

# **THIS NOBLE LIFE**

**BY**

**Ashin Kuṇḍalābhivamsa**

**Saddhammaramaṣī Centre Sayadaw  
Mahāsi Nāyaka,  
Agga Mahā Kammatthānācariya**

**Translated by Dr. Kay Mya Yee**

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ASHIN KUNDALABHIVAMSA**

# **THIS NOBLE LIFE**

## **Preface**

On a certain occasion I went to see the Venerable Saddhamamaransi Sayadaw. He said "U Ukkansa, I have written a book again", When I saw the title of the book, I was repeatedly overwhelmed with the suffusing joy. The title of the book is, "This Noble Life".

I was overjoyed while listening to the dhamma talk on the nobility of the human life which the Sayadaw elaborately and explicitly explained. Now the Sayādaw has written a book on that dhamma talk, supplementing with quotations from the Pali and Attakattā Texts making it more complete. For the dhamma-loving devotees, this book is believed to be invaluable and a priceless ruby of the king of all universe. The invaluable priceless book of Sayadaw's dhamma talk made me extremely joyous over and over again.

## THIS NOBLE LIFE

This human world is the noblest one out of all the thirty-one planes of life. Why is it?

It is only in the human world, like the innumerable amount of sand in the Ganges river, that the Buddhas, the noblest and omniscient ones had enlightened. Moreover, the noble Pacceka Buddhas, aggasāvakas, mahā-savakas and the kings of all universe had arisen only in this human world.

Furthermore, this human world is like a fertile land where the noble seeds of dāna can be sown. For example, even the king of devas transformed himself into the form of a human being as a poor weaver, had gained dāna merit from the arahat Ashin Mahā Kassapa by offering dāna just as the arahat arose from Attainment of Extinction or Cessation (nirodha samāpatti).

Similarly this human abode is like the fertile field where one can sow good seeds of sīla. The Buddha-to-be Usankhāpāla, the dragon king, unconcerned about his body but just like a leaf, observed sila firmly at a mount near the River Kannavanṇa. Besides, in this human world, this human life is the noblest of all abodes, for the reason that, one can enjoy the flowers and fruits of the noble magga, phala and nibbāna by sowing

## **THIS NOBLE LIFE**

the seeds of the vipassanā meditation in the fertile field of the human abode.

The Ven. Sayadaw had written this book "This Noble life" complete with the elaborate and explicit explanation of the noble essence of the human life. With the objective to encourage the devotees who are desirous of attaining nibbāna through magga ñāna, and phala ñāna, to observe sīla, to perform dāna and to practise meditation until they have realized magga, phala and nibbāna. It is inevitable that their aspiration will be fulfilled since they have the two opportune times, namely, to be reborn in this human abode and to be in the presence of Buddha's sāsana.

Accordingly, this book is written with full loving-kindness and volition. After reading and studying this book may the devotees be able to enjoy personally the essence of the human life and swiftly realize the noblest magga, phala and nibbāna.

**Ashin Ukkamisa**

(Dhammācariya)

Gandharum Monastery

Kyaikwaing, Thamaing

Yangon

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## Points to Note

- \* It is very difficult to be a human being
- \* It is very difficult to be alive
- \* It is very difficult to listen to dhamma
- \* It is very difficult to be present in sāsana
- \* It is very difficult to have the confluence of four factors.

- \* Although it is difficult to have the confluence

Now these four factors are in concurrence

- \* There should be realization of ariya magga  
When the confluence of four factors occurs
- \* The enlightenment of the Buddha is rightly the ninth opportune time
- \* Living in a place where sāsana flourishes is an opportune time
- \* Having a right view is certainly an opportunity
- \* Being endowed with the six-fold-sensitivity is the opportune time.

# THIS NOBLE LIFE

## Chapter I

Namotassa bhagavato arahato  
sammāsambuddhassa

### The Difficulty in Becoming a Human Being

THIS PRESENT LIFE, attained by Buddhists endowed with knowledge and wisdom, is the most noble one in many of all past existences.

This very life one has attained, can condition the future rebirths, because it can create better and more noble rebirths than the present one; it can also provide an opportunity for the attainment of blissful nibbāna, the cessation of rebirths. Moreover, it is the one which prevents rebirths lower and inferior than the present life. Hence, the present human life is the most noble existence.

The Buddhists have special faith in the Buddha's dhamma. Accordingly they also believe in the beginningless round of rebirths and that they have undergone the uncountable number of existences. These uncountable number of existences can be classified into two types;

- (1) Sugati bhava — happy course of existence
- (2) Duggati bhava—woeful course of existence.

The human world, the six celestial planes, the twenty brahma realms are the sugati bhava. We have undergone uncountable rebirths in the human world, the celestial abode and the brahma realms.

The duggati bhava are:

- (1) Hell where one experiences all kinds of sufferings.
- (2) Animal world where one has less opportunity to be reborn in higher realms as they are unable to do any good deed.

- (3) Peta world where one experiences various kinds of sufferings such as starvation.
- (4) Asūrakāya world where living beings have disgraceful bodies, a huge body with a tiny mouth as small as the eye of a needle, eyes on top of the head and so on.

We have been reborn in these woeful states many a time.

All worldlings together with us have been reborn in the lower abodes or apāya, such as hell, animal, peta, asūrakāya, etc. many more times than that we have been reborn in the higher abodes such as the human world, celestial planes and brahma realms. This indicates that we have spent more time suffering in apāya.

Thereupon, the Aṭṭhakattā teachers comment,  
"Cattāro apāyā sakageha sadisā"

"The four apāya abodes are just like the permanent home of the worldings, whereas the existences in the human world, celestial planes and brahma realms

are like appearing as guests once in a while."

This very life of ours is the existence which can condition the complete liberation from the lower apāya abodes and never to be reborn there again. Consequently this very life is the noble existence.

This very life of ours, in other words to be a human being, is included in the happy desirable abodes. Comparing with celestial planes and the brahma realms, the human world has more sufferings and less happiness and a shorter life. However, in this life, one can acquire noble dhamma, to be completely liberated from the apāya existences which have no happiness whatsoever but incessant sufferings. For this reason, although it is full of sufferings with less happiness and a shorter life, the present life we have, is the noble one.

**The short life in the human world**

Fifty years in the human world is equivalent to one day in the Catumahārajikā deva plane;

half-day in the Tāvatisa deva plane; six hours in the Yāmā deva plane; three hours in the Tusitā deva plane; one and a half-hour in the Nimmānārati deva plane and seventy five minutes in the Paranimitta-vasavatti plane.

Though the human life is very short, it provides opportunities to accumulate the special wholesome deeds to be reborn in the long-life of deva and brahma realms and to be liberated forever from the apāya abodes. These are the reasons why this very life is the noble one.

### **The happy world of deva and brahma**

The deva and brahma are not conceived in the mother's womb to suffer for nine or ten months like the human being because of the influence of the wholesome deeds that they have done in their human life. The devas appear happily in their celestial mansions as though being awakened from their sleep and dropped from the sky as a twenty years old devaputta and as a sixteen years old devadhitā.

The devas of the six celestial planes, according to their deeds have a life-span as long as several thousand years in terms of human life. As for the brahmas, their life-span is as long as many aeons. Moreover there is no extreme weather but only mild climates.

They can easily obtain the desired clothing, food and beverage as soon as they incline their mind towards them and have no problems to acquire them.

The deva and brahma do not experience the apparent old age. Unlike human beings, no deva had been observed toothless, white-haired, deaf and weak-eyed. They have everlasting graceful appearance.

This human life you now have among that of human and celestial realms, is the most noble life where you can develop the wholesome dhamma such as faith (saddhā); become a noble person; and close the gateway to apāya. This human life being a noble one is indicated by the three messages uttered by the deva when the devas are about to pass away.

**Five omens**

The five omens appear to the devas when they are about to pass away.

- (1) The flowers worn by the deva automatically wither.
- (2) Their apparel are no longer brilliant.
- (3) Sweatings from the body and arm-pits.
- (4) The graceful appearance becomes disgraceful.
- (5) They no longer enjoy their pleasurable celestial mansions.

**The three inspiring words from the celestial abodes**

When the five omens appeared to a certain deva, the other devas uttered the three joyful messages as they knew that their commarade is leaving the celestial abode.

- (1) Oh! Deva, go to the noble human world when you leave the celestial abode.
- (2) Bring back the noblest faith in the ariya dhamma discoursed by the Buddha.
- (3) Firmly establish that faith so that no one can disturb or shake it.

### **The four causes for the demise of devas**

- (1) *Āyukkhaya* — end of the deva life-span.
- (2) *Puññakkhaya*—exhaustion of wholesome deeds.
- (3) *Āhārakkhaya*—exhaustion of nutrition.
- (4) *Kopa* — showing of rage and anger.

Longevity, good appearances, wish-fulfilment and all kinds of luxurious pleasures in the deva and brahma realms are the resultant of the specially accrued meritorious deeds such as charity, morality, samatha and so on done in the human world. For this reason, this very life is the existence which can provide chances to be in the deva and brahma worlds where prevail various luxurious pleasures.

So also the Buddhas, the Silent-Buddhas and the arahats had entered nibbāna, the cessation of all kinds of sufferings after fulfilling the special perfections such as charity, morality, samatha and vipassanā meditation, mostly when they were in the human world. Hence, the human life which you now enjoy is the noble

one because it can provide you the opportunity to attain the bliss of nibbāna, the annihilation of all sufferings, just like the Buddhas, the Silent-Buddhas and the arahats.

You have been a human being numerous times during the past aeons. Though attained thus, attaining like the present human life may be so few. It can even be said that attainment has not yet being enjoyed.

The Buddha, the Exalted One, had taught that the human existence that one had attained at present is the best and noblest as the four-difficult-to-attain rarities have been attained.

At one time, the Exalted One taught on the four-difficult-to attain rarities with reference to Elakapatta dragon king near the seven airis trees on the way from Baranasi City to river Gaingā. Noble dhamma was realized by eighty four thousand dhamma audience. The gateway to the woe-ful states was closed for them.

### The four difficult-to-attain dhamma

1. "Kiccho manussa patilābho"

It is very difficult to become a human being.

2. "Kicchamī maccāna jīvitam"

It is very difficult to be alive.

3. "Kicchamī saddhammassavanamī"

It is very difficult to listen to the noble dhamma to realise magga and phala.

4. "Kiccho buddhāna muppādo"

It is very difficult to be present in the Buddha Sāsanā.

(Dhammapada-gāthā 182)

The present human life that you have now is fully complete with these four dhamma. This human life, therefore, is the one where one can become starting from stream-winnerhood, the stage that closed the apāya-gate, to ārahantship if charity is given, precepts are observed, samatha and vipassanā meditations are practised especially when vipassanā meditation is diligently practised in time and under the right guidance. Thus this present human life is the extraordinary noble life. The present

life attained by the ones, according to the teachings of the Buddha, the Exalted One, is the existence from which ariyahood can be realized starting from stream-winner-hood, as the four difficult-to-attain rarities had been attained.

Therefore, our Benefactor the Most Ven. Mahāsi Sayadaw had composed the following stanzas of motto in order that we may earnestly practise, after learning that the present life is the one which can close the apāyagata and also where one can become an ariya.

**Motto: 1. Although it is very difficult to be a human being, however we are now human beings.**

**2. Although it is very difficult to be alive, however we are now alive.**

**3. Although it is very difficult to listen to dhamma, however we are now listening to the dhamma.**

**4. Although it is very difficult to be present in the sāsanā, however we are now meeting the sāsanā.**

Although it is difficult to have the confluence of these four factors, however, we are now having the confluence of the four factors, so we should realize the ariya magga.

Among the numerous human lives that have been undergone in the beginningless rounds of rebirth, some may barely be said to have existed: Some die in the mother's womb; some also die just in days or in months.

In some existences one may be a human being with a long life, however, without having the opportunity to listen to the apāya-gate-closing sublime dhamma, the four foundations of mindfulness and vipassana meditation, or to be present in the Buddha sāsana, till the last day of life.

Some are said only to have the ordinary human life, and cannot become a noble one such as a stream-winner. Since they cannot become an ariya and close the apāya-gate, although they are living as a human being it

cannot be said that they have a noble human existence.

