

# FIVE WAYS TO CULTIVATE



*A  
Mature  
And  
Stable  
Mind*

Sayādaw U Paññadipa



Tathāgata Meditation Center

# **FIVE WAYS TO CULTIVATE A MATURE AND STABLE MIND**

By

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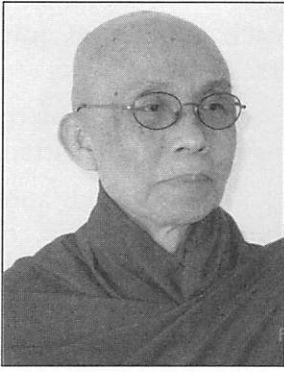
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## BIOGRAPHY

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Sayādaw was born on March 16, 1933 at Hninpalei village, Beelin township in lower Myanmar; therefore he is called Beelin Sayādaw. His father was U Kyaw Hmu and his mother was Daw Hla Thin.

He began his elementary education at the village monastery at the age of eight and was ordained as a sāmanera (novice) at the age of twelve. He culminated his early academic work at Hitlikaryi Buddhist Studies School in Thaton and passed with honors the Tipitaka study program there. He became a Dhamma teacher (Sāsana Dhaja Siripavara Dhamma Cariya).

Post graduate work was completed in Yangon and in Mandalay.

In 1967 he went to Mahāsi Yeikthā in Yangon and practiced intensive vipassanā meditation under Sayādaws U Pandita, U Janaka and U Sanwara. The following year he was sent to Gyopintha Sāsana Yeikthā near Prome as a meditation teacher, where he taught for seventeen years.

Then he was recognized as Nāyaka Kammatthāna Cariya (Senior Meditation Teacher) by Venerable U Panditabhivamsa and was asked to teach at Mahāsi Center in Yangon, which he did for six years.

Sayādaw has traveled extensively to other parts of the world including Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia

Beelin Sayādaw next served at Mahāsi Meditation Center near Wigan in the U.K. when the members of that community requested a Sayādaw skilled in patipatti (practice of meditation) and pariyatti (study of scriptures)

He was next invited to serve at Tathāgata Meditation Center in San Jose, California in December of 1999. There his strong and serene presence has contributed to the growth of Dhamma in yet another part of the world.

He was recently awarded the title of Agga Mahā Sadhamma Jotika Dhaja for his Dhamma Dhuta work abroad.

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## Preface

With dedication to the great meditation master of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Late Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, and under the guidance of my meditation teacher, Panditarama Sayadaw, I have been giving talks on vipassana meditation for years. Among them, the talk entitled “To Destroy Five Aggregates” was published in English in 2000. Also, another talk entitled “For the Full Realization of the Meaning of Life” published in Myanmar in 2004 was so satisfying to the devotees that they suggested to publish it in English for the benefits of English readers.

So, I asked U Aung Thein Nyunt (the Director of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Myanmar) to translate this book into English. Much to my delight, he accepted my request with enthusiasm and got the translation done very well. I must express my deepest appreciation of his time and energy devoted to this work.

In this book I talked about five ways to cultivate a mature and stable mind. So, its English version is accordingly entitled as “The Five Ways to Cultivate a Mature and Stable Mind.” A young and tender tree, for example, cannot resist severe weather. It can be easily destroyed by heavy rain, strong wind, too much water, too much sun and so on. When it grows bigger and stronger, however,



it would withstand those impediments. In the same way, immature and unstable mind cannot resist any temptation. It can be easily polluted by several kinds of defilements. Only when it is mature and stable, can it be able to stand ups and downs of life firmly and calmly. Based on the Buddha's teachings from Pali text, I expounded five ways in this book that would be helpful for developing such a mature and stable mind.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Tathāgata Meditation Center (TMC) for making this publication possible. And then my special thanks should go to Luyen Pham, Mudu-bhānini (Laura), Ha Truong, Sarah Marks, Karin Fowler and U Hla Myint who helped me in reviewing and correcting it over and over again.

May all the readers be able to fulfill morality, concentration and wisdom until the attainment of Arahatta Magga and Phala or the full realization of the meaning of life.

U Paññādīpa (Beelin Sayadaw)  
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**NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO  
SAMMĀSAMBUDHASSA**



**Homage to the Blessed One, The Perfect One,  
The Fully Enlightened One.**

# Five Ways to Cultivate a Mature and Stable Mind

*This Dhamma topic is based on the Meghīya Sutta, Udānapāli, a discourse taught by the Buddha. It is found in the Khuddakakya collection.*

## Introduction

Young or tender plants are not resistant to heavy rains, strong winds and the burning sun. When they encounter these, they are at risk of dying. Therefore, they must be given protection and guarded.

Similarly, the natural state of the mind of beings is uncontrolled and uncultured. As a result, the mind is not able to resist good or bad repercussions and indirect effects from certain given conditions. When it encounters a good situation, the mind becomes elated, uplifted and, if uncontrolled, it may end up in suffering. Also, when the mind encounters bad situations, it becomes desolate and depressed. Indeed, the natural state of the mind of common people can resist neither good nor bad effects.

When faced with the uncertainties of life, a firm and stable mind is needed. Such noble ones like the Buddha and Arahats are neither elated nor depressed when they encounter good or bad situations. Their minds remain balanced, tranquil.

To control the mind when faced with good or bad circumstances, the Buddha taught us five ways to cultivate a mature and stable mind thus:

**Aparipakkāya cetovimutiyā pañcadhammā  
paripakkāya samvattanti.**

*There are five ways that can make the mind mature, stable,  
and free from mental defilements.*

These five ways can lead one to gain the Arahatta-phala that can make the mind completely mature and noble. So this Dhamma talk is entitled “Five Ways to Attain a Mature and Stable Mind.” I would like to share these ways for managing the mind when encountering the uncertainties of life taught by the Buddha.

## The First Way: To Associate with the Noble Ones

The Buddha expounded as follows:

**Idha bhikkhu kalyānamitto hoti kalyānasahāyo  
kalyānasampavanko**

*A bhikkhu here (in this Holy Order of the Buddha's teaching) associates with noble friends, noble companions and noble partners.*

### What 'Bhikkhu' Means

From this Pali passage, first I would like to explain what a "Bhikkhu" means. Normally, the word "bhikkhu" is translated as a monk. However, the Buddha described "bhikkhu" as someone who fears the cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*).

In the cycle of rebirth, the aggregates, the sense-bases and elements are always recurring, one existence after another. No one knows where this cycle started and where it will end. Regarding this, the Buddha said,

**Anamataggo'yam bhikkhave samsāro. Pubba-koti  
na paññāyati Avijjā-nīvaranānam sattānam tanhā-  
samyojanānam sandhāvatam samsaratam.**

*"Oh Bhikkhu! The round of existences is endless. No one can know where it begins. Ignorance (Avijjā) is a hindrance. Craving (tanhā), too, is a sort of bondage. Due to these two causes, the beginning of the cycle of beings going from one existence to another is unknown."*

In this very life, we are able to observe and to see the aggregates that are the effects of our actions in previous existences. It is due to attachment to these aggregates that we create new actions that result in consecutive births in samsāra or the cycle of rebirth.

At the moment we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or know, we experience mental and material phenomena without much insightful understanding. This is called ignorance (*avijjā*). We think that these phenomena are permanent, truly happy, beautiful, and appreciable. We think that “they” are beings, that “this” is ‘I’, that is ‘he’, and so on. All of these thoughts, however, are indeed just the knowledge on the surface, not the correct understanding of the true nature of the phenomena. In these moments, the true nature of mental and material phenomena is overwhelmed and hidden by ignorance. Thus, we only see the surface of the phenomena and think that they are good, pleasant, likable, and charming, and then we crave them.

Craving (*tanhā*) is similar to a fetter or chains. When a bull is bound to a post with a chain, it can move only around and around within the range that the length of the chain permits.

In a similar way, as beings are overcome with ignorance, they long for sensual pleasures. Craving is the chain that binds them to these sensual pleasures. Due to this bondage, beings repeatedly go round and round in the samsāric cycle of rebirth. They cannot escape and, most often, they cannot even comprehend freedom from this

bondage.

The beginning of the cycle is unknown. The process of becoming manifests as mentality and materiality, and is going on and on from one existence to another by means of cause and effect. This process continues for a long, long time, countless eons and eons. Unless one attains the first stage of enlightenment (*Sotāpatti Magga*), the process of becoming will also be endless in the future.

One who sees that this ongoing process of becoming is suffering, not beneficial but dangerous, and who makes an effort to become free from such dangers is indeed called a “*bhikkhu*.” So, the title “bhikkhu” ultimately refers to a monk, novice, nun or layperson who strives for liberation, the transcendence of suffering.

## **To Associate with the Noble Ones**

In order to cultivate a mature and stable mind and to realize the Path and Fruition of Enlightenment (*Arabatta Magga* and *Phala*), it is vital to have good companions and to incline the mind toward virtuous or noble ones. This is the very first way as taught by the Buddha for the development of a mature and stable mind. Frankly speaking, it is essential that one associates with virtuous or noble ones.

What makes a good friend? What makes a good companion? What are the attributes of good friends? These qualities and characteristics will be explained in the following stories.

## 1. Two Parrot Brothers: The Foolish and the Virtuous

In this world, to become a foolish person or a virtuous person depends greatly on having good or bad friends. When associating with virtuous ones, one may also become virtuous. In the same way, when associating with the foolish, one may become foolish, too.

Once there were many parrots building their nests in a forest of silk cotton trees. Two parrot brothers stayed together in one nest. They were just fledglings when a storm blew heavily through the forest. The two brothers fell out of their nest and down to separate places on the ground. One brother parrot fell into the dwelling of a group of robbers while the other parrot into a hermitage.

The parrot that fell into the hands of the robbers imitated everything they did. It was taught how to speak and behave by its masters. It learned to speak their language and behaved in their manner, as well. The other brother who fell into the hermitage was brought up by a group of hermits. It also was taught how to speak and behave by its masters. Its speech mirrored the speech of the hermits, as did his manner and behavior.

One day, a king named Pañcala was separated from his retinue while going on a royal hunt in the forest. He lost his way back to the palace and happened to arrive at the dwelling of the robbers. Knowing him to be the king, they fled their residence. Only a guardsman and the parrot were left behind.

The king was very tired from hunting and decided to take a short nap. On seeing this, the parrot said to the



guardsman, "Hey, look over there! The king is asleep! Kill him and take all of his gems and jewels! Do it now! Right now!" The guardsman replied to the parrot, "This is the king! It is not appropriate to do such things." The parrot was not satisfied with the guardsman's response and countered him, "You fool! You coward! You said before that you would kill him, but now you dare not." The king, in his drowsy state, overheard the conversation between the parrot and the guardsman. He quickly went away, as it was unsafe for him to stay there any longer.

The king soon arrived at the dwelling of the hermits. At that time, all of the hermits had gone into the forest searching for fruits. Only the parrot remained there. Upon seeing the king, the parrot exclaimed, "Oh Glorious King! You are warmly welcome here! Please take a rest. There is much cool drinking water over there, fetched by my teachers, the hermits. Serve yourself Glorious King! There are many fruits over there also brought back by my teachers. Serve yourself! I am sorry that I cannot myself serve you. Although I can speak well, I have no hands to offer these things to you."

The King then asked the parrot, "How about that? I just met another parrot who was very rude and foolish, but you are very polite and wise."

The parrot replied, "Oh King! That parrot and I are brothers born of the same mother and raised in the same nest; however, we were separated when we were still very young. My brother's masters are very rude and foolish; therefore, he, too, has become foolish and rude.

I, however, learned to be polite from my wise teachers.”

“When foul fish or meat is wrapped up in a leaf, the foul smell emits from the leaf. Likewise, when roses or starflowers are contained in the same way, a fragrant smell emits from the leaf. Similarly, when associated with the virtuous, one becomes virtuous, and when associated with wicked persons, one becomes wicked.”

## **2. The Virtuous Anāthapindika and His Virtuous Daughters**

In the same manner as in the previous story, when brought up by good parents, children may become virtuous and may also reap good fruits produced from the seeds planted within them by their parents.

You may remember Anāthapindika, the millionaire offered generously the four great requisites to the Sangha during the time of the Buddha and was also the donor of the Jetavana Monastery. He had three daughters named Mahā Subhaddā, Cūla Subhaddā, SumanāDevī and one son named Kāla. He and his daughters were very friendly with the disciples (monks and nuns) of the Buddha and were quite familiar with their tendencies.

