

VAMMIKA SUTTA

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Buddhasāsanā Nuggaha Organization
Mahāsi Sāsana Yeikthā
Rangoon

A DISCOURSE ON

VAMMIKA SUTTA

by

THE VENERABLE MAHĀSĪ SAYĀDAW

of

BURMA

Translated by U Min Swe (Min Kyaw Thu)

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CORRIGENDUM

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FOREWORD

“Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhasa”

Among many outstanding Suttas expounded by the Venerable Agga Mahā Pandita Mahāsi Sayādawpayagyi, Vammika Sutta is one of the most interesting discourses that reveals the Truth of Buddha's Dhamma in a simple, effective way and in unequivocal terms. The brilliant light of Mahāsi preachings has expelled the darkness or the dim ambiguities of certain highly philosophical dhamma which are not ordinarily and easily comprehensible to a man of average intelligence.

This lovely discourse originally preached by the Buddha has been elucidated by the Author, the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw, to become a newly developed product idea of his own. It reveals in a very brief and striking way the genius of the Lord Buddha, the Omniscient. In it you will find the fundamental religious concepts ornamented with a wide variety of aphorisms and lively short *vutthus* or stories, which though concisely narrated leaving out what are irrelevant to the practical aspect of the dhamma, will be found really interesting and invaluable,

FOREWORD

The exposition takes the trend of a new style of expression relating to the prime importance of the practice of Vipassanā meditation which is essential for all mankind to escape from the fetters of human passions. The Venerable Mahāṣī Sayādawpayagyi has precisely presented the practical method of Vipassanā meditation exercise in this discourse, with brilliant touches which would surely bring an enthusiastic reader a step closer to Nibbāna. This statement is not an exaggeration. Reading through this Sutta, one may perhaps be aroused with curiosity as to what are the fifteen riddling problems which were posed by Ashin Kumārakassapa on the advice given by a Brahmā god and what are the answers as elucidated by the Blessed One.

Treatment of this Sutta with lucid explanation is beautifully blended with the genius of the Author. The translation truthfully rendered will, it is hoped, give a delightful reading particularly to those who understand English language and who have a bent in Buddhist philosophy. It may perhaps even encourage them to take refuge in the Triple Gem of Buddhism and seek for real Peace and Happiness by experimenting Vipassanā meditation.

The light of Buddha's dhamma is still shining. Reality is indescribable. Buddha, whose purpose of life was the attainment of Enlightenment.

FOREWORD

ment, had preached us with all-embracing love and compassion to be always "mindful and self-possessed" refraining from mental and emotional attachment to all nature of things which are ephemeral, particularly, the material body, Rūpa, which is prone to decay, suffering and death. The method of eliminating kilesā – human passions, has been candidly explained in this Sutta for you to follow in accordance with the well-known phrase quoted hereunder:

"Thus have I heard." Even 'Buddhas do but point the way', and the individual must sooner or later work out his own salvation with diligence.'

May you all be able to follow the right Path, free from all hindrances and strive after Nibbāna to bring all your passions to an end.

Min Swe

(Min Kyaw Thu)

SECRETARY

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha

Organization.

VAMMIKA SUTTA DHAMMA

OR

*Discourse on the ant hill - - The mound or,
the material body*

PRELUDE TO THE DHAMMA

The Discourse to be delivered to-night is on "Vammika Sutta Dhamma". Vammika Sutta Dhamma means the dhamma that is preached illustrating the big mound or the Ant Hill as an example. This dhamma was rehearsed and recorded in 'Sangāyana' as per Mūlapannāsa Opammavagga Pali from among the three Pannāsa Texts of Majjhima Nikāya which is one of the Five Divisions of Nikāya. If this Sutta is to be delivered, its history will have to be recounted and preached commencing from the introduction.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUTTA

On one night at the time while the Blessed One was residing at Jetavana monastery in Sravasti, one Thera by the name of Ashin Kumāra kassapa was staying at Āndha forest situated in the north of the Jetavana monastery. During the life time of Lord Buddha, both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunī Theris who were desirous of living in solitude to find peace, used to retire

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to that Āndha forest. In those days, this Āndha forest was very seldom frequented by ordinary people, being a secluded place where peace and tranquility reigned. However, at the present time, this forested area has transformed into a cultivable land where crops are found standing.

When I went to India, I had visited the site of the Jetavana monastery where the Blessed One had resided for a period of nineteen *Vassas* (years) and had given my whole-hearted reverence to this highly respectable place. There was no monastery at all but only a bare ground on which only remnants of the old Jetavana monastery with a few foundation bricks and old unused wells were found. The former Āndha forest has now almost become barren with hardly any sign of trees or forest. Only patches of crops under cultivation were found. In any case during the time of Lord Buddha, this place was a remote forested area, calm and peaceful, where ordinary people would not dare visit.

FIFTEEN PROBLEMS WERE PROPOUNDED

While Ashin Kumārakassapa was residing at this Āndha forest, a Brahmā god with all his radiance appeared before him at night time on one day and gave him profoundly riddling problems, fifteen in number. The manner in which these fifteen problems were proposed will be described by me by reciting the original in Pāli

FIFTEEN PROBLEMS WERE PROPOUNDED

to enable you to listen to it attentively and to revere. However, it would take much time if the whole of Pāli passage were recited as spoken by that Brahmā. Hence, I will do the recitation of only part of it merely in the form of an example or illustration. Now, please listen to it carefully.

Bhikkhu Bhikkhu ayam vammiko rattam dhūmā yā ti, divā pajjalabhi, brahmano evamāha "abhikkhani sumeda sattam ādāya" ti. Abhikkhananto sumedo sattam ādāya addasa langhim, langi bhaddhanteti. Brahmano evamāha - - "okkhipa langhim, abhikkhana sumeda sattam ādāyā" ti. Abhikkhananto sumedo sattam ādāya addasa uddhumāyikam. Uddhumāyikā bhaddhanteti, etc.

As stated above, the Brahmā god spoke to Ashin Kumāra-kassapa in Pāli language. During the life time of Buddha, in India, called *Majjhima-desā*, the people used to speak among themselves in Pāli language, the same dialect that was found in the present Pitaka Scriptures. In those days, Pāli was the common language used by all people, both male and female, young or old. That was the reason why the Brahmā god had spoken to Ashin Kumārakassapa in Pāli language.

The Pāli scholars who have high regards for Māgadha language as being sacred, have decided that Pāli language known as Māgadha is the dialect always in use by the Brahmās. In the

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world of human beings, people sometimes speak in Pāli and at times they speak in other languages. However, during Lord Buddha's time, Pāli language was the common language among people. For this reason, the language used in this Sutta was in Pāli as was also found in other Buddha's preachings. In order, therefore, to be able to understand and appreciate the Pāli language with its meanings, I will first give the meaning of Pāli in common Burmese and let you recite the mottos and then explain to you the meanings phrase by phrase.

"Bhikkhu, Bhikkhu—i.e. O, Monk! Monk! This was the manner in which Ashin Kumāra kassapa was first addressed. The twice repeated expression of the word, "Bhikkhu, Bhikkhu" was used as an interjection, (*āmetik*) in Pāli. It means an exclamation of surprise. It is something like a cry of sudden surprise and fear as "Snake! Snake! or, Fire! Fire!" when one is alarmed at the sight of a snake or a fire.

"Bhikkhu, Bhikkhu, O, Monk! Monk! *avam vammiko*, this big mound or ant-hill, *rattam*, at night time, *dhumavati*, is emitting smouldering smoke. *Diva*; during the day, *pajjalabhi*; it is spurting out bright flames of burning fire." Let's think of the way the Brahmā spoke. Without saying anything that was relevant, he had uttered in surprise "Monk! Monk! this big mound

FIFTEEN PROBLEMS WERE PROPOUNDED

is bursting out smoke at night and burning flames at day time," as if the big mound or the hill is just nearby. I will explain about this mound only later.

"Bhikkhu, Bhikkhu, Monk! Monk! *Avam vammiko*—this ant-hill, *rattam*—at night time, *dhumayati*—is emitting smoke incessantly. *Divā*—at day time, *pajjālati*—it is ejecting fiery flames." *Brahmano*—the Brahmana teacher, *sumedam evamāha*, gives orders to his young and fully educated pupil in this manner. *Sumedā*—O, my good young pupil of outstanding wisdom! *sattam ādāya*, take hold of the spade, and *emam vammikam abhikkhana*—persistently dig up this mound (hill). *Eti*—orders are given in this way. *Sumedo*—this good and young intelligent and brilliant pupil, *sattam ādāya*—after holding the spade, *abhikhananto* when digging the mound without a stop as ordered by his teacher, *langhim adattha*, found a bolt (a bar or a rod for fastening a door). *Bhadante*—"O, great teacher, *langi*—here is a bolt, Sir", etc—said the pupil. *Brahmano*—the Brahmana teacher, *evam āha*—again ordered thus: *Langhim ukkhupa*—"Remove or take out the bolt", and *sumedā*—"my good, wise and very intelligent pupil, *sattam ādāya*—get hold of the spade", and *abhikkhana*—"carry on digging repeatedly." *Eti*—order is given as such: *Sumeda*—"the good, intelligent and wise pupil, *sattam ādāya*—getting hold of the spade, and *abhikhananto*—when continued to dig up, *uddhumāyikam*

VAMMIKA SUTTA DHAMMA

ādattha—saw or found a kind of frog-like toad which when touched grows bigger in size and swells up. *Bhadante*—“O, great teacher, *uddhumāyika*—here is a toad which becomes bigger in size and swollen everytime it is touched.” *Eti*—So said the pupil. The Brahmā had given the problem in the manner stated above. The words spoken by the Brahmā were in Pāli.

The gist of the meaning is that there was a Brahmana Teacher who was imparting knowledge, or rather, giving educational instructions to numerous pupils. The instructions were given by this teacher in the town on worldly knowledges that could be acquired in the town itself. In regard to the knowledge which could not be sufficiently imparted in the town proper but which could be learned adequately in a practical way in the forested area, he took his pupils to the forest and taught them endeavouring to discover facts in the manner of making a research. In the ancient days, the Brahmana Teachers who gave education to the pupils were similar to the Head-masters of schools at the present day. They were also called *Disāpāṃokkha*, eminent teachers just like the University Professors of the present day period. It means to say that they were the leading teachers of eminence whose fame had spread far and wide reaching to all corners of the globe. In fact, the term “*Pāṃokkha*”, that is Professor, is de-

FIFTEEN PROBLEMS WERE PROPOUNDED

rived from the term "Disāpāmokkha" of the past ages.

This Brahmana Disāpāmokkha while teaching his pupils in that forest camp was said to have found the strange big mound (Ant-Hill). The peculiar nature of this ant-hill was that at night time it emitted smoke, while at day time, it spurted out the glittering flames. Finding the peculiar characteristics of this ant-hill, the Brahmana teacher asked one of his wise pupils to dig it up. The pupil must have been very reliable in as much as he had earned the confidence of his great teacher and had been well trusted. That is the reason why the sterling qualities of this pupil were mentioned in praise as "Sumedā-the wise and well-educated pupil of outstanding ability."

The manner of asking him to do is: "Well, my distinguished pupil! Here is the mound. This mound is indeed very strange. At night time, it emits smoke constantly, while at day time, it bursts forth fiery tongues of blazing flames. Hence, underneath this ant-hill or mound, there must be some kind of valuable property (precious thing)". Such being the case, order was given thus: "My good and bright pupil! You better take hold of the spade and dig up or excavate this mound."

In compliance with the orders, the wise and highly intelligent pupil after taking the spade

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in his hands began to dig with all his might continuously. In the course of his digging, the first thing found was a big bolt, a kind of wooden bar used in fastening a door. Then, the wise pupil remarked, "O, teacher! Here is a big bolt, the one which I have found. It must be the inherent quality of this big bolt that has caused the bursting forth of smoke at night time and of the bright flames during the day." On hearing this remark, the eminent teacher said, "Hey, my good pupil! This is not correct. How could this bolt emit the bright flames? Take out and throw aside this big bolt, and go on digging." When the pupil continued digging the earth after removing the bolt, he found a toad, called "Uddhumāyika".

"Uddhumāyika" toad is the kind of a frog that becomes bigger in size and bloated every-time it is touched, as some of the people might have come across and seen. This kind of frog is the one which stays in a group in a pool at the beginning of the rainy season and croaks noisily producing a verbal sound like "Om . . In". In the Commentary, however, it has been mentioned thus: "This kind of frog usually stays among rotten tree-leaves and in the bushes. The size of this animal is about the size of a fingernail or a toe-nail (*nakhapitthi*). If it is about the size of the nail of a big toe of the foot, it is said to be not very large. This kind of frog which

FIFTEEN PROBLEMS WERE PROPOUNDED

we have seen in Burma is not so small. It is about the size of a "Gon-hnyin"—a kind of fruit, flat and somewhat circular in shape cased in a long outer cover. It has a fairly thick brown hard shell about double the size of a dollar coin. It seems that the Commentators had probably mentioned the size as compared to that of the frogs found in Ceylon. The body of "Uddhumāyika", the toad, found in Burma appears to be much larger in size. What I remember is that this kind of frog is known in Burmese as "Phar-Onn" or "Phar-Gon-Hnyin". "Phar" in Burmese means "frog". I haven't heard of it as being called "Phar-dalet". Some said it is called "Phar-byoke" which, of course, has poisonous *horny* scales on its back. The toad—"Uddhumāyika" is a kind of frog having nearly a round shape. Well, the term used may probably depend upon the usage or terminology adopted at the place where the frog is found. We cannot possibly say which is correct. Each country or place of residence adopts its own nomenclature.

In Arana Vibhanga Sutta, the Blessed One had preached *Janapadaniruttam*—the *paññāta* terminology commonly employed or used in a certain country or district, *naabhiniveseya*—should not be taken for granted that it is the only correct term. Therefore, without prejudice to the name that is differently known to different people,

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let us call it a "frog", which is a common name known to all—the frog that is puffed up every time it is touched. The great teacher again asked his pupil to clear this frog away and discard it, and then to continue to dig. When further digging was done, it touched a spot where a road junction was found inside the hill. In this manner, new and strange things were discovered one after the other until at last they came upon a dragon (Naga). In the process of digging, all that had been found commencing from the mound (Ant Hill) to the dragon, came to fifteen in number—all problematic points in issue which were shrouded in mystery. These are what we called in Pali "Paheli", that is, riddles or puzzling questions. They will be composed in a motto in serial order that can be easily noted.

THE FOREMOST (LEADING) MOTTO RELATING TO FIFTEEN PROBLEMS

Seeing a big *Ant-Hill*, *Smoky alive* by night, and *Vomiting bright flames* by day, the *Noble Teacher* counselling his *Elegant pupil*, to find out what's the matter about, and on *Digging* it with the sharp edge of the *Spade*, emerged a *Door-bolt* followed by an ugly wicked toad, a *Road junction*, a *Soap-water strainer*, a *Cunning tortoise*, a *Dah*,*

(*) a dah is a sort of big knife with one edged blade.

LEADING MOTTO RELATING TO FIFTEEN PROBLEMS

along with a *Wooden slab* for chopping meat, a *Piece of solid flesh* and a *Divine dragon*, thereby making a total of *Fifteen riddles* in seriatim.

Let us explain this motto. "Smoky alive by night" means, at night time it was emitting smoke. "Vomiting bright flames" means – at day time it was spurting out fiery flames. These two were meant to indicate the big Ant-Hill. This Ant-Hill or mound was found by the Teacher Brahmana. When he saw it, he asked his pupil to dig it with the spade to know distinctly what were inside the Ant-Hill.

When it was dug, the first thing discovered was a bolt normally used in fastening a door. As the pupil continued digging, a "frog" (toad) called "Uddhumāyika" popped up. Thereafter, a "road junction" where two roadways met, came in sight. Later, "a soap-water strainer", and then a "tortoise" followed by a "dah" and a "wooden slab" for chopping meat, and again "a piece of flesh" successively appeared one after the other. The pupil therefore, said to his teacher: "Here again a piece of flesh". To this, the Brahmana teacher asked his pupil to remove this piece of flesh and also ordered to continue digging as before. As the pupil went on digging, he found a dragon and uttered surprisingly—"Here appears a dragon, Sir." Having heard his pupil's utterance, the

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Brahmana teacher gave the following instructions:

“Titthatu nāgo, manāgam gadhesi, namo kārohi nāgassa.”

The above Pāli phrase denotes:

Nāgo—the dragon, *titthatu*—may remain where it is. *Nāgam*—this dragon, *magadhesi*—may not be disturbed or harmed. *Nāgassa*—the divine dragon, *nāmo*—may be revered and worshipped.

The foregoing account conveys the fifteen riddles given by the Brahmā god.

Hence, there is food for thought as to what is meant by the big Ant-Hill (mound) and the frog, etc., totalling fifteen problems. That is the reason why I have enumerated in the motto all fifteen riddles in seriatim, so as to enable you to easily retain it in memory.

After giving these fifteen problems, the Brahmā told Ashin Kumārakassapa in the manner stated hereinafter.

“O, Monk! You may approach the Blessed One and respectfully put up these problems. You should make note of the meaning of these problems as explained by the Buddha. In regard to these problems, those who would be able to solve and answer them correctly were (1) The Blessed One (2) Buddha’s apostles and (3) the person who got the cue or in other words,

PAST HISTORY OF ASHIN KUMĀRAKASSAPA

the method of solution from me. With the exception of these three, no other person will be able to give a true and full explanation of the said problems. After leaving instructions where to obtain clarification on these riddling points, the Brahma-god returned to his celestial abode.

In this connection, it would be necessary to explain as to what connections he had, and with what intention he had come down to earth to give these riddling questions. I would, therefore, relate to you what the connections and intention were, by referring to the past events that had taken place ages ago.

THE PAST HISTORY OF ASHIN KUMĀRAKASSAPA

Finding some of the monks turned renegade by contravening the rules of conduct and discipline for priests in the latter part of the Sāsana during the time of Kassapa Buddha, those priests who felt sorry for this unhappy state of affairs, consulted among themselves reflecting that the birth or appearance of a new Buddha is hard to come by. To become a Sammā-Sambuddha (Supreme Buddha) is not at all easy, and one whose objective is to attain Buddhahood has to strive continuously and relentlessly throughout his life existences at least for a period of four immensities and a lakh of *kappās* so as to achieve the perfection of his spiritual powers, i.e. to fulfil his *paramitas*. Only after attainment of

VAMMIKA SUTTA DHAMMA

pure enlightenment, he will be able to preach the true Dhamma to enable mankind to gain *magga-phala-Nibbāna*. They felt it regrettable that some of the members of the Order of Sanghās had not truly conformed to the Rules of Discipline, and were therefore, of the opinion that if such a state of affairs were allowed to prevail, this priceless and noble Sāsana would soon dwindle into oblivion. Then, they came to a decision as: "Before this great and noble Sāsana had been obliterated, we should devote to the practice of meditation in order to work out our own salvation by making sole reliance on this great Sāsana. Let us therefore proceed to the forest retreat where there was peace and tranquility—a place free from worldly interferences and then, dedicate ourselves to the practice of meditation."

SEVEN MONKS WENT IN FOR A FOREST RETREAT

Decision having been arrived at as stated in the foregoing, they went to a forested area, taking along with them only the eight requisites of a Buddhist priest, such as, three robes, bowl, etc. After reaching the forest, they went up a mountain which soared forming a slope at the apex where they could not possibly reach without the help of a ladder. It might probably resemble the famous Mount Popa of Burma. When they found the declivity, all the seven monks got hold of a ladder and climbed up as

HOW MEDITATION WAS PRACTISED BY THE SEVEN MONKS

already agreed upon. After making their way up to the top of the mountain, the eldest Thera pronounced, "O, Monks! If you have a clinging desire for body and soul, you may now leave and go down to the foot of the mountain. If, on the other hand, you agree to stay put here, I will presently throw down and discard the ladder." However, none of the seven monks descended having entertained a very keen desire to practise meditation even to the extent of sacrificing their lives. They all agreed to remain as they were. Since everyone of the group of the Seven had given their express consent to stay put and meditate assiduously, the Mahā Thera threw down the ladder.

HOW MEDITATION WAS PRACTISED BY THE SEVEN MONKS ON THE MOUNTAIN

After abandoning this ladder, the seven monks had nothing to depend on except the Dhamma. They were now unable to get down from the top of the mountain. If they jumped down, they would surely meet with death. The water they had taken along with them might have been a small amount as was contained in a water-bag. If that water was used up, they could die of thirst. As regards meal, they had nothing for the next day. Therefore, they could also die of hunger. Under such circumstances, their chance of survival only depended upon their achievement of the higher stages of Dhamma in

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the exercise of insight meditation and the attainment of Abhiññā (Supernatural powers). The danger of death was so imminent that they could not think of what the future would be. In other words, they were in a tight corner, as it were, and hence, these seven monks earnestly plunged themselves in meditation with all seriousness and diligence. Because of the unremitting effort and enthusiasm in practising meditation, the eldest Mahā Thera became an Arahat after the first night.

In practising meditation, according to *maranā-nussati*, if it is developed by dwelling one's own thought on the imminent nature of death, it could be very far-reaching and beneficial. As such, the Blessed One had preached as follows with an exhortation to dwell on the thought of 'death'.

*Ajjāva kicca mātappam, ko jannā maranam suve,
Na hi no sangaram tena, mahāsenena maccunā.*

Atoppam, sammappadham, with the right exertion or rather all acts that should be done by exertion energetically and zealously, *ajjava*—now and presently, without postponing it to the next day and day after, *kiccām-kattabbam*—ought to be done. In other words, all that can be done now, should be done at once with zeal and ardour without procrastination.

HOW MEDITATION WAS PRACTISED BY THE SEVEN MONKS

Exertion made to dispel or do away with the demeritorious acts that have been committed; to prevent or deter all demerits which have not yet arisen; to achieve or acquire the merits, such as, *dāna* (charitableness), *sīla* (morality), *samatha vipassanā magga* that have not been acquired or obtained, is called *Sammappadham*-exertion or effort. All works, particularly the work of *Vipassanā* which should be carried out diligently with *sammappadham*-exertion, should not be put off or deferred till to-morrow or the day-after-tomorrow. It is urged that meditation exercise must be practised immediately now. This is what the Buddha had exhorted. It is very clear indeed. Don't you understand? If it is understood, you should better join the meditation centre right now. Our male and female benefactors do not seem to be capable of performing in conformity with the teachings of the Buddha. Leaving aside laymen, even for some of the *Sanghās*, it does not appear to be easy to strictly adhere to the directions of the Lord Buddha. They have found it difficult to comply. However, the Blessed One had earnestly urged us very precisely through sheer deep compassion to devote ourselves to meditation.

It is because we do not exactly know when death will prevail on us. It may be today or tomorrow or at some future date. How can we know when we are going to face death? How-

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ever, people generally have an impression that death will not take place today or tomorrow, or, even in the near future. Well, generally, it may be true. However, if we verify and take a census of deaths, we would find among the dead, a considerable number of people who had succumbed to death inspite of the fact that in a day or two or in the near future, they thought they wouldn't die. Although it was true that they had not met with death as they had expected, it had thus happened without knowing definitely that it would so happen. Nobody is quite sure of himself when death would seize him. The reason being, as stated hereunder:

“Nā bi no sangāram tena, mahāsenena maccunā.”

It means that we have not been given opportunity to be on good terms(*sangaram*)with “death”, the Sovereign of the Infernal, to get a fixed date, nor to bribe him, nor raise an army to be able to defend and strike back against “death” (*tenamaccuna*), who is fully equipped with a hugh armed force and an arsenal of a variety of lethal weapons (*mahāsenena*), such as, disease, poison, etc.

In fact, no one has been given a fixed date by *yama*, the ‘king of death’ as a favour to a person who might wish to befriend him. Nor is there anyone who has to offer bribe to be able to live long. In this mundane world, a

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person who has committed a serious crime deserving of a penalty of death sentence, may even get discharged or acquitted if he could offer bribe or gratification. Nevertheless, no such bribe or any kind of gratification can be given to the "King of Death" to escape either from death or to be able to live a long life. No one on this earth can declare war against the "death" or to fight against "death" with the might of a gigantic army though they may be able to stand against or defend the worst enemy. Everyone of us will have to bow down before "death". Death is, in fact, inevitable and metaphorically speaking, invincible.

I may herein mention the significance of mindfulness on or of making a mental note of the imminent nature of death. At one time, the Blessed One addressed a congregation of monks to find out whether they had developed mindfulness on "death" (*maranā nussati*). Thereupon, six of the monks respectfully replied that they were contemplating as such. When the Blessed One again inquired as to the manner in which contemplation was made, the first monk stated in reply that he had imagined how nice would it be if he were alive to contemplate according to the teachings of the Buddha for about a day and a night. The manner of his contemplation indicated his assumption that he wouldn't die for the whole day but that he

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might probably meet with death the next day. The second monk said that it had occurred to him how fine would it be, if he could contemplate for a day (12 hours) while he was still alive. The third monk said he thought to himself how good would it be if he were able to contemplate meditation for a brief period of time usually involved in taking meals. The fourth monk stated it would be really good if he were to contemplate for about a period of time spent in taking four or five handfuls of meals. The Blessed One did not express his approbation relating to the answers given by these four monks. That means they were looked upon with disapproval by the Buddha.

We have come across cases where some people have pursued alchemy so that they may live long and be able to practise meditation for a long period. When asked why they had become alchemists, the reply given was that they wanted to live long; and then, when inquired what they would do if they had a longer span of life, they said it would enable them to practise meditation very seriously longer than the normal period of their life-span. What they had stated is not in conformity with the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Only if a person could bear in mind and note that "death" is imminent, then he would, after severing the bonds of attachment, surely meditate with great diligence and earnestness.

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The belief that is entertained by the alchemists is that they would be able to meditate with peace of mind only if they have the longevity. There are different principles with a good deal of divergent views. On the other hand, we do not believe in the principle that by prolonging one's life, one could meditate for a lengthy period. It is simply because people at the present time are meditating for fear of death which may take place at any moment, and that by doing so, they expect to gain the knowledge of dhamma as quickly as possible before the clutching-hand of death seizes them. If the people were to live for a life span of thousands of years, I don't think they would care to devote themselves to meditate just as they are earnestly doing now.

Some people even while meditating do not make serious efforts, and with their mind running riot as to what they would do after meditation and what prosperity and wealth they would gain from their business enterprise and so on, valuable time has been wasted for nothing. The monks who had climbed up to the summit of the mountain, had discarded the ladder to prevent laxity on their part. With nothing to rely upon after abandoning the ladder, they had no other way out to survive except by relentlessly making effort to achieve the dhamma. The eldest Thera had thus gained Arahatsip after one night.

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Arahatship is of two kinds. Although some have become Arahat, the only distinguishing feature is that they have the full realization of the Four Noble Truths and are entirely free from all *kilesās* (defilements). They do not however, possess miraculous faculty (*iddhipada*), such as, the supernormal power of passing through the air, etc. Such an Arahat is called "*Sukkhavīpassaka*" Arahat. This means an Arahat who has attained *ariya phala* without the essence of *jhāna abhiññā* after deficient contemplation. Some, of course, have achieved *jhāna abhiññā* from the very outset, and after contemplating Vipassnā become an Arahat. Some have the attributes of *jhāna abhiññā* simultaneously with the achievement of Arahatship. This *jhāna abhiññā* accomplished at the time of achieving *arahatta-magga* is called "*Maggasiddha jhāna*". This means to say "The *jhāna* which has the full compliments of *Magga*." An Arahat who is accomplished with such faculties are endowed with the supernatural powers, such as, the power to fly through the air, etc. The aforesaid Sangha Thera was one of the kinds of Arahats fully equipped with such miraculous or supernatural powers.

This Arahat Mahāthera brought food for his fellow-monks after procuring them from places where he had been through the air-space and then invited his Bhikkhu-friends saying "O, Monks! Don't relax, please; make your utmost

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endeavour in meditational practice after 'taking food. I shall supply you with meals daily in the like manner.' The six monks then asked his permission to let them speak a few words, and said "Before we began to plunge ourselves into meditation, have we ever made any agreement among us that the person who first achieved the 'special' dhamma should procure food for others who have not yet reached the ultimate goal, while the rest should continue meditating after depending upon the meals so supplied?" Thereupon, the Arahata Thera replied, "No, my fellow-monks." The six monks then stated, "If we have the adequate past perfections, we will also achieve the 'special' dhamma like yourself. If we are to nourish ourselves with the meals brought by you, we would become lax, and this would take a longer period of time to reach our ultimate goal." They thus refused to accept the offer of meals. The Arahata Thera, therefore, departed from them to some other suitable place.

On the next day, the second Thera from among the six, reached the stage of *Anāgāmi*. The said *Anāgāmi* was the eldest of the six monks. He too had been accomplished with *jhāna abhiññā* the moment he attained Anāgāmiship. This Thera likewise brought meals for the remaining five monks, and offered them in the same manner as was done by the first Thera Arahata. The rest five

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monks also declined the offer of food, and went on meditating relentlessly denying all food and water. Since two days had elapsed, they must have been badly stricken with hunger. Yet, they continued persevering at the sacrifice of their lives. How wonderful and worthy of reverence!