The present life that you have is the most noble life because it is complete with the following four conditions which are difficult to have.

- (1) To be a human being although it is very difficult to be a human being.
- (2) To be alive although it is difficult to be so.
- (3) To be able to listen to the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā dhamma and other noble dhamma which can close the apāya-gate and to become an ariya.
- (4) To be in the presence of the Buddha sāsanā though it is very difficult to be so.

It is very difficult to have the confluence of these four conditions not even once in the incalculable worlds. The present life you have is the existence with the confluence of the four conditions. Thereupon, if you practise satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā meditation diligently

under the right guidance. starting as an apāya-gate-closing sotāpanna you may realize the arahantship, in accordance with your perfection.

### **The difficulty to be a human being**

The Enlightened One discoursed the Nakhasikha Sutta to explicitly explain the difficulty to be a human being by the analogy of dust on nail.

At one time while residing in Jetavana monastery at Savatthi. the Buddha, came to the waiting congregation of monks and asked them, after putting some dust on his nail. "Oh! Dear sons, what would you say comparing the dust on my nail with that on the earth? (knowingly)" "Your most Ven. Sir, the amount of dust on the nail is too small and negligible if compared to that of the dust on the earth, which is too much in abundance," respectfully replied the monks. "Dear sons, similarly, the number of people. who would return to the human abode after passing away from there, are as few as the amount of the

dust on my nail. The number of people which would be reborn in the apāya abode namely, hell, the animal world, the peta world and the asurakāya world after leaving the human world are as numerous as the dust on the earth", said the Buddha. Thus the difficulty of becoming a human being is distinctly pointed out.

The present life you have now is as much difficult one as explained above.

**Motto: The number of returners to the human world is comparable to that of the dust on the nail.**

**The number of those becoming apāya creatures are comparable to that of the dust on the earth.**

The Buddha then continued to admonish, "While in the presence of the sāsana, you all should not forget to practise, since you have the human life which is so difficult to get and so few as the dust on My nail."

"Do not forget" is the usual advice of the Exalted One, when the time is short for a dhamma discourse. Sometimes the advice given was, "Appamādena sampādetha". meaning, Be mindful, practise diligently to be fulfilled".

The Buddha's advice "not to forget" does not mean not to forget to live a happy life as a human being, as a deva or as a brahma. His advice is to be mindful and not to forget to practise satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā meditation leading to the attainment of magga, phala and nibbāna.

Why is "Do not forget, practise with diligence" interpreted as mentioned above? The reason why the Exalted One had perfected His parami during the four incalculable and a hundred thousand world cycles with no regard for his. life and limb is not for the people to enjoy the worldly pleasure, it is to liberate people from various sufferings such as apāya and to attain magga, phala and blissful nibbāna. Thence the Buddha's advice is interpreted as" To be mindful, not to forget to practise satipaṭṭhāna vipassana dhamma for

the realization of magga, phala and for the attainment of nibbāna.

**Motto: Whilst a human being  
Not to forget is the reason.**

The present life you have is a "life" too difficult to gain, since it is as few as the dust on the Buddha's nail. It is also a noble existence because it provides opportunities to prevent having more rebirths in the lower (apāya) abodes.

\* \* \*

# THIS NOBLE LIFE

## Chapter II

### The Difficulty to be Alive

To be alive is a great concern to an individual after he has become a human being, since it is very difficult to be alive. Some individuals become a human being in name only. Some die in the mother's womb, some, at the age of just months or days. Many of the people who are younger than ourselves, who are about the same age, who are older than ourselves expire. We are alive not automatically and easily, because all the time we have to take care of ourselves with effort to be alive.

To be alive we have to take suitable food, to wear proper clothings to withstand cold

and heat, to build houses to shelter us from wind, rain and weather, and also take agreeable medicine. To be alive therefore is difficult as we have to condition ourselves with effort all the time.

Fathers and mothers will realise more, the difficulty to be alive through their experience from bringing up their sons and daughters since the babyhood with shoulders and soles as tiny as two-fingers' width.

For those individuals with knowledge and wisdom to be alive as a human being is very beneficial as long as they live. The reason is that they can perform deeds which are beneficial for themselves and for the others, for this life and for the subsequent ones, and also for the liberation from the round of existences.

Accordingly, we should take great care to have longevity. The Buddha has expounded the five factors essential for longer life, as the human life is a happy and desirable existence.

## **The five factors for longevity in human beings**

- (1) To act and behave properly to suit one's body.**
- (2) To know the extent or measure for what is suitable.**
- (3) To have the habit of taking digestible food.**
- (4) To have moral conduct.**
- (5) To have good companions or virtuous friends**

**These five factors discoursed by the Exalted One should be followed.**

**Motto: Suitability, extent, digestibility, morality.**

**And good companion are the five, for longevity.**

- (1) To act and behave properly to suit one's body**

**To take suitable food, to adjust to the climate, to act or perform suitable activities such as**

walking, standing, sitting, lying down. In reverse one will have short life, if one overtakes the unsuitable food one likes, too much, if he stays in a cold place which is not suitable for his body; sit, walk, and so on for a long time although these activities are not comfortable ones.

**(2) To know the extent or measure**

Not to take too much food though it may be suitable and to take it accordingly to the extent or amount that should be taken. So also with regard to the climate or weather not to stay too long in cold or hot places but to adjust to the right extent for oneself. In the same way such behaviour as walking, standing, etc. should be adjusted to one's suitability, i.e., to know how long one can stand, sit, and so on.

In reverse, one will shorten one's life if one does not know the extent suitable to one's body, such as over-taking food, not adjusting to heat and cold, also in action such as, walking, standing, and such

**(3) The habit of taking digestible food**

To take food which can be easily digested according to one's digestive power.

In reverse, if one takes food which is not suitable to one's digestive power, one will suffer indigestion and other general diseases accompanying it. Thus one's life may be shortened.

**(4) Moral Conduct**

The moral conducts such as not killing, not stealing, no sexual misconduct, not telling lies, and not taking intoxicants.

In reverse, if one kills, steals, commits sexual misconduct, tells lies, and takes intoxicants and thus the morality conduct is breached one will have shorter-life. Even though one has good health, there are many cases of a shortened-life.

**(5) Good companions or virtuous friends**

Having good and virtuous son and daughter, spouse, companion, and friend. Living with good son and daughter, spouse, companion

and friend brings a cheerful state of mind. Due to this state of mind, material phenomena originating from consciousness become better and firm, material phenomena originating from kamma, season and nutrient also are improved and strengthened. When these four material phenomena are well developed and strengthened, there will be longer life.

In reverse, because of bad son and daughter, spouse, friend and companion, the individual living together with them gets depressed. Consequently the material phenomena originating from consciousness is no longer in a good condition. Thereupon the karmic material phenomena, the climate produced material phenomena and the nutrient produced material phenomena are also destroyed and no longer in good condition. A person, whose four material phenomena are weakened, will live shorter life.

The aggregate of the body has four material phenomena originating from kamma, consciousness, season (utu) and nutrient (ahāra).

These four material phenomena support each other by mutual conditioning. They are analogous to the four legs of a table. The table stands well balanced because of the four legs being rightly placed. If one of the legs is broken the table becomes unstable or unbalanced. Similarly because of the reciprocal effect of the four corporealities the aggregate is firm and strong. If one of the corporealities is weakened the equilibrium of the aggregate is disturbed, just like a broken leg of a table unbalanced the table.

We have to give special care all the time for the equilibrium of the four material phenomena, then only one can exist firmly and be alive. That is the reason why it is difficult to be alive. Thus the present life is a noble one because we live a life which is difficult to be alive.

\* \* \*

# THIS NOBLE LIFE

## Chapter III

### The Difficulty to listen to the Noble Dhamma

THIS VERY LIFE that we have now is noble existence, since it provides us with the opportunities to listen to the noble dhamma which closes the apāya-door and become ariya such as sotapanna and so on.

In the absence of sāsana, when Buddha does not appear there is no noble dhamma such as the satipaṭṭhana vipassanā, the apāyā-door closing dhamma and to create the chances to be an ariya such as sotapanna, etc. There is no one to deliver such noble dhamma. Even during the sāsana, it is possible to listen to the noble dhamma only when there is an

opportune time. Hence, it is difficult to listen to the noble dhamma such as the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā.

During the past sixty years in Myanmar, there were a few who can instruct satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā dhamma leading to the realization of magga and phala. There were also very few people who listened to such dhamma and practised accordingly.

At that time the Buddhists were quite content and satisfied with giving charity and observing precepts. The sayadaws and the sangha of those days gave sermons mostly on charity and moral conduct. As the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā did not flourish and was concealed, it was not easy for lay people, who wished to practise to realize the knowledge of magga and phala, to listen to such dhamma.

Nowadays, the qualified sayadaws and sangha frequently give instructions on the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā leading to the realization of magga and phala. On the other hand the devotees also are neither content nor satisfied with only dāna and sīla, but they have strong

desire to listen to and practise the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā.

For these reasons, we can listen to the satipaṭṭhāna dhamma quite often, not that it is easy to do so, but because the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā has now flourished. It is still difficult to listen dhamma.

It is due to the accrued wholesome deeds and the perfections we have done in our past existences, that we are now human beings. As we are reborn as human beings at the time where the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā flourishes, not only we can listen to that dhamma, but also we can close the apāya-gate by gaining noble wisdom and noble dhamma if we earnestly practise under the correct guidance and according to our perfection. For this reason, the very life we now have is the noble existence.

### **Gaining magga and phala by listening to dhamma**

During the Buddha's time some people with good foundation of perfection gained the

noble dhamma by contemplating the dhamma while listening to it.

Once the Buddha resided at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti country. One day the richman Anāthapindika promised his son Kāla a hundred pieces of money if he went to the Buddha's monastery and observed sabbath. Kāla had a wrong belief and did not take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. However, as he wanted the money very much, Kāla went to the Buddha's monastery and observed sabbath. When he came back in the morning, the richman prepared rice-porridge (food) and asked him to eat. However, Kāla kept on asking for the money saying "Give me the money first, then I will eat". However much the richman persuaded him to eat, Kāla insisted on getting the money first. The rich man, had to give in to him.

Knowing that his son had not gained any dhamma, the richman again promised to give a thousand pieces of money, if Kāla could

deliver a dhamma talk and sent him again to the Buddha's monastery.

Very attentively Kāla listened to the dhamma, to get a thousand pieces of money when he could deliver a dhamma talk on his return.

The Buddha knew the condition very well that Kāla came to listen dhamma not to gain it but just for the money. When Kāla was trying to memorise the first dhamma, the Buddha changed to another one. In order to have continuation between the first and the second dhamma, Kāla had to contemplate while listening attentively. While doing so he became a sotapanna.

Next morning, when the Exalted One and the monks went to the richman's house for alms-food, Kāla followed them as an attendant.

The richman offered alms-food to the Buddha and the monks and also gave food to his son. Kāla was secretly praying that the richman would not mention about the hundred pieces of money and also not to give the money in the presence of the Buddha.

The richman gave a thousand pieces of money to Kāla in the presence of the Buddha. When the meal was over, Kāla refused the money in a shameful manner. Then the richman respectfully said to the Buddha, "Your Ven. Buddha, the other day, I sent Kāla to your monastery to observe sabbath with a promise of a hundred pieces of money. When he came back the next morning he asked for the money first instead of taking the food. However, to-day though I gave him a thousand pieces of money first, he refused to take it. It is very surprising to see the change of mind in Kala."

The Exalted One said "Oh! richman Anathapindika, your son Kāla has gained the noble sotapatti phala which is more noble than the luxury and wealth of the king of all universe, deva and brahma. That is why he refused to take your thousand pieces of money".

(Dhammapada--- tha 124)

The luxury and pleasure of a king of all universe, deva and brahma is to be enjoyed only in the present life. However one's subsequent life may be in the hell, animal, peta and asūrākāya. That is the reason why the luxury and pleasure of the king of all universe is not as noble as that of sotapanna (sotapanna phala).