Each day, about one to two hundred members of the Sangha would go to their residences to receive alms-food. The members of Sangha were very pleased with the alms-food since Anāthapindika and Visākhā knew their likes and dislikes. When other donors wanted to offer alms-food to the Sangha, they had to consult with them. So they were very busy with the preparation of alms-food

in different homes of donors. The preparation of the alms-food for such a large number made them so busy that they were unable to serve the food to the Sangha themselves. Consequently, Anāthapindika requested that his eldest daughter, Mahā Subhaddā, offered the food to the Sangha on behalf of their family.

As a very devoted Buddhist, Mahā Subhaddā served the Sangha well and everything ran smoothly. Thanks to this, she had had the opportunity to hear the noble Dhamma occasionally. One day, while listening attentively to the Dhamma talk, she attained the first stage of enlightenment (Sotāpatti Path and Fruition). We may see clearly here that her noble attainment was surely a result of being brought up by virtuous parents.

When she came of age, Mahā Subhaddā was married to a man. As it was the custom then, she had to leave her parents to live at her husband's house. So, her father, Anāthapindika, passed this noble responsibility of offering the alms-food on to his second daughter, Cūla Subhaddā. Like her eldest sister, she served the Sangha well. She also had the opportunity to hear Dhamma teachings occasionally. And one day, she attained the first stage of enlightenment while listening attentively to the Dhamma talk.

When she came of age, she too was married. Like her eldest sister, she also had to leave for her husband's house. So, Anāthapindika again had to pass on the responsibility of offering the alms-food. Sumanādevī, the third daughter, was assigned the duty of serving the

alms-food to the Sangha. Also, like her elder sisters, she served them respectfully and had golden opportunities to hear the Dhamma. She attained not only the first stage, but also the second stage of enlightenment (Sakādāgami Magga and Phala) which is nobler! Her life was more honorable than her elder sisters. All of these results for the sisters were the outcome of being brought up by their noble parents.

### **3. Young Son Kāla Becomes a Virtuous One Due to His Virtuous Father**

Anāthapindika's daughters all attained either first or second level of enlightenment by doing wholesome deeds and listening to the Dhamma. Nevertheless, his youngest son, Kāla, was not like his sisters. He neglected the Buddha and the Sangha when they came to receive alms-food at his home. He did not know how to appropriately welcome them. Neither did he know how to prepare seats for them nor how to serve them food. Much worse, he did not like to listen to the Dhamma given by the Buddha or his disciples after the meal. Kāla preferred to go out and play with his friends.

His father, Anāthapindika, thought to himself, "My son, Kāla, does not pay respect to the Triple Gem, namely the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Although a son of a pious monastery donor, he does not pay attention to appropriate religious tasks and, instead, only associates with foolish and even wicked friends. It is not proper for me to neglect his inappropriate behavior and manner and

to let him fall to the hellish abodes. What can I do for his benefit? How can I make him virtuous?”

One day, Anāthapindika had an idea and, therefore, sent for his son. When Kāla approached him, Anāthapindika said gently, “Dear son, come close to me.”

Kāla replied bluntly, “Father! What is the matter? I am going to meet my friends now. If you have something to say, tell me quickly!” As the youngest and only son, Kāla whined like a child.

Anāthapindika then said to his son, “My dear son, today is Uposatha Day (Observance Day). Please go to the monastery and observe the eight precepts. When you return after having observed the precepts, I will give you one hundred coins.”

“Really?” asked Kāla.

“Yes, certainly,” replied his father.

“Then I will go to the monastery and observe the eight precepts as you wish,” answered Kāla.

So, he went off to the monastery to observe the eight precepts. However, being ignorant of the appropriate ways to behave at a monastery, he slept in an improper area and returned home at daybreak. His father welcomed him at the gate and said to his attendants, “My son, Kāla, has come back from the monastery after having observed the eight precepts. Give him food and drink!”

Kāla responded abruptly, “No, Father! No food and drink! As you promised, Father, you must pay me one hundred coins!” Only after he received the coins did he

eat and drink.

On another Uposatha Day, Anāthapindika sent for his son and said to him, “Dear Son, today is the Uposatha Day. Please go to the monastery and observe the precepts, and also learn one verse from the Dhamma talk given by the Buddha. If you are able to learn one verse, I will give you one thousand coins.”

As before, Kāla agreed and went off to the monastery to observe the precepts, only because he was so eager to receive one thousand coins. This time, however, he did not sleep over at the monastery since he was eager to learn a verse from the Buddha’s Dhamma talk and then return home immediately to get one thousand coins from his father.

The Buddha knew Kāla’s intention. So, he taught the Dhamma in a very clever way. Using his psychic powers, the Buddha made it in such a way that Kāla could not commit one verse to memory. He tried and tried to memorize one verse taught by the Buddha but was unable to do so by the end of the discourse. Kāla, therefore, decided to increase his attempts by trying to memorize all of the stanzas taught by the Buddha. While doing this, he began to understand the Dhamma and penetrate more and more deeply into it. Kāla then came to realize the essence of the Dhamma and attained Sotāpatti Path and Fruition, the first level of enlightenment.

At sunrise of the following morning, Kāla did not return home in a hurried manner as before. Instead, he walked along the way slowly and peacefully in a gracious

manner following the members of the Sangha led by the Buddha. When they arrived at his home, he prepared seats for the Buddha and his disciples with tremendous care, and also assisted others in offering alms-food to them. He only took his meal after the Buddha and the Sangha had finished theirs.

While taking meal, the wish came to Kāla's mind that his father should not offer him the one thousand coins in front of the Buddha and the Sangha. He realized, at that moment, how shameful it had been for him to observe the precepts only with the intention of gaining money from his own father.

At that moment, Anāthapindika said to him in the presence of the Buddha and the Sangha, "Dear son, here is the money that I promised you! One thousand coins! Please take it."

Kāla shook his head in dissent and said, "I do not wish to accept it, Father. Please keep it for yourself."

Understanding the situation, the Buddha asked, "What is the matter here?"

The millionaire Anāthapindika admitted to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, today I am very pleased to see my son behave in a polite and gentle way. On the previous Uposatha Day, upon returning from the monastery, he refused to eat or drink before receiving the money I offered him to take the eight precepts. Only after he received one hundred coins would he eat or drink. However, today I've offered him one thousand coins and he has refused to accept them!"

## **The Life Higher than that of a Universal Monarch**

In response to Anāthapindika's explanation, the Buddha said, "Anāthapindika, look at how valuable your money truly is! The value of Enlightenment gained through Sotāpatti Magga and Phala, which your son has just attained, is of higher value than the wealthy life of a Universal Monarch, who enjoys different sorts of wealth and luxuries!"

Then, the Buddha expounded the following verse with reference to Kāla;

**Pathabyā eka-rajjena, saggassa gamanena vā,  
Sabba-lokā'dhipaccena, Sotāpatti-phalam varam.**

a. In this world, attaining the first stage of Enlightenment is a higher and nobler achievement than even being a Universal Monarch who governs the entire world. Why? Although a person may be a Universal Monarch, he is not free from the suffering in the world. He may roam about in the whirlpool of Samsāra, the cycle of rebirths, suffering from old age, disease and death. Those attaining the first stage of Enlightenment will experience seven more rebirths at most and be reborn only in good abodes. He who accomplishes this surely attains the Nibbānic bliss in the seventh existence, if not earlier.

b. Moreover, the attainment of the first stage of Enlightenment is also a superior accomplishment more lofty than being reborn in the celestial abodes. Although a



person may be a king of devas in a certain celestial abode, he is not totally free from being reborn in hell someday. Therefore, he is still subject to the suffering in hell has he not yet attained this first stage of Enlightenment.

c. Likewise, a king of Brahmas who has not yet attained the first stage of Enlightenment cannot be totally free from the sufferings of hell. Indeed, he who is reborn in the Brahma abode from the state of a common worldling, even as Brahman with long life for eons and eons, has to return to the human abode upon ending his lifespan as a Brahman. If he befriends foolish and wicked ones and performs unwholesome deeds, he may also fall back to the four woeful realms.

#### **4. Splendor in Brahma Abodes and Munching Away in a Feeding Trough**

Regarding this point, there is a traditional saying in Theravāda Buddhism, thus:

*“One might be glorious and dignified as a Brahma in the Brahma abode at one time, but he might also be munching away in a feeding trough for pigs at another time.”*

Following is a story related to the above saying:

Once, the Buddha went out for alms-food in the city of Rājagaha. While on alms-round, the Buddha saw a sow and smiled. When the Buddha smiled, his teeth emitted white rays. Venerable Ānanda walking behind the Buddha knew that the Buddha had smiled. Therefore, he respectfully asked the Buddha, “Venerable Sir, why are you smiling?”

The Buddha replied, “Ānanda, look over there. Do you see that sow?”

Venerable Ānanda answered, “Yes, Venerable Sir. I see it.”

The Buddha said, “Ānanda, the sow you see over there right now was once a woman at the time of Kakusandha Buddha. She was later reborn as a hen near a dining hall. One day, a falcon swooped down and caught her. She died suddenly. As she had heard and appreciated a meditative verse recited by a meditating monk, she developed merit and was reborn as a princess named Ubbarī in a Royal Residence. Later she became a Pabbajjikā, a female ascetic. As an ascetic, she at one time contemplated death and decay through feces full of maggots. Seeing the maggots with the perception of detestation and disgust, she attained the first stage of Jhānic trance, a stage of absorption and deep concentration. After she died as a female ascetic, she was reborn as a Brahma. When that lifetime ended she was reborn as the daughter of a millionaire. After that existence, she was born as the sow that you see before you now. In knowing all of these successive events, the passing from one existence to the next, I smiled.”

Upon hearing this, all of the monks led by the Venerable Ānanda felt tremendously sorry for sentient beings in samsara (cycle of rebirths). Then standing on the path where the monks traveled for alms, the Buddha expounded six verses. The first of these verses is as follows:

**Yathāpi mūle anupaddave dalhe,**

**Chinno pi rukkho punareva rūhati.  
Evampi tanhānusaye anūhate,  
Nibbattatī dukkhamidam punappunam.**

*Just as a tree again becomes prosperous,  
Though its branches have been cut off,  
If its roots are fixed and firm.  
So does suffering arise in each new existence  
As long as the roots of craving for new existences  
have not yet been cut off.*

In the same way, the princess Ubbarī or the ascetic Paribbajikā was not able to dispel the craving for sensual pleasures for more than a short time. As an ascetic, she was free from the craving of sensual pleasures temporarily thanks to her attaining the first stage of absorption as a result of her contemplation on the loathsomeness of maggots in feces. However, the craving for existence had not been totally dispelled in her, so she was reborn again later as a millionaire's daughter. Unless a being attains a full enlightenment, the craving for existence continues to exist throughout the cycle of rebirths even if the being has already achieved states of absorption or deep concentration.

Depending on one's own kamma or the wholesome and unwholesome deeds in the past, one will receive corresponding results whenever suitable conditions arise. This is the natural law of cause and effect. So long as the roots of craving exist, one will wander through countless existences. With the craving still existed and along with her own kamma, the millionaire's daughter was later reborn in

the human world as a sow. In reference to this event and others mentioned in Tipitaka literature, the Mahā Theras of the olden days used the following saying, "*Splendor in Brahma abodes and munching in pig's feeding troughs.*"

Life as a pig in the animal realm or life in any of the lower existences such as ghost (petas) or hell realms, however, cannot directly follow the Brahma existence. Due to the power of the cultivation and development of wholesome actions associated with states of deep concentration (jhāna) or neighborhood absorption (Upacāra Samādhi), one may only be reborn into wholesome abodes such as celestial realms or the human world.

The sow was a millionaire's daughter in a previous life. At that time, she was very haughty and disrespectful to noble ones. Such demeritorious and unbeneficial actions may have been the cause for her rebirth as a sow.

When the sow died, she was reborn as the princess of a royal family in the Suvannabhūmi region. After that, she was reborn as a woman in the city of Bāranasi, India. She later took birth as a woman in the Vanavāsi Division, now the southeastern part of Bombay. Then she was reborn as a daughter of a horse trader in Port Suppāraka, now on the coast of northern Bombay. Following that death, she became a daughter of a boat-leader in another port town, Kāvīra. In her next life, she was a female official in a governing body of Anurādha City on the Sinhalese Island.

