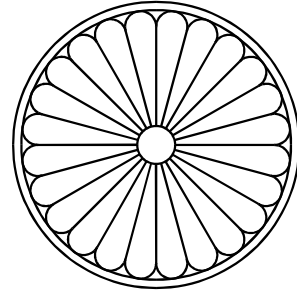


# Mahāsī Abroad

## Part I

*Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw*



Mahāsī Abroad — Part I

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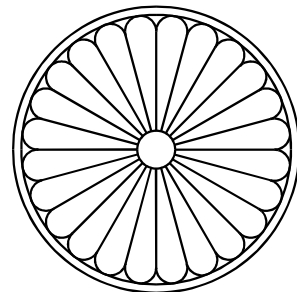
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know. You will also come to know how each cause brings its corresponding effect, and how this causal process goes on. You will realise how each new phenomenon arises and passes away repeatedly. Then you plainly see for yourself that things come and go without remaining for a moment. So they are all impermanent. You will see that death can come at any moment, so all is suffering. You will see how they all occur in spite of your wish, so they are not self. While you are thus meditating, your insight gradually develops, and eventually the knowledge of the noble path and its fruition will arise. If you attain the first path of Stream-winning, you will be saved from the lower states of suffering for ever. You will be reborn only in noble and happy existences in the worlds of gods and men. Within seven of these happy existences you will attain the path and fruition of *Arahantship* and become a worthy one. After passing away as an *Arahant*, there will be no new births, which means eternal peace.

By meditating on arising phenomena beginning with the movements of the abdomen, may you strive to develop insight and realise the impermanent, suffering and egolessness of mental and physical phenomena. May you very soon reach the noble path and attain nibbāna.

# Mahāsi Abroad

## Lectures

by

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw

First printed and published in the Socialist

Republic of the Union of Burma

1979



### Pocket Edition

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'*cakkhāyatana*' — the eye organ from which arises visual consciousness (*cakkhuviññāna*). The visible object is called '*rūpāyatana*', the sight from which arises visual consciousness. The seeing is called *manāyatana*, mind organ, from which arises the act of consciousness (that is *phassa*, *vedanā* and so on). Failure to note what you see, or even if you note it, failing to understand impermanence and so on, gives rise to fetters such as taking pleasure in the visible object. You must also know the arising of the fetters. If the fetter passes away because of noting it, you must know this too. Once you reach the noble path, these fetters cease to arise and this must also be known. This is how you should meditate and understand with regard to seeing.

In the same way, if one notes 'hearing, hearing' one understands the physical phenomena of the ear and the sound. If one notes 'smelling, smelling' one understands the physical phenomena of the nose and the odour. If one notes 'tasting, tasting' one understands the physical phenomena of the tongue and the taste. If one notes 'touching, touching' one understands the physical phenomena of the body and tangible objects. (Contemplation of walking, standing, sitting, rising and so on belong to this contemplation of touch. That is why we say 'touching' and so on). One who notes 'thinking, thinking' while thinking understands the physical phenomenon of the base of consciousness and the mental phenomenon of ideas or mind-consciousness. If you do not know them as they really are, because you have failed to note them properly, fetters like sensual desire arise from the six senses. This arising of fetters must also be noted. If, on being promptly noted, they pass away, note this too. When, on reaching the noble path, these fetters cease to arise altogether, you must know this too.

of meditation is right concentration. These three are the path factors of concentration. Knowing the object rightly is right view. When one first begins meditation, this right view is not much in evidence. Later on, however, it becomes clear that there are only mind and matter with each act of noting. Because of the desire to move, motion occurs. Because there is something to be seen, eye-consciousness occurs. Thus, the meditator comes to distinguish between cause and effect. Something arises afresh and instantly passes away. This may also be quite clear. The meditator then realises that everything is impermanent. After the passing away of the old mental and physical phenomena, if new ones fail to arise, that is the moment to die. Thus death can occur at any moment, which is a frightening and dreadful fact. One also realises that this process happens of its own accord, is subject to no one's control, and is therefore not-self (*anatta*). All these realisations are right view (*sammā ditṭhi*). Inclining the mind towards this view is right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*). These two are wisdom path factors (*paññā maggaṅga*).

The three concentration factors and the two factors of wisdom are described in the Commentaries as the 'five workers' (*kāraka maggaṅga*). If a job can only be done by a team of five workers, it needs to be done by all of them working in harmony. Likewise these five path factors are in harmony with every act of noting and knowing. Every time one notes, these five path factors gain strength through such harmony, and thus extraordinary insight develops.

Abstaining from unwholesome bodily acts of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct is right action (*sammā kam-manta*). Abstaining from verbal misdeeds of lying, backbiting,

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### Editor's Foreword

This edition of 'Mahāsī Abroad' contains the talks given by the Sayādaw on the foreign missions he made to Europe and America in 1979. While I was in Burma in 1999, the then President of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization, U Hla Kyaing, asked me to prepare an edition of Mahāsī Abroad, Parts I and II for publication as a combined volume. For ease of binding, this pocket edition is again divided into two parts.

The reader will find here the fundamental teachings of the Buddha, especially on insight meditation. As is customary with learned Burmese monks, the Sayādaw quotes directly from the Pāli texts, since this adds authority to what he has to say. Students of the Dhamma should not be intimidated by this style, because the Sayādaw always explains any passages quoted. Though Pāli words seem strange at first, if one reads patiently, one will soon assimilate the most common words, which will greatly enrich one's understanding of Buddhism.

I have edited the English to improve the readability, but what remains is essentially the actual talks given by the Sayādaw on his missions to the West.

Bhikkhu Pesala  
February 2002

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Whatever enters through the six sense doors, must be noted and observed as 'seeing', 'hearing', etc. However, for the beginner, to be aware of everything is quite impossible, so one should begin with only a few things that can be easily discerned. Thus, concentration can be developed and lead to insight knowledge.

Every time you breathe, your abdomen moves and its rising and falling movement is quite plain to contemplate. That is why we instruct our disciples to begin by noting the abdominal movements as 'rising' and 'falling'. This rising and falling movement is the element of motion, or the air element (*vāyodhātu*). The words 'rising' and 'falling' are not important. The point is to discern the phenomenon of movement.

If, while noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, any thought or imagination occurs, note it as 'imagining' or 'thinking'. This is contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). After noting the mind, you can return to noting the rising and falling. If a painful sensation should occur in the body, you must note it. This is contemplation of feelings (*vedānānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). Then return to noting the rising and falling. If there is any bending or stretching of the limbs, you must note as 'bending', 'stretching'. Whatever bodily movement there is, you must note it. This is contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). When you see, you must note as 'seeing', 'seeing'. When you hear, you must note as 'hearing', 'hearing'. This is contemplation of mental-objects (*dharmānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

If you continue meditating on whatever occurs, your concentration will gradually become powerful. Then you will be able to distinguish clearly between the material phenomena, which are known, and the mental phenomena, which

abuse and frivolous talk is right speech (*sammā vācā*). Abstaining from unlawful livelihood is right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*). These are the path factors of morality (*sīla maggaṅga*). These factors are accomplished with the taking and observing of the precepts. So they also occur with every act of noting in meditation. Thus, all eight factors are developed with every act of noting. So nibbāna gets nearer with every act of noting, just as one's destination gets nearer with every step one takes on a journey. Just as you arrive at your destination with the last step of your journey, so too you will arrive at nibbāna with the last act of noting.

Therefore, begin with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, observing the occurrence of psychophysical phenomena as much as you can. With such observation, may you develop extraordinary insights, speedily attaining the noble path, its fruition and nibbāna.

be aware of these doubts. One often mistakes doubt for ideas. If a meditator keeps on noting whatever arises, the hindrances will be dispelled. They come about because of ignorance. Once one is fully aware of them, they cease to arise. The noble path eradicates them completely. While meditating, one understands the arising and passing away of the particular hindrance one is noting. This understanding will lead one to the noble path and its fruition. One can become a Stream-winner. This, in brief, is contemplation of the hindrances.

#### Contemplation of the Aggregates

As you contemplate the body by noting, 'walking', 'standing', 'sitting', 'rising', or 'falling', you know for yourself, "This is matter, which is insentient. It arises and passes away thus." When you note 'pain', 'pleasure', 'happy' and so on you know, "This is pleasant or unpleasant feeling. It arises and passes away thus." When you note 'perceiving' you know, "This is perception, which perceives sight and so forth. It arises and passes away thus." When you note volitions like 'striving', 'doing', 'speaking' and so forth you know, "These are mental formations. They arise and pass away thus." When you note 'thinking' you know, "This is consciousness. It arises and passes away thus." While you meditate on the arising and passing away of matter, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, you can reach the noble path and its fruition, becoming a Stream-winner. This, in brief is contemplation of the five aggregates.

#### Contemplation of the Six Senses

If, while seeing, one notes 'seeing, seeing', concentration will gradually develop and one comes to know the eye, the visible object and the seeing as distinct phenomena. The eye is called

consciousness as 'seeing' and so on. When you hear something, you should note it as 'hearing'. Although it should be taught in full as 'I am seeing' or 'I am hearing', to quicken the noting, we teach our disciples to note just as 'seeing', 'hearing' etc.

If you fail to note clearly and do not know things as they really are when you see or hear something, then lust or delight arises regarding the things seen or heard. Such defilements lead to moral or immoral deeds. Because of these deeds you may be reborn in states of suffering, or you may be reborn as a man or celestial being and suffer old age, disease and death, or other suffering. So one who fails to contemplate the arising mental and physical phenomena, fails to know them as they really are, and is far away from nibbāna. This is explained in the *Mahānīkaya Sutta*.

One who makes a habit of noting whatever he or she sees or hears, knows empirically that things come and go without remaining for a moment, and so understands that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory phenomena without an abiding self. Knowing them as they really are, he or she allows no opportunity for the arising of defilements such as lust or anger regarding the things seen or heard. The defilements are pacified, so one is free from both moral and immoral deeds. Thus, one is free from the suffering of rebirth in the lower realms and from the worlds of gods and men, where one must endure old age, sickness and death. This is how one gains peace and freedom through meditation. When this insight meditation is fully developed, one realises nibbāna through the path and fruition of *Arahantship* eradicates all suffering. Therefore one who contemplates all phenomena to understand them as they really are when seeing, hearing, etc., is close to nibbāna, the end of suffering. This is also explained in the *Mahānīkaya Sutta*.

1. Sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*).
2. Anger or ill-will (*vyāpāda*).
3. Sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*).
4. Restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*).
5. Sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

This is the classification according to the Pāli text, but if one separates *thīna* and *middha*, and *uddhacca* and *kukkucca*, there will be seven in all.