The said Anāgāmi Thera therefore had to leave them behind. He then proceeded on his own way to some other congenial spot. The five monks continued to make greater exertion to gain higher stages of awakening consciousness towards Enlightenment, but as they were lacking in their perfections (*paramitas*), they failed to gain the 'special' dhamma. They soon died of hunger and thirst. In this regard, those who have no faith in Buddha's doctrine might probably think: "These monks had suffered great loss for having indulged themselves in meditation." In fact, it is quite the contrary. It is not at all surprising that death is inevitable in one's life time. No matter to what extent one may nurture himself to his utmost, death cannot be avoided. It will take place one day. When it occurs, it is of paramount importance to have a purified mind i.e. on the eve of death, so as to reach a better new life existence. It is really dreadful to face death while perfunctorily leading a way of life without chastity. In that event one could land in the nether world. In the case of these

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five monks however, as they had succumbed to death while seriously meditating, they were fully accomplished with morality, and were also in possession of the attributes of *samādhi* and *paññā*, at least to some extent. Hence, according to the Buddha's preachings, their death was admirably noble. They had, therefore, no loss, and instead gained a lot of benefit.

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They had reaped the benefits in the following manner. These monks after their demise were immediately reborn in the Devaloka (Celestial Abode) as if they had been aroused from their deep slumber without any sensation of pain and suffering by virtue of their *sila* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (insight wisdom). On their rebirth, everything was found furnished to their heart's content including the amenities of the World of Devas, with celestial palaces, and appurtenances thereto along with a suite of celestial nymphs or damsels. Such beneficial results were derived from the time of Kassapa Buddha up to the time of Gotama, the Enlightened One. They had thus been repeatedly born, died and reborn in all the six Devalokas, and had the privilege of living in great luxury, comfort and happiness all throughout such existences. During the life time of Gotama Buddha, they became human beings, the time being ripe for them to escape from all worldly woes and worries through

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attainment of Nibbāna. They had therefore gained benefits throughout their rounds of existences.

BECOMING AN ARAHAT AT AN EARLY AGE OF SEVEN

Let's go back to the past history during the time of Kassapa Buddha. The first Thera who became an Arahata as mentioned earlier, had entered into *Parinibbāna* after the expiry of his life-span pertaining to that era. As regards the Thera who became an Anāgāmi, he was reborn a Brahmā after his death reaching Brahmāloka by the name of Suddhavāsa. This Brahma was said to be watching his follow-monks to render them assistance whenever occasion demanded. Later, finding them elevated to the Devaloka after their demise, no occasion had arisen to help them.

ASHIN DHABBA THERA

During the life time of Gotama Buddha, one of the said five monks was found to have attained Arahata-ship at the age of seven. A person seven years old is, in fact, very young compared to children of the same age of the present day period. However, he had achieved Arahata-ship at a very young age of seven for having accumulated perfections of his spiritual powers in the past as a monk who had diligently meditated on the mountain retreat. Therefore, those who are at present assiduously meditating Vipassana, need not be discouraged though under

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certain unfavourable circumstances they have not been able to fully accomplish themselves with the knowledge of the dhamma. They can still hope to become an Arahāt easily as Ashin Dhabba Thera in the realm of this Sāsana, or in the least, in the Buddha Sāsana to come.

KING POKKUSĀTI

The next monk had been reborn as king Pokkusāti in the country of Taxila. Taxila is situated in the southern part of Peshwar township which lies within Punjab, the province in the extreme north-western part of India. The said Pokkusāti king had donned the yellow robe after his attainment of *jhāna* through the practice of *ānāpāna* meditation which he had exercised, realizing the glorious attributes of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha on the strength of the informatory letter received from the king Bimbisāra of Rājagriha. After becoming a priest, he left his own native place to pay obeisance to the Blessed One. He arrived Rājagriha where Buddha was residing. There, while he was staying at the house of a potter, the Blessed One visited that potter's house. The Blessed One then delivered a Discourse on Dhātubhanga Sutta. While listening to the Buddha's preachings, he (the monk) became an Anāgāmi. However, soon after his attainment of Anāgāmi, he was gored to death by a cow that was impersonated by an ogress who had grudge against him in one of

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his previous existences. After his death, he had reached the celestial abode of Brahmās called Suddhavāsa. As such, it was not necessary for the Brahmā god to help Ashin Dhabba and Pokkusāti.

Another monk became a wandering ascetic by the name of Sābiya. Cherishing erroneous views, he became an adherent to a false doctrine. Finding him thus, the Brahmā god came to him and gave him twenty problems (riddles). The Brahmā god then left word with him to find solution to these riddles from the holy priests and advised him to take the role of a disciple of the monk who could successfully tackle these riddling problems and give him the correct answers. He went in search of a competent priest and eventually failing to find any one who could solve these riddles, he approached the Blessed One. Thereafter, being elated with the answers given by the Blessed One, he entered into priesthood in the realm of Buddha's Sāsana, and not long after indulging himself in meditation, attained Arahatsip.

BHĀHIYA DĀRUCIRIYA

The next monk was reborn in the country of Bhāhiya. Hence, he was given the name of 'Bhāhiya'. He was dealing in international trading business and was a reputed wholesale-dealer and shipper having business relations with foreign

countries. After successfully conveying merchandise with sea-going vessels on seven occasions, he left his native place by a ship, fully loaded with goods, his eighth trip, intending to send the goods and merchandise to Suvannabhūmi. In ancient times, the ships which plied between different countries were sea-going vessels with sails. In the past, Suvannabhūmi was thought to be a sea-port town by the name of Thaton in Burma. At the present day, some researchers have said Sumatra Island was formerly known as Suvannabhūmi. This coincides with the commentary which says 'Suvannabhūmi' is an Island.

During the trip to Suvannabhūmi, the ship belonging to Bhāhiya was caught in a violent storm on the high seas and was wrecked. All the crew on board the ship lost their lives except Bhāhiya. As for Bhāhiya, this being his last life existence, fortune favoured him. By a stroke of luck, he was able to get hold of a floating plank torn from the wreckage and being buffeted by the waves, he was gradually carried to the shore. He then rested for a while on the shore and fell asleep. He later woke up from his sleep, and being seized by hunger, he thought of begging for food from some one. Having lost his clothes in his struggle against the waves after the ship was capsized, he was almost naked. He therefore, had to gather the slender stems from a

plant known as "Māyo" and wove them in the form of a skirt, and then wrapped it round his waist. Finding him wearing a dress made of slender woody stems or sticks of the plant, he was given an additional title of 'Dārucīriya'. After dressing himself with an outer garment made of thin sticks hanging down from his waist, he went about, and then picking up an old pot from an altar used for putting offerings to a deity, proceeded to Soppāraka village, which was a sea-port, to beg for meals. The port of Soppāraka stands on the west coast of India near the port of Bombay. It is a place called Sopāra which lies at the mouth of Nammada river on the north of Bombay. Finding a person strangely wearing a woven slender sticks as his garment and holding an old worthless pot, the village folks from Soppāraka village thought very highly of him and remarked: "Oh, This great personage is indeed a wonderful figure. Unlike common people, he wears no ordinary dress and is using a worthless pot as a receptacle for putting his meals instead of a plate. This strange personality very much looks like an Arahat." Regarding him as being a praise-worthy personage, the people offered him fine clothes, good food, crockery and utensils for his use.

It is indeed extremely surprising that people in the ancient times regarded a person without any clothes on, as an Arahat. They revered

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and worshipped Bhāhiya who had just managed to cover his exposed indecent part of his body with the woven sticks, holding him high in their estimation as a holy Arahāt. They had not considered things deeply and weighed them, and had no ability to judge a person reasonably from various aspects. These people were really strange. It is because of such false beliefs that dishonourable creeds without proper foundation have sprung up at the present day. Leaving aside these simple ancient peoples, even now a negligible few wrongly look upon a queer person who seemingly appeared to be seeking for a way out of this worldly life, as a noble Arahāt, and worship him reveringly! In this present age of modern science, despite the development of scientific knowledge and mental powers, it is highly improper and inappropriate to find such people blindly believe in bigotry.

When he was so revered as an Arahāt and offered with many human requisites by the villagers, he thought to himself: "The reason for making reverence and offerings to me is because of my nudity without any clothes on my body. Therefore, if I accept their gifts of clothes and put them on, they will have no faith and respect in me." He therefore, only accepted the offerings of food and remained undraped with clothes which he denied to receive contenting himself with the garment made of

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slender sticks. The people then naturally thought more highly of him and made more offerings with increased reverence and generosity. Yes, indeed, it is so. Simple and ignorant people usually hold very high estimation of such strange persons whom they might have come across. As people admired him and respected him all the more as an Arahant, he was even inclined to believe that he himself was an Arahant. It had occurred to him that, "In this Universe, an Arahant may be like myself," and that funny assumption had made him egoistic. It is natural for people generally to become wavering in mind about one's own qualities depending upon the consensus opinion of the many. Such a case has been cited as a fable in Hitopadesa Dhamma.

THE GOAT BECAME A DOG

Once upon a time, a Brahmin teacher bought a small goat and carried it with him for the purpose of performing a ritual, an act to propitiate a deity. A group of scoundrels seeing him carried a goat, plotted to get it with ease for nothing. They put their heads together, and agreed to make utterances so as to let the goat seemingly become a dog, and then waited at the assigned places along the route where the Brahmin teacher would come. The person who was waiting at the first point told the Brahmin teacher on the latter's arrival, "Hello, Great Teacher! Why are you carrying a dog on your

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shoulders?" The Brahmin teacher ejaculated with anger; "What the devil are you? The animal that is carried on my shoulders is not a dog at all, but a 'goat'. I have bought the animal for sacrificing it for the ritual. Don't you see it is a goat? How could it be a dog?" So saying, he proceeded on his journey.

After having walked for some distance, the Brahmin teacher reached a place at the fringe of a jungle. There, a group of persons appeared and said "Aha! What a wonderful teacher! Despite the fact that you belong to a very high caste of Brahmins, it's really surprising that you are carrying a very mean and ignoble dog." The rest of the group joined in and uttered: "Aye; It is quite so. We are at a loss to know for what purpose the dog is carried on his shoulders." Then, the Brahmin teacher began to waver a bit. He reflected: "Just then a person had told me that the animal I carried is a dog. Could it be a dog? I would rather have a look at it." Imagining as such, he put down the goat on the ground and looked at it. He even caressed the goat in the ears and said to himself, "H'm! This thing is not a dog but a goat after all." So saying, he continued his journey.

Then again when he arrived at the outskirts of a forested area, another group of persons appeared and made a joke of the Brahmin teacher by clapping their hands, and making fun

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of him said : "Hey, Look! Look! This is really wonderful. In spite of his being a high caste Brahmin teacher, he is shouldering a base creature—a mean dog. How marvellous!" It so happened then that the Brahmin teacher thought to himself; "It seems true. The first person has said that the thing carried by me on my shoulders is a dog. The second—a group of persons have also stated that it is a dog. The present group of persons have also remarked that it is a dog. The thing I am carrying does not seem to be a goat. It appears to be a dog." He then set the animal free, uttering: "Off you go—the big dog." After he had abandoned the goat and left the place, the animal was killed by the band of villains who cooked the flesh and made a feast on it. This tale is illustrated in the Hitopadesa Dhamma to give lesson to those who, though they may be educated, could become wavering, if many persons have jointly expressed their adverse opinion on a matter.

This incident is similar to the case of Bhāhiya who had a false notion that he himself was an Arahāt. As a good number of people had spoken in admiration of his being an Arahāt worthy of high esteem, he really thought himself an Arahāt. Nowadays, it seems that there might be people who think highly of themselves as being Sotāpanna or Arahāt on the strength of their spiritual teacher's opinion of them as having reached

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those higher stages of insight wisdom. There could be a number of people who become egoistic for having been highly praised by many others. Such cases should serve us as a reminder to take heed.

The Brahmā god from Suddavāsa abode found Bhāhiya harbouring false pride. He therefore reflected, "Oh! My friend has been trodding on a wrong path with his bigoted views. During the time of Kassapa Buddha, while we were meditating on the mountain retreat, he had devotedly plunged himself in meditation even after refusing to take the meals benevolently and honestly offered him by the Arahāt Thera. He had also denied the offer of meals from the Anāgāmi Thera. Now that he had condescended himself in accepting the offerings made by others who are under the wrong impression that he is an Arahāt, although he himself is far from being an Arahāt. He has a false impression of himself as being an Arahāt. He has made a great blunder. Not long afterwards, he is going to die. Death is approaching him. It's now time that I should go to him to render help." Reflecting as such, he went to Bhāhiyadaruciriya. Then, at night time, he stood in the mid-air within sight of Bhāhiya with all his radiance and lustre, and spoke quite bluntly, "Hey, Bhāhiya, you think highly of yourself as an Arahāt. In fact, you are not. You are an

impostor without the necessary attributes to conduct yourself to become an Arahāt.”

Having heard these words, Bhāhiya thought to himself; “H'm! This is quite true. I have not put in any effort to practise myself to become an Arahāt. I have been drifted away from the sea to the shore. On being landed, I was naked, and had to weave tiny thin sticks of a plant to be worn as a garment. With this kind of dress on, I went out begging for meals. The people in the neighbourhood were innocently impressed with my queer attire and had mistakenly, admired, acknowledged and extolled me as an Arahāt. I have indeed committed a grave mistake in pretentiously claiming myself to be an Arahāt, though, in fact, I'm not.” Thus repentance came upon him. He then asked, “O, Ashin Brahmā, if that is the case, is there any real Arahāt in this world? Where does he reside? The Brahmā god replied “There is a place called the kingdom of Kosala lying to the north-east of this sea-port village of Soppāraka. In that place stands a monastery, named Jetavunna, near the city of Sravasti. At this monastery, resides Gotama, the Buddha, who has descended from the royal family of the Sakya Clan. This Gotama Buddha is the real Arahāt, free from all defilements of human passions (*kilesās*). He is proclaiming the noble doctrines and is preaching the path that leads to the

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attainment of Arahatsip. Hearing this statement, Bhāhiya felt much regret with repentance, and was greatly alarmed for his own imprudent behaviour, and then immediately left the place to see the Buddha, the Omniscient.

In Bhāhiya Sutta commentary, the distance from the port of Soppāraka to Śravasti is said to be (120) 'yūjanās'. However, in Ponnovāda Sutta commentary, it is stated to be (130) 'yūjanās'. According to the commentaries, one *yūjanā* approximately equals thirteen miles. On the other hand, the present day researchers have said eight miles. If calculated at the rate of eight miles, 120 multiplied by 8, is (960) miles. To such a far distant land, Bhāhiya travelled on foot in haste stopping *en route* only for one night's stay at every place of stop instead of taking rest for two or three nights at one time.

"Sleeping one night at every place he had passed through on the way", is the exact meaning conveyed in Pāli language as per the expression "*Sabbatha ekarattivasena*". As it has been stated "*Sabbattha—everywhere, ekatattivasena—coming after one night's stay*", it is clear that at every place at the end of a day's journey, only one night had been spent to take rest. It is quite realistic. However, the commentator of Bhāhiya Sutta had mainly given the meaning: "The journey from Soppāraka seaport to Śravasti was covered in a single night." If that is so,

as the long distance of 960 miles could not possibly be covered by ordinary human effort, it would require outside help. It is also not in agreement with the statement "*Sobbattha ekarattivāseṇa*". By this, as it is stated "everywhere" with the expression "Stay", there appears to be no justification in saying "walking or journeying", when it has been specifically stated as "staying". It will be absurd to stay only ONE night throughout the whole journey. It would be "one night's stay at every place." Hence, the statement "One night's stay at every place of stop instead of taking rest and wasting time for two or three nights", is more realistic. If the whole journey were performed in a night, the expression "*Sabbattha*", i.e. everywhere, is considered superfluous. The word "*vāsa*" i.e. 'stay' will also be unnecessary. It would be adequate only with the mere expression of the word "*ekarattaneva*", which means "only one night."

In this regard, the most significant point is: "Bhāhiya being greatly repented had come in haste". At the time of his arrival at Jetavana monastery, Buddha was away making a round of alms begging for food in the city of Sravasti. Bhāhiya therefore, in a hurry, made his way to Sravasti. At the sight of the Blessed One, he was overwhelmed with great reverence, intense rapture and faith, and then paid his

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obeisance. After paying obeisance, he fervently requested the Buddha to preach. The Lord Buddha fully realizing that the time was inopportune to preach him while he was in a mood of extreme respect and ecstasy, and was becoming tiresome also after a strenuous long journey, rejected his request saying "This is not the time to preach while making rounds seeking for alms." Bhāhiya earnestly entreated for three times repeatedly. Then, the Buddha seeing him cooled down in a fit state of composure and also finding it an opportune moment, gave the following exhortation in brief:

Tasamā tiha te Bhāhiya evam sikkhitabbāna ditthe ditthamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati, mute mutamattam bhavissati, vinnate vinnatamattam bhavissati, etc.

The meaning of the above Pāli phrase in a nutshell is, "when an object is seen, just contemplate and note fixedly as "seeing"; when hearing a sound, just make a mental note fixedly as "hearing" with concentration; when nose-consciousness or sense of smell arises, just concentrate and note firmly on "smelling"; when knowing while eating, just make a mental note with constant awareness on "eating"; when feeling the sense of touch (tactile), simply make a mental note fixedly on "touching"; and when consciousness arises on imagination, just mentally note with fixed concentration only on "imagining". After

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having heard this dhamma which is to deter any inclination towards extraneous matters or thoughts, Bhāhiya, while contemplating on every act of the arising mental consciousness from the contact of eye and visual object, ear and sound and so on, by concentrating fixedly on mere awareness of "seeing", "hearing", "touching", and "knowing", made progressive strides towards Vipassana insight knowledge stage by stage in serial order, and became an Arahāt. He was the most outstanding personality receiving a pre-eminent title of '*Etedagga*' among *khippābhinna* persons who speedily attained *magga ñāṇa* and *phala ñāṇa*, the knowledge of the Path and its Fruition.

After thus attaining Arahātship, while going out to find the robes to be ordained a priest, Ashin Bhāhiyadāruciriya met his death and entered into *parinibbāna*, being fatally gored by a cow impersonated by an Ogress who had an animosity against him in the past existence.

As stated serially in the foregoing, of the five companions who, as monks, had practised dhamma on the mountain retreat, Ashin Dhabba had already become an Arahāt; Pokkusāti king, after attaining Anāgāmihip was already in *Suddhāvāsa*; Ashin Sabiya also had achieved Arahātship; and Ashin Bhāhiyadaruciriya had entered into *parinibbāna*. Only one was left. The Brahmā god reflecting where could that person be living at

THE GOAT BECAME A DOG

the moment, saw Ashin Kumārakassapa residing in Āndha forest. Therefore, wishing to help him out, he appeared at night time before Ashin Kumārakassapa beaming a radiant light and spreading out rays, and then offered him the fifteen riddles, as has been stated earlier, saying "Bhikkhu. Bhikkhu! *ayam vammiko rattam dhumā-rati*", etc. What I have just spoken is the "Introduction" to this Sutta to show why it has been preached.

On the following day, Ashin Kumārakassapa approached the Blessed One and respectfully paid his obeisance. He then took his seat in an appropriate place and re-iterated the full account of the gift of fifteen riddling problems given him by the Brahmā god and sought Buddha's elucidation with the words "*Konnikho bhante vammiko, ka rattam dūmī yanī, ka divā pajjalanī*", etc.

In plain Burmese language, it means: "My Lord, the Exalted One! What is meant by the big mound (Ant Hill)? What does the expression vomiting smoke at night time convey? What is the significant meaning that in day time it emits burning flames? Who is the person said to be the Brahmā god? Who is 'Sumedā', the outstanding pupil?" The Blessed One first explained as follows relating to the problematic question of "*Ko vammiko*"—the big mound (Ant Hill).

VAMMIKA SUITA DHAMMA

THE BIG MOUND OR ANT HILL

*Vammikoti kho Bhikkhu ema citam cātum-
mahābhūtikassa kāyassa adhivacanam mātā
pettika sambhavassa odanakummāsūpacayassa
aniccucchādhanaparimaddhanabedana viddhamsana-
dhammassa.*

The meaning of the above passage is: "O, Bhikkhu Kumārakassapa, the name of the "Mound" (Ant-Hill) refers to *rūpa*, this corporeal body. In other words, the "Ant-Hill" means nothing but the name applied to this "material body" or matter called '*rūpa*'. The form or the matter possessed by every human being is exactly similar to a mound. Your own body is your mound. Everybody seems to know what is a mound. Similarity has been shown because the tangible human body is very much like a real mound.

THE MOUND WHICH HAS MANY HOLES

The true nature of a mound or an ant-hill is such that it is full of big and small holes. Likewise, the human body or form has a lot of big and small holes. The big holes are nothing but the doors of eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth. The small or tiny holes are pores on the skin, which are permeable to sweat. Close to these pores, hairs of the body are grown. The people of the West have made minute researches and it has been stated that within a space of an inch on the skin, if it is examined under very powerful microscopic lens, about two thousand tiny holes can be discerned. If seen by a naked

THE MOUND WHICH HAS MANY HOLES

eye, only about twenty pores would be found. Mosquitoes appear to have very sharp eyes. They can easily suck the blood from the minutest pores of the human body within a very brief moment. Men cannot see the minute hollow spaces from where the blood is sucked by the mosquitoes, but a mosquito can see the tiny space through which it sneaks, pokes and sucks. If the pores of the skin were scrutinized by a magnifying glass or telescopic lens, numerous tiny holes could be found just like a sieve. The human body, being full of big and tiny holes, very much resembles a big mound—an ant-hill. Hence, the big mound has been illustrated as an example.

If the people were able to see the innumerable number of pores on their own bodies with their naked eyes, they would not consider themselves and others as being not distasteful or disagreeable, since the material body is, in fact, loathsome and detestable. Looking at the faces and hands with ordinary naked eyes, they would be found smooth. They appear even more smooth, fresh and refined in surface, if beautified with rouge. People therefore have found their bodies agreeable and desirable. If the pores on the body were seen with insight wisdom or mind's eye, they will be found horrible. It should therefore, be remembered that the Brahmā god had compared this body with the mound citing it as an example.

VAMMIKA SUTTĀ DHAMMA

THE MOUND THAT EMITS FILTH

Next, "*vamati*"—as it vomits, it is named "*Vam. mika*"—the mound. What are those that have been vomited? The snake, scorpions, rats, lizards and all sorts of insects used to come out of the mound. Such filthy, loathesome and frightful creatures are vomited by the mound. In the same way, this body is ejecting discharge from the eyes; wax or resins from the ears; nasal secretion from the nose; saliva, mucus content and foul watery discharge from the mouth; sweat from the sweat-pores impulsed through the glandular ducts. Moreover, from the lower *dvaras* (doors), faeces and urine are flowing out. Do you find any agreeable or lovable things among them? No. All are filthy and detestable. As the material body is vomiting all loathesome dirt, it is called *Vammika*—the ant-hill or the mound that is ejecting all these dirty garbage.

THE ANT HILL - - DISGUSTING HEAP OF MASS

The next meaning is: The ant-hill or the mound is a heap of dust carried and gradually piled up by the white ants. Just as these fine particles of earth discarded by the ants have formed into a mound, this material body is made up of the thirty-two kinds of *kotthāsa*, the material elements, such as, hairs on the

THE ANT-HILL - DISGUSTING HEAP OF MASS

head, hairs on the body, etc. which have been abandoned as worthless by the Buddha, Pacceka Buddha and noble Arahats. These rejected things are looked upon by ordinary worldlings (*puthuj-jana*) as pleasurable. How? Just as there are people who keep long hairs, there are those who keep them short, according to their own idiosyncrasies. They dress the hairs in a fashionable and agreeable way putting scented oils and pomade to make it look more decent. Some even make their hairs curly, or shingle them at the hair-dresser's saloon or the 'Beauty-Palour'. This is done so to add beauty to their physical appearance. Therefore, it is obvious that they find pleasure in doing so. They are also pleased with other people's long hairs or 'hair-dos' - fashionable style of hair-dressing. As a matter of fact, hairs are found to be pleasant for so long as they remain on the head, but once they are cut or shaved, the cut strands of the hairs become detestable. Even sometimes when a thread of hair is found in a plate of rice or a dish of curry, one becomes disgusted with it. Look! How inconsistent. When hairs are on the head, they are found to have afforded pleasure. But when they are dropped off the head, a strong feeling of aversion has occurred.

People are interested in and pleasurable with not only the hairs on the head but also the hairs on the body. There are those who caress

and trim their moustaches, eye-brows and eye-lashes in a fashionable way. The beauty of eye-lashes has been inspiringly described and poured out in certain verse romances of the literature. Some womenflocks even pluck or trim the eye-brows making it into a thin strip or curve it into a quarter-moon-shape. Some keep long moustaches making it pointed at both ends, while others keep long, long beard (just like San'ta Claus). This indicates one's own pleasure in having done so and also to afford pleasurable sight to others.

Then, with regard to finger or toe nails, these are cut and or polished to make them look nice. This has been done simply because generally people consider them as pleasurable. In big cities like Rangoon, the finger and toe nails of some of the fair-sex are polished and coloured with a variety of stain. Such nails are looked upon with pleasurable delight when they are on the body. Once they are cut with the nail-clipper, the tips of the cut-nails are adhorred, and if kept in the house, some even think it would bring ill-luck. This superstitious belief is unrealistic probably because in actual fact, if such cut portions of nails are neglected to drop inside a house, the sharp points or edges would hurt the young children whose skin is soft and delicate. It could harm the eyes too, if it pricks.

THE ANT-HILL - - DISGUSTING HEAP OF MASS

Next comes the teeth. If seriously considered, they are of paramount importance and give us a lot of advantage. Only when the teeth are in good shape, it would improve digestion and general health. With the teeth we can bite and chew. People however, seldom think in the like manner. They are happy in having them on the ground that they add beauty to their looks. It may be true in a way. However, the main significance is by keeping the teeth hygienically clean and in good order, they can be used to help one eat well and maintain good health. Some, when photographed even kept smiling to expose their good teeth. Some extracted even a good tooth and substituted it with a false tooth made of gold. Some have their teeth gilded. Some may remark a fine row of white teeth as being like a row of pearls. But when they are broken or extracted, they become really detestable so much so that some people are not inclined to touch them.

Then, relating to the skin, people wrongly think it smooth and beautiful and very pleasant to look at. Having pleasurable attachment to the figure of a male or a female, they become joyful and pleased, of course, superficially seeing the outer layer of skin and outward general appearance. In fact, the skin becomes horrible and is viewed with aversion if it is contracted with dermatitis or is afflicted with other common skin diseases, such as, leprosy.

Next, as regards flesh, for example, red lips, pretty arms, proportionate bodily frame, breasts, cheeks, etc., if they are stout, handsome and muscular in the case of males, or elegant or slender in case of females, with broad chests or full breasts, as the case may be, they are appreciated with great pleasure. Some females even put on lip sticks and make their cheeks rosy.

Furthermore, the veins and nerves, because of their qualities in making it possible to manoeuvre the limbs rendering one to sit, stand, walk and work, are even regarded as pleasurable. The bones, ligaments, marrow etc., not being clearly visible, the body as a whole frame is considered delightfully fine.

Particularly, the saliva, nasal secretions and viscid substance secreted by mucus membrane are really detestable. However, while the saliva remain in the mouth these are not detested, and that is the reason why these are swallowed with gusto while it remain in the mouth. To prevent the throat from getting dry, the saliva has got to be swallowed and while so doing, it appears essentially agreeable. After the saliva have been spitted out, they become detestable, and nobody would like to touch it. Even one has got to wipe out his own saliva if ejected from the mouth (i.e. sputum). As regards nasal secretions, they are even more horrible. Some-

THE ANT-HILL -- DISGUSTING HEAP OF MASS

times, such nasal secretions have to be channelled through the mouth and spitted out. Phlegm is also the same. Sometimes, phlegm has to be swallowed and nobody seems to regard it as detestable. But once they are spitted out or ejected by coughing, they are treated as filth, which are even considered as not worth touching. All these are disgusted by ordinary people just as they are despised and discarded by the noble Arahats.

The most detestable things are faeces and urine. While they remain in the intestines of the body and the bladder, as the case may be, people do not as yet detest them. But once they are evacuated or urinated, people even make wry faces at the sight of them.

These thirty-two *kotthāsas* are those that have been rejected as undesirable by the Buddha and noble Arahats. The whole body being an agglomeration of these undesirable filth that have been so rejected, it resembles an ant-hill, which is a heap of dust discarded by the little white-ants. Well, in this regard, it is to be noted that the material body which forms an aggregate of dirty things or substance, should be considered as unpleasant and undesirable. As such, we should endeavour to abandon this detestable material body, as has been done by the Buddha and the noble Arahats.