In another existence, she was reborn as a daughter of a millionaire in Bokkanta village. She was named Sumanā,

meaning “bright mind.” Later, her father transferred to a village called Mahāmuni in Dīghavāpi State and the family moved there. On one occasion, while Sumanā was living in this village, a minister of King Dutthagāmani named Lakundaka Atimbara came to visit. The minister saw Sumanā and, upon seeing her, loved her and married her in a grand and elaborate ceremony.

Sumanā’s new husband then took her to his native village called Mahāpunna. While she was living there, a monk named Mahā Anuruddha Thera, who was staying at a nearby monastery, came to town for alms-food. He stood at the entrance of Sumanā’s house for alms and saw her. He immediately exclaimed to his followers, “How wonderful and marvelous it is to see the sow of the Buddha’s lifetime as the wife of a minister in the present!”

When Sumanā heard these words from Mahā Thera, she recalled all of the events of her previous existences, one after another, and became filled with remorse. Consequently, she asked her husband’s permission to become a bhikkunī. At the Tissa Mahāvihāra Monastery, Sumanā learned the MahāSatipatthāna Sutta. Following the teachings in the Sutta, she practiced ardently and attained Sotāpatti path and fruition.

Later, during the reign of King Dutthagāmani, Sumanā returned to her native village of Bokkanta. While she was staying there, she happened to hear the Asīvisopama Sutta at the Kalla Mahāvihāra Monastery. While paying deep attention to the sutta, she became an Arahat.

Our great benefactor, Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw, composed a Myanmar verse regarding the thirteen existences of Sumanā so that they could be easily taken into memory.

To reflect on the events and rebirths of Sumanā, once a sow, is quite insightful. When she died as a human being in the lifetime of Kakusandha Buddha, she left behind all of her wealth and property, family and attendants to be reborn as a hen. What a dreadful change! In her life as a hen, she may also have had young to care for; but, snatched up by a falcon, she died suddenly and in a tremendously unpleasant way.

Then, due to the power of wholesome actions such as listening to the recitation of Dhamma verses, Sumanā became a princess in her next existence. Although a hen may not realize the profound meaning of a Dhamma verse, the mind may still become serene and reverent at the moment of hearing it. Because of this wholesome cause, she was then reborn as a princess. What great benefit comes from listening to the Dhamma! She later became a Brahma and then the daughter of a millionaire in the human realm.

Again, when, as the daughter of a millionaire, she died, she had to leave behind all of her property and wealth, and family, friends and relatives, despite clinging to them and desiring not to leave them (tanha). This is indeed suffering! To be reborn as a human being after having been born into the Brahma realm is inferior. Even more so is to be reborn as a sow after having been born

as a human being! All beings who have not attained the first stage of enlightenment are subject to be reborn in lower existences. The Buddha related this story of the sow in order for us to give deep attention to the Dhamma and to be tired of worldly conditions. Indeed, this story has a happy ending. In her last existence as Sumanā, she became a fully enlightened one, an Arahāt.

In learning of such a cycle of rebirth, we should try to know the cause of one existence following another. It is craving for existence that produces rebirth. If we are attached to it, we will continue to experience rebirth again and again throughout the cycle of rebirths, *samsāra*. It is essential that we practice the Noble Eightfold Path in order to eradicate craving (*tanhā*).

In the aforementioned story, Sumanā heard the Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta and followed its teachings to practice meditation and attain the first stage of enlightenment, *Sotāpatti Magga* and *Phala*. Then, upon hearing the *Āsīvisopama Sutta* and consequently contemplating the meaning of the Dhamma, she became fully enlightened as an Arahāt. Craving (*tanhā*) had been eradicated from her mind. As a result, there was no more succeeding existence for her. She was finally free from rebirth.

When Sumanā was near death, she informed her fellow *bhikkhunīs* that she was going to die. Both *bhikkhus* and her fellow *bhikkhunīs* asked her to relate the events of her past. She described to them all of her previous existences from the life of a woman during the lifetime of the Kakusandha Buddha up to her rebirth as a woman living

in Bokkanta village. She then urged all of her Dhamma friends to practice intensive meditation with ardent effort in order to be freed from the cycle of rebirths (samsāra) and to attain the ultimate freedom of Nibbāna.

She said: “As I said earlier, I have experienced all of the good and bad throughout these thirteen past existences. In this final existence, due to my fear of Samsāra, the cycle of rebirths, I ordained as a bhikkhunī and strived to become an Arahat, a fully enlightened one. I kindly urge you all to strive diligently in your meditation practice and to cultivate your moral conduct (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (pañña).”

She then took the noble demise of Parinibbāna, death with no return.

## 5. Atijāta Sons and Daughters

Atijāta is a Pāli term which refers to the birth of sons and daughters who are wiser than their parents. Atijāta may also refer to students who are superior to their teachers. However, it is most commonly used in reference to the relationship between children and parents. The following is a story that illustrates the ways by which parents may emulate the good manner and behavior of their children. In learning from their children, they too can become virtuous ones and reap the benefits of wholesome actions.

In the lifetime of the Buddha, there was a young man named Goghātakaputta residing in Sāvathī. “Goghātaka” means cow butcher and “putta” means the son of. So,



Goghātakaputta was the son of a cow butcher. One day, Goghātakaputta went to Takka-sila country and approached a goldsmith and asked to accept him as a apprentice.

After some time, the goldsmith wanted to test the skill of his student. So, he said to Goghātakaputta, “My pupil, I have to take a journey. Using these materials, make beautiful ornaments while I am gone.” The teacher then left his workshop.

When he returned, he asked his student, “Have you finished your work?” At that time, Goghātakaputta presented the beautiful ornaments he had made. As he was skillful, intelligent and well mannered, his teacher married him to his daughter. Goghātakaputta later became very prosperous with children of his own. However, Goghātakaputta did not perform charitable deeds, observe the moral precepts, or practice meditation.

His two sons also became goldsmiths and moved to Sāvatti. They were dedicated devotees (Upāsaka), taking refuge in the Triple Gem, namely the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. When their father, Goghātakaputta, grew old in age, they took their father in and attended to him.

One day, the Buddha and some of his disciples were offered alms-food in the house of Goghātakaputta’s sons. After they all had finished their meal, the sons bowed to the Buddha and said, “Venerable Sir, the alms food offered today is not for our benefit but for the benefit of our father. In honor of this donation on his behalf, please give him a Dhamma talk.”

The Buddha then offered a Dhamma talk to Goghātakaputta as follows:

“Goghātakaputta, you are now like a withered leaf. You have become overripe. The messengers of death are near to you. You are at the end of your life. You have made no provisions of wholesome deeds to be taken with you into your next existence. Goghātakaputta, you must perform wholesome deeds that will act as an island on which you can stand! Try with great effort to gain wisdom and to dispel mental defilements! If you free yourself from these unwholesome defilements, you will go to the *Suddhāvāsa* Abode where noble ones, Ariyas, stay.”

In listening attentively to the discourse given by the Buddha, Goghātakaputta attained the first stage of enlightenment, *Sotāpatti* path and fruition.

The next day, the Buddha and his followers were served again by the sons of Goghātakaputta in their home. The two sons again paid respect to the Buddha and requested a Dhamma talk for the benefit of their father.

The Buddha then spoke thus:

“Goghātakaputta, you are now overripe! It is time for you to go to the realm of death. There will be no interval and there are no provisions of wholesome deeds to take with you.”

Upon hearing this, Goghātakaputta attained the third stage of enlightenment (*Anāgāmi* Magga and Phala).

This story illustrates the importance of children repaying their debt of gratitude to their parents.

An enormous debt of gratitude is owed to parents. However, this debt cannot be repaid by means of offering great amounts of money, properties, and material things. Even offering the wealth and riches enjoyed by a universal monarch will not repay this debt. So how then may the debt owed to our parents be repaid?

## 6. Repaying the Debt of Gratitude Owed to Parents

The Buddha taught that there are various ways to repay this debt of gratitude to our parents. First, children should encourage and urge their parents with no faith or confidence in the Dhamma to cultivate such faith and confidence (*saddhā*). If they do not take refuge in the Triple Gem, they should be encouraged to do so. If they do not believe in *kamma*, the natural law of cause and effect, they should be helped to understand *kamma* and its results clearly.

Children may also encourage and urge parents who have not taken, honored, and upheld moral precepts to do so respectfully. They might say to their parents, “Mom! Dad! Today is Uposatha day. Let us uphold and honor the moral precepts. Don’t worry about any arrangements, I will take care of everything.” Parents then may be able to cultivate morality (*sīla*).

Some parents are reluctant to give things away or to donate. Their children should encourage them to do charitable deeds with open-heartedness and generosity. In this way, they may cultivate generosity (*dāna*).

Parents who do not know or have no interest in the

teachings of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, should be encouraged to listen to Dhamma talks or to learn about Dhamma in other ways to cultivate wisdom (*paññā*). Children may sometimes encourage their parents by saying, “Mom! Dad! There will be a Dhamma talk at the monastery. Would you like to join me in going? Don’t worry about any arrangements. I’ll take care of everything!”

With encouragement from their children, parents may develop faith or confidence (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), generosity (*dāna*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Given the cultivation of these wholesome qualities, they may even develop insight, or *Vipassanā*, or even the first stage of enlightenment. Only in this way can the debt of gratitude owed to one’s parents be fully repaid. It is a gift that exceeds all gifts, a gift of clarity, understanding and true freedom. Therefore, children should not only attend to the needs of their parents when their parents are old but also provide this encouragement for cultivating these qualities for the long-term benefit of their parents.

## 7. The Benefits of Associating With Virtuous Ones

The Buddha preached the benefits and fruitfulness of associating with virtuous ones in a Jātaka tale called “Sutasoma” as follows:

**Sakideva sutasoma, sabbhi hoti samāgamo**

**Sānam sangati pāleti, nāsabbhi bahusangamo**

*“King Sutasoma! Association with virtuous ones even just once is extremely beneficial and fruitful and will offer you protection. Association with vicious ones will bring danger and will not offer*

*you any protection.”*

Virtuous ones never endanger others. Their actions, speech and thoughts are of great benefit to themselves and others. Vicious ones are always cruel and show the desire to hurt others. Their actions, speech and thoughts can bring much harm to themselves and others.

The advice given in the story continues:

**Sabbhireva samāsetha, sabbhi kubbetha santhavam,  
Satam saddhamma maññāya, seyyo hoti napāpiyo.**

*“King Sutasoma! Associate and befriend with the virtuous ones only. Knowing that their practice is noble, you too will become noble, more so than before. You will never become inferior and worthless.”*

When associating with virtuous ones, their wholesome and honorable actions, words, thoughts, manner and behavior may be taken as models. We can see this by reflecting on the story of the two parrots. Those with whom we spend time may also be regarded as teachers, not just as companions. Therefore, we must choose our companions carefully. In this way, we will surely benefit from our good association with them.

In a Buddhist society, we come to know the genuine Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha under the guidance of our devoted parents and teachers. As one comes to know even just one of the many attributes of the Buddha, one becomes more wholesome due to this knowledge. Among these qualities, *Arāham* expresses the noble attribute of the Buddha for his complete freedom from

craving, anger, and ignorance. As one learns deeply the complete meaning of Arahant, one knows more about the Buddha and is uplifted by his purity. The second quality, *Sammāsambuddho* means “the Fully Enlightened One.” The Pāli word Buddha, meaning “The All-Knower” - knowing everything - is another attribute of the Buddha. The attributes of the Buddha once deeply understood bring forth wholesomeness.

In the same way, when one understands and has confidence and inspiration in the Dhamma and then practices to realize the true nature of all things, one can be freed from suffering and become noble.

Likewise, when one devotes energy and time to support the Sangha, members of the community following the teachings of the Buddha, one may have opportunity to cultivate morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). In this way, one becomes lifted and attains nobility after dispelling greed, hatred, and delusion.

## **8. The Benefits of Having Virtuous Parents**

Children in their pristine state are in a most vulnerable position and have no knowledge of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Over time, they begin to communicate with others and begin to understand their surroundings and look to their parents for guidance. The parents take good care of them in terms of promoting good health, education and behavior. Virtuous parents teach them how to pay respect to and take refuge in the Triple Gem. They are also guided to cultivate morality and gain spirituality

for themselves. As children come to realize these benefits, they practice and become virtuous and wholesome.

The formula for taking refuge in the Triple Gem is as follows:

**Buddham Saranam Gacchāmi**

*I take refuge in the Buddha*

**Dhammam Saranam Gacchāmi**

*I take refuge in the Dhamma*

**Sangham Saranam Gacchāmi**

*I take refuge in the Sangha*

By taking refuge in the Triple Gem, the children are protected and possess good conditions for developing faith in the Triple Gem. This is the first step of the spiritual path.

