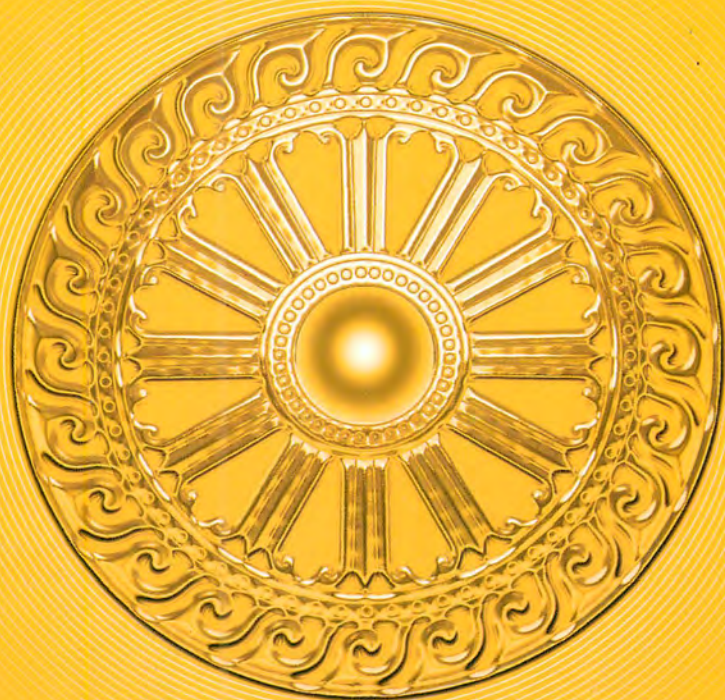




DHAMMAKAYA FOUNDATION  
'BUDDHISM IN PLAIN ENGLISH' SERIES 3



# THE BUDDHA'S FIRST TEACHING

by Phrabhavanaviriyakhun  
(Phra Phadet Dattajeevo)

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*by Phrabhavanaviriyakhun  
(Phra Phadet Dattajeevo)*

**DHAMMAKAYA FOUNDATION**

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## *Translator's Preface*

This book has been compiled and translated not exclusively from the written Thai version of Phrabhavana-viriyakhun's '*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*', but also from many subsequent renditions of the the same work given by the author in training sessions for people of all walks of life, age ranges: monks and laypeople alike. The content of those teaching sessions, had considerable overlap, however, for different groups, the author often made remarks specific to the audience. In the case where specific comments would be inaccessible to the general reader they are not included, but in all other cases the book attempts to give the fullest possible coverage of the author's commentary on this Sutta, to do justice to the exceptional dedication of the author in teaching on this subject throughout the last ten years.

The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is a teaching which has a message for those of all walks of life, however, the specific observations by the author have been grouped in Appendix A of this book. In translating this book, it has been necessary from place to place, to add additional explanation and footnotes in cases where aspects of Buddhist culture might not be immediately obvious to western readers. Similarly, aspects



which are unnecessarily caught up with Thai culture have been minimized or omitted.

The content of this book is more advanced than the foregoing titles in the series 'Buddhism in Plain English'. This book had thus been placed as number '3' in the series because the content of the book is reasonably difficult, dealing almost entirely with higher spiritual training. It goes much further than, for example, *Blueprint for a Global Being* or *Buddhist Economics* which are grounded on a basis of everyday life and virtues. In fact, the whole subject of renunciation of the mundane, which is the point of departure for this book, may seem alien to householders who might feel perfectly contented with their lot in life. There may be a tendency to see the Buddha's renunciation of the world as at best irrelevant to themselves or extreme, or at worst irresponsible. For this reason, it is necessary to lay a foundation of understanding for the reader concerning three major issues before embarking upon the main body of this book.

Firstly, it is important to understand that the vast majority of people live in *a world of delusion*. Even without touching a drop of alcohol, they tend to be drunk with the apparent perpetuity of life, labouring under the misapprehensions that:

1. life will be long;
2. they will be forever free of illness;
3. their youth will be eternal.

When Prince Siddhattha journeyed outside the palace in his youth, witnessing the three so-called 'angelic emissaries' [*devadūta*], an old man, a sick man and a corpse, he did not see these things as others before him had. Most



people see the signs of receding youth and health and respond with disgust, especially at the sight of a corpse. Siddhattha Gotama's witness of these events was different, however. Confronted by the inevitability of death, Siddhattha Gotama was not perturbed but thought like a soldier on the battlefield — one had the choice of whether to fight or to surrender — but if one were to surrender, one would die for sure — however, if one were to put up a fight, at least there would be *some* chance of survival! Seeing the fourth of the angelic emissaries, an ascetic, Siddhattha Gotama recognized this path as a way of fighting back against the inevitability of old-age, sickness and death.

Secondly, most people, in considering appropriate paths of action in life, have very little more than their own worldly interests at heart. In a family life, an altruistic parent might extend their decision-making to the interests of their family too. Some parents might even forgo their own personal interests, if it is in the interests of their family. These are some leaders, moreover, who might forgo their personal interests *and* their family's interests in order to serve the interests of the people of their nation (themselves and their family included). In considering the appropriate course of action for himself, Siddhattha Gotama surveyed the world seeing that the lot of living beings, himself, his princess, his newborn son and all the people of his kingdom unexcepted, was to undergo the suffering of old-age, sickness and death. He considered his own potential in comparison to the rest of the people of the world and realized that others failed even to see the danger of their predicament, let alone to find a way out of it. He realized that if



he, himself, didn't engage in the battle against delusion, there would be no-one else to do it in his place. Thus with anxiety, *not only* for his own lot in life, *not only* for the lot of his family, but for *all* the people of the world imprisoned in the Triple World of *samsāra*, subject to the fate of old age, sickness and death, he decided to renounce the world in search of a way to the end of suffering — knowledge once found, which would lead not only to his own salvation, but that of the whole of mankind for his generation and generations to come.

Thirdly, long before renouncing the world, over the course of countless lifetimes Siddhattha Gotama had accrued a *substantial foundation of meditation*. Some of this background is exhibited by how, during the Royal Ploughing Ceremony at the age of only seven years, Siddhattha could attain the first absorption [*paṭhama jhāna*] without instruction. In fact, if you study the previous lifetimes of Siddhattha Gotama, when he was still pursuing Perfections as the *bodhisatva*, he had already attained five of the six mental powers [*abhiññā*] since the time  $4 \times 10^{140}$  *kappas* and 100,000 *mahākappas* before when he received the prophecy of his forthcoming Buddhahood from Dipaṅkara Buddha. It is recorded, that at that time, if the *bodhisatva* had wished to attain arahanthood, he could have done so immediately thereby benefitting personally from all the Perfections he had accrued for himself. Instead he decided to pursue Perfections further until reaching Buddhahood, so that not only could he reach an end of suffering, but could teach other worldlings to attain an end of suffering too.

Spiritual tradition contemporary to the Buddha was largely the realm of theory. All theories of liberation available before



the Buddha's enlightenment dealt entirely with meditation focussed *outside* the body. Then, as now, almost all success was attributed to ideas and strategies — but as a result of countless past lifetimes dedicated to true meditation, Siddhattha Gotama quickly recognized that all the forms of practice available, although advanced, were mere conceptualizing that could not lead to enlightenment or release from old-age, sickness or death. He realized that theory alone, in the hands of a virtueless person would be as dangerous as a sword without a scabbard. Theory needed to go hand in hand with inner attainment of virtue to be a viable path to freedom from old age, sickness and death. It was for this reason that Siddhattha Gotama sacrificed his worldly life in order to discover not mere 'concentration', but full-factored meditation and insight as borne witness by the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (M.iii.71ff.) which tells us that the sort of meditation the Buddha discovered at His enlightenment was supported by all the other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path — and could therefore be referred to as 'Right Meditation' [*sammā samādhi*], His enlightenment could not be attributed, as assumed by some, to mere reflection or theorizing. Those who assume that the Buddha gained enlightenment in the same way as Bāhiya Dārucīriya (i.e. by spontaneous enlightenment at the way-side) would be mistaken, because even Bāhiya Dārucīriya's enlightenment can be traced back to the efforts made, sacrificing his life for meditation in previous existences.

Thus readers, who have not previously studied the earlier titles in this series, should take a few moments to consolidate their understanding of the three issues mentioned





above — delusion, renunciation and the Buddha's previous meditation experience — before embarking on the remainder of this book.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the aim of books in the 'Buddhism in Plain English' series is to bring alive the Buddhist scriptures in the light of practice, making them accessible to beginners without oversimplifying them. In keeping with this spirit, technical and non-English terminology has been avoided as far as is possible without neglecting accuracy. In general, translated terminology appears together with the Pali equivalent in square brackets. In case of doubt as to Pali terminology not explained in the body of the text consult the Reference Table of Pali Terms (p.235ff.). This terminology can be referred back to the text via the General Index (p.217ff.).

In closing, I would like to convey my thanks to Phrabhavanaviriyakhun for allowing the publication of this translation and to all staff of the Dhammakaya Foundation in Thailand concerned, for their continued encouragement, technical and creative support for these translations. May the merit that accrues from this work be shared by all sentient beings.

Phra Nicholas Thanissaro  
Series Editor  
21 December 2002



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## *Author's Preface*

Buddhism is unique in teaching a way to overcome suffering, with its aim definitively to liberate oneself from the Cycle of Existence [*vaḍḍa-samsāra*] thereby attaining the highest eternal happiness. *This is the majesty of Buddhism.*

Buddhism is unique in guaranteeing that whoever practises in strict accordance with the teachings of the Lord Buddha will be able to uproot all defilements and craving from the mind, attaining the Path and Fruit of Nirvana in His footsteps. *This is the wonder of Buddhism.*

Buddhism is unique in the way it groups its virtues and also by the way it graduates its teachings starting with simple ones and moving gradually onto more difficult ones — making Buddhism *easy to study and to practise.*

However, more wondrous than all of these is the fact that the Lord Buddha was able to summarize the essence of Buddhism in its entirety in a teaching as short as his first — the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. Many religions shroud in exclusivity the practices or virtues that distinguish the founder from subsequent disciples — but the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta contains teachings that can



be practised by anyone, giving access to the highest attainments — even attainments on a par with that of the Lord Buddha himself.

That the Buddha was able not only to understand Dhamma teachings, but to teach them in a way that allows us to understand them as well as Himself, is a further illustration of the *unique capability of the Lord Buddha*.

Moreover, in keeping with the Great Compassion of the Lord Buddha for the beings of the world, it would be for a further forty-five years of his dispensation that the Buddha would expand upon the foundations of virtue outlined in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta with deeper but complementary teachings — and in spite of the volume of teachings in complete absence of internal contradiction.

The content of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta taught to the “group of five” [*pañcavaggiya*] monks led by Koṇḍañña, is familiar to the ears of Buddhists throughout the world — because anyone wishing to understand the teachings of Buddhism, needs first of all to have an understanding of the Buddha’s first teaching.

When studying the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta students will find it useful not only to study the Sutta in translation, but also to learn how to chant the Sutta in its original Pali language. Committing the Sutta to memory by chanting is advantageous when it comes to reflection upon and hence understanding of the Sutta. If you cannot yet memorize the Sutta, it is advantageous even to listen to the Sutta being chanted by those who can. Even the confidence or faith that the chanting of the Sutta brings blessings to one’s life can pave the way towards an understanding of the Sutta — this is perhaps why the chanting of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is traditional in certain royal or civil cer-



emonies. This is especially true of the ceremonies held on *Āsālha Pūjā Day*, when it is a traditional duty for Buddhist monks to celebrate the anniversary of the preaching of the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* by chanting the *Sutta* for the benefit of the laypeople or giving commentarial teachings about it. This tradition is one that has been carried down to the present day.

It is regrettable that in the present day, it is becoming more and more difficult to find unabridged commentaries on the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. The present author was thus privileged to obtain a copy of the *Sāratthasamuccaya* reprinted by H.M. King Rama IX of Thailand on the occasion of the cremation held at Wat Thepsirindaravas of His Late Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand Phra Ariya-vamsāgatañāṇa (Waś Wasan Mahathera) on 18 March 1989. The *Sāratthasamuccaya* itself is a translation of a text composed some 800 years ago.

The original Thai translation appears to have been made during the reign of H.M. King Rama III and comprised twenty-two verses. The commentary on the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* was to be found in the twenty-first of these verses. Apart from offering a detailed explanation of the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, the translation is notable for a use of language so rich and impressive that it could easily qualify in itself as a Buddhist literary masterpiece.

Having read this translation of the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, it was the dearest wish of the present author to make this book more readily accessible to the Buddhist community, to facilitate the implementation of this *Sutta*'s message into personal practice in the footsteps of the Buddha and the arahants. Modern students of the original





translation are hampered in their studies both by the scarcity of the original and its archaic language. In spite of the present author's respect for the original use of language, to leave it in its original form would frustrate young people in their ongoing studies of Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. The present author has thus taken the liberty to adapt the more difficult passages into language which complies with more current usage. However, there has been strict adherence to the original content throughout. For example, even though the section on "*byādhidukkha*" is described in the *Sāratthasamuccaya* but appears not to be present in the original Pali of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the present author has retained reference to it in this version.

The emphasis of the *Sāratthasamuccaya* was primarily on Dhamma *principles* rather than Dhamma practice and although readers might delight in the clarity of the theoretical explanations, it is unlikely that the reader will be inspired to practise the principles for themselves.

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen (Phramonkol-thepmuni) (Sodh Candasaro) emphasized Dhamma practice throughout his life, considering Dhamma practice to the point of attaining the Dhammakāya to be the only sure way for Buddhists to understand the essence of the Buddhist teachings and to attain the fruits of practice in accordance with those described in the Scriptures. As an adherent to Luang Phaw Wat Paknam's tradition, the present author has taken the opportunity in this book to insert hints and tips for Dhamma practice in several places in this book in order to awaken the reader to the value and necessity of Dhamma practice, and integration of the said as a habitual part of everyday life in our quest for the Path and Fruit of Nirvana.



This book envisions the student of Dhamma as being an “heir” to the Buddha’s Teaching who has the responsibility to study them to the point where they understand them sufficiently deeply to instil these teachings in future generations of students — in the same way Koṇḍañña did this for us in his day and age — and the approach of the book is to facilitate the reader’s mastery of the scriptural material laid before us to a point of mastery both in theory and practice.

Lastly, the present author would like to express gratitude to the ancient commentarians who authored the *Sāratthasamuccaya* without whom this literary legacy would never have come down to our present time. Also, the present author would like to recognize with gratitude the virtue of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) of Thailand who was responsible for the reprinting of the translation of the *Sāratthasamuccaya* at the aforementioned funeral and without which the present author would never have had access to the original of the translation brought to you, the reader, in the present day, as *The Buddha’s First Teaching*.

Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Phra Phadet Dattajeevo)

Vice-Abbot: Wat Phra Dhammakaya

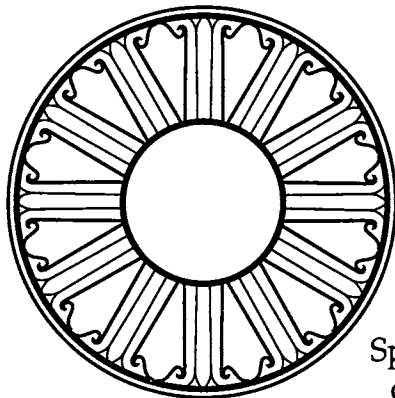
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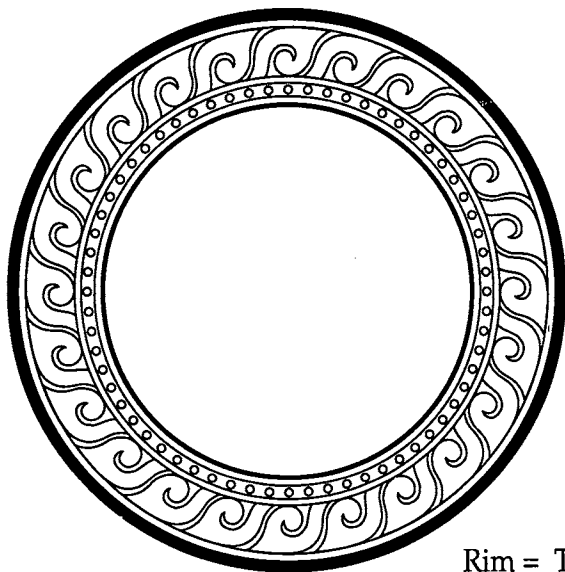
## The Structure of the Dhammacakka



Hub = The Thirty-Seven  
Factors of Enlightenment



Spokes = The Twelve Links  
of Dependent Origination



Rim = The Four Noble Truths



## Introduction

After the Enlightenment which transformed Siddhattha Gotama into the Lord Buddha beneath the Bodhi tree on the banks of the River Nerañjarā, Bodhgayā on the full moon night of the month of Visākha (May), the Buddha sat further to absorb the bliss of his Enlightenment and further to consider the Dhamma which he had learned, for a period of another seven days before finishing his meditation. The Buddha then moved to continue his consideration of the Dhamma under the Ajapālanigrodha Tree for another seven days. The Buddha then spent another seven days doing the same underneath a Jik Tree. From there he spent another seven days underneath a Ketaka Tree. Thus it was only twenty-eight days after his Enlightenment that he returned to sit beneath the Ajapālanigrodha Tree again. As the Lord Buddha was considering the Dhamma there the Brahmā Sahampati and a retinue of 10,000 bade the Buddha to have compassion and to teach what he had known for the benefit of the beings of the world. The Buddha surveyed the potential of the beings of the world to profit from what he had learned.



He agreed to teach the Dhamma, but remained undecided as to exactly who he should teach first. Eventually, the Buddha decided to make the journey to teach the 'Group of Five' [*pañcavaggiya*] who were residing at the Isipatana Deer Park close to Benares.

The inaugural teaching which the Lord Buddha preached to the 'Group of Five' was the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. The reason why the sutta was thus named, was because it was compared to a 'royal chariot of Dhamma' which the Lord Buddha would use to transport the beings of the world out of the Cycle of Existence [*vaḍḍa saṃsāra*] to the eternal safety of Nirvana — with the Buddha himself at the reins.

One indispensable component of such a chariot, necessary for it to reach its destination, would be its wheels [*cakka*]. Thus as the chariot was a 'Dhamma chariot' then the wheels would-be Dhamma wheels [*dhammacakka*].

Any wheel has three important components: hub, spokes and rim. The Dhammacakka was also composed of these three components: the Lord Buddha compared the hub to the Thirty-seven Factors of Enlightenment<sup>1</sup>; the spokes were compared to the Links of Dependent Origination<sup>2</sup>; and the rim was compared to the Four Noble Truths.

---

1 The Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment [*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*] consist of: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, The Four Strivings, The Four Foundations of Success, The Five Faculties, The Five Powers, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment and the Noble Eightfold Path (see footnote p.38).

2. The Links of Dependent Origination [*paṭiccasamuppāda*] consist of: Because of 1. Ignorance [*avijjā*] there is the condition for the arising of; 2. Mental Formations [*saṅkhārā*]...because of mental formations there is the condition for the arising of; 3. Consciousness [*viññāṇa*]...because of consciousness there is the condition for the arising of; 4. Mind and Form [*nāma-rūpa*]...because of mind and form there is the condition for the arising of; 5. the Six Senses [*āyatana*]...because of the six senses there is the condition for the arising of; 6. Sensual contact [*phassa*]...because of sensual contact there is the condition for the arising of; 7. Feeling [*vedanā*]...because of feeling there is the condition for the arising of; 8. Craving [*taṇhā*]...because of craving there is the condition for the arising of; 9. Clinging to rebirth [*upādāna*]...because of clinging to rebirth there is the condition for the arising of; 10. Becoming [*bhava*]...because of becoming there is the condition for the arising of; 11. Birth [*jāti*]... because of birth there is the condition for the arising of; 12. Old age and death [*jarā-maraṇa*].



For as long as the components were separated, they could not be called a wheel. Just as, a skilled wheelwright can assemble the components to make a strong wheel ready to be put to work, the Buddha, through his preaching of the three groupings of Dhamma to the 'Group of Five', and relating them, gave rise to a 'Dhammacakka' which would bear the practitioner towards benefit and ultimately liberation. There is no other spiritual teacher apart from the Buddha who could expound the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta to fulfil the same function.

We find that after the Buddha had expounded the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta to the 'Group of Five' on this occasion, he never taught it again throughout the forty-five years of his dispensation — however, all the teaching which the Buddha gave during this time were simply expansions upon the details of the Sutta. Furthermore, it is well known to scholars, that the expounding of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is the traditional first sermon which is given not only by Gotama Buddha, but every Buddha down the ages.

### **The Recording of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**

The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta which is recorded for us in the Buddhist Scriptures, is preserved for us by Ānanda who when he accepted the post of personal attendant to the Buddha, did so on the condition that if the Buddha should give any teachings in his absence, then those teachings should be repeated to him at a later date.

### **The Main Issues of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**

After the Buddha had developed the wish to transport the beings of the world out of the cycle of existence to the shores of Nirvana, each of his teachings, whether short or long, is given with the intention of leading the listener to



the attainment of Nirvana. In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, further to the clarification of the profitable path of practice, the Buddha stipulates paths of practice that are unprofitable and might even be harmful. The Buddha is able to explain the dangers of these other paths because, He himself had practiced all three paths of practice, namely: sensual-indulgence [*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*]; 2. Self-mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*], and; 3. the Middle Way between these two extremes [*majjhimā paṭipadā*].

### 1. The Path of Sensual Indulgence

The path of sensual pleasure [*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*], is to seek for pleasures through the channels of the five outer senses: eyes, ears, nose, mouth and physical contact. Such pleasures reduce the seeker to worldly mundaneness. The more you let your mind be influenced by sense pleasures, the more defilements will accrue in the mind, in just the same way that the brightness of the sun can be covered up by clouds, defilements will cover up the innate brightness of the mind, and cripple its ability to perceive [*maggañāṇa*]<sup>1</sup> the fetters that hold the mind back from Enlightenment or the wisdom to know the Sadhamma to the appoint of attaining transcendental [*lokuttara*] attainments.

The path of sense pleasure fools the beings of the world into being contented with delusion, making them have to endure endless suffering in the Cycle of Existence. The Buddha taught us that the path of sense pleasure is sordid, worldly (i.e. for those still defiled), without benefit, ignoble, inappropriate for monks (because it is no path to release from defilements). These conclusions came from the supreme wisdom of the Lord Buddha.

1. *Maggañāṇa* is the knowing that allows one to be released from the fetters and defilements that ail the minds of beings.



## 2. The Path of Self-Mortification

According to the Buddha, the practice of self-mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*] is fruitless. He said that it is not a practice in keeping with the tenets of Buddhism because the way in which defilements are purportedly removed are by practices of physical self-denial such as lying on a heap of thorns, burning oneself in the sun, burning oneself in front of a fire, beating one's shins with a piece of wood, walking around under the weight of a burden of sand or severe fasting. Some eat only fruit or pickled vegetables, or the tips of rice grains, rice alone or rice husks. Lying on a heap of thorns produces such pain that all thoughts of sexual pleasure disappear temporarily. However, such practitioners, misunderstand that they have rid themselves of their defilements. Roasting oneself in the sun or in front of the fire, certainly burns the practitioner making them forget temporarily about the pleasures of the senses, and making them misunderstand that they have overcome their defilements. Some beat their shins each time they have a sensual thought and the shock makes them forget their desires temporarily. Some carry sand until they have built a huge sand heap and their tiredness seems to keep their desires in check. Eating insufficient food weakens the body to a point where there doesn't seem to be any further sensual desire.

Because only temporary respite from craving can be found by such practices, the Buddha taught that such practices are fruitless — the practice of fools who claim wisdom — the practice of those with False View. Such practices are of no benefit, and they are certainly not the practice of the Noble Ones. Therefore they are not practices suitable for monks because they do not lead to liberation from defilements. These conclusions came from the supreme wisdom of the Lord Buddha.





### 3. The Middle Way

The Middle Way [*majjhimā paṭipadā*] is a path of practice that avoids the extremes of either sensual indulgence or self-mortification. It is a path of practice that is conducive to taming the mind, supreme knowledge, virtuous knowledge, the extinguishing of craving and for liberation from defilements. It is the practice of the Noble Ones, fitting for monks who have gone to the trouble to raise themselves from the status of householders. Monks should practice the Middle Way according to the Noble Eightfold Path [*aṭṭhaṅgikamagga*], namely:

1. Right View [*Sammā Ditṭhī*]
2. Right Intention [*Sammā Saṅkappa*]
3. Right Speech [*Sammā Vācā*]
4. Right Action [*Sammā Kammanta*]
5. Right Livelihood [*Sammā Ājīva*]
6. Right Effort [*Sammā Vāyāma*]
7. Right Mindfulness [*Sammā Sati*]
8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]

Sometimes the Noble Eightfold Path is summarized in three components, i.e. the Higher Training in Self-Discipline [*adhisīlasikkhā*]; the Higher Training of the Mind [*adhicittasikkhā*]; and the Higher Training in Wisdom [*adhipaññasikkhā*]. These trainings are the path by which Prince Siddhattha became enlightened as the Lord Buddha, and gained insight into the Four Noble Truths which comprise:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering [*dukkha ariyasacca*];
2. The Noble Truth of the Causation of Suffering [*dukkhasamudaya ariyasacca*];



3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering [*dukkhanirodha ariyasacca*];
4. The Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering [*dukkhanirodhagāminī ariyasacca*].

Apart from allowing Prince Siddhattha to attain an end of defilements and become the Buddha, the Middle Way also allowed him to attain Nirvana while still alive [*sa-upādisesanibbāna*] — eradicating all defilements from his mind even before the break up of his own psychophysical constituents or aggregates [*khandha*]<sup>1</sup>. It also prepared him for the day of his death when he would pass away into permanent Nirvana [*anupādisesanibbāna*] — at the break up of his aggregates and only his body of enlightenment [*dhammakāya*] remained, the latter would take its place permanently in the sphere of Nirvana [*āyatananibbāna*].

It is for all these reasons that the Lord Buddha dared to compare the Supreme Dhamma of the Noble Eightfold Path to a precious jewel — because it has the potential to lead whoever practises it to the attainment of Nirvana. These conclusions came from the supreme wisdom of the Lord Buddha.

### **Seeing & Knowing: Three Cycles & Twelve Components**

The insight gained by the Lord Buddha into the Four Noble Truths, was gained in three successive cycles of examination. Only then did he dare to announce that he had attained Enlightenment. Thus, three cycles of examination of four Noble Truths gives us a total of twelve components in his examination:

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1. The Five Aggregates or Psychophysical Constituents [*khandha*] consist of the following: 1. Corporeality [*rūpakhandha*]; 2. Feeling [*vedanākhandha*]; 3. Perception [*saññākhandha*]; 4. Mental Formations [*saṅkhārakhandha*], and; 5. Consciousness [*viññāṇakhandha*].



**1. Saccañāṇa:** This first cycle of examination of the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths established the knowledge of the Truth of their Existence. Thus he was to find out: 'this is the Noble Truth of Suffering'; 'this is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering'; 'this is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering'; 'this is the Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering'.

**2. Kiccañāṇa:** This second cycle of the examination of the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths established the knowledge of one's duty in relation to them. Thus he was able to find out: 'this is what should be done in relation to the Noble Truth of Suffering'; 'this is what should be done in relation to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering'; 'this is what should be done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering'; 'this is what should be done in relation to the Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering'.

**3. Katañāṇa:** This third cycle of the examination of the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths established the knowledge of the fulfilment of one's duty in relation to them. Thus he was able to find out: 'what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Noble Truth of Suffering'; 'what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering'; 'what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering'; 'what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering'.

The stages of the knowledge accrued during the twelve stages of the cycle of examination in three cycles can be shown in table form as shown in Table I.

The attainment of all twelve of the stages of the cycle of examination, are what made the Buddha dare to testify to

**TABLE I:**  
***Insights gained from fulfilling the Three Cycles & Twelve Components***

<b>Ariyasacca</b>	<b>Dukkha Ariyasacca</b>	<b>Samudaya Ariyasacca</b>	<b>Nirodha Ariyasacca</b>	<b>Nirodhagamini Patipada Ariyasacca</b>
<b>Saccañāṇa</b>	Knowledge of Existence of Suffering	Knowledge of Existence of the Origin of Suffering	Knowledge of Existence of the Cessation of Suffering	Knowledge of Existence of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering
<b>Kiccañāṇa</b>	Knowledge of what should be done in relation to Suffering	Knowledge of what should be done in relation to the Origin of Suffering	Knowledge of what should be done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering	Knowledge of what should be done in relation to the Path to the Cessation of Suffering
<b>Katañāṇa</b>	Knowledge that what needs to be done has been done in relation to Suffering	Knowledge that what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Origin of Suffering	Knowledge that what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering	Knowledge that what needs to be done has been done in relation to the Path to the Cessation of Suffering



his Enlightenment for the benefit of the 'Group of Five' — Enlightenment that is supreme in the human world, angel world, Māra-world, Brahmā-world, animal-world, world of monks, world of brahmins, world of angels or men — Enlightenment from which there will be no relapse into defilements and no further rebirth.

### **First Disciple: the most seasoned in the Perfections**

At the end of the Lord Buddha's sermon, Koṇḍañña, the leader of the 'Group of Five', became a Stream-Enterer [*sotāpana*]. He had seen with the eye of (the body of) enlightenment that 'Whatever is of the nature of arising, has the nature of cessation' and in his context, he saw that his own aggregates were of such a nature — all of the nature of arising and cessation.

The earth-sprites [*bhūmadevata*] unanimously praised the supremacy of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, saying that it was incomparable with anything taught by monks, brahmins, angels, Māras, gods or anyone in the world. The praises resounded amongst the angels sequentially higher and higher in the various levels of heaven until it reached the Brahmā-world. The cosmos quaked and there arose limitless brightness.

The Buddha knew of the attainment of Koṇḍañña and exclaimed '*Aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño, aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño*' ('Koṇḍañña now you know') and for this reason Koṇḍañña was henceforth known as '*Aññakoṇḍañña*' (Koṇḍañña who knows).

In fact, the 'group of five' had already been ordained for a long time, and were already endowed with self-discipline and meditation. However, they still lacked the wisdom to see the path out of suffering. After the Buddha had clarified



the harmfulness of the extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification, and advocated the following of the Middle Way or Noble Eightfold Path, the 'group of five', especially Koṇḍañña who was most seasoned in his Perfections was able to become a Stream-Enterer — the first to attain Enlightenment under the dispensation of our Lord Buddha.



Something which you will find at the beginning of every sutta are Ānanda's words '*Evaṃ me sutaṃ...*': i.e. 'Thus have I heard (directly from the Lord Buddha)'.

On one occasion, the Blessed One was staying at the Isipatana Deer Park close by the town of Benares [Vārāṇasi]. At that place, the Buddha summoned the 'group of five' [*pañcavaggiya*] and addressed them thus:

O! Bhikkhus! Monks who wish to overcome suffering must strictly avoid the two extremes of practice, namely:

1. Sensual indulgence [*kāmasukhallikanuyoga*]
2. Self-mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*]

**1. Indulging in sensual pleasures [*kāmasukhallikanuyoga*]**  
Sensual indulgence is being enamoured by the pleasures of the five senses (i.e. images, sounds, aromas, tastes and physical contact) — and endless hankering after the pleasures therein, until such hankering becomes a habit. Reliance on such sense pleasures becomes so engrained in one's being that one has no more thought of renunciation or of going forth into the monkhood.



**Commentorial Metaphors: Indulgence in sensual pleasures:**

1. *A pig content to wallow in dung:* Indulging in sensual pleasures is rather like a pig, which spends all its life wallowing in the warm mud and dung of its pigsty because it thinks that this is the ultimate happiness. The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the five senses to sewerage, also beloved of pigs. He said that the pleasures of the senses are suitable only for householders and are not suitable for those leading the monastic life.

2. *A corpse abandoned to rot in a cemetery:* Indulging in sensual pleasures as a state of being is base and unprofitable, comparable to a rotting corpse abandoned in a cemetery.

3. *A dog chewing on the bones of a fleshless skeleton:* Indulging in the pleasures of the five senses is comparable to a skeleton and the person who indulges in the pleasures of the five senses can be compared to a dog which enjoys chewing at the dry and fleshless bones of that skeleton. The dog feels a few moments satisfaction as the result of its chewing — but the satisfaction is short-lived.

4. *Enjoying a dream:* The pleasures of the senses can be compared to a dream — again because they are transitory and soon disappear.

5. *The red-hot glowing embers of a fire:* The pleasures of the senses can also be compared to red-hot glowing embers — and those who indulge in the pleasures of the senses are like someone who has fallen into the flames — if the victim is not burned to death instantly, he will experience nothing but excruciating torture. In just the same way, those drunken with indulgence of their sensual desires will have to continue to endure the excruciating torture of rebirth in the cycle of existence.





**6. Eating a poisonous fruit:** The pleasures of the five senses can be compared to a poisonous fruit. The hedonist, in his greed eats the fruit and must endure the ensuing pain and upset as the poison takes its effect — and he may die as a consequence.

**7. Playing with a sharp weapon:** The Lord Buddha compared the pleasures of the five senses as being like a sword, a foil, a spear or a javelin. Anyone who meddles with the pleasures of the five senses, will eventually be tortured or executed by sword, foil, spear or javelin. In the end there is nothing more than suffering. Ultimately, there is not even the slightest benefit from indulging the pleasures of the senses.

**8. A child playing with a top:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to a top (childrens' toy). He said to play with a top is immature: i.e. appropriate only for those who are still thick with defilements. It is only those with immature and sordid lives, who spend their time accruing and indulging in such sensual pleasures.

**9. Discarded husks of rice:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to rice husks which are discarded in troughs as pig offal.

**10. A cemetery of rotting corpses:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to a filthy cemetery filled with rotting corpses which attracts stray dogs, crows and vultures.

**11. A latrine:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to a latrine or a toilet which is soiled with excrement.

**12. Excrement or Toilet rinsings:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to the water that has been



used to rinse a toilet or the toilet bowl itself, which is soiled with excrement. He also compared the pleasures of the senses to human faeces which dogs like to spend their time sniffing.

Thus, the Lord Buddha taught that indulgence in the pleasures of the senses is shunned by the Noble Ones [*ariyapuggala*]<sup>1</sup>, just like a girl of the untouchable caste [*caṇḍala*]<sup>2</sup> would be shunned by a brahmin suitor for her vulgar manners, disposition and speech.

Furthermore, indulgence in sensual pleasures is of absolutely no benefit — on the contrary it attracts only damage and suffering to whoever indulges. Thus it has been compared to:

**13. A road through dangerous territory:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to a road whose route leads us through dangerous country threatened by ogresses [*yakkhinī*], upon which no traveller can ever escape misfortune and death.

**14. Licking honey from a razor blade:** The Buddha also compared the pleasures of the senses to a greedy person who tries to lick sweet tasting honey from a razor blade and suffers from the ensuing wounds and infection of his tongue.

**15. Denizens of hell blundering back into the fires of hell:** The Buddha also compared indulging the pleasures of the senses to denizens of hell fooled into thinking they have reached a place that is a sanctuary from the suffering of hell, but instead are dropped anew into hell's fires.

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1. The Noble Ones [*ariya-puggala*] are those who have attained the transcendental states of Buddhist sainthood: i.e. Stream-enterer [*śotāpana*], Once-Returner [*sakadāgāmin*], Never-Returner [*anāgāmin*] and *arahant*.

2. An untouchable [*caṇḍala*] is an outcast child arising from parents of different castes (e.g. the mother might come from the peasant caste [*sudda*] and the father from the brahmin caste). Such apartheid is a product of the Brahmin caste system of India.



**16. A man who falls in love with an ogress:** The Buddha also compared indulging the pleasures of the senses to a man who falls in love and co-habits with an ogress who he takes for a human maiden (but who will later become her victim).

**17. A crow feeding from a floating elephant carcass:** The Buddha also compared indulging the pleasures of the senses to a crow feeding from a floating elephant carcass who takes it for dry land (that will never sink) and is so concerned with feeding that the carcass floats so far out to sea that the crow cannot fly home, and eventually drowns from its folly.

This last metaphor clearly illustrates how no benefit can be found by indulging in sensual pleasure. All these dangers of indulging in sensual pleasures are the reason why the Buddha taught in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta that those leading the monastic life must avoid the extreme of indulging in sensual pleasure.

Furthermore, in the Mahādukkhakhanda Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Stems of Suffering) (M.i.83ff.), delivered at Savatthi, the Buddha expounds the dangers of sensual indulgence, in detail which exceeds even that of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta.

“O! Monks! What is indulgence of the senses? The senses are five, namely: images seen with the eyes, sounds heard with the ears, aromas smelled with the nose, savours tasted with the tongue, physical touch registered by the body. The indulgence of these five senses is of a nature to tempt us to attachment. O! Monks! The pleasures and enjoyment which come from sense contact are what we call the indulgence of the senses.

O! Monks! What are the dangers of sensual indulgence? The people of this world earn their livelihood in many



ways: for example, some are farmers, some run businesses, some tend dairy cattle, some are soldiers, some are civil servants, some are elephant trainers, some are horse trainers. No matter which way one earns one's living, one has to endure hardship. In the winter one has to tolerate the cold while working. In the summer one has to tolerate the warmth while working. Sometimes one has to tolerate the humidity. One's skin becomes chapped in the wind and the sun. Sometimes, one has to tolerate pests such as gadflies, mosquitos and other biting insects. Sometimes one is threatened by poisonous animals such as snakes. Sometimes one becomes emaciated because one lacks sufficient means of physical support.

O! Monks! Whether one earns one's livelihood by arts or by sciences, one cannot avoid the hardships imposed by nature. All these are the dangers of sensual indulgence — the manifestation of suffering as we meet it in our lives — all coming as the result of our wish to indulge the senses. Whenever a person strives to earn a living, to do business, but does not achieve the success he requires, he will be disappointed, laments that he deserved more after all his efforts, that it is not befitting that he should make a loss, be without benefit — but it is all due to indulgence of the sense pleasures.

Even though a person makes a success of earning his living and becomes wealthy, it is not an end to his suffering — because now he must worry about how to protect his wealth from being taken away in taxes, taken away by robbers, damaged by fire, damaged by flooding, taken away by enemies — so his suffering continues.



If it happens that his wealth is taken away in taxes, or stolen by robbers, or damaged by fire or floods, or frittered away by fraudulent enemies then that person will be sorrowful, suffering in body and mind, lamenting his loss with the realization that 'this wealth doesn't really belong to me, it is out of my hands'. O! Monks! These are the dangers of sensual indulgence — suffering that manifests itself as the result of the sense pleasures.

O! Monks! Emperors fight one another, kings fight one another, brahmins fight one another, householders fight one another, mothers fight with their children, children fight with their mothers, fathers fight with their children, children fight with their father, older siblings fight with younger siblings, big brothers fight with their little sisters, little sisters fight with their big brothers, friends fight one another — and all because of attachment to sense pleasures.

When people (of various social positions) such as emperors, fight amongst themselves, they try to hurt one another with their fists, by shoving, by punching, by stabbing, with weapons — where either of the opponents might lose their life — all these manifestations of fighting are consequences of attachment to sense pleasure.

O! Monks! Futhermore, there are those who take a sword and a shield, or bow and arrow, or a flaming torch, instruments of torture with poisoned tips, wage war on the battleground, shoot at their enemy, throw spears, stab their enemy with swords, leaving victims dead on the battlefield or leaving combatants mortally wounded. O! Monks! The waging of war, the fighting to kill or wound one another, all comes as a consequence of attachment to sense pleasure.



O! Monks! Some warriors go to the trouble to erect defences of brick and mortar to stop their enemies being able to climb over, they fill their arsenals full of weapons. However, if the enemy should penetrate their defences, they will be killed with guns, arrows, spears or swords or hanged. The attackers attempting to climb the defences might have boiling cow dung poured over their heads, or have their heads chopped off with a sword, or be mortally wounded. O! Monks! All this manifestation of suffering comes as a consequence of attachment to sense pleasure.

O! Monks! Furthermore, there are burglars who go from house to house robbing them, some force their way into a house and threaten or kill the householder, some are highway robbers, some commit adultery with the wives of other men. When any of these criminals are caught by the king, they are punished by whipping, caning etc.. O! Monks! All this manifestation of suffering comes as a consequence of attachment to sense pleasure.

O! Monks! When those who commit wrongdoings of body, speech or mind die, the body breaks up but their spirit remains and will be reborn in any of the four unfortunate (hell) realms: the hells, the realm of hungry ghosts [*peta*], the monstrous [*asurā*] realms or as an animal. O! Monks! All this manifestation of suffering comes as a consequence of attachment to sense pleasure.

O! Monks! To restrain oneself from enjoyment of the sense pleasures, to avoid attachment to the sense pleasures — both these are refuges from sense pleasure [*kāmanissaraṇa*] or in other words 'Nirvana'."



It is for this reason that the Lord Buddha should want to start his sermon by instructing the 'group of five' that indulgence of the senses is unsuitable, base, ignoble, without benefit, unsuitable for a Buddhist monk — and should be shunned, not indulged or prized.

## **2. Self-Mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*]**

This is the practice of self-denial or self-mortification — which is a non-Buddhist practice. It is one of many practices favoured by non-Buddhist ascetics such as *Niganthas*. In fact, even amongst the ascetics who practice self-mortification there are many different schools: some refuse to wear clothes, some always stand in order to defecate, some use their bare hands to clean up after defecation, some accept alms from a maximum of only one household or two households per day, some live on only one mouthful of food per day, some accept alms from only one benefactor per day, or only one particular woman benefactor per day, some fast for ten days, fifteen days each time they take a meal. Some eat only the tips of the rice, some eat only rice husks, some eat only pickled vegetables and fruit, some eat only rice, some eat only bran. Some wear only clothes made of jute. Some leave their hair to grow long and cover their nudity with their own hair. Some wear only animal skins. Some wear only clothes made of owl feathers. Some lie on a heap of thorns. Some never wash.