The individuals who become sotapanna after listening to the dhamma will never be reborn in the apāya abodes. They have gained a foothold in the round of rebirths. They will be reborn continuously in the abodes of happiness and will realize the bliss of nibbāna within the seven existences. Consequently a sotapanna is more noble than the luxury and pleasure of the king of all universe, deva and brahma.

This very life you now have is the existence where you can listen to the satipaṭṭhāna noble dhamma, hence it is a noble life.

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# THIS NOBLE LIFE

## Chapter IV

Difficult to be in the Presence of  
Sāsana

FIVE KINDS OF WORLD where there is the  
enlightenment of Buddha

- 1 Sāra world — the Enlightenment of  
one Buddha.
2. Manda world — the Enlightenment of  
two Buddhas.
3. Vara world — the Enlightenment of  
three Buddhas.
4. Sāramanda world -- the Enlightenment of  
four Buddhas.
5. Bhadda world — the Enlightenment of  
five Buddhas.

The present world is the Bhadda world where five Buddhas are enlightened. The four Buddhas namely, Kakusanda, Konagamana, Kassapa and Gotama were already enlightened and the fifth one to be enlightened is Arimetteyya Buddha. The Gotama Buddha's sāsana has reached twenty-five hundred and twenty eight years, thence it has passed half of the sāsana fifty hundred years.

In Myanmar, the State Sangha Nayaka Organization and other Sangha Organizations have five lotus flowers in their seal. The four lotus flowers represent the four Buddhas already enlightened and the middle lotus bud represents the Metteyya Buddha. This is also the acknowledgement of the five Buddhas in this Bhaddha world.

We missed not only the sasana of the already enlightened Buddhas, namely Kakusanda, Konagamana, Kassapa but also the sasanā of the Buddhas of incalculable worlds which had already been enlightened.

By virtue of the special perfection in the past existences, we have now the opportunity to be alive during the Gotama Buddha's Sāsanā. It is not easy but very difficult to have such a chance.

It will be very difficult to meet sāsana in the future if we do not realize the sotapatti magga-ñāna which will close the apaya-gate or if one does not possess the perfection of vipassanā wisdom, which is the basic seed to attain special noble magga and phala in the second and successive existences.

Only Metteyya Buddha is left to be enlightened and at the end of His sāsana there will be incalculable worlds with no enlightenment of Buddha, known as Suñña world. Thus it is specially urgent to gain the noble magga and phala dhamma, the heir of Sasana while you are in the presence of the sasana.

**Not easy to meet Metteyya's Sāsanā**

It is not easy to be in the presence of the Arimetteyya Buddha's sāsana just by praying as a worldling. The rebirths for the wordlings

are in five abodes such as hell, animal world, peta world, human abode, and deva and brahma realm. Out of these five destinations the worldlings are mostly reborn in hell, animal world and peta world. Unfortunately, if one is reborn in these destinations it will be very difficult, like a blind tortoise (Kānakacchapo) to meet the Metteyya sāsana as mentioned in the Sutta dhamma.

(San - 3- 397)

There is a blind tortoise in the ocean and it used to come up to the surface once in a hundred years and a shoulder yoke with a hole floating here and there according to the prevailing wind. It is not so difficult for the tortoise's head to get into the hole of the shoulder yoke once in a while. However, it is difficult for a person reborn in apāya to be a human again.

With reference to the Sutta dhamma discoursed by the Buddha, it is an evident fact that to be a human being and to be in the presence of sāsana is very difficult. It is so

frightening that we should strive to gain an apāya-gate closing stage while in the presence of sasanā.

### **The believable example of the blind tortoise**

This example of the blind tortoise as mentioned in the Sutta dhamma seems unbelievable if you take it superficially. However, you will find it believable when you reflect upon it seriously. The sight of the animal you see makes it believable.

The animals such as dogs, pigs, chickens and birds kill smaller and weaker ones or search for food with greed. On seeing the other animals they prepare to attack with anger. They are frightened and worried upon meeting the stronger animals endangering them and constantly lived in state of stress. They have sex or try to have it on meeting agreeable opposite sex. That also is greed. If there is no circumstances to arouse greed, anger they fall asleep with bewilderment (moha).

**Should abstain from ignoble practice  
(a-brahmacāriya)**

The indulgence in sex is naturally the practice of the base animals such as dogs, pigs, chickens and birds. The Buddha remarked about these practices as ignoble ones (a-brahmacāriya). The noble venerable sayadaws regard the ignoble sex as the practice indulged by animals and detest it. Thus it is the practice of the ones to be abhorred.

It is very difficult for the animals to be reborn in the human world since their lives are loaded with unwholesome deeds so that there is no chance whatsoever to develop wholesome deeds. For this reason, the words from Kānakacchapo Sutta should be earnestly believed.

Just like example of the blind tortoise (kānakacchapo) from the Sutta dhamma, we have this present life which is very difficult to have. Moreover this is the opportune time with the sāsanā at its height which can liberate us from the round of apāya. Thus it is a very noble existence.

**Four opportunities to attain dhamma.**

1. To be present in the sāsana.
2. To live in a place where sāsana flourishes.
3. To have the right belief in the fact that kamma alone is one's own property.
4. To be endowed with six sense-sensitives in our continuity of consciousness.

Since we have these four opportunities, we can listen to the noble dhamma and close the door to apāya. Therefore, present life of ours is a noble existence.

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## THIS NOBLE LIFE

### Chapter V

#### The Enlightenment of Buddha is an Opportune Time

IN THIS VERY LIFE, we have a chance to meet Buddha sāsana. The meeting of the Buddha sāsana is known as Buddhuppāda navama khana. The meaning is that it is the ninth opportune time where one can gain nobler dhamma.

**Motto: The enlightenment of the Buddha is  
rightly the ninth opportune time.**

Buddhuppāda Navamakhana

Buddha — Buddha

Uppāda — enlightenment

|        |   |                                       |
|--------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Navama | — | ninth                                 |
| Khana  | — | time, opportune time,<br>good chance. |

The enlightenment of the Buddha is the ninth opportune time where one can gain noble dhamma and close the door to apāya. The ninth time gives the meaning that to have the ninth good time, one has passed the bad eight times. In other words, one has the best chance or opportunity.

For example to get to the ninth rung of a ladder, one has to pass the eight rungs which are the eight bad times before getting to the ninth opportune time. The Buddha named these bad times as "akkhana".

(aṅguttara Pāli- 3/60)

akkhana = a + khan = not good time

khana = good time, opportune time

a = not

These bad times have no opportunity to gain noble dhamma

The Buddha explained these eight bad times in (añ - 3/60) as follows:

1. When one is reborn in hell.
2. When one is reborn in the animal world.
3. When one is reborn in the peta world.
4. When one is reborn in the asaññasatta abode where there is only body but no mind.
5. When one is reborn as a human in a place where there is no sāsana.
6. Born as a human but who professes in the wrong belief such as there is no good effect from good deeds; no effect or punishment from bad deeds.
7. Born as a human but physically handicapped and unintelligent to differentiate what is wholesome and what is not.
8. To be reborn as a human at the time where there is no enlightenment of Buddha.

**In this very life the apāya-gate can be closed.**

After passing the eight bad times we are in the ninth good time where the Buddha has

enlightened and sāsana has flourished. This is the very life where we can become ariya such as sotapanna and close the apāya-gate if we diligently practise under the right guidance and gain the noble dhamma.

**Motto: The bad eight times are over.**

**The enlightenment, the ninth opportune time occurs.**

**A good chance to become a sotapanna.**

**While there is such an opportunity  
Practise to be a successful noble  
yogi.**

Only when there is the enlightenment of Buddha and sāsana can the realization of sotapatti magga-ñāna and phala-ñāna occur and thus closes the apāya-gate.

**In the absence of sāsana apāya-gate will not close.**

In the absence of sāsana and no enlightenment of Buddha, however much one strives his utmost best, the apāya-gate will not close,

since there is no noble dhamma such as the satipatthāna vipassanā whatsoever

Buddha cande anuppanne, Buddha dicce anuggate tesam sabhāga dhammānam nāma mattam nanāyati. (Vinaya mahāvā)

"When the Buddha, the moon, the Buddha, the sun has not been enlightened, there is entirely no dhamma to practise, so even the name of the paramatha dhamma is unknown".

The above statement was said by the Buddha as commented in Mahāvā Pāli. It is very evident that the door to apāya will not be closed in the absence of sāsana, since there is no dhamma to practise to attain nibbāna and to close the apāya gate.

### **The best opportune time**

Out of the four opportune times to attain the noble dhamma, to be in the presence of sāsana due to the enlightenment of Buddha, is the best opportune time.

By virtue of the fulfilment of the perfection in the past existences with an aspiration for

the attainment of the noble dhamma, you are now in the presence of the sāsana. It is the best opportune time, since you can gain the noble dhamma if you practise under the correct guidance and when there is the influence of the parami kusala.

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# **THIS NOBLE LIFE**

## **Chapter VI**

### **The Opportune Time is when Sāsana Flourishes**

IN MYANMAR there are many monasteries where the Pariyatti Sāsanā or the Tri-Pitakas are instructed full time. There are also many sayadaws and the elder monks who are qualified to instruct the Tri-Pitakas. There are also sayadaws with the title of Tipitakadhara – one who can recite and has competently studied the Tri-Pitakas. Thus Myanmar is the place where Pariyatti Sāsanā flourishes.

In Myanmar there are many sayadaws and monks endowed with morality (sīla) and con-

centration (samādhi) and who are personally practising the satipaṭṭhana vipassanā to attain magga and phala. There are also sayadaws and monks who can instruct and guide how to practise for the attainment of magga and phala. Moreover, there are many meditation centres. Accordingly Myanmar is a place where Patipatti Sāsanā or virtuous practice flourishes.

Myanmar is a place where flourish the Tri-Pitakas or Pariyatti Sāsanā and the three practices such as morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (pañña) or the Paripatti Sāsanā. Consequently, to live in such a place is the second most opportune time to gain the noble dhamma.

**Motto:** It is an opportune time to live in a place where sāsanā flourishes.

Although it is in the presence of sāsanā, if one lives in a place where sāsanā does not flourish, he losses the chance to gain the noble dhamma. In other words, he misses the noble dhamma.

## **Perpetuation of the threefold sāsana**

The threefold sāsana or the Teaching of the Buddha are:

- (1) Pariyatti = learning of the sāsana
- (2) Patipatti = practising of the sāsana
- (3) Pativadha = to have insight knowledge of the sāsana

Out of the three sāsana it is to learn and practise the two sāsana, namely Pariyatti and Patipatti respectively so that they will be established in one's continuity. When only these two sāsanas are fully established or learned and practised, then only the insight knowledge of sāsana (Pativedha) will be achieved.

## **The perpetuation of sāsana in sangha**

The Pariyatti Sāsana perpetuates in the continuity of the venerable sayadaws and sangha while they promulgate the sāsana by learning the scriptures by themselves and also by instructing it to others.

The Patipatti Sāsana perpetuates in the continuity of the venerable sayadaws and sangha

when they securely guard the two twenty seven rules of training and practise samatha and vipassanā meditation.

The perpetuation of Pativeda Sāsanā is established in the continuity of the sayadaw and sangha as they practise vipassana meditation and gaining knowledge starting from discernment of nama and rupa, to the penetrative insight of the four noble truths by realizing magga ñāna and phala ñāna.

### **The differentiation of the three sāsana**

1. Pariyattāti tini pitakāri

Pariyatti means the three pitakas.

2. Patipattit patipadā

Patipatti means the practice.

3. Pativedhoti saccapativedho

Pativedha means the analytical insight of the four noble truths.

(Uparipannāsa aṭṭhakathā - 80)

### **Perpetuation of the three sāsana in laity**

The Pariyatti Sāsanā perpetuates in the continuity of consciousness of the laity when they listen to the dhamma talks delivered by

the venerable sangha according to the scriptures; by learning the Buddha scriptures and by undertaking for the prolongation of sāsana.

To have Patipatti Sāsana in your continuity of consciousness is to observe the five precepts firmly and permanently; to observe eight, nine and ten precepts as much as possible; to tell beads, to practise samatha and vipassana meditation.

The Pativedha Sāsana is established in your continuity of consciousness if you practise vipassana meditation and attain the knowledge of discerning rupa and nama. Thereafter the analytical insight of the four noble truths is achieved after realizing magga ñana and phala ñana.