If, while you are noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, sensual desire arises, you should note as 'pleasure', 'desire' and so forth. This is explained in the text of the *Satīpaṭṭhāna Sutta* as, "*Santaṃvā ajjhattaṃ kāmacchandaṃ 'Atthi me ajjhattaṃ kāmacchando'ti pajānāti.*" — "(A monk) who has sensual desire in him is aware, 'There is sensual desire in me.'" As one notes thus, the sensual desire disappears. This disappearance of desire, too, should be noted. Sensual desire arises because of ignorance, because one has failed to note the first thought. One must understand that this ignorance of the real nature of things gives rise to desire. As one meditates and understands the truth, sensual desire ceases to arise. This fact, too, should be understood. When one reaches the path of *Arahantship*, one has completely eradicated such desires. You must understand that an *Arahant* is free from such desires. Thus, one should know about sensual desire.

In the same way, when anger arises one notes and is aware 'I am angry.' When one feels dull and lazy, note as 'I feel dull' or 'I feel lazy'. When one gets restless, note as 'I am getting restless.' When one feels remorse at having done something wrong, one must note as 'I feel remorseful.' If one harbours doubts about the Buddha or the Dhamma, one must note and

The Buddha Sāsana (the Buddha's Teaching) is more than 2,500 years old, but though it is old in years, owing to its truth and accuracy, it is as fresh and bright as ever.

As a man ages, the food he once took in his youth becomes indigestible. When he is old, he has to take dietetic food that his digestive system can tolerate. This is not due to any change in his normal food, but to the weakening of his digestion.

Similarly, with the aging of the Buddha Sāsana, people's faith in the Teaching declines so that traditional observances like charity (*dāna*) and morality (*sīla*) are no longer sufficient to establish firm faith. Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is needed as a dietary supplement for the proper assimilation of the Teaching. This is not due to any deterioration in the Teaching, but to the declining faith of people.

It is natural for people to believe only when they have experienced, known, and seen for themselves. However, just as those who cannot believe that man has reached the moon by spacecraft are deficient in scientific knowledge, so too those who lack faith in the Buddha's Teaching are weak in their spiritual knowledge. They need to practise the Buddha's Teaching themselves to deepen their religious understanding.

Dietetic food does not mean special food. It is just food that one is accustomed to taking, but selected for its suitability. In the same way, the Buddha has prescribed the Dhamma-diet for those who lack faith in the Three Gems of the Buddhist religion. Those who take this Dhamma-diet will be freed, not only from their physical ailments, but also from mental defilements like greed and anger.

## The Teaching of the Buddha Sāsana

"*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacittapariyodāpanaṃ.  
Etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*"

"Not to do any evil,  
To cultivate good,  
To purify one's mind.  
This is the teaching of the Buddhas."

This is the teaching (*sāsana*) of all the Buddhas. The evil which should be avoided, according to the first line, means the unwholesome deeds that arise from greed, hatred and delusion. These include physical, verbal and mental unwholesome deeds.

Unwholesome deeds include killing living beings, unlawfully taking the property of others and engaging in illicit sexual relations. Only these three are mentioned in the commentaries. To abstain from these, one needs to observe the five precepts by saying:

1. *Pānātipātā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I undertake to abstain from killing or injuring living beings).
2. *Adinnādānā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I undertake to abstain from taking that which is not given).
3. *Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct).
4. *Musāvādā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I undertake to abstain from incorrect speech).
5. *Surā-meraya-majja-pamādatṭhānā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I undertake to abstain from intoxicating drugs and drink, which lead to carelessness).

The excellent Dhamma-diet of the Buddha to cure suffering is described in this booklet. It consists of contemplating all acts of seeing, hearing, walking and so on.

The ability to distinguish between mind and matter by reading, listening to discourses and engaging in discussion, is only of a conceptual nature. It falls short of personal experience and knowing through insight knowledge.

Besides knowledge that may be acquired in universities, there is another, more profound kind of knowledge, which is gained experientially in the 'University of Life.' Such wisdom is much more helpful to our present and future happiness than mere academic learning.

If we apply the Buddha's Teaching, we will be taking the Dhamma-diet prescribed by the Buddha. Only then will we get the benefit of attaining nibbāna, the cessation of all suffering.

The Buddha started teaching the Dhamma in 588 BC to confer this benefit. Afterwards, he preached the Dhamma repeatedly to countless sentient beings. Whenever he knew that someone could be liberated, the Buddha did not hesitate to go to the home, workshop, or field of the person concerned, to teach the Dhamma. The Buddha illustrated his teaching by different examples depending on the occupation and disposition of the audience.

Some people criticise the Buddha's teaching as archaic, outmoded, and socially deadening. All these criticisms are quite wrong. In the scriptures are there not such discourses as the *Maṅgala Sutta* and *Sīgala Sutta*, which are concerned with social matters? By observing the teaching in these discourses, life can become happy and peaceful. How can the Buddha's injunction to reduce greed and anger, while cultivating loving-kindness and

Venerable Sāriputta went at once to the Dhanañjāni Brahmā and preached to him about *vipassanā*, the teaching that leads to the path and its fruition, and to nibbāna. The Brahmā meditated as instructed and realised the path and its fruition.

Therefore, it is not suitable for us to stop our talk after just speaking about *mettā*, the practice that can lead one to *jhāna*. We should also talk about insight meditation, the practice that leads to nibbāna.

Insight meditation means to contemplate the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment (*upādānak-khandhā*), to realise that they are all impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*). Attachment (*upādāna*) includes craving (*taṇhā*) and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) — the view that there is a permanent soul or self in a living being. The five mental and material aggregates grasped by craving are called the aggregates of attachment. These aggregates manifest whenever one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks. If one fails to notice these events immediately, one does not know them accurately, but mistakes them for permanent, pleasant or good things, or as persons or beings. So one clings to them with craving and wrong view. To overcome attachment to them, we must note all mental and material phenomena at the moment of their occurrence. How can we do this?

In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* we are taught to observe the bodily movements like walking, standing, sitting and so on, and to note them as 'walking', 'standing', 'sitting' and so forth. Pleasant and unpleasant feelings, must be noted as 'pleasant' or 'unpleasant'. Mind-objects or thoughts, too, should be noted as 'passionate', 'dispassionate', 'angry', 'not angry' and so on. We must also be aware of the visible objects and visual

Unwholesome speech is given briefly as:

- a. Telling lies that cause harm to someone.
- b. Backbiting speech that can cause dissension among those who are in harmony.
- c. Harsh speech, curses and threats.
- d. Fruitless speech, which has no value.

Abstention from these four kinds of speech is included in the fourth precept. If one abstains from the seven unwholesome deeds of body and speech, one thereby abstains from wrong livelihood too.

Why must we abstain from these unwholesome deeds? These deeds are blameworthy when they are committed and bring only bad results when they bear fruit. Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and lying are blameworthy in the eyes of the wise and the virtuous. Living beings have to suffer because of these unwholesome deeds. It is like eating rotten food, which is a blameworthy action. Because they are altogether blameworthy, we must abstain from them. Besides, they bring bad results in the present life like censure, punishment or imprisonment. In future births, too, the evil doer is reborn in hell and suffers great torment, or is born as a hungry ghost (*petā*) who has to endure starvation, or is born as an animal, which is a miserable and brutal existence. Even if born as a human being because of wholesome deeds, one will suffer such misfortunes as short life, poor health or poverty, due to the unwholesome deeds. Since they bring such bad results, one must abstain from all unwholesome deeds.

The Buddha taught us to refrain from and eradicate these unwholesome deeds by means of morality. However, the mental unwholesome deeds cannot be got rid of so easily. Only meditation can do that. The removal of unwholesome

'dispassionate mind.'" There are sixteen kinds of mind to contemplate. So, while contemplating the rising and falling, if a passionate mind arises, you must note 'passionate mind'. As you note thus, the passionate mind will disappear. Then a dispassionate mind appears. Note it as 'dispassionate mind'. Likewise, if an angry mind arises, note as 'angry mind'. If a deluded thought occurs such as "I am permanent", "I am happy" or "I am", note it as 'delusion'. Similarly, if a wandering mind appears, note it as 'wandering'. If a lazy mind appears, note it as 'lazy'. You must note whatever mind appears and be aware of it as it is. When concentration is strong, whenever you note, you will find such minds arising and passing away, never remaining for a moment. So it is said, "*Samudaya-dhammānuṭpassi vā ... vāya-dhammānuṭpassi vā ... samudaya-vāya-dhammānuṭpassi vā cit-tasmim viharati*" — "He abides contemplating the arising of things in the mind, or he abides contemplating the passing away of things in the mind, or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing away of things in the mind."

### Mindfulness of Mind Objects

Now we will deal briefly with contemplation of mind-objects or mental phenomena (*dhammānuṭpassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). The Buddha taught the contemplation of mental-objects in five sections.

#### The Hindrances

The first section is the contemplation of the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). There are five of them:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here, the Sayādaw lists six, then says the texts give five, which can be divided into seven. Since most people are familiar with the fivefold classification, I have changed the wording accordingly (Editor's Note).

good attitude indeed and no one can find any fault with it. To cultivate kindness one should think of other living beings individually or collectively and mentally recite, “May they be happy!”

You can think of someone, or anyone you can see, and cultivate *mettā* towards them. “May he be happy! May she be happy! May they be happy!” You need to do this in your mind only. If occasion arises, you can also speak some kind words, or if there is something you can do to help, you can do it personally. Even if you cannot help others by kind actions or words, if you refrain from improper speech and actions, this is also cultivating kindness in deeds and words.

Although you may not have seen them, you can imagine all beings and wish, “May they be happy!” You can cultivate kindness in the mind only. You may do this for five minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, an hour or more, as much as you can spare the time. If your practice goes well you may gain *jhāna* and will be reborn in the Brahmā world, where you can live happily for aeons.

However, the Buddha did not want us to be content with the bliss of the Brahmā heavens only. Once an old Brahmin named Dhanañjāni, who was on his deathbed, sent for Venerable Sāriputta to listen to the Dhamma from him. Venerable Sāriputta preached to him how to cultivate love and compassion — a practice that leads to rebirth in the Brahmā world. Then he returned to his monastery.

The Brahmin, Dhanañjāni, meditated on *mettā* and very soon passed away. Because of his *mettā jhāna*, he was reborn in the Brahmā heaven. It may not have taken him more than an hour, for he died and became a Brahmā before Venerable Sāriputta had reached his monastery. The Buddha blamed Venerable Sāriputta for failing to preach about insight meditation (*vipassanā*). So

compassion, adversely affect human rights? It can only promote them. It will ease the process of government and commerce.