All of these non-Buddhist practices are examples of self-mortification. Such practices cause physical harm without any good benefit in return. They only increase one's suffering.



### Commentorial Metaphors: Self-mortification:

1. *Sugar-cane juice and poison*: It can be compared to a mixture of sugar-cane juice and poison. In the end such practises will lead to death, and all for nothing.

2. *Stale Excrement mistaken for medicine*: It can be compared to stale faeces or urine which has degenerated into a poison which festers with disease. Anyone who mistakes it for medicine will cause their own death or near death. Anyone who tries to reduce their suffering through the use of such a medicine will find that they are seriously mistaken.

3. *A grasshopper leaping into a fire*: It can be compared to a grasshopper which leaps into the flames: Self-mortification is not a noble practice, but a practice fit for fools. It brings not the least benefit.

4. *A Vengeful Ogre*: It can be compared to an ogre which follows one everywhere, with the vow of vengeance to kill one at the first opportunity.

5. *A poisonous snake mistaken for a rope*: It can be compared to someone who mistakenly picks up a poisonous snake in the dark, thinking that it is a rope. There is no way they can escape the poisonous bite of that snake.

6. *Jumping over a cliff*: It can be compared to someone jumping over a cliff. There is no way they can escape being smashed to smithereens.

7. *Jumping into a fire*: It can be compared to a person jumping into the flames of a fire. There is no way he can escape being burned to ashes. Anyone who wants to release themselves from the cycle of existence but mistakenly practises self-mortification — and for all the suffering of one's efforts, eventually it will all be in vain.

8. *Trusting an Enemy*: It is like persuading one's worst enemy to be one's friend. Sweet words lull one into a false





sense of security, but in the end, he will surely take advantage of us and leave us decapitated in the jungle.

It is for all of these reasons that the Lord Buddha taught that self-mortification is a non-Buddhist practice, it is unwholesome, ignoble and unsuitable for monks subscribing to Buddhism to practise or associate with.

Self-mortification is a dangerous temptation which looks as if it should be a fruitful practice, but instead puts one in dreadful danger.

### 3. The Noble Middle Way [*majjhimā paṭipadā*]

Anyone who wishes to escape from the Cycle of Existence [*vaḍḍa saṃsāra*], who has gone to all the trouble to renounce the life of a householder, should devote themselves to the practise of the Middle Way [*majjhimā paṭipadā*], which consists of eight components, and is thus often referred to as the "Noble Eightfold Path". The Buddha himself, having surveyed the world with the special wisdom accessible only to a Buddha<sup>1</sup>, saw that it is possible to see the Four Noble Truths (i.e. The Existence of Suffering, the Origin of Suffering, the Extinction of Suffering and the way to the Extinction of Suffering) only by the practice of the Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path is the only way in which defilements can be uprooted from the mind. It is a condition of becoming enlightened as the Four Noble Truths. It is a condition of attaining Nirvana.

#### Commentorial Metaphors: The Noble Middle Way

1. *A Righteous Emperor*: It can be compared to a Righteous Emperor of unrivalled majesty — whose rule all other

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1. The special wisdom of the Buddha referred to as "*anāvaraṇaṇāṇa*" which allows him to have insight which penetrates to the roots of all things.



kings must accept with obeisance. This is because the Noble Eightfold Path is a supreme and noble practice.

**2. A Wide Ocean:** It can be compared to the wide ocean into which all rivers must flow. The Noble Eightfold Path is endowed with all thirty-seven of the Factors of Enlightenment. The Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment comprise of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness<sup>1</sup>, The Four Strivings<sup>2</sup>, The Four Foundations of Success<sup>3</sup>, The Five Faculties<sup>4</sup>, The Five Powers<sup>5</sup>, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment<sup>6</sup> and the Noble Eightfold Path.

**3. A Palace Spire:** It can be compared to a jewel on top of the spire of the palace of the Lord Buddha's Teachings. The

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1. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness comprise: 1. mindfulness of the body [*kāyānupassanāsati*paṭṭhāna]; 2. mindfulness of the feelings [*vedanānupassanāsati*paṭṭhāna]; 3. mindfulness of the mind [*cittānupassanāsati*paṭṭhāna], and ; 4. mindfulness of mental phenomena [*dhammānupassanāsati*paṭṭhāna].

2. The Four Strivings comprise: 1. Avoidance of evils not yet done [*saṃvara-padhāna*]; 2. Abandonment of evils already done [*pahāna-padhāna*]; 3. Development of virtues not yet done [*bhāvanā-padhāna*], and; 4. Maintenance of virtues already mastered [*anurakkhanā-padhāna*].

3. The Four Foundations of Success comprise: 1. Initial Willing [*chanda*]: Having the initial enthusiasm to do a task and the wish always to improve; 2. Initial Application [*virīya*]: Getting down to doing the task with effort and patience to overcome possible hindrances and provarications; 3. Continued Application [*citta*]: Following through with the task to completion by full immersion of our attention in the task, and; 4. Review [*vimaṃsā*]: Using our wisdom to look for room for improvement in the way we do the task.

4. The Five Faculties (characteristics that put us in control of a task) comprise: 1. Confidence [*saddhā*]; 2. Energy/Effort [*virīya*]; 3. Mindfulness [*sati*]; 4. Concentration [*saṃādhi*] and; 5. Wisdom [*paññā*]. These virtues are called 'indriya' because they allow us to take control of our doubts, laziness, recklessness, absent-mindedness and ignorance respectively. The same five virtues are sometimes called the 'Five Powers' [*bala*] (see note 5 below).

5. The Five Powers: These are the same five virtues mentioned as the Five Faculties of note 4, but here they are described from the point of view of 'empowering' us in a task and making us invulnerable to the perils of doubts, laziness, recklessness, absent-mindedness and ignorance respectively. The Five Powers are irreplaceable principles of practice for our practice towards liberation and Nirvana.

6. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment comprise: 1. Mindfulness [*sati*]; 2. Wise Examination of Dhamma [*dhammavicaya*]; 3. Effort/Energy [*virīya*]; 4. Joy [*pīti*]; 5. Peacefulness of Mind [*passaddhi*]; 6. Concentration [*saṃādhi*], and; 7. Equanimity/Letting go [*upekkhā*].



Noble Eightfold Path is the most auspicious of all the virtuous teachings of the Lord Buddha.

**4. A Wish-fulfilling Jewel:** It can be compared to a wish-fulfilling jewel of eight facets.

**5. The Chariot of Dhamma:** It can be compared to the chariot which mobilizes the Lord Buddha's teachings, and which transports the practitioner to Nirvana.

### **The Components of the Noble Eightfold Path**

The Lord Buddha explained that the Noble Eightfold Path comprises:

1. Right View [*Sammā Diṭṭhi*]
2. Right Intention [*Sammā Saṅkappa*]
3. Right Speech [*Sammā Vācā*]
4. Right Action [*Sammā Kammanā*]
5. Right Livelihood [*Sammā Ājīva*]
6. Right Effort [*Sammā Vāyāma*]
7. Right Mindfulness [*Sammā Sati*]
8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]

You can define the components of the Eightfold Path in terms of practice at two levels: low (mundane) (*see more detail Chapter Eight*) and high (transcendental) (*see more detail Chapter Seven*).

**1.1 Right View (mundane):** At low level Right View means having the discretion to believe in the working of karma [*kammassakatāñāṇa*]: that doing good deeds will merit good outcomes and that evil deeds will cause unfortunate retribution.

**1.2 Right View (transcendental):** At high level Right View means the ultimate wisdom, based on an attainment of Nirvana, which is devoid of any further influence of ignorance<sup>1</sup> [*avijjā*] or

1. Ignorance [*avijjā*] means not knowing the reality of the Four Noble Truths



subtle defilements<sup>1</sup> [*anusaya*].

**2.1 Right Intention (mundane):** At low level Right Intention means having the wholesome intention to be generous, keep the Five Precepts, renounce the world to become a monk, avoid taking advantage of other people or animals.

**2.2 Right Intention (transcendental):** At high level Right Intention means the intention to dedicate oneself entirely to the attainment of Nirvana.

**3. Right Speech:** Right Speech means avoiding the four types of False Speech:

1. Telling Lies [*musāvāda*];
2. Divisive Speech [*pisuṇāvācā*];
3. Harsh Speech [*pharusavācā*];
4. Idle Chatter [*samphapphalāpa*].

**4. Right Action:** Right Action means practising the three wholesome physical deeds [*kāyasucarita*], namely:

1. Refraining from killing or physically torturing other living beings [*pāṇātipātā*];
2. Refraining from stealing or obtaining things in a dishonest way [*adinnādānā*];
3. Refraining from sexual relations outside marriage (committing adultery) [*kāmesumicchācārā*].

Furthermore, one must not consume intoxicants such as alcohol that lead to heedlessness.

**5. Right Livelihood:** Right Livelihood means earning one's living in an honest way — and in a way that avoids evils like telling lies or deception. In the *Tiṭṭaka*, in many places<sup>2</sup>, the Buddha exhorts even his monks, to earn their living by

1. There are seven sorts of subtle defilements [*anusaya*]: 1. Sensual desire [*kāmarāga*]; 2. Irritation [*paṭigha*]; 3. Being opinionated [*diṭṭhi*]; 4. Doubt [*vicikicchā*]; 5. Arrogance [*māna*]; 6. Grasping for Rebirth [*bhavarāga*], and; 7. Ignorance of Reality [*avijjā*].

2. e.g. the *Samaññaphala Sutta* (D.i.47ff.)



the monk's equivalent of Right Livelihood, by avoiding such evils as fortune telling, sacrifices or interpreting dreams, because these are all 'low arts'<sup>1</sup> [*tiracchānavijjā*]. The Buddha even prohibited monks from making medicines or from earning their living as a physician. As for householders, in the *Vaṇijja Sutta*<sup>2</sup>, the Buddha prohibits Buddhist laypeople from the following trades:

1. Selling weapons;
2. Selling people (as slaves);
3. Selling animals (live ones for slaughter);
4. Selling alcohol or drugs;
5. Selling poison.

**6. Right Effort:** Right Effort means endowing oneself with four sorts of striving:

1. Avoidance of evils not yet done;
2. Abandonment of evils already done;
3. Development of virtues not yet done;
4. Maintenance of virtues already mastered.

**7.1 Right Mindfulness (mundane):** At low level Right Mindfulness means a mindfulness that keeps our mind on wholesome thoughts like that of meritorious actions like generosity, keeping the Precepts, thinking of the Triple Gem, thinking of those to whom you have a debt of gratitude like your parents or teachers.

**7.2 Right Mindfulness (transcendental):** At high level Right Mindfulness means cultivating the Four Foundations of Mindfulness [*satipaṭṭhāna*] — that is to concentrate one's mind to see and know four aspects of reality:

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1. Low Arts [*tiracchānavijjā*] are forms of knowledge or practice which stand in the way of the Path to Nirvana. They include charms to attract women, laying ghosts and fortune telling. Studying such arts will ensnare the student in ignorance and causes him encourage others to become ensnared in superstition, and abandon their reason.

2. A.iii.208



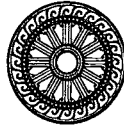
1. *mindfulness of the body* [*kāyānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna*]: Continuously seeing and knowing the body in the body — that is to see and know the subtle inner bodies that lie hidden within our physical body: the astral body (sometimes called ethereal, dream or subtle body) through to the various bodies of enlightenment [*dhammakāya*].

2. *mindfulness of the feelings* [*vedanānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna*]: Continuously seeing and knowing the feelings in the body in the inner bodies — that is to see what is happiness, what is suffering and what is neither happiness-nor-suffering in the physical body and the inner bodies. 'Outer feelings' means the feelings of the physical body while 'inner feelings' means the feelings of the inner bodies.

3. *mindfulness of the mind* [*cittānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna*]: Continuously seeing and knowing the 'minds within minds' in the physical body and in the inner bodies — that is continually to see and know the state of mind — knowing when the mind is caught up with defilements or knowing when the mind has become free of the action of defilements. 'Outer mind' means the mind of the physical body while 'inner mind' means the mind of the inner bodies.

4. *mindfulness of the dhammas* (mental phenomena) [*dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna*]: Continuously seeing and knowing the 'mental phenomena within mental phenomena' in the physical body and in the inner bodies — that is continually to see and know the sphere of dhamma which gives rise to our physical body. 'Outer mental phenomena' means the sphere of dhamma of the physical body while 'inner mental phenomena' means the sphere of dhamma of the inner bodies.

**7.1 Right Concentration (mundane):** At low level Right Concentration means determination of mind to be gener-



ous, keep the Precepts, meditate or listen to Dhamma sermons. Such determination is a precursor of concentration called '*khaṇika-samādhī*'.

**7.2 Right Concentration (transcendental):** At high level Right Concentration means attaining neighbourhood concentration [*upacāra-samādhī*] and access concentration [*appanā-samādhī*] — the former means concentrating the mind to the degree that it is so stable that it rests on the brink of the 'absorptions' and the latter means attaining the absorptions, from the first absorption upwards.

### **The Dhammacakka: Transport to Nirvana**

The word '*cakka*' means a 'wheel' — a wheel in just the same way as a cartwheel or a car wheel. Any wheel has three important components: hub, spokes and rim. For as long as the components are separated, they could not be called a wheel. Just as a skilled wheelwright can assemble the components to make a strong wheel ready to be put to work, the Buddha, through his preaching of the three groupings of Dhamma to the *pañcavaggiya*, and relating them, gave rise to a 'Dhammacakka' which would bear the practitioner towards benefit and ultimately liberation. The Dhammacakka was also composed of these three components — the Lord Buddha compared the (*see also pages 14, 16-7*):

- the hub to the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment
- the spokes to the Links of Dependent Origination
- the rim to the Four Noble Truths

The close relationship between these three sets of Dhamma teachings is manifested by their relationship in the Dhammacakka — the sets of Dhammas rely on each other for their strength in just the same way as the different components of a wheel lend each other mutual support. The ser-



mon wouldn't have been called 'Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta' if only the Four Noble Truths or Dependent Origination or the Factors of Enlightenment were important — thus by the name of the sermon, we know that the important thing about the sermon is the way it shows the interconnection between these three Dhamma groups — as if the Buddha himself were the wheelwright who had assembled the fragments into a coherent and usable whole. Thus even if only some parts of the wheel are specifically mentioned in the sermon, as students we should look beyond to the implications for the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment and the Links of Dependent Origination too.





### **The Artistry Behind Preaching the Four Noble Truths**

In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta as in his other sermons, the Lord Buddha explains not only Dhamma subjects, but the relationship between them too. Even when treating the the 'rim of the wheel' (i.e. The Four Noble Truths), when the Lord Buddha teaches the 'Noble Truth of Suffering', his explanation includes implications which touch upon the 'Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering', the 'Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering' and the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. When the Lord Buddha teaches the 'Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering', his explanation includes implications which touch upon the 'Noble Truth of the Suffering', the 'Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering' and the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. When the Lord Buddha teaches the 'Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering', his explanation includes implications which touch upon the 'Noble Truth of the Suffering', the 'Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering' and the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. When the Lord Buddha teaches the 'Noble Eightfold Path', his explanation includes implications which touch upon



the 'Noble Truth of the Suffering', the 'Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering' and the 'Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering'. In brief, the artistry of the Lord Buddha is to integrate all four Noble Truths in his explanations.

### **1. Explanation of the Noble Truth of Suffering**

The Lord Buddha's explanation of suffering includes all four of suffering's implications in the light of the Four Noble Truths:

- 1.1. Suffering as bringing misery
- 1.2. Suffering as conditioning
- 1.3. Suffering as an affliction
- 1.4. Suffering as decay

#### **1.1. Suffering as bringing misery**

This is the direct explanation of the Noble Truth of Suffering — explained from the point of view of bringing misery. From this point of view, suffering has twelve characteristics:

**1.1.1 Birth** [*jāti*]: This form of suffering is unavoidable for all still caught in the cycle of existence.

**1.1.2 Aging** [*jarā*]: This form of suffering has the characteristic of deterioration of the bodily organs and faculties.

**1.1.3 Illness** [*byādi*]: This form of suffering has the characteristic of coming from loss of good health, which makes one suffer in various ways.

**1.1.4 Death** [*maraṇa*]: This form of suffering has the characteristic of bringing one to the end of one's life.

**1.1.5 Sorrow** [*soka*]: This form of suffering is of the characteristic of being afflicting one with 'burning in one's heart', anxiety, dry-mindedness — as if you have a huge weight on your chest or blocking the normal function of your chest.

**1.1.6 Lamentation** [*parideva*]: This is suffering that drives you to tears.

**1.1.7 Pain** [*dukkha*]: This is suffering that makes the mind



depressed and dejected.

**1.1.8 Feeling slighted** [*domanassa*]: This is when one has a 'chip on one's shoulder' (to be aggressively sensitive about a particular thing or bear a grudge).

**1.1.9 Bemoaning** [*upāyāssa*]: This is the suffering that causes you to bemoan something missed.

**1.1.10 Exposure to hateful things** [*apiyehi sampayoga*]: This is the suffering that causes cloudedness, grief, melancholy and heart-break as the result of coming into contact with things to which we are averse.

**1.1.11 Separation from loved ones and treasured things** [*piyehi vipayoga*]: This is the suffering arising when one is separated from the beings and mental formations we love.

**1.1.12 Disappointment** [*yam piccham na labhati*]: This is the suffering with the character of non-fulfillment of wishes when one is not gratified in the things one was hoping for.

These twelve different sorts of suffering are of the nature to bring misery to all living beings. The only certain thing in the life of every living being is that one will have to encounter the misery of suffering at some time in one's life. There is no-one who can evade the misery of suffering. For all of these reasons, the Lord Buddha taught us that suffering is of the nature to bring misery.

## **1.2. Suffering as conditioning**

This second characteristic of suffering demonstrates the inter-relation with the second Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. The Lord Buddha taught that suffering only arises because it is conditioned to arise by craving. There is nothing more directly responsible for the arising of suffering than craving.



### **1.3. Suffering as an affliction**

This third meaning of suffering shows the direct inter-relation with the fourth Noble Truth of the Path of Practice for an end of suffering. That suffering is an affliction, in the same way that patients continue to suffer from illnesses they make no effort to heal, suffering continues to ail those who are still reckless and make no effort to practise the Eightfold Path for an end of suffering. If living beings made the effort to practise the Noble Eightfold Path, they could effectively remove themselves from the clutches of suffering.

### **1.4. Suffering from the point of view of decay**

This fourth meaning of suffering is intended by the Buddha to show the direct inter-relation between suffering and the cessation of suffering. The Buddha shows his objective to inform living beings that the suffering which brings them misery from the moment they are born will continue for as long as those living beings have not attained cessation [*nirodha*] of suffering, better known by the word 'Nirvana'. Whosoever is well-developed in their Perfections and in their wisdom will be able to attain the Noble Paths and Fruits of Enlightenment and finally attain Nirvana. Those who have become united with Nirvana, will finally cast off the shackles of suffering once and for all and will be left in happiness for eternity. Deterioration and decay that are the characteristics of all things still within the clutches of suffering, will be transcended. This is the reason why in this fourth explanation of the characteristic of suffering, the Buddha pointed clearly to the suffering's inter-relation with the extinction of suffering.



## 2. Explanation of the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering

The Lord Buddha's explanation of the Origin of Suffering includes all four of the Origin of Suffering's implications in the light of the Four Noble Truths:

- 2.1. The Origin of Suffering as compiled
- 2.2. The Origin of Suffering as a cause
- 2.3. The Origin of Suffering as a controller
- 2.4. The Origin of Suffering as an anxiety

### 2.1 The Origin of Suffering as Compiled

This is the direct explanation of the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. It implicates craving as the universal initiator and the elaborator of Suffering with all living beings as its victims. Craving itself can be divided into two sorts:

2.1.1. *Self-centred craving* [*attatthataṇhā*]: The craving for advantages for oneself in terms of possessions and retinue.

2.1.2. *Retinue-centred craving* [*paratthataṇhā*]: The craving for advantages for those who are close to oneself, such as one's wife and children.

If one is unfulfilled in either or both of these two forms of craving, then one will suffer from continuous misery. Even if one gets everything one wants, it is never as quick as one wants, bringing one disappointment, anxiety and confusion — and it is the same for every sort of living being in the Three Planes of Existence. All have craving at the root of the suffering they experience. Even the smallest of animals has to eke out advantages for itself and its nearest and dearest, in spite of the intervening dangers. The resulting outcome is always suffering. Thus craving is at the root of every form of suffering.



## 2.2 The Origin of Suffering as a Cause

In explaining the Origin of Suffering, the Buddha intended to make clear that the suffering experienced by living beings has craving as its cause. As soon as there is craving, then the repercussion is suffering, from the suffering of birth onwards. Furthermore, the Lord Buddha wished to underline the inter-relation between the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering and the Noble Truth of Suffering.

## 2.3 The Origin of Suffering as Controller

With the objective of showing the inter-relation between the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, the Lord Buddha taught that craving is able to take control of living beings, keeping them endlessly in the Cycle of Existence because those living beings have failed to attain Nirvana. Those living beings are still polluted with greed, hatred and delusion, so craving is able to keep those beings under its control, to keep them being born and reborn without end.

## 2.4 The Origin of Suffering as Anxiety

The Lord Buddha taught that the anxieties which bring living beings misery are caused by the mind being caught up in two sorts of sensuality: mind-side sensuality [*kilesakāma*] and object-side sensuality [*vatthukāma*]<sup>1</sup>. Living beings are unable to release themselves from these anxieties and sensualities because they have not got down to following the Noble Eightfold Path. By practising the Noble Eightfold Path, they would be able to overcome their obsessions with

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1. Sensuality *per se* is the interaction of desire [*kilesakāma*] with an object of desire [*vatthukāma*]. Mind-side sensuality comes in the form of defilements which cause attachment such as grasping [*rāga*], greed [*lobha*] and jealousy [*icchā*]. Object-side sensuality comes from attractive objects for the senses such as attractive images, sounds, perfumes, tastes and physical contacts.



sensuality. In this way, the Buddha shows the inter-relation between the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Eightfold Path.

### **3. Explanation of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering**

The Lord Buddha's explanation of the Cessation of Suffering includes all four of the Origin of suffering's implications in the light of the Four Noble Truths:

- 3.1. The Cessation of Suffering as release;
- 3.2. The Cessation of Suffering as an end to obsession;
- 3.3. The Cessation of Suffering as stopping conditioning;
- 3.4. The Cessation of Suffering as deathless.

#### **3.1 The Cessation of Suffering as Release**

This is the direct definition of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. Whosoever attains Nirvana will be able to obtain release from the Cycle of Existence — and for that person there will be no more rebirth.

#### **3.2 The Cessation of Suffering as an End to Obsession**

The Lord Buddha taught that living beings are caught up in the clutches of sensuality because their minds are still polluted by craving. If they are able to remove craving from their minds, they will come to an end of their obsession with sensuality and thereby end their suffering — in other words they will attain Nirvana. This explanation is intended to show the inter-relation between the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

#### **3.3 The Cessation of Suffering as stopping conditioning**

In order to demonstrate the inter-relation between the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path, the Lord Buddha taught that:



“The wise one who trains himself [*yogāvacara*] should see that the builder is ‘Craving’ who fashions the home that is the physical body of each and every living being, to keep those living beings being reborn again and again in that home and having to endure the ensuing suffering and retribution.”

Whosoever wishes to escape from this physical body which is conditioned by craving must practice the Noble Eightfold Path, to stop the mind from ‘conditioning thought’. Thus ‘Stopping the Mind is the Secret of Success’.

### **3.4 The Cessation of Suffering as Deathlessness**

In order to show the relationship between the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Buddha taught that Cessation is the ‘Elixir of Deathlessness’ which can cure the illness of ‘Suffering’ — that is all twelve characteristics of suffering mentioned above. Those twelve characteristics of suffering are like the symptoms of a disease that traps living beings within the Cycle of Existence. Anyone who tastes the ‘Elixir of Deathlessness’ — i.e. the Extinction of Suffering — will cure themselves of Suffering’s disease.

### **4. Explanation of the Noble Truth of the Path to the End of Suffering**

The Lord Buddha’s explanation of the Path to the End of Suffering includes all four of the Path to the End of suffering’s implications in the light of the Four Noble Truths:

- 4.1. The Path as the Escape from the Cycle of Existence;
- 4.2. The Path as the Cause;
- 4.3. The Path as the Manifestation;
- 4.4. The Path as the Supreme.





#### **4.1 The Path as the Escape from the Cycle of Existence**

This is the direct definition of the Noble Truth of the Path to the End of Suffering. Whosoever wishes to traverse the ocean of the Cycle of Existence, needs to rely on the Noble Eightfold Path as the Supreme and Magnificent Vessel that can ride out all storms and perils to reach the other side of the worldly realms safely, without deviation or shipwreck.

The ocean of the Cycle of Existence is brimming with the tears brought forth in the course of the suffering of birth, aging, sickness and death of living beings.

Furthermore, the ocean of the Cycle of Existence is haunted by countless malevolent spirits and predatory fishes, comparable to the defilements of greed, hatred, delusion and stinginess. This ocean is so deep that aside from the Noble Eightfold Path, there is no vessel which could manage to make the crossing without being dashed to pieces by the fierce waves and their passengers all drowned or becoming food to the fish. The Noble Eightfold Path alone can withstand the crossing to Nirvana — the Lord Buddha explained the Noble Eightfold Path thus to communicate the outstanding majesty of this fourth Noble Truth.

#### **4.2 The Path as the Cause**

In order to show the relationship between the Noble Truth of 'Path' and the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Buddha taught that for all those who wish to escape the Cycle of Existence who have not yet succeeded, the reason is because craving still lurks in their minds — or they lack the wisdom to comprehend the danger of craving — and who still let clinging to rebirth [*upādāna*] run amok — and who can thereby not manage to find a Noble Vessel by which to traverse the Ocean of Worldliness.



Those who are wise and endowed with Right View will see the dangerous reality of craving, and not delay in practising the Noble Eightfold Path as a vessel to take them beyond the Sea of Worldliness.

#### **4.3 The Path as the Manifestation**

Demonstrating the inter-relation between the Noble Eightfold Path and the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, the Lord Buddha explained that practising the Noble Eightfold Path is the method by which the Cessation of Suffering or Nirvana can be manifested.

#### **4.4 The Path as the Supreme**

The Lord Buddha taught that the supremacy of the Noble Eightfold Path lies in its ability to extinguish all suffering for all those who practise it — in just the same way as a powerful charm or spell, by its recitation, can overcome the effects of a poisonous snake-bite. It is like the pure rainwater that falls from the sky and irrigates the fields ensuring that all crops can bear plentiful fruit and guarding against the perils of malnutrition and drought. Just as water is the leading factor in vegetal growth, the Noble Eightfold Path is the Supreme factor in allaying the Noble Truth of Suffering.

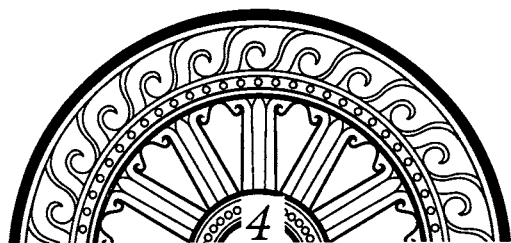
#### **The Inter-relation of Explanation for the Noble Truths**

The direct explanation of each of the Noble Truths is found in each case in the first explanation of the four given — for Suffering it is 'misery'; for the Origin of Suffering it is 'Being Compiled'; for the Extinction of Suffering it is 'Release' and for the Noble Eightfold Path it is 'Escape from the Cycle of Existence'.

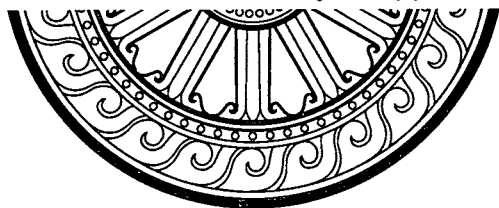
For the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Lord Buddha taught us to avoid the twelve characteristics of Suffering's misery



by reflecting on Suffering's meaning at 2, 3 and 4 in that order. As for the the meaning at 2, even though it is concerned with the Noble Truth of Suffering, it has implications reaching to the Origin of Suffering. Although the meaning at 3 is concerned with the Noble Truth of Suffering, it has implications reaching to the Noble Eightfold Path. Although the meaning at 4 is concerned with the Noble Truth of Suffering, it has implications reaching to the Cessation of Suffering. In the same way the meanings at 2, 3 and 4 for the Origin of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Eightfold Path and all linked to the other Noble Truths, as taught by the Lord Buddha.



## *The Noble Truth of Suffering*



### **Every living being is a victim of suffering**

The Lord Buddha explained the nature of suffering in detail. The Pali word for 'suffering' is '*dukkha*'. A definition of suffering separates the Pali '*dukkha*' into its root syllables '*du-*' and '*-kha*'. '*Du-*' refers to anything that is bad, to be avoided or brings danger. '*Kha*' refers to something that is devoid of goodness and happiness — it is the sort of thing that only fools associate with goodness and happiness, but that the noble ones shun.

If it wasn't for suffering, all beings would live a life without hardship or misery. In reality, however, there is no being which can escape suffering for as long as they remain caught up in the cycle of existence — being born and reborn — starting a new lifetime doesn't allow one to escape from suffering.

The Lord Buddha analysed suffering into the following categories:

1. Birth [*jāti dukkha*]
2. Aging [*jarā dukkha*]
3. Illness [*byādi dukkha*]



4. Death [*marāṇa dukkha*]
5. Sorrow [*soka dukkha*]
6. Lamentation [*parideva dukkha*]
7. Pain [*dukkha dukkha*]
8. Feeling slighted [*domaṇassa dukkha*]
9. Bemoaning [*upāyāssa dukkha*]
10. Exposure to hateful things [*apiyehi sampayoga dukkha*]
11. Separation from loved ones and treasured things [*piyehi vipayoga dukkha*]
12. Disappointment [*yam piccham na labhati dukkha*]
13. Clinging to the Five Aggregates [*pañcupādānakhandha dukkha*]

### 1. Suffering as a result of Birth [*jāti dukkha*]

The Lord Buddha taught that suffering as a result of birth is 'built in' suffering for every living being conceived in the realms of the Cycle of Existence. The arising of beings in the Cycle of Existence is by four possible modes of birth:

1. Hatching from an egg [*aṇḍaja*] e.g. birds, lizards and snakes;
2. Birth from the womb [*jalābuja*] e.g. mammals;
3. Arising in dampness or moisture [*saṃsedaja*] e.g. prokaryotic organisms e.g. mosquitos and some sorts of worms;
4. Spontaneous arising in adult form [*opapātika*] who are as developed as a sixteen-year old complete with adornment from the moment of birth e.g. angels, gods and denizens of hell.



The suffering of birth starts to affect beings without exception from the moment they are conceived. Some beings are fully equipped with sense spheres [*āyatana*]<sup>1</sup> from the moment they are born — others are handicapped, only further adding to their suffering. There will be suffering as a result of birth, whatever the mode of birth. However, for birth from the womb, the suffering is correspondingly more than for those arising spontaneously in adult form, or those arising in dampness or moisture.

For the mammals, for the first seven days after conception, the embryonic precursor [*kalla*] has the appearance of a tiny drop of sesame seed oil of the size that adheres to the tip of a yak hair which is clear like butter fat.

Seven days later the embryonic precursor will become more concentrated taking on the colour of water in which one has washed one's hands.

Seven days later still, the droplet becomes yet more concentrated until it has become a small piece of flesh with the same consistency of a chicken egg and it will continue in this state for a further seven days. So far twenty-eight days have elapsed. At this time, there is a swelling in five places corresponding to the limbs and the head — a state which lasts for another seven days. After this time there is a differentiation of hair [*kesā*], bodily hair [*lomā*], finger and toenails [*nakkhā*], teeth [*dantā*] and skin [*taco*] respectively.

From this time onwards, the suffering of being in the mother's womb starts to be apparent to the foetus, suffering that is so intense that it is difficult to find a comparison in words.

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1. The twelve sense spheres, factors of the faculty of perception, comprise six inner sense spheres and six outer sense spheres. The six inner sense spheres are: 1. eyes; 2. ears; 3. nose; 4. tongue; 5. the body surface, and; 6. the mind. The six outer sense spheres are: 1. sights; 2. sounds; 3. smells; 4. tastes; 5. touches, and 6. things arising in the mind.



### 1.1 The Suffering of Internment in the Womb

The foetus is seated upon the faeces of the mother passing through her intestines and has the food being digested in her stomach as a pillow. The foetus is forced into a squatting posture, hunched and hugging its own knees, with its back to the surface of the mother's stomach. Its face is against the mother's backbone — more like a monkey squeezing itself inside a hollow log to escape the rain, than a human being. The baby is bound up by its placenta and so is unable to extend its arms or legs, in the stinking darkness of the womb — almost like being subjected to a new sort of hell for nine-months. The stench inside the womb, which the foetus must tolerate night and day is like the smell of a rotting corpse [*asubha*] — and all with the relentless burning heat within the mother's body, more like a piece of meat being poached in a casserole than a baby. This is the first sort of suffering every living being encounters and technically speaking, this first suffering in the womb is called '*gabbho kantika mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.2 The Suffering of Physical Shocks to the Womb

Moreover, if the mother should happen to fall accidentally, or even the normal motion of the mother's walking up and down, or turning over in bed, getting up and sitting down inflicts further fear, shock and pain on the foetus in the womb — like the fawn of a hog deer terrified at the hands of a drunkard, or a baby snake at the hands of a snake-charmer — their whole body will be cast back and forth, shaken and tumbling, never managing to regain an upright position. When the mother eats or drinks something cold, the foetus will be frozen within the womb. Each time the mother eats or drinks something hot, then the burning only adds to the



suffering of the foetus, like being exposed to a rain of hot ashes. Each time the mother eats something spicy, the whole of the foetus's body will itch and become swollen with the strength of the spices — like a prisoner being tortured by having salt rubbed into open wounds all over his body. This second aspect of suffering at birth is known as '*gabbha parihāra mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.3 The Suffering of Unnatural Delivery at Birth

If the baby happens not to rotate itself properly when nearing the time of birth, and lies blocking the delivery path, the baby will have to be delivered by being forcibly dragged out of the womb by its arms and legs. This third aspect of suffering at birth is known as '*gabbha vipatti mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.4 The Suffering of being delivered at Birth

When it comes to the time when the baby must be delivered, there will be a build up of 'natal wind' [*lamma-kammajavāta*] which turns the baby upside down with its head down towards the birth canal and its feet up — as frightening for the baby as a person dangling upside down over a cliff face. Next the baby will have to endure the torture of childbirth — like a working elephant trying to make its escape by squeezing through a narrow space, or like denizens of the '*Sanghāta*'<sup>1</sup> hell<sup>1</sup> who are condemned to being crushed beneath fiery mountains. This fourth aspect of suffering at birth is known as '*gabbha jāyika mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.5 The Suffering of Being Cleaned-Up after birth

The torture continues as the doctor or the midwife cleans up the baby and dries him off. To the baby with its sensitive skin, the experience is like being pierced by sharp needles

1. see *Saṅkicca Jātaka* (J.530)(J.v.261ff.)





and stabbed with razor-sharp knives. This fifth aspect of suffering at birth is known as '*gabbha nikkhamana mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.6 The Suffering of Curtailed Life

From the moment the baby leaves the womb, the suffering is not finished. The baby must grow up into an adult. Some people have various forms of unpleasant karmic retribution that have followed them from their actions in previous lives. Some are punished as criminals and spend their lives in prison. Some are murdered. Some are obsessed by vengeance. Some commit suicide by hanging themselves or poisoning themselves. These are all examples of suffering which people experience merely as the consequence of having been born and are called '*attūpakkama mūlaka dukkha*' — the sixth aspect of the suffering of birth.

### 1.7 The Suffering of Wounds in Combat

In actual fact, all the suffering people experience in the world starts from the fact that they have been born at all. Birth is the prime mover for their suffering. Taking birth in human form, some people are subjected to suffering as the result of the weapons of others. This seventh aspect of suffering at birth is known as '*parūpakkama mūlaka dukkha*'.

### 1.8 The Suffering of Birth in the Hell Realms

Even the suffering of the denizens of hell starts with them being *born* in hell. The causative relation of birth in the hell realms for consequent suffering is said to be the eighth aspect of suffering caused by birth.

### 1.9 The Suffering of Birth in the Animal Kingdom

Those beings that are born in the animal kingdom are subjected to suffering caused by the cruelty of masters and hunters — being beaten with a whip or a goad, being stoned or



hunted to death. All of these forms of suffering could not occur if it wasn't for being *born* as an animal. The causative relation of animal birth for consequent suffering is said to be the ninth aspect of suffering caused by birth.

### **1.10 The Suffering of Birth in the Realm of Hungry Ghosts**

Lastly, those who are born as hungry ghosts [*pettivisaya*] suffer seriously as the result of having been born. They are hungry but unable to eat or drink anything while being left exposed to be burned by the wind and the sun. The causative relation of birth in the realm of hungry ghosts for consequent suffering is said to be the tenth aspect of suffering caused by birth.

## **2. Suffering as a result of Aging [*jarā dukkha*]**

The Lord Buddha defined Suffering resulting from aging as the form of suffering that has the characteristic of deterioration of the bodily organs and faculties — such alarming symptoms as the hair turning grey, teeth breaking, sunken cheeks, dry and wrinkled skin and deafness. The real process of aging is invisible to the naked eye. Only with the eye of insight developed through meditation can aging be seen.

### **Metaphors for Suffering as a result of Aging**

**1. A Forest Fire:** Aging is like an inferno which burns a forest to ashes before disappearing without trace. The flames are not a part of the forest or the ashes — and with aging we see only the results of the work (i.e. the symptoms of age) without being able to see the culprit. In fact aging is at work the whole of the time — even in young people — but it is only in their old age (when their hair turns grey etc.) that they realize the presence of aging (like noticing a fire only when it has already reduced the forest to ashes.)



2. *A Flood or a Storm which carries away forest debris:* In just the same way as a flash flood inundates a forest or a storm tears down branches and leaves in a forest and sweeps them away, leaving the debris somewhere else — only when the flood has subsided or the storm has passed can people see the debris left behind by the flood and know that the forest has been damaged by that flood or storm. In just the same way, it is only when we see someone losing their teeth, with hollow cheeks, sunken eyeballs, deaf ears, a delapidated body, grey hair and wrinkled, baggy skin that we realize that aging has done its work.

In conclusion, we can say that in general, we don't realize that aging is affecting us the whole of the time, whether we are awake or asleep. We only realize when the results of aging's work become manifest to the naked eye.

Another characteristic of aging is that it gradually increases the time that has elapsed in our lives and reduces the time left to go until our death. Just like the shuttle of the weaver advances the woof, adding to the woven cloth but detracting from the unwoven warp, aging takes away the remaining years of our life, adding them to the years elapsed. If a person had a lifespan of a hundred years, when a day passes, they have one less day to go until their hundred years is up. When a month passes, they have one less month to go until their hundred years is up. When a year passes, they have one less year to go until their hundred years is up (they have only 99 years left to go.) In conclusion aging drives all living beings relentlessly towards their dying day — all the way from the day of their birth we are already counting down to the day of our death.

Furthermore, aging causes the deterioration and clouding



of the six senses<sup>1</sup> and the deterioration of the thirty-two parts of the body<sup>2</sup>, causing the body to become shrivelled and unattractive.

In actual fact, this house that is our body, has craving [*tanhā*] as its builder — right from the foundations at the bones of the feet up to the bones of the legs as its supporting pillars. The hips are the beams. The ribs are the rafters. The collar bones are the column beams. The neck vertebra are the roof shield. The cranium is the gable peak. The arms are the gable weatherboards. The skin covering our trunk is like the roofing thatch, fastened down with the skewers of the tendons. The whole home is plastered with flesh and blood. Our house has nine doors, namely: two eye sockets, two earholes, two nostrils, a mouth, the urinary tract and the anus. The five windows are those of the outer senses, namely: eyes, ears, nose, mouth and touch. The whole structure is weatherproofed with a coating of 'taco', in other words, our skin, given its covering of the white and yellow powders (presumably for skin care) of cumin and talcum. The mind is the owner of this house — and is the real 'us'.

When the stormy gales of aging begin to blow, the house is vulnerable. The house shakes in the face of the storm and is subject to storm damage which is cumulative in its toll with every passing day. The body becomes slower in movement between the four postures<sup>3</sup>, and the body loses its vitality. The body groans as one stands up or sits down or walks along, because of the various afflictions of suffering which one must

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1. The six senses [*indriya*] comprise: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, body and mind.

2. The parts of the body are traditionally numbered as 32 '*akāra*', the hair of the head [*kesā*] being the first.

3. The four postures comprise: standing, walking, sitting and lying down.



bear.

When the sun shines in the morning, all the different flowers of the meadow and the water, open up their petals to welcome its rays. However, when the rays of the sun become hotter, the same flowers become withered by the heat. Even the moon which is so bright with its own radiance must hide itself away when the sun rises. The time of the rising sun is comparable to our youth when our body is still fresh, and when we are still strong and healthy. However, later in life, the same rays of aging bring us skin which is wrinkled and dry, dull and unattractive like the flowers withered by the extended heat of the day.