### **The development of the Pativedha Sāsana**

While practising satipatthana meditation under the right guidance some will come to know rupa and nama separately after four or five days of practice. Some yogi with strong concentration and sharp intelligence will perceive their body as a mechanical robot and

are frightened. It is frightening to them to see the noting mind is separate and different from the acting body, since it is an unusual thing which they have never seen before.

The awareness of the walking behaviour as different from the noting mind while noting "walking, walking", "left foot forward", "right foot forward", occurs slowly to some yogi. The analytical discernment of walking action as rupa and the noting mind as nāma is the establishment of the lowest Pativedha Sāsanā in your mind-continuity.

Afterwards with the successive practice of the satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā, the concentration becomes more mature and a step higher you will be able to observe the subtle wind (the element of vāyo) pushing and moving in your whole body. Furthermore, you can also note the subtle physical movements at the lips, ear, fingers and toe-tips.

By dint of the repetitive contemplation, the concentration develops one step higher and more mature, then you may be able to

observe the mind or nāma dhamma which is subtler than the rupa dhamma. When there is the purpose to walk, you will notice the first distinct tendency to walk before you actually start walking. Note 'intend to walk, intend to walk' when the tendency (mind) to walk appears distinctly and note 'walking walking' when the actual walking movements occur.

In the standing, sitting, lying down and such actions, the intention first appears distinctly. While walking if you want to stand, the intention to stand is the first tendency to come forth. Such tendency should be noted as 'intend to stand, intend to stand'. Then note the bodily behaviour of standing as "standing, standing".

When you are going to sit down, the intention to sit is the first tendency to come forth. Then note it as "intend to sit, intend to sit", and note "sitting, sitting" when the actual sitting behaviour takes place.

As the intention to lie down firstly appears when you want to lie down, note that inten-

tion as, "intend to lie down, intend to lie down", and note "lying down, lying down" when the lying down action occurs.

The satipaṭṭāna vipassanā meditators finally realize that, the intention to walk, intention to stand, the intention to sit and the intention to lie down are the causes that bring about the walking behaviour, standing behaviour, sitting behaviour and lying down behaviour respectively. This analytical discernment of the cause and the effect is the establishment of the tender Pativedha Sāsanā in the mind-continuity. Thereupon, they have eliminated the false view namely a-hetuka diṭṭhi or the causeless belief i.e., the rebirth, the happiness and the sufferings of the beings automatically happen.

Moreover, the meditators also eradicate the visama-hetu diṭṭhi or the incongruent cause and effect belief. According to this belief the beings are created by the powerful Brahmas, the Vishnus, god and so on, however there is unevenness of the cause and effect in such belief.

The meditators living in the places where sāsana flourishes become cula sotapanna or junior sotapanna when they are free from the causeless and incongruent beliefs. Accordingly they will never be reborn in apāya in their subsequent life. That is the reason why to live in a place where sāsana flourishes is noble.

With successive contemplation the concentration is more and more strengthened. Thereupon develops the Sammasana Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsana), the analytical discernment of the three characteristics, namely the impermanence (anicca), sufferings (dukkha) and the uncontrollability or non-self (anatta).

Afterwards by virtue of the continuous practice and more mature concentration, the Udayabbaya Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsana), where the yogi penetratively perceives the swift disappearance of rupa and nāma after arising, is established. Next follows the Bhanga Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsana) the stage of insight where only the quick dissolution is distinct. Because of the strong concentration due to

repetitive contemplation, there arises the Bhaya Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā) the awareness of dread or fear caused by the dissolution of rupa and nāma. Next comes the Ādinava Ñāna the penetrative comprehension of misery and dissatisfaction of the corporeality, and the Nibbida Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā), the knowledge of disgust and weariness of the psycho-physical phenomena. Thence a desire arises to renounce the body-mind complex, the Muncitu kamyata Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā). Then arises the Patisankhā Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā) knowledge of reobservation, by pondering the needs of re-observation for the liberation.

The Sankhārupekkha Ñāna, the knowledge of equanimity, where one can contemplate with no fear or attachment and view pleasantness and unpleasantness with equanimity, together with Anuloma Ñāna and Gotrabhu Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā) develop. These are followed by Magga Ñāna and Phala Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā) which can penetratively discern the four noble truths.

As the Magga Ñāna and Phala Ñāna can penetratively comprehend the four noble truths, they are undoubtedly known as Pativedha Sāsanā. So also the vipassanā wisdom, the root cause of the realization of Magga Ñāna and Phala Ñāna, can be treated as Pativedha Sāsanā. Thus it can be said that the Pativedha Sāsanā is established in these mind-continuity of people who have accomplished the vipassana wisdom.

Due to the fact that one living in Myanmar where sāsanā flourishes, can achieve not only the vipassana ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā), the cause, but also can attain the noble dhamma namely, Magga Ñāna and Phala Ñāna (Pativedha Sāsanā) which can penetratively discern the four noble truths, the effect, this very life is the noble life.

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## **THIS NOBLE LIFE**

### **Chapter VII**

#### **Having the Right View is the Opportune Time**

HAVING THE RIGHT VIEW such as "kamma deed is our sole property" (kammassakatā sammadiṭṭhi) is an opportunity for us to gain the noble dhamma which can close the apāya-door in this very life.

**Motto: Having a right view is certainly an opportunity.**

#### **Two types of deed (kamma)**

In the continuity of consciousness of the individuals who are not yet arahants, there are

two types of kamma, namely the wholesome deeds (kusala kamma) and the unwholesome deeds (akusala kamma).

The wholesome deeds are giving charity (dāna kusala kamma) rendering services to the Three Gems, parents and teachers and observing precepts (sila kusala kamma) and practising the samatha and vipassanā meditation (bhāvanā kusala kamma).

The unwholesome deeds are actions such as killing, stealing committing sexual misconduct, telling lies, taking intoxicants and so on.

**That which is unobservable cannot be said to be non-existence**

The wholesome and unwholesome kamma are volition (cetanā) which is not rupa but nāma dhamma. The nāma dhamma cannot be observed by natural eyes or be touched and felt. Even though it cannot be seen, touched or felt, it is certain that it exists but can be seen only through the eyes of wisdom and so indestructible.

**Wholesome effects from wholesome deeds**

Those who have done wholesome deeds such as dāna, sila and meditation (bhavanā) will enjoy the good results such as abundance in property, being free from danger and harm, enjoy physical and mental happiness, have serenity of mind and high intelligence, not only in the present life but also in the forthcoming existences.

**The consequences of the seven kusala impulses (javana).**

When doing a wholesome deed the kusala impulsive volition mostly happens seven times in rapid, succession. Out of the seven impulsive volitions, the first one is most effective for the present life. However, its effectiveness is not so prominent since it is the first one to happen and not strong. If the doer does not ponder upon the consequences he may not be aware of them. For example, not to encounter danger or harm, the danger will be easily overcome even if he encounters it; his work always gets done with no difficulty and things happen as he wishes and so on.

**An episode of the consequence when the four conditions occur.**

In as much as the first kusala impulsive volition is weak, its consequences may be great when the following four conditions are in concurrence.

- (1) The recipient must be a Non-returner (an anāgāmi) or an arahant.
- (2) It must be at the time when he arises from the absorption for the attainment of cessation. (nirodhasamāpatti)
- (3) The offertories must be lawfully earned or obtained.
- (4) The donor donates joyously, wisely and predominated by the three volitions.

The puissance of the first kusala impulsive volition can turn a poor man into a very rich one in this very life.

(Dhammapada - tha 2- 59)

In one of his past existences the Ashin Anuruddha-would-be was a poor grass carrier, named Annabhāra at the rich man Sumana's house. One day Annabhāra came back carrying

the bundles of grass from the forest. At that time Upariṭṭha, the Silent-Buddha (Pacceka Buddha) arose from the nirodha samāpatti at the Gandhamādana mountain travelled through space and came down in front of Annabhāra and went for his alms-round.

Annabhāra ran after Ashin Pacceka Buddha and addressed him "Your Venerable Sir, have you got alms-food?". Upon hearing the reply "I would get some", Annabhāra realized that He has no alms-food yet and then asked Him to wait for a while. Annabhāra ran home and asked his poor wife whether his meal was ready.

He ran back to Ashin Pacceka Buddha, brought the alms-bowl and told his wife to offer alms-food.

"In our past existences we had not done any kusala deeds, that is why we are poor in the present life. Even in this very life although we wish to offer offertories we do not have them. Sometimes we have something to offer, however, there is no one who has accom-

plished sila, samādhi and paññā to receive our offertories. We, therefore, have not yet offered any dāna.

"Now we see Ashin Pacceka Buddha Upasitṭha, we have enough food for one meal, so let us offer it and put my share into the alms-bowl". Having full faith (saddha) herself, the poor wife put not only her husband's share of the meal, but also her share too into the alms-bowl.

Annabhāra took the alms-bowl and offered the meal to Ashin Pacceka Buddha praying, "Your Venerable Sir, because of offering this one meal, may I never be reborn again in a poor family in the subsequent existences. May I never hear and know the word 'there isn't' ".

When Annabhāra's prayer was heard after offering the alms-food, the deity at the rich man Sumana's house joyously uttered, 'Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! (Well done, well done, well done).

The rich man Sumana thought it was strange and special for the deities not to utter 'Sadhu'

for his continuous offerings but for one meal offering of the grass carrier, Annabhāra. So he sent for the poor man with an idea of buying the latter's dāna kusala.

On the poor man's arrival Sumana asked him, 'What good deed have you done to-day?' "I've offered alms-food for one meal to Pacceka Buddha Upariṭṭha", replied the poor man, Annabhāra" I want your good deed. I will give you one coin". However Annabhāra kept on refusing to sell his merit even though Sumana gave him a thousand coins. Then the rich man said again, "If you cannot sell your merit, please share it with me, I shall give you a thousand coins of money. Thereupon Annabhāra asked for the permission to see Ashin Pacceka Buddha and if the Venerable said he should, he would do so. He went to see the Pacceka Buddha.

### **Sharing merits prospers kusala**

Pacceka Buddha Upariṭṭha told Annabhāra that the merits should be shared and by doing

so the merits or kusala deeds will not be lessened, moreover the merits prosper when the people who joyously utter, 'Sadhu' gain merits, compared it to the analogy of getting light from a lighted candle. In a village with a hundred houses, one house has a lighted candle. If the rest of the houses lit the light from the lighted candle the light in the first house is not only lessened but also the rest of the houses have light at the same time. So also in sharing merits, the merits of the first donor is not lessened.

Annabhāra, accordingly shared his merit with Sumana who gave him a thousand coins and also told him not to work any more from that day onward. The rich man also provided Annabhāra with the necessary properties.

The puissance of Annabhāra's one meal dāna sent the rich man Sumana together with Annabhāra to the king on the same day. Annabhāra's merits influenced the king to look at him all the time instead of looking at the rich man. When Sumana asked for the

reason, the King replied that because he had never seen this man before. Sumana said, "He should be the man to be looked at, as he has received a thousand coins from me for sharing his merit of one meal of great dāna that he offered to the Pacceka Buddha Uparit̥ṭha by not eating it himself". Thence the King also gave a thousand coins to Annabhāra.

The King ordered the ministers to build a house for Annabhāra. When they broke the ground they found many pots of gold laid rim to rim. When the King asked the ministers to bring the gold pots, the gold pots sank deeper and deeper into the ground. So the king ordered to dig the gold for Annabhāra. Then only they could easily take out the gold pots, for Annabhāra. The King asked the ministers whether there was anyone in the city who had this much of gold pots. The King honoured Annabhāra with the title of the great rich man when the ministers told him that there was none who possessed that much gold.

(An- t̥ṭha-1/148)

In this story of Ashin Annuraddha-to-be Annabhāra, the puissance of the first kusala kamma was so great that the poor man became a rich man. This is also due to the confluence of the following four conditions when Annabhāra offered the alms-food.

- (1) The recipient of the dāna is Pacceka Buddha.
- (2) The appropriate time, that is the Pacceka Buddha has just arisen from the nirodha samapatti.
- (3) The offertory, i.e., the alms-food is lawfully earned by carrying grass bundles.
- (4) Both the husband and wife have three strong volitions.