Are there not deep scars in the modern world, left by trying to solve disputes through war? Is not the ultimate solution only through peaceful negotiation? If so, then Mahāsi Sayādaw’s talks and writings are invariably with the purpose of promoting world peace, and also mental peace. These talks and writings have already been produced in sixty-eight publications (by the seventy-fifth year of the Venerable Sayādaw’s life).

The present booklet owes its origin to the suggestion of the Venerable Dr. Rewata Dhamma, a Burmese Buddhist monk who has been preaching Buddha-Dhamma extensively in the west. He requested the Ven. Sayādaw to prepare some talks to be read as lectures during his tour of the West. The following are the four talks prepared following the above suggestion:

1. The Noble Teaching of the Buddha
2. The Teaching of the Buddha-Sāsana
3. Satipaṭṭhāna — The Only Way, and
4. The Way to Happiness

Of these talks prepared by the Ven. Mahāsi Sayādaw in Burmese, the first, “The Noble Teaching of the Buddha,” was translated into English by U Nyi Nyi (a Mahāsi meditator), and the rest by U Tha Noe, MA (a Writer).

‘The Teaching of the Buddha Sāsana’ stresses the importance and value of insight meditation (*vipassanā*) and describes how it may be undertaken. It goes on to describe accurately, and clearly, the progress of insight as meditation develops, and the gaining of the *nibbānic* experience through the knowledge of the path (*magga nāṇa*). The talk also deals with forms of modern religious and secular thought to suit the needs of modern listeners.

ance of pain and before the appearance of pleasure, or after the disappearance of pleasure and before the appearance of pain. You should note this neutral feeling too. When the knowledge of arising and passing away is well developed and the knowledge of dissolution (*bhāṅga-nāṇa*) is gained, this neutral feeling will become apparent. At the stage of knowledge of equanimity with regard to formations (*saṅkhārupekkhānāṇa*) it will be even more prominent. Then you must note this neutral feeling.

When your concentration is very strong, while you note ‘tired’, ‘hot’ or ‘painful’ you will find that these sensations break into small pieces. To the untrained mind, tiredness, heat and pain seem to last very long, but to the mindful meditator they are just small pieces and do not cause much discomfort, so he or she feels unperturbed. If one goes on meditating, even severe pains can be overcome. So it is said, “*Samudaya-dhammānupassī vā ... vāya-dhammānupassī vā ... samudaya-vāya-dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu viharati.*” — “He abides contemplating the arising of things in feelings, or he abides contemplating the passing away of things in feelings, or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing away of things in feelings.”

While thus contemplating the arising and passing away of feelings, one can reach the noble path and become a Stream-winner. This is the contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

### Mindfulness of Thoughts

Regarding contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*) it is said, “*Sarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ ‘Sarāgaṃ cittaṃ’ ti pajānāti, vitarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ ‘Vitarāgaṃ cittaṃ’ ti pajānāti*” — “(A monk) is aware of a passionate mind as ‘passionate mind’; of a dispassionate mind as

thoughts can be achieved through mental culture (*bhāvanā*). If one abstains from the seven physical and verbal unwholesome deeds, one is following the Buddha’s advice not to do any evil. The good deeds to be cultivated and developed, which is the second part of the Buddha’s advice, are:

- a. The good deed of charity or giving alms (*dāna*).
- b. The good deed of morality or restraint of one’s actions and speech (*sīla*).
- c. The good deed of mental tranquillity (*samatha*).
- d. The good deed of insight into the true nature of things (*vipassanā*), and
- e. The good deed of the realisation of *nibbāna*.

The first, giving alms, is something that everybody knows about. Those who believe in and understand the law of *kamma* give whatever they can. While it is being done, giving does not bring any blame from the wise and the virtuous. They have only praise for it, saying, “That kind and generous person works for the well-being and happiness of others!” That is why we say that giving is a good deed. Moreover, when it bears fruit it gives only good results. That it brings praise and admiration in the present life is plain enough. In future existences, too, it will lead to rebirths in the human or celestial realms and benefits as long life, beauty, health and affluence. Because it brings such beneficial results, we say that it is a good deed. All good deeds are like that. When they are being done, they are blameless and in the future too, they bring happiness. It is like taking nutritious food. While it is being eaten, it is delicious and one praises it, and later it gives energy and good health. Therefore the Buddha urged us to cultivate wholesome deeds and to make a habit of it. This is a splendid teaching.

Because of its verifiable truth, the Buddha-Dhamma has stood the test of scrutiny, and comparison with the philosophical thought, views and experiences of other religions throughout the centuries. So it will undoubtedly retain its pre-eminence in the future too.

As time and circumstances have permitted, the Ven. Mahāsi Sayādaw has taught Vipassanā Meditation since 1939. In the wake of these teachings and instructions, the grateful and convinced disciples of the Sayādaw, having undertaken intensive meditation themselves, promoted the Buddha Sāsana by setting up an International Association for the Propagation of Insight Knowledge and Practice.

At the time this association was formed, it was considered too ambitious a project. There were doubts if covering its activities world-wide would be possible. However, through the united efforts of the teachers and their disciples, the number of practised meditators has steadily grown. There has been a corresponding increase in those who have faith in the effectiveness of the Sayādaw's method of meditation. Today, the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's reputation in the sphere of insight meditation has not only spread throughout Myanmar, but has reached other parts of Asia, Europe, and America, making the Sayādaw internationally famous. Such renown is primarily attributable to the intrinsic purity of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* method of meditation, which is based on mindfulness and wisdom. This wheel of Dhamma is swift and smooth, powerful and resilient, precise and suitable.

May all beings attain the peace of nibbāna by travelling in the vehicle of the Noble Eightfold Path!

The second kind of good deed, moral conduct, is the same as "not to do any evil" which we have already explained. However, to abstain from evil is blameless and leads to moral conduct, which brings positive good results. So to emphasise it, we are again urged to cultivate the good deed of moral conduct. This advice to live blamelessly and gain happiness is a splendid teaching too.

Regarding the good deeds of concentration, there is tranquillity (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*). For the cultivation of tranquillity there are forty meditation objects including ten devices (*kaṣiṇa*), ten foul objects (*asubha*), ten recollections (*anussati*) and ten others. Here, I will not go into details. If you are interested in these meditations, you can read about them in the *Visuddhimagga*. However, of the forty methods, mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is easy to understand and can be explained in brief. According to the Buddha's teaching it should be done like this. Fix your attention on the tip of the nostrils. Each time the breath comes in or goes out through the nostrils, note "It is coming in" or "It is going out". If, while thus noting, the mind wanders away, bring it back to the nostrils and go on noting. As you continue like this, the mind gets fixed to the breathing and mental tranquillity and concentration are developed. All of your mental stress and worry are calmed and you feel peaceful and relaxed. So this good deed of tranquillity is blameless while you are doing it and it brings happiness. If concentration is developed to the level of absorption (*jhāna*), you will be reborn in the Brahmā realm and live for aeons. If you develop insight from this concentration, you can attain the noble path and its fruition. That is why the Buddha taught us to develop tranquillity.

If one rejoices at the success of others, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will have many friends.

#### Poverty and Wealth

If one does not give and discourages others from giving, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be poor. If one gives to others, one will be reborn in heaven. If one is born as a human being, one will be wealthy.

#### Low Birth and Noble Birth

If, being proud, one does not show respect to those who deserve it, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being one will be low born. If one pays respect to others, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will have a noble birth.

#### Ignorance and Intelligence

If one never asks what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be ignorant. If one asks, "What is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be done? What should not be done? What deeds bring benefit and happiness? What deeds cause loss and suffering?" Then one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will be wise and intelligent.

There are seven unwholesome deeds that will bring suffering and the seven wholesome deeds that will bring happiness. Herein, the seven unwholesome deeds arise when there is no goodwill for others, and when anger prevails. So if you constantly cultivate loving-kindness (*mettā*), there will be no occasion for unwholesome deeds to occur.

Everyone wants to be happy and no one likes to suffer. Also, one wishes for others to be peaceful and happy. This is a very

knows, 'I feel a painful feeling', when feeling a neutral feeling one knows, 'I feel a neutral feeling'."

If sensations of tiredness or pain occur in the body while noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, you should concentrate on them and note as 'tired' or 'painful.' If the feelings disappear as you note, you can return to noting the rising and falling. If the unpleasant sensations increase, you should try to bear them as much as you can. When you have to note sharp pains, it is good to remember the Burmese saying, "Patience leads to nibbāna." If you can bear the pain and go on noting it, the pain often disappears. If so, go on noting the rising and falling, and your insight will make great progress. If, however, the pain persists and proves almost unbearable, you may change your posture. However, when you change, you must do so slowly and note every movement very carefully. This is how one should meditate on feelings in the body.

As you are noting, unpleasant thoughts too may arise. You may feel miserable or disheartened. Then you should note as 'miserable' or 'disheartened.' They will very soon pass away as you note on. Then return to noting the rising and falling again. If a pleasant feeling arises in the body, note it as 'pleasant, pleasant.' If happiness or joy arises in the mind, just note 'happy' or 'joyful'. Such happy moods will come to you in torrents when you gain the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-nāṇa*). You will also experience great joy or rapture (*pīti*). This too, you must note as 'rapture, rapture.'

The neutral feeling, which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, very often occurs in both the mind and the body, but it is hard to discern. Only when concentration is especially strong, will this neutral feeling become prominent after the disappear-



are friendless while others have many friends; some are poor while others are rich; some are low-born while others are of noble birth; and some are ignorant while others are intelligent? What is it that divides them into these high and low states?"

The Buddha replied, "Young man, beings are owners of their deeds, heirs to their deeds, their deeds are the womb that bears them, their deeds are their relatives and their refuge. Their deeds divide them into high and low states."

This is a brief statement on the law of *kamma*. The young man Subha did not understand this brief statement so he asked the Buddha to explain it more fully.

#### Short and Long Lives

If a man or woman kills a living being, because of this deed of killing, he or she will be reborn in a state of suffering — in hell. If born as a man or woman again, he or she will live a short life.

One who abstains from killing will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will live a long time.

#### Sickness and Health

One who harms others will arise in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will have many diseases. If one does not harm living beings, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will enjoy good health.

#### Ugliness and Beauty

One who is full of anger will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be ugly. If one controls one's anger and shows forbearance, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being one will be good-looking.

#### Having Few or Many Friends

If one envies the good fortune of others, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be friendless.

