoid stealing will not in their future lives suffer from the loss of property through the action of bad kings, and thieves, fire and water, nor will they have to bequeath their wealth to unworthy sons and daughters.

The kammic consequences of stealing are, of course, just the opposite of those of non-stealing. These may be summed up as poverty, hunger and misery in spite of hard work, economic ruin, destruction of property by five enemies, low social status and hardship and privation in daily life.

### PRACTICE FOR HIGHER LIFE

So everyone should avoid stealing for his or her uplift in status and prosperity. For the same reason, one should seek to eliminate the other forty three evils such as killing, aggression, etc., that are mentioned in the Sallekha sutta. Moral evils are to be eliminated through commitment to moral precepts as well as through meditation. For the conquest of non-moral evils, the yogi can resort to wise reflection, meditation and knowledge on the Ariyan path level (Ariyamaggañāṇa). Of the forty four

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evils, some can be wholly done away with on the Sotāpatti level, some at Anāgāmi stage while some can be stamped out only on the attainment of Arahatsip.

### EXTINCTION OF DEFILEMENTS

At this meditation center, the yogis practise constant mindfulness to overcome defilements. Defilements arise from lack of mindfulness and even if they do not arise at the moment of seeing, etc., they may find an outlet in retrospections. Such defilements are called *anusaya kilesā*, that is *kilesā* lying dormant in us.

With the development of concentration, the ever watchful yogi becomes aware of only corporeality and consciousness in perpetual flux. He has an insight into their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and conditionality (*anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*); and this insight leaves no room for greed, ill-will and ignorance. So unwholesome desires such as the desire to kill, etc., become extinct. The yogi overcomes them whenever he is mindful of them. This is overcoming by the opposite (*tadaṅgapahāna*).

When the insight knowledge matures, the yogi attains the path of Ariyas. At the Sotāpatti stage, the ego-belief, wrong belief, doubt and all evil desires leading to the lower worlds become extinct. Later on at the Sakadāgāmi



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stage, the yogi is assured of the complete extinction of gross evils associated with sensuous desire and ill-will. At the Anāgāmi stage, he is wholly free from the subtle forms of the same unwholesome propensities while finally with the attainment of Arahatsip, he is liberated from all evils rooted in the craving for existence, pride and ignorance. To achieve this liberation, the yogi must be constantly mindful in accordance with the teaching of Sallekha sutta.

Some may ask what this sutta has to do with mindfulness. They need not ask this question if they understand the sutta. Every moment of mindfulness means the practice of Sallekha dhamma at its highest level. The yogi will vow to avoid all misdeeds through constant mindfulness although unmindful persons kill, steal, etc., in the wake of what they see, hear, etc.

Lack of mindfulness means harbouring potentials for misdeeds and the choice of wrong path leading to killing, stealing and so forth. Every moment of mindfulness marks a step in spiritual development. Initially the yogi is a foolish worldling, ignorant of the arising-and-passing away of all psycho-physical phenomena. Mindfulness develops concentration, unusual insight and awareness of the corporeality as

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the known object and consciousness as the knowing subject. This is the first step. The second step is the awareness of cause and effect as the only two aspects of reality. Then there is the clear realization of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* and so on with other successive stages of illumination.

That is what the yogis themselves reveal to us. Among them are both men and women who have had a specially clear insight (into the nature of phenomenal existence). This morning a *dullabha bhikkhu*, i.e. a man who has joined the Sangha on a temporary basis told us how he adored the Buddha because of his deeper understanding of the Dhamma. Before one practises the dhamma, one's knowledge of the dhamma is limited and based only on tradition. Then instructions of the teachers fail to make impression and arouse interest. It is practice that enlightens the mind and makes the yogi aware of the nature of reality.

Some do not know what to make of the experience of the yogis that I describe to them. They say that they do not remember what I tell them. So they do not speak well of my discourse. Of course, I might have failed to preach something that could be well understood by them. But the yogis who have practised meditation appreciate my teaching. Other teachings

fail to satisfy them fully. To them elaborate sermons with scriptural quotations, examples and analogies are not worthwhile if divorced from practice. To talk about the nature of mind-body complex or impermanence in terms of Pāli texts requires detailed explanations with examples but as for the meditating yogi the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* or the passing away of all phenomena is borne upon him at every moment of his mindfulness. So these yogis appreciate our teaching and evaluate it on the basis of their experience. This is, indeed a step in their spiritual development.

Through the practice of meditation the yogis realize *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, and attain various stages of insight knowledge. Of these, that of *udayabbayañāṇa* is striking. At this stage the perception is quick; the intellect is sharp; it seems as if there were nothing that could not be perceived or known. The yogi experiences illumination and intense rapture. The mind is very clear and happy. The joyful feeling is indescribable and the Buddha labels it "*amanu-sirati*" a joy that is beyond the reach of ordinary men. But it is necessary, too, to note these delightful stages of consciousness and reject them so as to attain "*bhaṅgañāṇa*." At that stage the known object as well as the knowing consciousness vanishes. The vision of human form with its hands, head, etc, is nowhere to be

## MAHĀSAMAYA DAY

found. Everything is passing away and a deeper insight into *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* dawns on the yogi.

This is followed by successive stages of insight-knowledge, viz., *bhayañāṇa*, *ādinavañāṇa*, etc., which we touched upon in a previous discourse. Later on, we come to *saṅkkhārupek-khañāṇa*, a very subtle, fine insight knowledge that lasts for two or three hours and is characterized by automatic, effortless cognition and equanimity. This stage leads to *anulomañāṇa* and then finally to *ariyamaggaphalañāṇa*, that is, knowledge of the path and fruition on the plane of *Sotāpanna*.

If the yogi keeps on practising mindfulness, he passes through the other two stages of Ariyas and at last he attains Arahathship, the supreme goal of the holy path. Progress on the path presupposes constant mindfulness and so one should practise mindfulness for spiritual uplift and conquest of defilements.

## MAHĀSAMAYA DAY

Today is the Mahāsamaya Day which Buddhists celebrate all over the country in commemoration of the Mahāsamaya sutta which the Buddha delivered on this Full Moon of Nayan (June).

First, as to the origin of the sutta. On this day 500 Sakyan monks practised meditation in

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a forest near Kapilavutta in accordance with the Buddha's instructions and on that very day they became Arahats. The monk who became the first Arahata came to inform the Buddha of his attainment. But just as he was about to address the Buddha, he saw another monk coming and so he could not speak of his Arahata-ship. As the 500 monks kept on coming one after another, none of them was able to achieve the object of his visit. This was due to the fact that they had no desire to let others know of their accomplishment.

A true Arahata wants to share his enlightenment with others; he is anxious to see others as Arahats, but does not want others to know his attainment and he keeps it a secret as much as possible. He does not let any non-bhikkhu have an inkling of it. He may sometimes have to reveal it when pressed by a bhikkhu. Even then he would let it be known indirectly. Once a bhikkhu who had renounced his family to don the holy robe and was attending on an Arahata asked the latter how an Arahata looked like. Of course he did not know the attainment of his preceptor. The Arahata said, "It is hard to know the Arahata. Even a monk who is serving the needs of an Arahata does not know the spiritual status of his teacher." Thus because he had no vanity, the Arahata did not reveal his accomplishment. If they did let others into

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their secret, they did so on the eve of their *parinibbāna*.

So, not wishing to let others know their Arahātship, the 500 bhikkhus did not tell the Buddha anything but sat in silence. At that time the *devas* and *brahmās* came to pay their due respect to the Buddha and the new Arahats. It was a very big assembly. The Buddha announced the list of deities present and then preached the suttas that befit their six types of temperaments. It is said that at the end of these discourses countless *devas* and *brahmas* attained illumination.

## BRAHMACARIYA OR CHASTITY

The subject of our talk today is chastity. According to Sallekha sutta, we should practise chastity although other people may indulge in unchastity (*abrahmacariya*).

People who cannot abstain from sexual acts are very great in number. The only exceptions are the bhikkhus who live up to the vinaya rules faithfully and the lay men and women who are committed to moral codes that insist on chastity. The majority of mankind indulge in sex. But sexual indulgence is not an immoral act like killing or stealing if it does not mean unlawful sexual intercourse. Unchastity by itself cannot land a lay man or woman in the lower worlds and so it is not a grave offence like killing.



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There are two kinds of unchastity, viz., unchastity that amounts to unlawful sexual intercourse and unchastity which we cannot equate with such sexual offence. Everybody should abstain from unlawful sexual intercourse. If the lay man does not avoid the second kind of unchastity, i.e., legitimate sexual act, his morality as regards the five precepts remains untainted. If he can avoid it so much the better for his spiritual life. But the bhikkhu has to avoid all sexual acts completely. Any indulgence in sex means a violation to his moral life. So presumably, this passage in the sutta was primarily intended for the strictly celibate bhikkhus. But it concerns those who observe eight or ten precepts or any other moral code that emphasizes chastity. Chastity is the lifelong practice of the Buddha and the Arahats. The lay man who practises chastity even for a single day possesses in part the moral attribute of the Noble Ones for that day. His life is then very noble and pure. If he cannot practise it, he should resolve to abstain from unlawful sexual intercourse.

### KAMESUMICCHĀCĀRA (ILLICIT SEX)

*Kamesumicchācāra* is sexual misconduct. It refers to all kinds of sexual relations conducted in violation of the traditional code of sexual ethics laid down by good and wise men. There are twenty kinds of women with whom men

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should have no sexual relations. Briefly, they are women under the guardianship of parents and relatives, women under the guardianship of clansmen or kinsfolk, women under the protection of her fellow members of a religious order, married women, betrothed women and so forth. Men should avoid sexual contact with such women. As for a married woman, she should have no sexual relation with any man other than her husband. Men and women who engage in such illicit relations are guilty of sexual misconduct and so everyone should avoid this breach of morality.

## BRAHMACARIYA

*Brahmacariya* or chastity is abstinence from all sexual acts regardless of the legality or otherwise of such acts. Bhikkhus, hermits and nuns have to practise chastity for life. Lay men and women are committed to it while they observe precepts of higher morality.

As in the case of killing and stealing, the Buddha in *Sallekha sutta* says that we should practise chastity even though others may indulge in unchastity (*sallekhavāra*); that we should cultivate thoughts about chastity (*cittuppadavāra*). This resolution is meant for *bhikkhus*, *sāmaṇeras*, nuns and lay Buddhists who have pledged themselves to higher moral life. The meditating yogi who observes eight precepts is committed to chastity

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for a number of days or months. Those who cannot practise chastity should avoid unlawful sexual acts.

### PARIKKAMANA VĀRA, ETC.

Like non-killing, etc., the practice of chastity means the avoidance of an evil path; it contributes to spiritual uplift and is conducive to the extinction of defilements.

It is hard for those who have sexual desire to practise chastity. This is because they are blind to the evils of sexual defilements. It is therefore necessary to reflect on these evils. Attachment to sexual pleasure means impurity of mind. We are dominated and enslaved by sexual desire. For the sake of sexual pleasure we have to suffer, commit crimes and face penalties. We do misdeeds that lead to the lower worlds after death, we cannot free ourselves from the lower sexual life or from *saṃsāric* plane of existence.

If a man leads a life of chastity, his spiritual status is high. Look at the *bhikkhus*. People revere the *bhikkhu* and offer food, etc., because of his chastity. His spiritual life will be much higher if he possesses moral integrity, tranquility and wisdom. But morality in itself is a mark of a noble life and ensures the respect, adoration and generosity of lay people.

## SEVEN MINOR SEXUAL ACTS

“Such virtuous *bhikkhus* are seldom in need of food, robes, dwelling and medicine. So, to those aged monks who come and ask for robes, I say, “Sir, you are in dire deed of robes because of your lack of moral attribute. If you have this attribute, the lay men and women will surely offer you robes. Therefore, Sir, try to live up to the moral ideal.” The Buddha himself gave the same advice in *Akakamkheyya sutta*, that is, that a *bhikkhu* should perfect his moral life if he wants to be well provided with the four necessities life. Hence, chastity contributes to material and spiritual welfare in this life as well as to progress on the *samsāric* plane and towards final attainment of *Nibbāna*.

Those who are committed to lifelong chastity should practise it strictly. We say strictly in the sense that they should avoid not only major sexual acts involving mutual agreement and intercourse between two persons but also minor sexual behaviour. In the *Methuna sutta* of *Anguttara-nikāya* the Buddha mentions seven kinds of minor sexual acts.

## SEVEN MINOR SEXUAL ACTS

On one occasion a brahmin called Janussoni approached the Buddha and asked him a question. He was a learned man, well-versed in the Vedas. In those days, learned brahmins used to question, discuss and argue with the Buddha.

The Hindus of modern times are the descendants of those brahmins and so Janussoni might be called a Hindu pandit. He asked the Buddha, "Does Gotama claim to be a holy man who practises chastity?" He asked this question because he considered the Buddha unqualified to be called a *brahmācāri* (one who practises chastity).

According to the practice of chastity prescribed in their sacred books, a brahmin remained unmarried and devoted himself to the study of Vedas until he was 48 years old. At 48, some brahmins begged for alms with which they repaid the debt of gratitude to their teachers and then they became ascetics. Some went to the house of brahmins who had daughters of marriagable age. They asked for marriage to such girls for the perpetuation of their families in exchange for the merits which they had acquired through the practice of chastity for 48 years. The brahmins who wished to acquire merit without any effort gladly gave away their daughters with ceremony. It would be hard for Buddhists to understand such an offering but this is not surprising in view of the occasional reports that we hear in Burma of daughters being offered to a charlatan who posed as a member of the royal family. Brahmins offered their daughters because of their faith in Vedas while some Burmans gave away

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their daughters under certain delusions. What some people do may seem absurd in our eyes but it is born of their hopes and convictions.

With the birth of a child, the brahmin considered himself to have fulfilled the function of procreation and some became ascetics while some continued to live the life of a householder. Janussoni believed that only those who, like these brahmins, were pledged chastity for 48 years, should call themselves the holy *brahmacāri*, a title which, he contended, must be denied to the Buddha who, as prince Siddhattha, had enjoyed married life for 13 years.

The Buddha replied that he indeed was a true *brahmacāri*. Then, he pointed out the seven minor sexual acts that tend to blemish and degrade chastity. These are as follows.

(1) Some so-called *samaṇas* and *brahmanas* claim to be *brahmacāri* by merely abstaining from sexual intercourse with women. Yet, they welcome and enjoy being fondled, massaged, bathed, cleansed and powdered by women. Such indulgence is the cause of degradation of chastity. The chastity of these persons is not pure. It does not contribute to their spiritual liberation. This is the first minor sexual act. Among the Buddhist Sangha too, some elderly monks are reported to have allowed themselves to be



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massaged by women. This practice will surely cast a slur on their chastity. Delight in contact with females and any effort to that end lay a bhikkhu open to the charge of *Sanghadisesa* offence.

(2) Joking and talking merrily with women. There is no physical contact but the act involves joking, teasing and kidding. If the talk refers to obscenities, the bhikkhu concerned is also guilty of *Sanghadisesa* offence.

(3) Staring at a woman with pleasura.

(4) The woman is not visible because of the walls, partitions or curtains but her voice is audible. The ascetic or the brahmin is pleased to hear the woman laughing, crying, talking or singing. This way of seeking pleasure is nowadays more widespread than before. The songs of women over the radio can be heard everywhere. To enjoy hearing these songs is to indulge in minor sexual pleasure.

(5) Retrospective pleasure over the pleasant time which one spent formerly with women. This concerns especially those who take to ascetic life after having indulged in worldly pleasure in their youth.

(6) Envy of the rich who are given to the pursuit of sexual pleasure. Such an envy cannot

## SEVEN MINOR SEXUAL ACTS

but lead to the degradation of chastity. This sexual act is subtle. These minor sexual acts from No. 1 to No. 6 are concerned with the present life.

(7) The last minor sexual act is the desire to be reborn in the deva-world by virtue of one's morality and chastity. This means the desire for sensual pleasure in the company of angels in the next existence and as such it does not differ basically from the desire of the monk who looks forward to having a good time when he leaves the order. So the craving for the pleasure of the celestial abodes is described as a sexual act by the Buddha. In fact, the object of the *bhikkhu* in joining the Sangha is to achieve not heavenly bliss but liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

These seven minor sexual acts may be committed by the *bhikkhu* as well as by the Buddhist laymen who observe the eight precepts. Furthermore, everything that we have said about the defilement of male chastity applies equally to females.

Of the seven minor sexual acts, it is the first two that largely lead to moral breakdown. The other five acts by themselves are not so destructive though they tend to defile morality. So the *bhikkhu* should, if possible, avoid all the

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seven acts. It may not be possible for non-meditating people to free themselves wholly from the desire for heavenly pleasure. Even among the meditators the desire may lurk in those whose object is only to avoid rebirth in the lower worlds. But the meditating yogi makes a mental note of all thoughts and desires about minor sexual acts and overcome them. This is no more difficult for them than it is for a sick man who has medicines to cure his disease. They also discard all unwholesome thoughts about sex through firm resolution.

Non-followers of the Buddha who practise chastity did not consider it necessary to avoid minor sexual acts; nor did they know how to exercise mindfulness and reflect to that end. Hence, those who practised chastity for 48 years in the Brahmanical tradition were not free from minor sexual acts. Their married life after 48 years of chastity also made them sexually impure. The Buddha brought home these facts to the brahmin Janussoni and added that he claimed to be the all-Enlightened Buddha only after he had completely overcome the seven minor sexual acts.

Much impressed by this teaching, Janussoni became the disciple of the Buddha.

It was not only the Buddha but the Arahats also had nothing to do with minor sexual acts.

## SEVEN MINOR SEXUAL ACIS

Even at the *Anāgāmi* stage, the Ariya is free from attachment to the world of form and formless world. At the first two stages of holiness, too, the bhikkhu is usually free from sexual acts. It is also necessary for lay Buddhists to avoid them when they are meditating or observing the precepts. In this way, they can enhance their chastity and make it immaculately pure.

I have referred to minor sexual behaviour for the sake of those who set their heart on higher chastity. As for ordinary chastity that most people understand by the word "*brahmachariya*", its purity is not affected so long as one avoids sexual intercourse. The lay Buddhists who cannot keep themselves chaste should avoid illicit sex. Those who commit sexual excesses have to pay dearly for them in their future existences. According to the Buddha's teaching in *Anguttara-nikāya*, they are liable to land in the nether worlds. And when they are reborn as human beings they tend to have many enemies.

The kammic rewards of those who avoid unlawful sexual intercourse are just the opposite. After their death they will reach celestial abodes, and on their reversion to the human world, they will have no enemies but many good friends.

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

The commentaries on Khuddakapātha and Itivuttaka mention twenty kammic effects of chastity. Of course, eight are specially worthy of note. The kammic rewards are (1) Having no enemies, (2) Being in no danger of rebirth in the lower worlds, (3) Being in no danger from any quarter, (4) Being able to do anything openly without any fear, (5) Being able to speak fearlessly, "straight from the shoulder", (6) Being able to speak without hanging one's head, (7) Being loved by other people, (8) Happy married life, (9) Abundance of consumer goods, (10) Having all the sense-organs such as eyes, ears, etc., (11) Possession of the essential attributes of the male and the female, (12) Not being a eunuch, (13) No change of sex, (14) Having no occasion to part with one's beloved, (15) Being able to sleep soundly, (16) Having no worry about food, clothing, etc., (17) Being not short-tempered, (18) Having no fear or shyness.

These are the kammic benefits accruing to those who avoid unlawful sexual intercourse while observing the five precepts or who practise chastity while observing the eight precepts. Needless to say, the same benefits accrue, too, from the lifelong chastity of bhikkhus. The following is a story illustrative of such benefits.

## MALE CHASTITY

### MALE CHASTITY

During the time of Kassapa Buddha, seven bhikkhus noticed moral corruption among some of their fellow monks, and being monks of high integrity, decided to live in solitude. They went up to the top of a hill by means of a ladder and pushed away the ladder as they were bent on practising the Dhamma at the sacrifice of their lives. In due course, the eldest bhikkhu became an Arahat with psychic powers. He went about for alms and on his return, he invited the other monks to eat the food that he had collected. But the six monks declined the offer as they believed that eating would make them less afraid of death and so became less energetic in their spiritual effort.

The next day, the eldest of the six bhikkhus attained *Anāgāmi* stage together with psychic powers. He, too, offered food to the remaining five bhikkhus but they refused to eat and continued practising the Dhamma. They lacked, however, the capacity for spiritual development and at last all of them died of thirst and starvation.

It may be said that these monks lost their lives prematurely because of their excessive energy. But if we consider their case objectively, it was not a loss but a great gain for them. Without practising chastity, they might have



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

lived for twenty thousand years but they would not have gained much after their death. Now by virtue of their serious practice of chastity, they were reborn in the deva-world. There they spent, not a couple of lifetimes, but a long period from the time of Kassapa Buddha until the time of Gotama Buddha when all of them attained Arahatship. The first three Arahats were Dabba, Kumārakassapa and Bahiyadāruciriya. The third was the wandering ascetic Sabyiya who asked the Buddha some questions and became an Arahata. The last was king Pukkusati who attained *Anāgāmi* stage after hearing the Dhatuvibhanga sutta. Then before long, he died, landed in Suddhavāsa Brahma world and became an Arahata. Their repeated enjoyment of heavenly bliss and their final attainment of Arahatship were due to their practice of chastity as monks. Thus although they died of starvation in the time of Kassapa Buddha, it was a great gain for them.

### FEMALE CHASTITY

In the time of Kassapa Buddha there was a king called Kiki who attended to the physical needs of the Buddha. He had seven daughters named Samani, Samanaguttā, Bhikkhuni, Bhikkhudayikā, Dhammā, Sudhammā and Senghadāyika. These names indicate the king's high regard for the Buddha's teaching. Indeed the seven princesses adored the Dhamma very much.

## THE STORY OF KHEMA

They wished to join the Sangha and asked for the father's permission. The king did not agree and so instead of getting married, they practised chastity for 20,000 years.

As the king's daughters, they grew up in the tender care of their royal maids and attendants. They had no need to worry about food, clothing, etc. Because they were unmarried, they led a care-free life. They spent their time serving the physical needs of the Buddha. Although they lived for 20,000 years they did not get bored and never thought of marriage but practised celibacy happily.

Because of their virtues they enjoyed heavenly bliss many times. When they were reborn in the human world, they lived in affluence and finally in the time of Gotama Buddha they had illuminating experiences. Of the seven daughters Samanī, the eldest became an Arahāt and one of the Buddha's chief disciples.

## THE STORY OF KHEMA

Khemā was at first the chief queen of Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha. When the Buddha came to the city of Rājagaha, accompanied by one thousand Arahats, the former ascetics of Uruvela forest who had been converted to the Dhamma, he was welcomed by the king with a gathering of 12,000 people. The Buddha delivered

a suitable discourse and on hearing it, the king and most of his followers attained *sotāpanna*. The next day, the king offered food to the Buddha and the Sangha and donated his Veluvana garden for their residence. The Buddha spent the second, third, fourth, seventeenth and twentieth *vassas* (period of rain-retreat) in the Veluvana vihāra and at other times, too, he stayed there in the course of his wanderings. While the Buddha was there, the king availed himself of every opportunity to see the Buddha and hear his sermons.

However, his chief queen Khemā did not care to see the Buddha. For she was very beautiful and much of her time was spent in making herself beautiful. She had heard that the Buddha often spoke in contempt of physical beauty and so, she was afraid and reluctant to see the Teacher. But having savoured the Dhamma, the king wanted to share it with her. But since the king was five years younger than the Buddha, the queen was probably still in her early thirties and what with her narcissistic vanity, she had no desire to hear the Dhamma. So the king hit upon a plan to bring about the Queen's encounter with the Buddha.

He had songs composed by poets and sung by minstrels, songs which paid a glowing tribute to the splendour of the Veluvana garden.

The poets did their best to paint a fine literary picture of the garden. Their songs extolled the attractions of the garden, depicted its resemblance to the Nandavana of the *deva*-world, the visits of the *devas* to the garden, their wonder and infatuation, the residence of the Buddha that added to the splendour of the garden and so forth. The songs were in Pali stanzas and they might have moved the listeners deeply if they had been recited by a singer gifted with a good voice and fluent delivery.

These songs were also sung by ladies of the court. On hearing them, the queen became eager to visit the garden. In point of fact, there was no doubt about the splendour of the garden. Formerly, it was delightful just to enjoy the sight of its flowers and trees. Now, it was graced with the glory of the Buddha, with his preaching of the Dhamma, with the meditating yogis and with the *bhikkhus* absorbed in *jhāna*. No wonder that the *devas* took delight in visiting it and never tired of seeing the Buddha and hearing his discourses.

Queen Khemā then asked the king for permission to visit the garden. The king gladly gave his consent but stipulated that she should see the Buddha. In order to avoid meeting the Buddha, the queen went there while the Buddha was going

the usual round for collecting food. She was much enraptured with the beauty of the garden. Wandering here and there, she saw a young monk in deep meditation under a tree. She wondered why the young man had dedicated himself to a holy life which was, so she thought, meant only for old people who were given to the pursuit of sensuous pleasure in their youth.

When she was about to return to the palace, the ministers who had accompanied her reminded her of the king's instruction and under their pressure she had to proceed to Gandhakuti, the residence of the Buddha. She hoped that the Buddha was not yet back from his morning round in the city but the confrontation which she feared so much was inevitable.

As she entered the main hall, she saw an extremely beautiful girl fanning and paying respect to the Buddha. In reality the girl was a creation of the Buddha. The queen was much surprised because she thought it was a real girl. She had never seen such a beauty before, a girl so beautiful that compared with hers, the queen's beauty paled into insignificance. What she saw removed her mis-apprehension that the Buddha looked down upon beautiful women. It was also a shattering blow to her pride and vanity.

As queen Khemā gazed at the girl, the Buddha, by exercising his supernormal powers, made the

latter grow old right under the eyes of the queen. The girl aged ceaselessly until she became an old woman of ninety, with her hair turning grey, her teeth broken, her skin shrivelled and her bones protruding. Then the old woman lost her balance, collapsed, and was moaning and panting for breath. At this sight the queen was deeply shocked. She became aware of the impurity and loathsomeness of the human body and the human ignorance that made people attached to their bodies.

Then the Buddha spoke to the queen. He told her to reflect on her body. The body is the object of attachment for ignorant people despite its evil smell, its impurities, its putrid matter and its susceptibility to painful diseases. "So, O Queen! You should fix your mind on the repulsiveness of the body. Be sick of it. That woman's body was as graceful as yours before its disintegration. But now it is repulsive and so will be your body in due course. Therefore you should avoid attachment to your body as well as to the body of any other person. You should contemplate the signless impermanence of everything."

The signless impermanence of everything usually escapes the notice of those who, being unmindful of the mind-body complex at the moment of its arising, and living without re-



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flection and wisdom, believe that a man's physical body is the same as it was in his childhood. To them the mind is also a permanent entity and to some people mind and body are the aspects of the same enduring self. Thus, it is a human tendency to see falsely the sign of permanency. This illusion is shared even by those who can describe body, mind and its elements analytically but who have not introspected themselves rightfully. But the yogis who practise constant mindfulness have no visions of hand, feet, heads, etc., when they develop concentration. They see only the momentary dissolution of everything subjectively and objectively. And so they clearly realize for themselves the impermanence of the phenomenal world.

The Buddha urged the queen to contemplate this nature of things that are devoid of any sign of permanence, for it was her ignorance of it that lay at the root of her inordinate conceit.

"So O Queen! Through insight into impermanence, you should overcome the root of conceit; through overcoming conceit, you will live in peace."

"Just as a spider wanders ceaselessly in its web, so also through attachments of their own making, people ceaselessly wander from one existence to another and cannot detach them-

## THE STORY OF THERI UPPALAVANNA

selves from the wheel of life. Those who renounce the sensuous pleasures and practise the Dhamma can overcome attachment and liberate themselves from *samsara*."

The commentaries say that after hearing the Buddha's sermon, Khemā attained Arahatship. According to Apadāna, she obtained the Eye of the Dhamma after hearing the *gāthās* (verses) and according to Mahanidāna sutta, she attained Arahatship after practising the Dhamma as a *bhikkhuni* for a month and a half. The Eye of the Dhamma (*Dhammacakkhu*) may here mean *sotāpattimaggañāna* or *anāgāmi maggañāna*. The commentary on Therigāthā takes it in the former sense. In view of her renunciation of the household life, it is safe to assume that even if she did not immediately become an Arahāt, she attained *Anāgāmi* stage that freed her from all sensuous desires.

In any case with the consent of the king, she joined the Sangha and was known as Khemā theri. Because she was unmatched among the *bhikkhunis* (order of female *bhikkhus*) in respect of her intelligence and knowledge, she was honoured by the Buddha with *etadagga* in *paññā* (wisdom).

## THE STORY OF THERI UPPALAVANNA

Samānaguttā, the second daughter of king Kiki became the daughter of a merchant of Sāvattī city in the time of the Buddha. She

## SALLEKHA SUITA

was named Uppalavaṇṇa because the colour of her skin was like that of a lotus-flower. To cut the long story short, she was so beautiful that the kings and merchants all over India sought her hand for matrimony. Because of so many suitors, the merchant was at a loss what to do with his only daughter. So he asked her whether she would like to join the holy order. What with her spiritual potential carried over from her last existence, she agreed and was formally ordained at the monastery. Before long, she became an Arahāt possessing psychic powers.

### THE STORY OF PADĀCĀRI

The third daughter of king Kiki, called Bhikkhuni was Padācāri *theri* in the time of Gotama Buddha. Her story is enacted on the stage and well known to many people. Having lost her parents, husband and children, she became insane and while wandering aimlessly she came to Jetavana vihāra where the Buddha was preaching. There she was cured of her temporary insanity and after hearing the Buddha's sermon she became a Sotāpanna. She joined the holy order and finally attained Arahātship. She ranked as the chief female disciple in regard to the knowledge of Vinaya.

### KUNDALAKESĀ THERI

The fourth daughter, bhikkhudāyika became the daughter of a merchant in Rājagaha. She

## KUNDALAKESĀ THERI

was called Baddā. Taking a fancy to a condemned robber, she ransomed him and became his wife. One day the robber took her to the top of a hill under the pretext of paying homage to the *devas*. There he relieved her of all the jewellery and decided to kill her. The woman asked for permission to pay him her last respect, deceived him with her amorous gestures and pushed him into the chasm below. Then being afraid to return to the home of her parents, she sought refuge in the abode of wandering ascetics (*paribbājākas*). On the occasion of her initiation into their order, each of her hair was plucked one by one and so she might have suffered more than ten thousand times at that time. The new growth of hair was circular in the shape of an ear-ring and hence her name Kundalakesā.

She studied all the doctrines of the ascetics and wandered about the country, challenging any teacher she met to an ideological disputation with her. Then one day she was defeated by Sāriputta, she became his disciple and after hearing the Buddha's discourse, attained Arahathship. The Pāli book *Apadāna* mentions her liberation following the attainment of *Dhammacakkhu* (Eye of Dhamma) and her subsequent ordination. She was the foremost female Arahath in respect of *Khippabhiññāṇa*.

## KISĀGOIAMI

Dhammā, the fifth daughter became the daughter of a poor man in Sāvatti city. Because of the poverty of her parents, she was despised by the relatives of her husband. They showed affection only when she bore a child. Unfortunately the child died and the mother was almost beside herself with grief.

Clasping the dead child, she went about the town in search of medicine that would restore the life of her son. on the advice of a wise man she sought the help of the Buddha who told her to bring a mustard seed from a house where nobody had died. She went about looking for such a house but, of course, it was in vain. People were taken aback by her inquiry and said, "Why, you foolish girl! So many deaths have occurred in our house that we cannot keep count of them." This kind of reply in three houses brought about her disillusionment. She realized that there was no house that had never known of death, that her child was not the only human being who had died, that all living things are mortal. So, she left her dead child at the cemetery and uttered these words.

"Death is not confined to a village or a city. It concerns not only a clan or a family, but it is the destiny of all living beings whether

## DHAMMADINNĀ

human or *devas*, who are governed by the law of impermanence.”

It may be asked whether it would have been possible for a poor girl to compose such a stanza with its flawless rhythm and grammar. Since the commentaries ascribe it to *Kisāgotamī*, perhaps she might have expressed her thought in plain prose which the Buddha turned into verse. According to *Apadāna*, this verse as well as another verse was uttered by the Buddha. On hearing it, *Kisāgotamī* became a *Sotāpanna*. She joined the Sangha, practised the Dhamma and before long attained *Arahat*-ship. She was the chief among the female *bhikkhunis* who donned coarse robes.

## DHAMMADINNĀ

*Sudhammā*, the sixth daughter of king *Kikī* became *Dhammadinnā*, the wife of *Visākhā*, a rich merchant. *Visākhā* attained the first stage of the holy Path together with king *Bimbisārā* when he heard the Buddha's sermon on the occasion of the latter's first visit to *Rājagaha*. Later on he attained *Anāgāmi* stage. At this stage the yogi is free from attachment to sensual objects. He has no craving for good visual objects, good sound, good smell or good bodily contact. So on that day *Visākhā* came home, calm and composed. *Dhammadinnā* looked out of the window. On other days both of them



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would smile when they saw each other but now she saw him coming with a grave expression on his face.

She came out to greet him but he entered the house quietly instead of going hand-in-hand with her as on other days. Nor did he speak to her during meal time. He ate his meal silently, thereby making her more worried about his strange behaviour. At night he slept alone instead of sleeping with his wife as usual. She was now much alarmed. She wondered whether he was in love with another woman, or whether someone had made him hate her or whether she had done anything that offended him. She said nothing for two days but on the third day, she could restrain herself no longer and asked him bluntly what was the matter with him.

Visākhā thought, "The spiritual experience is something which one should not reveal to others. But I cannot evade her question. If I do not answer her, she will die of a broken-heart." Then he said to her, "My sister, I have had some transcendent experience after hearing the discourse of the Buddha. One who has had this *Anāgāmi* experience is neither capable nor desirous of indulging in the kind of relation that formerly existed between you and me. So you can do what you like with all the wealth that we have. Regard me as your brother. I

will be content with the food that you provide. If you do not want to live here, you can return to your parents with all your wealth. If you wish to remain here instead of getting married again, I will regard you as my sister and look after you."

Being a woman of high intelligence, Dhammadinnā reflected thus; "An ordinary man would not have told me like this. He certainly might have had transcendent experience. It would be good for me to have it, too." She would have come to grief if she had thought otherwise and said to herself, "Why should I care for him if he does not care for me any longer? I can easily get another husband." A woman of high intellectual stature, she was much impressed by what he said and wished to share his experience. So she asked him if the experience was accessible to women. On being told that the Dhamma made no distinction between men and women, she expressed her desire to become a bhikkhuni. Visākhā was much pleased and sent her to a bhikkhuni *vihāra* on a golden palanquin. Soon after her ordination she attained Arahatsip.

To the very profound questions posed by the merchant Visākhā, bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā gave clear-cut answers. The dialogue between Visākhā and Dhammadinnā was canonized as Culavedāliya sutta of Majjhima-nikaya. Her exposition of

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some points of the Dhamma was so illuminating that the Buddha conferred on her the title of the chief female disciple in respect of preaching.

### VISĀKHĀ

Sanghadayikā, the seventh daughter of king Kiki was Visākhā, the lady who donated Pubbarāma vihāra to the Sangha. She had been a *Sotāpanna* since the time when at the age of seven, she heard the Buddha's sermon along with her 500 girl-friends on the occasion of the Teacher's visit to the town of Bhaddiya. Later she moved to Sāketa with her parents at the invitation of king Pasenadi. When she came of age, she married the son of the merchant Migāra and lived in Sāvatti. She donated the Pubbarāma vihāra to the Sangha, served them gruel and morning meals every day at home, provided juice and medicine at the vihāra and heard their sermons.

Of the seven daughters of king Kiki who practised chastity, the first six became Arāhats and attained Nibbāna. The last daughter, that is, Visākhā in the time of Gotama Buddha did not attain the higher path of holiness. She died as a *Sotāpanna* and is now the queen of the deva-king Sunimmita in Nimmanārati, the fifth world of devas. She will attain *Anāgāmi* stage there, pass through the five Suddhavāsa realms

## VISĀKHĀ

successively and attain Nibbāna in Akaniṭṭha realm as an Arahāt.

So Visākhā is now the chief queen in the realm of Nimmānārati. The life-span there is 8000 which means 2304 million years on earth. Perhaps, it would be boring to enjoy heavenly bliss for so long. When she dies as an Anāgāmi, she will pass on to the lowest of the five Suddhāvāsa realms, i.e., aviḥā realm where she will become a Brahmā. The Brahmā is neither man nor woman but takes on the appearance of a majestic male. The Brahmā is free from all sensuous desires.

The life-span there is 1000 *kappas* (world-cycles). From there she will go to Atappa, the second Suddhāvāsa realm. After 2000 *kappas* there, she will pass on to Sudassanā, the third Suddhāvāsa realm where she will live for 40000 *kappas*. Then she will live another 4000 *kappas* in the fourth Suddhāvāsa, viz., Sudassi realm. After spending 16 thousand *kappa*-years there, she will reach Akaniṭṭha, the highest Suddhāvāsa realm where she will attain Nibbāna after a life-span of 16 thousand *kappas*. All these life spans add up to 31 thousand *kappas*. That means Visākhā will be in the Brahmā world for 31 thousand *kappas* before she attains Nibbāna.

We assume this post-mortem destiny of Visākhā on the authority of the commentery on Sakka-

pañā sutta of Dighanikāya. There it is said that Sakka, the king of devas will have Akaniṭṭha as his last abode. True, no mention is made of his Arahatsip or attainment of Nibbāna there. But existence in Akaniṭṭha rules out the possibility of rebirth or passage to other realms and so it means attainment of Arahatsip and Nibbāna there. This is the destiny, too, of the yogis at the first three stages of the holy path who have come to vehapphala and nevasaññānasaññāyatana realms. The same commentary says that this is the destiny which Sakka has in common with Anathapindika and Visākhā.

Some *Sotāpannas* love worldly pleasures or the kammic fruits of their good deeds. They long for worldly bliss, they take delight in it and they are repeatedly drawn to it. Anāthapindika, Visākhā, Cularathadeva, Mahārathadeva, Aneka-vaṇṇadeva, Sakka and Nāgadatta deva - - it is said that these seven persons were fond of worldly pleasures and that they will pass through the six heavenly abodes successively, reside in Akaniṭṭha abode and attain Nibbāna there.

It will not be proper to take literally the statement in the commentary about the successive enjoyment of sensual pleasure in six celestial abodes. Perhaps, it means the Anāgāmi stage in one or two of the abodes and sub-

sequent passage to Avihā abode. For that is the destiny of Sakka as stated in Sakkapañāsutta. A *Sotāpanna* like Visākhā is not a *Sotāpanna* with seven rebirths at the utmost (*sattakkhatu-parāma*) nor a *Sotāpanna* passing from one noble family to another (*kolamkola*). He is also not the one "germinating only once more" (*ekabiji*). He or she is called *Bonzinzan* in Burmese because he or she will enjoy all the heavenly bliss in one abode after another. A *Bonzinzan* is so called because according to commentaries on Samyuttanikāya and Puggalapaññatti, he or she will pass through all the lower celestial abodes as well as the five higher ones successively.

Dhammasaṅgani, the first book of Abhidhamma pitaka describes the four stages of the holy path as the four abodes (*bhūmi*). The Ariyas who pass through all these abodes may also be labelled *Bonzinzan*. This label for such Ariyas is more apt because the gradual attainment of the Ariya differs from the destiny of the *Sotāpanna* with seven rebirths. The *Sotāpanna* is reborn seven times and after passing through the three higher stages of the holy path, attains Arahathship. This is the destiny too of the other two types of *Sotāpanna*, viz., *kolamkola* and *ekabiji*. But if by "abode (*bhūmi*)" we understand the four stage, of holiness, the *Sotāpanna* attains Anāgāmi stage in one of the celestial



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

realms, passes on to the five Suddhavāsa realms and attains Nibbāna in Akaniṭṭha realm. He is more aptly called *Bonzinza* because of his progressive attainment of the three higher stages or abode of Ariyas.

These are the stories illustrating the kammic fruits of chastity practised by men and women. They tell us how chastity leads to material and spiritual progress--how the man or woman who is pledged to chastity enjoys heavenly bliss in succession, how from *deva*-realms, he or she passes on to Suddhavāsa or Brahmā realms or how, starting from the ordinary state of a worldling, the successive attainment of the holy stages together with the supreme goal of Arahatship or Nibbana is possible for the yogi.

Therefore, you should vow to practise chastity for spiritual uplift and for the lessening or extinction of defilements. Those who can observe only the five precepts should vow to avoid all kinds of unlawful sexual intercourse.

### MUSĀVĀDA--TELLING LIES

"Other people may speak falsehood; but as disciple of the Buddha, we will avoid it. Thus, we should commit ourselves to a practice that lessens defilements."

This is the teaching of the Buddha. Here 'musā' is falsehood and *vāda* means speaking;

hence 'musāvāda' is speaking falsehood or telling lies. You tell a lie if you deny seeing or knowing a thing when in fact you see or know it; or if you say you see or know a thing when in fact you do not see or know it. There are four constituent factors of lying, viz.. (1) what one says does not accord with reality, (2) the intent to deceive other people, (3) describing falsehood as truth and (4) the statement is accepted as truth by another person who hears it. Making a statement that comprises these four conditions is a kammically effective act of lying. If the act is detrimental to the interests of other people, it may lead to the nether worlds.

The kammic gravity or otherwise of lying is determined by the moral and spiritual status of the victim of deception. The higher the spiritual plane of the victim, the more serious is the offence. If the victim is devoid of moral character, lying is not serious. But it is a serious offence if it endangers the interests of another person. The more harmful the offence, the more serious it is. Lying which does not cause harm to others is not kammically grave. According to the commentaries, it does not lead to the lower planes of existence. But a good man completely avoids lying. He will avoid even making a joke based on falsehood.

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

If someone comes and asked you for a loan of something belonging to you and you do not wish to lend it to him, what will you say? If you say that you do not have the thing when in fact you have it, you will be lying. But it is not a serious offence since it is not detrimental to other persons. Of course, even as a minor offence, lying should be avoided. If you say frankly that you do not wish to lend anything you will incur the displeasure of the borrower. Townspeople probably know how to give an evasive reply. Perhaps, it would be advisable to tell him that we have just enough for personal needs, that we do not have enough to lend or spare. We should thus avoid lying even in trivial matters. A man who speaks the truth is trusted and held in high esteem by other people.

### IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHFULNESS IN GIVING EVIDENCE

Respect for truth is of paramount importance in the settlement of a dispute. In a trial court or in any other place a witness under interrogation should testify truthfully. Some witnesses tell lies and so if a judge disposes of a case on the basis of their false evidence, they are guilty of a very grave offence. A false testimony may lead to imprisonment, or execution, of an accused in a murder case or to fine and imprisonment in other criminal cases. It means a great misfortune for the innocent person.

## ARIYA AND ANARIYA

The judge who passes the sentence is also not free from guilt. In a court of law judgment is based on the evidence adduced rather than on a judge's personal knowledge which is considered irrelevant. The settlement of ecclesiastical disputes in the Buddhist Sangha, too, rests on the statements of witnesses.

So truthfulness on the part of a witness is of utmost importance. A false testimony in a civil dispute makes it difficult for the judge to decide rightfully, and a wrong decision may cause much damage to the rightful owner or claimant, and the presiding authority is not free from responsibility.

## ARIYA AND ANARIYA

When examined as a witness, one should speak the truth in regard to what one has seen, heard or found or what one knows. The witness must be truthful too when he has to testify about what he has not seen, heard or found or what he does not know. These eight kinds of right speech are called Ariya speech because these are the words of Ariyas, the Noble Ones. The falsehoods uttered by those in regard to what they have seen or not seen, heard or not heard, found or not found and what they know or do not know are Anariya utterances which mean the words of evil persons.

## SALLEKHA SUTTA

So you should avoid the eight kinds of lying practised by evil-doers and devote yourself to eight kinds of right speech practised by the Noble Ones (*Ariya vohāra*).

### CITTUPPĀDAVĀRA, ETC.,

Then you should cultivate thoughts about abstention from lying (*cittuppādavāra*). You should avoid lying through truthfulness. You should resolve to speak the truth for spiritual uplift and for overcoming the defilement of lying (*parikkamanavāra*, etc). The Pāli term for truth is *saccā*, a term that is well-established in Burmese language. To speak *saccā* means to avoid telling lies that leads to the lower worlds. It means progressive attainment of heavenly abode, the Brahmā worlds, the four stages of holiness, viz., *Sotāpanna*, etc., and the ultimate goal of *Nibbāna*, the complete extinction of all suffering.

### KAMMIC RESULTS

According to the Buddha's teaching in *Anguttaranikāya*, the liar is liable to land in the lower worlds and, if, after release therefrom he is reborn as a human being, he is likely to face false charges. The kammic results of abstention from lying are of course just the opposite. A person who avoids lying is likely to pass on to the *deva* worlds and on his return to the human world, he will not be subjected to malignant accusations but will be trusted by

## KAMMIC RESULTS

the public. The commentaries on Khuddakapāṭha and Itivuttaka mention fourteen kammic results of speaking the truth. These are:— (1) having a mouth that is fragrant like a lotus flower, (2) having a set of white, beautiful teeth, (3) having the power of speech that attracts the attention of other people, (4) having the power of speech that is persuasive, (5) having a personality that delights other people, (6) having clear faculties, (7) having a mind composed and free from distractions, (8) having no vanity, (9) having a reddish, soft and thin tongue, (10) having a well-proportioned body that is not too fat, (11) a body that is not too thin, (12) a body that is not too short, (13) a body that is not too tall, (14) having the habit of speaking clearly and sweetly.

A fragrant mouth, a set of beautiful teeth, the ability to influence others by word of mouth—these are the attributes which everyone wants to possess. So are clear faculties, a mind composed and so forth.

A well-proportioned body is desired by every person. It will not do to have a body that is excessively fat or lean. Nor will it do to be abnormally tall or short in stature. Equally important is the ability to speak clearly and sweetly. What we want to say may be fine but if we can not speak well, it will not be accep-



table to others. A speech marked by circumlocution and confusion will fall on deaf ears. Some speakers are sincere and what they say is worthy of attention but the way they speak is so aggressive that it jars on the ears of their listeners. Some are good speakers. Their speeches are clear, precise, orderly and pleasant ; as a result they appeal to many people and contribute to the attainment of their object.

These then are the kammic benefits of truthfulness. Their opposites are, of course, the kammic effects of lying. The evil smell coming out of the mouth of some persons may be due to their habit of lying in their previous lives. The same may be said of the discordant and disunited teeth of some people and so forth.

#### BENEFITS HERE AND NOW

Moreover, truthfulness is beneficial not only after death but also in the present life. It is said that solemn utterance of truth enables one to walk on water. In the time of the Buddha, king Mahākappina set out with his one thousand followers to become bhikkhus. On the way they crossed three large rivers after uttering the truth about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. It is said that even the hoofs of their horses did not get wet. This story illustrating the power of truth may sound like a myth to modern people. But we should consider the story rationally. Today, we see

## REMEDY FOR POISON

planes flying in the air, space ships are circumnavigating the earth and astronauts have landed on the moon. If these marvels of our age had been predicted in the lifetime of the Buddha, the people in those days would have dismissed them as myths. In reality, the story of men walking on water is not preposterous if we take into account the possibility that the scientific achievements of modern age might have been paralleled by the psychic powers of the yogis in ancient times.

## REMEDY FOR POISON

Affirmation that something is true can also help to remove poison. This is borne out by the Kaṇhadipaya jātaka. While visiting the house of his lay follower Manadavya, the hermit Kaṇhadipaya found the man's son lying unconscious as a result of snake-bite. The householder appealed to him for help. The hermit said that as he did not know medical treatment, he must rely on affirmation of truth for therapy. And so he declared solemnly.