Children are also taught by their parents to observe the five moral precepts, which include the abstentions from killing, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from lying and using harmful speech, and abstention from alcohol and drugs. Thus, they are well equipped with protection and the means for a moral life.

All of the previously mentioned lessons by virtuous parents constitute the basic factors for children to become more moral and virtuous beings. Parents may benefit their children more if they send them to highly qualified teachers to learn about the Dhamma.

Given such a basis of morality and knowledge about the Dhamma, those who then cultivate concentration

and wisdom through insight meditation or Vipassanā experience even have more purity and maybe nobility in their lives.

**Jīranti ve rājarathā sucittā,  
Atho sarīrampi jaram upeti,  
Satañca dhammo na jaram upeti,  
Santo have sabbi pavedayanti**

*“The royal chariots, decorated and beautified with splendid ornaments and paint, eventually deteriorate and age. Similarly, this physical body too deteriorates and ages. The Dhamma realized by the noble ones, however, neither deteriorates nor becomes old. It is the wisdom of the noble ones.”*

The chariots used by the kings or emperors in the olden days were beautifully decorated with grand ornaments. They were very valuable and expensive like the fancy cars of today. Motorized vehicles were invented only over one hundred years ago. Prior to their invention, only carts, carriages and chariots drawn by horses were used.

Those chariots decorated with the most expensive and precious stones, gems, gold, silver and other valuables, were viewed with amazement when new. However, after twenty or thirty years, they deteriorated and were not so special anymore. In the same way, the cars of today age and lose their appeal. Highly respected leaders, businessmen, and royalty drive fancy cars that will age and decrease in value, too. Buildings also become “out of date” as the architectural style changes with time. When the time passes, everything in this world becomes old and



deteriorated. It is natural.

Just as these material things will deteriorate, our bodies also age and decay. When we reach fifty or sixty years of age, our faces as well as our hands, limbs, and so on become wrinkled. Some people become bony, frail and thin while others suffer from poor eyesight and hearing loss. This is the natural process of deterioration. It is unavoidable.

We may reflect back on the time twenty or thirty years ago when we were youthful, energetic, beautiful and happy. But those things are no more! We are now older. So, it is wise for youth to contemplate these things and to put forth ardent effort into the development of spirituality prior to old age.

What is this Dhamma that neither decays nor ages? It is the true nature of all things experienced by the noble ones. It is not common knowledge resulting from thoughts or ideas. It is a deeper truth, fully realized by enlightened beings. It is the ultimate extinction of craving. When fully realized, one is freed from the cycle of rebirths. As there is no more rebirth, one will not again encounter old age, sickness and death. So, this bliss of Nibbāna is devoid of deterioration, aging, sickness and death.

Prior to his final existence as Prince Siddhattha, the Buddha-to-be had been moving through the cycle of rebirths, *samsāra*, for four eons (*asankheyyas*) and one hundred thousand world cycles accumulating the *pāramīs* or perfections. After having renounced the world and abandoned all royal luxuries and sensual pleasures as

a prince, he left his kingdom to become an ascetic, a monk, seeking immortal truth. It has been more than 2600 years since the prince, through direct experience, realized this truth, became the Buddha and began to spread this Dhamma. He taught the Dhamma tirelessly and unceasingly for forty-five years for the benefit of all beings. The Buddha taught not only humans but also devas, brahmas and beings in all realms of existence. Those who heard the Dhamma and practiced in accordance with the Buddha's instructions came to realize this immortal truth for themselves.

So it was further related in the story of Sutasoma:

**Nabhanca dūre pathavīca dūre,  
Pāram samuddassa tadahu dūre,  
Tato have dūrataram vadantin,  
Satanca dhammo asatanca raja.**

*“King Sutasoma, the sky is far away from this earth. The earth is also far away from the sky. The other shore of the ocean is also far from here. King Sutasoma, there are two kinds of Dhamma: unwholesome Dhamma and wholesome Dhamma. These two types of Dhamma are further apart from one another than the great distances between the sky and earth, the shore of this ocean and the next.”*

Wholesome Dhamma is known and possessed by noble ones but unwholesome Dhamma is possessed by the ignoble. Wholesome Dhamma is pure and produces positive outcomes while unwholesome Dhamma is defiled and results in undesirable outcomes. So these two types

of Dhamma are as opposite to one another as the north from the south or east from the west.

We can see clearly from the above stories and know with our own wisdom the importance of association with virtuous and morally conscious beings. This association is the first way for the development of a mature and stable mind.

**The Second Way:**  
**To be Replete with Morality**

**Puna ca param bhikkhu sīlavā hoti**

*“Apart from the said first cause, the second cause is that a bhikkhu or a yogi should be replete with morality.”*

There are three types of morality (*sīla*): moral precepts (*patimokkha*), practices (*acāra*) and domains (*gocara*).

**1. Moral Precepts (*patimokkha*)**

**Pātimokkha-samvara-samvuto viharati**

*“A bhikkhu or yogi observing the moral precepts is protected from falling to inferior states.”*

The five basic moral precepts are:

**Pānātipātā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi**

*Abstaining from killing and harming sentient beings.*

**Adinnādānā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi**

*Abstaining from stealing and taking what is not given.*

**Kāmesu micchācārā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi**

*Abstaining from sexual misconduct.*

**Musāvādā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi**

*Abstaining from lying and using false or harmful speech.*

**Surā-meraya-majjappamādatthānā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi**

*Abstaining from abusing intoxicants and drugs.*

If one can observe these five precepts, one will cultivate honorable morality (*sila*). In following these precepts, verbal and mental actions become purified and one gains a protection from harmful inferior states.

Immediate disadvantages follow one who does not observe the five basic moral precepts. A happy person who hurts others may become unhappy and be looked down upon by others, especially by the wise. One who breaks laws will be punished by the law of society. And ultimately, one who does not abide by the precepts may be reborn in unwholesome abodes where wholesome actions, the cause for freedom from suffering, cannot be achieved.

When one is replete with the basic moral precepts, he can guard himself well and also protect others by causing no harm. It is easy to see the benefits and happiness that result from observing the moral precepts. One is respected and valued by others and has an honorable reputation that spreads far and wide.

Once the Buddha, while residing at Veluvana village, suffered from a serious illness. The king of the celestial beings named Sakka became aware of the situation and decided that it was a suitable time for him to go down to the human world to care for the Buddha. Sakka took the human physical form and approached the Buddha. After greeting the Buddha, Sakka began to rub his feet. The Buddha became curious about this being whom he had not seen before and asked, "Who are you?"

Sakka replied, "Venerable Sir, I am Sakka, the king of

celestial beings. I have come to attend to the Buddha.”

Knowing that the human scent is quite repulsive and undesirable to celestial beings, even from a far distance, the Buddha requested that Sakka go back to the celestial realm. “Please go back Sakka. There are many bhikkhus here attending to me.”

Sakka explained to the Buddha, “Venerable Sir, I have come from a very far distance. While staying in the celestial realm very far from here, I received the fragrant smell of the Buddha and came to experience the scent of the Buddha’s virtue for myself. May I please attend to the Honorable One?”

The Buddha agreed and Sakka stayed with the Buddha until he recovered from his serious illness. Sakka then returned to his Tāvātimsa Deva realm.

As illustrated in this story, the fragrance of moral precepts spreads throughout the universe. Maintaining morality (*sīla*) is clearly the root cause of attaining true bliss in the human and celestial abodes as well as the suitable condition for the ultimate bliss of Nibbāna, freedom from all suffering.

## 2. Practices (*ācāra*)

**Acāra-gocara-sampanno**

**anumattesu vajjesu**

**baya-dassāvī samādaya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu.**

**(Pali Text)**

**Apica bhikkhu sa-gāravo sa-patisso**

**Hiri-otappa-sampanno su-nivatto su-pāruto**

**Indriyesu gutta-dvāro bojane mattaññū jāgariyam-anuyutto**

(Commentary)

Certain practices are essential to the cultivation of a stable and mature mind. The Buddha taught that a bhikkhu or yogi must be respectful and humble. One must be reluctant and ashamed of doing evil things and fearful of the consequences of unwholesome actions. Yogis should be aware and shameful of inattentiveness and heedlessness while practicing meditation.

The Buddha also encouraged his disciples to wear clean clothes and maintain neatness. He gave them instruction for wearing the robes, placing utensils, preparing beds and bedding, composing themselves in a monastery and in villages, and so on, in order for them to cultivate neatness, tidiness and strong awareness. He knew that clean and tidy surroundings support a serene and focused mind and create space for the development of concentration and wisdom. So, he had the highest of standards! Additionally, the Buddha taught that bodily movements such as moving forward, backwards, side to side, bending or stretching arms or legs, should be undertaken in a gracious and mindful manner.

Another crucial practice in the cultivation of a mature mind is to guard the sense doors with mindfulness (*indriyesu guttadvāro*). All together, there are six sense doors

consisting of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. If a bhikkhu or yogi does not guard these sense doors with mindfulness, unwholesome mental states such as greed, covetousness, ill will and so on will continually follow into one's mind. These mental states may easily overpower the mind and make it difficult if not impossible for the yogi to achieve this goal of gaining concentration and wisdom. From such unpleasant states, his goal of freedom will be far away from him.

How are we able to control the sense doors? Those who have healthy bodies may be active and quick while those with ailing bodies are very slow and inactive. The Buddha taught that, in order to control the sense doors, in meditation practice, we must behave as if we were blind although we have good eyesight, as if we were deaf although we hear well, as if we were mute although we can speak well, as if we were weak although our bodies are healthy and strong. In this way, there will be fewer distractions to the mind. A yogi who is engaged in meditative activities must act slowly with mindfulness like a handicapped person. Those who ardently practice in this way can achieve tranquility and stronger and more developed states of mindfulness.

The Buddha further taught us to practice eating in moderation. When receiving alms-food, one must know moderation. For example, when there is a table of five people, one must take one-fifth of the food. In this way, one practices awareness and moderation in eating. Not everyone is aware in this way, and sometimes one without



such awareness may act greedily and take too much, thus leaving others without enough to eat.

When eating, mindfulness should be cultivated. Based on the late Mahāsī Sayādaw preachings, Mahā Visuddharāma Sayādawphayagyi composed a poetic verse that says,

*“These different kinds of food and drink  
Are not to be eaten nor drunk  
For the purpose of beauty and blooming,  
Joy and joking.”*

For common people, food and drinks are usually taken for enjoyment, beautification and pleasure. Some people take certain foods in order to better their complexion, to gain or lose weight, or for various other sensual pleasures. Yogis, however, take food for the purpose of sustenance, simply to nourish the physical body in order to strive diligently in their practice. Without eating or drinking, one will surely come to death. The body can only go so long, just a few days, without food or drink. So we eat and drink in order to perform our daily tasks well and to overcome the disease of hunger.

This disease of hunger, the Buddha taught, is the most chronic and incurable. Most illnesses and diseases can be cured quite quickly these days, sometimes even within two or three months. Those that cannot be cured in this existence still do not follow us into the next. The disease of hunger, however, exists not only in this present life but follows us into future existences. Only when complete freedom, Nibbāna, is achieved is one free from this form

of suffering.

The Buddha taught the importance of two contemplative practices to his followers for living in comfort without hunger. The first is to reflect on the following verse:

*“So not to arise disease,  
old or new,  
and to have a healthy body,  
food and drinks are taken.”*

In order to dispel hunger and to prevent disease, one must nourish the body with food and drink. By taking one’s meal with contemplation mentioned above, one cultivates the practice of eating in moderation with awareness which also lessens craving.

The second contemplative practice on eating and drinking is described in the Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta, the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. With this practice of mindfulness on eating and drinking as described below, there may arise no pleasure at all. Indeed, it is a great technique!

When practicing, we note carefully all of our actions. When going to the dining hall, we must note each step, *“left step, right step.”* When we arrive at the dining table, we note carefully each movement of the body, *“standing, sitting,”* and so on. When seeing, we note *“seeing.”* When raising or stretching the hand, we note *“raising”* or *“stretching.”* So, also when we eat, we must be mindful of our every movement, of every action. As we open the mouth, put the food into the mouth, close the mouth,

chew the food, put down the hand, touch the plate, etcetera, we must note at all times, "*opening, opening,*" "*putting, putting,*" "*closing, closing,*" "*chewing, chewing,*" "*putting down, putting down,*" "*touching, touching.*" Meanwhile, we may become aware of tastes, such as sweet, sour, bitter, and salty and, therefore, must note "*knowing, knowing.*" When swallowing the food, we are to cultivate the awareness of the action of swallowing by noting "*swallowing, swallowing*" as well. In this manner, we are able to cultivate awareness in every moment without getting caught up in the sensual pleasures related to eating.