The seventh kusala impulsive volition kamma is weak and being the last one, its effectiveness is apparent only in the very next existence by being reborn in the noble existences as a human being, in the deva and the brahma worlds. But not effective in the third and the succeeding existences.

Due to the preceding kusala impulsive volitions' influence the five middle kusala impulsive volitions wield a great power for the development of the succeeding impulsive volitions. That is the reason why these five impulsive volitions yield benefits beginning from the third existence till the attainment of nibbāna.

Beginning from the third existence, being reborn in higher and nobler abodes, to acquire abundant property easily, to be healthy, to be free of danger, to have physical and mental happiness, to have longevity, to have a clear and serene mind, high intelligence and such, in every rebirth are the benefits of the five middle kusala impulsive volitions, to be enjoyed by the doer of the merits.

The Buddhists have the right belief in the fact that their own good deeds are the only ones which produce good benefits for them or the good deeds are their sole property (kammassakatā sammadiṭṭhi) To have such a right belief is the golden opportunity to gain

noble dhamma and to close the door to apāya.

### **The ill-effects of misdeeds**

Those individuals who commit killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, indulgence in taking intoxicant and such will suffer ill-effects of misdeeds. In this very life, having to face difficulties in acquiring wealth and property, having bad reputation, being not easily accepted, and finally visualizing bad omens when nearing death and so die in fear and bewilderment. Furthermore will suffer all kinds of miseries when reborn in the lower abodes for many existences. When reborn in the human world after suffering in apāya, will be in the lower rungs of humans, having ugly appearances, wanting in wealth and property and such like deficiencies.

#### **1. Killing (Pānātipāta kamma)**

Those who kill, because of not abstaining from killing (pānātipāta kamma), in every existence, will be so ugly, that no one will like to look at them, they are tortured and

die at the hands of others; they will have short lives and such ill-effects.

## **2. Stealing (Adinnādāna kamma)**

Stealing other people's property means not refraining from the (adinnādāna) kamma. Due to this kamma in every existence they will be wanting in wealth and property, having to face frequent destruction of their acquired wealth and property and suffer such like ill-effects.

## **3. Sexual misconduct (Kāmesumicchācāra kamma)**

Committing the sexual misconduct will produce the following ill-effects to the doer in every life. People will be jealous of and hate him, have many enemies, scarcity of wealth and property, being physically and spiritually unhappy; will be in humble family, being shameful, being separated from lovers and so on.

## **4. Telling lies (Musāvāda kamma)**

Due to telling lies one will have ill-effects in every existence , such as his words being

ignored, speaking with a lisp, foul smell coming from the mouth and so on.

### **5. Taking intoxicants (Surāmeraya kamma)**

Those who indulge in taking intoxicants will suffer from memory failure, become mentally deranged, have a dense mentality and other ill-effects of surāmeraya kamma.

### **The bad consequences of the seven akusala impulses**

The akusala impulsive volition mostly arises seven times in successive rapidity, when a certain person is about to perform an unwholesome deed. Out of these seven impulses, the first one is very effective to give ill consequences especially in this very life.

### **The ill consequences of the first akusala impulsive volition**

Though the effectiveness of the first akusala impulsive volition will be experienced in this very life, it is not so distinct as it is the first volition to arise. Hence, the wrong does not realise the ill-consequences such as encountering of danger, hardship to escape from it

although it does not harm his life, suffers injuries and pain, meeting with obstruction in his work, things he desires are not easily obtained and such like.

### **Immediate result of offence**

The first akusala impulsive volition kamma will immediately give ill-result in this very life if there is an offence to a person who should not be offended.

One day, when Buddha was residing at Jetavana monastery, a hunter followed by his hunting dogs met a monk, on his way to the hunting ground. Thereupon he was very unhappy reflecting, "To-day I'll not get anything as it is a bad omen to see a wicked man who does not work but begs for his food."

The monk went back to his monastery after having his meal obtained from the alms-round in the village. The hunter also failed to get a single prey the whole morning. Again he met the same monk on his way back home. Then the hunter said, "Since meeting you this

morning I did not get a single prey. Now I meet you again, I'll kill you by letting my dogs bite you".

The monk begged the hunter not to do so, however the hunter said again that he was going to let his dogs kill him. So saying he signalled the dogs. The monk quickly climbed up a tree and tried to rest precariously at a height of two arms length. The dogs also waited around the tree to kill the monk. Then the hunter poked the monks feet with the pointed arrow head, saying "Oh wicked monk do you think that you'll escape from death by climbing up the tree. No, not at all". The blood came down from the monk's sole so he asked the hunter to stop doing it. However, the hunter continued to hurt the monk.

As it was so painful that the monk pulled up one foot but the hunter kept on hurting the other one with the arrow-head. The blood streamed down torrentially from both soles of the monk as the hunter repeatedly poked them with the arrow-head although the monk re-

requested again and again not to hurt him. The whole body of the monk became very hot as if burnt by fire and he fell unconscious on the branch and he did not even realise that his robes had dropped down. The blood-soaked robes enveloped up the hunter from head to toe.

The waiting dogs thinking that the robe-covered hunter was the monk fallen from the tree, killed and ate him until only the bones were left. The monk broke a twig and threw it down to frighten the dogs. As soon as they saw the monk on the tree, the dogs ran away into the wood as they realized that they had killed their own master the hunter instead of the monk.

Although the first akusala impulsive volition is weak, it can punish one who offends the one who should not be offended, as the hunter right in this very life.

## **Ten retributions due to offending the one who should not be offended**

1. To suffer severe headache.
2. Deprivation of one's hard earned wealth and property.
3. Loss of parts of the body, having the leg or the hand amputated.
4. Inflicted with repulsive diseases such as leprosy.
5. Mental derangement, madness.
6. To be demoted, demotion.
7. Allegation.
8. Misfortune related to the supporting relatives.
9. Stored up properties being soiled and damaged; the genuine gold, silver and other gems, turned into imitation.
10. House on fire, death by lightning.

(Dhammapade gāthā 138-9-140)

Your present life is the noble one since you are endowed with the right belief and wisdom predominated by the faith such as that we will be punished in this very life if we offend a person who is not to be offended.

### **The bad consequences of the seventh akusala impulsive volition**

The seventh akusala impulsive volition kamma is weak, being the last of the seven and its influence is distinct only in the very next existence but not in the third and other successive succeeding existences. One may be reborn in the lower abode such as hell, animal world, peta world and asurakāya world as the result of the seventh akusala impulsive volition kamma.

### **The consequences of the five middle akusala impulses**

By dint of the preceeding akusala impulsive volitions influence the five middle akusala impulsive volitions wield a great power for the development of the succeeding impulsive volitions. For this reason these five impulsive volitions yield consequences beginning from the third existence till the attainment of nibbāna. The illustrative case is the story of Mahāmoggalana. In one of his past existences with immature perfection he killed his parents. The puissance of this akusala volition

kamma (the five middle impulses) produces bad consequences till he, the holder of the pre-eminence title in supernormal powers, attained nibbāna.

In the ancient time, the Ashin Mahamoggalāna-to-be who as a son of good parentage and had looked after the blind parents killed them, influenced by the ill-advice of his wicked wife. He took his parents through a forest in his cart, on the pretence of visiting the relatives. When he got to the forest, saying that the robbers were here, he beat his blind parents to death as if by the robbers. This akusala volition kamma (the five middle impulses) brought the ill consequences which is well known in the whole island Continent of Jambudipa to Ashin Mahāmoggalāna who was bestowed with etadagga in supernormal powers in his last existence and entered nibbāna.

(Dhammapada - t̥tha - 2/44)

At one time while the Buddha was residing at Veluvana monastery the heretic teachers

(Titthiya) who were not fortunate enough to receive lots of fortune like the Buddha believed that Ashin Mahāmoggalāna was the one who was bringing lots of fortune to the Buddha sāsana. Thus they gave one thousand in money to the villains to kill Ashin Mahāmoggalāna.

At that time he was staying on a stone slab at the side of a mountain called Isigili in Rajagaha. The villains surrounded the mountainside, however he escaped by his super normal powers. He escaped for the second time too. On the third time he let them catch him after realising that he could not possibly avoid the ill-consequences of his unwholesome deeds.

The villains beat him up until his bones were broken to pieces. Afterward he went to the Buddha, paid obeisance and entered nibbāna without being able to prevent the ill-consequences of his unwholesome deeds with his super normal powers, though he could go through the ground and travel through space.

## **The Four Unpreventable Dhamma**

The Buddha had preached the four dhamma which cannot be prevented by any powerful person in the world.

1. The nature of old age.
2. The nature of sickness.
3. The nature of death.
4. The ill-results of the unwholesome deeds.

These are the four dhamma that the powerful individual in the world like the Great Brahma, the Vishanu god and such cannot possibly prevent. (aṅguttara Pāli - 3/490)

**Motto: It is never possible to prevent old age, sickness, death and the ill-consequences.**

As the result of killing his parents (the five middle impulses) who should not be offended, in one of his past existences while his parimitta was not yet mature Ashin Mahamoggalāna suffered in hell for many hundred thousand years. After he came out from hell he died from being beaten up, for hundred existences.

This present life you have is a noble one because you have the right belief and wisdom predominated by the faith that the ill-consequences of the offence, (the five middle impulses) due to offending the people who should not be offended, could possibly be effective, until one enters nibbāna.

\* \* \*

## THIS NOBLE LIFE

### Chapter VIII

Being endowed with the Six-fold Sensitivity is the opportune time

IN THIS VERY LIFE, you have the six-fold sensitivity such as, eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, body-sensitivity and mind-sensitivity, so that you can practice dhamma. This is the opportune time for you to gain the noble dhamma according to your perfection (paramitta), if you practice satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā under the correct guidance. That is the reason why it is an opportune time to have six-fold sensitivity.

**Motto: Having the six-fold sensitivity is rightly an opportune time.**

In reverse those who are unfortunate not to have these six sensitivities, cannot note "seeing", "hearing", "smelling", "eating", "touching" and so on. Especially when one does not have the mind-sensitivity (or is mad), cannot note anything, thus miss the opportunity to practice dhamma. It is very important for us to practise dhamma since we are endowed with the six-fold sensitivity and the dhamma can be achieved if practised under the right guidance, according to our perfection.

Although we may not be able to practise full time, dhamma possibly will be perceived even by part-time practice under the right guidance and instruction. Thence we become interested in dhamma. The faith in the fact that dhamma could be gained in this very life become more firm than before. In as much as that faith is strong, the perseverance and diligence in practising dhamma get strengthened. Thereupon mindfulness is improved and concentration becomes mature. With the maturity of concentration, the vipassanā wisdom develops,

magga ñāna and phala ñāna arise with the development of mature concentration then the bliss of naibbāna is realised. That is the reason why it is essential to practise under right guidance and correct instruction.

### **Right and correct guidance to practise**

When an individual practises vipassanā meditation, he has to note at the six sense-doors such as seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, touching, and thinking. The beginners may not find anything special though he notes at eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind. The contact of sense-objects with eye, ear, nose, tongue and mind is very subtle. Moreover mindfulness, concentration and wisdom are also very weak. That is the reason why the beginners do not perceive anything special when they practise vipassanā meditation.

Accordingly, the vipassanā meditators should note the body first. It is easy to note and develop concentration as there are many distinct objects in the body to note.

**Many objects of noting in the body.**

All over the whole body where there are body-sensitivities (kayapasāda), they are the objects of noting. With the exception of tips of hair, the finger nails and the toe nails, any part of the body when touched by a needle will feel the sensation of touch. These parts of the body are the places where there are the body-sensitivities. As all parts of the body have the body-sensitivity the whole body become the object of contemplation.

The out-breath and the in-breath in the nose are the objects of noting in the body. So also the rising of abdomen due to the inhalation and the falling of abdomen due to exhalation are the objects of noting in the body.

Walking, standing, sitting and lying down are the objects of contemplation in the body. In the same manner bending and stretching of arms and legs, handling, fetching, bending of the head, lifting of the head, shifting of the eye, winking and such physical movements are the objects to be contemplated in the body.