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The next point I would like to stress is that the Mound means a heap of particles of earth which the white-ants have vomited and deposited together with their viscid saliva. In the same manner, this material body which is compounded with clinging passionate desire for life existence, is very much like the big mound in nature. This conception being highly profound, it is difficult to make a huge assembly of persons understand its meaning within a short period of this sermon. I do not at the present moment propose to amplify its meaning.

THE MOUND -- A HOUSE OF VARIOUS ORGANISMS AND GERMS

Another meaning is: In that mound, there are hideous and formidable creatures like snakes, scorpions, rats, lizards and other various kinds of insect. Therefore, the mound is, indeed, horrible and abominable. Hence, would you dare sleep near such a mound? Our material body is like a mound. This body of ours is infested with innumerable germs. The texts of dhamma say that there are so many kinds of germs, eighty in number. We do not know how many germs are there in each and every kind. In the Commentary introducing this Sutta, it is said, "*Athītimattāni-kīmikulasahassāni*". The exact translation of this Pāli words is: 'There are eighty-thousand kinds of germs.' If that is so, there would be eighty-thousand species of germs.

THE MOUND-A HOUSE OF VARIOUS ORGANISMS AND GERMS

Other texts of dhamma mention only eighty kinds. It will agree with other texts, if a 'thousand' - - (*Sahassa*), appearing in the Commentary is considered superfluous.

The mound itself is a breeding ground for all reptiles, such as, snakes, scorpions and also for other kinds of creatures, such as, insects. These creatures evacuate their excretions and urinate in the same place. They sleep inside it coiling in that mound if they are sick. They die there too. This mound or the ant-hill has therefore become a place where these creatures are born and a lavatory as well. It also serves as a hospital where diseased patients are treated and a grave-yard in so far as these creatures are concerned. Some of the bacterial germs live in the flesh and blood, and some in the veins, and bones and in the stomach and the intestines. It isn't that the body is a store-house for germs? Among them according to the doctors, there are disease germs. They breed and multiply inside the body. Therefore, no matter the people may have regarded and caressed their own body as being kings, millionaires, officials, etc., it is a breeding ground for germs. Some even said that those who hold superstitious views about having mysterious powers of immunity from injuries that can be caused by all sorts of lethal weapons, or power to win love of another fellow being, are not inclined to enter the labour-room

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for fear of losing their supernatural powers. This is nonsensical. If considered deeply, these germs have evacuated faeces and urine in our heads; fore-heads and mouths though we may look upon such essential parts of the body as being attractive and lovable. Under such conditions, the body being a lavatory or a toilet and cemetery for all such vile and horrible creatures, it is, in fact, abominable. That is the reason why it has been illustrated as a mound. As such we should have no attachment or craving for this body of ours.

THE MOUND -- AN ACCUMULATION OF FOUR MAIN ELEMENTS (MAHĀDHĀTU)

The material body which resembles the mound, is made up of a collection and accumulation of the four principal elements, namely, *pathavī-dhātu*, *āpodhātu*, *tejodhātu*, and *vāyodhātu*, i.e. earth, water, fire and air, just like the collection or heap of particles of earth which is called a "mound".

Let us then dissect and analyse it. *Pathavī*, earth, has the characteristic or hardness and solidity. If we feel by touch anything that is inside the body, we will find something hard or soft. When we touch and feel the hairs, we find it rough in texture and the same thing will be sensed or found in the case of eye-lashes and eye-brows. Some people may, however, think them smooth and soft. Again, this softness will

THE MOUND-AN ACCUMULATION OF FOUR MAIN ELEMENTS

be felt hard or rough in texture, if compared with a thing which is more soft and finer in texture. This is why 'softness' or 'hardness' is the characteristic of *pathavī* (earth). Finger and toe nails have the hardness having the nature of solidity. The teeth have the same characteristic. So is the skin. They are in the nature of mass. All these are the intrinsic nature of the *pathavidhātu*. Briefly stated, the flesh, the veins, the bone, the marrow, ligaments, the heart, the liver, membranes, tissues, chest, large and small intestines, food both fresh and stale and the brain, are fifteen in number. If these are added to the previous five, it will come to twenty in number. These all have the characteristic nature of hardness or softness and of solidity. They are termed as *pathavidhātu* because of the predominance of the feature of hardness in these mass of solids. In actual fact, the mass of these collections contained *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo dhatus*. For instance, in the hairs, there is *āpodhatu*, the element of water or liquidity which has the characteristic of being moist and humid and sticky. It has also the *tejodhātu* which gives out the warmth and hot-vapour. Moreover, it has the *vāyodhātu* which causes propelling force or stiffness. Motivation is the manifestation of propelling action of the air or wind element. However, as the hardness of *pathavidhātu*, earth element, is most predominant, the hairs are called the collection of *pathavidhātu*.

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A Yogī who is contemplating and noting, when touching the hairs, feels the hardness and knows them as an earth element "*pathavīdhātu*" that is inherent in it. When he feels it, warmth and coldness will be sensed and he will know the *tejodhātu*. When he finds the stiffness and motivation of the body, he will know the *vāyodhātu*. When he finds it damp, he knows it is the *āpodhātu*. He need not reflect the nature of *paññata* as an element of earth and of water or wetness. What is required to be reflected is merely to know its characteristic of hardness or coarseness. His awareness should not go beyond that to reach the stage of *paññata* that it is the hair of a male or a female. To know its characteristic as having the nature of hardness is fundamentally important. It is neither a woman nor a man. Nor it is the hairs or the hairs on the body. It is only an element of earth, *pathavīdhātu*. It is most essential to realize this fact.

After *pathavī* comes the *āpodhāta*. It has been preached as having twelve different kinds, such as, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, unsaturated fat, tears, fatty fluid, saliva, nasal secretion, vicid secretions and urine. These are all in the nature of fluidity that exudates. And for this reason, it is said to be *āpodhātu*. It is caused by water element which is predominant or preponderant. Among these are also included *pathavī*

THE MOUND-AN ACCUMULATION OF FOUR MAIN ELEMENTS

(hardness), *tejo* (hotness or coldness) and *vāyo* (stiffness and motivation).

Next comes the *tejodhātu*. The heat inside the body is known as "*jiranatejo*". Because of this heat or element of fire, the corporeal body of a human being is gradually wearing out and growing older and older with the passage of time. The degree of internal bodily heat, i.e. the temperature which is higher than the normal body temperature is called "*santappateja*", that is burning heat. It is the kind of temperature more than the normal temperature of 98.4° degrees measured with an instrument called the thermometer used by medical doctors. When the body temperature becomes very intense and unbearable, it is called "*dahatejo*", i.e. burning heat or hotness which causes severe suffering. The heat in the belly or the abdomen which includes stomach, etc., gives the power of digestion and is known as "*pācakatejo*". These four kinds of heat are only known by their natural inherent quality. It is neither female nor male. If you now examine and feel any place inside the body, you will at least find hotness, or warmth, or coldness. Is it your "Self"? Or a female?. It is none of these. There is only the nature of hotness, warmness or coldness. Yes, indeed. These are merely "*tejodhātu*".

Finally, we come to the *vāyodhātu* or the element of air or wind. This element comprises

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six kinds. They are (1) Belching, i.e. the retro-pulsion of air either from the esophagus or from the stomach through the esophagus, and rumination, etc. (2) passing flatus or downward flow of gas, (3) the gas that is generating in the intestines or alimentary canal, (4) gaseous distention, (5) respiration, i.e. air breathed in and out, (6) the wind element that pervades the hands and feet and other parts of the human body, causing motivation of the bodily limbs or physical behaviour, such as bending, stretching, sitting, standing, walking, etc. This last element is called *angamangānusāri-vāyo*. These six kinds of gas or air is named 'the wind element'. It has the characteristic of stiffness and motivation, and is therefore, obviously not a female or a male.

As has been mentioned just now, there are twenty in the group of *pathavī*, twelve in the group of *āpo*, four in *tejo*, and six in *vāyo*—all totalling forty-two kinds. In brief, these are the Four principal Elements. The whole aggregate is called the "Body"—*rūpa*. From the point of view of those who have no Vipassanā insight knowledge, there is a wrong impression of their own body and that of others as "Self", and of being the figure of a female or a male.

For instance, let us take an example of a brick building. Although it is properly con-

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structed with the building materials, such as, bricks, sand, lime, cement, and timber, it is to be called a brick building. The building, however, does not stand as a solid piece of substance only. In it, there are a number of bricks one after another layer with an innumerable number of sand grains, cement powder of countless particles, and many timber scantlings. In the same way, this material body is an aggregate built up or compounded with numerous substances belonging to the four primary elements (*dhātu*).

Let's now dissect the forefinger. Take off the outer skin and nail that cover the top portion of the forefinger, and have a look at it. Is that outer skin and nail, a female or a male? Or, an individual, or a living entity, or a creature? It is nothing of that kind. In actual fact, it is only a *pathavīdhātu*, which has the characteristic of hardness or softness. Yes, it is. Below the skin (subcutaneous) is *avadha*, the bile. Unknowledgeable persons will not know about it. This is not the earth element, but *āpodhātu*. Therefore, just leave it aside. Flesh, nerves, bones and marrow will be found underneath the skin. All these are not the so-called human being. Neither is it a female nor a male. It is not a living entity or a sentient being. It is only the *pathavīdhātu* which has the characteristic of hardness, roughness and softness.

Besides, there is blood in that forefinger. There are also sweat, fatty substance, fluid and bile in small quantities. This indicates the nature of fluidity or liquidity—the *āpodhātu*. Then, there is also hotness and warmth or in other words, *tejodhātu* in the forefinger. *Vāyodhāta*, having the characteristics of stiffness and motivation, is present too. All these are neither female nor male. Only the nature of element exists. Other parts of the human body also have the same nature and composed of only four main *dhātus*. Therefore, it has been preached that this accumulation or aggregate of the four main elements, has been given the name of "body", the *rūpa*.

In the latter portion of this Sutta, it will be found that explanation is given of the similarity of *vipassanā ñāṇa* to the spade. When the big mound is dug with the spade of *vipassanā ñāṇa*, the four main elements of *dhātu* will be detected. If contemplation and noting is made on any part of the body, wherever touch is felt, the nature of hardness or roughness will be noticed. It is the earth element (*pathavīdhātu*). Hotness, warmth or cold will also be felt and noted. This is *tejodhātu*. Then, either stiffness, or stillness, inertia or propelling force will be found. This is *vāyodhātu*. Then also, wetness or dampness, or moulding, cleaving or oozing will be noticeable. These are *āpodhātu*. Hence, this material body

IT BEGINS FROM FINE PARTICLES OF FLUID MATTER

should be known distinguishingly as four groups functioning in four different ways.

IT BEGINS FROM FINE PARTICLES OF FLUID MATTER

Generally, people think that this *rūpa*, the material body is a solid mass. It is not so. It has gradually grown into a dimension of great magnitude from the stage of atom, smallest particles in which elements combined among themselves or with each other. It therefore bears the name of this material body which has been formed by the parents' semen, blood and sperms.

With the combination of the father's spermatozoa and mother's ovum, amniotic fluid is first formed. In this fluid (according to scriptures), three kinds of cells called *kāyadasaka*, *bhavadasaka* and *vutthudasaka* have sprung up due to *kamma*. These three cells and amniotic fluid are so minute that they are invisible to the naked eye. The minutest particles of dust seen in the sun's rays coming through the window, is called "atom". If an atom is splitted up into thirty-six units, each unit of proton is known as an 'electron'. Roughly speaking, the dimension of the amniotic fluid is about the size of the said electron.

This tiny particle of clear fluid slowly grows without being noticeable. After seven days, this clear fluid becomes a bit turbid, greasy bubble. Then, this bubble again gradually develops into a semi-liquid substance (protoplasm) something

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like a chilli-juice in the shape of a tiny piece of flesh after seven days. Then again, this tiny piece of flesh which is not rigid and which yields to the slightest pressure, becomes a firm tiny piece of round flesh after the next seven days. This little piece of flesh after expiry of another seven days, protrudes small and minute projections—Five in number. One tiny projection is to become the head; two for the two arms; and another for two legs. These five projections are called the five main branches.

Later on, it gradually develops into a fluid substance in the shape of a head, of the hands and feet and ultimately to become a body. On the seventy-seventh day, it is said that figures of eyes, ears, nose, and tongue appear. Thereafter, it is stated that the nutrition obtained from nourishing food slowly infiltrates into the body of the embryo infant in the womb, contributing to the needs for development of the body in the form of ferrous (iron), calcium and other elements essential to nutrition. The records of the medical scientists relating to the pregnancy and the development of foetus into a human form, are more accurate. The dhamma that was preached by the Buddha, the commentaries and Dighas only indicate roughly regarding this matter since it is not intended to give medical treatment and lend aid to the knowledge of medicine. I have so mentioned, simply because

THE BODY THAT IS DEVELOPED BY NUTRITIOUS FOOD

the records of medical scientists have been compiled complete with illustrations by photographs after practical observation, research and analysis for the purpose of medical treatment. However, for the purpose of contemplation and noting in the practice of meditation, it is not necessary to be particularly specific. Hence, in the Pāli Commentaries and Dīghas, only superficial treatment of the subject matter has been made giving only an approximation. After the development of this foetus for about seven months, or eight months or in some cases, nine months or even ten, a child is born into this world. That is why the name of the material body which comes into being from the parents' semen, blood, and ovum, has been described and preached as "*Mātā-pittikasambavassa.*"

THE BODY THAT IS DEVELOPED BY NUTRITIOUS FOOD OR NOURISHMENT

Next, this material body becomes developed because of food and nutriment. Therefore, it has been preached that *Odana kummīsūpacavassa*, because of food or nourishment, such as, rice and other vitamins which brings physical development, this material body—'*Cimassakavassa*', bears its very name—'*adhivacanam*'. Depending on mother's breast feeding after birth, it develops. From the time, food and other eatables can be taken, it has become developed because of the nourishment it has obtained. Some of the food taken

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by mouth, are consumed by the germs in the stomach. Some have formed into faeces while some become urine. Some have been burnt out by the bodily heat. Some have become nutrients and spread all over the body to become flesh, blood, etc. These have been mentioned in the texts of dhamma. In this regard, the physicians' findings and records are more precise and accurate. As nourishment is gained in this manner, the material body has grown up.

The degree of body development is measured in terms of the age of a person who, then, is said to have attained the age of two, five, ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty, or forty, fifty or sixty years, etc, which, of course, indicates the length of one's life. However, it is not the same young child's body that has turned into a figure of a grown-up. It is by bodily process that new and fresh formations of *rūpa* are continually taking place. For example, it resembles a seed that germinates, sprouts and then grows up into a plant or a tree, mainly relying on the nature elements of water and earth. Just imagine a seed of the banyan tree that has developed into a big tree with the passage of time. The sprout that has sprung up from the seed is NOT the seed. When it is grown up into a small plant, it is NOT a sprout. Again, when it becomes a big tree, it is NOT the young plant at all. In the same manner, physical substances in this

EMITTING SMOKE

material body are constantly undergoing a process of change, arising and passing away every moment. New formations of matter are occurring in place of old which are dissolving. It is just like running waters that are incessantly changing. As it could crumble and is prone to destruction, it is clearly subjected to the Law of Impermanence. Besides, in order to keep this material body clean and tidy, it has got to be always bathed, its face washed and cleansed and beautified with perfumery, etc. Sometimes, massaging has to be done, to repair this body. This material body being an aggregate of various elements, is liable to decay and destruction according to the Law of Impermanence. It is therefore called a mound or an ant-hill, which is identified with the material body in the manner stated above.

According to the Brahmā god, the big mound is nothing but a material body made up of an aggregate of the four *dhātus*, whose characteristics are as described in the foregoing.

EMITTING SMOKE

In reply to the question put up to the Lord Buddha as: "*kā rattam dhumāyanā*", i.e. "My Lord, what is the meaning of the expression which says 'it is emitting smoke'?", the Blessed One said, "*yam kho lhikkhu diva kammante ārabha rattam anuvitakketi anuvicareti, ayam rattam dhumāyanā.*"

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The meaning of the above answer in Pāli is: "With reference to the work or business to be performed during day time, it is reflected at night time". The expression 'emitting smoke when night falls' indicates "reflecting or imagining at night". In ancient times when Lord Buddha was living, people were not avaricious to the extreme. In those old days, people indulged themselves in business affairs only at day time. Exceptionally few people worked at night. At the present day as much as the people have more of greed, the field of business have also become expanded. That is the reason why they have got to work hard or toil both day and night. Works connected with industrial enterprise have to be performed round the clock for twenty-four hours. The above answer was given in accordance with the times when there was no work or activity to be carried out at night. It was also absurd to work at night time. For the said reason, what was to be done on the following day, had to be thought of or planned at night time. This is what is meant by "emitting smoke at night".

In this regard, if desired, it can be differentiated between good and bad smoke. What is meant by "good smoke" is something like reflecting that on the following day, one has got to go to school, or to the pagoda to worship, or to keep sabbath, or to give offerings of food,

EMITTING SMOKE

or to listen to the sermons, etc., etc. However, the fundamental idea behind this preaching or *desanā*, is to refer to the reflection made with a feeling of *loba* (greed), *dosa* (anger or hatred), and *moha* (delusion) relating to worldly affairs. So, if one has become deep in imagination in connection with the worldly affairs as impulsed by greed and anger, just remember: "I'm emitting smoke." Nevertheless, I cannot possibly force people in this mundane world "to shut out the bad smoke or deter them from emitting smoke". One may have to think seriously in connection with some kind of business which needs to be unavoidably performed. Otherwise, there is danger of the business enterprise or any undertaking getting into disaster or ruin. The main objective of this *desanā* would concern monks starting from Ashin Kumarakassapa and reaching down to all others. In fact, there is nothing special to be done by monks during day time for their own personal welfare. It is simply because of the presence of lay benefactors, both male and female, who are supporting the monks for their noble way of living by making generous offer of necessary requisites pertaining to priests. Early in the morning, monks can easily receive the offerings of food by just making a round for alms carrying their alms-bowls after putting on the robes. They have the robes ready to be donned and the monastery to reside. Such being the case, there is no need to worry and draw up

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a plan about their livelihood. Therefore, if ideas and thoughts come into their heads as to what they should do on the following day or day-after, etc., at night time, such thoughts must be rejected bearing in mind that these thoughts are merely "smoke". In the like manner, people who are meditating should endeavour to prevent the "smoke" from coming out.

EXPELLING BRIGHT FLAMES

The question raised was "*ka diva pajjalanā*", which means: "O, my Lord, what is it which says "bright flames are spurting out in the day time"? To this question, the Blessed One answered: "*yam kho bhikkhu rattam anuvitakketvā anuvicarettvā diva kammante payojetikāyena vācaya. Ayam diva pajjalanā.*"

The gist of the above Pāli passage is: "After reflection being made at night time, it is followed by action or deeds performed in person or by speech made, during day time. Performances during the day are "burning flames or blaze". What has been thought of at night time in regard to any kind of business to be performed, is carried out gradually at day time by deeds or by words. All that have been planned with a feeling of greed and anger at night are not only personally performed but also carried out or done by means of verbal instructions during the day. These are said to be "emitting flames

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during day time.” Moreover, in this regard, there is a strange mound. The nature of the “mound” is such that after investigating and hatching secret plans in day time, unfair opportunity is taken surreptitiously only at night when others have gone to bed. This kind of mound may be regarded as unnatural. Now that we have dealt with three problematic riddles.

BRAHMANA TEACHER

In response to the question as to what is meant by ‘Brahmana Teacher’, the answer given by the Blessed One was “*Brahmanotī kho bhikkhu tatthāgata suttam adhivacanam arahato sammāsambuddhasa.*”

The meaning of the Pāli phrase is:—The name of ‘Brahmana Teacher’ indicates and refers to the Blessed One, the Fully Enlightened One, the Most Exalted One—the Supreme Buddha who is worthy of high veneration by all beings—human, Devas and Brahmas alike and who is the Omniscient, rightly knowing the truth of all Dhamma analytically with his own wisdom and Supreme Intelligence like all his Enlightened predecessors. The ‘Brahmana Teacher’ personified Lord Buddha in as much as there is some sort of similarity in the way instructions were imparted. The similarity is that usually a Brahmana teacher had about five hundred pupils, and at

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the most he might have five, six or seven thousand. However, in the case of Buddha, the number of disciples were countless. These innumerable number of disciples or adherents were composed of all sentient beings including Devas and Brahmās apart from human beings. There are numerous beings in the world of sentient beings and right now in this Sāsanā, there are beings who will be liberated from *sattaloka* during the life time of Buddhas to come. The Buddha has been extolled as "*devamanussānam*", having been endowed with attributes of a great noble teacher of all human beings, Devas and Brahmās.

SUMEDĀ -- THE OUTSTANDING PUPIL

Then, relating to the question as to "who is the wise and well-educated pupil of outstanding ability?" i.e. "*ko Sumedo*", the Blessed One gave the reply as: "*Sumedoti kho bhikkhu sekhasattam bhikkhuno ādhivacanam*".

The meaning of this Pāli phrase is: "The name of the fully educated, wise and outstanding pupil." It impliedly refers to the Bhikkhu Yogī who is undergoing practical training and is presently practising *sīla* (moral precepts), *samādhi* (concentration to gain calmness) and *sikkhā* (higher morality or thought). A person of "*Sikkhā*" is one who has ability in the field of moral training and is indulging in meditation to gain *sīla*, *samādhi*

SUMEDA - THE OUTSTANDING PUPIL

and *paññā*. In this regard, “*sekkhā*” individual is one who is practising Vipassanā to gain insight knowledge. Moreover, it means ‘an outstanding pupil’, named “Sumedā”. The reason being the material body called the big mound which is made up of four main *dhātus* cannot ordinarily be put under post-mortem examination by merely achieving *sīla* and *samādhi*, or in other words, only with the instruments of *sīla* and *samādhi*. It can be operated only after the attainment of Vipassanā knowledge through a course of meditational training. Later, you will come to know how it was dug with the spade of *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. Only if resorted to the practice of Vipassanā, one could become a ‘*sekkhā*’ individual according to this Sutta. Then only, he would be regarded as a person of outstanding ability. When Vipassanā meditation is going to be practised, the attributes of morality (*sīla*) need be accomplished. *Samādhi* and Vipassanā knowledge will then automatically take place. Hence, a ‘*sekkhā*’ individual is one who is indulging in practice for the achievement of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. He is no other than the outstanding pupil.”

In short, “Mound or Ant-Hill” means the material body, the *rūpa*. “Smoke” means planning or imagining. “Burning bright flames” means action by deeds or words. “Teacher” refers to the Buddha. “Outstanding pupil” represents the meditating Yogī.

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If you wish to become an outstanding pupil of ability like "Sumedā", let us contemplate and note in a practical way. It is particularly meant for those who have not had experience in the practice of meditation.

The manner in which meditation practice is to be performed will have some bearing on the motto contained in the Ariyavāsa Sutta dhamma and it runs as follows:

"Satarakkhena cetasa samannāgato."

This means: "May you be fully accomplished with mindfulness as a protection." If fully accomplished with mindfulness, it would be tantamount to reaching the abode of Ariyā, that is, Noble Ones. At every moment of thought that arises, let it be protected by contemplating mindfulness. If equipped with this mindfulness, one is said to have been residing in the abode of Ariyā, properly guarded and secured. Every time formation of thought takes place, it must be contemplated and noted, and if it is so done, at every moment of noting, one is deemed to have reached the abode of Ariya, which thereby affords him protection from the danger of descending to the Nether World. If progress is made by gradually noting your mind, achievement of *ariya-magga* will be gained which will in turn provide adequate security or safeguard

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from all adversities and dangers of *Samsarā*. If mindfulness is contemplated on every formation of thought, even though *ariya magga* may not yet be attained, one will be well-guarded against the four Nether Worlds. In the event of death taking place while practising mindfulness, he will definitely escape landing in the four Nether Worlds. This constant mindfulness or vigilance on the arising of mental thoughts or consciousness is known as "*Ariyāvāsa*", the abode of Ariya.

"*Beware to contemplate and note on every occasion of phenomenal occurrence and be always vigilant*" is the motto I have given you. "Beware to contemplate and note on every occasion of phenomenal occurrence" means to make a mental note every time thought arises, and that is, at every time mental consciousness arises when seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and imagining, and let every such thought or mind that arises be noted. When consciousness arises on seeing a thing or an object, note what has been seen. So also, when mental awareness takes place at the time of hearing, the mind that knows the 'hearing' should be noted. Every mental activity must always be followed up with 'mindfulness'. Put this 'mindfulness' in every act of hearing, etc., etc. It is something like a person in convalescent stage, who will have to take a digestive pill or digestive enzyme whenever he has taken food which is not agree-

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able to him. It is to put mindfulness in noting every time seeing, hearing, contacting and knowing takes place arising out of the six sense-doors. This is said to be reaching the abode of Ariya, and it will give full protection against all dangers.

If you put in "mindfulness", not only mindfulness will take place, but also the energetic vigour or perseverance will be automatically included. This is *Sammāvāyama*, right exertion or effort. *Samādhi* also is embraced therein. Then, this is what is known as *Sammāsamādhi*. Consciousness with the right view is also included in it. This is *Sammāditthi*, the right view. Along with *Sammāditthi*, *Sammāsankappa*, right thought, also goes hand in hand. As for *Sammāvācā*, *Sammākamanta* and *Sammājīva*, which are *Sīla maggangas*, these have been fulfilled since the time of the observance of the precepts. All Noble Eight-fold *maggangas* or Path are therefore embraced. "Beware to contemplate and note on every occasion of phenomenal occurrence (including mental formations) and be always vigilant" refers to Ariyāvāsa dhamma in brief. If stated in terms of *Satipatthāna*, it is nothing but *Satipatthāna dhamma*. In the light of Buddha's preachings (*desanā*), called "*appamādena sammādetiṭṭha*", it is *appamāda dhamma*, i.e., vigilance or thoughtfulness.

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Every time consciousness arises, it should be followed up by mindfulness. Therefore, do not fail to note at every moment of seeing, or hearing, or smelling, or knowing the taste, or contacting, as "seeing, seeing", "hearing, hearing", "smelling, smelling, and in the case of knowing the taste, as "knowing, knowing"; and when contacting, as "touching, touching". While noting as "touching", it imbibes all bodily behaviour and movements. *Kāyānupassanā* – Satipatthāna dhamma, such as, "*gicchantovā gicchāmīti pajānāti*", etc., are also included therein. When walking, stiffness and bodily movements occur in all parts of the body which become involved in manoeuvring. These movements occur only after the elements in the body have been brushed and stimulated. *Kāya-viññāna* touches and knows. From there, consciousness arises as 'touching'. This feeling of touch brings awareness of being stiff. When stiffness takes place, awareness becomes very vivid. When bending too, note as "bending, bending". It is the consciousness of touch in respect of stiffness and of the bodily movements. The movements of the abdomen due to the pressure of the wind element should be noted as "rising", and "falling". Next, when imagining and planning, note as "imagining", and "planning". This is the routine in meditational exercise. However, for a beginner in the practice of meditation, it is not possible for him to follow up all of them while contemplating.

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Therefore, it is important that he should first contemplate and note on what is obvious.

It was mentioned as “*Yatthā pākadam vipassanā bhiniveso*”. It means that one can contemplate serially beginning from what is obvious. Generally, the bodily behaviour is more clearly manifested. Hence, the Commentaries say that contemplating and noting should start from the material body, the *rūpa*. One should begin contemplating from the more obvious *mahābhūta* – the primary four elements in the material body. From among the four main elements, one should contemplate starting from any one of these elements.

However, in as much as *Satipatthāna* has shown the manner of contemplating *vāyodhātu* as “*gicchanto vā gicchāmīti pajānāti*”, etc., it should be contemplated beginning from *vāyodhātu*, the element of air or wind. Therefore, when sitting or remaining still as at present, contemplate and note as “sitting, sitting,” Then, stiffness which is *vāyodhātu* will be known. In any case, if noting is done at ease as “sitting, sitting”, power of concentration will get the better of exertion or effort which may, therefore, become weak. Hence, while meditating in a sitting posture, instead of noting on one object, we have instructed to contemplate and note the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, which involves a

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variation caused by the wind element in pushing the belly up and down. All meditators have been instructed to note as such so that uniformity of method can be maintained among the Yogis when contemplating.

Therefore, when the abdomen rises, note as "rising", and when it falls, note as "falling". "Rising" and "falling" should be noted mentally, and not to be uttered by mouth. The fundamental point is to be aware of the phenomenon. This is the same as "contemplating", "noting", "knowing", and "retaining in memory" or "memorizing". Some have laid down certain rules such as, "It is not to be uttered that way; or "It should be uttered in that manner". These rules are unnecessary. Be it as it may, the essence of it is to know or become aware. If it is noted as "knowing, knowing", it amounts to knowing it. If it is noted as "contemplating, contemplating" it will also be known. If noting is done, it is known. If it is memorized and is noted, it is also known. If noted as "imagining", knowing is the result. All are the same and have the same effect, We just say "note", to be able to pronounce it with ease.

