

# **A DISCOURSE ON THE TUVATAKA SUTTA**

**by  
The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw  
of  
Burma**

*Translated by*  
**Daw Kay Mya Wee**





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## Editor's Foreword

As with my other editions of the translated works of the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw, I have removed many of the Pāḷi words for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the technical terms. The original translation was published in Rangoon in 1982. The Sayādaw gave this discourse as a series of five talks in 1976. To transcribe and translate the tape-recordings is a huge task, but one productive of great merit as it enables a much wider audience to benefit from the late Sayādaw's profound talks. This edition aims to extend the audience further still by publishing a modern edition on the Internet with a PDF file for those who want to print a copy.

References are to the Pāḷi text Roman Script editions of the Pali Text Society — in their translations, these page numbers are given in the headers or in square brackets in the body of the text. This practice is adhered to by Bhikkhu Bodhi's modern translations, It would be on a different page in the PTS translations, but since the Pāḷi page reference is given, it can be found in either translation. In the Chāṭṭha Saṅgāyana edition of the Pāḷi texts on CD, the references to the pages of the PTS Roman Script edition are shown at the bottom of the screen, and can be located by searching.

The Tuvaṭaka Sutta is the fourteenth of sixteen Suttas in the Aṭṭhakavagga of the Suttanipāta. In the CSCD edition it begins at verse 921, but in Venerable Hammalawa Saddhātissa's edition published by Curzon Press, it starts at verse 915.

I have attempted to standardise the translation of Pāḷi terms to match that in other works by the Sayādaw, but it is impossible to be totally consistent as the various translations and editions are from many different sources. In the index you can find the Pāḷi terms in brackets after the translations, thus the index also serves as a glossary.

I started work on it in 1997, but left for Burma before completing it, and only now have I got around to completing the first edition. As my time permits, I will gradually improve it.

Though this is not a long book, being only about seventy pages, it took a long time to edit. The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw had a vast knowledge of the Pāḷi texts and Commentaries, and in this series of five lectures he covers material from many sources. Though I have spent many happy hours reading the available translations of the Sayādaw's discourses, I discovered many new things in the course of editing this edition such as the story of Nālaka, who was one of



the very early disciples of the Buddha, and the nephew of Asita (or Kaṇha Devala), the sage who predicted the Buddha's Enlightenment at the time of the Bodhisatta's birth by the art of reading bodily marks. At first he smiled, but then he wept when he foresaw that he would not live long enough to hear the Buddha's teaching. Like Āḷāra Kālāma, he would be reborn in a formless realm (*arūpaloka*), and so would be unable to visit the Buddha later to hear the Dhamma. The celestial beings who attended the Tuvāṭaka Sutta were more fortunate, as they gained various stages of the Noble Path. Heaven is not the goal of Buddhism, and not all celestial beings are on the right path.

Discourses to celestial beings may not be high on everyone's reading list, but if you have a good knowledge of Buddhism you will appreciate that they were reborn in celestial realms due to wholesome deeds during the dispensation of previous Buddhas. They were therefore very familiar with the practice of meditation and capable of understanding profound ideas with just a brief hint in verse.

The Sayādaw explains in much more detail for the benefit of his audience who, though they are mostly meditators, may not have as much knowledge of monastic life and practices. The section on the Rathavināta Sutta, for example, explains how monks and supporters should receive and offer alms without grasping onto each other. Donors should give, wishing for the highest merits and the attainment of nibbāna, which means the cessation of craving and attachment. Monks should receive alms impartially, without flattery for lavish gifts from wealthy donors or disdain for meagre offerings from poor donors. The donors should not think, "This is my monk," and the monk should not think, "This is my lay supporter." Both should be mindful to maintain freedom (*mutta*) from grasping (*gāha*) and unsuitable familiarity. In this way the Buddha's teaching is preserved in its pristine purity. It is not a practice that can be done by the average householder or monk who is not both well-informed and diligent in the practice of mindfulness.

This on-line edition may still have many defects, but I hope it is good enough to be useful. If you find any errors, please let me know.

Bhikkhu Pesala  
August 2013

## Preface

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa*

The Tuvāṭaka Sutta is one of the six discourses delivered by the Buddha at the Mahāsamaya (the Great Occasion), one full moon day of June, after his achievement of Supreme Enlightenment. Each discourse is meant to appeal to each type of celestial being assembled at the time, varying as to their propensity, such as those fond of sensual pleasures, those who are intelligent, those with strong confidence in the Buddha's dispensation (*sāsana*) — particularly confidence in what one has to do. U Paññobhāsa of Kabā-Aye, in the introduction to the Burmese version of the discourse commented that the Sutta meant to lead people to be good speedily to be relieved from the miseries of the cycle of existences (*saṃsāra*).

Among the six discourses, the Purābheda Sutta appeared in print as a result of the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's exposition in 1961 at Mahāsi Yeikthā.

A discourse on Tuvāṭaka Sutta was given in 1976 by Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw at the request of U Hla Maung, the then Director General of the Religious Affairs Department, the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs.

The Sayādaw's sermon appeared in print in 1976. This translation is here translated by Dr Kay Mya Yee, Mahāsi meditator and a founder member of the Women Devotees Welfare Association, Mahāsi Meditation Centre.

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's exposition of the Buddha Dhamma is always inclined towards insight meditation. This Sutta was delivered by the Buddha for those celestial beings who were inclined towards confidence in the Buddha's dispensation. It would be superfluous for me to expound at length about the excellence of the manner and the matter of the delivery of the Dhamma by the world renowned Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw. The readers will find out for themselves the clear path the Sayādaw shows by his delivery of the Sutta leading to expulsion of the five impediments (*papañca*).

U Hla Htun  
Mahāsi Disciple and Meditator

# Tuvaṭaka Sutta

## Part One

While the Buddha and five hundred Arahants, formerly Sakyan princes, were residing at the Mahāvaṇa forest in the district of Kapilavatthu, celestial beings from ten thousand worlds came to adore the Buddha. On this auspicious occasion the meeting of celestial beings, after introducing the names and clans of celestial beings, the Buddha delivered the six discourses so that they would attain the path and its fruition. These are:

1. The Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta<sup>1</sup> for those who indulged in lust (*rāga*).
2. The Kalahavivāda Sutta<sup>2</sup> for those who indulged in anger (*dosa*).
3. The Mahāyūha Sutta<sup>3</sup> for those full of delusion (*moha*).
4. The Cūḷabhūha Sutta<sup>4</sup> for those full of reflection (*vitakka*).
5. The Tuvaṭaka Sutta<sup>5</sup> for those full of confidence (*saddhā*).
6. The Purābheda Sutta<sup>6</sup> for the wise ones.

At the end of each Sutta, not only innumerable celestial beings became Non-returners (*anāgāmi*), Once-returners (*sakadāgāmi*), and Stream-winners (*sotāpanna*), but also many millions attained Arahantship.

Knowing that a question and answer method would be more effective, the Blessed One created an image of himself, as there was no one who could ask highly intelligent questions. He also willed that the mind-created image would put such questions to him.

The Tuvaṭaka Sutta opens with the following question submitted by this mind-created image.

### How Does a Monk Know Cessation? (1)

*“Pucchāmi taṃ ādiccabandhu, Vivekaṃ santipadañca mahesi.  
Kathaṃ disvā nibbāti bhikkhu, Anupādiyāno lokasmiṃ kiñci.”*

The meaning of the above stanza is, “Lord Buddha, the possessor of such attributes as morality (*sīla*), allow me to submit the following question. How does a monk know the factors of seclusion? How does he know cessation? How does he extinguish lust, *etc?*”

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<sup>1</sup> Suttanipāta, Cūḷavagga, 13th Sutta, beginning at verse 361 in the CSCD edition.

<sup>2</sup> Suttanipāta, Aṭṭhakavagga, 11th Sutta, beginning at verse 868.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 13th Sutta, verse 901.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 12th Sutta, verse 884.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 14th Sutta, verse 921.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 10th Sutta, verse 854.

### Three Types of Seclusion

The three types of seclusion (*viveka*) are:

1. Seclusion of the body (*kāyaviveka*). It means to be in seclusion without any company. It is very beneficial in meditation. That is why, for the purpose of meditation, the Buddha instructed, a) go to a forest (*arañṇagato*), b) go to the root of a tree (*rukhamūlagato*), or c) go to an empty place (*suñṇāgāragato*). For an individual who does not indulge in greed, even if he does not practise meditation, to stay in seclusion is very peaceful.

2. Seclusion of the mind (*cittaviveka*). Be free from defilements, in *jhāna*, or attain the Path and its Fruition.

3. Cessation of the substratum of existence (*upadhiviveka*), namely *nibbāna*.

The question here is how these three types of seclusion are to be comprehended and the defilements extinguished.

The next point is how is the tranquil state (*santipada*) comprehended and how does it take place. This is the same as attaining *nibbāna* (*upadhiviveka*). In other words, how are defilements extinguished? The thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya dhamma*) destroy the defilements, and if one practises the four foundations of mindfulness, the remaining requisites of enlightenment are simultaneously developed. In the Sāsana Yeikthā Meditation Centre, the meditators practising the four foundations of mindfulness are striving for the extinction of defilements. It is a good practice.

One should not only extinguish defilements in the present moment, but one should uproot them permanently. The mind-created image stressed this by the words: “Annihilate defilements with detachment from the world (*anupādiyāno lokasmiṃ kiñci*).”

The world in the mundane sense includes the lower realms, the world of human beings, and the world of celestial beings, but ultimately it is just mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*). The question is how to extinguish without clinging to one’s own mind and matter or another’s as ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ The Blessed One answered in five stanzas.

### The Buddha’s Answers

The question of the mind-created image is how one comprehends seclusion and the tranquil state. The answer could be simply, “To comprehend bodily seclusion by staying in solitude, to comprehend

mental seclusion through the stages of absorption (*jhāna*), insight meditation and the path, and cessation of the substratum of existence or nibbāna can be attained by the knowledge of the noble (*ariyamagga-ñāna*). To attain nibbāna one must establish mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).” However, the Blessed One answered indirectly as follows:

## The Impediments (2)

*“Mūlaṃ papañcasankhāya, Mantā asamīti sabbamuparundhe.  
Yā kāci tanhā ajjhattaṃ, Tāsaṃ vinayā sadā sato sikkhe.”*

The first half means “impediments (*papañca*) is the root cause of the prolonged cycles of existence, and conceit such as ‘I am this’ should be inhibited through comprehensive wisdom, insight meditation and knowledge of the noble path (*ariyamagga-ñāna*). Any opportunity for their occurrence must be prevented, destroy them all.” Why did the Buddha use the indirect method (*neyyattha*) instead of the direct method (*nītattha*)? Because he knew the dispositions of the celestial beings who inclined towards confidence and that they would be liberated at the end of this sutta.

Cessation by comprehensive wisdom (*mantā*), i.e. comprehension through the knowledge of insight meditation and the knowledge of the true path. The three type of seclusion are inclusive in this indirect answer, namely bodily seclusion is the foundation of concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*vipassanā*); mental seclusion is concentration, insight, and the Path, and cessation of the substratum of existence is the extinction of defilements by way of knowledge of the path of the Noble Ones (*ariyamagga-ñāna*). In the last line of the above stanza “*sato sikkhe*” indicates that defilements are extinguished by the practice of mindfulness. Thus is how the Buddha employed the indirect method. It is very profound.

To summarise the first half of the above stanza: the primary root of impediments (unwholesome states that prolong the cycle of existence) and conceit should be comprehended through reasoning, insight knowledge, and path knowledge. Opportunities for defilements must be inhibited and destroyed totally. As this discourse is on how to extinguish impediments, it is known as the Tuvaṭaka Sutta. “*Tuva*” means “quick.” The Tuvaṭaka Sutta, is therefore the discourse for quickly achieving the end the cycles of existence.

The three impediments (*papañca*) are craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). We can see craving all around us. People are discontented with what they have. Even millionaires are striving to have more and more. Rulers of countries want to expand their empires by one means or another. This is the work of the impediment of craving. Some want to do better than others. Others want to propagate their beliefs.

### You Believe What You Think Is Best

However illogical it may be, once you believe in something you take it as the best and make propaganda for it. This morning I received a letter with no address. In brief the sender of the letter said, "Focus your mind on a small imaginary circle with your eyes closed" and he thought that is the best method of meditation practice. This method is diametrically opposed to the Buddha's teaching. The writer of this letter takes his as the best and that is why he is spreading his views.

Nowadays some say, "There is no need to develop tranquillity and insight, just do as we instruct." They say, "Keep your mind as it is. It is not necessary to practise meditation. All such efforts are painful." These are totally contradictory to the Buddha's teaching, namely, "You must follow the noble eightfold path, practise mindfulness, and understand the four noble truths." The above-mentioned beliefs are false doctrines, and lectures in those beliefs are just propaganda for wrong views.

Any religious discourse not concerned with the knowledge of the four noble truths and the practice of the Requisites of Enlightenment is promoting a wrong view.

### Right View Is Not Propaganda

It may be asked whether lectures on right view are not also propaganda. No, they are certainly not, because these lectures are based on the knowledge of right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*). Wrong-view (*micchādiṭṭhi*), is a belief that leads to prolonging existence, and is an impediment (*papañca*). Right view is not an impediment.

Craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) are the three impediments that prolong the cycle of existence. The roots of craving and wrong view are ignorance (*avijjā*), unsystematic attention (*ayonisomanasikāra*), egotistic pride (*asmi māna*), shamelessness (*ahirika*),

fearlessness (*anottappa*) and restlessness (*uddhacca*). Note that ignorance causes the arising of pleasure and craving. Whenever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think, these actions are incessantly changing. They are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. However, when one is not mindful of the true nature of these activities at the moment of their occurrence, one takes them wrongly as permanent, pleasant, and substantial. That is ignorance, which activates the impediment of craving or lust as a prolonging factor. It is said, therefore, that ignorance is the root cause of the impediment of craving.

It is necessary to understand and extirpate the root cause of the prolonging factor, namely ignorance. How can one do so? Note the phenomena as they appear — seeing, hearing, *etc.*, then their true nature will be seen. Thus the impediment of craving leading to the wrong idea of permanence, pleasantness, *etc.*, will not assert itself. This is momentary rejection. When your meditation matures, Arahantship will be attained and the impediment of craving will be totally extinguished together with its root cause — ignorance.

Because of unsystematic attention the desire for pleasure will arise. So unsystematic attention is the root cause of the impediment of craving. So too, egotistic pride, shamelessness, fearlessness, and restlessness are the causes of craving. These, together with unsystematic attention must not be given any chance to occur. They must be expelled by mindfulness of mental and physical phenomena.

These six factors together with ignorance also lead to the impediment of wrong view. At the moment of seeing, instead of noting mental and physical phenomena, unsystematic attention takes them wrongly as a self or 'I,' as 'me' or 'mine' — which is wrong view. This impediment of wrong view together with its root can be expelled by being mindful of mental and physical phenomena.

### **Egotistic Pride**

When one thinks regarding oneself, "I am clever," "I am noble," "I am powerful," "I am intelligent," it is known as egotistic pride (*asmi māna*). We must comprehend and reject it. In the above stanza, "*sabba*" means to inhibit everything, to annihilate all. In other words, to extinguish the root cause of the impediments, namely ignorance together with pride or conceit. On their extinction, the impediments of craving and wrong view and all defilements are expelled. Among

the defilements it is important to extinguish the cause of craving, the original cause of rebirth and the sufferings of mental and physical phenomena.

### **Practise to Expel Latent Craving**

All kinds of craving will rear their ugly heads at the opportune moment. In order to reject them one needs to practise mindfulness day and night. If they are not yet expelled by the Noble Path, the pleasure and craving for such pleasure will occur whenever conditions are favourable. They are latent tendencies. On seeing beautiful things, on hearing pleasant sounds, on tasting delicious food, *etc.*, craving can occur. All kinds of craving are present in worldlings. This craving could even compel one to kill one's own parents. King Ajātasattu killed his father because of lust for the kingdom.

Though there are no coarse sensuous cravings leading to the lower realms in a Stream-winner there are still some weak cravings so he or she would lead a household life. In the Once-returner there are only subtle sensuous cravings, but for the Non-returner there are no more cravings. Ordinary worldlings as well as Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners should therefore practise in order to expel this latent craving.