When continually contemplating with right effort and mindfulness, no mental defilements such as greed and craving will arise. Only peace and tranquility will prevail. To practice continual noting, there must be wakefulness and alertness and, as alertness increases, the hours of sleep should be reduced. The number of sleeping hours during intensive practice should not exceed four.

It is stated in the Mahāniddesa Pāli Text that "the bhikkhu makes great effort to purify his mind from defilements doing walking and sitting meditation throughout the entire day, and throughout the entire first watch of the night (6PM to 10PM). The second watch of the night (10PM to 2AM), he may lie on the right side, bending and placing the left foot on the right with continuous mindfulness until falling asleep. At the last watch of the night (2AM to 6AM), he rises from the lying posture and practices diligently to purify his mind doing walking or sitting meditation."

In this way, we must strive day and night to put forth tremendous effort in order to purify the mind. During the day, one should not lie down and should remain engaged in continual noting at every moment. Up until 10 PM, the first watch of the night, one should maintain the practice of noting. Scarcity of greed and contentment are essential for the continual noting of bodily movements.

One who practices meditation must also be diligent and alert, not lazy or sluggish. When sluggishness and laziness arise, they should be dispelled at once by practicing one of the ten reflections that lead to the great effort toward Enlightenment. What are these ten reflections?

(1) If, as a result of evil kamma, I happened to live in hell or to be a ghost or animal, I would not have the opportunity to be engaged in meditative practice as I am now. If not being engaged in meditation and mindfulness practice, I would wander about in the four lower states of misfortune many times. Now, having the chance to practice in a fortunate situation, I should not be lazy.

(2) Everyone has to earn a living, day and night. Many people live hand to mouth, earning only enough to provide for their immediate needs. Very few in the world earn enough to cover the expenses of living for several days or one month, much less earn enough in one year to cover a lifetime. One's meditative effort, however, leads to the priceless attainment of wisdom and Dhamma within one or two months, or even just seven days! Once fully realizing the true nature of all things, the noble Dhamma, one will no longer suffer from rebirth in the four woeful

states in future existences. So one should practice happily and diligently, pondering these benefits in order to dispel laziness.

(3) The path one is now treading is not an ordinary one. It is the path taken by the Noble Ones, such as Buddhas and Arahats. One who walks this path should not be lazy, but should strive with diligence and great effort. In this way, a yogi should contemplate the rarity of this opportunity and should strive to dispel laziness.

(4) The donors who offer alms-food are not relatives nor close friends. They do not offer with the expectation of receiving something in return as in normal business. They do not offer us for pleasure or enjoyment; rather they offer with the wish for our health and well-being that we may have energy in our meditation practice to strive ardently and to attain freedom from the suffering of rebirth, Samsāra. They do this wholesome act of offering to cultivate positive mundane and supramundane benefits. So, in order to fulfill their wishes, mindfulness meditation should be practiced with diligence and great effort. In this way, a yogi may strive contemplating the significance of offerings and dispel all sluggishness and laziness.

(5) A yogi, or meditator, may dispel laziness by also reflecting on the noble inheritance of Dhamma. Nowadays, most people search and long for an inheritance of wealth and fortune, such as property. However, the supramundane inheritance of the Dhamma, clearly seeing for oneself the true nature of things, is the greatest and noblest form of wealth and prosperity. When freedom

is attained in this way, one is sure to never be born again into the four woeful states. So it is very important for us to strive toward these noble qualities and goals and to cultivate the wealth of morality and faith in the Dhamma. A yogi contemplating this type of wealth may put forth effort to dispel his laziness.

(6) Other effective means for the cultivation of great effort are the contemplations on the lives led by Noble Ones. One may ponder the nobility of the life led by the Buddha.

(7) Or one may reflect on the lives led by fellow yogi like Venerable Sāriputta or the Venerable Ānanda who strived their best until fully enlightened.

8) In the same way, one may reflect on the nobility of a one's monk-hood or nun-hood (if one is a monk or a nun). With these reflections, we can gain the inspiration and energy to dispel sluggishness and laziness and to strive with great effort in our practice.

9) Avoiding lazy people.

10) Associate with energetic people.

The last two factors are also very supportive to boost up one's effort.

When laziness and sluggishness do arise, we should be aware, noting carefully "*laziness, laziness,*" "*sluggishness, sluggishness.*" Yogis should note repeatedly until the laziness passes. At that time, it is clear that, when the laziness passes, the noting becomes stronger and stronger.

### 3. Domains (gocara)

There are three types of domains:

1. Domain for living or associating with supportive and virtuous companions and mentors (*upanissayagocara*).
2. Domain for controlling or guarding the six sense doors (*āraḁbhagocara*).
3. Domain for binding the mind to the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*upanibanddhagocara*).

i. **Association with supportive and virtuous companions:** The first type of domain consists of associating with those who are virtuous and supportive (*upanissayagocara*). Living among these companions is beneficial in many ways. The following are the five benefits received from this virtuous companion:

- (1) Dhamma talks that have not been heard before (*asutam sunāti*).
- (2) Dhamma talks that have been heard may be repeated again for better comprehension (*sutam pariyodāpesi*).
- (3) Doubt can be overcome and dispelled (*kankham vitarati*). At the time of the Buddha, there were people doubtful of his teachings. They approached him and presented their qualms. With his help, they gained clear comprehension of the Dhamma and attained the first stage of enlightenment.
- (4) The erroneous views can be corrected and, thus, right views can be attained (*ditthim ujum karoti*).
- (5) Listening to their teachings, one's mind becomes serene

and stable (*cittam assa pasīdati*).

When following the example of those who are wise and noble, one gains confidence and becomes morally developed. Following are four kinds of confidence:

- (1) The confidence that arises out of seeing or hearing (*pasādasaddhā*). This type of confidence is not stable.
- (2) The confidence that arises out of knowing genuine attributes of virtue (*okappanasaddhā*). This is only a little more stable than the first.
- (3) The confidence of future Buddhas (*agamasaddhā*).
- (4) The confidence gained by realization as a result of deep meditative practice (*adbigamasaddhā*). This is indeed the most stable and unshakable form of confidence.

Other benefits of dwelling within this type of supportive community or among the virtuous include the natural development of various levels of moral precept from the most basic to the highest precepts (*sīlena vaddhati*), expansion of one's base of knowledge (*sutena vaddhati*), frequent opportunities to perform charitable deeds (*cāgena vaddhati*), to cultivate and to emulate the practices of the noble ones so that the intellect and reasoning can be developed (*paññaya vaddhati*). In the Mahānāma Sutta, the Buddha relates to the value of confidence (*saddhā*), moral development (*sīla*), knowledge (*suta*), charity (*dāna*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

There was a King named Mahānāma in Kapilavatthu City. He was a relative of the Buddha and a noble individual (*sakadāgāmi*). He frequently went to the Buddha's



monastery to pay homage to him and the members of the Sangha. He listened to the Dhamma talks given by the Buddha and his disciples. In the evenings, when King Mahānāma returned home, he had to walk on a narrow road. Occasionally, he would run into wild elephants, wild horses or rushing chariots on this narrow road and would have to react quickly. In those moments, he forgot the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

The King thought to himself, “What kind of rebirth will I experience if I die suddenly on this narrow road in a moment of reaction? Will I be reborn in one of the four woeful states?” The King was indeed a Noble One himself (*sakadāgāmī*) but he himself did not know whether he could be reborn in one of the woeful states.

Therefore, King Mahānāma approached the Buddha and asked him, “Venerable Sir, when I return home in the evenings, I often meet wild animals and rushing chariots on the narrow road. In these moments, I must react quickly to avoid death and, consequently, forget the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. If I die suddenly in such a moment, will I be reborn in one of the four woeful states?”

The Buddha replied thus, “Do not worry about such things, Mahānāma! If one is endowed with the qualities of confidence (*saddhā*), moral development (*sīla*), knowledge (*suta*), charity (*dāna*), and wisdom (*paññā*), his mind goes only to higher abodes, even supreme abodes. For example, when a pot of ghee is broken into pieces under water, the pieces of the pot sink to the bottom while the ghee rises

to the surface of the water. Similarly, when one of great virtue dies, his material body is buried beneath the earth but his spiritual attainments and value rise to higher and supreme states. As your own mind is endowed with these superior attributes, you will not roam about in the woeful states but will only rise to the higher and superior abodes. Therefore, do not worry Mahānāma!”

**ii. Guarding the six sense doors (*āraṅkabhagocara*):** This type can be better described with the following example. When a bhikkhu or a yogi enters a town or a village, he must proceed with mindfulness, keeping his eyes down and noting mindfully. This mindful guardianship over one’s sense-faculties is called *āraṅkabhagocara*.

All together there are six sense doors consisting of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. If a bhikkhu or yogi does not guard these sense doors with mindfulness, unwholesome mental states such as greed, covetousness, ill will and so on will continually flow into one’s consciousness. These mental states may easily overpower the mind and make it difficult if not impossible for the yogi to achieve his goal of gaining concentration and wisdom. From such unpleasant states, his goal of freedom will be far away from him.

How are we able to control the sense doors? Those who have healthy bodies may be active and quick while those with ailing bodies are very slow and inactive. The Buddha taught that, in order to control the sense doors, in meditation practice, we must behave as if we were blind although we have good eyesight, as if we were

deaf although we hear well, as if we were mute although we can speak well, as if we were weak although our bodies are healthy and strong. In this way, there will be fewer distractions to the mind. A yogi who is engaged in meditative activities must act slowly with mindfulness like a handicapped person. Those who ardently practice in this way can achieve tranquility and stronger and more developed states of mindfulness.

**iii. Four Foundations of Mindfulness:** The third type of domain is binding the mind to the four foundations of mindfulness.

The Buddha expounded four ways of practicing meditation:

- a. Contemplation of the body (*kayanupassanā*)
- b. Contemplation of the feeling (*vedanānupassanā*)
- c. Contemplation of the consciousness (*cittānupassana*)
- d. Contemplation of the Dhamma (*dhammanupassana*)

Our mind should be in one of the foundations all the time. As yogis, we note diligently our bodily actions as well as our mental activities in each moment.

**a. Contemplation of the body (*kayanupassannā*)**

First is the contemplation of the body in the body. Mindfulness of the rising and falling of the abdomen belongs to this practice. While noting this home object, should “stiffness,” “warmth,” “tension,” or “vibration” arises and becomes prominent, one should at once note

the phenomenon. Once it disappears, one should fall back to the noting of the home object. This is called the body contemplation(*kayanupassanā*).

For bodily actions, we note when we are going, walking, stopping, sitting, lying, etc. Noting should be continuous.

The Buddha taught us that the bodily movements should be carefully noted in order to realize the true nature of all phenomena. Therefore, our benefactor, Mahāsī Sayādawgyi, instructed us to use labeling as a tool. For example, we note “*rising*” and “*falling*” of the abdomen. This technique allows us to follow movements of the body in an easy way. Many yogi have realized the Dhamma by using this technique. So again, even when lying down, each movement should be noted carefully and continuously.

The Venerable Ānanda attained the last stage of enlightenment at the moment of lying down from the sitting posture! While the Buddha was alive, he had encouraged Venerable Ānanda by telling him, “Ānanda, you have fulfilled perfection and virtue. Put forth great effort and you will become an Arahat very quickly.” Three months and four days after the passing away of the Buddha, the Venerable Ānanda made a great effort to become an Arahat by doing walking meditation continuously throughout the night. His effort was tremendous; however, by morning he had not yet attained his goal. So, he thought to himself, “Why cannot I attain this noble goal of enlightenment? I have been striving diligently.”

Ānanda again thought to himself, “As I have been putting forth great effort throughout the night by doing walking meditation, my energy (*virīya*) may be excessive. Perhaps this is why I have not yet attained my goal. I will practice my meditation in the lying posture balancing out the effort and concentration.” Thinking thus, Ānanda went to his bedroom and sat down on his sleeping area. He then laid his body down from the seated position, noting continuously while doing so. While laying his body down he attained his goal, Arahatsip.

Given favorable conditions, the realization may be very swift. Therefore, continuous noting is so important.

The explanation of how to practice the bodily contemplation, or *kāyānupassanā*, may be enough. While practicing in this way, the repetitive arising and passing away of all bodily actions is observed and realized by direct experience.