## **Objects of contemplation in the body are distinct.**

The in-going and out-going air touch the nose-tip whenever there are inhalation and exhalation; the abdomen also rises and falls. The in-going and the out-going, the rising and falling movements will be very distinct if you fix your mind attentively at the nosetip or on the abdomen.

In walking, standing, sitting, lying down, bending and stretching of legs and arms, touching, fetching, bending down and lifting up (of head) and such behaviour will be very distinct if you are mindful and note attentively at the occurrence of these behaviour.

## **Three ways of contemplation in the body**

- (1) Sitting contemplation- to sit and note within the time allotted without shifting or moving the body and wandering of the mind.
- (2) Walking contemplation.
- (3) Detail noting or contemplation such as sitting, standing, bending, stretching, fetch-

The Benefactor, Most Ven: Mahāsi Sayadaw has instructed the beginners, in accordance with the Pāli text to note the rising and falling of the abdomen so that they can note easily. The meditators seek a quiet place, sit cross-legged or on the bent legs and close their eyes. They keep their heads erect, their body upright and their mind intensely focused on the abdomen.

**Motto: Keep the body upright, sit legs crossing,  
Eyes closed, head erect and on the abdomen the mind focusing  
Yogi, attentively note rising and falling.**

### **Attentive and respectful contemplation**

While practising vipassanā meditation it is essential to note respectfully and attentively. A person, who has not yet perceived dhamma, if he practises vipassanā meditation respectfully and attentively, he will perceive dhamma; for one who has already perceived dhamma,

will have an improvement; if he is the one to attain the noble dhamma, he will do so. Noting respectfully means to move and act gently as a weak person, while walking, standing, sitting, lying down, bending and stretching of legs and arms.

To note attentively is to fix the noting mind at the present, i.e., the moment of occurrence and to dissociate the mind from the paññatti and attentively note the paramattha.

### **Respectful noting in sitting practice**

The satipaṭṭhana vipassana meditators approach a secluded place, sit down and breathe in and out regularly. This regular breathing is regarded as "respectful".

### **Disregard the paññatti and note the paramattha attentively**

Make mental note "rising" by attentively focusing the mind at the present. In other words, it is to note attentively the tension, the gradual stage by stage rising of the abdomen due to the air breathed in, from the beginning to the end of the rising movement. While thus

noting, disregard the shape of the abdomen as much as possible and attentively observe the tension and the gradual stage by stage rising movement as much as possible.

The shape of the abdomen is paññatti and it is to disregard paññatti as much as possible in vipassanā meditation. The tension and the stage by stage gradual rising movement is the paramattha which is to be noted attentively as much as possible. This way of noting, disregarding the paññatti and noting the paramattha of the moment, is known as contemplating attentively.

**Motto: Disregard the paññatti.**

**Observe rightly only paramattha.**

Note mentally "falling" attentively at the present, when the abdomen falls due to exhalation and note the nature of the phenomena of the gradual stage by stage falling movement from the beginning to the end. While thus noting disregard the shape of the abdomen (paññatti) as much as possible and

note attentively and at the present the nature of the gradual stage by stage falling (paramattha).

The paññatti and paramattha exist compositely. Out of the two the paññatti is more distinct while the paramattha is submerged. The vipassanā meditators are not to note the paññatti but to observe and comprehend the paramattha. Dhamma will not be perceived if only the paññatti are contemplated.

### **Competition between paññatti and paramattha**

When the paññatti is apparent, the paramattha disappears and vice versa, as if they are competing with each other. For the beginners the paññatti is mostly apparent but the paramattha is not.

With repeated attentive noting, the nature of paramattha becomes more distinct. The meditators with mature concentration achieved the Bhanga Ñāna and the paramattha is so distinct that they do not perceive the forms

(paññatti) of the head, the body, the legs and the arms as if they (the paññatti) have disappeared.

**Motto: When the paññatti is apparent  
paramattha disappears.**

**When the paramattha is apparent  
the paññatti disappears.**

If the mind is not quite calm and wanders off to external objects, while noting "rising" and "falling" then add another object of noting such as "touching". In noting "touching", it is to observe attentively the sensation of touching of the flesh with the floor or the seats. Even the three objects of noting such as "rising", "falling" and "touching" fail to contain the mind, if it is still wondering then add one more object of nothing, i.e., "sitting". It is to note the nature of the tension by overall observing of the whole body from the head downwards. When you note with four objects, the mind usually becomes calm.

If the mind is calm and the noting is good with two objects of noting "rising", "falling", then keep on nothing with just two objects. In the same manner, you continue to note with three objects if it is good for observation and with four objects if the mind is calm.

### **Respectful contemplation in walking practice**

Contemplation in walking practice is also an essential factor in satipaṭṭhana vipassanā meditation. Those who can contemplate in walking practice will find the improvement in their ability in sitting practice and as well as in the detail noting of the behaviour such as bending and stretching of legs and arms.

- (1) One-noting in a step
- (2) Two-notings in a step
- (3) Three-notings in a step, and
- (4) six-notings in a step.

- (1) In one-noting in one step, one has to take mental noting as "left foot forward", "right foot forward". He/she must not control the step to make the movement slow but

to take step gently, not slow or fast. Dissociate the form of the legs as much as possible, however note attentively to comprehend the nature (paramattha) of the stage by stage forward movement and the lightness, from the beginning to the end of the step.

- (2) In two notings, take a mental note "lifting", "dropping" and lift the foot gently. While lifting the foot, disregard the shape of the foot (paññatti) as much as possible and note attentively to know the nature (paramattha) of the stage by stage of upward pushing and the lightness from the beginning to the end of the lifting. In dropping the foot, disregard the shape of the foot (paññatti) as much as possible and note attentively to know the nature (paramattha) of the stage by stage dropping down and the heaviness from the beginning to the end of the dropping.
- (3) In three-notings, take a mental note, "lifting", "pushing", "dropping". The move-

ment of lifting, pushing and dropping should not be controlled so that the movement would be slow. Lift, push and drop the foot not slow or fast, but gently. The nature of the dhamma will not be comprehended when the attention is in the control of the movement of lifting, pushing and dropping.

While lifting the foot, dissociate the mind from the shape of the foot (*paññatti*) as much as possible and note attentively to know the nature (*paramattha*) of the stage by stage lifting upward movement. The knowledge of the lightness is the comprehension of the element of heat (*tejo*) and the element of motion (*vāyo*).

When pushing the foot forward dissociate the mind from the shape of the foot (*paññatti*) as much as possible and note attentively to comprehend the nature (*paramattha*) of the stage by stage moving forward and that of the lightness from the beginning to the end of the pushing movement. The knowledge of

the lightness is the comprehension of the element of heat (tezo) and the element of motion (vāyo).

When the foot is dropped down, dissociate the mind from the shape of the foot (paññatti) as much as possible and note attentively to comprehend the nature (pareamattha) of stage by stage downward movement and that of heaviness from the beginning to the end of dropping movement. The awareness of heaviness is the comprehension of the element of existence, earth (pathavi) and the element of water or cohesion (āpo).

### **Becoming and dissolution**

When the concentration is strengthened to a certain extent, there will be the development of the awareness of the nature of lightness and stage by stage upward movement on noting "lifting", the nature of lightness and stage by stage forward movement on noting "pushing", the nature of heaviness and stage by stage downward movement on noting "dropping".

By virtue of the mature concentration, one will comprehend the discontinuity of the stage after stage movement when respectfully and attentively contemplated. In other words, the first stage arises and dissolves. Then the succeeding stage will arise and dissolve one after another with no continuity between each stage.

- (4) The six-notings consist the noting of the beginning and the end of lifting, the beginning and the end of pushing forward and the beginning and the end of dropping. It is in fact, the three-point noting but differentiating the beginning and the end of each point.

The raising of the heel but not the toes, is the beginning and the end is the raising of the toes.

The movement of pushing the foot forward is the beginning of pushing and the end is the momentary pause at the end of pushing. The beginning of dropping is the movement of dropping the foot, and

the end is the touching of the foot with the floor or the ground.

The meditators who can develop concentration wisdom by contemplating the walking practice may enjoy the five benefits, such as:

- (a) Ability to take long journey tirelessly.
- (b) Strong energy in practising meditation.
- (c) Not inflicted with diseases.
- (d) Good digestion of food.
- (e) The concentration developed by walking practice lasts longer.

**Motto: Can travel, strong and energetic,  
good digestion,  
Free from diseases and has firm  
concentration.**

**The five benefits of walking con-  
templation.**

The concentration gained from the standing contemplation may disappear when one sits down. In the same manner, the concentration developed by sitting practice may be disturbed when one lies down. Nevertheless, the concentration developed by walking practice,

will never be shakened by standing, sitting or lying down. The concentration by walking practice, therefore, is said to be strong and lasts longer.

### **Stay alive without being hungry**

In the time of Buddha, King Bimbisāra stayed alive by walking exercise and not being hungry.

Desirous of the kingdom, the son of King Bimbisāra, Prince Ajātasattu imprisoned his father with an idea of taking his life by starvation. He also issued an order that no one except the chief queen must visit the king. The queen secretly fetched food by all means in order to keep the king alive.

The queen put food in a small gold cup, hid it between the clothes around her waist and fed the king. Thus the king was alive. When the prince Ajātasattu knew it he ordered further that the queen must be searched so that she could not take anything to the king.

Thereupon the queen hid the gold cup in her big hair-knot and kept the king alive. Again

the prince did not allow the queen to make a big hair-knot. The queen put the food in her gold footwear and fed the king. Another order was issued that the queen must not wear any foot wear when going into the prison. Thereupon the queen cleaned her whole body with sandal-wood water and rubbed it with catumadhuram (a syrup of honey, butter, molasses and oil). The king licking the syrup from the queen's body, was content and kept alive. The prince ordered the queen not to enter the prison any more.

Hunger was kept away from the king by concentration developed from the walking contemplation. The physical equilibrium was maintained and the king was alive by the bliss of magga and phala. When the prince learned that his father King Bimbisāra was still alive because of the walking contemplation, he ordered to cut the king's soles and thus finally killed him.

To the individuals who have attained the Bhanga Nāna, the form of the foot is no

longer distinct while noting "lifting", "pushing", "dropping". They are aware of only the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the stage by stage lifting, when they note "lifting".

While noting "pushing", the form of the foot is no longer distinct, but only the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the stage by stage pushing is apparent.

Similarly in noting "dropping", the form of the foot is no longer distinct, but only the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the stage by stage dropping is discernable.

By dint of successive notings, the concentration becomes mature and those with high wisdom will comprehend the pair dissolution of the object of noting and the noting mind.

In noting "lifting", the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the lifting together with the noting mind are comprehended.

In noting "pushing", not only the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the pushing but also that of the noting mind is comprehended.

In noting "dropping", the fleeting dissolution of the nature of the dropping together with the noting mind is perceived.

When the dissolution is distinctly comprehended due to the maturity of the Bhanga Ñāna, then the meditator could note at eye, ear, nose, tongue and mind.

It is more convenient to note at the ear. On hearing a sound without thinking whose voice it is and if one notes "hearing, hearing" at the present moment of hearing, the sound or voice will dissolve one syllable after another.

### **Respectful contemplation in detail noting**

Noting the behaviour such as bending forward, lifting up, sitting, standing, bending stretching which are performed slowly and gently like a sick person, is the respectful contemplation.

### **Disregarding paññatti and attentive noting of paramattha**

While standing if one wants to bend forward, the intention to bend arises first. Note that

intentional mind as "intend to bend, intend to bend" When the stage by stage gradual bending movement occurs, keep pace with it as much as possible and note at the present moment of occurrence as "bending, bending". While thus noting, dissociate the mind from the shape of the body (paññatti) as much as possible and attentively note the nature of the heavily dropping, from the beginning to the end of dropping (paramattha). The awareness of the heaviness in the dropping nature is the comprehension of the element of extension or earth (pathavi) and the element of cohesion or water (āpo).