“I was happy as a hermit only for the first seven days. After that, for fifty years I have lived the holy life unhappily. Yet, in order that nobody may know of my unhappiness, I have never deviated from the holy path. Because of this true statement, may the child be cleared of poison and restored to life!”

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Then the upper part of the child's body was purged of poison and opening his eyes the child cried, "Māma, Pāpa" and fell asleep again. The father then declared as follows.

"I do not like giving alms or performing any act of *dāna*. I do not want to see those who ask for alms. Yet I have been giving alms regularly without letting the recipients know my antipathy to *dāna*. May the child rid himself of poison and survive by virtue of this affirmation of truth!"

The poison above the waist of the child's body was now neutralized and the child got up and sat. Then, the householder told his wife to affirm the truth of something she knew. The woman said that she dared not do so in his presence but under pressure from her husband she uttered the following words.

"Dear child, I do not love your father any more than I love the snake which has bitten you. May this affirmation of truth make you free from poison and restored to life!"

Then the child became wholly free from poison. After the child's recovery, his parents and the hermit admonished one another and the merchants gave alms joyfully and whole-heartedly; his wife treated him affectionately; and

## CURE FOR DISEASE

the hermit practised the Dhamma with a zest that finally led to the attainment of *jhāna* and psychic powers.

This story may sound incredible to scientists. But it will not be scoffed at by some people in Burma who have seen victims of snake-bite cured through mere recitation of *gāthas* and *mantras*.

## CURE FOR DISEASE

The cure of disease through the affirmation of a true statement is mentioned in Visuddhimagga. About four hundred years after the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha, there was in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) a bhikkhu called Mahāmitta. The bhikkhu's mother was afflicted with a disease that appeared to be breast cancer. She sent her daughter who was a bhikkhuni to her son for medicine. Bhikkhu Mahamitta said, "Since I have no knowledge of conventional medicine, I will give you the medicine of truth. Since my ordination I have never looked at a woman with lust. May my mother regain her health by virtue of my affirmation of truth! Now, sister, go back to my mother, repeat what I say and rub her body." The bhikkhuni did as she was told and her mother was instantly cured of the disease.

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### SPIRITUAL HEALING

The story may be ridiculed by modern medical doctors who have seen diseases cured only through medication. They know that germs cause diseases and it is hard for them to believe that there is no need for medicines to get rid of germs. But affirmation of truth is certainly one of the methods of treatment for diseases. It is a kind of spiritual healing. At our meditation center there are many yogis who have recovered from illness through mindfulness of their unpleasant feelings. Some patients consulted doctors who recommended a surgical operation. In order to fortify themselves on the operating table they came to our centre and practised meditation. In the course of their practice their power of concentration developed and their diseases subsided automatically. They again consulted the doctor; the doctor examined them, found no symptom of the disease and was surprised to learn that it was meditation that brought about the cure. There is a variety of diseases that have been so cured such as gastric troubles, abdominal pains, hypertension, headache. A yogi who had been deaf for many year was able to hear again and there is a case of the cure of sinusitis of twenty years' duration. Mahākassapa and Mahāmoggalāna recovered from illness after hearing the Bojjhaṅga sutta. As for the Buddha he overcame by meditation an affliction that was so severe

## KING SUTASOMA

as to threaten his life. It is therefore reasonable to believe that there are remedies other than medicines for some diseases.

### RAIN-MAKING

The affirmation of something that is true can also cause the rain to fall. This is evident in the *paritta* of the fish who was a Bodhisatta. Here the cure of poisoning and other afflictions and rain-making through the affirmation of truth are to be effected only by those who avoid lying. The potency of truth will become manifest only when they affirm something that is true concerning their private lives.

### KING SUTASOMA

In connection with the abstinence from telling lies, king Sutasoma's faithfulness to his principles is very interesting and a brief account of this king is in order. To distinguish him from his namesake in the *jātakas*, the commentaries refer to him as Mahāsutasoma. But we will here call him Sutasoma.

Porisāda in the story of king Sutasoma is well known to many Buddhists. Some have the Porisāda figure tattooed on their bodies. Originally, he was king Brahmadata of Benares in the kingdom of Kāsi. As he had been an ogre in many of his previous lives, he was very fond of meat and never had meatless meals



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By and large, people today are also fond of meat. All over the world those who avoid meat are few and far between. Only the high caste Hindus of India are well known as the community of non-meat eaters. There are only a few vegetarians in other countries. Doctors recommend meat as a nourishing food and of course their advice fits in with mankind's partiality for meat.

### A CANNIBAL IN EXILE

The king of Benares scorned meatless meal and so the royal cook had to serve him meat every day. Then one day no meat was available as the slaughter of animals was forbidden on that day. Fearing punishment, the cook went to the cemetery, cut off a piece of flesh from a fresh corpse and after cooking it served the human meat to the king. In ancient India it was customary to send a dead body to the cemetery immediately after death. The king found the human meat very delicious and he asked the cook what kind of meat it was. Rasaka, the cook dared not say anything but when threatened with death, he was forced to reveal the truth. Then the king ordered him to serve human meat every day. Rasaka killed the condemned prisoners in the jail to get meat for the king. When there was no condemned prisoner left in the jail, the cook killed one man every night. At last the king's cannibalism

## PORISĀDA, THE CANNIBAL

was found out and he was banished by the chief of the army and the citizens.

### PORISĀDA, THE CANNIBAL

The king left the country and with his cook he took up abode under a big banyan tree in the forest. He killed travellers coming along the jungle path and lived on human meat prepared by his cook. So he was called Porisāda, (*pori*=human flesh, *sāda*=eater), the cannibal.

One day Porisāda came back empty handed. He told the cook to put the pot on fire. The cook asked him about meat but he said, "Oh! Don't bother. We will get it." Rasaka was quite frightened. Trembling with fear that his turn had come, he made a fire and put the pot on it. Then Porisāda killed and cooked him for his meal. So we have the saying that when nothing was available, Rasaka was expendable.

After that Porisāda was left alone. He pounced on the travellers passing through the forest and prepared his meals. One day a brahmin who travelled with many escorts fell into his hands. With the escorts chasing him relentlessly, he jumped over a hedge and got his foot pierced by a sharp edge of a wood stump.

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Thus seriously injured, he abandoned his captive and lay down under the banyan tree. He besought the tree-god to help him heal his wound and promised to offer the blood-sacrifice of 101 kings if his prayer was fulfilled. We learnt something about the propitiation of *nats* (nature spirits) when we were young. A village woman would, for example, appeal to the *nats* for the recovery of her sick child, promising to do something in return for their help. In fact, *nats* cannot cure a disease but owing to their ignorance, women in rural areas rely on *nats* in accordance with their age-old beliefs.

Perhaps, because he was deprived of food, Porisāda's wound quickly healed up in a week. He attributed the healing to the tree-god's will and true to his pledge, he captured one hundred kings within a week, tied them with a cord and kept them together at the foot of the banyan tree. India or Jambudīpa as it is called in the sacred books is between two and three thousand miles wide from east to west and north to south. He would have made one hundred trips, each trip covering such a long distance. As he is said to have spent only a week for the capture of the kings, it must have taken him only 168 working hours which means on the average of two hour-round trip for each king. Thus, it must have been impossible for him to capture the kings from all over India.

## CAPTURE OF SUTASOMA

Most probably his captives were only rulers of local city states.

One of the kings not included among the captives was Sutasoma. As he was once under the tutelage of Sutasoma, Porisāda thought it inadvisable to capture his former master and so he proceeded to make a blood-sacrifice of the other kings in captivity. But the tree-god knew that he had nothing to do with the cure of Porisāda's foot sore and he did not relish the prospect of the blood-sacrifice that would make his tree dirty and involve the senseless slaughter of the kings. So, on the advice of his superior gods he made himself visible to Porisāda and insisted on the capture of the famous king Sutasoma. Then Porisāda set about to fulfil the wish of the tree-god.

## CAPTURE OF SUTASOMA

The next day was for king Sutasoma an auspicious day on which he would have a ceremonial washing of his head. Before the king's security guards arrived, Porisāda hid himself under a lotus leaf in the pond of the royal garden. The royal garden and its environs swarmed with regiments of war-elephants, infantry, cavalry, and so forth.

At the appointed hour the king came riding an elephant with a large retinue of troops. At

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the city gate he saw Nanda, the brahmin standing on an elevated spot and blessing him. On inquiry, the king learnt that the brahmin had come to preach four *gāthas* (stanzas) on Dhamma each worth 100 pieces of money. The king instructed his ministers to arrange suitable accommodation for the brahmin and saying that he would hear the sermon on his return, proceeded to the garden. There he had his hair and beard trimmed, bathed in the pond and then he was presented with a new robe and other regalia pertaining to royalty.

At this moment Porisāda decided to capture the king; for the king's body would be heavy if he had to carry it with the robe and other royal emblems. So brandishing his sword and shouting his name in a loud, piercing voice, he jumped out of the pond. As soon as they heard the name "Porisāda", the royal guards fled helter-skelter. It is said that even the soldiers on elephants tumbled down. It was an age of heroes. A hero could then strike terror into the heart of his enemy and he was more than a match for a host of soldiers. Today heroism counts for little, for, it is weapons, intelligence and man-power on which victory depends. But in ancient times nobody possessed any superior weapon and the warrior who had strength and courage was much feared. So Porisāda put the soldiers to flight and ran off

## THE KING'S CONCERN

with the king on his shoulder. He ran fast but slowed his speed when he saw no one pursuing him. He carried Sutasoma on his shoulder instead of dragging him by his feet as he had done to other kings, for Sutasoma was his former master. As Sutasoma had just finished bathing when he was kidnapped, water-drops from his hair fell on to Porisāda's body. Porisāda thought it was tear drops and said, "Sir wise men usually do not weep. Are you afraid of death? Or are you worried about your family?"

## THE KING'S CONCERN

The king replied, "Porisāda, I am not crying. The water drops on your body are dripping from my hair. I do not fear death nor do I bother about my family. But there is one thing that is worrying me. When I came to the garden, I made an appointment with a brahmin called Nanda. I am anxious to keep my promise. So if you let me go back, I give you my word that I will come back to you after seeing the brahmin."

Porisāda said, "Sir, I do not believe that a man who escapes death will dare return and face it again. It is unthinkable that you would come back to your enemy after living happily in the palace with your family and attendants. Nor would it be possible for me to capture



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you again in the face of troops that will be guarding you.”

King Sutasoma replied, “Porisāda, you once lived with me for a long time when I was your master. I do not tell a lie under any circumstances. If in spite of my pledge you do not trust me, I will take an oath. May I die by my own sword or spear if I do not come back to you!”

Porisāda thought, “Kings do not swear by swords or spears. Terrible indeed is the oath this man has taken. May be he is really concerned over the breach of his promise to the brahmin.” Then Porisāda released the king telling him to come back without fail after he had attended to his business.

### VALUABLE STANZAS

After his return to the palace, arrangements were quickly made for the sermon of the brahmin Nanda. The four stanzas that formed the subjects of the brahmin’s discourse are worthy of note. Originally they were preached by the Kassapa Buddha. Taking a seat that was lower than that of the brahmin, Sutasoma heard the sermon.

The first stanza says; “O King! Companionship with the wise even on a single occasion is beneficial. Companionship with the unwise even on many occasions is not beneficial.”

## VALUABLE STANZAS

A wise man avoids doing anything that is detrimental to his or another man's interest. He thinks, speaks and acts only for his good or for the good of others. He promotes the welfare of the person with whom he associates only for a short time. But a bad man who thinks, speaks and acts against his or other person's interest is harmful even when you come into contact with him many times.

The second stanza: "One should keep company only with the wise. One should seek their advice."

We should live with the wise. If we live with them, we get accustomed to their way of life and tend to emulate their good behaviour. But we should seek something more than the company of a wise man. We must look up to him as our teacher and follow his advice.

The stanza which king Sutasoma learnt from the brahmin Nanda was originally taught by Kassapa Buddha. The brahmin came by it as it was preached by successive generations of non-Buddhist teachers. Today, there are some verses of the Buddha which pass for the original teachings of Brahmanism although they were incorporated into their scriptures by ancient brahmins. These verses will remain part and parcel of their sacred books even after the extinction of Buddhism.

## ENNOBLING POWER OF THE WISE MAN'S DHAMMA

“When one knows the teaching of the wise men, one is more ennobled than ever; it does not do him any harm.”

A person is morally and spiritually advanced in direct proportion to his knowledge of the wise men's teachings. Buddhists acquire knowledge of the real Buddha from their wise parents and teachers. Knowledge of an attribute of the Buddha means a step forward in moral character. For example, according to *Arahan*, an attribute which denotes freedom from defilements, we know that the Buddha was free from unwholesome desire, ill-will and ignorance. This knowledge helps us to revere the memory of the Buddha and enhances our spiritual outlook. So does our knowledge of the fact that the Buddha knew all the dhammas, that there was nothing unknown to him. Again, we know that the practice of the Buddha's teaching prevents one from landing in the lower worlds, that it contributes to the attainment of prosperity on earth, celestial bliss or Nibbānic peace, that the Dhamma can be realized for oneself, that one gets instant benefit from its practice. Such a knowledge of the Dhamma means nobility of character. The same is true of our knowledge about the Sangha. The Sangha is dedicated to morality, samādhi and wisdom for the conquest of greed, hatred and ignorance and so reverence for the Sangha is

## ENNOBLING INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

beneficial in terms of longevity, health, etc. This knowledge about the Sangha will certainly enhance our moral stature.

### ENNOBLING INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

Initially, children know little about the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dhamma. They have no moral standard to speak of. When they grow up and become a little intelligent, wise parents teach them to revere the Sangha and the memory of the Buddha and impress on them the benefits resulting from such reverence. They teach the children the Refuge formula ("I take refuge in the Buddha" etc). Thus as a formally established Buddhist, the child is free from rebirth in the lower worlds. Then the child is taught the solemn undertaking in regard to the five moral precepts and their application to daily life. It is up to parents to teach the child the essentials of Buddhism and if they are not equal to the task, they should entrust him to the care of a good teacher. Good parents teach the child the recitation of holy texts and formulas. Thus, thanks to the intelligence and wisdom of parents, children are assured of spiritual heritage that contributes to their moral development.

### CONFORMITY TO THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING

When a boy grows up, he gives alms and observes the precepts, thereby ennobling his

character. He hears the sermon on mind-training that conforms to the Buddha's teaching, meditates rightfully and so enhances his moral stature. Here we should be mindful of the need for conformity to the Buddha-dhamma and correct approach to meditation. There are teachers whose doctrines do not accord with the Dhamma as well as yogis who practise meditation in the wrong way. These people misunderstand and disparage the true teaching, thereby degrading themselves spiritually. Even the effort to develop concentration (*samatha bhāvanā*) in accordance with the Buddha's teaching is noble. Some tend to belittle the practice of concentration. But this is due to their ignorance for in reality *samatha bhāvanā* which leads to the attainment of *jhāna* is beneficial to the yogi. It is most beneficial if the *jhāna* forms the basis for insight meditation (*vipassanā*). This is the excellent way of the Buddha and his chief disciples. So the practice of *samatha* is noble but more noble is the practice of *vipassanā*.

#### PURITY AND INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE (VIPASSANĀ)

Yogis who meditated at this centre did not at first know thoroughly the method of meditation. Some were wholly ignorant of it. They became familiar with it as well as with the development of *vipassanā* through old yogi friends books and sermons. This means, of course, an advance in their spiritual outlook. Indeed, we

## PURITY AND INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE (VIPASSANĀ)

may take for granted such an advance at every stage in the development of *vipassanāñāṇa*. These stages are concentration and tranquillity through mindfulness or purity of mind (*cittavisuddhi*). The yogi finds only corporeality as the object of mindfulness and consciousness as the subject (*diṭṭhivisuddhi*); then he finds causal connection between them (*kañkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi*); a stage which the Visuddhimagga describes as that of a *Culasotāpanna* who will not usually be reborn in the lower worlds; then the yogi is aware of the arising-and-vanishing together with the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* (*udayabbayañāṇa*); a stage that is marked by illumination, rapture, joy, etc; then the yogi finds that the watched object as well as the watching consciousness dissolves in pairs at every moment of mindfulness (*bhaṅgañāṇa*); he experiences fear at every moment (*bhayañāṇa*); then awareness of evil (*ādinavañāṇa*); then disgust (*nibbidañāṇa*); then the desire to detach oneself (*muñcitu-kamyatāñāṇa*); then re-examination and special knowledge (*patisaṅkhañāṇa*); then equanimity in regard to pleasant and unpleasant objects (*saṅkhārupekkhañāṇa*). The yogi is then very close to the goal. Before long he has specially sharp insight knowledge leading to the extinction of mind-body complex formations (*rūpa-nāma saṅkhāra*), that is, realization or Nibbāna through the four paths (*magga*) and four fruitions (*phalas*). This is the apex of spiritual develop-



ment. Thus every successive stage in the development of insight knowledge marks a further advance in spiritual life.

ROYAL CHARIOTS SUBJECT TO OLD AGE

( 3 ) The royal chariots which are so exquisite and splendid become old.

In ancient times the chariots which the kings as heads of states rode were very beautiful and majestic. They were of course not like modern motor vehicles. Motor cars have been in vogue only for a century and prior to their appearance there were only horse-drawn coaches. They were so gorgeous and splendid that a new coach might have fascinated many people. But in spite of its magnificence, a coach used by a king became old in the time of his successors and it was worn out and almost unserviceable by the time of his grandson. Some kings reigned for 50 or 60 years. Among such kings even the coaches used in the early years of the reign became old after 15 or 20 years. The same is true of royal coaches today. The latest model of a car may be an object of admiration but it is bound to become out of fashion after 25 or 30 years. It becomes ugly and obsolete as against a new model. It is said that officials and rich people have to buy new cars since their sons and daughters scorn old cars. New houses and brick buildings are fine

## THE HUMAN BODY TOO BECOMES OLD

but they become old within 50 or 60 years. Rājagaha and Sāvatti were magnificent Indian cities in the lifetime of the Buddha but today their sites are covered with bushes and jungles without any remains of human dwellings. The ancient glorious cities of Pagan and Ava are now small villages. Like the royal coaches majestic buildings also become old and fall into decay.

## THE HUMAN BODY TOO BECOMES OLD

The human body too is subject to old age and decay. This is, of course, the experience of elderly people over 60 or 70 years old. Every elderly man who reflects on his body has to face the fact that age is telling on him. With a few exceptions grey hair, decayed teeth and other signs of senility, such as flabby muscles, shrivelled skin, wrinkled face, etc., too are apparent. A bundle of skin and bones, an old man is indeed far from good-looking. Some have poor eye-sight, some are hard of hearing and some have become weak and feeble.

Thus disfigured and incapacitated by old age, the body of an old man presents a sharp contrast to what it was 40 years ago. It was then like the body of a teenager. The teenager possesses comeliness and he is constantly attentive to his personal appearance. But the old man is no longer in the physical condition of

his former days. He has undergone changes and so will the young men and women of today. Young people should reflect on old age which they will have to face one day instead of dismissing such thoughts as in bad taste.

The human body is bound to become old in due course since it is composed of matter that is subject to the ageing process. At the moment of conception life begins with the fluid which is called *kalāla* in Buddhist books. This Buddhist view of the origin of a human being does not differ essentially from the account given by Western medical scientists. According to them, the human being is born of the combination of the ovum (fertilized egg) and sperm. The fluid develops into a foam which in turn becomes a lump of flesh or an embryo. The embryo has five protrusions which later become head, hands and legs. Its head is big and its body is small. In due course there develops differentiation of eyes, ears, nose and other organs of the body together with sexual characters.

So the embryo develops and after nine or ten months the child is born. Thanks to the nursing and care of its parents, it grows up and the childhood lasts till the age of twelve or thirteen. The pre-teenager is still a child but compared with the infant, he has aged physically. The teenager is youthful and good-looking and he

may be able to keep up his physical appearance up to his early thirties. From then on he is subject to the disruptive effect of the ageing process. Some do not show signs of old age until they are over forty but by and large, old age clearly tells on us in our early fifties and its signs are unmistakable in those over sixty. So we should reflect on the inevitability of old age and look for something reliable in anticipation of it. And those who are already old should seek the Dhamma that will ensure freedom from old age.

The brahmin refers to this Dhamma in the next verse: "The Dhamma of the wise is ageless. This is what the wise talk about among themselves,"

This ageless Dhamma is the Dhamma of the wise men, not the ordinary wise men but the sages whom we recognize as the Buddhas, the Arahats and other Ariyas or the Noble Ones. Their ageless Dhamma is Nibbāna. When one realizes Nibbāna on the plane of the Arahatta path and fruition, one is assured of freedom from rebirth which means of course freedom from old age, sickness and death. The brahmin's verse refers only to agelessness because in the example of the royal chariot, its old age and decay are well known to many people.

Through rebirth after rebirth living beings have aged, become sick and died innumerable

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times and therefore, we should seek the Dhamma of agelessness, painlessness and deathlessness. The Bodhisatta searched for it for aeons of world-cycles and in his last existence he renounced all his wealth and pleasures and became an ascetic to achieve his ultimate object. Then, 2559 years ago the Bodhisatta realized Nibbāna, the extinction of all suffering. Those who practised the Dhamma have attained Nibbāna. The yogis at this meditation center have set their heart on it and they will realize it for themselves with the full development of knowledge attendant on concentration (*samādhiñāṇa*).

### AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE

In this connection, the quest for enlightenment on the part of Upatissa and Kolita (who were later to become Sāriputta and Moggallāna respectively) is highly interesting. They had been intimate friends since their childhood. One day while they were seeing a *pwe* (a dramatic performance) a thought occurred to them: "All these spectators at the *pwe* will be no longer alive after 100 years. By then all of them will have aged, sickened and died. So it is advisable for us to seek the Dhamma that will help us to do away with old age, sickness and death." So thinking, they became ascetics and went about in search of this supreme Dhamma all over India. But the object of their quest was nowhere to be found. Finally they met

## AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE

bhikkhu Assaji. After hearing one verse uttered by the bhikkhu, Upatissa became a *sotāpanna* and so did Kolita when he heard it from his friend. Then they went to the Buddha and received ordination. Moggallāna became an Arahāt in seven days and Sāriputta in fifteen days. The two chief disciples passed away before the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha. This is an inspiring example of persons in search of the Dhamma that leads to the extinction of old age, sickness and death. It shows also how, as the brahmin's *gāthā* says, we can benefit immensely by a single meeting with a wise man who can teach the true Dhamma. The Dhamma of the wise, that is, Nibbāna is ageless and permanent. The Arahāt who realizes it fully is free from old age, sickness and death after his *parinibbāna*.

(4) "O King! The sky is far away from earth and so is the earth from the sky."

The sky is what we call the space above the earth. But it is not the space that extends to a few feet or yards above the earth but the space that is beyond the range of visibility above us. In ancient times there were various speculations about the sky. Some people said that like a big bowl, the sky had an arched roof with the stars hanging like lamps. Some believed that God first created the earth and



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the sky. In fact the sky is a dark space without any solid matter that is visible to the human eye. At night we see the shining stars while in the day time we find the sun in the sky. The sky is far away from the earth.

The other two objects which are far apart are the shores of the ocean. For example, the shore of Ceylon is beyond our visible horizon; there is an immense distance between the two shores of Ceylon and Burma.

### FARTHEST APART

“But O King! The two objects that are farther apart than the sky and the earth or the opposite shores of the ocean, are the teachings of the Wise and the Unwise.”

The teachings of the Wise and the Unwise are poles apart. The teachings of the former are wholesome dhammas while those of the latter are unwholesome dhammas. The Sallekha sutta describes offensiveness, killing and other misdeeds numbering forty four as the unwholesome dhammas of the Unwise, and inoffensiveness, non-killing and other good deeds totalling forty four as the wholesome dhammas of the Wise. The dhammas or the norms of the ignorant are base but the degree of baseness is not the same for all their norms. Some misdeeds such as killing, stealing, etc., are extremely base but ordinary

moral weaknesses such as sloth and restlessness are not so bad. All good deeds are noble but those leading to the attainment of the holy path and its fruition are more noble. Such nobler-deeds are the practice of *dāna*, *sīla bhāvanā* and the practice of mindfulness for the sole purpose of overcoming all biases (unwholesome predispositions) and of attaining Nibbāna. Still more noble is the attainment of the four stages of the holy path.

Therefore evil men of ordinary type will do base deeds of ordinary type while extremely evil men will do extremely base deeds. Evil men are interested only in evil deeds to which they are accustomed. They do not take interest in anything that is free from evil. In the same way wise men are interested only in good deeds. They are absolutely against anything evil. Thus the Wise and the Unwise are poles apart in regard to their tastes and inclinations. Furthermore, an evil deed is harmful and degrading whereas a good deed is beneficial and ennobling, and thus these two different kinds of deeds are diametrically opposite.

King Sutasoma was very much pleased with the brahmin's sermon on the four verses and he offered one thousand pieces of money for each verse as honorarium which was ten times what the brahmin used to get elsewhere. He

also gave the brahmin a small vehicle. Then, he paid his last respect to his parents and said that he would go back to the jungle in accordance with the promise he had made to Porisāda. His parents as well as his ministers told him not to go back, saying that they would catch the great robber with their troops. The courtiers wept and implored him not to go back.

## KEEPING ONE'S PROMISE

King Sutasoma said, "The good and wise men make it a practice to keep their promise. Porisāda trusts me and so he permitted me to come back here. It is because of his permission that true to my word to the brahmin, I have had the opportunity to hear his sermon. So I must thank Porisāda and as a mark of gratitude to him I must return. If I do not return to him, it will be a breach of promise and it will mean lying." After thus explaining his attitude, he went back to Porisāda.

Some people make a promise sincerely but they cannot keep it because circumstances prevent their doing so but it is only a breach of promise and not an act of lying. It is an act of lying as well as a breach of promise only if you break a promise which you have made insincerely.

Porisāda was making a fire and sharpening the stakes preparatory to performing blood-sacrifice

## THE CONVERSION OF PORISĀDA

when Sutasoma came back to him. The king said fearlessly that as he had heard the sermon and completed all what he should have done, he was now ready to offer himself for the sacrifice or for the cannibal's feast. Porisāda was much impressed by the king's fearlessness. He attributed it to the brahmin's sermon and he wished to hear the sermon that might also inspire him with courage. So he requested the king to preach the four *gāthās* to him.

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The king replied that it would serve no purpose to teach a lawless, unscrupulous cannibal like Porisāda. The king's reply was harsh and humiliating because he wanted to put Porisāda to shame and bring him to his senses. His words made the cannibal more anxious to hear the sermon. He said that after hearing the sermon he would be able to distinguish between good and evil, and that he could aspire to the higher things in life. King Sutasoma considered it as the right time for Porisāda to hear the sermon. So he imparted the four *gāthās*.

Although Porisāda was a barbarian as a kammic result of his habits in his previous existence, he was intelligent enough to appreciate the king's teaching. As he listened to the sermon, he was filled with intense joy and admiration. He wished to offer some honorarium

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for the sermon and so he told Sutasoma to ask for something other than gold and silver for each of the four *gāthās*. The king ridiculed Porisāda wondering and speaking aloud as to what kind of gift he could expect from a scoundrel who did not know what was good for himself. Porisāda replied that he would fulfil the king's wish even at the sacrifice of his life.

Then, the king expressed his first wish. "Dear Porisāda, friendship between two virtuous persons or between two wise persons is good. I wish to see you healthy and free from disease for one hundred years."

This statement was apparently meant for the good of Porisāda but in reality it implied the king's wish that he be not killed. For, would he not have the opportunity to see Porisāda alive for 100 years only if he was not killed? This is typical of the exemplary sayings of the Wise that serve one's interest while at the same time Porisāda was pleased when he learnt that the man whom he intended to kill had no ill-will against him and was even interested in his welfare. He was, of course, only too glad to fulfil the king's wish.

The second and third request of king Sutasoma were also granted. The second request

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was not to kill the kings in captivity and the third request was to send them back to their countries.

As his last request king Sutasoma told Porisāda to give up the taking of human flesh. Porisāda rejected this request, saying that he had even left his country because he was so fond of the human flesh. He craved so much for human flesh that he had left his country and lived in the forest. But the king insisted that his request be granted.

Porisāda was in a quandary. For he had agreed to grant any request even at the sacrifice of his life. Moreover, it was a tradition among ancient monarchs not to refuse a request if they had given their word of honour. On the other hand, it was very hard for him to give up cannibalism. Obviously, he liked human flesh very much as was borne out by his renunciation of sovereignty and family in preference to a life of hardship in the jungle. This is not surprising to us if we consider it on the basis of our observation. Most people today are fond of meat and they would not welcome any suggestion to give up meat-eating. Neither would most people among this congregation. The suggestion would be more embarrassing to some monks than to lay Buddhists for we understand that they are rather re-



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luctant to accept strictly vegetarian meals. Some monks are said to have deprecated vegetarianism as a practice advocated by Devadatta. Some contend that eating only vegetables makes no difference because to take delight in doing so means craving. This is true. Eating without due reflection or mindfulness tends to produce craving regardless of the kind of food one takes. But the nature of craving is not the same and this is evidenced by the inability of many people to avoid eating meat. Some do not like meals that lack chicken, pork, mutton and so forth, a fact that points to their excessive attachment to meat.

No wonder then that it was very hard for Porisāda to give up eating human flesh. He wept and implored the king to make an alternative request. But the king was adamant and in the end Porisāda had to promise to give up cannibalism. His act of renunciation was exemplary and inspiring. If Porisāda, the very notorious robber could avoid human flesh which he relished, there is no reason why we should not avoid evil deeds. Porisāda followed the advice of Sutasoma who was only a Bodhisatta, so why should we not follow the advice of the Buddha? Thus inspired by the example of Porisāda we should try to avoid evil and do good.

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His last wish having been thus granted, king Sutasoma had Porisāda committed to the five precepts; and after all the captive kings were set free, he made arrangements for their repatriation to their respective countries. First, he urged Porisāda to return to his country. The latter did not wish to go back. He said that he would not be alive without eating human flesh. Instead he would rather remain in the jungle, subsisting on fruits and roots. But finally Sutasoma won him over and he left the forest together with the king. According to the commentary on Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, the place where Porisāda's conversion took place was the same as that where the sutta was delivered. Delhi is said to have been the old site of Indapatta city of Kuru state, and so most probably Porisāda might have been converted at a place somewhere in the township of Delhi.

From his city of Indapatta, king Sutasoma went to Benares with his nobles, courtiers and troops and Porisāda. The chief commander of the army who had sent Porisāda to exile refused to welcome him and Sutasoma had to do his utmost to persuade the commander and get the ex-cannibal reinstated. Then, after he had had other kings repatriated to their respective countries, he returned to his country.

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During the life time of the Buddha, Porisāda was Angulimāla *thera*, the army commander was Sāriputta, the brahmin was *thera* Kassapa and Sutasoma was the Buddha. All of them have attained *parinibbāna*.

### MORAL

The moral of the story is King Sutasoma's firm commitment to his word of honour. He managed to hear the sermon of the brahmin on his return from the garden as he had promised to do so. After hearing the sermon, he returned to Porisāda, thereby risking his life to keep his promise. These acts of heroism are worthy of emulation.

Let us therefore affirm that while others may lie, we will avoid lying. We will practise non-lying that will lessen defilements; we will cultivate thoughts for it. We will be truthful and avoid lying for our uplift.

### PISUṄAVĀCĀ--SLANDERING

*Pisuṇavācā* means slandering. We commit *pisuṇavācā* when we speak ill of someone in order to cause discord, hatred and enmity among people where harmony, goodwill and friendliness prevail. The Pāli term *pisuṇavācā* literally means a speech that is destructive of love between two persons. To disparage a person behind his back is also *pisuṇavācā* for it tends to discredit him in the eyes of the hearers.

## DIVIDE AND RULE

The Buddha's characterization of the slanderer is one who creates discord between two persons or two parties by gossiping. His gossips tend to destroy unity and inflame those who are already at loggerheads with one another. He wants to see others disunited and takes delight in their split. Therefore, his words lead to discord and disunity.

There are many people who indulge in such backbiting. They are fond of gossiping, listening to gossip or reporting all the gossip they have heard. The subject matter of the gossip attracts their attention as special news-report. Only those who love wisdom are free from such idle talk. So, those who love wisdom should avoid slandering.

## DIVIDE AND RULE

As an ethical value, abstinence from slandering is a noble virtue but some people consider it advisable to resort to calumny under certain circumstances for their own ends. In ancient times, kings employed deceptive tactics to create discord among their united enemies and so they achieved victory. King Ajātasattu defeated the united Licchavis by means of this kind of stratagem. He first banished his minister, the brahmin Vassakāra, under the pretext of punishing him for some offence. Vassakāra went to Vesāli. Some Licchāvi princes

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said that the brahmin was very cunning and objected to his residence in their city. But most of them had no suspicion because they believed that his banishment was due to what he said in their favour. So they welcomed him and entrusted him with the education of their children.

In order to gain the confidence of the public, the brahmin at first taught the young princes properly. The princes held him in high esteem and regarded him as their reliable teacher. Then the brahmin sought to create discord and misunderstanding among them. The way he did it was subtle. He would call a prince and ask him in whisper, "Have you had your meal? What curry did you eat?" His question was designed to make other princes suspicious. Again he would ask another prince in whisper, "Does your father plough with two oxen?" Thus there was an air of secrecy about his questions and the manner of asking them. The prince who was questioned by the brahmin became an object of suspicion by others. He said that he did not know what to make of the brahmin's questions but they thought he was only lying. Then the brahmin asked another prince whether he was afraid as reported by a friend of his named so-and-so. Naturally the prince was offended at what he believed to be calumny on the part of his friend. In this way Vassakāra set the

## DIVIDE AND RULE

princes by the ears and in a matter of three years they were so much divided among themselves that they hated to see one another.

Then Vassakāra sent a message to king Ajātasattu that it was high time for him to seize Vesāli. Ajātasattu marched on to the city with his troops. The alarm was sounded by the beating of war-drums but since the princes were not united, no one came out for the defence of the city. They sulked at home doing nothing. So there was no resistance and Ajātasattu took the city easily. This is an example of divisive tactics based on calumny and leading to victory, an example that teaches us valuable lessons.

Today, politicians and others engaged in worldly affairs employ deceptive tactics for their own ends. Propaganda involves many talks that are intended to discredit one's opponents. Even in matters of religion some make remarks that are harmful to others. Any remark that is calculated to discredit or arouse hatred against a person or persons is calumny. But some people have a high regard for a person who is not worthy of respect and you may have to speak ill of him by way of warning them against an illusion that is detrimental to their interest. This kind of remark is not slanderous and evil.



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### OVERCOMING SLANDER

But you should avoid making any remark that will create misunderstanding and discord. Your words should serve to infuse in others respect for the person who is worthy of respect and unite those who are on the verge of conflict. If you hear some one being criticized through misunderstanding, you should counsel restraint. You should appease the critic, saying, "This man would not have spoken such a thing," or "He might have said it not with ill-will but with the best of his intention." The Buddha describes abstinence from slander as follows.

"The man who is committed to such abstinence avoids tale-bearing. He brings about reconciliation among those who are divided. His words strengthen the unity of those who are already united. He delights in seeing people in harmony. He loves harmony and so he will make only the remarks that tend to encourage harmonious relationship."

Therefore, we should not convey the slanderous remark of a person to another person concerned. We should not tell a person about the faults of another. We should utter only words that are discreet and beneficial. We should make only remarks that are conducive to unity, remarks such as "Your friend often extols you for your honesty, broadmindedness and capabi-

## OVERCOME SLANDER

lities.” When we hear someone speaking ill of another, we should say, “What you say may not be true; perhaps you have misunderstood him or he has made a mistake sincerely, He is a very good man. He could not have made such a senseless remark.” We should not support a disparaging remark. Instead, we should say something that will mollify a person’s anger. Such words help to avert conflict that is likely to occur or to restore unity among those whose who are divided.

So we should practise the Sallekha dhamma of abstinence from slander (*sallekhavāra*); cultivate thoughts relating to it (*cittuppādavāra*); avoid slander by following the path of abstinence from it (*parikkamanavāra*); abstain from slander for our spiritual uplift (*uparibhagavāra*); avoid slander for the attainment of Nibbāna.

There are people who are by nature free from the habit of slandering and there are those who avoid it because of their firm commitment to moral precepts. This is the extinction of defilement rooted in the transgression by word of mouth, an extinction that is based on inborn or self-imposed morality. This kind of extinction is good and it is commended in Sallekha sutta. But one should not remain content with it. For it is not permanent. Although you are now free from the defilement, you are not assured of the

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same freedom in your next existence. So it is necessary to root it out on the plane of the Noble Ones (*Ariyamagga*). Such Ariyan or total extinction is called *samuccheda-virati* (absolute abstention), one of the three kinds of *virati* that I have explained in my third sermon.

### KAMMIC EFFECTS

Anguttara nikāya mentions the kammic effects of slandering. It says that the slanderer is liable to land in the nether world and that if he is reborn as a human being, he will be at odds with his relatives and friends. The more he is slanderous, the more kammic evil there is in store for him. Those who utter slander against good and virtuous persons will have to pay dearly for their evil words. The kammic rewards for abstinence from slander are just the opposite. One who abstains from slander will enjoy heavenly bliss and on return to the human world will have happy and harmonious relations with his friends and relatives.

The following is a story about a woman who had to suffer after her death because of her slanderous talks. It concerns both men and women and is worthy of note.

### THE STORY OF ISIDĀSI THERĪ

In the lifetime of the Buddha and for nearly one thousand years after his *parinibbāna* there

## THE STORY OF ISIDĀSI THERI

were *bhikkhunis*, the female members of the Buddhist Sangha. The scene of the story is laid at Pataliputta, a city that arose and became famous in post-*parinibbānic* period and so the events might have occurred after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*. But since the story is to be found in the Pāli pitaka, it apparently relates events before the second Council or events that took place within one hundred years after the Buddha's decease.

One day, the two *theris*, Isidāsi and Bodhi, sat on the clean, white sand bank of the Ganges near the city of Pataliputta. Both were Arhats with all their biases (*āsavas*) or unwholesome tendencies totally extinct. They sat in a contemplative mood, breathing fresh air and watching the cool, clear water of the river. Then as she looked at her companion, Bodhi *theri* was struck by her beauty and youthfulness. By and large, young and pretty women are sunk in sensual pleasures. They seldom visit holy places, let alone entertain any idea of joining the holy order. Bodhi *theri* wondered what unusual circumstances had led Isidasi to become a *bhikkhuni* at her tender age. So she asked Isidasi, "My friend, the world should be a happy place for a young and attractive woman like you. So what was your disappointment or your disillusionment with life that made you join the holy order?" Then Isidasi told her story.

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The only daughter of a merchant of good moral character in Ujjeni, she was much beloved by her parents. Ujjeni is the Ujjein of Bhopa state in middle west India. It is not far from the famous stūpa at Sanchi. When Isidasi came of age, a rich merchant of Sāketa in middle north India sought her hand in marriage with her son. Sāketa was far away from Ujjeni; and in those days it took probably two to three months by bullock cart or carriage.

The two families being well matched in respect of social status and wealth, Isidasi's parents agreed to the proposal. After marriage, she lived in the house of her mother-in-law in accordance with the Indian custom. As a girl of good unbringing, she revered her husband's parents as her own, paying customary respect to them twice a day.

In India, it is still customary for young people to do obeisance to parents, parents-in-laws and elders. On our way to Sri Lanka in connection with the sixth Buddhist Council, we stopped at Madras to call on a well-to-do Indian. The Indian was out, so we had to wait for him at his house. When he came back, his wife and all the other inmates of the house paid respect to him. It is their way of greeting, Elderly people, too, greet one another by raising their hands with palms placed together.

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There is no such custom in Burma and it is not usual to make obeisance to parents and elders. Public respect is accorded only to images of Buddha, pagodas and *bhikkhus*. Animists pay respect to *nats* (spirits) but they do not show the same gesture towards their fellow beings.

All this is due to lack of training. Some even do not know how to pay respect to their parents. Some, however, make it a practice to show respect to the elders in the month of Thadingyut (October) -- the end of Buddhist lent. Some children do not hesitate to pay respect to their parents and elders because they have been trained to do so. This is a very good habit of a cultured society and every parent should implant it in their children.

Isidāsi was courteous to her husband's brothers and sisters as well. She gave up her seat when they came and provided them with food. She approached her husband respectfully, with her hands and feet washed and cleaned. She groomed his hair, gave him a looking-glass and applied a brown lotion to his eyes in Indian fashion. She arranged his clothes like a slave girl. She prepared his meals herself instead of leaving the job to her servants. She washed the dishes and pots too. In short, she served her husband tenderly like a mother attending to the needs.



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of her only child. Her fulfilment of the wife's obligation should have been gratifying to every man.

Yet, by an irony of fate, one month after the marriage, her husband hated her bitterly and told his parents that he could not live with her any longer. They asked him why he disliked his wife who was in their eyes a good, hard working and conscientious woman. The young man said that his wife gave him no trouble but that in spite of her good character he did not love her any longer. If his parents insisted on his marital fidelity, he would have to leave the house.

So the merchant and his wife asked Isidāsi what mistake she had made in her relation with her husband. Isidāsi replied in sorrow that she had said or done nothing that might offend or make him unhappy and that she had served him with respect and deep affection. If in spite of her faithfulness he hated her, she could not help it.

They were convinced of Isidāsi's innocence but their sense of justice was outweighed by their love and attachment to their son. So they sent her back to her parents although they were unhappy for the loss of their charming daughter-in-law.

## THE STORY OF ISIDĀSI THERI

As will be shown later, the young man's hatred for his innocent wife was due to her evil kamma in the past. But the fault did not lie entirely with her. The man's dislike of Isidāsi might also be attributed to his lack of kamma that was good enough to make him worthy of a noble woman like her. We will explain it later.

Isidāsi's father was confident of her ability to get another good husband and he married her to the son of a well-to-do second-rate merchant. Isidāsi served him respectfully. But again after a month, her husband said that he could not live with her. She was later sent back to her parents.

Then her father thought that it was their wealth that had made her husbands and their parents so arrogant and cruel to her. So he looked for a poor man who would suit his daughter. Before long, there came a good-looking beggar. The merchant gave him new clothes and persuaded him to live comfortably in his house as his son-in-law. But after a fortnight the beggar changed his mind and said that he wished to leave the house. The parents and relatives of Isidāsi entreated him not to leave them but it was in vain. He said that he could not live any longer with Isidāsi in the same house. Then he deserted his wife.

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The working out of kamma is at times very surprising. The beggar's reluctance to live comfortably in the merchant's house as his son-in-law might probably be due to the inadequacy of his kammic potential for such a better life. The beggar was like the man in Mahosadhā jāataka who deserted his wife.

### THE STORY OF UDUMBARA DEVI

In the Mithila city of the kingdom of Videha, there was a young man called Piṅguttara who went to Taxila (Pāli: Takkasila) for his education. As he was an intelligent youth he accomplished his object in a short time and so he took leave of his master to return to his native place. It was the familiar tradition of the master to marry his grown-up daughter to his pupil. At that time the master had a marriagable daughter of great beauty and so he married her to his pupil. Piṅguttara was poor in his kammic potential and therefore, he had no love for the master's daughter who, as a girl of high kammic potential was ill-matched for him. But since he did not wish to displease his master, he agreed to accept her as his wife.

When at night the bride got onto the bedstead in the bridal chamber, Piṅguttara stepped down and slept on the floor. When the girl in duty bound followed him and lay down to sleep beside him, he shifted on to the bedstead. But he got down at once when the girl again

## THE STORY OF UDUMBARA DEVI

followed him. In this way the girl slept on the bedstead while he slept on the floor for seven days. This shows the incompatibility of two *kammic* potentials of opposite nature.

After a week Piṅguttara paid respect to his teacher and left Takkasila with his wife. They did not speak to each other during the whole journey. When they came near the Mithila city, they saw a water-fig tree laden with ripe fruits. Piṅguttara climbed up the tree and ate some fruits. His wife asked him to drop some fruits for her but he told her to get on to the tree herself. When she was up on the tree eating the fruits, he got down and fled after encircling the foot of the tree with thorns. Surely, he was cruel but he had to abandon his wife because he was not deserving of her.

Before long the king of Videha arrived by chance near the tree. Seeing the beautiful lady of Takkasila on the tree, he fell in love with her. So he made inquiries as to whether she was married or unmarried. She told the king who she was, how she was left on the tree by her husband whose whereabouts she did not now know and how she was in trouble, being unable to climb down. The king concluded that she had no husband to claim her and so after letting her come down, he made her his queen. She was named Udumbaradevi (Queen

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of water-fig tree), after the name of tree on which she was found.

One day the villagers near the city gate were ordered to repair the road in anticipation of the king's visit to the garden. As one of the villagers, Piṅguttara was working on the road when the king and the queen came along in a royal chariot accompanied by the ministers and courtiers. On seeing Piṅguttara with his loin cloth tucked up and a spade in his hand among the village labourers, the queen could not help laughing. The king asked her why she laughed. The queen pointed out her former husband and said that his inferiority complex had struck her so ludicrous as to make her laugh. But the king did not believe her. He said, "You are lying to me. You must have laughed because you saw a man whom you love. I must kill you." So saying, he took out his sword. The queen was frightened and implored the king to consult some wise men about her statement. The king then asked the minister Senaka for his opinion. Senaka replied that no man would have deserted a beautiful woman like her. Senaka's reply terrified the queen very much but having some doubts about his wisdom, the king decided to seek the opinion of Mahosadhā (or wise minister). So he asked Mahosadhā whether it was possible for a man to dislike and abandon a beautiful and virtuous woman.

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Mahosadhā replied, "Your Majesty, the man who abandons a beautiful and virtuous woman may be one who has low *kammic* potential. Therefore, I believe that it is possible for a man to dislike such a woman. A person of high *kammic* potential is never compatible with another person of low *kammic* potential. It is not in the nature of things to find them together."

Only when he heard Mahosadhā's answer did the king accept the queen's statement and his love for her remained intact. But for Mahosadhā he would have acted on the advice of the foolish Senaka and lost the worthy queen. He owed the life of his beloved queen to Mahosadhā and so as a mark of gratitude he presented him with a large sum of money.

Senaka's answer was erroneous. Moreover, it was a kind of calumny that served to aggravate the situation that was already tense because of the king's suspicion. It was not the kind of answer that should be given by counsellors. On the other hand, Mahosadhā's answer was reasonable and true. It was also meant to remove discord and restore harmony between the king and the queen. Such are the words of the Wise, free from slander and worthy of emulation by all counsellors.



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It is obvious that Pinguttara's desertion of Udumbara devi was due not to the evil *kamma* of the latter but to the low *kammic* potential of the former. Likewise, Isidāsi was deserted by the beggar because he did not have the good *kamma* that would ensure a good life in the house of the merchant. So also the desertion by her two former husbands was not wholly due to her bad *kamma* but it might be attributed in part to their *kamma* that was too poor for their association with a noble woman.

### ORDINATION OF ISIDASI

The merchant was at a loss what to do for his daughter. Deserted even by a beggar, Isidāsi was very unhappy. She felt humiliated and despaired of her fate and the worldly life. She thought of leaving her parents either to die or to join the holy order. At this time an elderly bhikkhuni named Zinadatta came to the merchant's house for her daily collection of food. Isidāsi paid obeisance to her and after offering the food, asked her for admission into the Sangha.

The merchant dissuaded his daughter from becoming a bhikkhuni, saying that she could as well give alms and lead a good life as a lay woman. Of course, he did not want to part with his only daughter. With tears in her eyes, Isidāsi replied that her misfortunes were probably

## ORDINATION OF ISIDASI

due to the evil deeds which she had excessively committed in her previous life, that she wished to cleanse herself of her unwholesome kamma by practising the Dhamma as a bhikkhuni. Thereupon, her father considered it inadvisable to obstruct her and gave his permission. He also expressed his best wishes for her; "May you attain the insight knowledge on the level of the Ariyan path and the highest good of Arahatsip that have been realized by the Supreme Buddha! May you attain Nibbāna!."