As such, when the abdomen is rising, note as "rising" from beginning to the end with awareness. In the same manner, "falling" should be noted and be aware of. Breathing should not

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be changed. It should be kept up with the same regular speed. It is not necessary to hold your breath so as to slow down your rate of breathing. Neither should special attention be paid to quicken your breathing. Neither is it necessary to breathe hard. Breathe as usual, and while in the process of noting, just follow through and note. "Contemplating Vipassanā" means not to contemplate the dhamma which is not yet in existence by invention or by introducing a novelty. It is meant only to be contemplated and noted serially the phenomena of things arising and disappearing in respect of the existing dhamma.

Therefore, it is merely necessary to contemplate and note in sequence as "rising" when the abdomen rises, and as "falling" when it falls. If the mind wanders while contemplating, the wandering mind should be noted. If it wanders, note as "wandering". If the mind wandering reaches a certain place, note as "reaching, reaching". If it plans and imagines, note as "planning" and "imagining", as the case may be. It is quite easy and not at all difficult. This mode of noting is *citānupassanā*, after which the usual exercise of noting as "rising" and "falling" should be reverted to. In the meantime, if stiffness, or hotness or pain, or ache becomes manifest, it should be noted. If there is stiffness, note as "stiff, stiff" with the mind fixed

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on the place where stiffness is felt. If the sensation of hotness occurs, note as "hot, hot" concentrating your mind on the place where hotness is felt. If pain is felt, note as "pain, pain". These are called *vedanānupassanā* mindfulness. After noting as such, just revert to the usual exercise of noting as "rising" and "falling". Next, when a sound is heard, note as "hearing, hearing", and then, revert to note as usual as "rising" and "falling". At one sitting, it is quite enough. However, when meditation is practised the whole day for a long time, "bending", "stretching", and other bodily movements should also be noted. Furthermore, other bodily behaviours must be noted too. All phenomena that arise or occur are to be noted. Noting done during the present meditational exercise at one sitting is merely an experiment in tasting the dhamma, just like tasting a bit of salt. It is not a long time. Just about two minutes for a short while. So, let's meditate for a brief period in order that we would become a wise and clever pupil.

There is one thing to be borne in mind before indulging in meditation, and that is: "*Addhā emāya patipodāya jarāmaranāmhā parimuccissāmi,*" as instructed in Visuddhi Commentary. This is, in essence, "I will bear in mind that by performing this practice, I will certainly be liberated from all woes, worries and miseries of this

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Samsarā, the round of continued existences, such as old age and death.”

In this world of human existence, if every thing goes smooth in the matter of one's own livelihood for subsistence, it would bring joy and happiness. Some even hum a tune while working. What could be expected as his earnings from his sweat and labour is just sufficient enough for a day's expense. If circumstances permit, he might receive remuneration to cover his living expenses for two or three days. Rare indeed is a person who will earn enough for ten days' expenditure for his living with one day's work. Surely, with one day's income, it would not be sufficient to meet the entire expenses for a year – far less for a life-time. If one could find enjoyment and sing a song while performing a task to earn money to cover his expenses for a day or two, will it not be happier for him to practise meditation so as to get himself liberated forever from the woes and worries of the *Samsarā*? It's worth not only singing a song but also taking part in an orchestra. It is spoken to encourage people to practise meditation with diligence and enthusiasm which will surely bring about happiness. This is what has been stated by the Commentators and not me. We may therefor, meditate just for two minutes in accordance with the instructions given. I'll take the timing,

EIGHT MAGGANGAS DURING ONE NOTING

EIGHT MAGGANGAS DURING ONE NOTING

Now, the time is up. Just two minutes. It is possible to note thirty (30) times in a minute. It could be even forty or fifty. Look! If you could note 30 times in a minute, it can be noted sixty (60) times in two minutes. At every noting or every time it is noted, eight *maggangas* are embraced. 'Eight *maggangas*' means: Firstly, does it not include exertion with care at every moment of noting? This exertion put in is known as *Sammāvāyama*. It is indeed, the right exertion. It is not the kind of exertion that is applied improperly. Then, at every moment of making a note, there is mindfulness. This is '*Sammāsati* – '*Sati*' means attentiveness or mindfulness. Every time it is noted, the mind gets fixed on the object of sensation. This is the right concentration called *Sammāsamādhi*. Therefore, we now have three *maggangas*, namely, *Sammāvāyama*, *Sammāsati*, and *Sammāsamādhi*.

Next, at every moment of noting, the mind that is noting proceeds gradually in advance as if taking a step forward. For example, if rising movement of the abdomen is noted as "rising", the mind that is noting rests on the act of 'rising'. Similarly, when the falling movement of the abdomen is noted, the mind that is noting will rest on the act of 'falling'. This occurrence is known as *Sammāsankappa*. Although *Sammāsankappa* is given the meaning of 'right thought',

in the course of making a note, it is not necessary to think or imagine for a long time. The mind that is noting is in the nature of advancing toward the sensation. Hence, it has been stated that it possesses the characteristic of what is called – “*abhiniropanalakkhanā*”. It is said that *Sampavutta* dhamma carries the sign of putting it on the sensation. This is, of course, *Sammā-sankappa*. Then, the right perception of the sense-object which has been noted is ‘*Sammāditthi*’. How it is rightly known may be mentioned thus: While noting as “rising”, it is perceived as having the characteristics of stiffness and mobility.

To become aware of the stiffness and of movement, is to know rightly the *vāyodhātu*, the element of wind. As a matter of fact, initially at the moment of such arising consciousness or awareness, no attachment or imagination takes place that it is a male, or female or an individual, or a living being, or “I”, or “He”, etc. It does not include any erroneous perception. If stiff sensation is felt, it is perceived or known as “stiffness”: If it becomes tense, the “tension” that arises is known, Knowing truly as such is called “*Sammāditthi*”. When the power of concentration becomes strengthened, the arising and dissolution of the phenomenal occurrences in its process from the beginning to the end, is clearly known. This brings realization of the

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nature of impermanence. If 'impermanence' is known, 'dukkha, and 'anatta' are also appreciated and realized. Knowing them at every moment of noting is *sammāditthi magganga*. *Sammāditthi* and *sammāsankappa* are the two *paññā maggangas* belonging to the wisdom group. These two, and three *sammāditthi maggangas*, if added together, come to five. These five *maggangas* are called *karaka magganga*. To complete the process involved in one noting, these five are working together in harmony. Every time when contemplation is made, these five are working in unison.

When these five are working together in combination, *sīla maggangas* automatically come into play. For amplification, it may be stated that morality or good conduct has been purified from the time of the observance of the precepts. It remains purified at the time of contemplating and noting the 'arising' and 'falling' of the abdomen. It may even have the chance to get more purified. In terms of its qualities, it embraces "*sammāvecī*", "*sammākaṇṭhī*" and "*sammājiṇṇā*". These three attributes are automatically fulfilled. When these three are combined together with five *karaka maggangas*, just already mentioned, it comes to a total of eight *maggangas*. When these constituents of eight *maggangas* are summed up, it is called *magga*, the Path.

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Magga—is the Path. The Path has many different kinds, quite a variety, such as, the Path leading to the village, to the town, to the monastery, to the pagoda, to the jungle, to the river port, etc. Just like worldly (*lokiya*) Paths, there are many different kinds of Path leading to Dhamma. Also, there are Paths that lead to the *niraya* (hell), *petā* (world of ghosts) and *tiric-channa* (animal world). The paths leading to the lower worlds are *akusala*, the path of vice, of sinful action and demerits. If you prefer you can follow any one of these evil paths. On the other hand, there are paths leading to the human world and the celestial world. These paths leading to the worlds of human beings and devas are *kusala*, the virtues such as, meritorious deeds of *dāna* (charitableness), *sīla* (morality or good conduct), etc. There is a path called *Samatha jhāna*, which leads to the Brahmā world. Should you desire to tread on these good and virtuous paths, you may do so. Among these different kinds of path, the path of *magga*, nay, the Noble Eightfold Path is the one leading to Nibbāna.

'Satipatthāna desanā says: "*nibbānassa sicchi-kiriyāya*", and that is, it is the one and only Path leading to the attainment of Nibbāna. Now that you have gained these *kusala* eight *maggangas* at least sixty (60) times within two minutes. Within such a brief moment you have

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covered sixty times of *maggangas*. If, for example, *ariyamagga* were to be achieved by exercising hundred times of *maggangas*, there would remain only about forty times to be exercised to reach *ariyamagga*. During the life time of Buddha, there were people who had reached *ariyamagga* stage within a brief moment while listening to the sermon of the Enlightened One. Anyone of you can aspire to gain such an achievement. Say, if by noting a thousand times you can reach that stage, only 940 times more to reach the desired destination. Just count as stated adding on and on. To-day, you are sixty steps nearer to Nibbāna by meditating as an experiment. When going outside or staying at home, if you could contemplate and note, every time chance permits, your own physical and mental behaviour, it would amount to developing eight *maggangas*. It is a real precious dhamma to be exercised daily. If you could do so, you will have gathered the seeds of your *kusala*, perfections, without any expense.

The fifteen riddles may be re-iterated as follows so that you may be able to refresh your memory.

Mound is the material body; Smoke, the imagination; Flames, the performance; Teacher, the Buddha; and Pupil, the Yogī.

Spade is the knowledge with which to dig the mound with exertion. Bolt is the Ignorance;

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the Toad, the anger; the road junction, the wrong belief; And these are for you to remember.

The water strainer is very similar to *nīvaranas* (hindrances). The crooked tortoise is the *khandha*; the *kāmā* is the wooden slab; *nandi*, the flesh; the divine dragon, an Arahāt.

And so, remember them all.

PART II

THE ONLY TEACHER

As has been stated earlier, the name "Brahmana Teacher" denotes the Supreme Buddha, the Omniscient. The Lord Buddha as the founder of the Buddhist religion has innumerable number of adherents. The community of monks are his disciples, and his devoted followers include Human beings, Devas and Brahmās. Buddha, the Enlightened One, possesses infinite and infallible knowledge. He has, after his attainment of the Enlightenment, imparted to all men and celestial beings the realization which possessed him. By so preaching the knowledge of Dhamma throughout his life time, he becomes the Saviour of mankind. What he had preached is the Truth which he himself, without anyone's aid, had acquired and understood. By adhering to the practices he had prescribed, men are redeemed from the miseries of *Samsarā* or Existence, and attain Nibbāna. Hence, in the nine glorious attributes with which he was endowed, the attribute of "*Sattādeva manussānam*" is included, and that means, for having benevolently shown to all human and celestial beings the way to peace and bliss of Nibbāna, they all look upon him as the Only beloved Master and Teacher.

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The qualities which such a teacher should possess are fundamentally to have the ability to prevent all beings from committing acts which will accrue no benefit and also from indulging in demeritorious deeds. He must also be able to dispense his knowledge of Dhamma with unbounded love and compassion for all mankind. An ordinary teacher may have the same kind of attributes. Nevertheless, the Buddha, who is a Teacher of the most outstanding ability, is capable of giving protection to countless generations of people throughout the *Samsarā*. He had preached and given admonition to mankind to avoid all vices, to refrain from doing bad deeds either in person or by word of mouth and to keep their thoughts free from evil. Buddha, in thus prohibiting mankind including Devas and Brahmās, who are not yet free from the bonds of *kīlesās*, has at his heart, *mettā* (loving kindness) and *karunā* (compassion).

With this feeling of deep compassion, the Buddha has prohibited all human and celestial beings from committing evil or immoral acts. Yet, all these beings in their own personal interest are bent upon killing and ill-treating others. I happened to remember an incident which occurred in my younger days. It was a case in which the son advised his mother to avoid killing and stealing. The mother then replied, "Oh, my dear son! In this human

A MONK - THE SON OF A MILLIONAIRE

world, one has got to do such acts unavoidably for one's own subsistence. It's impossible to abstain from doing so." What a pity? People usually think such sinful acts are permissible for the sake of one's own livelihood.

Nevertheless, the Buddha had forbade people to kill or illtreat, or steal, or rob others, being aware of the fact that such demeritorious acts, if committed, would bring about a series of dire consequences in the shape of sufferings throughout the continued life existences (*Samsarā*), as against one's own temporary welfare derived during a short period of one life's time. Buddha had, however, instructed us to do things which ought to be done, such as, to practise *sīla* or morality, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Enforcement of the rules of morality or good conduct would perhaps appear restrictive to some people who might consider it as being rather too drastic.

A MONK - THE SON OF A MILLIONAIRE

During the life time of Lord Buddha, a millionaire's son solicited a monk whom he revered and whose benefactor he was, in the following words: "Your Reverend Sir, I wish to escape from the pains, sufferings and misery of this *Samsarā*. I wish I could achieve Nibbāna, a state where all human passions and sufferings would become extinct. How should I conduct myself?" He was, therefore, asked to donate

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food, robes, etc., and also perform other acts of *kusalā*. After he had duly complied with this instruction, he again entreated the monk, saying: "I have made several kinds of donation and performed meritorious deeds, but have not yet found the dhamma which brings freedom from sufferings and misery". The monk then gave him further instructions to seek protection under the three Refuges and observe the five precepts. After observance of the five precepts, he still failed to find real happiness and get himself rid of the worldly sufferings. He therefore, approached the monk and said, "Your Reverend, I have truly and respectfully observed the five precepts, but have not yet become free from the woes and worries." Then, the monk instructed him once again to keep observance of the ten precepts. Despite these *kusala* practices, he had not gained complete emancipation from the world of miseries. In the last resort, the monk advised him to enter into priesthood.

When ordained a priest, ordinary layman's dress has to be discarded, and after shaving the hairs on the head and beard, the yellow robes have to be donned according to the Rules of *Vinaya*. Thereafter, having been ordained a priest, his own preceptor taught him the *Vinaya* rules. The senior monk Nissaya Sayādaw also imparted lessons to him relating to Sutta dham-

A MONK = THE SON OF A MILLIONAIRE

ma and Abhidhamma. Later, the priest was instructed to practise *kammatthāna* dhamma by indulging himself in Vipassanā meditation. When he met his spiritual teacher, he was imposed with so many restrictions and conditions relevant to the Code of Conduct for priests and Rules of Discipline called Vinaya that it had caused him to reflect, "Oh! It is so difficult. I have entered into priesthood to get rid of the miseries of *Samsarā*, but now I have found out the rules so restrictive and binding that there is hardly any room for me to make even a slightest move (i. e. no liberty of action). I've now been driven into a tight corner. Under such conditions, as it is impossible for me to remain in priesthood any longer, I would rather discard the yellow robes and revert to the role of an ordinary layman, and lead a worldly life striving as much as I can to follow the practice of alms-giving (charity) and observe *sila* (moral precepts), so as to get liberated from the sufferings and misery of *Samsarā*."

Lucky enough! Since this incident happened during the life time of the Lord Buddha, there was a saving factor. The spiritual teacher having heard of his change of mind, sent this monk to the Blessed One. After recounting as to what had taken place, the Blessed One asked him why he wanted to abandon the robes. He then respectfully replied: "I have so many things to

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remember and keep in mind as instructed by my spiritual teacher. Having been taught and made to understand the rules of Vinaya, I have become very much perturbed both mentally and physically, and I dare not even move at all. As the Rules of conduct and discipline are so restrictive, I've decided to abandon the robes." It appears that this monk had become worried and found it burdensome as he was under constant fear of breaking the rules of discipline and of inflicting damage to the progress of his concentration and Vipassanā insight knowledge.

On hearing his answer, the Blessed One encouraged him, saying, "Well, do not bother. I will give you only one thing to pay heed. If you can take care of it, there is nothing more to be cared for and take guard. The monk then inquired, "My Lord, what is it to be taken care of?"

The Buddha spoke to him thus: "You take care of your mind only. Could you do that?". To this question, the monk replied that he could. This monk probably had imagined that since only the mind had to be controlled and kept under watch, it would not be too numerous for him to be anxious of as in the case of observing Vinaya Rules and Code of conduct for priests in respect of sensations relating to *kammatthāna* practice. Numerically, as it is only ONE, he might have considered it easy to manage it. That is the reason

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why he had undertaken to comply. Then, the Blessed One gave him *cittānupassanā kammaṭṭhāna* in the following manner:

“*Suddasam suripuram, yatthakāmaniyātinam. Cittam rakkhettha medhāvī, cittam guttam sukhāvaham.*”

The meaning of the above stanza conveys that a wise man should always be vigilant of the very gentle mind which is inclined to dwell on any sensation that may arise. The mind which is capable of effectively guarding against *kilesās* from arising, has the quality of bringing one towards attainment of the bliss of *magga-phala Nibbāna*. Hence, *cittānupassanā-satipatthāna kammaṭṭhāna* dhamma has been prescribed. How nice would it be if I could elaborate on this Pali verse. However, as there are a number of fundamental points to be mentioned, I would rather proceed to explain further.

The said monk after practising contemplation on *cittānupassanā* dhamma concerning meditation based upon the essence of this verse, soon became an Arahant. In this regard, the main significant point which I want to stress is: “It is usually thought that the Rules of Conduct and Discipline are extremely rigid.” Moreover, as the mind should be prevented from wandering while practising Samatha-Vipassanā meditation, one might probably think that it is exceedingly restrictive.

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At one time, a monk was said to have delivered a sermon on Vipassanā meditation to his benefactor. The instruction was that the mind that occurs at every moment should be noted with consciousness. In the same manner, it should be mentally noted at every moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, touching, walking, moving, thinking, and imagining. It was taught that by contemplating and noting as such, Vipassanā or spiritual insight occurs. When preached as such, the reply given by the pupil was that he would be unable to contemplate since they were too numerous to be noted. When practising Vipassanā meditation, there should be no lapse. Also there is hardly any break or an interval. It is therefore often presumed that the practice of Vipassanā meditation is too rigid. This is the salient fact which I wish to lay emphasis on.

The Buddha had, however, instructed these practices so as to bring benefit to all mankind. If no effort is made to practise in the manner stated, there cannot be any hope to attain a stage whereby one could be sure of escaping from the four nether worlds. No matter *dāna* and *sīla* might have been completely fulfilled, under certain unfavourable circumstances before reaching the stage of *magga phala*, one may, in any one of the existences, descend to the four Nether World. There is cause for anxiety. To

get fully liberated from the four Nether World, and to escape forever from the miseries and sufferings of the *Samsarā*, the Buddha had taught us to perform the practices of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. It has been so instructed for the profit of all mankind including Devas and Brahmās who have their seeded *paramitas* (perfections) adequate enough to have faith in the three jewels of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha all throughout the period of the current *Sāsanā*, beginning from the life time of the Lord Buddha.

As expressed in the maxim: "*Buddho loke samuppanno, hitava sabbapaninam*", Buddha, who fully realized the four noble truths, had appeared to make available to all men the universal principles of Truth for the welfare of all beings. Buddha had so become in the interest of all beings, both human and celestial, but some people are unable to entertain faith in the Buddha. Those who do not have reverence for the Buddha are, of course, lacking in *paramita*. They may therefore be regarded as unfortunate. To cite an example, only those who are endowed with the gift of power and glory, will come to possess precious articles, property and wealth because of their *paramitas*. In the same way, only those who have the *paramitas* will have the chance of paying homage to the Buddha.

To put it in another way, it is similar to a case where though nourishing food are available

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to all people for their consumption with relish, a person who has stomach trouble, cannot eat them and find enjoyment. He is, therefore, considered unfortunate. Buddha had his unbounded love and compassion equally for all beings. He had offered the knowledge of the dhamma to all for their welfare. He is, therefore, the Teacher of all mankind, Devas and Brahmās. As such, there is only some kind of similarity between the Brahmana teacher and the Lord Buddha. That is why the motto has stated that Brahmana teacher means our Lord Buddha.

“The pupil means the meditating Yogi”, and that is, one who is practising meditation for achievement of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Now that I have already explained five problems.

THE WEAPON OF SPADE

In reply to the question raised by Ashin Kumārakassapa relating to the problem which runs: “What is meant by the weapon of spade?”, Buddha had answered, “*Satthantikho bhikkhu ariya-
yetam pannaya ādhivacanam.*”

The meaning of the above answer in Pāli is that the name of the weapon – the spade, is the noble spiritual knowledge, which is but the knowledge of Vipassanā and *ariyamagga*. “Spade”, of course, represents “knowledge” or “wisdom”. If the big mound is to be dug, it cannot be done by mere hand alone. It must be dug by

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using a spade or a sharp-edged iron rod. The spade is the most effective or best tool. Hence, in the Commentary, it has been mentioned as the 'spade' (Kuddala). Just as it would require a spade to dig the mound, the tool of knowledge is essential so as to distinguish what is in this material body called the mound. In the Commentary, the kind of knowledge is ordinarily described as *lokiya* (worldly) and *lokuttarā* (spiritual). However, if the means to be employed falls within the worldly knowledge, the tool of Vipassanā knowledge will have to be used for distinguishing it. Therefore, it should be noted that the mound should be dug with the spade of Vipassanā knowledge or insight-wisdom.

Ordinary worldlings usually think that this material body is one solid mass. The material body resembles the standing mound that has existed before it is dug or excavated. Whenever a Yogī contemplates and keeps watch on his bodily behaviours every time they occur or respond to the sense of touch, they are noted continuously as "walking, or standing, or sitting, or touching, or sleeping, or stretching, or bending etc., and it will be found in four different sensations, namely, rigidity or roughness, hotness or cold, stiffness or motivation, or moulding into shape (sticky) or liquidity (oozing). This is similar to the digging out of a piece of earth separated in parts from the mound every time

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it is dug and removed with the spade. Yes, indeed. This material body will become distinguishingly known in separate parts at every time it is noted. It is also distinguishingly known by knowledge or wisdom. Do concentrate and note as "walking, walking", whenever you walk, or as "lifting", "stepping", and "putting down".

If it is accordingly noted fixedly as much as concentration gets strengthened, the physical phenomena will be distinguishingly known. Even the nature of *vāyodhātu*, the element of air or wind, such as, stiffness and movement of the body falling out in pieces in the course of walking, will be clearly noticed. There is no longer a solid mass. When stiffness is felt, only the nature of stiffness is separately known, and what is found is only the nature of wind element. Moreover, every time noting is done, the phenomenal nature of bodily behaviour will be noticed as falling out in distinct parts. That is why the knowledge gained through contemplation and noting is said to be like the sharp edge of the spade. Every time the mound is struck with the spade, just as the earth is turned into pieces, so also, every time contemplation and noting is made, the material body will be noticed do have fallen into pieces, or rather decay and decomposition.

As it is, let us reflect it with the knowledge of imagination. Take the case of hairs and

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think of them. The hairs are the element of earth which signifies roughness and solidity. These are obviously not an individual nor a living entity. Therefore, hairs on the head will have been noticed through contemplation as splitting up into distinct minute particles. Next, reflecting the hairs on the body, they are the earth element and not an individual or a living being. These too will be found to have fallen apart. Again, if the toe and finger nails are reflected by Vipassanā insight knowledge, they too are the element of earth (*pathavī*) and not a living entity. Let's consider and reflect the teeth. They represent the nature of hardness – an element of earth. Neither do they constitute a being or a male or a female. Look at the skin, flesh, veins, bones, marrow, blood, intestine, liver, lungs, etc., etc. and then reflect on them. All are by nature elements, and are not a living substance. This is similar to the mound that has broken into pieces part by part. The material body is likewise falling into minute pieces in all its components. That is why knowledge which brings consciousness or awareness by the process of contemplating and noting is likened to the sharp edge of a spade. The motto being: *“What is meant by a spade? It is the knowledge that is contemplating with awareness.”*

In response to the question put as “My Lord, what is meant by ‘digging repeatedly’?”, i.e.

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“*Kim abhikkhanam*”, the Blessed One gave the answer as described below:

“*Abhikkhanamti kho bhikkhu vīriyārambhassattam adhivacanam*”

This means: “O Monk Kassapa! the expression ‘digging repeatedly’ without a stop denotes the relentless effort or exertion to be put in. ‘Digging repeatedly’ conveys the same meaning as “continuous and unremitting application of effort to be able to contemplate and note ceaselessly.” When digging with the spade, it is necessary to hold the spade firmly. Likewise, when contemplation is made, it should be carried out with constant application of utmost endeavour. Therefore, exertion is to be made continuously without relaxing one’s own effort every time contemplation and noting is made as “rising and falling” or “sitting” or “touching”, or “seeing”, or “hearing”, or “bending”, or “stretching”, etc. If the efforts become slack, indolence with creep in, causing to weaken the power of concentration and noting. This “exertion” called *Sammāvāyama* is extremely important. If stated in terms of *Sammappadhānam*, there are four kinds of exertion, viz: exertion to prevent arising sinful conditions; exertion to put away sinful states already existing; exertion to produce meritorious states not yet in existence; and exertion to retain or keep in tact meritorious conditions already existing. Hence, with

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the right exertion, *akusala* (demerits) that have occurred previously can be rejected and also that no new *akusala* will have the opportunity to occur. Then, *vipassanā kusala* which have not yet existed will be gained at every moment of contemplating and noting. It therefore means that exertion is being made to achieve *vipassanā-magga kūsala*. Every time it is noted, not only *kusala* or merits that have already existed will remain as they are, but also *vipassanā kusala* will occur again and again. This 'exertion' called *Sammā-vāyāma* is, therefore, really very similar to "digging with the spade repeatedly", the motto being: "What is meant by 'digging'? It is the unfailing effort that is constantly put in."

Next, we have come to the "bolt". When distinguished with the help of the sharp edge of the spade, there appears the door "bolt", i.e., a wooden bar for fastening the door. The question then asked was: "What is the *langhī* — the bolt?". The Buddha's answer was "*Langhiti kho bhikkhu avijjavetam adhivacanam*".

The above answer may be explained as: "O, Monk Kassapa! the name 'door bolt' is '*avijjā*' which does not understand the method of *kammatthāna* meditation. '*Avijjā*' is of different kinds according to varying circumstances, e.g. the *avijjā*, which should be rejected by *Vipassanā* and by applying the knowledge of *ariyamagga*. This '*avijjā*' is the ignorance of the Four Noble

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Truths. The *avijjā* which is relevant to the present case does not come up to that level (grade). It is the *avijjā*, the ignorance, that should be rejected by *sutamaya* knowledge and *ceindamaya* knowledge. It is mere ignorance of the method of *kammatthāna*.

If the method of *kammatthāna* is not understood, practice of meditation cannot be exercised. Just like a person who does not know how to cook rice, or, how to plough in cultivating a plot of land without the necessary guidance of an instructor. I would like to amplify it since the method is rather important.

THE METHOD IS IMPORTANT OR SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METHOD

Bodhisatta, Prince Siddhartha, had abandoned the worldly pleasures and went to a forest retreat in search of the Truth, which is the way to extinguish craving, the cause of suffering in this life and rebirth on the Wheel. In age, he was then only twenty-nine. He was married at sixteen to Yasodarā Devī and had for a period of thirteen years lived in comfort and luxury amidst gaiety, pomp and splendour as a Royal Prince. While thus indulging in sensuous delights, he saw in the course of his chariot rides, the four *nimittas* (signs or omen), namely, an old man, then a sick man, then a dead man, and finally, a recluse with shaven head and a

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tattered yellow robe. On his return to the palace, deeply pondering, he revolted from sensual pleasures wishing to escape from the woes and worries of this world of sufferings, and with this noble thought which crystallized into a resolve to save not only himself but all mankind from birth, he left the grand palace in the silence of the night and went forth into a homeless life in search of true Dhamma. When he left, he had not a bit of experience whatsoever or knowledge of the way to free himself from the bondage of human passions and lust which led one to rebirths, old age, sickness and death.

After his arrival at the forest, he started to lead the life of an ascetic, and in the course of his search for Dhamma, heard about a noted sage by the name of Ālāra Kālāma. The great ascetic Ālāra was then teaching his three-hundred disciples the method of meditation at a Centre in the neighbourhood of Vesālī, a town in the state of Vijjī. This sage Ālāra fully possessed seven out of eight qualities of *Samāpatti*, i.e. except the attribute of *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*, the state of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, induced by the ecstatic meditation. Wishing to study under the sage Ālāra with whom he met, he said, "Friend Ālāra, I wish I could stay with you and learn the method of meditation." Ālāra replied, "My friend Gotama, our

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method of meditation is extremely fine. If a person of great intelligence like you, Gotama, exercises the practice of meditation, you will surely gain all the knowledge known to the teacher. This method of dhamma is indeed impressively superb.”

It is essential that the pupil should know the dhamma known and possessed by the teacher. Or else, the dhamma which the pupil might have acquired can go off at a tangent and it cannot be rest assured as perfectly true. If the pupil is not aware of the real quality of his teacher's knowledge, the pupil might wrongly think that the teacher is endowed with powers which are mistakenly believed to be surprisingly miraculous. Having believed that the teacher is equipped with supernatural powers, the pupil would revere and rely upon the teacher for the derivation of benefits from the miraculous powers, which the teacher does not in fact actually possess. Some of them even tried to procure a philosopher's stone, etc. This is ridiculous. There are a number of such instances at the present day.

Similar instances can be found in the field of religious affairs. Outside the domain of Buddha Sāsana in other religions, there are quite a number of such beliefs. Of course, the blind faiths have been entertained by such superstitious persons as handed down to them from their ancestors traditionally. This appears unsatisfactory.

