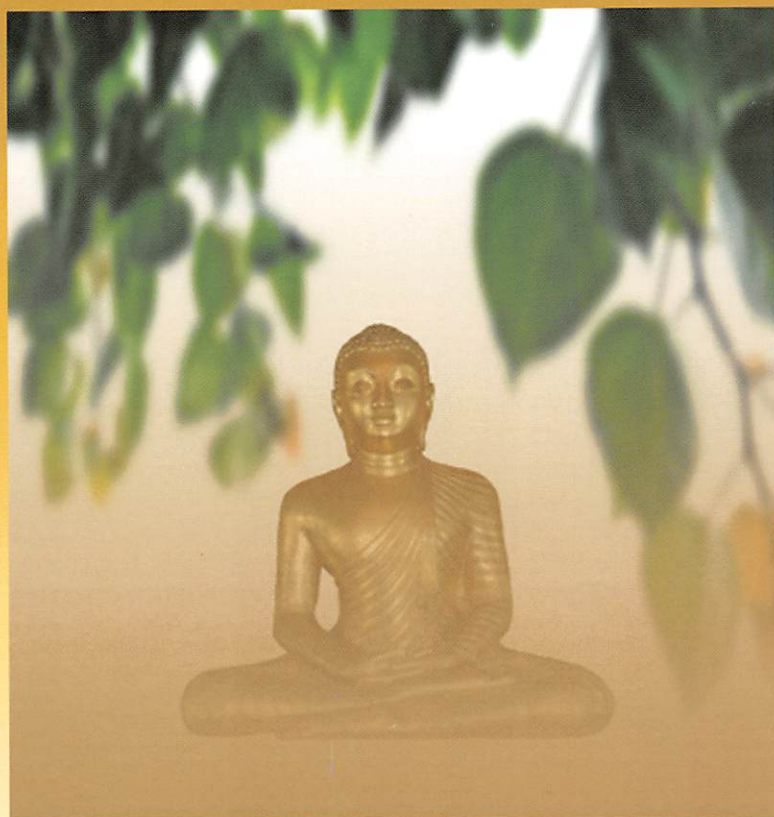


SAYADAW U SĪLĀNANDA

# WELL-INFORMED BUDDHIST

(Kalyāṇa)



Edited by  
U Hla Myint

**Sayadaw U Sīlānandabhivamsa**

**WELL-INFORMED  
BUDDHIST  
(Kalyāṇa)**

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**U Hla Myint**

2014

**Cover by Vinh Dang**

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## **Well-informed Buddhist**

**In remembrance of the late  
Sayadaw U Sīlānanda**

## Table of Contents

Publisher's Notes .....	9
Preface .....	13
Well-informed Buddhist .....	15
Introduction .....	15
Five Aggregates.....	17
• Aggregate of Matter .....	18
Aggregate of Feeling.....	35
• Aggregate of Perception .....	36
• Aggregate of Mental Formations.....	37
• Aggregate of Consciousness.....	54
Twelve Sense Bases.....	70
Eighteen Elements .....	73
Four Noble Truths.....	81
Dependent Origination.....	103
Planes of Existence .....	125
Twenty Four Conditions of Paṭṭhāna .....	139
Thirty Seven Members of Enlightenment .....	176
Venerable U Sīlānanda's Biography.....	204

## Publisher's Notes

“Well-informed Buddhist” was a class given to the founding members of Tathāgata Meditation Center (TMC) by the late Sayadaw U Sīlānanda according to their request. The class materials in this course contains the basic teachings of the Buddha based on the standard of the great commentator Buddhagosa.

The late Sayadaw U Sīlānanda often emphasized the importance of being well-informed about these basic teachings of the Buddha. According to Sayadaw, they are a steppingstone for better understanding of the discourses taught by the Buddha and his disciples such as The Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*), The Law of Conditionality (*Paṭṭhāna*)...

To benefit those who want to study the original teachings of the Buddha, we have asked U Hla Myint to edit the materials of Sayadaw's “Well-informed Buddhist” class into this book.

Now the book is completed. We are very happy to introduce it to all of those who are interested in the Dhamma.

With metta,  
Tathāgata Meditation Center



**Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato  
Sammāsambuddhassa**



## Preface

This book, “A Well-informed Buddhist,” is a compilation of the serial lectures on *Abhidhamma* (Buddhist Philosophy) given by the Late Venerable Sayadaw U Sīlānanda. The fortunate students who studied these lectures with him were those who later founded Tathāgata Meditation Center (TMC), and this place has been providing a serene and secluded place for *vipassanā* meditators. When Sayadaw succumbed to his demise, these lectures were left to the founding members of TMC as a precious heritage. So, this book signifies the good-heart of TMC members who are willing to share the priceless heritage left to them by their great teacher.

The late Venerable Sayadaw U Sīlānanda often mentioned in his serial lectures that he wanted us to be well-informed of the Buddha’s basic teachings, so that we could gain better understanding of the discourses (*Dhamma*) given by the Buddha and his disciples. More importantly, he wanted us to gain a general idea of the purpose and method of *vipassanā* meditation, so that we can practice successfully without confusion. In other words, he made a great attempt to help us understand *Dhamma*, from both theoretical and practical aspects.

Honestly, I feel very fortunate to be assigned by TMC to edit this book, because I not only can learn a lot from this book but also feel his loving kindness and wisdom in it. Even though Sayadaw expected this book to provide us

with basic knowledge of *Dhamma*, it actually deepens our knowledge much further than that. His literal explanations of the *Abhidhamma* terms and theories often amaze me, even though I thought I had learned enough. For instance, he said that in the water there is fire element. The cold or warm temperature that we can experience when we touch the water, he said, is the fire element. Being very knowledgeable, he explained difficult technical terms in a very clear and precise way. When he explained about the space element (*akasa*), for example, he said that, according to the science, if all the space were removed out of our planet, it would be reduced to the size of a golf ball. So, reading this book, I sincerely feel blessed by his loving kindness and wisdom.

In conclusion, I wish that we all be blessed by his loving kindness and the wisdom infused in this book, and be able to make an attempt to meet his sublime wish that we can become well-informed of *Dhamma* and can practice meditation without confusion until we are fully enlightened.

With much metta,

U Hla Myint

# INTRODUCTION

## Two Kinds of Common People

The Pali word “*Puthujjana*” literally means many people, or the majority of people or common people. Technically, it refers to people who are not enlightened. So, unenlightened individuals are called “*puthujjana*.” The great Buddhist commentator, Venerable Buddhaghosa, said that there are two kinds of *puthujjana*: *kalyāṇa puthujjana* or good individual and *andha puthujjana* or blind individual. “A good individual” really means a person who is well-informed of the Buddha’s teachings. So, I prefer the terms an ill-informed Buddhist and a well-informed Buddhist to the terms a good individual and a blind individual.

## Twelve Topics to Learn for a Well-informed Buddhist

The purpose of this *Dhamma* class is to make you well-informed Buddhists. You have learned *Dhamma* with Venerable Khippa-pañño and me by listening to our talks and practicing *vipassanā* meditation for a few years; therefore, I think you have been well-informed to some extent. But I want you to meet the standard of a well-informed Buddhist described by the great commentator Buddhaghosa. According to him, a well-informed Buddhist is someone who is familiar with the following teachings:

1. Five Aggregates
2. Twelve Sense Bases
3. Eighteen Elements
4. Four Noble Truths

5. Dependent Origination
6. Four Foundations of Mindfulness
7. Four Supreme Efforts
8. Four Means of Accomplishment
9. Five Faculties
10. Five Powers
11. Seven Factors of Enlightenment
12. Eight Factors of Path.

Among these topics, the first five are explicitly mentioned by name, and the remaining seven are implicitly mentioned. They are all for you to be well-informed of. This will be the table of contents for our talks. We will go one-by-one in a little detail.

These topics are taught in *Suttas* (general discourses), as well as in *Abhidhamma* (specific teachings on ultimate realities). In the *Suttas*, they are treated just generally but, in *Abhidhamma*, they are treated in too much detail. So, I do not know whether you want to learn them according to the *Suttas* or the *Abhidhamma*. What is your preference? I think we should follow the middle path here, neither too general, as in the *Suttas*, nor in too much detail, as in *Abhidhamma*.

In the above list of the subjects for a well-informed Buddhist, do you see any discourse (*sutta*) such as the First Sermon, the Non-self Sermon, and the Fire Sermon, etc.? No, right? It is because these subjects are the basics for you to learn, so that you can understand any discourse. That is why particular discourses are not mentioned in this list.

# FIVE AGGREGATES

## *Pañca-kkhandha*

What is the first topic in the list? The Five Aggregates (*pañca-kkhandha*). I want you to be familiar with Pāḷi words; therefore, I give the Pāḷi, too. *Pañca* means five and *khandha* means aggregate. So, *pañca-kkhandha* means five aggregates. I think that you are all familiar with the teaching of the Five Aggregates.

Below are the Five Aggregates:

1. The aggregate of matter (*rūpa-kkhandha*)
2. The aggregate of feeling (*vedana-kkhandha*)
3. the aggregate of perception (*saññā-kkhandha*)
4. The aggregate of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*)
5. The aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*)

When the Buddha analyzed the world, both animate and inanimate, he found only these five aggregates. An animate being is a combination of these five aggregates, while inanimate things belong to the first, the aggregate of matter. Everything in the world is composed of one or more of these aggregates.

### **Definition of “Aggregate”**

Why are they called “aggregates (*khandha*)?” You may think that they are so called because they are a group. Actually, each and every unit in each of them is also called an “aggregate.” The reason is each one can be divided into

several forms from several aspects such as past, present and future, internal and external, subtle and gross, low and high, far and near. For example, there are twenty-eight material properties that make up the aggregate of matter which we are going to study today. Even one unit out of them, say, earth element, is also called an “aggregate,” as it can be classified into several forms from many aspects, as just mentioned.

Do you find *Nibbāna* in these five aggregates? No, it is not included in them because it is diametrically opposite of them in nature. *Nibbāna* is timeless. It cannot be divided into past *Nibbāna*, present *Nibbāna* and future *Nibbāna*. It cannot be classified into internal *Nibbāna* and external *Nibbāna*, as it is external only. *Nibbāna* is formless. It cannot be divided into subtle and gross, low and high, or far and near. Therefore, in the teachings of the Five Aggregates, *Nibbāna* is not included.

## THE AGGREGATE OF MATTER

Now, let’s see the first aggregate, the aggregate of matter called *rūpa-kkhandha* in Pāli. The word “*rūpa*” is defined as the phenomena that change with cold, heat, hunger, thirst, bites of insects, etc. So, in brief, “*rūpa*” means changing phenomena. “Change” here means the gross change that can be seen by our naked eyes. Mind, including both consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasika*), is not called “*rūpa*” although it changes even more quickly. That is why only material properties are called “*rūpa*,” not mind.

The aggregate of matter (*rūpa-kkhandha*) consists of twenty-eight material properties. They are divided into two groups. The first group includes four primary elements

and the second twenty-four dependents. Altogether, there are twenty-eight material properties which are called “aggregate of matter” (*rūpa-kkhandha*).

### **Four Primary Elements** (*cattāro mahābhūta*)

The first four are literally called “the great elements (*mahābhūta*),” but I’d rather call them “primary elements,” which would be much clearer. “Primary Elements” means the basic elements of anything that we call “matter.” So, they can be found in every material thing in the world.

Below are the four primary elements:

1. The element of earth (*pathavī-dhātu*)
2. The element of water (*āpo-dhātu*)
3. The element of fire (*tejo-dhātu*)
4. The element of air (*vāyo-dhātu*)

### **Earth Element** (*pathavī-dhātū*)

The first one, “element of earth,” does not necessarily mean the solid earth under your feet, but the quality which inheres in the earth. When we touch the earth, what do we find? Hardness. So, “element of earth” is characterized by hardness. Hardness and softness are relative terms. Compared to steel, lead is soft, but compared to cloth, lead is hard. Hardness and softness are relative terms. So, when we say “hardness,” we also mean softness. Hardness or softness is, therefore, the characteristic of “the element of earth.”

This earth element can be found everywhere, such as

in the water, in the fire, or in the air. If you touch water, you feel softness there. Right? So, the softness or hardness we feel is what is called “earth element.”

### **Water Element** (*āpo-dhātū*)

The second element is the element of water. What is the element of water? What do you see in water? You just see water. Right? Actually, there is stickiness or cohesiveness in it. This quality of water element keeps things together. Suppose there is flour. You put some water in the flour, knead it, and get a dough. Originally, the particles of flour were not blended together. You add water and they become blended. That quality of keeping things together is what is called the “element of water.” The water element is predominant in the water, but it is not necessarily in the water only. In a grain of sand, there is also the element of water. A grain of sand is made up of smaller particles. These smaller particles are kept together by the water element in them. We cannot squeeze water out of a grain of sand, but there is this element of water in it making its particles to stick together.

### **Fire Element** (*tejo-dhātū*)

The third element is the element of fire. What is the element of fire? Temperature. Hot or cold. When we say “hot,” we also mean cold. Hot or cold is what we call the “element of fire.” It is not necessarily the blaze of fire although the element of heat is predominant in fire.

### **Air Element** (*vāyo-dhātū*)

Last is the element of air. The element of air has the characteristic of distending and supporting. When air is



blown into a balloon, it distends and keeps the balloon distended that way after the hole is sealed. That is also called supporting. Because of this distending and supporting nature of air, things can stand upright. For example, we can walk upright. If there were no air at all, we might fall. The air element is that which supports us and which keeps things distended.

## **Four Elements in Brief**

Hardness or softness is what we call earth element. Cohesiveness is water element. Temperature, hot or cold, is the fire element. Distending, supporting is the air element. So, in a glass of water, for example, we find all four elements. When you touch the water, you feel hardness or softness, cohesiveness, and temperature. If you put in a thermometer, you may read its temperature as seventy degrees or eighty degrees, or something like that. There is also the air element (air pressure) so that when it blends together, it is distended.

So, we find these four elements everywhere, in our bodies, in trees, in flowers, in water, and anywhere else. Therefore, they are called “the primary elements” or “the basic elements.”

## **Twenty-four Dependent Elements** (*upadā-rupa*)

Depending on these four great elements, there arise twenty-four kinds of matter. They are, therefore, called Dependent Matter (*upadā-rupa*). The four great elements can be compared to canvas and the dependent ones to a picture. You paint a picture on the canvas. If there were no canvas, you cannot do it at all. But the picture is not the

product of the canvas. The picture only depends upon the canvas. In the same way, the twenty-four depend upon the primary four, but not the product of the primary four.

That is important because many English translations use the words “derived matter.” I don’t like that because, if they are derived, they must be the products of these four. Actually, these twenty-four are separate material properties. They are not derived from the four, but they just depend upon the four to arise and exist, just like the picture depends upon the canvas.

Among the twenty-four Dependents, only fourteen are real material properties (*rūpa-rūpa*), which include five sensitivities, five objects, two genders, heart-base, life-faculty, and nutrition. (Regarding the five objects, the last one of them, tangibility, is not counted as a separate number, because it is not a separate phenomenon from the three primary elements: earth, fire and air.)

### **Five Sensitivities (*Āyatana*)**

The first group includes the five sensitivities: eye sensitivity, ear sensitivity, nose sensitivity, tongue sensitivity, and body sensitivity. These are what we call “the five senses.”

The “eye sensitivity” (*cakkhu-pasāda*) is in the eye where the images strike. In that place, there is a certain kind of physical phenomena that are sensitive to the visual objects and cause us to see. It does not mean the solid eyeball. According to medical science, it is in the retina where the images strike. It, then, sends a message to the brain. That is eye sensitivity.

The “ear sensitivity” (*sota-pasāda*) is in the ear where the vibrations of sound strike. Maybe, it is what we call “inner ear.”

The “nose sensitivity” (*ghāna-pasāda*) refers to a certain kind of physical phenomena in the nose by which we sense smell. It is not the solid form of the whole nose.

The “tongue sensitivity” (*jivhā-pasāda*) are the taste buds on the tongue through which we experience taste.

The “body sensitivity” (*kāya-pasāda*) constitutes a certain kind of physical phenomena that represent our experience of sensations everywhere in the body, except the dry parts like the hairs and nails.

## **Five Objects (*Ārammaṇa*)**

The five senses are the receptors of outside stimuli. The second group is comprised of those outside stimuli, which include the visible object (i.e., color), sound, odor or smell, taste, and tactile ability or touch. They correspond to those in the preceding group. Visible object corresponds to eye sensitivity; sound corresponds to ear sensitivity, and so on. They are called five kinds of objects. Actually, they are the first five of the six kinds of object.

For the visible object (*rūpa*), it is translated as “form.” This is not a good translation, but many authors use that translation. Actually, it is not form. When we say “form,” we mean something like a shape. But, according to Abhidhamma, we do not see form or shape with our eyes. What we really see is the visible datum. Some authors, therefore, translate it as visible datum. However, if we say visible datum, then we have to say audible datum, odorous datum, sapid datum, tactile datum. That is difficult. So,

the word "form" should simply imply visible datum, visible object, or what can be seen. Having seen it with our eyes, we translate it in our minds into shape or form and think, "we see a shape."

Let us say, you look at a pen and see its shape or form. Right? You see the shape or form of a stick. Actually, what we see is just the visible datum in these things. After seeing the visual datum, we make up in our minds: "Oh, I see a pen;" "I see something that has the shape of a stick or the shape of a rod." So, by "form," we mean what can be seen and that is color or visible datum.

Now, tangibility is not counted as a separate material property. Otherwise, we will get twenty-nine, not twenty-eight, material properties. "Tangibility" means what can be touched. What we touch is not separate phenomena other than three primary elements: earth, fire, and air. That is why a number is not given to tangibility here. Although there are five objects, the touch itself is not counted as a separate material property.

You may want to ask why the water element is excluded from tangibility (touch). According to Abhidhamma, the water element cannot be touched. You touch the water, but not the water element. When you touch the water, you touch hardness or softness. That is the earth element. Then, you feel cold or hot. That is the fire element. Then, there is the distendedness in the water. That is the air element. It is said that the cohesiveness of the water element cannot be touched. In the same way, we think that we touch the water element, but what we really touch are the other three primary elements.

## **Two Genders** (*bhāva*)

The third group consists of femininity and masculinity. There is certain kind of physical phenomena that represent male or female. By sight, we know that a person is a male or a female. Sometimes, even if we do not see them clearly, we know whether it is a man or a woman by their voice or smell or by their mannerism, such as the way they walk, the way they do things, the way they speak, and so on. Sometimes, by just looking at the hands you know: Oh, this is a man; this is a woman. That is because there is masculinity or femininity in that hand. Through such peculiarity, we experience what we call “femininity” and “masculinity.”

Then, where exactly does this femininity and masculinity exist? All over the body. That is why even looking at a finger, you know this is a man or a woman.

## **Heart Base** (*Hadaya-vatthu*)

The next one is heart base. There is a heart in our body and there is blood in the heart. That blood in the heart is what is here called “heart base.” Actually, in that blood, there is a certain kind of physical phenomena that serve as the base for our thoughts or as the seat of certain types of consciousness. You will learn the different types of consciousness when we come to the fifth aggregate.

Let us take seeing consciousness as an example. Seeing consciousness has the eye as a seat. That means, depending upon the eye sensitivity, seeing consciousness arises. If we do not have eye sensitivity, there will be no seeing consciousness in us. The eye sensitivity is said to be the seat for eye consciousness. Similarly, hearing consciousness, smelling consciousness, tasting consciousness, touching

consciousness have ear sensitivity, nose sensitivity, tongue sensitivity, body sensitivity as corresponding seats, respectively.

Then, there are the other types of consciousness when we think of something. They are what we call “thoughts.” What is their seat? According to the Commentaries, the heart is interpreted as their seat. Actually, the Buddha did not specifically say the “heart.” Buddha just said: “There arise certain types of consciousness depending upon *“certain material property.”* He did not say: Depending upon *“the heart.”* Commentators, however, interpreted the phrase *“the certain type of material property”* as the heart.

Why did they interpret it to be the heart? That is probably because, sometimes in the *Suttas*, the Buddha used the word “heart” as a synonym for consciousness. It is the same in English. Sometimes you say “heart,” when you mean the mind or emotion. In the same way, sometimes the Buddha used the word “heart” to mean mind or consciousness. That is why I think the Commentators interpreted the phrase as the heart. So, let us think that the heart is the base for the certain types of consciousness; i.e., what we call “thoughts.”

By “the heart” what we really mean is not the solid physical heart. But the handful of the blood in the heart or (rather) certain type of material property in that blood is what we really call “heart base.” Depending on “that heart base,” certain types of consciousness take place.

### **Life Faculty (*javitindriya*)**

Next is the life faculty. In Pāḷi, this is called *javitindriya*, which is translated here as life faculty. It is so called because it is the material property that keeps other material

properties in us alive and, therefore, keeps us alive. Because of this life faculty, our body does not decompose while we are still living. It is always with us in our body when we are alive. When we die, it disappears and our body decomposes. This life faculty is material property. There is another kind of life faculty that is a mental state among the fifty-two mental factors.

According to *Abhidhamma*, the life faculty is found in living beings only. So, there is no life faculty in trees, plants, and others. According to modern science, there is some kind of life in these inanimated things, but that life is different from what is called “*javita*” in *Abhidhamma* here. They are maybe two different things.

### **Nutrition (*āhāra*)**

The next one is nutrition. In Pāḷi, it is called *āhāra*. It is a material quality which we find especially in food and in everything that is nutritious. Something that nourishes the other material properties is called “nutrition.” Actually, it could be translated as food; however, only the nutritious quality that inheres in food, not the whole food, is called *āhāra* here. It is one of the material properties.

So far, we have learned eighteen material properties that are considered the real material properties. The others to come are actually not the real or substantial material properties, but they are kind of dimensions of these eighteen. So, these eighteen material properties are called *rūpa-rūpa*, that means the real *rūpa*. In Pāḷi, when we want to say something is real, we repeat the word. So, *rūpa-rūpa* means the real *rūpa*. These eighteen are important because they are what we can experience during the practice of meditation.

Let us go through them again. Below are eighteen material properties in five groups:

1. The first group consists of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air.
2. The second group includes the five senses: eye sensitivity, ear sensitivity, nose sensitivity, tongue sensitivity, and body sensitivity.
3. The third group deals with the five objects: color, sound, smell, taste, and touch.
4. The fourth group constitutes femininity and masculinity.
5. And, there are three individual phenomena: heart base, life faculty, and nutrition.

### **Inseparables** (*avinibbhoga*)

Among these eighteen, there are eight inseparable physical properties: the four great elements, color, smell, taste (but no touch, as it represents the other three great elements), and nutrition. These eight material properties cannot be separated physically and are called “inseparables.” They can be separated only in our mind, but not in a laboratory. We can say this is earth element, this is water element, and so on, but we cannot pick up each of them separately. So, they are called “inseparables.”

According to the teachings of *Abhidhamma*, these inseparables are everywhere there are material properties, even in the smallest particle of an atom. Scientists can divide matter into small parts until they reach the atom. They can even divide the atom and describe its structure. An atom has a nucleus at the center with protons and an electrons revolving around it. Based on *Abhidhamma*, we



can say that, even in a proton or electron, there are still these eight material properties. That is because the eight cannot be separated physically.

Again, what are the eight? The four great elements, color, smell, taste, and nutrition. There is nutrition in every kind of material property. Even in a rock or a stone, there is nutrition. So, these eight are collectively called the “inseparables.”

### **Why Sound Is Excluded**

I would guess that someone asked why sound is not included among the inseparables. Sound is not always inherent in anything. Only when you strike something there is sound. That is why it is excluded.

How many material properties are in this glass? Eight. The four great elements and then form, odor, taste, nutrition. Sayadaw then taps the glass and raises the question again: How many material properties are there right now? Nine. Eight plus sound. Sound is not always with glass. Only when you strike it, there is sound. Sound is not inseparable. Only the eight inseparable material properties get together all the time everywhere.

### **Ten Dependent Elements**

The remaining ten of the 24 dependent elements are: space, bodily intimation, verbal intimation, lightness, softness, adaptability, and four phases.

### **The Element of Space (*Ākāsa*)**

The first one is the element of space. There are different

kinds of space mentioned in Pāḷi text. This element of space is not the space we say when we talk about spaceships or space travel. The element of space here is a particular kind of phenomenon that lies among different groups of material properties. The material properties when they arise, they arise in groups (in groups of eight, in groups of nine, in groups of ten, and so on). Within a single group, there is no space, as they are stuck together so tightly that there is no space among them. But among the different groups, there is "space." This is what is here called "element of space." When balls are put together, for example, there is space among them. It is something like that. So, it is not the outer space when we talk about space travel or spaceships. It is the space among the different groups of material properties.

Groups of material properties are so minute that we cannot see them with our naked eyes. Even then, there is space among them. Nowadays, scientists say that our globe has so much space in it that, if we take all the space out of it, it would be reduced to just a golf ball.

You look at the glass. You don't see any space in the glass. If you put it under a very powerful microscope, we will be able to see that there is space in what we think is a very solid thing. This conforms to what the Buddha taught here, that there is space between different groups of matter. Even in a block of iron or steel, there is space. That is what is here called "space." That space is actually not a real kind of matter, but it is so called when groups of material properties are together. Anyway, it has something to do with groups of material properties. So, it is included in the list of material properties.

### **Bodily Intimation (*kāya-viññatti*)**

The next two are bodily intimation (*kāya-viññatti*) and

verbal intimation (*vacī-viññatti*). When we want to let someone know our wishes and wants, we use gestures. If we want to call someone, what gesture do we use? In our country (Sayadaw motions with his hand), when we put the palm down and wave, we mean, “please come here.” But, in this country, that means “bye, bye.” In our country, to call a person like they do here is impolite. So, these gestures differ from culture to culture. By these gestures, we let other people know our inner intentions or wishes.

Now, this finger, the index finger, is used when we want somebody or when we want to reprimand somebody. If a person points an index finger and shakes it at you, that means you are warned or you are threatened. So, at school if the teacher wants to scold a student, he may do something like that. It is interesting that this index finger in Pāḷi is called “threatening finger.” If you want to threaten somebody, you use this finger.

There are many kinds of bodily intimations. If you want to say “yes,” what do you do? You nod. Right? If you want to say “no,” you shake your head. By nodding or shaking your head, you let other people know whether you agree to it or not without saying anything. These are called bodily intimation.

So, “bodily intimation” is neither the body nor just its movement itself, but certain quality of the bodily movement which communicates one’s wishes and wants to the other. If (simply) movement is to be called bodily intimation, then the movement of the trees could be called bodily intimation. Although the trees move, we do not know what the trees mean to say to us. In brief, “bodily intimation” means communicating a gesture that goes along with the bodily movement and is unique to living beings.

## **Verbal Intimation (*vacī-viññatti*)**

The next one is called “verbal intimation (*vacī-viññatti*).” You know what verbal intimation is. It is speaking or speech, right? Actually, it is not really the speech itself, but something inherent in that speech that makes us understand. Speech is sound in an ultimate sense, right? Sound is particular kind of physical phenomenon, but not verbal intimation. So, it is not just the sound itself. Now, I am saying words. I am producing sounds. And you are hearing the sounds and understanding me. In the sounds that I produce, there is something that you know what I mean. That quality is what is called “verbal intimation.”