### **How to Practise Mindfulness**

There are four things to be noted: 1) physical actions, 2) feelings, 3) ideas and thoughts, and 4) mental phenomena. Whether it is pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, just note the feeling at the moment of its occurrence. The sphere of mental objects is very extensive. It is not apparent in physical actions or mental actions, nor in feeling. Seeing and hearing are included in mental phenomena, so too are liking and aversion. The mental phenomena must be noted whenever they occur.

### **When to Practise Mindfulness**

When it is said to be mindful, is it for a short moment, for a few seconds, a few minutes or a few hours? No, it is not for such a short time as that. It has to be practised constantly, day and night. In the Mahāniddeśa it is said, "One must be mindful all the time, continuously, incessantly. In the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, at midnight and in the small hours of the morning too during the



new moon or the waning moon. All the year round. One should be mindful during childhood, during adolescence, and during old age, until one has fully established it.”

The main point is not to allow any chance for the arising of craving. You should practise and note every time you see, hear, *etc.* However, a beginner may not be capable of noting every action. It is therefore better to note one or another bodily contact. While sitting you should note ‘sitting,’ ‘sitting.’ If you think that is not enough to be mindful, you can also note any prominent bodily contact along with ‘sitting,’ such as ‘sitting,’ ‘touching’; ‘sitting,’ ‘touching.’

### **Rising and Falling is the Primary Object**

Our basic instruction (in this Mahāsi Yeikthā meditation centre) is to note the rising and falling of the abdomen continuously as ‘rising,’ ‘falling.’ While doing so the mind may wander off, thinking and reflecting about something. Pleasant and unpleasant feelings may arise; hands and legs may have to be moved; sights or sounds may become apparent. All of these should be contemplated. If you stand up from the sitting position to walk, these bodily actions should be contemplated. When there is nothing in particular to note, focus your mind again on ‘rising, falling,’ and contemplate continuously. When the contemplation becomes stronger, note the arising phenomena diligently. There are thousands who have gained clear insight as they closely followed these instructions. The special method of contemplation is fully discussed in ‘Practical Insight Meditation’ and ‘A Discourse on the Ariyāvāsa Sutta.’

If the true nature of phenomena is not perceived and contemplated, craving arises — craving for sensual pleasures, attachment, and lust. The opportunity for the occurrence of craving must be prevented by contemplating the true nature of phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. On expelling the latent craving by insight knowledge and the Path of Arahantship one becomes an Arahant. However, it is essential to comprehend and expel conceit before one can gain Arahantship. This conceit does not arise only with sensual craving, but with pride in wholesome deeds too. It can be mistaken as extinction of craving and one does not realise that one has become conceited. Some people may not regard themselves as conceited, but they take others to be conceited. The Blessed One explained how to comprehend and expel conceit.

### Comprehend and Expel Conceit (3)

*“Yaṃ kiñci dhammamabhijaññā, ajjhattaṃ athavāpi bahiddhā.  
Na tena thāmaṃ, kubbetha, na hi sā nibbuti sataṃ vuttā.”*

Do not think too highly of your position and be conceited. Do not let the attributes of your teachers make you conceited. “I come from a noble class,” “I am from a wealthy family,” “I am powerful, and have everything,” “I am highly educated,” “I can preach Dhamma,” *etc.* All such thoughts increase one’s pride. Such things as extraordinary insight and possession of absorption (*jhāna*) would only magnify one’s conceit. The above-mentioned causes of conceit can be found both with regard to oneself, or regarding one’s teacher. Monks, especially, should expel such conceit.

In the world, beauty, education, wealth, and prestige are all causes of conceit. One should not think highly of oneself nor belittle others. How should be restrain such conceit? There are two ways: by reflection, and by insight meditation. One can reflect, “The present benefits are the result both of previous kamma and present effort. They are impermanent, so one day I may lose prestige. In old age, or sickness it is of no use at all. One may be well-off in this existence, but the next existence is still uncertain. Nobody likes conceited persons. If you are disrespectful to others due to conceit, you will suffer in the end, and will be born in a low class family in the next existence. What is this self that you regard so highly? It comprises thirty-two repulsive components such as hair, nails, teeth, skin, *etc.* It is constantly decaying and subject to death.” By reflecting like this one can dispel conceit.

By continuous noting of sight, sound, thoughts, *etc.* the insight meditator could deny conceit the chance to assert itself. As soon as the intention to take pride arises in your mind, just note and reject it. If this unwholesome attitude is noticed, there is no opportunity for conceit to occur; it is already extinguished. If you fail to note the unwholesome attitude, conceit will arise. Then take note of this and dispel it. By repeated noting and dispelling such thoughts Arahantship could be attained and conceit would be entirely extinguished.

Why should conceit be extinguished? The Buddhas and the Worthy Ones have never regarded conceit as a peaceful dhamma. Some take conceit in Dhamma as wholesome. Especially at the stage of the

knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), people mistakenly think that is it and become conceited. Some think the observance of moral precepts is enough and never practise insight meditation. Those who are well versed in the Abhidhamma and have intellectual knowledge of the analysis of the physical and mental phenomena, those who can preach, those who observe ascetic practices, those who possess *jhāna* — they think that they have attained the ultimate goal and never think of practising insight meditation. All these are subtle conceits and those who regard them as the ultimate goal have not attained nibbāna. They need to practise until tranquillity is achieved.

The highest conceit, as mentioned in the Dhammapada (Dhp vv 271-272) could still bother a Non-returner, so it is best to practise until one reaches Arahantship. There are three types of conceit to be extinguished, and the Enlightened One continued to teach as follows:

### Extinguish All Three Types of Conceit (4)

*“Seyyo na tena maññeyya, Nīceyyo atha vāpi sarikkho.  
Phuṭṭho anekarūpehi, Nā’tumānaṃ vikappayaṃ tiṭṭhe.”*

The meaning of the above verse is, “Do not be conceited by thinking, ‘I am superior because of my position, or because of my teacher.’ Do not be conceited because you are lower in dignity or because you are on the same level.” It is obvious how one can be conceited about being superior or on the same level as others. This is natural pride through comparison (*yāthāva māna*). It must be dispelled. Though one may not be superior or on the same level, yet one become conceited by thinking, “I am superior. I am of the same level.” This is unnatural pride (*ayāthāva māna*), obviously this too must be dispelled.

However, one may question whether such a thought as “I am below their dignity” should be take as humility (*nivāta*) as mentioned in the Maṅgala Sutta. I will explain. Yes, it is right that to be humble with respect to others is the blessing of humility (*nivāta maṅgala*), but this is not inferiority conceit (*nīcamāna*), which is low and mean in comparison with others. For example, a young monk might say, “I am a junior so why should I be reserved like the elders,” or “I cannot behave like a meditator since I am not one,” or “I am just a student monk, why should I behave like my teachers.” Lay people might

think, "We are just manual workers, we are not officials or wealthy, but we can maintain our living." In all of these instances, one takes pride and becomes conceited by being lower than others. That is inferiority conceit, which takes pride in a comparatively low position. All of these three types of conceit should be noted and discarded.

All these types of conceit arise out of attachment to self (*atta*). So the Blessed One exhorted thus, "When you come into contact with various sense objects, never regard it as 'It is I who sees,' 'It is I who hears.' In other words do not take it as self."

Non-meditators always think in terms of "I see, I hear, *etc.*" on seeing or hearing things. It should not be taken thus, but worldlings find it difficult to inhibit such thoughts. Those well versed in analytical knowledge and the Abhidhamma still think in the same way. At the moment of contemplating physical and mental phenomena one may be free from attachment to self, but even then, one could still think, "I contemplate, I comprehend." Also, those who teach about impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self, on mind and matter; could have the idea while teaching, "I teach." It is, therefore, not easy to detach oneself from the sense of 'I' at the moment of seeing, hearing, thinking, *etc.*

This is what should be done to detach oneself from the 'I' conceit. At the moment of seeing, hearing, *etc.*, observe and comprehend the most prominent phenomena. When you practise continuous noting and observation, you come to know from your own experience that the eye and the sight are just sense-objects, and that eye-consciousness and the fact of knowing are just mentality. Furthermore you realise that there is no such thing as a self or 'I' as a separate entity. On comprehending that the phenomena dissolve immediately at the moment of seeing and hearing you will realise their true nature, *i.e.*, that they are impermanent, undesirable, and unreliable; all are suffering and not-self. When their true nature dawns on you, you will be free from the attachment to 'I.' Not only this wrong view, but also the conceit "It is I who sees," "It is I who knows it" would have no chance to occur and they are extinguished totally. Finally, the root of conceit could be entirely eradicated by the path of Arahantship. It is best to note and observe every time that you see, hear, *etc.* to gain total extinction of conceit.

## **The Lion's Roar of Venerable Sāriputta**

At one time, the Venerable Sāriputta, after seeking permission from the Buddha, departed on a journey. Many monks accompanied him. A certain monk, on seeing that, became jealous and reported to the Buddha that the Venerable Sāriputta had bumped into him, but went on his journey without apologising. The Buddha sent for the elder and asked him if it was so. The Venerable Sāriputta answered as follows:

“Your reverence, one who has not practised noting and observing the heap of elements that is called a body may bump into one’s comrade and proceed on his journey without apologising.” What he meant to say is since he had fully practised contemplation on the impurity of the body, that instance could not happen to him. Then the Venerable Sāriputta continued.

“Excrement and all kinds of filth are thrown on the earth, but the earth never complains or detests it. So too, I have cultivated a mind like the earth.” He meant that he could bear anything just like the earth. “So too, water, fire and air never complain nor detest though excrement and all kinds of filth are thrown into them. Likewise, I have cultivated a mind like water, fire, and air. I am like the dish rag that cleans soiled things and never shudders at it. I am as humble as a beggar in tatters, who comes into the village to beg.”

It is wonderful that the Venerable Sāriputta, who was from a very high Brahmin caste was as humble as a beggar, the lowest caste. We should take this lesson to heart and conduct ourselves humbly, speaking gently. He continued by saying that his actions were as meek as an ox with broken horns. He abhorred his body like a youth who had cleaned and anointed himself with sandalwood, would loath the stinking carcass of a dead dog hung around his neck. He also disliked his body as a man hated the leaking oil pot on his head.

All these statements by Venerable Sāriputta showed that he had no conceit whatever concerning his body since he had developed abhorrence of it through meditation on the impurity of the body. He was not disrespectful because of conceit. Taking a lesson from this we should expel our conceit.

At the mere touch of the tip of Venerable Sāriputta’s robe the monk falsely reported that he was bumped into by the elder. He was jealous of the elder as the majority of monks were following the latter on his

journey and a few were left with the Buddha. So just to interrupt the elder's departure, he misinformed the Buddha. On hearing the Venerable Sāriputta's explanations, that jealous monk, who had misrepresented the case, became repentant and begged for forgiveness. The Buddha pardoned him, and asked the elder to forgive him too. The elder not only pardoned the young monk, but also asked for his forgiveness if he had done anything wrong.

Wrong-doers should not delay in asking for forgiveness since it is the conduct of good people. A wicked person has conceit so hates to ask for forgiveness from anyone. We should be careful about it.

According to these three verses, if the impediments together with their roots, especially craving and conceit are expelled, all the defilements would be extinguished, and then all sufferings would be extinct. Tranquillity is the keystone. This tranquillity could be found only within oneself. Hence the Blessed One exhorted in the following verse that one must endeavour to extinguish the defilements within oneself.

### Internal Tranquillity (5)

*“Ajjhattamevupasame, na aññato bhikkhu santimeseyya.  
Ajjhattaṃ upasantassa, natthi attā kuto nirattā vā.”*

All suffering could be ended only by internal tranquillity. Tranquillity could not be gained externally. People search for tranquillity outside of themselves. Expectation of salvation from God means looking for peace from external help. It is quite possible that some celestial beings might think that extinguishing the cycle of existences could be obtained by God's salvation. The Buddha taught to seek internal peace, not any other kind of peace by external means, to expel the doubt in those celestial beings.

Internal tranquillity could be achieved only by the cultivation of mindfulness, which can only be done by oneself, not by God or any other saviour. To attain nibbāna, which is the end of suffering, one must practise mindfulness to expel all defilements. One should not seek salvation by any means other than by practising mindfulness. The inference of the preceding three verses is that one should practise to extinguish defilements such as lust and conceit within oneself. With the cessation of defilements, one will find that there is no self that is thought to experience suffering or satisfaction. Then there

could also be no more belief that the self could cease to exist after death, *i.e.* annihilationist views would be eradicated.

The Blessed One continued, “In one whose defilements are dispelled, there remains no eternal self to be attached to, so how could one believe in a self after death?”

By cultivating the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya dhamma*) all defilements are distinguished, so self-view (*atta ditṭhi*) is destroyed. Conceit such as “I know,” or “I am superior” will disappear. It is like the air in a bottle, which is expelled when the bottle is filled with water. Latent defilements become less active as one cultivates the requisites of enlightenment. They are expelled completely, together with pride and self-view, on the full attainment of insight. So there is no place for the belief that the self does not exist after death. Since all defilements are extinguished an Arahant need not worry that he is free from all suffering in the present existence. After the attainment of nibbāna all suffering is annihilated and no more new existences or suffering can arise. Thus, the main point is to attain the cessation of all defilements by practising mindfulness. Comparing the serenity of an Arahant to the calmness of water in the middle of the ocean, the Buddha recited the next stanza.

### As Serene as the Middle of the Ocean (6)

*“Majjhe yathā samuddassa, ūmi no jāyatī tḥito hoti.  
Evaṃ tḥito anejassa, ussadaṃ bhikkhu na kareyya kuhiñci.”*

“As the middle of the ocean is calm, so is one who is free from active craving. Bhikkhus should not develop lust, either internally or externally.”

Ordinary human beings may know about the calmness of mid-ocean, but this discourse was given to celestial beings, who know about the ocean very well, so they could easily appreciate it. Mid-ocean can be taken as the water lying midway between the top and the bottom of the ocean, or that several hundred miles away from the shore. One should practise mindfulness to be as calm as the mid-ocean, free from active lust and craving, and unperturbed by liking or disliking. This means to practise mindfulness all the time, day and night.

## How to Be as Calm as the Mid-ocean

One must note whatever one sees as “seeing, seeing,” though at first one may notice only the general nature of the eye and forms. When the contemplation becomes mature, the impermanence of the eye and forms will be comprehended. Practise in the same way with hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. The range of tactile sensations is very extensive. When you walk, note as “walking;” when you sit, note as “sitting;” when you stand, note as “standing.” Each and every bodily movement must be noted. If you have pain, that should be noted too. All of these phenomena are tactile sensations. Similarly, if you think or reflect, note “thinking.” As well as physical sensations, mental feelings such as “happy,” or “sad” should also be noted. In brief, every physical and mental activity should be contemplated — pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings should be noted, and the nature of these phenomena should be noticed and understood.

When all prominent phenomena are noted and comprehended whenever they occur, concentration will become deep. Then one will realise through intuitive wisdom that “there are just the object and the knowing of it.” Then the relativity of cause and effect are perceived, and the incessant arising and passing away of phenomena is realised. The three characteristics of impermanence (because of incessant arising and dissolution), unsatisfactoriness, and not-self (since the phenomena act according to their own nature, and do not obey one’s wish) are understood through intuitive wisdom. When this insight matures, the realisation of the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna will follow, with the total cessation of mind and matter. If one continues contemplating like this unremittingly, Arahantship would finally be attained and then all defilements would be eradicated. An Arahant is serene and unperturbed by pleasant and unpleasant sensations, or by the vicissitudes of life.

If one fails to practise like this, one is allowing the growth and development of the following seven things: lust (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*), wrong view (*ditṭhi*), defilements (*kilesā*), and deeds leading to rebirth (*kammabhava*). The Noble Path and its Fruition could not be gained if these seven factors are allowed to grow and develop.



One will be still be affected by pleasant and unpleasant sensations, because attachment is not discarded. Therefore one should practise mindfulness without a break. Then the seven factors would have no chance to arise, and would be eradicated through the path and fruition of Arahantship. With the extinction of attachment one will become serene and calm like the mid-ocean. Among the seven factors, defilements includes doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness and recklessness. The growth and development of these factors must be prevented by the practise of mindfulness until Arahantship is attained and one becomes serene and calm as the mid-ocean, where there are no waves.