All these are ways in which aging brings misery to living beings.

### **3. Suffering as a result of Illness [*byādhi dukkha*]**

The Lord Buddha taught that suffering as a result of illness comes from the malfunction of the bodily elements. Sometimes such malfunction leaves us feeling cold. Sometimes we are left feeling intense heat and pain inside.

#### **Metaphors for Suffering as a result of Illness**

1. *A donkey dying while giving birth to a mule*: to bear the suffering of illness is as hard to bear as the suffering of a mother donkey who dies painfully while attempting to give birth to the kicking mule in her womb.

2. *A parasitic creeper*: A creeper starts by growing on a tree trunk, but eventually it will compete for the nutrition of that tree and eventually strangle that tree to death — like reed and bamboo competing for nutrients in the soil.

Illness brings pain, weariness, aches and weakness to the home that is our body. Illness undermines the sturdiness of our body and deprives us of happiness, bringing us misery



in its place. Even the Buddha and the enlightened ones are subject to the suffering of illness — so who are we to overlook the misery of illness?

#### **4. Suffering as a result of Dying [*maraṇa dukkha*]**

All living beings have to undergo death before they are able to leave one existence for the next. Thus, whether it is for the final extinguishing of the mind or merely the break up of the five aggregates that comprise the body, leaving behind this loathsome body — all are referred to as dying. The suffering of dying brings excruciating misery because the element of fire within the body will become increasingly hot, bringing a scorching sensation that seems to penetrate every part of the body, just as if someone has lit a fire just upwind of where we are lying. This is the first characteristic of the suffering caused by dying.

Furthermore, those beings who have said or done evil things during their lifetime, for example acting without mercy, there may be an 'omen of suffering' which appears to them prior to death — some have visions of the fires of hell, some have visions of being surrounded by the guardians of hell with instruments of torture, some see the shackles and chains of torment, some see the crows and vultures waiting for them — filling them with fear and making them struggle against the death that must inevitably come. Some cry out in fear so extreme that they lose touch with any mindfulness of their own condition, some feel emotionally slighted at the way others have treated them and become obsessed with this in the last moments of their life — and if you try to find the reason, it is always because that person had habitually conducted himself as a fool [*bāla*], or had neglected to do good deeds during their life that would cause



them terrible fear of hell at the end of their life. This is another aspect of the suffering of death.

As for the wealthy who have so many possessions, or those with lots of relatives, there is a tendency to become anxious about these things in the final moments of one's life. Worrying about one's wealth, children, husband or wife in the final moments of one's life is another aspect of the suffering of death.

For those who die at the hand of the executioner, who end their lives in chains or maimed as a punishment for their crimes, it is almost unavoidable to finish their life in fear as the executioner is sharpening his sword. This is yet another aspect of the suffering of death.

No matter whether one is born rich or poor, has led a good life or bad, for as long as one still has to be reborn in the cycle of existence, when the mind must depart from one's body at the end of one's life, there is no-one who doesn't fear oncoming death except for those who have managed to attain transcendental [*lokuttara*] mental states. This is why the Lord Buddha referred to death as suffering.

Death has been compared to huge falling mountains crushing its victims simultaneously from four directions pulverising them into smithereens, leaving its victim without the slightest trace of life.

The wise of ancient times compared the suffering caused by birth, aging, illness and death to four enemies. We are like a man guarding a forest. Those four enemies plot together to find a way to kill the guard. The first enemy approaches the guard, pretending to be his friend, and tells him about another beautiful forest with beautiful scenery where the fruits on the trees are delicious and abundant,



with cool shade and sparkling waterfalls. The first enemy offers to take the guard to show him the other forest. Unwittingly mistaking the enemy for a friend, he goes with him. Eventually reaching the middle of the forest, the second enemy comes out to meet the guard and beats him until he is left so bruised and broken that he can hardly stand up. Next comes the third enemy who continues to beat the man until he is left lying motionless upon the ground. Finally the fourth enemy arrives, a razor-sharp sword in hand, and decapitates the victim.

The suffering of birth is equivalent to the first of the enemies which tempts us to be conceived into one realm or another, and pass our time in revelry and distraction. Aging is like the second of the enemies who comes and beats us until we have no further strength, leaving no part of our body unaffected, our eyes become clouded, our ears deaf, our teeth are knocked out, our cheeks hollow, our hair grey, our skin dry, our back bent, our ribs showing through our unattractive skin — quite frightening in appearance to any onlooker. The suffering of illness is like the third enemy, who beats the victim further, bringing indescribable suffering to every part of the body. Finally death is the fourth of the enemies who inflicts the mortal blow. It is in this way that the four sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death conspire to bring misery to our existence.

### 5. Sorrow [*soka dukkha*]

The Buddha characterized the suffering of sorrow as afflicting one with burning in the heart as if the mind has lost all refreshedness. It is a mind that is 'dried up' by anxiety, sleepless with loss of appetite. Such suffering may be caused if we mourn for a lost relative or are parted from a beloved





friend or possession. These are all the characteristics of sorrow which will bring us misery for as long as we still harbour it in our hearts.

#### **6. Lamentation [*parideva dukkha*]**

The Buddha characterized this form of suffering as that which produces tears of anguish whenever we are unable to give up our attachment to something. Again the cause might be the decease of a beloved friend or relative, but, it differs from sorrow in that we are driven to tears. A person for whom lamentation is very serious might become distraught or even have lapses of sanity as the result of their anguish. These are all the characteristics of lamentation which will bring us misery for as long as we still harbour it in our hearts.

#### **7. Pain [*dukkha dukkha*]**

The Buddha characterized this sort of suffering as that which makes the mind depressed and dejected. The cause of the suffering might be illness, physical torture, punishment, imprisonment or having hands and feet cut off. Such suffering must be endured alone — as friends and relatives can do nothing to reduce such suffering for us. Some people feel such pain as a result of their poverty — being unable to afford clothes and jewelry to wear like more fortunate people. The mental anguish which comes from the resentment of the unavailability and seeming unfairness of one's circumstances can also be ascribed to this form of suffering.

#### **8. Resentment (feeling slighted) [*domanassa dukkha*]**

The Buddha characterized this form of suffering as that which makes us aggressively sensitive about a particular thing, to bear a grudge or to have a 'chip on one's shoulder'



about a certain thing. These are all the characteristics of resentment which will bring us misery for as long as we still harbour it in our hearts.

### 9. Bemoaning [*upāyāssa dukkha*]

The Buddha characterized this form of suffering as the sort of grief that comes from loss of a loved relative, loss of honour or influence.

Commentarians have made it easier for students of Dhamma to distinguish between Sorrow, Lamentation and Bemoaning by the following metaphor: If you imagine a person tending a pan of boiling oil which stands on a stove:

*Sorrow* is like the action of the man who constantly agitates and stirs the oil to keep it boiling. The boiling oil stays in the pan. (Sorrow arises from within the mind and the suffering it causes is contained by the mind).

*Lamentation* is like the action of the man who constantly turns up the heat or fans the flames so that the oil boils over and splashes outside the pan. (Lamentation cannot be contained within the mind but manifests tears for the rest of the world to see.)

*Bemoaning* is like the residue of oil left in the pan when the sorrow and lamentation is finished. (Bemoaning lingers on even after the tears are dry, as grief continues to be harboured in the mind)

### 10. Exposure to hateful things [*apiyehi sampayoga dukkha*]

The Buddha characterized this form of suffering as the sort of cloudedness of mind, grief and melancholy which result from coming into contact with those things to which we are averse. The things which make us feel averse may come via our five senses — we feel aversion and would like to re-



move those hateful things or escape from their grasp — but when we can't it only adds to the suffering in our mind.

**11. Separation from loved ones and treasured things** [*piyehi vipayoga dukkha*] If we are someone who wishes for fulfilment by the sense-pleasures and habitually partake of those sense-pleasures, when we are eventually separated from such sources of pleasure, the heartbreak of parting is the characteristic of this sort of suffering. Separation from loved ones (like close relations who pass away) or from treasured things (possessions, home or honours) will bring us misery for as long as we still harbour these attachments in our hearts.

**12. Disappointment** [*yam picchaṃ na labhati dukkha*] The Buddha divided this category of suffering into two parts — material disappointment and abstract disappointment. Supposing in spite of working hard and having all the necessary patience in the face of hardship, a person still doesn't manage to earn their living successfully — *material disappointment* is what they feel as the result. If a person hankers after more abstract things like honours, but is unable to procure all that they are looking for, *abstract disappointment* is what they feel as the result. For as long as we still harbour such disappointment in our hearts, it will continue to bring us misery.

**13. Clinging to the Five Aggregates** [*pañcupādānakkhandha-dukkha*] Our psychophysical constituents or aggregates comprise five categories: corporeality [*rūpakhandha*], feelings [*vedanākhandha*], perception [*saññākhandha*], mental formations [*saṅkhāra-khandha*] and consciousness [*viññāṇakhandha*]. The first aggregate is always physical, the remaining four are mind-based. All five can be prey to



attachment and can therefore lead to suffering. The reason that attachment to the Five Aggregates causes suffering is that they belong to the mundane world [*lokiya*] and are therefore referred to as 'Aggregates of Clinging' [*upādānakhandha*].

The aggregates of anyone who has attained any of the four levels of Buddhist sainthood are worldly [*lokiya*] only for their physical aggregates (i.e. his or her body). The other four aggregates — feelings, perception, mental formations and consciousness are all of transcendental [*lokuttara*] purity — and are no longer subject to clinging (which is why they are referred to as Pure Aggregates [*dhammakhandha*]). The Buddha pointed to the 'Aggregates of Clinging' as the origin of all other sorts of suffering (from the suffering of birth all the way to disappointment). Thus anyone wishing to enlighten themselves as to the Noble Truth of Suffering needs to pay particular attention to the Aggregates of Clinging as explained by the commentarians of the *Atthakathāvibhaṅga* and *The Path of Purity*:

**Metaphors for the importance of the Aggregates of Clinging:**

**1. *The Soil of the Earth*:** Just as the soil is prerequisite for the growth of all forms of plant life the Aggregates of Clinging are prerequisite to the arising of all other forms of suffering.

**2. *A Forest Fire*:** Just like a forest fire eventually consumes all forms of life in the forest, ironically those other forms of suffering are eventually the cause of the break up of those Aggregates of Clinging to which they owe their birth!

**3. *An Archer's Target*:** Just as the concentric coloured circles of a target are the chosen object for archers to test their skills, the Aggregates of Clinging are the chosen target of all forms of suffering.



**4. A Large Ox:** Just as a large ox is the unescapable target for swarms of various biting insects no matter where it may roam, the Aggregates of Clinging are the unescapable prey of all twelve forms of suffering no matter in which realm our aggregates take their birth.

**5. An Insecure House:** Just as an ill-protected house will attract various bands of robbers, no matter where it is situated, twelve different sorts of suffering will follow the Aggregates of Clinging to wherever they may go in order to effect their various forms of misery.

Those who wish to avoid the misery of Suffering should therefore make all efforts to avoid enfatuation with the Five Aggregates. Only in that way can Suffering be avoided in its beginning (birth), middle (old age and illness) and end (death).

Practically speaking, enfatuation with the Five Aggregates can be overcome by regular recollection of the inevitability of suffering as the result of our psychophysical constituents. We should constantly remind ourselves that:

"All beings without exception, which comprise the physical and psychological aggregates, are subject to the suffering of birth, old-age, sickness and death."

For people in general who never studied the Dhamma or listened to sermons concerning suffering, when they are overtaken by old-age, sickness or death, it comes as a major trauma. As for those who have achieved some level of enlightenment or have heard the teaching of the Lord Buddha, the inevitability of such suffering presents no surprise. Faced by suffering, the wise reflect that all beings are subject to suffering, irrespective of whether they are possessed of supra-normal powers — no matter how rich or influen-



tial a person might be, it doesn't merit any special consideration on suffering's part — all are equal in the face of suffering. Thus, realization of the reality of suffering for what it really is, to know the Noble Truth of Suffering, is indeed one strength of the Enlightened Ones.

The realization of the Noble Truth of Suffering has been achieved independently by all the Buddhas and Paccekabuddhas. As for the arahants and various enlightened disciples of the Buddha — it has only been as the result of the teaching of the Buddha that such an insight has been attained.



After explaining the Noble Truth of Suffering, Lord Buddha continued with an explanation of the origin of suffering. He pointed to craving as the origin of suffering — craving for rebirth in the Cycle of Existence leads living beings to continue to be reborn again and again in the various planes of existence. He taught that being enamoured with sense pleasures i.e. images, sounds, perfumes, tastes and touch keeps beings prisoner. The sense pleasures are like fetters which force living beings to continue to arise and pass away in the Cycle of Existence, and to have to endure the implicit suffering, all the way from the suffering of birth, to old age, illness and death — just as if one were being stalked endlessly by the grim reaper who is ready at all times to terminate one's life with a slash of his sickle. The life of beings is thus unspeakably difficult, dying in suffering from one realm and being born into more suffering in another realm — dying from there into yet another, and the cycle goes on and on, for as long as beings are subject to *craving*, the fetter that keeps all beings as captive travellers in the Cycle of Existence.



## The Three forms of Craving

The Lord Buddha taught that there are three sorts of craving: craving for sense-pleasure [*kāmatanḥā*], craving for the form realms [*bhavatanḥā*] and craving for the formless realms [*vibhavatanḥā*].

### 1. Craving for Sense-Pleasure [*kāmatanḥā*]

Craving for sense-pleasure is the grasping of the mind when it is under the influence of greed or desire for the objects of the senses i.e. images, sounds, perfumes, tastes and touch. It is the craving of those who think that true happiness can be obtained via sense pleasure. Such people may wish to be reborn in the human realm or one of the heavens, all of which are in the Sphere of Sense Pleasure [*kāmabhāva*]<sup>1</sup>. Those with such an attitude to life, try to do as many meritorious actions as possible (e.g. keeping the Precepts or being generous) in order to be reborn in heaven. Such is the attitude of one motivated by craving for sense-pleasure and the Lord Buddha enumerated it as one of the Noble Truths of the Origin of Suffering.

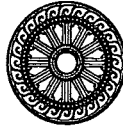
### 2. Craving for the Form Realms [*bhavatanḥā*]

Craving for the Form Realms is the attitude of those who wish to be reborn in the Brahmā-world or the Realms of Form [*rūpabhava*]. Such people believe that being able to attain the Brahmā-world will allow them to escape from the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death. Such people devote all their efforts to the attainment of the form-absorptions [*jhāna*] in order to pass away into the Brahmā-world at death.

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1. The Sphere of Sense Pleasure [*kāmabhāva*] contains all the realms of existence where pleasure is obtained via the senses — i.e. the four hell realms, the human realm and the lower six levels of heaven — a total of 11 realms.





The ascetics who subscribe to this dogma and who have developed a certain degree of meditation, may acquire the ability to recollect their previous lives and will know what form they had taken in previous lives. When passing away, the highest realm in which they can be reborn will be the Form-Brahmā world<sup>1</sup>. Ascetics subscribing to this dogma believe that Brahmā is the Ultimate Truth. Thus, having taken human birth, they spend all their time trying to develop the absorptions in order to try to be born in the Brahmā world next time round. Such an attitude is driven by craving for the Brahmā world and the Lord Buddha enumerated it as one of the Noble Truths of the Origin of Suffering.

### 3. Craving for the Formless Realms [*vibhavataṇhā*]

Craving for the Formless Realms is the dogma of those who wish to be reborn in the formless Brahmā-world or the formless Realms<sup>2</sup> [*arūpabhāva*]. Such people believe that being able to attain the formless Brahmā-world will allow them to escape eternally from rebirth in lower realms and that it will allow them to attain Nirvana.

The ascetics who subscribe to this attitude, who have developed a certain degree of meditation, may acquire the ability to know what awaits them after death. The limits of the

1. The Form-Brahma world [*rūpa-(brahma) bhava*] which is the realm of Brahmas who have arisen as a result of their ability to develop the form-absorptions [*rūpa-jhāna*]. There are a total of sixteen realms within this sphere: 1. Brahmāpārisajjā; 2. Brahmāpurohitā; 3. Mahābrahmā; 4. Parittābhā; 5. Appamāṇābhā; 6. Ābhassarā; 7. Parittasubhā; 8. Appamāṇasubhā; 9. Subhakiṇhā; 10. Asaññisattā; 11. Vehapphalā; 12. Avihā; 13. Atappā; 14. Sudassā; 15. Sudassī, and; 16. Akaniṭṭhā.

2. The Formless-Brahma world [*arūpa-(brahma) bhava*] which is the realm of Brahmas who have arisen there as a result of their ability to develop the formless-absorptions [*arūpa-jhāna*]. There are a total of four realms within this sphere: 1. Ākāśānañcāyatana (realm of the infinity of space); 2. Viññāṇaṇcāyatana (realm of the infinity of consciousness); 3. Ākiñcaṇñāyatana (realm of nothingness), and; 4. Nevasaññāsaññāyatana (realm of neither perception nor non-perception)



knowledge of such ascetics are the Formless Brahmā Realms — knowledge gained as the result of developing the formless absorptions [*arūpajhāna*]. Such ascetics misunderstand that being reborn in the Formless Brahmā world will release them from suffering — thus all their time in the human world is spent trying to develop the formless absorptions in order to try to be born in the Formless Brahmā Realms. Such an attitude is one driven by craving for the Formless Brahmā world and the Lord Buddha enumerated it as one of the Noble Truths of the Origin of Suffering.

The wise recognize these three forms of craving as the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering because they are the prime mover for all subsequent forms of suffering. Craving for sense pleasure is the origin of all the suffering connected with rebirth in the Sphere of Sensual Pleasure. Craving for the Brahmā world or the Formless Brahmā World are the origins of all the suffering connected with rebirth in the Spheres of the Form-Brahmās and the Formless-Brahmās respectively. It is for this reason that craving is explained as being the sole cause of all forms of suffering — suffering cannot be blamed on any other thing. If craving can be avoided, the suffering of birth, old age and death will be escaped.

Craving has been responsible since the beginning of time for keeping beings in the endless cycle of birth and rebirth in the cycle of existence without offering any possible refuge. It is for this reason that craving has been called '*samudaya*' the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

### **Craving for Sense Pleasure leads to the Hell Realms**

The origin of craving is the desire of the unwholesome mind — and following such craving leads to evil acts. Desire was



characterized by the Lord Buddha as being attached to the things we like. It is like a monkey trapped by glue in a monkey trap. Normally it sticks to the trap when it sits down, and trying to prise its body free, it uses its legs to push — however, it only succeeds in sticking its feet to the glue as well. Trying to bite its way free, its mouth sticks to the glue as well. In the same way, when we become enamoured of something, at first we think we are simply showing approval for that thing, but later we find that we have become sentimentally attached to that thing and can no longer let go.

The action of desire on the mind is to supplement one's attachment to an object of desire until we find it impossible to extricate ourselves any more — just like a piece of meat that is thrown into a burning hot pan will burn and stick to that pan as soon as it comes in contact. Once attachment and desire become the habitual way of thinking for a person, their personality changes to become more and more materialistic.

Once materialism or habitual craving becomes engrained in a person's heart, it becomes difficult for them to give away any of their wealth, even for charitable purposes. They become so attached to their wealth, that they feel nothing for the plight of monks, hermits, the poor, beggars or orphans. It is like taking a clean white cloth and dying it a different colour — even if you were to rinse that cloth a hundred times in clean water, you would be unable to restore it to its original whiteness. In the same way as dye in a cloth, desire tends to impregnate the mind almost irrevocably making one attached to one's wealth.

The risk of entertaining such desire in the mind is that it may be the reason for a person to be reborn in one of the



four unfortunate realms [*abhāyabhūmi*]. Just as the swift currents of a river tend to sweep away all things to the ocean that fall within its reach, desire will tend to pull all beings who entertain it in their mind, away to the hell realms.

### **The Universe is too small to contain Sense-Craving**

The Lord Buddha taught that the extent of craving in the minds of living beings is so great as to be beyond words. Supposing all the craving in existence were to manifest itself in concrete form as a tree or as a mountain, such a tree or a mountain would have to be so large that it is not certain whether the whole universe would be large enough to contain it — because everybody has their endless desires and attachments and it is doubtful whether a whole ship would be large enough to contain everything a person desires for.

The craving that arises in the minds of men, pushes them in the direction of sinful actions — for example, killing others. Under the influence of craving, normal people become capable of performing the most heinous of sins. This is why the Lord Buddha declared that:

“Craving is the wishfulness, attachment and captivation with the world of the aggregates and is the origin of suffering.”

### **Craving as the Cause of Unwholesome Behaviours**

Those beings that try to attain happiness dependent upon the pleasures of the five senses are wont to commit unwholesome behaviours as outlined in the Ten Paths of Unwholesomeness [*akusalakammāpatha*], which comprise three unwholesome deeds, four unwholesome ways of speaking and three unwholesome ways of thinking:

*Unwholesome actions comprise:*

- killing living beings [*pāṇātipāta*]



- stealing [*adinnādāna*]
- committing adultery [*kāmesumicchācāra*]

***Unwholesome speech comprises:***

- telling lies [*musāvāda*]
- divisive speech [*pisunāvācā*]
- harsh speech, insults and swearing [*pharusavācā*]
- idle chatter, frivolous talk [*samphappalāpa*]

***Unwholesome thought comprises:***

- covetousness [*abhiññhā*]
- vengeful thinking [*byāpāda*]
- false view [*micchādiṭṭhi*]

Most people know that these ten behaviours of the Path of Unwholesomeness are to be strictly avoided, but under the influence of craving for sense-pleasure which lurks in the mind, they cannot avoid the temptation of these behaviours and lose their fear and shame of the contingent retribution. Those who have habitually committed these behaviours tend to be reborn in the unfortunate (hell) realms after death. This is why the Lord Buddha pointed to craving as the Origin of all suffering in the Sphere of the Sense Pleasures.

Those who wish for human wealth<sup>1</sup>, heavenly wealth (in any of the lower six levels of heaven) and who expend effort in generosity and keeping the Precepts, and who conduct themselves in accordance with the Tenfold Path of Wholesomeness [*kusalakammamapatha*], when they are reborn in the human world, they will be endowed with human wealth — or if they are born in the heaven realms, they will be endowed with heavenly wealth. However, hanker-

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1. Human wealth [*manussasampatti*] is wealth fitting for those in the human realm as opposed to the wealth of heaven realms [*dibbhasampatti*] or the wealth of Nirvana [*nibbānasampatti*].



ing after such wealth, even though it is acquired by honest means, is still subject to suffering because it contains craving which is the origin of suffering. Even the craving for the Brahmā-world and the Formless Brahmā-world still trap living beings in the cycle of existence. An example of those who have craving for the Brahmā-world [*bhavataṇhā*] or the formless Brahmā-world [*vibhavataṇhā*] are those who strive in meditation by calm [*samatha*] and insight [*vipassanā*]<sup>1</sup> and who set their heart on being born in the Brahmā-world or the formless Brahmā-world by the ignorance of the false view of eternalism (*sassatadiṭṭhi* or *ucchedadiṭṭhi*), thinking that those born there are unaffected by old age, sickness or death. Such craving is an origin of suffering, because it is hankering after something that keeps one prisoner in the Cycle of Existence, constantly dying and being reborn. This is why the Lord Buddha pointed to craving as the Origin of all suffering.

**Liberation entails the extinguishing of the Three Cravings** Meditators who reflect wisely on the dangers of the Cycle of Existence and Suffering, are wont to strive in the performance of skilfulness such as generosity, keeping the Precepts, continuous meditation on the Three Universal Characteristics [*ti-lakkhaṇa*] — impermanence, suffering and not-self — and reflection on the virtues of the Triple Gem, with the practice of meditation by calm and insight with the wish to escape from birth in the cycle of existence — and the attainment of Nirvana constantly in mind. There is no other way to escape rebirth in the cycle of existence and extinguish

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1. *Samatha-vipassanā* meditation (*samathakammaṭṭhāna/vipassanākammaṭṭhāna*) is composed of two interacting components — tranquility [*samatha*] which entails making the mind still and insight [*vipassanā*] which is the wisdom and understanding of the world as it really is — the latter arising from the mind which is still.



suffering completely, with no more attachment for the Three Spheres<sup>1</sup>. Put another way, their practice entails extinguishing the three sorts of craving which keep them prisoner in the thirty-one realms.

In teaching on the subject of the three sorts of craving as the reason why living beings are the prisoners of rebirth in the Cycle of Existence, the Lord Buddha taught in the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā<sup>2</sup>, in brief, as follows:

One day the Lord Buddha went on almsround in the city of Rājagaha, and seeing a female piglet, smiled to himself. Ānanda noticed the Buddha's smiling and asked the reason. Later, the Buddha revealed the story of the past that that piglet had previously been born as a hen in the yard of the monk's almonry in the time of Kakusandha Buddha<sup>3</sup> and had regularly overheard the preaching of monks on the practice of insight meditation and had been filled with faith thereby. Passing away from that lifetime, the hen was reborn as a royal princess family by the name of Ubbarī. One day, the princess entered the royal lavatory (cesspit) and saw a pile of maggots there. The sight stimulated her to wise recollection and she attained the first absorption. Passing away from that lifetime, the princess was reborn in the Brahmā-world. Passing away from the Brahmā-world, she was born continuously in the Cycle of Existence until she came to be born as a sow in the time of our present Buddha. Hearing the tale of the

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1. The Three Spheres [*bhava*] (which are groupings, in turn of the 31 realms of existence) comprise: 1. *Kāmaabhāva* (the sphere of those looking for happiness via sense desire; 2. *Rūpabhāva* (the sphere of those looking for happiness via the form absorptions), and; 3. *Arūpabhāva* (the sphere of those looking for happiness via the formless absorptions).

2. DhA.iv.46ff.

3. Kakusandha Buddha was one of the five Buddhas to be born in our present epoch. The complete list of Buddhas in our epoch in order is as follows: Kakusandha, Konāganama, Kassapa, Gotama and Metteyya.



past, Ānanda and the rest of the monastic community were moved by the perils of the Cycle of Existence.

Having completed his sermon, the Lord Buddha preached on the peril of Craving for the Brahmā-world. He taught:

Craving is of the nature to cause suffering. If all of you wish to extinguish suffering, then all of you should practice for the extinguishing of craving — in that way you can extinguish suffering completely. Without the extinguishing of craving, there is no way you will manage completely to remove suffering. For as long as craving remains in the mind, suffering will continue to cause continual misery — just as a plant that is pulled up, but its roots left in the ground, will eventually regenerate.

Most people dispose of large trees simply by chopping down the branches and the trunk — but they leave the stump — if left as such, before long, a new tree will grow from the stump. In this comparison, suffering is like the branches of a tree which has craving its roots. Only when the roots too are removed, by the power of the wisdom of attainment of arahantship [*arahattamaggañāṇa*]<sup>1</sup> is there no further risk of the regeneration of suffering. The Lord Buddha taught that the currents of craving tend to flow in the images, sounds, perfumes, tastes and touches to which we have positive attachments. Those currents are so strong that anyone who surrenders themselves to the current will lose all ability to use their wisdom to discern the difference between right and wrong, usefulness and harm, merit and demerit. In the absence of wisdom, false view will arise in the mind increas-

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1. The wisdom of the attainment of arahantship is a state of enlightenment by which all ten of the higher fetters [*saṃyojana*] have been removed.





ingly frequently, until our seeing wrong as right and harmful things as harmless will be our continuous perspective of the world. We lose our interest to train ourselves in meditation and in the absence of absorption or insight, false view prods us in the direction of unwholesome behaviour. The karmic fruits of such unwholesome behaviour will bring us retribution in both this life and the next.

## **Commentorial Metaphors for Craving**

### **1. Craving compared to resin**

The Lord Buddha compared craving to the resin of the persimmon tree or varnish which are some of the stickiest forms of sap. Anything which touches such resin will be stuck firmly. In the same way, the resin of craving sticks in our minds forcing us to attach to the things we love, indulge our emotions to the point we have no wish for anything else. The firmness with which craving attaches us is like a monk who has still not managed to attain transcendental [*lokuttara*] states of mind and who is thus still attached to his robes, bowl and other requisites. That living beings are obsessed with the sense-desire and sense objects, and seek pleasure from images, sounds, perfumes, tastes and touches, all derives at root from the action of craving.

### **2. Craving compared to a snare or a prisoner's chains**

Most people try to procure happiness from the pleasures of the five senses with the assumption that whenever they are able to gain their fill of sense pleasure, they will be truly satisfied. In the search for satisfaction, those people have to continue being born and reborn in the Cycle of Existence, and are unable to protect themselves from the hardship of existence — birth, old age, sickness and death — because of the action of craving.



Those who search for happiness via sense pleasure only experience happiness at the moment before suffering manifests itself. As soon as suffering becomes manifest, such people are often so shocked that they cannot even control themselves — like a rabbit caught in a hunter's snare which bounds and throws itself backwards and forwards out of fear of death at the hunter's hand. Craving is like the hunter (who sets the snare) and those subject to craving are like the rabbit. The edge of the forest where the rabbit lives is like the pleasures of the five senses. For as long as the rabbit can run around freely in the wood, it feels that life is happy and that searching for happiness from the five senses is justified. However, when it gets caught in the snare, it is terrified in the face of death. Similarly, the unenlightened person, still under the influence of his defilements, becomes ensnared in the Ten Fetters [*saṃyojana*]<sup>1</sup> and therefore cannot escape the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death.

Those who are still ensnared in craving will continue to have to endure the suffering of being born and reborn in the Cycle of Existence without end. Thus, the wise expend all efforts to remove themselves from craving and give craving no further opportunity to ensnare them in sense pleasures. They set their aims on Nirvana which is free from all greed, hatred and ignorance and which is the embodiment of true happiness and freedom from suffering. They strive to develop the wisdom of attainment of arahantship and to ex-

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1. The Ten Fetters [*saṃyojana*] are subtle defilements of the mind. They are divided into the lower and upper fetters: Lower fetters [*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*]: 1. Mistaken self-view [*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*]; 2. Doubt [*vicikicchā*]; 3. Superstition concerning rites and rituals [*silabbataparāmāsa*]; 4. Grasping for sense-pleasure [*kāmarāga*], and; 5. Annoyance [*pāṭigha*]. Higher fetters [*uddhamabhāgiya saṃyojana*]: 1. Grasping for form absorptions [*rūparāga*]; 2. Grasping for formless absorptions [*arūparāga*]; 3. Stubborn self-view [*māna*]; 4. Absent-mindedness [*uddhacca*], and; 5. Ignorance [*avijjā*].



tinguish craving completely.

Even though snares are usually made of tough material, there is no snare as tough as that of craving. Even though a prisoner is shackled with iron or chains, wooden stocks or ropes, his chances of escape are more than his chance of escaping from craving. If a prisoner wants to cut himself free from conventional fetters all he needs to find for himself is a sharp cutting edge. However, for the fetters of craving, the sharpest knife cannot help. The only thing that can cut definitively through craving is the wisdom of the attainment of arahantship. Those who wish to endow themselves with the sword of the arahat's wisdom need first to forgo attachment to sense pleasure, and must strive in the cultivation of the Precepts, practising *dhutaṅga* austerities and meditation. Only when these virtues have been fully developed can the sword of the arahat's wisdom be attained, allowing the practitioner to cut away the fetters of craving for good.

### 3. Craving compared to a spider

Those who are still attached to sense-pleasure are vulnerable to the temptations of desire and anger and ignorance and are wont to be swept away by the currents of craving. They are unable to find a way to slip through craving's net. In this sense, craving is just the same in the way it traps living beings as a spider which spins a large web by which to trap small insects.

When a spider has finished spinning its web, it is wont to lie in wait at the centre. When other insects get caught in the web, they awake the spider which comes quickly to suck its victim dry. Its appetite satisfied, the spider returns to its place at the centre of the web — it has no need to go anywhere else. In just the same way, those who are attached to sense-



desire and carried away by their craving, and who do nothing but please themselves, never remove themselves from craving. Like the spider which spends its whole life in its web. If the spider were wise, it would cut itself free from the web of craving with the sword of the arahat's wisdom once and for ever.

### **The wise see the body as no more than excrement**

The wise of old, trained themselves to see the filth and impurity of the human body in order to purge themselves from the sensual desire in their minds. They constantly remind themselves that the physical body is impermanent, fashioned from its 300 components with craving as the maker — and packaged in a bag of skin. When the body is ornamented, if viewed only from the outside, it looks attractive enough — but if you consider what the body is like from the inside too, you will soon see that the majority of the body is in fact revolting, smelly, impure, repugnant and filled with excrement, mucus and urine. In reality, the body is no more beautiful than a huge spot filled with pus, plasma and blood, and bleeding from nine wounds (the bodily openings). Nonetheless, the body remains attractive to those who lack mindfulness and wisdom and who are blinded by their defilements.

### **The Physical Body is the Crossroads for Suffering**

The physical body is said to be constantly sick because it is a crossroads for all kinds of suffering. Anyone who has to maintain their body has to tend the body's sicknesses day and night. The body cannot even stay still in a single position for long without suffering — so the owner has to keep shifting position to cope with the discomfort. Thus the physical body is said to have a constant disease. Those who are



wise will use the indications of deterioration in their own body to wake themselves up to the fact that the body can offer the spirit no true refuge.

### **The Physical Body is a Storehouse of Unwholesomeness**

The body is riddled with the suffering of old age and dying. It is our physical wants that are at the root of all our stubbornness, pretence and ingratitude. The body is also the breeding ground for illnesses. Just as a storehouse, made of daub and wattle is used to store various sorts of grain, the body built on its skeleton and covered with sinews and skin is the storehouse for sickness, death, stubbornness, pretence and all forms of unwholesomeness. The wise therefore reflect and are sobered by the impermanence of the body.

### **The Nine Supreme Transcendental Attainments**

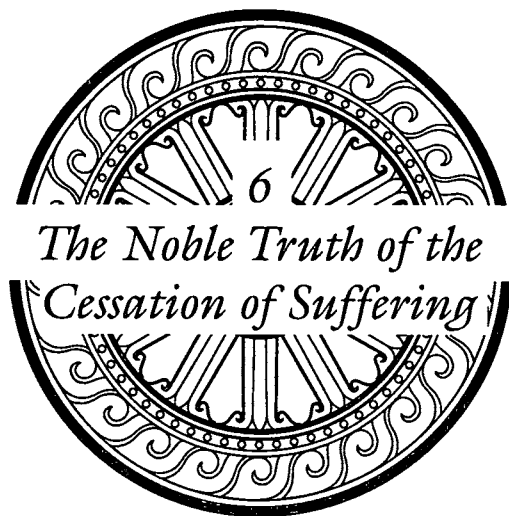
In contrast to the impermanence of the physical body, transcendental attainments, comprising the Four Paths, the Four Fruits and Nirvana, are beyond the reach of the deterioration of old-age, sickness and decay. These transcendental attainments can bring the attainer only happiness and prosperity. The Lord Buddha and all those who attained Buddhist sainthood for themselves all praised the nine transcendental attainments as supreme as being the total embodiment of true happiness, free from all suffering. True happiness can be attained by anyone reaching the nine transcendental attainments. They will go beyond all vengefulness, suffering and will no longer have any need to strive for happiness via the senses.

### **Forgo Sensual Pleasure to Gain Liberation**

Those who are still thick with defilements are wont to suffer physically and spiritually because the sensual pleasures from



which they try to derive happiness are themselves of the nature of suffering. The suffering of such people, at root comes from their search for sense-pleasure and sense-objects. Even the suffering that comes to us from unjust government, robbery, fire and flood which affects all in the Three Spheres, could not affect those people who took no happiness from sense-pleasure and sense-objects. Thus one should strive with diligence to minimize hankering after sense-pleasures — not being deluded by love, not being attached to sense-pleasures — but cultivating the mind to purity — renouncing the so-called 'pleasures' derived from sense-pleasure and sense-objects in order to effect one's own salvation.



When the Lord Buddha had finished his explanation of the origin of suffering, he continued with an explanation of the cessation of suffering. The essence of what he taught, based on the Pali is that the extinguishing of craving in the mind is by means of practising the Noble Eightfold Path, that craving is to be removed by means of the Noble Eightfold Path and that liberation from craving is to be achieved by having no further attachments. All of these are elements of what the Lord Buddha called the 'cessation of suffering'.

### **The root of suffering is craving**

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering [*dukkha-nirodha*] concerns the extinguishing of craving. There are those who wonder why this Noble Truth should deal with the extinguishing of craving rather than dealing directly with the extinguishing of suffering. However the Lord Buddha wished to extinguish not only the symptoms of suffering, but suffering at its roots. If the practitioner wishes to remove all forms of suffering (from the suffering of birth onwards) he must not forget that the suffering experienced in life is but the branches and twigs of a tree which has already grown



up, but to get rid of the suffering in a way that it will not grow up again, it is not enough simply to cut off the branches and the twigs — the tree must be completely uprooted — that is craving, the root of suffering, must be extinguished first.

### **Extinguishing Suffering means Extinguishing Craving**

The necessity of dealing with craving as the origin of suffering instead of dealing with suffering alone can be compared to a clever lion, continuously hunted down by a hunter with a gun. The lion could ensure its safety by seizing the hunter's gun — but the safer alternative is to seize the hunter. For as long as the hunter is still alive the lion is at risk. It is no use for the lion to waste his time with the bullets or the gun. Similarly, the explanation of the cessation of suffering by the Lord Buddha deals entirely with uprooting craving. The Lord Buddha could be compared to the lion and craving to the hunter with his gun. Suffering was like the bullets from the hunter's gun. Thus the practitioner who wishes to be liberated from all suffering in the cycle of existence should follow the Buddha's example, dealing with suffering at the root and extinguishing craving.

Every Buddha who has arisen in the world has had the mission to uproot craving — but where the Buddhas are said to conduct themselves like lions, other persuasions of ascetics are said to conduct themselves no better than dogs. The nature of dogs is to scavenge and to seize anything they find without any consideration for what the owner might think. In the same way, ascetics who practice various sorts of self-mortification only add to their own suffering — they sleep on the ground, on thorns, some sit surrounded by fires, some stare at the sun until dusk — all with the belief that such





practices will lead them to an end of suffering — but without realizing that it is only adding to their suffering. Thus it is compared to a dog who seizes whatever it likes from the owner without taking any interest in what the owner may throw at it.

Buddhists who practise properly, with earnest and perseverance, will eventually be able to remove craving by its roots. In this respect, it can be compared to a gardener who must remove weeds in his garden, not just picking the stems and leaves but pulling the weeds up by their roots so that they cannot regenerate. In this parable, the gardener can be compared to practitioners who strive in Buddhist practice. The garden can be compared to the six senses and their sense objects [*āyatana*] which are the breeding ground of craving.

Thus the Lord Buddha taught that craving is the root of all suffering — if craving can be extinguished then all forms of suffering (from the suffering of birth onwards) can be extinguished too.

### **How can Craving be extinguished?**

The Lord Buddha taught that if we can overcome our greedy attachments to the things we love in the world, craving can be overcome too. Thus we can see that the target for our practice is to uproot the state of attachment — if we can succeed in uprooting attachment, we can uproot craving too. Craving is engrained at all levels of the sensory processing of our mind. There are a total of ten stages in the sensory process and six sensory channels — giving a total of sixty places (a group of mental phenomena known as the 'Objects of Sensual Delight and Pleasure' [*piyarūpa sātārūpa*] (see Table II overleaf) where craving can lurk!

**TABLE II: THE OBJECTS OF SENSUAL DELIGHT AND PLEASURE**

	Eyes	Ears	Nose	Tongue	Body Skin	Mind
<b>Sense Organs</b>	cakkhu	sota	ghāna	jivhā	kāya	mano
<b>Sense Objects</b>	rūpa	sadda	gandha	rasa	phoṭṭhabba	dhamma
<b>Sense-Consciousness</b>	cakkhu- viññāṇa	sota- viññāṇa	ghāna- viññāṇa	jivhā- viññāṇa	kāya- viññāṇa	mano- viññāṇa
<b>Sense-Contact</b>	cakkhu- samphassa	sota- samphassa	ghāna- samphassa	jivhā- samphassa	kāya- samphassa	mano- samphassa
<b>Sense-Feeling</b>	cakkhu- vedanā	sota- vedanā	ghāna- vedanā	jivhā- vedanā	kāya- vedanā	mano- vedanā
<b>Sensory Registration (perception)</b>	rūpa- saññā	sadda- saññā	gandha- saññā	rasa- saññā	phoṭṭhabba- saññā	dhamma- saññā
<b>Sensory Volition</b>	rūpa- sañcetanā	sadda- sañcetanā	gandha- sañcetanā	rasa- sañcetanā	phoṭṭhabba- sañcetanā	dhamma- sañcetanā
<b>Sense-Craving</b>	rūpa- taṇhā	sadda- taṇhā	gandha- taṇhā	rasa- taṇhā	phoṭṭhabba- taṇhā	dhamma- taṇhā
<b>Sense Thought- Conception</b>	rūpa- vitakka	sadda- vitakka	gandha- vitakka	rasa- vitakka	phoṭṭhabba- vitakka	dhamma- vitakka
<b>Sense Discursive Thought</b>	rūpa- vicāra	sadda- vicāra	gandha- vicāra	rasa- vicāra	phoṭṭhabba- vicāra	dhamma- vicāra



Our sense organs [*ajjhattikāyatana*] are implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. If we want to extinguish the craving arising because of attachment to visual temptations, then we have to extinguish them at the eye. In the same way, if you want to overcome the attachment to pleasures coming via the other senses (sounds, perfumes, tastes, touches and inner experience that falls short of enlightenment) then you have to overcome them at their respective sense organs (ears, nose, tongue, body and mind).