**Motto:** In "Pa" and "Ā", the two elements heaviness is evident.

("Pa"= pathavi, "Ā" = āpo)

While standing, after the purpose of bending the body to do something is over, the body will be lifted back. First note the intention to lift back as "intend to lift back, intend to lift back". Dissociating the form of the body

(paññatti) as much as possible, note attentively the stage by stage upward lifting movement (paramattha) and the nature of lightness from the beginning to the end of lifting as "lifting, lifting". The awareness of lightness is the comprehension of the element of heat (tejo) and the element of motion (vāyo).

**Motto: In "Te" and "Vā", the two elements  
lightness is evident.  
("Te" = tejo. "Vā" = vāyo)**

While sitting, if you want to bend and do something, first note the intention to bend as "intend to bend, intend to bend". When the stage by stage gradual bending movement occurs keep pace with it as much as possible and note at the present moment of occurrence as "bending, bending".

Dissociate your mind from the shape of the body (paññatti) as much as possible and attentively note the nature of the heavily dropping movement (paramattha) from the beginning to the end. The awareness of the

heaviness in the dropping nature is the comprehension of the element of extension or earth (*pathavī*) and the element of cohesion (*āpo*).

While sitting, after the purpose of bending to do something is over, the body will be lifted back. First note the intention to lift back as, "intend to lift back, intend to lift back". Disregarding the form of the body (*paññatti*) as much as possible, note attentively the stage by stage gradual upward lifting movement (*paramattha*) and the nature of lightness from the beginning to the end of lifting as "lifting, lifting". The awareness of the nature of lightness in lifting up movement is the comprehension of the element of heat (*tejo*) and the element of motion (*vāyo*).

### **Two merits gained when there is satipaṭṭhana foundation**

The individuals with the satipaṭṭhana foundation gain the merit of obeisance when they pay homage to the Buddha, recollecting Him

with cupped hands. They also gain the vipassanā merit by apprehending the phenomena of stage by stage becoming and dissolution and the gradual heavily dropping movement on noting "bending, bending" as they bend their heads. Accordingly they gain two merits, namely the merit of obeisance and the vipassanā merit.

Similarly, they gain the merit of obeisance when they lift back the body after paying respect and reverence. They also gain the vipassanā merit by apprehending the phenomena of stage by stage becoming and dissolution and the gradual lightly lifting up movement on noting "lifting up, lifting up". Thereupon, they gain two merits namely, the merit of obeisance and the vipassanā merit.

### **Disregarding paññatti and attentive noting of paramatta in sitting and standing**

When you want to sit, first and foremost, note the intention to sit as "intend to sit, intend to sit" and sit down slowly and gently. Keeping pace with the step by step gradual

dropping of the body, from the beginning to the end, note at the present moment of occurrence as "sitting, sitting".

While thus noting, dissociate the mind from the form of the body (paññatti) as much as possible and attentively note the nature (paramattha) of the stage by stage heavily dropping movement. The awareness of the heaviness is the comprehension of the element of extension or earth (pathavi) and the element of cohesion (āpo).

When you want to stand up, first and foremost, note the intention to stand up as "intend to stand, intend to stand" and stand up slowly and gently. Keeping pace with the stage by stage gradual upward movement of the body, from the beginning to the end, note at the present moment of occurrence as "standing, standing".

While thus noting, disregard the form of the body (paññatti) as much as possible and attentively note the nature (paramattha) of the stage by stage gradual lightly upward move-

ment of the body. The awareness of lightness is the comprehension of the element of heat (tejo) and the element of motion (vāyo).

**Disregarding paññatti and attentive noting of paramattha in bending and stretching**  
When you are going to do something and want to stretch your hand, first and foremost note the intention to stretch as, "intend to stretch, intend to stretch" and stretch the hand slowly and gently. Keep pace with the stage by stage gradual stretching outward and away from the body as much as possible from the beginning to the end of stretching behaviour. Note "stretching, stretching" at the present moment of occurrence. It is not necessary to look at the hand but to mentally perceive the stage by stage movement.

Again disregard the form of the hand (paññatti) as much as possible and note attentively the phenomena of stage by stage gradual movement (paramattha) and that of heaviness when stretching down towards the lower part of the body (paramattha).

When the purpose is done and you want to bend the arm, first and foremost, note the intention to bend as, "intend to bend, intend to bend" and bend the arm slowly and gently. Then note "bending, bending" by keeping pace with the stage by stage gradual bending towards the body, from the beginning to the end. It is necessary to note at the present as much as possible.

While thus noting, dissociate your mind from the shape of the arm (paññatti) as much as possible and attentively note the nature of the stage by stage gradual bending movement (paramattha) towards the upper part of the body such as the head, and the shoulder and that of lightness in the upward movement.

**Note:** The above statements are just the instructions for how to note fully the intention to bend down, to sit, to stand, to bend, to stretch when you contemplate the bending down, sitting, standing,

bending and stretching. If the beginners could not note the intentional mind, it is to begin practising by noting bending down behaviour, sitting behaviour, standing behaviour, bending behaviour and so on.

With repetitive contemplation the concentration wisdom is more strengthened and the beginnings of the intention to bend and stretch are not lucid. However, the ending or the dissolution and the swift disappearance of the bending, stretching behaviour are personally experienced.

Moreover, when the concentration wisdom is further strengthened by successive contemplation, the simultaneous swift dissolutions of bending, stretching behaviour and the noting mind are personally comprehended through one's own wisdom.

The impermanence of both rupa and 'nāma i.e., anicca; the swift dissolution is frightening and tormenting i.e., dukkha; there is no way of preventing the rapid dissolution and the

tormenting, they are happening on their own accord, i.e., anatta. These three characteristics are apprehended through personal experience and wisdom, when the swift dissolution of both rupa and nāma are perceived.

### **Contemplation at the eye**

The individuals with satipaṭṭhana foundation need to practise their mind to establish mere-seeing on seeing if they intend to contemplate vipassanā meditation by the eye.

First and foremost, note "intend to look", intend to look" when there is something to look at. Then note "looking, looking" when the upper eye-lid moves upward, the lower eye-lid moves downward and the ocular muscles start working to look. On seeing the sense-object keep the mind at mere-seeing and note "seeing, seeing".

Although it may not be easy for those who have no satipaṭṭhana foundation to maintain the mind at mere-seeing, it is not so for the individuals with satipaṭṭhana foundation espe-

cially when they are intensely observing an object of noting.

For example when a yogi is walking respectfully and attentively noting "lifting, pushing, dropping" some one may pass by. He/she may notice that a person has passed by him/her, however, does not perceive as a man or a woman. This state of not distinguishing is the establishment of mere-seeing on seeing. It can be said that a person is certainly not far away from his/her desirous noble dhamma, if he/she can establish mere-seeing on seeing and prevents the greed, anger and delusion not to develop due to the eye.

In the olden days, there were many instances of the elder monks who attained arahantship by establishing mere-seeing.

At one time the Elder monk Cittagutta practised dhamma in the Kurandaka cave. There were interesting paintings on the wall depicting the scenes of the seven Buddhas (Vipassi Buddha and so on) renouncing the world. There also was a big Indian Ironwood tree

at the entrance of the cave. In as much as the Elder controlled his eye (cakkhundariya), although he had lived there for more than sixty vāsas, he had never looked at the paintings or the tree.

On learning the reputation of the Elder, the pious king wished to see the Elder and invited him three times. Nevertheless the Elder gave no response, so the king thought of some means to make the Elder visit him.

All the feeding mothers from the Mahāgāma village, near the palace, were sent for and their breasts were wrapped by towels and sealed. Then the king issued an order that the babies were not to be fed until and unless the Elder Cittagutta came to the palace.

Upon learning this news the Elder Cittagutta, out of great compassion for the babies, went to the Mahāgāma village. The king invited the Elder together with the follower monks to the palace.

The king and queen saw the Elder and the monks off after they had their meal and

giving the precepts, from a suitable place of the palace.

Before leaving for the palace the king went to a distance from where he could see the Elder and paid homage. Then the Elder blessed him "May the King be healthy, and may he be happy". When the queen came and paid homage, the Elder blessed her "May the King be healthy, may he be happy".

The Elder gave the same blessing, "May the king be healthy and may he be happy" whether it was the king or queen who came to pay homage when he left the palace to go back to the village.

The follower monks addressed the Elder, "Your Rev. Sir, you gave the same blessing, "May the king be healthy, may he be happy" to both the king and the queen when they paid homage to you. May we know the reason". The Elder's answer "I do not distinguish whether it was the king or the queen" indicated that he had established the state of mere-seeing on seeing.

When the king learned that it was strenuous for the Elder to control his eyes controlling power while going to the city and the village and in the palace, So he sent back the Elder after seven days. The Elder contemplated the dhamma that very night and perceived vividly the becoming and the dissolution of rupa and nāma. Thence he happily contemplated till dawn and gained arahantship after attaining the four stages of magga and phala.

It can be said the Elder became an arahant due to the special control of his eyes and the ability to establish his mind at the state of mere-seeing on seeing.

For those who are desirous of gaining dhamma the lessons to learn, from the story of elder monk Cittagutta are:-

- (1) The ability to establish mere-seeing on seeing the attraction of the king, queen and palace retinue is due to the strong mindfulness. The Elder was specially more careful not to look differentiating whether it was the king or the queen. or their

retinue, the controlling faculty of mindfulness (sati) was stronger than before because he was specially careful not to look at the pleasing attractive sense objects.

- (2) The controlling faculty of concentration became stronger than before when the controlling faculty of mindfulness is strengthened. In as much as the controlling faculty of concentration is strengthened the apprehension of the becoming and dissolution of rupa and nāma become more vivid. This is the development of the vipassana wisdom.
- (3) When the objects or phenomena for observation become very lucid the time for meditation is usually not limited and the meditation practice is continued till the noble dhamma is attained. This is the nature and the normal practice of the ancient elder monks and it is a lesson to learn.

## **Contemplation at the ear**

When you hear a sound do not let your mind go after the sound, but note "hearing, hearing" when there is the contact of the sound with the ear-sensitivity, by establishing the mind as mere-hearing. On hearing a sound you will be able to know whose voice it is only when the following four conditions concur.

- (1) The ear-sensitivity
- (2) The sound
- (3) No obstruction between the ear and the sound
- (4) The attention or interest to know whose voice it is.

Out of the four conditions if there is no attention or interest, mere-hearing can be established on hearing. Those with satipaṭṭhana foundation can frequently note as mere-hearing on hearing.

With continuous practice of satipaṭṭhana vipassanā the concentration and wisdom will be more strengthened and one will achieve the Bhanga Nāna. At this stage of insight one will experience the dissolution of sound one

after another when he/she notes "hearing, hearing" at the moment of the contact between the sound and the ear-sensitivity.

If one can note the dissolution at the ear, the other notings in the body become easier. He/she will be able to note "seeing, seeing" at the eyes, "smelling, smelling" at the nose, "tasting, tasting" at the tongue and "thinking, thinking" in the mind.

### **Contemplation at the nose**

When you get the odour, just note "smelling, smelling", without letting your mind go after the odour thinking "From where does the smell come? Is it from a flower? It is a foul odour and so on.

### **Contemplation at the tongue**

When you note at the tongue, you should start noting the eating behaviour such as, note "stretching, stretching" when you stretch your hand towards the plate, "touching, touching" when your fingers touch the food, "arranging, arranging" when you arrange your food, "taking, taking" when you take the food,

"bending, bending" when you bend your head, "opening, opening" when you open your mouth, "chewing, chewing" when you chew the food, "swallowing, swallowing" when you swallow the food.

At the beginning of meditation, as the concentration is not mature yet, it is to note carefully in order to develop the concentration. In other words, it is to fix your noting mind on the stretching hand, on the touching fingers, on the gathering of food, on taking the food, on the bending of the head, on putting the food into the mouth, on chewing and swallowing.

You may mostly fail to note as the concentration is weak because you have been taking your meals since your childhood without any mindfulness and only now you try to note when you practise meditation. However, you should not be disheartened, for you will be able to note almost all the various activities involved in eating when the concentration becomes strong due to the frequent notings.

With the repetitive notings, the concentration and wisdom are strengthened and the Bhanga Nāna is achieved. Then you will personally experience the dissolution of the eating actions which have no connections with each other.

### **Gain dhamma by contemplating while eating**

The magga ñāṇa and the phala ñāṇa could be gained through the stages of insight by contemplating while eating.