By these two kinds of intimation, sometimes just by bodily gestures and sometimes by speech or by talking, we communicate to each other. They are certain qualities of our bodily gestures and verbal tones or intonations produced by our mind. They are not included in real material properties.

## **Lightness, Softness, and Adaptability**

The next three are material lightness (*lahutā*), material softness (*mudutā*), and material adaptability (*kammaññatā*). These three always go together. You will find these three also in the mental factors.

Sometimes we feel light in our body, especially when the weather is good, or when we eat suitable food, or when we are happy. Also, when our body is light, there is something like softness in our body. “Softness” means pliancy. That means lending itself (easily) for something to be done to it. Also, there is what is called “adaptability.” That is when, for example, gold is heated, it becomes soft and it becomes

pliable. So, you can make any ornament easily. That quality is what is called adaptability.

These three are not the material properties themselves, but certain qualities or modes of the material properties. When we are unhappy or sick, there is no lightness in us and so on. These three qualities (lightness, softness, and adaptability) are related sometimes to our *kamma*, sometimes to our minds, sometimes to climate or temperature, and sometimes to the food we eat.

## Four Phases

Now, there come the last four. In order to understand the last four, we should know that the existence of any conditioned phenomena, whether mental or material, has three phases. What are these three phases? Arising, aging, and disappearing. These are called “the three phases of existence.” If anyone (or anything) has these three phases, then we say it exists. Or, if we say something exists, we mean that it has these three phases of existence. It arises, lasts for a little while, and disappears. These three phases are common to all conditioned phenomena and, therefore, are called “common characteristics,” *lakkhaṇa* in Pāḷi.

As for material properties, however, one more characteristic is included. Why? Because, as our commentaries explain, the first phase, the phase of arising, is here divided into two: initial arising and ongoing arising. It is a minute moment just before the aging phase.

Here, the Buddha described four characteristics according to the inner dispositions of his audience. The Buddha will expound three or four phases depending on which way his audience will easily understand and become enlightened. Buddha had different ways to teach

different people. So, according to the inner dispositions of his audience, he here described the four characteristics of existence.

All together, there are twenty-eight material properties. However, the last ten are not real material properties but have something to do with or are related to the real material properties and, therefore, are put in the list. Thus, there are twenty-eight material properties called "the aggregate of matter."

Actually, as I mentioned before, each and every one of these material properties can be called "an aggregate," because they each can be classified as past, present and future, or as internal and external, or as lowly and lofty, or as far and near. The same will apply to the remaining aggregates.

There are some people who were born blind, who were born without eye sensitivity, or ear sensitivity, and so on. In the same way, it is said, there are certain kind of celestial beings called *Brahma* who look like human beings in general, but do not have the sense of smell, taste, and touch. The reason is they develop *jhana* with notion of disgust about these senses, because they believe these are not conducive to their spiritual life. They only have eyes and ears for seeing the sages like the Buddha and for hearing their talks. As a result of such *jhanas*, when they are reborn as *Brahmas*, they lack these three sensitivities. So, you can hit a *Brahma* but he will not feel anything at all.

And then femininity and masculinity may be deficient in some being. There are some beings who are neither male nor female. They lack both femininity and masculinity. These can be deficient in some beings.

If a being is not deficient in any of these material

properties, how many material properties do that being have? Twenty-seven. That is because a being will have either masculinity or femininity, not both.

## **Causes of Material Properties**

Some material properties take place due to *kamma*, and others to mind, climate, or nutrition. I will not go into details about them because it will take too much time. Below is brief explanation about their causes:

Kamma-born are eighteen that include eight inseparables, five sensitivities, two genders, heart-base, life-faculty, and space.

Mind-born are fifteen: eight inseparables, sound, space, two intimations and three modes (lightness, softness, adaptability).

Temperature-born are thirteen: eight inseparables, sound, space, and three modes.

Nutrition-born are twelve: eight inseparables, space and three modes.

Note: For further information, you may read "A Manual of Abhidhamma," written by Venerable Narada Thera.

## **THE AGGREGATE OF FEELING**

The second aggregate is the aggregate of feeling (*Vedana-kkhandha*). We have different kinds of feeling: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. There arises pleasant feeling when we, for example, touch something soft and smooth or when we think of something pleasant. On the other hand, there arise unpleasant feelings when, for example, we hit ourselves against something (physical

contact), or when we think of something unpleasant (mental contact). So, pleasant and unpleasant feelings are of two kinds each, related to contact (*phassa*) to physical object or mental object. The last one is neutral feeling, or literally neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant feeling. This neutral feeling arises only through contact to mental object. Thus, there are altogether five kinds of feelings.

By “feeling,” we here mean a certain kind of mental factor (among 52 mental factors) called *vedanā* in Pāḷi. It is a mental phenomenon, not physical one. The pleasant or unpleasant sensations in our bodies represent good or bad material properties, which are actually experienced through our minds. This experience is feeling. So, what we call “feeling” here is just a mental factor that experiences either material or mental object.

Every single feeling is called “the aggregate of feeling,” because each can be classified into past, present and future, or internal and external, or as lowly and lofty, or as far and near.

## THE AGGREGATE OF PERCEPTION

The third one is *saññā-kkhandha*. *Saññā-kkhandha* is normally translated as the aggregate of perception but it is difficult to understand what the word “perception” really means. So, I will explain the Pāḷi word *saññā*. *Saññā* means making a mark. Suppose, for example, you see someone today. If you see him again tomorrow, you will remember: This is Mr. A, whom I saw yesterday. It is because you have made a mark in your mind. This man with hair in this style, tall or short, big or small is Mr. A. Making marks in this way is the characteristic of *saññā*. So, we do mark every object we come across. Before we know what to do with it, we



have already marked it.

Such marking may sometimes be wrong. It may be a wrong marking. So, we have false *saññā* as well as true *saññā*. Suppose, you see something long in the dark and you think that it is a snake, while it's actually a rope. That means you have ever marked a snake as something like a rope in the past. That is false *saññā*. False *saññā* makes something look so real that in this case you would jump away from the rope. So, making a mark is what we call *saññā*, that can be sometimes true and sometimes false.

It is compared to carpenters who make marks here and there on the timber to be cut off when they build a house. When they make a mark, they know where to put it or what to do with it. In the same way, we make marks on every object we come across. With the help of that marking, we remember later what it is and what to do with it. So, this *saññā* helps us to remember things. If we cannot remember things very well, that means our *saññā* is weak. If we have strong *saññā*, then we will remember things very well.

This *saññā* goes together with *sati* (mindfulness). So, strong *saññā* is the proximate cause for mindfulness. That *saññā* can also be divided into past, present, future, or internal and external, or as lowly and lofty, or as far and near. So this *saññā*, although it is single mental factor, is called "the aggregate of perception."

## THE AGGREGATE OF MENTAL FORMATIONS

The next one is the aggregate of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*). The fourth mental factor out of fifty-two is *cetanā*, which is translated as volition. When you do something, there is a certain kind of mental factor that is prompting you to do. And that is what we

called *cetana* or “intention.” This *cetana* arises with every type of consciousness. But it is called “*kamma*” only when it goes along with wholesome consciousness or unwholesome consciousness (not with resultant or functional consciousness). Driven by our intention, we do unwholesome or wholesome actions by body, by speech or by mind. *Cetana*, the volition or the willing in the mind, in this case is what the Buddha called *kamma* when he said: “I call *etanā kamma*.”

For your information, there are four types of consciousness: wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, and functional. *Cetanā* accompanies every type of consciousness. But the *etanā* accompanying wholesome consciousness and unwholesome consciousness is called *kamma*. Such kammic *etanā* has the ability to give results. “Giving results” means causing something to happen, or producing something, or conditioning something.

This *etanā* has another name; i.e., *saṅkhāra*. *Saṅkhāra* means producing or putting things together. So, *etanā* is called *saṅkhāra*, because it has the ability to produce results or to condition results to arise.

In Pāḷi, the word *saṅkhāra* has many meanings. We have to understand it according to the context. Otherwise, we will make misinterpretations.

- a. In this case, *saṅkhāra* means the certain kind of mental factor called *etanā*.
- b. “All *saṅkhāras* are impermanent.” Here, *saṅkhāra* means conditioned phenomena, not *etanā*. In this sense, it should be interpreted that all material and mental phenomena are impermanent.
- c. In some cases, *saṅkhāra* means “prompting.” You have learned that some kinds of consciousness take

place along with “prompting” and others without it. That “prompting” or “instigating” is also called *saṅkhāra*. It is a technical term.

Here, we take *cetanā* as *saṅkhāra*, but *saṅkhāra-kkhandha* (the aggregate of mental formations) consists of the fifty mental factors excluding feeling and perception, which are separate aggregates. Among these fifty, *cetana* is the most prominent with respect to producing results, or conditioning the result to arise. So, the fifty mental factors headed by *cetanā* are collectively called *saṅkhāra-kkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formation.

In brief, as you know, there are fifty-two mental factors. Among them, feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) form separate aggregates. So, the remaining fifty mental factors constitute the aggregate of mental formation. Here again, if you want to study further details about fifty-two mental factors, please go to the book “A Manual of *Abhidhamma*.”

## DISCUSSION

Student: Can you clarify when you say “for something is an aggregate, it has to be of the past, present and future, or internal and external, or far and near.” Can you give us an example of that? How that differs?

Teacher: Differs from what?

Student: If you say that feeling is an aggregate, are you talking about that feeling can be in the past, the present, the future?

Teacher: Suppose, you are referring to the present feeling. But this feeling can be considered as the future feeling before it comes into existence, and it will be also regarded as the past after a while. These classifications

are just relative, but not absolute. So, a single phenomenon can be classified into past, present and future, or internal and external, or soft and gross.

Opposite of them is *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is not included in the five aggregates, because it is unique and absolute. It goes beyond time. It's timeless. It cannot be classified into past, present and future. Moreover, it is only external, but not internal. So, it cannot be classified into internal and external. And, it is always subtle. It is not gross. Thus, *nibbāna* is the unique, but not something relative. So, it has no classification. Actually, I intend to touch on this point when we come to the end of the five aggregates.

## **Fifty Mental Factors**

### **Constituting the Aggregate of Mental Formation**

Now, let us look at the fifty mental factors that constitute the aggregate of mental formation. They include: five out of seven Universal, six Particular, fourteen Unwholesome, and twenty-five Beautiful.

#### **Five Universal**

Five of the seven “Universal” mental factors (*sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa*) accompanying every type of consciousness are as follows:

1. **Contact:** The first one is “contact” (*phassa*). It means the contact between the mind and any object, mental or physical. It is a mental phenomenon. For example, when a visual object impinges on our eye-sensitivity, there arises seeing consciousness. Then there arises this contact as a result of these

three things (the visible object, eye-sensitivity and seeing consciousness) getting together. So, there is always contact when a sense-object impinges on its corresponding sensitivity giving rise to the corresponding sense-consciousness. It is not just an act of getting together, but certain mental factor that arises as a result of these three things getting together. It arises simultaneously with these three. (Hereupon, Sayadaw clapped his hands.) It's something like this noise. The noise arises simultaneously with the two hands clapped. The mental contact is something like that. It arises when these three come together.

2. **One-pointedness of Mind:** The next is *ekaggatā* which is literally translated as “one-pointedness of mind.” By this mental factor, we refer to concentration. So, “one-pointedness of mind” means the mind that is concentrated on the object.
3. **Life Faculty:** Next is “life faculty” (*jīvitindriya*). We can also find another kind of “life faculty” among the twenty-eight material properties. So, there are two kinds of life faculty: one is a material property and another is a mental factor.
4. **Attention:** And then, there is a mental factor called *manasi-kāra* that is normally translated as attention. This mental factor is necessary for the sense-consciousness to arise. Without attention paid to the object, no sense-consciousness will take place.
5. **Volition:** The volition (*cetanā*), or the willing in the mind, that prompts us to do something.

These five mental factors together with feeling (*vedanā*), and perception (*saññā*) are collectively called “Seven

Universals,” because they arise with every type of consciousness. Only these five factors out of the seven come under the “Aggregate of Mental Formation,” because feeling and perception have been taken as separate aggregates.

## Six Particulars

And then, there come six kinds of mental factors called “Particular” (*pakiṇṇaka*), because they arise only with particular types of consciousness, but not with all types of consciousness.

**6-7. Initial Application and Sustained Applications:** *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are translated as “initial application” and “sustained application,” respectively. Initial application is a mental factor that takes place in terms of aiming the mind at the object or directing the mind to the object. This goes first, and sustained application follows up. (Hereupon, Sayadaw rings the bell.) It is something like this. The first sound is like the initial application (*vitakka*), and the subsequent sound or vibration is like the sustained application (*vicāra*).

The next two are decision and effort, respectively.

**8. Decision:** It is through the decision mental factor (*adhimokkha*) that we make a decision. In other words, this mental factor plays an important role in decision-making.

**9. Effort:** Effort means mental effort (*vīriya*). This mental effort motivates the physical effort. First, there comes the mental effort and then you make an attempt to do something by body.

**10. Joy:** And then there comes joy (*pīti*). You experience *pīti* when you are happy. Sometimes it may come along with gooseflesh. So, when you are meditating, you may

sometimes feel this gooseflesh. This is a sign of *pīti*. Sometimes you may feel like floating in the air. That is also another sign of *pīti* you are likely to experience during the practice.

**11. Desire:** The last one of the six particulars is *chanda*. This is kind of desire. It is desire-to-do but not attachment or craving (*taṇhā*). Suppose you want to give something to somebody. Without attachment to that thing, you then pick it up and give it to the person. That desire to give is *chanda*. It should not be confused with attachment or craving. This *chanda* can accompany both wholesome and unwholesome types of consciousness (*kusala* and *akusala*).

Note: These thirteen are literally known as “Common to Others” (*añña-samāna*), which actually means “Common to Either,” because they can be associated with either unwholesome (*akusala*) or wholesome (*kusala*) consciousness, or resultant (*vipāka*) or functional (*kriya*) consciousness.

## Fourteen Unwholesome

**12. Delusion:** Among the unwholesome mental factors, the first one is delusion (*moha*) or ignorance (*avijjā*). Mind and matter are what we really are. In other words, we are nobody, but just ever-changing psycho-physical compounds. However, we feel like someone everlasting. Therefore, we are ignorant of what we really are. This is ignorance.

**13-14. Shamelessness and Fearlessness:** When we don't feel ashamed or are not afraid to do something immoral, there arises certain mental factors known as shamelessness (*ahīrika*) and moral fearlessness (*anottapa*).

**15. Restlessness:** The number fifteen is restlessness of mind (*uddhacca*). It means that the mind cannot focus on an object properly. Most of the time, it won't be with the object as we want it to be. It becomes more obvious when you practice meditation. This is what we called *uddhacca*.

**16-18. Lobha, Diṭṭhi, Māna:** Number sixteen is *lobha*. This mental factor is characterized by greed, selfishness, attachment or craving. It is very common to all of us. Number seventeen is *diṭṭhi*, or wrong view. It is mainly related to three kinds of ideas: the idea of individual soul (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), the idea of universal soul (*visama-hetu diṭṭhi*), and the idea of randomness (*a-hetuka diṭṭhi*). Therefore, there are several kinds of wrong views. Number eighteen is *māna*, pride or conceit. We have a big ego. It is very difficult to get control over it. We always feel like someone special on earth, even though we may not be successful in life.

**19-20. Dosa, Issa:** Number nineteen is *dosa* that refers to such mental states as aversion, ill will, anger, hatred. And then, number twenty is *issa*, or jealousy. This mental state becomes obvious when we find someone, especially our rival, has become prosperous and successful.

**21. Avariciousness:** Number twenty-one is *macchhariya*, or avariciousness. *Macchhariya* really means intolerance of one's property to be in common with others. To put it plainly, let us say, I own this machine. I don't want other people even to touch it. If you come and touch it or make use of it, I will be angry. That is what is called *macchhariya*. So, *macchhariya* is not stinginess, but it is intolerance of one's property to be common to others.

**22. Remorse:** Number twenty-two is *kukkucca*, remorse or regret. We feel regret for doing something bad or for not having done something good. Both are called remorse.



**23-24. Sloth and Torpor:** Then number twenty-three and number twenty-four are *thina-middha*. *Thina* is the sluggishness of the consciousness (*citta*) and *middha* the sluggishness of the mental factors (*cetasika*). Together they signify sleepiness or laziness. If we are not interested in something wholesome, then it becomes boring to us. We become sleepy or lazy to do it. We are likely to give lame excuses for not doing it.

**25. Doubt:** Number twenty-five is *vicikicchā*, or skeptical doubt. There is doubt when we are unable to decide which way is wrong, which way is right. Let us suppose we are not sure whether the body is something lasting or changing. If we cannot decide, if we are wavering, then this is doubt. But, it is a wrong view if we come to conclusion that the body is lasting or something permanent.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Student:** Regarding remorse, if there is something you feel remorse about, and you stop it. Isn't that good?

**Teacher:** Actually remorse is one thing and learning from mistakes is another. Of course, it is good that you learn from mistakes and do something wholesome or avoid something unwholesome. But remorse itself is unwholesome.

In this regard, let me relate the account of a monk called Sudinna. After having listened to the Buddha's talks, Sudinna decided to become a monk so that he could fully follow Buddha's spiritual guideline. Unfortunately, his parents did not allow him to become a monk. So, he laid down on the ground and did not eat anything until they consented to his ordination. After becoming a monk, he went to somewhere far away from home and practiced intensively in a secluded place.

For a health reason, he came back to his native place after years. One day, on the alms around, he accidentally stopped by his father's house, as he rarely looked further than six or eight feet ahead. Then, his father seized this chance to persuade him to come back to lay life. He refused: "No, I am very happy as a monk." Then, his father showed him a heap of gold and silver, and said: "This is your inheritance. If you do not come back to lay life, all these will be confiscated by the king, because there were no heirs."

So, his father one day brought his wife and asked: "If you do not want to come back to lay life, why not just give her a child?" Thus, he was forced to fulfill his father's need. Actually, there were no monastic rules and regulations laid down at that time. However, he knew he did something inappropriate for a monk and was depressed by this remorse. He became thin, just skin and bones, a skeleton. His fellow monks asked: "Why are you so thin and look so depressed?" Then, he told them what he had done. It was reported to the Buddha, who then laid down the rule that monks must not have sex. He felt great remorse about what he did, but it was impossible to undo what was done. Remorse (*kukkucca*) is like that.

## **Twenty-five Beautiful**

**26. Faith or Confidence:** Let's go to beautiful qualities. First of all, there is confidence (*saddhā*). It can be translated as faith, but it is not blind faith. It is faith with understanding. So, it is confidence. Unless you have faith or confidence in something, then you won't do it or can't accomplish it.

**27-29. Mindfulness, Moral Shame, Moral Fear:** Number twenty seven is mindfulness (*sati*). Number twenty-eight is

moral shame (*hiri*). It is the opposite of number thirteen. Number twenty-nine is moral fear (*ottappa*). It is the opposite of number fourteen. You refrain from doing something morally wrong because you are ashamed of doing that or you are afraid of its moral consequences.

**30-31. Non-attachment, Non-hatred:** Number thirty is non-attachment (*alobha*). It means unselfishness or generosity. It is through this mental factor that you generously give something or donate something to somebody. Number thirty-one is non-hatred (*adosa*) that means loving-kindness, goodwill.

**32. Equanimity:** Number thirty-two is equanimity (*tatramajjhata*). It is a skillful mental factor that receives an object without bias, against or in favor of what the object is.

## Six Pairs

Then there come six pairs:

1. (No. 33, 34): The number thirty-three is **tranquility of kāya** (*kāya-passaddhi*). The word *kāya* normally means body. But, the “body” here means mental body referring to mental factors (*cetasika*). Number thirty-four is **tranquility of consciousness** (*citta-passaddhi*). Any wholesome deeds and their resultant mental states involve these mental qualities.
2. (No. 35, 36): **Lightness of mental factors** (*kāya-lahutā*) and **lightness of consciousness** (*citta-lahutā*)
3. (No. 37, 38): **Pliancy of mental factors** (*kāya-mudutā*) and **pliancy of consciousness** (*citta-mudutā*)
4. (No. 39, 40): **Adaptability of mental factors** (*kāya-*

*kamaññatā*) and **adaptability of consciousness** (*citta-kamaññatā*)

5. (No. 41, 42): **Proficiency of mental factors** (*kāya-pāguññatā*) and **proficiency of consciousness** (*citta-pāguññatā*)
6. (No. 43, 44): **Rectitude or straightness of mental factors** (*kāy'ujukatā*) and **straightness of consciousness** (*citt'ujukatā*)

So, these are pairs. They are all included in beautiful mental factors (*sobhana cetasikas*) and go along with wholesome minds or wholesome resultant minds or functional minds.

### **Three Abstinenances** (No, 45, 46, 47)

Then there are the three abstinenances: **Right Speech** (*sammā-vācā*), **Right Action** (*sammā-kammanta*) and **Right Livelihood** (*sammā-ājīva*). They are among the factors of the *Noble Eightfold Path*. Right Speech means abstention from wrong speeches: lying, back-biting, harsh speech, and frivolous speech. Right Action means abstention from such wrong actions as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Right Livelihood takes place when you earn your living by abstaining from the three wrong-doings and the four wrong speeches. In brief, they are abstentions from three kinds of misconducts.

**48. Compassion:** The number forty eight is compassion (*karuṇā*). Compassion means wishing for beings to get free from suffering, affliction. So, when you see someone afflicted, you wish him or her relief from that. That is what we call compassion. You can develop this wholesome attitude by saying wholeheartedly: "May this person get free

from suffering.” So when I say, “May the suffering-struck be suffering-free, may the fear-struck be fearless, may the grief-struck find relief.” This is *karuṇā*, not *mettā* (loving-kindness) which is developed by wishing wholeheartedly thus: “May they be well, happy and peaceful.” So, there is a difference between *mettā* and *karuṇā*.

**49. Sympathetic Joy:** The next one is sympathetic joy (*muditā*). You are happy with other people’s success or prosperity. So, it is the opposite of jealousy. If you have jealousy, you cannot be that way. Here, you are happy with their prosperity. This wholesome mental state can be developed by wishing wholeheartedly: “May they not be separate from whatever prosperity they have.”

**50. Wisdom:** The last one is faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*) that can be characterized by understanding, comprehension, knowledge, insight, enlightenment, and so on. Strictly speaking, *paññindriya* actually refers to understanding of the Four Noble Truths, or understanding of the true nature of mind and body, their conditionality, and impermanence, etc., based on one’s own experience through practicing meditation.

These fifty mental factors, headed by intention (*cetanā*), are collectively called “the aggregate of mental formations” (*saṅkhara-kkhandha*).

So far, we have completed four aggregates: the aggregate of matter (*rūpa-kkhandha*), the aggregate of feeling (*vedana-kkhandha*), the aggregate of perception (*sañña-kkhandha*), and the aggregate of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*). There is one more to go. That is the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*). There are 89 or 121 types of consciousness. We will pick it up next time. If you are impatient, you may read the first chapter of

“A Manual of *Abhidhamma*” that deals with these types of consciousness.

## DISCUSSION

Student: You mentioned *saññā* (the aggregate of perception) as making a mark so that the next time you run into the same being or same person you remember. Where are those marks stored?

Teacher: Actually, we do not say that they are stored, because it may imply permanency. Our explanation is that memory is also impermanent. One memory disappears and then in its place there is another memory. So, there is continuation of memory. In the same way, we cannot say where *kamma* is stored. There is *kamma* and it gives results when circumstances are favorable.

Student: The *kamma* is stored somewhere we don't know and, with favorable conditions, it comes out as a result?

Teacher: It is not *kamma* itself that comes down, but its results appear. You know *kamma* is intention (*cetanā*). Right? Since it is a mental factor, it has only three stages of existence: arising, lasting, and disappearing. In other words, it disappears immediately after arising. So, it is nowhere after disappearing. However, it is said that it has left certain kinds of energy in dormant form in the continuous process of our minds and bodies. Such dormant energy is what we call *kamma*, which has the ability to give results when the circumstances are favorable. Actually, this energy itself is also changing with each moment, but there is continuous process. When conditions are met, it gives results.

Another Student: In the *Mahā-yāna* teachings, there is a consciousness called *ālaya-viññāṇa*. This has the seeds

of goodness, the seeds of evil, the seeds of memory. Everything is contained in that consciousness. In *Thera-vāda*, there is no *ālaya-viññāṇa*, is that right?

Teacher: There is no *ālaya-viññāṇa* taught in *Abhidhamma*. It may imply that there is something permanent, or something long-lasting.

Everything seems to be lasting. Right? This bell looks the same as it was yesterday. So, it seems to be lasting. However, in the ultimate reality, the particles or molecules in this bell are always changing. Therefore, in one sense it is permanent, because it looks the same as it was yesterday. In another sense or in the ultimate sense, it is impermanent because it is always changing.

Student: Something is still not clear about where those things are stored in a human person and given the right conditions they arise. Where are they stored?

Teacher: That is difficult to explain. In the books, it is said that it is in our continuity. That means the ongoing arising and disappearing of our mental states. I think that, when something dies, it imparts something to the successive mental state. So, the succeeding mental state gets the potential from the preceding mental state. This process continues and, when the conditions are met, the potential will give a result.

Student: Can I contribute something? This ball rolls and hits another ball. The first ball stopped, but the force makes the second ball roll. This force is similar to the potential from one mental state to another as mentioned above.

Teacher: There can be transference from one moment to another. The potential itself is changing, mental states are changing, but there is a continuous process like a fire that transfers from one candle to another. Fire itself is changing

all the time, but its process is ceaselessly going on and on. Preceding fire and succeeding one are neither the same, because both are changing continuously, nor different, because both belong to the same process. So, potential, like memory or kamma itself, is changing, the mental states are changing, but there is their continuous process. Thus, they can pop up when the right conditions are met.

Student: It seems to me that *kamma* is going along with us like a shadow goes with a man. And anytime in a lifetime or the next life, if the suitable conditions are met, they give results to that person.

Teacher: Yes. Maybe, it is not explained well by people like us. Actually, there are things that can be explained based on one's own experience or scientific evidence (*paccakkha-siddhi*). Sometimes, things have to be explained by thinking logically of their cause or effect (*ākappa-saddhī*). For example, gravitation was initially explained in view of its effect; i.e., things falling down onto the earth. Sometimes, we have to accept something by faith in someone of expertise (*saddheyya-siddhī*). For instance, we just follow the medical advice of our doctors just by faith in their expertise.

We can find some people are luckier than others. Some people are geniuses but not others. People have different talents, different aptitudes and different luck, even if they were identical twins raised in the same environment. Moreover, golden opportunities for one's success in life have little to do with one's effort and education. By thinking logically of these effects, we can draw a conclusion that there must be *kamma* behind our differences. Or, we can accept it by faith in the Buddha who is of a unique personality and highly-developed spiritual power. Things like kamma and memory are things that can be explained by logical thinking



or by faith in the Buddha, but not in molecular terms.