Moreover, the sensual objects [*bāhirāyatana*] are implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. As attachment to things has roots in the objects themselves, we have to extinguish them also, at the object itself. If we are attached to certain pleasurable sights then we have to extinguish attachment at that visual object too. In the same way, if you want to overcome the attachment to pleasures coming via the other senses (sounds, perfumes, tastes, touches and inner experience that falls short of enlightenment) then we have to overcome them at their respective objects (sounds, perfumes, tastes, touches and inner experience that falls short of enlightenment).

Moreover, our consciousness [*viññāṇa*] is implicated in our attachment to sense pleasure. By consciousness, we mean the awareness of the objects arising in the senses. Each of the senses has its own channel of consciousness — therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — visual consciousness [*cakkhu-viññāṇa*], auditory consciousness [*sota-viññāṇa*], olfactory consciousness [*ghāṇa-viññāṇa*], gustatory consciousness [*jivhā-viññāṇa*] tactile consciousness [*kāya-viññāṇa*] and mental consciousness [*mano-viññāṇa*].

Moreover, the contact [*samphassa*] between the three



previous factors — senses, sense objects and sense-consciousness — is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sense-contact therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — visual contact [*cakkhu-samphassa*], auditory contact [*sota-samphassa*], olfactory contact [*ghāna-samphassa*], gustatory contact [*jivhā-samphassa*] tactile contact [*kāya-samphassa*] and mental contact [*mano-samphassa*].

Moreover, the pleasurable feeling [*vedanā*] arising from the aforementioned contact is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sense-feeling therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — visual feeling [*cakkhu-vedanā*], auditory feeling [*sota-vedanā*], olfactory feeling [*ghāna-vedanā*], gustatory feeling [*jivhā-vedanā*], tactile feeling [*kāya-vedanā*] and mental feeling [*mano-vedanā*].

Moreover, the perception (sensory registration) [*saññā*] arising from the aforementioned feeling is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sense-perception therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — visual perception [*rūpa-saññā*], auditory perception [*sadda-saññā*], olfactory perception [*gandha-saññā*], gustatory perception [*rasa-saññā*], tactile perception [*phoṭṭhabba-saññā*] and mental perception [*dhamma-saññā*].

Moreover, the volition concerning our sensual objects, or our choice of sensual objects or our will directed at sensual objects [*sañcetanā*] arising from the aforementioned sensory



registration is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sense-volition therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — volitions concerning visual images [*rūpa-sañcetanā*], volitions concerning sounds [*sadda-sañcetanā*], volitions concerning perfumes [*gandha-sañcetanā*], volitions concerning tastes [*rasa-sañcetanā*], volition concerning bodily sensations [*phoṭṭhabba-sañcetanā*] and volition concerning of the mental objects [*dhamma-sañcetanā*].

Moreover, the craving [*taṇhā*] concerning our sensual objects arising from the aforementioned sensory volitions is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sense-craving therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — craving concerning visual images [*rūpa-taṇhā*], craving concerning sounds [*sadda-taṇhā*], craving concerning perfumes [*gandha-taṇhā*], craving concerning tastes [*rasa-taṇhā*], craving concerning bodily sensations [*phoṭṭhabba-taṇhā*] and craving concerning of the mental objects [*dhamma-taṇhā*].

Moreover, the thought-conception [*vitaka*] concerning our sensual objects arising from the aforementioned sensory craving is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sensory thought-conception therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — thought-conception concerning visual images [*rūpa-vitaka*], thought-conception concerning sounds [*sadda-vitaka*], thought-conception concerning perfumes [*gandha-vitaka*], thought-conception concerning tastes [*rasa-vitaka*], thought-conception concerning bodily sensations



[*phoṭṭhabba-vitaka*] and thought-conception concerning of the mental objects [*dhamma-vitaka*].

Moreover, the discursive thought [*vicāra*] concerning our sensual objects arising from the aforementioned sensory thought-conception is implicated in the attachment we have to sensual pleasures. Again, each of the six senses has its own channel of sensory discursive thought therefore there are a further six areas in which the practitioner needs to extinguish craving — discursive thought concerning visual images [*rūpa-vicāra*], discursive thought concerning sounds [*sadda-vicāra*], discursive thought concerning perfumes [*gandha-vicāra*], discursive thought concerning tastes [*rasa-vicāra*], discursive thought concerning bodily objects [*phoṭṭhabba-vicāra*] and discursive thought concerning of the mental objects [*dhamma-vicāra*].

Thus, the emotions of pleasurable attachment concerning the sensory process of all six sense-channels need to be overcome. Only when they have been overcome at all levels and in all sense-channels can the extinguishing of suffering be achieved.

### Numerous are those who have attained Buddhist Sainthood

The mechanism of overcoming suffering requires the practitioner completely to uproot craving from the mind by transcendental extinction [*samucchedapahāna*] (i.e. raising the mind above the temptation of craving rather than just sensual restraint). Such extinction of craving is a task already exemplified by the Buddha. The tool he used to overcome craving was the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path until attaining Nirvana. "Nirvana" is a word used interchangeably with the word '*nirodha*' (extinction, cessation).

Not just the Buddha, but all who practise the Noble Eight-



fold Path diligently to the extent they are prepared to lay down their life for their practice, have the chance to uproot craving from the mind by transcendental extinction — by attaining the various levels of Buddhist sainthood according to their own potential. There are many documented examples of those who have managed to follow in the Buddha's footsteps — there are the eighty outstanding male arahant-disciples of the Lord Buddha and numerous outstanding female arahant-disciples — recorded by name in the Buddhist scriptures and today's Buddhist history textbooks. Furthermore there are 1,250 arahants who assembled miraculously on Māgha Pūjā Day, nine months after the Lord Buddha's enlightenment to hear the preaching of the Ovādapāṭimokkha<sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, there are multitudes who faithfully devote their lives to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path with steadfast faith in the existence of Nirvana as the highest aim in life — and those people will also eventually attain the various levels of Buddhist sainthood according to their potential. Such Buddhist nobles have overcome craving, even though some have not yet attained Nirvana — they have seen and known Nirvana via their Dhamma eye i.e. by meditational insight.

Even though it is more than 2,500 years since the Lord Buddha entered Parinirvāṇa — a long passage of time which has inevitably caused some details of His Teachings to be lost or distorted — even to the present day there are still those who faithfully devote their lives to the study and the

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1. The Ovādapāṭimokkha is a teaching which contains the most basic principles of Buddhism, sometimes referred to as the 'heart of Buddhist teachings' given in three verses — a sermon delivered by the Buddha to 1,250 spontaneously assembled arahants at Veḷuvana Grove on the full-moon day of the third month [*Māgha*].



practice of the Middle Way until attaining levels of Buddhist sainthood according to their potential. All the evidence that is left by some Buddhist saints is their scriptural testimonies, but some are still around, even to the present day.

**The Noble Monk who discovered the Dhammakaya Tradition** Phramonkolthepmuni, (Luang Phaw Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen) is well known and respected by all Buddhists in Thailand and beyond. Even though it is several decades since his death, his picture still hangs in innumerable homes and workplaces of those in the Thai and Chinese communities. The tales of the powers and sanctity of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam which he used to help his followers still abound.

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam heired from Supanburi province in Thailand and before ordaining was known as Sodh Mikaewnoi. He became disgusted with the superficiality of his working life and at the tender age of twenty-two committed himself to lifelong ordination as a Buddhist monk. He dedicated himself to Buddhist academic studies until he felt that the educational resources at his home temple in Songpinong, Supanburi were limiting him. He continued his studies in Bangkok — academic studies and also meditational studies, the latter for which he trained with the utmost strictness. The Dhammakāya Tradition is what he discovered as the result of all his efforts.

In his sermons, Luang Phaw Wat Paknam explained that the Dhammakāya Tradition (i.e. the method for attaining Dhammakāya) is what the Lord Buddha used in the training of sentient beings from the earliest days of his dispensation. Even the teachings on '*āyatana-nibbāna*' and '*dhammakāya*' which are prominent features of the Dhammakāya Tradition, are present in the Buddhist scriptures, but they are not sufficiently well explained in the com-





mentaries for most people to understand. The knowledge of Dhammakāya is said to have diminished and eventually for some unknown reason, disappeared from Buddhism approximately 500 years after the Parinibbāna of the Lord Buddha.

After rediscovering the Dhammakāya tradition, Luang Phaw Wat Paknam devoted the rest of his life to the teaching of the tradition. He recognized the exceptional purity and precision of the tradition and saw the potential benefit it could bring to society at large. Luang Phaw Wat Paknam was thus engaged in outreach programmes for the Dhammakāya Tradition for approximately forty years of his life. The fruits of his efforts have made the Dhammakāya Tradition recognized by countless temples and adherents in Bangkok, upcountry Thailand and abroad. Indeed, anyone who practises the Dhammakāya Tradition in earnest will surely see results in proportion to their efforts.

### **Majjhimā Paṭipadā is the Middle Way of practice**

In the Lord Buddha's first sermon to the group of five initial disciples he advocated to steer between the extremes of sensual indulgence [*kāmasukallikānuyoga*] and self mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*] in one's practice. He said that the way of practise one should aim for is the Middle Way [*majjhimā paṭipadā*] which the Lord Buddha had already practised to completion.

How can we know whether what we are practising is the Middle Way? In theoretical terms, we can know that we are on the right track if we are practising the Noble Eightfold Path — or more briefly if we are practising self-discipline [*sīla*], meditation [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*] — then these are also the theoretical essentials of the Middle Way.



In terms of practice however, Luang Phaw Wat Paknam explained how we can know we are practising the Middle Way in the sermon he gave on the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta on 3 January 1955. He explained that the word 'Middle' in the term 'Middle Way' is indeed used in a very profound way — but in a way which has for a long time been overlooked. He explained that the practice [*dhamma*] that is 'in the middle' is 'bringing one's mind to a standstill at the middle of the human body'. The exact position of the central point of the body can be pictured by imagining two thin threads — one running horizontally from the navel directly through the back — the other running horizontally from one side to the other on the same level. At the intersection of the two threads is a point no larger than a needlepoint. This is called the sixth base of the mind. Two fingers' breadths vertically above this intersection is the seventh base of the mind, or the precise central point of the body.

This seventh base of the mind is where the mind belongs. Furthermore, the centre of the body is where the Sphere of Dhamma of the human body is to be found. The Sphere of Dhamma is about the size of the yolk of a chicken's egg but is clear and transparent. At the time when we are born, we bring our mind to a standstill at the centre of this Sphere of Dhamma and this is what allows us to be born human. When we are asleep, the mind comes to rest at the centre of this Sphere of Dhamma. Even when we die, the mind comes back to rest at the centre of this Sphere of Dhamma. It is for this reason that the sphere is called the 'Sphere of Dhamma' — it is what gives us human form, it is the place through which our life comes and goes and when we sleep it is the place through which our consciousness comes (wakes) and goes



(sleeps).

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam explained that the ability to bring our mind to a standstill at this centre of the body is what we call '*majjhimā*' or 'centring'. When the mind comes to a standstill at the centre of the body, it can no longer be considered in terms of good, evil, merit or demerit — and it is completely free of the two extremes of sensual indulgence [*kāmasukallikānuyoga*] and self-mortification [*attakilamathānuyoga*] — it is the trailhead of the pathway towards the arahatship. This is the meaning of the Buddha's words in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta:

*Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā*

(Thus has the Tathagata known through  
{His} supreme wisdom)

When we are able to bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Dhamma that allow us to take human form, then this is where the mind belongs. Once we are able to practise this optimally, then this is what we can call the Eightfold Path — when all eight components of the Path are represented at the centre of the body a clear bright sphere will arise at the centre of the body which we call the Sphere of the Initial Path or 'Paṭhama Magga' Sphere or *Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere. It will be mirror-bright and appear the size of the sun or the moon and situated at the centre of the Sphere of Dhamma that allows us to take human form. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the *Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere, the Sphere of Self-Discipline [*sīla*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Self-Discipline, the Sphere of Concentration [*samādhi*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the



centre of the Sphere of Concentration, the Sphere of Wisdom [*paññā*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Wisdom, the Sphere of Liberation [*vimutti*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Liberation, the Sphere of Seeing and Knowledge of Liberation [*vimuttiñāṇadassana*] will be attained. When the mind is brought to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of the Seeing and Knowledge of Liberation the Astral Body or Subtle Human Body will be attained.

All the above represents the sequence of following the Middle Way which the Lord Buddha followed for Himself with His supreme wisdom to the point of enlightenment. When the mind reaches the Subtle Human Body inside, the Physical or Coarse Human body has fulfilled its duty. Now it is up to the Subtle Human Body to continue the process.

When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Dhamma which allows the Subtle Human body to arise, the *Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere will arise. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of this *Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere, the Sphere of Self-Discipline [*sīla*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Self-Discipline, the Sphere of Concentration [*samādhi*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Concentration, the Sphere of Wisdom [*paññā*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Wisdom, the Sphere of Liberation [*vimutti*] will be attained. When we bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of Liberation, the Sphere of Seeing and Knowledge of Liberation



[*vimuttiñāṇadassana*] will be attained. When the mind is brought to a standstill at the centre of the Sphere of the Seeing and Knowledge of Liberation the Angelic Body will be attained.

By now the sequence of the Middle Way will be more apparent to the reader — the sequence of inner spheres that leads from the Coarse Human Body to the Subtle Human Body is the same as that which leads from the Subtle Human Body to the Angelic Body — that is to bring the mind to a standstill successively at *Dhammānupassanāsati*paṭṭhāna, the Sphere of Self-Discipline, the Sphere of Concentration, the Sphere of Wisdom, the Sphere of Liberation and the Sphere of Seeing and Knowledge of Liberation — in that order.

By channelling the mind in an equivalent way the mind of the Coarse Angelic Body will attain the Subtle Angelic Body, the mind of the Subtle Angelic Body will attain the Coarse Form-Brahmā Body, the mind of the Coarse Form-Brahmā Body will attain the Subtle Form-Brahmā Body, the mind of the Subtle Form-Brahmā Body will attain the Coarse Formless-Brahmā Body, the mind of the Coarse Formless-Brahmā Body will attain the Subtle Formless-Brahmā Body and the mind of the Subtle Formless-Brahmā Body will attain the Dhamma Body — the first body of enlightenment [*dhammakāya*].

This process of channelling the mind is what the Lord Buddha referred to as 'seeing the body within the body' which can be compared to a long journey where we need to transit successively from one different sort of vehicle to another in order to reach our destination (as described in the *Rathavinīta Sutta* M.i.145ff.) — we might hire a taxi from our home to the river shore, from there we cross the river on a ferry to



reach the station, from there we take the train to the airport and eventually take the aeroplane that will take us to our destination.

All the various inner spheres and bodies all the way from the Physical Human Body inwards to the Dhamma Body are all nested within one another at the seventh base of the mind.

### **The Dhamma Body is made of Transcendental Aggregates**

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam explained that the Dhamma Body is similar in shape and form to a Buddha image (of the sort with a lotus bud on the topknot) — but crystal clear and sparkling like a mirror — exquisitely beautiful and proportioned. The Dhamma Body is the most refined of all the inner bodies described so far — and itself exists at differing levels of refinement — the Coarse Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Body, the Subtle Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Body, the Coarse Dhammakāya Sotāpana, the Subtle Dhammakāya Sotāpana Body, the Coarse Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmī Body, the Subtle Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmī Body, the Coarse Dhammakāya Anāgāmī Body, the Subtle Anāgāmī Body, the Coarse Dhammakāya Arahant Body and the Subtle Dhammakāya Arahant Body. From the teachings of Phra-rajbhavanavisudh (Chaiboon Dhammajayo) present abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya the only reason that there is differentiation between the different levels of the Dhamma Bodies is because the amount of subtle defilements that remain for each level of Dhamma Body are different. If a large number of defilements still remain then the Dhamma Body will be the 'Dhammakāya Gotrabhū'. If defilements are relatively less then it will be the 'Dhammakāya Sotāpana'. If the defilements are still less then it will be the 'Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmī'. If even less, it will be the 'Dhammakāya Anāgāmī' — and if no defilements remain at all, it will be



called the 'Coarse Dhammakāya Arahant' or the 'Subtle Dhammakāya Arahant' — the latter two being the bodies of enlightenment of the arahant. The Dhammakāyas are all transcendental [*lokuttara*] in nature — that is they are not made up of conventional aggregates [*khanda*] but are made up of pure aggregates [*dhammakhanda*] — the physical form, feeling, perception, memory and cognition still exist at the level of the Dhamma Body, but they are all purified to the point of perfection. By contrast the aggregates that make up the body at the level of the human, angel, Form-Brahmā and Formless-Brahmā are still on the mundane level [*lokiya*] and lead the owner of those bodies to be reborn further in the cycle of existence.

Meditators who channel their mind through the Middle Way at the centre of the body from the Physical Human Body to the Subtle Formless-Brahmā Body are still meditating only at the level of Calm [*samatha*]. The eyes of these aforementioned bodies are still blind to the way in which the aggregates are subject to the Three Characteristics [*tilakkhaṇā*]. Only when the mind can attain the Dhamma Body can one's meditation be said to have reached the stage of Insight [*vipassanā*] — because only then are you able to see for yourself that the aggregates are subject to the Three Characteristics of impermanence [*aniccā*], suffering [*dukkhā*] and not-self [*anattā*].

### **Dhammakāya is the Body of Enlightenment**

What is the true meaning of 'insight' [*vipassanā*] meditation? In fact insight is insightful vision or seeing things according to their true nature, seeing them thoroughly from every perspective. The 'Dhamma' eye is the eye of the 'Body of Dhamma' which has the ability to penetrate to the truth, especially to know the origins of defilements, how they come



to enslave the mind and how we can overcome them. This is a major difference from the naked (physical) eye to which the defilements are invisible. The limits of our human senses are to know the manifest symptoms of defilements — for example we realize “these are the signs of greed”, “these are the signs of hatred”, “these are the signs of delusion”. Human senses have no way of detecting the working of defilements, and therefore we have no way of even knowing how to start removing those defilements from the mind. It is no wonder that we lack the wisdom to transcend those defilements absolutely [*samucceda-virati*] — and that is why we are stuck as the victims of our own suffering without any hope of escape.

By contrast, the eye of the Dhamma Body is able to penetrate and understand the nature of all things all the way from the root of the cause to the implications of the effects — that is why the Dhamma Body is able to transcend suffering. Thus the Dhamma Body is what enables insight — the Dhammakāya is what ‘sees’. Besides ‘seeing’ the Dhammakāya is also what ‘knows’ — furnishing a penetrating understanding by use of its ‘jewel knowing’ [*ñāṇa-ratana*] — to the point of liberation from those things, and attaining permanence [*niccam*], happiness [*sukham*] and true self [*attā*] — a true self that is the embodiment of happiness (with no trace of suffering) and unchangability. Thus the Dhamma Body is every human’s body of enlightenment. It is a transcendental [*lokuttara*] body which is beyond the reach of defilements. It is a body which is to be found within every one of us without exception.

Meditators who attain the Dhamma Body to the degree that their mind becomes irreversibly unified with the





Dhamma Body, thereby make themselves invulnerable to the action of defilements. In the past we might have been unable to give up unwholesome behaviours (such as drinking alcohol) in spite of knowing the damage it was doing to our body and mind, because of the influence of our defilements. Furthermore we might have been too lazy to do wholesome things (like practising meditation) even though we knew the value of doing them, because of the action of defilements. It is only by attaining the Dhamma Body inside that one can definitively overcome the action of one's defilements — but for as long as one has not yet attained the Dhamma Body, one will be continually defeated by one's defilements.

The Dhamma Body or the Dhammakāya is the essence of Buddhism. All of the teachings of the Lord Buddha are derived from the fact that He managed to attain and become inseparably unified with the Body of Enlightenment inside Himself, as illustrated by his exhortation:

*Dhammakāyo ahaṃ itipi*  
(My essence is the Dhammakāya)

At that point the mind of the Lord Buddha had become definitively disconnected from all the inner bodies nested at the seventh base of the mind, from the human physical body to the Dhammakāya Anāgāmi Body and became permanently united with the Dhammakāya Arahāt, whether asleep, awake, standing, walking, sitting or lying down as the '*arahatta sammā sambuddha*'.

Every teaching given by the Lord Buddha derived from the wisdom of the '*arahatta sammā sambuddha*' who had freed himself of all defilement. Whether it be greed, hatred or delusion and all the higher and lower fetters [*saṃyojana*]



with which his mind had been engrained for countless lifetimes polluting his thoughts, speech and actions — which had led to retribution and leading to his continuing rebirth in the cycle of existence — he had freed himself of all impurities in the mind. The Dhammakāya Arahat Body of the Buddha had purged himself of all defilements like gold ore which has been purified of all impurities by solvent until nothing remains but pure gold. At the point of enlightenment the Dhamma Body which is composed entirely of purified aggregates manifested itself in His mind on the full moon day of the month of Visākha. It was on this day that the Lord Buddha attained *sa-upādisesa nibbāna*. Forty five years later when the Lord Buddha passed away (into *parinibbāna*) he attained *anupādisesa nibbāna*.

### **Paṭhama Magga is the Trailhead to Nirvana**

Practising the Middle Way is thus practising the Noble Eightfold Path. If practised properly, all eight components of the path will come together as a pure translucent sphere. At the smallest it will appear to be the size of a star. On average it will appear to be the size of the full moon. At its largest it will appear to be the size of the sun. It appears at the seventh base of the mind and is referred to as the 'Paṭhama Magga' Sphere or 'Sphere of the Initial Path' or '*Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere' which is a sign to the meditator that they have attained the trailhead of the path to *āyatana nibbāna*.

The 'Paṭhama Magga' sphere has the special characteristic of being exceptionally bright, situated at the seventh base of the mind, and will be visible continuously. When falling asleep, you will fall asleep joyfully, wake refreshed, at work you will find yourself able to work earnestly achieving all your goals without tiring yourself in the process, without



the temptation of looking for rewards in corruption or power. Your memory and wits will be sharpened and your thinking will be fluent and creative allowing you to find constructive solutions to problems. However, the Paṭhama Magga Sphere doesn't lead the meditator to sit on his laurels — it comes with the knowledge that it is only the *trailhead* to Nirvana and that there is still a long way further to go.

Therefore, it is still necessary to cultivate the mind further towards yet higher levels of happiness and success. The meditator needs to 'let go' of the Paṭhama Magga Sphere and the way that is done is to bring the mind to a standstill at the centre of it. Once the mind is at a standstill, the Paṭhama Magga sphere will enlarge in size just like ripples on the water's surface enlarge in size after a stone has been thrown in a pond. When the sphere is enlarged, the mind will be able to channel through the centre of the sphere (the "centre of the centre") passing through various inner spheres and bodies as already described, until eventually the Dhammakāya Arahat Body is reached. Attaining the Dhamma Body is our first contact with *sa-upādisesa* Nirvana which will eventually lead us to enter upon *āyatana nibbāna*.

### **Some Definitions of Vocabulary concerning Nirvana**

In the above passages, you will have already have met several new items of vocabulary concerning Nirvana and at this point it is worth pausing in order to clarify their definitions:

**1. Nirvana with residual aggregates (*Sa-upādisesa Nirvana* [*Nibbāna*])** is our experience of Nirvana as a mental state — that is our living experience of Nirvana — we don't have to die first and be reborn to attain it. We touch upon Nirvana in our experience when we have purified our mind from all defilements but our five aggregates [*khandha*] have not yet broken up. Dhammakāya will be manifest inside ourselves imparting the



same happiness to us as if we were really in *āyatana nibbāna* — but we are still ‘alive’ in our human body.

**2. Nirvana without residual aggregates (*Anupādisesa Nirvana [Nibbāna]*)** is the Nirvana that is a realm of “existence” outside our body and mind. Sometimes it is called ‘posthumous’ Nirvana because you can only go there after the breaking up of your five aggregates for the last time (one will not be reborn again). The Dhammakāya which one has attained by touching upon *sa-upādisesa nibbāna* will be drawn through the centre and enter upon *anupādisesa nibbāna*. This latter attainment is what we call ‘*āyatana nibbāna*’ which is the quest of all Noble Ones. Thus *āyatana nibbāna* is the location of Nirvana.

**3. The ‘sphere’ or ‘location’ of Nirvana (*Āyatana Nirvana [Nibbāna]*)** actually exists but it is not made up of normal elements like earth, water, wind and fire in the same way as things we can see with the naked eye. It is neither in this world or another world. It is not the sun, the moon or the stars because all of those things are still within the Three Spheres [*bhava*] and are hence mundane [*lokiya*]. Nirvana is outside the Three Spheres and is transcendental [*lokuttara*]. In Nirvana there is no movement, no coming or going. Those who have attained the path of Buddhist sainthood are able to see past Buddhas sitting deep in meditation [*nirodha samāpati*] in *āyatana nibbāna*, more numerous than all the grains of sand in the four oceans. All that remains of them are their Dhamma Bodies — but Dhamma Bodies more exquisite than any Dhamma Body you can perceive within yourself — Dhamma Bodies that are self-sufficient with boundless happiness independent of any outside influence — because the mind of those Buddhas has transcended all suffering entirely, having attained the true fulfilment of life.



## The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: A Conclusion

The Lord Buddha taught that the cessation of suffering can be effected by extinguishing all craving through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path — uprooting it irreversibly from the mind [*samucchadapahāna*]. Once craving has been extinguished, suffering cannot return — and this is why the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is sometimes known by the epithet ‘the extinguishing of suffering’. It is our nature for the mind to be the prime mover in all things in keeping with the Buddhist proverb:

*Manopubbaṅgamā dhamma . . .*

Phenomena are preceded by the mind, are led by the  
mind, succeed through the mind

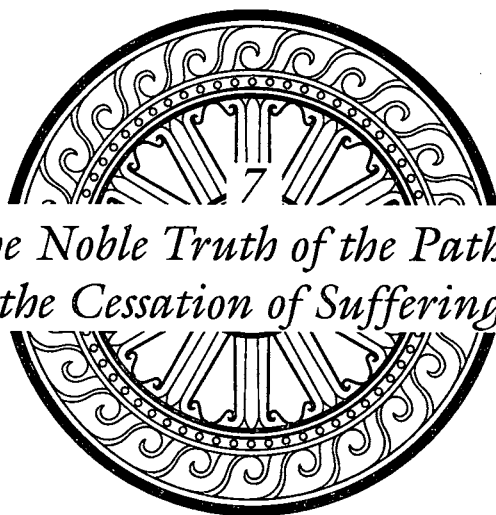
Thus, whether we feel happiness or suffering depends on our state of mind — whether we are subject to Right View [*sammā diṭṭhī*] or False View [*micchā diṭṭhī*] depends on our mind — no other factor is so important — and this is why in Buddhism we put so much emphasis on the training of the mind. In connection with the training of the mind Phra-monkolthepmuni (Luang Phaw Wat Paknam) taught that ‘stopping is the secret of all success’. By ‘stopping’ he meant bringing the mind to a natural standstill at the seventh base of the mind. Our mind is composed of perception, filtering, processing and knowing (*see diagram p.127*) which each have the form of consecutively nested spheres in the mind. The outermost sphere is the sphere of perception and the innermost one is the sphere of knowing. For as long as all four spheres are nested together at the centre of the body, you will be able to perceive the trailhead to Nirvana (Paṭhama Magga sphere). However, for most people, for most of the time, the mind tends to be distracted away from the centre of the body



and the four different functions of the mind are scattered in their separate directions like a group of people unable to work as a team — they cannot pool their abilities efficiently.

By 'all success' Luang Phaw Wat Paknam meant all the sorts of success you can think of, but he emphasized success at the level of transcendental [*lokuttara*] attainment. If one is able to bring the mind to a standstill to the point where one can attain the Paṭhama Magga sphere, one will overcome all reluctance further to cultivate the path towards Nirvana. Thus the real meaning of 'all success' is the certainty of attaining Nirvana.

It is for this reason that Luang Phaw Wat Paknam often explained the word '*nirodha*' as 'stopping' when he gave sermons — bringing the mind to a standstill at the seventh base of the mind which will eventually lead to liberation. However, in some of his sermons, Luang Phaw Wat Paknam referred to '*nirodha*' as 'extinguishing' — and in such a case he taught that you can attain extinction by cultivating self-discipline [*sīla*], concentration [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*] — and that there is no other way of attaining extinction. However, all of these things only become manifest if one can attain the eye of the Dhammakāya and use the wisdom of the Dhammakāya. Thus the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering means the extinguishing of craving or the bringing of the mind to a standstill because both these things are the beacons which light the pathway to Nirvana.



## *The Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering*

The final of the four Truths of the Noble Ones taught by the Lord Buddha was the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (or the Noble Eightfold Path) — the way to extinguish all suffering and attain Nirvana. This is the Path always followed by the Noble Ones (amongst whom the Lord Buddha was supreme) because this path is the only way by which the defilements and desires can be definitively overcome on the way to the final destination of Nirvana.

### **The Noble Eightfold Path**

The Noble Eightfold Path comprises:

1. Right View [*Sammā Diṭṭhi*]
2. Right Intention [*Sammā Saṅkappa*]
3. Right Speech [*Sammā Vācā*]
4. Right Action [*Sammā Kammanta*]
5. Right Livelihood [*Sammā Ājīva*]
6. Right Effort [*Sammā Vāyāma*]
7. Right Mindfulness [*Sammā Sati*]
8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]



### 1. Right View

The Buddha taught that Right View is a fiercely accurate understanding of life and the world based on the benchmark of Nirvana, a thorough understanding of all four Noble Truths, and practice for the removal of ignorance and craving.

### 2. Right Intention

Right Intention refers to the wholesome thoughts or intentions which leads us to be generous, keep the Precepts and meditate. It is intention that is free from vengefulness or thought to harm others. On the contrary it is intention filled with the compassion of the four Divine Abidings [*brahmavihāra*]: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

### 3. Right Speech

Right Speech is what remains when we abstain from speaking in any of the following four ways:

*Telling Lies* [*musāvādā*]: We must abstain from telling lies or speaking in a way that we benefit at others' expense;

*Divisive Speech* [*pisuṇāvācā*]: We must abstain from speech that creates disharmony or brings suffering, anger or damage to others;

*Harsh Speech* [*pharusavācā*]: We must abstain from swearing and insulting others;

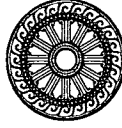
*Idle Chatter* [*samphappalāvācā*]: We must abstain from superfluous speech or purposeless speech.

### 4. Right Action

Right Action is what remains when we abstain from doing any of the following three sorts of actions:

*Killing living beings* [*pāṇātīpātā*];





*Stealing* [adinnādānā]: Taking that which is not given;  
*Committing adultery* [kāmesumicchācārā]: abstaining  
from sexual relations outside marriage.

## 5. Right Livelihood

The Lord Buddha taught his monks to avoid earning their living in a dishonest way — especially trying to impress supporters into making offerings by claiming mental attainments not yet reached, being a witch doctor or an alternative doctor. Furthermore monks should live by almsround, not by begging nor making requests of strangers nor investing money — monks should live in an honest way in the ways recommended by the Noble Ones.

## 6. Right Effort

Right Effort is composed of the Four Foundations of Effort, namely:

*Avoidance of evils not yet done* [saṃvara-padhāna];  
*Abandonment of evils already done* [pahāna-padhāna];  
*Development of virtues not yet done* [bhāvanā-padhāna];  
*Maintainance of virtues already mastered* [anurakkhana-padhāna].

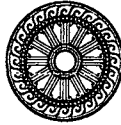
## 7. Right Mindfulness

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness comprise:

*Mindfulness of the body* [kāyānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna];  
*Mindfulness of the feelings* [vedanānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna];  
*Mindfulness of the mind* [cittānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna];  
*Mindfulness of mental phenomena* [dhammānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna].

### 7.1 Mindfulness of the Body in the Body

Mindfulness of the body means being able to see and consider one's inner bodies continuously — to see the various inner bodies that are nested in inner dimensions of our physical human body, all the way from our subtle human body



(also called the 'astral body' or 'dream body') all the way up to the various bodies of enlightenment.

The meditator can see and consider bodies within the body by settling their attention to the centre of the body (the seventh base of the mind). When the mind is firmly settled and is properly adjusted (brought to a standstill) a bright sphere will arise at the centre of the body. This sphere is known as the Paṭhama Magga Sphere [*Dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna* Sphere]. Bringing your attention at the point at the centre of the sphere, it will enlarge until it is so large that its edges disappear over the horizon. A new sphere brighter and clearer than the last will appear at the centre which is called the sphere of self-discipline. In the same way, the sphere of concentration, the sphere of wisdom, the sphere of liberation, the sphere of knowledge and vision of liberation can be attained in sequence. If one stops one's mind at the point at the centre of the sphere, it will enlarge until it is so large that its edges disappear over the horizon allowing one to see the subtle human body inside — an inner body that looks the same as the physical body, but more radiant. On attaining the subtle human body, the realization will arise in the mind that "There is more to life than just the physical body. The physical body is just the outermost layer," and "life doesn't finish at the grave because there is still life inside, independent of the physical body." The outer body will suddenly seem like no more than a house where one resides temporarily. Once one has seen the physical body (for the first time) according to its reality, one will be able to 'let go' of it — allowing the mind to go deeper and become unified with the subtle material body. One will have no more feeling of sentimentality for the physical body nor any of the other things associated with it such as children, husband, wife or



wealth. As the majority of sorts of suffering concerns material things, having attained the subtle human body, the mind, being unified with the subtle human body, is safely withdrawn beyond the reach of that suffering.

The reason why most people get upset about things is because they have not yet managed to attain the subtle human body — and consequently are still attached to their body and their possessions. Even though they might try to rationalize intellectually according to the teaching of the Buddha and try to convince themselves that “All things are of a nature of impermanence, suffering and not-self — they arise, exist for a time and then decay,” however, it is no more than a conceptualization. Such a thought might seem to console one for a while, but it doesn’t make the suffering go away. Such thinking might even increase one’s suffering because it will only increase one’s disappointment that one can’t manage to make the suffering go away. It cannot remove the source of the suffering at its roots by the method of transcending [*samuccheda-virati*]. This is the reason why the Lord Buddha taught us to practice by meditating to the point where we can see and consider the bodies within the body.

Once one has attained the subtle human body, having significantly reduced one’s suffering by loosening the fetters of ‘clinging’ [*upādāna*], there will be a feeling of refreshedness, joy and happiness which arises from within the mind — giving the meditator the inspiration they need for the mind to enter yet deeper on the central axis — and the deeper the meditator can go, the stronger will be the feeling of such inner happiness.

The nature of all the inner bodies is to have their centres all aligned with the centre of the physical body (seventh base of the mind). Thus, simply by settling the mind further at



the centre of the body, in the same way as described earlier, in entering the centre of the Paṭhama Magga Sphere, successive inner bodies can be attained, going further inside the subtle human body — the angelic body, the subtle angelic body, the form-Brahmā body, the subtle form-Brahmā body, the formless Brahmā-body, the subtle formless Brahmā-body and eventually the body of enlightenment [Dhammakāya] — each with their own life and mind.

The mind of the Dhammakāya is endowed with special knowledge allowing the meditator to see that the various bodies, all the way from the human body to the subtle formless Brahmā-body are all composed of the Five Aggregates [*khandha*] and are hence subject to the influence of the Three Signs [*tilakkhaṇa*], namely: impermanence [*aniccam*], suffering [*dukkham*] and not-self [*anattā*]. None of these bodies transcend the mundane level of existence — they are worldly [*lokiya*]. They are all still in the vicious circle of causation between defilements [*kilesa*], action [*kamma*] and retribution [*vipāka*].

By contrast, the further up the scale of purity of the various bodies of enlightenment, the more radiant and blissful the mind becomes. The bodies of enlightenment are transcendental [*lokuttara*] and are beyond the influence of the Three Signs because they are not made of mundane Aggregates but transcendental Aggregates [*dhammakhandha*]. The knowledge contained in the bodies of enlightenment which allows the meditator to consider the Three Signs in the mundane bodies, also allows them to consider the Four Noble Truths. This part of the practice is indeed the Noble Path which leads the meditator to the transcendental and eternal Noble Fruition they are aiming for.



It is for this reason that the Lord Buddha advocated his monks to cultivate transcendental knowledge in order to put themselves beyond the reach of sensuality [*kāma*], unwholesomeness [*akusaladhamma*], to eradicate False View [*miccha diṭṭhi*]. Attaining the First Absorption [*paṭhama jhāna*], they will be endowed with application of mind [*vitaka*], continued application of mind [*vicāra*], joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*] (see also page 130ff.). The seeing and consideration of the bodies within the body continuously in this way is what we call Mindfulness of Body in the Body.

## 7.2 Mindfulness of the Feeling in the Feeling

The mindfulness of the feeling in the feeling is to see and consider the feelings [*vedanā*] both inside and outside, the whole of the time. At a superficial level, mindfulness of the feeling in the feeling is to observe the feelings of happiness, suffering and 'neither happiness nor suffering' which occur at the centre of the subtle human body. The feelings of happiness, suffering and 'neither happiness nor suffering' manifest themselves in the form of bright spheres at the centre of the subtle human body. If you are still unable to see the subtle human body inside, then it will certainly be impossible for you to observe the spheres of the feelings. You must start by placing your mind in meditation at the centre of your (physical) body. Once the mind becomes settled, the subtle human body will appear. Putting your mind at the centre of the subtle human body, you will observe the spheres of the feelings arising there. For our physical body and senses, the feelings which arise for us are externally based — they are external feelings. By contrast, for the subtle human body, the feelings arise from within — they are internal feelings.



Once the meditator has developed the absorptions to this point not only can they see the inner bodies in succession — they will be able to see the corresponding feelings at the same time.

For as long as the meditating monk is able to see and consider the feelings in the feelings continuously and strives to uproot the defilements, by cultivating the ‘mundane’ absorptions, his mind will become ‘cooler’ with the reduction of activity of defilements in the mind. At the same time, the meditator’s knowledge will grow with a thorough awareness. The meditator will become less prone to forgetfulness, confusion and absent-mindedness, in keeping with the scriptural Pali explanation:

*“Ātāpi sampajāno satimā”*

In this way, the meditator will start to remove from his mind the subtle defilements of covetousness [*abhijjhā*], feeling slighted [*domanassa*] and ultimately the rest of the fetters [*saṃyojana*] too...

### **7.3 Mindfulness of the Mind in the Mind**

The mindfulness of the mind in the mind is to see and consider the mind both inside and outside, the whole of the time. It is obvious how we can be mindful of the state of the mind. If the mind is mixed up with desires, then you are mindful that ‘the mind is mixed up with desires’. If the mind is mixed up with hatred, then you are mindful that ‘the mind is mixed up with hatred’. If the mind is free of hatred you are mindful that ‘the mind is free of hatred’. If the mind is mixed up with delusion, you are mindful that ‘the mind is mixed up with delusion’. If the mind is sleepy, you are mindful that ‘the mind is sleepy’. If the mind is distracted, you



are mindful that 'the mind is distracted'. If the mind is concentrated, you are mindful that 'the mind is concentrated'. If the mind is liberated, you are mindful that 'the mind is liberated'. If the mind is not liberated, you are mindful that 'the mind is not liberated'.

Less obvious is how we can consider the mind in the mind. What is the nature of the mind? The normal resting point of the mind is at the seventh base of the mind. The mind comprises four concentric layers — the layer of perception, the layer of sensory registration, the layer of central processing and the layer of cognition (*see diagram p.127*). The outermost layer is the sphere of perception (sometimes called the bodily sphere) and is located at the centre of the body. The next layer in is called the sphere of sensory registration (sometimes called the sphere of the spirit) and is located at the centre of the sphere of perception. The next layer in is the layer of central processing (sometimes called the mind sphere) and is located at the centre of the sphere of sensory registration. The innermost sphere is the sphere of cognition (sometimes called the sphere of awareness) and is located at the centre of the sphere of central processing.

Our faculties of perception, sensory registration, central processing and cognition can be projected instantaneously to anywhere in the world. In fact what we do when we project our mind is to project our subtle body — something which can be clearly seen by those who have already attained Dhammakāya. If we have attained Dhammakāya we will realize at any moment what our subtle body is doing and we will be able to recognize the owner of the subtle body by its appearance.

The faculties of perception, sensory registration, central



processing and cognition are nested together inseparably and as a unit take the form of the subtle physical body. If the four faculties are separated, the subtle physical body will die immediately — and without an intact subtle physical body, the physical body cannot survive either. Seeing the mind of the physical body is what we can call 'mindfulness of the mind outside' while seeing the mind of the subtle physical body is what we call 'mindfulness of the mind inside'. The ability to see the mind outside is hard enough for most people — not to speak of seeing the mind inside, which is many times harder.

The most important thing beneath the whole issue of inner bodies is the subject of wisdom, concerning which Luang Phaw Wat Paknam taught:

"If you are able to attain the body of enlightenment (Dhammakāya) you will find that it is many tens of times wiser than our human physical body.

If you attain the subtle human body it is already twice as wise.

Attaining the Angelic Body, it is twice as wise again.

Attaining the Subtle Angelic Body, it is three times wiser.

Attaining the Form-Brahmā Body, it is four times wiser.

Attaining the subtle Form-Brahmā Body, it is five times wiser.

Attaining the Formless-Brahmā Body, it is six times wiser.