## Part Two

The gist of the Buddha's answer to the first question is to discard the impediments (*papañca*) with their roots, and thus attain tranquility. All these teachings were given from his personal experience and comprehensive insight. Some celestial beings wanted to know how to practise to gain such insight through personal experience. The Buddha therefore willed the mind-created image to request such a discourse.

### Request of the Mind-created Image (7)

*“Akittayī vīvaṭṭacakkhu, sakkhidhammaṃ parissayavinayaṃ;  
Paṭipadaṃ vadehi bhaddante, Pāṭimokkhaṃ athavāpi  
samādhin.”*

“O Buddha with wide-open eyes, you have well expounded the Dhamma gained through personal experience and intuitive wisdom that can expel and destroy all dangers. Venerable sir, kindly expound the fundamental practice that you have learned from personal experience, namely, the monastic discipline and development of concentration to gain mental calm.”

The Buddha is known as the possessor of five eyes:

1. The physical eye (*maṃsa cakkhu*) with which the Buddha can see clearly within a radius of one league (*yojana*) — about eight miles.
2. The divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), which can see the entire universe, and the destiny of beings after their death.
3. The eye of wisdom (*paññā cakkhu*), i.e. knowledge of the path and its fruition, and knowledge of reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*).

4. The eye of the Buddha (*Buddha cakkhu*) — Omniscience. This is the knowledge of the spiritual maturity of beings, and knowledge of their tendencies and predispositions.
5. The all-seeing eye (*samanta cakkhu*) — the knowledge of full enlightenment.

What are the dangers referred to in the above stanza? There are two kinds of danger: obvious danger and concealed danger. Obvious danger is the danger from wild animals, thieves or other bad people, and various accidents or diseases. Concealed danger is the danger from defilements like lust, anger, delusion, anger (*kodha*), enmity (*upanāha*), ingratitude (*makkha*), arrogance (*palāsa*), jealousy (*issā*), meanness (*macchhariya*), deceitfulness (*māyā*), hypocrisy (*sāṭṭheyya*), disrespect (*thambha*), impetuosity (*sārambha*), pride (*māna*), conceit (*atimāna*), vanity (*mada*), and heedlessness (*pamāda*). All these defilements are unwholesome. The mind-created image of the Buddha continued as follows: “Venerable sir, kindly expound the fundamental practice that you have learned from personal experience, namely, the monastic discipline and development of concentration to gain mental calm.”

### Restrain the Eye Faculty (8)

The Buddha considered the predispositions of the celestial beings and replied as follows beginning with the faculty of the eye:

*“Cakkhūhi neva lolassa, gāmakathāya āvaraye sotam;  
Rase ca nānugijjheyya, na ca mamāyetha kiñci lokasmiṃ.”*

“Restrain the faculty of the eye, do not listen to village gossip, reflect wisely while taking food, do not cherish anything in the world.”

The monastic discipline can be divided into minor, middle, and major sections according to the Dīghanikāya.<sup>1</sup> The minor morality deals with abstention from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, backbiting, abusing, idle chatter, destroying plants, eating at the wrong time, watching entertainments, using scents and cosmetics, using luxurious beds and seats, and using money or trading goods. The middle morality includes abstention from storing up food, playing games, watching entertainments, using luxurious furnishings, and wrong livelihood by medical practice, acting as a messenger, *etc.*,

<sup>1</sup> The more important rules are in the first, *i.e.*, the minor section (ed.)

while the major morality includes the low arts of telling fortunes, interpreting dreams, *etc.*

According to the predispositions of his audience, the Buddha began with the restraint of the eye and the ten precepts observed by monks and novices. To restrain the faculty of the eye means that a bhikkhu should not look here and there unmindfully because it yields useless results such as lust, greed, *etc.* When a bhikkhu goes into a village or town he must go or sit with downcast eyes, looking ahead a distance of only a plough's yoke. Celestial beings and lay people adore the bhikkhus with such restraint of the senses.

On seeing things, ordinary people recall impressions that arouse defilements. Lust may also arise due to attraction to the opposite sex. The minutest details of bodily actions and mannerisms are noticed and clearly remembered when a man sees a woman or vice versa. Unpleasant impressions give rise to hatred, even for the opposite sex. All these are the result of lack of restraint of the eye. These strong impressions of the opposite sex reappear later, with the recurrence of attachment, lust, or hatred.

There can be no peace of mind when you are angry or lustful. Due to the affliction of anger or lust one may spend a sleepless night, one may say what should not be said, or one may even commit a crime, which brings trouble immediately. If you murder, steal, or lie, you will fall into the lower realms after death. All these are the undesirable results of lack of restraint of the eye.

The disciples of the Buddha, therefore, do not pay attention to forms and images; they do not notice the minute details of bodily actions and mannerisms. They constantly note the apparent phenomena whenever seeing occurs. With deep contemplation, liking and disliking do not arise because nothing happens beyond the seeing. Dissolution takes place at the very moment of seeing, so the seeing is comprehended as unsatisfactory and not-self. Knowing the true nature of phenomena, lust and anger are extinguished, so the Buddha taught us to restrain the faculty of the eye.

However, it is difficult to stop at just seeing, and not to have any perceptions or feelings regarding the things seen. When the knowledge of dissolution (*bhāṅga-ñāṇa*) matures you will have personal experience of just seeing, and this becomes even more clear at the stage of knowledge of equanimity about formations

(*saṅkhārupekkhā-nāṇa*). Many meditators who practised mindfulness have such experiences.

### The Story of Cittagutta Thera

Cittagutta Thera, who dwelt in the Kuraṇḍaka cave in Sri Lanka, restrained his eye faculty not only when he went into the village, but also when he was in the cave. It is just like the meditators here who contemplate without looking at anything. A meditator should behave like a blind man, though he sees; like a deaf man, though he hears; like a dumb man, though he can speak; and like an invalid, though he is strong. There is no need for a meditator to look around, he must contemplate unremittingly.

Cittagutta Thera never looked at the roof of the cave, nor at the flowering tree at the entrance to the cave. One day some monks came to visit the elder and appreciated the paintings on the roof of the cave. The elder said that though he had lived for sixty years in the cave, only then did he learn about the paintings.

The King of Mahāgāma three times asked the elder to visit his palace, but the elder did not go there. Then the king ordered the nursing mothers of the village where the elder went for alms, not to nurse their babies. Only then the elder came to the palace for seven days. Whether it was the king or the queen who paid respect to him he blessed them with the words, “May the king be happy.” The elder’s pupils asked him why he did so. The elder replied that he did not notice whether it was the king or the queen who paid respect to him, since he did not look at them.

The eye faculty restraint of Cittagutta Thera is remarkable. It is a pity that no such record was made regarding great monks like Cittagutta Thera in Burma.

### Do Not Listen to Worldly Talk

The Buddha taught us to refrain from listening to worldly talk, or “animal talk (*tiracchāna kathā*) as it is called in the Niddesa Pāḷi. This means talk relating to worldly affairs, which are obstructive to the attainment of the Path and its Fruition. Such talk will disturb concentration, so meditators are advised not listen to talk about family affairs, nor to read newspapers, *etc.* If you happen to hear such talk, just contemplate it as “hearing, hearing.” The Buddha advised, “On hearing sounds, do not notice what is said, pay no

attention to minute details such as whether the voice is sweet, *etc.* Just let it be the sensation of sound.”

### **Take No Delight in Taste**

To avoid indulgence in pleasure while taking food, the Buddha taught, “Take your food reflecting wisely.” This means that food is taken not for enjoyment, not for pride, not for beauty, nor for a good complexion. Food is taken only to sustain the body, to keep it healthy, to satisfy hunger, and avoid discomfort. Hunger is the greatest disease. Most other diseases are curable, but hunger is incurable. It afflicts you every day in the present existence, and in future existences too. Only the final attainment of nibbāna can free you from hunger.

After satisfying one’s hunger, one should follow the virtuous practice according to the Buddha’s teaching. Monks who partake of almsfood offered by the laity, but do not lead a virtuous life, are not fulfilling their duty.

### **Reflecting on Food as Repulsive**

“Collecting almsfood in the rain or sun is burdensome. Collecting almsfood is regarded as begging by those who have no faith in the Dhamma, though it is a meritorious deed.” Reflecting in this way, the need to collect almsfood is seen as a burden. Then a monk should reflect how repulsive the food is while being chewed and formed into bolus; when it is digesting, and becomes faecal matter. You would not enjoy food at all if you reflect thus while eating. Even if craving for delicious taste is not eradicated, it would certainly be greatly reduced.

### **Taking Food With Mindfulness**

Another way to contemplate while eating is using the Satipaṭṭhāna method. This is the best method to reduce the craving for delicious tastes. One should be mindful of every detail of one’s actions while eating such as: “looking, seeing,” when one looks at the food; “arranging,” as one arranges it; “bringing,” as one brings it to the mouth; “opening,” as one opens the mouth; “touching,” as it touches the mouth; “closing,” as one closes one’s mouth; “chewing,” as one chews it; “tasting,” as one tastes it; “swallowing,” as one swallows it. This is how one should contemplate while taking food, and one should practise similarly when drinking or taking soup. Then one

will no longer enjoy the taste if one notes every detail of one's actions. Gradually, the craving for taste will be eradicated.

### **The Parable of Eating the Flesh of One's Own Child**

If you had to eat your own child's flesh, would you enjoy it? To that extent one must expel the craving for taste. Once a man and his wife went with their young son to a distant village. On the way they ran out of food. The man said that as he could not provide for the family, it was best that he should be killed, and his flesh taken for food. The wife asked her husband to kill her, since she was not a dutiful wife. Then the two thought of killing their son, since they could easily have another one. The father sent his young son to his mother, who sent him back to his father. This went on until the little boy dropped dead. Then they continued their journey using their son's flesh as provisions. They ate it with their eyes full of tears. How could they enjoy it? This is not a true story, but just a parable to press home the point. In the same way, while taking food you must not permit any greed or craving. By contemplating constantly, you must expel all craving for food.

### **Advice for Non-meditators**

The foregoing advice is intended for monks and meditators who should reflect thoroughly while eating. Non-meditators will also be happier if they can expel the craving for food to a certain extent. Family life will be more harmonious if one is not gluttonous, and if one abstains from drinking and smoking. Not to give trouble to lay supporters, newly ordained monks are instructed to be content with whatever food he receives for alms. Non-meditators will also benefit if they expel desire for food as much as possible.

### **Do Not Cherish Anything**

So far only restraint of the eye, ear, and taste have been mentioned. The faculties of smell and touch seem to have been overlooked. So the Buddha added, "Do not cherish anything in the world." This means that one should note everything, as and when it occurs, to discard craving. To expel all latent craving, note everything attentively. If you fail to note anything at all, craving will develop. Any craving must be noted until it disappears.

## **Do Not Grieve Over Misfortunes (9)**

*“Phassena yadā phutṭhassa, paridevaṃ bhikkhu na kareyya kuhuñci.*

*Bhavañca nābhijapēyya, bheravesu ca na sampavedheyya.”*

“Whoever is practising to be free from the cycle of existences will encounter misfortunes. So one should not grieve for any reason.”

This stanza is intended for meditators and monks, since the celestial beings would not encounter misfortune. However, on hearing that meditators and monks did not complain about any kind of suffering, the celestial beings would adore them. With this adoration and faith, they would attain the stages of the Path and its Fruition within a short time. Since this discourse was delivered to those imbued with faith, it deals with the practices of morality and mental calm.

If any disagreeable sensation such as feeling cold, hot, mosquito bites, tiredness of the limbs, or pain arises in the body, do not complain. Do not change your posture, but carry on contemplating with patience.

### **Contemplate With Patience**

The Buddha said, “Monks, in this community, a monk is unperturbed by cold or heat, hunger or thirst, mosquito or even snake bites. He can tolerate abusive words and accusations. He has patience for any kind of disagreeable feelings arising in his body. He can bear even life-threatening diseases.” People with faith pay the highest tribute to monks who practice such tolerance. Some can still contemplate with forbearance when afflicted by the pain of death. People of other faiths, on seeing such forbearance could not help but develop admiration and faith.

### **Those Who Lack Faith Dislike Talk About Faith**

Those who lack faith regard the practice of forbearance as self-torture and have no faith in it. However, the celestial beings who had faith, on hearing about this exercise of patience, developed faith and adoration. They were filled with joy and gladness. The Buddha delivered this sermon so that they would achieve insight on noting that this joy and gladness also passed away.

Several meditators here have personal experience of improvement in their concentration resulting from exercising patience. The Burmese proverb, “Patience leads to nibbāna” is well proven by insight meditation. When one first takes up meditation, aches and pains, and other disagreeable feelings will arise in the body. One must note these feelings without changing the posture. These feelings may become acute, but as concentration develops they will gradually be overcome. In some meditators such unpleasant feelings are totally eradicated. Some instruct to change the posture if painful feelings arise, because they have never experienced the passing away of these feelings with mature concentration. True insight knowledge could not be achieved if concentration is interrupted with frequent changes of posture.

### **Do Not Aspire for A Better Existence**

The Buddha taught not only to tolerate painful feelings, but also not to aspire for better existences. Some enter the monkhood, hoping to enjoy more refined sensual pleasures in the celestial realms. During the Buddha’s time some women believed that their husbands became monks to get nymphs in their next existence. The former wives of Venerable Raṭṭhapāla and Venerable Sudinna asked about the beauty of the nymphs that they would meet in their next existence. The Buddha urged them not to aspire for rebirth in celestial realms.

### **Have No Fear of Danger**

Do not allow fear of forthcoming dangers disturb the meditation practice. The Mahāniddeśa mentions the danger of tigers and other ferocious animals, snakes, and dacoits, and the dangers relating to birth, old age, disease, death, bad people, and natural disasters. In the Buddha’s time, many monks practised meditation in the jungle with no fear of such danger and harm.

### **The Story of Saṃkicca**

A young boy named Saṃkicca became a novice under the guidance of Venerable Sāriputta. He practised meditation on the five repulsive aspect of the body — head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin — while his head was being shaved and attained Arahantship. At one time, thirty monks took meditation instructions from the Blessed One and asked leave to practise meditation in a certain forest. Seeing the forthcoming danger, the Buddha told them to take leave from



Venerable Sāriputta who, also knowing about the danger, sent the novice Saṃkicca with them.

The thirty monks went with the novice to the forest and practised meditation. One night, a band of dacoits came and demands the life of a monk. Each monk offered himself, but the novice Saṃkicca asked permission to go, saying that was why he was sent with them. The seven year old novice sat meditating while the dacoits prepared to kill him. When the leader of the dacoits struck him with his long knife, the knife coiled back to the hilt. The same thing happened, a second time. Then the dacoit leader considered that even the lifeless knife had adoration for a righteous person, though he was ignorant of the novice's virtue. He begged forgiveness from the novice, and all the dacoits went forth under the guidance of the novice Saṃkicca. The novice took leave from the thirty monks and returned to Venerable Sāriputta with five hundred new monks. When they paid homage to the Buddha, he admonished them thus:

“A man with no morality and concentration may live for a hundred years; yet better is a single day's life of a man endowed with morality and concentration.” (*Dhp v 110*)

On hearing this verse, all five hundred new monks attained Arahantship. This story illustrates that the monks in those days went into the jungle to meditate with no fear whatsoever. Thus the attribute of the monks, namely the ability to meditate unperturbed by the fear of any danger was exalted by the Buddha so that the faithful ones might gain special insight on adoration of such attributes.

### **The Tiger and the Monk**

On another occasion, thirty monks took instruction from the Buddha and went into a forest to practise meditation. They agree to stay each in their own place and to practise constantly without disturbing one another. At dawn, one dozing monk was carried away by a tiger. However, to avoid disturbing the other monks, he didn't make even a sound. After fifteen days, when it was time for the Pāṭimokkha ceremony, it was noticed that fifteen monks were missing. On learning what had happened they agreed to let the rest know if another of them was taken by the tiger. This behaviour of the monks is praiseworthy because they were not deterred from their meditation practice. As usual, the tiger came and carried away a young monk.