"*Sīlaṃ samādhi paññā ca*  
*Vimutti ca anuttarā*  
*Anubuddhā ime dhammā*  
*Gotamena yasassinā.*"

Gotama Buddha, who is a true refuge for all Buddhists, fully practised and personally experienced the noblest, loftiest, and most dependable Dhammas comprising morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*) and deliverance (*vimutti*). When he had thus practised and discerned all that should be known, he preached the same for forty-five years to those who could be instructed. They could then gain freedom from all suffering through the practice of the same dependable Dhammas.

Four aeons (*asaṅkheyya*) and one hundred thousand world-cycles ago, the bodhisatta had vowed at the feet of Dīpaṅkara Buddha to become a Fully Enlightened One (*Sammā-sambuddha*). From that time onwards, the bodhisatta fulfilled the perfections (*pāramī*) needed for Buddhahood like charity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*) and so on. According to western reckoning, in 583 BC he became the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Māyā. The king gave the name 'Siddhattha' to the bodhisatta. At the age of sixteen he was married to Yasodharā-devī, the daughter of King Suppabuddha, and continued to enjoy the delights of royalty. When he was twenty-nine, he came to realise the ills of old age, sickness and death, and renounced the world in search of liberation from these ills.

In his search for the Dhamma, the bodhisatta practised under the sage Aḷāra who had attained the seven mundane *jhānas* (mental absorptions). Then he practised under the sage

stretching are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. This is also *asammoha sampajāñña*.

Likewise in using the robes and bowl, you must note how you move. In eating and drinking you must note all your actions. Even in urinating and defecating you must note your actions carefully. These acts of noting clearly are *gocara sampajāñña* and understanding impermanence and so forth is *asammoha sampajāñña*.

#### The Four Elements

As you go on meditating in the way we have explained, you may come across what feels hard and rigid. Then you know the earth element (*paṭhavīdhātu*). When heat, warmth or cold is manifest, you know the fire element (*tejodhātu*). When tension, stiffness, pushing or motion is manifest, you know the water element (*āpodhātu*). You clearly perceive that there are only these four elements in this physical body and that there is no self or soul. Again, since these four elements arise and pass away very rapidly you understand how they are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. When you know these things as they really are, and when your knowledge has matured, you can realise nibbāna by the noble path. You can then become a Stream-winner and so on.

#### Mindfulness of Feelings

Regarding the contemplation of feelings, the Buddha said, "*Sukhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vedayamāno, 'Sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi' ti pajānāti, dukkhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vedayamāno, 'Dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi' ti pajānāti, adukkhamasukhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vedayamāno 'Adukkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi' ti pajānāti.*"

This means, "When feeling a pleasant feeling one knows, 'I feel a pleasant feeling', when feeling a painful feeling one

The fourth good deed, insight, is the good deed by which one realises the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self nature of mind and matter whenever one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks. For Buddhists, this good deed of insight is the most important of all. Only when a person has acquired insight can he or she attain the noble path, its fruition and nibbāna, the end of all suffering. Of all mundane good deeds, the good deed of insight is the best. So how does one cultivate this good deed of insight?

#### Developing Insight

In the *Satīpaṭṭhāna Sutta* it says, "*Gacchanto vā gacchāmi' ti pajānāti*" — when a *bhikkhu* walks he is aware "I am walking." So, when you walk, you should concentrate on the movements of the feet: lifting the foot, pushing it forward and putting it down. You should note this either as 'walking'; as 'right step', 'left step'; or as 'lifting', 'pushing forward', 'dropping'. While you are standing, concentrate on the position of the body and note as 'standing, standing', or concentrate on the abdominal movements as you breathe and note as 'rising', 'falling'. When you sit down, concentrate on how you move from standing to sitting and note as 'sitting down, sitting down'. When you are seated, you may change the position of your limbs. Note all of these movements thus: 'bending', 'stretching', 'moving'. When you are settled in your sitting posture, either focus on the erect body and note as 'sitting, sitting', or focus on the abdominal movement and note as 'rising', 'falling'. While you are noting thus, your mind may wander elsewhere. Then you should note as 'wandering', 'thinking', 'reflecting' and so on. You may note using whatever language you are used to. This contemplation

Udaka, who had attained all the eight mundane *jhānas*, and soon attained those *jhānas* himself. However, the bodhisatta reflected, “These *jhānas* are incapable of freeing one from old age, disease and death. They can only take one to the formless realms and enable one to live for long periods. When the lifespan of 69,000 or 84,000 world-cycles is ended, death follows. Then one returns to the human realm where one is subject to old age, disease and death, just like others. One can still fall into the four lower realms too, so they are not the Dhamma that can release one from old age, disease and death.” So the bodhisatta gave up the practice of these mundane *jhānas* and continued the search for his own Dhamma that would lead to final liberation. Giving up solid food and living on a handful of boiled bean soup, he continued his search for the Dhamma. Though he thus mortified his body for six years, he could not find it. Then he gave up this ascetic practice, resumed taking such food as he needed, and thus regained his strength. Practising mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) he attained the four *rūpa jhānas*. Based on these *jhānic* states, he attained other *jhānas* and the higher spiritual powers.

Later he came to realise that old age and death are due to rebirth, which in turn is due to craving, attachment and *kamma*. Craving is caused by feeling (*vedanā*) which is regarded as pleasurable. If this feeling is rightly seen as constantly arising and passing away, craving will no longer arise and will cease. If craving ceases, attachment and pleasure-seeking *kamma* will also cease. With the cessation of *kamma* there will be an end to rebirth, with its inherent suffering of old age, disease and death. Realising all these facts, the bodhisatta meditated on the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attach-

his own comfortable bed. When the young man Subha saw him sleeping in the ashes, he asked his servants why, and was told what had happened.

Young Subha thought to himself, “According to the Brahmin religion my father should have been reborn as a Brahṃā, but the recluse Gotama called the dog ‘Todeyya.’ Thus he is saying that my father has been reborn as a dog. He just says whatever he likes.” Thus he was deeply offended and came to the Buddha to accuse him of speaking a falsehood. He asked the Buddha what he had said to Todeyya the dog and the Buddha told him. Then to arouse faith in the young man the Buddha asked him, “Is there any wealth that your father didn’t reveal before he died?”

The young man replied that four hundred thousand was missing.

The Buddha said to him, “Feed the dog well, and before he falls asleep ask him where the treasure is; he will reveal everything.”

So Subha thought, “If what the recluse Gotama says turns out to be true, I will find the treasure; if it is wrong then I can accuse him of a falsehood.” So he fed the dog and asked him about the treasure. The dog led him to the buried treasure. On recovering his wealth, Subha thought to himself, “The recluse Gotama knows the secrets hidden to us by death. He is indeed the Buddha who knows all things.” So he began to have faith in the Buddha. Later he came to the Buddha with fourteen difficult questions. His questions, in brief, were as follows:

“Why is it that among human beings, some live a short life while others live long; some have poor health while others are healthy; some are ugly while others are pleasing to look at; some

of the mind is called ‘*cittānupassanā*’. If you note like this, the thinking will be interrupted and will stop. Then you can go back to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen as before.

If a pain or itch comes up you must note it as ‘pain, pain’ or ‘itching, itching’. Sometimes the pain becomes more acute as you note. Then you should endure it as much as you can and continue meditating. If it becomes unbearable, you will have to change the position of your limbs, but when you move, note every movement beginning with the intention to do so. If the pain disappears as a result of your noting or because you have changed your position, you can return to noting the rising and falling. Here, noting the pain is contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā*).

When you hear or see something, you concentrate on the phenomenon that has appeared and note ‘hearing, hearing’ or ‘seeing, seeing’. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* it says, “*Cakkhuṃ ca pajānāti, rūpe ca pajānāti, sotaṃ ca pajānāti, sadde ca pajānāti*” — “He understands the eye and visible forms, he understands the ear and sounds, etc.” This is contemplation of mental-objects (*dhammānupassanā*).

Noting and understanding every movement like walking, standing, sitting, lying down, bending, stretching, rising, falling, and so on, is the good deed of insight called contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*). Noting pain and all other pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings, is contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā*). Noting of thinking, imagining, and so on is the good deed of insight called contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*). Whenever sense objects arise, noting them as ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’ and so forth is the good deed of insight called contemplation of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*).

they are all impermanent. This is comprehension of things as they really are, or *asammoha sampajañña*.

Then it says in the text, “*Alokite vilokite sampajānakārī hoti*.” This means, “In looking forward or looking back, he practises clear comprehension.” Whenever you look and see you must note, ‘looking’, ‘seeing’, which is *isocara sampajañña*. As you continue to note, you realise how all the phenomena of looking, seeing and noting pass away instantly. This understanding of their true characteristics is *asammoha sampajañña*. Ordinary people think that what they see is lasting, and they think the same of their seeing. This is a common illusion. When your concentration is strong, you clearly perceive for yourself how the thing seen, the seeing and the noting pass away as quickly as flashes of lightning. In a movie picture, thirty pictures every second are projected onto the screen, but these rapid changes are not visible to the untrained human eye. The meditator who has attained the knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-nāṇa*) perceives very clearly how the thing seen, the seeing and the noting pass away instantly. The greater the perfection, the clearer your perception of constant dissolution. You can then very clearly understand how these impermanent phenomena lack happiness and are no refuge. There is also no self or soul in these ever-changing phenomena. This is also *asammoha sampajañña*.

The next passage is, “*Samiñjite pasārite sampajānakārī hoti*.” — “In bending or straightening the limbs he practises clear comprehension.” When you bend or stretch your limbs you must note as ‘bending’ or ‘stretching’. When doing so you must bend or stretch very slowly. If you meditate like this you will notice that all the acts of bending and stretching pass away very swiftly. You will realise clearly how the bending and

Faith in the law of *kamma* and its effects, believing that unwholesome actions bring unpleasant results and that wholesome actions bring pleasant results, is also well-placed faith or *saddhāsampadā*. To have faith in *kamma* and its effects is essential. If one does not believe in *kamma*, but wrongly believes that someone such as an Almighty Being will save us, or is responsible for the good and bad results that we get, then one will not do good deeds and will do mostly bad deeds instead. If one has not done good deeds, one will not enjoy happiness, but will meet only suffering, which is the result of bad deeds. It is just like someone who has to suffer illness after eating rotten or unsuitable food instead of fresh or suitable food. I will tell you a true story about this.

In the days of the Buddha there was a rich Brahmin called Todeyya living at Sāvathī who was the king's adviser. He had fabulous wealth, but did not give anything to anyone, and told others, "If you give, you lose what you have, so do not give anything." He died greatly attached to his wealth and was reborn as a dog in his own house.