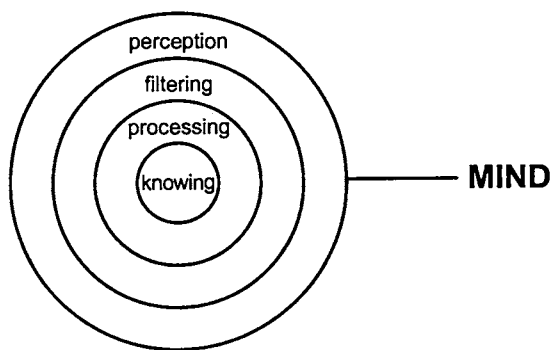
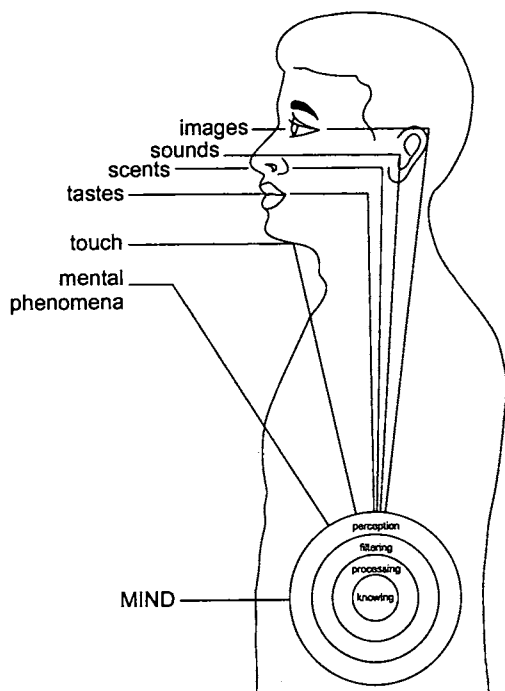
Attaining the subtle Formless-Brahmā Body, it is seven times wiser

Attaining the Body of Enlightenment and Subtle Body of Enlightenment, they are eight and nine times wiser respectively.

This is the nature of their successive wisdom — you should familiarize yourself with their relative wisdoms."

When the Buddha tells us to cultivate mindfulness of the





**The Relationship between the Psychophysical Constituents  
in the Mental Process**



mind in the mind, it means mindfulness only of the sphere of central processing — and not the spheres of the mind involved with perception, sensory registration or cognition. It is no use having mindfulness of any other parts of the mental process — because the layers of the mind cannot exchange roles any more than the moon can exchange its role with the sun.

The pure mind [*bhavaṅgacitta*] has the character of a clear, translucent sphere about the size of the pupil of our eye. However when the mind is tainted with desire which is red in colour, then the mind will become coloured red and will lose its translucence. If it is tainted with illwill which is dark greenish in colour then the mind will become darkened and muddy.

The mind is of the nature of arising and extinguishing the whole of the time — this is how the mind changes.

So how can we manage continuously to cultivate mindfulness of the mind both inside and outside? Cultivating mindfulness of the outer mind is to see the mind of the physical human body. Cultivating mindfulness of the inner mind is to see the mind of the subtle human body and how it changes at any moment — how it arises and extinguishes, arises and extinguishes. Once the meditator is able to observe as described, knowing with clear comprehension the state of the inner mind, he should know it according to reality and feeling of the arising and extinguishing without letting craving [*taṇhā*] or views [*diṭṭhi*] affect how he sees, without attachment to the things of the world, knowing one has no further attachment for the things of the world — this is how we can continuously cultivate mindfulness of the mind in the mind both inside and outside.



## 7.4 Mindfulness of the *dhammas* in the *dhammas*

Mindfulness of the *dhammas* in the *dhammas* is to see and consider the mental phenomena both inside and outside, the whole of the time. Seeing the inner mental phenomena is to see the sphere of the Dhamma which is responsible for the arising of the subtle human body. Seeing the outer mental phenomena is to see the sphere of the Dhamma which is responsible for the arising of the physical human body. Without these spheres of Dhamma, the various bodies could not survive. Even as the meditator attains successive inner bodies, he will also see their associated spheres of Dhamma. With each new attainment, the understanding of reality at that level will arise too, allowing wisdom to develop successively — the wisdom that is needed to overcome craving, the origin of suffering.

## 8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]

Right Concentration is a condition of mind which arises when the mind has become free of the influence of object-side sensuality [*vatthukāma*] and mind-side sensuality [*kilesakāma*] — entering upon the First Absorption [*paṭhama-jhāna*], the Second Absorption [*dutiya-jhāna*], Third Absorption [*tatiya-jhāna*] and Fourth Absorption [*catuttha-jhāna*]. Thus concentration of mind that can enter upon the Absorptions at these four levels are what the Lord Buddha referred to as 'Right Concentration'.

There are two ways in which the Absorptions can be described:

*Four-fold analysis* [*catuka-naya*];

*Five-fold analysis* [*pañcaka-naya*].

### 8.1 Four-fold Analysis of the Absorptions

If we divide the Absorptions up into four levels we distin-



guish them as follows:

**The First Absorption** which is accompanied by five factors: initial application of mind [*vitaka*], continued application of mind [*vicāra*], joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

**The Second Absorption** which is accompanied by three factors: joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

**The Third Absorption** which is accompanied by two factors: happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

**The Fourth Absorption** which is accompanied by two factors: one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*] and equanimity [*upekkhā*].

	initial application of mind [ <i>vitakka</i> ]	continued applic- ation of mind [ <i>vicāra</i> ]	joy [ <i>pīti</i> ]	happiness [ <i>sukha</i> ]	one- pointedness [ <i>ekaggatā</i> ]	equanimity [ <i>upekkhā</i> ]
1st Absorption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2nd Absorption			✓	✓	✓	
3rd Absorption				✓	✓	
4th Absorption					✓	✓

## 8.2 Five-fold Analysis of the Absorptions

If we divide the Absorptions up into five levels we distinguish them as follows:

**The First Absorption** which is accompanied by five factors: initial application of mind [*vitaka*], continued application of mind [*vicāra*], joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

**The Second Absorption** which is accompanied by four factors: continued application of mind [*vicāra*], joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

**The Third Absorption** which is accompanied by three factors: joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].



*The Fourth Absorption* which is accompanied by two factors: happiness [*sukha*] and one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].  
*The Fifth Absorption* [*pañcamajhāna*] which is accompanied by two factors: one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*] and equanimity [*upekkhā*].

	initial application of mind [ <i>vitakka</i> ]	continued application of mind [ <i>vicāra</i> ]	joy [ <i>pīti</i> ]	happiness [ <i>sukha</i> ]	one- pointedness [ <i>ekaggatā</i> ]	equanimity [ <i>upekkhā</i> ]
1st Absorption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2nd Absorption		✓	✓	✓	✓	
3rd Absorption			✓	✓	✓	
4th Absorption				✓	✓	
5th Absorption					✓	✓

In conclusion, it can be said that no matter how you analyse the Absorptions, you will always find one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*] as one of the factors.

### Three Levels of Meditation

Meditation itself can be analysed into three levels of advancement:

*Preparatory concentration* [*khaṇika samādhi*]: Which is attempting to place your attention as you do when you first start to learn meditation to the point that for an instant no longer than an elephant flapping its ear, your mind is concentrated;

*Neighbourhood concentration* [*upacāra samādhi*]: Which is a weak degree of concentration achieved when you start to discern something in the mind (i.e. an acquired image) and which can lead to access to the Absorptions;

*Access concentration* [*appanā samādhi*]: This is concentration of the quality that has access to the Absorptions when the mind comes to a standstill and is unified.



Meditation is the focussing of the mind on a single object and abiding in a single mood without distraction or restlessness, or being caught up in external influences on mood. Meditation is thus of great importance and the cultivation of all other virtues is based on meditation as a foundation. The cultivation of any other form of wholesomeness will be magnified and multiplied if done on the basis of meditation.

Furthermore, the five levels of Absorptions can only be achieved by cultivating meditation. The Path and Fruit of Nirvana attained by the arahants, similarly, can only be achieved by meditation. This is why meditation is praised by the Noble Ones of Buddhism.

#### **The Noble Eightfold Path arises at All Levels of Advancement**

The Noble Eightfold Path can be found at all levels of advancement, whether it be the Sensual Sphere [*kāma-vacara-bhūmi*], the Form Sphere [*rūpāvacara-bhūmi*], the Formless Sphere [*arūpāvacara-bhūmi*] or the Transcendental Level [*lokuttara-bhūmi*]. If it arises at the Transcendental Level then it is called the Transcendental Path [*lokuttara-magga*]. If it arises in the Sensual Sphere then it is called the Mundane Path [*lokiya-magga*]. For the mundane version of the Noble Eightfold Path, this is when the faithful cultivate wholesomeness by generosity [*dāna*], keeping the Precepts [*sīla*], practising meditation [*bhāvanā*] and hearing Dhamma teachings. Any time such a faithful person is generous, keeps the Precepts, listens to Dhamma teachings or practises meditation, they can be said to be cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path — because the Eightfold Path will arise for a person hand-in-hand with wholesome behaviour no matter whether it is generosity or self-discipline or any of



the other virtues.

For as long as a meditator cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path purely, completely and according to the principles of the Middle Way (i.e. with the mind entering continuously upon the pathway at the centre of the body), the mind will be liberated from mood influences in the outside world. Once the mind has adjusted itself, the meditator will see the diamond clear Paṭhama Magga Sphere (*Dhammānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna* Sphere) at the centre of his or her body. At its smallest it will be the size of a star. Medium-sized, it will be the size of the full moon. At its largest it will be the size of the midday sun. The Paṭhama Magga Sphere arises when all eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path are present and fuse into unity [*maggasamaṅgi*]. This is the trailhead of the pathway to Nirvana.

Having attained the Paṭhama Magga Sphere, if the meditator were just to place their mind there in quietude, it might revert to be influenced by external influences again and eventually the state of meditation would be lost. Thus it is taught that instead of just resting the mind in quietude, one should allow one's mind to go deeper through the centre of that sphere — the Paṭhama Magga Sphere will enlarge in size allowing the mind to go through the centre to the spheres of self-discipline, concentration, wisdom, liberation, knowing-and-seeing of liberation in that order. These spheres are in nested layers. Going deeper, the inner bodies will be attained (in keeping with the 'mindfulness of the body in the body' principle of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta). The Buddha taught us to be mindful of the body in the body, by seeing and considering the inner bodies the whole of the time. If those bodies are still subject to the Three Signs (impermanence, suffering and not-self), He taught us to let go of our attachment to



them and go further through the centre until attaining the Body of Enlightenment — the most subtle of the inner bodies.

The inner bodies between the Paṭhama Magga Sphere and the Body of Enlightenment which are still subject to the Three Signs comprise: the Subtle Human Body, the Angelic Body, the Subtle Angelic Body, the Brahmā Body, the subtle Brahmā Body, the Formless Brahmā Body and the Subtle Formless Brahmā Body. All of these inner bodies are made up of the Five Aggregates [*khandha*] i.e. corporeality [*rūpa*], feeling [*vedanā*], sense-registration (perception) [*saññā*], mental formations [*sankhāra*], and consciousness [*viññāṇa*].

By contrast the Body of Enlightenment is not subject to the Three Signs because it is made not of mundane Aggregates but 'Pure Aggregates' [*dhammakhandha*]. Its corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness have been distilled to the point of purity. The Bodies of Enlightenment also come in several different forms depending on the degree of this purification, but they remain distinct from the mundane [*lokiya*] inner bodies by virtue of their Aggregates.

The first Body of Enlightenment attained, which is the next body in sequence after the Subtle Formless Brahmā Body, is the Gotrabhū Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Gotrabhū]. From there, in order of sequence, the Bodies of Enlightenment comprise the Subtle Gotrabhū Body of Enlightenment, the Sotāpana Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Sotāpana], the Subtle Sotāpana Body of Enlightenment, the Sakidāgāmī Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmī], the Subtle Sakidāgāmī Body of Enlightenment, the Anāgāmī Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Anāgāmī], the Subtle Anāgāmī Body of Enlighten-





ment, the Arahatta Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Arahāt] and the Subtle Arahatta Body of Enlightenment. Thus there are ten types of Bodies of Enlightenment.

### **The Benefits of Attaining the Inner Bodies**

Attaining the body in the body brings inestimable benefit to our lives because it is the means by which we can overcome the defilements and it allows us insight into various sorts of higher knowledge which can only be seen and known by virtue of the eyes and minds of the inner bodies:

#### **1. Overcoming the Defilements in the Mind Level by Level**

Meditators who cultivate themselves according to the Eightfold Path and according to the principles of the Middle Way will find that their mind becomes free of the ups-and-downs of elation and disappointment. Apart from bringing them wisdom, the equanimity they discover will make them feel 'alive' in a way they have never felt before. It is this equanimity [*upekkhā*] which will lead the meditator down the pathway towards Nirvana. The more the mind becomes free from defilements, the deeper inside the mind will be able to travel on the central axis through the inner bodies.

The defilements associated with the physical human body comprise covetousness [*abhijjhā*], vengefulness [*byāpāda*] and False View [*micchā diṭṭhi*]. When the mind is sufficiently pure to be released from these three defilements, the mind will attain the Angelic Body.

The defilements associated with the Angelic Body are greed [*lobha*], hatred [*dosa*] and delusion [*moha*]. When the mind is sufficiently pure to be released from these three defilements, the mind will attain the Brahmā Body.

The defilements associated with the Brahmā Body are



grasping [*rāga*], hatred [*dosa*] and delusion [*moha*]. When the mind is sufficiently pure to be released from these three defilements, the mind will attain the Formless Brahmā Body.

The defilements associated with the Formless Brahmā Body are subtle sense-grasping [*kāmarāga ānusaya*], annoyance [*pāṭighā ānusaya*] and subtle ignorance [*avijjā ānusaya*]. When the mind is sufficiently pure to be released from these three defilements, the mind will attain the first Dhamma Body [Dhammakāya Gotrabhū] and that person will become a person enlightened at the level of the Gotrabhū attainer [*gotrabhū puggala*].

Having attained the first Body of Enlightenment, the meditator uses this Body of Enlightenment to examine the Four Noble Truths in the Physical Human Body and the Subtle Human Body both forwards [*anuloma*] and in reverse [*paṭiloma*]. In this way, the Sotāpana Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Sotāpana] will be attained. That person will become a stream-enterer [*sotāpana*] — the first level of Buddhist sainthood — who has managed to release themselves from the lower fetters of self-view [*sakkayadiṭṭhi*], doubt [*vicikicchā*] and attachment to rites and rituals [*sīlabbatapamāda*].

Having attained the Sotapana Body of Enlightenment, the meditator uses this Body of Enlightenment to examine the Four Noble Truths in the Angelic Body both forwards [*anuloma*] and in reverse [*paṭiloma*]. In this way, the meditator will manage to diminish the three fetters of grasping [*rāga*], hatred [*dosa*] and delusion [*moha*] — and that person will attain the Sakidāgāmī Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmī]. That person will become a once-returner [*sakidāgāmī*] — the second level of Buddhist sainthood who has diminished the worst of grasping [*rāga*],



hatred [*dosa*] and delusion [*moha*].

Having attained the Sakidāgāmī Body of Enlightenment, the meditator uses this Body of Enlightenment to examine the Four Noble Truths in the Brahmā Body both forwards [*anuloma*] and in reverse [*paṭiloma*]. In this way, the meditator will manage to release themselves from all five lower fetters: self-view [*sakkayadiṭṭhi*], doubt [*vicikicchā*], attachment to rites and rituals [*silabbatapamāda*], sense-grasping [*kāmarāga*] and annoyance [*pāṭighā*] — and that person will attain the Anāgāmī Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Anāgāmī]. That person will become a non-returner [*anāgāmī*] — the third level of Buddhist sainthood.

Having attained the Anāgāmī Body of Enlightenment, the meditator uses this Body of Enlightenment to examine the Four Noble Truths in the Formless Brahmā Body both forwards [*anuloma*] and in reverse [*paṭiloma*]. In this way, the meditator will manage to release themselves from all five higher fetters: grasping for the form sphere [*rūparāga*], grasping for the formless sphere [*arūparāga*], arrogance [*māna*], absent-mindedness [*uddhacca*] and ignorance [*avijjā*] — and that person will attain the Arahant Body of Enlightenment [Dhammakāya Anāgāmī]. That person will become an arahant — the fourth and final level of Buddhist sainthood — with no remaining defilements.

That the Buddha or the arahants are able to eradicate all the defilements from their minds is achieved by the same sequential method described above.

## ***2. Insight into various sorts of higher knowledge***

There are various sorts of higher knowledge which are only accessible by means of attaining the Dhammakāya. The meditator has attained the various bodies in sequence until



reaching the Dhammakāya and becoming one and the same as the Dhammakāya. The body of the Dhammakāya incorporates layers of perception, sensory registration, central processing and cognition in just the same way as the human body. By contrast however, the mind of the Dhammakāya can be enlarged to a diameter equal to the distance across the lap (knee-to-knee) of the Dhammakāya. If it is the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū, this distance measures twenty fathoms (forty metres) — and the size increases with the refinement of each new Dhammakāya attained in sequence. A ‘mind’ which can be expanded in this way is known by the special name of ‘*ñāṇa*’ or knowing.

The mind’s capacity to expand as ‘*ñāṇa*’ in this way allows the meditator clearly to examine the eight inner bodies which have already been traversed and to see that all of these bodies are subject to the Three Signs [*tilakkhaṇa*] — impermanence [*aniccaṃ*], suffering [*dukkhaṃ*] and not-self [*anattā*]. All this is seen by the eye of the Dhammakāya. All this is known with the knowing [*ñāṇa*] of the Dhammakāya. It is this practice which we can correctly refer to as ‘insight’ or ‘*vipassanā*’. Cultivating meditation and insight further, the meditator will attain increasingly subtle forms of the Dhammakāya until reaching the Subtle Arahāt Dhammakāya body. The meditator will attain the condition of ‘coolness’ [*sītibhūto*] — coolness from the fire of the defilements. At this point the meditator has completed the work of the mind — there is no further work to be done.

### **The Three Signs are Known by ‘*ñāṇa*’**

The Three Signs of Existence [*tilakkhaṇa*] that are exhibited by all material things are impermanence [*aniccaṃ*], suffering [*dukkhaṃ*] and not-self [*anattā*].



**Impermanence** [*aniccam*]: This is the built-in character of objects that are of a nature to change the whole of the time. Such things as the Five Aggregates of the Human Body are changing the whole of the time.

**Suffering** [*dukkham*]: This is the characteristic of built-in hardship seen again with the Five Aggregates because of the constant stress of arising and decaying. Suffering is something that it is hard to tolerate — creating the feelings such as pain and suffering.

**Not-Self** [*anattā*]: The changeability of the Five Aggregates makes them of the nature of suffering. When we try to relieve the suffering by trying to prevent the Aggregates from changing, we meet with no success because the Five Aggregates are not under our control. Furthermore, in these Five Aggregates there is no real 'self' because the Aggregates are just an assembly of decaying pieces none of which can be identified as 'self'. These are the signs of the characteristic of 'not-self'.

All this is seen only by the eye of the Dhammakāya. All this is known only with the knowing [*ñāṇa*] of the Dhammakāya. The reason why the eight 'mundane' bodies cannot know their own nature is because their knowledge is only on the level of 'consciousness' or 'cognition' — unlike the Dhammakāya, these bodies have no access to 'knowing' [*ñāṇa*].

The Great Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Phramonkolthepmuni, explained the difference between cognition and 'knowing' as follows:

"The knowledge arising from cognition depends upon the six senses [*āyatana*] rather than wisdom, therefore



the knowledge arising from cognition may be erroneous. The knowledge arising from 'knowing', by contrast, depends on the Dhammakāya — it is knowledge based on true wisdom such as the Four Noble Truths — accessed by seeing and knowing directly the arising of suffering, craving as its cause, that because of arising there must be decay i.e. cessation [*nirodha*] and that self-discipline, meditation and wisdom are the only things that can lead one to such cessation. All this is seen by the eye of the Dhammakāya. All this is known with the knowing [*ñāṇa*] of the Dhammakāya."

If we were to conclude the process of Right Practice by which the *bodhisatva* was able to attain Buddhahood, then he started by striving in the practice of meditation and insight at the foot of the Bodhi Tree on the eve of Visākha Pūjā Day. He had made the vow to himself:

For however long it may take me to attain enlightenment as a Fully-Enlightened Buddha, even if my body should shrivel and die leaving only skin, sinew and bone, I will not rise from this meditation seat.

The *bodhisatva* then strove in meditation making continuous progress until reaching his avowed goal. In the first watch of the night, the *bodhisatva* attained recollection of his own previous lifetimes [*pubbenivāsānusatiñāṇa*]. In the second watch of the night he attained knowledge of the birth and rebirth of beings in the cycle of existence according to their karma [*cutūpapātāñāṇa*]. In the third watch of the night the *bodhisatva* attained knowledge that he had eradicated all defilements from his mind [*āsavakkhayañāṇa*]. All three of these attainments came via the eye of the



Dhamma Body — not with the human eye or the naked eye. All the knowledge that brought him to Buddhahood came by the 'knowing' of the Dhamma Body, not by rationale or reasoning with the logical (human) mind. The Buddha was able to see deep and with certainty into the Three Spheres [*bhava*] of Existence because he had gone beyond these three spheres by attaining Nirvana.

The Lord Buddha was filled with Great Compassion and for this reason he was to teach the Noble Path he had uncovered for the benefit of disciples in releasing themselves from the Cycle of Existence and following Him into Nirvana. To follow the Path to completion in such a way is not beyond the capacity of mere mortals — all it needs is to apply oneself (by the principles of the Four Foundations of Success — *iddhipāda*) to practising the Noble Eightfold Path.

**Conclusion of the Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering**  
Anyone who has the wisdom to recognize that to cultivate virtues such as self-discipline or generosity is beneficial on three levels can be said to be of Right View. Anyone with the intention to get down to cultivating such virtues as self-discipline and generosity can be said to be of Right Intention — the intention to abstain from Wrong Speech, Wrong Action and Wrong Livelihood while cultivating generosity and the Precepts. Cultivating loving-kindness [*mettā*] can be said to instil one with Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Following up one's Right Intention by cultivating the virtues of generosity and self-discipline is to endow oneself with Right Effort and if one's wholesome attention is something from which your mind never deviates, you can be said to be of Right Mindfulness. Once one's mind becomes absorbed and one-pointed, then one can be said to be of Right Concentration.



### The Components of the Eightfold Path all arise together

When the factors of the Eightfold Path arise, they do so together — just as the elder monk Koṇḍañña, after listening to the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta instantly attained the Fruit of the Stream-Entry. All eight components of the Path arose simultaneously allowing the mind to attain the Fruit of Stream-Enterer. The wisdom of Right View at the level of the Stream Enterer allowed Koṇḍañña to see the Four Noble Truths. He gained insight into clinging to the Five Aggregates [*upādānakhanda*] as the first Noble Truth, the craving [*taṇhā*] which is the cause of such clinging as the second Noble Truth, the extinction of craving as the third Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path as the Path to the Cessation of craving.

As for Right Intention or initial intention [*vitaka*], he would immediately and definitively be able to release himself from the three types of Wrong preoccupation once and for all: preoccupation with desire [*kāma vitaka*], preoccupation with illwill [*byāpāda vitaka*] and preoccupation with aggression [*vihiṃsā vitaka*].

As for Right Speech, he would immediately and definitively be able to release himself from the four types of Wrong Speech once and for all: lying speech [*musāvāda*], divisive speech [*pisuṇāvācā*], harsh speech [*pharusavācā*], and idle chatter [*samphappalāvācā*].

As for Right Action, he would immediately and definitively be able to release himself from the three types of Wrong Action once and for all: killing living beings [*pāṇātīpātā*], stealing [*adinnādānā*], and committing adultery [*kāmesu-micchācārā*].

As for Right Effort, he would immediately and definitively be able to release himself from the four types of Wrong Ef-





fort: doing of evils not yet done, maintainance of evils already done, not doing virtues not yet done and abandoning virtues already mastered.

As for Right Mindfulness, he would immediately and definitively be able to appreciate that the aggregate of corporeality [*rūpakhandha*] is subject to the Three Signs (impermanence, suffering and not-self), the aggregate of feeling [*vedanākhanda*] is subject to suffering, the aggregate of consciousness is of a nature of impermanence — arising and falling away the whole of the time and that the aggregates of sense-registration (perception) [*saññā*] and mental formations [*saṅkhāra*] are of a nature of not-self because they are not under our control.

As for Right Concentration, this would arise immediately and definitively by the strength of the foregoing seven factors of the Eightfold Path in order to give rise to one-pointed and steadfast absorption of the mind onto Nirvana.

Thus all eight components of the Eightfold Path arise together — the Path of the *Sotāpatti* Fruit in the mind and the various forms of underlying action.

Right Intention becomes the tool of Right View — just as our hands are the tools of our ability to see things — if we want to take a close look at something, we have to use our hands to turn it over and see all its aspects. Our intention controls our conduct and our lives, but at the same time, the faculty of Right View constantly monitors the events of our lives reflecting “this set of phenomena belongs to the sensual sphere”, “this set of phenomena belongs to the Form-sphere”, “this set of phenomena belongs to the Formless-sphere”. In monitoring for the Three Signs of impermanence, suffering and not self, Right Intention is like a salesperson



which proposes various moods and situations for its approval.

Right Speech and Right Action are the tools of Right Livelihood because whenever our actions and speech are faultless, our means of livelihood will become faultless too.

Right Effort and Right Mindfulness are the tools of Right Concentration. The three virtues can be compared to three friends who enter the forest together. One of those friends sees a champac blossom out of reach on a tree and would like to get it for himself. One of the friends thus stoops down so that the others can stand on him. The second friend stands on him with the other on his shoulders and in that way they are able to reach down the flower blossom. In the same way, Right Effort has to bend down in order that Right Mindfulness can stand on him. Meanwhile Right Concentration sits on the shoulders of Right Mindfulness and is the one to pluck the blossom.

### **Ways of Analysing the Eightfold Path**

#### **Threefold Analysis**

If the Eightfold Path is analysed into three parts then it is divided as follows: with Right View and Right Intention contributing to our wisdom; Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood contributing to Self-Discipline, and; Right

Right View	}	Wisdom
Right Intention		
Right Speech	}	Self-Discipline
Right Action		
Right Livelihood		
Right Effort	}	Meditation
Right Mindfulness		
Right Concentration		



Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration contributing to our meditation.

Wisdom is used to overcome the defilements of delusion, self-discipline is used to overcome the defilements of hatred and meditation is used to overcome our desires.

### Twofold Analysis

If the Eightfold Path is analysed into two parts according to the knowledge [*viññā*] and the conduct [*carāṇa*] exemplified by the Buddha then Right View and Right Intention contribute to our knowledge, and; Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration contribute to our conduct

Right View	}	Knowledge
Right Intention		
Right Speech	}	Conduct
Right Action		
Right Livelihood		
Right Effort		
Right Mindfulness		
Right Concentration		

It is said that knowledge can be compared to our two eyes while conduct can be compared to the two feet on which we stand. A person making a journey has to have clear vision to see that path ahead is fruitful and not assailed by dangers. With a strong pair of legs, we can use our two feet to make progress on the path we can see ahead. In the same way, a person who follows the Noble Eightfold Path until attaining degrees of sainthood will find that the Path brings no suffering and indeed is the cause of immense happiness. One will know this for oneself by the wisdom arising through the two eyes of one's Right View and Right Intention. One will



see that the six components of conduct are a path ahead which are free of all dangers bringing one surely to one's destination.



Practising the Noble Eightfold Path is not just the duty of the saint or the monk striving for Nirvana — it is also a means by which the householder can secure happiness and prosperity in their personal lives, contributing to a harmonious society on the collective level. Indeed, without the Eightfold Path, life would be chaotic. The practise of the Noble Eightfold Path for laypeople may be different from that practised by the Noble Ones, but it contains the same eight components.

### **1. Right View**

The section which follows gives an explanation of the Noble Eightfold Path on the mundane level as described in the Dhammapada commentary. It explains that Right View means wisdom to recognize the virtue of the Triple Gem as illustrated in the following Tale<sup>1</sup>:

In the city of Sāvattthī, two boys were friends. One boy came from a family with Right View, the other came from a family of False View. When the two boys played together, throwing a dice, the boy of Right View would recollect the virtue of the Lord Buddha with the words “*Itipi*

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1. DhA.XXI, 5



so *bhagavā*" and "*Namo buddhassa*" before throwing the dice. By contrast, the boy from the family of False View would recollect the virtue of various heretics before throwing the dice with the words "*Namo titthiyanam*" (Praise be to the heretics!) It turned out that the son from the family of Right View won every single game of dice — and the son from the family of False View lost every game.

This tale has the moral that anyone established in Right View will always conquer those of False View.

### 1.1 Right View helps us to escape all danger

It is said that those of Right View are protected from all danger, with protection against malevolent spirits as a case in point. The same tale continues the previous tale of the boy of Right View with the following account:

One day the father of the boy of Right View took the boy in the cart to gather kindling wood outside the city gates. Having loaded the kindling onto the cart, they made their way home. On the way, they stopped to let the buffalo graze near a cemetery. The buffalo escaped and made its way back through the city gates. The father pursued the buffalo on foot, leaving the boy asleep alone in the cart, thinking to come back for him as soon as he could find the buffalo. However, by the time he managed to catch the buffalo inside the city, it was already dark and the guards had closed the gates. Not seeing his father return, the boy recollected the virtue of the Lord Buddha with the words "*Itipiso bhagavā...*" until falling asleep.

Two ogres prowled in the night looking for prey. One of the ogres was of Right View, the other was of False View. Seeing the boy asleep in the cart, the False View



ogre said to the other that they ought to eat the boy up, but the other ogre forbade him. The False View ogre ignored the warning and grabbed the boy's feet, waking him. The boy was startled and exclaimed aloud "*Namo buddhassa...*" In surprise the False View ogre dropped the boy's feet and retreated. The other ogre reprimanded him saying "Now look what you've done — you have sinned — now you have to make up for your wickedness by finding some food for this boy." The Right View ogre watched over the boy while the other flew away through the air to the royal palace where he found an ornate platter of delicacies, bringing it back for the boy. The ogres then transformed themselves to look like the boy's mother and father. Having fed the boy, they inscribed a message on the platter in letters visible only to the king. They left the platter in the cart with the boy and went on their way.

In the morning, the courtiers noticed that the platter was missing and had the whole city searched. They found the platter in the cart with the boy. They took both the platter and the boy before King Pasenadi of Kosala. The king learned from the boy that his mother and father had brought food for him on the platter. Having read the message written on the platter the king took the boy and his father to meet the Lord Buddha, asking the Buddha how simply recollecting the Buddha's virtue could be so potent in protection.

The Buddha replied that the mind of anyone who cultivates six forms of recollection will protect that person from all danger. The Buddha then taught that a person who wants to cultivate recollection should recollect the following:



1. Recollection of the virtues of the Buddha with the words *"Itipi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho..."*
2. Recollection of the virtues of the Dhamma with the words *"Svākkhāto bhagavā dhammo..."*
3. Recollection of the virtues of the Sangha with the words *"Supaṭipanno bhagavāto sāvakasaṅgho..."*
4. Recollection of the loathesomeness of the body (mindfulness of the body) with the words *"kesā lomā..."*
5. Recollection of compassion towards other living beings with the words *"Sabbe sattā dukkhā pamuñcanti..."*
6. Recollection of loving kindness towards other living beings with the words *"Sabbe sattā averā hontu..."*

Anyone who cultivates these six recollections, by night and by day, all day long or even three times per day or once-a-day can be counted amongst the worthy disciples of the Tathāgata and will be protected from all danger both in waking and in sleep. The wise who know the virtue of the Triple Gem, who cultivate these six types of recollection, can be considered as being established in Right View at the mundane level.

Furthermore, those who are able to eradicate False View from their minds can be said to be those of Right View. The False Views which should be removed from the mind are as follows:

1. The view that generosity is fruitless;
2. The view that any form of worship or respect is fruitless;
3. The view that wholesome action and unwholesome action have no retribution (lack of belief in the Law of Karma);





4. The view that this world lacks reality or doesn't exist;
5. The view that the afterworld lacks reality or doesn't exist;
6. The view that serving one's mother is fruitless;
7. The view that serving one's father is fruitless;
8. The view that monastics, even those who practise properly, are still unable to attain by their wisdom, in this world or the next, any fruit from their practice or to teach anyone else to do the same.

Furthermore, anyone who believes that death is the end of the story (that there is no life after death) or that there is no afterlife is also someone of False View. As for those who know the fruits of generosity, respect, filial piety and monastic practice is a person of Right View.

## 2. Right Intention

When Right Intention is described in the Suttas, it is analysed into three types:

1. The Intention to remove oneself from sensual desire  
[*nekkhamma saṅkappa*]
2. The Intention to remove oneself from vengefulness  
[*abyāpāda saṅkappa*]
3. The Intention to remove oneself from aggression  
[*avihiṃsā saṅkappa*]

In the Mahā Janaka Jātaka (J.539), when the Buddha was still pursuing Perfections as the *bodhisatva*, taking rebirth as King Mahā Janaka in the city of Mithila, with a lifespan of 10,000 years. He cultivated the Perfection of generosity and self-discipline for around 1,000 years while still on the throne, until he decided to renounce the throne and become a monk, for the benefit of pursuing the Perfection of renunciation. However, the *bodhisatva* still had his concerns about the royal wealth of Mithila. He thought to himself:



“Oh! When will I be able to leave this prosperous Mithila with its castles and towers, abundance of the four requisites?”

The *bodhisatva* thought in this way for four months before he was able to fulfil his renunciation. Such thinking can be referred to as ‘the intention to remove oneself from sensual desire’.

When the *bodhisatva* had renounced the world to live in the forest, he meditated upon a *kaṣiṇa* until being able to develop mental powers [*abhiññā*] together with the intention to remove himself both from vengefulness and aggression. At that time, the *bodhisatva* would have developed Right Intention at the mundane level.

In addition, any mood which leads us to think in a way which is unwholesome — to intend to have unwholesome deeds, words or thoughts — can also be considered to be a sign of False Intention. On the contrary, any intention to have wholesome deeds, words or thoughts can be considered as Right Intention.

A good illustrative example is that of King Dhammāsoka of Pāṭaliputta. The king was very powerful and his reputation spread far and wide. According to the Dhammāsoka Jātaka, the angelic host even recognized his power bringing him gifts from the Himavanta Forest<sup>1</sup>. Some of the angels would collect seven containers of water for him daily from the Anodāta Pool<sup>2</sup>. Minor birds would bring him the daily equivalent of 9,000 cartloads of rice from the Chaddanta Pool. The king used to practise generosity with his wealth

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1. The Himavanta Forest on a huge mountain range to the north of India — known as the Himalayas in the present day.

2. The Anodāta Pool is one of the seven pools found in the Himavanta Forest.



by inviting 60,000 monks for alms in the palace daily. The king wanted to have the chance to pay respect to a fully-enlightened Buddha and with this end in mind, invited the Nāga King to come up from under the ground and to transform himself into the appearance of a Buddha so that the king could have the chance to pay respect for seven days. The king had the wish also to revere the Dhamma in its 84,000 parts and so built 84,000 stupas containing the Buddha's relics to give his subjects the chance to pay respect. Once the king had built the stupas and a temple called Asokārāma<sup>1</sup>, he held a ceremony in that temple to pay homage to all 84,000 stupas.

Later King Asoka wished that Buddhism have an heir so he had his son Prince Mahindara ordain as a monk and his daughter Princess Saṅghamitā ordain as a nun. The king intended to do his best as a patron of Buddhism and so he organized and sponsored the Third Council. He was an exemplary Buddhist layman for the rest of his life taking the Triple Gem as his refuge.

King Asoka even sent a royal message to King Devānampiyatissa of Srilanka imploring him also to take refuge in the Triple Gem. He sent Mahindara Thera to spread Buddhism on the island of Srilanka and sent relics and cuttings of the Bodhi Tree there too. All these good actions of King Asoka must have stemmed from a mind of Right Intention.

### 3. Right Speech

The sort of wholesome speech which arises from a mind which is wholesome at the mundane level is well illustrated

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1. Asokārāma was an important temple at Pāṭaliputra in the time of King Asoka and was the venue for the Third Council.



by the tale of Sujātā, the younger sister of Visākhā. This lady was the sister in law of Anāthapiṇḍika but was very haughty because she heired from a wealthy family. She had consideration neither for her husband nor her parents-in-law. Sujātā was wont to use harsh speech and this led to conflict in the home.

One day, Anāthapiṇḍika invited the Buddha and his monks to his own home. From a distance, the Buddha heard the sound of argument coming from the house and asked Anāthapiṇḍika about the possible reason behind such a conflict. Anāthapiṇḍika replied that the cause was the arrogance of Sujātā, his sister in law, who looked down on everyone else.

Having heard Anāthapiṇḍika's advice, the Buddha summoned Sujātā. He asked Sujātā of the following seven sorts of wife<sup>1</sup>:

1. A wife like an enemy [*vadhaka samābhariyā*];
2. A wife like an robber [*cori samābhariyā*];
3. A wife like an boss [*ayyā samābhariyā*];
4. A wife like an mother [*mātā samābhariyā*];
5. A wife like an little sister [*bhaginī samābhariyā*];
6. A wife like an friend [*sahāya samābhariyā*];
7. A wife like an slave [*dāsī samābhariyā*];

which sort she would like to be? Having heard the Lord Buddha's question, Sujātā asked the Lord Buddha to explain what He meant by each of the seven categories. The Lord Buddha thus explained as follows:

**1. A wife like an enemy:** When a wife is cruel to her husband instead of being compassionate, when she brings no benefit to her husband, but is interested only

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1. A.iv.91ff., J.269



in other men, looking down on her husband — even when her husband is the one to pay her dowry in the first place — having no gratitude to her husband, and even going as far as attempting to kill her husband in some cases — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like an enemy;

2. *A wife like an robber:* A wife who is full of greed and who tries deviously to extract as much money as possible out of her husband for her own self-interest, without thinking how hard he has had to work to earn it — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a robber;

3. *A wife like an boss:* a wife who is lazy, who constantly awaits the chance to sit down or lie down and rest instead of helping with her various duties, lacks helpfulness, uses threats and insults to goad her husband into doing her work in her place, but who prohibits her husband from treating her in such a way — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a boss;

4. *A wife like an mother:* A wife who is full of compassion, who loves her husband, who helps and is a credit to her husband, who looks after her husband's health when he is ill, like a mother would look after her own children — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a mother;

5. *A wife like an little sister:* A wife who is ashamed of evil and who fears the consequences of evil, who respects and looks up to her husband as if he were her big brother — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a little sister;

6. *A wife like an friend:* a wife who is generous and sincere who empathizes with her husband in all he does like a friend who goes together through thick and thin — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a friend;



**7. A wife like an slave:** A wife who allows herself to be abused, slapped or beaten by her husband without becoming angry or vengeful and without blaming her husband, who is contented to be completely dominated by her husband — a wife with such characteristics is a wife like a slave.

The first three categories of wife, a wife like an enemy, a wife like a robber and a wife like a boss will pass away into hell at the end of their lives as a result of the bad karma they have accumulated for themselves.

The remaining four types of wife, i.e. a wife like a mother, a wife like a little sister, a wife like a friend and a wife like a slave will pass away into heaven at the end of their lives as a result of the good karma they have accumulated for themselves.

Having heard the teaching of the Buddha, Sujātā bowed at the feet of the Buddha and asked to take refuge in the Triple Gem for the rest of her life. From that time onwards, having become a Buddhist laywoman, she gave up all her False Speech and established herself in Right Speech at the mundane level.

Those who have reached the stages of Buddhist sainthood such as that of the 'stream-enterer' have transcended the mental formations that produce False Speech. Overcoming False Speech in this way is called Transcendental Right Speech [*lokuttarasammāvācā*] by Transcendental Abstinence [*samuccheda-virati*]. They have absolutely uprooted False Speech from the mind, never to let it return, in a way illustrated by some disciples of the Lord Buddha who lived in Sāvattihī<sup>1</sup>:

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1. DhA. Appamādavagga, 4



Once there was a festival which had been organized by fools. It was called the 'Festival of Fools' and lasted for seven full days. The fools of the town would sit in a circle and get drunk before going around the neighbourhood shouting crude words outside peoples' houses. If the inhabitant of a house paid them some money, they would go and shout elsewhere.

A certain group of the Buddha's followers had already attained 'stream-entry' (Sotāpana fruit). Having paid the shouting fools their dues, they locked themselves in their houses for seven days, meditating on the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. Only when the Fools' Festival was over did they emerge from their houses and go to visit the Buddha. They told him that they had confined themselves to their houses because of a festival by fools possessed of False Speech and for that reason had not been able to attend to the Buddha.

The Buddha subsequently gave the teaching that "Fools know neither benefit in this lifetime or the next. They are unable to find wisdom and are constantly established in recklessness. By contrast, the wise who know benefit in this lifetime and the next are constantly established in non-recklessness — in just the same way that the heir of seven sorts of jewel from a family wealthy in the past would take good care of his legacy."

Such disciples were maintaining Right Speech at the transcendental level.

#### **4. Right Action**

Right Action is the practice of abstaining from killing, stealing and adultery.



#### 4.1 Abstention from killing

Evil actions can be abstained from in any of the following three different ways:

1. *abstention on the spur of the moment* [sompattavirati];
2. *abstention by having requested the Five Precepts in advance* [samādānavirati];
3. *abstention by having transcended such behaviour* [samucchadavirati];

The account of the layman called 'Cakkana' is a good illustration of abstention from evil on the spur of the moment<sup>1</sup>:

Cakkana was ordered by his older brother to hunt and kill a rabbit so that the animal's fresh blood could be used as a lotion to cure his mother's illness. He caught a rabbit and was about to kill it. However, when the rabbit cried out in fear, he thought to himself of the folly of killing one being to save another. Thinking thus, he released the rabbit — this is an example of thinking that is Right Action on the level of the spur of the moment.