Then, Isidāsi took leave of her parents and other elders of her family and received ordination at the hands of theri Zinadatta and before long by virtue of her high kammic potential she became within a week an Arahata endowed with the three kinds of insight-knowledge (three *vijjās*).

The attainment of Arahatsip after the practice of the Dhamma for seven days was due to special kammic potential. Those who achieve extraordinary insight in such a short time are extremely rare among the yogis here. Those who practise the Dhamma ceaselessly and diligently every day and every night usually attain *udayabbaya* and *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* (insight-knowledge) in a week. Isidāsi attained the three-fold insight-knowledge after a seven-day practice and this knowledge means (1) knowledge which

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enables one to recall all previous existences (*pubbenivāsañāṇa*) (2) knowledge that enables one to see everything in heaven, hell and other parts of the universe that are invisible to the naked eye (*dibbacakkhu-ñāṇa*) and (3) knowledge that is synonymous with knowledge of the Arahatta path that can help to eradicate all biases and defilements (*āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*).

The attainment of this last knowledge is Arahathship. Isidāsi achieved her object in seven days and in retrospect she might have to congratulate herself on having been deserted by one husband after another. But for desertion by her first husband, she would not have married the second man, still less thought of becoming a bhikkhuni. Indeed even her permanent union with the beggar might have ruled out the possibility of a religious life for her. In fact, she joined the holy order because of her disenchantment with life. She became an Arahath in seven days and achieved complete freedom from all suffering rooted in the wheel of life. For her, desertion by one husband after another was in a sense a blessing in disguise.

Thus, we should view the case of Isidāsi wisely. It must have been much gratifying to Isidāsi that although she had to suffer much because of her evil kamma, she benefited by her suffering to become an Arahath eventually.

So when a misfortune befalls us, we should not be obsessed by it and become despondent. We should take an optimistic view of it. This attitude of mind that helps to console us and serves our spiritual need is called *yonisomanasikāra* in Pāli. But no woman should, want to be deserted by her husband like Isidāsi. For although Isidāsi became an Arahāt, it will be difficult for other women to turn their misfortune to advantage as she did.

As Isidāsi recalled her past lives through her insight-knowledge (*pubbenivāsa-ñāna*) the recollections of her evil deeds and consequent sufferings during her last seven existences dawned upon her. (1) In the first existence she was a goldsmith in the city of Erakiccha. As a young man in close contact with many women, he committed adultery. Because of this evil deed, on his death (2) he landed in hell where he suffered for a long time. (3) Then he was reborn as a monkey. Seven days after its birth the herd leader bit off its testicles and castrated it as it did not want any male member. This was the *kammic* effect of adultery. (4) Then in his next existence he became a ram. The ram was castrated and probably killed for human food. (5) in his fifth existence he was also castrated to be used for ploughing or drawing cart. The bull is usually castrated for its docility. When we

were young we saw some bulls being castrated. It was a terrible sight. The bull was tied down and his testicle beaten and battered with a wooden club. It must have been very painful. The animal could not eat for three or four days. Afterwards, when it was strong enough to work, it had to toil under the burning sun or in the rain without being able to complain of even sickness. In the end when it became very old, it was sold to the butcher regardless of its long service to the owner. Then it died helpless and forlorn at the hands of the butcher. The life of such an animal is heart-rending indeed.

(6) In her sixth existence she was conceived in the womb of a slave woman and thus she became a born-slave. Still worse, she had no male or female organs at birth, a shameful abnormality that was the kammic effect of adultery. For thirty years she suffered and then (7) in her seventh existence she was reborn as the daughter of a poor, wretched cartman.

As her father could not repay his debt to the caravan chief, the girl was enslaved by the latter. She had to do all kinds of work at the chief's house. Fortunately, she was good-looking and when she grew up, she became the concubine of the chief's son, Giridasa. The wife and the concubine usually do what is harmful to each other's interest. The concubine slandered the

## CONCLUSION

wife in order to create discord between her and her husband. But the wife was a woman of good moral character and so the slanderous remarks against the good woman were fraught with very grave negative *kamma* and now, with adultery in a previous life, she was now worsening her destiny by her evil speech. In fact Isidāsi admitted her mistake and attributed her former husbands' hatred despite her slavish devotion to them to the *kammic* effect of her slanderous remarks in a previous life.

She added that because of her evil *kamma*, she was deserted even by a beggar and that she had done away with her evil *kammic* debt by following the way to Arahātship and Nibbāna. This is most important. Arahātship means the complete extinction of all *kammic* potentials. *Kamma* bears no more fruit; it is the Arahāt's last existence and when its course is run, he or she attains *parinibbāna*. After *parinibbāna* there is no renewal of life or mind-body complex. So, Isidāsi attained *parinibbāna* and her suffering came to an end once and forever.

## CONCLUSION

This story has a lesson for both men and women. Adultery led the goldsmith to hell and then when reborn as a monkey, a ram and a bull he was castrated and then he became



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a sex freak born of a slave girl. These were the heavy *kammic* price he had to pay for the momentary pleasure of adultery. Then the girl's *kamma* worsened when she slandered a virtuous woman. Her misdeed must have caused a lot of discord and suffering to others. This should be a good lesson for wives, concubines and polygamous husbands. As a result of her misdeed, even in her last existence as Isidāsi, the daughter of a rich man, she was deserted by three husbands in a row, the last one being a beggar. All these are the evil *kammic* effects of calumny.

### HARSH LANGUAGE (PHARUSAVĀCĀ)

“Other peoples may indulge in harsh language but we will avoid it.” Thus you should practise the *sallekha dhamma* that lessens defilements.

Pharusavācā is harsh talk such as abusing, scolding and cursing. This kind of talk is very painful to the person concerned, unpleasant even to those who have nothing to do with it. Nobody wants to hear such utterances; and a wise man abhors them. In order to be *kammi*-cally effective, the use of harsh language must involve three factors, viz., the person who is abused or cursed, ill-will against that person, and the act of abusing or cursing.

In the absence of any unwholesome desire to cause pain or annoyance, the use of harsh

## HARSH LANGUAGE (PHARUSAVĀCĀ)

language is kammically fruitless. Once a boy went into the jungle against the advice of his mother. The mother was angry and cursed him, "May you be gored to death by a buffalo!" In the jungle the boy saw a she-buffalo which came to kill him. The boy invoked the power of truthfulness, saying, "Let it happen, not according to what my mother has uttered but according to her desire and will." It is said that the animal then stopped and stood still. Some parents often call down curses such as violent death from the attack by buffaloes, snake-bite, etc., upon their disobedient children but in reality, they do not want to see the slightest harm befall their kids. Teachers too scold their unruly pupils, saying, "Go away, all of you! Don't stay with me! I care a damn for whatever happens to you!" But in fact, they have the moral and material welfare of their pupils at heart. Such a kind of speech or talk, although verbally harsh, does not stem from bad motives and as such, it is not kammically fruitful. On the other hand, a gentle remark that springs from evil desire or feeling is kammically effective. "Let this man sleep soundly and happily" is what the ancient kings used to say euphemistically about a man they wanted to be executed. But the remark is based on ill-will and so it has *kammic* effect.

Therefore, we should avoid abusing and cursing. We should utter only words that are

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rightly motivated, gentle, pleasant and acceptable. We should overcome the use of harsh language through commitment to moral precepts and through concentration on an object. We must rely on insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) when we have to face unpleasant sense-objects. We tend to use harsh language when we are irritated by undesirable sense-objects. We should eliminate it through mindfulness. In particular, a remark which one dislikes often evokes harsh language and so we must be specially mindful when we hear unpleasant words.

### CASE OF A MAN WHO CONQUERS THROUGH MINDFULNESS

In my native village of Seikkhun in Shwebo district there is a yogi who is very mindful. He has been a monk for 20 years. While he was a layman he noted, "hearing, hearing," whenever he heard his father-in-law rebuking him. The rebuke lasted probably about ten minutes. To him the voice of the speaker as well as his words disappeared instantly and he did not know anything about what the old man was saying. He was not angry nor did he have any desire to retort. But for his mindfulness he would have retorted angrily and uttered harsh words. This is a very good way to overcome the habit of speaking harshly and other people can follow it. It also helps to overcome anger and ensures the complete

## KAMMIC EFFECTS

extinction of the habit when through the development of insight-knowledge the yogi attains the Ariyan path (*ariya-magga*). But since slander and harsh speech stem from anger, the yogi can wholly overcome these defilements only at the *anāgāmi* stage. The *sotāpatti* stage ensures only the extinction of evil speech-habits that lead to the lower worlds. At the *sakadāgāmi* stage, the yogi is assured of only the extinction of the gross forms of harsh speech and slander that does not lead to the lower worlds. He is not yet free from the subtle forms of slander and harsh utterances which become wholly extinct only at the *anāgāmi* stage. Visuddhimagga describes slander, harsh speech and ill-will as the three unwholesome propensities that are to be eliminated at the *anāgāmi* stage. So the yogi should try to attain *anāgāmi* stage to overcome them.

## KAMMIC EFFECTS

According to Anguttara-nikaya those who use harsh language are liable to land in the nether worlds and if reborn in the human world will be very often abused and scolded. Some people curse a thief with violent death or damnation to hell. Such curses are in vogue among the Indian Sadhus and fakirs. They would curse a man who does not give them what they ask for and it is the popular belief that any one who has been cursed by them is in for a lot of

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misfortune. People are, afraid of their curses probably because their holy books, the Purāṇas, tell them how misfortunes befell those who were placed under a curse by the holy men. Buddhist monks do not curse others or swear an oath. According to Buddhism, a curse by itself can cause no misfortune which is only due to bad *kamma*. In point of fact, a curse is likely to recoil on the one who utters it, as is shown in the following story from Petavatthu.

### REBIRTH AS PETA BECAUSE OF CURSES

In the time of the Buddha, twelve bhikkhus spent their rain-retreat at a village of eleven families. The chief weaver provided the necessities of life for two monks while each of the other ten families cared for each of the other ten monks. The weaver's wife was a non-believer and had no faith in the Sangha; so she did not serve the monks respectfully. Then the weaver married his wife's sister to whom he transferred all his property. As a pious woman, she served the monks with much respect. At the end of the lent each monk was offered a robe. Then the elder wife was so enraged that she cursed; "Let the food and drink which you have offered to the Sakyan monks become excreta, urine, pus and blood; let the robes turn into glowing iron sheets!"

After their death the weaver became a tree-god and his elder wife a *peta* near his mansion.

## ABUSE LEADS TO WORLD OF PETAS

She had nothing to wear and nothing to eat. So she begged the tree-god for food and clothes. But when the god gave some food and drinks they turned into excreta in the hands of the *peta*. The god provided celestial clothes too but they became glowing iron-sheets as soon as they were worn by the *peta*. So the *peta* discarded the burning iron-clothes and ran away crying, the curse in her previous life having thus boomeranged on her.

Her unhappy plight came to the notice of a monk who was visiting the place and on his advice the god offered food to him and shared the merits with the *peta*. The *peta* was then able to eat the celestial food and she became well-nourished. Then the god entrusted to the care of the monk a suit of celestial robes to be offered to the Buddha and again the *peta* got part of the merit and this made her beautiful like a goddess in her new dress. So a good deed is a remedy for a person who is suffering because of his or her own curse.

## ABUSE LEADS TO WORLD OF PETAS

In the time of the Buddha there was in a village near Sāvatti a faithful lay Buddhist called Nandisena. His wife Nandā had no faith and no manners. She did not respect her husband and she abused him and her mother-in-law. After her death she became a *peta* and prowled



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in the village neighbourhood. One day she appeared before Nandisena, identified herself as his former wife and attributed her rebirth in the *peta* world to her rudeness, lack of respect for her husband and the habit of abusing him in her previous existence.

Life as a *peta* was the price she had to pay for her rudeness to her good husband. Had she apologized to him, she might have been freed from evil *kammic* effects; but the woman Nandā had done nothing of the sort. Nandisena handed his cloak to the *peta* and told her to wear it and follow him to his house where she could have clothes and food. But the *peta* said that she could have such things only if he made offerings to the virtuous bhikkhus. Nandisena did so and shared his merits with her and she said, " *Sādhu! Sādhu!* " (well-done; well-done), The *peta* got celestial food and clothes and became beautiful like a goddess.

These stories show how abusesiveness leads to the lower worlds. The *kammic* rewards for those who avoid harsh language and speak gently are just the opposite. Those who speak gently and tolerate abuse instead of repaying it in kind, land in *deva*-worlds. There are stories in Vimānavatthu illustrative of such *kammic* rewards. If reborn in the human world, they are spoken to gently and they hear only sweet voices. Abstinence

## FRIVOLOUS TALK

from the use of harsh language is also beneficial in the present life. A man who speaks gently endears himself to everybody, he is highly esteemed and is not in conflict with his friends. So we should cultivate the habit of speaking gently. We must not speak when we are angry. We should first overcome anger through mindfulness and speak gently. We can profit by this practice here and now.

### FRIVOLOUS TALK (SAMPHAPPALĀPA)

We should also avoid frivolous talk. Frivolous talk is a talk that has nothing to do with truth or one's welfare or the dhamma or the Buddha's instructions. It is a talk that is not worthy of remembrance. In short, it is a misrepresentation of fiction as fact. But by and large people are fond of fiction. With their clever imagination, writers produce popular novels which are sold out in a month. There is a big demand for their books. By contrast, religious books have only a few readers because they do not have mass appeal like works of fiction. Frivolous writings pander to popular desires and turn the weal and woe of human life into fiction with various elaborations. True to the Sallekha dhamma, we should pledge to avoid speaking, writing or spreading anything that is frivolous.

One who practises this Sallekha dhamma will talk only about what is true or about what is

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beneficial or about the dhamma or about the Buddha's teaching or about what is worthy of remembrance. Even when we talk wisely, we must talk at the right moment. Moreover, we should not talk excessively. Even in our talks about the dhamma we must pay due regard to circumstances. If you often preach a man who has no spiritual inclination, he will be afraid to listen to the dhamma; and if you repeatedly urge him to practise it, he will soon give you a wide berth. So you should be discreet and teach him gradually at the right time. But in case of a very intimate friend, we should bear in mind the story of Ghatikāra and urge him persistently to take interest in the dhamma.

### THE STORY OF GHATIKĀRA

In the life-time of Kassapa Buddha there was a potter called Ghatikāra. He was a lay disciple who had attained *anāgāmi* stage. One day he urged his friend Jotipāla thrice to see the Buddha. Jotipāla demurred and spoke in contempt of the Buddha. Jotipāla was no ordinary man. He was a Bodhisatta. But as a brahmin and what with his deep-seated religious beliefs, he had a low opinion of the Buddha and hence his scornful rejection of the potter's advice. Traditional beliefs are really formidable and so Ghatikāra, the potter, took Jotipāla to the river-side for a bath and after taking his bath, Jotipāla put on his loin-cloth and was standing

## THE STORY OF GHATIKĀRA

for a while to get his hair dry when the potter told him to see the Buddha at his residence nearby. Ghatikāra proposed thrice and his proposal was turned down thrice as before. Then the potter got hold of his friend's loin-cloth and again urged him to see the Buddha, but it was in vain. At last the potter grasped his hair and repeated his suggestion. Then Jotipāla was stunned. He wondered why the low-caste potter had dared to hold his hair. He thought that the potter had the courage to do so probably because of his faith in his teacher, the Buddha. So he asked the potter, "Is this matter so important that you have to hold my hair?" "Yes, it is.", said the potter. Then Jotipāla considered the potter's request seriously, concluded that it might be a matter of no small consequence and agreed to see the Buddha with his friend. After seeing the Buddha and hearing the dhamma, he was converted and joined the Sangha.

Thus because his suggestion was bound to benefit his friend, the low-caste, untouchable potter urged the high-caste brahmin, first, by word of mouth, then by catching hold of his loin-cloth and finally by holding his hair. His persistence contributed to the spiritual welfare of his friend and the latter was much grateful to him. Likewise, today although some people had at first no interest in the dhamma, they

came to our centre to meditate in response to the persistent request of their friends. By virtue of their effort and *kammic* potential they gained spiritual experience for which they are much indebted to their dhamma friends. There are many such yogis and their experience shows how persistent urging often pays. That is why the Dhamma has the attribute of *ehipassika* (come and see). It invites everyone to test it. Just as a man who enjoys good food is thankful to the man who has invited him to the feast, so also the yogi who has had some spiritual experience thanks the person who has urged him to practise the dhamma. So we should persist in urging our intimate friends to practise Satipaṭṭhāna meditation.

Of the good talks that are commendable, those about welfare (*attha*) and teaching or discipline (*vinaya*) concern worldly matters too. In other words, we should engage in talks that are beneficial or edifying in our everyday affairs. But monks have to avoid any kind of talk that is proscribed in the Vinaya pitaka. Even the meditating layman should avoid the kind of talk called *tiracchānakathā* which means any talk that is incompatible with spiritual progress. Talks of this kind are those about kings, thieves, rebels, ministers, armies, food, drinks, clothes, relatives, vehicles, villages, towns, men, women and so forth. If these

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talks, have nothing to do with emotional shock, weariness, faith or wisdom, they are to be labelled *samphappalāpa* or frivolous talks and as such they should be avoided.

### KAMMIC EFFECTS

According to Anguttara-nikāya, the *kammic* result of frivolous talk is that the talker is liable to land in the nether worlds and if reborn as a human being most people do not pay attention to what he says.

Typical of the frivolous talk that is vicious enough to lead to the lower worlds is serious talk about such things as the story of the fighting of Bhārata kings in Mahābhārata, the legend of the kidnapping of Sitādevi by the ogre Rāvaṇa called Dasagiri and so forth. The commentaries describe only such talks as *samphappalāpa*. The following is the condensation of the story in Mahābhārata.

On the bank of Yamunā river a son was born of the union of the hermit Parāsara and Saccavati. The son was called Depāyana. After his birth his mother became a virgin again through the supernatural power of the hermit. Depāyana later became a hermit, Bhyāsa by name. He promised to come when his mother wished to see him. Later, Saccavati was made queen by Santanu, the king of Kurus. She



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bore him two sons, the elder Citringadahu and the younger Citraviriya. When king Citraviriya died, leaving two queens but no offspring, Saccavati sought the help of Bhyāsa, the hermit to preserve the royal family line. The hermit was so ugly that on his approach the elder queen shut her eyes and so she gave birth to a blind son, Dhatarat̥ṭha. The younger queen looked at him with her feeble eyes and so she got a feeble son, Panḍu. Panḍu became king because his brother was blind. The latter married Gandhāri, daughter of the Gandhāra king. She had one hundred sons, the eldest being Duyodhana.

One day king Panḍu killed a couple of mating deers with his bow. The male deer being a powerful hermit, he cursed the king to die while enjoying sex. So Panḍu decided to avoid sexual intercourse. He had two queens, Kunti and Maddi. Neither of them had a son to succeed Panḍu. Kunti prayed and had three sons, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhima and Ajjuna through her relations with the god Dhamma, the wind-god and Sakka respectively. Maddi had twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, through two Assavi gods. Panḍu died and was succeeded by the blind prince Dhatarat̥ṭhaka.

Dhatarat̥ṭha's son Duyodhana and others were called Korabhyasa while Panḍu's sons were hated

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by Duyodhana and others. Yudhiṭṭhara and others were called Pandavas. Being brave warriors, Panḍu's sons were hated by Duyodhana and others. So after consultation with his younger brother Pussāsana, his friend Kaṇṇa and his uncle Sakuṇi, he ordered the Pandovas in the name of the king to practise elephant-warfare at a rural house. His plan was to burn the house and kill them while they were sleeping at night. But being warned by Vidura, the wise man, Kunti and her five sons fled and escaped death. But they had to endure much hardship in the jungle and the five princes had to lie low in the guise of brahmins. The story also tells us how Bima killed two man-eating giants. Later, disguised as brahmins the five princes attended the ceremony for the choice of a suitor by Kaṇhā, the daughter of king of Pañcāla. The princess was to garland the suitor of her choice. The meeting was also attended by Duyodhana and his party as well as by local princes. Kaṇhā's brother announced the names of suitors. This was to introduce them to the princess. It was a contest of skill. The contestants tried one after another to string a bow but no one was successful. Kaṇṇa, a charioteer of Duyodhana faction managed to string the bow and he was about to shoot the target when the princess shouted that she would not choose him. At last Ajjuna who was disguised as a brahmin stringed the bow, shot and hit the

target. Kaṇhā garlanded and chose him but Ajjuna said that she was not meant only for him and in accordance with the family tradition she became the wife of the five brothers. Oddly enough, she was somewhat like Kaṇhādevi in Kuṇāla jātaḥa. Finally the fighting broke out between the princes headed by Duyodhana and and their cousins led by Yudhiṭṭhira and they killed one another. The war is described in Mahābhārata.

People are instructed to accept all these as facts and hear the story again and again. Everyone who recites or hears it sincerely is assured of liberation from all evil *kamma* and passage to higher abodes after death. Rāmāyana tells us elaborately how Rāma's wife Sitādevi was abducted to Ceylon by the giant Rāvaṇa and how Rāma fought Rāvaṇa with the help of the monkey Hanuman and recovered his wife. The believer who recites and hears this story is also guaranteed a heavenly life after death. In fact to those who are not orthodox Hindus and intelligent, it is obvious that these stories are myths and fabrications. If we regard these stories as real events, the belief will impede spiritual progress and cause much harm. To encourage the belief in such stories will therefore lead to lower worlds and lack of credibility in case of rebirth in the human world.

## COVETOUSNESS (ABHIJJHĀ)

According to the commentaries, listening to frivolous stories is kammically harmful only if one believes them. Again Visuddhimagga and other commentaries say that the yogi can overcome interest in frivolous talk only at the *Arahatta* stage. Therefore we assume that interest in ordinary frivolous talk like one of the thirty kinds of it that do not lead to the nether worlds still lingers at the lower stages of the holy Path.

The *kammic* results of abstinence from frivolous talk is of course the opposite of the evils that beset one who indulges in it. One who avoids frivolous talk goes to higher abodes after death and if reborn as a human being he is highly esteemed and trusted by other people.

## COVETOUSNESS ( ABHIJJHĀ)

You should also avoid *abhijjhā* or covetousness. In other words, *abhijjhā* is the intention to possess another person's property unlawfully. But in the Sallekha sutta sensual desire which is only a hindrance is also described as *abhijjhā*. So we should regard it as both kinds of *lobha* (greed), that is, *lobha* that is productive of evil conduct and *lobha* that is not so productive. We have the first kind of *abhijjhā* when we crave for the possession of another person's property. Here *abhijjhā* means not the intent

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to buy the property but the intent to own it unlawfully.

### FOUR KINDS OF COVETOUSNESS

*Abhijjhā* as a mere hindrance (*nīvāraṇa*) is of four kinds, viz., (1) ordinary desire (2) *pāpicchā* (3) *mahicchā* and (4) *atricchā*.

(1) Ordinary desire is desire for something which one sees or hears or which one neither sees nor hears. This kind of desire is hard to overcome by making a vow or just by an act of will. It will dominate us so long as we are not free from greed (*lobha*). But the meditating yogi should be on his guard against it; whenever it crops up, he must watch and reject it.

(2) *Pāpicchā* is the desire to win the respect and admiration of others of which one is not worthy. Some persons wish to give others the impression of having faith which they do not have; of having moral integrity which they do not possess; or of having knowledge which they lack; or of having practised the dhamma without any practice; or of attaining *jhānā* without any attainment; or of having insight-knowledge (*vipassanāñāṇa*) or psychic powers which they do not have; or of being Ariyas or Arahats without having any Ariyan qualification or attributes of Arahatship. Some pretend to be Arahats so as to mislead other people. They welcome

## FOUR KINDS OF COVETOUSNESS

people who regard them as Arahats. This desire to be esteemed and admired for the quality which one does not have is called *pāpicchā* (wicked desire). The Sallekha sutta stresses the need for freeing oneself from this kind of desire.

(3) *Mahicchā* is inordinate greed. A man who is consumed with inordinate greed is not content with what he has. He wants to have too much of everything and to have things of better quality. It is important to lessen this kind of greed.

(4) *Atricchā* is desire for something that belongs to another under the impression that it is better than what one has. In other words, it is discontentment. The effort to overcome it is of great importance for many people have to suffer in their search for something new which they think is better than the old.

The sutta's teaching on *abhijjhā* is primarily concerned with covetousness that is productive of evil conduct. So a few more words about it. *Abhijjhā* is the desire to have unlawfully something that belongs to another. Nowadays, this kind of desire seems to dominate many people. There are talks and instructions about ways and means of getting other people's property. As a result there are people who



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apparently look forward to possessing things that do not belong to them. In reality, they are not likely to realize their hopes. But whenever we think of getting another person's property, the evil thought occurs together with its *kammic* effects. So, if we wish to practise Sallekha dhamma, we should not harbour such thoughts but try to get what we want by lawful means; buy it at the proper price and honestly seek the money for it.

Covetous thought by itself is kammically effective and the effect may be potent enough to lead to the lower worlds. The intent to steal or rob is more serious in that it is the volitional prelude to the commission of crime; and still worse, of course, is the actual commission. We should, therefore, overcome such evil, grave deeds through moral integrity and reflections such as, "I do not like anyone who tries to get my property unlawfully; in the same way nobody will like me if I try to get his property unlawfully." We should also cultivate concentration constantly in order that it may leave no room for covetous thought in the mind. Covetousness may arise when we see, hear about, smell, eat, contact or use desirable objects belonging to others. So the yogi who is constantly mindful at the moment of seeing, etc., finds everything vanishing whenever he notes a phenomenon with his potent

## FOUR KINDS OF COVETOUSNESS

insight-knowledge. This makes it impossible for him to covet other person's property, let alone to think of getting it unlawfully. Thus we can overcome covetousness through insight-meditation, too. It can be rooted out when we attain the path of the Noble Ones or Ariyas. The complete extinction of covetousness that leads to misconduct is assured at the *Sotāpatti* stage and so is the extinction of wicked desire (*pāpicchā*). Other kinds of covetousness are to be eliminated at the three higher holy stages.

Visuddhimagga says that *abhijjhā* is wholly done away with only at the stage of Arahantship. It says so because it describes ordinary greed (*lobha*) also as a kind of *abhijjhā*. So we assume that *sotāpatti* stage ensures the extinction of evil conduct-oriented *abhijjhā* and *pāpicchā* since these two defilements are liable to lead to the nether worlds. The Sallekha sutta which teaches us to overcome *abhijjhā* is very profound in that it tells us to practise the dhamma to the point of overcoming it (*abhijjhā*) through the attainment of the four holy stages. Let us affirm then that :—

“While other people are covetous, we will avoid covetousness. We will seek spiritual uplift through non-covetousness. We will put an end to the defilement of covetousness through non-covetousness.”

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### VYĀPĀDA ( ILL-WILL )

*Vyāpāda* is the evil intent to bring about the death or destruction of a person. So in the Pali texts defining the term *vyāpāda*, it is said, " May these living beings be ill-treated or killed! May the whole tribe or clan be wiped out, destroyed or become extinct! There is such kind of intent to do wrong and destroy other beings." Thus *vyāpāda* is the intent to cause the death or ill-treatment of a hated person or persons. The intent in itself is unwholesome *kamma* in thought. At the very least the desire for the death or destruction of mosquitoes and bugs amounts to kammically effective ill-will. But as these lower forms of life have no morality, ill-will against them is not very grave in its *kammic* effect. The effect is very grave if we long for the death or destruction of men and monks who have good moral and other attributes.

Therefore, we should remove ill-will by cultivating love and radiating good-will, " May all beings be free from danger! May all beings be free from mental and physical suffering! May all beings live happily! " This is the way to avoid the evil path of ill-will by means of the good path of love. If we cultivate love in this way, we can advance from one stage to another and put out the fire of ill-will by means of the pure water of love.

## VYĀPĀDA (ILL-WILL)

People who have no self-control are intent on the death and destruction of those whom they hate. We who live among such people will free ourselves from ill-will; we will overcome ill-will by cultivating love. If we have ill-will, we must remove it through mindfulness. Such is the practice of Sallekha dhamma.

We can conquer ill-will through insight-meditation, that is, through mindfulness at every moment of seeing, hearing and so forth. When we see a person whom we do not want to see or when we hear a sound which we do not wish to hear, especially when we learn what a person is doing to endanger our interest or when we find or know what we do not want to find or know, we have ill-will; "Damn that fellow! A plague on him!" But with mindfulness at every moment of seeing, etc., you will find every thought and feeling passing away instantly and then it is impossible for ill-will to arise. Therefore, constant mindfulness of every mental event rules out the possibility of ill-will and that is the way to overcome it through the practice of *vipassanā* (insight-meditation).

If we cannot practise *vipassanā*, we can overcome ill-will through the development of loving-kindness (*mettā-bhāvanā*). We should radiate loving-kindness to every living being whom we see or hear. Then, there will be no ill-will

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against those people. Living beings whom we do not see or hear should also be the focus of our loving-kindness. If we watch the consciousness that suffuses loving-kindness, it means insight-meditation. Thus by suffusing loving-kindness and making a note of it, we can advance in our insight-knowledge from one stage to another till we attain *anāgāmi* stage when ill-will becomes completely extinct. Even at the *sotāpatti* stage the yogi is free from ill-will that can lead to the lower worlds. So we should seek at least the *sotāpatti* stage to overcome ill-will and if possible we should strive to attain the *anāgāmi* stage for its total extinction.

Let us then develop loving-kindness and meditate :—

- May all beings be free from danger !
- May all beings be free from mental suffering !
- May all beings be free from physical suffering !
- May all beings live happily !

In developing loving-kindness the consciousness that is focussed on it as well as the physical act of willing disappears instantly. This disappearance indicates the law of im-

## TEN WRONG IDEAS

permanence. Impermanence is suffering and impermanence and suffering (*anicca* and *dukkha*) are signs of insubstantiality (*anatta*). Such awareness of the nature of things as we develop loving-kindness is insight-knowledge (*vipassanā*). Let us then practise *vipassanā* while developing *mettā* (loving-kindness) at the same time.

May all beings be free from danger!

May all beings be able to bear the burden of the *khandhas*!

## TEN MICCHATTA (WRONG IDEAS)

The term *micchatta* is a compound of *micchā* and *atta*; *micchā* means wrong and *atta* means idea and so *micchatta* means wrong idea. Of the ten wrong ideas the first eight constitute the wrong eightfold path that is opposed to the right eightfold path. These are wrong belief, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong concentration and wrong contemplation as opposed to right belief, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration and right contemplation. This wrong eightfold path leads to one of the four lower worlds, viz., hell, animal world, the *peta* world and the world of *asurās*. If because of good *kamma* the follower of the wrong path is reborn as a human being, he will be short-lived, sickly



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and subject to other sufferings of life. Then we have *micchāñāṇa* (wrong knowledge) as opposed to *sammāñāṇa* (right knowledge) and *micchāvimutti* (wrong freedom) as opposed to *sammāvimutti* (right freedom). Thus there are ten wrong ideas.

### MICCHĀDIṬṬHI (WRONG BELIEF)

*Micchādiṭṭhi* which means wrong belief is the opposite of *sammādiṭṭhi* which means right belief. People usually resent being called heretics or upholders of a wrong belief. But this is an expression of one's view and there is no cause for resentment. Every religion lays claim to exclusive possession of truth and regards the teachings of other religions as wrong beliefs.

Some 15 or 15 years ago a young teacher from Sudan came to Rangoon and practised meditation at our center. He spent over a month and so far as his insight-knowledge was concerned, he could speak of *sammāsanāṇa* (knowledge of exploring, grasping, etc). About four months after his return to his native place he wrote to us that his father asked him whether he was still a heretic and that he admitted to still being a heretic.

So there is no reason why we should resent being labelled heretics by those who do not follow our religion. For it is only a matter of opinion and in our eyes they, too, would be

## WRONG BELIEF

heretics. What matters is that our beliefs must be true in the context of the realities of nature. We on our part will have to describe the non-Buddhist teachings as heresies but this should not be considered an overly harsh judgement. We have to consider only whether our view has any basis in fact.

The wrong belief that we speak of here is of two kinds, viz., the wrong belief included in the ten evils (*duccarita*) and the wrong belief that forms part of the eightfold wrong path. We have given talks on the three evil deeds viz., killing, stealing and unlawful sexual intercourse as well as the four kinds of evil speech, viz., lying, slandering, the use of harsh language and frivolous talk. All these seven evils should be avoided. Of three evils in thought we have dealt with covetousness and ill-will (*abhijjhā* and *vyāpāda*.) We will now go on to wrong belief. An analytical knowledge of wrong belief is very important and it concerns those who cannot meditate as well as the meditating yogis.

The wrong belief leading to evil conduct is the belief that there is no *kamma* and no *kammic* effect. It will do you good if you remember this brief statement about it. Generally speaking, wrong belief has ten parts. I have dwelt on them in the discourse on Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*) but I will repeat them because of their importance.

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### THE TENFOLD WRONG BELIEF

The first of the ten views or parts of wrong belief is the view that the act of giving away is not fruitful. In other words, it is the view that the act of giving is not beneficial, that it is only a waste of one's property. But careful reflection leaves no doubt about the benefits of giving. The recipient is pleased with what he gets. Your act of giving makes him happy physically and mentally. The food that you give to a starving man may prolong his life. The donor, too, is happy by reflecting on the results of his act. Moreover, he endears himself to many people. The man who contributes liberally to the fund for a certain object in the neighbourhood is highly esteemed. He is extolled by wise men. He wins admiration and fame. He is respected at every meeting he attends. He has attendants wherever he lives. He has influence and is successful in every undertaking. These are the benefits that accrue to him here and now.

After his death the donor is reborn as a prosperous man or he attains heavenly abodes. Of course these are post-mortem rewards that do not admit of empirical investigation. For those who insist on actual facts, it is hard to understand. But we should accept the teaching on *kamma*, bearing in mind that it is beyond the comprehension of the ignorant and that its

verification lies within the intellectual sphere of the Enlightened Buddha, the Arahats and the psychic yogis. If you wish to realize its truth, you should develop supernormal powers that will help to fulfil your desire. With the divine-eye (*dibbacakkhu*) or power of clairvoyance you can see millions of donors enjoying heavenly bliss as well as millions of evil-minded misers who are suffering in hell or the world of *petas*. Even some yogis who do not have such supernormal powers see beings attaining heavenly abodes because of good *kamma* and beings landing in the lower worlds because of evil *kamma*. This of course raises the question of whether what these yogis see is real or only imaginary. But it is reasonable to accept it as real in view of the independent accounts of similar experience by other yogis. So the denial of any benefit accruing from giving is part of wrong belief.

(2) The second part of wrong belief is the view that "There is no use in making an offering on a big scale", that it is only a waste of (consumer) goods and human energy to do so.

(3) The next wrong view is that feeding, giving gifts and other kinds of trivial offering are also useless; in other words, that feeding the guests, giving a feast or presents on the occasion of a wedding, on a new year day, etc.,

do not produce any benefit. The second and the third views are essentially the same as the first. They refer to the kinds of good deeds that were in vogue in ancient India and mention the specific acts of giving that are repudiated by heretics.

(4) The fourth wrong view is that a good or a bad act is devoid of any major or marginal effect. In other words, it says that the so-called good acts produce no good effect but are only a waste of energy and that the so-called bad acts do not have any bad effect, that the doer is free from guilt. As we have pointed out, the good fruit of a good act is abundantly evident in the present life and its good fruits in the afterlife are to be seen by the clairvoyant yogis. The same may be said of the evil deed. Those who do evil in deed or speech will be at the very least blamed by the wise. If they commit crimes, they will be punished. They will be economically ruined if they do any evil that harms their economic interest. As to their post-mortem passage to the lower worlds, this is obvious to those who have the supernormal power of seeing and we should accept it on the authority of the Buddha and the Arahats who have witnessed it supernormally. But the man who is very fond of sensual pleasures thinks only of indulging in such pleasures and he does not like the good deeds that stand in his way. Nor

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does he wish to avoid bad deeds for the man who believes in the *kammic* effect of a good or a bad deed will have to do good even at the sacrifice of his material welfare. He may think that he will not make any material progress so long as he has to avoid evil in his business. Therefore he does not consider the *kammic* effect of his deeds. He is inclined to reject it and he thinks of various arguments in support of his view. This is primarily due to his excessive love of sensuous pleasure.

(5) and (6) Another wrong view is that there is no mother or father. Wise men teach us to regard our parents as our great benefactors, to revere them, to care for them and to support them in return for what they have done for our welfare. The person who holds wrong beliefs does not accept this teaching. He rejects it, saying that people get their children by accident in the course of their sexual enjoyment, that they care for their children because of their sense of responsibility and that there is no reason why the latter should be grateful to them. Moreover, since he makes no distinction between good and evil, he does not believe that support of parents or any wrong done to them is productive of *kammic* effects. So when he says that there is no father or mother, he is denying that we deserve the special respects of our children by virtue of being their parents. It is a terrible belief. One result of this belief is



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certain and it is that the person who holds it will not be respected by his children.

(7) This is the belief that there is no such thing as this world (as distinct from the other world). In other words, there is no rebirth in the human world following death in the other world. One who holds this wrong belief rejects hell, the *deva*-world and the *peta*-world which are invisible. In this view the only other world is the animal world and it is impossible for an animal to die and pass onto the human world for death annihilates every living being.

(8) This belief denies the existence of other worlds. It denies the possibility of rebirth in hell, the *deva*-world or the *peta*-world following death in the human world. It insists that annihilation is the fate of every dying person.

(9) This belief says that there is no being who emerges in a new existence after death in a previous existence. In this sense this view is the same as views (7) and (8). The Pāli text says. "*Natthi opapātikā sattā*" and here *opapātikā* means beings with *upapātti* birth, that is, spontaneous birth. In other words, it refers to beings who emerge with complete body-organs and in Buddhism these beings are *deva*, *Brahma*, *peta*, *asurā*, denizens of hells and beings at the beginning of the world. The heretic denies

their existence because he has never seen them himself. There is no basis for this skepticism for good spirits as well as evil spirits are to be found occasionally in many places. There are tree-gods who give instant trouble to those who destroy their abodes. The spirits that guard ancient treasures have been seen by some people and the psychic feats of some wizards have been witnessed by others. Then there are meditating yogis who have really seen *deva*, Brahmas, *peta* and internal beings by means of their power of concentration. In view of these facts the belief which denies the existence of the spiritual world is untenable.

(10) This view is important. So we will give an almost literal translation of the Pāli passage and explain it. "There are ascetics and *brahmanas* (bhikkhus and holy men) who say that they have a special knowledge of and actually see this present world and the other, invisible world. But in this world there are no ascetics and *brahmanas* who lead their lives and conduct themselves rightly."

To put it another way, the heretic's view is that among those who have founded religions and proclaimed their doctrines there is no one who can teach on the basis of their independent, special and empirical knowledge of the visible human world and the invisible heaven and

hell. There is not one whose teachings accord with their practice. All their teachings are speculations and conjectures born of ignorance. The implication is that no religion is good or right. This charge against religion was made not only in ancient times for today it is being made by those who are hostile to religion.

Thus the heretic denies the existence of the Buddha and the Arahats who know the truth about the world as a result of their spiritual effort. But if one thinks rationally, one will have to conclude on the basis of the heretic's own saying that he (the heretic) too is just an ordinary man and that his argument is also mere speculation without any special knowledge. So it will not do to accept as truth the words of an ignorant person. It is necessary to think deeply and independently.

There are many religions in the world. Some of them concede in their holy books that their teachings are based on speculations and not on actual experience. Moreover, these religions do not promise any personal experience to those who practise their teachings. Instead, they only insist on blind faith and worship. Such religions will have no appeal for wise men. As for the Buddha-dhamma, it claims that its teaching is based on personal, extraordinary knowledge. True to its claim, steadfast prac-

## DENIAL OF KAMMA

tice will ensure personal experience. The Buddha's teaching is confirmed by science in many respects. But in order to verify the teaching decisively, one will have to practise systematically and thoroughly. So the person who holds this last wrong view should practise it fully and see for himself.

The man who proclaimed this tenfold doctrine in the lifetime of the Buddha was Ajita, a teacher of a religious sect. But he was already teaching before the rise of Buddhism. So initially his attack might not have applied to the Buddha and his disciples who were real Arahats but as he continued to make a sweeping charge against all holy men in the time of the Buddha, it implies an attack on the Buddha and the real Arahats.

### DENIAL OF KAMMA AND ITS EFFECT

The ten wrong beliefs that we have mentioned all boil down to the view that rejects *kamma* and its effect. For the denial of (1) the benefit of giving, (2) the benefit of giving lavishly, (3) the benefit of feeding and (4) the good or evil effect of good or evil deed means the rejection of *kamma* and its effect. The denial of (5) mother and (6) father means the rejection of the effect of reverence for parents and of the wrong done to them and hence it also is the rejection of the *kammic*

law. The denial of (7) this world (8) the other world and beings that emerge spontaneously also is rejection of *kamma* that leads to new existence or in other words, the rejection of the law of *kamma*. (10) The last view that denies the existence of the Buddha and the Arahats means rejection of the potential for Buddhahood and Arahatship and as such it too is the rejection of the law of *kamma*. Thus the tenfold false belief means the rejection of *kamma* and its effect.

The word *kamma* is a Pāli term which means action. Bodily action, verbal action and mental action are self-evident. These are the deeds which we call *kamma* and are not the effects of these deeds equally obvious? Clearly a good-deed is beneficial while a bad deed produces an evil effect. People who seek their welfare focus on good deeds every day. They are engaged in work for their prosperity and happiness. They send their children to school, hoping that education ensures good jobs and prosperity in later life. The child who leads a good life and learns his lessons will benefit by his good deeds in terms of good education, superior job and material wealth. These are the results of good actions.

On the other hand, evil deeds have evil consequences. Those who do evil are blamed; if they commit crimes they are convicted. These

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results of good or evil deeds are to be experienced in the present life. Likewise, there are good and evil results of our actions that pass on to future existences. We need not have any doubt about these *kammic* results if we think rationally.

For every human being wants to be prosperous and happy but all men and women do not fulfil their desires. Most people are poor. Men are born equal but some man die at an early age while some live long. Some are sickly while some are relatively free from disease. Some are good-looking and some are ugly. Some have many enemies but some are popular. Some meet with success and make fortunes while some are unsuccessful and suffer financial losses. Some are intelligent and some are dull. Why do human beings differ from one another in so many respects? The difference between identical twin brothers or sisters is certainly not due to their parents. Farmers who work on the same plot of land may differ vastly in the output of crops in spite of the equality in soil, water and labour. There can be no cause for their inequality other than their deeds in their previous lives.

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Some teachers say that the world and all living beings were created by the all-mighty



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God who has infinite power. According to Buddhist texts, they describe the world and all beings as the creation of the supreme ruler or the Great Brāhma. The differences among human beings are therefore to be attributed to the will of the Creator. But this view is not acceptable to intelligent people. It does not explain fully the differences among human beings. For why does the Creator create a good life for one person and a bad life for another? Why does he prolong the life of one man and shorten the life of another? Why is a child still born and another destroyed while still in its mother's womb? The hypothesis of a Creator does not dispose of these questions satisfactorily. Again, why does the Creator fail to make all human beings equally rich? Why does he make many people poor? Why has he created snakes, tigers and other animals that are harmful to mankind and germs that cause diseases? These facts of human life raise doubts about the belief in a Creator. The Sinhalese Sayādaw asks U Nārada why the Creator has made the Europeans and Americans rich and the peoples of India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia poor. This disparity has nothing to do with creation for it is most probably due to different degrees of intelligence, energy and effort, that is, actions in the present life. Thus the theory of creation cannot explain the facts of human life and as such it is not acceptable to wise men.

## KAMMA, THE ONLY EXPLANATION

Then there is the view which describes everything as happening by chance. This view is wholly untenable for everything that we see has its corresponding cause. A good deed benefits us while a bad deed harms us. Obviously any one who commits a crime is bound to suffer because of his evil deed. Of the people who do the same kind of job some prosper and get promotion while others do not achieve much success in life. This is presumably due not to their present deeds but to their past *kamma*. Moreover, there are people in many parts of the world who can remember their previous lives. They can tell you what they have done and what kind of lives they have passed through. The average human being is oblivious of his past existence because of the suffering he has undergone while in his mother's womb. But the *devas* do not suffer at the time of the renewal of their existence. Like a man waking up, they appear suddenly with their bodies and so with clear recollections of their past, they can recount the good deeds that have led them to heaven.

## KAMMA, THE ONLY EXPLANATION

In short, in the absence of the present actions that condition it, the disparity in the fortunes of human beings is obviously due to past *kamma*. The doctrine of *kamma* is the key to all problems of human life. Some people die at

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an early age as a result of their acts of murder in their previous lives. Some are afflicted with diseases because of their ill-treatment of others in their past existences. We have explained these kammic effects in our last discourse. No one will resent the law of *kamma* for it is of a piece with the facts of human existence, that is, the fact that every action whether good or bad, has its consequences. *Kamma* explains everything and the view which rejects it is clearly wrong.

### A VERY TERRIBLE BELIEF

This false belief is one of the ten evils (*duccarita*) and it is described as the belief leading to evil conduct. The evil conduct-oriented belief is of three kinds, viz., *nattnikadiṭṭhi* (Nihilist belief), *ahetukadiṭṭhi* (No-cause belief) and *akiriya-diṭṭhi* (Non-action belief). Pūraṇakassapa, one of the six prominent heretical teachers in the lifetime of the Buddha declared that there was no moral action that produced good or evil. This view is called *akiriya-diṭṭhi*, that is, the view which denies causal agent of *kamma*. Another teacher, Ajita, said that there was no result of a good or evil deed since death annihilated every human being. This view which rejects the result of *kamma* is called *nattika-diṭṭhi*. Still another teacher, Makkhali-gosāla taught that there was no moral cause that made a man happy or unhappy because

## A VERY TERRIBLE BELIEF

every man's happiness or unhappiness was inexorably predetermined. This view called *ahetuka-diṭṭhi* rejects *kamma* both as a cause and as an effect. Although the other two views differ in their rejection of *kamma*, they are essentially the same for the denial of cause implies the denial of effect and viceversa. So all these views are false in that they reject *kamma* and its effect. A strong attachment to any one of the views is fraught with grave consequences. The man who holds it is denied spiritual progress because he makes no effort for it. After death he cannot attain heaven but is bound to land in the lower worlds. According to the commentaries, he will not be liberated from hell as long as he clings to the belief. It is the worst of all evils, the most serious of all wrong beliefs. Even if the renunciation of the belief frees one from hell, one is likely to land in the *peta* or animal world if his *kamma* is not good enough to ensure his rebirth as a human being. So this false belief is frightful indeed.

In the Sallekha sutta the Buddha teaches the disciples to reject the belief.

“Other people may believe that there is no *kamma* and its effect. We will hold the right belief that there is *kamma* and its effect. Thus we should practise the Sallekha dhamma that will lessen defilements.”

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The right belief that leads to good conduct is called *kammassakata sammā-diṭṭhi*. According to this view, we have only our actions as our property. Good deeds benefit us and bad deeds are harmful to our interest. This view is very important because it forms the basis of all good deeds. Only this right view makes us avoid evil, do good and leads to prosperity in heaven or the human world through the practice of ordinary charity, morality and mind-development (*bhāvanā*). Or it may lead to the attainment of holy path (*Ariyamagga*) and fruition (*phala*) through the practice of meditation. So it is very important to hold this right view. But those who are born of good Buddhist parents inherit this important, invaluable right belief in their childhood and so they need not make special effort to acquire it. They should only guard and strengthen it through right contemplation.