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Our Buddha's Dhamma is perfectly logical. It can be achieved if it is personally pursued and practised earnestly. It is not the dhamma that is only known and can be achieved by the Buddha. Nor is it the knowledge exclusively within the reach of Ashin Sariputtrā and Ashin Mogallāna, or the noble Arahats. It is within the reach of all, if they truly and rightly practised. It is something like tasting the salt by anyone who will undoubtedly come to know its taste. Likewise, the statement made by the sage Ālāra to let the other know what he had realized is worthy of commendation. That is the reason why Bodhisatta had accepted the method with pleasure and had practised assiduously. Not long afterwards, he attained all seven endowments of *somapatti* as had been realized by the sage Ālāra. After his attainment, Bodhisatta saw Ālāra and explained what he had achieved and how he had reached the state of *ākincannāyatana*. Revealing his achievement, he asked Ālāra whether the nature of his attainment was the same kind of dhamma that the former had realized. Ālāra answered that it was so and expressed his surprise that he, Gotama, had achieved it in so short a time and that his talented wisdom was indeed marvellous. He then willingly invited Gotama saying that he would put him on equal status with him and delegate to him the task of guiding half of the number of his followers, as a group leader and teacher, while he himself

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would take responsibility for the other half of one hundred and fifty disciples Gotama stayed for some time, may be for a few days, at Ālāra's meditation Centre but found no answer to his heart's imperious demand. He reflected that the dhamma which he had acquired was not the doctrine that would liberate him from the miseries of old age, sickness and death. After death, it would only cause one to reach the plane of *ākincannāyatana*. This is the *Arupabrahmaloka*, the world of formless Brahmas. It is a kind of dhamma that cannot be investigated and known by modern scientific methods. Therefore, if it is considered that this concept is not in agreement with science, the best thing would be to disregard it as unbelievable. Knowledge of modern science can only be applied to the material form, *rūpa*, and not the state of immateriality. The Abode where only mind exists or where only consciousness dwells without the material form is pretty strange.

The life span in the Sphere of Nothingness runs up to sixty-thousand world cycles (*kappas*). One *kappa* alone is a period of immense duration. Even in this *kappa*, four Buddhas have appeared, and the fifth Metteya Buddha has yet to appear. Then again, when this life period has ended, a Brahma on his death will be reverted either to the human world or to devaloka. The cycle of life existence will therefore go on

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ceaselessly, and if he is lucky to have the opportunity of befriending men of virtue, he may continue to be reborn in the world of humans or devas by virtue of his performance of good deeds. On the other hand, if he happens to fall into bad company, he will have no chance of gaining merits and guidance to a right Path. The consequential effect will be that he will sink to one of the four nether worlds after his death for having believed in heresy and committed demeritorious acts.

Reflecting the consequences which he could derive from Ālāra's dhamma, Bodhisatta left the former, the sage Ālāra, and went off in search of a new dhamma. He later heard about a new sage by the name of Rama who was famous for his accomplishment of all the eight attributes of *samāpatti*. He lived in a forest attended by a group of pupils, seven-hundred in number in the district of Rājagriha within the province of Magadha. Bodhisatta therefore made his way to Udaka, a son-pupil of Rama and said "Friend Udaka, I would like to study and practise your method of dhamma". Thereupon, Udaka after explaining to him the noble qualities of the dhamma, gave him the method. On resorting to the method given, he soon developed progressive insight knowledge of the dhamma and attained *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna*. Having appreciated Bodhisatta's attainments,

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Udaka, being merely a pupil of Rāma, set Bodhisatta up as his own teacher, while he himself assumed the second place as a pupil. At that time, it appears that the famous said Rāma was probably not alive. Bodhisatta, the would-be Buddha, then reflected as in the case of his first experience with Ālāra that the acquisition of the knowledge of *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna* would only bring him the same consequences as before causing him to land in the Brahmā heaven, i.e. the state of immateriality, a formless state whose life span extends to eighty-four thousand world cycles. On expiry of its life span in that abode, rebirths will again take place, without being able to escape from the rounds of existence (*samsarā*), unliberated from the sufferings of old age, sickness and death. He therefore, forsook this dhamma and again proceeded his journey in search of the Truth.

Sammāsambuddha, the All Enlightened One who rightly and thoroughly knows the Four Noble Truths by his own personal effort and by discovery with his Supreme wisdom without anyone's aid or guidance. Bodhisatta passed through the country of Magadha to the town of Uruvela, and there settled down in a grove of trees taking his seat under a banyan (Bo) tree, and by putting his utmost endeavour in the practice of meditation, attained *pubbentvāsanānam*, the faculty of knowing all about his own and others' former

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states of existence. Later, at midnight he practised with his own insight wisdom and achieved *dibbacakkhu*, the power of supernatural vision. In the latter watch of the night, after reflecting on *paticcasamuppāda* dhamma, the Chain of causation or the Law of Dependent Origination – which sums up the principal causes of existence, he continued to contemplate on the arising and ceasing of the five aggregates of grasping “*upādānakkhandhā*” which led him progressively to the four *ariyamagga ñāṇa*, knowledge pertaining to the Holy Paths, eventually reaching the stage of full Enlightenment, and becoming the Omniscient the Supreme Buddha.

Having become a fully Enlightened One, he spent seven days each at seven different places enjoying the fruits of *vimutti sukha* – (Arahatship), with his mind completely emancipated, spending the days in various degrees of ecstatic meditation. On the fiftieth day, he considered to whom he should first deliver the Doctrine and chose the persons who would speedily comprehend the dhamma.

It is most appropriate to make the listening audience quickly understand in delivering the first sermon. Also in the case of teaching lessons, it is important to get the attendance of good students who have aptitude. If the first batch of students are well taught and able to speedily grasp the knowledge imparted, the

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teacher gets a good name. In the monastic schools too, if they have outstanding students who have found success in the examination, the monastery concerned gains popularity and earns a good reputation. In the same way, the meditation centres need obtain meditators who have good faith, zeal, industry and intelligence. Then only, with the right method of teaching, the meditation centre will have a good name. If such meditators make progressive strides in the practice of meditation, it will give stimulus to others as well to indulge in meditation.

As such, the Buddha had reflected to whom he should preach his first sermon. On reflection being made, his earliest *guru*, teacher, came into his mind. "This sage had been cleansed of the impurities of his mind and had got rid of the dirt of *kllesas* (defilements) with his accomplishment of the *Samāpatti*. He was also honest. If he were to listen to my teaching, he would quickly grasp the Special Dhamma." While thus considering his first teacher Ālāra, a deity appeared and addressed him, "My Lord; Ālāra had passed away seven days ago." The deity knows the worldly mind and not the spiritual mind. Through the exercise of his knowledge of supernatural vision, Buddha came to know that Ālāra had indeed expired seven days ago, and had reached the Brahmā heaven of

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ākincaññāyatana, a formless abode. At this abode, there is an absence of material body. Only the mind exists. Since it is devoid of any materiality, there are no eyes and ears too and therefore, had no sense of hearing the dhamma which the Buddha would preach. If he were lucky enough to remain alive in the human world, he would have attained the Special dhamma. He had but missed this great opportunity, and thereby suffered a tremendous loss so much so that he would have to remain in that abode for a life-span of sixty-thousand world cycles. After his demise from there, he would descend to the human world. There will then be no Buddha, and he would have no chance of hearing the Dhamma. He would therefore be deprived of the opportunity to achieve *magga-phala*. If, under unavoidable circumstances, he has committed evil deeds, he can go down to the nether worlds. Ālāra had thus missed the golden opportunity to hear the Buddha's First Sermon by a margin of only seven days. It is indeed an irremediable loss. The Buddha realizing this fact, bemoaned, "*Mahājaniyo Alāro Kālamo.*", which means that the hermit Ālāra of the Kalāma descent had suffered tremendous loss. Judging this incident, one should take lesson from it and take up meditation practice before death comes upon him. It may come at any moment. The significant point, however, is, if there is no method as to how meditation should be practised, meditation exer-

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cise cannot be fruitfully performed. This great hermit Ālāra was not aware of the fact that he could achieve *vipassanā ñāṇa* by means of contemplation and noting the phenomenal nature of, *rūpa* and *nāma*. This method could only be known when a Buddha had appeared. The Buddha had then to think of preaching his First Sermon to *Udaka*. Then, realizing that this hermit too had passed away in the first watch of the previous night, the Blessed One lamented, “*Mahājaniyo Udaka Rāmaputto.*” In fact, *Udaka* suffered worse than *Ālāra* for having very narrowly missed his extremely rare chance of hearing the Buddha’s Sermon, which would, if he were alive, surely liberate him from the bonds of *Kilesās*, and the consequential rounds of existence.

It was therefore stated that ignorance – *āvijjā*, which blinded a person from realizing the method of meditation was similar to the ‘bolt’ which firmly fastened the door. If a person is debarred from getting out of doors, he cannot see the light of the day outside. In the same way, if the method of practising *Vipassanā* is not understood, much as he may wish to meditate, he cannot do so thereby will miss his opportunity to eventually attain *magga-phala-Nibbana*. This explains the meaning of the “door bolt” which symbolizes “Ignorance” of the method of practising meditation.

LEDI SAYĀDAWPAYAGYI

The Buddha had removed the "bolt" and opened the door for the sake of humanity by means of the method of vipassanā meditation. Yet, as there are still many people who have either no faith in or not yet understood the dhamma, I have to elucidate it. I have preached the dhamma to make them meditate and contemplate on all phenomena of *rūpa* and *nāma* every time they occur at the six sense-doors. If so contemplated and noted, mindfulness, concentration and insight knowledge will be gained. A considerable number of people have already practised but there are still quite a number who have not yet taken up meditation. Before the "bolt" is put back again to close the door by someone, it is essential that one should take care to keep the door open. I have kept the door open by removing the door-bolt and have instructed the people as much as I could, urging them to contemplate and note the arising phenomena of matter and mind, and in particular to note as "walking", "walking", while you walk.

LEDI SAYĀDAWPAYAGYI

THE PIONEER IN EXPOUNDING VIPASSANĀ DHAMMA

As far as Burma is concerned, Ledi Sayādawpayagyi of Monywā town had first and foremost expounded the Vipassanā dhamma. Then came Monhyin Sayādawpayagyi following second in expounding that dhamma. We came third

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following the steps of the eminent Sayādawgyis just like picking up the remnants of paddy crops that have dropped out while harvesting and reaping, and as such, it is a very easy job. The exposition of that dhamma by Ledi Sayādawpayagyi can be found in what is known as the Text on "Anatta Dipanī". To make it more precise as contained in the original text, I have taken out an extract, and this I will read out.

"In a walking posture, every time a step is taken, the mind should be rivetted on the foot and walk, noting as "I walk" "I walk". Not a single step should be made without being mindful." This is how Ledi Sayādawpayagyi had expounded. This Text of Dhamma known as "Anatta Dipanī" was written in the year 1263 B.E. It was long time ago. We were not yet even born in the year 1263 B.E. We had to follow up that Sayādawpayagyi's method of exposition. It was also possible to do so not because of our ability but because we learnt this method from Mūla Mingun Jetavum Sayādawpayagyi. Hence, we have set forth clearly as "*Gicchantova gicchamiti pajanati*", according to the Pāli scriptures, and this is the instruction given at the outset to contemplate and note every time a step is made in the act of walking.

According to the rules of Pāli Grammar, there are three kinds as: "*amhayoga*", "*tumhayoga*", and "*namayoga*". If it is said "*gicchāmi*" using a per-

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sonal pronoun, though the particle “*aham*” is omitted, the word “I or Myself” will have to be inserted. If it is stated as “*gicchasi*”, though the word “*tvam*” i.e. “thou or you” is not included, it will have to be inserted and translated in Burmese as “you walk”. If however, it is written or spoken as “*gicchati*” using *namayoga*, another matter or subject will have to be inserted and translated such as, “he walks”, “the mind goes”, “the body moves”, etc. as may be required, with the exception of the word “I” or “you”. Hence, the word “*gicchāmi*” used conjunctively with “*amhayoga*”, is to be translated as “*aham*” – “I”; “*gicchāmi*” – “walk”, and in conformity with this Pāli grammatical rule, Ledi Sayādawpayagyī had stated as “I walk”, “I walk”, with a rejoinder that “the mind should be rivetted on the foot, and walk.”

In this expression, emphasis has been laid on “should be rivetted on the foot”, because the movement of the foot is the most obvious manifestation. Movements of other parts of the body can be contemplated, if it is desirable. Next, the instruction “*not a single step should be made without being mindful*”, is really precise and strictly worded. The Sayādawpayāgyī had particularly let the ‘bolt’ removed and kept the door open. Despite the fact that the door has been opened and the clear exposition given, a text of dhamma, published about four years ago from

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Syriam (a town on the other side of the Rangoon river), which is notorious for its villainous trait of villification or throwing mud, put the bolt back and closed the door that was opened by the Ledī Sayādawpayagyi. It was critical of the instructions given as "I walk", "I walk", saying that it was wrong and should not be contemplated as such because "the *paññā* ' I ' " had been included.

I am, however, supporting the Ledī Sayādawpayagyi and keeping the door open. I have explained about it in the Ariyāvāsa Sutta, simply because if I had remained complacent or connived at it, I would be found guilty from the point of view of the Buddha's doctrine, or rather, I would be reprimanded by the Buddha, if he were alive.

BUDDHA'S REPROBATION

During the life time of the Buddha with reference to "*nirodhasamāpatti*", i.e. attainment of cessation of consciousness and feeling, Ashin Sāriputtrā had preached that a monk who is accomplished with the attributes of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* (morality, concentration and wisdom), might probably become a Brahmā called "*manomayakāya*" which is caused by the Mind, though during his life-term he may not have attained Arahathship. Lāludāyī, an ordinary monk, raised objection to this point of preaching. The said

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monk was a fault-finding critic who neither understood the Scriptures (*pariyatti*), nor had any experience in practical aspect of meditation (*patipatti*). Ashin Sāriputtrā stressed this point of view for the second time saying that it was possible. The monk, however, repeated his argument and objected. Ashin Sāriputtrā again elucidated it for the third time only to meet with rebuff. During the controversy, none of the intellectual members of the audience present on the occasion participated and spoke in support of Ashin Sāriputtrā.

Under such circumstances, Ashin Sāriputtrā brought the matter up to the Lord Buddha and recounted the incidence that had taken place between him and the said monk. Even in the presence of the Buddha, the monk Lālundāyī remained adamant raising objection to the statement made by Ashin Sāriputtrā for three times in succession. Ashin Sāriputtrā then eventually remained mute. Thereupon, the Blessed One bemoaned the prevailing state of affairs and expressed his disapproval uttering "*atthi nāma Anandā theram vihesiyāminam ajcupakkhissatha.*"

The gist of this admonition is that: Buddha uttered in disappointment reprimanding Ānandā for the pitiable state and for remaining complacent without intervening the brazen act of maltreating an eminent Thera in their presence. This utterance was in fact a reproof or a cen-

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sure aimed at all the priests present at the assembly though it was primarily addressed to Ānandā. In other words, Buddha reprimanded that such an undesirable misbehaviour should not have been connived at without lending support to the party who was on the right by anyone of the most intelligent and wise monks in whose presence a nonentity like Lāludāyī was frivolously and falsely objecting a true statement uttered by a very noble and eminent Thera like Sāriputtrā. This indeed is a frightful admonition. Ashin Ānandā was so shaken with fear that he requested the audience that in future if there was anything to be said in the presence of the Buddha, Ashin Upavana must first be apprised of. It is the responsibility of all wise men to endorse what is true. Realizing this burden of responsibility, I had to explain relating to the criticism made against Ledi Sayādawgyi, in the Ariyāvāsa Sutta Dhamma.

In the discourse delivered by Ashin Sāriputtrā, the correct meaning of the expression "*manomaya*" is "*rūpabrahmaloka*", that is, the world of corporeal Brahmās, caused by *jhāna* or the Jhanic state of mind. On the other hand, What Lāludāyī thought was that "*arūpaloka*", the world of formless Brahmās, was caused by the mind—"*manomaya*." It is clear that he had caused annoyance to Sāriputtrā without having any knowledge of the dhamma and that he was

BUDDHA'S REPROBATION

unable to substantiate his statement of objection. This is alarming. I shall elucidate further.

The term "*manomaya*" indicates holy personages as Anāgāmis (Non-returners) and Arahats who have reached the abode of *Suddhavāsarūpabrahmā*, springing from the Jhanic mind. Such Anāgāmis and Arahats can absorb themselves in *nirodhasamāpatti*. Lāludāyī, however wrongly imagined that having sprung from the mind – "*manomaya*", it was erroneously considered to be a formless state, i.e. *arūpabrahmā* abode, where the inhabitants have no bodily form but are mere effulgences endowed with intelligence. *Nirodhasamāpatti* does not usually happen in the abode of *arūpabrahmā*. For that reason he had objected to it and expressed his opinion that it was absurd.

If Ledi Sayādawpayagyi were still alive, he would subdue the arising heretical view and then, open the door by removing the bolt. I have mentioned about it in support of the Sayādawpayagyi in the Ariyāvāsa dhamma because it concerns us despite the fact that the Sayādawpayagyi was now dead and gone. I had also elucidated and supported in that Sutta what the Sayādawpayagyi had stated giving direct translation in Burmese as "I walk" for the Pāli word "*gicchāmi*" drawn from the *desanā* – "*gicchantovā gicchāmiti pajānāti*". If it is commented upon as wrong, it would amount to rejecting the *desanā* (preachings) in Pali.

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KEEP THE DOOR-BOLT OPEN

I have, therefore, been preaching to all and sundry to contemplate and note as "walking" while walking, etc. According to the fundamentals of mindfulness of the body – "*kāyānupassanā*", all bodily behaviours should be similarly contemplated. The same method of contemplation should be adhered to in respect of *cittānupassanā*, *vedanānupāssanā* and *dhammānupassanā*, and this has been explained according to the Satipatthāna Pāli. This is how the door-bolt is opened to gain egress from *Samsarā*. You all may or may not wish to escape from the fetters of this *Samsarā* but if at all you wish to be desirous of finding a way out of this mesh, you may not be able to find an exit in case some miscreant attempts to close the door-bolt. You need special care and attention in this regard.

During the life time of Lord Buddha, such an incident had happened inspite of the fact that the Buddha had kept the door-bolt open. The act of closing the door was committed by the great Mara, the evil one. At the time while female Arahats were temporarily residing at Āndha forest retreat, Mara appeared and said, "Hey! what are you all doing? There is no such thing as Nibbāna whereby you can escape from the deep ocean of whirlpool continued existences – '*samsarā*'. It is no use meditating, etc."

KEEP THE DOOR-BOLT OPEN

This is a wicked attempt to put back the bolt for closing the door.

The Mara appeared before a Bhikkhunī by the name of Soma and enticed her saying:

“Yam tam esīti pattabbham, thanam dhurabhisambhavum. Na tam dvimgula paññāya, sakkā pappotu mitthiyā.”

It means that Nibbāna is the dhamma that can be achieved only by the highly noble and most eminent Theras and not by females with meagre knowledge or wisdom. In short, it is to say, “How could you-females – with mere scanty knowledge or poor wisdom gain Nibbāna? You couldn’t.” This amounts to closing the door with the bolt. It was however lucky that Mara could not fasten the door-bolt because the Bhikkhunīs happened to be Arahats. Therefore, beware and keep yourself on the alert, or else, you may get into trouble. Let’s recite the motto.

“What is the ‘bolt’? It means ‘ignorance’ of the method of contemplation and noting.”

The Commentary says: “By learning the method of *kammatthāna* meditation and asking questions on ambiguous points, ‘Ignorance’ – *avijjā* is dispelled.” This amounts to rejection of *avijjā* which makes a person ignorant of the method of meditation. We are teaching the method of removing the ‘ignorance’ of the door-bolt.

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THE TOAD THAT BECOMES BLOATED EVERY TIME IT IS TOUCHED

Then, comes the next question: "What is meant by the toad that becomes puffed up or inflated in appearance every time it is touched?" Buddha's answer to this question runs as follows:

*"Uddhumāyikāti kho bhikkhu kodupāyāsas-
setam adhivacanam"*

The above Pāli phrase conveys the meaning of: "O, Bhikkhu Kassapa! The name of 'Uddhumāyikā' which becomes swollen every time it is touched, indicates the heated anger or fiery hatred. When continued digging the mound after removing the door-bolt, the toad called 'Uddhumāyikā' was found." 'Anger' very much resembles that toad. Every time sensation of hatred is felt or feeling of strong dislike arises, degree of anger runs high. Likewise, unpleasurable sights or unpleasant sounds may cause anger to arise. The same feeling of resentment may occur from any unpleasant touch or disagreeable thought that arises. It is most common that such a feeling occurs more frequently with the sensations of touch and of hearing. Just imagine a case in which one becomes suddenly angry, the moment words of nuisance or scurrilous utterances are heard. At the outset, ugly facial gesture may only become apparent, but sooner or later, rising anger may pervade the entire

THE TRIVIAL DHAMMA

body when repeatedly heard, causing one to lose control of his tongue, and followed eventually by physical action. This will lead to committing assault or to causing bodily injury to others. For the said reason, appropriate comparison has been made between '*Uddhumāyikā*' toad and '*anger*', which tends to become more and more violent. Indeed, similarity between these two is really apt.

THE TRIVIAL OR INSIGNIFICANT DHAMMA

At one time, U Pan Maung, a popular figure in charge of Thudhammawadi Printing press, narrated a short story. When announcement was made that a "Trivial Dhamma" would be broadcast on the radio, I happened to listen to it out of sheer curiosity. The gist of his talk was that trouble might brew for a trifling cause and therefore advice had to be given not to ignore or disregard anything on the ground that it is just a trivial matter. The title of the story is quite fascinating and modern. The story runs as follows:

At one time, there were two monks who lived together in close intimacy. While one of them was bathing, the other jokingly hid his slippers. The monk who bathed, after finishing his bath, when looked for his slippers, found them missing. Not finding the slippers, he knew that the other was making fun of him and had hid

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the slippers. He therefore, spoke in jest quite lightly, "Hey! I don't know which dog had snapped and carried away my slippers". This jocular remark though trivial, had very much wounded the feelings of the other monk who hid the slippers. Of course, the remark so made was not with an intention to harm the other monk's feelings. It is, in fact, quite a popular joke among common people. However, the other monk felt very bad and was so angry that he hit his friend with a brick on the head causing instantaneous death. Despite the fact that the remark made was just a trifle, yet the monk who had uttered the joke lightly had to pay dearly for his life. The other monk who had struck his friend's head with the brick was also accused of murder. It was a criminal offence. This is a unique example of a case in which one could get into trouble for a mere trifling talk. U Pan Maung gave his advice to pay heed to the manner of talking to one another. It should serve as a good lesson. What do you think of it? It is the '*Uddhumāyikā*' toad that has become bloated. The simple remark — "I don't know which dog had snapped and carried away my slippers" is nothing that could cause physical harm or injury to the other. Not a bit harmful — not even as bad as it has been thrown with a tiny particle of sand. But, it must have seriously affected the feelings of the other so as to arouse in him a violent

STORY OF VEDEHIKĀ

temper to the extent of retaliating with a fatal blow. This is a toad getting puffed up with one touch whereas the toad '*Uddhumāyikā*' gets swollen every time a touch is made on him.

STORY OF VEDEHIKĀ

There was a case where the Buddha had personally given exhortation by citing a story with reference to a monk by the name of Phaggu-mawliya. This story too, is really worthy of note.

A long time ago, there lived a rich house-wife in the state of Sāvutthi by the name of Vede-hikā. Her demeanour, gait and sweet manner of speech being suave and faultless, she received an approbation from the people residing in the ward in which she lived. Some of you might have heard of this story but some might not have. This story is of much value and will give you benefit.

Vedehikā was extolled for her refinement by her friends and neighbours in this way. "Vede-hikā is good-tempered and is easy to get on with. She is amiable and is kind-hearted. She never gets angry and has compassionate feeling towards all. She is really noble." With her lived a maid-servant called "Kālī". "Kālī", a name in Pāli means "Black" in Burmese language. She may therefore be called "Miss Black". This maid servant Kālī reflected: "Our mistress has

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been so highly praised by almost everybody living in the whole neighbourhood that I wish I could know whether our mistress has really no feeling of anger and resentment, or it might be that she has no opportunity to get angry as she has been preoccupied with her domestic chores." After reflecting as such, she started making discreet inquiries in her own way. Up to that moment Kālī was carrying out her household duties, such as sweeping, cooking and drawing water from the well everyday since the early hours of the morning. On that particular day, she did not get up from her bed at the break of dawn and went on sleeping.

Vedehikā got up from her sleep as usual and observed the condition of her home. She then noticed that there was no sign of her maid's usual performances of the daily chores. Having found that nothing had been done as it should be, she imagined whether Kālī was indisposed and even wondered if she was sick. No feeling of anger had arisen in her then. The toad had not yet been touched. She even sympathised with her, and then, thinking her maid had fallen sick, she decided to go and see her, in case the maid might need some kind of help. If the maid was really sick, she might have to give her medicine, or summon a doctor. With the best of intention, she went close to her bed-room and called out softly "Hey, Kālī".

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On being responded by Kālī as: "Yes, anything madam?", she asked her "Haven't you got up from sleep as yet? Are you all right?" Kālī then replied, "I'm quite well, madam, though I'm still in bed." This reply made Vedehika pretty irritated, her face turning a bit sour. She then bemused herself, "This girl failed to get up from bed as usual and perform her household duties though she said nothing had happened to her. She has started to become a recalcitrant." Kālī, as an investigator was a shrewd judge of character. She was surreptitiously observing her mistress. She had seen her mistress getting sour in her looks. She therefore imagined, "H'm, our mistress is liable to get angry; but to be quite sure, I would take further steps to inquire." She then purposely remained in bed in the early morning the next day.

Vedehikā promptly got out of her bed chamber at the usual time. The toad having been touched on the previous day, was getting a bit puffed up. When, on that day, finding her maid still rolling in bed at the usual time when it was due to get up, the toad had become swollen. She therefore asked Kālī in a commanding tone, "Hey, Kālī! Haven't you got up from bed as yet?" Their dialogue then ensued as below:

"Madam, I haven't yet got out of my bed."

"What happened?"

“Nothing particularly wrong, madam.”

“H’m, Kālī! You will know who am I”

She was not only bitterly stern in her looks then, but angry words were spurting out of her mouth. Kālī then reflected, “Oh, our mistress is capable of being really angry; but to make it more definite, I will conduct further investigation.” With this thought in her mind for the third time, she staged a passive sleep-on strike purposely by remaining in bed in the morning. The toad having been touched twice, became badly swollen when touched for the third time.

Vedehikā rose from her bed early and then queried (in indignation):

“Hey, Kālī, are you still asleep? Haven’t you got up as yet from bed?”

“Not as yet, madam.”

“What’s the matter with you, then?”

“Nothing wrong with me, madam.”

“If nothing is wrong with you, then, you will know my true colour.” So saying, she hurled a bolt at her maid. It hit Kālī on the head which received a fracture. The toad had become fully bloated now.

Having sustained an injury on the head, with blood flowing out from the wound, she went round the neighbouring houses and lodged a

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complaint: "Just look at my awful condition and imagine the way I was ill-treated by Vede-hikā, the so-called reputed person of piety and tolerance! I'm the only person in the whole house doing all the daily chores. Will you please have a look at me and think of the manner in which I've been chided by my mistress Vede-hikā for my mere failure to get up early in the morning? I was struck with a door bolt with which she threw at me causing serious injury on my head." The neighbours rallied round her and remarked, "Oh, indeed! How cruel Vede-hikā is. She is very rude, reckless and heartless. She has no feeling of sympathy for the poor girl." Blame was heaped on Vede-hikā much more than praise was once showered on her. It is human nature to slur others' faults with gusto more than when speaking of their virtues. People are used to putting more weight on speaking ill of others. On the other hand, when one is deserving of admiration or praise, people are generally reluctant to extol. It is therefore difficult to receive a high commendation and an honour for one's own outstanding achievement or qualities. Once honour is conferred on a person, it has got to be preserved in tact throughout one's life time. It is really trying and yet once reputation and honour are affected and faded out by some kind of misdeed committed wilfully or unintentionally, everything is gone forever.

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The story cited above clearly reveals the similarity between "anger" and the toad which becomes bloated at every touch. I will explain another story which is more relevant to men rather than to womenfolks so as to cover every aspect.