On hearing him shout, the others came and gave chase, but the tiger climbed a cliff. Being unable to follow, they urged the young monk to prove his special attribute of a monk, by meditating to his utmost. The monk meditated earnestly without grieving, and just before the tiger devoured his heart, he attained Arahantship.

### How to Discard Suffering

In this story and in the one of Venerable Tissa (who broke his own legs with a boulder as a guarantee to robbers that he would not run away), the feeling of suffering was discarded by means of mindfulness. The meditators here have personally experienced the disappearance of suffering by practising insight meditation. If contemplation is really powerful and mature, the suffering will be totally exterminated. The monk in the above story meditated zealously while he was being carried away by the tiger, and while he was being eaten, without being deterred by the fear of death.

Since the final purpose of meditation is to be liberated from rebirth, old age, disease, and death, one should not be shaken by such dangers. Some meditators, however, give up the practice because of the fear of disease and pain. Some stop meditating, fearing that they might drop dead. However, meditators with mature insight will continue to contemplate to gain freedom from these dangers, just like the novice Saṃkicca and the monk eaten by the tiger. I urge you to meditate courageously, to overcome the fear of death.

## Part Three

In the two previous lectures I completed the explanation of nine stanzas — today I will start with the tenth, which deals with instructions to monks to be free from storing up food and other things.

### Must Be Free From Hoarding (10)

*“Annānamatho pānānaṃ, khādanīyānaṃ athopi vatthānaṃ;  
Laddhā na sannidhiṃ kayirā, na ca parittase tāni  
alabhamāno.”*

In the above stanza, the Buddha admonished the monks not to store up food, juice, or robes. If edible things from the previous day are taken the following day, a monk has committed an offence that is a demeritorious deed. It is permitted to take juice in the afternoon,

in the evening, or before the following dawn, but if it is taken after that it is an offence. The following story gives a salutary lesson relating to the above instructions.

### **Don't Store Even Salt**

In one existence the Bodhisatta was the king of Gandhāra (in the north west of India, near Kashmir). The king of Gandhāra renounced the world and became a monk. On learning about it, his friend, the king of Videha followed suit. These two monks practised the Dhamma together in the Himalayan forest. As they took only wild fruits and roots with no salt they became undernourished. When they went to a nearby village, the villagers offered them rice and salt with much respect and adoration. The next day there was no salt in their food, so the Videha monk offered the Gandhāra monk some salt. The latter asked where it came from. On learning that the Videha monk had kept the salt from the previous day, the Gandhāra monk reprimanded him, "Friend, you abandoned the bountiful country of Videha, with sixteen thousand town and villages, and its treasury full of treasure. Why did you keep this worthless salt just for the next day or the day after?"

Most people cannot bear to be reprimanded, even though they have a fault and are likely to retort. So the Videha monk retorted, "Teacher, since you have renounced the throne of Gandhāra, you have no followers and subjects to instruct, so why do you instruct me now?"

The Bodhisatta explained, "Friend, I have spoken the truth. This unwholesome practice is not for me. The impurity of misdeeds never exists in me."

Then the Videha monk realised his fault and the two monks continued to practise, gained supernormal powers, and were reborn as brahmās after their death. The main point of this story is that even monks who were not disciples of the Buddha abstained from storing up things. These days many monks may think that keeping salt is not wrong. Formerly, the disciples of the Buddha possessed such attributes of contentment and did not store up anything for the coming days. Learning about this attribute of contentment many celestial beings gained more faith and adoration, and attained insight.

With regard to the instruction to store no robes, a monk is advised to keep no more than three robes. If extra robes are kept, though it is not regarded as an offence, a monk is no longer seen as one

practising to reduce defilements. The Buddha admonished the monks not to worry even if there was insufficient food to eat, or robes to wear. A monk must tolerate hardship by practising insight meditation or reflecting thus: “In previous lives my meritorious deeds were not good enough to ensure that I have sufficient food and robes, so I should strive harder in this existence. I am better off than those in the lower realms. I am still well off compared to some poor people and animals. I am very fortunate to be a monk and to have this chance to practise meditation. The meditators here must note the wandering mind if it worries about the lack of sufficient food or robes.

### **Fundamental Principles for Concentration (11)**

*“Jhāyī na pādalolassa, virame kukkucā nappamajjeyya;  
Athāsanesu sayanesu, appasaddesu bhikkhu vihareyya.”*

“A monk who comprehends the perils the cycles of existence, practices tranquillity meditation and attains absorption. He contemplates the characteristic of impermanence, and attains the Path and its Fruition. To do this, he should not move about.”

The above statement means that a monk should always contemplate in one absorption or another. By contemplating the sign (*nimitta*) of the meditation object one attains absorption. *Vipassanā jhāna* could be gained through insight meditation. It is, therefore, advised that one must constantly contemplate one of the following: a meditation device (*kaṣiṇa*), impurities of the body, the respiration, the thirty-two parts of the body, or loving-kindness (*mettā*). By doing so absorption will be achieved. These are the fundamental principles for concentration leading to the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna.

### **Vipassanā Jhāna**

The other kind of absorption is concentration through contemplating mental and physical phenomena. Concentration is attained by noting constantly and attentively (*sadā sato sikkhe*). By doing so the contemplating mind is concurrent with the object of contemplation, so the mind does not wander at that very moment. The concurrence of the contemplating mind with the object of contemplation is known as momentary concentration of insight (*vipassanā khaṇika samādhi*).

The attainment of momentary concentration is explained as follows in the Visuddhimagga (Vism 289). After exiting from absorption, a meditator will comprehend the passing away and the dissolution of the consciousness during the absorption. The insight into the characteristics of impermanence, *etc.*, enhances the momentary unification of mind. The unification of mind, according to the Commentary, is momentary concentration of insight. Being free from hindrances, having no interruptions in contemplation, forming one continuous chain of identical thoughts, the mind at this level, ceases to wander as if it has attained ecstatic concentration (*appanā samādhi*). For one whose vehicle is tranquillity (*samatha yānika*), nibbāna could not be attained without proximate concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and ecstatic concentration (*appanā samādhi*).

Similarly, one whose vehicle is insight (*vipassanā yānika*), has never attained nibbāna in the absence of momentary concentration. Though one may practise insight meditation by contemplating “standing,” “standing,” “sitting,” “sitting” and so on, if the momentary concentration is not strong enough, he may not comprehend the intrinsic characteristics of mind and matter. In the early stage of meditation, the characteristics of impermanence, *etc.*, are not yet perceived. However, if one contemplates incessantly as “walking,” “standing,” “sitting,” “rising,” “falling,” when he walks, *etc.* (according to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta) momentary concentration will gradually mature. Then the contemplating mind and the object of contemplation will concur. As the momentary concentration gains strength one will distinctly comprehend the rigidity, force, and motion due to the air element while noting “walking,” *etc.* Moreover one will perceive analytically that there is just the phenomena of the noting mind and the object noted *i.e.*, matter. One will further notice the relationship of cause and effect. The continuous arising of sense objects and their dissolution become very distinct and clear as if one is handling them.

At this stage, impermanence as the outcome of dissolution, unsatisfactoriness because of incessant arising and passing away, and insubstantiality of mind and matter are fully realised. This realisation of the natural phenomena of conditioned existence is due to the strong momentary concentration. That there is “no insight without momentary concentration,” as stated in the Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīka, is then obvious.

## Explanation in the Visuddhimagga

Some people who are conversant with analytical study by way of the Abhidhamma maintain that the three characteristics (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) of conditioned existence could be perceived, and that insight could be gained through reflection using the analytical method. However, this belief is not in line with the Commentaries, which state that knowledge of comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*) is developed only after the four forms of purity (purity of morals, purity of mind, purity of view, and purity by overcoming doubt) are accomplished. Thence the achievement of insight into the arising and passing phenomena. Moreover, it is clear that seeing brilliant light, colours, or gaining ecstasy and so forth could not possibly be experienced just through analytical study by way of Abhidhamma.

In accordance with the word “*jhāyī*” in the above verse, one is advised to contemplate eight kinds of absorption and to establish the access concentration. If this is unattainable then contemplate and note the arising of mind and matter through the six sense-doors to gain momentary concentration. To accomplish strong concentration one must not move about, but stay in one place and practise meditation calmly. Visiting places and listening to worldly talk are counted as roaming about. One must meditate constantly instead of going to other places without sufficient reason.

## Restlessness of the Limbs

“Must abstain from restlessness” means to abstain from demeritorious deeds. There are three kinds of restlessness in monks:

1. Monks who abide by the Vinaya rules should reflect before doing anything, and should not do it if doubtful.
2. Remorse over mistakes one has made by omission or commission. If there is remorse one should note and dispel it.
3. Physical restlessness means fidgeting the limbs while teaching, listening to the Dhamma, or speaking. One must restrain such restlessness by mindfulness.

## Do Not Be Heedless

Not being heedless (*nappamajjeyya*) has a very broad meaning. The Mahāniddeśa explains it as: “One must act with reverence.” In other words, one must respectfully practise morality, concentration,

and wisdom. The phrase means to practise meditation respectfully. Not only that, it should be done without interruption, without giving up, with continuous endeavour, never neglecting the practice, remembering to do meritorious deeds, and determined to accomplish morality, concentration, and wisdom that have not yet been fulfilled.

Monks who perceive the perils of the cycle of existences should remain in a quiet place. They must always be attentive and mindful so as to enjoy absorption, not roaming about, and accomplished in the three forms of training (morality, concentration, and wisdom). To practise tranquillity one should find a quiet place where one will not be undisturbed. A quiet place is vital for meditation. If possible it is best to go into a forest. However for reasons of safety, many meditation centres have been opened in suitably quiet places.

## Be Vigilant (12)

*“Niddam na bhahulikareyya, jāgariyam bhajeyya ātāpī.  
Tandim māyam hassam kiḍḍam, methunam vippajahe  
savibūsam.”*

In the Apanṇaka Sutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya, Tikanipāta, it is stated that a monk who is endowed with three things, is surely on the way to Arahantship:-

1. He guards the sense-doors (*indriyesu guttadvāro hoti*),
2. He is moderate in eating (*bhojane mattaññū hoti*), and
3. He is devoted to wakefulness (*jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti*).

The Pāli word “ātāpī” in the above verse means to note with unremitting zeal and ardour. Defilements will not have any opportunities to assert themselves and tranquillity will be achieved if one observes and notes with diligence. That means defilements will dry up by less sleep and more arduous practice. To be able to meditate incessantly and zealously one should sleep less. Lay aside one sixth of the day for sleep, the rest must be spent for ardent meditation. Taken from the Jāgariyānuyoga Pāli Commentary, Mahāniddeśa explained as follows:-

A bhikkhu in this Saṅgha should keep his mind pure, totally free from hindrances by noting while walking and sitting during the day. So also in the evening (meaning up to 10 p.m.) observe while walking and sitting and thus expel the hindrances. In the night time (*i.e.* 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.) lie on the right side; note every movement while preparing

to lie down and before falling asleep; keep in mind to wake up at 2 a.m. (to sleep for four hours during the night for health reasons). Wake up in the early morning and keep away the hindrances by noting and observing while walking and sitting.

This is the way of being devoted to wakefulness (*jāgariyānuyoga*). It is clear that sleeping time is only for four hours during the night and to get up at 2 a.m. and start noting while walking and sitting. Before walking you stand up from sitting, and also you stand before sitting down from walking, there may be times when you stand for a while. All these must be noted as “standing.”

During the day and also up to 10 p.m. you should avoid lying down while meditating. Thus you keep vigilance by sleeping less and keeping awake more. Awakened hours without meditation are undesirable because they enhance the thoughts about various things and thus bring forth immoralities.

### **Expel Sloth**

To be vigilant and meditating constantly one should expel sloth. Sloth cannot be removed merely by wishing “do not be sleepy,” but it can be discarded by noting or reflecting energetically as follows:—

1. “If reborn in the lower realms there will be no chance for meditation. Many such existences have passed. Now everything is feasible for meditation practice, seize this opportunity, do not be a victim of sloth. Laziness will again drag you down to the lower realms and there you will suffer for innumerable existences.” This is how to discard sloth by reflecting on the perils of the lower realms.
2. “In this world people struggle for their daily existence. Though they toil day and night, sometimes it is not even enough for a day’s expenses. How much work is needed to live for months, years, or the whole life time? When practising meditation, it is not only for the sake of a day or a month, or for one existence. It is possible that you may achieve the higher Dhamma within a week or a few months. This will save you from the suffering of the lower realms for the remainder in the cycle of existences. Do not let sloth prey upon you, practise meditation with joy and zeal. If you are reluctant, you will not accomplish the



higher Dhamma.” This is how to reject sloth by reflecting upon the benefits of meditation practice.

3. “This is not a Path for ordinary people. It is the path trodden by the Noble Ones. One on this path should not be slothful and lazy — one must be energetic and diligent” This is expelling sloth by reflecting upon the noble nature of the Path.
4. “Those who offer almsfood are not your relatives, they expect no wealth, nor they offer almsfood so that you would enjoy life. ‘May he be of good health to practise meditation and be liberated from the cycle of existences. May we also benefit from these good deeds’ are their aspirations in offering alms. Hence sloth should be rejected and one should make an effort to practise meditation in order to fulfil their wish.” This is how to dispel sloth by reciprocating the merit of offering alms.

In connection with this, I will tell you the story of Venerable Mahāmitta from the Commentary on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.<sup>1</sup>

### The Story of Mahāmitta Thera

An elderly female disciple was very devoted to Mahāmitta Thera who was residing in the farmer’s cave (Kassakaleṇa). One day, before she left to gather fruits and leaves in the wood, she instructed her daughter to offer the good rice, together with honey, butter and milk if the elder came for alms, and also to eat what would be left. As for herself she had taken broken rice and some sour leaves for her lunch. Having overheard this<sup>2</sup> while preparing to go for alms, he admonished himself thus, “The old woman ate leftovers and asked her daughter to prepare broken rice gruel with some sour leaves for her lunch. As for your almsfood she instructed her daughter to offer the best. She does not offer you these things expecting fields, food, clothing, or other goods. What she wishes for is the happiness of the human abode, the world of celestial beings, and nibbāna. Are you capable of fulfilling her wishes? You should not receive her almsfood if you are not free from lust, anger, and delusion.” Reflecting thus he put back the almsbowl and contemplated in the cave with the determination that he would not rise until Arahantship was attained.

<sup>1</sup> MA.i.293.

<sup>2</sup> This is not mentioned in the Commentary, it just says having heard that sound (*taṃ saddaṃ sutvā*), but presumably the elder had developed the Divine Ear (*dibbasota*), by means of which he could hear sounds at a great distance (ed.)

As he had been mindful for a certain length of time, he practised meditation and became an Arahant that very morning.

Then he went to the elderly devotee's house for his almsfood and blessed the daughter "May you be happy," upon offering food, milk, *etc.* Arriving back from the wood the elderly woman realised that the elder had attained Arahantship when she was informed by her daughter that the elder looked very serene. She said, "Your brother, the elder, has found delight in the Buddha's teaching."

### **The Story of Piṇḍapātika Tissa Thera**

Once, there lived a poor firewood seller named Mahātissa in the village of Mahāgāma in Southern Sri Lanka. So charitable was he that he and his wife offered almsfood to the monks fortnightly. The young monks threw away their (the firewood seller and his wife) almsfood right in front of them saying "They are no good."

Mahātissa was unhappy about it. However, they could not offer better almsfood. His wife encouraged him by saying, "Who is said to be poor when he has children. Here is your daughter.

Send her to a house as a maid and we'll get twelve rupees. Buy a milk cow. Then we would be able to offer almsfood with milk." From that day on only the fortunate monks, by drawing lots, received the milk and butter almsfood from Mahātissa. He was happy about it and went to work at a sugar-cane factory, and having saved twelve rupees, he went to bring back his daughter.

At that time Piṇḍapātika Tissa was on his way to the Tissa Mahāvihāra. The firewood seller paid respect and followed the elder. As mid-day was drawing near, the firewood seller thought "Although I've not brought any food with me I have some money. At a village gate I shall buy some food for the elder." In a moment a man with a food package came along their way. So the poor man requested the elder to wait a while and went to the man and offered one rupee for his food package. The greedy man refused to sell and asked for more. Finally the poor man gave all of his twelve rupees and brought the food to the elder. When half the food was put in the almsbowl the elder covered the bowl. The poor man asked him to let him give it all. Thinking there might be some reason the elder accepted it.