One day the Buddha came to that house on his round for alms because he wanted to preach the true Dhamma to the young man Subha, the son of Todeyya. The dog that was formerly Todeyya came running out and barked at the Buddha. The Buddha spoke to the dog, "Hey Todeyya, you showed disrespect to me in your former birth, so now you have become a dog. Now you are barking at me and will be reborn in Avīci hell for this bad action." On hearing this the dog thought, "This recluse Gotama knows me." Feeling very ill at ease he went to the kitchen and lay down to sleep in the ashes there. As he was the young Brahmin's pet, he used to sleep in

ment (*upādānakkhandhā*) so that there might be no occasion for desire and attachment to arise.

*Upādānakkhandhā* means the psychophysical phenomena that occur every time one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks. In every act of seeing, there are the eye, the visible object and visual consciousness. Along with this consciousness, there is also a feeling (*vedanā*) of pleasure or displeasure regarding the thing seen. The perception (*saññā*) of what is seen, the urge to see (*cetanā*) and the attention (*manasikāra*) to the sight also occur. Of these, the eye and the sight make up the aggregate of materiality (*rūpakkhandha*). One takes these material qualities as permanent, pleasing and a living soul (*atta*), so one clings to them. Because of this clinging or attachment they are called '*upādānakkhandhā*' — 'aggregates of attachment'. So eye-consciousness etc. are called the aggregates of consciousness (*viññāṇupādānakkhandha*), feeling (*vedanupādānakkhandha*), perception (*saññupādānakkhandha*) and mental formations (*saṅkhārupādānakkhandha*). In brief, the eye and the sight are material qualities (*rūpa*), the consciousness of sight is mental quality (*nāma*). There are only these two — material and mental qualities. These phenomena arise every time something is seen, and arise and pass away repeatedly at every moment. However, if they are not noted at the time of seeing, they will be taken and clung to as permanent entities. Thus, through attachment and the *kamma* of striving for pleasure, rebirth follows. Because of rebirth, the sufferings of old age and death are inevitable.

However, if noting is made at every moment of seeing, the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment will be realised and the attachment will be removed. Thus,

you should do walking or sitting, then do whichever is more suitable. However, when you are contemplating in earnest, you do not need to make these considerations, but just go on with your noting.

The third comprehension, *gocara sampajañña*, for the meditator, is just noting the physical and mental phenomena without any let-up. As you go on meditating with *gocara sampajañña*, your concentration becomes strong and see for yourself the incessant arising and passing away of things. You very clearly understand how these phenomena are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. This understanding is *asammoha sampajañña*, which means comprehension without delusion.

This practice of clear comprehension is explained in the text as, "*Abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakāri hoti*," which means, "Both in advancing and returning he practises clear comprehension." This reminds us to note and know every step taken in going or coming, which means to note 'right step', 'left step', 'lifting', 'pushing forwards', 'dropping down', etc. Thus noting the meditation objects relentlessly is *gocara sampajañña*. As you go on noting, your concentration becomes very strong and you come to distinguish between mind and matter. You know the walking as matter and the noting of it as mind. You may not know the Pāli words '*nāma*' and '*rūpa*', but if you know the difference between what is cognised and what cognises, then that is enough. Again, you understand that the intention to walk gives rise to walking, and that walking gives rise to the noting of the walking. So you distinguish between cause and effect. The intention to walk, the walking and the noting of it all pass away immediately, so you understand very clearly that

As you continue noting, your concentration will grow stronger and you will come to understand, "That which is known is one thing, that which knows is another." So you distinguish between mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*). This is the analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*).

Later, you know for yourself, "From the intention to move, the movement arises. From the intention to bend, bending arises. From the intention to stretch, stretching arises. Because there are the eye and a visible form, one sees. Because there are the ear and a sound, one hears. Because there is something to be known, one knows." You realise how there are only cause and effect. This is the knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*).

As your concentration and insight gain further strength, you see for yourself how the object noted and the noting mind arise and pass away repeatedly. So you plainly see that they are all impermanent. This is the good deed of insight called knowledge of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā-ñāna*). You realise too that if, after the passing away of the old mind and matter, new ones fail to arise, that is the moment to die. Since you can die at any moment, you realise what a dreadful and unreliable thing life is, which is suffering. This is the good deed of insight called knowledge of unsatisfactoriness (*dukkhānupassanā-ñāna*). The mental and physical phenomena do not follow your wish; they arise and pass away of their own accord, which is their nature. They are beyond your control so they are not-self. This is the good deed of insight called knowledge of not-self (*anattānupassanā-ñāna*).

Of the good deeds of insight, one is the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāna*), by which one

*kamma* and the arising of new existences will, cease and the resulting old age, disease and death will cease too.

In the same way, if the phenomena that arise on hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking are not noted, and awareness is lacking, new existences will arise. Then the suffering of old age, disease and death must be undergone. If, on the other hand, all psychophysical phenomena are noted and perceived rightly, new existences will not arise, and so the sufferings of old age, disease and death will cease.

“Thus reflecting on the arising and cessation of suffering, the bodhisatta meditated on the arising and passing away of the aggregates of attachment. Soon he was freed from the bondage of defilements (*āsava-kilesa*) and became the Omniscient Buddha.”

“*Tassa pañcāsu upādānakkhandhesu udayabbayānupassino viharato na cirass’eva anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ vimucci.*”

Thus has it been preached. This in brief is how the Buddha practised to gain freedom from old age, disease, death, etc., and realised the noblest dhammas of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*) and deliverance (*vimutti*). The Buddha realised the cessation of all suffering and preached the Dhamma out of compassion to all beings so that they might, like himself, come to know and experience the cessation of suffering.

Initially, the Buddha preached this Dhamma to his five disciples: Kondañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji. Those five disciples attended on the bodhisatta for six whole years while he was practising austerities, going without solid food and living on just a handful of boiled bean soup. They did so hoping that the bodhisatta, who had wasted away to a mere

rich by cultivating the other *sampadās*. Therefore, to be happy and prosperous one should try to live by these *sampadās*.

However, it is more important to be happy in one’s future lives, than it is to be happy just in this life, so the Buddha taught us four further *sampadās*. They are: accomplishment in faith (*saddhāsampadā*), accomplishment in morality (*sīlasampadā*), accomplishment in generosity (*cāgasampadā*) and accomplishment in wisdom (*paññāsampadā*).

Of these four, *saddhāsampadā* means to have faith in what one should have faith in. What should one have faith in? One should have faith in the true Buddha, the true Dhamma, the true Saṅgha and in the law of *kamma* and its effects.

The true Buddha has nine virtues. The first is worthiness (*araham*). It means one who is purified of all defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion and so forth. The second virtue, *Sammā-sambuddha*, means one who knows the four truths by his own knowledge. The eighth virtue, *Buddha*, means one who knows all things and preaches the four noble truths so that other beings may know them. Once endowed with these three virtues, the other six naturally follow. Having faith or confidence in the Buddha with these virtues is well-placed faith or *saddhāsampadā*.

The true Dhamma is the nine supramundane *dhammas* — the four noble paths, the four fruitions and nibbāna. There is also the teaching which explains these things to us. These ten together are the true Dhamma.

The true Saṅgha is the Order of the Buddha’s disciples who practise morality, concentration and wisdom to gain freedom from all mental defilements like greed and hatred. To have faith in the true Dhamma and the true Saṅgha is well-placed faith or *saddhāsampadā*.

realises the very rapid arising and passing away of things. When this knowledge comes, one finds bright light all around. One’s whole body feels weightless and one experiences extreme happiness, never before experienced. The mind is in raptures. One finds that illnesses and pains that were so difficult to bear before have now disappeared altogether. When one reaches the higher stage of knowledge of equanimity with regard to formations (*saṅkhārupekkha-ñāṇa*), one finds that every act of awareness is so peaceful and subtle. This, in brief, is how one experiences extraordinary happiness never before enjoyed, when practising the good deed of insight.

When the knowledge of equanimity gains strength, the meditator realises nibbāna through the knowledge of the noble path. This, too, is a good deed that has to be developed. When one has attained the path of a Stream-winner, its result follows immediately. Once one is a Stream-winner one is freed forever from the four lower realms of hell, animals, hungry ghosts (*petā*) and demons (*asūra*). When born in the human or celestial realms, one is reborn among the higher ranks, never the lower. Within seven of such rebirths at the most, one will reach the final stage of an *Arahant* by virtue of the good deed of insight. One then attains the end of all suffering. That is why the Buddha advised us to fulfil the good deeds of insight as well as mundane good deeds. To cultivate the good deeds of insight and other good deeds is what is meant by the Buddha’s teaching, “To cultivate good.”

The third line says, “To purify one’s mind.” To purify the mind completely one must strive to remove the defilements like greed, hatred and delusion, and never let them arise again. This amounts to developing the noble path of *Arahantship*. For

passing away, moment by moment, and nothing else. You become detached from them without any illusion that there is a self or soul. You no longer regard things as permanent, pleasant or good and know everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. This is what is said in the text as, “*Anissito ca viharati.*” This means, “The *bhikkhu* abides detached and independent.”

Once your knowledge of these three characteristics is perfected, you will realise nibbāna and attain the noble path and fruition, you will become an *Arahant*. Then you will be free from all suffering after your final passing away (*parinibbāna*). At least you will attain the path and fruition of a Stream-winner. Then you will never be reborn in the lower realms of existence again. So we must strive until we attain at least the stage of a Stream-winner.

#### The Four Clear Comprehensions (*Sampajañña*)

Now we come to cultivating the four clear comprehensions. They are:

1. *Satthaka sampajañña.*
2. *Sappāya sampajañña.*
3. *Gocara sampajañña.*
4. *Asammoha sampajañña.*

When you are about to do or say something, you should consider whether it will be useful or not, and then you should do or say only what is useful. This kind of consideration is called ‘*satthaka sampajañña*’. Even if it is useful, you should also consider whether it is suitable or not, and then you should do or say only what is suitable. This is called ‘*sappāya sampajañña*’. These two clear comprehensions are beneficial in worldly matters as well. When meditating, you may consider whether

Everyone wants to be happy, but what must one do and how should one live to be happy? Everyone should know this much. Because of his great compassion, the Buddha taught us about this 'Way to Happiness'. Happiness is of two kinds: happiness in this very life, and happiness in the future lives. Happiness in this life can be gained by four accomplishments (*sampadā*), namely: *uṭṭhānasampadā*, *ārakkhasampadā*, *kalyāṇamittatā* and *samajivitā*.