Another layman's story illustrates the abstention from evil by someone who has requested the Precepts in advance<sup>2</sup>:

There was a layman who had requested the Five Precepts from a distinguished monk before going out to plough the fields. At lunchtime, he released his buffalos to graze, but one escaped into the forest. Taking his machete he followed the buffalo into the forest. However, he was encircled by a huge python from the feet upwards. At first he thought to hack the snake with the machete, but recalling that he had taken the Precepts he refrained. When

1. DhsA. p.103

2. Maṅgaladīpaṇi Part II, v.158





the snake started to crush him in his coils, he thought again of killing the snake, but remembering his Precepts he threw down the knife. He thought to himself, that if he should die, at least he would die with pure Precepts. However, by the might of the intention of the layman to lay down his life for his Precepts, his body became hot like a flame, making the snake unable to bear to touch him any more and it uncoiled and made its escape — this is an example of thinking that is Right Action on the level of having requested the Precepts in advance.

Abstaining from killing either on the spur of the moment or because of having taken the Precepts in advance are both examples of Right Action on the 'mundane' path [*lokiyamagga*].

The following account, by contrast tells us how killing can be abstained from by having transcended the very intentions to kill<sup>1</sup>:

There was a fisherman called "Ariya" (lit. "noble one") who lived during the time of the Buddha. As a fisherman, he caught and killed fish every day. One day in meditation, the Buddha saw Ariya's potential to attain the fruit of stream-entry [*sotāpattiphala*] and went, with a number of other monks to where Ariya was fishing. Seeing the Buddha approaching, Ariya became ashamed of his action and hid his fishing line. When the Buddha arrived, while standing in front of the man, he asked Sāriputta his name. "Sāriputta", replied Sāriputta. The Buddha then proceeded to ask the name of each of the monks and overhearing, the man wondered whether af-

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1. DhA.iii.p.396-8



ter asking all the monks' names, the Buddha would ask his. The Buddha knew what he was thinking and asked the man his name. "Ariya<sup>1</sup>" replied the man. In fact, the Buddha didn't need to be told the man's name. The Buddha gave Ariya a teaching that anyone who still harmed other living beings could not be called 'noble' on account of his actions. He said that one's nobility comes from not harming other living beings. Hearing the Buddha's teaching, Ariya attained stream-entry and from that day onwards never killed a living being again.

Ariya had transcended the very intention to kill — this example of thinking that is Right Action on the level of transcending evil by a mind that has attained stream-entry.

#### 4.2 Abstention from Stealing

Abstention from stealing on the level of the transcendental [*lokuttara*] path is illustrated by the account of Khujjutarā. Khujjutarā was the handmaid of Sāmāvadī and five-hundred other courtesans in the court of King Udena<sup>2</sup>:

Usually, King Udena would bestow 1,000 *kahapanas* per day on his courtesans to buy flowers for themselves. Khujjutarā had the duty to buy the flowers for them. Each day she would keep 500 *kahapanas* for herself and bring back 500 *kahapanas* of flowers to present to the 500 courtesans.

One day the florist had invited the Buddha and the monastic assembly to receive their midday meal at his home and asked that Khujjutarā attend to help with the offering and hear the teaching. Khujjutarā attended gladly and having heard the teaching, attained stream-entry. From that time onwards, Khujjutarā never embezzled

1. A name which means 'noble'. 2. DhA.i.208ff.



money any more. She used the whole 1,000 *kahapanas* to buy flowers for Sammāvadī and the courtesans. Seeing that there were more flowers than usual, the courtesans asked Khujjutarā whether the king had given her more money than usual.

Khujjutarā admitted the truth that every day King Udena had given her 1,000 *kahapanas* for flowers and today was no exception — but in the past, she had used only half the money to buy flowers and had embezzled the rest — so the flowers were few. However, today, having heard the teaching of the Buddha about the harm of stealing which causes people to be reborn as animals, monsters [*asurakāya*], hungry ghosts or as poor people, or as people whose wealth is always destroyed by taxes, thieves, fire, flood or enemies — there would be no more embezzlement for her. She had used all 1,000 *kahapanas* to buy flowers and that was why there were more than usual. She asked their forgiveness on this occasion.

Having attained stream-entry, Khujjutarā could not even tell a lie any more and had to tell the whole truth illustrating Right Speech at the transcendental level. Abstaining from further embezzlement, illustrates Right Action also at the transcendental level.

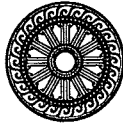
#### 4.3 Abstention from Adultery

Abstention from adultery on the level of the transcendental path is illustrated by the account from the Dhammapada of a young man called Khema<sup>1</sup>:

Khema was the son of a wealthy banker and was the grandson of Anāthapiṇḍika as well. Khema had, in a

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1. DhA.iii.481ff.



previous lifetime made a beautiful golden flag and placed it as an offering on the pagoda containing the relics of Kassapa Buddha<sup>1</sup>. After making his offering, he had made the wish that he may always appear so beautiful to all women excepting his blood relations, that they all fall in love with him on first sight.

Even during his lifetime as Khema, large numbers of women were attracted to his charms and this caused him to commit adultery with the wives of many other men. One day, the king's men caught Khema in the act, arrested him and brought him before King Pasenadi of Kosala. When the king found out that the boy was also the grandson of the eminent Anāthapiṇḍika, for fear that the boy's behaviour punishment would bring Anāthapiṇḍika into disrepute, he released the boy instead of executing him. Once released, the boy went back to his old adulterous ways and was caught and released in the same way three times.

Subsequently Anāthapiṇḍika took the boy to see the Buddha to ask him to teach the boy to mend his ways. The Buddha gave the teaching to the effect that:

"Those lacking the mindfulness to consider wholesomeness, who commit adultery with the wives of others will bring the following four sorts of suffering to themselves:

1. They will suffer extendedly as the result of their misdoing;
2. Even if proud of their misdoing, at the same time they will be so full of fear and suspicion that they will be unable to sleep;
3. They will be the subject of malicious gossip and will

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1. Kassapa Buddha is the third of the five Buddhas who appear during our present world era.



- hardly be able to find anyone to praise them;  
4. They will spend forthcoming lifetimes in hell.

Having heard the Buddha's teaching, Khema attained stream-entry, never committing adultery again  
This example of thinking that is Right Action on the level of 'transcending evil' by a mind that has attained stream-entry.

### 5. Right Livelihood

At its most basic, Right Livelihood means earning one's living in a way which avoids the five types of Wrong Trade<sup>1</sup>:

1. *Dealing in slaves* [satthavaṇijjā]: For example, prostitution or buying people at a low price and selling them at a higher price, supporting oneself from the profit made;
2. *Dealing in weapons* [sattavaṇijjā]: Selling weapons destined for killing, supporting oneself from the profit made;
3. *Dealing in flesh* [maṃsavaṇijjā]: Rearing live animals (like buffalos, pigs, ducks and chickens) to slaughter oneself or have someone else slaughter for us, supporting oneself from the profit made;
4. *Dealing in alcohol* [majjavaṇijjā]: Selling alcohol, supporting oneself from the profit made;
5. *Dealing in poisons* [visavaṇijjā]: Selling poisons for killing animals, supporting oneself from the profit made;

Earning one's living in any single one of these five ways is Wrong Livelihood.

Furthermore, those who work in commerce but who are dishonest (by for example fixing scales) are also included in Wrong Livelihood. Fixing scales is enumerated in four ways:

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1. *micchāvaṇijjā* A.iii.207



1. *Double scales*: having one set of scales which underweighs and another which overweighs. The retailer uses the underweighing scales when buying stock and the overweighing scales when selling stock;
2. *Pushing the scales*: Using the old-fashioned hand-held scales with two suspended trays, the dishonest retailer uses their little finger to tilt the scales to their advantage;
3. *Holding the scales*: Using the old-fashioned hand-held scales with two suspended trays, the dishonest retailer holds the scales in a way that so that it does not tilt when buying or tilts further than it should when selling;
4. *Fixing the weights*: Hollowing out one set of metal weights and filling it with powder (for selling) and another set of hollowed weights filled with mercury (for buying).

Anyone who uses such deception and uses the profits to support themselves is guilty of Wrong Livelihood.

Apart from cheating with weights, cheating with measures is also rife. A large coconut shell, one litre in capacity would be used for measuring out rice. Holes in the coconut shell would mark the capacity. The dealer would use their finger to stop the holes when measuring out liquids. Anyone buying oil, ghee, sugar-cane juice or syrup measures out the commodity and then lets releases their finger to let the liquid flow out into the buyer's container. However, if they cheat by keeping their finger over the hole instead of allowing allowing all the liquid out, it is dishonest.

When measuring out beans or rice in a measuring scuttle or basket, when buying they carefully fill the measure making sure all the contents settle with no air pockets. However, when selling, they fill the measure quickly and roughly to



take advantage of the measure not being completely filled. Again such behaviour is dishonest.

Moreover, surveyors in charge of measuring land for a buyer, if they are dishonest or corrupt and don't get paid protection money, will over-measure the land. However, if they are bribed, will undermeasure it. Judges who can be bribed to come to a biased verdict are no better. All come under the heading of Wrong Livelihood.

There are many more varieties of Wrong Livelihood. Some are forgers. They provide the first batch of their work in solid gold. The remainder of their work is in gold-plated brass passed off as solid gold. Whenever a new customer comes, they show them the solid gold and allow them to scratch the surface but when they decide to buy, they substitute the gold-plated one.

Even customers can do it! Suppose a hunter has caught two deer, a big one and a little one. At the market he asks two *kahapanas* for the big one and one *kahapana* for the little one. A gangster comes up and buys the little one for one *kahapana*. A while later he comes back and says he changed his mind and he wants the big one. The hunter asks two *kahapanas* for the big deer. The gangster said that he already gave the hunter one *kahapana* and that the small deer he is returning is also worth one *kahapana*. Together they are worth two *kahapanas*, the price of the big deer. The gangster therefore exchanges the big deer for the small one. Meanwhile the hunter is not smart enough to keep up with the gangster's trick and is thereby cheated by his customer. On this occasion, the customer is guilty of Wrong Livelihood even though he might say the hunter deserved it.

Thieving, pick-pocketing and other forms of stealing for a living of course are also Wrong Livelihood.



The Buddha said that a person who earns their living by Wrong Livelihood is like someone who intentionally advises a traveller to take a dangerous road, saying that it is safe, but when travelling themselves, will always take another (safer) route.

As for Right Livelihood, there is a good example illustrated in the Serīva Jātaka (J.3).

During that lifetime, the *bodhisatva* was born as a merchant called Serīva from the town of Seriva. Once, in the company of a greedy merchant of the same name, he crossed the Nīlapāha River and entered Andhapura. In that city was a family who had fallen on hard times, the sole survivors being a girl and her grandmother. The greedy merchant went to their house with his wares. The girl begged her grandmother to buy a trinket, and suggested that they should give the hawker the golden bowl from which they ate. The bowl was a valuable heirloom, but it had lost its lustre and the woman didn't know its value. The hawker was called in and shown the bowl. He scratched it with a needle and knew it was gold and worth about \$1,000, but wishing to have it for nothing, said it was not worth half a farthing — so he threw it away and left. Later, the *bodhisatva* came to the same street and was offered the same bowl. He told them the truth, gave them all the money he had and his stock, leaving only eight pieces of money for himself. These he gave to the boatman and boarded the boat to cross the river. Meanwhile, the greedy merchant went again to the old woman's house, hoping to get the bowl in exchange for a few trinkets. When he heard what had happened, he lost control of himself, and throwing down everything on his yoke, he took the bar of the yoke as a weapon and ran down to the river to find the *bodhisatva*'s boat in mid-stream. He shouted to the boatman to return,





but the *bodhisatva* urged him on. The merchant, realizing what he had lost through his greed choked up blood. It was at this time that he vowed to get his revenge on the *bodhisatva* in every future lifetime. He was so upset that his heart burst and he fell down dead.

Merchants who are honest, according to the example shown by the *bodhisatva* and who avoid taking shortcuts can be said to be of Right Livelihood. To buy wares cheaply in a country where they are cheap and resell them expensively in a country where they are expensive, if it is not outside the law, can still be considered as Right Livelihood. In general, everything excepted by Wrong Livelihood as explained above, can be considered Right Livelihood.

## 6. Right Effort

Right Effort is composed of the Four Foundations of Effort, namely:

1. *Avoidance of evils not yet done* [*saṃvara-padhāna*];
2. *Abandonment of evils already done* [*pahāna-padhāna*];
3. *Development of virtues not yet done* [*bhāvanā-padhāna*];
4. *Maintainance of virtues already mastered* [*anurakkhāna-padhāna*]

### 6.1 The First Foundation of Effort

The first foundation of effort is to avoid evils not yet done. This is well illustrated by the example of the *bodhisatva* in the Mora Jātaka (J.159, J.491):

The *bodhisatva* was once born as a golden peacock with a body the size of a cart and eyes like bright red berries and its mouth pink like coral. The bird had a red aura too. Noticing his own beauty in the reflection of a pond,



he realized the risk of continuing to live near the haunts of men so he fled secretly from the flock at night to the Himavanta forest, finding safe cave as a home on a golden hill in Dandaka. Every morning he would recite a mantra in honour to the rising sun (with the words "*ahetayañcakkhumā ekarājā harissavaṇṇo...*"). Every evening he would recite a spell in honour to the setting sun (with the words "*appetayañcakkhumā ekarājā harissavaṇṇo...*" and thus was protected from all harm. In this way he maintained an unbroken practice for 700 years.

This is an example of Right Effort on the worldly level arising from wholesome intention.

## 6.2 The Second Foundation of Effort

The second foundation of effort is to abandonment of evils already done. This is well illustrated by the example of the *bodhisatva* in the Pañca-Uposatha Jātaka (J.490). At that time the *bodhisatva* was born in a wealthy Brahmin family. However, he renounced the wealth and became a hermit in an amenable<sup>1</sup> location near to Magadharasthra. Near to his hermitage lived many sorts of animals. Pigeons lived in the nearby bamboo. A snake lived in a termite mound. There were also a jackal and a bear.

One day the cock pigeon went foraging and while he was gone his mate was killed by a hawk. The cock returned and was overcome by remorse and yearning for his mate. Thus the pigeon entered the hermitage to keep Eight Precepts in order to still his troubled mind. The pigeon took

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1. By "amenable" it is meant that something, somewhere or someone is conducive to maintenance of and progress along the spiritual path and is composed of seven factors: 1. Somewhere to stay [*āvāsa*]; 2. Somewhere to procure food [*gocara*]; 3. Amenable conversation [*bhassa*]; 4. Amenable people who encourage our practice [*puggala*]; 5. Food [*āhāra*]; 6. Amenable climate and temperature [*utu*], and; 7. Posture [*iriyaṃpatha*].



the vow that he would not go foraging any more for as long as he could not still his mind from desire.

The snake had been trodden upon by a "holy cow" and had bitten the cow, accidentally killing it. When the cowherd found the cow dead, he broke into tears. After performing the necessary rites, the cowherd buried the cow close by the snake's termite mound. Seeing this, the snake became disgusted at his own uncontrolled anger. Thus the snake entered the hermitage taking the vow never to hunt again until he could overcome his anger.

The jackal had once been out scavenging and, coming across the dead body of an elephant, ate into it from behind and lived inside it. When the body dried up, he became a prisoner and made frenzied efforts to escape. Eventually the storm broke, moistening the hide and allowing him to emerge through the head, but not without losing all his hair as he crawled through. He thereupon resolved to renounce his greediness. Thereupon he entered the hermitage with the other animals (*also J.148*).

The bear had been greedy for fancy food and had left the safety of the forest to enter the town in search of dainties. On entering the village the bear had received many blows before fleeing. Reflecting on his injuries, the bear saw that his own stupidity was the reason for his hurt and resolved to enter the hermitage, not to re-emerge until he could overcome his delusion.

The hermit himself had once suffered from arrogance about being 'born of the Brahmas'. With such arrogance, he had not been able to attain the meditative absorptions. A Paccekabuddha saw the hermit's potential for enlightenment and went to where the hermit was, appearing



before him floating in the air. However, the hermit was so full of pride that he paid no respect. The Paccekabuddha thus advised him:

"I am a Paccekabuddha. As for you, who will go on to be a fully-enlightened Buddha — why are you so afflicted by arrogance? Arrogance does not befit you."

However, the hermit still did not humble himself. Thus the Paccekabuddha continued:

"As a Paccekabuddha, my attainment is by far superior to yours. If you doubt it, why don't you try floating in the air like me?"

The Paccekabuddha rose in the air and floated away to the Himavanta forest. Consequently, the hermit was so humiliated that he realized he must devote himself to serious practice. He felt ashamed of his arrogance. Therefore, he took Eight Precepts and vowed not to go out to pick fruit again until by meditation he could overcome his False Views.

Thus the pigeon practised to overcome lust, the snake to overcome anger, the jackal to overcome greed, the bear to overcome delusion and the hermit to overcome his arrogance. All these five sorts of practice are making effort representative of the second category of Right Effort on the worldly level arising from wholesome intention.

### 6.3 The Third Foundation of Effort

The third foundation of effort is the development of virtues not yet done [*bhāvanā-padhāna*]. There is an incident related in the Dhammapada which illustrates this sort of effort<sup>1</sup>:

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1. DhA.XVIII,2



Once there was a brahmin who noticed that as the monks stopped at a certain place to robe themselves before entering the town for alms, the hems of their robes would always become wet from the dew on the grass. Therefore the wholesome intention arose in his mind to do a good deed he had never done before — that is, to cut the grass at the point where the monks habitually robed themselves. Thinking thus, he cut the grass. Some time later, the same brahmin observed the monks robing themselves at the same spot at midday and noticed that the hems of the monks' robes was getting soiled by dust on the ground. Therefore he had the wholesome intention to cover up the dust with clean sand and thinking thus he obtained sand and covered over the dust at that spot. Later still, not contented with the good deeds he had already done, he noticed that standing in the sun to robe oneself caused the monks to sweat profusely — or when it was raining, caused the whole robe to become soaked. Therefore he built a small pavillion to protect the monks from the sun and the rain where they could robe themselves. Once the pavillion was completed, he invited the Buddha and the monastic community to take a meal in the pavillion. When the Buddha heard about the brahmin's wholesome efforts, he gave the teaching:

"Just as a goldsmith must smelt gold not one time, but many times before it can be used to make jewellery, in order to remove all the impurities from the metal, the wise who wish to remove the defilements from their mind (such as greed etc.), must remove those impurities little by little, sequentially until none remain, while at the same time cultivating wholesome deeds constantly."



Hearing the Lord Buddha's explanation, the Brahmin attained "Stream-Entry".

This is an example of making effort representative of the third category of Right Effort on the worldly level arising from wholesome intention.

#### **6.4 The Fourth Foundation of Effort**

The fourth foundation of effort means the maintenance of virtues already mastered [*anurakkhana-padhāna*]. There is an incident related in the Scriptures about 500 laymen who at first persuaded one another to keep the Five Precepts. Having accomplished that, next time round they persuaded one another to keep the Eight Precepts. Next time round they persuaded each other to keep the Ten Precepts and the time after that, to ordain as novices in the monastic community. Eventually, having all trained themselves in the necessary manners and knowledge, they all became fully-ordained monks.

This is an example of making effort representative of the fourth category of Right Effort on the worldly level arising from wholesome intention.

#### **7. Right Mindfulness**

Right mindfulness is mindfulness which takes four things as its object:

1. Taking the body as the object and cultivating stillness of mind
2. Taking the feelings as the object and cultivating stillness of mind
3. Taking the mind as the object and cultivating stillness of mind
4. Taking mental phenomena as the object and cultivating stillness of mind

Mindfulness based on any of these four objects can have two characteristics:

1. Monitoring Mindfulness [*apilāpanasati*]
2. Discretionary Mindfulness [*uparigahaṇasati*]



### 7.1 Monitoring Mindfulness

This form of mindfulness is mindfulness that is constantly monitoring the level of wholesomeness in the mind — never letting wholesomeness slip away from the mind and its intentions. It can be compared to the treasurer of an emperor who monitors the treasury all day and all night and who can report the state of the assets to the emperor at any time to say how many elephants, horses, vehicles, soldiers, how much silver, gold, jewels remain, so that the emperor can know at any time how his assets are. Similarly, the duty of monitoring mindfulness is to say: “these four virtues are the Four Foundations of Mindfulness [*satipaṭṭhāna*]”, “these four virtues are the Four Foundations of Effort [*sammappadhāna*]”, “these four virtues are the Four Foundations of Success [*iddhipada*]”, “these five virtues are the Five Faculties [*indriya*]”, “these five virtues are the Five Powers [*bala*]”, “these seven virtues are the Seven Factors of Enlightenment”, “these eight virtues are the Noble Eightfold Path”, “these group of mental phenomena belong to stillness of mind [*samatha*]”, “this group of mental phenomena belong to insight [*vipassanā*]”, “this group of virtues are called ‘truthfulness’ [*sacca*]”, “this group of virtues are called ‘liberation’ [*vimutti*]”, “this group of virtues is transcendental [*lokuttara*]”.

### 7.2 Discretional Mindfulness

This form of mindfulness is like the emperor’s commander in chief who must constantly be on the alert to everyone in the population. Knowing that a certain group in the population may bring harm to the emperor, he must make sure that they are kept far away from the emperor. Knowing that a certain group in the population may bring benefit to the emperor they should have the opportunity to come close to



the emperor. Similarly, discretionary mindfulness monitors all mental phenomena — if it is unwholesome, then to try to reduce it. If it is wholesome, to give it the chance to grow.

## 8. Right Concentration

Right Concentration has two characteristics:

1. Supporting Role [*pāmoḁkha sammā samādhī*];
2. Focussing Role [*avikkhepana sammā samādhī*].

### 8.1 The Supporting Role of Right Concentration

It is said that concentration is the head of all virtues rather like the ridge-pole of a castle roof which has the duty to take the weight of all the rafters. Thus in the Milindhapaṇha, Nāgasena makes the comparison:

“Your Majesty, all the rafters of the castle roof, no matter how numerous they may be, must have a ridgepole as their highest support, and come together at that ridgepole. Thus the ridgepole is supreme amongst rafters. In the same way, no matter how many virtues there may be, all of them come together in Right Concentration”

### 8.2 The Focussing Role of Right Concentration

It is the duty of concentration to keep the mind on track towards higher virtues without being waylaid or distracted by hindrances such as absent-mindedness or doubt — but to come to one-pointedness. Just as the emperor going to war must keep an eye on his ministers to make sure they don’t become dejected or lose their courage to fight against the enemy, and to remain loyal to his command. Similarly, Right Concentration has a focussing role to stop the mental faculties being scattered by hindrances such as absent-mindedness or doubt, but to remain one-pointed.





## The Enlightenment of the Buddha's First Disciple

In preaching the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Buddha revealed the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment [*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*], the Cycle of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths as the hub, the spokes and the rim of the Dhammacakka respectively.

Dhammacakkas can be divided into two types:

**1. *Paṭivedhañāṇadhammacakka*:** The Personal Attainment of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, the Three Cycles of Examination<sup>1</sup> [*parivaḍḍa*]; and the Twelve Stages of the Cycle of Examination overcoming by transcending [*samuccheda*] the enemy we call craving, giving rise to the Fruits of Sainthood [*ariyaphala*].

**2. *Desanāñāṇadhammacakka*:** Out of compassion, teaching for the benefit of one's disciples (Añña-Koṇḍañña would be the first) the way to overcome craving by attainment of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, the Three Cycles of examination and the Twelve Stages of the Cycle of Examination.

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1. i.e. *Saccañāṇa*, *Kiccañāṇa*, *Katañāṇa* (see overleaf)



The Three Cycles of Examination comprise:

1. **Saccañāṇa:** Knowledge of the existence of each Noble Truth over which the Lord Buddha had unequalled personal knowledge and which he could teach to others with unequalled skill.
2. **Kiccañāṇa:** Knowledge of what must be done in relation to each of the Noble Truths e.g. it is necessary to *know* the existence of the Noble Truth of Suffering; it is necessary to *let go of* the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering; it is necessary to *attain* the Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering; it is necessary to *cultivate* the Noble Truth of the Path for the Extinction of Suffering.
3. **Katañāṇa:** The Knowledge that what needs to be done in relation to each of the Noble Truths has already been completed: the existence of the Noble Truth of Suffering has been known; the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering has been let go of; the Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering has been attained; the Noble Truth of the Path for the Extinction of Suffering has been cultivated.

The twelve stages of the Cycle of Examination is the product of multiplying the Four Noble Truths by the Three Cycles of Examination. The cyclical pathway of attainment is called the 'Dhammacakka' because it eradicates the defilements as it rotates — and is thus a weapon of unequalled potential — to which even the Vajra Wheel<sup>1</sup> of Indra cannot compare.

When the Lord Buddha had finished teaching the

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1. Indra's Vajra, if thrown down in an arable place can stop the rain falling there for seven years, if thrown down in a fertile place can stop fruit and vegetables growing there for twelve years, if thrown into the ocean can make the whole ocean dry up, if thrown at the peak of Mount Sumeru will cause the mountain to break all the way from top to bottom.



Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta the whole of the Earth quaked and the waves of the ocean were whipped by strong winds and even Mount Sumeru bowed down its peak as if in humility to the teaching, with a sound that could be heard all the way to the Brahmā world and bright light was sent forth which exceeded even the brightness of the auras of the angels of the highest levels.

The announcement of praise for the Sutta was so loud on the Catumahārājikā (first) level of heaven that it was overheard on the Tavatīmsa (second) level of heaven. The announcement of praise for the Sutta was so loud on the Tavatīmsa level of heaven that it was overheard on the Yāmā (third) level of heaven . . . and so on, all the way from Tusita Heaven to Akiniṭṭhabhavagga Brahmā world. Every one of the Thirty-One Realms were shaken and light was perceived in every level of existence.

The Lord Buddha exclaimed,

*"Aññāsi vatabho koṇḍañña, aññāsi vatabho koṇḍañña"*  
(Koṇḍañña you have known)

From that time on "Koṇḍañña" became better known by the title of "Añña-Koṇḍañña" Thera (Koṇḍañña who knows). The exclamation of the Lord Buddha at that time testified to Koṇḍañña's attainment of the Fruit of Sainthood at the level of Stream-Enterer. At the same time it testified to the potential benefit of the Buddha's Enlightenment for other beings in the world too. Apart from announcing the value of Buddha Dhamma to the world it won over the Pañcavaggiya (Group of Five) Bhikkhus who had previously been skeptical, to want to join the Buddha's tradition, and practise strictly according to the Buddha's Teaching.



If you look back at the life history of Koṇḍañña, you will remember him as being the youngest amongst the eight brahmin soothsayers selected to interpret the bodily marks of Prince Siddhattha shortly after the latter's birth. Koṇḍañña had obviously been very highly educated both in worldly ways and in understanding meditative practices because amongst the eight, he was the only soothsayer to be able to say with precision that Siddhattha would surely renounce the world to become enlightened as a Buddha. After the Siddhattha's renunciation of the world, Koṇḍañña had spent a further six years together with him, studying meditation, and is likely to have attained the absorptions. Thus, hearing instruction from the newly-enlightened Buddha, he was the first to attain "stream-entry" and to bear witness to the fact that the Buddha was indeed a "Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha" [*Sammā Sambuddho*] who had attained something never before known.

Furthermore, a large number of Brahmās were able to attain the fruit of "stream-entry" at the moment the Buddha completed his teaching of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. This goes further to show the superiority of the Buddha's attainment over the teaching of other contemporary traditions — the Buddha's teaching was benefitted from by Brahmās in the Brahmā world who normally were considered the zenith of attainment by adherents of contemporary traditions. It follows therefore that Brahmās themselves have not attained a level of Sainthood and are ignorant of the Path and Fruit of Sainthood [*ariyamagga-ariyaphala*] — because when they die from their existence in the Brahmā world, they must still continue to be caught up endlessly in the Cycle of Existence [*samsāra*] — just like the rest of the unattained worldlings. The only alternative is to remove all



the defilements from their minds and to attain liberation.

The conclusion we can draw from seeing Koṇḍañña attain stream-entry after a relatively short teaching (and also from seeing the rebirth of beings in heaven or the Brahmā world) is that favourable attainment comes as a result of wholesome deeds accumulated all the way from one's distant past, possibly from previous lifetimes and in combination with the good deeds performed in one's present lifetime. One may have accrued many good deeds in one's past, however, if one hadn't had the opportunity to come into contact with the Lord Buddha, or at least his undistorted teachings, then again, it would be impossible to attain the stages of liberation or Sainthood.

It is thus the immense fortune of anyone who comes into contact with Buddhism in the course of their life, to have the opportunity to study and practice Buddhism until reaching a true understanding of it, to dedicate one's life and efforts to unwavering practice in the Lord Buddha's footsteps — at least to the point where confidence is gained that one is on the right track — ultimately the speed with which one can attain one's final goal is influenced by many factors.

Supposing you were to plant a fruit tree — it is difficult to predict when you will be able to obtain fruit from the tree. All we can say is that if the tree is in good soil and is well maintained with water and fertilizer, undisturbed by weeds, it will give fruit more quickly than if all these factors are neglected. Neglect of the tree will slow its production of fruit or even kill the tree before it has the chance to bear fruit. In the same way, the best we can do for our progress is to make sure that we optimise the conditions of life and mind we set for ourselves.



It is interesting to consider that although the Buddha taught the same sermon to all five monks in the Pañcavaggiya, it was only Koṇḍañña who attained stream-entry as a result. The reason for the difference in attainment is due to the difference in the accumulated Perfections of the monks in the group. Study of Koṇḍañña's past reveals that during the dispensation of Vipassī Buddha, he was born as a rice-farmer named "Mahākāla"<sup>1</sup>:

In the crop cycle, Mahākāla would find the opportunity to make an offering to Vipassī Buddha and his community no less than nine times!

1. when the tips of the rice shoots could be ground into milk;
2. when the rice had grown into seedlings
3. at the first harvest;
4. when the rice was bound into handfuls;
5. when the rice was bound into sheaves;
6. when the rice was transported to the yard;
7. when the rice was arranged in stooks;
8. when the rice was threshed;
9. when the rice was stored in silos;

Everytime Mahākāla made an offering, he would make the wish that he might forever be the first to attain the Path and Fruit of Nirvana during the dispensation of the next Buddha to come. Whenever there was the opportunity to perform a wholesome act, Koṇḍañña would always make sure that he was the first to do it, and cultivated Perfections in this way until it became engrained in his being. He would do everything in earnest and with dedication — never with reluctance.

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1. Aṅguttara Nikāya, Ekanipāta, Ekadagga Sutta 1



The Perfections which he had built up for himself from the past, together with the good deeds of his present lifetime added up to a level of Perfections superior to those of his contemporary monks.

Consequently, hearing the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, Koṇḍañña was awakened before his contemporaries — he was to attain sainthood before his other four colleagues. The other four members of the *pañcavaggiya* were not disappointed as a result of their lesser attainment — on the contrary they were all inspired to faith in the Buddha and became dedicated to practice further in earnest, according to the Lord Buddha's teaching. Indeed, we find in the scripture of the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta that the remainder of the Pañcavaggiya together with Koṇḍañña were to attain Arahantship — the first disciples of the Buddha to attain arahantship.

It is the author's dearest wish that having read this edition of *The Buddha's First Teaching*, readers will be inspired to see that through practice, ordinary men can attain extraordinary stages of liberation and Sainthood. Knowing that by practice alone progress can be attained, one should not let the time pass fruitlessly — but get down to earnest meditation practice such as that outlined at the end of this book. Apart from purifying the mind of the practitioner, meditation serves to bring happiness in one's everyday life, facilitates the overcoming of life challenges, enhances mindfulness and wisdom and in itself is a way of pursuing the Perfections towards Nirvana. Even if we are unable to attain Nirvana in this present lifetime, we will be able to secure heaven or the Brahmā world as our afterlife destination according to the merit we have accumulated for ourselves.

Whenever the Buddha arises in the world and our Perfections are sufficiently developed, we too may be the first disciple to attain Sainthood in that Buddha's dispensation, in the same way as Koṇḍañña. Failing this, if we take rebirth in heaven or the Brahma world, we may, like the eighteen crore<sup>1</sup> Brahmās of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, attain Sainthood along with the first disciple.

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1. One crore, according to the ancient Indian numerical system is equal to ten million. Thus 18 crore is equal to 180,000,000.





## *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta for Pursuers of Perfection*

### **1. Introduction**

In this Appendix we delve a little deeper into the meaning of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta itself is a very brief teaching because it serves merely as a reminder to listeners who were already well versed in the materials covered. However, for us reading the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta in the ignorance of the present day, at face value, it is a little too difficult for us immediately to understand.

### **2. What is the Dhammacakka?**

At face value, the Dhammacakka is a wheel of the Dhamma and traditionally speaking, it was just considered as a metaphor for the means by which the Dhamma could make progress or go forth. However, the present author is of the opinion that to make the Dhamma into a Dhammacakka is a way of comparing it to the 'jewelled wheel' of a Universal Monarch. You may already have seen from the Cakkavatti Sutta that in any world era when there is no Buddha arising in the world, there will be a Universal Monarch who rules in justice over the world. The Universal Monarch keeps Five Precepts on ordinary days and Eight Precepts on the



Upasatha Days (full-moon and new moon days). The Universal Monarch is endowed with seven forms of jewels by which he can rule the world:

1. A jewelled wheel;
2. A jewelled elephant;
3. A jewelled horse;
4. A jewelled general;
5. A jewelled treasurer;
6. A jewelled lady;
7. Precious stones.

Most important amongst these endowments is the jewelled wheel [*cakka*] which arises through the strength of the Universal Monarch's own merit. The Jewelled Wheel has two special characteristics it is:

1. *An invincible weapon*: if the owner ever needs to deal forcibly with any evils such as organized crime, all he needs to do is make a resolution in his mind and the Jewelled Wheel will lead his troops to quell the troubles — and no other weapon will be able to defeat them. The jewelled wheel is like a weapon at the forefront of technology — however, unlike the best of technology known today, the owner doesn't even need to press a button — all he needs to do is to make a resolve to himself. The Jewelled Wheel will turn to the left or the right in accordance with the owner's every intention.
2. *A vehicle*: if the owner or his community ever need to be transported to a distant place or to cross difficult territory such as deserts or mountains, then they can do this by virtue of the Jewelled Wheel — flying through the air if necessary. In descriptions of Universal Monarchs of the past, the Jewelled Wheel has often been used



to transport the community from one continent to another or even one world to another. In the time of the Buddha, the scriptures report that people and the Universal Monarch were transported from another continent called Uttarakurudīpa (to the North of Mount Sumeru) to the human world of Jambudīpa (to the South of Mount Sumeru) by means of the Jewelled Wheel of that Universal Monarch. However, the Universal Monarch passed away during their visit and the Jewelled Wheel disappeared with him, making the community unable to return. Thus they resigned themselves to living in the human realm, establishing their own territory called “Kururaṭṭha”. Usually those from the Uttarakurudīpa are always strictly established in the Precepts, but after the passing of many generations, a war broke out amongst the Kuru people themselves as is recorded in the Mahābhārata called the ‘Bhāratayuddha’. These are the traces left behind of beings from another continent (effectively from another planet or another universe). Kuru of those times is in the same location as New Delhi of the present day.

The Dhamma of the Lord Buddha, like the Jewelled Wheel of the Universal Monarch can serve as both a weapon and a vehicle:

1. *The Dhamma as a Weapon:* The Dhamma can be considered like a weapon, because it allows us to execute the defilements — or the three forms of craving: craving for the sensual realm, for the form plane and for the formless plane.
2. *The Dhamma as a Vehicle:* The Dhamma acts like a vehicle in transporting us out of the Cycle of Existence



[*vaḍḍa-saṃsāra*] on the levels of the Sensual Plane, the Form Plane and the Formless Plane so that we can enter upon Nirvana.

Thus in the inauguration of the Dhamma to the world, these two reasons are ample explanation for why this first Sutta should be called the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. Therefore, the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta can be said to be a teaching about the Power of the Dhamma — which can be compared to the power of the Jewelled Wheel of a Universal Monarch. It is not that other Dhamma teachings by the Buddha do not have comparable importance — but the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta was the first and the teachings which came later only serve to expand upon the foundations already laid down in this inaugural Sutta.

The Buddha taught the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta on the full-moon day of the eighth lunar month, two months after His Enlightenment. He gave the sermon at the Isipatana Deer Park near Benares. This woodland was a haunt of ascetics and also a natural sanctuary set up by royal decree — no-one was allowed to hunt any of the animals which lived there. In ancient India, even though the king who made the decree might pass away, or even if his dynasty might fall, the decree would live on out of hereditary respect that all the castes had for the kingly caste.

The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta was taught to the Group of Five [*pañcavaggiya*] ascetics who had Koṇḍañña as their leader. To understand how the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta could have given the result it did on these five ascetics, it is important to know a little of their backgrounds first. Unfortunately, in many Buddhist countries of the world, there is the misunderstanding that Enlightenment can be achieved without training oneself in meditation. Such



people cite examples of enlightenment such as that of Bahiya Dārucīriya who, in his final lifetime didn't appear to meditate, but could become enlightened just by hearing a few words from the Buddha at the roadside. Therefore, they come to the conclusion that meditation is unnecessary for enlightenment and that there is no necessity for themselves to practice meditation. What they fail to take into account is the influence of his previous lifetimes. It turns out that in a previous lifetime:

Bahiya was one amongst a group of monks who climbed up onto a mountain plateau and vowed to themselves not to leave the mountain until they could attain enlightenment or at least fly down in the air by their own mental powers. After three days of meditation, one of the group became an arahant — he promised to bring food back from his almsround for the others, but they refused to eat it. On the fifth day, another monk became enlightened at the level of "non-returner" and he went for almsround too, but again, the others refused to eat his almsfood. After the passing of seven days, the remainder of the group died of starvation.

They had effectively meditated to death, but the habit of earnest, to sacrifice even one's own life in meditation, carried over into subsequent lifetimes allowing them to attain enlightenment in their meditation with uncommon ease. Tappa-mallaputta was able to attain Arahantship from the age of seven. Bahiya had also been one of the group. The Buddha gave Bahiya only a very short sermon:

"Seeing only, hearing only, smelling only, tasting only, coming in physical contact only — for all things just sensing."



With those words alone, Bahiya was able to become an arahant. However, there are those, both in Thailand and abroad who look at examples such as that of Bahiya and come to the conclusion that you don't need to meditate in order to attain enlightenment.

Therefore, for the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, it is necessary to give a few words of explanation about the meditational backgrounds of the 'group of five'.

If you look into the history of Koṇḍañña, you find that he has an extraordinary history. Even in this final lifetime of his, when he was a young man, he had completed his studies of all eighteen academic schools. According to the commentary *Paṭhamasaṃbodhigathā* he was the leader of Kapilavastu's envoy to Devadaha to ask the hand of Queen Mahā Māyā for marriage to King Suddhodana. After the birth of Prince Siddhattha, Koṇḍañña was the amongst the soothsayers selected to deliberate the vital signs of the newborn prince — and amongst the soothsayers he was the most precise, giving one possibility alone for the vocation of the prince, whereas all the other soothsayers gave two possibilities. According to Koṇḍañña, there was no way the prince could follow the vocation of a Universal Monarch — the only possibility for him was to become the world spiritual leader. After having seen the vital signs of Prince Siddhattha, from that day forth Koṇḍañña was to prepare himself spiritually, awaiting the day when the prince would renounce his worldly life. When at the age of twenty-nine, Prince Siddhattha renounced the palace, Koṇḍañña was the first to ordain in his footsteps. Thus, Koṇḍañña had at least twenty-nine years of experience in spiritual and academic study under his belt by the time he renounced the world in



Siddhattha's footsteps. When Siddhattha was training himself under the auspices of Ālara and Udaka it was Koṇḍañña who was also to train himself in Siddhattha's footsteps. Thus, Koṇḍañña, along with his other four companions were all adept in meditation by the time they came to hear the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta.

And again we owe it to the thoroughness of Ānanda from the introduction given not just to the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, but to most of the Buddha's teachings, that we know exactly where, to whom, when and with what result that teaching was given. From Ānanda's example, we can learn principles of recording notes on any activity that we must always be able to write down "what" it is about, "when" it was done, "where" it happened, "to whom" it happened and "the effect" it had.

Thus, the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta was given for the benefit of the 'group of five' who would have been some of the foremost meditation adepts of the day. They were of a quality that was recognized by kings, courtiers and philosophers alike.

### **3. The Importance of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**

The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is one of the most important teachings for Buddhists to know. It is so important because it acts like a master-plan for all the subsequent teachings on Buddhism given during the Buddha's lifetime. Even if the Lord Buddha were to teach the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta and never to teach another word of Dhamma for the rest of his life, His duty in proclaiming the Dhamma to the world would have been fulfilled. Just as each country of the world has a Constitution as the master-plan for the rest of the laws of the country to expand upon — similarly,



the other teachings of the Buddha, the teachings of the arahants and the teachings of distinguished Buddhist teachers down to the present time are simply enlargements upon the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. This is the importance of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta as a master-plan. It is complete in itself and can lead the listener, who had no other knowledge of the Buddha's teaching to attain enlightenment in the Lord Buddha's footsteps. If Buddhists were to neglect the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta to the point it disappeared from living memory, then with it Buddhism would also disappear. Even if the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta has not yet become extinct from the world, but a Buddhist fails to understand fully the meaning of this teaching, then it is as good as that person's Buddhist-ness has disappeared.