While they proceeded on their journey, the elder learned the whole story and thought himself, "This man has done what is not easy to do. As soon as I find a suitable place I must strive for Arahantship

at one sitting, even if my body, skin, flesh, and blood dry up.” At the Tissa Mahāvihāra the elder began to practise and attained Arahantship at the dawn of the seventh day. He was very weak and tired. Knowing that he might not live long he asked the monks to gather and invited them to say if there was any doubt in them about his conduct. They realised at once that the elder had attained Arahantship and done what he should have done. They wished to know what cause lay behind it. After relating the whole story, the elder made a wish that his body may be moved only at the touch of the firewood seller. Then he attained *parinibbāna*.

On learning about the death of the elder, King Kākavannatissa come to Tissa Mahāvihāra and made preparations for the cremation. The elder’s body could not be moved to the funeral pyre. The firewood seller was sent for. By way of paying homage, he lifted the elder’s feet and put them on his head. Then the body went up and fell on the funeral pyre and was cremated automatically.

The lesson from these two stories is that monks should endeavour to expel sloth in return for the almsfood offered by the laity. One thing to consider is that by practising meditation there is more benefit for the monks than for the people who offered almsfood.

5. To dispel sloth by reflecting on the nobility of the Buddha’s inheritance. How to do so.

The seven qualities of the Noble Ones, *i.e.*, the inheritance of the Buddha are highly venerable. Nowadays people crave for material inheritance only. However, the supramundane inheritance is the most valuable, and the most worthy. The supramundane qualities will deter rebirths in the lower world. It is of utmost importance to gain the qualities of the Noble Ones such as morality, faith and so on. One should not be slothful if one desires such things. Thus reflecting upon the nobility and worthiness of the Buddha’s inheritance, sloth must be dispelled. To discard sloth by thinking of the worthiness, nobility, and reverence of the Buddha and other bhikkhus such as Venerable Sāriputta. Also think of your own opportunity of becoming a monk and its nobility.

These are the ways of rejecting sloth by means of reflection. According to insight meditation practice it is to contemplate and expel when you begin to be slack in mindfulness or become lazy, by noting “slacking,” “slacking,” “lazy,” “lazy.” Then your contemplation will gain strength.

**Avoid Hypocrisy**

Some people, though they have done immoral deeds such as theft and murder, pretend to loathe such acts. Some liars pretend to abhor lies. This is hypocrisy. Some meditators entertain unwholesome thoughts that they should note and dispel. On being questioned by the meditation teacher, they would not dare to admit it. That also is regarded as hypocrisy. If a patient refuses to tell what is wrong with him, a doctor will not be able to cure him. If a meditator does not inform the teacher what is in his or her mind, the teacher may not be able to put him or her on the right track. The Buddha, therefore, stated: "If he is not cunning, does not hide his faults, is straightforward and intelligent. Let him come to take instruction. Within seven days Arahantship is his."

**Abstain from Laughing and Playing**

There are six grades of laughter.

1. Smiling just with open eyes.
2. Smiling with a glimpse of teeth. These two are also enjoyed by the Buddha and Arahants. Smiling for no purpose should be noted and dispelled.
3. Making soft sounds while laughing.
4. Making loud sounds while laughing. Normal people used to laugh these two ways, but monks should abstain from it.
5. Laughing with tears rolling down the face.
6. Laughing with the body swaying back and forth.

These latter two ways of laughing are seen in less cultured people, and are unsuitable for monks. If anything amusing is heard or seen, note and dispel the mirth. In the *Āṅguttara Tikaṇipāṭa* (263), the Buddha said, "Only the young men laugh making loud noises, baring the teeth and clapping their hands. Monks, if due to something you wish to express your pleasure, smiling with just a glimpse of teeth is enough for you." Physical playing includes playing with live or model horses, elephants, and carriages; or with cards, chess pieces, *etc.* Verbal playing means playing tunes, singing, joking, and playing pranks. All of these must be refrained from.

**Abstain from Beautification and Sexual Relations**

Beautification for layman need not be explained here. Monks are not to decorate their robes, alms-bowls, *etc.* so as to have good

appearance, nor their monastery or place where they reside. Sexual relations are regarded as the most degrading and immoral act for monks. If a monk has committed sexual intercourse he can never be ordained again. It is a great loss for his own life and for the Saṅgha. Therefore, sexual relations should be avoided even at the cost of one's life. The laity adore and revere monks, The sons of the Buddha, because of their abstention from sexual relations, which is regarded as the most desirable thing by worldlings. King Mindon expressed his devotion of the monks, "Just on account of their celibate life, they should be revered."

While the Blessed One was giving this sermon, the celestial beings praised, "The monks are free of sexual relations," became so full of joy and faith that they could easily attain the supramundane Dhamma. The Buddha delivered this sermon with this is view.

In brief, this verse means is to abstain from laughing, playing, sloth, hypocrisy, and sexual relations. Besides actual sexual intercourse, there are seven minor sexual relationships that were explained by the Buddha to the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi.

### Seven Minor Sexual Relations

"Jāṇussoṇi, in this world some recluses (*samaṇa*) and brahmins claim that they are celibate. However, they enjoy rubbing the body with perfumes, soothing massages and nursing by female disciples. In this case their morality is no longer pure as they take sensual pleasure from the physical contact of woman." Nuns as well as women observing moral precepts must refrain from massage and nursing by men, for this amounts to minor sexual relations. There is an exemption if the woman is seriously suffering from illness and there is no female to attend to her.

The second minor sexual relationship is laughing together with women. The third is the sensual pleasure enjoyed by gazing eye to eye with a woman. Fourthly, when a monk takes pleasure in listening to the voice of a woman on the other side of the wall. Listening to radios and tape recordings are included under this heading. The fifth is the pleasant feeling by recalling what has taken place (such as talking, laughing, and playing) between him and a woman in the past. Those who became monks, leaving their families behind, should take special note of this. The sixth is the desire for such enjoyments

and pleasures experienced by husband and wife. Lastly, the desire for celestial abodes in the next existence by virtue of the merits gained through strict observance of the monastic precepts in the present life. Many find difficult to refrain from this desire.

Monks who are mindful of the primary purpose of ordination, *i.e.*, to be liberated from the cycle of existences will abstain from these minor sexual relations. Samaṇa Deva, when reborn in Tāvatiṃsa, after arduous meditation in his previous existence, looked down upon the pleasures of Tāvatiṃsa, as a boxing champion would on being awarded a cabbage instead of a gold medal. The celestial realms are vastly inferior in comparison to the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna. Note and dispel such desires whenever they arise.

### Do Not Practise Black Magic (13)

*“Āthabbaṇaṃ supinaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ, no vidahe athopi nakkhattaṃ.  
Virutañca gabbhakaraṇaṃ, tikicchaṃ māmako na seveyya.”*

“Monks who are my followers do not practise black magic. They should not practice fortune-telling and medical charms.”

To practice the art of black magic (*āthabbaṇa mantāṃ*), one has to take salt-free food, sleep on grass spread on the ground, and observe the required practice. On the seventh day he has to go to a cemetery and take seven steps according to his prescribed text and recite mantras while waving his hands. Thus the accomplishment of the discipline takes place. As the Mahāniddeśa comments, people with the knowledge of this discipline could cast spells or various dangers and diseases upon the enemy’s army during war. It resembles the practice of the ascetics in the days of ancient Pagan. This black magic flourished in ancient India, nevertheless it could not stop the Arab and Greek armies from conquering the country. Moreover, India was under western rulers for many years.

I would like to relate a story that I heard at the age of eighteen, with regard to coincidence. A man from the village called Myaung Gyi went to a so-called magician as an apprentice. One day a merchant came with valuable presents and asked for a talisman. The teacher told his student to prepare one. Not knowing what to do, he just made a small ring out of a thatch leaf and gave it to the merchant. At the end of the year the merchant came back with more valuable

gifts believing that his business prospered due to that talisman. It was just a coincidence. The merchant's good business could not possibly be the result of the thatch leaf. This is a lesson to consider with one's own reason and wisdom. There are many such examples.

Even if there are some possibilities, the Buddha's disciples should respect the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha and should not to engage in any practice that is contrary to his teachings. Nowadays, some well known monks give out something as medicine or to avert dangers, evils, *etc.* This is also not in conformity with the teachings. Monks devoted to the triple gem should refrain from such practices. Not only that, monks should not engage in fortune-telling, interpretation of dreams, palm-reading, or spells and rituals to avert dangers. Monks should not fix auspicious dates or times for weddings, or ground-breaking ceremonies for buildings, according to the influence of the stars. In other words, monks should practise astrology. Whether stars and planets have anything to do with our world or not, the Buddha taught us to observe moral precepts, to develop concentration, and to gain insight with profound faith in kamma and its results.

After renouncing the household life there is no reason for monks to engage in worldly affairs. They should practise and contemplate ardently and diligently, to be free from the fetters that bind them to the cycle of existences.

Monks must also refrain from medical practices and fortune-telling based on birdsong. If a disease really is cured, it is a great meritorious deed, so there seems to be some exceptions with regard to medical practices among monks.<sup>1</sup> However, monks with earnest faith and devotion for the attributes of the triple gem should attach the greatest significance to the attainment of the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna. Putting aside other unnecessary things, they should strive for the accomplishment of morality, concentration, and wisdom.

### **Important to Have Pure Faith**

It is of great significance to be imbued with profound and pure faith in the Buddha's teachings, such as "Practise this with regard to morality, exercise thus to gain concentration and wisdom." The function of worldly affairs such as fortune-telling, medical practices, *etc.*, only cause degradation of one's morality. Concentration and wisdom could

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<sup>1</sup> Monks may prescribe medicine for other monks or co-residents, but not for lay people. See Buddhist Monastic Discipline II (ed.)

not be attained if there is moral impurity, and without concentration and wisdom there is little chance of liberation from the cycle of existences. Emancipation and liberation from the cycle of existences result only from pure morality, which in turn brings forth concentration and wisdom. “Not only you, but thousands could achieve real happiness and be liberated from the cycle of existences based on your teaching and instruction. You can give happiness for a short time, just for one existence, by prescribing medication or carrying out worldly affairs, but not permanent happiness.” To be full of profound and pure faith by reflecting in this way should be the aspiration of monks.

A monk is permitted, according to the Vinaya rules, to give medical cures to certain persons, such as his own father, mother, those looking after the father and mother, those serving him, and co-residents. It is also allowed to dispense medicine to the relatives of the monks, down to seven generations. If and when a monk would like to give prescription to other people it must be done through discussion with other monks. Once in Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup> a woman of the court came to Mahāpaduma Thera for a prescription for the Queen of King Vasabha. The elder consulted with the other monks.

When the Queen regained health they offered three robes and a medicine chest containing three hundred *kahāpaṇas*<sup>2</sup> saying, “Please offer flowers.” The Venerable elder accepted the gifts and offered flowers to the Buddha, thus freeing himself from the offence against the Vinaya rules.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The story is told in the Samantapāsādikā, Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the Vinaya Piṭaka (ed.)

<sup>2</sup> A coin of significant value — more than just a rupee (ed.)

<sup>3</sup> If the elder accepted the medicine chest, not knowing that money was inside, he still fell into an offence. Having confessed the offence and forfeited the money to a quorum of four bhikkhus the Saṅgha would give the money to a lay person if one was present. The lay person could then buy the flowers and the bhikkhus could offer them at the shrine.

Had the queen not specified that the money was for offering flowers to the Buddha, the lay person could have bought other requisites for the monks, and the other monks, though not the elder who had accepted the money, could have made use of whatever allowable requisites were offered. Otherwise, the lay person could have just taken it for his own use — once it has been forfeited. It is not for the Saṅgha to say what should be done with it unless invited by the lay person, and the monk who originally accepted the money may not use anything provided from it.

If no lay person is present, then the Saṅgha must appoint one of the quorum to dispose of it. He should take it outside of the monastic compound and throw it away, taking no note of where it falls, and thinking, “Let it be for whoever finds it.” (ed.)



## Part Four

Today's lecture will begin with verse 14. We have already completed 13 of the 20 verses in the previous three lectures.

### Tolerance of Praise and Blame (14)

*“Nindāya nappavedheyya, na unnameyya pasamsito bhikkhu.  
Lobham saha macchariyena, kodham pesuṇiyaṅga panudeyya.”*

In this verse the Buddha taught not to be downhearted upon reproach nor to be elated on praise and compliments. Undoubtedly people have to face these two worldly conditions. Nothing is unusual about praise and blame. Nevertheless, people are often upset and disheartened by reproof, whether it is in connection with worldly affairs or the Dhamma. It is important not to think in terms of worldly affairs, such as class, caste, wealth, education, and occupation. Pay no attention to such reproof; note and discard it on hearing it. On hearing words of reproach with regard to morality, *etc.*, one must reflect upon one's faults and limitations. If there are any, correct it and be happy. Ignore the reproach if you have no such faults or defects — “Even the Enlightened One was disparaged. If I have not done any wrong, there is nothing to fear,” reflecting thus one must not be disheartened.

Praise or compliments are welcomed even if they are not sincere. This is a wrong attitude. Even if they are sincere one must refrain from being elated. It is just a sound, a natural phenomenon. What is essential is to strive continuously for gaining praiseworthy attributes. To be unperturbed and equanimous upon reproofs and compliments one must endeavour to practise mindfulness.

One receiving compliments for accomplishments in learning, moral purity, or achievement of concentration and wisdom, one should try one's utmost to attain the higher stages reached by the Noble Ones. Until, and unless, Arahantship is attained, however much others may praise you, reflect “I have not yet reached the final goal,” and continue to strive for the attainment of Arahantship. Once Arahantship has been attained, there is no need to refrain from elation because there is no more conceit or pride in an Arahant. If not an Arahant yet, one needs to restrain oneself by noting and discarding elation and pride.

Not to be disheartened when reproached, not elated on praise, but to remain calm and restrained is the sign of strong concentration.

To tolerate both good and bad, to gain equanimity, one must possess mental tranquillity. Due to greed (*lobha*) one will be perturbed, therefore greed must be rejected. Covetous desire and greed cause one to be proud when praised, whereas anger causes dejection when one is not appreciated. For these reasons, greed and anger should both be dispelled. To be jealous and miserly is the outcome of greed. Covetousness (*macchhariya*) or possessiveness regarding property and loved ones is the result of intolerance or anger. Since covetousness is the cause of a disturbed mind it should be eliminated. Backbiting, one of the four verbal immoralities, is an act leading to the infringement of morality. Not only that, it can result in misunderstandings among loved ones. Backbiting should also be dispelled.

In the Dīghanikāya the moral precepts are explained as abstention from three kinds of bodily and four kinds of verbal immorality. In this Tuvaṭaka Sutta to abstain from sexual relations and unchastity (*abrahmācariya*) is clearly expressed by the words “*methunaṃ vippajāhe*” in verse 12. Verse 14 states how to refrain from backbiting (*pisuṇavācā*). To abstain from telling lies is mentioned in verse 17 and how to abstain from the use of harsh speech (*pharusavācā*) are explained in verse 18. The remaining precepts are killing, stealing, and frivolous talk (*samphappolāpa*). “Discard greed” means to abstain from stealing and frivolous talk, which have greed as their basis. Killing can be avoided by expelling the causal factors of anger and hatred. The above embraces the moral precepts for abstaining from seven immoral deeds as mentioned in the Dīghanikāya.

### Must Not Transact Business (15)

*“Kayavikkaye na tiṭṭheyya, upavādaṃ bhikkhu na kareyya kuhiñci. Gāme ca nābhisajjeyya, lābhakamyā jaṇaṃ na lapayeyya.”*

“The disciples of the Buddha do not engage in agriculture, paid work, fortune-telling, medical practice, or business of any kind. They do not enjoy the proceeds from such occupations.”

As the Buddha is free from these occupations, his disciples must be too. In the Brahmajāla Sutta of the Dīghanikāya the moral attributes of the Enlightened One are extolled thus:–

“The monk Gotama refrains from doing business.”