When noting an action such as “going,” it becomes clear that the manner of going is the inanimate or unknowing materiality and noting is the animate or knowing mentality. When noting “rising,” it is known that the manner of rising is the inanimate or unknowing materiality, and noting is the animate or knowing mentality and so on.

Due to the intention of “going,” the materiality or action of “going” arises. Due to the intention of “stopping,” the materiality of “stopping” arises. Due to the existence of the materiality of “going,” there arises mental knowing of “I am going.” Thus, one can discern clearly the material and mental phenomena. With continuous practice, the

yogi may see the general characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and no soul of all conditioned phenomena.

A yogi who sees the true nature of things as they really are through wisdom, is far from craving. Experiencing the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena, the yogi lessens craving for sensual pleasures and delusory sense of permanence, joy and soul. Having realized this, the peace of the first stage of enlightenment is attained. One who has at least attained the first stage of enlightenment will never again be reborn into the four woeful states. Therefore, all yogis are encouraged to at least attain the first stage of enlightenment or to become a *Sotapanna!*

#### • The Four Types of Clear Comprehension

The development of the four types of clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) is another important factor in being replete with wholesome morality (*sīla*) and mindfulness (*sati*). Four types of clear comprehension are:

1. Clear comprehension of purpose (*sāttbaka sampajañña*)
2. Clear comprehension of suitability (*sappāya sampajañña*)
3. Clear comprehension of domain (*gocara sampajañña*)
4. Clear comprehension of non delusion (*asammaoha sampajañña*)

(1) The first of these four is *clear comprehension of purpose*. That means clear comprehension of whether

one's actions or speeches are beneficial or not. One can manage to speak of or to do only what is beneficial, if one has a clear comprehension of purpose.

(2) The second clear comprehension is to do or say only what is appropriate. One can manage to speak of or to do only what is appropriate, if he has *clear comprehension of suitability*. These first two clear comprehensions are highly beneficial for mundane affairs as well as for spiritual.

(3) However, when one practices the cultivation of meditative awareness, one does not need to think of how to speak or do. All one needs to do is to develop continual contemplation of arising mental and material phenomena, which is domain of meditative awareness. So, such practice is the third type of clear comprehension called *clear comprehension of domain*.

(4) When concentration and wisdom deepen and become powerful due to continuous contemplation and noting, clear differentiation between mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*) becomes obvious. Although one may not be able to describe what mind and matter are, one can clearly realize what is known and what is knowing and, therefore, realize the true nature of mind and matter. For example, one may realize that “going” arises from the intention to go and can differentiate intentions as the cause and going as the effect. The intention of “going,” the action of “going” and the action of “noting” are all passing. As continual contemplation deepens, it results in the clear and full realization of impermanence, suffering and no-self

characteristics of all phenomena. This clear knowledge is called *clear comprehension of non delusion*.

Whenever looking straight ahead or off to one side, it should be noted and known as it truly is. When seeing, it should be noted as "*seeing*." This is continuous attention. Realizing that "*seeing*" and "*noting*" immediately pass away and are impermanent, it is the clear comprehension of non delusion.

Ordinary people think that what is seen is permanent. This is common knowledge and is an error. When concentration and wisdom become stronger and more powerful, one can come to know clearly what is seen, what is seeing and noting, and these phenomena disappear quickly like the lightning.

Scientists say that when playing or viewing a movie, thirty frames per reel of film pass within one second and fifty frequencies of light in a bulb within one second as well! Nevertheless, using only their common knowledge, people think that the scenes of a movie are continuously moving forward and that the light in a light bulb is continuously emitting; they cannot see the changes occurring one after another.

A yogi who has practiced deeply realizes that what is seen, the act of seeing and noting are all events that are arising and vanishing very quickly. Thus, one comes to realize that everything one contemplates is ever impermanent, suffering, and unsubstantial. This again is the clear comprehension of non-delusion.



## • Contemplation of the Four Primary Elements

While continually contemplating bodily actions, one will naturally begin to notice various sensations such as hardness, softness and so on. Hardness is very apparent and is the characteristic of Earth element (*pathavi dhatu*). When the sensations of warmth, heat or coolness become apparent, they are said to be a result of kinetic energy or the Fire element (*tejo dhatu*). The sensations of stiffness and motion are also easily noted and are said to be related to the element of motion, or the Air element (*vāyo dhatu*). Lastly, when wetness is apparent, it is said to be the element of fluidity or Water element (*āpo dhatu*).

It becomes clear that there are these four primary elements in the material body and that there is in fact no soul at all. Continually arising and passing away, these four elements are impermanent (*anicca*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). When one's knowledge matures and realizes thus, he may arrive at the first stage of enlightenment and become a Sotāpanna and so on.

### b. Contemplation of the feelings (*vedanānupassanā*)

Second, the Buddha taught the contemplation of feeling in the feeling. In Pāli, this is called *vedanānupassanā*. While focusing on the home object, should a feeling, either pleasure, displeasure or neutral (neither pleasure nor displeasure), appear and become prominent, one should focus the attention right away on the feeling. If the feeling is pleasant, one should note as “*pleasure*”; if the feeling is unpleasant, one should note as “*displeasure*”; if the feeling is neither pleasure nor displeasure, one should

note as “*neutral*”. And right after the feeling disappears, the rising and falling of the abdomen as the home object should again be noted.

While noting the home object, the pain in the body may arise, intensify and seem unbearable. In that case, one should first attempt to withstand these sensations with mindfulness. This means one should keep on noting the unpleasant feeling for as long as possible. If one can patiently maintain the noting of the painful feeling, it may disappear completely. Insight may develop at this time. There is this saying in Myanmar, “If you can withstand, you can attain *Nibbāna*!” It is appropriate in this case. After the pain disappears, one should go back to the home object of rising and falling of the abdomen. If the unpleasant feeling remains and becomes unbearable, one can change the bodily posture. Changing bodily posture must be done slowly with mindfulness, however. These are ways in which to contemplate painful bodily sensations.

When strong states of despair, depression... (*dukkhavedanā*) arise and become prominent while noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, these states should be noted accordingly, such as “*despair*,” or “*depression*,” and so on. When these states dissipate, one should return to the noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen.

In the same way, when pleasant sensations (*sukhavedanā*) arise in the body, each should be noted accordingly such as “*pleasant*,” “*pleasant*.” When joyful feelings arise in the mind, “*joyful*,” “*joyful*” should thus be noted. With increasing wisdom, this pleasant feeling may increase naturally and

should be carefully noted as “joyful” or “pleasant.”

The feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant is called neutral feeling (*upekkhāvedanā*) that frequently occurs in bodily and mental processes. It can be even hardly identified as feeling. When concentration and wisdom become stronger, however, this neutral feeling becomes apparent at the moment right after unpleasant feelings disappear and before the appearance of pleasant sensations. In the same way, it becomes obvious right after pleasant feelings disappear and before the appearance of unpleasant sensations. This neutral feeling becomes obvious especially when the insight into arising and passing away (*udaya-bbaya-ñāna*) becomes mature and the insight into disappearance comes into existence (*bhanga-ñāna*).

When concentration and wisdom become strong, one will see clearly in each moment of contemplating that unpleasant feelings come one after another. When looked at with common knowledge, people tend to think that such unpleasant feelings exist indefinitely. The yogi who develops deep mindfulness, however, will clearly see that all feelings arise and pass away, one after another. It is beneficial and favorable to see things in this way. A yogi who continues to contemplate even the most painful sensations may see them dissipate entirely. By contemplating this arising and passing away of feeling, one may attain the stages of enlightenment.

### **c. Contemplation of the consciousness (*cittānupassanā*)**

Next, the Buddha taught the contemplation of

consciousness, known in Pāli as *cittānupassanā*. Sixteen types of consciousness are described here, one of which is with craving. The consciousness with craving should be known as the consciousness associated with craving, while the consciousness without craving should be known as the consciousness disassociated with craving.

While contemplating the rising and falling, if consciousness of craving arises, it should be promptly noted as “*craving, craving.*” When noted carefully with mindfulness, such consciousness with craving will disappear. At that moment, the consciousness without craving is apparent. Similarly, when the consciousness with anger arises, it should be noted with mindfulness as “*angry, angry.*” When the consciousness with anger disappears, the consciousness free of anger should be contemplated.

In the same way, when the consciousness with delusion arises with the idea of permanence, pleasantness and soul, it should be observed and noted as “*delusion,*” “*delusion*” right away. Similarly, the consciousness associated with the remaining mental states such as restlessness, laziness, and so on should be noted when they arise. When concentration and wisdom deepen, in each moment of noting, the quick arising and passing away of all phenomena, including consciousness with these mental states, can be seen. One who contemplates consciousness in this way will be able to reach the stages of insights leading to the enlightenment.

We should also note mental actions such as imagining, thinking, pondering, reflecting, raging, despairing, grieving, rejoicing and so on.

#### **d. Contemplation of the Dhamma** (*dhammānupassanā*)

The Buddha taught five ways for the contemplation of the true nature of things or *dhammānupassanā*.

##### **• Contemplation of the Hindrances**

Out of these five ways, the very first one is the contemplation of the mental hindrances (*nīvarana*).

How do hindrances obstruct our practice? They hinder concentration and wisdom. The following are the five types of hindrances:

1. Desire for sensual pleasures (*kāmacchanda*)
2. Hatred or anger (*byāpāda*)
3. Sloth and torpor (*thīna middha*)
4. Restlessness and anxiety or worry (*uddhacca* and *kukkucca*)
5. Doubt (*vicikicchā*)

(In the original Pāli text, restlessness and worry (*uddhacca* and *kukkucca*) are combined as a single hindrance.)

While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, should desire for sensual pleasures arise, one must with mindfulness note carefully “*desire, desire*”. The Buddha instructed us to know what arises internally in the mind, such as desire and ill will. When one knows clearly such mental states as they truly are, they will dissipate. When full enlightenment is attained, desire will be eliminated.

In the same way, when hatred or anger arises, it should

be noted "*hatred, hatred*" or "*anger, anger*". When sloth and torpor arise, they too should be noted "*sloth, sloth,*" "*torpor, torpor*" and so on. In the same way, restlessness, anxiety or worry resulting from misdeeds or unwholesome speech and doubt about the existence of the Triple Gem or one's own practice should be noted with great effort and mindfulness. When carefully noted, they will dissipate.

As previously mentioned, with deep concentration and wisdom, all hindrances will vanish due to continuous awareness and knowing. At the moment of noting, the arising and passing away of all hindrances can be clearly known. At this time, due to the realization of the true nature of things, the first stage of enlightenment can be attained.

### • Contemplation of the Five Aggregates

(1) When noting "*going,*" "*standing,*" "*sitting,*" "*rising,*" "*falling,*" etcetera, one will come to realize that these actions are matter (*rūpa*). Matter cannot cognize and arises and passes away instantaneously. This *aggregate of matter* or form (*rūpa*) is the first of the five aggregates (*rūpak.khandhā*).

(2) The second aggregate is sensation (*vedanā*) or *aggregate of feelings*. When noting "*pain,*" "*pleasure,*" or "*neutral*" feelings, one may come to realize that this is simply sensation which arises and passes away quickly.

(3) Next is the *aggregate of perception* (*saññā*). When being aware of "*perceiving,*" one may realize that it is only perception that perceives form, sound, odor, etcetera and that it too arises and passes away.

(4) Mental formations (*sankhāra*) constitute the fourth aggregate. Except perception and feeling, the remaining fifty mental states such as “joy,” “intention,” “anger,” “jealousy” and so on, belong to this *aggregate of mental formation*. If one notes carefully when they become prominent, one will not fail to see that they are also impermanent meaning they disappear right after arising.

(5) The last aggregate is *aggregate of consciousness (viññāna)*. While noting “*thinking*,” “*knowing*” or “*realizing*,” one may also come to know that this is consciousness. It is also impermanent since it arises and passes away incessantly.

In noting and contemplating the arising and passing of these five aggregates, one may attain the first stage of enlightenment and become a *Sotāpanna* and so on.

#### • Contemplation of the Sense Bases

By noting “*seeing*” “*seeing*” at the very moment of seeing an object, one will know with mindfulness exactly the eye base, the existence of the object seen or the seeing consciousness. In this case, the eye base is called *cakkhāyatana*, the object is called *rūpāyatana*, and the eye-consciousness is called *manāyatana*.