Student: The Buddha said *kamma* is one of the four incomprehensible things.

Teacher: That's right. It's *acinteyya*, something unthinkable or incomprehensible, or something beyond our understanding.

Student: Regarding the mental factors, there is a category called "the particulars." Why are they so called?

Teacher: The first seven mental factors arise with every type of consciousness. The second six arise only with particular types of consciousness, not with all types of consciousness. That is why they are called "particulars" (*pakiṇṇaka*). For example, number six (*vitakka*) arises with only fifty-five types of consciousness out of 121. And number seven (*vicāra*) arises with only sixty-six types of consciousness out of 121. So, they only arise with particular types of consciousness, but not with all types of consciousness. That is why in Pāli they are called "*pakiṇṇaka*" (particulars).

The mental factors from number one through eleven plus feeling and perception are called "Common to Others" (*añña-samāna*), since they go along with all kinds of consciousness. They can go along with the wholesome consciousnesses (*kusala*), or unwholesome ones (*akusala*), or resultant consciousness (*vipāka*), or functional consciousness (*kriya*). The third group (of unwholesome mental factors) goes along only with the unwholesome. Then, the beautiful twenty-five only arise with the wholesome, resultant, and functional consciousnesses (*kusala, vipāka, kriya*<sup>1</sup>), but never with the unwholesome.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kusala and kriya are actually wholesome mental states that are involved in wholesome deeds, like acts of generosity (dāna), morality (sīla), and spiritual development (bhāvanā). They are called kriya if they belong to an arahat, and kusala if to others. The reason is an arahat has no more rebirth for his deeds to give results.*

Student: Among the causes of material properties, there is consciousness. So, some material properties can be caused by consciousness. It implies that if we have good consciousness, then maybe our body will change. Is it possible for some people to get their chronic diseases cured by meditation practice?

Teacher: Yes. I often explain that way, healing during meditation. Good consciousness, happy consciousness, consciousness that is free from mental defilements, can produce good material properties. Bad consciousness can produce bad material properties. What we call disease is just the bad material properties. So, when you practice meditation, most of the time your mind is free from mental defilements. Your mind is mostly pure. So, the material properties it produces will be healthy ones. These healthy material properties multiply when there is meditation for a long time. Then, they can fight against the diseased material properties or the bad material properties in the body. Sometimes they win and sometimes they do not. When they win, there is what we call healing. I think healing is possible. Healing does occur during meditation.

## **THE AGGREGATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

In the previous chapter, we discussed the fourth aggregate, the aggregate of mental formations. Now, we will deal with the fifth aggregate, the aggregate of consciousness (*Viññana-kkhandha*). As you know, it includes 89 or 121 types of consciousness.

### **What Consciousness Means**

Before we go into that, let me explain what consciousness

is. When studying things like this, we must not rely on English translations. We must always look at the original Pāli words and try to understand them properly. Then later we can use any translation for convenience.

Here, consciousness is the translation of the Pāli word, *viññāṇa*. The other Pāli word for consciousness is *citta*. So, in Pāli, these two words, *citta* and *viññāṇa*, are synonyms. They mean the same thing. *Citta* is defined as that which is aware of the object. Awareness here is just the pure awareness of the object. It is not like the awareness in the practice of meditation. In meditation practice, we use the word “awareness” that is more like mindfulness. So, here *citta* and *viññāṇa* are the pure awareness of the object.

## The Chief Aggregate

Among the five aggregates, the first one is material aggregate, and the rest are all mental aggregates. So, the five aggregates consist of one material aggregate and four mental aggregates. Out of the four mental aggregates, the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇa-kkhandha*) is said to be the foremost or the chief of the other three mental aggregates, viz., the aggregate of feeling (*vedana-kkhandha*), the aggregate of perception (*saññā-kkhandha*), and the aggregate of mental formation (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*). These three aggregates cannot arise if there is no aggregate of consciousness. That is why the aggregate of consciousness, or just consciousness, is said to be the foremost of the mental states. In other words, if you are not aware of the object, how can there be feeling, making mark of the object, understanding the object, and so on?

This kind of awareness is always with us as long as we are alive, even when we are fast asleep or have fainted in

an accident or something like that. So, now you see the English translation of consciousness is not exact or it cannot cover all that is connoted by *viññāṇa* or *citta*. But we cannot find a better word. Therefore, we have to use this word “consciousness” to mean *viññāṇa* or *citta*. So, whenever I use the word “consciousness,” please understand it in the sense explained here, namely the awareness of the object.

Consciousness is considered an aggregate, because it can be of the past, present, future, or internal and external, or as lowly and lofty, or as far and near. In terms of awareness of the object, the consciousness is only one but, due to the mental factors arising simultaneously with it, it is divided into 89 or 121 types.

## **Six Groups of Consciousness**

We will divide consciousness into broad divisions. Then we will go into more detail later. Now, just remember 89 or 121 kinds of consciousness in six groups:

1. Twelve unwholesome consciousnesses
2. Eighteen rootless consciousnesses
3. Twenty-four sense-sphere beautiful consciousnesses
4. Fifteen form-sphere consciousnesses
5. Twelve formless sphere consciousnesses
6. Eight or forty supra-mundane consciousnesses

### **1. Twelve Unwholesome Consciousnesses**

Now, the first group consists of the twelve unwholesome consciousnesses. Consciousness by itself is colorless; it's just the pure awareness of the object, not considered wholesome or unwholesome. But it becomes unwholesome when it is associated with unwholesome mental factors,

such as greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), lack of moral shame (*ahīrika*), lack of moral fear (*anottappa*), and so on. Basically, we have three kinds of unwholesome consciousness: greed-led, aversion-led, and delusion-led.

The greed-led consciousness is classified into eight, based on whether it is associated with wrong-view or not, whether it is accompanied by pleasant feeling or neutral feeling, and whether it is unprompted or prompted<sup>2</sup>. There is this greed-led consciousness when we are greedy for or attached to something or somebody. Let us say, you are eating your food. You are enjoying and like it very much. You want to eat, and eat, and eat until you cannot eat anymore. So, you are greedy while eating. Greedy consciousness is unwholesome.

The aversion-led consciousness is of two kinds, depending on whether unprompted or prompted. Sometimes, there may be something you don't like in the food, for example. It may be too salty, or no salt at all, or too much pepper. And you are upset. Then, there is consciousness with aversion or anger. That is also unwholesome consciousness.

Delusion-led consciousness is of two kinds: associated with restlessness and regret and associated with doubt or confusion. These mental factors have been explained before.

## 2. Eighteen Rootless Consciousnesses

The second group consists of eighteen rootless consciousnesses as follows:

- Five pairs of sense-consciousness (seeing, hearing,

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<sup>2</sup> *Consciousness is called "unprompted" (a-sankharika) when it comes into existence without prompted by anybody. Opposite of it is "prompted" (sa-sankharika). Greed-led mind, for instance, will take place when we find something desirable. On the other hand, it can be prompted by someone telling us how desirable an object is.*

smelling, tasting, and touching) (10),

- Their preceding (Five-sense-door Adverting Consciousness) (1),  
and succeeding ones (Accepting Consciousness (2), Investigating Consciousness (3)),
- Mind-door Adverting Consciousness (1),
- Smiling Consciousness (1).

The sense-consciousnesses are related to our kamma. So, seeing something desirable or undesirable is attributed to wholesome and unwholesome kammās, respectively. So, sense-consciousnesses, such as seeing, hearing, etc., are kammic results, but not considered to be wholesome or unwholesome.

Suppose, for example, we see something beautiful or pleasant. There is seeing consciousness that is considered as the result of our good *kamma*. So, it is our good *kamma* that creates a condition for us to see a beautiful thing here. When you see something ugly or unpleasant, there is seeing consciousness that is considered as the result of our bad *kamma*. The same is true for hearing consciousness, smelling consciousness, tasting consciousness and touching consciousness. Thus, there are five pairs of them: two seeing consciousnesses, two hearing consciousnesses, two smelling consciousnesses, two tasting consciousnesses, and two touching consciousnesses.

At the moment of seeing, we do not know whether we are seeing a man or a woman, or a rose or whatsoever. There is just seeing a visible object. After that moment, there comes another moment of consciousness of accepting the object, as when you accept something given to you. That is called

Accepting Consciousness or Receiving Consciousness (*sampañicchana citta*). After receiving the object, we investigate the object, whether it is a desirable object or undesirable. This is Investigating Consciousness. Thus, there are seven unwholesome resultant consciousnesses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, accepting and investigating. On the other hand, as a result of wholesome *kamma*, pleasant objects are experienced through our successive consciousnesses: Sense-consciousness (seeing, hearing, etc.), Accepting Consciousness, and Investigating Consciousness. In this case, there are two Investigating Consciousnesses: one accompanied by pleasurable feeling and another by neutral feeling. Altogether, there are eight kinds of rootless consciousness here that are the results of wholesome *kamma*.

Five-sense-door-adverting Consciousness: When an object impinges on its corresponding sense, the mind turns toward the object. I mean the mind gets out of its subconscious state (life-continuum, *bhavaṅga*) and turns toward the object. This mind-unit of turning toward the object is called Five-sense-door-adverting. "Adverting" here means turning; i.e., turning toward the object. So, there arises Five-sense-door-adverting Consciousness when the sense-objects come into their corresponding sense-doors.

Mind-door-adverting Consciousness: Five senses are known to most of us. In *Abhidhamma*, however, there are six sense-doors including the mind-door (that refers to subconsciousness). Through the first five sense-doors, we can only experience something present. When I think of something of the past, say, of the orchid I saw yesterday, the memory of that orchid comes back to me through the mind-door but not through the five sense-doors. In this case, my mind gets out of its subconscious state and turns toward

the image of the orchid. This turning moment of mind-unit is called Mind-door-adverting. This Mind-door-adverting Consciousness does two functions: the function of turning towards the mind-object and the function of determining whether the object is pleasant or unpleasant.

Smiling Consciousness: There is one more rootless consciousness called "Smile-producing Consciousness" (*hasituppāda*). This consciousness is unique to *arahants*. This Smile-producing and above-mentioned Five-sense-door-adverting and Mind-door-adverting are not considered to be wholesome, unwholesome or resultant. They belong to a different category called "functional" (*kriyā*).

### 3. Twenty-four Beautiful Consciousnesses of Sense-sphere

All the living beings on earth and celestial beings on six *deva* realms belong to the sense-sphere; i.e., the domain of the sensual pleasure (*kāmāvacara*). So, the consciousnesses that bring us the wholesome sensual pleasure<sup>3</sup> are called "beautiful consciousnesses of sense-sphere" (*kāmāvacara-sobhana-citta*). They are twenty-four in number: eight wholesome ones, eight resultant ones and eight functional ones.

The first eight are the eight beautiful wholesome ones. Consciousness is considered to be wholesome when it is associated with wholesome mental factors, such as unselfishness, loving-kindness, compassion, understanding, rightful faith, mental effort, mindfulness,

<sup>3</sup> Here, "sensual pleasure" means the pleasure or happiness that are generated by sense-objects. It can be wholesome or unwholesome. For instance, there arises wholesome pleasure when we enjoy objects that are related to good deeds, whereas unwholesome pleasure to bad deeds. Both are generated by sense-objects and, therefore, are called sensual pleasures.



concentration, and so on.

When we pay homage to the Buddha, for instance, there is wholesome consciousness. We have faith and confidence in the Buddha and his qualities. Faith or confidence belongs to the beautiful group (*sobhana*). There are many other beautiful mental factors involved in it like mindfulness when we recollect his qualities, and like wisdom when we understand them. Being associated with such wholesome mental factors, the consciousness is wholesome.

Another example, when we make donations, the most predominant mental factors involved in it are non-attachment or unselfishness (*alobha*) and loving kindness (*adosa*). If we are attached to our wealth, we will become very selfish, and we won't share our belonging with anybody. We won't give something to someone if we hate him or her. So, when you make donations, there are many beautiful mental factors involved, such as unselfishness, loving-kindness and so on. Associated with such wholesome mental factors, the consciousness is called wholesome.

We develop loving-kindness. When we are doing loving-kindness meditation, the most prominent mental factor in our mind is non-hatred (*adosa*). The *Pāḷi* words *adosa* and *metta* are the same for indicating this non-hatred mental state. Accompanied by such beautiful mental factors as loving-kindness, the consciousness at that moment is called wholesome consciousness.

When we practice mindfulness meditation, the prominent mental factor in our mind is mindfulness (*sati*). Along with mindfulness, there are wholesome mental factors such as concentration, wisdom, mental effort. So, in practicing meditation our consciousness is wholesome.

Sometimes we are meditating and somebody makes

a noise. And we are upset. Our thoughts may be: who is making noise? I am meditating here. I need quietness. Then, your consciousness, being accompanied by upset, would be unwholesome. So, even during meditation, unwholesome consciousness can come to you. You have to be very careful. After a while, you may remember: I am meditating. I must make notes. So you note, “angry, angry, angry.” Then, there arises wholesome consciousness thanks to the mindfulness. Our consciousnesses may become wholesome at one moment and unwholesome at the next in a rapid succession. Even during the meditation practice, there are times when our consciousnesses become unwholesome. That is why I always say, “when we are meditating, our minds are mostly pure.” I said “mostly” because sometimes there can be unwholesomeness in our minds.

So, regarding the eight beautiful wholesome consciousnesses, when we do wholesome deeds like giving, observance of the moral precepts, or practice meditation..., our consciousness is led by beautiful mental factors such as faith (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*satī*), moral conscience (*hīri-ottappa*), unselfishness (*alobha*) loving kindness (*adosa*), wisdom (*amoha*), and so on. That is why this consciousness is called “beautiful.” It is classified into eight depending on whether it is accompanied by pleasant or neutral feeling, whether it is led by wisdom or not, and whether it is unprompted or prompted.

The second eight are “Beautiful Resultant Consciousnesses.” They are direct results from the previous life’s eight wholesome consciousnesses of good deeds such as generosity, morality, etc. They represent the in-born minds of human and six deities<sup>4</sup>. They stand for the birth consciousness (*paṭisandhi*), or the first consciousness

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<sup>4</sup> *Deities from six celestial realms among the 31 realms.*

in our lives, sub-consciousness (*bhavaṅga*) throughout our lives, and the last or death consciousness (*cuti*) in the end. Birth consciousness signifies a new life. Sub-consciousnesses are like hosts in our lives because they maintain our lives. Without it, life would stop. They are always with us whenever there is no active consciousness in us, as when are asleep or unconscious. So, they are the consciousnesses that signify who we are, or what personalities we have. Death consciousness is the last consciousness of a life<sup>5</sup>.

The third eight are “Beautiful Functional Consciousnesses” that only belong to *arahats* (fully-enlightened persons). Of course, *arahants* do perform wholesome deeds, like an act of generosity, observance of moral precepts, etc., but their beautiful consciousnesses are called “functional,” because their wholesome deeds have no chance to bring result to them since they have no more rebirths.

Thus, there are twenty-four kinds of Beautiful Consciousness that belong to Sense-sphere.

#### **4. Fifteen Beautiful Consciousnesses of Form-sphere**

The fourth group is the group of the fifteen kinds of beautiful consciousness that belong to Form-sphere. They are fifteen in number: five wholesome, five resultant, and five functional.

There are certain kinds of celestial beings called “*brahmā*.” They are those who develop *jhānic* concentration

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to these eight resultant consciousnesses, there are eight rootless resultant consciousnesses, which are brought about by the same eight wholesome consciousnesses. They include seeing consciousness, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, receiving consciousness, and two investigating consciousnesses. This means eight wholesome consciousnesses create fortunate chances for us to see pleasant sights, to hear pleasant sounds, and so on.

and are reborn in certain kinds of celestial realms. When the mind is developed with high-level concentration, called *jhāna*, it is destined for those celestial realms called form-sphere. The realms are so called because celestial beings there have body forms in comparison with “formless” *brahmas*, *brahmas* without body forms. This form-sphere consciousness is classified into five kinds, according to its progressive levels of concentration that are accompanied by corresponding *jhānic* factors.

Procedure of *Jhāna*: In order to develop *jhāna*, we have to concentrate our minds on certain kinds of meditative objects, like breath, earth-disk and so on. These meditative objects are called workable forms of the object (*parikamma-nimitta*), as a meditator has to work on it to develop the powerful concentration up to certain stages. When the concentration gets strong, the object becomes so vivid that we can visualize it without watching it. This is called the visualized form of the object (*uggaha-nimitta*). When the concentration becomes even stronger, the meditative object transforms from its actual form into something identical, somewhat like a three-dimensional image of the actual object. This is the identical form of the object (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*).

1. By paying and sustaining full attention to this identical form of the meditative object, there arises the powerful concentration along with ecstasy and happiness. Such powerful concentration is known as the first *jhāna* that constitutes five *jhānic* factors: initial attention (*vitakka*), sustained attention (*vicāra*), ecstasy (*pīṭi*), happiness (*sukha*), and concentration (*ekaggatā*).
2. When concentration quite matures, we can easily sustain our attention to the meditative object without paying initial attention to the object. So, the second

*jhāna* is devoid of the initial attention.

3. At the third stage, concentration becomes strong enough to focus on the object without applying two kinds of attention. Thus, the third has only three factors: ecstasy, happiness, and concentration.
4. At the fourth stage, the concentration becomes even stronger and is no longer accompanied by ecstasy. So, the fourth has only two factors: happiness and concentration.
5. At the fifth and highest stage, the concentration reaches its peak and the mind is so tranquil that the happiness is replaced with tranquility. Thus, the fifth has only two factors: tranquility and concentration.

The second five form-sphere consciousnesses are resultants of their corresponding *jhāna* in the next life, and the last five are known as “functional” as they belong to an *arahant*<sup>6</sup>. Thus, there are fifteen kinds of Form-sphere Consciousnesses.

## 5. Twelve Formless Sphere Consciousnesses

The fifth group constitutes the twelve kinds of consciousnesses that belong to the Formless Sphere. Among them the first four are wholesome, the second four are resultants, and the last four are functional. There are certain kinds of *brahmās* who have only mind but no physical body. Those who make further development of the fifth form-sphere *jhāna* mentioned above are reborn in the certain Brahma spheres called Formless Spheres. The *brahmas* there have no physical body, but limited kinds of mental states only. This formless-sphere consciousness

<sup>6</sup> “Functional” means they only function their jhanic works, but do not bring about their corresponding resultant consciousness since Arahants have no more rebirths after death.

(*arūpa-jhāna citta*) is classified into four according to their progressive levels of concentration and corresponding meditative objects.

Four *Jhānas* of Formless Sphere are as follows:

1. To develop the first Formless *Jhāna*, you first focus on the identical form of the object mentioned above. When you get extremely absorbed in that object, you will find it becomes very shining and turns into a bright light. Then, you will it to expand until it covers the whole space. By focusing on this conceptualized form of space, the first stage of Formless *Jhāna* is developed.
2. To develop the second Formless *Jhāna*, you focus on the mental state of the first formless *jhāna* itself by willing it to be “Infinite Consciousness.”
3. To develop the third, you focus on the first Formless Consciousness again. This time you will it to turn into emptiness.
4. As for the fourth Formless *Jhāna*, you focus on your mental state of the third formless *jhāna* until the mental state becomes so refined that you can be said neither conscious nor unconscious.

Some people meditate on the mental state only. Although they don't develop the fifth form-sphere *jhāna*, there are times when they get so extremely absorbed in the mental state that they find the meditative object turn into somewhat like space, infinite consciousness, or emptiness.

## **6. Eight Supramundane Consciousnesses**

The sixth and last group constitutes of the eight supramundane consciousnesses. Among them, the first four

are wholesome and known as Path-consciousnesses, and the second four are resultant and known as Fruit-consciousnesses.

The word "Path" literally means a road that leads to somewhere. Here, Path refers to spiritual enlightenment that leads us to the liberation. Fruit is the direct result of the Path. Actually, the initial experience of the enlightenment is known as Path and the subsequent experience of it is Fruit. The enlightenment is of four stages depending on what extent the mental defilements are eradicated.

To develop the supramundane consciousness or, in other words, to attain the spiritual enlightenment that leads us to liberation, as you all know, we have to develop *Vipassanā* insights step by step by observing present phenomena such as physical phenomena, sensations, thoughts and senses that manifest in us moment by moment. If we can see them at the moment they arise, we can spontaneously see them disappear at the next moment, too. Thus, we can develop insights into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self until we become enlightened.

## Four Path Consciousnesses

1. *Sotāpatti-magga*: Here "*Sotāpatti*" literally means getting into the stream (of the enlightenment). At this stage, you mainly eradicate three fetters: self-illusion, skeptical doubt, and false notions of rites and rituals. In addition, your remaining defilements are no longer strong enough to break the five-precept and, therefore, you are no longer liable to be reborn in any woeful state.
2. *Sakadāgāmi-magga*: Here "*Sakadāgāmi*" literally means the once-returner. If you attain this stage,

you will weaken two more fetters; i.e., lust and anger, which bind you to the cycle of rebirth. And, you may return to this sense-sphere only one time, unless you become fully enlightened in this very life.

3. *Anāgāmi-magga*: “*Anāgāmi*” here means non-returner. If you attain this stage, you will never come back to this sense-sphere because you have eradicated two main fetters: sensual desire and aversion.
4. *Arahatta-magga*: “*Arahanta*” literally means the Worthy One, or the Killer of Disastrous Fetters. If you attain this stage, you become fully enlightened and will root out all the remaining five fetters: attachment to form-sphere, the attachment to formless-sphere, conceit, mental restlessness, and ignorance.

## Four Fruit Consciousnesses

These four Paths immediately lead to their corresponding Fruits, namely *sotāpatti-phala*, *sakadāgāmi-phala*, *anāgāmi-phala*, and *arahatta-phala*. As mentioned earlier, the Fruit Consciousnesses are actually the subsequent experience of Path enlightenments themselves.

## 121 Kinds of Consciousness

The right concentrations (*sammā-samādhi*) involved in the Path and Fruit enlightenments are of five stages, each in degree in the same manner as in the five Form-sphere *Jhanas*. The eight supramundane consciousnesses, therefore, are classified into five stages each, and become forty in number. Thus, there are 121 kinds of consciousness altogether.



As I have previously mentioned, I want you all to become well-informed Buddhists. So, I want you to understand the Five Aggregates, the Twelve Sense Bases, and so on. Each topic needs some lengthy lectures, however. So, please do not hope to understand everything in full detail. But, what we have covered so far, I believe, would be enough for you to build up the basic knowledge required to understand Buddha's teachings with regard to the five aggregates.

# **TWELVE SENSE-BASES**

## **and**

# **EIGHTEEN ELEMENTS**

I touched on the eighteen kinds of rootless consciousness (*ahetuka-citta*) in the previous chapter. I wish you could still remember them, because I need to refer to them when we come to the eighteen elements.

## **TWELVE SENSE-BASES**

There are twelve sense bases (*āyatana*): eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, visible form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and *dhamma*. These are called “sense-bases or bases” because, depending on them, consciousness takes place. So, they are called “bases of consciousnesses.”

1. Let's find out what eye base is. The eye base is the same as eye sensitivity. It refers to a certain kind of sensitive phenomena in a certain part of the eye. According to medical science, in the back of the eyeball there is a certain area called the retina. When the visible images strike there, certain kind of impulses take place and go through the nerves to the brain. The sensitive phenomena on that area of the eye should be taken as “eye sensitivity” or “eye base.”
2. The second one is ear base. Ear base means ear sensitivity. It is a certain kind of physical phenomena in a certain area in the ear, or in what we call the eardrum, where the sound strikes.

3. The third one is nose base or nose sensitivity. It refers to a certain kind of physical phenomena in the nose where smell is sensed.
4. Then there is tongue base or tongue sensitivity. It is a certain kind of sensitive phenomena in the tongue, or the taste buds in the tongue, where the taste is experienced.
5. And, the body base is body sensitivity. It is everywhere in the body, except the dry parts of body like the tips of the hair, the tips of the nails, and some parts of the skin as in calluses.
6. The sixth one is mind base, which refers to all 89 types of consciousness. This means one mind-moment serves as the base for another.
7. The number seven is form base. Form here just means the visible object that can be seen by the eyes. So, it is just the visible object.
8. Number eight is sound base. The noise or sound which you hear is called sound base.
9. Number nine is smell base. That is odor, smell.
10. Number ten is taste base. Sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, hot are called taste.
11. Number eleven is touch base. It is called tangibility in the list of physical phenomena. It refers to the phenomena that can be experienced by touching. You may remember that tangibility just means the three primary elements: earth (hardness or softness), fire (temperature), and air (pressure).
12. The last one is *dhamma* base. I have told you repeatedly that the word "*dhamma*" is very difficult

to translate. It means different things in different contexts. Here *dhamma* refers to the remaining phenomena from the above-mentioned list. So, Dhamma base includes all mental factors (*cetasika*), subtle material properties (*sukhuma-rūpa*) such as masculinity, femininity, and so on, and *Nibbāna*. These three are called dhamma base.

**Note:** Among these twelve bases, the first six are called internal, because they are found in living beings only. The others are called external.

### **Twelve Bases Compared to Five Aggregates:**

You can see that all of these twelve sense bases except *Nibbāna* (the part of the *dhamma* base) are included in the five aggregates.

The eye base, ear base, nose base, tongue base, and body base are all included in the aggregate of matter. The number six, or mind base, is aggregate of consciousness.

And then, visual object base, sound base, odor base, taste base and touch base also belong to the aggregate of matter. The last base, the *dhamma* base, covers four different aggregates: aggregate of matter, aggregate of feeling, aggregate of perception, and aggregate of mental formations. As mentioned above, *dhamma* here comprises the fifty-two mental factors (*cetasika*) and the certain kinds of material properties and *Nibbāna*. Among them, the material properties are included in the aggregate of matter, and the fifty-two mental factors get into three mental aggregates: feeling, perception, and mental formation. Hence, the *dhamma* base covers four aggregates.

## Same Thing with Different Names

Now you can see that the same thing is given different names. Eye sensitivity, for example, comes under two names: eye base and aggregate of matter. Later on, it will also be called the element of eye.

The Buddha would use the term “aggregate” for someone, and “sense-base” for another according to their spiritual background. The Buddha knew what terms would help you easily understand his teaching. That is why his teachings were very effective. People understood his teachings and practiced the *Dhamma* until enlightenment.

## EIGHTEEN ELEMENTS

Now, the next subject is “*dhātu*,” meaning elements. Literally, however, the Pāli word *dhātu* has many meanings. Here, it means something that holds its characteristic, or something that really exists in its own characteristic.

### Elements 1 – 10

Let us go to its classifications. There are eighteen kinds of elements most of which you’ve already been familiar with. The element of eye, element of ear, element of nose, element of tongue, element of body all belong to the aggregate of matter, and are the same, respectively, as eye-base, ear base, nose-base, tongue-base, and body-base. And there come the element of visible object, element of sound, element of smell, element of taste, element of touch. These are also the same, respectively, as form base, sound base, odor base, taste base, and touch base.