TOPIC OF DISCUSSION ON KHANII -- PATIENCE: A REDEEMING FEATURE

About 3 or 4 years ago, it came out in one of the Daily Newspapers relating to an incident which took place in Thanbyuzayat, a town within Moulmein District. It so happened that at a house, four or five ward-elders were chatting about on a religious topic. It is the way of social custom in Burma in villages or in wards among elderly people with knowledgeable background of worldly experience to get together whenever there is an occasion in connection with a social or religious function or a function connected with the death of a person. They usually discuss on religious topics while reception is going on with light refreshments particularly plain tea and some delicacies like 'laphet'—pickled tea. Sometimes, when heated discussions take place, those who participate in the discussion, quarrel on a moot point, become emotional or indignant and commit assault against one another ending in their being hauled up by the police—law enforcement officers. The news editor who made the comment, drew his conclu-

TOPIC OF DISCUSSION ON KHANTI

sion relating to such an incident which had happened at Thanbyuzayat mentioning that the elders concerned had been placed in police custody, and that "The redeeming feature was because the topic of discussion happened to be on "Patience" (*khantī*)". The News Editor was clever enough to hit right on the nail. Intolerance is the worst thing when discussion is made on the subject of "Patience" which needs be exercised as desired by the Buddha. This sudden indignation resembles the *Uddhumāyikā* toad which gives a lot of trouble and therefore really need be discarded.

Quarrel usually breaks out between intimate friends and it agrees with the proverb – "familiarity breeds contempt." It is something like the tongue and the teeth, which are in close contact with one another and often come into a clash. If no patience or tolerance is exercised in dealing with one another between friends or relatives, or members of the same household or between neighbours, it can bring about much trouble and unhappiness. Generally, – brothers and sisters among themselves often fall out but when need arises in any emergency, they have to depend upon one another like what is said in the proverb – "Blood is thicker". It has so happened because of this "toad" called "anger". This is the very "toad" which is ill-treating the nations of the world. Do not therefore accept this toad. It should be rejected by reflection,

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and if possible, by the method of contemplation and noting. Well, let's recite the relevant motto.

“What is meant by the wicked ‘toad’?
It means nothing but ‘anger’.”

THE ROAD JUNCTION

Then, a point of intersection where the two paths meet is said to have been found.

Answer was given as “*Dve dhapathoti kho bhikkhu vicikicchayetaṃ adhuvacanam*”, to the question put as: “What is meant by “*Ko dvedhapatho*”, the road junction?” The meaning of this answer is: “O, Monk, Kassapa, the name of the ‘Road Junction’ is ‘*Vicikiccha*’ ” and that is, sceptical doubt or uncertainty.

To cite an example: Let's say that a trader was proceeding on his way to make a business deal. He would no doubt carry with him some money. A gang of bandits who were bent upon robbing him must have had prior information from some of their touts as to the time and route the trader was coming along. Acting on this information, the robbers who lay in wait for him, chased him as he came walking. Finding the robbers in pursuit, fear seized him making him walk faster. While thus speeding up, he was unfortunately confronted with a road junction, He had never before

THE ROAD JUNCTION

travelled along this route and was therefore hesitating whether he should follow the right or the left branch of the road at the junction. As he was thus vacillating, the robbers overtook him, and then captured and killed him, after looting all his property. He would have escaped from the hands of the enemy if he had not come across the road junction, which had caused him to waver.

Similarly, in the course of your meditation, if the wavering mind or sceptical doubt arises, *kilesas*, the enemies would catch up with you. Thus, the method of meditation has been prescribed. According to it, be vigilant and note every time the physical phenomenon takes place. When walking note as "walking". When standing, note as "standing". When sitting, note as "sitting". When lying, note as "lying". When bending, note as "bending". When stretching, note as "stretching". When the abdomen rises, note as "rising", and when it falls, note as "falling". It should also be noted every time the mind imagines or reflects, as "imagining", or "reflecting", as the case may be. This is how to contemplate and mentally note while meditating. This method of meditation is "*cittānupassanā*", according to the Buddha's teachings, which say: "*Saragamva saragamcittamti pajānati*". And every time feeling of sensation – "*vedanā*" – occurs, it must be noted. It has also been

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mentioned as: "*Sukham vā vedanam vedayamano sukham vedanam vedayamiti pajānāti*" and "*dukham vā vedanam vedayāmiti pajānāti.*" We have given instructions to meditate every time feelings of such sensations occur, and at every moment of seeing, hearing, and so on. Doubt may however arise in the mind of the Yogī while meditating. This is however unavoidable; but when such doubt arises, it is essential to reject or dispel it.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF SCEPTICAL DOUBT

Prior to my taking up of the meditation practice, when I first heard about the method of Satipatthana mindfulness exercise to contemplate and note as "walking" when I walk, or as "standing" when I stand, or "sitting" when I sit, and so forth, I had some doubts about its propriety or correctness since there was no involvement of the act of distinguishing and dissecting *rūpa* and *nāma* according to *paramattha* in the process of noting, and as stated also in the Commentary.

I then reflected that the teacher – Mingun Jetavun Sayādawgyi was an adept in Scriptures; he had also personally practised meditation; and also when I checked up this method of contemplation with the Pāli Scriptures, it was found to be correct. Therefore, since it falls in with the Pāli Scriptures, I considered it to be the right method. Imagining as such, I had taken up meditation practice under the guidance

DOUBT RESEMBLES A CHEAT

of that Sayādawgyi. As a matter of fact, I did harbour certain doubts while I was meditating. Only later, I came to know that because of my knowledgeable experience, I was wavering and reflecting in the manner stated. In fact I mistook the "doubt" as "knowledge". It could be really misleading. This sceptical doubt had crept in, in the manner as stated in the *nitthi* Commentary as '*ubhayapakka samtorana mukhena vicikicchā vanceti*, i.e. It is capable of playing deception by assuming a false character as if it were the knowledge which seemingly weighs and considers with all fairness from both angles or points of view.

DOUBT RESEMBLES A CHEAT

In this world of ours, there are people who put on disguise in one way or the other so as to enable them to deceive others. A 'cheat' will have to devise all sorts of tricks to make others believe him.

At one time, a king summoned a person who was ill-reputed to be a cheat, and asked him, "Do you possess ability to practise deception on others? He replied, "Yes, Your Majesty." Then, the king said, "If that is so, try to cheat me." The man said, "Your Majesty, it is pretty difficult for me to deceive a great Sovereign of dignity and glory like yourself. Deception cannot be practised on Your Majesty in the way

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I'm now dressed up with ordinary clothes on. I will be able to cheat only if I could put on the full outfit of the Royal Robes like you do." The king then ordered "Aye! Provide him with a complete outfit of the royal robes and emblems of royalty." He was therefore given the full dress of a monarch. When he had obtained the full regalia, he said, "Your Majesty, I cannot deceive you now all at once. I will come over and play deceptive games on you on such and such a day;" and accordingly fixed a date. On the appointed day, the king waited for him in readiness and reflected "This chap would come over to me to-day. I wonder how he would play his tricks on me!" Hours rolled on and the day drew to a close; yet there was no sign of the appearance of the cheat. The king therefore sent out messengers who brought that man before the king's presence. The king then asked him, "Hey, you fellow! You had promised me to come over and practise deception on me but you didn't turn up at all. What's the reason for failing to do so?"

The man replied nonchalantly, "Your Majesty, I've already cheated you!"

"Aha, fellow! When and how was it done?", ejaculated the king.

"I've cheated you, Your Majesty, on the very first day and have even received the full Regalia from you," said the Cheat.

DOUBT RESEMBLES A CHEAT

The king then bemused himself, "Ah, exactly so! It is quite true."

In the same way, although *vicikicchā* is said to have practised deception, it is not discernible. It is usually misconceived as a "knowledge". Therefore, it is to be feared that *vicikicchā*, under the guise of "knowledge", might deceive. The door-bolt as stated earlier, is, connected with *vicikicchā*. We have preached so that the 'bolt' may be removed and the door opened, and that '*vicikicchā*' also may be dispelled. Or else, it could destroy the faith, or confidence. This being of paramount importance, when doubt (*vicikicchā*) arises, it should be discarded by noting it with proper contemplation. Gradually, as you carry on with your contemplation and noting, you will grasp the truth of the dhamma. As you proceed with your contemplation and noting the bodily behaviour, you will fully understand the process from the beginning to the end throughout. Nothing will be left out if awareness takes place when making a mental note of the phenomenon that occurs at every moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, touching, bending, stretching, moving, thinking, and planning. You will come to know convincingly the real nature of the occurrences of each phenomenon from the beginning to the end completely, if you keep on watching constantly.

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Another example is a row of white ants. Have you ever seen it? If you look at it superficially, it would appear as if it is a long, straight and continuous line of white ants. But on close observation, you will find them separated, one following the other in procession. They are not linked together. One ant is apart from the other while moving along. It is not a continuous row of ants linked together. The truth of the matter is known only by close observation. In the like manner when the phenomena of body and mind (*rūpa* and *nāma*) are contemplated and noted at every moment of their arising, these will be found to be arising and disappearing or dissolving singly in distinct parts and not as a long chain of matter or thoughts. The process of arising and vanishing phenomena of body and mind is extremely fast and is clearly indicative of impermanency. The nature of impermanence can be distinguishingly known with one's own knowledge or insight.

The next example is: Let's hang a sand bag on a hook and a hole may be punched at its base. The sand contained in the bag will be coming out through the hole as if it were a long line of sand. If you push the bag forward, the long line of sand flowing out will appear as if it has moved forward. Draw it back again, and it would seem as if the long line of sand has moved backwards. The same thing would happen

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directionwise whenever you move the sand bag to any direction. In reality, it is not the line of sand that is moving but the tiny particles of sand which are dropping out one after another very closely. Similarly, if it is contemplated and noted at every moment of the phenomenal occurrences, you will perceive the continuous arising and dissolution of things.

Let us recite the motto.

“What is the ‘Road Junction’. It is mere imagination – the feeling of doubt that arises.”

The ‘Spade’ is the ‘knowledge’. “Digging” is ‘Exertion’. It is *sammappadhānaviriya* – ‘The Right Exertion’ which are the four kinds. The ‘bolt’ is compared to *avijjā*, ignorance of the method of meditation. The “toad” represents ‘anger’, which should be contemplated and dispelled. If possible, it should be rejected after contemplating and noting. The “Road Junction” is the wrong belief or ‘doubt’.

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I may amplify the method of meditation to be practised, a bit more. According to the method of Satipatthāna, bodily action or behaviour at every time of its occurrence should be contemplated. It will then be distinguishingly known part by part. It is just like watching a lightning when the brilliant flash of light emitted

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is known at the initial, the intermediate and the final phases of its occurrence. In the same way, if contemplation is made at every moment of the occurrence of the bodily behaviour, it will definitely be known through personal experience and not by mere book knowledge.

By merely uttering the words as "*rūpa* (material body) is impermanent", though the terminology is correct, you will not realize as to what really is impermanent without concentrated contemplation. What you will know then, is only the *panatta*, the name. You would, in fact, be imagining the name of *rūpa* and of *anicca*(impermanence). This can therefore mislead you to a wrong notion that it is *paramatta*. If, however, you contemplate and note as: "falling", "rising", "sitting", etc., you will be fully aware of its true characteristics precisely. Realization comes truly only by practising contemplation and noting at every moment of the phenomenal occurrences of the body and mind arising out of the six sense-doors. This is most natural. Buddha has, therefore, preached as "*gicchanto vā gicchāṃīti pajānāti.*"

So, contemplate and note what is seen every time you see an object. Similarly, every time you hear, touch, bend, stretch, or move your limbs, you note what is heard or touched, or what you do. "Rising" and "falling" are also included in the sense of touch. Therefore, note

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the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Thought that arises every moment should also be contemplated and noted. Note every sensation that occurs. In the beginning of the practice, it will not be possible for you to follow up and contemplate every phenomenal occurrence that arises. Hence, you should note beginning from the 'rising' and 'falling' movement of the abdomen. However, on gaining sufficient strength in concentration, you will find it easy to follow up and will even be able to carry on with contemplation of each act of opening and closing of the eyelids and winking. The motto given is:

“Contemplate and note at every moment of the arising phenomena and be mindful with constant vigil.”

You should therefore contemplate and note whenever any sensation or feeling occurs. The whole body from head to toe comprises material matter which need be contemplated. Any place in the material body, if conspicuous, can be noted. Mahādīgha has said, “*yathāpakadham vipassanābhīni veso*”, which goes in support of this method of instruction. Those who have adequate perfections (*paramittas*) may become a Sotāpanna by just listening to the sermon. Some however, become a Sotāpanna after practising meditation with diligence.

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At the time when Buddha delivered his first sermon of "Setting in Motion the Wheel of Righteousness", only one of the five ascetics, namely, Ashin Kodanna became a Sotāpanna. The rest four, only after practising meditation, reached the stage of Sotāpanna, and perceived the Truth of the Dhamma. It took Ashin Vappa one day, Ashin Bhaddiya – two days, Ashin Mahānam – three days, and Ashin Asaji – four days, respectively, to become Sotāpanna. It is therefore evident that it would be essential to practise meditation to achieve the stage of Sotāpanna. These ascetics were eminent intellectuals and yet as they were asked by the Buddha to meditate, it becomes obvious that the practice must be *invariably* exercised. If they could reach the stage of Sotāpanna by listening to his sermon only, he would have delivered his sermons repeatedly instead of asking them to indulge in practical meditation.

PART III

FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF 'DOUBT'

Some people have said, "Seeing is believing", i.e. they will believe only after they have acquired personal experience. They cannot believe in anything unless they have experimented it as scientists do. In other words, they do not believe things blindly. That's not bad. It is because the people belonging to the ancient times had accepted the doctrines blindly, a variety of religious beliefs have sprung up at the present time. There is no doubt that personal knowledge acquired by practical experience is natural and realistic.

The Buddha's Dhamma can be practically experienced. Practical experience is reliable. However, it will not be feasible only if one were to accept or make reliance upon anything that has been known and acquired by one's own personal experience. There are preachings that have been made by those after they themselves have realized through practical experience of the dhamma. Hence, what has been preached by a person who has personally indulged in practical meditation ought to be accepted by one though he himself may not have any personal experience of his own.

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Buddha's dhamma is stated as "*Sanditthiko*". It has the attribute of "*Sanditthika*", i.e. the dhamma that can surely be realized personally with immediate result, if practised with diligence. Buddha has offered his guarantee that his dhamma will be personally realized if one truly practises it with right exertion. There are only two things—matter and mind. There is no 'being' or 'Self' and no such thing as an ego substance, as a living entity, or an "*Atta*".

As such, refusal to accept a teaching simply on the ground that no meditation has yet been personally practised, is not a good justification. Let me cite an example. If one were to proceed by train from Monywa, he will definitely reach Mandalay. This is obvious to those who have performed this journey before. Suppose a person who has never had any experience of a journey by railroad, and has never been to Mandalay, were told by an experienced traveller as, "You will reach Mandalay if you ride on this train," and if he replied, "I cannot believe you and for having never travelled on my own by train before, I am unable to take your advice", will he be able to reach Mandalay without performing the journey by train? Certainly not. This has so happened because he does not believe in what the other person has said. As an alternative, if he is advised to go by automobile, and if he still has his doubts and says, "I don't

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believe it either because I have never before travelled by a car.” If he refuses to accept the advice, will he get to Mandalay? Definitely ‘No’. Then again, suppose he is told that he could go by steamer to Mandalay, and yet, if he continues to adopt the same negative attitude, he will not certainly reach Mandalay. Such being the case, it is more likely that he will deny to travel by air from Monywa to Mandalay. If he has accepted the advice, he could have reached Mandalay.

Analogous to the case just illustrated, with reference to Vipassanā dhamma, Buddha has preached; “Practise with diligence” as instructed in Satippatthāna Pāli wherein it is stated: “*eka. vāno magga*”, i.e. this is the only way to achieve *ariyamagga* – the only true Path by which Nibbāna can be attained. The instruction thus given ought to be believed and accepted. The method of practising has also been prescribed by the Buddha as “*gicchantovā gicchamīti pajānāti. etc.*” It means while walking, note as “walking” with awareness. If sitting posture is taken, note as “sitting”. While standing, note as “standing”. While lying, note as “lying”. When bending or stretching the limbs, note as “bending”, and “stretching”, as the case may be, etc. In the act of walking, characteristics of stiffness and propelling force are obvious. No instructions have, however, been given to note as: “stiff”, or “propelling”, or as “moving”, or as “pushing

forward". It has been preached to note as "walking" only.

While contemplating as, "walking", stiffness of joints, motivation and propelling force will be noticeable. If there are people who say that unless they have had personal experience in meditation, they cannot believe the teaching, such type of people would fall into the category of those persons who have refused to travel by train, or steamer or by plane, as described earlier. They will never reach their destination and achieve their objective. It does not appear reasonable to reject the suggestion or advice given without experimenting it. Nor will it be proper to totally deny acceptance of the advice.

To put it in another way, a sick man should not refuse to take the medicine prescribed by the doctor who has the experience in treating the sick. If the sick man refuses to take the medicine, there is no chance of his recovery. The Buddha's dhamma is like the medicine that can cure the disease. That is the reason why Buddha has exhorted "come and see for yourself" by practising the method of Satipatthāna. If the practice is experimented, one will definitely see the Truth personally. You will find the incessant arising and dissolution of *rūpa* and *nāma*, if you meditate, contemplate and note.

What had been stated by Ledi Sayādawpayagyi in the first part of "Iriya" is: "*Yathā yathā vā*

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panassa kāyo panihito hoti, tatthā tatthā nam pajānāti.” The meaning of this simple phrase is exactly the same as interpreted and accepted by us. It is as contained in Anatta Dīpani. When bodily behaviour or action, such as, movements of the limbs of the body in any manner, or the manner of carriage in the act of walking and lifting the foot that occur in the four main elements of the body, it shall not be observed as is usually done without being mindful. It means that contemplation with attentiveness should be made on the limbs or parts of the body concerned. In this Pāli phrase, emphasis has been made on the movements or occurrences of physical and mental behaviour which are embraced in the four main ‘*iriyābhūtas*’. No emphasis is laid to contemplate on the whole body as an aggregate of the four principal elements. In other words, the body should be known by the characteristics of its bodily behaviour. After preaching the manner in which the main *iriyābhūtas* should be made known as “walking”, while walking, or as “standing”, while standing; or “sitting”, while sitting; or “lying”, while lying, Buddha has taught in another way that the body exists by such characteristics and that by these characteristics, the said ‘body’ is known. This statement agrees with the second exposition in the Digha which was reiterated to supplement the first exposition.

In the second method of contemplation as contained in the Dīgha, it has been preached laying emphasis on the "body" as fundamental. No primary importance is attached to the *iyirābhūtas*. The Commentator says that the four main elements will be automatically included as mere accompaniments and fulfilled. These concepts are highly philosophical. Ordinary worldlings will not be able to grasp. The salient point here is that the body (*kāyo*) exists. That body is known. *Iriyābhūta* is not indicated as essential to be known. Therefore, it should be construed as having imbibed all the bodily behaviours. The behaviour of the main elements, unprescribed, is not to be taken into consideration. This amounts to emphasis being made on the 'body'.

It may be further elucidated thus: While sitting, any part of the limb whether it is moving, or feeling stiff, or remaining still, if that part of the limb concerned is contemplated, it would amount to dwelling your mind on the characteristics of its presence in the body. Posture of sitting is also automatically embraced therein. Hence, if the behaviour of 'rising and falling' of the abdomen is contemplated while sitting, *Iriyābhūta* called 'sitting' is automatically included, and is regarded as being fulfilled in sequence or in unbroken series. Therefore, the statement made by Ledī Sayādawpayagyi as "*Yathā yathā*

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vā panassa kāyo panhito hoti, tathā tathā nam pajānāti" shall be interpreted as having imbibed all bodily behaviour in detail, which is in agreement with the exposition of the second method of the Dīgha. We are preaching in the same manner. Presumably, it is sufficient enough for you to understand.

CONTEMPLATION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE WITH PACCUPPATTHĀNA

Next, I would like to explain as to how contemplation should be made at the initial stage of Vipassanā meditation. Visuddhimagga has stated as "*lakhanarasadivasena pariggahetabba.*" The instruction given is to contemplate the essence of characteristics. In order to know the truth of the dhamma relating to *rūpa* and *nāma*, matter and mind, it is necessary to find out the factors, four in number, namely, sign or characteristics, essence, *paccuppatthāna* and *padathāna*. As it has been stated to contemplate the "characteristics, essence and so on" from among these four, it is quite obvious that the remaining two – *paccuppatthāna* and *padathāna* must be included because of the expression "and so on" appended to that phrase.

Hence, it must be borne in mind that all *rūpa* and *nāma* should be contemplated along with their characteristics, the existing occurrences as well as *padathāna*. These are as instructed by us as had been done by the Theelon Sayādaw.

payagyi and Ledī Sayādawpayagyi and also by other famous Sayādawgyis in Burma. The justification for contemplating along with *paccuppatthāna* has been shown in Visuddhi Magga as well as in Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga Arthagatha, Dīgha and Samyutta Nikāya, etc. How five *upādānakkhandhas* are contemplated, has been described therein. There are some who have said that Vipassanā should not be contemplated as stated in the foregoing. They are therefore on the wrong path as their dissentient views have gone contrary to the Commentaries. They even made repeated blunder in saying that the existing *rūpa* is *paññāta*. Visuddhi Magga Commentary and Dīgha have cleared this erroneous concept of *paññāta*. It is made even more convincingly clear in Mahāvagga Commentary.

Paccuppatthāna refers to *rūpa*, the body, and not to *nāma*, mind. This is meant to refer to *rūpakkhandhā*. No reference has yet been made to *nāma*, the mind. *Rūpa*, the body, is conspicuous. It is in fact the sense object on which the 'knowledge' dwells. In other words, the character of the sensation is *paccuppatthāna*. *Rūpa* is an absolute truth or reality and is *paramattha*. It really exists and is reflected in 'knowledge'. It is not *paññāta*.

Therefore, whether contemplation is made on *rūpa* or on *nāma*, according to Vipassanā, it must be contemplated along with its characteristics

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and its essence – *paccuppatthāna* and also with *padatthāna*, if possible. Then, the question may arise as to which is in fact contemplated when one is contemplating “*gicchantovā gicchāmīti pajānāti*, etc.” The answer is that the air or the wind element – *vāyodhātu* is that which is contemplated. How is it then known? If contemplated on the nature of *rūpa* and *nāma* at every moment of their phenomenal occurrence, they appear in their own characteristics, in their own essence, and in the way they are existing – ‘*paccuppatthāna*’. For example, looking at the flash of lightning as it occurs in the firmament, the sign of electrical discharge is obvious. This characteristic is its substance. The substance is the brilliant light. The gleam that is emitted is the lightning or the electricity which is discharged. There is no other thing: Then, a person who has seen it at the time of its occurrence, will know the brilliant flash. This is knowing its characteristics.

At the time the lightning flashes, darkness disappears. The thing that causes to dispel the darkness, is called the ‘essence’ of the flash light. The person who is watching when lightning occurs, knows the disappearance of the darkness. Then also, he who is watching at the moment lightning takes place, will know the nature of the electricity that is discharged. The shape; its appearance whether the light

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that flashes is dim or profuse, or is of great magnitude, or round, or long or short, will be revealed. This is, the nature of its dimension that is reflected in the conscious mind or 'knowledge' of the person watching the lightning as it occurs. This is the example. It cannot be said to be *paramattha* in reality.

In the same manner, if *vāyodhātu* is contemplated at the time of its occurrence, this element of air or wind is known with its characteristics. Its essence will also be known. It is also known by *paccuppatthāna*. The nature of *vāyo* is wind or air. It could therefore propel, or in ordinary parlance, it would cause 'stiffness'. If you stretch your arm, you will find "stiffness". If you stretch your hip, you will say you find "stiffness" instead of saying "propelling". Though no stiffness is knowingly or obviously felt, considering the degree of stiffness, you will have to say it is less stiff or vice versa, as the case may be. If the degree of stiffness is diminished, you will say it is a bit eased off.

Take another example by pulling the three ropes. One of these may be pulled tight; the middle rope may be moderately tightened; the third at the extreme may be slackened. The first rope as compared to the other two is obviously the most rigidly tightened. The rope in the middle, if compared to the one that is

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pulled tight, may be said to be less taut. But if it is compared to the third, it is considered as stiff or tight. If the rope in the middle were the only one, it would be considered tight and rigid.

Propelling force, stiffness, tight or loose are the characteristics of *vāyodhātu*, the wind element. The word "propelling force" is the usage in the literary sense. "Stiffness" is the term commonly used. *Vāyodhātu* is capable of moving or in other words, has the power of motivation. It is the wind element that pushes forward or propels.

It may also be likened to a cart and the bullock. The cart itself has no power of mobility. It is the bullock that moves. When the bullock moves, the cart is moved. It is the bullock that causes the cart to move. *Vāyodhātu* in its very nature has the power of motivation. The wind by itself is in motion. If this wind element strikes or hits anything, it may be said that the wind causes a thing to move or propel. It makes the leaves or dust move or change their position and sways the standing plants and branches of a tree. Then, if you bend or stretch and note as "bending", or "stretching", you will notice the nature of motivation. If you coil or bend your forefinger or stretch it, you will clearly find its movement. This is the

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Samudirana essence of the wind element – *vāyodhātu*. In the same manner, while you contemplate as “walking”, “lifting”, “stepping”, or “dropping”, you will notice the bodily behaviour or characteristics of your feet which moves slowly and gradually. You call this nature of movement as “*Samudirana-rasa*”. *Paccuppatthāna* is the characteristic that becomes manifested after a thing has become an object of sensation of the knowledge or the mental consciousness. When it is so manifested, it is then correctly conceived. The knowledge that is reflected is not that which is similar to *paññāta*, the erroneous notion. It is called “*paccuppatthāna*”, which is *paramattha*. The motto is:

“*Vāyodhātu* pushes and carries forth to where it proceeds on its own inclination;

‘Tis for you, O noble Yogi, to know and note it with contemplation.”

The foregoing explanation describes the manner in which *vāyodhātu* is known in its characteristics, essence and *paccuppatthāna*. *Padatthāna* not being very important, is not included in the verse. The wind element in the body can be contemplated at any place where it is manifested but it is essential to know it along with the three factors – characteristic, essence and *paccuppatthāna*. If one of those three is known, it may be stated to have been correctly realized.

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The phenomenon of the wind element wherever it may occur in the whole material body, can be contemplated. Any form or matter that is *paramattha* whether it is *pathavī*, or *āpo*, or *tejo*, or *vāyo*, or any sensation relating to *rūpa*, could be contemplated.

The manifestation of any matter or *rūpa* can be contemplated. It is perfectly all right to contemplate on *rūpa* and *nāma* at every conspicuous moment of its occurrence. I lay stress on these points so that you can dispel your doubts—'vicikicchā' at the road junction, before you get on to the stage of *vipassanā*. You have just learnt about the method. I am repeatedly explaining to enable you to reject the doubt before you go on with your meditation.

I have covered the subject of *vāyodhātu* fairly adequate enough to make you understand. Now, I am going to explain and cite an example with reference to *nāma*.

"*Arammana vijānanalakkhanam viññānam*" which in essence, is that *viññāna*, the knowing mind, is the nature of consciousness of the sense-object or the sensation. The mind or the thought only proceeds from contact with the sense objects. Therefore, if mind-consciousness is contemplated every time it arises, it will be known that it becomes aware of the sensation that occurs. When seeing takes place, the visual object or

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the sight becomes known through consciousness. The same thing happens if a sound is heard. The mind flows through the ear, the sense-organ to where the sound comes or from where it is heard. If there is an odour, the smell is felt and the mind proceeds to where the smell is, etc. etc. The mind immediately dwells on the sensible object or the senses.

It is more obvious in the case of "imagination". From where you are, say for example, Monywa, if you imagine or think about Mahāmyatmuni shrine at Mandalay, the whole picture of the shrine comes into your mind. If you think of the Sagaing Hills and the Ava Bridge, it would also appear in your mind's eye. That is why it is said that the mind reaches to where the sensation lies. The motto may be recited thus:

"The mind has the natural tendency to know the sensation.

It is capable of taking the lead or giving guidance as a leader."