### AFFIRMATION OF THE BELIEF ( *Cittuppādavāra*, etc., )

It is more important to affirm our belief in *kamma* when we have to deal with heretics or when we are among them. We should stick to the right belief regardless of what is said by those who reject it. Some lack a firm conviction and so they go astray after reading books that support wrong beliefs. Some have deviated from right views following their marriage or

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social relations. This means a loss of spiritual heritage that is very much to be deplored. Such misguided people will realize their mistakes and suffer remorse on their death-bed and hereafter.

Wrong belief means wrong path, right belief means right path and so just as one follows the right path in order to avoid the wrong path, so also one who is not wholly free from wrong belief should change his path. This is what the Buddha taught concerning the choice of right belief as the alternative to wrong belief.

Moreover, a wrong belief leads to the lower, while a right belief leads to the higher planes of existence. Of these two paths the Buddha tells us to choose the higher one. A man who does not believe in *kamma* and its effect will not do good nor will he avoid evil. So he cannot hope for a higher life but is bound to land in the nether worlds. But a man who believes in *kamma* and its effect avoids evil, leads a good life as far as possible and by virtue of his good deeds attains the higher worlds of human beings or *devas* or he may attain the noble, holy path to Nibbāna through the practice of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). Thus one can make spiritual progress only through right views.



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Everybody craves for a higher life and seeks it but some seek it by following the wrong path. Some people do not believe in *kamma* and its effect and yet they have attained higher life and prosperity because of their past *kamma* and hard work in the present life. The man who has thus become prosperous despite his rejection of *kamma* is esteemed by some people who accept his views and follow his advice. In this way they may achieve their objects in their present life but they are likely to land in the lowest worlds after their death. Therefore we should seek higher life by means of right views.

Finally according to the Buddha the acceptance of right views is essential to the total extinction of defilements or in other words, the attainment of Nibbāna.

If one believes that there is no *kamma* and its effect or is inclined to such a belief, one should reject it and accept the right belief after hearing a good sermon and reflecting wisely (*yonisomanasikāra*). This will lead to the extinction of the defilement rooted in wrong views. The ordinary worldling who is not yet wholly free from wrong views will also be assured of complete freedom from them if he strengthens the belief in *kamma*, practises meditation and attains the first stage of holiness (*sotāpattimagga*) and its fruition.

## BELIEF IN KAMMA

Therefore in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha, let us affirm that :

“ Other people may hold that there is no *kamma* and its effect but we will hold the right belief that there is *kamma* and its effect. We will practise the dhamma that lessens defilements. We will cultivate the thoughts for the right belief in *kamma*. We will avoid the wrong belief by adopting the right belief for our spiritual uplift and for the extinction of defilements.

Thus we should strengthen the belief in *kamma*. Whenever we come across or hear of an evil deed we should remember that it will have an evil *kammic* effect and avoid it. Whenever we do a good deed, we should do it wholeheartedly, bearing in mind that it will benefit us.

This way of doing good is born of knowledge. It assures one of good rebirth in the next life. Moreover, whenever we contemplate the law of *kamma*, we have wholesome consciousness (*diṭṭhijukamma*). This is a kind of mind-training and we should practise it before we can practise other *bhāvanās*.

### THE PATH-ORIENTED WRONG BELIEF AND RIGHT BELIEF

We have told you how to remove the false belief that is productive of evil and cultivate the right belief that is productive of good. We

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now urge you to remove the false belief regarding the path or as it is called *Aniyyānika-diṭṭhi* which means the false belief that is a hindrance to liberation from suffering. There are four false beliefs, viz., *attadiṭṭhi*, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, *sassatādiṭṭhi* and *ucchedadiṭṭhi* that run counter to insight-knowledge and path-knowledge (*magga ñāṇa*).

Of these *attadiṭṭhi* or *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is the belief in the existence of a living entity or soul. The living entity is called *atta* and the Pāli texts refer to both living being and *atta*. Ordinary people suppose themselves as well as others to be living beings. In reality there are only the five *khandhas* or only consciousness and corporeality, There is not *atta* or a living entity. People believe in the existence of the non-existent *atta* and this false belief is called *attadiṭṭhi* or *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. *Sakkāya* means mind-body complex and *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is the false view that this mind-body complex is the living being or *atta*.

For example, seeing involves the eye-organ, the visual object and the eye-consciousness. But those who cannot contemplate or understand with insight-knowledge regard the clear eye-organ, the visual object and the eye-consciousness as a living being. They believe that "My eye is clear and good; I see my hand; I see

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his body; it is I who sees" etc. This is the *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* which identifies the apparent mind-body complex with *atta*. This kind of false belief is also associated with acts of hearing, smelling, eating, touching and thinking. To give another example, when you bend or stretch your hands or legs, the desire to bend and stretch is consciousness while bending and stretching comprise corporeality. We have only this mind-body complex. But those who cannot contemplate or understand with insight-knowledge have the illusion. "It is I who bend or stretch because it is I who wish to do so", etc. This is the *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* that regards the apparent mind-body complex as *atta* and the belief arises too in connection with other kinds of physical behaviour.

It is hard for common people to be wholly free from the ego-belief (*attadiṭṭhi*). There is only a difference in degrees, some being much attached to it and others being not so much attached. The belief is deep-rooted in those who do not know anything about the *khandhas*. I held this belief when I was young and ignorant. I believed then that there was a living entity in a man's physical body, that on his death it left the body either through the mouth or the nose. I thought that life entered the mother's womb during pregnancy. This belief is supported by doctors who recognize the

coming of life in the fetus only when they hear its heart beat. So people who do not have adequate knowledge about mind and body cling to the belief. But it does not have a firm hold on Buddhists who are familiar with the impersonality of life. The belief is not strong enough to impede spiritual effort and the practice of the Dhamma. So it is possible for Buddhists to practise and attain the Ariyan path and fruition in spite of their ego-belief.

The belief is weak in those who have a good knowledge about the nature of mind and body. Not that they are wholly free from it. For while talking about the nature of mind and body, they may have the illusion that "It is I who am talking," a fact evident in the heated and impassioned arguments during the discussion of the Dhamma. It is the insight-meditation and the Ariyan path that can ensure the extinction of the belief. Of the two, meditation brings about the extinction of the belief on the *tadaṅgapahāna* level or in other words, the illusion as regards the object contemplated is eliminated by the opposite. Constant mindfulness means extinction of the illusion on the *vikkhambhana* level, i.e., overcoming by repression. The belief may still arise, however, when the yogi stops meditating and is off his guard. It is completely rooted out only when he attains the first stage of holiness. So it is up

## ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

to him to strive for the first stage of the holy path.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

In order to attain this object, one must start with meditation that is the prelude to knowledge of Ariyan path. The practice of meditation presupposes knowledge and some say that before he meditates the yogi should be thoroughly familiar with the concept of *khandhā* (the five groups of mental and physical phenomena), *āyatana*s (the bases or sources), *dhātu* (elements), *indriya* (the faculties), *saccā* (the truths) and *patīccasamuppāda* (the dependent origination). This is sound advice since it accords with *Visuddhimagga* (Buddhaghosa's book, "The Path of Purity".) If the yogi is to meditate without a teacher, he needs such knowledge for self-examination. We should not assume, however, that this knowledge is indispensable to all meditating yogis. For not every yogi who meditated according to the instructions of the Buddha did so only after he had thoroughly studied the concepts of *khandhas*, etc. Perhaps giving instructions to meditators in those days did not usually last even an hour. Especially if there is a teacher to guide the yogi, his knowledge is sufficient if he bears in mind that there are only mental and physical phenomena and impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality.



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The Buddha pointed out the need for sufficient knowledge in a few words as follows.

“O King of devas! The bhikkhu who wants to meditate till he attains Arahatsip remembers that he should regard none of the phenomena as permanent, pleasant or substantial.”

This was the Buddha's brief statement in response to the king of deva's question as to the extent of knowledge that is essential to the attainment of Arahatsip. It is the word of the Buddha, not a post-canonical teaching. To put it another way, all phenomena that occur to one or others should be regarded as impermanent, suffering and insubstantial and this knowledge suffices to equip the yogi intellectually for the practice of meditation. We can have this knowledge by merely hearing the sermons. Religious Buddhists have learnt for a long time that there are only physical and mental phenomena, that everything is transitory, suffering and devoid of ego-entity. So if you know the method of meditation you can meditate at any time.

### METHOD OF MEDITATION

The Buddha's method of meditation is given in a few words: “*So sabbam dhammam abhijānāti....* The yogi knows all phenomena intelligently and mindfully.”

## METHOD OF MEDITATION

Here all phenomena means the psycho-physical phenomena involved in hearing, smelling, eating, touching, bending, moving, thinking, etc. The yogi should note them in order to know them as they really are. *Abhijānāti* means to fix one's attention on the object intelligently, to be mindful of it; and the yogi must know all phenomena. His awareness should not be confined to a single phenomenon. He must take cognizance of every event that occurs when he sees or hears or contacts or knows.

But in the beginning he cannot attend to all events. So he should start with the observation of one or two obvious events. While sitting, he must fix his mind on "sitting," "sitting," or he can concentrate on his nostril which is the point of contact with inhaled or exhaled air and make a mental note, "in," "in," and "out," "out,". Or he may note arising and passing away with his mind fixed on tenseness and movement in the belly. If while thus watching, some thoughts occur, he should note them and return to the original phenomenon that he has been watching. If stiffness, pain, heat and any other sensation occur, he must note, "stiff," "stiff," "pain," "pain," "hot," "hot," etc., and then resume his original introspection. If there is bending, or stretching or any other movement, it should also be noted. When the yogi stands up, he must do so.

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mindfully. When the yogi walks, he must be aware of every step that he takes; if possible, he must make a note of every act of seeing or hearing.

By virtue of his mindfulness, he develops the power of concentration and comes to realize independently that there is no living ego-entity, nothing apart from the knowing consciousness and the known corporeality. This is the knowledge (*nāmarupaparicchedañāṇa*) which enables the yogi to discriminate between consciousness and corporeality and it is basic to right belief in meditation.

This belief is opposed to the ego-belief and the personality-belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). It is important to grasp this right view properly. Some people think that they have the right view if they merely recognize that there are only corporeality and consciousness, the former comprising the four primary elements plus the twenty four secondary physical phenomena (*upādarūpa*) and the latter being made up of eighty one kinds of mundane consciousness plus fifty two elements of mind (*cetasika*). This does not accord with the Buddha's teaching that all phenomena should be known. Nor does such kind of reflection in itself ensure the elimination of the ego-belief that arises at the moment of seeing, hearing, etc. But the yogi who keeps

## CREATION

watch on what is actually happening to the psycho-physical organism will, at the moment of noting the arising (of the belly), realize that there are only the arising corporeality and the knowing consciousness; and at the moment of noting the falling of the belly, he knows that there are only the falling corporeality and the knowing consciousness. At the moment of bending or stretching, he knows that there are only the corporeality that bends or stretches and the consciousness that makes a note of it.

The same may be said of his knowledge of the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* while walking, seeing, hearing, etc. So every moment of mindfulness means rejection of the ego-belief and the personality-belief. That is the way the Buddha pointed out for dispelling these beliefs in the Sallekha sutta.

“Other non-meditating people may believe in the ego-entity. But we who are familiar with the Satipaṭṭhāna method of introspection will, by introspecting the psycho-physical phenomena at the moment of their occurrence, hold the correct view that there is no ego-entity but only the consciousness and corporeality. Thus we will practise the dhamma that lessens defilements.”

Our interpretation of the Buddha's teaching is advanced and profound. Those who cannot meditate are included in the “other” people.

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But we should assume that knowledgeable persons who are not firmly attached to ego-belief are to be excepted. The belief will have a strong hold on those who cannot meditate and have little knowledge. According to our interpretation such person will have to be labelled heretics. But ego-oriented heresy is not as serious as evil conduct-oriented belief. It does not by itself lead to the lower worlds. The believer may land in heavenly abodes by virtue of his charity and morality. Or he may attain *jhāna* and pass on to the Brahma world or even the highest abode.

So the ego-belief is not a barrier to the *deva*-worlds. But a person who is dominated by the belief lacks faith in the Buddhist teaching and so it may impede his spiritual progress. The extreme ego-belief usually prevails among non-Buddhists and is hardly to be found among Buddhists. So a Buddhist may hold the ego-belief because of his ignorance and yet he may have faith in the Dhamma and practise meditation. If he exerts whole-hearted effort, he may attain the holy path and fruition. So while living in a world that is wedded to ego-belief, we should meditate and hold the right view based on insight-knowledge.

### AFFIRMATION OF THE RIGHT VIEW

"Other people may believe in a living soul or an ego-entity but we will hold the right view

that there are only consciousness and corporeality. We will practise the dhamma that lessens defilements. We will cultivate thoughts about such a view. We will avoid the ego-belief and personality-belief by adopting the right beliefs. We will achieve spiritual uplift through right beliefs. We will put out the fire of defilement arising from ego-belief and personality-belief through adherence to right belief.”

Implicit in this affirmation is that those who hold the ego-belief are to be labelled heretics, an implication that may be offensive to believers. But as we have pointed out, such an ego-belief is not as serious as evil-oriented heresy. It only prolongs one's existence in *samsāra* or the cycle of life. Moreover, ordinary people are seldom free from the belief. We are temporarily free from it only when we are meditating. So there is no reason why the believers should resent being called heretics. If they resent it, they can switch to the right belief through introspection. There are people who have set their heart on greater spiritual heights without giving up their ego-belief. As for the meditating yogi, he makes spiritual progress on the basis of his right views just like Visākha and Anāthapiṇḍika in the lifetime of the Buddha.

These two disciples of the Buddha passed on to heavenly abodes on their death. There they



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attained *anāgāmi* stage and will pass through the *Suddhavāsa*, i.e., the five *Brahma* worlds of form in succession. They will spend one thousand world-cycles in the lowest *Aviha* realm, two thousand world-cycles in *Atappa* realm, four thousand world-cycles in *Suddassa* realm, eight thousand world-cycles in *Sudassi* realm and sixteen thousand world-cycles in *Akaniṭṭha* realm, or altogether thirty one thousand world-cycles in *Suddhavāsa Brahma* realms. Finally in the *Akaniṭṭha* realm they will become Arahats and attain Nibbāna. This is how the yogi makes spiritual progress through right belief on the basis of insight-meditation and Ariyan path. We should also follow their example.

### SASSATADIṬṬHI AND UCCHEDADIṬṬHI

(Continuity-belief and Annihilation-belief)

*Sassatadiṭṭhi* is the belief that a living being remains permanent, passing from one existence to another. According to this view, the soul or the ego never perishes although the gross physical body is subject to death and destruction. After the death of the body the soul moves on to another physical abode. It is indestructible and it survives the disintegration of innumerable world-systems.

By and large the *sassata* belief is prevalent among people who believe in *kamma*. It is

explicitly accepted by the Hindu holy books. According to their view, the living being has two kinds of bodies, viz., the gross body and the subtle body. The gross body eventually perishes but the subtle body passes on to a new abode and remains intact. The soul which thus seeks a new abode is very small, smaller than the tip of a pin that can go through the eye of a needle. It can reach a very distant place instantly and pass through mountains and brick walls. They have to credit the soul with such supernormal power for only then would it be able to gain access to a potential mother who is sleeping in a brick-building without any opening. There is no Buddhist book that explicitly states such a view. But ignorant people believe that the soul leaves the body after death and passes onto another abode or existence. The belief does not have a strong hold on those who have knowledge about causal relation between mind and body. No one is, however, wholly free from it so long as he lacks insight-knowledge on the level of the holy path.

Opposed to the *sassata* belief is the *uccheda* belief which insists on annihilation after death. If you believe that there is nothing after death, you assume that there is something before death and presumably that something is the ego. So although the annihilationists insist on the cor-

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poreality of everything (or the primacy of matter) they are not really free from ego-belief. In other words, the *uccheda* view too is rooted in ego-belief. According to *sassata* view, the ego continues to exist after death while according to *uccheda* view it is annihilated by death. So both views attribute ego to a living being, the only difference being that the first view insists on while the second view rejects the continued existence of the ego after death.

Some people hold that the mind and body of childhood still exist in the grown-up man but this is not *sassata* view. It is only the idea of permanency; you may call it *attadiṭṭhi* but it is not the same as *sassatadiṭṭhi* inasmuch as *ucchedadiṭṭhi* too insists on such permanency before death. Moreover, if the belief in the mind and body of childhood it to be labelled *sassata* belief, our awareness of their ceaseless passing away will have to be called *uccheda* belief. In fact, this awareness is based on reflection and insight-meditation. The view opposed to it is only ego-belief, not *sassata* (continuity or eternity) belief. In short, *sassata* belief insists on permanence while *uccheda* belief on annihilation of the ego after death.

The annihilation doctrine was preached by Ajita in the lifetime of the Buddha. The substance of his teaching is that when a man dies,

## UCCHEDA VIEW

his corpse is placed on a bedstead and taken to the cemetery by four men. There it is burnt to ashes and nothing is left. According to this view there is no need to avoid evil. One can do anything that will serve one's interest. Nor is it necessary to do good. Those who hold this view urge us to do whatever is beneficial to us and they tell us not to do good at the sacrifice of our own interest. Thus the *uccheda* view rejects action and its *kammic* effect and as such it is one of the false views that give rise to evil conduct.

RIGHT BELIEF BASED ON MEDITATION

(OR) KNOWLEDGE OF CAUSAL RELATION

The *sassata* view and *uccheda* view have to be repudiated through the right view regarding cause and effect or through the reflective insight into the causal relation of dependent origination. It can be removed too by the right view in meditation called *paccayapariggahañāṇa*.

There is no living soul either before or after death. The only thing that exists is the psychophysical process based on cause-and-effect relationship. There are only consciousness, mind, corporeality, etc., that arise ceaselessly because of ignorance and other causes. Today most people do not know the four noble truths rightly. In short, they do not really know the truth of suffering. This truth is evident in

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every phenomenon that occurs at the moment of seeing, hearing, eating, thinking, etc. All phenomena are continually arising and passing away and so they are impermanent, unpleasant, undependable and insubstantial. We do not know them as they really are and consider them permanent, pleasant, good and substantial. This is ignorance.

Because of ignorance we take delight in sensual objects and become attached to them. We cling to them. We try to get the object of our attachment. Thus ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*), attachment (*upādāna*), action (*kamma*) and conditioning (*saṅkhāra*) are the five causes or in short, the round of *kamma* involving good or bad deeds.

### RENEWAL OF EXISTENCE

The round of *kamma* is followed by the round of result (*vipākavaṇṇa*). It happens in this way. A dying person has certain mental images as a result of the good or evil deeds that he has done in the course of his life. There are images of his deeds (*kamma*), the objects and circumstances concerning his deeds (*kammanimitta*) and the future life conditioned by the deeds (*gatinimitta*). These images flash across his mind when he is close to death. So he dies while being attached to one of these images.

## RENEWAL OF EXISTENCE

Death is nothing but the cessation of the ever arising-and-passing away of the mental process following the dissolution of the last thought-moment. But it is not complete cessation. There arises new consciousness in a new existence in a new abode in accordance with one of the mental images to which the dying person was attached at the last moment. Together with this (rebirth-consciousness) there follow other consequences, viz., *nāmarūpa* (mind, and corporeality), *āyatana* (bases or sources) *phassa* (contact) and *vedanā* (feeling). Thus there are five causes (ignorance, etc.,) and the round of action followed by the round of results (consciousness etc.). Likewise, from the moment of conception to the moment of death the psycho-physical phenomena arise ceaselessly and in the course of their arising pleasant and unpleasant feelings cause craving, etc., and these in turn lead to (rebirth) consciousness, etc., in the next existence. Thus there are only causes and effects. Because of ignorance, *kamma*, etc., there arise new existence, consciousness, etc., and then we speak of a man's attainment of the *deva* world or damnation in hell.

In reality there is not transmigration of a person, a being or an entity. There is only the arising of mind and corporeality afresh in a later life as the result of *kamma* in a



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former existence and during a single life we have only a psycho-physical process as a result of former states of consciousness. You should know this nature of life by hearing sermons and by reading scriptures. Those who have such knowledge are free from two heresies, viz., the *uccheda* belief that a man's life is annihilated after death and the *sassata* belief that a man's soul-entity passes on to another place after death and remains permanent.

### FREEDOM FROM HERESIES THROUGH DISCRIMINATIVE KNOWLEDGE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

But the knowledge that we acquire from books and teachers (*sutamayañāṇa*) is not well-founded and it is insight-knowledge (*bhāvanā-mayañāṇa*) that is more solid. So it is necessary to meditate and through meditation you will discriminate between mind and corporeality and become aware of their nature. When you bend, stretch or move your leg or hand, you recognize the mind that wants to bend, etc., and then you come to know without thinking that the bending of the leg is due to the mind's inclination to bend and so forth. When you make a mental note of seeing something, you know that you see because of your eye, the visible object and consciousness. The same may be said of hearing, etc., and we become aware of mind and corporeality as cause and seeing, hearing, etc., as effect. We come to

know, too, that preceding thought-moments determine succeeding thought-moments, that perception depends on the presence of the object to be perceived, and that thought-moments arise and pass away afresh as units.

So to the yogi, death is like the dissolution of the thought-unit that is now apperceived. It is not the dissolution of a person or being individually. Rebirth is also like the arising of a unit of consciousness that is apperceived. It is not the passing on of an individual being. So rebirth means the arising of a new unit of consciousness following an attachment to an object just before death. Thus the yogi realizes independently the cause-and-effect relation (of psycho-physical phenomena) and some yogis can explain it clearly though they have no bookish knowledge.

Once you realize the purely psycho-physical phenomena of life that are in a constant, causally related state of flux, you are free from the eternity-belief (that the soul continues to exist after death) or the annihilation-belief (that the soul is annihilated by death). Gone overboard are also the belief that man is created by God and the belief that man comes into existence automatically. The creation-belief called *visamahetukadiṭṭhi* is a kind of *sassata* belief while the automation-belief, termed *ahetukadiṭṭhi*, belongs to the group of evil-oriented wrong.

belief. Opposed to these four beliefs is the *paccayapariggahañāṇa*, the discriminative knowledge of cause and effect.

GENESIS OF SAMMASANAÑĀṆA, ETC.

The two right beliefs that we have mentioned, viz., *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa* and *paccayapariggahañāṇa* are basic to meditation and hence they are here called *vipassanāsammādiṭṭhi*. In the course of further introspection the yogi realizes independently that all the psycho-physical phenomena arising from the six senses are impermanent, suffering and insubstantial. This realization is due to the discovery of the fact that everything that arises invariably vanishes. If some thoughts occur to you while you are watching the rising, falling, etc., you should note them, too, and then they will pass away. Thus you see the arising and vanishing of a new mental event and you realize its impermanence and you reflect on the impermanence of all mental phenomena. This is *sammasanañāṇa*.

If while being mindful of the arising, falling, etc., you have the unpleasant feeling of stiffness, pain, itchiness, etc., you should fix your mind on it and note, "stiff, stiff", "warm, warm," etc. Then your unpleasant feeling will gradually disappear, you realize its impermanence and reflect on the impermanence of all feelings. This too is *sammasanañāṇa*.

## REFLECTION ON IMPERMANENCE

You should also take note of craving, anger, displeasure and other mental states that arise. You will find that they vanish as you note them. Reflection on their impermanence is *sammāsañña*.

Fixing your mind on the movements of any part of your body such as bending, stretching, etc., is momentary and impermanent, and so is your mental state at the moment of watching the arising (of the belly). Each mental event vanishes together with the corresponding physical event. So you reflect on their impermanence.

Their impermanence leads you to think of their unsatisfactoriness, undependability and painfulness, your lack of control over them and the occurrence of phenomena in their state of nature. This reflection is the first insight-knowledge that you gain in meditation.

It is *sammāsañña*, the first of the ten kinds of insight-knowledge. As you keep on making a note of all that occur without reflection, your insight quickens and arising is followed so quickly by vanishing that at last your attention is confined to the latter phenomenon. Then impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality become more manifest. This insight into fast arising-and-passing away is *udayabbayañña*.

At this stage the yogi sees lights, feels elated, ecstatic and excessively joyful. These

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sensations and visions have to be watched and rejected. Overcoming them, the yogi finds that the arising of the phenomenon that he watches is no longer apparent and only their vanishing remains in the focus of his attention. The yogi thinks he is aware only of the vanishing of the phenomenon and this awareness clearly points up to the rapidity with which everything dissolves and passes away.

This insight into the passing away as the only reality is *bhangañāṇa*. At this stage no image, vision or sign occurs to the yogi. He finds that everything vanishes instantly without getting from one place to another. For example, when he directs his attention to bending, the yogi sees no image of his hand or leg. He finds only the physical phenomenon and the corresponding consciousness vanishing. The same may be said of stretching, walking, arising, falling and so forth. This discovery helps to underscore the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

With the development of this Insight-knowledge (*bhangañāṇa*) there arise fear (*bhayañāṇa*) and other kinds of knowledge. These latter kinds of knowledge make the yogi more fully conscious of the dissolution of everything and the three marks of existence, viz., *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. Of these developments *saṅkhārupekkhañāṇa* is very subtle and very good. It makes the yogi

## GENESIS OF PATH-KNOWLEDGE

indifferent to both pleasant and unpleasant sense-objects which can therefore neither repel nor attract him. The yogi can then remain mindful for two or three hours at a stretch. When this equanimity-knowledge is fully developed, the yogi has *vuṭṭhānagāmini vipassanā* (insight leading to ascent). The last part of this insight is called *anulomañāṇa* (adaptation-knowledge). This insight-knowledge means a clear grasp of any one of the three marks of existence and it is the right belief based on insight.

## GENESIS OF PATH-KNOWLEDGE

The adaptation-knowledge is the last of the different levels of knowledge associated with mindfulness. Immediately after the end of this knowledge the yogi is face to face with *Nibbāna* where consciousness, corporeality and *kamma*-formations become extinct. This contact with *Nibbāna* involves maturity-knowledge (*gotrabhūñāṇa*), path-knowledge and fruition-knowledge. Of these three, the path-knowledge is the right belief of the path (*magga sammādiṭṭhi*).

Contact with *Nibbāna* means seeing that the consciousness and corporeality and *kamma*-formations which arise and pass away are wholly extinct. At the moment of the arising of insight-knowledge the yogi sees only the psychophysical phenomena arising and vanishing.



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With the end of the last adaptation-knowledge, the psycho-physical phenomena cease to arise and their complete extinction means realization of the peace of Nibbāna. This will be fully understood only by those who have had the experience. Those who have no experience may just imagine it.

### SEEING THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Seeing Nibbāna means seeing the Four Noble Truths. When the yogi sees the complete extinction of all psycho-physical phenomena that arise and pass away, he knows that it is peace *par excellence*. He knows too that compared with Nibbānic peace, the ever arising-and-vanishing phenomena are painful and because of this awareness he is more or less free from craving for such phenomena. At the *sotāpatti* stage he is free from the craving that is strong enough to consign him to the lower worlds. At the *sakadāgāmi* stage he is free from gross sensual desire; at the *anāgāmi* stage he is free from the subtle sensual desire while at the *Arahatta* stage he is free from the desire for the world of form and the formless worlds.

Thus the yogi knows freedom from desire through avoidance (*pahānābhisaṃaya*). Actual contact with Nibbāna is the fourth noble truth. The realization of this truth occurs in the mind

## THE THREE STAGES OF THE PATH

of the yogi and so it is known through development (*bhāvanābhisamaya*). In short, the yogi's insight into the third truth (the truth of the cessation of suffering, that is, Nibbāna) means his immediate insight into the other three noble truths.

## THE THREE STAGES OF THE PATH

There are three stages of right belief. First we have the basic right belief; then there is right belief based on insight-knowledge which is the forerunner of the Ariya path (*pubbabhāga vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*) and lastly we have the right belief of the Ariyas (*Ariyasammādiṭṭhi*). The same may be said of the other parts of the Eightfold Noble Path. Each part of the path has three stages, viz., basic path, preliminary path and Ariya path.

We may consider here right belief as an example. The belief in *kamma* is very important because it is the basic path. Without the belief in *kamma* one will not avoid misdeeds and it will be difficult to do good deeds such as *dāna* and *sīla*. Even when such a man has to give alms by force of circumstance, it will be an act divorced from knowledge and so the merit that he gains will be of an inferior kind. So he is likely to land in the lower worlds and stands little chance of achieving good rebirth,

let alone the holy path or Nibbāna. On the other hand the man who believes in *kamma* avoids misdeeds, devotes himself to good deeds, hears the discourses on the Dhamma and practises insight meditation. So even if he does not have unusual spiritual experience, he will be happy in his future lives. If he fully develops right belief up to adaptation-knowledge (*anulomañāṇa*), there will arise the right belief about the Path (*Ariyamagga*) and he will actually see Nibbāna.

So let us affirm our belief in *kamma* in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. Those who cannot as yet practise insight meditation should pay special attention to this right belief. They should also implant the belief in the minds of their children. For without this belief a child is not a true Buddhist although he may be called a Buddhist by birth. He would have unwholesome thoughts and ridicule the good deeds of his parents such as revering the memory of the Buddha, keeping sabbath, giving alms, etc. When he grows up he may become a convert to another religion through marriage or for some other reason. Or he may become an agnostic. So you should instill this right belief in your children and if possible make them strengthen it through meditation.

Let us then affirm our right belief in *kamma* although others may reject it; cultivate right

## RIGHT BELIEF

thoughts and adopt right practice that will lessen defilements. Let us avoid false beliefs and stick to right beliefs for our spiritual uplift.

Those who believe in *kamma* should strengthen the belief. Those who have not gained insight-knowledge should practise meditation. Those who are engaged in meditation or have had much practice, in it should set their heart on having higher insights. They should try to gain *udayabhayañāṇa* (knowledge concerning the arising and vanishing) that affords unusual spiritual experience, ecstasy and a firm basis for the path-knowledge and its fruition. They should also seek *saṅkhāruppekkhañāṇa* (equanimity-knowledge) which is very subtle, calls for relaxed watchfulness and is something like spontaneous awareness. It will make them completely detached in the face of pleasant or unpleasant sense-objects. At this moment they will have the attribute of the Arahant called *chalaṅgupekkhā* (indifference to six sense-objects). The experience is gratifying to the subject and awe-inspiring to others.

With the perfection of this knowledge there arises the right belief about the path that brings one into contact with Nibbāna. At this stage all the wrong beliefs become wholly extinct. You should then try to gain at least the right belief

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on the *sotāpatti* level and if possible, the right belief on the higher level. Through right beliefs we can overcome self-conceit (*asamimāna, diṭṭhimāna*) which dominates us on the lower paths. This self-conceit is rooted in qualities which we really possess and so it is also called *yathāvamāna*. We can do away with this kind of conceit once and forever only when we become Arahats. So in order to overcome it we have to replace wrong beliefs with right beliefs and it is up to us to conquer it through Arahatship.

### WRONG INTENTIONS (MICCHASAÑKAPPA)

"Other people may have wrong intentions but we will have right intentions and thereby lessen our defilements."

That is what the Pāli text says. There are three kinds of wrong intentions, viz., intentions arising from sensuous desires, that is, the intention to have the object of one's desire (*kāma-vitakka*), intentions arising from ill-will or the intention to ruin another person (*vyāpādavitakka*) and intentions arising from aggressive desire or the intention to hurt another person (*vihimsa-vitakka*).

Nowadays people harbour many wrong intentions and the most common of these intentions is that which stems from sensuous desire.

## WRONG INTENTION

People usually are intent on getting the objects of their desire,-- good food, good clothes, good houses, cars, land, garden, cattle and so forth. They have plans concerning their ambition, social relations, professions, families, maintenance of property, etc. In short, they are pre-occupied with their sensuous desire almost the whole day.

Of these intentions, the self-serving intention may be called right intention. But since it is based on unwholesome sensuous desire, it is termed wrong intention from the point of view of the Dhamma. But the intention to seek lawfully the necessities of life is not greatly harmful. Even the bhikkhus who are devoted to the Dhamma have to seek food, etc., and it is quite proper to think of doing lawfully what is unavoidable. However, during meditation the yogi should not harbour such thoughts for a long time. They should be watched and rejected.

What is gravely harmful is the intention to get unlawfully something which one does not deserve or in the case of those who deserve it, obsession with the desire for it. For this kind of sensuous thought prolongs the cycle of life (*samsāra*) even if it does not lead to the lower worlds. The best thing to do is to reject sensuous thoughts. The bhikkhus and yogis who have high regard for morality based on restraint of the senses should avoid sensuous



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thoughts about *visabhāga* objects, that is objects in the form of males and females that have different physical appearances. Bhikkhus and male yogis should avoid thoughts about women and nuns, and female yogis should not think of men. Such sensuous thoughts impede concentration, knowledge and mental development and as such they are to be watched and rejected.

Again when we think of a person whom we hate we tend to have ill-will against him. We accuse him of having done some thing harmful to us, of having obstructed our plans and so we long for his destruction and ruin. We think of doing away with him. This is hateful thought arising from ill-will (*vyāpāda*). The object of ill-will is not necessarily a human being. When we seek to destroy snakes, scorpions, mosquitoes, bugs, etc., we are also motivated by ill-will. We may justify our attempt to kill snakes, tigers, etc., but the unwholesome *kammic* volition involved leads to suffering and so every thought of killing for any reason or purpose is to be called a wrong intention.

If the intention is not to kill a person whom one hates but only to ill-treat him, it is called *vihimsavitakka* or aggressive thought. Here one intends to beat, abuse, scold or otherwise cause suffering to another person. If one is motivated by good-will in his intention, there is no *kammic* result. But the aggressive thought that stems

## RIGHT INTENTION

from hatred is kammically unwholesome and the *kammic* result is grave in proportion to the moral purity of the person who is wronged.

### RIGHT INTENTION (SAMMĀSAÑKAPPA)

Right intention is the opposite of wrong intention and as such it is of three kinds, viz., thought of renunciation (*nekkhammavitakka*) thought of harmlessness (*avyāpāda-vitakka*) and thought of harmlessness (*avikinisa-vitakka*). Of these three, the thought of renunciation is the intention to liberate oneself from sensuous desire, defilements and the cycle of life. According to the commentary, joining the Buddhist Sangha is *nekkhamma* or renunciation. So is Nibbāna or the first *jhāna* or *vipassanā* (insight meditation) or the practice of charity, morality, etc. So the thought of entering the holy order, the thought of developing the mind to attain the first *jhāna*, the thought of attaining Nibbāna, the thought of going to meditation-center, the thought of observing the moral precepts, the thought of observing the moral precepts, the thought of giving alms, the thought of hearing a sermon—each of these thoughts is thought of renunciation. Every thought of renunciation presupposes the right belief in *kamma*. The belief is also involved at the time of translating the thought into action. So when you develop right intention or thought, you develop, too.

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right belief and vice versa. Other parts of the path are also more or less developed accordingly.

Thought of hatelessness is the opposite of thought of hatefulness. It is thought of the welfare of all living beings based on good-will and love. Thought of harmlessness is the opposite of thought of harmfulness. It is the thought arising from compassion and sympathy. People usually have regard only for those who are associated with them. They tend to ill-treat any person who oppose them. In this world of such moral degradation it is indeed very noble to think of the welfare of all living beings universally with love and compassion. Here we will cite the story of bodhisatta Sumedhā's thought of renunciation that is so memorable.

Bodhisatta Sumedhā was born aeons ago. His parents died when he was young. So the treasurer of the family handed over to the young man all the wealth that had been accumulated by the seven generations of his forefathers. Sumedhā reflected on the mortality of his forefathers who had left all their wealth in the hands of other people. They could not come and look after their property. They could not use any of their former property nor could they take it away with them. Now Sumedhā hoped to take away his wealth in the

#### FOUR, KINDS OF PROPERTY

form of *kammic* effect by giving it away. In other words, he hoped to gain merit by alms-giving, the merit that is called *anugāmika* property because it is the property that always follows the donor in the cycle of life.

There are four kinds of property, viz., *jaṅgama* property, *thāvara* property, *aṅgasama* property and *anugāmika* property. The commentary describes slaves, cattle and other living things as *jaṅgama* property and the non-moving, lifeless things as *thāvara* property. But we will classify property in the traditional way. Gold, silver, clothing, etc., which are easily changeable are to be regarded as *jaṅgama* property. This kind of property is not durable. Although it is one's property, it is another person's possession when it gets into the hands of a thief, a robber or a swindler. For example, a fountain-pen or a pocket watch that is stolen by a pickpocket becomes his property and it is hard to recover it unless it bears identification marks or there is someone to testify to your ownership. So you cannot own a thing permanently if it can change hands easily. It may be yours now but it may belong to another the next moment.

So gold, silver, etc., which are not of immediate use to us have to be changed into permanent property such as land, building, etc. A permanent property cannot be moved secretly and so is more durable than movable property. Yet

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you may lose it when a powerful man legally claims it by right of inheritance. Or you may lose it because you cannot always count on it through the change of times. You cannot always count on it and so it is better to change it into *aṅgāsama* property or property like the parts of your body. You carry this property wherever you go just like your legs or hands. This kind of property is a person's occupation like painting, teaching, writing, dancing, medicine, law and so forth. A man can earn his living by his profession, he cannot be robbed of it and so people spend money on the education of their children. But a vocational training or knowledge may be of no use if the law forbids its practice. So more solid than the property of profession is the *anugāmi* property in the form of alms-giving, morality, etc. Nobody can steal it or rob you of it or prevent it from producing its wholesome *kammic* effect. It will follow you in your life-cycle and prove beneficial. So Sumedhā thought of turning his wealth into the most solid property or *anugāmi* property that he could take with him on his death.

So the Bodhisatta Sumedhā gave away all his wealth and became an ascetic. He was then about 16 or at most 20 years old. As a young ascetic, he developed concentration, trained his mind and within seven days he attained *jhāna* and psychic power. Later on he offered him-

## RENUNCIATION

self as a bridge at the foot of the Dīpaṅkarā Buddha who prophesied that he would become a Buddha.

Here the Bodhisatta's intention to give away all his wealth as the right intention or the thought of renunciation. So was his thought of becoming a ascetic and trying to attain *jhāna* and psychic powers. So too was his thought of seeking Buddhahood by offering his body to be used as a bridge by the Buddha.

Likewise, the thought of making daily devotion before the shrine of the Buddha and observing the five precepts, etc., is thought of renunciation. So is the thought of observing the eight precepts on sabbath days or the thought of hearing the dhamma and practising it. Here the practice of the Dhamma means renunciation of desirable and pleasant sense-objects. The Dhamma will be foreign to those who are steeped in sensuous pleasure. So although you urge them to practise it they will refuse to do so on one pretext or another.

You have thoughts of harmlessness (*avyāpāda*) when you diffuse love and goodwill toward a person or persons; or when you are interested in their welfare; or when you work for their welfare verbally or physically; or when as a leader you do something for the good of your followers.



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You have thoughts of harmlessness (*avihiṃsa-vitakka*) when you avoid harming a person out of compassion and sympathy; or when you think of saving or helping a suffering person. Such compassionate thoughts occur often in nurses and doctors who attend the sick kindly. It is with compassion and thoughts of harmlessness that we pray for the end of suffering among other people. Let us cultivate compassion especially towards those who are sick, distressed or wailing over their misfortunes.

During the practice of insight-meditation every moment of mindfulness means the rejection of three kinds of unwholesome thought and the cultivation of the three kinds of wholesome thought. If at the moment of seeing, the visual object is watched and its true nature (that is the fact of its having the three marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*) realized, there can be no sensuous thought, no hateful thought and no harmful thought. The same may be said of the state of consciousness at the moment of hearing or eating, etc. Every moment of mindfulness means the development of wholesome thoughts as opposed to unwholesome thoughts. In other words, the right intention in itself that is involved in mindfulness helps to develop thoughts of renunciation, thereby excluding sensuous thoughts. Ill-will and aggressive

## OVERCOMING WRONG THOUGHTS

thoughts are removed in the same way. For if you are aware of the impermanence of everything at every moment of mindfulness, how can there be the desire for an impermanent object or malicious and aggressive thoughts on account of it?

So the meditating yogis develop the three kinds of right thought or intention at every moment of mindfulness. As their insight-knowledge develops and becomes perfect, they see Nibbāna and attain the Ariyan path. The right intention on the Ariyan level helps the yogi to overcome the unwholesome thoughts progressively. At the first stage it removes the sensuous thoughts that lead to the lower worlds. At the second stage it removes the gross forms of sensuous thoughts, etc. At the third stage the subtle forms of sensuous thoughts are stamped out while at the last stage, i.e. on the level of the Arahant, the right intentions root out the unwholesome thoughts arising from the desire for the world of forms and the formless world.

The Buddha therefore urged his disciples to lessen their defilements by having right intentions. We should cultivate right intentions to avoid the wrong path of wrong intentions for our spiritual uplift and for the extinction of wrong intentions.

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### WRONG SPEECH (MICCHĀVĀCĀ)

Wrong speech is speaking wrongly or improperly. It is of four kinds, viz., lying, slandering in order to create dissensions among those who love one another, abusing and talking frivolously. These kinds of speech may serve the interest of the speaker and so there may be justification for them in his eyes but they may be harmful to other persons and the speaker will have to bear the unwholesome *kammic* effect of his wrong speech in future.

### RIGHT SPEECH (SAMMĀVĀCĀ)

Right speech means abstinence from wrong speech. Here the term *sammāvācā* refers not to what one says but to the avoidance of lying, etc., whenever the occasion arises. Such abstention is called *virati*. Those who are committed to the five precepts should avoid lying and kindred wrong speech such as slandering, abusing and frivolous talk. Needless to say, the abstention from the four kinds of wrong speech is binding on those who have committed themselves to *ājīvaṅghamaka* morality. During meditation the abstention is effected through overcoming by the opposite (*tadaṅgapahāna*). So in effect meditation involves *virati* (abstention) although it has substantially little to do with it. Then on the Ariyan path the four kinds of wrong speech are rooted out through destruction (*samucchedapahāna*).

## WRONG ACTION

### WRONG ACTION (MICCHĀKAMMANTA)

Wrong action is of three kinds, viz., killing, stealing and committing sexual acts wrongfully. These acts may be justified by those who commit them but they are by no means justifiable from the point of view of the victim. For how can you say that it is proper for a person to kill you for the good of someone or some people, to steal or rob you of your property or to lust for your wife or daughter? Everyone will agree that these acts are evil and those who commit them will have to suffer in future for their evil deeds.

Here, too, right action means abstinence from killing, etc. Those who have committed themselves to non-killing and so avoid killing are doing the right action. Every moment of mindfulness during meditation leads to abstinence from killing, etc., although it involves no element of consciousness (*cetasika*) as regards abstention (*virati*). On the Ariyan path all wrong actions are done away with through destruction.

### WRONG LIVELIHOOD (MICCHĀĀJIVA)

Wrong livelihood is to earn one's living by getting money unlawfully. Some people commit evil deeds such as killing to make their living but some commit evil not for economic reason but because of their greed or anger. Evil deeds that have nothing to do with one's living but

stem from anger or greed are not wrong livelihood but wrong action or wrong speech. For example, the killing of mosquitoes, snakes, etc., or one's enemy through anger is wrong action. But the killing of chickens, pigs, fish, etc., for the market or for one's own consumption is wrong livelihood. As for stealing or robbing, it is usually done for economic reason and so most of these acts are to be classified as wrong livelihood. Stealing out of spite or through ill-will, habit or propensity is of course wrong action. Unlawful sexual intercourse has usually nothing to do with one's living. To seduce a woman, however, for the sake of money or for one's living is wrong livelihood.

Telling a lie in business transaction is wrong livelihood; but if you lie for other reasons, it is wrong speech. The same may be said of slandering. Nowadays some kinds of propaganda are defamations that fall within the category of wrong livelihood. They are very harmful. Abusive language is not very much used in business. But there are many kinds of wrong livelihood in the form of frivolous talk that we can find in fiction-writing, play acting, film-making and so forth.

All kinds of wrong livelihood involve violation of the moral code that prescribes abstinence from killing, etc. Those who observe the five precepts are free from the seven kinds of

## RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

wrong livelihood that we have mentioned above. It is obvious that those who adhere to *ājivaññhamaka* morality are especially free from wrong livelihood. Right livelihood is to earn money lawfully with moral life untainted by any kind of wrong livelihood.

### RIGHT LIVELIHOOD (SAMMĀ ĀJIVA)

To put it another way, right livelihood is to make one's living without killing, stealing, etc. Wise men of yore described it as proper farming, proper trading and so forth. Obviously proper farming is cultivating crops or gardening by one's sweat of labour without ill-treating another person. Proper trading is to buy goods at proper price without ill-treating, killing, stealing robbing or cheating another person and then to sell them properly at current prices. In olden days there were few traders who made a profit of one kyat on a commodity that was worth ten kyats. Later the business men became greedy and some of them sold their goods at a profit of hundred percent. This is not proper marketing. Proper marketing is to market goods of genuine quality at proper prices without any attempt at profiteering.

Those who thus sell their goods properly benefit from their business. In 1952 there was in Zeygyo bazaar at Mandalay a grocery owner named Ko Nyan. He was a Burmese Buddhist. He spoke to his customers courteously, "Sir,



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what can I do for you?". He did not overcharge his goods but stated the exact price. If a customer haggled, he would say, "Sir, I cannot reduce the price; I make only a profit of two pice on one kyat." Even if the buyer happened to be a child, he never thought of cheating over the price and quality of the good. If the wrong article was sold by mistake, the buyer could change it for the right one. So his four or five assistants were always busy, a form of right livelihood that was really commendable.

Again a Government employee or a worker in a private business or a porter who does his work dutifully for a reasonable wage is earning right livelihood. So is the driver or the boatman who works conscientiously and charges fairly for his service.

### THE RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AND THE WRONG LIVELIHOOD OF THE BHIKKHUS

Unlike the laymen with their seven rules of conduct the bhikkhus have a wide variety of moral rules binding on them. A bhikkhu should not ask for food, robes or dwelling unless the person who is thus requested happens to be his relative or to have invited him. Neither should he nor other bhikkhus use anything that is received in this way. Asking outright for

## KULADUSANA

donations as is being done nowadays is very unbecoming of a bhikkhu. A bhikkhu should not even show signs or make indirect remarks that would induce a layman to offer food or robes. It is wrong livelihood to use anything that the bhikkhu obtains by begging, or showing signs or through artful suggestions.

Moreover, any effort on the part of a bhikkhu to make himself intimate with laymen or laywomen or to endear himself to them by giving flowers, fruits or food is an offence called *kuladūsana* which means destroying the faith of the laity. Giving flowers, etc., may help to win the affection of the recipients but it will not contribute to their faith. For respect for a bhikkhu can become genuine faith only if it is due to his moral purity and other qualities. So any attempt to cultivate intimacy by giving flowers, etc., is harmful to the original true faith that the bhikkhu's virtuous life has created. The lay follower is then likely to revere only the monk who gives flowers. He will not care for other good monks. The so-called reverence for the liberal monk is in reality nothing more than affection that we find among ordinary people since it has little to do with faith. So it is improper for a bhikkhu to offer flowers, food, etc., to his lay followers, to fawn on them, to serve them, to care for their children, to practise medicine, to

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read their horoscopes or engage in any other faith-destroying, wrong livelihood. It is also wrong livelihood to make use of the consumer goods which the monk gets by means of such practices.

The bhikkhu should avoid, too, hypocrisy in regard to material goods, *jhāna*, *magga*, etc., and the practice of meditation. Some bhikkhus pretend to have no desire for the robe or food offered by their lay followers. They would refuse to accept it, "I do not want good robes and good food. I am content with cast-off rags and the food that I get by begging." Their refusal strengthens the faith of their lay follower who repeatedly requests them to accept his offer. Then they accept and never decline the offer of the lay believers on whom they have thus impressed their apparent distaste for the good things of life. This is the way of earning one's living wrongly by posing as an ascetic.

A monk may say, "A bhikkhu who wears his robes like this or who dwells in such a place is usually a Noble One, an Arahant or one who has attained *jhāna* and psychic powers." The description conforms to the speaker's mode of life, the way he puts on his robe. This is a kind of wrong livelihood by a hypocritical monk.