## Elements 11 – 15

Now, we come to something new, the element of eye consciousness. It is eye consciousness, not the eye (or eye sensitivity). This consciousness is included in the mind base (the sixth base). Eye consciousness is actually seeing consciousness that is here named as eye consciousness because it depends on the eye. When you see something, there is seeing consciousness. That seeing consciousness is what is here called the element of eye consciousness. So, the seeing consciousness itself is known by several names, such as eye consciousness, mind-base, and aggregate of consciousness.

Ear consciousness means hearing consciousness. You hear something and you have the hearing consciousness at that moment. Nose consciousness or smelling consciousness is the consciousness that depends upon the nose. Tongue consciousness or taste consciousness arises on the tongue. Body consciousness means touch consciousness. In the previous classifications, these consciousnesses are categorized as the aggregate of consciousness and the mind-base.

So far, you have learned five kinds of consciousness: seeing consciousness, hearing consciousness, smelling consciousness, tasting consciousness, and touching consciousness. They are divided each into two: one with pleasant objects and another with unpleasant. Seeing something pleasant is the result of good *kamma*. You did something good in the past and get in good conditions to see good things here. On the other hand, seeing something unpleasant is the result of bad *kamma*. So, when you see something unpleasant, whom would you blame? You have to blame yourself. It is your *kamma* that put you,

but not anybody else, in the condition to see something unpleasant. Most of the time, however, we find someone to blame. It is not difficult to understand this set of five types of consciousness.

## Element 16

Now, come two elements that are difficult to understand: the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*) and the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*).

When a visible object impinges on our eyes, we turn our attention to the object, and then we see the object. And we receive or pick up the object. And we investigate the object, whether it is good, or bad, or whatever. And we determine whether the object is desirable or undesirable. And then there comes the full experience of the object, which normally repeats seven moments. After these seven moments, there are two moments of after-taste. It is like you experience the taste of food for awhile after having swallowed it.

Thus, a seeing mental process normally involves fourteen mind-moments:

- Turning the attention to the object
- Seeing (hearing, etc.) the object
- Receiving the object
- Investigating the object
- Determining the object
- Seven moments of experiencing the object
- Two moments of after-taste.

Among these fourteen mind-moments, the turning

consciousness and receiving consciousness—which respectively precedes and succeeds the seeing (hearing, etc.) consciousness—are called the mind-element. The turning consciousness is only one, but receiving consciousness is of two types, one for desirable objects and another for undesirable ones. Altogether, there are three types of consciousness which are collectively called mind-element (*mano-dhātu*).

## Element 17

The mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) includes all types of consciousness, excluding ten sense-consciousness elements (two seeing consciousnesses, two hearing consciousnesses, two smelling consciousnesses, two tasting consciousnesses, and two touching consciousnesses) and three mind-elements (one turning consciousness and two receiving consciousnesses) mentioned above. So if we take away these thirteen types of consciousness out of 89, we can get only 76 types of consciousness, which are called “mind-consciousness-element”.

I hope you remember that, among the twelve sense-bases, the mind-base (*manāyatana*) is constituted of 89 types of consciousness. These 89 are now divided into the seven elements: five sense-consciousness elements, mind-element and mind-consciousness-element. So, the mind-base alone is divided into seven elements. In terms of aggregate, however, they all belong to the aggregate of consciousness.



## Element 18

Number eighteen is the element of *dhamma*. It is the same as the *dhamma*-base, the 12<sup>th</sup> sense-base. So both includes the same phenomena, namely all mental factors (*cetasika*), subtle material properties (*sukhuma-rūpa*) such as masculinity, femininity, and so on, and *Nibbāna*.

Now, you see that the teaching of aggregates is very brief. The teaching of sense bases is in a little more detail. The teaching of the eighteen elements is the widest.

### Only Elements, but Nobody

The elements from one to fifteen correspond to each other. For example, the eye element, visible object, and eye consciousness are interrelated. The same is true with the ear element, sound, and ear consciousness, and so on. So, whenever we see, hear, smell, and so on, the three elements always go together and interact. Other than these elements, there is no one who sees or hears... In other words, there is nobody other than these elements.

The eye consciousness or the seeing consciousness is not stored in the eye. It just arises; it just comes into existence when the eye and the visible object meet together. It comes up like a spark. So, we cannot say that the eye consciousness is stored in the eye or in the visible object. It is like when you strike a match. You cannot say that fire is stored in the match. If it were stored in the match, it would burn the match. When you strike these two together, you get the fire. Similarly, eye consciousness arises when the two conditions, eye and visible object, are met. So no consciousness is stored anywhere, but it just take place when conditions are met.

Now, let me ask you how many aggregates can you find in yourself? All five. How many bases? Let us check one by one. Eye base, do you have eye base? Yes. Ear base? Yes. Nose base? Yes. Tongue base? Yes. Body base? Yes. Mind base? Yes. Do you have visible object base? Yes. You can see yourself, right? So, yes. Sound base? Yes. Odor base? Yes. You can smell yourself. Taste base? Yes. Touch base? Yes. *Dhamma* base? Part of it, except *Nibbāna*. So we find all twelve bases in ourselves or in living beings. We are a bundle of five aggregates or twelve bases.

Let us go to the eighteen elements. Do we have the element of eye? Yes. Element of ear? Yes. Element of nose? Yes. Tongue? Yes. Body? Yes. Visible object? Yes. Sound? Yes. Odor? Yes. Taste? Yes. Touch? Yes. Eye consciousness? Yes, if we are not blind. Ear consciousness? Yes, if we are not deaf. Nose consciousness? Yes. Tongue consciousness? Yes. Body consciousness? Yes. Mind-element? Yes. Mind-consciousness-element? Yes. *Dhamma*-element? Part of it. So we have all eighteen elements in ourselves. Right? Very good. So we are a bundle of five aggregates, twelve bases, and eighteen elements. That is true for all living beings.

I will ask some more questions to make sure you understand this topic well. You see something. There is seeing consciousness. What aggregate does it belong to? It belongs to the fifth aggregate, the aggregate of consciousness. What base? Mind-base, the sixth base. What element? It is the eye consciousness element, the eleventh element. Right? Yes.

So just for an exercise let us go to the next one. I am talking. Mr. Luyen is translating. And you are listening. What consciousness is there in your mind? Hearing consciousness. What aggregate is it? The aggregate of

consciousness. What base? Mind base. What element? Element of ear consciousness. Right. Now you've got it. OK.

Now I will give you one more difficult question. Say, you are angry. Your mind is accompanied by anger. You have angry consciousness at this moment. What aggregate is it? The fifth aggregate of consciousness. What base? Mind base, yes. What element? Mind-consciousness-element. Right? Then, let us just pick up the anger alone. What aggregate is it? Students were saying "feeling." Do you agree? What is anger? What is anger among the fifty-two mental factors? *Dosa*, right? What is *dosa*? It is not feeling.

*Dosa* (anger, aversion, hatred, etc.) belongs to the fourth aggregate, the aggregate of mental formations. Among the 52 mental factors (*cetasikas*), feeling is the aggregate of feeling and perception is aggregate of perception. The other mental factors belong to the aggregate of mental formations. When you are angry, there is consciousness accompanied by anger. Consciousness itself is the fifth aggregate, but anger belongs to the fourth aggregate, the aggregate of mental formations. What about the base? What base? *Dhamma* base. The *dhamma* base consists of fifty-two *cetasikas*, sixteen subtle *rūpa* and *Nibbāna*. What about the element? It is the element of *dhamma*. Now, you can mostly identify them. Right?

Here is another example. You go to a restaurant and you order the food you like the best and you eat that food. When you like it, you eat with relish. You like it so much. What consciousness do you have? You have consciousness accompanied by attachment. Right? That consciousness belongs to what aggregate? The fifth aggregate, aggregate of consciousness. What base? The sixth, mind base. What element? Mind-consciousness-element. Then,

the attachment itself is what? The aggregate of mental formations. What base? *Dhamma* base. What element? Dhamma-element. Right.

You can memorize these eighteen elements right now, can you? Very easily. Right? If you remember the five senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body), then it would be easy to remember their corresponding objects (visible object, sound, smell, taste, touch) and the corresponding types of consciousness (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching). The only elements you may have difficulty with are mind-element and mind-consciousness-element. Mind-element includes two mind-moments: the turning consciousness and receiving consciousness. The other types of consciousness belong to the mind-consciousness-element. So, these eighteen elements you can remember quite easily.

If you can remember the eighteen elements, then the twelve bases are nothing. Right? The twelve bases become the eighteen elements, because mind base is here divided into seven consciousness elements. Right? Actually, although there are three categories, they are the same realities, the same things. So, one thing can be called by three names: aggregate, base, and element. Very good.

I want you to remember the Pāḷi terms, *khandha*, *āyatana*s, and *dhātu*s, at least these three terms.

## THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

If you want to be a well-informed Buddhist according to our ancient Commentaries, you should know the Five Aggregates, Twelve Bases, Eighteen Elements, Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, and also the Thirty-seven Members of Enlightenment. So far, we have learned the five aggregates, twelve bases, and eighteen elements. Today we come to the topic of the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths are the core topic in the Buddha's teachings. All the *Dhamma* that the Buddha taught during the forty-five years of his ministry can be summed up into the Four Noble Truths.

Once the Buddha said:

*“Not understanding, not realizing (the Four Noble Truths), I, as well as you, had to wander so long through this round of rebirths.”*

It may be strange to some people that there are Four Noble Truths in Buddhism and not just one truth. People always say there is only one truth and different teachers describe it in different ways. In the teachings of the Buddha, there are not one, but Four Noble Truths, which are as follows:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering,
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering,
3. The Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering,
4. The Noble Truth of the Path that Leads to the Extinction of Suffering.

## **Definition of Truth**

Truth in Buddhism does not necessarily mean something lofty or something good or wholesome. Whatever is true is called a truth in the teachings of the Buddha. If you look at the Second Noble Truth, the Origin of Suffering, you will find the attachment or craving. Right? Attachment or craving is unwholesome. It is an unwholesome mental factor, but a truth. Whatever is true is called truth in Buddhism. There are four truths, or Four Noble Truths, in the teachings of the Buddha.

They are called Noble Truths because they were discovered by the person who was the Noblest among the Noble; that is, the Buddha. Also, they are called Noble Truths because these truths are realized by the Noble Ones, or because these truths make you a Noble One when you realize them.

## **Discovery but Not Creation**

The Buddha discovered the Four Noble Truths by his own efforts without any teacher's help. You all know that the Buddha renounced the worldly life at the age of twenty-nine and spent six years practicing austerity without any spiritual accomplishment. Having learned a lot from the mistakes he had made during those six years, he finally discovered the Four Noble Truths and became the Buddha at that very moment.

I say "discovered" because the Four Noble Truths were not his creation. It is not that he made these Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are a universal law. Before our historical Buddha (*Gotama Buddha*), there were countless Buddhas in the countless universes. All the

Buddhas discovered the Four Noble Truths and taught them to people. When one Buddha died, his teachings eventually disappeared, the Four Noble Truths also disappeared for eons of world-cycles. For our universe, when our historical Buddha appeared, he also rediscovered the Four Noble Truths that had been hidden since the death of his preceding Buddha (*Kassapa Buddha*). He revealed the Four Noble Truths and taught them to the world. So, “the Four Noble Truths” are what the Buddha discovered, but not what he created.

## **An Analogy for Four Truths**

I would like to give you an analogy regarding these Four Noble Truths. Suppose there is a physician who examines a patient. After his examination, he comes up with a diagnosis that the patient has a certain disease. Since he is a good physician, he also knows the cause of the disease. This cause has to be treated, so that the disease itself is cured. (If a physician does not know the cause of the disease, he will not be able to treat that person.) So, there is freedom or escape from this disease. Then, the next thing is what to do to get rid of this disease. The physician compounded a medicine containing eight components and gave it to the patient. In summary, the physician knows the disease, its cause, and how to cure it with a certain medicine. With this analogy, I hope, you would get a general idea of the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is like a disease discovered by the physician. Buddha was a spiritual physician. When he examined the world, actually the world of living beings, he discovered that mind and body are suffering. And he found out that craving or attachment is the cause of suffering. This

discovery of the cause of suffering, or the Second Noble Truth, is very important because it made Buddhism unique among the religions of the world. In other religions, the cause of existence or the cause of everything is ascribed to the creation of a Brahma or the creation of a God. In Buddhism, the cause is traced to attachment, or craving, or thirst for existence. Then also he declared that there is the cessation of suffering. If there were no cessation of suffering, we would be very dejected and frustrated since we could not get out of this suffering. But the Buddha said there is the cessation of suffering; therefore, there is escape from suffering. He not only discovered the cessation of suffering, he also discovered the way or the path with eight components that leads to the cessation of suffering. It is popularly called the Noble Eightfold Path.

In his first sermon, the Buddha called this Path the Middle Way. The Middle Way and the Fourth Noble Truth are the same. The Buddha called it the Middle Way because this Path avoids two extremes: indulging in sensual pleasures on the one hand and practicing the self-mortification on the other. Actually, the Buddha himself had followed both these extremes before he became the Buddha. When he lived as a prince, he followed the first extreme, indulging in sensual pleasures. When he renounced the world and practiced austerities in the forest, he followed the second extreme. He practiced austerities until his body became very, very thin like a skeleton. Later on, he renounced that practice and discovered the Middle Way. It is not a mixture of these two extremes but different from them. It is called the Middle Way because it does not approach either of the two extremes. This is the Noble Eightfold Path. It is like medicine in the analogy.

The physician gives medicine to the patient but, if the



patient does not take the medicine, the disease will not be cured. You may have many medicines in a cabinet in the house but, if you don't take the medicine, you will not get rid of the cold, the fever, or whatever. You must take it if you have a fever so that you get the benefits of the medicine. In the same way, the medicine given here by the Buddha is the Noble Eightfold Path. It is not just for keeping or understanding. Only when we practice this Noble Eightfold Path, can we get benefits. The ultimate benefit of this practice is a total eradication of mental defilements or impurities in our mind. It is the cessation of all suffering. So, these are the Four Noble Truths first discovered by the Buddha and then taught to the world.

## **THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH**

### **Old Age**

Let us go into these Four Noble Truths in more detail. The First Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Let us consider life. We are getting old day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second. I don't think there is anybody who wants to get old. Right? We don't like getting old. When someone says, "You look young for your age," or something like that, you are happy. If someone says, "Oh, you have changed or you have become old," then we don't like it. Although we don't like it, we get older at every moment of our lives.

Some people say that you can stay young and there are medicines or exercises to keep you young. If you use the exercises and the medicines they sell, you may look

young. But what they don't tell you is that although you may look young, you are not really young. Even at the moment of taking that medicine or doing exercises, we are getting older. We are getting older day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second, and the process of getting old cannot be stopped.

When we get older, our senses become weaker. We have poor eyesight, we don't hear quite clearly as we did before. We become weak in many respects. These are the sufferings of old age. When we get old, younger people don't want to be with us. We will be left out of their doings, and so on. This is also the suffering of old age. The Buddha said: Old age is suffering. I think that can be easily accepted.

## **Sickness**

Then disease is suffering. Sickness is suffering. I don't have to tell you that disease is suffering. When you have a fever or a disease, you always suffer. Disease is suffering.

## **Death**

Death is suffering. Nobody wants to die, but one day we will have to face death. It will come to us sooner or later. It is very definite. There is no way of escaping death. We don't like to die, yet we have to die. We have to face death one day and that is suffering. So, death is suffering.

## **To Be with Someone We Hate**

Then sometimes we have to live with persons whom we don't like, whom we hate, whom we cannot get along with. Then, at that time we suffer. Sometimes we have to live in

a house we don't like. We have to drive an old car for years although we don't like it. So, we suffer because we have to be with something we don't like. That is suffering.

## **To Be Separated from Someone We Love**

And then, to be separated from those who are dear to us is also suffering. To be separated from things which we like is also suffering. Many people lose their houses, their cars or whatever and, when they lose them, they suffer. So, to be separated from the people or from things we love is also suffering.

## **Unfulfilled Wishes**

Then we want this thing or that thing. We want to have a good car, a good house, or a modern house; but, when we cannot get what we want, we suffer. Unfulfilled wishes are, therefore, suffering.

Also, we are subject to old age, disease, and death, but sometimes we wish: Oh, it would be very good if I were free from old age, disease, and death. But we can by no means get away from old age, disease, and death. So, our wish to live young forever can never be fulfilled. However much we wish, however much we pray, we will never be free from old age, disease, and death. The wish that cannot be fulfilled makes us suffer.

## **Suffering in Brief**

According to the Buddha, everything in the world is suffering. But you may want to say: Sometimes we enjoy life, like good food, companionship, movie, vacation...

and we are happy at that time. Right? So, there can be some happiness in life and, therefore, it may not be easy to accept that life is suffering. According to the Buddha, what we call “happiness” is, in the ultimate analysis, also suffering. In order to let us know that everything in the world, including what we call “happiness,” is suffering, the Buddha gave us another explanation of suffering: “In brief, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are suffering.”

Five aggregates are the aggregate of matter, aggregate of feeling, aggregate of perception, aggregate of mental formations, and aggregate of consciousness. Among them, the first aggregate is matter and the remaining four belong to the mind. So, “the five aggregates” mean mind and matter. However, eight supramundane consciousnesses and their concomitant mental factors are not taken here as suffering because they are not something we can cling to or be attached to. Clinging (or attachment) is the main source of suffering. So, suffering means the Five Aggregates of Clinging that includes eighty-one mundane consciousnesses and their concomitant mental states and all physical phenomena that we have in our life. We are composed of these mind and matter, so we are suffering.

## **Criteria for Suffering**

In order to understand this, we must understand the Buddha’s explanation of what *dukkha* is, or what suffering is. When we hear “suffering,” we understand it to mean some pain in our body or some pain in our mind. That is what we understand as suffering. When the Buddha used the word “suffering” (or the original word *dukkha*), he meant not just painfulness but also something more. His explanation of suffering is: Whatever is impermanent is suffering. It is

his criteria for suffering. So, whatever is impermanent is suffering. Is there anything that is permanent in the world? Of course not. Our mind? No. Our body? No. What about the houses? They may seem to last for some time. Right? They seem to last for twenty years, thirty years but, actually every particle in the house, in the parts of the house, are always changing. So, they are also impermanent although they seem permanent to us.

However, when we speak about the Noble Truth of Suffering, we are concerned with living beings only, not non-living things like cars, houses, trees, and so on because attachment or clinging, which is the cause of "suffering," is concerned with only the psycho-physical process of a living being, but not with non-living things. In an ultimate sense, therefore, suffering is nothing but our psycho-physical compounds, which are generated by attachment and subject to impermanence.

One meaning of *dukkha* is to be tormented by arising and disappearing. Everything is arising and disappearing or has a beginning and an end. And the torment by arising and disappearing is called *dukkha* or suffering. So, according to this definition, everything pertaining to living beings is suffering since it is tormented by arising and disappearing. In other words, it is suffering in the sense of unsatisfactoriness. We want ourselves to be permanent and live forever, but we cannot be permanent. So, our minds and bodies are not satisfactory to us. That unsatisfactoriness is another meaning of "*dukkha*," which is popularly translated as suffering.

There is happiness when we enjoy good food, good companionship, and so on. Although it is called "happiness," it is also suffering in the ultimate sense, because it is tormented by arising and disappearing.

## THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH

### The Cause of Suffering

The Buddha discovered attachment to be the cause of suffering. And this is the Second Noble Truth.

Our lives are suffering. What is the cause of our lives? What is the cause of our suffering? We are born as human beings. So, as human beings, we suffer a lot. We suffer by old age, disease, and death. And also we suffer by unfulfilled wishes, and so on. We have all kinds of suffering since we were born as human beings. So, birth itself is suffering. When birth is suffering, then the whole life is suffering. What is the cause of birth as a living being, human, animal, or celestial being?

Buddha said that the cause of birth as beings is craving or attachment. That is because we have very strong attachment to our lives. This attachment makes us do things. I mean, we perform actions or *kammas*. Sometimes they are good, sometimes bad. Once we perform *kamma*, we cannot avoid the results of *kamma*. Some *kamma* gives results in this life. Some *kamma* gives results in other lives. As a result of the *kamma* we performed in our past lives, we are reborn here as human beings. And those *kammas* are conditioned by what is called "attachment" or "craving." If we do not attach to anything at all or, in other words, if we have eradicated all mental defilements including attachment or craving, we will not acquire any fresh *kamma*.

Attachment or craving is not actually the only cause. It is always accompanied by what is called ignorance, not knowing things as they are. In fact, ignorance and craving are the basic causes for suffering. But, in this discourse on the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha picked only craving as

the cause of suffering. But when craving is taken, ignorance also has to be taken. That is because they always arise together. Craving does not arise without ignorance. So, when we take craving, we also take ignorance. These two mental states, ignorance and craving, are the two real culprits for our suffering in life.

So, Buddha discovered that suffering is caused by craving. The pāḷi word used is *taṇhā*. The literal meaning of *taṇhā* is thirst. When you are thirsty, you cannot help but drink. Right? You have to drink water. When there is the thirst for life, then we do deeds - sometimes good deeds, sometimes bad deeds - in order to get good lives in the future. When there are deeds or when there are actions, there are always reactions. Those reactions affect this life, as well as future lives.

It may not be easy to accept that craving is the origin of suffering or the origin of rebirth as a living being. That is because we cannot really see, truly see, that craving is the cause of suffering, the cause of rebirth.

If we want to see that, we have to practice meditation. We have to get a very high quality of concentration, so that we can see beings dying in one existence and being reborn in another, like Buddhas and Arahants see. They see beings dying from one existence and being reborn in another existence, like seeing something on a (movie) screen. They have direct knowledge of cause and effect. They see suffering as the effect, and craving as the cause.

## **How Can Attachment Be the Cause of Suffering?**

In another way, it is not too difficult to see that suffering is caused by craving. We can see that. There was news of a plane crash in Europe. More than a hundred people

died in that crash. Did we suffer when we heard the news? Maybe just a little - Oh, poor people, or something like that. Right? If one of those killed was our friend, we would have more suffering. If one of those killed were our relative, like brother, sister, father or mother, we would suffer a lot. Right? So, suffering is not actually caused by the death of those people, but by the attachment to them. If suffering is caused by death, then we have to suffer every time we hear that a person dies. So, the intensity of our suffering is determined by the intensity of our attachment.

Another example, it may be a little sentimental. Let us say you have a girlfriend or a boyfriend. Let us say your girlfriend or boyfriend gives you a present on your birthday. You may have the same thing given to you by your parents or whomever. Those two things, although they are identical, you have more attachment to the gift given by your girlfriend or boyfriend. Right? We have to admit it. So, if that thing is taken from you, you suffer a lot because that is given by your sweetheart. You put much sentimental value on it. In other words, you have more attachment to it than to the other thing. So your suffering is not caused by the mere loss of the thing. Actually it was caused by your attachment to that thing. So, in the ultimate analysis, the cause of suffering is attachment.

If you have little attachment, you have little suffering. If you have no attachment at all, you have no suffering at all. So, the cause of suffering is not the loss of persons, not the loss of things, but the attachment to those persons or things. Therefore, the Buddha said that the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering is just thirst for life, the attachment to life, or just craving.



## THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH

Now, the Third Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. When the Buddha described this Third Noble Truth, he said: Total cessation of that very craving is the cessation of suffering. Please listen carefully. Buddha explained the Third Noble Truth, which is the Cessation of Suffering, as the cessation of craving. So, Buddha said cessation of craving equals cessation of suffering.

Why did Buddha say like that? He should say the cessation of mind and matter or the cessation of the five aggregates is the Third Noble Truth. But he said the cessation of craving is the cessation of suffering. That is, because you have to deal with the cause in order to get rid of the effect, the result. When craving is eradicated or destroyed, then its result is automatically eliminated. That is why the Buddha described the Third Noble Truth as the total cessation or total disappearance of craving.

### No Word to Describe Nibbāna

The Third Noble Truth is popularly known to us as what? *Nibbāna*. The Third Noble Truth is actually *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is the cessation of all suffering. *Nibbāna* is very, very difficult even to describe, to explain because it defies all explanations. We live in this conventional world and the words we use for communication with each other are conventional. *Nibbāna* is beyond convention. So, we cannot adequately describe *Nibbāna*. We have no words to describe it. If I say *Nibbāna* is something that is free from suffering, what is that "something?" It must have a beginning and an end. If I say it is where there is no suffering, I am implying *Nibbāna* is a place, then it has to

have a beginning and an end. It is kinds of contradiction in terms. So, *Nibbāna* is very difficult to understand, to explain, or to realize.

In many of the discourses, *Nibbāna* is described as — again I have to use the word “something” — something by which mental defilements come to cessation. *Nibbāna* is something taken as an object by the mind (Path and Fruition) that eradicates mental defilements. It is very difficult to explain. Just say *Nibbāna* is the cessation of mental defilements or the eradication of mental defilements and the cessation of all suffering.

We can achieve the cessation of mental defilements in this life if we really have enough *pārami* accumulated all the way from the previous lives. When a person becomes an *Arahant* or a *Buddha*, his mind becomes totally pure. His mind becomes totally free from mental defilements. “Totally free” means these mental defilements will never arise in their minds again. That is one kind of *Nibbāna*. It is called *Nibbāna* of mental defilements, cessation of mental defilements. “Cessation” really means not arising again of mental defilements.

## **Eradication of Defilement**

We always speak of cessation of mental defilements or eradication of mental defilements. Actually, we cannot destroy mental defilements, but we can make them not arise again. These two things are very different. When mental defilements are in our mind, they are already there, and so we cannot destroy them. We must do something so that they do not arise again in us.

For example, there is a tree with fruits. If we don't want fruits on the tree, we cannot just pick the fruits because the

tree will give fruits again. If we want it not to give fruits, we can treat it with some chemicals. Although it does not die, it will not give fruits. So, we do not actually destroy the fruit, but we destroy the potential of the tree to give fruits. And there is non-arising of fruit.

In the same way, when we say a person eradicates mental defilements, we mean that he cannot eradicate the mental defilements already arisen in his mind. All he can do is to make them unable to arise again in his mind. That is what we call eradication of mental defilements. Eradication of mental defilements is one aspect of *Nibbāna*.

## **Cessation of Suffering**

The other aspect of *Nibbāna* is cessation of all suffering. That means the total disappearance of mind and body altogether. There is no more mind again, no more body again. That is what is called the cessation of all suffering.

We are so attached to our lives, to our existences. We always think in terms of existence. But *Nibbāna* is not existence. *Nibbāna* is the absence of all mind and matter. If somebody were to say: *Nibbāna* is the total extinction of mind and body, we might not like it. That is because we are always attached to our minds and bodies. We think in terms of existence. We may still want to be ourselves, want to cling to our existences as beings or as celestial beings. So we may not like *Nibbāna* at all. Therefore, *Nibbāna* is difficult to explain, difficult to understand, difficult to realize, and is difficult to like.

This is the Third Noble Truth. This Noble Truth is like the cure of the disease.