A person who has the qualities of leadership or rather a leader, has the ability or the natural tendency to guide and lead. Any kind of work to be performed by a group of persons, needs a leader. In any organization, there is always a leader who directs the followers as to what action is to be taken. Even in transplanting paddy seedlings, it requires a group leader. The

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rest will follow his actions and guidance. In the same manner, the mind reaches the object of sensation and gains awareness. This mind consciousness is followed in suit by *cetasikā*, a series of mental or thought formations. To cite a vivid example, take the case of "seeing" a visual object. After having seen it, sensation arises. If it is a pleasurable sight, greed or *loba* follows in train. If anything which is seen, is unpleasant or detestable, anger or *dosa* occurs. If a revering thing is noticed, feeling of faith and generosity happens. If there is anything to be proud of, *mana* or conceit takes place. Likewise, *macchhariya*, envy or avarice or grudge will arise if feeling of clinging attachment to anything occurs or if bitter feeling or jealousy takes place against some one. For this reason, the mind resembles a leader. *Cetasikā*, mental formations follow closely behind the mind, which takes the lead. Every time the mind is contemplated, you know what are following in suit. If the mind is not properly contemplated and noted, greed and anger can arise. The leading role that is assumed which is the Essence, will be candidly known by mere contemplation. If a Yogi carries on with his contemplation every time the mind occurs, thought formations that follow suit will be clearly found to have its link with the mind that has already arisen. While noting as "rising" and "falling", and "sitting" or "touching", the mind which imagines,

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occurs and while noting as "imagining", will come to know what is following up subsequently. Then, it will be vividly realized that a series of mental formations are taking place something like a string of beads following one after another when the beads are moved in quick succession. At the beginning of meditation, the mind sometimes flits away or wanders hither and thither or hops from one place to another. Such happenings can be clearly known even by children of the age of ten or eleven, if they contemplate and note the phenomenal arising of the mind. Therefore, grown-ups can easily realize them. These children are really wonderful, and there had been children of the age of seven who became Arhats during the life time of the Lord Buddha. Children could relate the events that have occurred in their mind in sequence. Repeated occurrences of mind will also be conceived to have been taking place. It may appear to have so occurred endlessly, but it will come to an end when the contemplating mind with awareness comes to a cessation. Doubt may arise whether such mental occurrences will even come to cease. The manner in which the mind occurs singly and endlessly is preached in Dhammapada as follows:

*"Durangamam ekacaram, asariram guhasayam.
Ye cittam sanyamhessanti, mokkhamti maraban-
dhana."*

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This means that the mind is used to wander about ceaselessly and reach to a remote place. Whatever the distance might be, if you just think of a far distant place, it can be reached or covered in no time with sheer imagination—all of a sudden. You just think of the “Shwedagon Pagoda”. Your mind reaches there all at once in a split second. You let your mind or thought visit many places in foreign lands where you have been. The mind reaches there without travelling by plane and without incurring any expense. If you imagine about a place where you have never been before, you can go wrong. The mind, therefore, may go astray or go on frolicking to a far-flung place, and if it so happens, it shall be considered improper. Mind arises singly at every one time. Different mental thoughts cannot possibly occur simultaneously. It is just like beads in a string falling in a row one after another in an accelerated motion. It may be difficult to believe so. The mind that had occurred when young, is not the same mind which has just arisen or which is now arising. However, a person might probably think it as a chain of thoughts occurring continuously. *“The Mind occurs only once at any one time.”* It seems only acceptable because it has been preached by the Buddha and stated in the Commentaries and Dighas. If you do want to know that a single thought or mind occurs only once at any one time, you should meditate

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and see for yourself. *Citānupassanā* has been preached by the Buddha as "*Saragham vā cittam saragham cittamti--pajānāti*", etc. If you contemplate and note the mind every time it occurs, you will definitely find it appearing only one after the other in extremely quick succession. The first 'mind' that appears will soon disappear followed immediately by another 'mind'. It flits and vanishes with the greatest acceleration. The moment an "imagination" or a thought that occurs is noted, it vanishes or dwindles to nothing suddenly. You will notice it personally if you contemplate and note the mind. Though the first occurrence of the mind disappears, another mind subsequently appears and takes the place of the former mind that has preeded and dissolved. It is occurring and disappearing with a never-ending process — *ad infinitum*.

The mind which is used to occur singly has no substance. *Rūpa*, the matter, is a physical substance or materiality. That is the reason why the material body can be pointed out where it is. It can be felt or captured or tied up or confined in a room. The mind has no such substance or materiality. It is therefore difficult to show where it stays or lurks. We could only say that "Awareness or consciousness of the sensation is the Mind." It is hard to explain when asked where it occurs. It cannot be pointed out.

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Of course, what is definite is when "seeing" takes place, it happens or is reflected in the eyes. When a sound is heard, "hearing" occurs in the ears. When smelling, the odour comes through the nose. When eating, the taste is felt on the tongue. When something is touched, it is felt or known at the point of contact, for instance, when the head is touched, the sensation of touch comes from the head. Hence, all these five senses are definitely known. The mind that imagines, or "planning", is not clearly known where it arises. The Commentators, however, say that it occurs from the bottom of the heart called "*Hadayavutthu*", the substance of the heart, depending on the flesh of the matter – which is but the heart.

Medical doctors from the West have their own assumption that it occurs in the brain, the nervous organ which is the seat of sensation and thought. If this viewpoint is reflected, there is room for thought that the mind occurs in the head. It cannot, however, be said with certainty, and is rather difficult to say so. In any case, when there is fright, the heart palpitates or rather, the heart-beat becomes fast. When there is something to be worried or sorry, it is often said that pain is felt in the heart. In view of these happenings, the authors of the *Dighas* have supported the view expressed in the *Commentaries*. If that is the case, it would

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have some sort of justification to accept the view that the formation of thoughts arises or first takes place in the heart.

Nevertheless, it is not easy to pinpoint from where the mind comes from or has occurred. Though it may be manifested, it is difficult to see it vividly as it has no tangible substance. The mind cannot be captured. Neither can it be tied up with a rope nor confined nor controlled.

If contemplation is made on this Mind at every moment of its occurrence, and if it is constantly put under vigilance, it is stated that one can escape from the fetters of *kilesā*. The defilements or *kilesās* is called "*Mara*". *Mara* means the Great Slayer or Slaughterer. Because of the presence of *kilesās*, new existences have taken place. In every life existence, death will take place once. This means that the sentient beings are put to death by *kilesā*. It is therefore said that one can escape from the bonds of *kilesā*, the Slaughterer. If you prefer to escape from the clutches of *kilesā*, the Mind shall be taken care of. It will not be possible to tie the mind with a rope. The Mind shall be contemplated and noted with attentiveness.

This concept appears to fail in line with what has been stated as "The manner of knowing with the characteristics, essence and *paccuppatthāna*." A continual chain of mind consciousness linking

CONTEMPLATION BE MADE WITH PACCUPPATTHĀNA

with the first mental occurrence can take place repeatedly and endlessly. What is to be known in this regard is that the mind occurs linking with the thoughts that have arisen or have preceded it. This is clearly known by a Yogī with his personal insight knowledge. No lessons need be learned. It is only necessary to contemplate the mind every time it occurs. It happens singly and separately. This fact will be personally realized. The Yogī then understands that death will take place in every existence. Conception in the womb of a mother and rebirth take place in a new existence. The actual phenomenal process will then be understood clearly.

It may be explained in this way. If the mind is known at every moment of its occurrence, the mental consciousness that arises will be found disappearing or vanishing. If such state of vanishing is conceived and known with insight knowledge, realization comes as: "After all death means the disappearance or cessation of that kind of mental consciousness at the last moment before death." The mind or the mental consciousness occurs *one after another* in a continuous chain, and when this is known, it will be grasped that "the passing away of the present consciousness only conditions a fresh one in another birth, and it is nothing but the new existence." This knowledge is the personal realization of *cuti-*

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death, and *patisandhi*, entering a womb in a new existence.

If a person truly realizes this *cuti* and *patisandhi* as stated, he will get rid of *Sassataditthi*, i.e. a belief in the heretical doctrine that the living substance or *atta*, self, is eternal.

"In reality, mind or mental consciousness arises and then vanishes immediately. The consciousness that occurs in the new existence is similar to the consciousness of the mind that occurs afresh repeatedly while contemplation is made or in process. The mind from the past existence is not transmitted to the present existence; and the mind arising at the present existence does not move out to the next existence." A Yogi who realizes this fact as stated, will get rid of the wrong belief called "*Sassataditthi*", the concept of which is that the living substance or 'being' has been transferred in its entirety to the new existence, and will continue to reside in the new body. This is how *Sassataditthi* is eliminated. As regards "*ucchedaditthi*", it is a belief that "nothing remains after death. If the body is cremated, it is turned into ashes, and becomes a fertilizer. There is no such thing as a fresh or next existence." This erroneous conception is what is known as "*ucchedaditthi*". In actual fact, when death occurs in one existence, mental consciousness still goes on without a break just like when one is alive, provided

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no *kilesās* have yet been extirpated. To a person who is not yet free from *kilesās*, the mind impinges on a sensation. On death bed, the sensation that has cropped up will always be remembered and will never be forgotten or wiped out. It will be repeatedly reflected by the mind. Therefore, on the verge of death, an act that has been done by him during his life time, will appear in his vision and while in the course of reflecting on this act, the strength of consciousness will gradually become weak and feeble and fade away until it reaches the point of cessation. The moment this last consciousness ceases, fresh consciousness arises with the new existence. This process is what is called the appearance of new existence after the death of a person in his present existence. In other words, it may be stated that a human being or a deva or an animal is born or has come into existence. If it is so clearly perceived and understood, a person may be said to be free from "*ucchedaditthi*", the view that life continuum ceases or that life existence is entirely annihilated after death. The knowledge of it is very valuable indeed.

If the mind is contemplated while occurring, it can be known with the characteristics which distinguishingly knows the sensation. It can also be distinguishingly known by the essence which has the ability to take the lead, and by

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paccuppatthāna, which occurs repeatedly and continuously linking with the mind that has preceded. If the mind can be known with characteristics, essence and *paccuppatthāna*, it is obvious that the rest of the mental *khandhās* called *nāma*, will also be known when all of them are contemplated at the moment of their occurrences. I have only explained it very briefly to shorten the time citing the *vāyodhātu* out of the four elements of the body, with its characteristics, essence, and *paccuppatthāna*, as an example to enable you to have a slight taste of the dhamma. The illustration given is as expounded in Dīgha Nikāya, Commentaries, Samyutta Nikāya Atthagathā Dīgha, and is therefore unrefutable.

By now, it should be clear enough to know what is required to be known. Hence, if all bodily behaviours are contemplated, it would amount to realization of *kāyānupassanā satipatthāna*. It confirms the knowledge of the feasibility of the method of contemplation, as; "walking", "lifting", "stepping", and "dropping" in the act of walking. I am sure there is hardly any room for doubt. As such, since the door is now open and since doubt has been dispelled, the road to Nibbāna is clear. It is now left for you to meditate only. Let us recite the following motto.

The Mound or the Ant hill is the material body; Imagination—the Smoke; the Fiery Flame—

SOAP-WATER STRAINER

Performance or Deed; Teacher – the Buddha;
Pupil—the Yogi.

The Spade is the Knowledge; Digging – the Exertion; the Bolt—the Ignorance; the Toad—the Anger; and the Road Junction—the Doubt or the false conception.

SOAP-WATER STRAINER

The last motto is said to be *nivarana* which may be likened to a water strainer. Ashin Kumārakassapa put the question as “*kim cingavarim*”, i.e. What is meant by “water strainer”? Buddha’s answer to this question runs as follows:

“*Cingavarantikho bhikkhu pancanettam nivaranam adhivacanam.*”

The meaning is: “O, Bhikkhu! The name of the ‘water strainer’ is indicative of the name of five *nivaranas*.” Water strainer was generally used in those old days though it is not in use at present. A strainer is a piece of gauze through which liquid is poured to be cleared of matter suspended in it. In ancient times, if people want soap, they had to dissolve the sandy soap in water and strain the soapy liquid to collect the residue – refined particles of pure soap for washing fine clothes. The gauze is finely perforated to allow the water to pass through it easily.

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WATER AND FISH - - KĀMAGUNA AND MIND

attachment to worldly passions are *nīvaranas* which would deter the realization of merits of *bhāvanā*.

Nīvaranas being obstacles to the progress of Vipassanā meditation, are comparable to the soap-water strainer. If *kāmacchanda*, the wish for sensual enjoyment, and passionate desires are allowed to prevail, or entertained, no success can be achieved in meditational practice. In the course of contemplation, while noting as "rising", "falling", "sitting", and "touching", the mind usually flits away very often. Buddha has given a very good example in this regard, comparing the mind to a fish out of waters.

WATER AND FISH - - KĀMAGUNA AND MIND

Just as fishes live and find happiness in water, the human mind dwells in and finds enjoyment in sensual pleasures. Men are always thinking and planning as to how they should earn their living and perform their duties in the field of social activities. Such mental and physical activities are prompted by human passionate desires. That is the reason why *kāmaguna* is said to be the dwelling place of the human mind. If the mind is moved out of its residence of *kāmaguna*, it would resemble a fish thrown out from water and landed on the earth. The Buddha has preached this metaphorical statement in the form of verse. It is an excellent piece, but it will be more obvious if one has gained experience in the practical exercise of meditation.

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“*Varijova thale khitto. okamokatā mobbhato.*
Pariphandatidam cittam, maradheyham pahatave.”

In plain language, the above Pāli verse denotes: “That a fish whose home is the water, if taken out of its dwelling place and thrown on to the ground, would quiver and twiddle as if it were struck and wounded to the point of death, longing for its watery home.”

In the personality of a human being will be found the Truth of Suffering—*dukkha saccā*—constituting the five *khandhās*, namely, *rūpa* (body or form), *vedanā* (sensation), *saññā* (perception), *sankhāra* (volitional energy), and *viññāna* (consciousness) which fall within the realm of *mara*—the *kilesās*. Because of these *kilesās*, existences have come into being. In any existence, death is inevitable. In other words, death occurs because of the presence of these *rūpanāmakkhandhās*. Without the aggregate of *rūpakkhandhā* or the organized body, no death will take place. Therefore, these aggregates consisting of *rūpa-nāmakkhandhās* fall within the domain or jurisdiction of the Great Killer called *kilesā*. All these *rūpa* and *nāma* are in the hands of this Killer, and hence, they are bound to face old age, suffering and death wherever they may be in the human world, or in *deva loka* or in *brahma loka*. You with your material body cannot possibly escape from the clutching hands of *kilesās*. In order therefore to escape

HOW FIVE INVARANAS ARE DISPELLED

from this fate what you will have to do is to put the mind on the landing ground of Samatha and Vipassanā. So, it behoves us to join the meditation centre and practise religious exercises. Contemplate on “rising” and “falling”, “sitting”, “touching”, etc., repeatedly with utmost concentration. You will then find your mind often reflecting on sensual pleasures as usual. This resembles the fish rolling, twisting and quivering wishing to get back to its watery home. This rolling and restless mind should be rejected by contemplation and noting to prevent it from making reflection.

HOW FIVE NIVARANAS ARE DISPELLED

Hence, it has been stated as “*pajaha cingavaram*”—i.e. remove or reject this soap-water strainer. This means to say “*pajaha pancanīvarane*—reject the five *nīvaranas*: Hindrances.” Such *nīvaranas* should be noted again and again in the course of contemplation, and rejected. The manner of rejection is to note as “reaching” when the mind reaches back to your home while contemplating as “rising”, “falling”, “sitting”, and “touching”. If the mind wanders and reaches to your daily chores or daily routine work, note as “reaching”. If imagination occurs, note as “imagining” and then reject it. It is indeed a very good method of rejecting the *nīvaranas*.

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Moreover, feeling of disappointment, ill-will or anger – the “*vyāpāda*” may appear or arise. This too should be contemplated, noted and rejected. Briefly stated, “*thina middha*” – sloth and torpor or laziness if appeared, should also be noted through contemplation and then eliminated. Then, if “*uddhiccakukucca*”, i.e. restlessness and worry occur, dispel it by contemplating and noting it. If “*vicikicchā*”, sceptical doubts crop up in your mind with all sorts of imagination, contemplate and note them, and then reject them. This “*vicikicchā*” is the wavering mind or the doubt that happens while contemplation is being carried on.

CITTA-VISUDDHI

If these five hindrances, the *nīvaranas*, are contemplated and rejected after noting them, you will reach the stage of *citta-visuddhi*, where the mind becomes purified. If you are really bent upon meditating to achieve *magga-phala*, it is, first of all, imperative to be endowed with the qualities of morality – the purity of conduct called “*sīla visuddhi*”. Thereafter, it requires to have the full accomplishment of the purity of mind.

HOW NĀMA RŪPA PARICHEDA ÑĀṆA OCCURS

When you reach this stage of insight wisdom, at every time of contemplation and noting, the Mind that is conscious of the sensation and the

HOW NĀMA-RŪPA PARICCHEDA-ÑĀṆA OCCURS

object of sensation are distinguishingly known. This knowledge that distinguishes between mind and matter is "*nāma rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*". The manner in which *nāma* and *rūpa* are distinguishingly known has been preached and lucidly explained by the Buddha in the following example.

What is known as a "cat's eye", a precious ruby stone, ought to be possessed. This "cat's eye" is a kind of precious stone with a pale greenish colour, and is crystal clear. Some people wear a ring as an ornament on their fingers made of gold and inset with such a precious stone. Great significance has been attached to such precious stone in the preachings of the Lord Buddha. I will therefore make reference to the precious stone which is generally well-known. Take for instance, a ruby which is a crimson or rose-coloured precious stone, a product of Mogok ruby mines in Burma, renowned in the world of gems and known by almost all people. A very tiny hole may be pierced through this small ruby stone for threading with other precious stones of varying colours – say, yellow or blue, or green or white on a string. Then, let this precious stone be put to scrutiny by a person who has a good eye-sight after placing it on the palm of his hand. If it is closely observed by him, he will come to know clearly and distinctly that the precious stone and the

string are quite separate. The stone and the thread or the string will then be distinguishingly known. The thread will also be found to have been put through the tiny hole in the stone. In the same way, the meditating Yogī who is contemplating and noting will know distinguishingly between *rūpa*, the object of contemplation and knowing mind at every time of his contemplation and noting.

To cite an example: When you note as "rising", will you not find the stiffness and the movement in your abdomen? Then also, will not the mind that contemplates, notes, and knows the "rising" of the abdomen, become obvious? The rising movement of the abdomen with a feeling of stiffness is the innate nature of *rūpa*, and the knowing mind is *nāma*. The nature of stiffness and movement of the abdomen is *rūpa* which resembles the precious stone. The mind that notes and knows is *nāma* that resembles the string or the thread. At every time of noting, the mind that notes swiftly goes towards the sensation just like the thread which passes through the tiny hole in the stone. That is why the noting mind that reaches the object of sensation is likened to the thread that goes through the small precious stone. This is the concrete example given by the Buddha showing the manner in which the distinguishing feature of *nāma* and *rūpa* is realized by the knowledge

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of *nāma-rūpa pariccheda*. It is the most reliable statement as preached by the Buddha and is exactly found to be in entire agreement with what has been found and realized by our Yogīs. Likewise, there is similarity in the knowledge that knows the two distinct parts distinguishingly at every time the bodily behaviours are contemplated and noted.

THE TORTOISE -- FIVE KHANDHĀS

When *nāma* and *rūpa*, mind and matter, are distinguishingly known, you will find the five *khandhās*. This is what is stated as, "very similar is *nīvarana* to water-strainer, just as the wicked tortoise is to *khandhā*". It has therefore been mentioned that if the five *nīvaranas* which resemble the soap-strainer, are contemplated and noted, the mind becomes purified. As the mind is purified, *rūpa* and *nāma* will be distinguishingly known at every time of contemplation and noting. These two – *rūpa* and *nāma* are nothing but the five *khandhās*. A meditator who is noting the rising movement of the abdomen will feel the stiffness. Movement of the abdomen will also become noticeable. This nature of 'rising' movement is the wind element, the *vāyodhātu* and is characteristic of *rūpa-khandhā*. Awareness by noting is *nāma-khandhā*. Awareness that occurs in *nāma-khandhā* in realizing merely the nature of sensation is called *viññāna-khandhā*. Joy and happiness which is felt while noting and becoming aware

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is called *sukha-vedanā*. If neutral sensation only occurs without joy or happiness, it is said to be *upekkhā-vedanā*. This *vedanā* is embraced in *vedanakkhandhā*. Knowing the nature of 'rising' movement is *sanññānakkhandhā*. Concentration made with attentiveness to know the nature of "rising" and "stiffness", and then, knowing them distinguishingly is *sankhārakkhandhā*. If they are so analysed, the distinguishing features of the four *khandhās* become distinctly noticeable and known. Therefore, every time contemplation is made on the "rising" of the abdomen, the tense or the stiff movement is *rūpakkhandhā* while the knowing mind that notes, constitutes the four *nāmakkhandhās*. The sum total of these two becomes the five *khandhās*. Every time you contemplate and note, these five *khandhās* will be found. This is what is stated as "finding the tortoise." The body of tortoise is composed of bodily limbs, namely, two arms, two legs and a head which come to a total of five in number.

Furthermore, the five *khandhās* will be noticed every time you contemplate and note as "falling", "sitting", "touching", "bending", "stretching" and so forth. In the act of bending, if you note as "bending", stiffness and the movement that occur is *rūpa*, the form, while awareness gained through noting is *nāma*. *Nāma* is the four *nāma-khandhās*, and *rūpa* comprises one *rūpa-khandhā*. These are the five *khandhās* in all. Similar charac-

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teristics can be known *mutatis mutandis* in respect other physical and mental phenomena when noted. Do not seek for pleasure in these five *khandhās* which are to be contemplated, noted and rejected. This is the essence.

Hence, the question put was “*ko kummo* – What is meant by tortoise?” The answer given was: “*kummoti kho bhikkhu pancanneytam upādānakkhandhānam adhivacanam.*”

The meaning of this answer is: “O, Monk Kumārakassapa! The name “tortoise” is the name given to the “five *upādānakkhandhās*”. The name *upādānakkhandhā* conveys *upādāna* – the attachment that clings to the sensations. These sensations should be dispelled and eliminated by Vipassanā contemplation in order to get rid of the pleasurable desires.

Therefore, Buddha has explained that the expression “*pajaha kumman* – the tortoise should be removed”, means: “Reject the Five *Upādānakkhandhās*.” The Commentary says that the gist of it is to reject the clinging desires of attachment to five *khandhās*. In Vipassanā, the fundamental motto given by me is:

“What should be contemplated to gain Vipassanā knowledge?”

The knowledge is gained by contemplating the five *khandhās*, which are prone to attachment.”

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In this *desanā*, "Tortoise" is the dhamma relating to the five *khandhās*. These five *khandhās* are to be contemplated, noted and then rejected.

Although the five *khandhās* are to be contemplated and rejected, at the initial stage of meditation, only the main nature of five *khandhās* will be known. At this stage, arising and dissolution of these *khandhās* and their nature of impermanence cannot as yet be realized. Only the nature of stiffness and movement will be known when contemplating the rising movement of the abdomen. Hence, there is only awareness of the distinctive features of *nāma* and *rūpa* respectively. When concentration and knowledge become strong and mature, all these dhamma will be distinguishingly known both at the beginning and the end. When it is clearly realized that from the moment of their arising they begin to disappear towards total dissolution, and then, as they will be found to have completely vanished, Vipassanā knowledge occurs with a candid realization that they are impermanent. It should therefore be contemplated to know the truth of the phenomenal occurrences, as stated. It would be necessary to note and realize the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* as *samādhi* becomes strengthened. Only when such realization is achieved, you will be free from the pleasurable feelings and desires connected with the five *khandhās*.

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As such, the Commentator has said “*aniccam veditabbam* – ‘impermanence’ should be known. *Aniccata veditabba* – the characteristic or nature of impermanence should be understood. *Aniccānupassanā veditabbāniccānupassanā* should also be known.”

What is meant by *anicca* is “*aniccanti khandha-pancakam*”, says the Commentary. *Anicca* means the aggregate of five *khandhās*. If the body – *rūpa* is remembered, the phenomenal nature of its arising and dissolution is known depending mainly upon the body. In the same way, the *nāma* can be known and realized in its true perspective. Let us recite the motto.

“The *rūpa-nāma-khandhā* as it arises and dissolves is the nature of impermanence.”

The characteristic of ‘impermanence’ is obvious because of its transient nature, vanishing without lasting. It is just like a flash of lightning. It flashes and disappears all at once. This is the nature of impermanence. You note what is occurring and you will find the occurrences immediately followed by their disappearance. This is evident of the nature of impermanence, without remaining constant even for a moment.

The true characteristic of impermanence will be personally realized only when you have experienced it personally. Then only, the true

knowledge relating to the nature of impermanence will be gained. This can only be achieved by right contemplation.

When such real insight wisdom is achieved, it can lead you to *ariyamagga-phala ñāṇa*. Ordinary worldlings may wrongly think that from infancy up till now as a grown-up, there is continuity of the same mind without any break. This is what is called '*Santati*', similar to the erroneous notion of a long line of white ants. To get rid of this veil that hides the truth, the mind should be contemplated and noted every time it occurs.

When awareness becomes accelerated, the mind or thoughts which are arising, becomes distinguishingly obvious part by part. Then, realization comes that these mental occurrences incessantly appear and vanish all of a sudden. They are found to be impermanent, and the truth of impermanence and of its transient nature will be clearly appreciated.

Take an instance of "*vedanās*" or sensations. Pain, or ache may casually be thought as occurring for quite a long time. If carefully contemplated and noted, every time it is noted as "painful", "painful", it will be found that the painful sensation is occurring singly and is vanishing. It is just like white ants separated

from one another in a row. Pain occurs and then disappears, and this state of flux indicate the nature of impermanence. All bodily behaviour happen in the same manner. When "impermanence" is known through insight knowledge, *dukkha* – suffering, and *anatta* – non-self, will be automatically understood.

Being subjected to impermanence is "*dukkha*", suffering. This "suffering" in itself is '*anatta*'. They are basically the same as dhamma in substance, though they are different in name. Therefore, if *anicca* is known, *dukkha* is understood; and if *dukkha* is known, *anatta* is understood. Now that there is hardly any time to explain at length how knowledge concerning *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* has occurred. Only a brief account of it will therefore be given.

If *anicca* is clearly seen, *dukkha* will be visualised and known. If *dukkha* is known, *anatta* will be perceived. When *anatta* is perceived, Nibbana dhamma will be found. If you want to reach Nibbāna, follow this path. It is however to be remembered that one should be well endowed with proper knowledge mature enough to attain Nibbāna. Nibbāna cannot be reached by merely perceiving *anatta* only about once.

If *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta*, (non-self or unsubstantiality) are truly

realized every time the phenomenal occurrences are contemplated, it amounts to rejection of the five *khandhās* called the 'tortoise'. If you fail to contemplate, you will have no knowledge of what is 'impermanence', 'suffering', or 'non-self'. If you have pleasurable sensation at every moment of seeing, hearing, contacting, knowing, as they arise from the six sense-doors, you will go on thinking them as being "permanent", "happy" "good", "self", "he". "male" or "female", and find delight in them. This is taking delight in the "tortoise". It would therefore amount to finding enjoyment and pleasure in the five *khandhās*.

To avoid having pleasurable enjoyment in the tortoise, advice has been given to reject it. The method of rejection is to contemplate every time the physical and mental phenomena occur, and if that is done, you will be able to distinguish between *rūpa* and *nāma*. As you go on contemplating and noting, their arising and dissolution will be known which will lead you to the realization of the knowledge of the dhamma relating to *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. If this knowledge is acquired, no attachment can take place thinking them as being permanent. This will deter *kilesās* from arising. Otherwise, you will still have a mistaken notion with false attachment that a thing is beautiful, or good, or pleasurable and fine, or a "being", or an "individual."

THE TORTOISE == FIVE KHANDHĀS

What is meant by rejecting the big "tortoise" is to dispel the five *upādānakkhandhās*. Therefore, every time the five *upādānakkhandhās* are contemplated as they occur, it will be in conformity with the statement made in this Sutta.

Then, the question arises as to what extent these five *upādānakkhandhās*, called the 'tortoise', should be contemplated and then rejected? The answer is: It should be contemplated up to the stage of *Anuloma ñāṇa* (knowledge of adaptation on the threshold of *ariyamagga*) which occurs linking with *gotrabhū ñāṇa*, *ariyamagga ñāṇa*, and then rejection should follow. While such rejection is being made in the course of contemplation, the arising and passing away of the physical and mental phenomena will be known with the result that the characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* will become manifest. When this reflective knowledge of *sammāsana ñāṇa* becomes stronger, complete and clear awareness will take place of the arising and dissolution of the sensations in the beginning and the end of the phenomenal processes while being contemplated and noted every time they occur.

This precise knowledge or awareness of the ever-changing phenomena, arising and passing away in an accelerated motion, is *udayabaya ñāṇa*. Again, when this *udayabara ñāṇa* gains maturity, every time it is noted, the end-vanishing of the

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sense-feelings is more clearly manifested and becomes more noticeable than the beginning of their arising. This knowledge and awareness of the process of vanishing in pairs of the sense-object and the knowing mind at every moment of contemplation is called *bhaṅga ñāṇa*. Having perceived that both the knowing mind and the phenomenal sense objects are incessantly dissolving and vanishing both within and outside, it would occur to the meditator that "nothing is dependable and everything is really frightful". This is what is called *baya ñāṇa* (awareness of frightful condition). When such awareness of fright takes place, all sensations which are known and the knowing mind successively appearing, will be considered as being faulty and undesirable in many different ways. This is what is known as *ādinava ñāṇa*. If, from among the many faults that have been realized by the knowledge, reflection is made in connection with the pleasurable sensations of *kāmaguna*, it would appear similar to the 'Dah' (a short sword with one sharp-edged blade) and the wooden slab for chopping meat.