If one cannot note what is seen as “*seeing*” or realize the true nature of seeing, the sensual desire may arise. In this case, one should note the sensual desire. By the power of noting or of mindfulness, one can see the arising and ceasing of sensual desire.

Similarly, one who notes “*hearing*” at the very moment of hearing with concentration knows the ear base, the

sound and the hearing consciousness. By noting “*smelling*” at the very moment of smelling, one will know the nose base, the scent or the smelling consciousness. Equally, one who notes “*tasting*,” “*touching*” or “*thinking*” when these experiences occur, knows the base, the object and the corresponding consciousness of the present experience. If one cannot note in time, defilements may arise. However, one can then note the defilement and experience both the arising and ceasing of defilements.

Defilements (*kilesas*) are obstacles in meditation practice and are likened to the chains which keep bulls bound. In the same way, sentient beings dwelling continuously in the cycle of rebirths are bound to it by these defilements. Following are the ten types of defilements which are called ‘fetter’ as they keep us bound:

1. Desire for sensual pleasures (*kāmarāga*)
2. Craving for existence (*bhavarāga*)
3. Hatred or anger (*patigha*)
4. Pride or conceit (*māna*)
5. False view about self (*ditthi*)
6. Skeptical Doubt (*vicikicchā*)
7. Belief in rites and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*)
8. Envy (*issā*)
9. Avarice (*macchariya*)
10. Ignorance (*avijjā*)

It is said that false view of self, skeptical doubt, and



belief in rites and rituals in addition to envy and avarice are dispelled by the attainment of the first stage of enlightenment. Desire for sensual pleasures and hatred are weakened by the second stage of enlightenment and are eliminated by the third stage. Finally, the remaining defilements including conceit, craving for existence and ignorance are destroyed upon attaining Arahantship.

• **Contemplation of the Enlightenment Factors Leading to the Realization of Liberation (*Nibbāna*)**

The seven enlightenment factors (*bojjhanga*) leading to the realization of Liberation (*Nibbāna*) are as follows:

1. Mindfulness (*satisambojjhanga*)
2. Investigation of Dhamma (*Dhammavicaya-sambojjhanga*)
3. Effort (*viriyasambojjhanga*)
4. Rapture (*pīṭisambojjhanga*)
5. Tranquility (*passaddhisambojjhanga*)
6. Concentration (*samādhisambojjhanga*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkhāsambojjhanga*)

Upon initial contemplation, these seven enlightenment factors have not yet arisen. The mindfulness enlightenment factor will not arise if noting is not continuous and concentration is weak. It is only with developed insights (*udayabbaya-ñāna* and higher) that these factors come into existence. For example, when one experiences the arising and passing away of all mental and material phenomena (*udayabbaya-ñāna*) through noting, these seven factors (*bojjhanga*) arise.

Whenever these factors leading to realization appear and disappear, the yogi should know their appearance and disappearance. Knowing them in this way, the investigation of Dhamma enlightenment factor will arise and, thus, the first stage, second, third and fourth stage of enlightenment may be attained.

• **Contemplation of Truth** (*sacca*)

The Buddha taught us thus regarding the contemplation of truth (*sacca*):

*One knows as it really is, "This is suffering."*

*One knows as it really is, "This is the cause of suffering."*

*One knows as it really is, "This is the cessation of suffering."*

*One knows as it really is, "This is the way to the cessation of suffering."*

All material and mental phenomena of all sentient beings are true suffering (*dukkha sacca*). Why? All phenomena are afflicted with old age, disease, death, bodily pain, mental pain, and so on. These are said to be "dreadful suffering" due to the incessant oppression of arising and passing away at each moment. Pain arises from both the material body and consciousness. If there were no material body, there would be no physical pain. If there were no consciousness, though having a material body, there would be no painful sensation either. For example, though inanimate materials such as rocks, stones, posts, and lumps of earth are burned or beaten or cut off, they experience no painful sensation. Because sentient beings have both physical and mental qualities, they have both physical and mental pain. These material and mental

phenomena are indeed true suffering.

In each existence, the material and mental qualities are present. The duration of their existence is very short. They only exist for just one tiny fraction of a second and then vanish completely. If new physical and mental qualities do not take place, death will come surely and suddenly. How dreadful to depend on such things! For this reason, also, they are real sufferings.

Without knowing the true nature of material and mental phenomena, common people never see the frightening nature of their existence. Even though they practice, they cannot see that nature until they see phenomena arising and passing away constantly. Only when they continuously develop concentration and Vipassanā insights until enlightenment, can they see clearly that physical and mental phenomena are suffering (*dukkha sacca*). With reference to this, the Buddha said as follows:

**Idam dukkhanti yathā-bhūtam pajānāti**

*One knows as it really is, "This is suffering."*

With insight into suffering, the attachment to mental and physical phenomena becomes less and less. Thus, the craving as the cause of suffering (*samudaya sacca*) is dispelled in momentary way. Then, the temporary cessation of suffering (*tadanga nirodha sacca*) is experienced. Thus, they develop vipassana in terms of magga-caccā (*vipassana-magga*), the path leading to the enlightenment.

While observing the phenomena arising and passing away constantly, one's vipassana insight becomes mature

enough for the realization of Nibbāna. Thus, the true cessation of suffering (*niroda-saccā*) is experienced with the attainment of magga-enlightenment. At this very moment, one accomplishes the realization of suffering (*dukkha sacca*), the eradication of the craving that is the cause of suffering (*samudaya-saccā*), and the development of the true path (*magga saccā*). Thus, one simultaneously realizes all the Four Noble Truths. When the first stage of enlightenment is thus achieved, one is free from the four lower planes of existence forever. This is a brief explanation of the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths (*Catusaccadhammānupassanā*).

The second way of cultivating a mature and stable mind has now been explained in many ways. One must be replete with moral precepts and mindfulness and put forth great effort to gain clear understanding and ultimate freedom from suffering. Being guarded by these precepts and wholesome actions, the mature mind gradually developed.

**The Third Way:  
To Listen to Dhamma**

**Puna ca param bhikkhu yāyam kathā  
abhisallekhikā**

**Cetovivarana-sappāyā ekanta-nibbidhāya,  
virāgāya, upasamāya,**

**Abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya, samvattati**

*“The third way for cultivating a mature and stable mind is to listen to words which weaken the mental defilements and support the development of tranquility and insight. A mind developed and guarded in such a way will be freed from craving and mental defilements and consequently achieves the complete cessation of suffering. Therefore, listening to Dhamma may ultimately lead one to the full realization of the Four Noble Truths and to the bliss of Nibbāna.”*

**The Ten Kinds of Dhamma Talks**

**(1) The Dhamma Talk on Freedom from Desire  
(appiccha-kathā)**

This kind of Dhamma talk addresses little want or freedom from desire. Only Arahats are completely free from desire.

There are many kinds of desire. First, there is the desire for something in another’s hand which is the same as that already in one’s own hand. That is excessive greed

(*atricchatā*). There is an English proverb related to this excessive want, “Grass is greener on other side.” In a similar sense, a Myanmar saying goes thus: “When fresh fish is available, grilled fish is abandoned”

Second, wanting to receive praise for virtues that one does not actually possess, or wanting to receive and utilize valuable things that one is not worthy of. It is called evil or mean desire (*pāpicchatā*).

Third, wanting to receive praise excessively for virtues which one possesses or to receive and utilize things exceedingly. It is called excessive desire (*mahicchatā*).

If one is free from these three types of desire (*atricchatā*, *pāpicchatā* and *mahicchatā*), one is considered free from desire (*appicchatā*). Such a person does not want to receive praise for virtues, although he or she actually possesses them. And he or she receives and utilizes things in moderation. This quality is called *appicchatāta*.

This Dhamma talk of desirelessness should be listened to by a bhikkhu or yogi.

## **(2) The Dhamma Talk on Contentment**

(*santutthikathā*)

There are three kinds of contentment:

Bhikkhus should be content with whatever requisite are available such as dwelling place, alms food, robes and medicine. Such contentment with the four requisites is called *yathā-lābha-santosa*.

It is all right, though, to exchange one item for another

for health or any other suitable reason. For example, if a bhikkhu is very weak and unable to wear a very heavy robe, he may exchange the heavy robe for a lighter one and use it in a proper manner. It is called *yathā-bala-santosa*.

Thinking that a requisite is too good for him to use, a bhikkhu gives it to other bhikkhu, takes an inferior one back from him and uses it in a proper manner. Using a suitable requisite only is called *yathā-sāruppa-santosa*.

A bhikkhu or yogi should listen to the Dhamma talks on such contentment.

### **(3) The Dhamma Talk on Seclusion (*pavivekakathā*)**

A bhikkhu should be in seclusion, both bodily and mentally.

- For bodily seclusion, he should be away and detached from the crowd. It is called bodily seclusion (*kāyaviveka*).
- Guarding his mind from mental defilements and hindrances by doing Vipassanā or Samatha meditation is called mental seclusion (*citta-viveka*).
- Keeping the detached mind on the bliss of Nibbāna by means of phala-samapatti (absorption into Phala mental state) is called (*upadhi-viveka*).

By keeping his mind in meditation, a bhikkhu should remain in this kind of seclusion. He should teach the same practices to others, too.

The Dhamma talk on seclusion should be done whenever condition is favorable.

#### (4) The Dhamma Talk on Keeping Away from the Opposite Sex (*asamsagga-kathā*)

Sexual attachment can arise from seeing, hearing, talking, touching, sharing the utilized materials with the opposite sex. Sexual attachment (*samsagga*) is a hindrance for spiritual progress. To avoid this, one should note immediately upon seeing one of the opposite sex as “*seeing, seeing.*”

In addition, the attraction to the voice or any other features of the opposite sex (*savanasamsagga*) must also be noted right away to prevent craving from arising.

Attachment to the words of the opposite sex is called *samullapanasamsagga*. When speaking to him or her, one must be careful of being fascinated by his or her voice.

Depending on the utilized materials possessed by males, females, bhikkhus, and bhikkhunis or due to the use of personal objects among fellow-companions, there arises attachment, and it is called *sambhogasamsagga*.

The *Vinaya*, monastic codes of morality for monks and nuns, strictly prohibits the bodily contact between opposite sexes. Therefore, they should not engage in this kind of bodily contact (*kāyasamsagga*). Nevertheless, physical contact may happen unintentionally. In this case, the monks or nuns should immediately note the touching as “*touching, touching*” to prevent craving from arising and to purify their precepts.

Following is a story of Cūla-Pindapātika-Tissa-Thera, who was supported by a female devotee for about



twelve years. She offered him requisites during this time interval.

One day, the village of the female devotee caught fire and several houses were destroyed. Many bhikkhus went to their supporters and offered them encouragement. Even in present times, some bhikkhus dwelling near villages affected by fire rush to the village to help the villagers in every way they can. In worldly view, these are praiseworthy actions. But Cūla-Pandapātika-Tissa-Thera did not rush to his female supporter for fear that physical contact between him and her might occur. Because of this, her neighbors said to her mockingly, “Your bhikkhu will come only for meals!”

The following day, as usual, the Thera went out to the female devotee’s house to receive alms. She prepared a seat for him in the shade of the shed and offered him alms food. When the Thera finished his meal, he went on his way. The neighbors again spoke mockingly, “See! Your bhikkhu only comes to you at meal times!”

This time the female devotee replied, “The bhikkhus you support behave in ways appropriate to you, and the Thera I support behaves in ways appropriate to me.” These words are very profound since venerating the Sangha means paying deep respect to the qualities of morality, concentration and wisdom which they strive to develop.

It is very beneficial to provide offerings to the Sangha members who are replete with these qualities. Offering just a spoonful of alms food to such a Sangha member

may give the advantage of being reborn in the celestial abodes.

A man named Indaka dwelling in Rājagaha city was reborn in the Tāvātimsa deva world as a result of donating just a spoonful of alms food to the Venerable Arahat Anuruddha in his previous life. Indaka was as a powerful supreme deva as others in the Tāvātimsa realm. When the Buddha preached the *Abhidhamma* to the celestial beings there, Indaka had the chance to sit in the front row near the Buddha.

Initially, another deva named Ankura sat near the Buddha. However, as the supreme devas who were more powerful than he came to the assembly, they took all of the front seats. Ankura had to move back again and again until finally he was twelve yojanas (a yojana is about eight miles) away from the Buddha!