Of these, *uṭṭhānasampadā* means alertness or diligence in one's work. In whatever work that you do, whether it is agriculture, commerce or education, you should apply your skill, and work diligently. If you do so, you will earn what you deserve, which is obvious.

*Ārakkhasampadā* means wariness or watchfulness so that your worldly possessions may not be lost. This too is clear.

*Kalyāṇamittatā* means association with good friends, who can help you work for your well-being. To get such good friends, it is important that your dealings with people be motivated by good-will (*mettā*). According to the Buddha, a good friend should be one who has the virtues of faith (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), generosity (*cāga*) and wisdom (*paññā*). If a friend is lacking in faith, your faith can fail. If a friend is lacking in morality, your morality can fail. If a friend is lacking in generosity or wisdom, you too may lack them.

*Samajivitā* means to live within your means. You should spend less than your income, not more. If possible, you should set aside a quarter of your income and spend only three-quarters. There are many examples of people who became wealthy by living within their means. There are similar examples of people who became

skeleton of skin and bones, would soon attain Buddhahood. However, when the bodhisatta resumed taking solid food to practise *ānāpānasati* meditation, they had lost faith in him. They thought that he could not attain it even while practising austerity by abstaining from solid food. They considered that the bodhisatta had deviated from the true path that would enable him to realise the noble Dhamma. Thus, looking down on the bodhisatta, they left him and went to live in the deer park near Benares, eighteen *yojanas* (about 140 miles) away from Bodhgaya.

The Buddha went to the deer park and, sitting at the place they had prepared, asked them to listen to his teaching. He said to them, "I have found the Dhamma that is deathless, and if you practise it you will attain the noblest Dhamma that you seek. Listen!" Then, the five disciples retorted, "Friend Gotama, even while you were practising the austerities by abstaining from solid food, you could not gain extraordinary wisdom. How could you have gained it now that you have given up that ascetic practice?" Out of compassion the Buddha repeated his invitation to listen to his teaching three times. Three times they rejected it. Then the Buddha admonished them, "My five disciples, it is not that you have met me only now; you have been attending on me for six full years while I was practising arduous austerities. Did you then hear me say that I had gained the exceptional Dhamma?"

Then the five disciples, believing that it must be as the Buddha had said, agreed to listen to his teaching. The Buddha then preached the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, beginning with these words:

"*Dve 'me bhikkhave antā pabbajitena na sevittabbā.*"

soon be an *Arahant*.' Surely these are words of truth. I have been walking the while night, so I must have overtaxed my strength and slackened my concentration. That is why I have made no progress. To balance concentration and effort, I should practise meditation in the lying posture for a while." So, he entered his room, sat on the bed and lay down. While doing so and noting, 'lying, lying', he attained *Arahantship* before his head had touched the pillow. That is what we have been talking about — noting while lying down. Enlightenment can be very quick indeed! So it is important to note whatever bodily movement there is.

I have said enough on the second method of body contemplation. While noting in this way, you may see for yourself and understand the process of arising and passing away of the physical phenomena in your body. That is what is said in the passage, "*Samudaya-dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vaya-dhammānupassī vā ... samudaya-vaya-dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati.*" The meaning is, "He abides contemplating the arising of things in the body, or he abides contemplating the passing away of things in the body, or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing away of things in the body."

When you note 'walking', the walking is matter, a non-sentient thing. The noting is mind, which is sentient. So you distinguish between mind and matter. When you note the abdomen as 'rising' the rising is matter, and the noting is mind. So you distinguish between mind and matter. Then again, the intention to walk gives rise to walking, the intention to stand gives rise to standing, and so on. You make these distinctions and understand things as well as your ability allows. When you understand them, you realise that there is only this arising and

the *Arahant*, no matter what object he or she meets with, no passion, ill-will or delusion arises. The *Arahant* is totally purified from defilements for ever. To reach this path one must cultivate the good deed of insight.

The bodhisatta himself meditated on the arising and passing away of the mental and physical aggregates of attachment whenever seeing, hearing, etc. occurred. By thus meditating he realised the path of *Arahantship* and became the Buddha. The disciples of the Buddha, too, meditated and became *Arahants* in the same way. When one attains *Arahantship*, one's mind is free from all defilements, so one no longer clings to any object at all. Therefore, after the passing away of the last consciousness (*cuticitta*) at death (*parinibbāna*) no new birth will arise and one is free from all suffering for ever.

We should strive to be free from the suffering of old age, disease and death, and the suffering of formations (*saṅkhārā*), and to gain the eternal happiness that the Buddha advised in his teaching:

"Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind."

Now, in accordance with this teaching let us try some meditation for about five minutes. Hold your upper body straight (*ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya*). Establish mindfulness on the object to be noted (*parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapaetvā*). Fix your attention on the abdominal movements. Since there is no need to look, keep your eyes closed.

As the abdomen rises note 'rising'; as it falls note 'falling'. You need not say the words aloud, just note mentally. Noting or meditating is trying to understand mind and matter as they really are, so words are not important. What is important is to know the movement of the abdomen. This movement is called

To such preaching of the Buddha respectful attention should be paid according to the following statement:

“*Buddho so bhagavā bodhāya dhammaṃ deseti.*”

The meaning is that after realising the true Dhamma himself, the Buddha preached it to those who could be instructed so that they may, like himself, come to realise the true Dhamma.

I shall now explain a few passages from the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, the first discourse of the Buddha.

From the age of sixteen till the age of twenty-nine, the bodhisatta, Prince Siddhattha, enjoyed the pleasures of the senses, accompanied by his wife Yasodharā-devī and other female companions. Though ordinary people consider these pleasures to be delightful, they are free neither from the defilements of greed and anger nor from the arising of new existences accompanied by old age, disease and death. Thus, in the eyes of wise and farsighted people, there is no satisfaction whatever in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Only that which confers permanent freedom from the suffering of old age, disease, and death, leading to permanent happiness, is the noblest Dhamma. This is self-evident if one considers carefully. Renunciation of the worldly life is to gain such permanent happiness, but this happiness would be complete only if there is freedom from the defilements of greed and anger. That is why the Buddha taught that the monk who has gone forth to free himself from these defilements should not indulge in the vulgar enjoyments of sensual pleasures, which is regarded as an extreme practice. In conformity with this precept, the Buddha let it be known that he himself had forsaken these sensual pleasures from the age of twenty-nine. He also said

‘*vāyodhātu*’. You should mindfully follow the abdominal movement from the beginning of the rising to the end of it, and from the beginning of the falling to the end of it. When the falling ends, the rising begins. When the falling ends, the rising begins. There is no interval, so you must meditate continuously.

In the beginning of the practice your concentration is not strong enough, so the mind is unstable and may often slip away. Note that wandering mind too as ‘imagining’, ‘thinking’, etc. Noting thus is contemplation of mind. When you note like this, the wandering will stop, then you can return to the rising and falling. If you feel tired, hot, or pain somewhere in the body, note ‘tired’, ‘hot’ or ‘pain’. This is contemplation of feelings. When mindfulness and concentration have grown stronger, the painful feelings noted may disappear as if they were taken away. Some people got cured of otherwise incurable diseases while they were meditating, which is very heartening. Now, we are only meditating for a few minutes and you will not have to note for long. Just note the pain three or four times and then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. If you hear a sound, note ‘hearing, hearing’ and then return to the rising and falling. Now please note as I have instructed for five minutes.

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There can be about fifty or sixty acts of noting in a minute. In such acts of noting the eight path factors are being developed. This is how they occur:

The effort to note is right effort. Keeping the object in mind as it occurs is right mindfulness. Remaining focussed on the object of meditation is right concentration. These three are the

of the truth of suffering is accomplished. The realisation of the truth of the cause of suffering is accomplished by eliminating it, and the truth of the path is accomplished by developing it. When you realise the Four Noble Truths by such meditation, you become at least a Stream-winner and are saved from the lower realms (*apāya*) for ever. This, in brief, is contemplation of the Four Noble Truths.

### The Fruits of Satipaṭṭhāna

Regarding the benefits that one will enjoy from the development of this mindfulness the Buddha said, “*Yo hi koci bhikkhave ime cattāro satipaṭṭhāne evaṃ bhāveyya, sattā vassāni ... sattā māsāni ... sattāhaṃ, tassa dvinnaṃ phalānaṃ aññātaraṃ phalaṃ paṭikaṅkhaṃ, ditṭhe va dhamme aññā sati va upādisesa anāgāmitā.*” — “Whoever, monks, practises these four foundations of mindfulness for seven years ... even for seven months ... even for seven days will win one of two fruits, in this very life he will win the highest knowledge or, if there is some attachment remaining, he will win the path of a Non-returner.”

If you cannot become a Non-returner as stated above, you can certainly become a Stream-winner. Many have now realised the path, its fruition and nibbāna after meditating for one or two months on bodily movements, mental states, feelings or the six senses. So by practising this *Satipaṭṭhāna* method to the best of your ability, may you be able to attain the path and its fruition, and may you realise nibbāna very soon.

still, when you are sitting, since the abdominal movement is something very plainly felt, concentrate on this movement and note as ‘rising’, ‘falling’. This amounts to contemplating a bodily movement in the abdomen. Any form of movement or posture should be noted according to the text: “*Yathā yathā vā paṇ’assa kāyo paṇihito hoti, tathā tathā naṃ pajānāti.*” This means, “Whatever the posture of the body is, one is aware of it.” This teaching shows that we should note every bodily movement — moving of the limbs, closing and opening of the eyes, moving of the abdomen and so on, and try to perceive it as it really is. That is why we instruct our disciples to begin with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, which is plain to all. Those who noted as instructed and gained insight are now more than a hundred thousand.

When you lie down, you should do so noting the bodily movements involved. While so lying down you can gain supramundane knowledge. This is what led Venerable Ānanda to become an *Arahant*.

Exactly three months and four days after the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*, on the eve of the First Buddhist Council, Venerable Ānanda was trying strenuously to attain *Arahantship* overnight. For the whole night he was practising the form of meditation known as ‘*caṅkamaṇa*’, noting his steps, right and left, raising, pushing forward and dropping of the feet; in the manner we have just described. Although he continued until it was nearly dawn, he had not yet attained *Arahantship*. Venerable Ānanda thought, “I have done my utmost. I don’t think I need to exert harder. Why haven’t I attained wisdom yet? The Lord encouraged me with the words, “Ānanda, you have sufficient perfections (*pāramī*), strive on and you will

dissolution. So they are really suffering. They do not last for a second — not even a millisecond. They pass away very rapidly. If no more mental and physical phenomena arise when they pass away, that is the moment to die. How terrible it is to depend for one's support on these unreliable phenomena, which can bring death so suddenly. That is why they are nothing but suffering.