## **THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH**

The Fourth Noble Truth is the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. What is it? It is the Noble Eightfold Path. It is the path or the practice which has eight components. And you've already known the eight components. For those who do not remember, let's repeat. The first one is Right Understanding. The second is Right Thought or Right Thinking. The third is Right Speech. The fourth is Right Action. The fifth is Right Livelihood. The sixth is Right Effort. The seventh is Right Mindfulness. The eighth is Right Concentration. These are the eight components which are contained in this Noble Path. I have no time to explain them in details one by one.

All these components are mental factors or mental states. When we invoke these mental states in our minds, when we make them arise in our minds, we are following this Path, we are practicing this Path. When we are thinking of something we want to possess, then these Path mental states are not in our mind. Instead, there is attachment and there may be jealousy or envy or other unwholesome mental states in our mind. At such times, there is not even one of these Path factors in our mind. So at such times, we are not practicing the Path, not following the Path. Only when these are in our mind are we practicing, following this Path. Now, you can imagine how much time you spend without the Noble Eightfold Path and how much time with the Noble Eightfold Path. Or, in other words, how much time you follow the Noble Path, and how much time you do not follow the Noble Path.

### **Five Working Factors**

When we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, we are

following this Path. All these eight components are present in our mind when we practice. So, the best way to follow the Fourth Truth or the Noble Eightfold Path is to practice *Vipassanā* meditation.

When you practice *Vipassanā* meditation, you are instructed to be mindful of whatever is present at the present moment, to be mindful of your breath, or abdomen, thoughts, emotions, sensations, and so on. You make an effort to be mindful, that is Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*). Then, your mind seems as if it were to hit the object. Actually, the object is there and you pay attention to it. When your mind pays close attention, it hits the object. That is Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). You then have mindfulness of the object. You make effort and you have mindfulness. When mindfulness is good, you have concentration, too. Your mind can stay on the object for longer period of time. That is Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). When your mind is concentrated, you see the thing clearly, you see the object as it is. You see the object arise and disappear. That is Right Understanding (*sammā-ditṭhi*).

For example, you have one thought. You pay attention to the thought. Then it disappears. Then, there may be another thought. And you are aware of that thought. That thought also disappears. So, if you really pay attention, you will not fail to see that the thoughts just come and go. They just arise and disappear. Seeing them come and go means seeing them to be impermanent, unsatisfactory, and insubstantial at the same time. It is what we call Right Understanding. Right Understanding means understanding the true nature of things, understanding things as impermanent, suffering, and soulless through direct experience. It is not just thinking about them, or just reading about them, or just listening to a talk about them. It is by seeing them through self-

experience during *Vipassanā* meditation practice.

There are Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, and Right Understanding. Now, what is Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*)? "Right Thought" really means a mental factor that takes the mind to the object. There are different mental factors arising at the same moment. Each has its own function. This mental factor has the function of taking the mind to the object. If it doesn't take the mind to the object, there can be no mindfulness, no concentration and also no wisdom or understanding. That mental factor is what is called Right Thought. That does not mean thinking rightly about something. It is just a mental factor that has the function to take the mind to the object.

This mental factor is compared to a city man who takes some country folk to the mayor of the city. Without the city man, the country folk do not know how to go and meet the mayor. Similarly, without this mental factor, the mind cannot go to the object. In this case, there can be no hitting the object, no staying on the object, no understanding the object. So, this is also one of the factors or one of the components of the Fourth Noble Truth, the Eightfold Path.

How many factors of the Eightfold Path do we now have? Five. Once again what are they? Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, Right Understanding, and Right Thought. These five factors are called working factors (*kāraṅga-maggaṅga*) because they are working together for spiritual achievement.

### **Three Moral Factors**

Where are the other three factors, namely, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood? Strictly speaking, they are

not present when we are practicing meditation. They have been accomplished prior to the meditation; that is, when we take precepts. That is why I make you take precepts at the beginning of each day. When you take precepts, you undertake to refrain from doing wrong. You undertake to refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants.

Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*) means abstaining from wrong speech, abstaining from telling lies, from slandering, and so on. Right Action (*sammā-kamamanta*) means abstaining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) means abstaining from these wrong speeches and wrong acts related to your livelihood.

For example, fishing is the livelihood for a fisherman and your livelihood is some other thing and not fishing. If the fisherman refrains from fishing, it is Right Livelihood for him. Let us say, you used to go fishing for fun. Now, you refrain from fishing. For you, it is Right Action, not Right Livelihood. That is the difference between the two. If you refrain from wrongdoing which is your livelihood, then you are getting Right Livelihood. If you refrain from the same action and it is not your livelihood, then you have either Right Speech or Right Action.

When you take precepts and intend to keep them, you are said to have accomplished all three. Strictly speaking, these three are not present at the moment we are meditating, but they are accomplished beforehand. So, we can say that all the eight factors actually are present when we practice meditation. When we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, we are following or going along this Path, the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the best way to follow or to practice the Noble Eightfold Path.

Sometimes you do some meritorious deeds like observing precepts or making offerings. These are also wholesome actions. Right? When you do such things, you may be said to be following the Noble Eightfold Path. But that is not as good as when you practice meditation because, in meditation, all eight of these factors are present. So, when you are meditating, you are following the Fourth Noble Truth, which is composed of the Noble Eightfold Path.

For us the Fourth Noble Truth (i.e., the spiritual development) is the most important. We don't have to worry about the first three Noble Truths actually. What matters most for us is the Fourth Noble Truth because it is the medicine which we must take. We may not know what disease we have. We may not know the origin of the disease. But, if we take the right medicine, we will get cured. Just as medicine is the most important for a person who is suffering from a disease, so the Fourth Noble Truth is the most important for us. We must follow this Eightfold Path; that is, the Fourth Noble Truth. I'm very glad that all of us practice *Vipassanā* meditation. We are following in the steps of the Buddha.

## **What to Do With the Four Noble Truths**

With regard to these Four Noble Truths, there are said to be functions - what is to be done with regard to the First Noble Truth, what is to be done with regard to the Second Noble Truth, and so on. Now, what must we do with regard to the First Noble Truth? We must understand it fully. That is the thing we must do with regard to the First Noble Truth. When we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, we will not fail to see the First Noble Truth.

Suffering (*dukkha*) can be seen in many ways. You



go to a hospital and you see people suffering there. And you say: Oh, there is suffering, there is suffering. That is superficial understanding of the First Noble Truth. The deep understanding of the First Noble Truth is to see mind and body as they really are. When you practice *Vipassanā* meditation, you become aware of mental and physical phenomena that are changing every moment. Mind and body are, as mentioned before, changing every moment and, therefore, suffering. To be aware of mind and body means to be aware of suffering. So the First Noble Truth—suffering, or mind and body—is to be aware of.

What about the Second Noble Truth? What must we do with regard to the Second Noble Truth? We must get rid of it. We must throw it away. Getting rid of it is the function we must do with regard to the Second Noble Truth. When we practice *vipassanā*, we see mind and body arising and passing away. Then, we will realize them as suffering. Then there will be no room for attachment to them. That is how we get rid of the attachment. That is what to do with regard to the Second Noble Truth.

Then, regarding the Third Noble Truth, *Nibbāna* or the Cessation of Suffering, what must we do? We must realize it. We must see it clearly. It is called realization. *Vipassanā* will lead us to the enlightenment through which we will experience of the cessation of mental defilement or cessation of suffering. The Third Noble Truth—the cessation of mental defilement or suffering—is to experience.

The Fourth Noble Truth - what must we do? We must practice it. We must develop it. Development or practice is what we must do with regard to the Fourth Noble Truth. These are the functions to be done to the Four Noble Truths.

These are the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha.

As I said, whatever the Buddha taught during his forty-five years of ministry is always included in these Four Noble Truths. There is nothing outside of these Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha said:

*“It is because of not understanding, not realizing (the Four Noble Truths) that I as well as you had to wander so long through this round of rebirths.”*

That means, because we don't really see for ourselves the Four Noble Truths, we have to go from one life to another. There is no end of our journey through this round of rebirths. Once we have done these functions with the Four Noble Truths, we will be able to get out of this round of rebirth. So understanding the Four Noble Truths is really important. It is the key to getting rid of suffering.

If you want to know more about the Four Noble Truths, more details about the Four Noble Truths, I would like to recommend a book titled, “The Word of the Buddha,” which was compiled by a German monk, Venerable Nyanatiloka. He passed away in about 1956. He collected the explanations of the Four Noble Truths from different discourses and put them in order. So, this book gives you very systematic explanations of the Four Noble Truths in the very words of the Buddha, not the explanations made by later teachers or modern people. You don't find them in one place in the discourses. It is a very small book, but very systematically arranged. It could be a textbook in Buddhism classes. Now, we come to the end of one topic, the Four Noble Truths.

# DEPENDENT ORIGATION

As I mentioned repeatedly before, I want my students to be well-informed Buddhists who understand certain topics in the teachings of the Buddha, such as Five Aggregates, the Twelve Bases, the Eighteen Elements, the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, and Thirty-seven members of Enlightenment. So far, we have done with the first four topics. So now we will study or we will try to understand the fifth topic, “Dependent Origination” (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

## Translation of “*Paṭicca-samuppada*”

The Pāḷi word “*paṭicca-samuppāda*” is translated into English in several different ways, like Conditioned Genesis, Dependent Origination, or Dependent Co-arising. “Co-arising” means arising together. Although the Pāḷi word “*samuppāda*” can mean arising together, it may be a little misleading if we say co-arising because we may understand it to mean the cause and effect arising together. In this teaching of *Paṭicca-samuppāda*, in some links, cause and effect arise together, but in others they belong to different times. If we say co-arising, it may mean cause and effect just arise together at the same time, but not at different times. So I think it is preferable to translate it as Dependent Origination or Dependent Genesis rather than Dependent Co-arising. Lately this translation, Dependent Co-arising, has become more popular with people in the West.

## What It Teaches

This is a unique teaching of the Buddha. It describes the law of mental and physical phenomena that arise

depending upon each other. In other words, it explains the conditionality of mind and matter. First, we must understand that this teaching of Dependent Origination deals with living beings only, with the world of living beings only. So, it won't explain the existence of inanimate things like mountains, trees, and so on. It deals only with living beings. This teaching, as I said, is an important teaching because it teaches that there is nobody absolute or timeless in the world of living beings. Everything belonging to living beings is conditioned by some other thing. Therefore, nothing is absolute, nothing is causeless. There are always conditions or causes for everything that belongs to living beings.

## **Discovered but Not Created**

This law of conditionality is not created by the Buddha. It is said: Whether Buddhas arise in the world or not, there is the law of conditionality. Buddha discovered it and revealed it to the world. Buddha was not the creator of conditionality but the discoverer. He discovered this law just before he became the Buddha. Actually, he discovered it when he was still a would-be Buddha (*Bodhi-satta*).

A *Bodhisatta* is a person who has aspired for Buddhahood, but who has not yet gained enlightenment. I think you are familiar with the *Bodhisatta* sitting under the Bodhi tree, practicing meditation. I hope you all know on what day the Buddha became the Buddha. What was that day? On the full moon day of May, actually on the night of the full moon day of May. In the evening, the Buddha approached a tree and sat under that tree. He sat cross-legged and resolved that he would not break that cross-legged position until he became the Buddha. Then he practiced meditation.

During the first watch of the night (the night is divided into three parts.), the *Bodhisatta* gained *jhānas* and also the psychic power to remember his past lives. During the second watch of the night, that is from midnight onward, he gained the wisdom to see beings dying in one existence and being reborn in another. During the third watch of the night, the *Bodhisatta* contemplated on the doctrine of Dependent Origination. It is said that he went back and forth, back and forth many times. Then, after that, he practiced *Vipassanā* on the factors of Dependent Origination, on ignorance, on mental formations, and so on. So he discovered Dependent Origination and contemplated on this doctrine, back and forth, and practiced *Vipassanā* meditation on the factors of Dependent Origination. At the end, he became the Buddha. The *Bodhisatta* discovered this Dependent Origination just before his enlightenment.

After he became the Buddha, he spent seven days under the Bodhi tree enjoying the bliss of emancipation and contemplating on this doctrine of Dependent Origination in the due order and the reverse order.

In order to fully understand this doctrine of Dependent Origination, we need to have knowledge of the fundamentals of *Abhidhamma*, such as the different types of consciousness, their concomitant mental factors, and the material properties. At least these three ultimate realities you need to know.

You also need to know the Twenty-four Modes of Causality or the Twenty-four Modes of Conditioning taught in the seventh book of *Abhidhamma*. Only when you apply the Twenty-four Modes of Conditionality to the doctrine of Dependent Origination, do you understand it fully and thoroughly.

Tonight, I will not go into minute detail on the doctrine of Dependent Origination. You cannot hope to understand it fully with just one talk. It will need a series of talks to really understand the doctrine of Dependent Origination, which is constituted of eleven links.

## **Eleven Links of Dependent Origination**

1. Conditioned by ignorance, there arise mental formations.
2. Conditioned by mental formations, there arises consciousness.
3. Conditioned by consciousness, there arise *nāma-rūpa*.
4. Conditioned by *nāma-rūpa*, there arise the six sense bases.
5. Conditioned by the six sense bases, there arises contact.
6. Conditioned by contact, there arises feeling.
7. Conditioned by feeling, there arises craving.
8. Conditioned by craving, there arises grasping.
9. Conditioned by grasping, there arises *bhava*.
10. Conditioned by *bhava*, there arises birth.
11. Conditioned by birth, there arise aging and death, and (in some cases) sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

## **Where to Start**

Actually, the Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-*

*samuppāda*) is like a garland of flowers. You can pick it up at any place and then explain it starting from that place. So, we can pick up at the beginning and go to the end. Or, you can pick up at the end and go back to the beginning. Or, you can start in the middle and go forward to the end, or you can go backward to the beginning. That is what the Buddha did during the forty-five years of his ministry. When the Buddha taught Dependent Origination, sometimes he would start at the beginning, sometimes he would pick up at the end and go backward to the beginning. Or, he would pick up in the middle and go forward or backward. Where do you want to pick up? At the beginning or the end?

I think we will follow the line of thought taken by the *Bodhisatta* immediately before his enlightenment; that is, from the end. The *Bodhisatta* picked up at the end and went backwards. I think that is quite logical, to start from the end and go backwards to the beginning. Please look at the end of the principle. What do you see there?

*“Conditioned by birth, there arise aging and death, and (in some cases) sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.”*

So first, *“Conditioned by birth (jāti), there arise aging and death (jarā-maraṇa).”* Let us leave out sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair for now. The *Bodhisatta* picked up aging and death. He contemplated on them like this: In the world, there is aging and death. Everybody has to become old and everybody has to die. There is no escape from aging and death. Then he thought to himself: What conditions aging and death? Why is there aging and death? That was his line of thought. We are getting old day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second. One day we will die. So, aging and death are very real to us. And the *Bodhisatta* took what was real and tried to find out

what conditions aging and death or what was the cause of aging and death.

He was still a *Bodhisatta* when he started considering this doctrine. He fulfilled *Parami* for so many lives. During some of his lifetimes, he even came close to the attainment of enlightenment. Currently, he already attained the supernatural power. Just considering the cause of aging and death, therefore, the knowledge arose in him thus: “*Dependent on birth, there arise aging and death.*”

We were born as human beings. We begin our lives at birth as human beings. When there is birth, there is inevitably aging. Nobody can reverse or prevent us from getting old. When there is birth, there is also death in the end. When the *Bodhisatta* contemplated, he found out correctly that birth is the condition for aging and death.

Then the *Bodhisatta* went backward. What is the condition for birth? Why is there birth as human beings for us? You can see thus:

“*Conditioned by bhava, there arises birth (jāti).*”

Here, I did not translate the word “*bhava*,” which is normally translated as becoming. Actually, we cannot translate it as becoming every time we see it. That is the trouble with translating Pāḷi discourses into English or any language. We have to understand the context and then translate it accordingly.

Here *bhava* has two meanings: something from which some other thing arises, and something that arises. We are more likely to be familiar with the latter according to which our life is called *bhava*. The former is not very familiar to many of us, that is, “something from which some other thing arises.” This means the cause of something actually. This is what “*bhava*” really means here in this link. We were



born because of *kamma* we did in the past. If we did not do any *kamma*, there would not be rebirth at all. We were born as human beings because of our *kamma*. So *bhava* here refers to wholesome or unwholesome *kamma*. Hence, conditioned by *bhava (kamma)* there arises birth.

*“Conditioned by grasping (upādāna), there arises bhava.”*

It is wholesome *kamma* when you make donations, when you take precepts, and when you practice meditation. Why do you do wholesome *kamma*? Because we want a better life or better rebirth. If we are to be reborn (and actually it is sure that we will be reborn), then do we want to be reborn in a better existence or do we want to go down to the lower states? Better existence, of course.

In order to be reborn in the better existences, we do wholesome *kamma*. Sometimes, however, led by false teachers, we may do unwholesome *kamma*, believing it will lead us into higher rebirth. For example, there are some teachings that, if you sacrifice animals to devas or God, then you or your beloved ones will be reborn in the heavenly realm. With such a wrong view, you kill an animal and sacrifice it to the *deva, brahma* or God . Thus, sometimes we do unwholesome deeds with the wrong view. Because of a strong attachment to better life and better rebirth, we do wholesome or unwholesome deeds known here as *bhava*.

### **Grasping (upādāna)**

So, strong attachments or grasping forms the condition for *bhava*. Grasping is sometimes translated as clinging or holding onto something. Grasping or clinging is an intense form of attachment and a wrong view. There can be two degrees or two levels of attachment - not so strong attachment and strong attachment. When attachment

becomes strong, it becomes grasping. First, you are attached to something. Then, when you are strongly attached to it, you cannot let it go.

Grasping is compared to a snake swallowing a frog. When the frog is in the jaws of the snake, it cannot get out. Or, once the frog is in its mouth, the snake will not let it go. In the same way, once we have grasped at things, we will not let them go. That is called grasping.

There are four kinds of grasping but, in the ultimate sense, we grasp at things by two ways: by attachment and by wrong view. We grasp at things because we wrongly believe that we are timeless and permanent, or that there are no benefits for doing good things, or that there is no life after death, or that there is no wholesomeness in taking care of one's parents, and so on. In brief, therefore, grasping takes place by strong attachments and by wrong views.

Whenever we come across objects in our life, we tend to grasp at them, sometimes by strong attachment, sometimes by wrong view, and sometimes maybe by both. Because of that grasping, or strong attachment to things, strong attachment to our lives, we do both wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*. That is why the condition of *bhava* is said to be grasping.

*“Conditioned by craving (taṇhā), there arises grasping (upādāna).”*

What is the condition for grasping? When the *Bodhisatta* contemplated on this, he found out that the condition for grasping is craving. Craving is called in Pāḷi *tanhā*. The literal translation of *tanhā* is thirst. This thirst for being is craving here. This craving is actually attachment (*lobha*), but it is not so strong as grasping. Initially, it is weak attachment called

craving. When it develops into strong craving, it becomes grasping. So there is craving for grasping to arise.

*“Conditioned by feeling (vedanā), there arises craving (taṇhā).”*

Why is there craving? Because of feeling. There are pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, and neutral feeling. When there is feeling, there is craving. When you have a good feeling, then you are attached to it. When you practice meditation and you feel good, you don't want to lose it. Right? You want to hold onto it. So, where there is pleasant feeling, there is attachment or craving. Then, what if there is unpleasant feeling? It also leads to craving. In the Commentary, it says, when you have unpleasant feeling, you long for pleasant feeling. Thus, there is craving even when you have unpleasant feeling. So, whether you have pleasant or unpleasant feeling, there is bound to arise craving. What about neutral feeling? Neutral feeling is similar to pleasant feeling. When you have neutral feeling, you tend to be attached to it, too. When there is feeling, there is always craving. Actually, I should not say “always.” I will explain later. When there is feeling, there is craving. So, craving arises having feeling as a condition.

Does feeling always lead to craving? With mindfulness, you can avoid craving. It is by mindfulness that you can avoid attachment to the pleasant feeling or aversion against unpleasant feeling. You have good feeling. You have to be mindful of it. Otherwise, you will be attached to it. If you have unpleasant feeling, you have to be mindful of it. Otherwise, you will have aversion to it, or you will long for pleasant feeling. So, with the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation you can avoid being attached to, or longing for pleasant feeling. Thus, there will be no room for craving although there is feeling.

*“Conditioned by contact (phassa), there arises feeling (vedanā)”*

What is the condition for feeling to arise? Contact. When there is no contact, there will be no feeling. When there is contact, there is always feeling without exception.

What is contact? Contact is a separate mental factor. We must understand this because many people misunderstand this. Contact does not just mean the coming together of two or three things. What we call contact is something that arises as a result of two or three things getting together. It is something like the sound that arises when you clap your hands. The sound is conditioned by two hands clapping, but separate phenomenon that arises simultaneously with the hands coming together. Contact is like that sound. It does not just mean that two things get together. There arises a mental factor because of two or three things coming together. That mental factor is what we call “contact.”

There are analogies to understand what “contact” really means. When you see somebody walking on a tightrope, how do you feel? Your seeing affects your feeling here. You feel kind of worried about that person, as he might fall off, or something might go wrong with him. There arises the mental contact among eye-sensitivity, seeing consciousness, and the visible object (the man on the tightrope in this case). Another example, if you see someone eating a sour fruit, you would feel like having the sour taste and arousing saliva in your mouth. These examples signify the mental contact that arises through the combination of three phenomena: sense-base, sense-object, and sense-consciousness. Such mental contact is a condition for a feeling to arise. So, when there is contact, there is feeling, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

*“Conditioned by six sense-bases (saḷāyatana), there arises mental contact (phassa).”*

What is the condition of the mental contact? What are its causes? For instance, there is the eye and there is something to see. When a visible object comes into the avenue of the eye, there is seeing consciousness. This is how we see something or someone. So when we see something or someone, there are three things: the eye, the visible object, and seeing consciousness. When these three things come together, there is the mental contact. So the contact is conditioned by actually three things: sense-bases, sense-objects, and sense-consciousnesses.

As the condition for the contact, however, only six sense bases are taken here: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. In Buddhism, there are six senses, not five senses because mind is taken as the sixth sense. Conditioned by these six sense-bases, there arise corresponding mental contacts such as eye-contact, ear-contact, etc. So the mental contact is conditioned by the six sense bases.

*“Conditioned by mind and body (nāma-rūpa), there arise six sense bases (saḷāyatana).”*

Now, the condition for the six bases is mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*). Right? Normally, “mind” (*nāma*) means both consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and mental factors (*cetasika*). Here, however, only mental factors are taken as “mind” (*nāma*), because the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) has been taken as the condition for the mind and body in the next link. So, here “mind” (*nāma*) means mental factors (*cetasika*). “*Rūpa*” means the material properties that cover five sense bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body.

Then, what is the sixth base? Mind-base - that is, consciousness. Right? The consciousness (mind-base) always arises together with mental factors that are taken as “*nāma*” here. They support each other. They condition each other. Consciousness conditions mental factors, and

mental factors condition consciousness. That is why the condition for the six sense bases is said to be the mental factors (*nāma*) and the material properties (*rūpa*).

*“Conditioned by consciousness (viññāṇa), there arise mind and body (nāma-rūpa).”*

Consciousness is the bare awareness of an object. It is different from the awareness in meditation. In meditation, what we call awareness is mindfulness (*sañi*). But here it is just bare awareness of sense-objects. Only when there is awareness of the object can there be mental factors (*nama*), such as contact with the object, attachment to the object, or aversion to the object, and so on. So the mental factors are said to be dependent on consciousness. Without the consciousness, there cannot be mental factors. Consciousness and mental factors are two components of mind. They arise together simultaneously. But the mental factors (*nāma*) are dependent on consciousness. So the consciousness forms the condition for mental factors.

And the consciousness also forms the condition for body (mind-born material properties). Some material properties are caused by consciousness.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the consciousness (*viññāna*) serves as the condition for both mental factors (*nāma*) and material properties (*rūpa*) to arise.

*“Conditioned by mental formations (saṅkhāra), there arises consciousness (viññāṇa).”*

What is the condition or cause of consciousness (*viññāṇa*)? Mental formations. Here, “consciousness”

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<sup>7</sup> Among the 89 types of consciousness, there is what is called the rebirth-producing consciousness. “Rebirth” of five-aggregate beings is the combination of certain type of consciousness and certain types of material properties which are caused by kamma. Kamma is volition, a mental factor that always goes along with consciousness. Here, therefore, kamma and consciousness are taken as the same in terms of conditions for rūpa (as well as nāma) to arise.

means resultant consciousness. When we were born to this life, the first type of consciousness in our life is a resultant consciousness. It is the result of past *kamma*. During life time, this rebirth consciousness serves as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) that flows constantly if there is no active consciousness as during deep sleep.

There are also other kinds of resultant consciousnesses. When we see something, for instance, there arises seeing consciousness, which is also a resultant consciousness. The same is true with hearing consciousness, etc. These resultant consciousnesses are caused by mental formations. What are mental formations? Wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*. So, it is the same as *kamma bhava*. Wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* produces resultant consciousness at the moment of rebirth as well as during lifetime.

*“Conditioned by ignorance or delusion (avijjā), there arise mental formations (saṅkhāra).”*

What is the condition of mental formations? Ignorance. Mental formations means wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*. Ignorance is the condition for wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* to occur. So when you are practicing meditation, you are acquiring wholesome *kamma*. That wholesome *kamma* is conditioned by ignorance. This implies you are ignorant and, therefore, you practice meditation. (*Sayādaw* laughing.) Right? Now, ignorance is ignorance of truth, ignorance of what really is.

When we come across an object, we do not see it as it really is. We take it to be something permanent or desirable. That is ignorance. Because of that ignorance, we are attached to it or we are repulsed by it. Through *Vipassanā* meditation, we see it as it really is. When we are fully enlightened and become *arahant*, there will be no room

for ignorance. When there is no ignorance, there can be no mental formations. Although we do wholesome deeds, they won't form mental formations (*kamma*) that can result in rebirths, because we have no more attachment to them.

## **Is Ignorance the First Cause?**

We have gone backward from the eleventh link (old age and death) to the first one. Is ignorance the first cause, or is there a condition for ignorance? It looks like ignorance is the first cause or the starting point of the cycle of birth and death as it is mentioned at the top of this doctrine. It looks like there is no condition for ignorance. Can we take ignorance as the first cause? No. It is said that ignorance is conditioned, too. Oppressed by aging and death, we can't see the truth, and our mind is defiled by what we call *Āsavas* (cankers) including ignorance. So, ignorance is also conditioned by other unwholesome mental states.

## **How to Cut This Wheel**

That is why we should understand the doctrine as a cycle or a wheel turning round and round, rather than as a chain. From one you go to two, three, four, five up to eleven, and then back to one. This is life. So long as we are unable to interfere with this wheel, are unable to cut this wheel, we will be going round and round from one life to another. How many past lives have we come through? Millions! We will go for many more millions if we do not cut this wheel.