Some monks do not meditate but they behave themselves quietly and gently like a meditating

## FALSE PRETENCE AND DECEPTION

yogi. They stand, sit, lie down, bend or stretch their hands like a yogi absorbed in *jhāna* or concentration. This is also wrong livelihood by false pretence.

Some pretend to be able to read the mind of another person. If a monk who is preaching says, "Ho! The woman over there is distracted. Be attentive and practise breathing," there may indeed be some distracted women in the congregation. Such women would be much impressed and have a high opinion of the monk. Or if a monk says that he was a king and that such and such a woman was his queen in a previous existence, he will be credited with psychic powers by some of his followers. This is wrong livelihood by deception.

A bhikkhu should not use anything that is offered by a lay disciple who has been thus deceived. He should live only on those things that he can have by right livelihood. If there is no one to offer him food, he should go about begging for it. If he has no proper robe, he should search for cast-off rags. Or he should stand in front of the house of a lay man and when he is asked what he wants, he should express his desire for a robe. It is not improper to say what he wants in response to an inquiry. To seek the necessities of life through bodily expression (*kāyaviññatti*) is right livelihood. Food, robes, etc, which a lay man offers

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out of regard for the learning, spiritual life and sermons of a monk are pure since the monk receives them lawfully. So the Buddha urged his disciples to make their living rightfully.

### THREE KINDS OF ABSTENTIONS (VIRATI)

Right speech, right action and right livelihood are three wholesome abstentions. Each abstention is of three kinds. First there is *sampatta virati* when a man abstains from a misdeed without having been committed to moral rules. Thus a man who has not vowed to observe the moral precepts may abstain from lying, stealing or killing at certain moments of life that expose him to temptations. Then we have *samādāna virati* that refers to a man who having pledged himself to observe the precepts sees to it that his moral life is pure. The third abstention is the one on the Ariyan path called *samuccheda virati* that serves to root out all evils.

Of these three kinds of abstentions the last one, viz., *samuccheda virati* is not associated with any thought of abstention. The yogi's mind is focussed on Nibbāna. But from the time he attains the Ariyan path there never arises any desire to do evil. Evil desires become totally extinct and this means complete abstention and hence the name *virati*. In the same way while meditating, the mindful yogi realizes the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of all sense-objects and so he has no unwholesome desire to kill, steal,

## WRONG EFFORT

lie, etc., and this means abstention from misdeeds. Thus insight meditation involves in effect the three kinds of abstention. When meditation is perfect there is abstention on Ariyan level and then all wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood are rooted out.

### WRONG EFFORT (MICCHĀVĀYĀMA)

Wrong effort means hard work and perseverance in regard to misdeeds. Some people have a very strong will in doing evil. They try hard and kill, steal or rob successfully in the face of difficulties. Theirs is a clear example of wrong effort. For example, in killing mosquitoes or bugs, there is effort to crush or beat the insects. Lying easily involves effort and so does abusing. The wrong effort is obvious in the manufacture of weapons for the killing of living beings and so is it in defamation, modern fiction-writing and film-making. Wrong effort creates unwholesome things that have not yet arisen and encourages unwholesome things that have arisen. Moreover, it is wrong effort to seek sensual pleasure and objects. It is evident in the case of people who line up to buy tickets at the cinema-halls and theatres. In short, trying to do an unwholesome deed is wrong effort.

### RIGHT EFFORT (SAMMĀVĀYĀMA)

Right effort is the opposite of wrong effort. It is strenuous effort in connection with alms-



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giving, morality and mind development. There are four kinds of right effort, viz., (1) the effort to overcome unwholesome tendencies that have occurred. If, for example, you have killed mosquitoes, etc., it is up to you to avoid doing so in future. If you have lied before, you should try to avoid lying in future. (2) The effort to avoid unwholesome tendencies that have not yet occurred. If you see others killing, lying or stealing, you should seek to avoid such misdeeds just as you seek to avoid a contracting a disease which you see afflicting other people.

(3) Trying to do good things which you have not yet done is also right effort. You should give alms and observe moral precepts, if you have not done such things. You should regard the Buddha with his nine attributes as the noblest being and vow to have faith in him and follow his teaching, reciting thrice the Refuge formula ("I go to the Buddha for refuge"). Similar vows should be made in respect of the Dhamma and the Sangha. We should observe the five precepts or the eight precepts and if possible, become *sāmaṇeras* and *bhikkhus* and live up to the moral codes prescribed for them. It is not easy to become a permanent *bhikkhus* but some may join the holy order temporarily. Then there are other good things to do such as revering those who are worthy of

## RIGHT EFFORT

reverence, doing service to them, hearing their talks, etc.

We should also meditate on the Buddha, loving-kindness (*mettā*), repulsiveness (of the phenomenal world), in-and-out breathing, etc., for concentration and mental development. Then we should practise insight meditation. Even if we have practised it, we should continue the practice if we have not yet developed unusual insight-knowledge. We should especially seek *udayabbhayañāṇa* (insight into fast-arising-and-passing away), *saṅkhārupekkhañāṇa* (equanimity-knowledge). Wholesome or good things on the Ariyan path are those which have never occurred to the worldlings. We should seek to cultivate such wholesome things on the path and the attempt to cultivate or develop new wholesome things is right effort.

(4) It is also right effort when we try to strengthen and perfect the wholesome things that have already developed. This needs no elaboration.

So the yogis who are here practising insight-meditation are at every moment of mindfulness trying to overcome unwholesome things that have arisen; trying to avoid unwholesome things that have not yet arisen; trying to cultivate wholesome things that have not yet arisen and that such effort concerns higher insight meditation and Ariyan path; and trying

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to strengthen and perfect the wholesome things of insight-meditation that have already arisen.

These four right efforts are also called four *sammappadhāna* (the four right exertions).

### WRONG RECOLLECTION (MICCHĀSATI)

Wrong recollection is the remembrance of worldly matter and unwholesome things of the past. Some remember the unwholesome things that they did when they were young, their companions, the places they visited, their happy days and so forth. They may be likened to cows chewing their curd at night. These are wrong recollections. But it is not wrong recollection when one recognizes the mistakes of the past, repents and resolves not to repeat them in future. Such repentance is right recollection. Some monks think of their parents, relatives, native places and the companions of their childhood. They recall how they spent their days as laymen. They think of what they have to do for so-and-so. All these recollections of the past are wrong recollections.

Laymen need not reject thoughts about their sons, daughters etc. for such recollections are natural. But while meditating, the yogi should watch and reject them. As he sits in his retreat at the meditation center, watching the arising-and-falling of the abdomen or his other bodily movements ("sitting", "touching", etc.,) the

## RIGHT RECOLLECTIONS

yogi recalls what he did formerly, his sayings and doings in his youth, his friends, etc. These are wrong recollections and have to be watched and rejected. Some old men and women think of their grand-children. While watching their thoughts, they have mental visions of the kids near them and they fancy they hear the kids calling them. All these have to be watched and removed. Some have to return home since they cannot overcome these unwholesome thoughts. A yogi's spiritual effort is thus often thwarted by wrong recollections. In the final analysis a wrong recollection is not a distinct, separate element of consciousness. It is a collection of unwholesome elements in the form of memories *vis-a-vis* worldly and unwholesome things of the past.

### RIGHT RECOLLECTIONS (SAMMĀSATI)

Opposed to wrong recollection is the right recollection or recollection of wholesome things concerning alms-giving, morality and mental development. One recalls how one did such-and-such good things at such-and-such a time in days gone by; good deeds such as offering *kathein* robes and food, keeping sabbath on *uposatha* days, etc. This recollection of wholesome things is right recollection. It is the element of recollection that goes along with wholesome consciousness. It is involved in every arising of wholesome consciousness such

as alms-giving, devotion before the Buddha image, doing service to one's elders, observing the moral precepts, practising mind-development, etc.

No wholesome consciousness is possible without right recollection. But it is not apparent in ordinary wholesome consciousness. It is evident in the practice of mind-development (*bhāvanā*) especially in the practice of insight meditation. Hence in the Pitaka the elaboration of right recollection is to be found in the sutta on four applications of attentiveness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). It is *sammāsati* to be attentive to all bodily behaviour or postures, to all pleasant or unpleasant feelings, to all states of consciousness and to all mental phenomena or mind-objects (*dhamma*).

The yogis who practise insight-meditation are cultivating right recollection on the *vipassanā* level. They watch all psycho-physical phenomena that arise from six senses; they focus their attention generally on the arising and falling of the abdomen, sitting, bending, walking and so forth. This is cultivation of attentiveness to body. Sometimes the yogi watches his feelings, "painful", "depressed", "joyful", "good", etc. This is to develop attentiveness to feelings. At times attention is focused on "thinking", "intending". etc. This is cultiva-

## WRONG CONCENTRATION

tion of attentiveness to states of consciousness. Then there is watchfulness in regard to "seeing", "hearing", "desiring", "being angry", "being lazy", "being distracted" etc. This is to develop attentiveness to mind objects. Every moment of watchfulness means cultivation of *vipassanā* attentiveness and is very gratifying. When this *vipassanā* attentiveness develops and becomes perfect, there arises attentiveness on the Ariyan path that makes you aware of Nibbāna. So you should practise until you attain this final stage of attentiveness.

### WRONG CONCENTRATION (MICCHĀSAMĀDHI)

Wrong concentration is concentration of mind on a misdeed which one intends to commit bodily or by word of mouth. It is concentration that enables one to do evil successfully. For example, when you intend to tell a lie, your intention will materialize only if you fix your mind on the words that you have to utter falsely. If your mind wanders, you are likely to speak the truth unwittingly. It is said that at the law courts the truth about some cases come to light when some persons who have greed to give false evidence are sidetracked by lawyers whose cross-examination is designed to create confusion. This is due to lack of concentration on the part of the witnesses. So concentration is vital when you do a bad deed. The power of wrong concentration is indeed



very great when men plan a big massacre, stage a big robbery or produce lethal weapons.

RIGHT CONCENTRATION (SAMMĀ-SAMĀDHI)

Right concentration is concentration in regard to wholesome deeds such as alms-giving or observance of moral precepts. Alms-giving involves concentration that is strong enough to effect it. So does paying respect or doing service to others. Concentration is most vital to exercises in mind-training such as preaching and hearing sermon. It is more important in the practice of in-and-out breathing where you have to fix your mind wholly on a single object. Concentration related to such wholesome consciousness is *sammā-samādhi*.

*Sammā-samādhi* is of three kinds viz., (1) *Khaṇi-kasamādhi* (temporary concentration) (2) *upacā-samādhi* (neighbourhood concentration) (3) *appanā-samādhi* (attainment concentration).

Concentration that is involved when there arises ordinary forms of wholesome consciousness such as alms-giving and morality is called *khaṇikasamādhi* as it is temporary. This ordinary concentration is not notable and so the scriptures make no mention of it. It is mentioned only in connection with the foundations of concentration and insight meditation. So it is concentration that occurs at the preparatory stage of mental development (*bhāvanā*) or at the

## RIGHT CONCENTRATION

beginning of the exercise. Concentration which is powerful enough to exclude hindrances is called *upacāsamādhi* or neighbourhood concentration. The concentration that the yogi has on the attainment of *jhāna* is called *appanā* or attainment *samādhi*.

In *vipassanā* (insight-meditation) there is *khaṇikasamādhi* when the yogi concentrates on the four elements, the five *khandhas*, *nāma* and *rūpa*, etc. But at the beginning concentration is not apparent as it is not well developed. When it is developed the mind is entirely fixed on the object of contemplation. During that time the yogi is free from hindrances such as sensual desires. The mind becomes a ceaseless stream of thought-moments characterized by watchfulness. This is *khaṇikasamādhi* of insight meditation. It is also called neighbourhood concentration as it is like *upacāsamādhi* which frees one from hindrances. So in the commentary on *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* ways of movement, bodily postures (*iriyāpatha*) clear-sightedness (*sampajañña*) mental advertence of the elements (*dhātumanasikāra*) are described as *upicā kammaṭṭhāna*. *Visuddhimagga* ("The Path of Purity") also identifies the *dhātumanasikāra kammaṭṭhāna* of *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* with *catudhātuvaṅkatthāna* (analysis of the four elements) *kammaṭṭhāna* and describes the attainment of *upacāsamādhi* through it.

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So for the meditating yogi, from the time concentration is developed enough to exclude hindrances, the *samādhi* that arises at every moment of mindfulness is *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* that is like the *upacā-samādhi*. Indeed it is also called *upacā samādhi* since it resembles the latter in respect of its ability to free the yogi from hindrances. The yogi has them purity of consciousness because the mindful *vipassanā* consciousness is pure. When the insight knowledge is perfect, the yogi attains the fruition or result on the Ariyan path that brings him into contact with Nibbāna. The concentration at the moment of attaining the fruition of the Ariyan path is supramundane attainment concentration.

Wholesome *sammāsamādhi* is of three kinds, viz., *khaṇika-samādhi*, *upacā-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi*. The Pāli Pitaka explains *sammā-samādhi* in terms of the four *jhānas*. The Pali texts mention only the *jhāna* of the fine-material sphere, *jhāna-samādhi* of the immaterial sphere (*arūpa-jhāna*) and *maggophala-samādhi* as the three primary types of *samādhi*. We must assume that *upacā-samādhi* and *vipassanā-samādhi* are of secondary importance since these are included in the first *jhāna-samādhi*. For without the *khaṇika upacā-samādhi* the mundane *jhāna-samādhi* and the supramundane *samādhi* are not possible and moreover this *khaṇika upacā samādhi* helps to overcome the wrong *samādhi*.

## WRONG REFLECTION

### WRONG LIBERATION (MICCHĀVIMUTTI)

Wrong liberation is the state of consciousness which one mistakes for real liberation. There are many kinds of wrong liberation. There are many wrong views about liberation among non-Buddhists.

### WRONG REFLECTION (MICCHĀÑĀṆA)

It is wrong reflection to have a misconception and to misuse one's intelligence. Such kind of reflection is born of ignorance. The Commentary defines it as devising means of doing evil and gloating over one's evil deed.

One has to plan in the face of difficulties to kill, steal, rob or lie. Planning is also essential to success in doing evil. For killing a large number of living beings easily, it is necessary to plan the production of machines, weapons and poisons. The mastermind behind such planning is generally recognized as intelligence but in reality it is ignorance or misdirected knowledge. Moreover, after doing evil, we often justify ourselves or rationalize our actions. This, too, is misuse of intelligence rooted in ignorance.

### RIGHT REFLECTION (SAMMĀÑĀṆA)

Opposed to wrong reflection is sammāñāṇa which means reflection on the path, fruition or Nibbāna which one has attained or reflection on defilements that are extinct or that are

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still dormant. These reflections are termed *paccavekkhaṇāṇā* and the yogi at the *sotāpana* stage has four kinds of these reflection; at the *sakādāgāmi* stage he has five kinds; at the *anāgāmi* stage he has five kinds while the Arahats who has no defilements has four kinds of reflection.

The yogis who contemplate all the *nāma-rūpa* that arise from the six senses are on the way to developing right reflection. When the reflection becomes perfect through constant contemplation there arises the extraordinary insight called *saṅkhārupekkhāṇā* (equanimity insight—knowledge). At this stage the yogi can watch the sense-objects for two or three hours at a stretch. He is unaffected and neither pleased nor displeased in the face of pleasant or unpleasant objects and experiences. He is barely aware of and indifferent to all events. His perception sharpens and he realizes the arising-and-passing away of all *nāma-rūpa*. He reflects on the dissolution and then on the extinction of all phenomena.

This reflection on the extinction without arising-and-passing away is reflection on Nibbana (*paccavekkhadṇāṇā*). Some yogis reflect on the extinction of the illusion of ego-entity and all doubts about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Some reflect on the need for further effort in view of the vestiges of defilements such as craving, anger or ignorance. Accord-

## RIGHT REFLECTION

ding to the commentaries, such reflections on defilements occur only to some knowledgeable yogis. They occur on the attainment of the *sotāpatti* stage and its fruition.

If the yogi at the *sotāpatti* stage strives for higher spiritual experience and if he has the potential for it he will attain it and there will occur other reflections. As we have pointed out above, there are altogether nineteen of such reflections (*sammāñāṇa*) or *paccavekkhaṇañāṇa*). According to the Buddha, the disciples should develop all these kinds of right reflections.

## WRONG LIBERATION (MICCHĀVIMUTTI)

Wrong liberation is the state of consciousness which one mistakes for real liberation. There are many kinds of wrong liberation. There are many wrong views about liberation among Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Non-Buddhists believe that they are liberated when they succeed in their search for *atman* or when they differentiate *atman* from *khandhas* or personality. In the lifetime of the Buddha the Jains who were the disciples of the prominent religious teacher Nigaṇṭhanāṭputta held that they could achieve liberation through the practice of austerities that would help them to exhaust the old *kamma* and make them immune to new *kamma*. They lived in a state of nature because they believed that non-attachment to



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cloths was a sign of full liberation. These naked ascetics were honoured as Arahats by their followers.

There are still such ascetics in India. Some seek liberation by worshipping fire, some hope they will be liberated if they cleanse themselves of their sins by bathing in the Ganges river. Some hope to attain liberation in heaven by worshipping the All-mighty God. Some people like the rishis Ālāra, Rāma and Udaka believe in liberation through Nothingness (*ākāṅkānāyatana*) *jhāna* or Neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*neva-saññā*), *jhāna*. Some people identifies liberation with *jhāna* of the fine material sphere. For Baka brahma liberation is attainment of the brahma world of his first *jhāna*.

Among Buddhists, too, there is the view which equates liberation with the attainment of one of the *jhāna*. The Buddha mentioned it at the beginning of this sutta. We have also referred to Mahānaga and Mahātissa teras who harboured such a delusion. Then there are yogis who speak of their attainment of the path and its result when they have unusual experiences such as seeing the light, joy and ecstasy attendant on the emergence of *udayabbaya* insight (insight into fast arising and passing away.) Some believe they have made much spiritual progress even when they have less significant but unusual experiences such as feeling cool and

## RIGHT LIBERATION

fresh, feeling light, sudden tremor, collapsing, seeing extraordinary forms and visions, hearing strange sounds, seeing repulsive objects, feeling contact with space, feeling oneself on a big expanse of water, seeing the light and so forth.

Some become unconscious while sitting within two hour or two or three days after practising mindfulness. When the body of such a yogi is lifted, his sitting posture remains intact but when questioned, he cannot point out the distinction between corporeality and consciousness or the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. So these unusual experiences are purely based on concentration. But for ignorant people they may mean cessation of psycho-physical phenomena or absorption in the fruition of the path.

What is important is the successive arising of the different kinds of insight-knowledge that lead to the knowledge of the path and fruition and to liberation. Those who consider themselves liberated should at least have unwavering faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha as well as in their moral integrity, have no faith in any practice that is devoid of the path, should be free from ego-belief and doubt and very strict in the observance of the five precepts. A man may claim spiritual progress or *sotāpanna*-hood without being free even from the breaches of the five precepts but his sense of liberation is purely *micchāvimutti*.

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Here for the information of readers we will mention the cause of wrong liberation cited in the commentary on Samāgama sutta of Majjhima-nikāya.

### THE "LIGHT" ARAHAT

In response to the request of his disciples a monk gave instructions for what he described as instant attainment of Arahatsip. Each yogi was to meditate on his original object in his room. If while he was thus meditating, there appeared a light he would be on the first path. The second appearance of the light would indicate the attainment of the second path, the third and fourth lights the third and fourth paths respectively. The yogi would then become an Arahata. Because of such instructions his disciples decided that he was an Arahata. When he died later they believed that he had attained Nibbāna and so they honoured and cremated his remains pompously. The bones were enshrined in a *stūpa*. At that time some knowledgeable monks arrived as guests and the hosts told them about the instruction of their teacher, his supposed *parinibbāna* and so forth.

Then the visiting monks said "Sires, the light which your teacher saw is not the path. It is called *upakkilesa*, something that defiles insight-meditation. You are not well-informed on *vipassanā*. In fact, your teacher is a mere worldling. Their explanation was based on

## BOGŪS ĀRAHATS

scriptures but it was not acceptable to the other monks who resented any adverse reflection on their teacher and argued the case for his spiritual attainments. Thus some people credit a person with Arahatship when he is in fact not an Arahata. The commentary states that these people cannot attain the Path and fruition or even the *deva*-world so long as they do not renounce their wrong view.

The Tīkā explains the commentary's statement as follows.

“To cling firmly to a wrong view that makes one upgrade the blame worthy worldling to the status of an Ariya, the Noble One, talk about it (the wrong view), to extol it or to argue for it is an obstacle to the attainment of the *deva*-world or the path.”

We should bear in mind then that it is a grave mistake to glorify one's teacher and argue about him when he is just an ordinary person.

### IRON-POT-ROASTING ARAHAT

The commentary goes on with another monk's account of Arahatship. The monk said that his disciples should imagine kindling a fire and putting an iron pot over it. Then the disciple should imagine his physical body to be put into the pot and roasted. When the body is reduced to ashes, they must be blown away

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with the moth. Then the disciple becomes a monk who has been purged of all evils. The teacher who preached thus was also honoured as an Arahant and after cremation his bones were enshrined in a *stupa*. His disciples also argued with the visiting monks about him.

### EARTHEN-POT ARAHANT

Still, another monk said that his disciples should imagine a large earthen pot placed on fire, the pot that is supposed to contain the thirty two parts of the body. The contents of the pot are then to be stirred up and dissolved and the froth that comes up is to be consumed mentally. This is, the monk said, imbibing the nectar of the Dhamma. This view is in fact the misinterpretation of the Buddha's teaching that those who devote themselves to contemplation of the body enjoy Nibbana. The teacher who preached thus was also honoured as an Arahant and a *stupa* enshrining his bones built as a memorial. He, too, was the subject of controversy between his disciples and other monks.

These are instances of wrong liberation in ancient times. Cases of this kind are likely to be on the increase nowadays. At one time some preached that a knowledge of the four Noble Truths meant Buddhahood and so there arose some of their followers who impudently called themselves Buddhas. But if we are to exposé

## RIGHT LIBERATION

cases of wrong liberation in detail, it would mean indirect attack on some people and so we will leave it at that.

### RIGHT LIBERATION (SAMMĀVIMUTTI)

Right liberation is liberation that presupposes the eight stages of purification, the twelve kinds of insight-knowledge, the four Ariyan (Noble) paths and the four Ariyan fruitions.

Before the yogi practises insight-meditation, he must be morally pure. Then he must have *upacā-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi* that will ensure his mental purity. While watching, the yogi should know the distinction between the corporeality that is being watched and the watching consciousness. Then he must know the cause and effect and reflect independently on *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* (impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality of existence). Then he must have *udayabbaya* knowledge or insight into the arising afresh-and-instant vanishing of the corporeality and consciousness that he watches. He will have unusual experiences such as seeing the light, feeling joyful, faith, etc. He must watch and transcend them. Then there will arise *bhaṅga* and *bhaya* insights that see the object of attention and the attending consciousness vanishing together. Then he must clearly have *saikhārupekkhañāṇa* or insight that is concerned with equanimity and bare awareness without effort.



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This should be followed by *anulomañāṇa* (adaptation knowledge) that occurs very quickly and Ariyan insight that brings the yogi into contact with Nibbāna and finally leads to liberation. Such is right liberation. According to the commentary, all the aggregates of mental elements and consciousness relating to fruition with those of the eightfold path excepted is in effect right liberation. Other Pāli texts define liberation as the sum-total of fruition-consciousness and mental elements. In accordance with their explanations we may as well understand right belief, etc., in terms of knowledge, etc., at the moment of attaining the Path and the right liberation in terms of right belief, etc., at the moment of attaining the fruition of the Path.

We will now go on with three hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) viz., torpor and languar (*thinamiddha*) restlessness (*uddhacca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*). We have dealt with the other two hindrances viz., sensuous desire and ill-will in our talk on the ten unwholesome propensities.

### TORPOR AND LANGUAR (THINAMIDDHA)

The Pāli books describe *thina* as the torpor of the mind and *middha* as the torpor of mental factors (*cetasika*). But *cetasika* is not a common word in Burmese language and so we will translate *thina-middha* as mental torpor. Since *cetasikas* are always bound up with *citta* (mind)

## TORPOR AND LANGUAR

the torpor of *citta* means torpor of *cetasikas*. Mental torpor means a decline in energy and laziness. For the yogi who is engaged in meditation low energy and a dull, sluggish mind are obstacles to the development of concentration. Hence *thina-middha* is described as a *nivāraṇa* (hindrance).

The yogi must first free himself from hindrances and make himself pure. He should overcome the hindrances by means of *jhāna-samādhi* or *upacā-samādhi* (neighbourhood concentration).

The Satipatthāna sutta contains two parts, the first dealing with *samatha* (tranquillity) and the second with *vipassanā* (insight). Practice of in-and-out breathing and reflection on impurity as described in the first part lead to attainment of *jhāna-samādhi*. The section on in-and-out-breathing says:—

“The yogi breathes in (*assasati*) attentively; he breathes out (*passasati*) attentively.”

*Assāsa* is translated as exhaled air and *passasa* as inhaled air in secular treatises and lexicons. But in the Pāli books of *patisambhidāmagga* which sets forth the course of training in holy life *assāsa* and *passāsa* are described as inhaled air and exhaled air respectively. This interpretation is more reasonable in practice. For if you fix your mind on the nostril in the practice of breathing, the inhaled air is first

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apparent. It also fits in with the Pāli term "*ānāpāna*". *Ānā* means inhaled air, *pāna* means exhaled air. So I have translated *passasati* as breathe out.

In breathing in and out the yogi should do so mindfully. According to the commentary, if contact with the in and out air is apparent at the nostril or the upper lip, the yogi should watch the point of contact. He must ignore the air that is breathed into the body or the air that is breathed out. He must watch 'in, in, and 'out', 'out'. The commentary suggests that the beginner should practise by counting, 'one, two, three,' etc. But what matters most is the development of concentration through the practice. So it will do as well if the yogi just watches always mindfully "in, in," "out, out", whenever he breathes. Through such practice he will be free from sensuous desire and other hindrances and attain *upacā-samādhi* (neighbourhood concentration) and the four *jhāna* of *appana* (attainment) *samādhi*. This is the way to cultivate mental purity according to the section on *ānāpāna* in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta.

Then as regards reflection on impurity, the yogi should reflect on the thirty two parts of the body such as hair, bones, heart, liver, lung, intestines, urine, saliva, etc. This reflection will free him from hindrances and ensure *upcā-samādhi* and the first *jhāna*. This is the

## MENTAL PURIFICATION

way to achieve purity of mind through reflection on impurities.

### MENTAL PURIFICATION THROUGH INSIGHT

The other nineteen sections are described as those relating to insight meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and *upacā* (neighbourhood) concentration. The yogi notes that he walks when he walks, that he stands when he stands, that he lifts his foot when he does so and so forth. In short, he watches and notes all kinds of bodily movement.

He must also have clarity of consciousness (*sampājañña*). He must be clearly conscious in looking straight, on looking side-ways, in bending or stretching the legs or hands, in holding the robes or begging-bowl, in eating, in drinking or even in passing the waste matter out of the body. When he walks, stands, sits, sleeps, wakes up, speaks or keeps silence, he must do these things consciously. In short, every behaviour of the body must be governed by consciousness. There is no bodily behaviour that we should not watch or that should not be the object of our consciousness. We should also watch and make ourselves aware of the wind-element or the element of stiffness and motion as suggested by the arising and falling of the belly.

The yogi should also contemplate the three kinds of feeling, viz., pleasant feeling, unpleasant

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feeling and neutral feeling. This may be expanded to nine kinds of feeling. The yogi should know and note all these feelings.

As regards the contemplation of *citta* the yogi is instructed to attend to and know every state of consciousness that occurs as it is, whether it is greed or not and so on.

As for the contemplation of the mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*) there are five subjects for practice. The yogi should know the kind of hindrance that he has, whether it is sensuous desire or not, etc. He must know the five *khandhā*, viz., corporeality, feeling, perception, *kamma*-formation and consciousness. He should know the *āyatana* or the twelve bases or sources such as the eye and the visual objects, etc. When the yogis of today watch and become mindful of their seeing, hearing, etc., they are practising Satipaṭṭhana method and their practice conforms to the *āyatana* section of the sutta.

The yogi is also instructed to know the seven links of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*). This accords with the experience of the yogis when they have special illuminations following the development of insight-knowledge such as *udayabbayañāṇa*. The yogi should also know the four Noble Truths. According to the commentary, we should distinguish between two mundane truths, viz., the truth about suffering and the truth about the

## WATCH EVERYTHING

cause of suffering. When the yogi watches the desire and attachment that arise, he is aware of the truth about the cause of suffering. He also knows it after reflection. So to watch everything that arises on the basis of the abdominal rising and falling is to practise the four kinds of Satipaṭṭhana contemplation more or less in accordance with the teaching of the Satipaṭṭhāna. Each of the four methods of contemplation is especially suitable for some yogis. The yogis will attain the Ariyan path and fruition through any method that suits them best.

So we advise the yogi to watch everything starting with the rising and falling. While thus watching, the yogi is likely to be distracted by habitual thoughts which are largely the hindrance of sensual desire. Such thoughts should be watched and rejected. We become angry in the face of an unpleasant object. This is the hindrance of ill-will that has to be watched and rejected.

The yogis who practise meditation are at the beginning motivated by strong faith, will and energy. But when there does not develop an insight-knowledge, some yogis lose heart and become slack after sometime. This is the hindrance of torpor which must be removed through constant watchfulness. If watching is not helpful, the yogi should reflect on the



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virtues of the Buddha, etc., on the dangers of saṃsāra (life-cycle) and the benefits of *vipassanā*. Those who do not know how to reflect should consult their teacher and hear suitable sermons. Hearing sermons tends to dispel laziness.

*Thinamiddha* is also translated as drowsiness. Drowsiness may be due to torpor or to physical exhaustion. While watching the yogi may lose energy, become slothful and his perceptions are gradually weakened. If he cannot overcome his sloth by watching, he becomes drowsy and falls asleep. Even the chief disciple Moggalāna was overcome with torpor while meditating before he became an Arahāt. The Buddha instructed the disciples to dispel torpor by fixing the mind on light, washing one's face, and so forth.

### DROWSINESS IS NOT NECESSARILY DEFILEMENT

Drowsiness through exhaustion of the physical body may occur in the Arahāt who has no defilement. So when Saccaka, the wandering ascetic asked the Buddha whether he ever slept in the daytime, the Buddha replied that he slept during the day in the last month of summer. Saccaka said that sleeping in the daytime was regarded by some people as a form of stupor. Although he thus referred to the views of some people, he was in fact implying that the Buddha was not free from *moha* (ignorance). The Buddha then said that sleeping was neither stupor nor

## PHYSICAL TORPOR

non-stupor, that one who is not free from biases and defilements may be in stupor, that the Buddha who was free from defilement was never in stupor. So even the Buddha slept and this shows that the desire to sleep because of physical exhaustion is not to be described as torpor or as an hindrance.

## PHYSICAL TORPOR

So the *Vimuttimaggā* ("The Path of Liberation") mentions three kinds of torpor according to their causes, viz., psychological factors, hot weather and excess of food. It says that, only the psychosomatic torpor is a hindrance or a defilement and that other kinds of torpor cannot be so described because even the Arahats are not free from them. This view is repudiated in *Visuddhimagga* and the commentary on *Aṭṭhasālinī*. But physical torpor due to climate and food is also mentioned in *Milindapañā* ("Questions of Milinda") and *Petakopadesa*. Thus the theory of physical torpor was advanced by three ancient Indian books and rejected by the Sinhalese commentaries. We should therefore assume that the physical origin of torpor was accepted by Indian bhikkhus. The theory is reasonable because it is said that even the Buddha slept during the day when it was very hot.

So the term *thinamiddha* is to be restricted to laziness, drowsiness or lethargy that beset us

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in doing good deeds or in the practice of meditation. It is *thinamiddha* if it is laziness that prevents you from hearing the sermon or from meditating on the Buddha. Such *thinamiddha* should be rejected after due reflection. In particular laziness, low energy or drowsiness while you are watching the sense-objects in meditation means *thinamiddha*. This is to be watched and dispelled.

True to the teaching of the Buddha, the yogi should affirm his will to overcome *thinamiddha*. He should watch vigilantly and focus his mind on the contact between his consciousness and the object that is watched. In this way before long he will attain concentration. Concentration means insight because when the mind is concentrated it is fixed on the object of attention. There is no lethargy, no hindrance. The watching consciousness is pure and this is *cittavisuddhi* or purity of mind. Just as when you look in the darkness at night you see nothing clearly but when you switch on your flash-light, all the objects that are within the focus of the light become clearly visible. Concentration is like the electric light. All the phenomena on which you concentrate your mind become clear.

When you watch the rising and falling, you become clearly aware of the rising, falling and stiffness of the abdomen. The same may be

## RESTLESSNESS

said of the bending, stretching, lifting of your legs, etc. The yogi knows stiffness and motion clearly; every unit of the watching consciousness is also clearly perceived as if it were moving toward the object of attention. Hence there arises *nāmarūpaparicchedāñāṇa*, that is, insight into the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* and the formation of couples of the watching consciousness and the corporeality that is watched.

We will talk more of the relation between *samādih* and insight later. For the moment we stress the need for overcoming torpor through intensive mindfulness.

### DUDHACCA (RESTLESSNESS)

*Uddhacca* is mind-wandering or the straying of the mind away from the object that is to be watched. This is so well known that it needs no elaboration. While watching the rise and fall of the abdomen or the body postures, etc., the mind tends to wander to vague, indefinite objects. These thought-objects are apparently not objects of desire, irritation or doubt. Sometimes the thoughts seem to slip away in spite of all the special attention paid to the object. Occasionally the mind wavers between this and that way of watching and so is distracted and restless. This restlessness is due to overzeal. The yogi should then relax his effort, take it easy and practise watching steadily. More

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often than not restlessness is due to weak effort. So in order to avoid it the yogi should take special care to fix his mind on the object of his attention.

Watching should be done with special care just as one exercises great care to prevent a breakable object from slipping from the hand. The commentary says that some people are not tranquil even for a few seconds, their minds are always wandering. They do not try to keep their minds stable even for a moment nor do they know that it is worthwhile to do so. So the Buddha urged his disciples to overcome restlessness by fixing their mind on the object of attention instead of allowing it to wander restlessly.

At the beginning the yogi should focus on the arising (of the abdomen) from the beginning to the end. The same may be said of watching the falling, sitting, lifting, putting forward, etc. If the yogi thus keeps on watching carefully, he will develop concentration and find his consciousness falling right on the object of attention. Just as, for example, when you throw a heavy rice bag off your shoulder, it stays where it falls instead of rolling away, or just as when you plunge a spear or a pointed stick into the soft ground, it stays stuck up where it falls.

## DOUBT (VICIKICCHA)

So with the development of concentration, the mind is focused on the object and it is no longer restless but becomes pure. This is purity of mind that is free from restlessness and other hindrances. This mental purity leads to *nāmarūpa pariccheda* insight that discriminates between consciousness and corporeality.

### VICIKICCHA (DOUBT ABOUT RIGHT DHAMMA)

*Vicikicchā* is skepticism about the Buddha, his teaching, the Sangha and the practice of *sila*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. All these four kinds of skepticism are implicit in the skepticism about the true Dhamma. For one who has doubt about the true Dhamma will have doubt, too, about the Buddha who preached it, about the members of the Sangha who practise it and about the way of life that conforms to it. Hence our translation of *vicikicchā* as doubt about the right Dhamma. Also implicit in the doubt about the right Dhamma are doubt about the past of life-cycle (*samsāra*), doubt about its future, doubt about the present in relation to the combination of past and future and doubt about the relation between cause and effect (dependent origination). For the past of *samsāra*, etc., are bound up with the right Dhamma.

Thus doubt about the right Dhamma means all the eight kinds of doubt that we have mentioned. It does not include doubts that have



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nothing to do with the right dhamma, doubts such as whether this road will lead to the pagoda, whether this business is likely to be lucrative and so forth. Such kind of doubt in worldly affairs is not a *nivāraṇa* or hindrance. Only the eightfold doubt about the Dhamma is to be termed a *nivāraṇa vicikicchā*.

### DOUBT ABOUT THE PRACTICE FOR TRANQUILLITY

The yogi who devotes himself to *samātha bhāvanā* may have doubts about the practice. Would the meditation by breathing in itself lead to attainment of *jhāna*? Would it be possible to attain the four *jhānas* merely by practising the earth-*kasina*? Would such *jhānas* lead to attainment of psychic powers? Is it a fact that such powers enable a man to create things, to go underground, to fly in the air, to see or hear everything? Would watching and reflection on the thirty two parts of the body ensure the attainment of *jhānas*? These are doubts that pose a hindrance to the development of tranquillity.

### DOUBT ABOUT INSIGHT MEDITATION

Would mindfulness of one's bodily behaviour (standing, sitting, walking, etc) by itself develop the insight into the distinction between consciousness and corporeality? Is it possible for the yogi to gain insight knowledge simply by watching every phenomenon that arises from

## DOUBT ABOUT MEDITATION

six senses such as the arising and falling of the belly? These are instances of *vicikicchā* that form a hindrance to the progress in the practice of *vipassanā*.

The yogi who harbours such doubts is like a traveller at a cross-roads. If he is travelling in a new territory, he should inquire those who have travelled there before. He must travel fast if he is being followed by enemies. Suppose he stops at a cross-roads and wavers without following one way or the other. He will then be overtaken, looted and killed by the pursuing enemies. His suffering is due to his hesitation at the cross-roads.

Likewise, the yogi who has doubts is hampered in his effort to practise mindfulness. He is at the cross-roads. Because he hesitates inattentively, he does not know the sense-objects as they really are. Because of his ignorance he clings to them as if they were permanent, pleasant and substantial. Clinging causes greed, hatred and other defilements as well as wholesome and unwholesome *kammas* that lead to the lower worlds and other *samsāric* suffering such as birth, etc. Thus the doubting yogi suffers just as the hesitating traveller at the cross-roads suffers at the hand of his enemy.

So it is imperative to dispel doubts about the right Dhamma. Because of skepticism some

cannot practise meditation; some do not hear the sermons and some do not care to read books on meditation. They miss opportunities because they confuse *vicikicchā* with an inquiring mind.

#### CAUSE OF CONFUSION

In fact, some people do not grasp the secret of meditation since they do not consider Sati-*paṭṭhāna* sutta seriously. The Buddha's teaching is simple and straightforward but they mix it with the teaching of Abhidhammā and commentaries and hence their confusion. The Buddha said, *Kāye kāyanupassi viharati*. - "Be mindful of your physical body.-" which means that the yogi should focus his mind on the parts of the body and its behaviour. Meditation on the parts of the body is described fully is the method of meditating on thirty two parts such as hair, etc. Watching hair, etc., as loathsome objects is undoubtedly the practice of attentiveness to the body. Again meditation on the behaviour of the body is described in *Gacchanto vā gacchamiti pajānāti*. - "the yogi knows that he walks when he walks," etc.

The text tells us plainly to be mindful of walking when we walk, of standing when we stand, of sitting when we sit and so on. If we do not watch the behaviour of the body at the moment of its arising, we tend to consider it permanent, pleasant and substantial. But wat-

## ALL FORMS OF CORPOREALITY

ching all forms of behaviour makes us aware of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* and this awareness in turn makes one free from attachment. Hence the Buddha's insistence on the need for mindfulness at every moment. Here the bodily behaviour which is the object of attention includes the abdominal rising and falling. Tenseness and motion at the moment of rising and falling form wind-body (*vāyokāya*), watching and knowing mean *anupassanā* and so to watch and know the rising and falling is *kāyānupassanā*.

## ALL FORMS OF CORPOREALITY

(The subject for contemplation)

But the yogi should see to it that his method of contemplation is correct. The physical body is impermanent, painful and lacking in an ego-entity and repulsive. He should contemplate so as to realize these marks of life, viz., *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* and *asubha*. To this end he must first know the nature of the physical body. This calls for watching all forms of the behaviour of the body at the moment of their arising.

In other words, the yogi contemplates all forms of corporeality that are manifest in the whole body. These include solid and gross corporeality, that is earth-element (*pathavī-dhātu*) represented by hair, etc. The yogi is mindful when he is in contact with the hair or finger—

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nails or toe-nails or the skin, etc. The earth-element is also to be watched and noted when there is contact between the teeth and the tongue or between the flesh and the bones. All solid, gross or soft earth-element that is manifest is the subject for contemplation. There is no earth-element that is not worthy of contemplation.

The flowing and compounded water body (*āpo-kāya*) is also to be contemplated. *Apo kāya* means the water-element that is to be found in bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, etc., According to Pāli commentaries this element is intangible, not an object of body contact but there is flowing and wetness only after the contact between the *āpo*-element and other elements that are bound up with it. So the flowing, cohesive *āpo*-element is apparent when one contacts and watches tear, water from the nose, saliva, sweat, etc. The yogi can watch any manifestation of *vāyo*-element.

The hot, warm or cold *tezo-kāya* or heat-element is also to be watched. *Tezo-kāya* comprises (1) the normal heat of the body that causes a man to grow old (2) the feverish heat that exceeds the normal heat of the body (3) the burning, excessive heat and (4) the internal heat of the digestive system that digests and burn up all the food that is eaten. This heat-element should also be watched wherever it is apparent.

## VAYO OR WIND-ELEMENT

### VAYO OR WIND-ELEMENT

The *vāyo-kāya* or the element of stiffness and motion is also the subject for contemplation. The element of motion is sixfold, viz., (1) motion upward, (2) motion downward (3) motion in the intestines, (5) motion which causes walking, standing, sitting, lying, bending, stretching, handing, etc., (6) motion produced by in-and-out breathing. The yogi can contemplate any kind of this *vāyo*-element. To watch the behaviour of one's body ("walking" "sitting" "lying" etc.,) in accordance with the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is to watch the fifth kind of element of motion called *aṅgamaṅganusāri* in Pāli. The practice of in-and-out breathing means contemplation of the *vāyo* element of the sixth kind called *assasapassāsa*. To watch the rise and fall of the abdomen is to watch the *vāyo* element that is in motion because of the pressure of the inhaled air.

By watching thus the yogi knows the pressure of the inhaled air. So it can be said that he watches breathing in-and-out air. Some yogis may think that they should focus only one their nostril. This is true if the object is the attainment of *jhāna* and *samādhi* (concentration). *jhāna* and *samādhi* develop only if the mind is focused on a single object in one place. To attend to several objects in several places is bound to impede their development. But this



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does not apply to insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) which does not require the yogi to restrict his attention to a single place or a single object.

Every phenomenon that arises from the six senses is to be the object of mindfulness. The Buddha says, "*Sabbam abhiññeyam. Sabbam dhammam abhijānāti*" which means that the yogi should be mindful of everything. So in the practice of *vipassanā* there is not any restriction as to the part of the physical body that is or is not to be watched. Just as upward motion, downward motion, abdominal motion, intestinal motion and other motions in any place are worthy objects of contemplation, so is the motion of air breathed irrespective of any part of the body. In other words, the arising and falling indicate tautness and motion in the abdomen and so to watch them is to watch the abdominal motion.

### NO DOUBT ABOUT THE CULTIVATION OF THE FOUR SATIPATTHANAS

So to watch the rising and falling is to watch the wind-element (*vāyo-dhātu*) in accordance with Satipatthana sutta. It means watching the *assāsapassāya* (in-and-out breathing) wind-element, one of the six *vāyo dhātu* that is apparent in the abdomen. This is also contemplation through bodily postures and clarity of consciousness.

Hence to watch the rising or falling while sitting or to watch, "sitting," "sitting" is to watch

## DOUBT ABOUT RISING AND FALLING

the *vāyo*- element and its behaviour. This is the practice of *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*; so is watching other forms of behaviour such as bending, moving, walking, and so forth.

Again, to watch one's feelings — "it is cramping" "it is hot," "it is painful"—is *vedanānupassanā*. To watch every mental event whenever it occurs, imagining, thinking, intending, etc., is *cittānupassanā*. To watch seeing, hearing, etc., when these become especially manifest is *dhammānupassanā*. Hence mindfulness of rising—and falling and all other psycho-physical phenomena at the moment of their occurrence is the right dhamma that accords with the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. There is no doubt about it. Yet those who do not fully understand the nature of *vipassanā* tend to be skeptical.

Most of these skeptics are well-read and critical. Women have implicit faith in the meditation teachers and by and large they devote themselves to the *vipassanā* practice whole-heartedly. They easily attain tranquillity (*samādhi*) by virtue of their uncritical approach and unwavering faith. Tranquillity is of course followed by insight and so it is not difficult for them to pass through successive stages of insight-knowledge. But this is not true of every female yogi. There are those who do not make any progress because of their critical minds.

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Some fail to attain any insight because of their laxity, age, poor health and lack of all-out effort. There are also yogis among laymen and bhikkhus who attain *samādhi* and insight quickly by dint of systematic effort in accordance with instructions. In short, it is easy to attain *samādhi* if the yogi is convinced of the worthwhileness of the *vipassanā* method that we have mentioned above and practises steadily and zealously.

### PURITY OF MIND THROUGH TEMPORARY TRANQUILLITY

So the yogi should not harbour doubt and critical thinking but watch and reject them. Equally to be watched and rejected are sensuous desire, ill-will, torpor and restlessness. In this way he will be free from doubt and other hindrances and being always mindful, his mind will be pure. This is insight-oriented temporary tranquillity (*vipassanā*) *khaṇika samādhi* that is on a par with neighbourhood tranquillity (*upacā samādhi*). It may also be called *upacā samādhi* because of its resemblance in respect of its freedom from hindrances. Hence in the commentary on Satipaṭṭhāna sutta contemplation on bodily postures, clarity of consciousness, reflections on elements and other insight-meditations are described as *upacā kammaṅghāna* (neighbourhood contemplation). These *khaṇika samādhi* and *upacā samādhi* ensure mental purity.

## CONQUEST OF DOUBT

Hence the Buddha's teaching: "Other people may have doubt about the true Buddha, the true Dhamma and the true Sangha. But we will overcome such doubts." Thus you should practise the Sallekha dhamma that lessens your defilements. You should affirm your will to overcome doubt by following the path of right belief and right resolution. You should do for your apiritual uplift and put an end to the defilement of doubt by determination.

### CONQUEST OF DOUBT THROUGH INSIGHT AND PATH-KNOWLEDGE

Freedom from hindrances by itself will not enable us to overcome doubt. We should try to overcome it till it is uprooted on the *sotāpatti* level. So even after the mental purity has been attained with the extinction of the hindrances we should keep on watching the rise and fall and other psycho-physical phenomena. The yogi then discriminates between the object that is watched and the watching consciousness. He will note as he watches that the stiff, moving and arising corporeality is one thing and the watching consciousness another. He will make the same distinction at the moment of sitting, bending, etc. In short, the distinction between the corporeality and the consciousness will become apparent at every moment of mindfulness. The insight into such a distinction is called *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*.

This insight is the basis of *vipassanā* practice and so it is important to have it in its proper perspective. It is only after the independent, proper development of the *nāmarūpapariccheda* insight in the course of the practice of mindfulness that the yogi makes progress and passes through the higher stages of insight-knowledge. The distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* which the yogi then realizes is real. Originally it is impossible to distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa*. The two are closely bound up and do not lend themselves to intellectual analysis.

For example, when you move your hand, you cannot differentiate its motion from the desire to move it. When you watch and the distinction becomes clear, it is not possible to confuse one with the other. The watched corporeality and the watching consciousness remain sharply distinct. The distinction is borne in on you at every moment of watching and so is the non-existence of the living ego or soul apart from *nāma* and *rūpa*. This is the purity of belief.