However, those who do not meditate on the arising and passing away of phenomena do not understand how unstable they are, and so are not alarmed. Even those who meditate, if they haven't yet realised the fleeting nature of things, will not be afraid. Only if one meditates diligently on 'walking', 'standing', 'thinking', 'imagining' will one gain the deep kind of concentration that can perceive the fleeting nature of things. Only then will one understand that death can come at any moment, and one will be alarmed. One will realise that what is the basis of pain, misery, old age and death is indeed suffering. One knows this for oneself, which is what the Buddha meant by the words, "*Idam dukkhan'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.*" — "He comprehends as it really is, 'This is suffering'."

Once you understand suffering as it really is, your attachment to these mental and physical phenomena is eliminated. This is comprehending by eliminating craving, which is the true cause of suffering. Every time you eliminate craving, you achieve the momentary cessation of suffering. By developing the path of insight you achieve the knowledge of the truth of the path. This is how you understand the Four Noble Truths every time you meditate on suffering. As you continue to meditate and your insight is perfected, you will realise nibbāna. This is knowing the truth of the cessation of suffering by the knowledge of the right path. By such knowledge the realisation

that giving up austerities and taking such food as he needed, was not enjoyment of sensual pleasures, but just strengthening the body so that he could practise meditation properly. This fact also needs to be acknowledged.

Sustaining himself daily on a mere handful of boiled bean soup and practising self-mortification for six years without gaining any noble Dhamma, the bodhisatta realised that it was a fruitless exercise that brought only suffering. He therefore let it be known that he had forsaken it as futile. The bodhisatta discovered the Middle Way only after giving up these two extremes. What is this Middle Way? It consists of 1) Right View (*sammā diṭṭhi*), 2) Right Thought (*sammā saṅkappa*), 3) Right Speech (*sammā vācā*), 4) Right Action (*sammā kammanta*), 5) Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*), 6) Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*), 7) Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*), and 8) Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*).

Of these eight factors of the path, right speech, right action, and right livelihood are the path factors of morality (*sīla maggaṅga*). If the five precepts are scrupulously observed, morality is accomplished to a reasonable extent, but for full accomplishment the stage of a Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) is necessary. That is why a Stream-winner is described as one who is practising with full accomplishment of morality (*sīlesupariṇurakāri*).

Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are the path factors of concentration (*samādhi maggaṅga*). The factors are reasonably accomplished on the attainment of *jhāna*, but are complete only at the stage of a Non-returner. That is why the Non-returner is described as one who is practising with full accomplishment of concentration (*samādhismiṃ pariṇurakāri*).

and so on. When *jhānic* concentration is developed, it can be used to cultivate insight.

The fifth way is developing insight by contemplating the four elements. Again, we will come to this later.

The nine remaining contemplations are comparing one's own body with a dead body to arouse loathsomeness.

Now, I will explain the second of the fourteen body contemplations — the four postures. The text says, "*Gacchanto vā gacchāmi'ti pajānāti.*" This means, "When he is walking, a *bhikkhu* comprehends, 'I am walking'." By this is meant that we should note and understand what is really happening whenever a bodily movement takes place. So, when you walk, you must concentrate on the bodily movements involved in walking and note 'walking, walking'.<sup>1</sup> You must note every part of the step from lifting the foot to putting it down. When walking fast you must note 'right step', 'left step'. When walking slowly you must note 'lifting', 'pushing forward', 'dropping'. When you stop walking and stand still, you concentrate on the erect body and note as 'standing, standing'. When you sit down, you concentrate on the manner of sitting down and note 'sitting down'. When you have sat down, you arrange the positions of your limbs. Note every movement. If there is no movement and you are just sitting still, concentrate on the erect position of the body and note as 'sitting, sitting'.

Your effort may soon slacken if you note only one object like 'sitting'. In that case you can combine it with some other object such as touching and note as 'sitting, touching'. Better

<sup>1</sup>Though it should be taught fully as 'I am walking' or 'I am standing', and so on, to quicken the noting we teach our disciples to note 'walking, walking', 'standing, standing', and so on.

path factors of concentration. Knowing the object rightly is right view. When you first begin meditation, this right view will not be clear to you, but after forty, fifty or sixty hours of meditation your concentration grows stronger. Then your mind no longer wanders, but stays on the meditation object. When you note the rising of the abdomen, you very distinctly realise that the rising is one thing and the knowing of it is another. When you note the falling, you distinctly realise that the falling is one thing and the noting of it is another. When you note 'moving' or 'walking' you distinctly realise that the moving or walking is one thing and the noting of it is another. When you note 'seeing', you distinctly realise that the eye and the visible form are one thing and the seeing and noting of it are another. When you note 'hearing', you distinctly realise that the ear and the sound are one thing and the hearing and the noting of it are another. This, in brief is how you develop the analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*).

As your concentration and insight develop further, you realise that because of the respiration the abdomen rises and falls, and because of the abdominal movement, noting of it occurs. Again, because of the intention to move, the movement follows, and because of the movement, noting of it occurs. Because of the eye and visible forms, seeing arises, and because of seeing, noting of it occurs. Because there are the ear and sounds, hearing arises, and because of hearing, noting of it occurs. So you realise for yourself the cause and effect relationship between everything. This is the knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*). Furthermore, failure to note seeing, hearing, and so on, leads one to the delusion that things are permanent, happy, good, and self. This delusion leads

Right view and right thought are the path factors of wisdom (*paññā maggaṅga*). While noting the phenomena that occur at every moment, if one realises their impermanence, the path factors of wisdom are being developed, along with morality and concentration. The bodhisatta was liberated from the defiling outflows (*āsava-kilesa*) by the path of *Arahantship*. He thus became the Buddha through observing the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*) and developing these eight path factors. The Buddha himself found the right Middle Way called '*majjhima-paṭipadā*' by avoiding the two extremes and developing the eight path factors. He then taught the practice of this Middle Way, which is conducive to the opening of the eye of wisdom and to the attainment of insight.

Here, the eye of wisdom means the act of knowing. It is called the 'eye of wisdom' because it sees clearly as if with the eye. What kind of knowledge does it see? With every moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and knowing, whatever is experienced is only mental and physical phenomena or cause and effect. One experiences personally that there is no permanent soul or self. It is clearly seen with one's own insight knowledge that there is only an ever-changing process of insubstantial psychophysical phenomena. These are all facts of personal knowledge and not beliefs held out of deference to one's teachers, or blind beliefs accepted out of reverence for the Buddha. That is why the Buddha's teaching is praised as '*sanditṭhiko*', the Dhamma that can be personally experienced if practised.

These eight path factors (*maggaṅga*) are the Middle Way, which allows extraordinary insight and knowledge to arise.

its fruition, and become a Stream-winner. This, in brief, is the contemplation of the factors of enlightenment.

### Contemplation of the Four Noble Truths

Regarding the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths the Buddha taught, "*Idaṃ dukkhaṃ ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, '*Ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo*' *ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, '*Ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho*' *ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, '*Ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha gāmini paṭipadā*' *ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*." — "He comprehends as it really is, 'This is suffering.' He comprehends as it really is, 'This is the cause of suffering.' He comprehends as it really is, 'This is the cessation of suffering.' He comprehends as it really is, 'This is the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

The mental and physical phenomena occurring in the body are really just suffering. Why? Because they are the basis of suffering like physical pain, mental pain, old age, death and so on. Since they are impermanent, death can come at any moment. Physical suffering like aches and pains occur because there is a physical body and consciousness. Without a physical body, physical pain is quite impossible. Though there is a body, if there is no consciousness, pain or suffering is also impossible. Why? If a log or a stone or a lump of clay is beaten with a stick, struck with a knife, or put into a fire, it will suffer no pain because it lacks consciousness. So the physical body without consciousness is no cause for physical pain. However, sentient beings have got both a physical body and consciousness, so they have to endure all kinds of physical and mental suffering. Therefore, mind and matter are really nothing but suffering.

Moreover, every time we are reborn, we must undergo the suffering of old age, death and so on, because we have these mental and physical phenomena, which are subject to decay and

one to take delight in them. This delight makes one strive to attain the things one has taken delight in. This striving, or *kamma*, leads to more and more rebirths. Because of rebirth one has to undergo old age, illness, death, and other physical and mental suffering, wherever one is born. Thus, higher wisdom comes to one who is intelligent. This understanding of the relationship between cause and effect is in accordance with the Law of Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca Samuṭpāda*).

At the next stage of insight, as concentration and insight grow stronger still, you plainly realise how the object noted and the mind noting it arise and pass away instantly. Then you know for yourself that whatever arises and passes away is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. This is knowledge by comprehension (*sammasana-nāṇa*). Knowing how things arise and pass away is knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-nāṇa*). When this latter knowledge is attained, one sees bright lights all around, one feels great joy, the body and mind feel at ease and are pervaded with immense happiness. As one advances to the knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-nāṇa*), forms and shapes like arms, legs and the body no longer manifest themselves. Then one finds both the things noted and the noting of them very swiftly disappear. When the meditator reaches the higher stage of knowledge of equanimity with regard to formations (*saṅkhārupekkha-nāṇa*), awareness comes easily without making an effort to be mindful. The meditator can sit for one hour, two hours, three hours or more without difficulty. It is a very good stage. Knowing things clearly like this is right view. Bringing one's mind to clearly know mind and matter is right thought. These two are the path factors of wisdom (*paññā maggaṅga*).

greed and hatred. These defilements, which are the cause of suffering, can be eliminated only by the noble path, and the noble path can be attained only through the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. So to reach the noble path, which eradicates all defilements, and to attain nibbāna, which means the end of suffering, we all have to practise *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.

The practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* has four aspects:

1. Mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
2. Mindfulness of feelings (*vedānānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
3. Mindfulness of thoughts (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
4. Mindfulness of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

### Mindfulness of the Body

There are fourteen ways of contemplating the body. The first is mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). '*Ānāpāna*' means the inhaled and exhaled breath. Every time air is breathed in and out through the nostrils, one makes a note of the in-breathing and out-breathing. By so doing, *jhānic* concentration can be developed, and from this *jhāna* one can develop insight into the impermanent nature of mental and physical phenomena. This is how it is explained in the commentaries.

The second way is contemplation of the four postures: standing, sitting, walking and lying down. We will deal with this in detail later.

The third way is the four clear comprehensions (*sampañjānā*). We will deal with this later too.