Can we cut this wheel anywhere? No. There is only one place where we can cut this wheel. It is between feeling and craving. This is very important. When we practice *Vipassanā*



meditation, we are cutting this wheel bit by bit. When we see things as they really are, we won't get attached to, or averse against them. Although there is feeling, if we won't have craving, then the wheel stops for that moment. Every time we are aware of things as they really are, there will be no room for attachment and aversion. This is how we are cutting this wheel of life. Of course, this is temporary way of cutting. This temporary cutting will lead us to permanent cutting when we get enlightened and become *Arahants*. Therefore, the only place to cut this wheel of life is between feeling and attachment. So, it is very important to be mindful of our feelings before they can lead us to attachment. Thus, we can stop this wheel from turning round and round.

## **Twelve Factors**

There are twelve factors you can find in Dependent Origination: ignorance, mental formations, consciousness, *nāma-rūpa*, sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, *bhava*, birth, aging and death. Aging and death are taken as one. Altogether, how many are they? Twelve. So there are said to be twelve factors in the doctrine of Dependent Origination or in this Wheel of Life.

## **Two Main Roots**

Among these twelve factors, those that are mainly responsible for this wheel going on and on are number one (ignorance) and number eight (craving). These two are the most important conditions or causes for this wheel to go on and on.

According to *Abhidhamma*, craving is always accompanied by ignorance. So when we say craving, we

also mean ignorance because the two cannot be separated. We say that craving is the Second Noble Truth. That means craving is the cause of suffering. When we say craving, we also say ignorance because the two always go together, neither stands alone. Wherever there is craving, there is ignorance. So, with regard to the Second Noble Truth, the Buddha said craving is the origin of suffering, taking the one which is prominent. But actually we should take both ignorance and craving as the cause of suffering. These two are called the roots of the round of existence. If we can cut these two roots, then the round of existence will be no longer going on and we will be liberated from all sufferings.

### **Arahants Do, but No Deeds**

People who become *Arahants* destroy these two roots. That is why whatever they do before they die, their actions do not constitute *kamma*. Buddhas teach people. Right? *Arahants* also teach other people. They donate something to others. Of course, their actions are wholesome, but not regarded as wholesome deeds (*kusala*), because their deeds form no *kamma* that bring about results. It is because they have cut off the two roots of the round of existence. They have no more rebirth. So their actions are called *kriya*, which literally means mere action and is normally translated as inoperative or functional.

Following the line of thought of the *Bodhisatta*, we traced the wheel of life backward up to the first link mentioned in this teaching; that is, ignorance. But, when the *Bodhisatta* traced from the number eleven (aging and death) backward, his wisdom stopped at the number three and turned back. He didn't go beyond that to the second link (mental formations) and the first link (ignorance or

delusion). He got stagnant at the third link and turned back.

It is because, according to the Commentary, he was going to practice *Vipassanā* on the factors belonging to the present life but not to the past life. If you read the First Discourse, the second part, in the *Digha Nikaya* (the Long Discourses), you will find that the *Bodhisatta* says: My mind turned back from the link, "Conditioned by consciousness, there arise mind and body." He said he found consciousness as the condition for mind and body, and vice versa. And then his mind turned back without going beyond this link.

If we are born as a *Brahma*, we won't have the last five factors: sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. These five factors belong to human beings. We are human beings, we cry, we feel sorry and lament. But when we become a *Brahma*, there are no sorrow and lamentation. These are not inevitable. The inevitable results of birth are again aging and death which we cannot escape. Whether we are born as a *Brahma*, a *deva*, or whatever, there will be aging and death, but there may not be sorrow, lamentation, and so on. If we are human beings, I don't think, we can avoid having sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. This is the wheel of life. We should see it as going round and round, and not like a chain.

## **It Helps Overcome Four Wrong Views**

What benefits do you think you would gain from understanding of Dependent Origination? You can overcome four wrong views:

1. Belief in Annihilation (*Uccheda Diṭṭhi*): There is the belief that this life is the only life. At death everything is finished. The being is annihilated at death. That, according to Buddha's teaching, is one wrong

view. Would you believe that beings at death are totally destroyed, that there is no rebirth for them? If you understand Dependent Origination, you will overcome this wrong view because, according to Dependent Origination, one thing leads to another, and it goes on, and on, and on until you become an *Arahant* and cut off this wheel. So, you will not believe in annihilation.

2. Belief in Eternal Soul (*Sasata Ditthi*): There is another wrong view which says that *atman* (soul) goes on permanently. Through the knowledge of Dependent Origination, you will not believe in something permanent like that. You know that everything is conditioned meaning it can arise only when conditions are met. And, whatever is conditioned is impermanent, not otherwise. So you do not believe in the permanency of a being, or soul, or whatever.
3. Belief in Wrong Cause (*Visama-hetu Ditthi*): There is a belief or a teaching that we are created by *Brahma* or God. According to this Dependent Origination, could you believe that? There is just one condition giving rise to another one, and another one giving rise to another. And so it goes on, and on, and on. There is no creator or maker of beings. That's also clear to you when you understand Dependent Origination.
4. Belief in No Cause (*A-hetuka Ditthi*): There is belief that things arise at random without cause or without conditions. You won't accept such wrong view because you have learned from Dependent Origination that everything is conditioned by some other things.

Actually, there are many more things for you to understand with regard to Dependent Origination. Let me explain you one more thing among others.

### **“To Condition” Means**

When people read or study Dependent Origination, they get the impression that these links are cause and effect, and that the cause means something that comes first and produces the effect later. For instance, the number one is to produce the number two. Number two is to produce the number three and so on. That is not so. Some are the producing conditions, but many are just the supportive conditions. In the second link, for example, mental formations cause rebirth consciousness. In this case, “cause” means to produce effect. But, in the link between rebirth consciousness and mind-and-body, the consciousness does not produce mind-and-body, but it helps them to exist. So, in some cases, “to cause” or “to condition” means just to help or support each other to exist. This is something for you to understand.

### **Reference to Patthana**

In order to understand fully all the links, you must understand *Patthana*, the seventh book of *Abhidhamma* regarding the Twenty-four Modes of Causal Relations. In the *Visuddhimagga*, the Dependent Origination is explained with reference to these conditions.

Many authors do not touch upon these Twenty-four Modes of Relationship when they wrote on Dependent Origination. The only book I am aware of where Dependent Origination is explained with reference to *Patthana* is a book

by Venerable Nyanatiloka. You can get that in his book, *Buddhist Dictionary*, and also there is a separate booklet on *Dependent Origination*. As far as I know, he is the only modern author who explained *Dependent Origination* with reference to the *Twenty-four Modes of Relationship*. If you want to go to the origin, then you read the *Visuddhimagga*.

Now please read the last sentence.

*“Thus, there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.”*

Please do not think that the Buddha only gave us the arising of this whole mass of suffering. Buddha also taught the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

## **Reverse Order**

I say the Buddha and *Bodhisatta* contemplated on *Dependent Origination* in due order and in reverse order. By reverse order, I do not mean from the end to the beginning. “Reverse order” means cessation. Reverse order goes like this:

- *Due to the complete cessation of ignorance (avijjā), there is the cessation of mental formations (saṅkhāra).*
- *Due to the complete cessation of mental formations (saṅkhāra), there is the cessation of consciousness (viññāṇa), and so on.*

Buddha taught not only the arising of this whole mass of suffering, but also its cessation. If he taught only the arising of the whole mass of suffering, his teaching would be very depressing. He taught also the cessation of suffering, actually the way that leads to the cessation of suffering. The way to the cessation of suffering is the

Eightfold Path that includes Right Understanding and so on. What do you do to have this Eightfold Path in you? Practice *vipassanā* meditation. The Buddha taught us how to practice meditation that surely leads to the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

There is a lot more to understand. If you don't understand all these details, don't worry. What is important is the practice. One thing certain is that many of those who met the Buddha in person did not know *Abhidhamma* or Dependent Origination. But they practiced and became enlightened. Right?

## **Subhadda, The Last Disciple of Buddha**

A wandering ascetic named *Subhadda* became the last disciple of the Buddha. He was at the door of the Buddha's chamber when the Buddha was only about two or three hours away from his demise. Venerable Ananda did not let him in lest he might annoy the Buddha. The Buddha overheard their conversation, and said: "Ananda, let him in. He will ask what he really wants to know. He won't disturb me." So, he got a chance to raise a question<sup>8</sup>. The Buddha did not answer his question. Instead, the Buddha talked about the Noble Eightfold Path.

Buddha said:

*"In whatever order of doctrine where the Noble Eightfold Path is taught, there are monks (and nuns) who have reached the first stage, second stage, third stage, or fourth stage,"* and so on.

He was so pleased with the Buddha's teachings that he humbly requested the Buddha to ordain him. The Buddha

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<sup>8</sup> *Subhadda first mentioned a number of sages who all claimed to have knowledge of the Truth, and then asked if all of them had this wisdom, or only some of them.*

got Venerable Ananda to ordain him during the night, about midnight. Afterward, the Buddha taught him meditation. Then, he went to a secluded place away from the Buddha and practiced meditation until he became an Arahant while the Buddha was still alive. He went back to the Buddha and reported of his spiritual achievement. He was the last disciple of the Buddha. He used to belong to another sect. So he didn't know anything about the Buddha's teachings before. For sure, he had no time to learn *Paticca Samuppada*, *Abhidhamma*, or whatever. He just followed the Buddha's instructions on meditation and became an *Arahant*.

So, if you don't know the details and intricacies, don't be disappointed.



# PLANES OF EXISTENCES

So far you have studied with me the Five Aggregates, the Twelve Bases, and so on. Yesterday, when I saw the chart of 31 planes, I thought I might as well include this topic in the series of talks on “Well-informed Buddhists.” It is good to know the 31 planes of existence, too.

Whenever we talk about rebirth, we often refer to the 31 planes of existence. If you believe in rebirth, you should also know the 31 planes of existence. I myself wanted to do a chart about this, but I didn't happen to do it. But now somebody else has done it and I am glad about it. The chart gives you a general idea of the 31 planes of existence.

Where do you want to start? From the top down, or from the bottom up? I think it is better to go from bottom up. There are four sections in the bottom panel:

1. The “*Asura*” kingdom (It is a certain kind of spirits.)
2. The ghost kingdom (*peta*)
3. The animal kingdom (*tiracchāna*)
4. Hell (*niraya*)

These four are called in Pāli “*apāya*” - that means the states of misery. Beings reborn in these four states suffer a great deal. They are the four woeful states.

**Hell:** The bottom one is hell. There is hell in Buddhism, too. But hell in Buddhism is different from hell in Christianity. According to Christianity, once you get to hell, there is no way of getting out of it. Hell is eternal. In Buddhism, hell is not eternal. It is like a prison. You serve some time in a prison and then you get out of it again. You do something

bad, some *akusala*, and you may be reborn in hell. Then you spend some time there. “Some time” or “a short time in hell” means millions of years in human beings. We may say you go to hell and spend seven days there. That may be one hundred million years by human reckoning. Hell is a place where people suffer a lot of suffering. It is like paying the penalty for *akusala*, like killing, stealing, something like that.

**Animal Kingdom:** Let us go to the next one, the animal kingdom. I don’t have to explain about the animal kingdom. You all know what animals are and how much animals suffer.

**Ghost:** The next one is ghosts, or unhappy spirits, or hungry spirits, or hungry ghosts. They belong to the *peta* world. We believe that when some people die, they may be reborn as ghosts. You have heard of ghosts and maybe you have seen ghosts. I have never seen one, but I am very afraid of ghosts (students laughing). If I had seen one, I may not be afraid of it. You know when we were young, our parents used to frighten us into not doing something unwholesome. They would say that there is a ghost and it will kill you or it will break your neck and suck blood out of your throat, or something like that. We were always afraid of ghosts. They belong to what are called *petas*. Sometimes they are very hungry and they don’t have enough to eat, or sometimes they are too thirsty, or something like that. They always suffer. They are the third one (of the four woeful states).

**Asuras:** The fourth one is *asuras* (spirits). They are a species of ghosts (*peta*). That is why some discourses

mention only three woeful states, not four. But traditionally, we have the four woeful states. The fourth one is the same species as the third one. These spirits are like the ghosts, they suffer a lot. One difference between these two species is that some of the *asuras* do enjoy happiness during certain periods. During the day they enjoy happiness. Then, during the night, they suffer, something like that. They are those who have both happiness and suffering. They are called *asuras*.

These four woeful states are called existences or realms. So, it implies that they must have their own separate places. Actually some of them have no particular place of their own. Let us go to the bottom one, the Hell (*niraya*). Where are the hells located? In order to understand it, we must understand the structure of the universe.

## The Buddhist Cosmology<sup>9</sup>

According to Buddhist cosmology, there is a universal mountain in the middle of the universe. It is called Mount Meru. This Mount Meru has one half in the water and another half on earth. It is submerged in water. Around it are four great continents - the north continent, the south continent, east continent, west continent. Around each of these four great continents there are 500 islands. So there are all together 2000 islands. (Indonesia alone has 3000 islands, maybe very small islands.) Then they are surrounded by a range of mountains around them. Between the range of mountains and Mount Meru is a great ocean.

<sup>9</sup> *This cosmology is described according to the sub-commentary known as Sārattha-dīpanī. Modern Pāli scholars believe that it is totally based on the ancient Indian cosmology but not exactly on the Buddha's explanation. In the Anguttara-nikāya, while talking about impermanence of everything, the Buddha described a universe to be constituted of the sun, the moon, the Mount Meru, and four continents, which all will disappear one day leaving not even a smallest particle behind.*

In this great ocean, the four great continents and the small islands are situated. So in the middle is Mount Meru. Then around Mount Meru there are seven levels of mountains. And between these rings of mountains is water. The earth is said to be 240,000 yojanas<sup>10</sup> thick. Half of the earth or the lower half of the earth is solid rock. The upper half is soil. There are eight great hells situated on the rock part of the earth, one above the other. If you dig into the earth, then you may reach one of the hells. So, the hells have a separate location in this system of the universe.

What about the animal kingdom? They don't have a separate location. They live among human beings or in the sea. They have no separate location. Hungry ghosts also have no separate location. They live among us. There may be some hungry ghosts around us now. We don't know. Also, the *asuras* spirits do not have a separate location or special location of their own. They are scattered among human beings and also at the foot of Mount Meru.

These four are called the four woeful states. It is our wish that we will not be reborn in any of these four woeful states. We want to avoid being reborn in these four woeful states as much as we can by doing good deeds.

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<sup>10</sup> *The length of Yojana varied depending on the different standards adopted by different Indian astronomers. It was taken to be the distance covered by an ox cart in one day. In the Surya Siddhanta of the 5th century, for example, a Yojana was equivalent to 5 miles, and the same was true for Aryabhata's Aryabhatiya (499). By the time of Paramesvara in the 14th century, the Yojana was more than 1.5 times larger than it was in Aryabhata's time, thus a Yojana was equivalent to at least 8 miles by Paramesvara's time. Religious leader A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada gives the equivalent length of a yojana as 8 miles (13 km) throughout his translations of the Bhagavata Purana. Some traditional Indian scholars give measurements between 13 km and 16 km (8-10 miles) or thereabouts. Alexander Cunningham, in The Ancient Geography of India, takes a yojana to mean 8 miles.*

## Human Realms

Above these four is the human realm. That is the world. Let us see what is written there (on the chart of the Buddhist universe): It refers directly to humans of Jambudīpa (the south continent) and refers indirectly to the other three whose bodies are similar to Jambudīpa. People of Jambudīpa (the south continent) are those whose minds are very brave and firm both in good and evil aspects. So they can become Self-enlightened Buddhas (*Sammāsambuddha*), Silent Buddhas (*Pacceka-buddha*), *Arahants*, etc., while they can also commit gravest evil deeds such as matricide, patricide, etc.

Human beings are said to be very brave and firm. They can do the best or the worst of things. A human being, if he wishes, can become a Buddha. And he can commit an offense so bad, so grievous, that he will be reborn in the lowest of the hells after this life. So a human being is the most capable of doing good or bad, doing the best or the worst.

According to the system of four great continents, the habitats of human beings are the four great continents.

## Catu-mahārājika Realm

Above the human beings is *Catu-mahārājika* realm. They are celestial beings, lower celestial beings. They are called *Cātuma-hārājika*. *Cātu* means four, and *mahārājika* means great kings. So, *Cātuma-hārājika* are four great kings. They are protectors of the four directions. They are a kind of deity or celestial being. Their habitat or their place is from the roof of Mount Meru down about half of the height of Mount Meru.

Mount Meru should have two levels. From the halfway mark to the top of Mount Meru is the place of the *Cātu-*

*mahārājika* gods. From the root to the halfway point is the place of the spirits and others. So the *Cātu-mahārājika*, the lower celestial beings, have their own location.

## **Tāvātimsā Realm**

There is another realm called *Tāvātimsā*. *Tāvātimsā* is said to be situated on the top of Mount Meru and then stretches in four directions in space. That is the second celestial realm.

## **Yāmā Realm**

The next one is *Yāmā*. It is in space. After that is *Tusitā*, a realm of celestial beings.

## **Tusitā Realm**

*Tusitā* realm is said to be a good place to be reborn in, because all Bodhisattas were reborn in *Tusitā* before they came down to the human world to become Buddhas. The *Bodhisatta*, *Metteya*, the future Buddha, may be there in *Tusitā* Realm. Therefore, many people want to be reborn in *Tusitā* so they could see the *Bodhisatta*, listen to his preaching, and then come down to the human world with him and get enlightenment.

## **Nimmāna-rati Realm**

Above that is what is called *nimmāna-rati*, another kind of celestial beings, another kind of deities. It is said that they enjoy the five sense objects created by themselves. Do you want to be reborn there? You can create happiness

for yourself. You can create anything to enjoy. It's very good. Don't you want to be reborn there?

## **Paranimmita-vasavattī Realm**

Then above that, the sixth of the celestial realms, is *Paranimmita-vasavattī*. They enjoy pleasurable objects created by others for them. They may be lazier celestial beings. They don't want to create for themselves, but they let others create for them, and they enjoy them. They are called *Paranimmita-vasavattī*. They are one step higher than *Nimmāna-rati*.

These are the six realms of *devas* or celestial beings. Their realms are one above the other. They are in the top half of Mount Meru, on the top of Mount Meru and in space.

## **Eleven Realms of Sensuous Sphere**

So far we have got eleven realms. Right? Among these eleven the first four are called *kāma-duggati*. "*Kāma*" means sensuous sphere and "*duggati*" means unhappy destiny. So it is the unhappy destiny of the sensuous sphere. There is always suffering there in these four states. Then the other seven are called *kāma-sugati* (happy destiny of the sensuous sphere). That is because, among these realms beginning with human beings, there is happiness. Although there is suffering among human beings, there is also happiness as known by common people. So, they are called happy destiny or happy states. Again, how many sensuous states are there? Seven. Right. Six celestial realms and the human realm. These seven are called *kāma-sugati* in Pāḷi (happy states of the sensuous sphere).

People who do meritorious deeds, like making donations, keeping precepts, helping people, even practicing

meditation. As a result of such meritorious deeds, they can be reborn in one of these seven happy states. So, you make a donation here and, as a result of this, you may be reborn in one of these seven. You keep precepts and, as a result of keeping precepts, you may be reborn in one of these seven. If you practice meditation, although you don't get any enlightenment, you can be reborn in one of these seven states of happiness as a result of the meditation.

## **Twenty Realms of Brahmas**

There are twenty *Brahmā* Realms where people who have attained *jhāna* in this life can be reborn after death. Somebody attains *jhāna* here in this life. If he or she keeps the *jhāna* intact and dies, he or she will be reborn in one of these twenty planes according to the level of *jhāna* he or she has reached. The beings reborn in those planes are called *Brahmas*. They are celestial beings higher than those born in the previous six happy celestial states. They are those who have attained *jhāna* previously as human beings, or as celestial beings, or as lower *Brahmas*. They may be reborn as higher *Brahmas*. There are all together twenty realms of *Brahmas*.

## **Sixteen Rūpa Brahma Realms**

Among the twenty planes of *Brahmas*, the lower sixteen are called realms of form (*rūpa-loka*). That means those born there have both mind and body. They look like human beings. They have bodies like human beings and they also have mind. They have both mind and body, but they are called *Rūpa Brahmas* because the mind is common to all kinds of *Brahma* except one unconscious kind of *Brahma*



(*asañña-satta*).

## **Jhāna**

Here I would like to explain a little bit about *Jhāna* because all the *Brahmas* are *jhāna*-achievers. *Jhāna* means high-level concentration (or meditative absorption), which is developed by practicing *samatha* meditation. Depending on how high the degree of the concentration, the *jhāna* is one of four kinds: first *jhāna*, second *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, and fourth *jhāna*. If you practice *samatha* meditation, you can attain these *jhānas*. For the *jhāna*-achievers, there are sixteen *Rūpa Brahma* planes: three each for the first *jhāna*, second *jhāna* and third *jhāna* achievers, and seven for a fourth *jhāna* achiever. Depending on the quality of *jhāna* you have attained, you will be reborn in one of these planes.

If you attain the first *jhāna* and die with that *jhāna* intact, you will be reborn in one of the three first *jhāna* planes according to the quality of the first *jhāna* you have attained. If you get the second *jhāna* here and you die with that second *jhāna*, you will be reborn in one of the three second-*jhāna* planes. Then if you get the third *jhāna* here and you die with the third *jhāna*, you will be reborn in one of the three third-*jhāna* planes. So there are three first-*jhāna* planes, three second-*jhāna* planes, and three third-*jhāna* planes. Names are not mentioned because they are difficult to remember.

## **Seven Fourth Jhāna Planes**

### **Realm of Great Reward**

There are seven fourth-*jhāna* planes. The fourth-*jhāna* achievers will be reborn in the first plane out of seven

called Realm of Great Reward (*Vehapphala*) if they are just ordinary persons (*puthujjana*), or achievers of the first enlightenment, (literally known as Stream-winner, *Sotāpanna*) or achievers of the second enlightenment (a once-returner, *Sakadāgāmi*).

## Realm of Unconscious Brahma

The second of fourth-jhāna planes is *Asañña-satta* (the abode of unconscious beings), where there live *Brahmas* who have no mind, but only body. This realm is unique. They have only body, no mind. So, the *Brahmas* born in this realm are like statues. The only difference from a normal statue is they have physical life (*rūpa-jīvitandriya*), which is certain kind of physical phenomena that protect their bodies from becoming rotten. Normal statues have no such unique physical quality. They are composed of inanimate things only. That is the only difference between normal statues and these unconscious *Brahmas*. Both have no mind. So for 500 world cycles (*kappa*), they are just there with the physical body but no mind.

What kinds of people are reborn there? There are people who believe that it is mind that makes us suffer. When one has mind, one suffers. If one has no mind like a statue, one won't suffer. Thus, they find fault with mind. They develop the fourth *jhāna* with the intention of eliminating the mind and attain this special type of fourth-*jhāna*. As a result, when they are reborn as *Brahmas*, they have only body but no mind. They are a peculiar type of *Brahmas*. While they are there, they cannot see or hear. They have no mind. Even if the Buddha were to go there and teach them, they won't hear. They won't know anything. They cannot practice. They cannot get enlightenment. They are just stuck there

for 500 long world cycles. So their realm is regarded as one of the unsuitable places to be reborn.

### **Five Pure Abodes (*Suddhāvāsa*)**

The top five abodes of fourth *jhāna* are called Pure Abodes, *Suddhāvāsa*, which means the place of pure beings. They are all *Anāgāmis*, those who have attained the third stage of enlightenment. After reaching the third stage of enlightenment, they invariably develop the fourth *jhāna*. After they die, they are reborn in one of these five Abodes of Pure Beings. They are called pure beings because they no longer have attachment to sensuous things or anger. They only have very little attachment to *Brahma* world. Even though they are not totally pure as *Arahants* but they are called pure beings because they are very, very pure. So, their places are called Pure Abodes.

### **Four Topmost Arūpa Brahma Realms**

The topmost four are called *Arūpa-loka*, formless realms. They are another kind of peculiar Brahma. They have developed *jhāna* with the intention of eliminating the physical body, because they think it is the physical body that makes them suffer. We have all sorts of ailments. We sit for some time and have pain here and there. Right? Sometimes we cut our finger, sometimes we hit against something. All this suffering comes from the fact that we have this physical body. If we can be without this physical body, we won't suffer. So, this is the way they think. They find fault with the physical body, just like the other *Brahmas* find fault with the mind. So they have developed the fourth *rūpa jhāna* with intention of eliminating the body. From that fourth *jhāna*, they try to attain even higher *jhāna* called

formless *jhāna*.

The formless *jhāna* is of four stages that are developed step by step by concentrating on four different meditative objects. Corresponding to the four stages of formless *jhāna*, there are four realms of formless *Brahmas*. If you die with the formless *jhāna* intact, you will be reborn in one of the formless *Brahma* realms according to your *jhāna* stage. The fourth formless realm is the uppermost, the highest realm among the 31 realms.

So when a person is reborn in these realms, there is no physical body for him due to he developed *jhāna* with intention of eliminating the physical body. Their mind is not like ours. Human and *devas*' minds need physical bases. In order for seeing consciousness to arise, for example, we need the eye as a physical base, and so on. But, in these realms, mind does not need a physical base. Only in these four realms, can mind exist without a physical base.

Should we be reborn in one of these four states? We can enjoy happiness, as there is no physical body, no physical ailments, and no disease. But there is one flaw. There is only mind - no eye, no ear. If you are reborn there, you cannot see, you cannot hear. You cannot take advantage of the Buddha's teachings. Even if the Buddha were to go and talk there, you cannot hear him. And you will be there for a very long time. Many Buddhas will appear during that time and you cannot take advantage of any of them. Although beings there are a very high form of *Brahmas*, their abodes are not good places for those concerned with getting enlightenment to be reborn.

You know Noble persons. They are those who have gained enlightenment. Can they be reborn in these states? Yes or no? OK. It is said that Noble Persons can also be

reborn there. Sometimes they have got the formless *jhānas* and they are attached to these *jhānas*. They cannot give them up. If they die with these *jhānas* intact, then they will be reborn in these states. They will be there for many, many world cycles.

The only thing that cannot be achieved there is the first stage of enlightenment. After reaching the first stage of enlightenment, it's all right for one to be reborn there. As for non-enlightened persons, they cannot get enlightenment in one of those states because, to become enlightened, they need instruction from others such as their teacher, the Buddha. Since they have no ears, they cannot hear the *dhamma*. They cannot get any information from others. They can't become enlightened if they are reborn there as non-enlightened persons. If they get enlightenment in this life, they can be reborn and can develop the higher stages of enlightenment there because, for the higher stages of enlightenment, they don't need instructions from others. Only when they are unenlightened, do they need instructions from others.

Do you want to be reborn there? If you have reached the first stage here, the answer may be "yes," because you can get the higher stages. If you are an unenlightened person, the answer should be "no," because you cannot get any enlightenment there. That is why these four are called unsuitable places.

Immediately after the birth of the would-be Buddha, a sage came to see the infant prince. Upon seeing him, the sage first laughed and then cried. The father king was alarmed, and asked, "What happens to you? First you laughed and then you cried. Do you see any bad omen of my baby?" The sage said, "No. I laughed because I am happy that this baby is going to become a Buddha and will

save many beings in the world. I cried because I will not be able to take advantage of his Buddhahood." What the sage meant was that he had got the fourth *arūpa jhānas*. When he died, he would be reborn in the world where there are no ears and no eyes. So, he cried. He knew that he could take advantage of the Buddha if he would give up this fourth *arūpa jhāna* and go down to the fourth *rūpa jhāna*. But he was so attached to these *jhānas* that he would not give them up. Attachment is very dangerous.