As you keep on watching, you will realize the causal relation, that, for example, your hands bend because of your desire to bend them, that you have consciousness because there is an object for it and so on. You reflect on the causal relation between defilements in your previous life and the manifestation of *nāma-rūpa*

## FREEDOM FROM DOUBT

such as rebirth-consciousness in your present life; the causal relation between the good and evil that you experience; your effort and hope for a good life and the continuity of *nāma-rūpa* in the future life. This insight into the conditioned nature of *nāma-rūpa* is called *paccayapari-ggahañāṇa*.

So for the yogi it is crystal clear that *nāma-rūpa* is only conditional or just mere cause and effect and that there is no permanent soul or ego-entity that passes on from one life to another. This is *kaṅkhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi* or purity of escape from all doubt. With this purity, the yogi is free from all doubts such as "Did I exist in the past?" "Did I come into existence only in this life?" "Was I created by devas, Brahmas or God?" "Will I continue to exist after my death?" etc. For he is convinced of the cause-and effect relation between one life and another and the non-existence of a living soul.

So the yogi should overcome doubt through this purity. Then he must keep on watching. He will see the watched phenomenon arising and passing away. He realizes the law of impermanence and the suffering of life that is unsatisfactory and undependable. He becomes aware, too, of the conditionality of everything. His awareness is not confined to *nāma* and *rūpa*.



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It encompasses all the phenomena that arise from six senses. This kind of awareness is of a piece with what the Buddha says, .... *Sabbam pariññeyyam* – "Everything is to be analysed and known in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*".

When such analytical insight-knowledge is complete, the yogi will, while watching the ceaseless arising and passing away of *nāma-rūpa*, see the cessation of *nāma-rūpa* formations, that is Nibbāna at the *sotāpatti* stage of the Path. He cannot then have any doubt about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Nor will he be skeptical about his practice, the past, the present and the future of life-cycle or the conditionality of all phenomena. The yogi is then beyond all doubt. Such a yogi who is totally free from all doubt is a *sotāpanna*. So you should overcome doubt at least on the *sotāpanna* level.

### RODHA (ANGER)

There are unwholesome emotions called *upakkilesa* which defile the mind. The first of these defilements is anger. We usually fly into a rage in the face of an odious sense-object. Some are very short-tempered and highly sensitive. They become furious when they hear even a slight remark that offends them. Their faces blacken, they scowl and rave without restraint. Anger thus causes instant disfigurement and according to the Buddha's teaching in Culakam-

## ANGER (KODHA)

mavibhaṅga sutta, it leads to hell in a future life and makes its victim ugly in his or her rebirth in the human world.

If a man restrains his anger even when there is occasion for it and speaks pleasantly and sweetly, he will not become ugly but retains his good look. On his death he will land in the deva-world and when he is reborn as a human being, he is likely to become a handsome person. I have told you of the harm and the good that anger and forbearance can do you with illustrative stories in my other discourses and so I will not now dwell on them. Forbearance brings us instant benefit. So we should exercise it when we are angry. We must not give vent to anger in speech or bodily behaviour but watch and lay it to rest. If our remark or facial expression betrays it, we must try to overcome it before it draws the attention of other people. We must affirm the will to compose ourselves and restrain anger under circumstances that may provoke other people.

### UPANĀHA - - HARBOURING SPITE

Some people not only give way to their anger but also harbour spite against the object of their offence. In other words, they are out to take revenge when they have the opportunity to do so. Some bear grudge not only against living beings but also against lifeless objects

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such as a stump or a post. They would beat or batter a stump when they stumble over it. When they bump against a post, they would deliberately bump their heads again and again against it. If a thing topples or rolls away or falls down, they would break or throw it away in a rage. Such a short-tempered man who behaves like a lunatic is a laughing-stock and a pitiable creature in the eyes of observers.

### CAUSE OF SPITEFULNESS

There are nine reasons why we bear spite against a person. We bear spite against a person (1) because he has done something harmful to our interests or (2) because he is now doing harm to us or (3) because he will do us harm in future or (4) because he has done harm to our beloved or (5) because he is now doing harm to our beloved or (6) because he will do harm in future. In the latter three cases we bear grudge against a person not for self-preservation but for the sake of someone whom we love, e.g., a member of the family, a relative, a friend, a teacher or a pupil. We bear malice when our son is ill-treated or our daughter is molested.

Again we bear a grudge against a person (7) because he has done good to someone whom we hate or (8) because he is doing good to someone we hate or (9) because in future he will do good to someone we hate.

## THE STORY OF KĀLIYAKKHINI

These are the causes of spitefulness. We should not harbour spite because spitefulness is harmful to us in the present life as well as after our death. If A, bears spite and does something harmful to B, the latter's descendents will seek to settle old scores and again A's descendents will try to get even with them. This feud will continue endlessly and thus the destructive effect of spitefulness is obvious in this very life.

Mutual ill-will also tends to lead to enmity and disaster throughout the *samsāric* existence (life-cycle) as is evident in the story of Kāliyakkhini in the commentary on the Dhammapada.

### THE STORY OF KĀLIYAKKHINI

Long long ago there was a man who supported his mother without getting married. He worked single-handed at home and at his farm. Seeing this, his mother told him to get a wife as his helpmate. He said that he wished to remain unmarried in order to devote his full attention to her welfare. But she urged him again and again and so at last he married a woman.

He did not have any child by his wife. So in compliance with the wish of his mother, he reluctantly kept a young woman as his second wife. In due course the younger wife

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became pregnant. Being jealous and concerned about her future, the elder wife put some drug in the food that destroyed the pregnancy. She caused the second abortion in the same way. Then on the advice of her neighbours the young woman did not tell the elder wife anything about her third pregnancy. But the elder woman found it out and tried to destroy it. But the pregnancy being in an advanced state, she did not succeed outright but caused much suffering to the young woman. So on her death-bed the lesser wife said, "Sister, you told me to live in this house and yet you yourself have destroyed my pregnancy thrice," and she willed "May I in my future life be an ogress and in a position to eat your children."

After her death she became a cat in the same house. The elder woman died, too, because she was beaten by her husband for making him childless. She became a hen in the house. When the hen laid an egg, the cat came and ate it. After she had eaten the eggs thrice, the cat was about to eat the hen herself when the latter prayed that she might be able to get even with her enemy in her next life. On her death she was reborn as a she-leopard whereas the cat became a doe. The female leopard ate the doe's litters thrice and finally ate up the doe herself. But before she died, the doe prayed for the opportunity to take vengeance

## THE STORY OF KĀLIYAKKHINI

in her next life. Sure enough, on her death she became an ogress while her old enemy was reborn as a woman of Sāvattī city. When as a married woman she gave birth to a child, the ogress came disguised as her friend and ate the child. When she got the second child, it was again eaten up by the ogress.

When she became pregnant for the third time, she went to her parents' house for security. After naming the child, she left for her home with her husband. On the way while her husband was bathing in a pond near the Jetavana monastery, the ogress appeared. The woman called her husband loudly and ran into the monastery with her child. At that time the Buddha was preaching to some bhikkhus and lay followers. The woman crouched at the feet of the Buddha and appealed for help. The deva guarding the entrance forbade the ogress to enter the monastery.

The Buddha sent Ānandā to bring the ogress. At the sight of her enemy the child's mother was alarmed but the Buddha soothed her. The Lord then gave a talk, stressing the fact that it was forbearance and not retaliation that helped one to overcome another's enmity. At the end of the talk the ogress became a *sotāpanna* and there was no longer any enmity between her and the woman. By order of the Lord the woman took the ogress to her house



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and boarded her. According to the Dhammapada commentary, the ogress forecast the weather and guarded the woman's household.

The long-standing feud in this story would not have come to an end but for the Buddha's intervention. The story leaves no doubt about the evils of spitefulness.

### RETALIATION MAY LEAD TO WRONGS DONE TO NOBLE ONES

The person against whom we bear spite may be an ordinary person but the victim of our vengeance may turn out to be a Noble One, an Arahant or even a Buddha. Thus Devadatta and Ciñjamaṇa had ill-will against the bodhisattva but it was against the Buddha that they plotted. Again a woman who was robbed and killed by four young men prayed for an opportunity to take vengeance. But when she became an ogress and finally paid off old scores, all the victims happened to be Arahants. She disguised herself as a cow and gored to death Bāṇiyadārusīriya soon after his attainment of Arahantship, Pakkusati soon after he attained *anagāmi* stage, the leprous Suppabuddha who was a *sotapanna* and Tambadaṅhika soon after he attained insight-knowledge. So she incurred the heavy *kammic* debt resulting from her murder of the Arahants.

Thus spitefulness is very destructive and it is best to exercise forbearance. Let us then affirm

## INGRATITUDE (MAKKHA)

that we will take things philosophically. In other words, if we suffer at the hands of others we should regard it as repayment of an old *kammic* debt and cultivate loving-kindness in order to overcome ill-will and lessen defilements.

### INGRATITUDE (MAKKHA)

*Makkha* means ingratitude to a person to whom we should be grateful for help or acts of kindness. A good man should have a sense of gratitude to his benefactor even though he may not be able to show it. He must express it verbally and if possible repay the other's kind acts. This is part of our moral tradition and yet some fools who are steeped in ignorance tend to speak impertinently to their benefactors. They are ungrateful and speak lightly of what their parents, teachers or friends have done for them. Some do not only lack a sense of gratitude but they do things that are harmful to their benefactors.

According to the Buddha, there are two types of rare persons. There are persons who give priority to other people's welfare. They first work for the welfare of those who have never done anything beneficial to them. They are motivated by pure love, pure compassion or pure good-will and they do not expect any reciprocal service from their beneficiaries. Such cases of pure altruism as exemplified by parents in their relation with their child are indeed rare.

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Equally rare are the persons who have a sense of gratitude or who reciprocates other people's acts of good-will. At the very least we should acknowledge what we owe to others and if possible we should reciprocate their good-will by deed or word. We must defend our benefactors if we see or hear any one doing or saying something harmful to them. We should promote their welfare by deed or word. A person who thus recognizes his indebtedness to another by doing a good turn reciprocally is called *katavedī* in Pāli. Such kinds of persons are rare indeed.

We do not attach much value to abundant things such as grass, stones, etc., because they are available everywhere. But rare things such as diamonds and rubies are very valuable. Likewise, people who have a sense of gratitude are rare and so they are noble whereas ungrateful persons whom you can find everywhere are mean and low. So you should try to belong to the class of noble men of sterling character and to this end you should be grateful to others for what they have done in your interest and do them favour by way of reciprocation.

### SĀRIPUTRA'S SENSE OF GRATITUDE

In the lifetime of the Buddha there was an old brahmin who being helpless and uncared for by his sons and daughters lived in a monastery, attending to the needs of the bhikkhus.

The bhikkhus were kind to him but as he was very old, nobody wished to assume the role of an *upajjhāya* teacher and ordain him. He felt dejected and much run down for being thus refused admission into the Sangha. But knowing his potential for Arahatsip, the Buddha summoned the bhikkhus and asked whether there was any one who had any sense of gratitude to the brahmin. Then the Elder Sāriputta told the Lord how he was grateful to the brahmin for once offering him a spoonful of rice during his begging round in the Rājagaha city. The Buddha said, "O Sāriputta! Would it not be advisable for you to help such a benefactor to attain salvation?"

Sāriputta promised to ordain the brahmin and before long the brahmin Rādha became a bhikkhu. Following the advice of Sāriputta, the bhikkhu practised the dhamma and in a few days he attained Arahatsip. Later on the Buddha asked the chief disciple whether Rādha was docile. "Yes, Lord, he is." "How many such docile disciples would you be able to accept?" "I would welcome many such disciples, Lord," replied Sāriputta.

Here the thera Sāriputta's sense of gratitude even for a spoonful of rice is indeed exemplary and so is the docility of the old monk Rādha. We should dispel ingratitude and be ever grateful to our benefactors.

## EMULATING MEN OF HIGHER SPIRITUAL STATUS (PALĀSA)

*Palās* is to regard oneself as on an equal footing with very noble persons and to speak disrespectfully of them. It is the tendency to rival great men who are unique and peerless in intellectual and spiritual spheres. Some men have little learning but they consider themselves on a par with learned scholars of whom they speak irreverently. They contend that some Sayadaws are not free from errors and ignorance, a contention that is designed to enhance their prestige. Some people have no moral character and yet they consider themselves on a par with the saintly Sayadaws.

Some have little knowledge but they do not care for a learned person. Some have never practised meditation seriously but they wish to look down upon those who have had many years' experience. Recently some monks who joined the order only in old age have gone so far as to challenge the scholarly and saintly Sayadaws, insisting on the truth of their sayings and denouncing some teachings of the ancient holy books as erroneous. Their views are often taken seriously by ignorant people. Thus these monks breed evil *kamma* because of their misguided rivalry.

We have now dealt with seven defilements, viz., torpor, restlessness, doubt, ill-will, spiteful-

## ENVY (ISSĀ)

ness, ingratitude and rivalry. Of these torpor and restlessness can be rooted out at the *Arahatta* stage, ill-will and spitefulness at the *anāgāmi* stage and the remaining three defilements at the *sotāpatti* stage. These three defilements can lead to the lower worlds and so at the very least it is imperative to seek the conquest of doubt, ingratitude and rivalry.

## ENVY (ISSĀ)

*Issā* or envy is the feeling that one has against another person who is better than oneself. We do not want to see a man who is more prosperous and wealthy than we are. The average man does not want to see or hear of anyone who excels him in wealth, social relation, physical appearance, intelligence or knowledge. We feel more envious when the object of our envy happens to be the person we do not love or the person who is in the same profession or have the same social status. Thus a boy will envy another boy, a woman will envy another woman, there is envy among teachers, monks and so forth.

The rich are usually envied by the poor. In rural areas villagers who work on their own farms are likely to excite the envy of those who are less fortunate. Government employees who do not get promotions envy those who are promoted. The great and the powerful cause envy in those who are of small consequence. The



good speaker is envied by the poor speakers. Thus there are many causes of envy in human beings.

In the final analysis envy gives rise only to evil *kamma* without doing us any good. Envy makes a man unhappy and so it is self-destructive. According to the Buddha's teaching in the Cūlakammavibhaṅga sutta, envy leads to the nether world and if reborn as a human being, the envious man will have few attendants and friends.

Opposed to envy is *muditā* or sympathetic joy of the four sublime states, the other three being love, compassion and equanimity. *Muditā* makes us interested in the prosperity and welfare of other people. It is conducive to happiness because it makes us rejoice at the good fortunes of other people. According to the Cūlakammavibhaṅga sutta, rejoicing at the prosperity of others will make one reborn in the deva-world and in case of rebirth as a human being, it (*muditā*) makes a man powerful with many attendants at his service.

In cultivating loving-kindness, the first of the sublime states, one should say, "May all beings be free from *dukkha* that engulfs them!" And to cultivate *muditā*, one should express the wish: "May all those who are prosperous and happy continue to have the same good fortune!"

## MISERLINESS (MACCHARIY)

So through the cultivation of *muditā* one can build up wholesome *kamma* without spending a single pice. This good deed may lead to the deva-world and rebirth as a great leader with many attendants. On the other hand envy causes evil *kamma* without any benefit accruing from it. It leads to hell and a lonely life of poverty in the next existence.

We should especially take care not to harbour envy in doing good deeds, in preaching or in the practice of the *dhamma*. To envy others who are doing many good deeds, who can preach sermons that have mass appeal or have made spiritual progress in meditation is to do little good but much harm to oneself. So it is imperative to avoid envy in doing good things.

## MISERLINESS (MACCHARIYA)

*Macchariya* is the desire to hoard up one's property in order that other people may have nothing to do with it. Its characteristic is described by the commentary as the secrecy with which one keeps one's wealth. The miser does not want other people to know what he has, let alone give his property to them. In the lifetime of the Buddha when the youth Maṅḍhā Kundali was seriously ill, his father kept him outside the house in order that his relatives and friends who came to see the patient might not find out what he had in the house.

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But on his death-bed the young man saw the Buddha as the latter passed the house, paid his respect and attained the deva-world in his next life. Later on his father went to the cemetery and was mourning over his dead son when the young deva appeared and reminded him of something. Then the old man approached the Buddha and asked a question. The Buddha answered it and gave a talk. According to the Dhammapada commentary, both the father and the son attained *sotāpatti* stage and fruition after hearing the Lord's sermon.

### THE STORY OF MACCHARIYAKOSIYA

The classic story of the miser in Buddhist tradition is that of Kosiya. He was so miserly that he was called Kosiya, the miser. He lived in a village near Kājagaha City. He was a millionaire but he was so stingy that he did not offer even a drop of cooking oil to alms-men. Nor would he use it for himself. Then one day on his return from the royal palace he saw a man eating fried food heartily and there arose in him a desire to eat such food. But he did not wish any food to be prepared for his wife, let alone for the other members of his household since that would mean a lot of rice, butter, etc. So because of his stinginess he did not tell any one about his desire. But the desire became oppressive and at last he lay miserably in his bed.

When pressed by his wife, he expressed his desire and in compliance with his wish the woman prepared to make food just enough for her husband. Lest he should have to give food to those who saw him eating, the couple went up to the top storey of the seven-storey building and there with all the doors bolted, they set about to prepare the food.

Then the Buddha seeing their potential for the attainment of *sotāpatti* stage sent the thera Moggalāna. Moggalāna went there and stood in the air near the window of the chamber where they were preparing the food. The millionaire was much shocked at the sight of the thera. He wondered how the thera had come to his hideaway and said that he (the thera) would not get any food whatever he might do. Moggalāna performed miracles such as walking, sitting, in the air, emitting gases, etc. He dared not challenge the thera to emit flames lest his house be burnt down.

Then knowing that the bhikkhu would not go away unless he got some food, the miser told his wife to prepare a small cake. But the cake became so big that it filled the frying pan. The miser tried to make it small but every time he tempered with it, it became bigger and bigger. So the frustrated miser told his wife to offer a cake to the thera. But when the woman took a cake, all the cakes stuck together and it was

impossible to separate them. First the miser tried and then later he and his wife tried together to separate the cakes but it was in vain. At last tired and frustrated, the miser had no longer any desire to eat and so he told his wife to offer all the cakes to the bhikkhu.

Then Moggalāna gave a talk on the *kammic* benefits of alms-giving (*dāna*) etc. The talk inspired Kosiya with so much faith that he asked the thera to eat the cakes in his house. But the thera said that the Buddha was waiting for food together with five hundred bhikkhus and with their consent he took them to Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti city that was 45 *yujana* away. It is said that Moggalana having taken them there by means of his supernatural powers, they reached the gate of the Jetavana monastery just as they passed the foot of the stair of their house.

There the merchant and his wife offered cakes, milk, butter, honey, sugar, etc., to the Sangha. Originally the cakes were made just enough for one person but by virtue of the Buddha's supernatural powers there was no end of the cakes after the Lord and 500 bhikkhus, the merchant and his wife had eaten them. Even after the beggars had been fed, there were so many cakes left that they had to be thrown into a valley near the monastery. Then the Lord gave a talk and after hearing it both the

## MACCHARIYA

merchant and his wife attained the *sotāpatti* stage and fruition.

### THE NATURE OF MACCHARIYA

The above story shows that *macchariya* or miserliness is characterized by secretiveness arising from jealousy of one's property. Moreover, *macchariya* makes one unhappy, discomfited and mean if other persons have something to do with one's possessions. One who has much *macchariya* does not want another person to handle or use his property. As is borne out by writers and what we see in life, a jealous husband or wife will frown on anyone who looks closely at his or her spouse; he or she is wretched and cannot bear the sight of the spouse speaking pleasantly to another person.

### NOT ALL IS MACCHARIYA

But we should not call every man a miser simply because he does not give alms. A man may be called a miser only when he does not give alms although he can and should do so. The reluctance to offer to an immoral person something which is intended for a morally good man is not a sign of *macchariya*. When Udāyi asked for the underwear of bhikkhuni Uppalavanna, the latter refused to give it. Her refusal was due not to her miserliness but to the impropriety of the request. Likewise, it is not *macchariya* to refuse to give a person anything



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which he does not deserve; not is it miserliness not to give away a thing which one adores for this is due to attachment.

### KAMMIC EFFECTS OF MACCHARIYA

It is *macchariya* when one does not wish to give things which one has more than enough. Some people never give alms in spite of their affluence. They hoard up all their wealth. They do not even share it with their families or use it for themselves. They also prevent others from giving alms. This kind of *macchariya* has grave *kammic* effects. According to the Buddha's teaching in *Culakammavibhaṅga* sutta, it makes one helpless in afterlife, leads to hell and the lower worlds and in case of rebirth in the human world it causes poverty and suffering. It is said in the same sutta that the liberal, alms-giving man attains the deva-world and if reborn as a human being he is rich and prosperous.

### THE FRAHMIN TODEYYA

*Culakammavibhaṅga* sutta is the discourse which the Buddha gave in response to the question of Todeyya's son Subha. Todeyya was the chief of the Tudi village granted to him by king Pasenadikosala. He was a millionaire but very stingy. His advice to members of his household was "A wise man should manage his household by bearing in mind the erosion of a whetstone whenever it is used, the growing in

size of an ant-hill day by day and the accumulation of honey by bees.”

The erosion of a whetstone when we use it once or twice is of little consequence but when used repeatedly it will be eventually worn away. In the same way we may spend or give away our money bit by bit but this may lead to much dwindling of our wealth in the long run. Bearing this in mind we should be frugal and avoid alms-giving. This is implied by the first part of Todeyya's advice. It is a sound advice from the economic point of view. Rich and prosperous people are usually frugal while on the other hand some people are poor largely because of their extravagance.

In Burma it is customary to celebrate pompously weddings and initiation (*shinpyu*) of a boy into the holy order. This may not affect well-to-do people. But those who do not have enough money and so borrow from other people and spend lavishly just to show off are in for trouble. Because of their over-spending some villagers found themselves heavily in debt after the initiation of their sons and they were forced to mortgage or dispose of their carts, oxen, farms, etc. Then there are funerals of monks and pagoda festivals to which villagers have to make monetary contributions reluctantly. These do not benefit them very much and are in part responsible for their economic distress.

But from the religious point of view we should give donations to worthy causes. In accordance with the advice of ancient sages we should invest one fourth of our income in business, save another one fourth for the rainy day and spend the rest. Or we may adjust our expenses otherwise to the needs of modern times. Alms should be given to worthy persons. The initiation should be done within one's means. With a set of robes, a bowl and food for the morning meal, it may be carried out at the monastery. Rich people may spend lavishly for such alms-giving is beneficial to the donor throughout his *samsāric* existence (life-cycle), but we should give alms according to our financial position.

Todeyya's advice is not commendable because he told his family not to give alms; he deprecated alms-giving as waste of money. His reference to the collection of honey by bees is, however, worthy of note as it concerns purely the accumulation of wealth.

True to his word, Todeyya never gave alms and dying with attachment to his wealth, he was reborn as a dog in his own house. The young man Subha was very fond of the dog. He fed the animal and allowed it to sleep in a good place. One day seeing Subha's spiritual potential, the Buddha came to his house. The dog barked and the Lord said "Hi, Todeyya, you are now a dog because you spoke irreverently

#### FOURTEEN QUESTIONS

to me when you were a human being, Now you are barking at me and so you will go to hell." Seeing that the Lord knew who he was, the dog became dejected and went to sleep on the ashes near the hearth. When Subha returned home he learnt what the Lord had said about his father. He was angry for in the time of the Buddha the brahmins believed that when they died they attained the Brahma world.

So Subha went to the Buddha and accused the Lord of having told a lie about his father. The Buddha asked him whether there was anything that his father did not mention before his death. He said that his father told him nothing about the golden garland, the golden shoe, the golden cup, each worth one lakh of money and cash to the value of one lakh. The Lord told him to return home, feed the dog and ask the animal when it was about to fall asleep. He did as he was told and crying, "the Lord knows all about me," the dog showed the place where all the things and money were hidden.

#### FOURTEEN QUESTIONS

Then Todeyya became convinced of the omniscience of the Buddha and asked the Lord fourteen questions. "Why do some people die young? Why do some live to an old age? Why are some sickly and some healthy? Why

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are some ugly and some good-looking? Why do some have many attendants and some have few attendants? Why are some rich and some poor? Why are some born of high families and some of low families?"

We have referred to some of the Buddha's answers to these questions in our previous talks. We have now to say something about the rich and the poor.

If a rich but miserly man does not give alms he will no gain merit. It is not easy to avoid doing good deeds but we live under conditions that expose us daily to bad temptations. We are greedy and covetous in the face of a desirable object. We may be tempted to steal, rob or swindle. We have ill-will at the sight of someone we hate, ill-will that arouses the desire to hurt or kill. Those who do not give alms will suffer in hell after death as a *kammic* result of their evil deeds. They are helpless because they have no *kammic* good to their credit that will save them from hell. They are like people who having no friends and relatives are at the mercy of their enemies. If because of some good *kamma* they are reborn as human beings they are likely to be wretched and poor.

Those who give alms and share what they have with the needy can attain the deva-world in spite of their *kammic* evils for these will be outweighed by their acts of *dāna*. They are

## FIVE KINDS OF MACCHARIYA

like a man who escapes punishment for his crime because of his prestige. If reborn in the human world, they tend to be rich as a *kammic* result of their previous alms-giving. So we should overcome *macchhariya* and give alms to the best of our ability.

Burmese Buddhists do not need such exhortation. They are very generous. The monks at this meditation-center numbering thirty or forty go about to collect food every morning and they get more than enough rice and curries. Even in time of acute rice shortage the amount of food they collect is considerable. Most of these donors are not rich but motivated by good-will and faith, they somehow manage to offer food. They will prosper throughout their life-cycle (*samsāra*). Some are doing *dāna* so many times that we have to restrain them.

## FIVE KINDS OF MACCHARIYA

The Abhidhamma piṭaka mentions five kinds of *macchhariya* or miserliness. Miserliness in regard to (1) abode (2) disciples and followers (3) consumer goods (4) qualifications and (5) learning.

## MACCHARIYA IN REGARD TO ABODE

The first *macchhariya* is miserliness in regard to abode. All the five kinds of *macchhariya* have special reference to bhikkhus and these concern the Sangha more than the laymen.



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The first *macchhariya* is the one that makes a monk miserly and unhappy when he sees the other good bhikkhus of high moral character dwelling in a big monastery (*sangha arāma*) or in a specially enclosed building on the premise of the monastery or in a separate monastery. In ancient times monasteries were largely buildings donated to the Sangha. Such *sanghika* monasteries were open to bhikkhus who came from anywhere. They were accomodated in order of seniority in the Sangha. To begrudge a good monk lodging in a *sanghika* monastery is *macchhariya*. But it is not *macchhariya* to refuse lodging to an immoral, contentious or quarrelsome monks.

Private monasteries cannot be blamed for their exclusiveness. But if the visiting monk is of good character and the monastery is spacious, it is *macchhariya* to refuse admission unreasonably. Among lay people, too, good visitors should be accomodated temporarily if there is room for them.

### MISERLINESS IN REGARD TO LAY FOLLOWERS

#### (KULAMACCHARIYA)

Every bhikkhu has lay followers among Buddhist men and women. Some bhikkhus do not want their lay followers to have relations with other monks. They even forbid a lay follower to go to certain monks. They are justified in doing so if the monks in question happen to be immoral

## KULAMACCHARIYA

and unworthy of respect. But it is *macchariya* prevent a lay follower from seeing good monks. In some places distinction is drawn between two groups of lay followers, those belonging to one's monastery and those belonging to another. We understand that even inquiries are made to see whether one's followers go to any other monastery.

The primary object of every monk is to free himself from the sufferings of *samsāra*. Yet some monks are miserly in respect of their lay followers and it is downright improper for them to be so mean. Miserliness is intense in places where a village may have one or two monasteries and monks are few but have much influence. Once I received a letter from a monk in a village in Bamo district. According to his letter, there were two monasteries in his village and he resided in one of them. He and the other monk agreed to have no contact with the laymen and women who belonged to the other monastery. Now some of his lay followers were visiting the other monastery and giving alms to the other monk. So the writer asked for judgement as to whether or not the other monk was violating the Vinaya rule about stealing because of his acceptance of alms from his (the writer's) followers.

The writer was indeed being preyed upon by *macchariya*. He was under the delusion that his

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lay followers as well as their offerings all belonged to him as a result of their agreement. Whatever their agreement, the two monks do not possess the lay followers or their offerings. Lay Buddhists have the right to show their faith in any monk, visit any monastery or give alms to whome they like.

In the lifetime of the Buddha some followers of Nigamhanaputta became the Buddha's disciples because they were much impressed by the Lord. The lay Buddhists in the case of the above writer might have gone to the other monastery because of the defects of their teacher. A teacher should prevent his pupils from doing anything that is harmful to them. He must instruct them to do things that are beneficial to them. He must preach the dhamma that is new to them and repeat the dhamma that they have heard for further understanding. He should point out the good deeds that lead to the deva-world; suffuse his lay followers with loving-kindness for their welfare; and do by word or deed everything that does not conflict with Vinaya rules but that is beneficial to them. Most probably the above-mentioned monk was deserted by his followers because he failed to do his duties as a teacher.

Then there are four *sāṅgha-dāmmas*, that is, four ways of helping other people. We should give to others what they need. But it is not

proper for a bhikkhu to give anything to a layman. The second *saṅgaha-dhamma* is that we should speak courteously. This is important for some monks tend to speak haughtily and angrily. The third *saṅgaha-dhamma* requires us to promote the welfare of other people. Monks should instruct young boys and preach to their followers but by and large they fail in their duty. Monks and laymen alike tend to find fault with those who do not come to them without thinking of their failure to do their duties. This is their big mistake.

The last *saṅgaha-dhamma* is that one should associate with a person as one's equal without looking down upon him but this applies only to relationship among laymen. The monk who wrote to me was deserted by his lay followers probably because he failed to live up to the two *saṅgaha-dhamma*, viz., speaking courteously and working for the welfare of his disciples. So I sent him a reply, stating my views and advising him to do his duty towards his disciples thoroughly.

It is the duty of a head of a monastery to preach. A monk is qualified to be the head of a monastery only after he has spent ten years in the Sangha. But nowadays the abbot may turn out to be a self-styled Sayādaw who was once a married man and has not yet spent even one or two years as a bhikkhu. The head-monk

should be well-versed in the twofold *Vibhaṅga*, viz., the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga* and the *Bhikkuni-vibhaṅga*, *Pārājika* and *Pācitta Pāli* texts. At the very least he must have learnt *Pātimokkha* by heart. Today, however, there are monks and Sayadaws who have not yet studied the four *Pārājika* rules.

The head-monk must also be familiar with the rules of conduct laid down in *Mahāvagga* and *Cūlavagga* of the *Khandaka* (a book of *Vinaya-piṭaka*) and the procedures for carrying out the ecclesiastical functions (*Saṅghakamma*). An ignorant head-monk is likely to conduct even initiation, ordination, etc., improperly, thereby doing disservice to Buddhism. The last essential qualification of the head-monk is the ability to explain thoroughly the nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*. This is very important. Lay Buddhists rely on monks for instructions about the way to the deva-world or *Nibbāna*. They do not have the time to study scriptures because they have to work the whole day for their living. So it is important for the head-monk to teach the *Dhamma* according to the *Piṭaka*.

The head-monk should teach his lay disciples the way to take refuge in the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha* and the way to keep sabbath. He should preach *dāna* and to those who ask for it, the method of meditation according to scriptures. It is up to the head-monk.

## DUTIES OF THE HEAD-MONK

to fulfil these duties. If he fails to do so, those who wish to hear the Dhamma will go to other monks who can preach. They will seek their interest and this is no reason why their teacher should be embittered.

It is regrettable that in some villages the head-monks forbid their lay followers to attend lectures on meditation. If the talks on *vipassanā* conflict with the Pitaka, such a prohibition may be well justified. Otherwise it is a grave misdeed. So the bhikkhus should be on guard against this kind of miserliness. Among lay people, too, it is *kulamacchariya* to seek exclusive association with certain persons. But it is good-will and not *macchariya* to disapprove of a friend's association with a person of undesirable character.

There are many people who have various objects and spread various views. Some preach doctrines that are diametrically opposed to the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha urged his disciples to avoid evil, do good and develop tranquillity and insight-knowledge. Some teachers say just the opposite. They would have us believe that if we realize the truth as proclaimed by them, we are assured of salvation and there is no need to avoid evil, do good and develop the mind. Some call themselves Arahats. Some claim Buddhahood, saying that a knowledge of the four Noble Truths mean enlightenment of the Buddha.



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Yet they are not free from sensual desires. There are people who encourage such teachers. It is a pity that they are so ignorant and follow the false teachings which they mistake for the true Dhamma. They are led astray in spite of their desire to know the true doctrine. I think it would be better for them to remain ordinary Buddhists by birth without any interest in their religion rather than accept false views.

We have been giving instructions in *vipassanā* based on Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta and in accordance with the Pitaka and commentaries for 32 years. The yogis who have practised meditation according to our instructions during these years number 60 thousand. Among them are learned monks and laymen by the hundreds. These learned yogis can evaluate our teaching accurately. Then there are thousands of people who have meditated seriously although they have no knowledge of the scriptures. With their clear insight which they have gained independently, they can distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Most of those who meditated at our center wished to attain transcendental knowledge and its result. If I had not preached to them the Satipaṭṭhāna method, some of them would have been misled by false teaching. Those who have seriously practised the Dhamma under our guidance may hear talks by any teacher. We d

not prevent them from doing so. They are in a position to think and judge for themselves.

It is our business to instruct our disciples in order that they may know the true Dhamma and have spiritual experience. Likewise, those who have a thorough knowledge of our methods propagate it elsewhere. Sometimes we have to point out the mistakes of other teachers. Here our object is to keep the disciples off the wrong path. This is the teacher's duty and has nothing to do with *macchariya*. *Macchariya* in regard to followers is pure selfishness regardless of the interest of others, the only motivation being the desire to have exclusive influence over them. But to point out the mistakes of others for the enlightenment of the disciples is not *macchariya* but the duty of the teacher.

THE DESIRE FOR EXCLUSIVE POSSESSION(LĀBHAMACCHARIYA)

*Lābha macchariya* is the desire to have things only for oneself, to deny them to others, to use a thing selfishly without sharing it with others. Bhikkhus have certain things which may be summed up as food, robes, abode and medicine. Food means all things that we can eat or drink. All articles of clothing are to be regarded as robes. All dwelling places together with the means of transport are to be labelled abodes. Medicine means all things that are relevant to health. It is *lābha macchariya* for a monk to

wish to be the exclusive recipient of these things from the laity, to begrudge the fellow-monks the offerings made by their lay followers or to have no desire to share his acquisitions with other monks or his pupils.

Some monks are so miserly that they do not eat the food they have nor do they give it to their pupils so that it has to be thrown away when it becomes rotten. Robes are hoarded up by some monks only to be found useless after their death. *Lībhī macchariya* is also the besetting sin among lay people. There is the story of a married couple who quarrelled while having their meals because one ate more than the other.

Business men do not want to see their rivals booming. A mill-owner once told me that formerly it was painful to him to hear the siren of another mill, a sign of envy which he overcame only through meditation. But some monks may cause damage to the thing they have acquired; it may rot from want of use, it may be given to improper persons or it may be sold for profit. So we should assume that it is not *lībhī macchariya* to wish to see a monk or a layman denied certain things which he may use improperly.

#### MISERLINESS ABOUT VIRTUES (VAṆṆA MACCHARIYA)

*Vaṇṇa* here means any laudable quality and it is *vaṇṇa macchariya* to begrudge a person any

laudable quality such as physical beauty, a good voice, fluent speaking, physical strength, intelligence, scholarship or moral virtues. Some people desire these qualities but do not want to see them possessed by others. Some want to distinguish themselves in learning but they do not wish to see others so distinguished. Some want to be virtuous but they do not want to hear of the good moral character of other people. These are examples of *vaṇṇa macchariya* which usually arises in connection with those who are one's peers or those whom one dislikes.

MISERLINESS IN RESPECT OF LEARNING  
(DĀHAMMA MACCHARIYA)

*Dhamma macchariya* is miserliness in respect of the knowledge of the Dhamma. Some do not wish to see others well-versed in Pāli pitakas. So they do not teach their pupils thoroughly but keep something to themselves. They are reluctant to lend important books. These are signs of *dhamma macchariya* but this kind of *macchariya* was more in vogue in ancient times when there was not much writing and monks had to rely on memory for their knowledge. Nowadays it is not dominant because of the abundance of books. Still it may assert itself in connection with rare books. If reluctance to lend books is due to respect for them it is not *macchariya*. But it is *lābha macchariya* if there is the desire to deny others the use of books and

*dhamma macchhariya* if it is to deny knowledge to them.

*Dhamma macchhariya* has nothing to do with transcendent knowledge. For the yogi who has attained the Ariyan path and its fruition never stoops to such meanness. On the contrary he wants to share his knowledge with others. So if a man considers himself an Ariya and yet begrudges others a similar or higher spiritual status, he should face the fact that he is not yet really enlightened. The yogis who have meditated at our center convey the message of the Dhamma to their friends. Some have attained only the lower *vipassanā* insight such as *udayabbayanina* and yet they urge their friends to seek such illuminations.

This augurs well for the future of the Buddha's teaching. Nowadays lay people establish meditation centers, build retreats for the yogis, support meditation teachers, attend talks on meditation and urge others to practise it. This shows that they are free from *dhamma macchhariya* and that they want to share their experience with others. But the yogi who has had unusual experience does not reveal it because he has no desire to pride himself on his attainment. This is called *adhigama-appicchā*—lack of desire in regard to spiritual experience.

So we should overcome *macchhariya* by regarding it as an unwholesome, mean and unworthy state

## FETTERS OF SUFFERING

of consciousness. For it leads to evil and usually dominates low living beings. It is especially to be found to a high degree in dogs which are very mean in some respects. Other animals are considerate and helpful among their own species but dogs will pursue and bite another dog that comes from elsewhere; or if they do not have courage, they will bark and drive it away. Throw a bone to two dogs that are playing together and the stronger of them will growl and grab it. *Macchhariya* which is latent in such low animals should not be allowed to defile a man of noble character. Bearing this in mind, you should overcome it through mindfulness or seek to uproot it through Ariyan enlightenment.

### THE FETTERS OF SUFFERING

In the *Sakkapaññā* sutta the Buddha describes ill-will (*issa*) and envy (*macchhariya*) as the two evils that cause suffering and frustration among living beings. Sakka, the king of devas asks the Lord why human beings, devas and animals in the sensual world are suffering although they all want to live happily. No doubt all living beings are at one in their desire for happiness and yet they fight with one another and they are wretched and miserable. According to the Buddha's reply, the whole world is mired in conflict and suffering because of ill-will and envy. If we can root out these two evils,



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the world will be a very nice place just like a home where parents and children live happily in an atmosphere of good-will and harmony. So we should refuse to harbour these two evils after due reflection, remove them through mindfulness, deny them an outlet by watching all psycho-physical phenomena arising from the senses and root them 'out through Ariyan enlightenment.

According to the commentaries, ill-will and envy are done away with at the first stage on the path. So in my discourse I have described ego-belief, doubt, attachment to rites and ceremonies (*silabbataparāmāsa*) and envy as the five fetters that the yogi casts off at the *sotāpatti* stage. But the Suttanta pitaka refers to the conquest of only ego-belief, doubt and rites and ceremonies. Anguttara Nikāya mentions four pairs of evils that are harmful to the yogis under training (*sekkhā*). These are anger and malice, ingratitude and rivalry, ill-will and envy, hypocrisy and deceit.

The commentary here explains the Pāli text as implying that these evils rule out the possibility of any advance to a higher stage in the case of the seven kinds of noble disciples (*sekkhā*). As for the ordinary man (*puthujjana*) he will not make a start on the spiritual path if he is beset with these evils. On the authority of the Pāli text and the commentary it is to be

## SĀTHEYYA (HYPOCRISY)

assumed that the *sotāpanna* who is one of the seven kinds of noble disciples will not make any progress if he harbours ill-will and envy. In other words, it means that he is not yet free from ill-will and envy.

But it is hard to draw any conclusion for a certainty. For among the seven noble disciples are the four yogis at the moment of the attainment of the holy stage. At that moment they cannot have anger, malice and other evils; and it is hard to discount the possibility of their higher attainments. In particular, the yogi who has attained the *Arahatta* stage is never likely to revert to a lower stage. The commentary also includes the four yogis in the category of seven disciples under training (*sekkhā*). Moreover, ill-will, hypocrisy, deceit, etc are so base that there can be no room for them in the mind of the pure and noble Ariyas. So the commentaries describe them as evils that are done away with at the first stage. We may assume then that a *sotāpanna* is free from these six evils and if we are not free from them, we should practise mindfulness until freedom is attained. Now we will describe the other remaining fetters.

## SĀTHEYYA (HYPOCRISY)

*Sātheyya* is the tendency to simulate and boast of virtues or qualities which one does not possess. One may pretend to have moral purity,

scholarship and practice in mind-development without having these qualities. The Ariyas do not make such pretensions, they do not brag of their attainments because they are straightforward. The worst kind of hypocrisy is to make pretensions to psychic powers such as telepathy, clairvoyance, recall of past lives and unusual, transcendental experience. The bhikkhu who is guilty of this offence ceases to be a member of the Sangha. For the layman, too, it is the most serious of all kinds of falsehood to pretend to have psychic power or transcendent knowledge.

So it is important to be free from *sātheyya* or hypocrisy. Ancient scholars translated *sātheyya* as cunningness. This is a good translation but one who cheats is also said to be cunning. So the word is not as exact and appropriate as hypocrisy which lays stress on pretentiousness and empty vaunting that are associated with *sātheyya*. So I have translated it as hypocrisy. For the meditating yogi sincerity and freedom from hypocrisy are vital to the practice of meditation. Hence sincerity is described as an element of effort.

#### PADHANIYANGA--ELEMENTS OF EFFORT

There are five elements of effort. ( 1 ) One must have faith in the supreme enlightenment of the Buddha. One must believe that the Buddha's teaching was based on his omniscience.

## ELEMENTS OF EFFORT

Nowadays it is necessary for the yogi to have faith in meditation teachers as well as in the method of meditation. Without faith there will be no effort. Faith in the Buddha is essential to effort.

( 2 ) One must be healthy and free from disease because only the healthy yogi can exert all-out, strenuous effort regardless of physical strain and discomfort. But the zealous yogi need not bother about minor physical afflictions for he is likely to overcome them while meditating. Some even attain the path and fruition through meditating on their death-bed. Nevertheless an intensive and lifelong effort presupposes good health and the yogi should seek it.

( 3 ) One must not pretend to have the quality which one does not have and one should admit one's defects instead of concealing them. The yogi should make a clean breast of his state of consciousness to his teacher or fellow yogis. His relation to his teacher is like that of the patient to the doctor. The doctor can cure the patient only if the latter reveals his suffering truthfully. Likewise, the teacher can give the necessary instructions only if the yogi states the facts of his experience. The teacher cannot help him if he fails to give a true account of his experience or to admit his fault such as, say, his dozing off during his meditation hours. So sincerity without any pretence or cover-up

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is a basis of effort. It is an antidote to *sātheyya* (hypocrisy).

(4) The yogi must apply his energy with steadfastness and intensity in his effort to overcome evil and establish wholesome states of consciousness. He must exert energy regardless of whatever may happen to his physical body. He should resolve to persist in his effort even if, as a result, his flesh and blood wither away, leaving only the skin, nerves and bones. Here the withering away of flesh and blood is one factor while residue of skin, nerves and bones constitute the other three factors of energy. Hence the energy which the yogi needs is called *caturāṅga viriya* or fourfold energy.

(5) The yogi must have the insight-knowledge of the arising-and-passing-away of *nāma-rūpa*. You cannot have this insight (*udayabhavaññā*) before taking up meditation or at an early stage. Strenuous effort may ensure it within a week, one percent of the yogis may attain it within three or four days. It may take some yogis 10 or 15 days to attain it because of their low intelligence or inadequate effort. Some do not have it even after a month because of other defects. In any event the insight usually dawns on the energetic yogi within a week on the average. It makes the yogi ecstatic as he is then full of joy, faith,

## ELEMENTS OF EFFORT

vigilance and zeal for further effort. Moreover, the yogi who attains this insight is bound to become an Ariya, the Noble One in a few days if he persists in his effort.

Thus the five elements of effort are faith, health, sincerity, energy and insight. These five qualities are essential to success in meditation and the attainment of unusual experience in this life. The yogi may initially possess faith, health and sincerity but for some yogis faith and sincerity get an impetus with the attainment of concentration. Real effort depends on the yogi's energy. Whole-hearted exertion of energy brings about insight into the arising-and-passing-away in a few days. The state of consciousness accompanying this insight is marked by visions of light, ecstasy and joy pervading the whole body. The yogi feels very comfortable, happy in both body and mind. While seated or walking, the body appears to be in the air above the floor and in some cases it actually is. The attention is very keen. The yogi appears to remember everything without much effort. The intellect is quickly aware of every phase of arising-and-passing away.

So the yogi is full of energy and desire to go on with the practice of mindfulness to the end. Some who had to leave our center just after they attained the insight because of unavoidable circumstances are still enthusiastic



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and they would seize the first opportunity to come back. Most of them do come back and usually complete their training.

### NEED FOR SERIOUS EFFORT

Some yogis lack serious effort because their faith is weak and as a result they do not develop concentration and cannot describe the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa*. Although they practise meditation for one or two months, they do not have any unusual experience and so they are skeptical about the reported experience of other yogis. Their attitude is of a piece with the empiricism of modern age but they should take into account their failure to meditate seriously. One who is not serious about a thing cannot have any unusual experience that the thing promises.

Moreover, it makes little sense to insist in every case that only seeing is believing. Telescopes make visible those things which one cannot see with the naked eye. We have to believe what some people say about some parts of the world that they have visited but which will forever remain merely geographical names for us. Accounts of man's landing on the moon have to be accepted although it is impossible for us to go there.

The nature of spiritual experience is very subtle. One may not have it for want of

intellectual basis or of adequate effort. Failure to have the experience may be due to *kamma*, *kammic* result (*vipāka*), unwholesome tendencies (*vitikkama*) or beliefs opposed to Ariya path (*Ariyupavāda*). But it is to be attributed largely to lack of effort and non-attainment of concentration. But the yogis who thus fail to have experience are not more than two percent. This failure is damaging to their already poor faith and so it would have been better if they had never taken up meditation.

Those who meditate seriously are assured of unusual experience. First-hand reports by some yogis are very clear and such yogis are to be found among monks, men and women, both young and old. Some are just 11 or 12 years old and have never studied the scriptures. But their report is explicit, clear-cut and in accord with the Pāli texts. It sounds credible to those who have not had the experience and it is indeed an inspiration to those who wish to follow their example. If, thus inspired, a yogi practises mindfulness, he will soon attain the *udayabbayañāṇa* that leads to the path and its fruition.

#### INVITATION BY THE BUDDHA

“Let a sincere, straightforward person come to me and practise the Dhamma in accordance with my teaching. I assure him of Arahatsip at most within seven years or at least within

seven days." Thus the Lord boldly invites every one to give his teaching a trial. In the Bodhirājakumāra sutta the Buddha even promises that those who receive instruction in the evening and practise will have the unusual experience in the next morning while those who receive instruction in the morning and practise will have the experience in the evening. True to this teaching, the wise and sincere disciples of the Buddha had the experience. They became Arahats or Ariyas at the *anāgāmi* stage, within at most seven years or at least seven days. Those who had the experience within seven years or seven days were, says the commentary on Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, middle class people among the well-guided disciples (*neyya puggala*). The higher disciples did have the experience in one day or one night as proclaimed by the Buddha.

#### RARITY OF ENLIGHTENMENT WITHIN A WEEK

So far as we know, nowadays it is very hard to find a disciple who had the transcendent experience in a week, let alone one who had it within a day or a night. Some teachers claim to be able to give such instructions as will ensure unusual insight at one sitting. We welcome their claim if there is any basis for it. Some even say that one can have insight-knowledge merely by hearing their sermon and knowing the truth, thus making further effort unnecessary. This may be gratifying to lazy

## THE FIRST SERMON OF THE BUDDHA

people. We must not forget, however, the fact that even the Buddha himself enjoined the practice of the Dhamma on guided *neyya* disciples, who could not have the insight by hearing his discourses.