#### **4. Reason for Teaching the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**

What was the reason behind the Lord Buddha's preaching of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta? In order to understand this point, we have to go back to the day of Enlightenment of the Lord Buddha. If you look at the history of that time, you will find that having attained Enlightenment, the Buddha did not get up from where he was sitting. He remained where he was in order to "ingest the bliss that had come from Enlightenment". Traditionally speaking, the long period of time the Buddha spent sitting, after his Enlightenment, is supposed to be because the Buddha felt so proud or exalted by what he had managed to achieve — like a man who has finished a task of hard work and can sit back with a smug grin on his face! However, in the eyes of meditators, we understand that the Buddha couldn't immediately arise from His seat of enlightenment because He must go further and further through the centre in order to consider the





Dhamma in even greater subtlety. The Buddha was later to preach in the Simsapa forest that there were more leaves in the forest than he held in the palm of his hand. The 84,000 units of Dhamma which the Buddha was to reveal to us are but the leaves in the Buddha's hand, but the leaves of the forest (the phenomena into which the Lord Buddha gained insight through his enlightenment) were still left for Him to consider subsequent to His Enlightenment. Eventually, he came to consider the reason for his having renounced the world from the time of leaving the palace up to his Enlightenment. He remembered that the realization of his own suffering had caused him to leave the palace. He saw the suffering of Yasodharā of his son Rāhula. He realized that to stay in the palace would be to suffer from the fetters of suffering without end. He had made a vow to himself that if he could find an end to suffering then he would lead the other beings of the world also to an end of suffering. He realized that this had been his vocation ever since the first lifetime when he had started to look for Buddhahood, floating in the endless watery oblivion of the ocean with his drowning mother upon his shoulders. He realized that it had come to time for him to proclaim Dhamma to the world — it was something he had aimed to do since the beginning twenty *asaṅkhaya* kappas ago. On the day of his Enlightenment, he had fulfilled his vocation to the extent of achieving Enlightenment himself, but now it remained for him to fulfil the second part of his resolve and teach to the others of the world.

He considered who would be able to appreciate the Dhamma he had uncovered. The Dhamma was so subtle that it would be a rare person who would appreciate it. Even the Buddha himself, with all the marks of a great man and



so many lifetimes in his past of pursuing Perfections, still had to waste six years in the discovery of the Dhamma, staking his own life for the knowledge — how much harder would it be for others to understand? He would have to consider his first disciples carefully, because if his first sermon gave no effect, his dispensation would immediately founder on the rocks. His decision about suitable disciples was also important because the way he chose his disciples would later be used as an example by others when choosing who to teach in places never exposed to Buddhism before. We see that he didn't base his decision on himself, or the majority, but on Dhamma itself. If he were to make the decision based on himself (i.e. selfishly) then surely he would choose his own relations or those closest to him at the time before his renunciation as first priority — to teach to Yasodharā or Rāhula first. However, the Buddha used the quality of inner experience as the most important in his decision. He had to ask himself who was the most adept in the Eightfold Path. He asked himself "who, in this age, is the most free from defilements? Who has made the most progress in their meditation?" He could think of two such persons:

**Ālāra Kālāma Hermit:** who had been the meditation teacher who had been able to impart to him the way to attain the *akiñcaññāyatana* (third) level of *arūpajhāna*. If in the words of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam, we could say that Ālāra had made significant progress in his meditation because he had already attained the subtle human body, the angelic body, the *Brahmā* body and the formless *Brahmā* body. He would be almost on the brink of attaining the *Dhammakāya*. The Buddha thought to teach this hermit first, but having checked with the knowledge of the *Dhammakāya* he found that Ālāra had



just passed away seven days ago and would now have to spend an exceedingly long lifetime in the formless Brahmā-world. He might not even have the chance to hear the teachings of the next Buddha, let alone this one!

**Udaka Rāmaputta Hermit:** who had been the meditation teacher who had been able to impart meditation to him up to the level of the *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* (fourth) level of *arūpajhāna*. Udaka was only one inner body away from attaining Dhammakāya. The Buddha thought to teach Udaka but on checking by meditation, found that Udaka had passed away only the day before.

It appeared that the *macchumāra* (demons of death) had done their job well — and had disposed of the two best potential disciples the Buddha could find. If the Buddha had managed to convert Ālāra or Udaka, he would have converted the disciples of these two teachers throughout the land. It was as if Māra had deprived the Buddha of countless potential disciples by disposing of these two teachers.

The next person the Buddha was to think of was Koṇḍañña who had been at His side since he renounced the comfort of the palace. He realized that in the present day and age, it would be hard to find his equal. He saw in his meditation that Koṇḍañña was still alive and well and living in the Isipatana Deer Park. This is why the Buddha made the journey to teach his first sermon there on the full moon day of the eighth lunar month.

## **Dhammakayacakkapavattana Sutta: Content**

### **SECTION 1: EXTREMES OF PRACTICE**

Thus have I heard, that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There he addressed the Group of Five monks as follows:



**1.1 Kāmasukhallikānuyoga:** indulgence in the various sensual pleasures is harmful in the following ways:

**1.1.1 Hīno:** It makes the mind coarse and clouded;

**1.1.2 Gammo:** (this word literally means "householder") It is the reason why people settle for the household life;

**1.1.3 Pothujjaniko:** It makes the mind collect defilements and become engrained with them;

**1.1.4 Anariyo:** It is the reason one cannot escape the clutches of the defilements;

**1.1.5 Anathasaṃhito:** It is unprofitable.

**1.2 Attakilamathānuyoga:** the ascetic practice of self-mortification which is harmful in at least the following three ways:

**1.2.1 Dukkho:** It brings needless suffering on yourself;

**1.2.2 Anariyo:** It is the reason one cannot escape the clutches of the defilements;

**1.2.3 Anathasaṃhito:** It is unprofitable.

The Buddha had to mention these two extremes right from the beginning of the sermon because in contemporary religious practice there were two main schools of thought. The first school of thought taught to eat, drink and be merry and one day one will find true happiness which will be everlasting. Prince Siddhattha had tried this for himself since his time in the royal palace and found that it was ineffective. The Group of Five knew this too, so the sermon started from something they could agree upon. It also warned the Group of Five not to slip back into worldly ways. However, the school of thought which advocated self-mortification was like a cloud blocking the light of the sun in the spiritual thought of those days. Many people in those days were in-



terested to liberate themselves from suffering, but because the strongest spiritual trend of the time was the practice of self-mortification, many went astray or perished in their quest. Having tormented themselves they had the feeling that their sensual lust was diminished and they thought that if they tormented themselves to the utmost, they would attain true happiness. No-one knows who originated this school of thought — all you can say is that Māra had fooled a whole continent and a whole generation of people into inflicting pain on themselves. Even Prince Siddhattha was among those to be taken in by this school of thought — but luckily he realized the futility of it sooner than the others. The Group of Five hadn't agreed with him however and had opted to continue with their self-mortification, so at that time they had had to go their separate ways. There had been no anger between them, but they were subscribing to different schools of thought at that point.

Thus the Lord Buddha taught that neither of the extremes of sensual indulgence or self-mortification were profitable. This teaching was revolutionary, because it went beyond what any previous philosopher or religious leader had ever taught. Thus for the Buddha to deny the truth of these two schools of thought, was to overturn all that had gone before.

The Buddha didn't just deny what had gone before — he offered a correct alternative. Normally this part of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is just translated:

“Avoiding both of these extremes, the Middle Way realized by the Tathagata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to supreme knowledge, to good knowledge, to extinction.”

This is a literal translation, but it doesn't give us much clue



how to adapt the teaching for our personal practice. However, if we look at how Luang Phaw Wat Paknam explained these same words, compiled from sermons he gave on many occasions:

## SECTION 2: THE MIDDLE WAY

O! Monks! The Middle Way [*majjhimā paṭipadā*] which doesn't err towards the aforementioned extremes of practice, which I, the Buddha have attained [*abhisambuddha*] with utmost insight, will bring the following benefits to those who practice:

**2.1 Cakkhukaraṇī:** Is of the nature to bestow the means of seeing according to reality. It was not that the Group of Five were blind — but they lacked the “inner eye” to see things according to reality;

**2.2 Ñāṇakaraṇī:** Is of the nature to bestow the means of knowing according to reality. It was not that the Group of Five were unaware of the reality of the world around them — but they lacked the “inner knowing” to understand the world according to reality;

What then was the “means”, the “device”, or the “where-withal” which the Buddha referred to which the Group of Five were lacking before their enlightenment? The Buddha was not yet to elaborate this point — but the reason why the Pañcavaggiya didn't immediately give up listening to the sermon in anger, was because they already had some degree of inner experience as a result of their practice. They would already know the meaning of such things as “inner brightness” and so what the Buddha was referring to in his sermon would simply be building upon experience they already had. They might already have had experience of “inner bodies” up to the level of the Brahmā-body. Even though



the Buddha didn't explain *what* the device was by which they could see and know according to reality, they could follow the gist of what he was explaining.

### **2.3 Benefits of Seeing and Knowing according to reality**

The Buddha still had not explained what he meant by the Middle Way, but he elaborated on what benefits it would bring if practised correctly: to bestow the means of seeing and knowing according to reality. He explained that if one can see and know according to reality one gains the following benefits:

**2.3.1 Upasamāya:** It can still the mind to a point where defilements are extinguished;

**2.3.2 Abhiññāya:** It gives rise to supreme knowledge: knowledge that is superior even to that of the angelic body, the Brahmā-body or the formless Brahmā-body;

**2.3.3 Sambodhāya:** It gives rise to knowledge of the Noble Truths;

**2.3.4 Nibbānāya:** It leads to complete extinction (attainment of Nirvana).

### **2.4 The Middle Way**

Having explained the benefits of the Middle Way, the Buddha went on to explain what he meant by the Middle Way. "And what is it about this Middle Way which bestows the means of seeing and knowing according to reality, which stills the mind to a point where the defilements are extinguished, which gives rise to supreme knowledge, which gives rise to a knowledge of the Noble Truths, which leads to complete extinction? The Middle Way is the Noble Eight-fold Path which comprises:

1. Right View [*Sammā Diṭṭhī*]
2. Right Intention [*Sammā Saṅkappa*]



3. Right Speech [*Sammā Vācā*]
4. Right Action [*Sammā Kammanta*]
5. Right Livelihood [*Sammā Ājīva*]
6. Right Effort [*Sammā Vāyāma*]
7. Right Mindfulness [*Sammā Sati*]
8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]

This is the Middle Way realized by the Tathāgata which which bestows the means of seeing and knowing according to reality, which stills the mind to a point where the defilements are extinguished, which gives rise to supreme knowledge, which gives rise to a knowledge of the Noble Truths, which leads to complete extinction.

### SECTION 3: THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

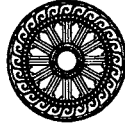
The aforementioned reference to “*sambodhāya*” concerning the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is now expanded upon in more detail:

“O! Monks! The Noble Truths which are the reality of the world, which allow those who see and know them to attain the stages of supreme sainthood, comprise four components

**3.1 *Dukkha Ariyasacca*:** The Noble Truth of Suffering — suffering really exists in the world. Some people, like those who are on the brink of death with an illness they don’t even notice, don’t even realize that suffering is the nature of life, for everybody in the world;

**3.2 *Samudaya Ariyasacca*:** The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering — everyone is ill with a sickness called ‘suffering’, but that suffering has a cause. To us, in the present day, this might not sound very startling — but to people of ancient times, it would have been revolutionary thinking because at that time they thought people became ill as a punishment from the gods, not because of a physical cause;





**3.3 *Dukkhanirodha Ariyasacca:*** The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering — the sickness of suffering which plagues us all has a cure;

**3.4 *Dukkhanirodhagāmini Paṭipadā Ariyasacca:*** The Noble Truth of the Method of Practice for the Cessation of Suffering — if one practises the Noble Eightfold Path one can cure oneself of suffering.

These are truths which already exist in the world (even if there is no-one to discover them). However because our eyes and our minds are blind to the reality, we fail to notice them unless they are pointed out. However because the Buddha had practised the Middle Way, He had been able to realize the Truths of the world. Once one sees the reality of the world one can no longer be fooled by the world.

### **3.1 *Dukkha Ariyasacca:* The Noble Truth of Suffering**

The suffering referred to here is any discomfort of body or mind — comprising the following eleven types of suffering:

- 3.1.1 *Jāti Dukkha:* Birth is suffering;
- 3.1.2 *Jarā Dukkha:* Aging is suffering;
- 3.1.3 *Marāṇa Dukkha:* Death is suffering;
- 3.1.4 *Soka:* Sorrow;
- 3.1.5 *Parideva:* Lamentation;
- 3.1.6 *Dukkha:* Pain;
- 3.1.7 *Domanassa:* Feeling slighted;
- 3.1.8 *Upāyāssa:* Bemoaning;
- 3.1.9 *Sampayoga:* Exposure to hateful things;
- 3.1.10 *Vippayoga:* Separation from loved ones and treasured things;
- 3.1.11 *Alābha:* Disappointment;

In conclusion clinging to the Five Aggregates [*pañcūpādānakkhandha*] is suffering. The Buddha testified that



all that way from the top of our head to the tips of our toes, we are full of suffering — he had seen and known it for himself as a result of having the wherewithal to see and know the nature of reality.

### 3.2 Samudaya Ariyasacca:

#### The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering

To people of ancient times, the Buddha's testimony about this second Noble Truth would have been revolutionary thinking because at that time they thought people became ill as a punishment from the gods, or as a result of the conjunction of the stars. The Buddha challenged all their superstitions by telling them that craving [*taṇhā*] and not fate was the reason behind their suffering.

#### 3.2.1 Characteristics of Craving

The Buddha taught that craving has three harmful characteristics:

**3.2.1.1 *Ponobbhavikā*:** Gives rise to rebirth — those subject to craving will be born again and again without end — death is not the end of the story. You can imagine how grass keeps on sprouting up afresh, even when you cut it back as a good metaphor for someone still affected by craving.

**3.2.1.2. *Nandirāgasahagatā*:** Is accompanied by passion and delight;

**3.2.1.3. *Tatratatrābhinandini*:** If you happen to be reborn somewhere, even though you were born there reluctantly, you become attached to existence there and don't want to go anywhere else.

#### 3.2.2 Categories of Craving

Craving comes in three forms:

**3.2.2.1 *Kāmatanḥā*:** Craving for sensual pleasure or sen-



sual realms of existence;

**3.2.2.2 Bhavataṇhā:** Craving for the pleasure of the "form-absorptions" or for the Brahmā-world;

**3.2.2.3 Vibhavataṇhā:** Craving for the pleasure of the "formless-absorptions" or for the formless Brahmā-world;

### 3.3 Dukkhanirodha Ariyasacca:

#### The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

The state where craving has been extinguished, releasing a person from being reborn in the cycle of existence. The Buddha testified that there is a way by which one can escape from the cycle of rebirth — there is no need to be born again and again without end. The characteristics of such cessation of suffering are as follows:

**3.3.1 Asesavirāgaṇirodho:** Cessation of craving with no remaining trace;

**3.3.2 Cāgo:** Cessation with a complete relinquishing of craving;

**3.3.3 Paṭinissaggo:** Cessation with no further effect from craving;

**3.3.4 Mutti:** Cessation with complete liberation from craving

**3.3.5 Anālayo:** Cessation with no further concern for craving;

These characteristics of release from craving are similar, but cover the full spectrum of ways in which we can let go, all the way from "executing" craving to "ignoring" it and letting it go away by itself.

### 3.4 Dukkhanirodhagāminī Paṭipadā Ariyasacca

The Noble Truth of the Method of Practice for the Cessation of Suffering, comprising the eight components mentioned



earlier:

1. Right View [*Sammā Diṭṭhī*]
2. Right Intention [*Sammā Saṅkappa*]
3. Right Speech [*Sammā Vācā*]
4. Right Action [*Sammā Kamṁanta*]
5. Right Livelihood [*Sammā Ājīva*]
6. Right Effort [*Sammā Vāyāma*]
7. Right Mindfulness [*Sammā Sati*]
8. Right Concentration [*Sammā Samādhi*]

## The Fruits of Practising the Noble Eightfold Path

### 3.5 Knowing the Noble Truth of Suffering

#### **3.5.1 *Dukkha Saccañāṇa*:**

##### **Knowledge of the existence of Suffering**

O! Monks! The fruit which the Lord Buddha has gained as a result of practising the Noble Eightfold Path is as follows:

**3.5.1.1 *Cakkhu*:** The means of seeing according to reality;

**3.5.1.2 *Ñāṇam*:** The means of knowing according to reality;

**3.5.1.3 *Paññā*:** The wisdom to know cause and effect according to reality (to know cause and effect is superior than simply knowing as with the previous item);

**3.5.1.4 *Vijjā*:** The knowledge that allows defilements to be overcome definitively;

**3.5.1.5 *Āloko*:** Brightness arises which is brighter than the sun, the moon, the stars or all the brightness in the universe.

**3.5.2 *Dukkha Kiccañāṇa*:** Knowledge of what must be done in relation to Suffering.

**3.5.3 *Dukkha Katañāṇa*:** The Knowledge that what



must be done has been done in relation to Suffering.

### **3.6 Knowing the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering**

O! Monks! As a result of practising this Noble Eightfold Path, which gave rise to vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and brightness, allowing knowledge of things never before known about the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering:

**3.6.1 *Dukkhasamudāya Saccañāṇa:*** Knowledge of the existence of Origin of Suffering.

**3.6.2 *Dukkhasamudāya Kiccañāṇa:*** Knowledge of what must be done in relation to Origin of Suffering.

**3.6.3 *Dukkhasamudāya Katañāṇa:*** The Knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Origin of Suffering.

### **3.7 Knowing the Noble Truth of the Cessation Suffering**

O! Monks! As a result of practising this Noble Eightfold Path, which gave rise to vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and brightness, allowing knowledge of things never before known about the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering:

**3.7.1 *Dukkhanirodha Saccañāṇa:*** Knowledge of the existence of Cessation of Suffering.

**3.7.2 *Dukkhanirodha Kiccañāṇa:*** Knowledge of what must be done in relation to Cessation of Suffering.

**3.7.3 *Dukkhanirodha Katañāṇa:*** The Knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Cessation of Suffering.

### **3.8 Knowing the Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering**

O! Monks! As a result of practising this Noble Eightfold Path, which gave rise to vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and brightness, allowing knowledge of things never before known about the Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering:



**3.8.1 *Dukkhanirodhagāminī Saccañāṇa*:** Knowledge of the existence of Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

**3.8.2 *Dukkhanirodhagāminī Kiccañāṇa*:** Knowledge of what must be done in relation to Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

**3.8.3 *Dukkhanirodhagāminī Katañāṇa*:** The Knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

These twelve stages of the Cycle of Examination is the product of multiplying the Four Noble Truths by the Three Cycles of Examination. The cyclical pathway of attainment is rather like the way a nut gradually makes progress along the screw-thread of a bolt by rotating (not like an electric fan which rotates without getting anywhere). For progress with enlightenment, progressing in the cycle eradicates the defilements as it rotates.

The first circuit is the cycle of "*Saccañāṇa*" — the knowledge of the existence of each of the Noble Truths. The second circuit is the cycle of "*Kiccañāṇa*" — the knowledge of what must be done in relation to each of the Noble Truths. The third circuit is the cycle of "*Katañāṇa*" — the knowledge that what must be done in relation to each of the Noble Truths has been completed.

"O! Monks! If the Tathāgata had not fully completed these three cycles with their twelve components, I would not say that the Tathāgata has attained enlightenment as a fully self-enlightened Buddha. However, because the Tathāgata has completed these three cycles with their twelve components in their entirety, the Tathāgata dares to claim enlightenment as a fully self-enlightened Buddha, unexcelled in



the cosmos with its deities, Māras and gods, with its contemplatives and priests, its royalty and commonfolk."

"O! Monks! My liberation from the Cycle of Existence is real and permanent. This is my final lifetime. There will certainly be no new rebirth for me."

#### **SECTION 4: THE OUTCOME OF THE SERMON**

Even without going into detail about how to practice the Eightfold Path, Koṇḍañña was able to focus his mind at the centre of the body. Even though the Buddha didn't say that he needed to attain the Dhammakāya, the result of focussing the mind properly, in a sequential way, is to attain the Dhammakāya automatically. Koṇḍañña had long trained himself in preparation for this attainment. Attaining the Dhammakāya, Koṇḍañña was able to use the Dhammakāya to see and know the Four Noble Truths in the human physical body. The outcome of his attainment (and hence of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta) was that Koṇḍañña attained Stream-Entry with the realization that:

"Whatever thing is of a nature to arise, is of a nature also to cease"

And when the Buddha had set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma, the earth deities cried out: "At Benares, in the Deer Park of Isipatana, the Buddha has set in motion the supreme Wheel of the Dhamma which cannot be denied by any priest or contemplative, deity, Māra or god or anyone in the cosmos."

Hearing the proclamation of the earth deities, the deities of the Catumahārājika Heaven proclaimed the news to the deities of Tavatīmsa Heaven.

Hearing the proclamation of the Catumahārājika deities, the deities of the Tavatīmsa Heaven proclaimed the news



to the deities of Yāmā Heaven.

Hearing the proclamation of the Tavatiṃsa deities, the deities of the Yāmā Heaven proclaimed the news to the deities of Tusita Heaven.

Hearing the proclamation of the Yāmā deities, the deities of the Tusita Heaven proclaimed the news to the deities of Nimmānaratī Heaven.

Hearing the proclamation of the Tusita deities, the deities of the Nimmānaratī Heaven proclaimed the news to the deities of Paranimitavasavattī Heaven.

Hearing the proclamation of the Nimmānaratī deities, the deities of the Paranimitavasavattī Heaven proclaimed the news to the whole of the Brahmā world.

The whole ten-thousand-fold cosmos shook and a limitless radiance extended throughout the cosmos surpassing even the radiance of the deities.

The Lord Buddha exclaimed,

*"Aññāsi vatabho Koṇḍañña, aññāsi vatabho Koṇḍañña"*

(Koṇḍañña now you have known and seen everything)

Accordingly, from that time on "Koṇḍañña" became better known by the title of "Añña-Koṇḍañña"

Some might wonder why Koṇḍañña like the Buddha saw the three cycles and the twelve components, but only attained "Stream-Entry" and not arahantship. The explanation is that Koṇḍañña's vision and knowledge extended only to the Physical Human body. He had not yet seen the same in the more subtle inner bodies. He would have to follow the Eight-fold Path further. Once he had seen them in the Angelic Body, he would become a Once-Returner. Once he had seen them in the (Form) Brahmā-body, he would become a Non-Returner. Once he had seen them in the Formless Brahmā-body,





he would become an arahant. Having done the three cycles for each of the Four Noble Truths in each of the Four Inner Bodies, he would have completed the:

“sixteen tasks — until invulnerable to hardship — that you can call Nirvana if you like”

described by Luang Phaw Wat Paknam. Thus for anyone to attain arahantship, they must complete all sixteen of the tasks.

This has been an overview of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. As for the Buddha’s subsequent teachings — they were all but an expansion upon these basic principles.

## *Appendix B:*

### *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*

### *Translated with a View to Practice*

*(Figures in square brackets refer to the heading numbers in Appendix A)*

Evam me sutam, ekam samayam  
Bhagavā Bārāṇasiyam viharati  
Isipatane Migadāye tatra kho Bhagavā  
pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi:

Thus have I heard, that on one occasion the Blessed  
One was staying at Benares in the Deer Park at  
Isipatana. There he addressed the group of five  
monks as follows:

“Dve me bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena  
na sevittabbā. Yo cāyam kāmesu <1.1>  
kāmasukhallikānuyogo <1.1.1> hīno  
<1.1.2> gammo <1.1.3> pothujjaniko  
<1.1.4> anariyo <1.1.5> anattasam-  
phito, yo cāyam <1.2> attakilama-  
thānuyogo <1.2.1> dukkho <1.2.2>  
anariyo <1.2.3> anattasamphito.

O! Bhikkhus! Monks who wish to overcome suf-  
fering must strictly avoid the two extremes of prac-  
tice, namely: sensual indulgence (which makes the  
mind coarse; makes people settle for the house-  
hold life, engrains the mind with defilements, is  
the reason why the mind cannot escape the  
clutches of the defilements, is unprofitable) and  
self-mortification (which brings needless suffering  
on yourself, is the reason one cannot escape the  
clutches of the defilements, is unprofitable).

Ete te bhikkhave, ubho ante  
anupagamma <2> majjhimā paṭipadā  
tathāgatena abhisambuddhā <2.1>  
cakkhukaraṇī <2.2> ñāṇakaraṇī  
<2.3.1> upasamāya <2.3.2>  
abhiññāya <2.3.3> sambodhāya  
<2.3.4> nibbānāya samvattati. Katamā  
ca sā bhikkhave, <2.4> majjhimā  
paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā

O! Monks! The Middle Way which doesn't err to-  
wards the aforementioned extremes of practice,  
which I, the Buddha have attained: bestows the  
means of seeing according to reality; bestows the  
means of knowing according to reality; can still  
the mind to a point where defilements are extin-  
guished; gives rise to supreme knowledge; it gives  
rise to knowledge of the Noble Truths; it leads to  
complete extinction.



cakkhu-karaṇi ñāṇakaraṇi upasamāya  
abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya  
saṃvattati

Ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo  
seyyathidaṃ: <2.4.1> sammādiṭṭhi  
<2.4.2> sammāsaṅkappo <2.4.3>  
sammāvācā <2.4.4> sammākammanto  
<2.4.5> sammāājīvo <2.4.6>  
sammāvāyāmo <2.4.7> sammāsati  
<2.4.8> sammāsamādhi.

And what is this Middle Way which bestows the means of seeing according to reality; bestows the means of knowing according to reality; can still the mind to a point where defilements are extinguished; gives rise to supreme knowledge; it gives rise to knowledge of the Noble Truths; leads to complete extinction? Precisely that which comprises: Right View; Right Intention; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.

Ayaṃ kho sā bhikkhave, majjhima  
paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā  
cakkhukaraṇi ñāṇakaraṇi upasamāya  
abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya  
saṃvattati.

This is the Middle Way realized by the Tathāgata which bestows the means of seeing and knowing according to reality, which stills the mind to a point where the defilements are extinguished, which gives rise to supreme knowledge, which gives rise to a knowledge of the Noble Truths, which leads to complete extinction.

<3.1> Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave,  
dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ: <3.1.1> jātipi  
dukkhā <3.1.2> jarāpi dukkhā <3.1.3>  
maraṇampi dukkhā <3.1.4> soka  
<3.1.5> parideva <3.1.6> dukkha  
<3.1.7> domanass- <3.1.8> upāyāsāpi  
dukkhā <3.1.9> appiyehi sampayogo  
dukkho <3.1.10> piyehi vippayogo  
dukkho yampicchaṃ <3.1.11> na  
labhati tampi dukkhā saṅkhittena  
pañcupādānak-khandhā dukkhā”.

“O! Monks! This is the Noble Truth of Suffering: Birth is suffering. Old-age is suffering. Death is suffering. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, feeling slighted, bemoaning are suffering. Exposure to hateful things is suffering. Separation from loved ones and treasured things is suffering. Non-fulfillment of wishes is suffering. In conclusion clinging to the Five Aggregates is suffering.

<3.2> Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave,  
dukkhasamudayo ariyasaccaṃ:  
<3.2.1> “yāyaṃ taṇhā <3.2.1.1>

“O! Monks! This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering: Craving which: gives rise to rebirth; is accompanied by passion and delight; attaches



ponobbhavikā <3.2.1.2> nandirāga-  
sahagatā <3.2.1.3> tatra tatrā-  
bhinandinī, <3.2.2> seyyathidaṃ:  
<3.2.2.1> kāmatanḥā <3.2.2.2>  
bhavatanḥā <3.2.2.3> vibhavanḥā”.

one to one's here-and-now existence — and comprises Craving for sensual pleasure; Craving for the pleasure of the “form-absorptions”; Craving for the pleasure of the “formless-absorptions”.

<3.3> Idam kho pana bhikkhave,  
dukkhanirodho ariyasaccaṃ: yo  
tassāyeva taṇhāya <3.3.1>  
asesavirāganirodho <3.3.2> cāgo  
<3.3.3> paṭinissaggo <3.3.4> mutti  
<3.3.5> anālayo.

“O! Monks! This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is cessation which is: Extinguishing of craving with no remaining trace; Extinguishing with a complete relinquishing of craving; Extinguishing with no further effect from craving; Extinguishing with complete liberation from craving; Extinguishing with no further concern for craving.

<3.4> Idam kho pana bhikkhave,  
dukkha-nirodhagāminī paṭipadā  
ariyasaccaṃ: ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko  
maggo, seyyathidaṃ: <3.4.1>  
sammādiṭṭhi <3.4.2> sammā-saṅkappo  
<3.4.3> sammāvācā <3.4.4> sammā-  
kammanto <3.4.5> sammāājīvo  
<3.4.6> sammāvāyāmo <3.4.7>  
sammāsati <3.4.8> sammāsamādhi.

“O! Monks! This is the Noble Truth of the Method of Practice for the Cessation of Suffering: the Noble Eightfold Path comprising Right View; Right Intention; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.

<3.5.1> “Idam dukkham  
ariyasaccanti” me bhikkhave pubbe  
ananussutesu dhammesu <3.5.1.1>  
cakkhum udapādi <3.5.1.2> ñāṇam  
udapādi <3.5.1.3> paññā udapādi  
<3.5.1.4> vijjā udapādi <3.5.1.5>  
āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of the existence of Suffering

<3.5.2> Tam kho panidaṃ dukkham  
ariyasaccaṃ pariññeyyanti me  
bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu  
dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam  
udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of what



āloko udapādi.

must be done in relation to Suffering.

<3.5.3> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññātanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Suffering.

<3.6.1> “Idaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariyasaccanti” me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of the existence of Origin of Suffering

<3.6.2> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariyasaccaṃ pahātabbanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of what must be done in relation to Origin of Suffering.

<3.6.3> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariyasaccaṃ pahīnanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Origin of Suffering.

<3.7.1> “Idaṃ dukkhanirodho ariyasaccanti” me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of the existence of Cessation of Suffering



<3.7.2> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkha-nirodho ariyasaccaṃ sacchi-kātabbanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of what must be done in relation to Cessation of Suffering.

<3.7.3> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkha-nirodho ariyasaccaṃ sacchikatanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Cessation of Suffering.

<3.8.1> “Idaṃ dukkhanirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccanti” me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of the existence of Path to the Cessation of Suffering

<3.8.2> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkha-nirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ bhāvetabbanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge of what must be done in relation to Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

<3.8.3> Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkha-nirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ bhāvitanti me bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.

O! Monks! The means of seeing according to reality arose; the means of knowing according to reality arose; wisdom arose, knowledge arose, brightness arose within me with regard to truths never heard before, that this is the knowledge that what must be done has been done in relation to Path to the Cessation of Suffering.



Yāva kīvañca me bhikkhave, imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇa-dassanaṃ na suvisuddhaṃ ahoṣi. Neva tāvāhaṃ bhikkhave, sadevake loke samāraḥ sabrahmaṇe sassamaṇa-brāhmaṇiṇiṃ pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho paccaññāsiṃ.

Yato ca kho me bhikkhave, imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇa-dassanaṃ suvisuddhaṃ ahoṣi. Athāhaṃ bhikkhave, sadevake loke samāraḥ sabrahmaṇe sassamaṇa-brāhmaṇiṇiṃ pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho paccaññāsiṃ.

Ñāṇaṇca pana me dassanaṃ udapādi akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti natthidāni punabbhavoti.

Idamavoca Bhagavā attamanā <4> pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandunti imasamiṇca pana veyyakaraṇasmim bhaññamāne āyasmato Koṇḍañña virajaṃ vitamaḥ dhammacakkhuṃ udapādi: “yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbantaṃ nirodhadhammanti”.

Pavattite ca pana bhagavatā dhammacakke bhumma devā sadda-manussāvesu: “etaṃ bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyaṃ Isipatane Migadāye

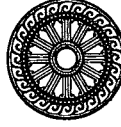
“O! Monks! If the Tathāgata had not fully completed these three cycles with their twelve components, I would not say that the Tathāgata has attained enlightenment as a fully self-enlightened Buddha unexcelled in the cosmos with its deities, Māras and gods, with its contemplatives and priests, its royalty and commonfolk.”

However, because the Tathāgata has completed these three cycles with their twelve components in their entirety, the Tathāgata dares to claim enlightenment as a fully self-enlightened Buddha, unexcelled in the cosmos with its deities, Māras and gods, with its contemplatives and priests, its royalty and commonfolk.”

“O! Monks! My liberation from the Cycle of Existence is real and permanent. This is my final lifetime. There will certainly be no new rebirth for me.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Glad at heart, the group of five monks delighted at his words. And while the explanation was being given, there arose to Koṇḍañña the dustless, stainless Dhamma Eye: “Whatever is of a nature to arise is also of a nature to cease”.

And when the Buddha had set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma, the earth deities cried out: “At Benares, in the Deer Park of Isipatana, the Buddha has set in motion the supreme Wheel of the



anuttaraṃ dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ  
appaṭivattiyaṃ samaṇena vā brāhmaṇ-  
ena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā  
vā kenaci vā lokasminti”.

Dhamma which cannot be denied by any priest or  
contemplative, deity, Māra or god or anyone in  
the cosmos.”

Bhummānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā  
Cātummahārājikā devā sadda-  
manussāvesuṃ Cātummahārājikānaṃ  
devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā

Hearing the proclamation of the earth deities, the  
deities of the Catumahārājika Heaven took up  
the cry. Hearing the proclamation of the  
Catumahārājika deities...

Tāvatiṃsā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ:  
Tāvatiṃsānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā

The deities of the Tavatīmsa Heaven took up the  
cry. Hearing the proclamation of the Tavatīmsa  
deities...

Yāmā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ  
Yāmānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā

The deities of the Yāmā Heaven took up the cry.  
Hearing the proclamation of the Yāmā deities...

Tusitā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ  
Tusitānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā

The deities of the Tusita Heaven took up the cry.  
Hearing the proclamation of the Tusita deities...

Nimmānaratī devā saddamanus-  
sāvesuṃ Nimmānaratīnaṃ devānaṃ  
saddaṃ sutvā

The deities of the Nimmānaratī Heaven took up  
the cry. Hearing the proclamation of the  
Nimmānaratī deities...

Paranimmitavasavattī devā sadda-  
manussāvesuṃ Paranimmitavasavat-  
tīnaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā

The deities of the Paranimmitavasavattī Heaven  
took up the cry. Hearing the proclamation of the  
Paranimmitavasavattī deities...

Brahmakāyikā deva saddamanus-  
sāvesuṃ:

The deities of the Brahma world Heaven took up  
the cry:

“Etaṃ bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyaṃ  
Isipatane Migadāye anuttaraṃ  
dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ  
appaṭivattiyaṃ samaṇena vā  
brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā

“At Benares, in the Deer Park of Isipatana, the Bud-  
dha has set in motion the supreme Wheel of the  
Dhamma which cannot be denied by any priest or  
contemplative, deity, Māra or god or anyone in  
the cosmos.”





brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasminti”.

Itiha tena khaṇena tena muhuttēna  
yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhuggacchi.  
Ayañca dasasahassī lokadhātu  
saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi.  
Appamāṇo ca oḷāro obhāso loke  
pāturahosi: atikkammeva devānaṃ  
devānubhāvanti.

So at that moment, that instant, the cry shot right up to the Brahma-world. And the whole ten-thousand-fold cosmos shook and a limitless radiance extended throughout the cosmos surpassing even the radiance of the deities.

Atha kho Bhagavā udānaṃ udānesi:  
“aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño, aññāsi  
vata bho Koṇḍañño”.

The Lord Buddha exclaimed, “Koṇḍañña now you have known and seen everything.”

Itihidaṃ āyasmato Koṇḍaññaassa  
aññākoṇḍañño teva nāmaṃ ahoṣīti.

Accordingly, from that time on “Koṇḍañña” became better known by the title of “Añña-Koṇḍañña”.



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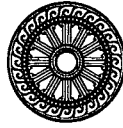
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## Appendix D: Reference Table of Pali Terms

The following table is not intended to be an exhaustive Pali-English dictionary: it contains only terms found in this book. Where an equivalent English term is available a cross-reference is given to entries in the General Index (Appendix C) p.217-33 via which clarification of meaning can be found. For Proper Nouns (indicated by "P."), brief clarification is given here mostly without cross-reference. Terms which are used untranslated (indicated "q.v.") are cross-referenced straight to Pali terms in the General Index. Entries are arranged for newcomer's convenience in Roman alphabetical order.