When the Buddha renounced the world and went into the forest, he met two teachers: Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta. Under their guidance, he developed *jhāna*. Later he left them and practiced on his own until he became the Buddha, however. When he became the Buddha, he thought of whom he should first teach. A thought came to him: I should teach Ālāra Kālāma because he is an intelligent man. But then he knew that Ālāra Kālāma had died seven days earlier. The Buddha said, "It is a great loss for him." Then, he thought of teaching Udaka Rāmaputta but this teacher had died the night before. The Buddha said again, "Oh, it is a great loss for him." So the Buddha taught his first sermon to the five disciples.

Why did Buddha say it was a great loss for Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta? Ālāra Kālāma reached the third formless *jhāna* and Udaka Rāmaputta reached the fourth formless *jhāna*. They died with these *jhānas* intact and were reborn in the *arūpa jhāna* planes. So they have no opportunity to listen to the Dhamma. That is why the Buddha said, "Oh, it is a great loss for them."

## TWENTY FOUR CONDITIONS OF PAṬṬHĀNA

You brought the chart about Dependent Origination from Malaysia and have asked me to teach this *Dhamma* so that you could understand it more. Every time when you asked me, I said, "Not now." That was because you need knowledge of *Abhidhamma* to understand Dependent Origination properly and correctly. One time, I gave talks to you on the basics of *Abhidhamma*. After those talks, I thought it might be time to teach Dependent Origination. There is one more thing that you need to understand and that is *Paṭṭhāna*, which is part of *Abhidhamma*. It is important when you study Dependent Origination that you study it along with the *Paṭṭhāna* Conditions. That is because, without knowledge of *Paṭṭhāna* Conditions, you may not understand the Dependent Origination properly. So it is important that you have a basic understanding of *Paṭṭhāna* also.

Both Dependent Origination and *Paṭṭhāna* teach the Law of Cause and Effect, but there is a difference in the method of teaching. Dependent Origination teaches that A is the condition for B to arise, or B arises dependent upon A. And then B is a condition for C, or C arises dependent upon B, and so on. A is related to B, and B is related to C. It teaches that nothing arises out of nothing. When something arises, it depends upon some other thing for its arising.

*Paṭṭhāna* teaches more than that. *Paṭṭhāna* teaches not only something is the condition for some other thing to occur but also how they are related. So, A is the condition for B and also how A and B are related. So it does not just say A and B are related, but it also teaches how A and B

are related.

I think with the help of an analogy it will be easier to understand the difference between *Paṭṭhāna* and Dependent Origination. If I say Mister A is related to Mister B, it is like Dependent Origination. But just knowing Mister A and Mister B are related is not enough. How are they related? *Paṭṭhāna* is like saying Mister A and Mister B are related as father and son, or as elder brother and younger brother, or as a relative, or as friends, or as cousins, and so on. *Paṭṭhāna* adds the mode of relationships between the two in addition to saying that they are related.

Tonight and tomorrow I will talk on the very basics of *Paṭṭhāna*, so that you get just enough knowledge of *Paṭṭhāna* to understand Dependent Origination correctly. It will be very basic, because *Paṭṭhāna* is the biggest of the seven books of *Abhidhamma*, the largest and the most comprehensive of the seven books of *Abhidhamma*.

In the Burmese edition of *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, there are twelve volumes. *Paṭṭhāna* alone occupies five volumes. The other six books of *Abhidhamma* comprise seven volumes. So *Paṭṭhāna* is the longest of the seven books of *Abhidhamma*.

*Paṭṭhāna* is described in the Commentaries as being bigger than the great ocean. The ocean is very big and sometimes you cannot see the coast. Still, the ocean is limited by the coast. *Paṭṭhāna* has no limit. It is very wide, very comprehensive, and very deep. So, we cannot cover *Paṭṭhāna* in one or two talks. Even in two or three years, we may not cover *Paṭṭhāna* in its entirety. Therefore, during these two days, I will give you just the basics or just the fundamentals of *Paṭṭhāna* so that you can get enough understanding of *Paṭṭhāna* in order to understand



## Dependent Origination.

In the book of *Paṭṭhāna*, Buddha taught what are known as 24 Conditions. Here “conditions” means something that produces some other thing, or something that supports some other thing, or something that both produces and supports some other thing. All these three kinds of things here are called conditions, *paccaya* in Pāḷi.

We will go through these 24 Conditions one by one. I want you to memorize these 24 Conditions both in Pāḷi and in English.

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Root Condition                  | <i>hetu-paccayo</i>              |
| 2. Object Condition                | <i>ārammaṇa-paccayo</i>          |
| 3. Predominance Condition          | <i>adhipati-paccayo</i>          |
| a. Object Predominance             | <i>ārammaṇā-dhipati</i>          |
| b. Conascence Predominance         | <i>sahajātā-dhipati</i>          |
| 4. Proximity Condition             | <i>anantara-paccayo</i>          |
| 5. Contiguity Condition            | <i>samanantara-paccayo</i>       |
| 6. Conascence Condition            | <i>sahajāta-paccayo</i>          |
| 7. Mutuality Condition             | <i>aññamañña-paccayo</i>         |
| 8. Support Condition               | <i>nissaya-paccayo</i>           |
| a. Conascence Support              | <i>sahajāta-nissaya</i>          |
| b. Presence Support                | <i>purejāta-nissaya</i>          |
| c. Base-prenascence Support        | <i>vatthu-purejāta-nissaya</i>   |
| d. Base-object-prenascence Support | <i>ārammaṇa-purejāta-nissaya</i> |
| 9. Decisive Support Condition      | <i>upanissaya-paccayo</i>        |
| a. Object Decisive Support         | <i>ārammanūpanissaya</i>         |
| b. Proximity Decisive Support      | <i>anantarūpanissaya</i>         |

c. Natural Decisive Support	<i>pakatūpanissaya</i>
10. Prenascence Condition	<i>purejāta-paccayo</i>
a. Base Prenascence	<i>vatthu-purejāta</i>
b. Object Prenascence	<i>ārammaṇa-purejāta</i>
11. Postnascence Condition	<i>pacchājata-paccayo</i>
12. Repetition Condition	<i>āsevana-paccayo</i>
13. Kamma Condition	<i>kamma-paccayo</i>
14. Result Condition	<i>vipāka-paccayo</i>
15. Nutriment Condition	<i>āhāra-paccayo</i>
a. Material Nutriment	<i>kabalīkārāhāra</i>
b. Mental Nutriment	<i>manosañcetanāhāra</i>
16. Faculty Condition	<i>indriya-paccayo</i>
a. Prenascence Faculty	<i>purejātindriya</i>
b. Material Life Faculty	<i>rūpajīvitindriya</i>
c. Conascence Faculty	<i>sahajātindriya</i>
17. Jhāna Condition	<i>jhāna-paccayo</i>
18. Path Condition	<i>magga-paccayo</i>
19. Association Condition	<i>sampayutta-paccayo</i>
20. Disassociation Condition	<i>vippayutta-paccayo</i>
a. Conscence Dissociation	<i>sahajāta-vippayutta</i>
b. Prenascence Dissociation	<i>purejāta-vippayutta</i>
c. Postnascence Dissociation	<i>pacchājāta-vippayutta</i>
21. Presence Condition	<i>atthi-paccayo</i>
a. Conascence Presence	<i>sahajātatthi</i>
b. Prenascence Presence	<i>purejātatthi</i>
c. Postnascence Presence	<i>pacchājātatthi</i>

d. Nutriment Presence	<i>āhāratthi</i>
e. Faculty Presence	<i>indriyatthi</i>
22. Absence Condition	<i>natthi-paccayo</i>
23. Disappearance Condition	<i>vigata-paccayo</i>
24. Non-disappearance Condition	<i>avigata-paccayo</i>

## 1. Root Condition (*Hetu-paccayo*)

The first one of them is called *Hetu-paccayo*. The English translation is Root Condition. I hope you know what “roots” here refer to. What are the roots? There are six roots: *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha* in the unwholesome case, and *alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha* in the wholesome case<sup>11</sup>. *Alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha* are the opposites of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, respectively. Just as roots of a tree keep the tree stable and firm, these six mental states known as roots keep their concomitants firmly on the object. That is why they are called roots (*hetu*).

For example, when you are attached to something or somebody, your mind is firmly stuck to or dependent on that object because of *lobha* and its concomitant mind and mental factors. So, *lobha* is like a root there.

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<sup>11</sup> 1. The Pali word 'lobha' refers to the certain mental factor that covers greed, selfishness, attachment, craving, sensual desire, romantic love, family love and so on.  
 2. 'Dosa' includes such mental states as anger, hatred, aversion, impatience, etc., in an active sense, and fear, worry, anxiety, frustration, depression, etc., in a passive sense.  
 3. 'Moha' includes ignorance, delusion, illusion, confusion, wondering thoughts and so on.  
 4. 'Alobha' covers unselfishness, contentment, non-attachment, generosity, moderation, and so on.  
 5. 'Adosa' refers to such mental states as non-hatred, kindness, forgiveness, forbearance, pure love, and so on.  
 6. 'Amoha' includes wisdom, understanding, intellectual knowledge, insight knowledge, enlightenment and so on.

You know, *lobha* never arises alone, but always together with its concomitant mind and mental factors. When there is an incidence of thought<sup>12</sup> accompanied by *lobha*, we can understand *lobha* as the condition in that case. So, *lobha* is a condition for its concomitant mind<sup>13</sup> (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasika*) by means of Root Condition (*Hetu-paccayo*).

When you practice meditation, there arises a series of wholesome thoughts. Those thoughts are accompanied by three roots, or sometimes by two of the three roots: *alobha*, *adosa* and *amoha*. In that case, if you take *alobha* as the condition, then its concomitant mind and mental factors are those that are conditioned. If you take *adosa* or *amoha* as condition, then the other mental factors and consciousness are the conditioned phenomena. Thus, *alobha* is a condition for its concomitant mind and mental factors by means of *Hetu* Condition. The same is true for *adosa* and *amoha*.

Mere awareness of sense-objects, however, is not related to any root. So we see something. It means there arises seeing consciousness in our eyes, which is mere aware of visible object, and not related to any of the roots. In other words, it is not by Root Condition that we see something or someone. But seeing consciousness will be accompanied by wholesome or unwholesome mental states that are related to corresponding roots, of course. The same is true with remaining sense consciousness: hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching.

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<sup>12</sup> "Thought" here refers to a complete set of mind-moment that includes consciousness and its concomitant mental factors.

<sup>13</sup> Here, two words, mind and consciousness, will be used synonymously

## 2. Object Condition (*Ārammaṇa-paccayo*)

What is the second condition? *Ārammaṇa-paccayo* (Object Condition). Let us say when we see something, then there is the seeing consciousness and the visible object. Along with the seeing consciousness, there come other mental states. In this case, the visible object is related to seeing consciousness in terms of Object Condition. That means seeing consciousness only arises when there is something to be seen. That something to be seen or what is seen is an Object Condition for the seeing consciousness to arise. So seeing consciousness and what is seen are related by means of Object Condition.

You hear something and there arises hearing consciousness in your ears. How are they related? They are related by way of Object Condition. In the same way, it is by means of Object Condition that smell is related to smelling consciousness; taste to tasting consciousness; touch to touching consciousness; and mind-object to the mind.

Everything in the world can serve as an object for our consciousness. So, the Object Condition is available anywhere in the world. When we are aware of something, it means our mind takes that thing as an object. It can be physical, mental or conceptual. So, everything in the world can be related to our consciousness by means of Object Condition.

## 3. Predominance Condition (*Adhipati-paccayo*)

The third condition is Predominance Condition called *Adhipati-paccayo*. The literal meaning of the word “*adhipati*” is an overlord. It is of two kinds:

1. Object Predominance: It is a powerful object that exercises its influence over the thoughts.

2. **Conscience Predominance:** It is a predominant mental state that influences its corresponding concomitants.

## **Object Predominance**

There are objects that are not ordinary, but so predominant that they overwhelm our minds. Suppose, for example, we see the Buddha with all his glory. For Buddhists, the Buddha is a very powerful object that can exercise predominance on our mind. Such is called Object Predominance Condition. In the unwholesome case, there are very desirable objects that dominate our minds. These objects are related to our minds by means of Object Predominance Condition.

Sometimes, an object may not be very desirable, but we may be very much attached to it. We want to possess it desperately. We think of it all the time. Such object also forms a predominant condition for our mind. The relationship between that object and our mind is by means of Predominance Condition.

## **Conscience Predominance**

The second kind of Predominance Condition refers to the four predominant mental states: will (*chanda*), effort (*vīriya*), mind (*citta*), and wisdom or knowledge (*vimarāsa*). One of these four can dominate all its corresponding mental states.

For example, we have a very strong will (not attachment), say, to practice meditation. This wholesome will or desire may become predominant. In this case, the wholesome desire forms the Predominant Condition for its concomitant mind and mental factors that arise together with it. So, this condition is called Conascent Predominance.

Remaining predominant mental states (namely, effort, consciousness, and knowledge) can become predominant factors. They can become predominant only one at a time. That is because they are like a head of state. There can be only one head of a state, such as president, at a time. In the same way, there can be only one predominant factor at a time. When any one of the four predominant mental factors becomes a leading one, then there is Predominance Condition.

#### **4. Proximity Condition (*Anantara-paccayo*)**

##### **The Literal Meaning of “*Anantara*”**

The next one is *Anantara-paccayo* translated as Proximity Condition. The English translation by itself may not have much meaning, but it is convenient when we want to refer to this condition. However, we need to understand the real meaning of the word. The English word “proximity” means close or near, but the word “*anantara*” actually means no gap, no intervening. It is composed of two words *na* and *antara*, which mean “no” and “gap,” respectively. It refers to the density of mental process with no gap in between.

When one consciousness arises, it lasts only for a split second and then disappears. Immediately after its disappearance, there arises another consciousness. Between the first consciousness and the second one, there is no gap. There is nothing intervening between them. If the first consciousness were not to disappear, then the second consciousness would not get a chance to arise. So, the disappearance of the previous consciousness means to give a chance for the succeeding consciousness to arise. For example, it is something like you give this seat to

another person. So long as you are on this seat, another person cannot take it. Only when you move away from that seat, can the other person take that seat. That is what is meant by *Anantara* Condition (Proximity Condition). So, it is giving up your position so that another may take your place. There is *Anantara* Condition only between preceding and succeeding moments of consciousness.

When I teach the thought processes, I use a diagram that contains the sequence of mind-moments. Sometimes, students may think that a thought process occurs as a connected line. Of course, any thought process is composed of different kinds of successive consciousnesses functioning with the same object. They happen so fast that it seems that they occur at the same time. But, in reality, no two consciousnesses arise at the same moment.

So *Anantara* Condition refers to every preceding consciousness (mind-moment) that disappears giving a chance to its succeeding one to arise in the mental process (*vīthi*). This also means every preceding mental state has already disappeared when it serves as a condition for its succeeding one. So, this Proximity Condition is actually the same in essence as the Disappearance Condition that will come later.

## **5. Contiguity Condition (*Samanantara-paccayo*)**

The next one is Contiguity Condition, which is identical with Proximity Condition. There is no difference in essence between the two. Then, why does this Condition jump in if the two are identical? It is explained in our Commentaries that, when the Buddha taught, he took into consideration the disposition of the audience. Some of his audience may be well-acquainted with the name "*anantara*," but others



with “*samanantara*,” depending on their past experience. To suit the different temperaments of his audience, he used different names for one and the same condition. That is why there is some repetition in these 24 Conditions.

## **6. Conascence Condition (*Sahajāta-paccayo*)**

The next one is Conascence Condition (*Sahajāta-paccayo*). “*Saha*” means together. “*Jāta*” means to arise or to exist. “*Sahajāta*” means arising together or existing together. In order to have this kind of condition, things must be together, things must arise together, and they must exist together. So any one of them is taken as the condition for the remaining ones.

For example, let’s take consciousness and mental factors. One consciousness (*citta*) arises along with its concomitant mental factors (*cetasika*). If the consciousness is taken as conditioning factor, its concomitant mental factors are taken as conditioned factors. Or, we can pick up one of the mental factors (*cetasika*) as condition and then the other concomitant mental factors and consciousness are those that are conditioned. They must arise and exist together at the same time. They must be present at a given time.

Since the basis of this condition is to arise and exist together, there can be *Sahajāta* Condition between mental states, between mind and matter, and between matter and matter. Different particles of matter arise together and exist together. Mind and some matter also arise together and exist together. So, there can be *Sahajāta* Condition between mind and mind, mind and matter, matter and matter.

## 7. Mutuality Condition (*Aññamañña-paccayo*)

When things arise together, in certain cases, one serves a condition and the others as something conditioned. But, in other cases, they are conditions in a mutual manner. That means they can condition each other or one another. So when there is such a reciprocal condition, we call it *aññamañña-paccaya* or Mutuality Condition or Reciprocity Condition.

In order to get the Mutuality Condition, things must arise together and exist together and serve as a condition for each other in a reciprocal manner. So the Mutuality Condition is narrower in scope than the Conascence Condition because, in the case of Conascence Condition, things arise together, but not necessarily condition each other in a reciprocal manner.

Now, I hope you know the 28 Material Properties (*rūpa*). Even if you don't know them in detail, I hope you know roughly that they include four Primary elements and 24 Dependent ones. They arise and exist together. So there is Conascence Condition between them, but no Mutuality Condition between the four Primary and the 24 Dependents, since the latter are always dependent upon the former. Among the four primary elements that arise and exist together, however, there is a mutual condition. When one is conditioning, the other three are conditioned. That is the difference between Conascence and Mutuality.

So Mutuality Condition is available only between mind and mind, and between matter and matter, but not between mind and matter. They do not condition reciprocally, although there is very close interaction between mind and matter by means of other conditions, such as Strong Support Condition (*pakatūpa-nissaya*) that will come later.

## **8. Support Condition (*Nissaya-paccayo*)**

The next condition is Support Condition (*Nissaya-paccayo*). “*Nissaya*” means something upon which some other things depend or rely. For instance, when you are sitting on a seat, the seat is your *nissaya*. When you are leaning against a wall, the wall is your *nissaya*. So, “*nissaya*” means something on which something else depends or relies. In other words, it is something that serves as a support for something else. That is why it is translated as Support Condition or Dependence Condition.

When you see something, for example, there is the thing to be seen, there is the seeing consciousness, there are the eyes. In this case, seeing consciousness depends on what to be seen. That means, if there is nothing to be seen, seeing consciousness will not arise. So the object to be seen is a Support Condition (*nissaya-paccayo*) for seeing consciousness. Also, seeing consciousness depends upon our eyes. If we have no eyes, we will not see or seeing consciousness will not arise. So the eyes (to be exact, the sensitive physical phenomena in the eyes) also form a Support Condition for seeing consciousness. Therefore, the seeing consciousness is supported by visible objects and eyes-bases.

### **Two Kinds of Support (*nissaya*)**

The Support Condition can be understood in two ways: by means of Conascence and by means of Prenascence. Conascence Support is among phenomena that arise and exist together. As for Prenascence Support, it is constituted of sense-bases and sense-objects that arise a few moments ahead of their corresponding consciousnesses, so that the former can be well-established enough to support the

latter. For instance, the visible form and eye-base need to arise a few mind-moments ahead, so that they can be well-established enough to support the seeing consciousness that comes a few mind-moments later.

## **9. Strong Support Condition (*Upanissaya-paccayo*):**

The next condition is *upanissaya-paccayo*. It is normally translated as Decisive Support. In the word “*upa-nissaya*” the prefix “*upa*” literally means powerful or strong, and “*nissaya*” means support. So, “*upa-nissaya*” literally means powerful support or strong support.

### **Three Kinds of Strong Support (*upanissaya*)**

Strong Support Condition is of three kinds. The first one is Strong Support of Proximity Condition (*Anantara-upanissaya*), which is comprised of preceding mental states that support to their succeeding ones by means of Proximity Condition. The second is Strong Support of Sense-object Condition (*Arammana-upanissaya*), which is constituted of the sense-objects that arise a few moments ahead and support their corresponding sense-consciousnesses by means of Sense-object Condition. So, wherever there is Proximity Condition or Sense-object Condition, there is always Strong Support Condition, too.

The third kind is very wide. Under this condition, there comes almost everything in the world. Merit can support demerit, and vice versa. Supported by merit we may do demerit, and supported by demerit we may do merit. For example, we did something wrong in the past. Thinking of that demerit, we may try to counterbalance that demerit by doing merit now. So our present merit is supported by our past demerit. Thus, demerit can become a Strong Support

Condition for merit. Let us say that you do something good and you get merit. Later depending on that merit, you may have demerit. For example, you may offer something to somebody you think is very virtuous. Later you find out he is a wicked person, then you are very disappointed. That disappointment is demerit. That demerit is supported by your merit (generosity).

So this third *Upanissaya* Condition is very wide and it can be applied to almost any condition in the world. A friend can also be this kind of *Upanissaya* Condition. Depending upon a friend, we may do some demerit or we may do some merit. Our merit or demerit is conditioned by that friend.

Sometimes our merit or demerit may be conditioned by the food we eat. Some food may cause us to get merit or demerit depending on how we think of it.

Also, climate or weather can serve as Strong Support Condition (*upanissaya*). Sometimes, for example, the weather is too hot, we may be angry with that and we have demerit. Sometimes the weather is good and we enjoy it. Then, we may have another kind of demerit, the attachment. Or, sometimes we may take weather just as it comes without any like or dislike, then we may get merit developing tranquility and equilibrium. In this case, even the external things like weather, food, etc., can serve as Strong Support Condition for our merit and demerit. They can condition our minds and bodies to have merit or demerit in our hearts.

Since it is so wide, it can explain all kinds of relationships. If we cannot think of any other condition, we just say, "Oh, there must be Strong Support Condition (*upanissaya*)."  
That is because nothing can be irrelevant to this condition.

So *Upanissaya* is of two kinds: one is explained in an

ultimate sense (*Abhidhamma*) and another in a conventional sense (*Suttanta*). In a conventional sense, everything can be a condition for everything else. So, if we cannot explain something in terms of *Abhidhamma*, we can explain it in terms of *Suttanta*.

## 10. Prenascence Condition (*Purejāta-paccayo*)

The next condition is *Purejāta-paccayo* (Prenascence Condition). I have already explained *Purejāta* in connection with *Nissaya*. “*Pure*” means ahead, and “*jāta*” means having arisen. So, *pure-jata* means the conditioning phenomena that have arisen ahead of the conditioned.

*Abhidhamma* says that matter lives 17 times longer than mind (any kind of mental state). When we say we see an object, we mean there is seeing consciousness. Actually, the object we see has arisen for three or four mind-moments ahead of our seeing consciousness. In this case, therefore, the visible object serves as a condition for the seeing consciousness by Prenascence Condition. Moreover, the seeing consciousness arises depending upon the eye sensitivity which has also arisen three or four mind-moments ahead of it. So the eye-sensitivity also forms a condition for the seeing consciousness by means of Prenascence Condition.

I hope you will notice that, when there is Prenascence Condition, there is also Support Condition. The eye consciousness takes place depending on a visible object and eye sensitivity. In other words, the visible object and eye sensitivity serve as a base for seeing consciousness to arise. Thus, the visible object and the eye sensitivity are conditioning the seeing consciousness by way of Prenascence and Support Conditions.

**Prenascence and Presence:** Also, I think you noticed that the phenomena involved in Support and Prenascence exist simultaneously or concurrently, although the conditioning phenomena have arisen ahead of the conditioned. In other words, both conditioning and conditioned phenomena are still in present when the former serves as a condition for the latter. Therefore, wherever there is Prenascence Condition, there is always Presence Condition (*Atthi-paccayo*), the number 21 that will come later.

## **11. Post-nascence Condition (*Pacchājāta-paccayo*)**

The next one is *Pacchājāta-paccayo*. “*Pacchā*” means later and “*jāta*” means arising. Under this condition, the conditioning phenomena arise later than the conditioned. It is the opposite of *Purejāta*. So, in *Pacchājāta*, what is to be conditioned arises first and then what will condition arises later.

In this relation, conditioning phenomena are mind (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasika*), and the conditioned are physical phenomena (*rūpa*). All the physical phenomena in our bodies, as mentioned before, arise and last 17 mind-moments. So they will exist concurrently with the mental states that will come into existence 1 to 16 mind-moments later. Thus, it is by Post-nascence Condition that the physical phenomena that have already arisen are conditioned (sustained or vitalized) by the mental phenomena that will come into existence later.

This condition is explained in the Commentaries by the analogy of a species of vultures. It is said that the parent vultures do not feed their babies, but the babies survive anyway with the hope that their parents would bring food sooner or later. That hope, it is said in our books, supports

their physical body until they are old enough to find food for themselves.

## 12. Repetition Condition (*āsevana-paccayo*)

Repetition Condition (*Āsevana-paccayo*): Here, “*āsevana*” means doing or experiencing something repeatedly. So, the English translation repetition is quite appropriate.

In order for something to be repeated, there must be something identical. Only when something identical is found or arises again, do we say it is repeated. For example, when you repeat something or when you say a formula, you repeat the identical words again and again. So, in order for anything or any *dhamma* to have *āsevana* condition, it must repeat itself. It must arise again and again.

Do you remember which consciousness repeats itself, or arises again and again? There are certain types of consciousness that normally repeat up to seven times. What are they? *Javanas*, which include wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) consciousnesses. Many other types of consciousness never repeat this way, but arise and disappear and are immediately succeeded by another type of consciousness. Only these wholesome and unwholesome types of consciousness normally repeat themselves seven times. Actually, there are another kinds of wholesome consciousnesses known as functional minds (*kriya*) that also normally repeat seven times, but they are unique only to a fully enlightened person (*arahant*). Let's just talk about these two types of wholesome and unwholesome consciousnesses, which arise seven times under normal conditions.

Now, visualize a type of consciousness repeating itself



for seven times. In other words, imagine seven mind-moments of the same type of consciousness that arise successively. Let us say them in ordinal number, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The second is identical to the first. The third is identical to the first and second, and so on. All these seven moments of consciousness are identical.

When there is no first consciousness, there can be no second, there can be no third. The first one, when it disappears, it gives something of it to the second. That is why it is called repeated. So, the first one is the Repetition Condition for the second one because if there is no first one, there can be no second one. The second one is the Repetition Condition for the third and so on. The sixth is the Repetition Condition for the seventh. After the seventh, there is another kind of consciousness. In that case there is no Repetition Condition. So, among the seven moments of wholesome or unwholesome consciousness, the first six have Repetition Condition. The seventh one does not because it is not followed by an identical type of consciousness. It is followed by different type of consciousness.