So too in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta the Buddha taught, “Great king, in my dispensation, the monks refrain from trading.” Since the Mahāsamaya Sutta was delivered during the time between the fourth and fifth rains retreats after the Enlightenment there were only monks and novices. It is, therefore, quite obvious that there was no exchange of things for profit among them as they were mostly Arahants and Noble Ones.

It is so adorable and honourable for the monks to be innocent and clear of any business transactions like laymen. It is not degrading for monks not to be doing business like laymen. In the Mahāniddeśa it would originally mean to say that monks not only refrain from business transactions, but also from exchanging things among themselves for profit. If it is not so, the Buddha’s restraint from business transaction may mean “restrain from exchanging things among the monks.” It will then be the most inappropriate way of interpretation. Therefore, in this sutta “*kayavikkaye*” should be translated as: “The disciples of Buddha are free from trading.”

Lay disciples offer robes, *etc.*, to the monks with faith in the morality of the monks and with the desire for happiness in the human world, celestial abodes, and to attain nibbāna. They offer requisites, without using them themselves or giving them to their loved ones. Hence the monks should receive and use them for the improvement of the Buddha’s dispensation. It is, however, very sad to hear that some monks sell the robes and save money to buy things such as radios or transmitters for business purposes. To abstain from business transaction is not impossible for a monk because he is fully provided with his needs by the lay disciples. The Buddha’s admonition “to abstain from business transaction” should be fully complied with — as many monks do.

### **Commit No Actions Deserving Reproach**

Blameworthy actions and defilements are of three grades — grave, medium, and light. The grave ones are killing, stealing, and sexual intercourse; lying backbiting, abusing, and frivolous talk; coveting other’s possessions, motive to kill, disbelief in kamma and its results. Transgression of the Vinaya rules and training is inclusive. The three mental actions should be rejected by concentration and wisdom.

The medium ones are:– lustful thoughts (*kāma vitakko*), malevolent thoughts (*byāpāda vitakko*), and cruel thoughts (*vihimsā vitakko*).

The light ones consist of: 1) thinking of relatives (*ñāti vitakko*), i.e., delighting in their health and prosperity, or grieving over their misfortunes, 2) thoughts of the district, province, or country (*janapada vitakko*), 3) anxiety about his own longevity or immortality (*amara vitakko*), 4) grief about the misfortune of others (*parānudayatā paṭisaṃyutta vitakko*), 5) longing for charitable gifts or awards (*lābhasakkāra siloka paṭisaṃyutta vitakko*), 6) wishing not to be unappreciated or underestimated (*anavaññatti paṭisaṃyutta vitakko*).

These grave, medium, and light faults should be rejected by means of concentration and wisdom. Such defilements should not be allowed to occur in the presence or absence of others, in personal or impersonal affairs. Should they occur, note and dispel them. Thinking that other people may not know, you may plan to commit something, but those with supernormal powers or celestial beings can know. Besides that, to safeguard your dignity you should never allow defilements to gain the upper-hand. Moreover because of their ill-results as the basis for immorality they should be rejected.

With the aforesaid statements, it should be considered that the Vinaya rules and training for morality, though not directly discussed in this Sutta, are well covered here. Hence the mind-created image's request for instruction on the Vinaya rules is fully answered. The phrase "*gāme ca nābhisajjeyya*" means that monks should not have attachment to the village, in other words, monks should not get attached to their benefactors.

If a monk is happy when his benefactors are well, and sad when they are in difficulty, he is involved in anything done by his benefactors. This behaviour amounts to the monk being attached to his benefactors. The Buddha advised the monks not to have such attachments. The following story is about a young monk with no such attachment (Vism.i.88).

### **A Monk Unattached to His Family**

A monk, who was the nephew of a Mahāthera of the Koraṇḍaka monastery, went to study in the district of Rohaṇa. After frequent enquiries by the monk's mother, the elder went to Rohaṇa to bring the young monk back. At the same time the young monk left Rohaṇa with the thought, "I should go back to pay respect to my teacher and

to see my mother since I haven't seen them for a long time." The two met on the banks of Mahāveligaṅgā. After learning about each other's purpose of the journey each proceeded on his way.

The young monk arrived at the Korāṇḍaka monastery on the first day of the rainy season and he was sent to the monastery built by his father. The next day his father went to the monastery and learned that a guest monk had come to stay at his monastery. Then he saw a young monk and requested respectfully, "Your reverence, it is customary for a monk who resides at our monastery, to receive almsfood at our house during the rainy season and also to take leave from us at the end of the rainy season."

The monk accepted the request by remaining silent. The benefactor and his wife offered almsfood for the whole rainy season with respect and faith. At the end of the rainy season, the monk came to take leave. They requested him to stay a day longer and on the day of departure they offered him almsfood, molasses, oil, and a piece of cloth. The monk gave a thanksgiving sermon and went back to Rohaṇa. His teacher, the elder, came back after spending the rainy season and the two met again at the same place as before. The monk related how he was well treated by his parents and offered the elder the oil and the piece of cloth and the molasses. After paying respects the monk said that as Rohaṇa was more suitable for him he was going back.

The monk's mother was expecting to see her son along with the elder. Upon seeing the elder alone she cried at the foot of the elder thinking that her son was dead. The elder thought, "The young monk is so free of attachment that he did not even let his mother know about his presence." Thence he told everything and showed her the piece of cloth the monk had offered him. The mother was so filled with joy and devotion that after turning toward her son's direction, she prostrated herself and worshipped him with exaltation. "The Blessed One taught the Rathavinīta Sutta, the Nālaka Sutta, the Tuvaṭaka Sutta, and the Mahā Ariyavamsa Sutta just because there are Venerable monks like my son. Look how wonderful a person he is. He spent three months receiving almsfood at my house and yet never mentioned that we are mother and son."

Why the monk in this story did not let the mother know about himself is obvious. He was not attached to his family and relatives at all. It may also be said that he wished them to make more noble

meritorious deeds. Had they known the true facts, the offerings might have been made with attachment to their son. Charity done with attachment for one's son will result in less merit than that done with sincere adoration and faith for the monk's morality. This monk's behaviour is appropriate and exemplary. The mother's mention of the *Rathavināta Sutta*, *etc.*, shows that she was not a person with only a little knowledge of the Dhamma. Very few among the laity and only some monks know about such practices. Some comments on those practices should be added here.

### The Practices in the *Rathavināta Sutta*

In the introduction to the *Rathavināta Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* the Blessed One asked the monks from *Kapilavatthu* who came to pay homage, which monk was complimented for having few wishes and who practised and taught others to have few wishes. They replied that Venerable *Puṇṇa Mantāniputta* was the one who was of few wishes and also urged the others to conduct themselves according to the ten topics of discourse on fewness of wishes. These ten topics, the essence of that *Sutta*, are talk on: having few wishes (*appicchakathā*), 2) contentment (*santutṭhi-kathā*), 3) seclusion (*paviveka-kathā*), 4) non-association (*asaṃsagga-kathā*), 5) stirring up energy (*viriyārambhapadā-kathā*), 6) being endowed with morality (*sīlasampadā-kathā*), 7) being endowed with concentration (*samādhisampadā-kathā*), 8) being endowed with wisdom (*paññā-sampadā-kathā*), 9) being endowed with liberation (*vimutti-sampadā-kathā*), 10) being endowed with knowledge and vision of liberation (*vimutti-ñāṇadassana-sampadā-kathā*).

1) Fewness of wishes (*appicchā*) means not greedy. Arahants are absolutely free from desire and greed. Rapaciousness (*atricchatā*) is the desire to get other's possessions thinking they are better than what one has, even though they may be the same. It is just like the saying "to throw away the smoked fish on seeing a fresh one." That certainly is excessive greed. There is also harbouring evil wishes (*pāpicchatā*), which is the desire for praise regarding virtues that one lacks, and to wanting to receive and use things that are inappropriate. These are ignoble desires. Desiring praise for existing virtues, and wasteful use of things is excessive greed (*mahicchatā*). One who has no intention of letting others know about his qualities and attributes,

and who knows his proper status is said to be endowed with fewness of wishes. If one is free from rapaciousness, evil wishes, and excessive greed, is endowed with fewness of wishes.

Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāniputta had such attributes and also urged others to be so. I advise you to practise as Venerable Puṇṇa did.

2) Contentment (*santutṭhi*) is being satisfied with whatever one has or receives. When a monk is contented with what he gets by way of robes, dwelling place, medicine, and almsfood he is said to be contented with what is appropriate (*yathālābhasantosa*). One is still allowed to exchange things that one cannot make use of for health reasons. For example, a monk can change for a lighter robe as he is not strong enough to wear a heavy one. Thinking that high quality things are inappropriate for him, he may change them for inferior ones. That is also being contented with what is appropriate. These are the three forms of contentment that Venerable Puṇṇa professed and you all are advised to practise accordingly.

3) Seclusion (*paviveka*) refers to bodily seclusion (*kāyaviveka*), which is living alone. Mental seclusion (*cittaviveka*) is freedom from the hindrances during tranquillity or insight meditation. Extinction of the substratum of being (*upadhiviveka*) means nibbāna. One should comprehend these three types of seclusion and also urge others to cultivate them.

4) Non-association (*asaṃsagga*) refers to non-association with the opposite sex. Attachment for the opposite sex on seeing each other is association through seeing (*dassana-saṃsagga*). To avoid it stay where you cannot see, or if you see pay no heed, but contemplate. If one is attached on hearing their voice, or hearing news about them, it is association through hearing (*savana saṃsagga*). This should be avoided by contemplating as “hearing,” and not going beyond that. Attachment to conversation with the opposite sex (*samullapana-saṃsagga*) should be noted with great care. Attachment can also arise out of the use of things belonging to women (*sambhoga-saṃsagga*). Attachment due to the bodily contact with the opposite sex (*kāya-saṃsagga*), rarely occurs among monks as physical contact is prohibited by the Vinaya rules. However, this can happen to a monk who is disrespectful of Vinaya rules. One must be detached from these five types of association and also urge others to be the same.

### Importance of Freedom from Intimacy

In connection with these five associations, the Commentaries say: “Lay disciples entice monks by offering almsfood, *etc.* Monks may also entice lay disciples by giving them flowers or fruits.” This explains the enticement and the enticed. If a monk is free from enticement (*gāhamuttaka*) he receives the offerings in accordance with the attribute, worthy of offering (*dakkhiṇeyya*). Although a layperson may try to entice the monk, the monk is innocent in receiving the offerings. On the other hand, the lay person may be free from enticement whereas the monk is not. This is known as “*muttagāhaka-samsagga*.” In this case the monk is not innocent.

These associations, and connections should be refrained from. The best way of association is to be free from any kind of enticement on both sides (*muttamuttaka*). The story in the Commentary with regard to this freedom from enticement is as follows:—

### The Story of Cūlapinḍapāṭiya Tissa Thera

A woman disciple served Cūlapinḍapāṭiya Tissa Thera for twelve whole years. One day a fire broke out in her village and the other monks went to their benefactors and inquired about the situation and consoled them. Nowadays, some monks even go to help if there is a fire in the village near their monastery. It is very praiseworthy in the eyes of the laymen. At that time the other people jeered at the elder saying, “Your monk will come just to receive almsfood.” Cūlapinḍapāṭiya Tissa Thera, next day went to the woman disciple who treated him dutifully as before under the shade of a barn. On his return after partaking of the food, people made fun saying, “Didn’t we tell you that your monk will come only at the meal time.” The woman replied that her monk was alright for her and the other monks befitted them too.

### The Great Benefit of Pure Charity and Homage

The words uttered by the woman are very profound and exact. “When you take refuge in the Saṅgha it is done with faith in morality, concentration, and wisdom — the attributes of monks. So too when charitable deeds are done. Monks are endowed with morality and so if offerings are made to them, the result will be happiness throughout the cycle of existences until the attainment of nibbāna.”

Offerings should be made with faith and respect. Even a spoonful of almsfood, when offered in this way, will bring forth happiness as



the result of being reborn in celestial realms. Indaka became a celestial being in Tāvātimsa from the merit of offering a spoonful of almsfood to Anuruddha Thera. He was reborn there not as an ordinary deva, but as powerful as the ones already there. That is why he was seated right near the Buddha when he taught the Abhidhamma.

For comparison, at that time Aṅkura was at first seated near the Blessed One, but he had to make way for the more powerful celestial beings until he was twelve leagues away from the Blessed One. In his human existence, Aṅkura gave pompous and elaborate charities for thousands of years.

However his meritorious deeds were done outside the realm of Buddha's dispensation and offerings were made to the people without morality. Since the recipients possessed no morality, the benefit was not of great magnitude. Though Indaka offered just a spoonful of almsfood, the offering was made to Venerable Anuruddha who was fully endowed with morality, *etc.* Thus the consequences were very great.

The comparison of benefits from the meritorious deeds of Indaka and Aṅkura, make it clear that deeds done with considerations on the attributes of the recipients have superior benefits. The enquiries and help of the monks at the fire mishap, may be worth no more than a hundred or a thousand kyats. The woman's offering with her thoughts on the attributes of morality, *etc.*, would bring forth immeasurable benefits. She might enjoy the happiness of celestial existences just like Indaka for many life times. She may attain the peace of nibbāna easily. The essential point is that the short term benefits of the present existence should not even be considered. It is to take refuge in the Order with a pure heart in view of the long term benefits *i.e.*, for the entire cycle of existences. All these are related to talk on non-association (*asaṃsagga-kathā*).

5) Stirring up energy (*vīriyārambha*) means to practise ardently and diligently, both mentally and physically. Defilements that arise while walking should not still be active when one sits down. Defilements at the time of sitting should not be present on walking or lying down. They must be rejected at the very moment of their occurrence. One should practise to be endowed with energy and also urge others to do the same.

6-8) To be endowed with morality (*sīla-sampadā*), concentration (*samādhi-sampadā*), and wisdom (*paññā-sampadā*). The meaning of

morality is obvious. Concentration here means to contemplate until attaining absorption. If that is not yet feasible, then strive for momentary concentration of insight (*vipassanā-khaṇika-samādhī*). With regard to wisdom it is to gain deep insight and attain the Noble Path. These are the essential attainments during a Buddha's dispensation.

Talk about not needing to practise meditation is not in line with the Buddha's teaching. It is obvious how detrimental such talk is to the Buddha's teaching. Just consider whether absorption can be gained without concentration, or insight without observing and noting with mindfulness, or knowledge of the Noble Path without gaining insight. It is clear that the answer to these questions is "No."

Those who believe that there is no need for meditation will not meditate, thence they will gain no concentration, no insight, and no knowledge of the Path. What is the difference between them and those outside the Buddha's teaching? Special attention should be paid in this connection. The main theme of this Rathavināta Sutta is to practise mindfulness, to be endowed with morality, concentration, and wisdom, and to teach others to do the same.

9) Endowed with liberation (*vimutti*) refers to the four stages of the Noble Path. To practise and urge others to strive for the attainment of these four stages. Endowment with morality, concentration, and wisdom ensures liberation by attaining the Noble Paths.

10) Endowed with knowledge and vision of liberation (*vimutti-ñāṇadassana*) refers to reflecting on liberation after the attainment of the four stages of the Path. How this insight is gained is mentioned in many Suttas: "Upon liberation, realisation of liberation occurs in mind consciousness." This knowledge usually appears naturally immediately after attaining the Path and its Fruition. Hence there need no special meditation needed for such knowledge.

The adoration of the woman disciple of Koraṇḍaka village for her son is with respect to this practice in the Rathavināta Sutta, especially non-association with the opposite sex, professed by her son. No attachment regarding the use of things, freedom from enticement, it is liberation from attachment to benefactors, namely that her son was so free from the fetters of the family and parents that he did not even let them know who he was. Bearing these two attributes in mind the woman disciple worshipped her son with deep reverence. It is remarkable that she had prior knowledge of this practice. A detailed

explanation of enticement (*gāha*) and freedom (*mutta*) were given so that you may understand the practice clearly. The young monk did not let his parents know that he was their son was because he wished them to be liberated from fetters. Hence there was detachment on both sides, although he had spent three whole months receiving almsfood from them.