At one time, the uncle, the Elder Mahāsaṅgharakkhita and the nephew sāmaṇera Saṅgharakkhita lived in the same monastery.

The Samanera went to the village at about 8:30 or 9:00 a.m., for alms-round and came back to the monastery at about 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. and had his meal. Then the uncle came and admonished, "Samanera, do not let the hot rice and curry burn your tongue."

The samanera pondered, "The rice and curry that I got from the round of house after house, are no longer hot and warm. They are

already cold. Therefore 'Do not let your tongue be burnt by the hot rice and curry' may not refer to the natural food. My uncle must mean 'Greed and anger' as hot food and curry." The samanera was quite happy about it and later took his food with mindful notings. When the meal was over, he attained arahantship.

### **The three ways of noting the dukkha vedanā**

- (a) The contemplation for the disappearance of the feeling of dukkha vedanā.
  - (b) The contemplation to get rid of the feeling of suffering, pain at one sitting.
  - (c) The contemplation for the discernment of the nature of the feeling of suffering.
- 
- (a) The contemplation for the disappearance of feeling of suffering, in fact, is the greed seeking for the pleasure. The purpose of meditation is to be free from the greed. The perception of dhamma will be slow and the progress in meditation could be slackened if the contemplation is for

the disappearance of the feeling of suffering since the impurity (kilesa) is the greed which arises between notings. This way of contemplation, therefore, is not to be practised.

- (b) The contemplation to get rid of the pain, indeed, is accompanied by the gross or aggressive mind. The gross mind co-exists with anger. One meditates to eradicate anger. Nevertheless, this way of contemplation is usually accompanied by anger (kilesa) which arises between notings. The contemplation with the aggressive mind also is not to be adopted.
- (c) In contemplating for the discernment of the nature of the feeling of suffering it is required to relax both physically and mentally when the feelings such as, ache and numbness arise. If not, there will be tension and the vigor is, in excess or takes the forefront. Let the noting mind dwell directly upon the feeling (vedanā) without tension.

It is not to note as "the leg is painful", the head is painful", "the knee is painful", "the buttock is painful" and so on, that is in terms of the shape of the parts of the body. It is to note absolutely the nature of the pain, so that there develops the discernment of the nature of the pain.

While meditating, if the feeling (vedanā) such as numbness and aches arise, reflect whether the pain is only skin deep, in the flesh, in the nerves, in the bones, bone-marrow and so on. Note attentively the vedanā in their own right in order to discern the intensity of the vedanā. The second, third and successive notings should be done similarly, so as to discern the intensity of the vedanā.

When the concentration has developed to a certain extent, with four or five attentive notings, the nature of the vedanā such as increasing in intensity and shifting from one place to another will be noticed. The vedanā may reach maximum intensity and then subsides again. By four or five notings the

decrease in vedana in one or another way, may be experienced.

By dint of successive notings, the concentration and wisdom become stronger and the nature of vedanā, that is the increasing of vedanā one noting after another, or shifting from one place to another, will be experienced. Similarly, the nature of the vedanā will be perceived when it subsides with each noting.

Afterwards with concentration due to repetitive notings the meditators will personally experience the arising and disappearing of vedana at each noting.

The yogi with sharp wisdom, will comprehend the simultaneous dissolution of vedanā at each noting, together with the mind which is conscious of the vedana and the noting mind.

The yogi who vividly perceive the dissolution, through their personal knowledge will comprehend the characteristic of impermanence

(anicca) such as that vedana is not permanent, that the mind which is conscious of the vedana and the noting mind are also not permanent. They also discern the characteristic of suffering (dukkha) due to the torture by the incessant and swift dissolution. The characteristic of non-self (anatta) is comprehended when they clearly cognise that the dissolution and suffering are unpreventable and they are happening on their own accord.

The yogi, who can contemplate to discern the nature of vedana, with the mature concentration and wisdom, will gain their most aspired noble dhamma because they could note for the comprehension of impermanence of vedana (vedana anicca) the suffering of vedana (vedana dukkha) and the non-self of vedana (vedana anatta). They will also attain the bliss of nibbāna.

### **Contemplation in the mind**

When one thinks of something related to the past, the future or the present experiences, attentively note as "thinking, thinking". When

the concentration is mature and achieved the Bhanga Nana, one will personally experience the passing away of the thinking at each noting.

### **Gain dhamma when the six senses are well controlled**

Those individuals who can note the six sense-objects at the six sense-organs namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind will gain their desirous noble dhamma when the five controlling faculties (indriya) are well balanced.

In the Buddha's time there were many individuals who gained the noble dhamma due to their control over the six sense-organs, such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

At one time, while the Exalted One resided at the Jetavana Monastery, Savatthi Country and as vassa retreat was approaching, the monks received the instructions on meditation from the Buddha and went to the suitable places to practise dhamma. Some went to the faraway border areas. There, they approached

a city as their alms-round place and began to practise meditation.

In the middle of the vassa retreat, the rebels and the robbers attacked the city, seized the people and the properties and also burnt it. The city dwellers were busy digging the moats, building large and small gates to guard the city. The monks were totally forgotten and the vassa retreat ended with the monks lived with difficulties.

They went back to the Buddha who addressed them, "Monks, were you comfortable at your place of vassa retreat?". The monks replied, "We were quite comfortable from the beginning to the middle of the vassa retreat. However, as the city was attacked by the rebels, we had difficulties from the middle to the end of the vassa retreat". Then the Buddha admonished them, "Do not think about the uncomfot and the unhappiness, it is only important to guard yourselves by controlling your six sense-doors, when you have the opportune time, just like the city

dwellers guard their city. If you miss the good opportune time of the Buddha's enlightenment, you will suffer in apāya repeatedly in your round of existences".

(Dhammapada-ttha-2-304)

The monks were frightened and remorseful on hearing the Buddha's admonishment. Henceforth they protected their eyes, ears, noses, tongues, bodies and minds which were likened to the city-area, from the danger of sense-objects such as sight, sound, odour, taste, touch and thought which were likened to the rebels and the robbers. They also contemplated the four foundations of satipatthana dhamma and prohibited the arising of greed, anger and delusion whenever the six sense-objects came into contact with the six sense-organs. Thereupon, in no time they became arahats.

The six internal bases (āyatana), namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and consciousness are likened to the city-area which was attacked and ruined by the rebels. The six external

bases, namely the sight, sound, odour, taste, touch and the mind-objects are likened to the rebels and the robbers. The four foundations of satipaṭṭhana are likened to the police and the soldiers who guard the security of the city area.

**Motto: The internal six (bases) are likened to the city-area.**

**The external six (bases) are likened to the rebels.**

**The satipaṭṭhana is likened to the town-guards.**

When the rebels and the robbers came into the city the armed police and the soldiers immediately seized them. If not, they would rob and plunder the city and the city-dwellers would have been in great stress and danger.

**Motto: Seize the robbers immediately**

**If not they will ruin the city.**

Similarly when the six sense-objects, sight, sound, odour, taste, touch and the mind-object

come into contact with the six sense-organs, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind, one should contemplate the four foundations of satipaṭṭhana in order to prohibit greed, anger and delusion from arising.

If you cannot contemplate greed, anger and delusion and the like unwholesome (akusala) dhamma will successively develop. Thereupon you will be reborn in the four apāya realms, namely hell (niraya), animal, ghost and demon (asurakāya) after passing away from this life.

**Motto: When the sense-objects contact the organs note immediately.  
If not, akusala will develop  
And be reborn in the four apāya realms.**

When the sight (rupārammana) comes into contact with the eye, the sound (saddhārammana) with your ear, the odour (gandhārammana) with the nose, the taste (rasārammana) with the tongue, the touch

(photthabbārammana) with the body, the mind-object (dhammārammana) with the consciousness, you have to protect them with special mindfulness, just as one would guard your home, village and town when the robbers come. In other words, it is to contemplate mindfully so that the unwholesome dhamma such as greed, anger and delusion will not arise.

In this connection, the commentary teachers expounded by saying that when you have the four opportune times the noble dhamma can be achieved if you can protect your eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

### **The four opportune times**

- (1) To be in the presence of the sāsana when the Buddha enlightened.
- (2) To live in a place where the sāsana flourishes
- (3) To have right faith or belief (sammādiṭṭhi)
- (4) To have eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, tactile (body)-sensitivity and mind-sensitivity.

You have these important four opportune times in this present life, therefore, it is a noble life where you can attain the noble dhamma.

### **Conclusion**

The satipaṭṭhana vipassana dhamma can be practised only when there flourishes sāsana. With the strong faith in this dhamma as the only genuine refuge, may the good devotees, after reading this book, "This Noble Life", be capable of practising it and swiftly realise the genuine bliss of nibbāna through the magga ñāna and phala ñāna. May they be able to close the door to apāya.

May they attain the true happiness of nibbāna.

May they always be away from the dangers of apāya which is full of sufferings.

## ERRATA

| <b>Page</b> |       | <b>Line</b> | <b>Incorrect</b>   | <b>correction</b>   |
|-------------|-------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Preface     | (i)   | 12          | Attakatta          | Atṭhakatha          |
| Preface     | (iii) | 9           | preatise           | practise            |
| 3           |       | 18          | Atthakatta         | Atṭhakattha         |
| 5           |       | 5           | Paranimita         | Paranimitta         |
| 7           |       | 16          | commarade          | comrade             |
| 8           |       | 4           | Ahārakkhays        | Ahārakkhaya         |
| 9           |       | 18          | Gang               | Gangā               |
| 11          |       | 2           | Exacled            | Exalted             |
| 11          |       | 12          | where              | when                |
| 14          |       | 17          | small              | little              |
| 26          |       | 6           | vipassnā           | vipassanā           |
| 27          |       | 7           | listen             | listen to           |
| 29          |       | 7           | listen             | listen to           |
| 31          |       | 5           | asūrākāya          | asurakāya<br>worlds |
| 3           |       | 8           | sotapanna<br>phala | sotāpatti<br>phala  |
| 33          |       | 3           | Kakusanda          | Kakusandha          |
| 33          |       | 19          | Kakusanda          | Kakusandha          |
| 33          |       | 17          | Bhaddha            | Bhadda              |
| 34          |       | 18          | heir               | inheritance         |
| 46          |       | 21          | losses             | loses               |
| 47          |       | 6           | Pativadha          | Pativeda            |

## ERRATA

| Page | Line      | Incorrect     | correction     |
|------|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| 47   | 14        | Pativedha     | Paṭiveda       |
| 48   | 12        | Pariyattati   | Pariyattīti    |
| 48   | 12        | patikāri      | patikāni       |
| 48   | 14        | patipattit    | paṭipattīti    |
| 57   | 14        | non-existence | non-existent   |
| 61   | 4         | Upasiṭṭha     | Upariṭṭha      |
| 69   | 21        | does          | doer           |
| 74   | 22        | Mahamoggalan  | Mahāmoggallāna |
| 75   | 16        | Mahamoggalan  | Mahāmoggallāna |
| 76   | 3         | Mahamoggalan  | Mahāmoggallāna |
| 77   | 19        | Mahamoggalan  | Mahāmoggallāna |
| 77   | 11        | Vishanu       | Vishnu         |
| 81   | 3         | naibbāna      | nibbāna        |
| 83   | last line | fetch         | fetching       |
| 88   | 16        | wondering     | wandering      |
| 92   | 2         | tezo          | tejo           |
| 92   | 8         | pareamattha   | paramattha     |
| 93   | 9         | consist.      | consist of     |
| 123  | 9         | lived         | living         |
| 126  | 11        | niraya        | niriya         |

## Points to Note

- \* It is very difficult to be a human being
- \* It is very difficult to be alive
- \* It is very difficult to listen to dhamma
- \* It is very difficult to be present in sāsana
- \* It is very difficult to have the confluence of four factors.
- \* Although it is difficult to have the confluence

Now these four factors are in concurrence

- \* There should be realization of ariya magga  
When the confluence of four factors occurs
- \* The enlightenment of the Buddha is rightly the ninth opportune time
- \* Living in a place where sāsana flourishes is an opportune time
- \* Having a right view is certainly an opportunity
- \* Being endowed with the six-fold-sensitivity is the opportune time.