### THE FIRST SERMON OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha's first sermon was the Dhammacakkapavattana sutta. The only human beings who heard the sermon were the five ascetics. Only one of the five, viz., Kodaṇṇa attained the first stage and fruition while hearing the dhamma. The other four did not have the insight so easily and so they had to meditate after the end of the sermon in accordance with the Buddha's instructions. Of the four it took Vappa one day, Baddiya two days, to attain the first stage. Rāhula, the son of the Buddha started meditating at the age of seven but he became an Arahant only after ordination at 20. Mahāmoggalāna attained Arahantship after meditating for seven days at *sotāpanna* stage while Sāriputra attained it after meditating for 15 days as a *sotapanna*. Ānanda won final liberation three months after the Lord's *parinibbāna* by walking and meditating strenuously the whole night.

In view of these statements in the scriptures it is safe to assume that hearing the sermon or

knowledge by itself does not ensure insight, that practice is essential to its development. If it were otherwise, the Lord would not have urged his disciples to practise the Dhamma. Surely Ānanda had heard and was quite familiar with all teachings of the Buddha. Yet he had to meditate intensively the whole night for his final liberation. So it is not mere knowledge but the thorough practice of *samatha-vipassanā* that enables the yogi to overcome defilements and contact Nibbāna on the Ariyan level.

#### MINDFULNESS WHILE HEARING THE DHAMMA

Bhikkhu Kodaṅṅa became a *sotapanna* while hearing the first sermon. All the five disciples became Arahats while hearing the Anattalak-khaṇa sutta. It was a single verse that made the minister Santati an Arahata and it was also a certain verse that turned bhikkhuni Paḍācāra into a *sotapanna*. According to the commentary on Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, those who attained the path and fruition did so after applying one of the four methods of the sutta. The commentary says:—

“There are those who attain the Ariyan path and fruition by merely hearing a stanza. But such an attainment is impossible without contemplation or mindfulness of the body or the feeling or the consciousness or the mind-object. Those who attain the path and fruition do so

## NO KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT EFFORT

and overcome grief and anguish only through the Satipaṭṭhāna way of meditation.”

In short, it is true that the minister Santati and Padacāri became an Arahāt and a *sotāpanna* respectively and got over their sufferings after hearing a stanza. But they attained the Ariyan path only through the practice of mindfulness in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna method. The commentary leaves no doubt about the paramount importance of Satipaṭṭhāna meditation. There is no scriptural authority for the view that knowledge and understanding suffice to lead a yogi to the path, that there is no need for effort. In fact, this view conflicts with the Buddha's teaching.

In many suttas the Buddha stresses the need for the development of tranquillity, insight and mind (*samatha-vipassanā bhāvanā*). In the Dhammacakkapavattana sutta the disciple is urged to realize the truth of the Ariyan path. In the Anattalakkhaṇā and other suttas the disciple is exhorted to realize *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of the five *khandhas*. Sāmaññaphala sutta of Dīgha-nikāya and other teachings stress the need for the development of *samatha*, *jhāna*, *samāpatti* and *vipassanāñāṇa* (insight knowledge). In Sagāthavagga (section) of Saṃyutta-nikāya the Buddha says that the development of concentration and insight knowledge frees one from the entanglement of *taṇhā* or desire. The Satipaṭṭhāna saṃyutta



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urges the disciple to practise the four kinds of mindfulness. In Sacca-saṃyutta the disciple is exhorted to realize the four noble truths.

Intense exertion of energy as an element of effort is emphasized by the Buddha. "Let there remain only the skin, the nerves and the bones. Let the flesh and blood wither away. I will persist ceaselessly in my effort until I attain the path and its fruit." With such affirmation of will, the yogi should exert his effort intensely (Saṃyuttanikāya, Nidānavagga, Dasabalsutta and Aṅguttara-nikāya, Dukanipāta Upaṇṇāta sutta). In the Mahāgosinga sutta of Majjhima-nikāya the Buddha advises the disciples to meditate after affirming his will not to change his cross-legged sitting posture until he is liberated from defilements.

On the eve of the full-moon of Kason, the day on which he attained Enlightenment, the Lord sat fortified by such a resolution and strove the whole night; then he attained *pubbenivasañāṇa* (the power to recall past lives) in the early part of the night, *dibbacakkhu* (deva-eye) in the middle part of the night and at dawn he reflected on dependent origination as well as on the arising-and-passing away of the *khandhas* and developed insight-knowledge. He perfected his insight by various kinds of mindfulness, e.g., *rūpāsattaka*, *nāmasattaka* as mentioned in Visuddhimagga. Then after passing

through the four stages of the Ariyan path and their fruitions he became the Buddha. It was on the basis of his experience that Buddha urged his disciples to strive hard for Arahats<sup>h</sup>ip at one sitting.

Thus the Buddha's insistence on strenuous effort in many suttas gives the lie to the view that knowledge by itself ensures transcendent insight, that no effort is needed. So let not your teacher's verdict or assurance make you complacent. You should examine yourself to see whether your experience brings about the extinction of defilements.

I have been giving instructions in meditation for 32 years. To my knowledge those who can fully recount their spiritual experience in a week are hard to come by. Most of them can do so only after 20 or 30 days or even after three or four months. But those who follow my instructions and practise steadfastly usually report their experiences after a month. I now urge the yogis to regard a month or just over a month as the norm for the period required for the successful practice of meditation. It will not do to think, as some people do, that one month is too short for the practising yogi. For the Buddha promised *anāgāmi* stage or even Arahats<sup>h</sup>ip to those who followed his advice and so to say that it is impossible to gain

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insight after a month is to deprecate the Buddha's teaching and to discourage the yogis

### RIGHT METHOD, SINCERITY AND DILIGENCE

What is important is that the yogi should follow the method that is in accord with Satipaṭṭhāna sutta and other teachings. He must be free from hypocrisy, self-deceit, he should be sincere and candid and he should stick to the instructions according to the Buddha's teaching. The yogi practises mindfulness constantly as instructed and reports his experience to the teachers. The teachers note the yogi's progress and his account of contact with Nibbāna on the Ariyan level. They urge the yogi to continue his practice. When they consider his progress satisfactory, they tell him about the stages in the development of insight-knowledge, the path and its fruition. Then the yogi assesses his progress on the basis of what he learns from us and determines the stage he has attained. We do not pass judgement on his attainment but let him judge for himself.

Yet some people criticize us, thinking that we give verdict but this is a misapprehension. Some look askance at our non-commitment, wondering why the teacher should not be able to specify the stage of a yogi's progress. But our non-committal attitude is in keeping with the Buddhist tradition in that apart from the Buddha

## MĀYĀ

even Sāriputra did not declare any yogi a *sotāpanna* or an *anāgāmi* or an Arahāt.

Furthermore, a meditation teacher is like a physician. In olden days physicians did not have any instrument to test the physical condition of a patient. They had to diagnose the disease by examining the patient's condition, feeling his pulse and listening to what he said. If the patient did not speak the truth, the physician went astray. Likewise, if the yogi does not report accurately, the teacher may be mistaken in his judgement. So the practising yogi should be free from pretence and hypocrisy and forthright in reporting his experience. And it is best for the teacher to note all that the yogi says, tell him about the stages of insight and let him judge for himself.

### HIDING ONE'S DEFECTS (MĀYĀ)

*Māyā* is the tendency to hide one's faults in order to keep others in the dark about them. We made allusions to *māyā* when we talked about *sātheyya* (hypocrisy). Some seek to cover their moral lapses behind a facade of talks on the evils of immorality and the blessings of a moral life, talks that are designed to deceive other people. The object of some persons who practise austerities (*dhūtaṅga*), and meditation is not to enhance their prestige but to cover up their moral laxity. This is not *sātheyya* but *māyā*.

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It is *māyā* on the part of some workers to idle away the time and then to work hard in the presence of their superior or submit tendentious reports. It is *māyā* to speak to a person as if one is interested in his welfare while covertly saying or doing things that are harmful to him. It is *māyā* to tell a teacher that one follows his instruction when in fact one does not. In short, all attempts to hide one's faults are *māyā*.

It is an evil that you should try to overcome. If you have it, you must confess it to your teacher or your fellow-yogis. According to the commentary, the yogi overcomes *māyā* and *sāpheyya* at the *sotāpatti* stage. Since they are evils, there is no room for them in the mind of the Noble One (Ariya).

EXCESSIVE CONCEIT (ATIMĀNA)

LACK OF RESPECT (THAMBHA)

Those who have excessive conceit usually do not have respect for a person who is worthy of respect. If one does not pay respect to or make room for or give way to a worthy person, it is a sign of conceit and arrogance. A worthy person here means a grandfather, a grandmother, a father, a mother, a teacher or any other aged person. It may also mean a person whose moral and spiritual life is much higher than yours. According to the Buddha's teaching in *Cūlakammavibhaṅga* sutta, those who lack res-

## EXCESSIVE CONCEIT

pect for a worthy person land in hell after death and on return to the human world are reborn in the lower classes ; while respect for a worthy person leads to the *da va*-worlds and to rebirth as human beings in noble families.

*Māna* means self-conceit and a low opinion of other people. *Atimāna* is excessive self-conceit. Conceit is totally extinct only in the Arahāt and so it is an evil that few bhikkhus and yogis can overcome. Excessive conceit of some people is an obstacle to their social relations and prosperity. Few people wish to have any relation with a conceited person. His friends and followers gradually dwindle, his superiors dislike him and at last he becomes isolated.

Among religious teachers, too, there are some who harbour excessive pride. Their sayings and writings clearly betray their conceit. They commit indiscretions and excesses in speaking and writing. A conceited teacher tends to belittle others and portray himself as peerless in respect of moral purity and learning. So although he may be a Sayadaw who is fully qualified in every respect, he will not prosper and have much success in life. His books may be remarkable but few people will esteem them highly.

So the best thing is to have little conceit. But the difficulty is that a conceited man is usually unconscious of his conceit. His conceit



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may be beyond control in spite of other people's advice. On the other hand, he may impute conceit to those who do not agree with him. As a result, he finds it hard to have cordial relations with others. Such an experience should make him aware of his excessive pride and help him to control it.

### SĀRIPUTRA'S HUMILITY

The humility of thera Sāriputra is exemplary. With the Buddha's permission Sāriputra and Moggalāna once set out to visit towns and villages. Seeing Sāriputra accompanied by many monks, a certain bhikkhu became envious and just to obstruct their journey he reported to the Lord that Sāriputra bumped against him but went on his way without making an apology. In fact, he made this charge just because of an accidental brush with the end of the thera's robe.

Thereupon the Buddha summoned Sāriputra and in the assembly of the Sangha the Lord asked him about the monk's allegation. Sāriputra's reply was as follows:—

"A bhikkhu who is unmindful of his physical body may bump against his fellow-bhikkhu and go on his way without an apology. But I regard myself as the earth", etc. What the thera meant is this: Many things, both clean and unclean are thrown onto the earth, but the

## SĀRIPUTRA'S HUMILITY

earth accepts everything without complaint or revulsion. So also whatever others may say or do, he exercises restraint. Furthermore, he regards himself as water, fire or air. Just as these elements remain unaffected by dirty things, so also he forbears whatever others may say or do to him.

Moreover, he regards himself as a low-caste young man or woman. Caste is very important in India. A low-caste Caṇḍāla must not touch a high-caste brahmin. So when a Caṇḍāla goes into the village of brahmins, he has to announce his coming by beating with a stick, thereby warning the villagers against physical contact with him. Sāriputra says that he has the kind of humility that characterizes the Caṇḍāla's way of life.

Again, a bull with a broken horn does not molest any living being and is gentle. He (Sāriputra) regards himself as that bull. He loathes his body just as a young man or a woman who has bathed and adorned himself would loathe a dead dog or snake hanging round his or her neck. He sees his body as a burden which he has to bear, as a burden that is like a pot of animal fat that is leaking through many holes.

Then the accusing monk was smitten with conscience and he apologized to Sāriputta for

his wrong allegation. The latter forgave him and even told him not to take his reply amiss.

We should emulate Sāriputra's example as far as possible. Even if we cannot overcome pride, we should try to overcome excessive conceit. This conceit (*atimāna*) is of two kinds, viz., conceit arising from possession of certain qualities such as intelligence, knowledge, moral character, etc., and conceit due to illusion of a quality which one does not have, as when one wrongly considers oneself intelligent or noble. Ordinary persons are not free from these two kinds of conceit. We should seek to do away with the conceit due to illusion. It becomes extinct at the *sotāpatti* stage but even then the yogi is not yet free from conceit over the real possession of a quality. It is rooted out only on the attainment of Arahatsip.

#### INDOCILITY (DOVACASSATĀ)

Docility is one of the qualities which the Buddha enjoined on his followers because it helps to lessen d-filements. Many people are far from docile. They do not care for the advice of their teachers and superiors. Some children disobey their parents, some pupils disobey their teachers, some disobey their superiors or leaders and some ignore the advice of their friends. Arrogant, strong-willed and impulsive, they are notorious for their intractability.

## INDOCILITY

Charges of disobedience against some persons stem from ill-will and so they are not to blame for their attitude of mind. What is important is to heed the advice that is rational and motivated by love and compassion. Moreover, we should follow the teaching that tells us not to molest others. A person who disregards sound advice is termed a *dubbaca* (intractable) person. The bhikkhu who was especially notorious in this respect in the time of the Buddha was Channa.

Bhikkhu Channa was not an ordinary person. He was prince Siddhattha's attendant who accompanied the bodhisatta when the latter set out to become an ascetic. Later on he joined the holy order. He did not live in accordance with the Vinaya rules and so he was taken to task by his fellow-monks. But he would not welcome their admonition. He retorted that he was not an ordinary bhikkhu, that he was the personal attendant of bodhisatta when he renounced the world, that he went along with the prince as far as the bank of Anomā river and that he served the needs of the prince at that time. As the veteran follower of the Buddha, he would not heed the advice of upstarts like Sāriputra and Moggalāna.

This led the Buddha to lay down a rule and what the rule says about admonition to a fellow-monk in the Sangha is very remarkable.

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If a monk turns out to be wilful and disobedient when he is reasonably admonished by his fellow-monks, they should say to him thus: "Sir, do not regard yourself as above the admonition of your fellow-monks. Consider yourself to be in need of admonition. Admonish other monks if necessary. Other monks will admonish you on occasion. Mutual admonition will contribute to the prosperity of the Buddha-dhamma."

But bhikkhu Channa remained intractable. So he did not attain enlightenment until the Buddha passed away. After the Lord's *parinibbāna* the Sangha imposed the penalty called *brahmadanda* on him as instructed by the Master. The penalty called upon the bhikkhus to let Channa say what he liked and to avoid admonishing or speaking to him. The penalty brought Channa to his senses. He realized how social ostracism would be disastrous to him. He ceased to be arrogant, practised the Dhamma faithfully and at last became an Arahat.

### DOCILITY ESSENTIAL TO MORAL PROGRESS

Among laymen and in the holy order of bhikkhus docility is vital to good manners and moral welfare. If we resent admonition and do not speak to one another, we will remain barbarous like animals and make no moral progress. Once when some bhikkhus were about to spend the rain-retreat (lent) at a certain

## VOW OF SILENCE

place in Kosala country, they vowed to avoid speaking to one another so that there might be no friction and disharmony among them. At the end of the lent they went and paid respect to the Buddha. They told the Lord that they had fared well during the lent because of their vow of silence. On hearing this the Lord blamed them, saying, "You say you fared well when in fact you did not do so. To live together without speaking to one another is the way of life among animals such as sheep or goats. It is the life-style of heretics, of enemies living together." So saying the Buddha laid down a rule that forbade the bhikkhus to adopt the practice of the dumb and the heretics.

So the vow of silence which is undertaken by some yogis nowadays needs consideration. It is not advisable to commit oneself to total silence while under the vow. It is better to avoid talking on worldly or unimportant matters. The yogi should make exceptions and occasionally talk on matters that concern the Dhamma or that are vital to his interests. Such talks may be conducive to his material and spiritual welfare.

So those who live together should talk to one another. What a person says should be considered seriously and accepted if need be. We must welcome criticism that points out our mistakes and defects. This is more important



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for the practising yogi. He should change his behaviour or life-style in the light of what the fellow yogis say. Needless to say, he should pay special attention to the advice of his teacher. Hence the Buddha's emphasis on the need for docility that contributes to unity and prosperity of a society.

### BAD COMPANIONSHIP (PĀPAMITTA)

*Pāpamitta* means bad, evil friend. Friend is here to be understood in the sense of a person whom one regards as one's teacher. So evil companionship means dependence on an evil teacher. *Kalyāṇamitta* means good friend, someone dependable in the role of a teacher and so to have a good friend is to have a good teacher. *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, a book of the *Abhidhammā piṭaka* differentiates a good friend or a good teacher from a bad friend or a bad teacher as follows.

A bad friend or teacher is one who has no faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha; he does not believe in *kamma*; he has no moral integrity; he is given to sensual pleasure even though he may be giving profound lessons in mind-training. He has little knowledge of the Buddha's teaching; nor has he any experience in real tranquillity and wisdom. You must beware of those who tell you not to follow the wrong teacher when they in fact have little knowledge. Furthermore, the bad friend or

## BAD COMPANIONSHIP

teacher is full of envy. He fears lest his followers should have faith in other teachers. He has no transcendent knowledge such as insight into the arising-and-passing away of all phenomena.

In short, one who has no faith, moral character, knowledge and wisdom but who is envious is a bad friend or a bad teacher. We may seek the friendship of such a person in business or worldly affairs but he should be given a wide berth as a teacher for our guidance. For since he does not believe in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, his words and behaviour tend to undermine our faith. He does not accept the *kammic* law and his skepticism is infectious. Preaching the futility of a moral life, he avoids no evil and does no good. His disciples follow suit and the result is their moral degradation.

Thus one who relies on an immoral teacher is misled morally. One who relies on an alcoholic teacher tends to become an alcoholic. An ignorant teacher has no respect for knowledge. Because of his ignorance he does not have a high regard for learned persons. When he is criticized for statements that do not agree with the scriptures, he cannot argue persuasively and then he is apt to belittle the sacred books. He would have us believe that either the books or the learned persons are wrong. His disciples accept his views and they tend to scoff at the

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scholars and ancient writings. Theirs is indeed a terrible misdeed.

The jealous teacher prevents his disciples from giving alms elsewhere. Nor does he let them hear and practise the true teaching. The teacher who lacks real insight-knowledge cannot help his disciples to develop it. He is likely to misrepresent the truth and create misunderstanding. One who has faith in such a teacher will never attain the right path. He tends to speak ill of those who point out the right path.

The evil teachers in the lifetime of the Buddha were Pūraṇakassapa and other leaders of the six heretical sects. Those who followed their teachings did not have the opportunity to see the Buddha. Some disparaged the true Buddha, the true Dhamma and the true Sangha, thereby committing unwholesome acts of kamma. A man like Devadatta is also described as an evil teacher in the commentary. Those who followed Devadatta suffered terribly.

### AJĀTASATTU AND DEVADATTA

Prince Ajātasattu was a follower of Devadatta. Devadatta said to the prince, "In ancient times people lived long. So although princes became kings only after the death of their fathers, they had a lot of time to indulge in royal pleasure. Nowadays people do not live long and by the time you succeed your father, you

will have become very old and there will be only a few years left for your pleasures. So why not kill your father now and become king?" Acting on the advice of his evil teacher, the prince imprisoned his father, starved him and finally had his heels cut with a razor, covered with salt and heated. So the king died and Ajātasattu had to bear the grave *kammic* burden for the murder of his father.

Later on he became repentant and saw the Buddha. The Lord gave a talk on the advantages of a bhikkhu's life (*Sāmaññaphala sutta*) and but for his parricide the king would have attained the first stage of the path after hearing the talk. As it was, the heinous crime against his father stood in the way and on his death he landed in Lohakumbhī hell. Thus calamity befell Ajātasattu because of his faith in an evil teacher.

#### DEVADATTA'S REQUEST

Devadatta planned a schism after consultation with his three followers. He went to the Buddha with three monks and requested the Lord to lay down five rules of conduct for the bhikkhus. These rules were (1) that all bhikkhus should live permanently in the forest. If they lived in villages they were to be declared guilty. (2) They should eat only the food that they obtained by begging. They were to be declared guilty if they accepted the food offered by a

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laymen who had invited them. (3) They should dwell at the foot of trees. If they took shelter, they were to be declared guilty. (4) They should wear only cast-off rags. They were to be declared guilty if they accepted robes offered by the laymen. (5) They should be vegetarians. Those who ate fish or meat were to be declared guilty.

It is of course not improper for the bhikkhus to follow any of these rules. But if these were prescribed by the Buddha, it would be hard for them to abide by all the rules. During the first year of the Buddha's ministry the bhikkhus lived only in forest retreats. They ate only what they got by begging and spent their time at the foot of trees. But seeing that it would be difficult for some of them to live so austerely in future, the Lord made these ascetic practices voluntary. Monks were permitted to dwell at the foot of trees except during the four months of rainy season. It was not improper for them to eat meat provided they did not see the animal being killed or hear or had reason to suspect that it has been killed expressly for their meals. Thus the Buddha had permitted the monks to choose some ascetic practices as they saw fit and so he turned down Devadatta's proposals.

Taking advantage of the Buddha's disagreement with him, Devadatta requested the assembly of

## DEVADATTA'S CHISM

Sangha to express their opinion by votes on his proposals that, he said, were conducive to the lessening of desire. The ignorant young monks of Vajjī state supported him. He took the monks numbering five hundred to Gayāsīsa. In compliance with the wish of the Buddha, Sāriputta and Moggalāna went there to enlighten the misguided monks.

When they arrived there Devadatta was preaching to the young monks. On seeing the two theras, he said to his disciples. "Look! The two chief disciples of samaṇa Gotama like my teaching so much that they are coming to me." Then Kokālika, one of his followers warned him. "These two monks have evil desires. They follow the dictates of evil desires and so do not be intimate with them." Here Kokālika was projecting on the two theras the evil desires which he had as the follower of the evil-minded Devadatta. It was like a lunatic calling others lunatics.

Despite this warning, Devadatta welcomed the two chief disciples of the Lord because he thought he had won them over to his teaching. He gave them seats but they seated themselves elsewhere. He preached far into the night and then he told Sāriputra to give a talk since the monks were not sleepy and he wanted to take a rest. He lay down with his right shoulder on the robe. Here he was imitating what the Buddha



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usually said and did on similar occasions. The Buddha did not fall asleep when he lay down to rest. He used to express approval of the disciple's sermon when it came to an end. But Devadatta was unmindful and he fell asleep in a moment.

Sāriputta pointed out what was passing in the minds of the monks and told them to practise self-discipline. Moggalāna performed miracles and taught the Dhamma. The talks might have been very interesting for while hearing these talks the five hundred monks attained the *sotāpatti* stage. With the two chief disciples they all went back to Rājagaha city where the Buddha resided.

Then Kokālika was furious and he awakened Devadatta by kicking him in the breast. "Now all your disciples are gone," he shouted at his teacher. "Didn't I tell you that Sāriputra and Moggalāna are evil-minded, that you should not trust them?"

Here Kokālika's words need consideration. As the follower of evil-minded Devadatta, he imputed evil motives to pure and noble Sāriputra and Moggalāna. This shows that he was infected by the evil mind of his teacher, that he wronged noble persons verbally because he had relied on an evil teacher. So you should avoid an evil

## GOOD FRIEND OR TEACHER

friend or teacher, one who is envious and lacks faith, moral virtues, knowledge and wisdom.

## GOOD FRIEND OR TEACHER

On the other hand a good friend or teacher has just the opposite attributes. He has faith, moral integrity, knowledge, a generous heart and wisdom. The best teacher and friend in the world is the Buddha. To rely on the Buddha is to rely on the best teacher. Although the Buddha has attained *parinibbāna*, those who hear his teaching and revere his memory have the best teacher to rely on. In the lifetime of the Buddha Sāriputra and Moggalāna ranked as second best teachers, Mahākassapa, Anuruddha, etc., as third best teachers. Later on the real Arahats, *anāgāmi*, *sakadāgāmi* and *sotāpanna* persons are best teachers in that order. Good ordinary persons with faith rank below them as good teachers.

Nowadays it is hard to identify an Arahāt or a Noble One who has really attained the other stages of the path. Only the real and well-informed Ariyas can assess the spiritual attainment of a person. If as an ordinary student, one wants to find out a good friend or teacher, one must apply the criteris of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Pāli text that we have mentioned, viz., faith, morality, knowledge, a generous heart and wisdom.

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The good friend or teacher must have faith. He makes devotions to the Buddha whole-heartedly and reverentially. Some people say that an Arahant need not make such devotions. But according to the commentary, an Arahant devoutly worshipped Mahācetiya (the great relic-shrine). The good friend or teacher has also faith in and respect for the Dhamma and the Sangha. He believes in *kamma*, avoids evil and does good deeds. He urges others to be morally good like him. He has knowledge. He must be well-equipped with worldly knowledge if he is to be a good teacher in worldly life. The bhikkhus who do not meditate should have enough knowledge to teach their pupils such things as reading and writing without violating the Vinaya rules.

Some bhikkhus are well-versed in Pāli literature but are poor in writing. They do badly even in spelling and their writing is likely to lower them in the estimation of school teachers. Of course the knowledge that the bhikkhu should primarily seek is knowledge of the Dhamma. It is up to the meditation teacher to have two kinds of knowledge, that is, knowledge of the scriptures and knowledge based on practice and experience. If the teacher is thus intellectually well-equipped, the disciple with inadequate knowledge can attain true insight by practising meditation according to the teacher's instructions.

## ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TEACHER

It is easy to know the marks of a generous heart. A generous teacher gives away everything which he does not need to his disciples and fellow beings. Wisdom (*pañña*) is that which a good teacher gets by learning, reflection and the practice of meditation. The teacher must have insight-knowledge such as insight into the arising-and-passing-away of all phenomena (*udayabbayañāṇa*).

A teacher's talk clearly shows whether or not he has insight-knowledge. It is hard for an ordinary man to identify such knowledge. A well-read man may be in a better position to do so but still it is not easy for a man without experience to recognize it. He may misunderstand what a teacher says on the basis of his experience or he may mistake purely bookish knowledge for reality. More difficult to understand are insights associated with the path and fruition as well as retrocognitive insight (*paccavekkhañāṇa*). So we should regard a person as a good teacher if he has faith, knowledge, etc., and describes the nature of insight-knowledge on the basis of experience and in accordance with the Piṭakas.

Visuddhimagga, "The Path of Purity" describes a good meditation teacher as an affable person. He endears himself to others by virtue of his moral integrity, good-will and loving-kindness (*mettā*) that motivates his speech and action.

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He must be worthy of respect. He will have this attribute if he has morality, tranquillity and wisdom.

He must be worthy of loving-kindness suffused by others. It is easy to suffuse *mettā* to one who has good moral character and is inspired by *mettā* in his speech and action.

He must know how to teach and discipline other persons. If a disciple has defects and faults, the teacher must not connive at them but reprove him. This is an important qualification of a good teacher. His indifference on matters that call for reproof is harmful to the disciple's interest.

He must be able to face criticism. Whatever the age of his critic, if the criticism is justified, he should welcome it and act accordingly, as in the case of Sāriputra who accepted the advice of a young novice.

On one occasion Sāriputra was so busy that his robe was slipping down. The way he wore the robe was out of keeping with Vinaya rules but since he had no desire to violate them, he was not guilty of any offence. Seeing his robe slipping, a young *sāmaṇera* drew his attention to it. Sāriputra took the reminder in good grace, adjusted his robe and even asked, "Would this do, Sir?"

## ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TEACHER

A good teacher must be able to speak on profound subjects such as *khandhā*, *āyatana* (the bases of mental process) *dhātu* (elements) *saccā* (truths), *paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent origination) *vipassanā* and so forth. Unless the teacher is able to talk on these subjects, the disciple will not have the opportunity to practise meditation-effectively despite his desire to do so.

He does not urge the disciple to do improper things. Some tell their disciples to do unwholesome things for their selfish ends. If the disciple acts on the instruction of such teachers, he usually comes to grief. If he speaks improperly, he is at the very least in for censure. If he commits crime, he is punished for it. If he does unwholesome deeds, he is likely to land in one of the four nether worlds after death. So the teacher should not encourage the disciples to do improper things.

These then are the essential qualifications of a good meditation teacher mentioned in *Visuddhimagga*. These qualifications are implicit in the five qualities, viz., faith, morality, etc., suggested in *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* of *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. Thus affability and the quality of deserving the loving-kindness (*metta*) of other people presuppose morality (*sīla*). Respectability is the attribute of those who have moral virtues, knowledge and wisdom and so are the



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ability to discipline others and the ability to accept advice. The ability to talk on profound subjects is based on knowledge and wisdom. Thus the qualities of a good teacher according to Visuddhimagga and Dhammasaṅgani are basically the same.

### PAMĀDA -- FORGETFULNESS IN DOING GOOD

We have often talked about forgetfulness (*pamāda*). We are apt to forget in worldly life as well as in matters of spirit. We put a thing at a place and lose it because we forget to take it when we leave the place. We lose articles that we forget to keep with us while travelling by car, train or steamer. We suffer financially or otherwise when we forget to do certain things. Such forgetfulness in everyday life is harmful. To forget in regard to alms-giving, morality, etc., is unmindfulness in matters of higher life. It is called *pamāda* and explained in Khuddhaka-vibhaṅga as follows.

“What is the nature of *pamāda*? It means lack of self-control in regard to unwholesome deeds, unwholesome speech, unwholesome thoughts and five sensual objects.”

Lack of self-discipline in regard to misdeeds is a kind of *pamāda*. By misdeed we mean taking life, stealing and indulging in illicit sex. So when you think of killing or when you are killing, you give reins to your desire to kill.

## PAMĀDA AND SENSUAL DESIRE

At that moment you forget that you should avoid killing. The same may be said of other two kinds of misdeeds, viz., stealing and illicit sex.

Likewise, unfettered mind in respect of the four kinds of evil speech means forgetfulness. It means forgetting the fact that one should avoid lying, slandering, abusing and frivolous talk. Hence it is a kind of *pamāda*. So is lack of control over evil thoughts such as the intention to get another man's property unlawfully, the desire to kill or doubt about the law of *kamma*. It means forgetting the fact that it is good to have no desire for other people's property, to cultivate good-will and to believe in action (*kamma*) and its result.

These are the worst of all kinds of *pamāda* for a person imbued with them is bent on evil and wholly blind to moral and spiritual values.

## PAMĀDA AND SENSUAL DESIRES

Still another kind of *pamāda* is licentiousness in respect of five sensual objects. Sensual objects are objects of desire. They form the basis of mutual attraction between men and women. The objects of men's desire are largely to be found in women and vice versa. These objects are form, sound, smell, taste and sensation. Of these taste also means the taste of prepared food as well as the comfort of clothes, bed, etc.

Also to be identified with sensual objects are material goods such as gold, silver, houses, vehicles, clothing, etc., which one needs to fulfil one's sensual desires.

Uncontrolled thoughts about sensual objects, uncontrolled desire for them and uncontrolled enjoyments of them mean *pamāda*. It is like having no control over cattle that are let loose on grazing ground. If you give a free rein to sensual desires instead of restraining them by mind-training (*bhāvanā*) you will certainly forget to do good deeds. Such obsession with sensual desire may be regarded as middle grade *pamāda* in that it is not as serious as the *pamāda* that leads to misdeeds.

People who do not develop their minds are imbued with the middle grade *pamāda* all the time. From the moment they wake up in the morning they think of sensual objects and the obsessive desires dominate them the whole day. They never get fed up with sensual objects. They delight in thinking of them and suspend their sensuous thoughts only when they fall asleep. They may think of sensuous objects the whole day, the whole night, the whole year, nay, it may be their lifelong preoccupation. This makes them unmindful of the *dhammas* within. So to give vent to sensuous desire without self-restraint is *pamāda* in respect of good deeds.

## PAMĀDA (FORGETFULNESS )

*Pamāda* is unconsciousness but it is not unconsciousness due to falling from a high place, drowning or affliction with a disease. It is total unmindfulness while one goes about, eats or indulges in pleasure. To give vent to evil desire in terms of evil deed, evil speech or evil thought is *pamāda* at its worst. Less serious is obsession with sensual objects. Then there is another kind of *pamāda* that is subtle and mild.

### FORGETTING TO DO GOOD

It is *pamāda*, too, to forget to develop or cultivate the good *dhammas* sincerely, constantly and ceaselessly.

The good *dhammas* here mean in brief alms-giving, morality and mind-development (*bhāvanā*). One must devote oneself to them sincerely and appropriately. Alms should be given on certain occasions to the best of one's ability. Commitment to five precepts should be permanent and one should observe the eight precepts and others whenever it is possible to do so. The mind should be developed as far as possible. This is to be done seriously and steadfastly. Half-hearted practice means lack of sincerity and unmindfulness of many things.

The good *dhammas* essential to mind-development are the four applications of attentiveness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), four right efforts (*sammāppadhāna*) four roads to power (*iddhipāda*), five ethical

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powers (*indriya*), five mental powers (*bala*), seven elements of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) and the eightfold path (*magga*). The yogi should develop these *dhammas* sincerely and seriously.

To watch every bodily behaviour such as walking, sitting, lying, etc whenever it occurs is to contemplate the body. To watch cramp, heat, etc is to contemplate the feelings; to watch thoughts and imaginations that arise is to contemplate the states of consciousness; while to watch the acts of hearing, seeing, etc is to contemplate mind-objects. To attend meticulously to everything that arises and to be aware of it mean careful application of attentiveness. The four applications of attentiveness lead to four right efforts and the application of other elements of *dhamma* for enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya-dhamma*). Therefore to watch the abdominal rising and falling and so forth thoroughly is to cultivate the good *dhammas* thoroughly. Any unmindfulness is lack of thoroughness which means *pamāda*.

Moreover, if you do the watching by fits and starts instead of doing it steadfastly, you will be unmindful occasionally and all such unmindfulness is *pamāda*. To watch for only one or two hours means *pamāda* for the rest of the day. In that case your concentration is arrested and it will be hard to develop insight knowledge perfectly.

## APPAMĀDA(MINDFULNESS)

Again if you relax your effort or if your enthusiasm wanes, you tend to become forgetful. If in the course of your practice in meditation you give up owing to lack of progress or ill-health or for any other reason, you cease to be mindful and free from *pamāda*. This kind of *pamāda* is obvious in the case of many people. Some never think of taking up meditation. Some even prevent others from meditating. Such persons are steeped in *pamāda* through out their lives. To tell others to give up meditating is *pamāda* at its worst. Some monks do not meditate even though they have joined the Sangha with the object of practising meditation. Yet instead of meditating themselves they discourage others from doing so. This is the most serious *pamāda*.

In short, it is *pamāda* if a person fails to cultivate the good *dhammas* seriously, ceaselessly and whole-heartedly.

The opposite of forgetfulness is mindfulness or vigilance (*appamāda*). It is *appamāda* to avoid wrong deeds, wrong speech and lead a good life; or to deny wrong thoughts an outlet through concentration and insight-knowledge; or to divert the mind from sensual objects through *bhāvanā* or mind-development; or to overcome sensual thoughts through mindfulness; or to give alms or to think of giving alms or doing good deeds. In particular, the best



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*appamāda* is to watch and be aware of everything that arises from six senses.

*Appamāda* is applied to daily life by yogis who are practising mindfulness at this center. Their commitment to moral precepts makes them free from unwholesome deeds and speech. Constant mindfulness excludes unwholesome thoughts and keeps the mind away from sensual objects. If the mind occasionally goes astray, it is promptly noted and checked. Since the yogi is always watching the mental images that arise, there can be no sensual, retrospective thoughts. This means mindfulness that is being developed through sincere, constant, steadfast and unfaltering practice. Their cultivation of *appamāda* is indeed very good and really gratifying to us.

### THE PRACTICE OF APPAMĀDA

“Work out your own salvation with *appamāda* (mindfulness).” Thus the Buddha exhorted his disciples every day. It was his last advice before his *parinibbāna*. The substance of his advice is that the disciple should exert effort to achieve the object which is Arahatship, the goal of a bhikkhu’s life, the attainment of which leads the Arahats to reflect, “*Karāṇīyaṃ katanī*: What is to be done has been done.” It is not easy to attain Arahatship. The yogi needs help or means for the accomplishment

## APPAMĀDENA SAMPĀDETHA

just as a man needs tools or instruments for carrying out a job. So in order to help his disciples achieve the goal of Arahatsip, the Buddha pointed out the *appamāda* as the best tool for the purpose. By means of *appamāda* the disciple is to devote himself to *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* till Arahatsip is won.

### APPAMĀDENA SAMPĀDETHA: ITS TRUE MEANING

We have referred to the instrumental nature of *appamāda* in relation to the subject because the way most people understand the last saying of the Buddha is not in accord with the explanation given in the commentaries. They believe that the Buddha's last advice was: "Keep yourselves wholly mindful." This interpretation is fairly plausible but it does not bring into focus what is to be accomplished by the disciples. On the other hand the commentary elaborates it thus: "*Satiavippavāsena sabba kiccāni sampādeyyātha*" The Pāli sentence contains the object *sabba kiccāni*" which means "all purposes, all matters". Hence the verbs *sampādeyyātha* and *sampādeyyātha* should be transitive verbs rather than objectless or intransitive verbs. *Appamādena* means by means of *appamāda* and as it is used in conjunction with transitive verb it is to be understood not in the sense of an object but in the sense of a means for achieving the object. So the Pāli passage in the commentary may be translated as "By means

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of mindfulness (*appamāda*) you should accomplish all the tasks (*sabbakiccāni*) relating to morality, etc” So the last saying of the Buddha means that one should do with mindfulness all that is to be done in connection with *silā*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. The same interpretation applies to *appamādena sampādeṭṭha* recited by the bhikkhu who presides over the ceremony for the commitment of the lay Buddhists to moral precepts.

### THE LAST TEACHING

The last saying of the Buddha on the eve of his *parinibbāna* contains the words “*vaya dhammā saṅkhārā*”. It means that all phenomena of existence are subject to decay and undependable; that mind and matter are impermanent and always passing away; that every thing will come to an end eventually and that we should therefore practise *silā*, *samādhi* and *paññā* thoroughly. Consider, for example, a house that you have built. In spite of its solidity as a new house, it will surely disintegrate in due course and before its final dissolution it will decay gradually. A house that is expected to last 100 years decays one per cent every year and it decays proportionately for every period of time down to a second.

We usually do not speak of a time-unit that is less than a second but according to the scriptures, there are many thought-moments in

## THE LAST TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA

a second during which dissolution takes place ceaselessly. Just like a well-built house, a man's body is also subject to the law of impermanence. It is apparently robust at the age of 16 or 20. He is then attached to his body and mind, confident of his strength and virility, and self-assured about his knowledge, understanding and skill. He considers himself immune to destruction but in fact mind and body do not endure even for the twinkling of an eye. Even when he is sleeping, eating or working, all psycho-physical phenomena arise and pass away ceaselessly. This can be realized by the yogis who practise constant mindfulness by Satipaṭṭhāna method. It is not an experience beyond the reach of the average man's intellect. Some say that it is impossible to have such an experience nowadays but this is a misconception due to lack of sustained practice. So because of this ceaseless dissolution even a man who lives 100 years eventually becomes a corpse. Hence the insubstantiality of life and the Buddha's emphasis on the need for the practice of *sila*, *samādhi* and *paññā* on which we should rely for liberation.

The yogis who watch all phenomena at every moment of seeing, etc are mindful in accordance with the Buddha's advice "*Appamādena sampādetha*". As concentration develops, there arises the insight into the only two phenomena of existence,

viz., the known corporeality and the knowing consciousness (*nāmarūpapariccheda-ñāṇa*). Then the yogi reflects on the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of all phenomenal existence (*sammāsanañāṇa*). This is followed by insight into the dissolution of all phenomena at every moment (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*). At this stage the yogi sees light, has ecstasy and believes that his insight is complete. But it is not and after that he finds both the *nāma* and *rūpa* vanishing (*bhanga-ñāṇa*).

Then constant mindfulness leads to fear (*bhaya-ñāṇa*), awareness of defects (*ādinava-ñāṇa*), weariness (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*), the desire to repudiate *nāma-rūpa* and existence (*muñcatukamyata-ñāṇa*) reflection (*patisaṅkharā-ñāṇa*) and equanimity (*sankharupekkhā-ñāṇa*). Still it does not suffice to bring the yogi to the ultimate goal. When it is developed, there arise adaptation-knowledge (*anuloma-ñāṇa*) and maturity-knowledge (*gotrabhū-ñāṇa*) followed by *sotāpatti* path-knowledge and its fruition. The yogi must, however, continue the practice whereupon *udayabbaya* and other kinds of insight-knowledge occur again in the same order until he attains the *sakadāgāmi* stage and its fruition. Still he must keep on with the practice, repeat the same process of development and reach the *anāgāmi* stage. Then continued practice and repetition of the same spiritual journey will bring him to Arahatsip. Only then does the disciple attain full liberation in accordance with the last advice of the Buddha.

## ASSADDHI (LACK OF FAITH)

So while other people may be forgetful, absorbed in sensual objects and divorced from good deeds, let us avoid forgetfulness, overcome evil deeds through morality, remove the *pamāda* of evil thoughts and sensual objects through mind-development. *Appamāda* is central to Buddhism. Indeed according to the commentaries, it is the epitome of the Buddha's teaching during his 45-year ministry.

### ASSADDHI - - LACK OF FAITH

*Saddhā* means faith but it is not *saddhā* to hold a view that is not sound and reasonable. *Saddhā* refers only to acceptance of the right beliefs about the true Buddha, the true Dhamma, the true Sangha and the law of *kamma*. The belief in *kamma* is the right belief based on faith. In the exegesis of the three Refuge (*saraṇā*) the commentaries describe the belief as *diṭṭhi jukamma*, that is rooted in *saddhā*.

Like the belief in *kamma*, the belief in the true Buddha, the true Dhamma and the true Sangha is a matter of faith. Every religion has God or supreme teacher, the doctrine revealed or taught by the founder and the disciples who follow the doctrine. How are we to know whether they are genuine or not? The answer is that a true Buddha must have nine attributes. One of the attributes is *Arahan* which means freedom from hatred, ignorance and other defile-



## SALLEKHA SUTTA

ments and as such it suffices to reveal the genuineness of the teacher. It is said that the so-called God or Creator wants human beings to revere and worship him and punishes those who fail to do so. This shows his craving for power and ill-will. But the Buddha teaches that we will fare according to our *kamma*, that good deeds will produce good results and bad deeds bad results. He does not say that worshippers will be saved and non-worshippers punished. There is no sign of greed or ill-will in his teaching. He only exhorts his disciples to free themselves from such defilements.

As for the teaching its test is experience. It must possess six attributes one of which is *sandiṭṭhika* which means the quality of being realized or experienced. So we can know whether it is true or false on the basis of experience. Other religions do not tell us what their followers can experience; all their teachings have to be accepted on blind faith. But the Buddha's teaching lends itself to empirical investigation. Spiritual experience is attained in a couple of weeks if you practise according to our instructions and you will have extraordinary insight if the practice extends to five or six weeks.

The Sangha, too, is genuine if it has nine attributes such as *suppatipanna* which means good training. Of course every religion recognizes the importance of good training but we must

distinguish a good training from a bad training. A good training means freedom from ill-will, greed and other evils. Such a training is not to be found generally in non-Buddhist teachings. The non-Buddhist systems do not help us to root out the evils whereas the Buddhist training ensures their total extinction. The Sangha is committed to this training.

Faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha is immensely beneficial. Owing to lack of such faith, some people do not do good deeds and some even do evil. Then there are those who reject *kamma* and the idea of a future life. They do not avoid evil and they do not do much good. Because of their lack of faith, their few good deeds that stem from love or compassion are outweighed by bad deeds. They have almost nothing to rely on for their welfare after death. On the other hand men of faith avoid evil and do good as far as possible. So they make spiritual progress and are assured of a good afterlife.

Ahirika and Anottappa - - Lack of moral  
shame and dread

Shame and dread are what we experience in everyday life. But it is not moral shame to feel unhappy for lack of good dress or prestige. *Hiri* is the shame associated with evil-doing. Likewise, *ottappa* means fear of evil-doing. Lack of

moral shame or conscience is called *ahirika* and lack of fear in regard to evil-doing is called *anottappa*. Lack of shame and lack of moral fear go together but these two kinds of moral defect differ in quality. Just as a clean man does not want to be tainted with dirt, so also a good man does not want his conscience (*hiri*) to be defiled by evil. But it is *ottappa* to dread the consequences of an evil deed. To put it another way, *hiri* makes a man reluctant to do evil because it leads him to reflect: "Only the cowards, fools and low class people do evil. As a man of noble family, wise, good and courageous, I should do no evil." But it is *ottappa* that makes a man afraid of public opinion and unwilling to do evil.

So a bhikkhu or yogi or a good man motivated by *hiri* will avoid evil because of his sense of self-respect or he may do so out of regard for society or for fear of being censured by *devas* if not by some people who are aware of his misdeeds.

Thus we shrink from doing evil when our moral conscience makes it abhorrent to us or when its immediate and post-mortem consequences make us afraid. It is when we are devoid of shame and fear that we tend to do evil; in other words, evil deeds are rooted in the absence of these two moral deterrents. Men's moral progress is due to them and were it not for them men

## POVERTY OF KNOWLEDGE

would morally sink to the level of wild animals. Hence the Pāli name given to them, viz., *loka-pāla-dhamma*, the *dhamma* that serves to guard human society.

### APPSSUTATĀ POVERTY OF KNOWLEDGE

According to the Buddha, poverty or lack of knowledge is also a defect which we should remove in order to lessen defilements.

Knowledge is of two kinds, one which we acquire by hearing (*āgamasuta*) and one which we acquire by independent understanding (*adigamasuta*). While many people may remain ignorant, we should seek knowledge.”

Some kinds of knowledge are relevant to worldly affairs while others bear on our spiritual life. Whatever its kind, every knowledge is good. Worldly knowledge is beneficial and so the more, the better. Some are ill-informed on worldly matters. Their knowledge is confined to their locality; they have never been elsewhere. Such ignorance will do them no good for when they have to visit distant places, they do not know what to do. So one should seek as much worldly knowledge as possible.

But what we should emphasize is spiritual knowledge. Some people have little knowledge about the Buddha-dhamma. Some have never heard of the Buddha, let alone know anything about his teaching. There are many such people

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all over the world. Even in Burma the Dhamma is wholly foreign to those living in border areas. There are preachers in some villages but serious sermons are hard to come by. The talks deal largely with alms-giving, morality, death and funerals. Even so the way they preach is not comprehensive but perfunctory and little more than what is required by tradition for the happy or unhappy occasions in life.

Here is a sample of their sermons: "*Bujjhatīti buddho yo bhagavā*—the *bhagavā* is called the Buddha because he clearly realized the four noble truths. The Buddha was on one occasion residing at Jetavana vihāra in the city of Sāvatti. At that time...." and so on. The preacher usually speaks in an authoritative tone. He seldom tells the people exactly what attitude they should have when giving alms or what thoughts they should cultivate when keeping sabbath. In some places such instructions have not yet come to the notice of the people who still regard the traditional sermons as the only teachings of the Buddha. Talks on *vipassanā* are indeed very rare among them.

The so-called *vipassanā* instructions of some teachers are hardly precise and comprehensive. They do not ensure concentration, insight or success in meditation. Some instructions lack the authority of scriptures. By and large people

## COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE

are ignorant of *vipassanā* and it is up to the yogis to fill their spiritual needs. Through talks by well-informed teachers they can increase their knowledge gradually. They should also study authoritative books and consult learned teachers about matters which they do not understand. Nowadays there are Burmese translations of Pāli texts which can give you a good knowledge of the Dhamma. But the sentence construction is archaic and so you may need the help of a teacher in your study.

## COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE IN ONE STANZA

The extent of knowledge which the yogi should have is explained by the commentary when it describes a well-informed yogi as one who understands only a single stanza but lives in accordance with it.

So a thorough understanding of even a single stanza means complete knowledge. Of course if one understands more, so much the better. But it is necessary to practise rightly what we understand. You may be well-versed in scriptures but your knowledge counts for little unless you live up to it and practise *sila*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Practice is of paramount importance in religious life. Even a knowledge of morality is useless if you do not apply it to daily life. It is superfluous and you are no better than one who knows little about moral



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values. There is, for example, the story of two bhikkhus in the commentary on Dhammapada.

In the time of the Buddha two friends in Sāvatti city joined the holy order. After learning the Vinaya rules for five years, they were told by the Buddha that it was up to a bhikkhu to do one of the two things, vix., the practice of *vipassanā* or the study and teaching of the Dhamma. One of the monks chose to meditate as he was too old to learn the Dhamma. So under the guidance of the Buddha, he went to a forest abode, meditated and finally became a full-fledged Arahāt. The other monk studied the Dhamma, preached here and there and gave courses to 500 bhikkhus.

A large number of monks went to the forest retreat, meditated and after attaining Arahātship, they took leave of the elderly bhikkhu to go and see the Buddha. The aged bhikkhu told them to pay respects on his behalf to the Buddha and his disciples as well as to his friend, the teacher of the Dhamma. They did so and the pitaka-teacher was struck by the number of bhikkhus who claimed to be the disciples of his friend. He did not have a high opinion of his friend. He wondered why the forest-dwelling monk who had never studied the Dhamma had so many disciples. So he decided to question the forest-bhikkhu when he came to the city.

## SIMILE OF A COWHERD

Later on the forest-bhikkhu came to see the Buddha. He left the bowl and robes with the Pitaka-teacher and went to the Buddha. After paying respects to the Buddha, he came back to his friend. The Pitaka-teacher had then prepared some questions to test the forest-dweller. The Buddha then having divined his intention came to the meeting to forestall any attempt on his part to snub the forest-dwelling Arahāt by irrelevant questions. For such an attempt was fraught with serious *kammic* consequences.

The Buddha asked the Pitaka-teacher about the *jhānas*, *samāpatti* and *rupa-nāma*. The monk could not answer the questions. He was baffled when he was questioned about the *sotāpatti* path. But the question did not present any difficulty to the forest bhikkhu. The Buddha asked them about the other three higher paths, the Pitaka-teacher was again baffled but the forest bhikkhu answered all questions.

## LIKE A COWHERD

The Buddha praised the forest bhikkhu but not the Pitaka-teacher. This of course did not please the disciples of the latter. Thereupon the Buddha declared, "Although a learned person may preach the Dhamma bearing on the welfare of human beings, if he does not practise it, he

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is not free from defilements; he does not attain any stage of the holy path. So he is like a cowherd who makes his living by counting and guarding the cattle of other people.”

The cowherd has to look after the cattle and hand them over to their owner. He gets only money for his job, he does not get milk from the cows which is consumed by the owner. Likewise, the monk who teaches the Dhamma is attended on and offered food by his followers for his service. Without practice he cannot enjoy the fruits of the Dhamma such as *jhāna*, *vipassanā*, the path and fruition. The fruits of the Dhamma are meant only for those who having heard it from a learned monk practise it just as milk is consumed only by the owner of the cows.

If a person preaches the five moral precepts, but does not practise them, he may be respected as a teacher but he will not benefit by them. Only those who apply them to daily life will enjoy the fruits of morality in this life and hereafter. Likewise, the fruits of higher dhammas are to be enjoyed only by those who practise *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Of course the practice must be correct. The yogi who takes up meditation seriously may not be able to talk much about the Dhamma but he is assured of the fruits of the Ariyan path and the extinction of defilements and suffering.

## SPÍRIT OF INQUIRY

Hence the Buddha's emphasis on the need for practice. "A person may be able to talk only a little about the Dhamma but if he practises *sila*, *samādhi* and *paññā* in accordance with the Dhamma, he realizes the truth, overcomes craving, hatred and ignorance, and having no attachment to this or the other world, his mind is fully liberated and he is one who has done away with defilements."

This is the translation of the Pāli text in support of the statement in the commentary that a single stanza that is heard, remembered and practised will benefit us and that it may mean complete knowledge. Again in the Culakamma-vibhanga sutta the Buddha says that a spirit of inquiry contributes to knowledge and good deeds, speech and thought in this life and that one who has an inquiring mind is likely to attain the *deva*-world after death and to be reborn as a highly intelligent human being.

So we should seek knowledge through investigation. "If you do not know, inquire; if it is not clean, cleanse it," as the Burmese saying goes. It is up to you to inquire if you do not know the methods of meditation or if you do not clearly grasp something about the Dhamma or if the study of scriptures leaves you still confused and unenlightened. The meditation teachers help even those who do not inquire them. The

yogi may be ignorant at the outset but he can gain much knowledge under the guidance of a teacher. You should not think that the practice of *vipassanā* is impossible without a knowledge of *khandha* (aggregates), *āyatana* (sense-bases) and so forth. For everyday the *vipassanā* teachers tell the yogis all that they should know while examining them about their progress. Moreover, while meditating, the yogi has unusual insights. Thus the yogis at this center gain both the knowledge imparted by the teacher and the knowledge based on experience.

LAZINESS (KCSAJJA)

A man may be lazy in worldly affairs or in his religious life. By and large the two kinds of laziness go together. The latter kind of laziness makes a man reluctant to do good, to hear the Dhamma, to study scriptures or to meditate. We should overcome such laziness and exert unstinted and strenuous effort.

There are four kinds of right effort (*sammāp-padhāna*), viz., (1) the effort to prevent the arising of evil (deeds, words and thoughts) which one has, not yet committed, (2) the effort to avoid the repetition of an evil that one has committed, (3) the effort to cultivate good deeds, words and thoughts that have not yet arisen, (4) the effort to perpetuate and develop the good that one has done. So we should avoid

## LAZINESS

the evil that we see or hear of in others but that has not yet occurred to us; see that an evil that has occurred is not repeated; do the good that we have not yet done, especially *vipassanā* that we have not yet practised and maintain and develop the good that we have done; in particular the *samādhi* and *vipassanā* insight that we have already gained.

Meditation involves all the four kinds of right effort. If you do not watch your senses you will be beset by old and new evils. Every moment of attentiveness means the effort to forestall both evils; it means also the effort to develop new insights as well as the effort to increase and perfect the insights that have already occurred to you.

Some lazy people do not wish to give alms personally and so they tell others to do so on their behalf. This alms-giving by proxy does not benefit them kammically as much as possible. Some lazy Buddhists do not wish to make devotions at the Buddha-shrine or to hear the Dhamma or to study scriptures or to meditate. Even if they do meditate, they do not exert much effort. They do so only half-heartedly and so they make little progress. All these deficiencies are due to their laziness. So they should be energetic and do these things that are essential to their religious life.



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### ABSENT-MINDEDNESS (MUTTHASSACCA)

Absent-mindedness and forgetfulness (*pamāda*) are basically the same and so are circumspection and mindfulness. So what we have said about *pamāda* applies equally to absent-mindedness. Absent-mindedness in worldly affairs or in religious life is harmful while mindfulness in both areas of life is beneficial.

It never occurs to some rich people to give alms. They are in for an unhappy future after their death because of their deficiency in *dāna*. Some do not care for morality; they do not observe even the five precepts strictly. They say that they are not yet old and lead an easy-going life. But young people are also mortal and if they die without *sila*, they are likely to land in the lower worlds. We should bear in mind the importance of *sila* even in the case of young people. *Samatha*, *vipassanā* and *bhāvanā* are foreign to most people. Those who know something about them think that these high dhammas are not meant for their generation. But if they die young, they are bound to miss valuable religious experience.

*Vipassanā* is especially important. If a Buddhist does not attain the fruits of *vipassanā*, his profession of the Buddha-dhamma has served little purpose. For whereas *dāna*, *sila* and *samatha* are to be found in other religions, *vipassanā* is the

## ABSENT- MINDEDNESS

exclusive teaching of the Buddha. It is not easy to practise *vipassanā* in the right way. Some have the desire to practise it but they die with their desire unfulfilled because there is no one to guide them.

Some people do not miss the opportunity to meditate. Initially there may be many things that escape their attention. They should watch such things and remove them. With the development of insight into momentary arising-and-passing away of all phenomena, their attention becomes very keen and is focussed on every phenomenon that arises. There is nothing that escapes their notice. Through such mindfulness they can finally attain the four stages of the Ariyan path.

The mindfulness that the yogi gains by watching centers on the sense-objects that are emphasized in Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, viz., physical body, feeling, consciousness and mind-objects. As it is said in the sutta, "*Sabbam abhiññeyya*—All ought to be known, etc", they refer to all psycho-physical phenomena that arise from six senses. It involves directing the mind to what is seen and being mindful of the fact of seeing and the same may be said of hearing, smelling, etc. The attention is focussed on the objects as they arise one after another. If while watching the rising and falling, you hear or smell a thing you may switch your attention to it. There is

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nothing that escapes your attention or that you forget. Such especially keen attentiveness emerges with the development of *udayabbayañāṇa*. The attention falls spontaneously on the objects just like the birds picking the grains of rice one after another, a state of consciousness called *upaṭṭhitassati* (clear mindfulness).

### DUPPANNATA- LACK OF VIPASSANĀ INSIGHT

One should practise Sallekha dhamma with the object of attaining *vipassanā* insight. Non-Buddhists are devoid of *vipassanā* insight and so are the Buddhists who do not meditate according to Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. Even those who follow the *Satipaṭṭhāna* method do not have it if their object is only to attain *samādhi* and *jhāna*.

### SATIPAṬṬHĀNA AND VIPASSANĀ

Some people hold that what the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta teaches is not *vipassana* but *samādhi* since *satipaṭṭhanā* means mindfulness which is included in *samādhikkhandhā* and as such implicit in *sammāvāyama* (right effort) and *sammāsamādhi* (right mindfulness). This view is based on a superficial study of the sutta and over-emphasis on the word *satipaṭṭhāna*. In the early part of the sutta it is said, "*Samjajāno*-know truly by analysis" and these words surely refer to *vipassanā* insight. The later part of the sutta says—"samudayadhammā nupassi – watching the arising and the cause of

## NOT HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

dissolution.” *Samatha bhāvanā* is not concerned with insight into the arising and passing away and their causes. It requires the yogi to confine his attention to objects that remain stable.

The sutta also speaks of *anissito ca viharati*—the state of being free from craving and belief; “*na ca kiñci loke upādiyati* . . . detachment from anything in the world.” *Samatha bhāvanā* has nothing to do with freedom from craving, belief and non-attachment that are relevant to *vipassanā*. Even the section on *samatha*, that is on in-and-out breathing, etc., is designed not merely to develop concentration but to contribute to *vipassanā* insight on the basis of *samatha*. There is no need to comment on the *vipassanā* section of the sutta. As for the contemplation of feeling, consciousness and mind-object, these have nothing to do with *samatha-jhāna* and there is no doubt about their importance in *vipassanā* practice.

## NOT HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

The yogi should know that he is walking when he is walking. This teaching of the Buddha in *Satipaṭṭhāna* sutta may be belittled by ignorant people. To them the teaching is not in the least remarkable since the knowledge it refers to is possessed by animals like dogs. To remove such misunderstanding, the commentary explains the statement and the explanation is not a revision of the Pāli text or an addition

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to it but an endorsement that accords with the spirit of the Buddha-dhamma.

According to the commentary, it is true that even a dog knows that it is moving when it is moving. But to know that one is moving in accordance with Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is diametrically opposed to the consciousness of an animal. For animals as well as common people who are unmindful do not know that they are moving at every moment of taking a step. Nor do they know the successive steps involved in the process that is caused by the desire to move. A man may be at times momentarily aware of what he is doing but by and large he is absent-minded and absorbed in thoughts irrelevant to what he is doing.

Moreover, his consciousness is bound up with his belief in ego-entity. He believes that his body and mind remain the same irrespective of time and place. He cannot overcome this illusion through ordinary awareness that does not make him mindful. Ordinary awareness may even strengthen the ego-belief. It has nothing to do with the mindfulness which the Buddha emphasizes in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta.

As concentration develops, the yogi who practises mindfulness learns to make a distinction between mind and body. He differentiates the physical elements of solidity and motion

### THREE QUESTIONS

from consciousness; he knows how solidity and motion appear because of the desire to move about, he sees the vanishing of desire and motion at every moment. While walking, he watches and clearly perceives the discontinuity and dissolution in six or more parts at every step he takes.

### ANSWERS TO THREE QUESTIONS

This clear insight provides answers to three questions, viz., (1) Who goes? Is there an ego-entity that goes? (2) Whose going is it? Is there the agent who does the going? (3) Why does the going occur?

(1) There is no ego-entity that goes for obviously it is only a successive arising-and-passing away of the desire to go and solidity and motion.

(2) There is no subject or agent who does the going.

(3) There is only the collection of physical elements, viz., solidity, motion, etc. There is no agent that causes the going, anything other than the desire to go and the successive physical elements.

### NĀMARŪPAPARICCHEDAÑĀṆA

Thus the yogi who practises constant mindfulness at every moment of walking, etc., develops *vipassanā* insight in accordance with Satipaṭṭhāna



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sutta. Unmindful persons who lack such insight go about with the kind of consciousness characteristic of animals. The distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* never occurs to them. On the other hand the mindful yogi distinguishes between the physical elements of rigidity and motion and the watching consciousness at every moment of doing something.

The emergence of the insight into *nāma* and *rūpa* depend on constant mindfulness in regard to what one is doing and bodily behaviour. This insight is called *nāmarūparicchedañāṇa* and introspection is absolutely essential to its development. It will not do to depend on speculation or reflection for this insight. To hold that there are only *nāma* and *rūpa*, the former comprising eighty one types of mundane consciousness and fifty two mental elements and the latter being composed of 28 physical elements is a matter of conceptual knowledge. It is not independent insight-knowledge.

For what are eighty one types of mundane consciousness? Do they all occur in the mind of an average man? The nine types of *Mahaggata vipāka* consciousness are to be found only in *rūpāvacara* and *arupāvacara Brahmas*. *Mahaggata kusala, kariyā* consciousness is the attribute of those who have attained *jhāna*. Even the *kāmāvacara kiriya javana* consciousness is to be found only in Arahats. Can you really know

## PACCAYAPARIGGAHA-ÑĀṄA

these types of consciousness that do not exist in your mind? Of the 28 physical elements one is *iṭṭhibhāvarūpa* or female form that belongs only to women. Can men know this physical element from experience? Is the knowledge born of reflection on the unknowable to be regarded as the knowledge of reality? One will have to concede honestly that it is merely the knowledge of names and concepts applied to ultimate realities. Obviously conceptual knowledge is a far cry from insight into the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa*, the lowest *vipassanā* insight that is foreign to those who do not practise mindfulness.

## PACCAYAPARIGGAHA-ÑĀṄA

Continued practice of mindfulness brings about the insight into the causal relation between consciousness and corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*). As your concentration develops, you become mindful of whatever you do as well as what happens before you do anything. For example, you feel itchy somewhere as you watch the rising and falling. You wish to scratch, you note your desire, the stretching, the bending, etc., of your hand. In this way you become aware of the causal relation between your consciousness and the changes in the behaviour of your body.

Moreover, with your mindfulness at the moment of seeing you realize the causes of your eye-consciousness, viz., the eye-organ, the visual form

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and attention to it. For the yogis such realization usually begins with hearing. He comes to realize that hearing depends on ear-organ, sound and attention to it. This is more obvious in the case of unpleasant sounds which the yogi cannot ignore.

As the yogi watches the rising and falling, his mind begins to wander elsewhere. If he does not watch this inclination, it turns into discursive thinking. Sometimes he notes it and redirects his attention to the rising and falling. Then he knows the cause, viz., unwholesome reflection (*ayonisomanasikāra*) and the wholesome reflection (*yonisomanasikāra*) that prevents his mind-wandering. At times his mind seems to be empty. Rising and falling are not apparent, the body appears to have vanished and the yogi thinks that there is nothing for him to watch. Later he notes every sense-object that arises. He knows that mindfulness occurs because of the object of attention.

Furthermore, he realizes that the ceaseless becoming of *nāma-rūpa* in the present life is conditioned by past *kamma*. His knowledge is extensive and here only a few obvious facts will be mentioned. His insight into the causal relation between *nāma* and *rūpa* is associated with *kiṅkhāvitarāṇa visuddhi* (purity of escape from doubt). This insight is born of experience and you cannot gain it by reasoning. According to

## SAMMĀSANA-ÑĀṄA

Visuddhimagga, it ensures good rebirth and the lower stage of *sotāpanna* path. But the yogi must not remain content with it; he should carry on with his meditation.

## SAMMĀSANA-ÑĀṄA

As he continues to practise meditation, the yogi becomes aware of the dissolution of psycho-physical phenomena from beginning to end. While watching each phenomenon, his mind wanders, he notes it, and stray thoughts disappear. Formerly he could not follow every thought instantly. Now he attends to it at once. So he knows its origin, its process and its dissolution thoroughly. The thoughts usually vanish when he focuses on them, thereby gaining a clear insight into the law of impermanence.

The objects and signs that arise in his mind gradually disappear. Here the mental images such as trees, men, bhikkhu, etc., are concepts but the consciousness which sees them is real. Consciousness, too, vanishes and he becomes aware of these visions.

As he walks, the yogi finds one stride vanishing before he takes another stride. For each stride, too, the lifting of the foot, putting it forward and dropping it, each of these steps appears as a distinct movement. Each is disconnected and so its transitoriness is apparent.

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The same is true of the abdominal rising and falling.

When you thus realize the impermanence of every phenomenon, you have *sammasanañāṇa*. This insight makes you aware of the unpleasant, painful, conditional and insubstantial nature of all existence. It is called *sammāsaṇaṇāṇa* because it makes you reflect again and again on *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the three marks of existence that you have just discovered. It is the first of the ten kinds of *vipassanā* insight.

### UDAYABBAYA-ÑĀṆA

If you continue to watch without reflecting on the marks of existence, your perception and awareness become sharp and fast. Without special effort you become constantly mindful. Whatever happens to the object of attention is also fast and clear. There is only the arising and vanishing. You do not see anything in between. This insight into only the arising and vanishing, only the beginning and end is *udayabbaya-ñāṇa*.

At this stage Your perception and intellect are so sharp that you can follow all the sense-objects that are arising fast. There seems to be nothing that escapes your notice. You see extraordinary light, become rapturous and jubilant. This experience is the by-product of *vipassanā* practice. You will not have it if you

have not attained *udayabbaya* insight and you cannot have that insight if your practice is incorrect or if you practise only by fits and starts. Ceaseless practice day and night barring a few sleeping hours is essential to the attainment of this insight that leads to higher path-knowledge.

The joyful experience that results from this insight gives rise to abundant faith that in turn ensures rebirth in the higher worlds. In the Alagaddūpama sutta of Majjhima-nikāya the Buddha says: "All the persons who have faith in me are assured of rebirth in the deva-worlds." The commentary explains this canonical passage as follows:

"This saying of the Buddha refers to those who practise *vipassanā*. These yogis have no fruits of Ariyan Path other than the *vipassanā* practice and faith. They have only faith in the Buddha. While they are striving for *vipassanā* insight, there wells up in them a certain kind of faith in the Buddha and this faith lands them in the deva-world as if it takes them by the hand and elevates them there."

Here the faith referred to in the Pāli text is the strong faith that arises again as a result of *vipassanā* insight. This faith usually wells up during the momentary flash of lower order of



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insight. But it is not then very manifest. It shows itself clearly with the emergence of *udayabbaya* insight.

According to the commentary, the yogi who has this kind of faith is called *Cūlasotāpanna*. This seems to have been quoted by Visuddhimagga.

### BHANGA-ÑĀṆA

Continued practice leads to gradual diminishing and final vanishing of light, rapture, joy and other unusual experiences. The mental events become more distinct and clearer than ever. The phenomena show no sign and vanish rapidly. It seems as if they vanish before the yogi watches them. In watching the rising and falling, etc., the yogi does not have a mental picture of the belly or the body or the leg. The objects of attention do not move from one place to another but vanish instantly in their own place. The phenomenon that is watched vanishes together with the vanishing consciousness. The realization of these facts is called *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* or insight into dissolution of everything. The yogi attains this insight not by thinking but by introspective intuition. For example, when he watches bending and stretching, he does not have an image of the hand nor does he picture any of its movement. He sees only the vanishing of his attending consciousness

and the object of attention as disjointed units. The same may be said of the abdominal rising and falling.

Since the yogi thus sees every object of his attention passing away, he sees no reason why he should be attached to anything as permanent, good and substantial. He realizes the nature of existence, that is, its *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. So according to *Visuddhimagga*, it is only *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* that enables the yogi to overcome thoroughly the illusions of permanence, pleasantness and ego-entity in regard to his existence.

BHAYA-NĀṆA, ĀDINAVA-NĀṆA AND NIBBIDA-NĀṆA

With *bhaṅga-ñāṇa*, the yogi is fairly assured of further progress. Continued practice helps him to develop other insights. Seeing only dissolution, he becomes scared, (*bhaya-ñāṇa*). He sees defects (*ādinava-ñāṇa*). So he becomes sick of existence. The ordinary man enjoys life because he is blind to its evils. If he were aware of its ceaseless dissolution, he would become disgusted and weary (*nibbida-ñāṇa*). This insight is important. In the suttas the Buddha after pointing out the three marks of life, usually says, "So the Ariyan disciple becomes weary of his body" and then goes on to say. "Being weary, he is free from attachment and attains the Path (*magga*) insight." We must

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assume that the Buddha identifies with his *nibbidañāṇa* all the preceding insights as well as the others that follow it.

### MUNCATUKAMYATĀ AND OTHER INSIGHTS

Being weary of life, the yogi does not want to cling to body and mind or his existence any longer and he has now the desire to renounce them. (*muñcitukamyata-ñāṇā*). In order to fulfil his desire, he must continue the practice (*paṭi-saṅkhāṇaṇa*). As his concentration develops, he is able to ignore all phenomena that arise. Without any effort he remains barely aware of them (*saṅkhārupekkha-ñāṇa*).

At this stage the yogi exerts effort only initially. Later on without any special effort he is barely aware of all that arise and all that vanish one after another. He remains in this state for two or three hours but does not feel cramps, heat or pain. His posture is unchanged. If he has any physical affliction, it does not appear at this time. Some diseases even disappear. With the full development of this insight, there arises *anupatiloma-ñāṇa* (adaptation-knowledge) and after that the yogi sees Nibbāna on the level of the path knowledge and its fruit.

So if you wish to see Nibbāna or the path and its fruit in this life you should seek *vipassanā* insight beginning with *nāmarūpapariccheda* to

## SANDIṬṬHIPARĀMĀSA--BIGOTRY

*anulomañāṇa*. To this end you must watch all psycho-physical phenomena that arise from six senses and see them as they are. For those who are not mindful, every sense-object which they do not really know means the latency of ignorance as a defilement. Under favourable circumstances this potential defilement finds an outlet. The seeds of ignorance usually bring the seeds of greed and hatred in their wake, and under certain conditions the sense-objects are recalled and as a result there burst forth the fires of craving and ill-will. Ignorance, craving and ill-will give rise to bad or good *kamma* which in turn leads to rebirth together with old age, death, worry, grief and suffering in its wake. These fires of life engulf unmindful people and have their origin in seeing, hearing, thinking and so forth. So the Buddha says in Aditta sutta: "The eye is burning, the form is burning, etc."

The fires are totally extinct in the case of the yogis who are mindful of everything that arises from six senses whenever they see, hear, etc., and so have *vipassanā* insight. We should therefore do away with ignorance through insight into the real nature of *nāma* and *rūpa* (mind-body complex).

## SANDIṬṬHIPARĀMĀSA - - BIGOTRY

*Sandiṭṭhiparāmāsa* literally means wrong reflection on one's view but it is to be understood in the context of other terms viz., *ādhānaggāha*: clinging firmly and *duppaṭinissagga*: being hard

to renounce one's view. Hence the three words collectively mean bigotry. According to the commentary, the Buddha deals especially with this kind of belief as bigotry is detrimental to spiritual effort on the Path. The Buddha says: "Other people believe that theirs is the only right view. They cling fast to their view and it is hard for them to change it. But we will not be self-opinionated and cling to our view blindly. We are prepared to renounce it on reasonable grounds. We will adopt the practice that helps to lessen the defilements."

The commentary describes bigotry as the attitude of mind that makes a man strongly attached to his view as the only right view. He will not give up his view even though the Buddha and other enlightened ones try to reason with him. Bigotry is to be found in everyday life, too, but it is not so serious in that it does not pose a threat to spiritual life. For example, there are popular beliefs about the positions of the earth, the sun, the moon and other planets as described in ancient writings. These beliefs run counter to the discoveries of modern science. The ancient accounts of the Himalayas and the five major rivers also do not accord with geographical facts. Bigotry in regard to these beliefs is not harmful to spiritual life because they have nothing to do with the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

## SANDIṬṬHIPARĀMĀSA--BIGOTRY

But bigotry concerning the practice of the Dhamma is serious. It makes one blindly attached to a wrong belief. If a man is so dogmatic that he cannot give up the belief in ego-entity and its continued existence or annihilation after death, he will be hampered in his spiritual progress. One of the false beliefs is the belief which rejects kamma and future life. Those who hold fast to this belief do not avoid doing evil or do good at the expense of their well-being. Nor will they practise the Dhamma that leads to the Path and Nibbāna. Another false belief is the belief that rejects the Buddha and the Arahats who attain unusual insights.

Those who believe firmly in the ego and its eternity assert that the ego exists for ever; and that after surviving the dissolution of the gross physical body, it moves on to another body and continues to exist there. They do not accept the teaching that the *nāma-rūpa* of the new existence arises as the result of defilement and *kamma*, that the extinction of defilement and *kamma* leads to the extinction of *nāma-rūpa* which means the total extinction of suffering. Because of their disbelief they do not follow the holy Path to the end. Thus this eternity-belief is an obstacle to spiritual progress. However, since it does not reject kamma and its fruit, it is possible for the good believer to attain the devā-world. On the other



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hand those who hold the annihilation-belief cannot attain the deva-world because they reject the law of *kamma*. Their wrong view rules out the possibility of rebirth as a deva or the attainment of the Path.

Another obstacle to spiritual progress is *sīlabbataparāmāsa* or the obsessive belief that a certain practice or conduct in itself ensures liberation from *samsāric* suffering. It is *sīlabbataparāmāsa* to believe that salvation depends entirely on living, eating and sleeping like animals. The worship of animals, too, is *sīlabbataparāmāsa* and so is the worship of the sun, the moon, the sea-gods, devas, Brahmas and so forth. In short, any practice that has nothing to do with the Four Noble Truths or the Eightfold Noble Path but that involves acting like animals or worshipping them is *sīlabbataparāmāsa* and to look up to it as the way to the end of *samsāric* suffering is *sīlabbataparāmāsa*.

Most of the non-Buddhist practices that are intended to bring about the end of suffering and permanent happiness are all *sīlabbataparāmāsa*. Some believe that they can cleanse themselves of all *kammic* impurities by bathing in the Ganges river. Some even think that the worship of devas, Sakka or the God Brahma will assure them of rebirth in heaven and happiness after death. Some hold that sacrifice of oxen, goats or other animals will free them from sins and

## BIGOTRY AMONG BUDDHISTS

make them happy. Such practices are a far cry from the effort to realize the Four Truths or to cultivate *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* and so it is *sīlabbataparāmāsa* to regard such practices as a way to salvation. Those who are firmly attached to them do not follow the Eightfold Path and never attain the Path-knowledge and its fruit.

Religious beliefs are always right in the eyes of their adherents but they are all wrong from the standpoint of the non-believers. But you cannot charge a man with bigotry if he seeks truth without being dogmatic. Nowadays some people who are non-Buddhists by birth study Buddhist scriptures and some of them have become Buddhist converts. Some have come to Burma from Europe and America to practise meditation. Some can describe their *vipassanā* insights from experience. These Westerners are wholly free from bigotry.

## BIGOTRY AMONG BUDDHISTS

Following the third Buddhist Council there appeared *Kathāvatthu*, an *Abhidhammā* book which records the teaching of *Mahāmoggaliputtatissa*. This book gives an account of different beliefs. Some of these beliefs concern practice and as such they form a barrier to the spiritual progress of the person who hold them firmly. The belief in the ego is a case in point.

Today some people believe that it is not necessary to contemplate the psycho-physical phenomena that arise from six senses and realize their *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. Some say that mere knowledge of the Four Noble Truths means the realization of their truth. Some hold that mere contemplation of Nibbāna ensures special insight. Some believe that concentration by itself can make a man attain the path and its fruition although he may not realize the arising-and-passing away of *nāma-rūpa* and their three chief marks.

If these beliefs are so deep-rooted that one cannot renounce them, they give rise to bigotry. Some insist that nowadays it is impossible to attain *vipassanā* insight in spite of all the efforts to practise meditation. These skeptics do not practise and so they never attain the path. Some hold that it would be in vain to meditate without first overcoming the ego-belief. We do not accept this view. For although Burmese Buddhists who wish to meditate may not be wholly free from the ego-belief, they accept the teaching that existence means only *nāma-rūpa*, that it is subject to *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. They show no sign of bigotry that may hamper their spiritual effort. When in the course of meditation they realize the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa*, the common ego-beliefs are done away with. With the emergence of *vipassanā* insight,

they realize the insubstantiality of life more deeply till at last they get rid of the ego-illusion through the Ariyan path-knowledge.

BHIKKHU SĀTI AND EGO-BELIEF.

If the ego-belief is so deep-rooted that you cannot overcome it, it may endanger your spiritual life as in the case of bhikkhu Sāti. In the lifetime of the Buddha a monk named Sāti studied the jātakas and concluded that consciousness was the ego or *atta*. He came to this conclusion on the basis of the identification of the main character in the stories with the Buddha. Thus king Mahājanaka became the Buddha and so did the Naga king Būridatta, the elephant king Saddana and king Vessantarā. Certainly the physical body of Mahājanaka or any other Bodhisatta did not pass onto the life of the Buddha nor did his feelings, perceptions and kamma-formations (*saṅkhāra*) in his previous lives. It is only the consciousness of Mahājanaka, etc., that became the consciousness of Bodhisatta prince Siddhattha. That consciousness is embodied in the present Buddha. Reasoning in this way, he concluded that it was consciousness that wandered from one life to another without being subject to destruction.

Sāti's view is mentioned in Mahātaṇhāsankhaya sutta of Majjhima-nikāya as follows: "The consciousness (*viññāṇa*) which existed in the previous lives passes on from one life to

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another. The present consciousness is no other than the consciousness of previous lives. Thus I understand the Lord's teaching."

So bhikkhu Sāti identified consciousness with the ego and believed in its immortality. Other bhikkhus told him that was not what the Buddha taught; that an individual's mental process is only a stream of consciousness with the new units constantly replacing the old; that as the process was continuous, king Mahājanaka was identified with the Buddha; and that consciousness being impermanent, it was not the old consciousness that came into existence. But Sāti did not give up his view. He stuck to it as the true teaching of the Buddha. Then as they could not bring him to his senses, they reported to the Buddha.

So the Buddha summoned Sāti and questioned him. Sāti stated his view and the Buddha asked him about his concept of consciousness. Sāti replied, "Lord, there is *atta* or ego-entity which speaks and feels. This ego fares well or ill in the course of its existence according to its good or bad *kamma*. I identify that ego with consciousness."

Then the Buddha said, "You fool! When did I ever teach anyone like that? Have'nt I told you in many ways about the consciousness that

## BIGOTED BHIKKHU ARIṬṬHA

arises from causes? Have'nt I said that no consciousness arises without a cause? You have misunderstood my teaching and laid me open to charges by others. You have destroyed yourself. Your mistaken view will be detrimental to your interests for a long time."

Then the Buddha asked the bhikkhus whether Sāti was likely to attain any spiritual insight. The bhikkhus answered, "No, Lord." The Buddha then stressed the conditionality of consciousness with examples. "The fire that starts with timber is called timber-fire, that starts with bamboo is called bamboo-fire, that starts with grass is called grass-fire...Similarly the consciousness that is conditioned by the eye and the visual form is called *cakkhuvīññāṇa* (eye-consciousness); that conditioned by the ear and the sound, *sotāvīññāṇa* (ear-consciousness) etc. Thus the Buddha explained how each unit of consciousness is distinct and separate in itself and how it passes away and is replaced by a new one. But Sāti did not give up his ego-belief and he missed the holy Path because of his bigotry.

### BHIKKHU ARIṬṬHA

A person may be overly attached not only to the ego-belief but to other beliefs as well. In the time of the Buddha there was a bhikkhu called Ariṭṭha. He was not an ignorant monk like Sāti. On the contrary he was well-informed



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and because of his wide knowledge he was inclined to criticize the Buddha's teaching. He argued thus: "The Buddha's lay followers lead a married life. They do not avoid sensual pleasures. But they occasionally hear the Dhamma, ponder and practise it and some attain one of the first three stages of the Path. Likewise, bhikkhus can enjoy the pleasant colour of their robes, hear pleasant voices, eat good food, etc. If they can thus enjoy the five sense-objects, there is no reason why they should not indulge in the pleasure of a woman's beauty, voice, smell and so forth. In the final analysis a woman's visual form does not differ from that of a robe nor is the sense of physical contact with a woman essentially different from the sense of touch afforded by bed or clothing." Reasoning in this way he insisted that it was proper for a bhikkhu to have sexual pleasure. To put it another way, he challenged the Vinaya rules to the point of declaring that there was nothing to justify the excommunication of a bhikkhu who had sexual intercourse with a woman.

Ariiṭṭha's argument was somewhat like that of some modern philosophers who say that it is as proper to drink alcohol as it is to drink water since they are both made up of the same physical element (*āpodhātu*). It is like the argument of those who insist that one who is fully aware of the reality of elements and free from

## ERRONEOUS VIEWS

attachment to conventions and concepts should have no more qualms about killing a fowl than about cutting a gourd inasmuch as both are made up of the same physical elements. Such sophistry is indeed terrifying. It results from an excess of independent thinking and those who rely on such teachers are in for moral disaster.

Other bhikkhus remonstrated with Ariṭṭha but it was in vain. Ariṭṭha held fast to his view and so they reported to the Buddha. The Buddha summoned Ariṭṭha and said, "When did I teach anyone like that? Have'nt I said that any sexual act by a bhikkhu is a hindrance on the holy Path, that all sensual pleasures tend to do more harm than good, that they are like a meat bone being gnawed by a dog or a piece of meat that is a bone of contention among the kites? Yet you misunderstand my teaching and have discredited us in the eyes of the public. Further, you have uprooted and made yourself devoid of all support." But notwithstanding the Buddha's repudiation of his view, Ariṭṭha stuck to it and did not make any spiritual progress because of his bigotry.

## ERRONEOUS VIEWS IN MODERN TIMES

Today there are misconceptions about the Dhamma. Once a woman said that there was an error in my book. In my book I have made

it clear that with the development of *udayabbayañāṇa* (insight into arising and vanishing) there arises *pītipāmojja* (rapturous joy), that although this *pītipāmojja* is not the deathless Nibbāna, it is indeed the deathless Nibbāna for the yogis who have attained *udayabbayañāṇa* because such yogis will realize the real Nibbāna if they continue to practise *vipassanā* meditation. My statement is in accord with Dhammapada and the commentary's explanation of the verse which says: "*Amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ* - - That *pītipāmojja* is the deathless Nibbāna of the yogi who has gained an insight into the arising and passing away of *nāma-rūpa*." Yet I was accused of having made *pītipāmojja* synonymous with Nibbāna. The woman admitted her mistake when her meditation teacher pointed out how my writing accorded with the Pāli Piṭaka and the commentaries. Fortunately she was not bigoted like Sāti or Ariṭṭha.

Another woman criticized the method of meditation that I recommended in one of my books but which she found unacceptable. She contended that "concentration (*samādhi*) is possible only if the attention is focussed on a single object," that "to attend to whatever one sees, hears, etc., means restlessness (*uddhacca*)." So she raised the question of whether it would not undermine *samādhi* if the yogi after having emerged from a *jhānic* state made himself mindful of everything that

## TWO KINDS OF SAMĀDHI

arose from the senses. In fact, my statement was based on the exegesis of Dvedhāvitakka sutta as given in the commentary on Majjhima-Nikāya. But as my book was a short description of meditation methods, I did not quote the Pāli text.

There are two kinds of *samādhi*, viz., *samatha samādhi* and *vipassanā samādhi*. Of the two, *samatha jhāna samādhi* requires the mind to be confined to a single object. If the practice of this *samādhi* involves *kasina* exercise, the yogi must focus his mind on a single object, say, earth in order to develop *upāca* (neighbourhood) *samādhi* or *appanā* (access) *samādhi*. If the device is to reflect on loathsomeness (*asubha*) the mind must also be focussed on a single object such as a dead body. When the 32 parts of the human body form the object of concentration, the yogi has to concentrate on all the 32 parts initially. Only at the later stage he focuses on the well-known parts and ignore the unknown. Finally he confines his attention to a single part to attain the two kinds of *samādhi*. So it is certainly true that one can develop *samatha samādhi* only by attending to a single object.

But the same cannot be said of *vipassanā samādhi*. It is possible for some yogis with sharp intelligence to attain the path and its fruition in a moment while being mindful of a single object. But presumably such yogis are

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very rare. For in *vipassanā* meditation you should attend fully to at least consciousness and corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*). As the Buddha says, " *Sabbam abhiññeyyam*: One should be aware of everything " the yogi should watch all the psycho-physical phenomena arising from six senses. So a *jhānic* yogi may enter into *jhāna*, watch that *jhānic* state, again enter into *jhāna*, watch that *jhānic* state and by thus practising *jhāna* and *vipassanā* alternately attain the Path and its fruition.

Or he may enter into *jhāna* and watch the phenomena arising from six senses. When he is physically and mentally tired, he again enters into *jhāna*. When he emerges from *jhāna*, he watches everything that arises. Repeating this process, that is, entering into *jhāna* and then practising mindfulness when out of it, he develops *vipassanā* insight and attains the Path and its fruition. This way of contemplation is described as follows in the commentary on *Dvedhāvittakka sutta*.

" Thus the Buddha described the duration of *vipassanā* that was conditioned by the *jhānic* state of the Bodhisatta. Both the *samādhi* and *vipassanā* in a person may be in an embryonic state. Practising *vipassanā*, he sits for a long time and feels tired. He feels heated in his body, he sweats and his forehead seems to exude vapour and gas. He is mentally tired, too. The yogi

## VIPASSANĀ PRACTICE

then enters into *jhāna* again and after alleviating his physical and mental fatigue, he feels at ease and practises *vipassanā*. When after sitting for a long time he gets tired again, he repeats as before. Thus absorption in *jhāna* is immensely beneficial to the practice of *vipassanā*.”

This is the way to contemplate the phenomena that are worthy of contemplation, after arising from *jhāna*. In the practice of *vipassanā* you should begin with obvious forms of corporeality, especially with the four physical elements. Then you have to contemplate the nature of feeling and consciousness. It is clear from what the Buddha says in *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (“The yogi knows that the eye is impermanent, that the visual form is impermanent and that seeing is impermanent, etc.”) that the yogi should attend to various phenomena at the moment of seeing, etc. Moreover, *Visuddhimagga* and other commentaries tell us how a yogi attains the path and fruition by contemplating not *jhāna* but obvious phenomena. In my book I described the post-*jhānic* practice of *vipassanā* according to Pāli commentaries. No doubt, it is not hard to understand if one has a knowledge of Pāli texts and grasp something about *vipassanā*.

The *samatha* that occurs while one contemplates various phenomena is called *khaṇika-samādhi*, the *samādhi* that lasts momentarily during contemplation. No *vipassanā* insight is possible



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without this *khaṇika-samādhī*. The yogi who has no basic *jhānic* experience and relies on *vipassanā* contemplation alone develops *vipassanā* insight through *khaṇika-samādhī* and attains the Ariyan path. This *vipassanā samādhī* is not confined to a single object. The yogi practising it watches all the *nāma-rūpa* that arise. But at the moment of watching his mind is fixed on the object and free from distraction. This is obvious to the yogi who practises effectively.

Presumably the writer who criticized my book did not understand *vipassanā khaṇika samādhī* thoroughly through books or from experience. If he still clings to his view, it is bigotry that will hamper his spiritual effort.

### THE BIGOTRY OF SUNAKKHATTA

In the time of the Buddha there was a Licchavi bhikkhu called Sunakkhatta. He sometimes acted as a personal attendant of the Buddha. After having attained through the practice of *samatha* (concentration) the four *jhānas* as well as the paranormal power of deva or divine eye, he asked the Buddha what he should do to attain the divine ear (*dibba-sota*) or the power of hearing all sounds heavenly and human, far and near. Seeing that there was an obstacle to his attainment of divine ear, the Buddha declined to help him. He suspected that the Buddha did not reveal the secret.

## BIGOTRY OF SUNAKKHATTA

because he did not want anyone to have as many psychic powers as he had. This suspicion was a set-back to Sunakkhatta's faith in the Buddha. Moreover, because of his lack of *vipassanā* practice he did not have a firm faith. He liked evil practices because he had evil predispositions that he acquired in his previous existences.

So one day he was much pleased when he saw the ascetic Korakhattiya living naked and behaving like a dog. Thinking, "This Korakhattiya is a true saint. He eats like a dog without holding the food with his hand. He is a true Arahāt without defilements," he adored the naked ascetic. The Buddha divined his thoughts and said, "It's a wonder that a man like you professes to be my disciple." The Buddha went on to predict the fate of the ascetic. "This man Korakhattiya will die of over-eating after seven days. He will be reborn as an "asura"—evil ghost. His corpse will be dumped in the cemetery. If you go and ask the corpse, it will rise up and tell you about his rebirth in the asura world."

Sunakkhatta wished to charge the Buddha with falsehood and he frantically did his utmost to make the prediction false. However, he had to admit afterwards that everything happened as predicted by the Buddha. Still

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he did not have much faith in the Buddha and continued to be attached to wrong practices. Because of his bigotry he left the holy Order three years later and denied that the Buddha had any transcendent knowledge. Since he failed to practise *vipassanā* and attain the Path, he could not give up his view and remained steeped in bigotry and evil thoughts.

Today there may be one or two persons like Sunakkhatta among those who came and practised at our center. Such a person may have been prompted not by faith but by other motives to come to the center. He does not practise seriously and so he does not have any unusual experience. He does not develop *samādhi* fully, let alone *vipassanā* insight. He tends to belittle meditation, saying that he does not experience anything extraordinary despite his practice. But he will cling to erroneous views and so long as he is mired in bigotry, he will do evil and endanger the spiritual life of those who pin their faith to him.

## JHĀNA AND PURITY OF MIND

There is also the belief that only *jhāna* makes one mentally pure. In Burma this view prevails only among a few people for it is clearly stated in the commentaries that purity of mind also depends on *upacā samādhi* (neighbourhood concentration). Moreover, the commentary on Satipaṭṭ-

## JHĀNA AND MENTAL PURITY

Jhāna sutta refers to the 19 sections on bodily postures, etc., excluding in-and-out breathing, etc., as the subjects of mind-training that leads to *upacā samādhi*. Again, according to Visuddhimagga, of the 40 kinds of *samathā kammaṭṭhāna* (mind-training) the one called *caturdhātuvavaṭṭhāna* is the *dhātumanasikāra kammaṭṭhāna* of Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, and the yogi who practises pure *vipassanā* begins with contemplation of 18 *dhātu*, 12 *āyatana* (bases), 5 *khandhā* and two *nāma-rūpa*.

Hence it is clear that the yogi can attain *upacā samādhi* by contemplating the four physical elements and the *upacā* or *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* by overcoming the hindrances and that *upacā samādhi* leads to purity of mind as well as to five kinds of *paññā* (wisdom) and purity such as purity of belief. This is clear from the ancient books and the complete purity of mind and belief is borne out by the experience of yogis who meditate seriously according to Satipaṭṭhāna method. To our knowledge such yogis number by the thousands. There is no doubt that *upacā samādhi* or *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* ensures mental purity. Those who firmly believe that the practice of *jhāna* is vital to mental purity will find their spiritual effort futile if they cannot attain *jhāna* and have doubts about *vipassanā samādhi*. Such an extreme view is a hindrance to *vipassanā* and should be avoided.

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### THE BIGOTRY OF AN ASCETIC TEACHER

After attaining *sotāpanna* stage through a stanza which they learnt from thera Assaji, the wandering ascetics (*paribbajjaka*) Upatissa and Kolita who were later to become Sāriputta and Moggallāna respectively decided to go to the Buddha. They invited their teacher Sañjaya to come along with them. Sañjaya declined, saying that as the leader of a sect for a long time, it would not be proper for him to become the disciple of *samaṇa* (ascetic) Gotama. On being told that people would desert him in favour of the Buddha, he replied that he did not worry about that since the fools who formed the majority of mankind would still come to him. This is an instance of bigotry for the sake of offering, attendants and fame.

Therefore we should avoid over-attachment to views that are opposed to the realization of true Dhamma. Some people believe firmly that they are indispensable at home and so they do not seek the opportunity to practise meditation and this means a great spiritual loss for them. In worldly life, too, it will not do to cling blindly to an irrational belief. We should think rationally and change or reject our view if necessary. But a self-opinionated person usually does not give up his view despite the rational teaching of sages like the Buddha and so he has to suffer in this life as well as hereafter.

## BIGOTRY OF A TEACHER

In every day life, too, over-attachment to a belief is detrimental to our welfare. At the very least a person who denies what others have experienced will be blamed as a bigot. But bigotry in worldly life is not harmful to spiritual life whereas religious bigotry may be damaging to chances of rebirth in the *deva*-world or spiritual attainment. So we should reflect rationally on what the wise and learned scholars say and give up old-established but erroneous views instead of clinging blindly to them.

Now we have dealt with all the defilements that the Buddha spells out in Sallekha sutta. The Buddha concludes the discourse by exhorting the disciples to contemplate under a tree or at any other quiet place. According to the commentary, we should contemplate 33 kinds of subjects of mind-training in order to develop concentration and for the development of *vipassanā* insight the object of contemplation are *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of the *nāma-rūpa* as well as the same three marks of the five *khandhas*, the twelve bases, etc. In short, we should practise both the *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

Thus the Buddha himself stresses the need for the practice of *samatha* and so we should not belittle *samatha*. Arahats of the higher order practise *vipassanā* on the basis of *samatha*. But contemplation of *khandhā*, etc., is *vipassanā* and not *samatha*. It is not true to say that contem-



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plation of bodily postures, etc., as suggested in Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is the practice of *samatha*. In reality contemplation of the nature of *nāma-rūpa* as distinct from the 40 subjects of mind-training (*samatha kammaṭṭhāna*) is pure *vipassanā*.

Concluding his discourse, the Buddha urges the disciples to contemplate at the foot of a tree or in some quiet retreat. The Buddha has given full instructions for the conquest of defilements. It is up to the disciples to follow them and practise accordingly. They should not forget what to do for their spiritual liberation. Otherwise when it is too late, they will feel unhappy, tormented by regret and remorse.



ENGLISH BOOKS ON MAHĀSĪ SAYĀDAW'S TEACHINGS

1. Vipassanā Meditational Exercises
2. Mahāsi Abroad
3. Practical Basic Exercises
4. Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation
5. Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation:  
    Criticisms and Replies
6. Discourse on Ariyavāsa Sutta
7.     ,,     ,, Lokadhamma
8.     ,,     ,, Bhāra Sutta
9.     ,,     ,, Hemavata Sutta
10.    ,,     ,, To Nibbāna via The Noble  
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