### The Practice of the Nālaka Sutta

This practice was named after the monk called Nālaka who fulfilled the practice for monks (*moneyya*). Nālaka became a hermit at the instruction of his great uncle, the hermit Kaṇha Devala,<sup>1</sup> after the birth of the Bodhisatta.

According to the Suttanipāta commentary he must have been quite young for he was playing on the road when his great uncle made him a hermit. The Buddha was about thirty-five years old at the time of teaching the Dhammacakka Sutta so the young hermit would then have been about fifty years of age. In compliance with his great uncle's advice, he went to meet the Buddha in the deer park at Benares and requested instructions on the practices of a monk.

The Blessed One delivered the Nālaka Sutta on the monk's practice in thirty-two verses beginning "I shall expound the monk's practice for you..."

In the early days of the Buddha's dispensation, many with no faith in this religion, behaved disrespectfully and used harsh words towards it. When we started to instruct about mindfulness meditation there were many supercilious comments. Therefore the Blessed One admonished us to regard abuse and respect equally, *i.e.*, not to be angry when abused and not to be elated when shown respect.

It is also required to abstain from sexual intercourse, and to refrain from any other worldly enjoyments. One must not torture others

<sup>1</sup> Also known as Asita (*q.v.*) He was the teacher of the Buddha's father, Suddhodana, and later his chaplain. On seeing the auspicious marks on the infant Bodhisatta's body he knew that it would become the Enlightened One and was greatly overjoyed, but realising that he himself would, by then, be born in a formless realm and would not therefore be able to hear the Buddha teach, he wept and was sad. Having reassured the king regarding the infant's future, He sought his sister's son, Nālaka, and ordained him so that he might be ready to benefit from the Buddha's teaching when the time came. Seven days after the preaching of the Dhammacakka Sutta, Asita sent his nephew Nālaka to the deer park (Migadāvaṇa) at Benares where the Buddha would teach him the Nālaka Sutta. (ed.)

(treat others as you would like to be treated). One must reject desires for what one does not have and avoid attachment for what one has. One should be moderate in taking food. After receiving almsfood one should go to a wood and stay under a tree. One must spend the time by meditating to attain mundane or supramundane concentration. Enter the village in the morning for almsfood, but one must not accept food by invitation from disciples or accept food that is sent. Go to each house in order and stand silently, without uttering a word soliciting gifts and offerings. Whether one receives good or bad food, or none at all, one must regard them as good people. One should not reproach anyone for slight offerings. There are four grades of conduct (three lesser and one higher) as taught by an Emancipated One (the Buddha). The annihilation of defilements or *nibbāna* is attained once, but never twice by the Noble Path. In other words, the annihilation of defilements by the first Path is done once, it is unnecessary to do it twice. Full emancipation is not achieved through annihilating the defilements by the first Noble Path only. That is, full emancipation is attained only by annihilation of the defilements in four stages. These latter two statements are very profound.

In brief, a monk is to stay under the same tree or in the same wood just for a day and to receive almsfood from the same village for one day only, not two. Venerable Nālaka conducted himself accordingly going from tree to tree, from wood to wood, village to village, and finally became an Arahant. If one conducts this monk's practice assiduously, he may live for seven months only after the attainment of Arahantship. If one regularly practises it, he may live for seven years and when one practises indolently one may live for sixteen years. The hermit Nālaka practised with diligence, therefore, he attained *parinibbāna* after seven months, at the Hiṅgulaka mountain.

The woman disciple of Koraṇḍaka village, adored her son with reverence comparing him to Nālaka with respect to his detachment regarding any place. She paid homage to her son with due respect because of the practice of the Tuvaṭaka Sutta, that is no attachment even for one's mother or one's home village.

### The Practice of the Mahā Ariyavaṃsa Sutta

This means the conduct of great nobility. There are three forms of contentment regarding almsfood and dwellings; the other one is to

practise meditation. These four comprise the practice (*paṭipadā*) of the Mahā Ariyavaṃsa Sutta. In connection with this conduct the Buddha taught:—

“O monks, in this Order a monk is contented with an abandoned rag (*paṃsukūla*) taken from a rubbish heap or any other piece of cloth as for his robes. He always appreciates this kind of contentment and never employs improper ways to obtain robes. He does not worry about not receiving a robe, nor does he become greedy, storing up robes upon receiving them. He always wears them with reflection upon the impurities and exerts for deliverance. He is never conceited due to this contentment nor does he reproach others with regard to lack of this contentment.”

To be content with any kind of robes, having no attachments for them, not glorifying oneself or degrading others with respect to this conduct of contentment, making use of it with wise reflection on the impurities are the qualities of one with the noble conduct.

To be content with any kind of almsfood or dwelling in the same way are two more forms of noble conduct. Rejoicing in meditation and not overestimating oneself or underestimating others in this connection is the fourth noble conduct.

The female disciple of Koraṇḍaka village exalted her son with respect to the conduct of contentment in almsfood, robes, and such. It is not inappropriate to mention that she also praised him for his rejoicing in meditation. All of these are examples of the admonition “have no attachment to the village (*gāme ca nābhisajjeyya*).”

### Avoid Persuasive Words to Obtain Gifts

“Say no sweet persuasive words to lay disciples expecting to receive charitable gifts or offerings.”

The Mahāniddeśa and its Commentaries, and the Visuddhimagga, explain how sweet persuasive words are used. **Talking at**<sup>1</sup> (*ālapanā*) refers to conversation started by the monk. The monk greets lay disciples when they come to his monastery with such persuasive words, “What is your purpose of coming? Do you come to invite

<sup>1</sup> See Vism.i.27. I have used Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s translations for these terms (ed.)

us? If so, I will come with the other monks. How many do you wish to invite? I am so and so. I am a teacher. Kings, ministers, and councillors pay respect to me.” Thus he glorifies his status without anyone even asking. This is one way of persuasion. Telling about oneself when asked is called **talking** (*lapanā*). Neither form of persuasive words are permissible.

Just to entertain the lay disciples and to let them say things is called **talking up** (*sallapanā*). To address as “The millionaire,” “The mill-owner,” “The president, etc.,” in praise of their position is **flattery** (*ullapanā*), which should not be employed either. However, if one uses such speech without any ulterior motive, it is allowable, because the Buddha addressed the king as “great king (*mahārājā*).”

Furthermore a monk may say, “Benefactor, last year about this time offerings were made for the harvest of new crops. Aren’t you going to do so this year?” And he may go on entrapping until the disciple promises, “Yes, your reverence.” This is known as **persuading** (*unnahanā*). Another way of persuasion is on seeing a man with a piece of sugar cane the monk may say, “Where do you get this?” On the reply “From the sugarcane plantation” again the monk asks, “Is the sugarcane from that plantation sweet?” “We must not say offer me sugarcane” said the monk when the man answers, “the taste can be known by crunching it.” This way, if trying to persuade one without giving a chance to say “No,” is also known as **continual persuading** (*samunnahanā*). All these forms of persuasion are inappropriate for a monk.

**Suggesting** (*ukkācanā*) is another kind of flattery such as, “The people from this house know me only. They always offer things to me alone.” Sweet and gently words should not be spoken with the motive of persuasion.

Another way round is to humble oneself and to compliment the lay disciples by saying, “I enjoy much benefit out of you. You have fully provided me. Because of you people give me charities. I am known as the teacher of so and so, but not by my own name. People know me because of you.”

In contrast to this is to exalt oneself and to humiliate others by saying. “Because of me, you gain a lot of merits; you become faithful disciples who seek refuge in the triple gem. You have better conduct by observing the five precepts. I teach you the Dhamma in Pāli and

its translation. I make you observe the eight precepts. I manage the buildings, and the construction of your monasteries. Because of me you are fortunate to be able to listen to the deep and profound Dhamma sermons." This is all talk that should be shunned by monks.

However, occasionally a monk may admonish lay disciples and on another occasion he may praise them with a clear conscience. If he has loving-kindness, and good-will for them, urging them to gain merits and practise meditation, and if it is not done with any expectations of offerings. This is not pretension or persuasion.

## Part Five

This is the last lecture and it will deal with the remaining five verses.

### Do Not Be Boastful (16)

*"Na ca katthitā siyā bhikkhu, na ca vācaṃ payuttaṃ bhāseyya.  
Pāgabbhiyaṃ na sikkheyya, kathaṃ viggāhikaṃ na  
kathayeyya"*

"Monks in the Buddha's Order must be free from boasting and they should absolutely refrain from claiming virtues that they lack. They should not be proud about qualities they do have."

Some have the habit of boasting as if they are from higher and noble class, as if they are of rich family. Monks must abstain from such pretension with regard to worldly values. Some pretend that they are of strict morality, as if they have fulfilled the ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*), as if they are highly educated in scriptures, as though they are endowed with supernormal powers and have the power to read others' minds. A monk should have no such pretence. Even if asked about his qualities and experiences, he should tell them truthfully what may be told, but without boasting.

A lay person who reveres the Dhamma should not be pretentious. Whether it is a layman or a monk, he who is honest and straightforward never pretends nor exaggerates, but is precise and truthful.

"One must never say words inviting charitable gifts of four necessities of a monk." Monks should not casually mention the unavailability of robes, or the monks in their monastery being short of robes, *etc.* This too should be refrained from. Furthermore a monk

should refrain from telling lies, backbiting, abusing, telling or writing legends and fables. He must not give discourses with any expectation of receiving charitable gifts. In the *Samyuttanikāya* it is stated thus:—

“Monks, a certain monk may teach harbouring such thoughts, ‘I hope that people will listen to my teaching and become devoted to it. Then they will offer me something. If so it is well and good.’ A discourse delivered with this expectation is impure.”

“Monks, a certain monk may teach with this thought in mind: ‘This Dhamma is well delivered by the Blessed One. It has the following attributes, it can be experienced here and now, it is of immediate benefit, it invites investigation, it is the one which should be practised so as to be always in one’s mind, the Noble Ones have experienced and comprehended it themselves. After listening to my discourse it would be well and good if they understand and practise accordingly.’ When a sermon is delivered because of its goodness and worthiness, with loving-kindness for the people, to safeguard them and to reward them, it is a pure discourse.”

When a monk teaches with a pure mind, only then he is free from scheming (*payuttavācā*) relating to receiving the requisites.

### **No Uncouth Mannerisms**

Among the three forms of uncouth mannerisms, the uncouth physical mannerism includes disrespect at the gathering of monks, jostling against the elder monks while walking or standing, standing in front of the elders, sitting at a higher place, covering the head, standing while talking to the elders, talking with waving arms, keeping arms around the knee while sitting in front of the elders. These impudent mannerisms should not be manifested by the monks. Some young monks took up the best places and did not make way when the elders came. This kind of mannerism is also undesirable. Sometimes while partaking food with other monks, a monk may behave in detestable manner, such as spitting, blowing a nose, clearing the throat, *etc.* These should be carefully avoided too.

The verbal mannerism is explained in terms of talking with no respect to respectable persons and monks. At the gathering of monks,



if one wishes to speak, to ask a question, to answer one, or to preach he must first request for permission. If he failed to do so it is regarded as ungraceful. When in a village or town a monk should not ask lay disciples, "What do you have for us? What are you offering us? Is it coffee or tea?" This is not in accordance with the Buddha's instruction. This is also uncouth mannerism.

Uncouth mental mannerism means reflecting and thinking of things and experiences without restraint of mind. A monk from a low family thinks himself as the same with the one from a high family. In India and Sri Lanka there is caste discrimination and a monk from lower caste has to pay respect to the one from higher caste. Even a layman may not respect a monk of low caste whereas a monk from low caste is expected to respect a layman from a high caste. All these are worldly affairs.

In fact whoever becomes a monk in the Saṅgha is treated as a member of the Sakyan family. There is no discrimination of high and low caste. In the Order the differentiation is in the light of seniority of monkhood and the degree of perfection in morality, concentration and wisdom, knowledge of scriptures and accomplishment in meditation. Uncouth mental mannerism, therefore, should be considered in connection with the magnitude of accomplishment in scriptures. A monk with less knowledge of scriptures may take himself to be on the same footing with the one who is well versed in scriptures. So also with regard to ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*) and trance. One who turned into monk leaving the family behind may think himself as equals with elder monks who are renowned for their accomplishment in scriptures. Some may even harbour the idea that the others have not achieved as much in meditation practice as they have. Such forward mannerism should be refrained from. meditators, practising meditation, will not entertain such mental impudence. Upon gaining the knowledge of arising and passing away, however, one may think highly of oneself. If this occurs, observe and dispel it.

Moreover there should be no arguments, that is especially when discussing the Dhamma. The dispute may be about who knows best. For a meditator it is best not to engage in any disputes or arguments. If there is anything to be argued better stop the discussion or conversation and continue with the contemplation and discard the uncouth thoughts.

## Abstain from Lies and Deceit (17)

*“Mosavajje na nīyetha, sampajāno saṭhāni na kayirā.  
Atha jīvītena paññāya, sīlabbatena nāññamatimaññe.”*

The Blessed One admonished the monks not to indulge in telling lies. Verse 12 comments on the abstention from deceit (*i.e.*, covering up one’s faults and pretending not to have any).

Some are pretentious of qualities that they really do not have, such as trying to make others believe that he is strict with morality, that he has attained tranquillity, though he possesses none of them. Nowadays, there are people who said that they are free from defilements such as lust, anger, *etc.*, and can keep their mind tranquil and pure, without practising any kind of meditation. This should be considered to be cunning. Not a single Buddha taught nor any Commentaries have mentioned that the mind could be free from hindrances and tranquil without practising tranquillity or insight meditation. You can find the truth from your own experience. It is obvious that to saying: “Without practising meditation, the mind can be pure and calm,” is merely hypocrisy.

For a meditator, it is vital to mention only what one really experiences or comprehends when asked by the teacher. The Buddha explained in the Aṅguttaranikāya<sup>1</sup> and the Majjhimanikāya<sup>2</sup> in connection with the five factors of striving (*padhāniyaṅga*):–

“One is not conceited, not evasive and cunning. When questioned by one’s teacher or one’s companions in the holy life, one should tell the truth.”

A person may never gain real concentration if he pretends to possess this quality. True insight may never be achieved by one who is arrogant about the comprehension of analytical wisdom for differentiating mind and matter, the knowledge of arising and passing away, insight into dissolution. When insight wisdom is not achieved there is no Path or Fruition. Remember this for good.

“Do not be boastful because of education, profession, morality, or training, and do not belittle others.”

If one leads the holy life, if one is well educated, or if one has accomplished morality or ascetic practices, one is liable to belittle

<sup>1</sup> A.iii.64, Padhāniyaṅga Sutta.

<sup>2</sup> M.ii.94, Bodhirājakumāra Sutta.

those less able. Nowadays, some under the influence of a certain sect (*nikāya*)<sup>1</sup> are insolent about those who of other sects, but who are well endowed with morality, knowledge, ascetic practice, and experienced in tranquillity and insight meditation. All of these bad mannerisms contravene the Buddha's teachings.

### Do Not Retort on Reproach (18)

*“Sutvā rusito bhahum vācam, samañānam vā puthujanānam.  
Pharusena ne na paṭivajjā, na hi santo paṭiseni'karontī.”*

“If reproached by laymen or monks, a monk should not retort with harsh words.”

A monk or recluse (*samaṇa*) does not necessarily mean a Buddhist monk, it can be any recluse or monk outside the Buddhist's discipline. This Tuvāṭaka Sutta was delivered in the early days of Buddha's dispensation, somewhere at the end of the fourth rainy season (*vassa*) after the attainment of his Full Enlightenment. At that time, many monks outside of the Buddha's dispensation, as well as their disciples, kings and brahmins, and also certain celestial being who professed other faiths criticised the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha, therefore, instructed his disciples not to retaliate and use harsh words in replying to them when necessary.

### Personal Experience of Tolerance

I started teaching insight meditation in 1300 (B.E.)<sup>2</sup> at my birth-place, the village of Seikkhun in the district of Shwebo. The monk from the Headman Monastery which was near the Mahāsi Monastery was not in favour of my teachings. Knowing about my learning in scriptures, he dared not criticize me openly, but only behind my back. Those monks friendly with him and his lay disciples behaved similarly. I continued with my instruction without retaliating him. Since I was teaching the Dhamma through personal experience, there was nothing to fear. The meditators and disciples at my monastery increased in number as they gained confidence in my teaching through their own experience. The monk of the Headman

<sup>1</sup> Monks of the Shwegyin Nikāya in Burma tend to be stricter regarding the observance of the Vinaya rules. The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw was a member of the larger Thudhamma Nikāya (ed.)