Ābhassarā (P. realm of Brahmas with radiant lustre: see form Brahmā realms)	<i>adhipaññasikkhā</i> (see higher training in wisdom)
<i>abhāyabhūmi</i> (see unfortunate [hell] realms)	<i>adhisilasikkhā</i> (see higher training in self-discipline)
<i>abhiṭṭhā</i> (see covetousness)	<i>adinnādāna</i> (see stealing)
<i>abhiññā</i> (see mental powers)	<i>āhāra</i> (food: see amenable location)
<i>abhiññāya</i> (adj. giving rise to supreme knowledge: see benefits of seeing and knowing according to reality)	Ajapālanigrodha Tree q.v. (P. "Goatherd" Nigrodha Tree)
<i>abhisambuddha</i> (see seeing and knowing according to reality)	<i>ajjhakkāyatana</i> (see sense organs)
<i>abyāpāda saṅkappa</i> (see intention to remove oneself from vengefulness)	Akaniṭṭhā (P. realm of the Supreme Brahmas: see form Brahmā realms)
<i>adhicittasikkhā</i> (see higher training of the mind)	<i>akāra</i> (see bodily parts)
	Ākāśānañcāyatana (P. realm of infinite space: see formless Brahmā realms)
	<i>ākāñcāññāyatana</i> (see realm of nothingness)



- Akinitṭhā (P. Realm of Supreme  
Brahmas: see form Brahmā  
realms)
- akusaladhamma (see unwhole-  
someness)
- alābha (see disappointment)
- Aḷara (P. the name of a hermit  
teacher)
- ālōka (adj. brightness: see fruits  
of practising the Noble Eightfold  
Path)
- Anāgāmi q.v. (non-returner)
- anālayo (extinguishing with no  
further concern for craving: see  
characteristics of the Noble  
Truth of Cessation of Suffering)
- Ānanda q.v. (P. the name of the  
personal attendant to the Buddha)
- anariyo (reason why one cannot  
escape from craving: see harm  
of sensual indulgence)
- Anāthapiṇḍika (P. main male  
benefactor of the Buddha)
- anathasaṃhito (unprofitable: see  
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harm of self-mortification)
- anattā (see not-self)
- anāvaraṇañāṇa (see penetrative  
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- aṇḍaja (hatching from an egg: see  
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- aniccā (see impermanence)
- aniccam (see impermanent)
- Aññakoṇḍañña (P. see Koṇḍañña)
- anuloma (see meditational analy-  
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- anupādisesa nibbāna q.v. (Nir-  
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- anurakkhana-padhāna (mainte-  
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- anusaya (see subtle defilements)
- apilāpanasati (see monitoring as-  
pect of mindfulness)
- apiyehi sampayoga (see exposure  
to hateful things)
- Appamāṇābhā (P. realm of  
Brahmas with infinite lustre:  
see form Brahmā realms)
- Appamāṇasubhā (P. realm of  
Brahmas with infinite aura: see  
form Brahmā realms)
- appanā samādhi (see access con-  
centration)
- arahant q.v. (category of attainment,  
one who has attained the final fruit  
of sainthood lit. Worthy One)
- arahattamaggañāṇa (see wisdom  
of the attainment of the arahant  
path)
- arūpa (brahmā) bhava (see form-  
less Brahmā sphere)
- arūpa jhāna (see formless absorption)
- arūpa rāga (grasping for the form-  
less sphere: see Ten Fetters)
- ariya magga-ariya phala (see No-  
ble Path-Fruit attainment)
- ariya puggala (noble, saintly, at-  
tained person)
- ariyasacca (see Noble Truth)
- Āsālha Pūjā q.v. (Buddhist festi-  
val marking the anniversary of  
the teaching of the Dhamma-  
cakkapavattana Sutta)
- asaṅkhaya (factor of  $10^{140}$ , incal-  
culable)



- Asaññisattā (P. realm of non-per-  
cipient beings: see form Brahmā  
realms)
- āsavakkhayañāṇa (see knowledge  
of an end of defilements)
- asesavirāganīrodho (see extin-  
guishing of craving with no re-  
maining trace: see characteris-  
tics of Noble Truth of Cessation  
of Suffering)
- asubha (adj. loathesome, corpse-like)
- asura (see monster)
- ātāpi sampajāno satimā (less  
prone to absent mindedness)
- Atappā (P. realm of supreme  
Brahmas: see form Brahmā realms)
- attā (see true-self)
- attakilamāthānuyoga (see self  
mortification)
- attatthataṇhā (see self-centred craving)
- Atthakathāvibhaṅga (P. a com-  
mentary)
- attūpakkaṃ mūlaka dukkha  
(see suffering of curtailed life)
- āvāsa (somewhere to stay: see  
amenable location)
- Avihā (P. realm of Brahmas who  
do not fall from prosperity: see  
form Brahmā realms)
- avihiṃsā saṅkappa (see the in-  
tention to remove oneself from  
aggression)
- avijjā (see ignorance)
- avijjā ānusaya (see the subtle de-  
filement of ignorance)
- avikkhepana sammā samādhi  
(see focussing role of Right Con-  
centration)
- āyatana nibbāna q.v. (lit. the  
sphere of Nirvana)
- āyatana (lit. sphere: see sense or-  
gans, Dependent Origination)
- ayyā samābhariyā (see wife like  
a boss)
- bāhirāyatana (see sensual ob-  
jects)
- Bahiya Dārucīriya (P. a disciple  
of the Buddha)
- bala (power: see Five Powers)
- bhaginī samābhariyā (see wife  
like a little sister)
- bhassa (amenable conversation:  
see amenable location)
- bhava (see sphere of existence)
- bhāvanā (see becoming)
- bhāvanā-padhāna (development  
of virtues not yet accomplished:  
see Right Effort)
- bhavaṅgacitta (see pure mind)
- bhavarāga (see grasping for re-  
birth)
- bhavataṇhā (see craving for the  
form realms)
- bhumadevata (see earth-sprite)
- bodhipakkhiyadhamma (see 37  
factors of enlightenment)
- Brahmā q.v. (a class of celestial  
being)
- Brahmapārisajjā (P. realm of  
great Brahma's attendants: see  
form Brahmā realms)
- Brahmapurohitā (P. realm of  
great Brahma's ministers: see  
form Brahmā realms)
- brahmavihāra (see divine abiding)



- byādhi* (see illness)  
*byādhi dukkha* (see the suffering of illness)  
*byāpāda* (see vengefulness)  
*byāpādavitaka* (see preoccupation with vengefulness)  
*cāgo* (relinquishing, letting go: see characteristics of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering)  
*cakka* (see wheel)  
*cakkavatti* (see Universal Monarch)  
*cakkhu* (eye, see means of seeing according to reality, sense-organs)  
*cakkhukaraṇī* (adj. bestows means of seeing according to reality: see seeing according to reality)  
*cakkhu samphassa* (visual contact: see sense-contact)  
*cakkhu vedanā* (visual feeling: see sense-feeling)  
*cakkhu viññāṇa* (visual consciousness: see sense-consciousness)  
*caṇḍala* (see untouchable caste)  
*carāṇa* (see contact)  
*catuka-naya* (see fourfold analysis of absorptions)  
*Catumahārājikā* (P. heaven of the four great kings, first level of heaven)  
*catuttha-jhāna* (see fourth absorption)  
*chanda* (willing: see Four Foundations of Success)  
*citta* (continued application of mind: see Four Foundations of Success)  
*cittānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna* (see mindfulness of the mind in the mind)  
*cori samābhariyā* (see wife like a robber)  
*cutūpapātāṇā* (see knowledge of the arising of beings according to their karma)  
*dāna* (see generosity)  
*dantā* (see teeth)  
*dāsi samābhariyā* (see wife like a slave)  
*desanāṇāna dhammacakka* (see facilitated attainment of the Dhammacakka)  
*dhamma* (mental object, mental phenomenon: see sense object [not to be confused with "Dhamma" q.v.] )  
*Dhamma* (purity, virtue, the teaching of the Buddha, righteous [not to be confused with "dhamma" q.v.] )  
*dhammacakka* (q.v. wheel of Dhamma)  
*Dhammakāya* (q.v. Dhamma Body, Body of Enlightenment)  
*Dhammakāya Anāgāmi* (q.v. "non-returner" Dhamma Body)  
*Dhammakāya Arahant* (q.v. "arahat" Dhamma Body)  
*Dhammakāya Gotrabhū* (q.v. "Gotrabhū" Dhamma Body)  
*Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmi* (q.v. "once-returner" Dhamma Body)  
*Dhammakāya Sotāpana* (q.v. "stream-enterer" Dhamma Body)  
*dhammakhandā* (see Pure Aggregates)



*dhammānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna*  
(see mindfulness of mental phenomena in the mental phenomena and also Paṭṭhama Magga Sphere)

*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (P. Dhammapada Commentary)

*dhamma-sañcetanā* (mental volition: see sense-volition)

*dhamma saññā* (mind-object registration: see sense-object registration)

*dhamma taṇhā* (mind-object craving: see sense-object craving)

*dhamma vicāra* (mind-object discursive thought: see sense-object discursive thought)

*dhammavicaya* (wise examination of the Dhamma: see Seven Factors of Enlightenment)

*dhamma vitakka* (mind-object thought conception: see sense-object thought conception)

*dhutaṅga* (see austere practices)

*dibbhasampatti* (see heavenly treasure)

*diṭṭhi* (being opinionated: see subtle defilements)

*domanassa* (see feeling slighted, resentment)

*domanassa dukkha* (see the suffering of feeling slighted, suffering of resentment)

*dosa* (see anger)

*dukkha* (see suffering, also specifically pain)

*dukkhā* (suffering: see Three Universal Characteristics)

*dukkha ariyasacca* (see the Noble Truth of Suffering)

*dukkha dukkha* (see the suffering of pain)

*dukkha kataññāṇa* (knowledge that what must be done in relation to suffering has been done: see knowledge that what must be done in relation to Noble Truths has been done)

*dukkha kiccaññāṇa* (knowledge of what must be done in relation to suffering: see knowledge of what must be done in relation to Noble Truths)

*dukkham* (nature of suffering: see Three Characteristics)

*dukkhanirodha* (see cessation of suffering)

*dukkhanirodha ariyasacca* (see the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering)

*dukkhanirodha kataññāṇa* (knowledge that what must be done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering has been done: see knowledge that what must be done in relation to Noble Truths has been done)

*dukkhanirodha kiccaññāṇa* (the knowledge of what must be done in relation to the Cessation of Suffering: see knowledge of what must be done in relation to the Noble Truths)

*dukkhanirodha saccaññāṇa* (the knowledge of the existence of the Cessation of Suffering: see knowledge of the existence of the Noble Truths)



*dukkhanirodhagāmini ariyasacca*  
(see the Noble Truth of the Path  
to the Cessation of Suffering)

*dukkhanirodhagāmini katañña*  
(the knowledge that what must  
be in relation to the Path to the  
Cessation of Suffering has been  
done: see the knowledge that  
what must be in relation to the  
Noble Truths has been done)

*dukkhanirodhagāmini kiccañña*  
(the knowledge of what must be  
done in relation to the Path to  
the Cessation of Suffering: see  
the knowledge of what must be  
done in relation to the Noble  
Truths)

*dukkhanirodhagāmini paṭipadā  
ariyasacca* (see the Noble Truth  
of the Path to the Cessation of  
Suffering)

*dukkhanirodhagāmini saccañña*  
(the knowledge of the existence  
of the Path to the Cessation of  
Suffering: see the knowledge of  
the existence of the Four Noble  
Truths)

*dukkha saccañña* (knowledge of  
the existence of suffering: see  
knowledge of the existence of  
Noble Truths)

*dukkhasamudaya ariyasacca* (see  
the Noble Truth of the Origin of  
Suffering)

*dukkhasamudaya katañña*  
(knowledge that what must be  
done in relation to the Origin of  
Suffering has been done: see

knowledge that what must be  
done in relation to the Noble  
Truths has been done)

*dukkhasamudaya kiccañña*  
(knowledge of what must be  
done in relation to the Origin of  
Suffering: see knowledge of  
what must be done in relation  
to the Noble Truths)

*dukkhasamudaya saccañña*  
(knowledge of the existence of  
the Origin of Suffering: see  
knowledge of the existence of the  
Noble Truths)

*dukkho* (adj. brings needless suf-  
fering on oneself: see harm of  
self-mortification)

*dutiya-jhāna* (see second absorption)

*ekaggatā* (see one-pointedness)

*Evaṃ me sutaṃ...* (see "Thus have  
I heard")

*gabbha kantika mūlaka dukkha*  
(see the suffering of internment  
in the womb)

*gabbha jāyika mūlaka dukkha*  
(see the suffering of being deliv-  
ered at birth)

*gabbha nikkhamana mūlaka  
dukkha* (see the suffering of cur-  
tailed life)

*gabbha parihāra mūlaka dukkha*  
(see the suffering of physical  
shocks to the womb)

*gabbha vipatti mūlaka dukkha*  
(see the suffering of unnatural  
delivery at birth)





- gammo* (adj. reason why people settle for the household life: see harm of sensual-indulgence)
- gandha* (scent: see sense-objects)
- gandha sañcetanā* (olfactory volition: see sense-volition)
- gandha saññā* (olfactory sense-registration: see sense-registration)
- gandha taṇhā* (olfactory craving: see sense craving)
- gandha vicāra* (olfactory discursive thought: see sense discursive thought)
- gandha vitakka* (olfactory thought-conception: see sense thought-conception)
- ghāna vedanā* (olfactory feeling: see sense-feeling)
- ghāna* (nose, nasal: see sense-organs)
- ghāna samphassa* (olfactory contact: see sense contact)
- ghāna viññāṇa* (olfactory consciousness: see sense consciousness)
- gocara* (somewhere to procure food: see amenable location)
- Gotama (P. name of the Buddha of our present era)
- Gotrabhū q.v. (lit. "become of the lineage [of Noble Ones]")
- gotrabhū puggala* (one who has attained the Gotrabhu Dhamma Body: see Dhammakāya Gotrabhū)
- hīno* (adj. of a nature to make the mind coarse and clouded: see harm of sensual indulgence)
- icchā* (see jealousy)
- iddhipada* (see Four Foundations of Success)
- Indra (P. the title of the King of Heaven)
- indriya* (faculties: see the Five Faculties, sense organs)
- iriyaṭṭhā* (posture: see amenable location)
- jalābuja* (birth from a womb: see modes of birth)
- Jambudīpa (P. "Rose-Apple Continent" — name of the Southern Continent in Buddhist cosmology)
- jarā* (see ageing)
- jarā dukkha* (see the suffering of ageing)
- jarā-maraṇa* (old-age and death: see links of Dependent Origination)
- Jātaka (P. Birth Stories, a part of the Buddhist Scriptures)
- jāti* (see birth)
- jāti dukkha* (see the suffering of birth)
- jivhā* (adj. gustatory: see sense-organs)
- jivhā-samphassa* (gustatory contact: see sense-contact)
- jivhā vedanā* (gustatory feeling: see sense-contact)
- jivhā viññāṇa* (gustatory consciousness: see sense-consciousness)
- kahapana* q.v. (P. Indian unit of currency contemporary to the Buddha)



- Kakusandha (P. the name of a past Buddha)  
*kalla* (see embryonic precursor)  
*kāma* (see sensuality)  
*kāmabhava* (see sense-sphere [of existence])  
*kāmanissaraṇa* (see refuge from sense pleasure)  
*kāmarāga* (see sensual-grasping)  
*kāmarāga ānusaya* (subtle sense-grasping: see subtle defilements)  
*kāmasukallikānuyoga* (see sensual indulgence)  
*kāmatanḥā* (see sensual craving)  
*kāmavacara-bhūmi* (see sensual sphere)  
*kāmavitaka* (see preoccupation with sensuality)  
*kāmesu-micchācārā* (see committing adultery)  
*kamma* (action, sometimes loosely retribution: see karma)  
*kammassakatāñāṇa* (see discretion to trust in the working of karma)  
*kappa* (measure of time, aeon)  
*karma* q.v. (action, sometimes loosely retribution)  
*kaṣiṇa* (see visual object of meditation)  
Kassapa (P. name of a past Buddha)  
*katañāṇa* (see knowing that what must be done in relation to a Noble Truth has been done)  
*kāya* (body, bodily, tactile: see sense-organs)  
*kāyānupassanāsatiṭṭhāna* (see mindfulness of the body in the body)  
*kāya samphassa* (tactile contact: see sense-contact)  
*kāyasucarita* (see wholesome physical deeds)  
*kāya vedanā* (tactile feeling: see sense-feeling)  
*kāya viññāṇa* (tactile consciousness: see sense-consciousness)  
*kesā* (see hair of the head)  
*khandha* (see aggregates)  
*khaṇika samādhi* (see preparatory concentration)  
*kiccañāṇa* (see knowledge of what must be done in relation to the Noble Truths)  
*kilesa* (see defilement)  
*kilesakāma* (see mind-side sensuality)  
Konāganama (P. the name of a past Buddha)  
Koṇḍañña q.v. (P. name of the first disciple of the Buddha)  
Kuru (P. the name of an Indian province)  
*kusaladhammapatha* (see Path of Wholesome Practice)  
*lamakammajavāta* (see natal wind)  
*lobha* (see greed)  
*lokiya* (see mundane, worldly)  
*lokiyamagga* (see mundane path of practice)  
*lokuttara* (adj. see transcendental)  
*lokuttarabhūmi* (see transcendental realm [of existence])  
*lokuttaramagga* (see transcendental path)  
*lokuttarasammāvācā* (see Right



Speech at the transcendental level)

*lomā* (see bodily hair)

*maggañāṇa* (see knowledge of the path out of defilements)

*maggasamaṅgī* (see collective arising of Path Factors) 134

Māgha (P. name of the third lunar month)

Māgha Pūjā Day (P. festival held on the full-moon day of the third lunar month)

Mahābhārata (P. an Indian literary epic)

Mahābhāratayuddha (P. a war described in the Mahābhārata)

Mahābrahmā (P. realm of the great brahmas: see form Brahmā realms)

Mahākāla (P. name of Koṇḍañña in a previous birth)

Mahā Māyā (P. mother to Prince Siddhattha)

*majjavanijjā* (see trade in alcohol: see unwholesome trade)

*majjhimā* (adj. middle, central)

*majjhimā paṭipadā* (see Middle Way)

*maṃsavanijjā* (trading in flesh: see unwholesome trading)

*māna* (arrogance: see Ten Fetters)

*mano* (mind: see sense-organs)

*mano samphassa* (mental contact: see sense-contact)

*mano vedanā* (mental feeling: see sense-feeling)

*mano viññāṇa* (mental conscious-

ness: see sense consciousness)  
*manussasampatti* (see worldly wealth)

Māra q.v. (P. devil, demon)

*maraṇa* (see dying)

*maraṇa dukkha* (see the suffering of dying)

*mātā samābhariyā* (see wife like a mother)

*mettā* (see loving-kindness)

Metteyya (P. name of a forthcoming Buddha)

*micchā diṭṭhī* (see False View)

*moha* (see delusion)

*musāvāda* (see lying speech)

*mutti* (extinguishing with complete liberation from craving: see characteristics of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering)

*nakhā* (see toe-/fingernails)

*nāma-rūpa* (mind and form: see links of Dependent Origination)

*ñāṇa* (see knowing)

*ñāṇakaraṇī* (adj. bestows the means of knowing according to reality: see knowing according to reality)

*ñāṇaṃ* (see means of knowing according to reality)

*ñāṇaratana* (see jewel knowing)

*nandirāgasahagatā* (adj. accompanied by passion and delight: see characteristics of craving)

*nekkhamma saṅkappa* (see intention to remove oneself from sensual desire)



- nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* (absorption of neither-perception-nor-non-perception: see formless absorptions)
- Nevasaññāsaññāyatanabhūmi* (realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception: see formless Brahma realms)
- Nibbāna* q.v. (see also Nirvana)
- nibbānasampatti* (see wealth of Nirvana)
- nibbānāya* (adj. leading to complete cessation [attainment of Nirvana]: see benefits of seeing and knowing according to reality)
- niccam* (see permanence)
- Nigāntha* q.v. (P. a spiritual movement contemporary to the Buddha)
- Nimmānarati* (P. the fifth level of heaven)
- nirodha* (see cessation)
- nirodhagāmini* (see the Path to Cessation)
- nirodha samāpati* (see deep meditation)
- opapātika* (spontaneously arising in adult form: see modes of birth)
- oramabhāgiya saṃyojana* (lower fetters: see Ten Fetters)
- Ovādapāṭimokkha* (P. a teaching given by the Buddha)
- Paccekabuddha* (P. a type of Buddha unable to teach others)
- pahāna-padhāna* (abandonment of evil habits already acquired: see Right Effort)
- pāṃokkha sammā samādhi* (see supporting concentration)
- pāṇātipāta* (see killing)
- pañcaka-naya* (see absorptions, five-fold analysis) 130
- pañcamajjhāna* (see fifth absorption)
- pañcavaggiya* (see Group of Five)
- pañcupādānakkhandha* (see clinging to the Five Aggregates)
- pañcupādānakkhandha dukkha* (see the suffering of clinging to the [Five] Aggregates)
- paññā* (see wisdom)
- Paranimmitavasavattī* (P. sixth level of heaven)
- paratthataṇhā* (see retinue-centred craving)
- parūpakkama mūlaka dukkha* (see the suffering of wounds in combat)
- parideva* (see lamentation)
- parideva dukkha* (see the suffering of lamentation)
- Parinirvāna* q.v. (P. final entry of the Buddha into Nirvana, see also *anupādisesa nibbāna*)
- Parittābhā* (P. realm of the Brahmas with limited lustre: see form Brahmā realms)
- Parittasubhā* (P. realm of the Brahmas with limited aura: see form Brahmā realms)
- passaddhi* (peacefulness of mind: see seven factors of enlightenment)
- paṭhamajjhāna* (see first absorption)



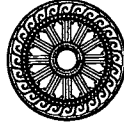
Paṭhama Magga (a level of meditational attainment, synonymous with "Initial Path", "dhammānupassanasatipatṭhāna" and "first absorption": see Paṭhama Magga Sphere)  
Paṭhamasaṃbodhigathā (P. a literary biography of the Buddha)  
paṭiccasamuppāda (see Dependent Origination)  
pāṭigha (annoyance: see subtle defilements)  
pāṭighā ānusaya (subtle defilement of annoyance: see subtle defilements)  
paṭiloma (see reverse direction, meditational analysis in a)  
paṭinissaggo (see extinguishing with no further effect from craving: see characteristics of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering)  
paṭivedhaññāṇadhammacakka (see personal attainment of the Four Noble Truths)  
peta (see hungry ghost)  
pettivisaya (see realm of hungry ghosts)  
pharusavācā (see harsh speech)  
phassa (contact: see links of Dependent Origination)  
phoṭṭhabba (tactile: see sense contact)  
phoṭṭhabba sañcetanā (tactile volition: see sense volition)  
phoṭṭhabba saññā (tactile sense-registration: see sense-registration)

phoṭṭhabba tanhā (tactile craving: see sense craving)  
phoṭṭhabba vicāra (tactile discursive thought: see sense discursive thought)  
phoṭṭhabba vitakka (tactile thought conception: see sense thought conception)  
pisuṇāvācā (see divisive speech)  
pīti (see joy)  
piyarūpa sātārūpa (see objects of sensual delight and pleasure)  
piyehi vipayoga (see separation from loved ones and treasured things)  
piyehi vipayoga dukkha (see separation of loved ones and treasured things)  
ponobbhavikā (adj. gives rise to rebirth: see harm of craving)  
pothujjaniko (makes the mind collect defilements and become engained with them: see harm of sensual indulgence)  
pubbenivāsānusatiñāṇa (see recollection of previous lifetimes: see knowledge required by the Buddha to reach enlightenment)  
puggala (person: see amenable location)  
rāga (see grasping)  
Rāhula (P. son of Prince Siddhartha)  
Rājagaha (P. name of a town, capital of Magadha)  
rasa (taste, gustatory: see sense objects)



*rasa-sañcetanā* (gastatory volition: see sense volition)  
*rasa-saññā* (gastatory sense registration: see sense registration)  
*rasa-taṇhā* (gastatory craving: see sense craving)  
*rasa vicāra* (gastatory discursive thought: see sense discursive thought)  
*rasa vitakka* (gastatory thought conception: see sense thought conception)  
*rūpa* (image, visual-, form-: see sense objects)  
*rūpa- (brahma) bhava* (see form Brahma sphere)  
*rūpa jhāna* (see form absorption)  
*rūpa khanda* (aggregate of corporeality: see aggregates)  
*rūparāga* (see grasping for form absorptions)  
*rūpa sañcetanā* (visual volition: see sense volition)  
*rūpa saññā* (visual sensory registration: see sense registration)  
*rūpa taṇhā* (visual craving: see sense craving)  
*rūpāvacarabhūmi* (see form sphere)  
*rūpa vicāra* (visual discursive thought: see sense discursive thought)  
*rūpa vitakka* (visual thought conception: see sense-thought conception)  
  
*sacca* (truthfulness)  
*saccañāṇa* (see knowledge of the existence of the Four Noble

Truths)  
*sadda* (sound, auditory-: see sense objects)  
*sadda sañcetanā* (auditory volition: see sense volition)  
*sadda saññā* (auditory sense registration: see sense-registration)  
*sadda taṇhā* (auditory craving: see sense craving)  
*sadda vicāra* (auditory discursive thought: see sense discursive thought)  
*sadda vitakka* (auditory thought conception: see sense thought conception)  
*saddhā* (faith: see Five Faculties)  
*sahāya samābhariyā* (see a wife like a friend)  
*sakadāgāmin* q.v. (once returner)  
*sakidāgāmi* q.v. (once returner)  
*sakkayadiṭṭhi* (self view: see Ten Fetters)  
*samādānavirati* (see abstention after requesting Five Precepts)  
*samādhi* (concentration: see meditation)  
*samapadana* (endowment)  
*samatha* (tranquility: see meditation)  
*samatha kammaṭhāna* (tranquility meditation: see meditation)  
*samatha-vipassanā* (tranquility-insight meditation: see meditation)  
*sambodhāya* (adj. giving rise to knowledge of the Noble Truths: see benefits of seeing and knowing according to reality)  
*Sammā Ājīva* (see Right Livelihood)



Sammā Diṭṭhī (see Right View)  
Sammā Kamanta (see Right Action)  
Sammā Samādhi (see Right Concentration)  
Sammā Sambuddho (P. an epithet of the Buddha: the Perfectly Enlightened One)  
Sammā Saṅkappa (see Right Intention)  
Sammā Sati (see Right Mindfulness)  
Sammā Vācā (see Right Speech)  
Sammā Vāyāma (see Right Effort)  
*sampattavirati* (abstention on the spur of the moment)  
*sampayoga* (see exposure to hateful things)  
*samphappalāpa* (see idle chatter)  
*samphassa* (contact: see sense contact)  
*samsāra* (see the cycle of existence)  
*saṁsedaja* (arising in moisture: see modes of birth)  
*samucceda-virati* (see abstention by transcending)  
*samucchedapahāna* (see transcendental extinction of craving)  
*samudaya* (cause, origin: see the Origin of Suffering)  
*samudaya ariyasacca* (see Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering)  
*saṁvara-padhāna* (avoidance of evils not yet done: see Right Effort)  
*saṁyojana* (see Ten Fetters)  
Sanghāta (P. a level of hell)  
*saṅkhāra* (see mental formations)  
*saṅkhāra-khandha* (see the aggregate of mental formations)

*sañcetanā* (volition: see sense volition)  
*saññā* (perception, sensory registration: see sense registration)  
*saññākhandha* (aggregate of sensory registration: see aggregates)  
Sārattasamuccaya q.v. (P. the name of a Commentary)  
*sassatadiṭṭhi* (see false view of eternalism)  
*sati* (see mindfulness)  
*satipaṭṭhāna* (see Foundations of Mindfulness)  
*sattavaṇijjā* (trading in weapons: see unwholesome trade)  
*sattavaṇijjā* (trading in slaves: see unwholesome trade)  
*sa-upādisesa nibbāna* q.v. (nirvana with remaining aggregates)  
*śīla* (see self-discipline)  
*silabbatapamāda* (attachment to rites and rituals: see Ten Fetters)  
*sitibhūto* (see coolness)  
Siddhattha (P. name of the *bodhisatva* in final existence)  
Siṁsapa q.v. (a species of tree, *Dalbergia sisu*)  
*sotāpattiphala* (see Sotāpana fruit)  
*soka* (see sorrow)  
*soka dukkha* (see the suffering of sorrow)  
*sota* (auditory, ear: see sense organs)  
*sotāpana* q.v. (stream enterer)  
*sota samphassa* (auditory contact: see sense-contact)  
*sota vedanā* (auditory-feeling: see sense feeling)



- sota viññāṇa* (auditory consciousness: see sense consciousness)  
*Subhakiṇhā* (P. realm of Brahmās with a steady aura: see form Brahmā realms)  
*Sudassā* (P. realm of the Brahmās who are beautiful: see form Brahmā realms)  
*Sudassī* (P. realm of the Brahmās who are clear-sighted: see form Brahmā realms)  
*Suddhodana* (P. name of Siddhattha's father)  
*Sudda* (peasant caste: see caste)  
*sukha* (see happiness)  
*sukhaṃ* (happy)  
*Sumeru* (P. mountain that forms the axis of the universe in Buddhist cosmology)  
*taco* (see skin)  
*taṇhā* (see craving)  
*Tappa-mallaputta* (P. name of a disciple of the Buddha)  
*Tathāgata* (P. The Such Gone One: epithet of the Buddha)  
*tatiya-jhāna* (see third absorption)  
*tatratatrābhinandinī* (adj. a quality of a realm that makes beings born there become attached to it: see characteristics of craving)  
*Tavatimsa* (P. second level of heaven)  
*ti-lakkhaṇa* (see Three Characteristics)  
*tiracchānavijjā* (see Low Arts)  
*Tusita* (P. see fourth level of heaven)  
*ucchedadiṭṭhi* (see false view of eternalism)  
*Udaka* (P. name of a brahmin meditation teacher)  
*uddhacca* (absent-mindedness: see Ten Fetters)  
*uddhamabhāgiya saṃyojana* (higher fetters: see Ten Fetters)  
*upacāra samādhi* (see neighbourhood concentration)  
*upādāna* (see clinging)  
*upādānakhandha* (see clinging to the aggregates)  
*uparigahanasati* (see discretional mindfulness)  
*upasamāya* (adj. can still the mind to the point where defilements are extinguished: see benefits of seeing and knowing according to reality)  
*upāyāssa* (see bemoaning)  
*upāyāssa dukkha* (see the suffering of bemoaning)  
*upekkhā* (see equanimity)  
*Uttarakurudipa* (P. the Northern Continent of Buddhist Cosmology)  
*utu* (temperature: see amenable location)  
*vaḍḍa samsāra* (see cycle of existence)  
*vadhaka samābhariyā* (see a wife like an enemy)  
*vajra* (a thunderbolt)  
*vatthukāma* (see object-side sensuality)  
*vedanā* (see feeling)  
*vedanākhanda* (the aggregate of





feeling: see aggregates)  
*vedanānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*  
(see mindfulness of feeling in the  
feeling)

*Vehapphalā* (P. realm of Brahmas  
with abundant reward: see form  
Brahma realms)

*vibhavataṇhā* (see craving for the  
formless absorptions)

*vicāra* (continued application of  
mind: see absorption factors)

*vicikicchā* (doubt: see Ten Fetters)

*vihiṃsāvitaka* (see preoccupation  
with aggression)

*vijjā* (see knowledge)

*vimamsā* (review: see Four Bases  
of Success)

*vimutti* (see liberation)

*vimuttiñāṇadassana* (see seeing  
and knowledge of liberation)

*viññāṇa* (see consciousness)

*viññāṇakhandha* (aggregate of  
consciousness: see aggregates)

*Viññāṇañcāyatana* (P. realm of  
infinite consciousness: see form-  
less Brahmā realms)

*vipāka* (see retribution)

*vipassanā* (see insight)

*vipassanākammaṭṭhāna* (medita-  
tional insight: see meditation)

*Vipassī* (P. name of a past Buddha)

*vippayoga* (see separation from  
loved ones and treasured things)

*virīya* (energy, effort: see Four  
Foundations of Success)

*Visākha* (P. name of the sixth lu-  
nar month)

*Visākhā* (P. name of the chief fe-  
male benefactor of the Buddha)

*visavaṇijjā* (trading in poison: see  
unwholesome trade)

*vitakka* (application of mind: see  
preoccupation, Four Foundations  
of Success, absorption factors)

*yakkhini* (see ogress)

*Yāmā* (P. the third level of  
heaven)

*yam picchaṃ na labhati* (see dis-  
appointment)

*yam picchaṃ na labhati dukkha* (see  
the suffering of disappointment)

*Yasodharā* (P. name of the wife of  
Prince Siddhattha)

*yogāvacara* (the wise who train  
themselves)

*Appendix E:*  
*About the Author:*  
*Phrabhavanaviriyakhun*  
*(Phadet Dattajeevo)*

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## *Appendix F:*

### *How to Meditate*

Meditation is a state of ease, inner peace and happiness that we can bring into being, ourselves. It is a practice recommended by Buddhism for happiness, non-recklessness, mindfulness and wisdom in everyday life. It is no mystery, but something which can be easily practised by all following the technique taught by Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), Luang Phaw Wat Paknam as follows:

#### **Step-by-Step Instructions for the Meditation Technique**

**(1) *Paying respect to the Triple Gem:*** To start one should soften one's mind by paying respect to the Triple Gem, before taking Five or Eight Precepts to consolidate one's virtue;

**(2) *Recollect your goodness:*** Kneel or sit with your feet to one side and think of all the good deeds you have done throughout the day, from your past, and all the good deeds you intend to do in the future. Recollect such good deeds in such a way, until you fill as if your whole body seems to be filled with tiny particles of goodness;

**(3) *Sit for meditation, relaxing body and mind:*** Sit in the half-lotus position, upright with your back and spine straight — cross-legged with your right leg over the left one. Your hands should rest palms-up on your lap, and the tip of your right index

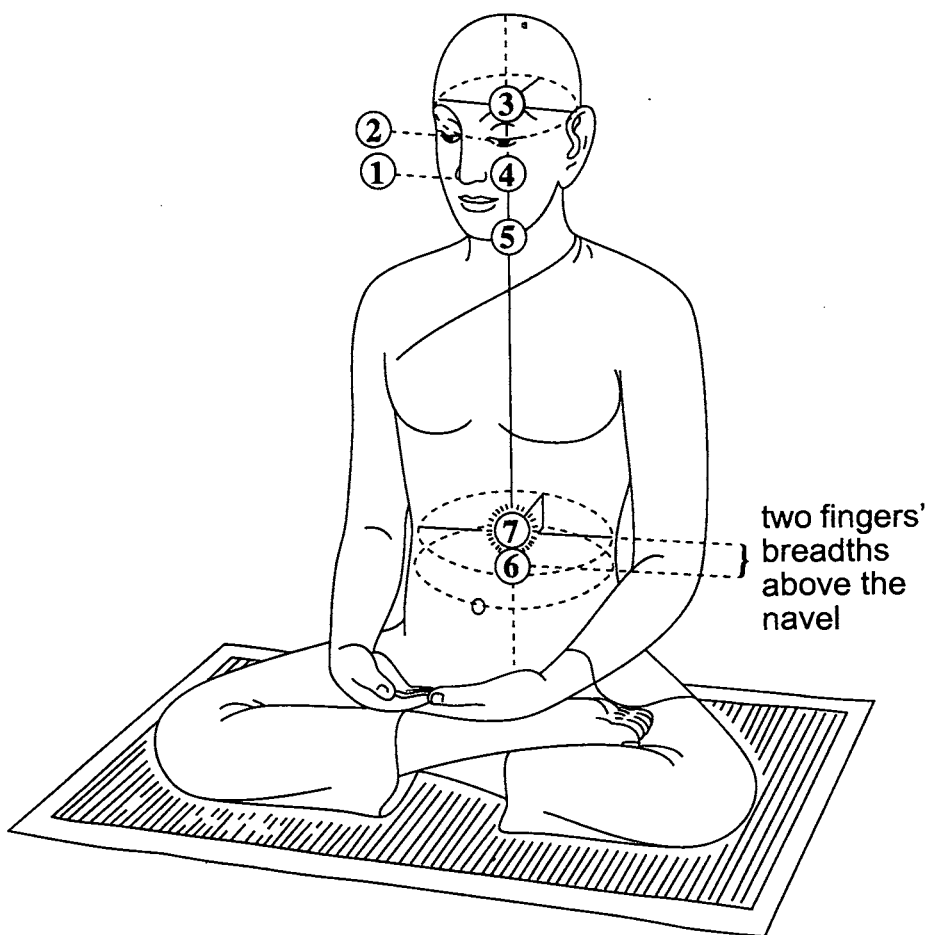
finger should touch your left thumb. Try to find a position of poise for yourself. Don't take up a position where you have to force or stress yourself unnaturally—but at the same time, don't slouch! Softly close your eyes as if you were falling asleep. Don't squeeze your eyes shut and make sure you have no tension across your eyebrows. Relax every part of your body, beginning with the muscles of your face, then relax your face, neck shoulders, arms, chest, trunk and legs. Make sure there are no signs of tension on your forehead or across your shoulders. Focus on the task in hand, creating a feeling of ease in your mind. Feel that the you are entering upon a supreme state of calm and ease with both body and mind.

**(4) *Imagine a crystal ball as the object of your meditation:***

Imagine a clear, bright, flawless crystal ball as if it is floating at the centre of your body (see seventh base of the mind in the illustration). The crystal ball should be pure and soothing, like twinkling starlight to the eye. At the same time, softly repeat the sound of the *mantra* 'Sammā-Arahaṇi' to yourself as 'recollection of the Buddha' over and over again. Alternatively you can start by imagining the crystal ball at the first base of the mind, and gradually move it down to the seventh base via the other six bases (see diagram) while repeating the *mantra* to yourself.

Once the crystal ball becomes visible at the centre of the body, continue to maintain a feeling of ease, as if the mental object seen is part of that feeling. If the crystal ball should disappear, don't feel disappointed — just keep the same feeling of ease in your mind as before, and imagine a new crystal ball in place of the old. If the mental object should appear anywhere else other than the centre of the body, gradually lead the object to the centre of the body, without using even the slightest of force. When the mental object has come to a standstill at the centre of the body, place the

# THE SEVEN BASES OF THE MIND



attention at the centre of that object, by imagining that there is an additional tiny star visible there. Focus your mind continuously on the tiny star at the centre of the object of meditation. The mind will adjust itself until it comes to a perfect standstill. At that point, the mind will fall through the centre and there will be a new brighter sphere which arises in place of the original one. This new sphere is known as the '*Paṭhama-magga* sphere' or 'sphere of Dhamma'. This sphere is the gateway or trailhead to the pathway to Nirvana.

Imagining the object of meditation is something you can do the whole of the time, wherever you may be, whether sitting, standing, walking, lying-down or performing other activities.

It is advised to imagine in such a way continuously at every moment of the day — but imagining without force. No matter how well you manage, you should be contented with your level of progress, in order to prevent excessive craving for immediate results becoming a hindrance to your progress. If you meditate until having attained a steadfast, diamond-bright 'sphere of Dhamma' at the centre of your body, you should try to maintain it by recollecting it as continuously as you can.

In such a way, the benefits of your meditation will not only keep your life on the pathway of happiness, success and non-recklessness, but also ensure your continuing progress in meditation.

## **ADDITIONAL ADVICE**

**1. Avoid force:** Never force anything in your meditation. Don't squeeze your eyes closed thinking you will see the object of meditation more quickly. Don't tense your arms, your abdomen or your body — because any form of tension will only cause the mind to be displaced from the centre of the body to the place you are tensing.



**2. Don't crave after seeing something:** You should always maintain complete neutrality of mind. Don't let your mind be distracted from the object of meditation and the mantra. Don't worry yourself about when the object of meditation will appear. The image will appear itself when it comes to the right time, just as the sun rises and sets in its own time.

**3. Don't worry about your breath:** Meditating in this technique starts with the visualization of a bright object [*ālōka kasīṇa*]. Once having meditated until attaining the sphere of Dhamma, one continues with meditation by passing through the refined human body (astral body), the angelic body, the form-Brahmā body and the formless-Brahmā body until attaining the Dhamma body (or Dhammakāya). Only then is one equipped to turn one's meditation towards insight [*vipassanā*]. Thus there is no need to practise mindfulness of the breath at any stage.

**4. Maintain your mind at the centre of the body all the time:** Even after having finished your formal sitting, maintain your mind at the centre of the body the whole of the time. No matter whether you are standing, walking, sitting or lying-down, don't allow your mind to slip away from the centre of the body. Continue repeating the mantra '*Sammā-Araham*' to yourself while visualizing the crystal ball at the centre of the body.

**5. Bring all objects arising in the mind to the centre of the body:** No matter what appears in the mind, bring it (gently) to the centre of the body. If the object disappears, there is no need to chase around looking for it. Just continue to rest your attention at the centre of the body while repeating the mantra to yourself. Eventually, when the mind becomes yet more peaceful, a new object of meditation will appear.





The basic meditation described here will lead to a deepening of happiness in life. If one doesn't abandon the practice but cultivates meditation regularly, to the point that the sphere of Dhamma is attained, one should try to maintain that sphere at the centre of one's body for the remainder of one's life, while leading one's life in a scrupulous way. It will offer one a refuge in life and will bring happiness both in this lifetime and the hereafter.

## **SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION**

### **1. Personal Benefits for the meditator**

● ***The Mind:*** the mind will feel at ease — calm and peaceful. Memory will also improve;

● ***Personality:*** self-confidence will be improved. The true nature of calm will become apparent. Anger will diminish, leaving only the feeling of kindness towards others;

● ***Daily life:*** will be increased in quality in the new-found absence of stress. The results of work or study will be much more successful. The meditator can enjoy health of both body and mind;

● ***Ethics and decision-making:*** a right understanding of that which is good and that which is bad, will be clearly seen for any given situation. Important decisions will cause less worry because the meditator understands the outcome of his actions. The meditator can refrain from harmful actions and decisions, instead being content and confident about choices made.

### **2. Benefits for the Meditator's Family**

● ***Peace and success:*** family life will be more harmonious, through the increased mutual respect and consideration between family members. Parents will be better able to lead the family successfully;



● **Cooperation:** Family members will be more enthusiastic to honour their duties and co-operate towards solving shared problems.

### 3. National Benefits

● **Peaceful Society:** most grave social problems originate from unwholesomeness of mind. If everybody learns to meditate and live peacefully, 'endemic' problems like crime and drug abuse will be diminished;

● **Respect:** Respect for others will be improved simply through keeping to a routine of meditation and following moral precepts. Honesty will diminish suspicion in the community;

● **A caring society:** as a result of meditation, the peacefulness of life can be more widely enjoyed and there will be a more widespread willingness to participate in social work

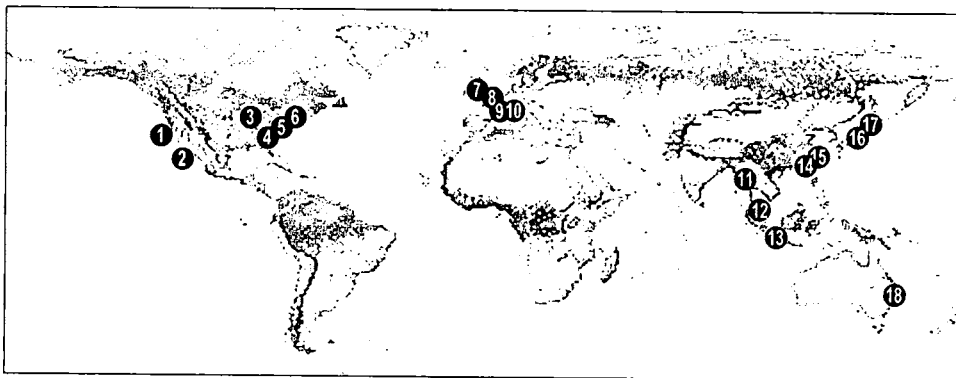
### 4. Spiritual Benefits

● **Understanding eternity:** all people, with or without their own faith can deepen the understanding of their own spirituality through meditation. Meditators of all faiths, through the practice of meditation, can explore their own faith in depth, particularly with reference to the understanding of eternity in their chosen faith;

● **Inspiration:** inspiration in your own spiritual tradition is strengthened as the meditator comes to realize the profound happiness that can be found through meditation;

● **Prolonging the lifetime of spiritual traditions:** the meditator's own spiritual tradition will be maintained as newcomers have a better understanding of moral conduct and self-discipline.

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*sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*  
the gift of dhamma excels all gifts

*Dh.354*

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 Ruangsuntorn Joibundit  
 Prapan Kasaemthanasin  
 Khlongtoei-Tha Lehaengboon Group  
 Aubsomsuda Kiatsilp  
 Phum Klaikhum  
 Wilawan Kongleema  
 Tichakorn Kongpet  
 Nipa Kuharatanakorn  
 Manat Lertshooh  
 Punchana Meekaewkunchorn and family  
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 Naiyana Niamsrichadra and Companies  
 Sunatorn Noochtapolin  
 Siripen Ounjitti  
 Suphaporn Pajitwatanakul  
 Wardsana Panturat  
 Narongchai Panyanontachi  
 Somsak Petsangthip  
 Pornchai Pinyapong  
 Family Poopomanake  
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 Pornson Soedham  
 Family Songkampol

Sopark Sotara  
Ladda Sritientong  
Kanmunee Srivisanprob  
Vorathep Sriwannawat  
Paisai Suchatkulwit  
Wantana Suthachiva  
Anan-Boonchern Suwannakul  
Nongnuch Tangchoksirikul  
Thipawan Tanprapaporn  
Arom Teskeo  
Saowalop Thaveesilp  
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Nangnoi Visitsatthawong  
Tawin Wattirangkul  
Nuansri Wongsinsangworn

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According to author, Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Luang Phaw Dattajeevo), the Buddha's First Teaching:

“....the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta is so important because it acts like a master-plan for all the subsequent teachings on Buddhism given during the Buddha's lifetime. Even if the Lord Buddha were to teach the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta and never to teach another word of Dhamma for the rest of his life, His duty in proclaiming the Dhamma to the world would have been fulfilled.”

This book is an annotated and fully-indexed edition of the 800 year-old *Saratthasamuccaya* commentary on the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta – respecting the authenticity of the original while adopting a modernized perspective to help the present-day reader understand scriptural principles and ways to apply them to the practice of meditation.

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