The fourth way is to contemplate the thirty-two parts of the body: hairs of the head, hairs of the body, nails, teeth, skin,



### Contemplation of the Factors of Enlightenment

The factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are the means by which one realises nibbāna. There are seven of them:

1. Mindfulness (*sati*).
2. Investigation of phenomena (*dhammavicaya*).
3. Energy (*virīya*).
4. Joy or rapture (*pīti*).
5. Tranquillity (*passaddhi*).
6. Concentration (*samādhi*).
7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

It is said in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that if any of these arise, one should be aware of it. If any are absent, one should be aware of this too. The factors of enlightenment do not arise in the beginner. They occur only when one has attained the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) or higher stages. If you persistently contemplate all phenomena, as explained in the section on mindfulness of the body, by noting 'walking', 'standing', 'sitting', 'bending', 'stretching', 'rising', 'falling', 'tired', 'hot', etc., you will soon attain the knowledge of arising and passing away. Then you will clearly understand the impermanence of things. Every time you note the arising and passing away of things, you have the enlightenment factor 'mindfulness'. When your concentration slackens and you are not so mindful, you are aware that the factor of mindfulness is absent. Similarly, when the factor arises that investigates mind and matter, you are aware that it is present, and when it is absent you are aware that it is absent. Through this awareness your concentration will become very strong. As you develop your awareness of the arising and passing away of these factors, you will in due course attain the noble path and

This insight is extraordinary because it discerns things that are subtle. It can extinguish all defilements and to realise nibbāna. That is why the Buddha taught that everyone who develops these eight factors will, like him, gain extraordinary insight knowledge, resulting in the extinction of defilements. Bearing in mind this advice while listening to the Buddha's first discourse, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, Venerable Kondañña was the first human being to achieve the stage of a Stream-winner. Simultaneously, one hundred and eighty million Brahmās attained the noble path, and innumerable celestial beings (*devas*) achieved this extraordinary Dhamma.

I shall now briefly explain these eight path factors so that you may be able to practise and develop them.

According to Indian practice, the meditator should sit in the cross-legged position (*paḷḷaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā*).<sup>1</sup> This position enables the meditator to sit still for a long time. According to the custom in the West one may also sit on a chair to meditate but the upper part of the body should be kept straight (*ujum kāyaṃ paṇidhāya*).<sup>1</sup> One must not be bent over nor too relaxed while sitting or energy will be weak. One should not sit leaning against something either. The mind should be directed towards the object of meditation (*parimukhaṃ satim upathapetvā*).<sup>1</sup>

Whether one is practising with an external device (*kaṣiṇa*), on loathsomeness (*asubha*) or mindfulness of the breathing (*ānāpānasati*), the mind should be directed towards the object of meditation. Insight meditation (*vipassanā*) means to observe all the phenomena occurring at the six sense doors. In the beginning, however, it will not be possible to observe each and

<sup>1</sup>These words are quoted directly from the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

they could not eat or sleep. They came to me, and after taking up *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation under my guidance, were relieved of their sorrows in a matter of four, five or ten days. The number of such people is now more than a thousand.

The practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* will lead one to the cessation of grief and lamentation, not only in this existence, but in all existences to come as well. So if you want to eradicate suffering, you must take up the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.

Furthermore, living beings suffer because of physical and mental discomfort. If these could be removed, they could live in comfort and happiness. Physical discomfort such as aches and pains in the body are caused by other people, extreme heat and cold, by tripping over, stepping on thorns, bumping into things, and so forth. Mental discomfort such as grief, sorrow and the like are caused by loss of loved ones, loss of wealth, meeting danger or frustration of one's desires. No one can save beings from these mental and physical misfortunes. Only the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation can eradicate these ills. There are cases of people who were deeply distressed and worried over the failure of their business, who found peace of mind by practising *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. Sometimes, people who were suffering from incurable diseases were cured by practising *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. However, to finally do away with suffering will be possible only when one has perfected oneself and reached the path and fruition of *Arahantship*. Only the *Arahant* after *parinibbāna* leaves behind all suffering, both physical and mental, for all time. That is why we must follow this practice to enjoy eternal peace.

Living beings continue to be reborn and to suffer old age, disease and death because they have mental impurities like

The three concentration factors and the two factors of wisdom are described in the commentaries as the 'five workers' (*kāraka maggaṅga*). If a job can only be done by a team of five workers, it needs to be done by all of them working in harmony. Likewise these five path factors are in harmony with every act of noting and knowing. Every time one notes, these five path factors gain strength through such harmony, and thus extraordinary insight develops.

Abstaining from unwholesome bodily acts of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct is right action (*sammā kam-manta*). Abstaining from verbal misdeeds of lying, backbiting, abuse and frivolous talk is right speech (*sammā vācā*). Abstaining from an unlawful livelihood is right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*). These are the path factors of morality (*sīla maggaṅga*). These factors are accomplished with the taking and observing of the precepts. So they also occur with every act of noting in meditation. Thus all eight factors are developed with every act of noting. So *nibbāna* gets nearer with every act of noting, just as one's destination gets nearer with every step one takes on a journey. Just as you arrive at your destination with the last step of your journey, so too you will arrive at *nibbāna* with the last act of noting.

So whenever you have the opportunity, you should meditate on the arising mind and matter, beginning with the rising and falling of the abdomen. With such observation, may you develop extraordinary insights, speedily attaining the noble path, its fruition and *nibbāna*.

every phenomenon. One should therefore begin with observing just a few phenomena that are most predominant. That is why we advise meditators to note the rising and falling of the abdomen at first. You need not observe it with the eyes, which should therefore be kept closed. While the abdomen rises, note ‘rising’ and while it falls, note ‘falling’. This should not be said verbally, but only noted mentally. The word that you use doesn’t matter, what is necessary is to be aware of each phenomenon as it occurs. That is why you should try to be continuously aware of the beginning and end of both the rising and falling of the abdomen. This is observing the element of motion (*vāyodhātu*) as it manifests as tension or movement in the abdomen.

While so noting, if a thought arises, it should be noted. This is contemplation of consciousness (*cittānupassanā*) according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. After noting this thought, return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. While noting thus, if pain or aching arises in the body it should be noted as ‘painful’ or ‘aching’. This is contemplation of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*). Then return to noting the rising and falling. If you hear something, it should be noted as ‘hearing, hearing’. Then return to noting the rising and falling. This, very briefly, is the method of meditation. So let us meditate in this manner for about two minutes.



Within every minute, fifty or sixty acts of noting are possible. In each act of noting, the eight path factors occur. The effort to note is right effort. Keeping the object in mind as it occurs is right mindfulness. Remaining focussed on the object

## Satipaṭṭhāna — The Only Way

The Buddha taught us in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*:

*“Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo, sattānaṃ visuddhīyā, sokaparidevānaṃ samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya, nāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.”*

“This is the only way, monks, leading to the purification of beings, to the transcendence of grief and lamentation, to the cessation of pain and sorrow, to the attainment of the right method, and to the realisation of nibbāna; namely, the four foundations of mindfulness.”

Because they have defilements (*kilesa*) like greed and hatred, living beings do such evil things as killing, causing injury, stealing, robbery, and lying. As a result of these evils they suffer in the four lower worlds (*apāya*). Even if, as a result of some good deed, they are born in the human realm, they suffer such miseries as early death, illness and poverty. These defilements cause them to be reborn repeatedly and thus to undergo suffering like old age, disease and death. If one wishes to be free from this suffering, one must strive to purify oneself of these defilements.

There is only one way to remove these defilements — the way of mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*), by which one contemplates what is going on in one’s own mind and body. If one wishes to get rid of the defilements like greed and hatred, one has to follow this only way of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. “*Ekāyana*” means “The Only Way” — there is no other way, no alternative. If you walk straight on along the only road, you will not go astray, as there is no junction, you are sure to reach your destination. Similarly, since

By noting ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’, and so on, and by understanding the real nature of the eye, visible objects, seeing and so on, you can gain the noble path and become a Streamwinner. This, in brief, is the contemplation of the six senses.

The fetters (*samyojana*) referred to here are defilements or base instincts, which, like the ropes that restrain oxen, bind us firmly to the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). They are:

1. Sensual desire (*kāmarāga*).
2. Anger or aversion (*paṭigha*).
3. Pride (*māna*).
4. Wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) that mistake mind and matter as self.
5. Scepticism or doubt (*vicikicchā*).
6. Adherence to rites and rituals (*silabbataparāmāsa*). This means to believe than any practice other than the Eightfold Noble Path will lead to liberation.
7. Craving rooted in eternalism (*bhavarāga*). Believing that one will continue to exist after death, one craves for continual pleasure.
8. Craving rooted in annihilationism (*vibhavarāga*). Believing that one will not exist after death, one craves to enjoy the present life.
9. Avarice (*macchariyā*).
10. Ignorance (*avijjā*) or delusion through which one mistakes what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self as permanent, happy and as having a self.

Of the above ten fetters, wrong view, doubt and adherence to rites and rituals are eradicated by the path of a Streamwinner (*sotāpatti-magga*); sensual desire and anger are eradicated by the path of a Non-returner (*anāgāmi-magga*) and the remaining fetters are eradicated by *Arahantship*.

*Satipaṭṭhāna* is the only way, if you continue training yourself in mindfulness, you will ultimately attain *Arahantship*, the noble state of complete purity from all defilements. That is why the Buddha taught us to follow this way of mindfulness.

All the former Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas and Arahants practised this method, were purified and reached nibbāna, where all suffering ceases. In the future too, all the Great Ones will follow the *satipaṭṭhāna* method and reach nibbāna. In this present world-cycle also, the Buddha Gotama and his disciples reached nibbāna by following this same way. This fact was pointed out by Brahmā Sahampati to the Buddha, who confirmed it and preached it to us.

People grieve and lament over the loss of their husbands, wives, children, parents and those near and dear to them. They also grieve for the loss of their wealth. They grieve when they suffer from any kind of disease. Of course, these are dreadful things. How peaceful it would be if there were no such things! Therefore, people should strive to eradicate all these miseries. However, they cannot escape from them just by praying to whatever gods there may be. Only by training themselves in this *Satipaṭṭhāna* method can they eradicate all suffering. During the Buddha’s time there was a young woman called Paṭācārā, who lost her husband, her two sons, her parents and her brother — all those near and dear to her. She was so overwhelmed with grief that she was driven to madness. One day she came to the Blessed One, heard the Dhamma, took up *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation and dispelled all her grief and lamentation, gaining peace of mind forever.

Today too, many people have lost sons, daughters, husbands, wives and parents. They were so stricken with grief that