A DAH AND THE WOODEN SLAB FOR CHOPPING MEAT

Hence, relating to the question as to "what is meant by the expression – *ka asisūnā* – the Dah and the wooden slab for chopping meat, Buddha has given the answer as: "*Asisūnāti kho bhikkhu pancanneytam kāmagunānam adhivacanam.*"

A DAH AND THE WOODEN SLAB FOR CHOPPING MEAT

The above answer denotes: "O, monk Kassapa! the name of 'the Dah and the wooden slab for chopping meat' refers to the name of '*panca kāmāgūna*' or the five pleasures of sense, namely, pleasurable sights, sounds, odours, tastes, and contacts." When the flesh of the meat is to be cut, it should be cut with the 'Dah' after placing the flesh on the wooden slab kept flat underneath. In the same way, the 'Dah' of *kilesā* is cutting and slicing off all sentient beings, using the five pleasurable sensations of *kāmāgūna* as a base (wooden slab). It means to say that having found pleasure and delight in the five pleasures of sense or *kāmāgūna* by *kilesās* – human passionate desires, people are in trouble and suffering. Even to gain pleasurable sensations, one has to strive with great physical and mental hardships. While so doing, if some improper *akusala* or vices are committed, one will go down to the four nether worlds after his demise. It is analogous to being cruelly illtreated and cut off with the 'Dah' of *rāga*, human passions or evil desires, after being placed on the wooden slab of *kāmāgūna*. Apart from that, even if one happens to be reborn in the human world or the world of Devas by virtue of his merits, he will face death and die eventually. Death is inevitable in any form of existence. One meets with death because of sufferings brought about by *kilesās*. It resembles the killing by

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cutting off with the 'Dah' of *kilesā kamma* after placing it on the wooden slab of the sensation of *kāmaguna*.

Since the time is limited at my disposal, it will not be commented upon with elaboration. Briefly put, the meaning of the statement: "reject the Dah and the wooden slab for chopping meat"—is to contemplate on the pleasurable sensations of *kāmaguna* with the knowledge of '*ādīnava ñāṇa*' and reject the attachment to these senses of pleasures.

When becoming aware of the unsatisfactory condition through *ādīnava ñāṇa*, no pleasurable feeling will arise on all sensations that are contemplated and on the contemplating mind as well as on all reflective moods. In fact, the mind becomes wearisome. There is also disgust. It is also devoid of pleasure knowing fully well the truth of psycho-physical phenomena that have taken place. This awareness is *nibbidā ñāṇa*, knowledge of wearisome condition and disgust.

Buddha has preached how this knowledge arises as follows:

"*Rūpesuṭṭi nibbindatī* – weariness has occurred on the visual object that is seen; *cakkhuvīññāṇepi nibbindatī* – becomes wearisome relating to what is seen and known; *dhammesuṭṭi nibbindatī* – becomes

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tedious and disgusted with the awareness of the mind that imagines the sensation; *manoviññānēpi nibbindati* – weariness is felt on consciousness of imagination and of noting.”

When becoming wearisome in the said manner, desire arises to abandon or get release from this body-mind complex. This is *muncitu kamyatā ñāṇa*. Wishing to gain deliverance, contemplation is to be continuously made as usual. When contemplated again as such, special awareness takes place, which is extraordinary. This special knowledge is known as *patisankhā ñāṇa*. As this *ñāṇa* gains maturity, knowledge that can view psycho-physical phenomena with equanimity arises, which is known as *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa*. Among the knowledges of Vipassanā, this knowledge is the best (except *anuloma*). Therefore, when this knowledge arises, one feels pleasant affording him pleasure and causing extremely delicate passion for dhamma – “*dhamma-rāga*”. If this passionate feeling cannot be discarded, *ariya-magga-phāla ñāṇa* will not be achieved. As such, it is of paramount importance to do away with this *dhamma rāga*.

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Of all the fifteen riddles, it has been given the name of “*mansapesi*”, i.e. a piece of flesh, in view of its prime importance. Therefore, in response to the question that was put as: “What

is the meaning of the expression – “a piece of flesh”?”, Buddha has given the reply as “*mansa-pesīti kho bhikkhu nandirāgasettam ādhivacanam.*” It means:

“O, Bhikkhu Kassapa! The name of the ‘piece of meat flesh’ is *nandirāgasa*, that is, *rāga* which has a tendency to incline towards pleasurable attachment.” People who are meat-eaters or non-vegetarians are very fond of meat. Lions, tigers, wild-dogs (jackals), and eagles, crows or other similar birds of prey are also fond of meat. All those beings who crave for meat generally whirl round about it. Particularly, ants, crows and dogs have to be scared away. Flies also flock or swarm round the flesh to have a share in it. They too relish it. In the same manner, the nature of pleasurable sensation and attachment are relished by all and sundry. Sweet music and melodious sounds are agreeable to everybody. People like to smell good fragrance and odour, and take delicious food. They find enjoyment in sweet smell and tasty food. They wish to enjoy pleasurable sense of touch, and find pleasure by immersing themselves in delightful imagination. This bent of mind or inclination is *nandirāga*. For them life is really pleasurable. Even in listening to the sermons, they would only appreciate if *nandirāga* or pleasurable sense of hearing occurs. They want to hear good, humorous and interesting stories.

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In regard to literature, generally they do not seem to enjoy reading scriptural texts as these invoke no interest. That is why novels and romantic stories or comics of the present day are the best sellers. People like them and are keen on reading them with great appetite because the writers' talents have awakened *nandirāga* in them. Even tragic or thrilling stories bring them pity and sympathy or fright, anxiety or anger though they realize that these stories are fictions. Being stimulated and impulsed by *nandirāga*, they have spent a lot of money in buying the books which appeal to them. They have also appetite for plays, concerts, movies, or popular songs which give them pleasure and delight and which in fact stimulate their *nandirāga*. Some of the people enjoy themselves in taking liquors which are stated to have given them pleasure and fine imagination. *Nandirāga* dominates them in their worldly life. Such *nandirāgas* are regarded as crude and these have got to be rejected in an earlier stage. It should be rejected in the process of contemplation. As a matter of fact, it has been embraced in the earlier rejection of *kāmicchandha*. If the crude form of *nandirāga* cannot be dismissed from the very outset, it would not be possible even to come over to where the sermon is to be delivered for listening, far less indulging in meditation.

Those who have found pleasure in *nandirāga* stay away from monasteries or pagodas (shrines).

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They feel even reluctant to play a short visit to such holy places to obtain merits. Then also, in the course of contemplation, *nandirāga* may appear. It so happens that when feeling rejoiced in reflecting the various phenomenal occurrences as being the true nature of impermanence, suffering and Non-Self, as stated earlier, he just merely notes them as such. While so contemplating and noting, the arising and passing away of the phenomenal occurrence becomes very vivid and clear cut. He will then feel at ease in both body and mind and become poised. Sensations seem to arise automatically, and awareness also becomes automatic. At that moment when contemplation and noting is in proper order, radiance or the bright light may appear. One may feel as if dancing in the air (wind) or riding on the waves. The mind also becomes buoyant with a feeling of rapture (*pīti*). At this juncture, he might feel happy and satisfied with what is happening. That means finding the dhamma tasty with a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. It is also *nandirāga*, the little piece of flesh. It should therefore be removed or dispelled by contemplating and noting it. Of course, it has already been embraced in the rejection of the tortoise. As mentioned earlier, after passing beyond this stage, Vipassanā insight will be developed eventually leading to *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa*.

With the realization of *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, noting becomes smooth, good and easy requiring

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no special effort to note and become conscious of all what is happening. The awareness of noting and of arising and dissolution of the mental and physical phenomena becomes spontaneous, and keen consciousness of mind occurs continuously for five, ten, twenty or thirty minutes or even one, two or three hours without any physical discomfort such as, stiffness, ache, pain, hotness or tiredness. Relaxation and comfort will be found while remaining in sitting posture which is considered agreeable. This kind of appreciation with great satisfaction is also *nandirāga*. This satisfactory feeling of awareness should continue to be contemplated and noted, and if it is carried on, it would become increasingly progressive escalating towards more and more acceleration in the process of noting with awareness. It will be something like making a dash to the winning post in a running event. The mind that is noted will appear and then vanish in a moment repeatedly. This will eventually carry off to the state of complete cessation and total eradication of the phenomenal processes of the arising and passing away of *rūpa* and *nāma*, and then all of a sudden, Nibbāna is seen in a flash. When it is so attained, the realization of *ariyamagga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa* - Nibbāna, takes place. This is *sotāpatti magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa*. It is the manner in which the stage of *magga-phala* is attained after rejecting *nandirāga*.

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On attainment of this first *magga* and *phala*, when becoming a Sotāpanna (stream-winner), if he continues to meditate and contemplate, *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa* will be reached but *nandirāga* may yet appear. If enjoyment with the taste of dhamma takes place with *nandirāga*, the satisfactory condition that is felt, if contemplated again, noted and then rejected, he will reach the stage of *sagadāgāmi magga-phala*. Thereafter, as a Sagadāgāmi, if contemplation and noting is carried on, progressive strides will be made towards *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa* by which the *dhamma rāga* will be tasted. The sensation felt would appear nice and pleasurable. If he feels agreeable and pleasurable to such sensation and feels rejoiced in it, no progress will be made in Vipassanā insight knowledge. If, however, this pleasurable sense of *nandirāga* – the piece of flesh – were contemplated and noted and also rejected, *anāgāmi magga-phala* will be achieved. He will then become an Anāgāmi.

If, as an Anāgāmi, he continues to go on diligently with his contemplation, progress will be gained by stages. Thus, when knowledge of *sankhārupekkhā* is attained, the flavour of dhamma will be found extremely tasty and nice. If he then remains contented with pleasure derived from this good and agreeable *sankhārupekkhā*, he may be said to have been stricken with *dhamma-rāga*, i.e. *Dhamma nandi*. If that

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dhamma rāga, called the "flesh", is contemplated by him ordinarily without being able to reject it, no further progressive insight will be achieved. Such a person after death, will be reborn in *suddhavāsa*, a Brahmā heaven, since he has failed to attain *arahatta-magga-phala* in his life time. Referring to this, it has been preached as: "*Tenava dhamma rāgena tāya dhamma-nandiyā opapātiko hoti tatthā parinibbāyi.*"

The above conveys the meaning that because of *rāga* - attachment to *sankhārupekkhā vipassanā* and of the clinging desire with gusto, re-birth takes place in *suddhavāsa* abode. Then, after becoming an Arahant at this abode of *suddhavāsa*, when the life-span expires, he will enter into *parinibbāna*. This is the *desanā*, the Teaching, which explains as to how the attainment of Arahantship has been hindered in the present existence because of this "small piece of flesh", called *nandirāga*. *Nandirāga* should, therefore, be expelled or rejected. The expression "*pajaha mamsapesim*" - reject the piece of flesh - means "*pajāha nandirāgam*" - reject the *nandirāga*. This is as elucidated by the Buddha Himself. The statement "reject the *nandirāga*" has been explained by the Commentary which says that the meaning of it as: "Total rejection of *nandirāga* is made by *arahatta-magga*."

Hence, says the Motto: "What is the piece of flesh? It is the *rāga*, human passion, that brings the desirable attachment."

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NAGA (DRAGON) -- THE ARAHAT

If a person making advancement in the progress of insight, after rejecting this pleasurable sensation, will immediately attain *arahatta-magga-phala* and become an Arahata completely free from *nandirāga*. When becoming an Arahata himself, extinct from all kinds of *kilesā*, he is deemed to have come across the Arahata – ‘dragon!’, As such, the Buddha had answered “*Nāgoti kho bhikkhu khināsavassetam ādhivacanam.*” in reply to the question put as: “*ka nāgo, i.e. What is meant by ‘Nāga’?*”

The gist of the above answer is: “O, Bhikkhu Kassapa! The term ‘*Nāga*’ – dragon – implies an Arahata, whose name it is.” The statement that a dragon (Naga, in Burmese) is found, conveys the meaning that he himself having attained Arahatship becomes an Arahata. As he himself had personally found the apostle ‘*Nāga*’ in his capacity as an Arahata free from all *kilesās*, Buddha is clearly known to him as the genuine Venerable Arahata. It would, therefore, tantamount to meeting the Divine Dragon—the Supreme Buddha. He himself having got rid of all *kilesās*, human passions, knows for certain and becomes elated that Buddha has preached this dhamma with his own supreme Wisdom gained from personal experience as an Enlightened One who has escaped from all fetters of *kilesā*. This is how the Buddha or the Divine Dragon has been found.

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The Motto is: "What is the dragon? It is the Arahāt who has exterminated the human passions – *Āsavo* which includes sensual pleasures, love of existence, defilement of ignorance and heresy. Here ends the Dhamma.

Therefore, let us recite the last answer. "It is to remember – *Nīvarana* is very similar to water strainer; tortoise to the *khandhā*; *kāmā* – the wooden slab; *Nandi* – the flesh; and the Divine Dragon – the Arahāt."

WORSHIP THE DRAGON

When the 'dragon' was found, the Brahmana Teacher had said as to what should be done. He had stated as follows:

"Titthatu nāgo, mā nāgam ghadesi, namo kārohi nāgassa."

This is to say: "Let the dragon stay where it lies. Do not disturb or harm this dragon. The dragon may be revered and worshipped." It means that after becoming an Arahāt, there is nothing more to be done or nothing else to be rejected too.

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What is meant by the statement: "The dragon may be revered and worshipped." It denotes: "As he himself had become an Arahāt, he had actually found the Buddha Arahāt, the Divine

Dragon.” Therefore, worship the Buddha, the Omniscient, since he, as an Arahāt himself had found the Divine Dragon, the Buddha-Arahāt. Arahāts ardently and willingly revere the Buddha without any one’s advice or inducement. People who are meditating has utmost reverence for the Buddha after having tasted the sweets of dhamma. How to worship has been preached in Culasaccaka Sutta of the Mūla Pannāsa Pāli.

“Buddho so bhagavā bhodāya dhammam deseti”

Marvellous indeed is the Buddha, really worthy of reverence and refuge, who having distinguishingly realized the Four Noble Truths has preached us – all beings, the Truth of the noble Dhamma with his Universal Love and deep compassion and with his all-knowing Wisdom.

Buddha has taught and prescribed us the way to escape from the miseries of existence or worldly life by delivering the Four Noble Truths in detail citing various examples and illustrations, which in essence will be explained in brief.

Contemplate at every moment of phenomenal occurrences out of the six sense-doors, and arising of the six sensations, six *viññānas*, six senses of touch, and six *vedanās*. This is the essence of Tipitaka, put in a nutshell. The senses

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arising from the six doors or apertures, viz the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the touch, the mind are all to be contemplated. Each '*dvāra*' or door has five attributes, respectively. Six times five is thirty. If these thirty dhammas were contemplated to know the real truth of the dhamma, *arahatta-phala* will be reached leading ultimately to the attainment of Nibbāna. Concisely preached, this would be comprehensive enough. If it were preached in such an abbreviated manner, some of the people may not be able to comprehend. Tripitaka or the three baskets of canons are voluminous. Through compassion, Buddha has preached all throughout his span of life taking great pains to save all mankind. This is the manner in which the Arahats worship the Blessed One. Let us bear in mind that we have come to know the truth of the dhamma by adhering to and by practising all what has been preached, and such being the case, we shall pay our heartfelt homage to the Lord Buddha.

The Blessed One would have been very much relieved from trouble and hardship if he had remained without preaching and proclaiming his dhamma, after his attainment of Supreme Enlightenment. If he had absorbed himself in *jhāna* and *phala samāpatti*, he would have peacefully found ecstatic delight. However, without seeking

self-happiness by remaining in a trance, he had preached his dhamma all through a period of forty-five years for the welfare and bliss of the many, day and night, without any rest. Let us therefore revere the Buddha again with our immense gratitude and make a recitation as follows:

“Buddho so bhagavā bhodāya dhammam deseti”

The Blessed One in whose Refuge mankind has found peaceful shade and shelter, having distinctly realized the Four Noble Truths in an analytical way, has preached, out of sheer deep compassion, the Four Noble Truths with his infinite Wisdom and foresight to enable all beings to see the light of real Dhamma.

There are five neatly phrased compliments to be borne in mind in the manner of worshipping the Buddha, and these are:

- (1) Realization has come to the Buddha by his own unaided effort and He, the Illumined One, has made available to all beings to understand the Universal Principles of Truth.
- (2) Having himself got rid of all harmful and poisonous *kilesās* or defilements of human passions, the Buddha has tamed all beings by his preachings showing them the way to entertain right thoughts.

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- (3) Buddha, having reached the state of calmness of mind and tranquility, and being endowed with noble-mindedness, preached all beings to become knowledgeable, gentle and calm like Him.
- (4) Buddha himself having escaped from the whirlpool in the ocean of *Samsarā*, has preached all beings to get liberated from the miseries of existence and to reach the shore of Nibbāna on the other side of the immensely vast ocean of *Samsarā*.
- (5) Buddha having personally and fully extinguished the fires of lust and passion – the *kilesās*, has preached the dhamma to all mankind to be able to extinguish the burning *kilesās* which have encompassed them in their worldly lives.

Relating to the above, the first one is expressed in the following phrase:

(1) *Buddho so bhagavā bhodāya dhamman deseti.*

And the second runs as follows:

(2) *Danto so bhagavā damathāya dhamman deseti.*

Those who practise in compliance with the preachings of the Buddha become more refined in manners and also cultured, all the more so in commensurate with the degree of their res-

pective ability to practise with diligence. This is the benefit derived from the Buddhist way of life and culture. In the manner of personal behaviour and of speech, such people can become elegant, gentle and noble. The rule of moral training is such that they will refrain themselves from killing or illtreating other living things. Verbally also, they will avoid telling falsehood and refrain from giving trouble to others. This will make one to become highly cultured and civilised. It, however, falls within the ambit of morality or *sīla*. When it comes to the region of *samādhi*, if one really practises dhamma with heart and soul, no grudge or ill-will will have any chance to occur. In the domain of *paññā* or knowledge, if one practises seriously with faith and devotion, evil seeds of *kilesā* will not even germinate. Hence, passionate desires, such as greed, anger, etc., will not arise.

In ancient times prior to the emergence of the Buddha, the people may be said to be rather primitive and uncouth from the point of view of Buddhist culture, simply because human passions were uncontrolled and were let loose. According to the Scriptures, Buddha Sāsana had spread to Burma during the time of the King Thiri Dhammā-Soka (Asoka), 236 years after the *parinibbāna* of the Lord Buddha. At that time when religious missions were sent out to proclaim the dhamma to nine countries and nine

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places, a place called Suvannabhūmi was one of the places the missionaries had visited. Majority of the people are of the opinion that Suvannabhūmi is the town of Thaton in the Union of Burma. But some intellectuals have said it is Sumatra Island in Indonesia. It is quite obvious that Buddha Sāsana had once flourished in Thaton district. Buddha Sāsana appeared to have spread to Thaton in Burma from Sumatra. In those days, one Ashin Sona and Ashin Ottara came to Burma as missionaries. It seems that Burma has inherited the Buddhist culture from that time onwards. Before that era, people in Burma were under-developed from the point of view of civilization and culture, and therefore they must be deemed to have become cultivated and polished only after the year 236 of the Sāsana Era. It then concerned only Lower Burma. According to the history of Burma, about the year 940-950 B.E., when upper Burma was under the reign of the famous King Anawrahta, Shin Araham was invited by the King for the promulgation of the Sāsana (which later had sprung up from Pagan). Buddhist culture must be said to have become flourished in Burma since then.

It is, therefore, fundamentally important to preserve and maintain the Buddhist culture inherited from the Buddha's Sāsana which has been traditionally handed down to us from our forefathers. If we fail to practise the Buddha's

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dhamma, this fine culture will be obliterated or dwindled into oblivion, and if this Sāsana is faded out, people, not knowing what is Buddha and dhamma, will be thrown into ruin and disaster by indulging in all sorts of vices and by committing evils. If profoundly imagined, such an awful state of things would be unthinkable, frightful and disastrous.

About five years ago, I had been to Indonesia on a religious mission. Buddhism had once flourished there where traces of it could still be found. At some later date with the introduction of their own faith and religion by the ruling Muslims in that country, it has become an Islamic State. There are now a few Buddhists in Indonesia. During my stay in that country, after having observed the activities of the people there, I happened to recollect a religious piece of writing, a passage extracted from the Dhamma, which runs as quoted below:

“Buddho loke samuppanno hitayā sabba paninam.”

Buddha has appeared for the benefit of all mankind. Now that over 2500 years have elapsed. These people who were found actively moving about and doing things, did not seem to have any knowledge of the birth of a Buddha. Generally, even in villages within the Union of Burma though the inhabitants are all Buddhists, it has occurred to me that the Sāsana in these Bur-

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mese villages and hamlets could one day sink into oblivion. If it so happens, the state of affairs will be really pitiable.

We should therefore keep on guard with constant vigil to save the Buddhist culture from deterioration or destruction. The method of protection is to personally practise *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. In particular, efforts should be made to practise *kammatthāna* meditation so as to reach the stage of *Sotāpanna*. It would also be necessary to encourage and give incentive to all our future generation – our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to continue practising meditation in order to preserve and prolong this noble heritage of the Buddhist culture.

The Buddha in whom we all are taking refuge, having eliminated all *kilesās* and become fully knowledgeable and highly cultured, has shown us the way with his penetrating foresight and deep wisdom to get fruitfully liberated from the impurities of *kilesā* in the manner in which he himself has succeeded in doing so.

Sādhu

Sādhu

Sādhu

(3) “*Santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammam deseti.*”

The Blessed One on whom reliance has been and is being made by all of us, having gained peace and tranquility of mind by getting rid of human passions and sensual desires, and having

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had a benevolent desire wishing all other beings to attain mental peace and calmness, has preached and taught us nobly to see the Truth of the Dhamma by invoking his noble wisdom which serves as a forerunner.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

(4) “*Tinno so bhagavā taranaya dhammam deseti.*”

The Blessed One in whom we all have to seek refuge, having crossed the deep Ocean of *Samsarā*, the round of existences, and reached the other side of the bank – Nibbāna, has preached with great compassion and profound wisdom the Truth of the Dhamma to enable all humanity to escape from all miseries and get beyond the ocean of *samsarā*.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

All beings are drifting along the raging torrent of *samsarā*. This torrential flood of *samsarā* is made up of four *oghas*, namely, *kāmogha*, *bhāvogha*, *ditthogha*, and *avijjhogha*. *Kāmogha* is the *kāma* stream of waters, the flood of sensual desires. This whirlpool flood can suck in or sink a person and kill him. The same kind of disaster or fate will befall a being who gets into the whirlpool of *mogha*. If such a being possesses an ability to perform the meritorious deeds of

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dāna (gift or charity), and *sīla* (morality) etc., he might have some relief by being reborn in heaven or human world – *sugati*. If not, having committed vices by resorting to killing, ill-treating, stealing, robbing, cheating and doing illegal acts (malfeasance), he will be drowned in the four nether worlds. This is flowing into or carrying off with the current of *kāma*.

Those who have performed meritorious deeds in the present existence will be reborn after death, in the human or celestial worlds where they will again have to undergo the same miserable process of old age, sickness and death, apart from encountering and going through various kinds of physical and mental distress and suffering. This is floating along the stream of *kāma* towards *kāma sugati*. *Bhavogha* means clinging attachment to the pleasant existence of *rūpabhava* and *arūpabhava*, form and formless existences in the Brahmā world. In these existences too, death will eventually take place. This amounts to succumbing to death by drowning in the ever raging torrent of existence called *bhava*. *Ditthogha* is the false view or false doctrine called *micchāditti*. *Avijjhogha* indicates the acceptance of erroneous concept of *nicca*—permanency, *sukha*—happiness, and *atta*—self or ego, instead of the true conception of the nature of dhamma as *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (non-self). Because of this ig-

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norance (*avijjā*) and wrong belief (*ditthi*), one will go down to the four Nether Worlds with the concomitant effect of misery and all kinds of sufferings. Even in the world of human beings and devas, one will come across numerous sufferings. In the Brahmā World too, death is inevitable. Therefore, this is nothing but killing a being by drowning him in a rushing stream of waters or current called '*avijjā*' and '*ditthi*'.

The Buddha has thus preached this noble Dhamma to save all beings from the Ocean of *Samsarā*, the continued existences, in which they are drifting hither and thither so as to reach a safety zone, the Region of Deathless, called Nibbāna. Therefore, Buddha has exhorted us – all mankind – to hold fast to the Truth of Dhamma and work out our own salvation with diligence.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

(5) *Parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammam deseti.*

The Blessed One who is truly worthy of reverence by all of us, having eliminated all human passions has preached to all mankind and shown us the Light of true Dhamma with full compassion and wisdom so as to render benefit to all living beings enabling them to extinguish all *kilesas*.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

CONCLUSION

Now that Vammika Sutta dhamma has completely come to an end quite comprehensively. As stated in the Sutta, Ashin Kumārakassapa after reaching *magga-phala* and exterminating human passions, had become an Arahāt. Some time later, on one occasion Ashin Kumārakassapa was conferred upon by the Blessed One, with the pre-eminent title of *Etadagga*, extolling him as being the noblest and the most learned monk among his disciples who could preach the dhamma in a most surprisingly queer and distinctive manner. Let us therefore wind up the Sermon after re-iterating a few mottos.

CONCLUSION

“Seeing a big *Ant-Hill*, *smoky* alive by night, and vomiting *bright flames* by day, the *noble* teacher counselling his *elegant pupil*, to find out what’s the matter about, and on *digging* it with the sharp edge of the *spade*, emerged a *door-bolt* followed by an *ugly wicked toad*, a *road junction*, a *soap-water strainer*, a *cunning tortoise*, a *dah*, along with a *wooden slab* for chopping meat, a *piece of solid flesh* and a *Divine Dragon*, thereby making a total of *fifteen riddles* in *seriatim*.”

1. Mound; Ant-hill – the Body; Smoke – the Imagination; Flame – the Performance; Teacher – the Buddha; Pupil – the wise Yogī; and ‘tis for you to retain in memory.

VAMMIKA SUTTA DHAMMA

2. Spade – the Knowledge; Digging – the Exertion; Door-bolt – the *Avijjā*; Toad – the Anger; Road junction – the Doubt; And know thyself all about.
3. Similar is *nīvarana* to Water-strainer; Tortoise to *khandhā*; *Kāmā* to Wooden Slab; *Nandī* – the Flesh; Divine Dragon – the Arahāt; And 'tis to note for you by heart.

BENEFICIAL RESULT OF VIPASSANĀ

If *anicca* is seen, *dukkha*'s reflection comes into the scene

If *dukkha* is reflected, perception of *anatta* becomes keen

Anatta when revealed rushes into the Nibbāna stream

Nibbāna, if seen, certainly brings liberation from *apāya* realm

May all those good and pious people who form this Congregation, by virtue of having devotedly given close attention to this Sermon on Vammika Sutta Dhamma, be forever free from all dangers and disaster and be able to practise assiduously the method of Vipassanā meditation as instructed in this Sutta Dhamma, and after passing through different stages of Vipassanā insight leading ultimately to the knowledge of *ariyamagga*, speedily attain the Bliss of Nibbāna – fully emancipated from all miseries and sufferings.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is a bibliography of books in English version on texts of dhamma written by the Venerable Agga Mahā Pandita Mahāsī Sayādaw, one of the most outstanding figures in the hierarchy of the world famous Buddhist Monks. These have been truthfully translated from the Burmese version of the books and published by the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization, Mahāsī Sāsana Yeikthā, 16, Hermitage Road, Rangoon. Some texts not included here are still in the process of publication. All these texts are of great value and cover almost every aspect of Vipassanā meditation besprinkled with the essence of the Scriptures in the field of Buddhism.

1. Vipassanā Meditation Exercise.
2. Practical Basic Exercises.
3. Satipatthāna Vipassanā Meditation.
4. Satipatthāna Vipassanā Meditation –
 Criticisms & Replies.
5. Mahāsi Abroad (Two Series).
6. Progress of Insight.
7. Purpose of Practising Kammatthāna Meditation.
8. Fundamentals of Vipassanā Meditation.
9. Discourse on Ariyāvāsa Sutta.

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10. Discourse on Lokadhamma.
11. Discourse on To Nibbāna via The Noble Eightfold Path.
12. Discourse on Bhāra Sutta.
13. Discourse on Hemavata Sutta.
14. Discourse on Sakkapanhā Sutta.
15. Discourse on Sammā Paribbājaniya Sutta.
16. Discourse on Culavedalla Sutta.
17. Discourse on The Nature of Nibbāna.
18. Discourse on Mālukyaputta Sutta.
19. Discourse on Sallekha Sutta.
20. Discourse on The Wheel of Dhamma (Dhammacakkappavattāna Sutta).
21. Discourse on Dhammadāyāda Sutta.
22. Discourse on Vammika Sutta
23. Discourse on Vipassanā
24. Discourse on Silavanta Sutta

AND

BIOGRAPHY OF THE VENERABLE

MAHĀSĪ SAYĀDAW

(Written by Ashin Silānandābhivamsa)

S.P.P.K.

5-8-82

2000

**THE LAST WORDS
OF
THE BLESSED ONE**

*"Handa dānti bhikkhave āmantayāmi vo
vayadhammā sankhārā appamādena sam-
pādeṭha."*

"Behold now, O Bhikkhus, I exhort
you saying, Decay is inherent in all
component things. Be vigilant and
work out your own salvation with
diligence!"