The deva Ankura, in his previous existences, had done many charitable deeds for the benefit of those without moral precepts. His acts continued throughout lifetimes, for about ten thousand years. It was said that the alms food was cooked in ovens covering twelve yojanas in breadth and width. As the donees were common people without moral precepts, the benefit he gained was little. The donation of the deva Indaka, however, was just a spoonful of alms food but produced great benefit as the donee was Venerable Anuruddha, an enlightened Arahat.

As illustrated in the story above, we can come to understand the benefit of doing charitable deeds and venerating the noble ones who diligently maintain the

moral precepts. Thera Tissa was trying to maintain his moral precepts and his female supporter understood and supported him in this sense. So, in veneration of the members of the Sangha Order, the benefits offered and gained throughout the samsāric journey, the rebirth cycle, must be appropriately regarded.

**(5) The Dhamma Talk on Diligence in Meditation Practice** (*viriyarambhakathā*)

The effort should be ardent for all bodily and mental activities during the meditation practice. With such an effort, defilements arising at the moment of walking should be stopped and not allowed to continue to arise with the posture of standing. Similarly, the defilements arising at the moment of standing should not be allowed to continue to arise in the posture of sitting, and the defilements arising at the moment of sitting should not continue in the posture of lying. In every moment of any posture, the defilements arising at that very moment should be successfully extinguished.

A bhikkhu or yogi must practice with great effort and diligence and should teach these efforts to others.

**(6-8) Dhamma Talks on Three Trainings** (*Morality, Concentration and Wisdom*)

Dhamma talks regarding morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) must be highly regarded and followed. How to practice and observe morality has already been explained. If chosen, deep concentration

(*jhāna samādhi*) should be attained first with tremendous effort. Thus, the concentration training can be fulfilled, and then insight meditation (*Vipassanā meditation*) should be applied on those very jhānic factors to see their true nature. Such development of wisdom or insight knowledges is called wisdom training.

Another way to develop wisdom or insight is to go directly to *Vipassanā*. In this way, instead of jhānic concentration, momentary concentration (*Vipassanā khaṇikasamādhi*) is attained by noting present objects moment by moment. Through such concentration also, one is able to develop stages of insights into the true nature of phenomena. These insights should be developed up to the stage of enlightenment (*ariya-magga Paññā*). These three modes of training are basically important factors in the teachings of the Buddha.

### **(9) The Dhamma Talk on the Four Noble Fruition** (*Nibbāna vimutti-kathā*)

A bhikkhu or yogi must attain the Four Noble Fruitions and encourage others to have them. When one is fulfilled with morality, concentration and wisdom, mental emancipation or the ultimate freedom from suffering (*vimutti*) will be attained automatically.

### **(10) The Dhamma Talk on Reflecting on Liberation** (*vimutti-ñānadassana-kathā*)

After having been liberated, a noble one reflects on the liberation, which includes the path, fruition and *Nibbāna*.

This is the reflection on liberation or *vimuttiñānadassana* in Pāli.

A bhikkhu or yogi should rely on a noble one or good teacher for spiritual guidance. When a meditator is given the chance to hear a Dhamma talk, which can make the mind stable and mature, wisdom can be attained. Ultimately, *arabatship* can be fully realized. Therefore, one should listen to the aforementioned Dhamma talks.

### **If Beneficial, Even Single Word is Superior**

Once there was a man with a red moustache named Tambadāthika living in Rājagaha City. He was appointed executioner by the king. He had to execute at least one or two criminals a day. After fifty-five years of service, he retired. On the first day of his retirement, he ordered his men to prepare rice gruel mixed with milk for him since, as an executioner in the past, he had had no right to have such food. He took a bath, smeared himself in fragrant powders, adorned his hair with jasmine flowers and put on newly made clothes. After he had beautified himself, he sat down to partake of his well-prepared meal.

At that time, out of compassion for the executioner, the Venerable Sāriputta stopped for alms in front of his house. Upon seeing Venerable Sāriputta, the retired executioner was joyful. He offered the rice gruel that had been specially prepared for him to Venerable Sāriputta. After finishing his meal and waiting for Tambadāthika to finish his, Venerable Sāriputta preached the Dhamma to the retired executioner.

While listening to the Dhamma, Tambadāthika

remembered all of the evil deeds he had done over the past fifty-five years and his mind became agitated. Knowing this, Venerable Sāriputta asked Tambadāthika, “Did you commit these evil deeds on your own accord or by order of others?”

Tambadāthika replied, “Venerable Sir, I did such evil deeds as ordered by the king.”

“Then, were these your own evil deeds?”

Tambadāthika then thought these evil deeds were acts of the king and his mind became stable and calm and he was able to listen to the Dhamma with a peaceful mind. His mind then became focused on the Dhamma talk and he developed concentration, leading to the early phases of the first stage of enlightenment.

After having seen the Venerable Sāriputta off, Tambadāthika was gored to death by a cow on the way back home. (It is said that an ogress in the form of a cow gored Tambadāthika out of enmity harbored from a previous existence.) After his death, Tambadāthika was reborn in the Tusitā deva world.

That evening, at the Dhamma assembly, the bhikkhus spread the news that Tambadāthika, a cruel executioner for fifty-five years, was killed by a cow after offering alms-food to Venerable Sāriputta. They wondered where he might have been reborn.

Knowing this, the Buddha addressed them thus: “The executioner, Tambadāthika of Rājagaha, having listened to the Dhamma given by the Venerable Sāriputta, realized

*Sankhārupekkhānāna* leading to the path of wisdom and was overjoyed to be reborn in the Tusitā deva world.”

The bhikkhus were not satisfied with what the Buddha had said and felt doubtful. They inquired further. It was said that the evil deeds done by the executioner were very, very grave while the Dhamma he listened to might have not been long enough for him to attain such benefit.

“*Oh, Bhikkhus!*” replied the Buddha, “the Dhamma talk should not be evaluated as ‘little’ or ‘much’ by its length.” Then the Buddha uttered the following verse.

*sabassam’api ce vācā, anatthapada-sambitā*

*eakm attha-padam seyyo, yam sutvā upasammati.*

*Words of no benefit are useless though they are thousands in number. One word is superior if defilements are extinguished upon hearing it.*

**Aparipakkāya cetovimuttiyā ayam tatiyo dhammo  
paripākāya samvattati**

So, the third way for developing a stable and mature mind is to listen to beneficial Dhamma talks. Such listening helps develop mindfulness in order to dispel ignorance and defilements.

**The Fourth Way:**  
**To Put Forth Ardent and**  
**Arduous Effort**

**Puna ca param bhikkhu āraddha-vīriyo viharati,  
akusalānam dhammānam pahānāya, kusalānam  
dhammānam upasampadāya, thāmavā  
dalhaparakkamo anikkhitta-duro kusalesu  
dhammesu.**

*A bhikkhu or yogi should live putting forth ardent and arduous effort toward the goal of cultivating a mature and stable mind*

Following are the goals of a meditator practicing this ardent and arduous effort:

- To dispel and eliminate unwholesome Dhammas
- To fulfill and accomplish wholesome Dhammas
- To be resolute and vigorous in practice
- To have firm and stable diligence and vigilance
- To sustain concentration and insight knowledge

At the time of the Buddha, some bhikkus requested the Buddha to show them the way to practice meditation. They asked for his teachings in this way, “Venerable Sir, may we humbly request the Dhamma in brief from you. After listening to the Dhamma, we will practice mindfully in seclusion with great effort which can dispel the defilements and lead to the blissful state of liberation (*Nibbana*).”



Why did they ask this way? It is very important for a meditator to stay in secluded places so that he will not be disturbed by others. In this way, it is easy for him to develop concentration and wisdom. Nevertheless, if there is no such place, then he should stay with others who are also attentive to their meditative goals and tasks. With such companions, concentration and wisdom may be obtained just like in a secluded place. Avoiding involvement in external conversations and interactions, one exerts great effort. Only in this way the staying together with others will not hinder the progress.

**Appamatto** means mindfulness. It is very important to be mindful in meditation practice. In each moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, knowing, touching, thinking, feeling, changing posture, and so on, mindfulness plays a vital role.

**Ātāpa** refers to the accomplishment with arduous and ardent effort to dispel the defilements. It means drying up or burning out all defilements, just as wet things become dry due to the heat of the sun or fire. With this kind of effort, defilements such as greed, hatred and delusion become less and less powerful.

If a lump of iron is cool, insects like flies and mosquitoes can stay on it. In the same manner, ordinary people without undertaking meditation may harbor mental defilements and act on them. These defilements arise through the six sense doors quickly due to lack of awareness of them. They will not arise, however, in a meditator who puts forth ardent effort in noting continuously.

**Sammappadhāna**, the supreme effort, which can avoid defilements has four functions.

The first is to prevent unarisen unwholesome states from arising, just as one has to take care of one's health to prevent diseases from happening.

The second function is to prevent arisen unwholesome states from arising again. This can be done by contemplating mindfully and continuously. In this way, one will handle all arisen defilements.

Here, latent defilements (*anusaya-kilesa*), although not actually arisen yet, are regarded as existing unwholesome states. One must make every effort to prevent them from turning up. If a yogi is mindful every moment he sees, hears, experiences or perceives, then there would be no room left for mental defilements related to the sense-objects that occur to him (*aramanā-nusaya*). When he is fully enlightened, he will get rid of all kinds of mental defilements that lie dormant in his mental process throughout cycle of lives (*santānā-nusaya*). Thus, one has to try his best to prevent the arisen defilements and latent defilements from turning up.

The third function is to arouse unarisen wholesome states such as generosity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*) and mind cultivation through meditation (*bhāvanā*). Whatever the wholesome state is, if it has not arisen, effort should be made to arouse it.

The fourth and final function is to sustain and develop the existing wholesome Dhammas. When the initial or elementary sort of wisdom arises, one should strive to

develop higher levels of insight and wisdom.

For a Vipassanā or insight meditator, these four types of effort should be included in each noting and every moment of contemplation.

**An Exposition of “pahitatto”:** It is stated in the commentary *Nidānavagga Samyutta Atthakathā* that, in order to attain path, fruition and Nibbāna, the mind must be directly inclined toward that goal. So, in the old version of the Myanmar interpretation, the word “*pahitatto*” is translated as “having the mind directed and inclined towards *Nibbana*.” Here only Nibbāna is mentioned as the goal, but not path and fruition. It is because Nibbāna is the most supreme among them. Also in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga Atthakathā*, this word is defined as “having the mind directed or having the body surrendered (to the goal of Nibbāna) without caring about one’s life and limbs.”

Thus the Buddha expounded, “*The fourth Dhamma of being replete with supreme effort releases the immature mind from mental defilements and develops it fully.*”

This ardent and arduous effort constitutes the fourth way for the cultivation of a mature and stable mind.

## The Fifth Way:

# To be Replete with a Special Insight

**Puna ca param bhikkhu paññavā hoti, udayattha  
gāminiyā paññāya sammannāgato ariyāya  
nibbedhikāya sammā dukkhakkhaya-gāminiyā**

*A bhikkhu or a yogi should be replete with a special insight of reasoning and wisdom, the fifth cause for the cultivation of a stable and mature mind.*

What is this reasoning and intellectual insight? One should fully realize the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena (*udayabbayañāna*). Such knowledge is sublime and powerful and lead to the full realization of the Four Noble Truths. Moreover, it can also lead to the bliss of liberation (*Nibbāna*), complete freedom from the suffering of old age, sickness and death.

The Buddha expounded:

**Yoca vassasatam jīve, apassam udayabhayam,  
Ekāham jivitam seyyo, passato udayabbayam.**

*“Though one may live one hundred years without comprehending the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena, better is a life of a single day of one who comprehends the arising and passing away.”*

A person who lives one hundred years without comprehending the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena is indeed inferior and ignoble. A person who lives for only one single day comprehending

the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena is indeed superior and noble.

Thus, the Buddha expounded:

*“This fifth Dhamma, i.e., the insight into the arising and passing away of material and mental phenomena, leads the liberation from mental defilement from immature stage to mature stage.”*

When we put forth great effort, we may attain the higher stages of insight and wisdom.

We have now covered all the five ways to cultivate a mature and stable mind leading one to full emancipation or to realizing the wisdom of life.

\* \* \*

May you all accomplish and achieve these five ways as taught by the Buddha!

May you all cultivate your minds up through the final stages of mental maturity and stability!

May you attain the highest freedom of Arahantship, Nibbānic bliss!

May you all realize the meaning of life!

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

# Sharing Merits

May all beings share this merit  
Which we have thus acquired  
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness

May beings inhabiting space and earth,  
Devas and nāgas of mighty power  
Share this merit of ours  
May they long protect the teachings!

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