<sup>2</sup> 1300 Burmese Era, in 1938 (ed.)

Monastery left the monkhood after four or five rainy seasons and got married. He died five years later.

At the time of my arrival at Rangoon, a newspaper ran a critical column on the method of insight meditation that I taught. I made no comments. There was also a book “Ariyā-bonthwā Nyanhlegā” (Steps to the Noble Abode) which criticised the method of insight meditation that I taught. A daily newspaper also published articles with critical comments on my teaching. I made no remarks and reflected thus, “This is the Buddha’s teaching and everyone has a claim on it. People who like my instructions will come to me and those in favour of theirs’ will go to them.” I continued giving instructions on insight meditation with a clear conscience. I also noticed that there was success from my instruction. The Sāsana Yeikthā, Rangoon, was opened with twenty-five meditators in 1311 (B.E.)<sup>1</sup> Now in summer there are about 1,000 meditators and about 200 in winter. This may be the beneficial result of respectful compliance to the Buddha’s advice not to retaliate (*na paṭivajjā*).

When there are allegations or if you hear someone accusing you, never retort with harsh words. If you have to make comments then use only soft and kind words. It is customary for worthy and noble persons who have extinguished defilements not to retaliate. A monk or recluse is someone who is practising to eradicate defilements, so he is a noble person. If one has faithfully practised and exterminated defilements, then he is a true recluse who no longer has any tendencies to retaliate and has a serene mind. Therefore, one who claims to be free from defilements should not retort with harsh words on being criticised.

## Contemplate to Note Constantly (19)

*“Etañca dhammamaññāya, Vicinam bhikkhu sadā sato sikkhe.  
Santīti nibbutim ñatvā, Sāsane gotamassa na pamajjeyya.”*

The first half of this verse conveys the following meaning:-

“Perceiving the perils of the cycle of existences, striving to liberate himself, a bhikkhu with a comprehensive knowledge of morality, concentration, and wisdom should reflect and practise diligently, noting the arising of mind and matter, day and night.”

<sup>1</sup> On 4th December 1949.

In verse 7, the mind-created image requested the Buddha to instruct on the Pāṭimokkha discipline and tranquillity meditation. Accordingly the Blessed One taught the moral practice in verse 8 by explaining the subjugation of eye-faculty, *etc.*, and taught tranquillity meditation by instructing to contemplate to gain absorption. In verse 18 the Buddha admonished not to use harsh words in retort. One should not be content merely by listening to and understanding these instructions, but one should also practice them all the time, day and night as mentioned in verse 2.

### **Nibbāna, Nibbuti, Santi, and Santilakkhaṇa**

The latter half of verse 19 can be rendered as follows:–

“After ascertaining that the annihilation of defilements is the peaceful bliss of nibbāna, (one) should be mindful of the Buddha’s teachings.”

“*Nibbutiṃ*” in verse 19 is to be taken as the annihilation of lust (*rāgassa nibbutiṃ*), anger, delusion, *etc.* is known as peace (*santi*).

This statement indicates that the annihilation of defilements is the peaceful bliss of nibbāna, which is also called peace (*santi*), or has the characteristic of bliss (*santilakkhaṇa*). The resultants of defilements such as kamma and its result, mind and matter, the conditions of sentient existence and suffering, are totally extinguished upon the annihilation of defilements. The annihilation of defilements, here denotes the entire extirpation of defilements with no chance of their reappearance, due to the Fruition of the Noble Path. It does not refer to a momentary extinction of defilements. It is to be understood that the bliss of nibbāna is complete annihilation without any opportunity for the recurrence of defilements. With this comprehension, one is to be mindful and to contemplate until the defilements are extinguished by the Path of the Noble Ones.

This annihilation of defilements is possible only under the teachings of the Buddha, not under any other teaching. Therefore, the Buddha exhorted us to practise ardently and diligently, following his teachings. The above admonition is the same as the one in verse 5 — “All suffering could be ended only by internal tranquillity (*ajjhataamevupasame, na aññato bhikkhu santimeseyya*).”

At that time some people and celestial beings believed that by professing other faiths, suffering could be ended and one could attain permanent happiness. Others believed that one could reach heaven by worshipping the God who created them. Some were still doubtful, which meant they were not sure of any belief. There will be extirpation of all sufferings if and when one can dispel defilements within oneself by means of the Noble Path. The way to eradicate defilements could be found nowhere but in the Buddha's teaching. In brief, "Practise diligently and mindfully under the Buddha's teaching, until the defilements are annihilated by the Noble Path."

### Extinction of Defilements Compared to a Dying Flame

At this point it is questionable whether peaceful bliss or nibbāna attained after the annihilation of defilements by the Noble Path, could be seen apparently as though a flame is snuffed out. Whether one could see the extinction of lust, anger, delusion, wrong view, and sceptical doubt — in other words the disappearance of lust, *etc.* That is certainly not so. One could not see as such for there is no longer lust, *etc.*, at the time when one approaches the Noble Path. On the brink of the attainment of the Path, one no longer experiences lust, anger, *etc.* There is still a possibility for them to occur, but it is not in the form of a flame. The non-existence of the chance for the occurrence of lust, anger *etc.*, beginning with the arising of the Path could not be seen as the extinction of a flame. How is it perceived then? Just the phenomenon of the non-existence of defilements, mind and matter, conditions of sentient existence, is perceivable and comprehensible. How it is perceived and comprehended is thus described in the Milinda Pañhā (Miln.235).

### The Realisation of Nibbāna

*"Tassa taṃ cittaṃ aparāparaṃ manasikaroto pavattaṃ samatikkamitvā appavattaṃ okkamati, appavattamanuppatto, mahārāja, sammāpaṭipanno 'Nibbānaṃ sacchikarotī'ti vuccatī'ti."*

The above Pāli states:

"The mind of a meditator who is observing and noting continuously, swims out of the stream of incessantly

arising mind and matter, and reversing the process of existences reaches a state of non-occurrence. Great King, one who has followed the right method and attained the state of non-occurrence is said to have realised the peaceful bliss of nibbāna.”

A meditator, striving for the attainment of the Path, should observe and note mind and matter constantly as instructed (*sato sikkhe*), touching, thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing, etc. All of these are incessantly arising phenomena, occurring one after another. All these phenomena are known as the stream of consistently arising mind and matter, just like a stream where new and old water flow continuously. The mind of a meditator always closely fits in with the stream of consistently arising mind and matter whenever contemplation is done. With such contemplation there appears the knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) and knowledge of adaptation (*anuloma-ñāṇa*), which is fleeting. Thence the meditator attains the state of extinction of the stream of mind and matter. The phenomenon of arising and dissolution is no longer experienced, but there is only the phenomenon of entire extirpation of arising mind and matter. That is tranquillity, nibbāna. Lust, anger, etc., no longer exist with the annihilation of mind and matter. Hence he who experiences the phenomenon of annihilation of mind and matter is said to realise nibbāna.

Beginning with the realisation of nibbāna through the Noble Path, certain defilements become totally extinguished as there is no more chance for their occurrence. The realisation through the Path of Stream-winning (*sotāpatti-magga*) will extinguish three fetters (*saṃyojana*): personality view (*sakkāyaditṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), and attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*). Strong forms of lust, anger, and delusion, which can drag one to the lower realms, are also extinguished. Hence a Stream-winner will never commit immoral deeds such as killing, stealing, etc., which land one in the lower realms. He or she is liberated from the four lower realms and will be reborn in the worlds of human or celestial beings for seven existences only. If the realisation of nibbāna is through the Path of Once-returning (*sakadāgāmi magga*), coarse sensual craving (*kāmarāga*) and ill-will (*byāpāda*) are eliminated. He or she will be reborn in the worlds of human or celestial beings for two

existences at the most. One who has realised nibbāna through the Path of Non-returning (*anāgāmi-magga*) is emancipated from refined craving and ill-will and will never be reborn in the worlds of human beings or devas, but only in Brahmā realms of Form or the Formless realm, from where final cessation (*parinibbāna*) will be attained.

One who has realised nibbāna as an Arahant is absolutely free from all fetters such as craving for material existence (*rūparāga*), craving for immaterial existence (*arūparāga*), conceit, *etc.* Upon the extinction of the existing continuity of mind and matter, no new existence will arise. This extirpation of new existence of mind and matter is known as "*parinibbāna*." As there is no rebirth one will completely escape from all sufferings of old age, sickness, death, *etc.* If it were not so, even when reborn in heaven, one will die and be reborn again in the world of human beings or the lower realms. Then one will surely undergo the various physical and mental suffering of old age, sickness, death, *etc.*, as one does in the present existence. That is why internally extinction of defilements must be sought after, not external ones. The method or practice for the absolute annihilation of suffering from defilements, *etc.*, leading to tranquillity is to be found only in the Buddha's dispensation. That is why it is instructed that one should be mindful and diligent under the Buddha's dispensation until all the defilements are extinguished by the Path of Arahantship.

### Some Points for Pāli Scholars to Ponder

Something to consider at this point is whether "*Gotamassa sāsane*" was said by the Buddha himself or by the mind-created image. In other discourses, if something was said by the Buddha himself he always referred to himself as the "Tathāgata," or the Teacher (*satthu*). However, in this verse it was stated as "*Gotamassa*" — by the Buddha himself. It is food for thought for Pāli scholars whether it was uttered by the Buddha himself or by the mind-created image in recommendation to the Buddha. It is more appropriate to take it as a recommendation by the mind-created image extolling the Buddha. However, in the Mahāniddeśa it says: "*Tenāha Bhagavā*" meaning "therefore, the Buddha said." I have also interpreted accordingly, as the verse was uttered by the Buddha himself. Instead of "*Tenāha Bhagavā*" if it was "*Tenāha nimmito*," it can be explained as "recommended by the mind-created image." It will be more appropriate. It is possible



to be so in the original Pāli Text. The reason is at the time of crisis in Sri Lanka, this Mahāniddeśa Text was learnt verbatim by one impious monk only. The Vinaya Aṭṭhakathā-Dutiyasikkhā Commentary (274) states that at the orders of Mahātipiṭaka Thera, Mahārakkhita Thera had learned it from the impious monk. Considering this statement it is plausible that there might be some errors in the young monk's learning such as "*Bhagavā*" instead of "*Nimmito*."

Moreover the words of mind-created image were uttered according to the wishes of the real Buddha, just as the Abhidhamma was delivered by the mind-created image in Tāvatiṃsa. The words of the mind-created image, therefore, are as profound as those of the real Buddha. The last verse expresses the reasons for "the diligent practice and mindfulness in the Buddha's teachings (*Sāsane Gotamassa na pamajjeyya*)," as mentioned in verse 19.

## He Who Has Practised Mindfully (20)

*Abhibhū hi so anabhībhūto, sakkhidhamma, manītiha, madassī.  
Tasmā hi tassa Bhagavato sāsane, appamatto sadā namassa,  
manuskkhe'ti."*

It will be more apt to translate the word "so" in this verse as "that Gotama Buddha" instead of "he who has practised mindfully," which is the version of the ancient teachers. Moreover, I would like to say that this verse was said by the mind-created image. The meaning of this verse is "Under the Buddha's teaching he who has practised mindfully can overcome the sense-objects, *i.e.*, will never be influenced by the six senses. He has achieved the Dhamma through personal experience, not by hearsay as "this is so and that is done."

The full explanation of "so" (he who has mindfully practised) would be that normal people, who fail to observe and note the phenomena of the sense-objects upon seeing, hearing, *etc.*, will take pleasure and be absorbed in pleasant sensual experiences. Therefore they will suffer from anger and wrath upon the undesirable sensual experiences. However, for the one who is always mindful and contemplates whenever he or she sees, hears, touches, *etc.*, only the characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self are comprehended. No lust or anger arises due to those sense-objects. It can be said that the sense-objects could no longer have any influence. One has gained insight into the Dhamma that could be personally experienced.

The meaning of the last half is expressed thus, “Because of the realisation of the Dhamma which should be personally realised, one in the Buddha’s dispensation is always mindful and practises with respect and reverence.” “To realise what should be realised” refers to the Buddhas and Arahants only. Whether it is necessary to exhort an Arahant to be mindful is questionable.

This extract from the *Kitāgiri Sutta*<sup>1</sup> will explain the above question.

*“Ye te, bhikkhave, bhikkhū arahanto khīṇāsavā vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīṇabhava-saṃyojanā sammadaññā vimuttā, tathārūpānāhaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhūnaṃ Na appamādena karaṇīya’nti vadāmi. Taṃ kissa hetu? Kataṃ tesam appamādena. Abhabbā te pamajjituṃ.”*

“O Bhikkhus, those Bhikkhus who are Arahants, free from all fetters, are liberated by the way of the Path of the Noble Ones, they have known the truth. I have never exhorted those Arahants to be mindful and to practise with diligence because they have been mindful and diligent. They will never be unmindful.”

According to this extract it is clear that Arahants do not need to be reminded to be mindful and diligent. That is why this verse should be taken as uttered by the mind-created image in recommendation and appreciation of the Buddha. It should be translated thus:—

“In this Gotama Buddha’s dispensation one should be diligent and mindful. Why is it so? Because Gotama Buddha has defeated all the senses and is no longer the victim of the six-senses. He has personally comprehended the Dhamma that cannot be achieved by hearsay. He admonishes according to his personal experience after gaining the upper-hand over all of the senses. He exhorts with full and complete knowledge of the Dhamma, being Enlightened through personal experience. For these reasons, one under the Buddha’s instruction should be mindful and endeavour to practise day and night, the whole time, and to comply with respect and reverence.”

This version is more appropriate. However, since it is stated as “Thus said the Blessed One (*tenāha bhagavā*),” in the *Mahāniddeśa* I have translated it as if this verse was uttered by the Buddha himself. You may choose whichever you prefer.

<sup>1</sup> M.i.477, Bhikkhuvaggo, Majjhimaṇṇāsa, Sutta 70.

The exposition of the Tuvaṭaka Sutta is completed. It remains only to explain the commentaries at the conclusion of this discourse.

### Summary from the Commentary

In the Commentary it is concluded as follows:—

From verse 8, “*Cakkhūhi neva lolassa*” means restraining the eye-door, *etc.*, that is morality for the subjugation of the senses.

In verse 10, morality regarding the use of the four monastic requisites — almsfood, robes, dwelling-place, and medicine — is expounded by instructing not to store up almsfood, *etc.*

Verse 12 deals with abstention from sexual intercourse, verse 14 with abstention from backbiting, and verse 17 with abstention from telling lies. All of these indicate the instructions of the Pāṭimokkha. The morality of Pāṭimokkha restraint is only briefly mentioned here — the remaining portions of are dealt with in verse 15.

Verse 13 refers to morality of livelihood purification (*ājīvapārisuddhi sīla*) such as not learning mantras (*āthabbaṇa*), *etc.*, and in the same verse it is advised to practise tranquillity and insight to develop concentration.

In verse 19 “to investigate and to reason (*vicinaṃ*),” refers to wisdom and the words “*sadā sato sikkhe*” are repeated in this verse denoting the three sections on morality. (If this verse is treated as uttered by the mind-created image, it can be said that it is in recommendation of the Buddha’s words).

Verses 11-12 include instructions on staying in secluded places, to be vigilant, *etc.*, meant to use things that support morality, concentration, and wisdom and to avoid those which are fruitless.

Thus the Buddha had answered completely questions in connection with moral practices and concentration practices as put by the mind-created image. The Blessed One concluded this Sutta with Arahattaphala as its climax.

The Commentary also mentioned that at the end of this Tuvaṭaka Sutta those celestial beings who became Arahants numbered in trillions<sup>1</sup> just as happened at the end of the Purābheda Sutta. Countless numbers of celestial beings became Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners.

*This is the end of the Discourse on the Tuvaṭaka Sutta.*

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<sup>1</sup> “Lakhs of crores” = 100,00 × 10,000,000 or a trillion (ed.)



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