You may have noticed in this Repetition Condition that Proximity Condition is also involved. "Proximity Condition" refers to each and every preceding mind-moment that disappears and allows the next one to arise. Here also the first consciousness disappears allowing the second consciousness to arise. Since it is *kusala* or *akusala*, it has power to impart or convey some of its force or energy to the second<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> When wholesome or unwholesome mental states disappear, they always leave their force in dormant form in our mental process (*vīthi*). These dormant forces are relayed from one mind-unit to the next by this condition (which is also known by four other names: *anantara*, *samanantara*, *natthi*, *vigata*). The dormant forces include wholesome force (*parami*), unwholesome force (*anusaya*), volitional force (*kamma*), habit (*vāsanā*), like and dislike (*ajjhāsaya*), personality (*cārita*), past-life memory (*jāṭissara-nāṇa*) and so on.

### 13. Kamma Condition (*Kamma-Paccayo*)

**Definition of Kamma:** The next one is Kamma Condition (*Kamma-Paccayo*). You all know what *Kamma* is. *Kamma* is volition, right? There are 52 mental factors. One of them is called *cetanā*, which is translated as volition. Buddha once said: “*Cetanā* is what I call *kamma*.” So “*kamma*” means the volition, a certain kind of mental state that leads all our actions: action by body, action by speech, or action in the mind. Literally “*kamma*” means an action. Strictly speaking, an action means volition that leads an action.

**Two Kinds of Kamma:** The volition has two functions. The first function is to contribute to its concomitant consciousness and mental factors at its current moment (Conscience *Kamma* condition, *saha-jāta kamma*). The second function is to give the corresponding results some time in the future (*Asynchronous Kamma*, *nānākkhaṇika-kamma*).

**Conscience Kamma:** You know volition accompanies each and every of all the 89 types of consciousness. So we can say there are 89 types of volition. All the 89 volitions contribute to their corresponding consciousness and mental factors at their current moment. This kind of *kammic* function is called Conscience Kamma Condition (*saha-jāta*).

**Asynchronous Kamma:** The second function is to give result some time in the future when conditions are met. This function is with only 33 out of 89 kinds of volition. They are the volitions that accompany 12 kinds of unwholesome

and 21 kinds of wholesome consciousness. Like any other kind of mental state, these volitions disappear immediately after their arising. When they disappear, however, they leave certain kind of potential behind. We don't know where that potential is stored. It is like the potential of fire in the match. We cannot say there is fire in the match, but there is potential. In the same way, we cannot say where the kammic potential is stored, but there is the *kammic* potential. When conditions are favorable, they will give corresponding results. That potential is what we really call "*kamma*." So, here conditioning factor is the volition (*cetanā*), and the results conditioned by it may arise later, years later or many lives later. So the conditioning and the conditioned belong to different times. This kind of kamma is called *nānākhaṇḍika-kamma*, which is translated to English as *Asynchronous Kamma*.

So among the 89 kinds of volitions, the 33 have both functions: to contribute to their concomitant mind and mental factors at their current moment, and to leave *kammic* potential that will give the corresponding results some time in the future. The remaining 56 do only the first kind of function. We should understand these two kinds of *Kamma*.

#### **14. Result Condition (*Vipāka-Paccaya*)**

The next one is *Vipāka Paccaya* (Result Condition). The word "*vipāka*" means result. *Kamma* gives results that include consciousnesses, mental factors, and material properties. The material properties such as eye-sensitivity, etc., are the result of *kamma*. But they are not included in *Vipāka* Condition in this context because the word "*vipāka*" here refers to identical results. That means, if the cause

is mental, the result must also be mental phenomena, not a material ones. So *Vipāka* Condition belongs to consciousnesses and mental factors only, but not to material properties although certain kinds of them are caused by *kamma*.

Resultant consciousnesses and mental factors that take place together serve as a mutual condition for one another by means of Result Condition.

## 15. Nutriment Condition (*Āhāra-paccayo*)

**Four Kinds of Nutriment:** The next one is Nutriment Condition (*Āhāra-paccayo*). Generally, “*āhāra*” means food. We can find Nutriment Condition in what are called foods. I hope you remember what *āhāra* (nutriments) are. How many *āhāra* are there? You are going to be Well-informed Buddhists, you must give the answer. There is material nutriment (*kabalīkāra-āhāra*). And then what is another kind of nutriment? It is mental nutriment that includes three mental factors: mental contact (*phassa*), volition (*cetanā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). So, all together there are four kinds of phenomena called *āhāra*.

**Material Nutriment:** In the food we eat, there is what we call nutriment or nutrition (*āhāra*) that can produce other material properties. So, nutrition is *Āhāra* Condition and the material properties caused by that nutrition are the conditioned.

**Mental Āhāra:** When consciousness and mental factors arise together, they always involve consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mental contact (*phassa*), and volition (*cetanā*).

When one of them serves as an *Āhāra* Condition, then the others and also their concomitants are the conditioned, and vice versa. When another one is an *Āhāra* Condition, the remaining ones are conditioned, and so on.

## **16. Faculty Condition (*Indriya-paccayo*)**

The next one is Faculty Condition (*Indriya-paccayo*). How many Faculties (*indriya*) are there? There are phenomena that are called *indriya*. According to the list, they are 22 in number. You look at the notes later. Among them some are material and others are mental. Most of them are called Faculty Condition.

### **Mental Faculties**

First, let us talk about the Mental Faculties. They are eight in number: life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*), consciousness (*manindriya*), feeling (*vedanindriya*), faith or confidence (*saddhindriya*), effort or energy (*vīriyindriya*), mindfulness (*satindriya*), concentration (*samādhindriya*), and knowledge (*paññindriya*). When certain kinds of mind and its mental factors take place together, certain kinds of mental faculties get involved.

Let us say there is the first unwholesome consciousness. How many mental factors (*cetasika*) go along with it? There are 19. They involve such mental faculties as consciousness (*manindriya*), feeling (*vedanindriya*), life faculty (*jīvitindriya*), and so on. They serve as a condition for their concomitant mind and mental factors by means of Faculty Condition.

### **Material Faculties**

Material Faculties include material properties such

as eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, and so on. We can see nothing unless we have eyes (eye-sensitivity). So when we see something or someone, there is eye-sensitivity as a Faculty Condition. So, seeing consciousness and its concomitant mental factors are conditioned by eye-sensitivity by means of Faculty Condition. The same is true with hearing, which is conditioned by ear-sensitivity by means of Faculty Condition, and so on.

There is a certain kind of material phenomenon called “Material Life-faculty” (*rūpa-jīvitindriya*). This material faculty vitalizes the *kamma*-generated physical phenomena in our bodies by means of Faculty Condition.

## 17. Jhāna Condition (*Jhāna-paccayo*)

The next one is *Jhāna-paccayo*. As you have already learned, there are five *jhāna* factors: initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), rapture (*pīti*), pleasure (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*). They are called *jhāna* factors because they help the mind to focus on the sense-objects. So they are not only associated with *jhāna* consciousness, but with any type of consciousness except the five pairs of sense-consciousnesses such as seeing consciousness, etc.

As an example, let's take the first unwholesome consciousness. It is accompanied by 19 mental factors including five *jhānic* factors: initial application, sustained application, rapture, pleasant feeling, and concentration. We can take one of them as *Jhāna* Condition and the others are those that are conditioned by that *jhāna* factor.

## 18. Path Condition (*magga-paccayo*)

Next is Path Condition (*magga-paccayo*). “*Magga*”

literally means path that leads us to somewhere. In the same way, there are certain kinds of mental factors known as Path, which lead us to certain states noble or ignoble. Among them, the certain kinds of wholesome mental factors known as Noble Eightfold Path lead us to *Nibbāna*. That is why these factors, as a whole or by each individual, are called *Magga*.

How many *Magga* factors are there? You know the Noble Eightfold Path, right? It is eightfold, so there are eight factors. When I say "*Magga*," you may always think of these eightfold factors. Actually, there are 12 *Magga* factors. Four of them are unwholesome, namely, wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), wrong thought (*micchā-sankappa*), wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*), and wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhī*). So there are 12 *Magga* factors altogether, the eight that lead to *Nibbāna* and the four that lead to ignoble states.

When you pick up the mental factors represented by them, however, there are only nine *Magga* factors in *Abhidhamma* terms. That is because right thought and wrong thought are the same mental factor called "*vitakka*" in *Abhidhamma* terms. Wrong effort and right effort are "*vīriya*." Wrong concentration and right concentration are "*ekaggatā*." So although there are four unwholesome *Magga* factors, when we count them in *Abhidhamma* terms, we only get one new factor, wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), which is a separate mental factor.

So, when I ask you how many *Magga* factors are there, the answer should be nine. Right? There are nine *Magga* factors in *Abhidhamma* terms. There are the eight regular ones plus wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). These are called the factors of *Magga* (*maggaṅga*). They serve as *Magga* Condition.

Again, let us look at the first unwholesome consciousness and its 19 concomitant mental factors. Is there *Magga* Condition there? Yes, because there are wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), wrong thought (*vitakka*), wrong effort (*vīriya*), and wrong concentration (*ekaggatā*). These four mental factors serve as a *Magga* Condition there. So, if we take wrong view as the *Magga* Condition, its concomitant consciousness and 18 other mental factors are those conditioned by it. If we take wrong effort (*vīriya*) as *Magga* Condition, then the remaining mental states are those that are conditioned by it.

## 19. Association Condition (*Sampayutta-paccayo*)

The next one is *Sampayutta-paccayo*. “*Sampayutta*” means association. “Association” here means arising together, perishing together, having the same object, and depending on the same base. The phenomena are said to be associated if they have these four characteristics in common. In this sense, only consciousnesses and mental factors can have this kind of condition, *Sampayutta-paccayo*. That is because it is only consciousnesses and their concomitant mental factors that can arise together, perish together, have the same object, and depend on the same base.

Let’s take again the first unwholesome consciousness and its 19 concomitant mental factors. We can pick anyone of them as the conditioning factor and the remaining ones as the conditioned factors. In other words, any one of them can form the Association Condition for the remaining ones.

## 20. Non-association Condition (*Vippayutta-paccayo*)

The next one is Non-Association (*Vippayutta-paccayo*). It is the opposite of *Sampayutta-paccayo*. Mental states and



material phenomena may arise at the same moment, but they do not perish at the same moment. Material phenomena are said to have life for 17 mind-moments. In other words, they lives 17 times longer than consciousness. So they may arise together at the same moment, but they do not perish together. The mind perishes first and, then, the matter 16 moments later. So, although they may arise together, they are not called associated. So Non-Association Condition is available between mind and matter.

### **Non-association between Matters?**

What about between matters? They do not have the four characteristics, taking the same object, and depending on the same base, and so on. So, can there be Non-association Condition between one matter and another matter? It would seem that there is, but the books say “no.”

There is a saying: “Wherever there is negation, there is some kind of doubt or suspicion”. I will give you an analogy. Let us say, you pick up a rock. You or anybody will not say this rock is not gold because it is too obvious. Nobody will think this rock is gold. So, you do not have to negate it because it is too obvious. But, if you pick up a brass thing and it looks like gold and somebody may suspect that it is gold, then you say, “No, this is not gold.” There is negation. Wherever there is negation, there is doubt or suspicion involved. Only when there is some kind of doubt or suspicion, do you negate, do you say “no.” Between one matter and another matter, there is no such doubt whether they are associated in terms of Association Condition. Therefore, we do not say that they belong to Non-Association Condition.

Only between mental states and matter is there such suspicion. Mental states can produce material phenomena.

There are four causes of matter: *kamma*, mind, temperature, and food. When mind produces matter, they arise together. When they arise together, there is the suspicion they may be associated in terms of Association Condition. So we need to say, "They are related under Non-association Condition."

## **21. Presence Condition (*Atthi-paccayo*)**

The next one is Presence Condition (*Atthi-paccayo*). "Presence" means existing. In order to have the Presence Condition, both the conditioning and the conditioned factors must exist at the same moment.

Actually, I explained this point regarding the previous conditions, such as Conascence, Support, Prenascence, and so on. There is Conascence Condition among the phenomena that arise and exist together. So, where there is Conascence Condition, there is also Presence Condition. In the same way, where there is Support Condition and Prenascence Condition, there is Presence Condition, too. For example, eye consciousness takes place depending upon the eye (the eye-sensitivity) and visible object. So both the eye and the object must be present for the eye consciousness to arise. Hence, where there is Support or Prenascence there is this Presence Condition, too.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Condition (i.e., Non-Disappearance Condition (*Avigata-paccayo*)) is actually the same as this Presence Condition. Presence and Non-Disappearance mean the same thing.

## **22. Absence Condition (*Natthi-paccayo*)**

The number 22 condition is Absence Condition (*Natthi-paccayo*). It is the opposite of the number 21, Presence Condition. This 22 and the 23 (i.e., Disappearance

Condition (*Vigata-paccayo*)) are the same, in essence. There is a very subtle difference between these two, but we will leave it alone now. Let us take it that they are the same. This number 22, Absence Condition, belongs to mental phenomena, which disappear and allow their succeeding ones to take over their place. It refers to Proximity Condition (*Anantara-paccayo*) or the number 4 condition. So the conditions 4, 22 and 23 are similar. Wherever there is one of them, there are the other two, too.

Now, we have come to the end of the 24 Conditions. If you don't understand the details, don't worry. I just want you to have the general idea of what *Paṭṭhāna* means. In order to fully understand the *Paṭṭhāna*, you need to have studied *Abhidhamma*.

The general idea of *Paṭṭhāna* you need to have is that one thing happen depending upon many other things. Everything is related to everything else. They are related in several different ways, not just in one or two ways. That is all you need to know.

## **Paṭṭhāna In Daily Life**

Now, we will pick up a specific incident in daily life, and see how many conditions we can find in that incident. OK? Say, you see a beautiful flower. There is the flower, the object. When you see it, there arises seeing consciousness in you. Along with seeing consciousness, there are seven mental factors. The seeing consciousness and the seven mental factors take place depending on the eyes. At least there are four kinds of phenomena involved in this seeing moment: the sense-object (a beautiful flower), the seeing consciousness, its concomitant mental factors, and the eye-base. Let us try to find out how many conditions available in

this situation. I will ask one by one.

### **1. Root Condition**

Sayadaw: Is there Root Condition? Yes or no?

Students: Yes.

Sayādaw: Why “yes?” It must be “No.”

You have to look at the four phenomena involved in this incident: a flower, seeing consciousness, its mental factors, and the eye. Is there any kind of root available, namely, *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*, or *a-lobha*, *a-dosa*, *a-moha*? No. It is because the seeing consciousness is a no-root mental state (*a-hetuka*), right? So Root Condition is not available in this case.

### **2. Object Condition**

Sayadaw: What about the second condition, I mean, Object Condition?

Students: Yes.

Sayadaw: Right, the flower is the Object Condition.

### **3. Predominance Condition**

Sayadaw: What about Predominance Condition?

Students: Yes.

Sayadaw: No, not really.

Only when you are attached to it, will there be Predominance Condition. At this moment, you are just seeing the object. At the very moment of seeing, it cannot exert pre-

dominance. There is no Sense-object Predominance here. There is no Conscience Predominance either because it can be found only in *javanas* accompanied by two or three roots. There is no Predominance Condition here. If you get it wrong, don't worry.

#### **4. Proximity Condition**

Question: What about Proximity Condition?

Answer: If we are looking at seeing consciousness alone, then we can say there is no Proximity Condition. However, this consciousness arises because its preceding consciousness disappears. And this consciousness, in its turn, will disappear so that another kind of consciousness can arise. So, if we look at not only this one consciousness but also the consciousness before it and after it, then there is Proximity Condition (*anantara-paccayo*) available.

#### **5. Contiguity Condition**

Question: What about number five, *Samanantara*?

Answer: When there is Anantara, there is *Samanantara*.

#### **6. Conscience Condition**

Question: Number six is *Sahajāta* Condition. Is there *Sahajāta* Condition there?

Answer: Yes, because consciousness and mental factors arise together. If one is taken as *Sahajāta* Condition, the others are conditioned by *Sahajāta* Condition. So, there is *Sahajāta* Condition.

## 7. Reciprocity Condition

Question: What about Mutuality or Reciprocity Condition (*Aññamañña*)?

Answer: There is always mutual condition among consciousness and its concomitant mental factors. So, there is also Mutual Condition.

## 8. Support Condition

Question: What about the next one, Support Condition (*Nissaya*)?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Which are supporting phenomena here?

Answer: The seeing consciousness arises depending on the sense-object (the flower in this case), and sense-base (eye-sensitivity in this case). The sense-object and sense-base serve as the Support Condition (*nissaya*) for the seeing consciousness. And then the consciousness and its mental factors arise together and support each other. So there are also Conascence and Support Conditions among them.

## 9. Decisive Support Condition

Then next is Decisive Support Condition. If we take it that there is Proximity Condition, there is also Decisive Support Condition, because Proximity Condition is one of the three kinds of Decisive Support Condition.

## 10. Prenascence Condition

What about Prenascence Condition (*Purejāta*)? Yes.

The seeing consciousness is conditioned by the visible object and eye-base that arise 16 mind-moments ahead of it. So, in this particular case, the flower and our eyes serve as Prenascence Condition.

### **11. Postnascence Condition**

What about Postnascence Condition (*Pacchājāta*)? When a consciousness and its concomitant mental factors arise, they always support whatever physical phenomena are there in the body at that very moment. So, when the seeing consciousness arises, it supports the material properties that are produced by one cause, two, three or four causes (*kamma, citta, utu, āhāra*). So there is Postnascence Condition, too.

### **12. Repetition Condition**

The next one is *Āsevana*. Is there *Āsevana* Condition (Repetition Condition)? No.

### **13. Kamma Condition**

What about *Kamma* Condition? There are two kinds of *Kamma*: Conascence *Kamma* and Asynchronous *Kamma*. Which one is available here? Here, only Conascence *Kamma* is available, but not the Asynchronous *Kamma*. So, the volition that accompanies the seeing consciousness serves as a Conascence *Kamma* for its concomitant seeing consciousness and other mental factors.

### **14. Resultant Condition**

Is there Resultant Condition? Seeing consciousness is a resultant consciousness. So there is Resultant Condition. When there is a resultant consciousness, there is Resultant

Condition. It refers to the resultant mental states that are mutually conditioned, but not to resultant phenomena that are conditioned by *kamma*. In the case of *kamma* and its resultant phenomena, there is only *Kamma* Condition, but not Resultant Condition. Seeing consciousness and its concomitant mental factors are resultant phenomena. They are mutually related by means of Resultant Condition.

### 15. Āhāra Condition

What about *Āhāra* Condition? Yes. In the case of seeing, there are consciousness, volition, and mental contact. These three are a *Āhāra* Condition for their concomitant phenomena.

### 16. Faculty Condition

The next one is Faculty Condition. Is this condition available when we see something or someone? Yes, because there are consciousness (*manindriya*), life faculty (*jīvitindriya*), and feeling (*vedanindriya*). These three mental faculties are a condition for their concomitant phenomena.

### 17. Jhāna Condition

OK. What about *Jhāna* Condition? The right answer here is “no.” There is no *Jhāna* Condition for no-root mental states. The five pairs of sense consciousness (two seeing consciousness, two hearing consciousness, etc.,) are no-root consciousnesses. Therefore, although two mental factors (feeling and concentration) are involved in seeing, they are not qualified as *jhāna* factors, because rootless mental states are too weak to be so.

### 18. Path Condition

What about Path? It is said that Path Condition cannot



be available for the 18 Rootless mental states. So there is no Path Condition here.

### **Why Jhāna and Magga Not Available?**

The reason for no *Jhāna* Condition is that seeing consciousness includes no Initial Application (*vitakka*) which is a requirement to be *Jhāna* Condition. That is why there is no *Jhāna* Condition. There is no Path Condition because, in order to be Path Condition, there must be roots. Since they are without roots, they cannot have Path Condition, although there are kind of Path factors arising together with seeing consciousness.

### **19. Association Condition:**

Next is Association Condition. Is there Association Condition? Yes, because there is consciousness and its concomitant mental factors.

### **20. Disassociation Condition:**

Is there Disassociation condition? No. Although there is *rūpa* as an object, there is no suspicion that they are associated. So, there is no Disassociation Condition here.

### **21-22. Present and Absence:**

Is there Present Condition? Yes. How about Absence Condition? We can say “yes,” or “no” because when it disappears, it becomes Absence Condition. But when it is existing, there is no Absence Condition.

### **23-24. Disappearance and Non-disappearance:**

The next two are Disappearance and Non-disappear-

ance conditions. Where there is Absence Condition, there is Disappearance Condition; and, where there is Present Condition, there is Non-disappearance Condition. That is because they are the same.

### **The Message I Want to Bring to You:**

The message I want to bring to you from this given example is how much we can understand from such a simple experience. It is very common. We are seeing things every day. So we don't think of it as a complex experience. We see something and that's all there is to it. If we apply our very small knowledge of *Paṭṭhāna* to it, we would know how complex a seemingly simple experience is. According to the *Paṭṭhāna* teaching, now we realize that everything is related to everything else in many ways, not just in one way, not just in two ways, but in many different ways.

So we can imagine how infinite, how immense the wisdom of the Buddha is. If we can understand just this much, how much more the Buddha would have understood! The more we know about the teachings, the more we adore the Buddha and the more we have respect for him and for his infinite wisdom.

When you have such respect for the Buddha, such appreciation of his infinite wisdom, then you have very firm faith and confidence in the Buddha and his teachings. Your faith may become almost unshakable. I say "almost" because the faith belongs to common people cannot be always unshakable.

We can also appreciate his infinite compassion for beings. He could have just enjoyed his bliss and did nothing because he had already finished his task and reached *Nibbāna*. Instead, he did not do so as much as he would

have liked to, but took the trouble to teach beings. Also, when he died, he left these teachings to his disciples. And those disciples carried the teaching through generations.

So, by understanding his teachings, we realize how important it is to continue to carry his teachings through generations. We are fortunate to be disciples of the Buddha who went through countless rebirths with a great deal of sufferings in order to discover the Noble Truths and teach them to beings. Therefore, we have taken advantage of this good opportunity to learn his teachings in depth. Your knowledge of his teachings is now no longer on the surface. You have penetrated the surface and are going deeper and deeper into the Dhamma.

I know you have many questions. But this is just a taste of *Paṭṭhāna*. I just give you the general idea of what *paṭṭhāna* is. If I have kindled a desire in your hearts to learn more, I think my task is successful.

# THIRTY-SEVEN MEMBERS OF ENLIGHTENMENT (*Bodhi-pakkhiya*)

To become a well-informed Buddhist, I think, we need to learn one more topic. So far, we have learned several topics such as the Five Aggregates, the Twelve Sense Bases, the Eighteen Elements, the Four Noble Truths, and Dependent Origination, and so on. Now I would like to talk about the Thirty-Seven Members of Enlightenment (*bodhi-pakkhiya*).

## **Pāḷi Words Pleasing to Hear**

Read the Pāḷi: "*Bodhi-pakkhiya Dhamma*." If you understand the Pāḷi, I think it is better to use Pāḷi words than the English. Pāḷi words are very pleasing to hear for me.

Last Thursday, a man asked me over the phone if there was a meditation class at the monastery. I said, "No," because I didn't know who he was. In the course of talking, he said he had been practicing for four years and that he came from New York. When we talked, he sometimes used the Pāḷi words "*nimitta*," "*sukha*," "*vipassanā*," and so on. Hearing him using Pāḷi words, I knew he was a serious meditator. I invited him to join us for a sitting hour from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm. He came at 6:15 pm, and so we had a talk and a sitting for one hour. I was very pleased with him because he used Pāḷi words when we talked. If you care about pleasing me, use Pāḷi words when you talk to me.

## The Definition of “Bodhi-pakkhiya”

Today's topic is *Bodhi-pakkhiya Dhamma*. You are already familiar with the first word, *bodhi*. The second part, *pakkhiya*, is made up of *pakkha* and *iya*. “*Pakkha*” means side as in “this side” or “that side,” and “*iya*” means belonging to. So “*bodhipakkhiya*” means those belonging to the side of *bodhi*. “*Bodhi*” literally means understanding or wisdom that refers to enlightenment. So “*bodhipakkhiya*” literally means those that belong to the side of enlightenment. According to the context, this word can be interpreted in two ways: those that arise together with enlightenment, or those that help enlightenment to arise.

**Seven Groups:** *Bodhi-pakkhiya* is popularly translated as Members of Enlightenment or Factors of Enlightenment. But we have another word, *Bojjhaṅga* that is translated as Factors of Enlightenment. So I use the word “Members of Enlightenment” here. They are of thirty-seven, which are divided into seven groups:

1. Four kinds of mindfulness
2. Four supreme efforts
3. Four bases of accomplishment
4. Five mental faculties
5. Five powers
6. Seven factors of enlightenment
7. Eight factors of Path

## Four Kinds of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*)

The first group is *Satipaṭṭhāna*. You are familiar with this word, not only in meaning but also in practice. You understand “*satipaṭṭhāna*” as four foundations of

mindfulness, but its literal meaning is “firmly established mindfulness.” As you know, there are four *Satipaṭṭhāna*:

1. Mindfulness of body (*kāyānupassanā* )
2. Mindfulness of feeling (*vedanānupassanā* )
3. Mindfulness of thoughts (*cittānupassanā*)
4. Mindfulness of *dhamma* (*dhammānupassanā* )

### **Four Supreme Efforts (*Samma-ppadhāna*)**

The next group is *Samma-ppadhāna*. Here “*samma*” is the same as the word “*sammā*” in *sammā-diṭṭhi*, *sammā-sankappa*, and so on. So “*samma*” means correct, or wholesome. “*Padhāna*” means effort. So “*samma-ppadhāna*” means right effort, correct effort, or “supreme effort” as translated here. There are four kinds of supreme effort:

1. Supreme effort to get rid of the arisen *akusala*
2. Supreme effort to prevent the unarisen *akusala* from arising
3. Supreme effort to give rise to the unarisen *kusala*
4. Supreme effort to multiply the arisen *kusala*

### **Four Bases of Accomplishment (*Iddhi-pāda*)**

The next group is the *Iddhi-pāda*. “*Iddhi*” means accomplishment or success. “*Pāda*” literally means foot. The foot is the base of a man; therefore, “*iddhi-pāda*” means the bases of accomplishment, or the means of accomplishment. They are of four kinds:

1. Desire-basis of accomplishment (*chandiddhipāda*)
2. Will-basis of accomplishment (*cittiddhipāda*)

3. Effort-basis of accomplishment (*vīriyiddhipāda*)
4. Understanding-basis of accomplishment (*vīmaṅsiddhipāda*)

### **Five Mental Faculties (*Indriya*)**

The next group is *Indriya*, which is translated as Faculties, Mental Faculties. They are of five kinds:

1. Mental faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*)
2. Mental faculty of effort (*vīriyindriya*)
3. Mental faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*)
4. Mental faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*)
5. Mental faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*)

### **Five Powers (*Bala*)**

The next group is *Bala*. “*Bala*” means power or strength. There are five powers, five kinds of strength (*bala*).

1. Power of faith (*saddhā-bala*)
2. Power of effort (*vīriya-bala* )
3. Power of mindfulness (*sati-bala*)
4. Power of concentration (*samādhi-bala*)
5. Power of wisdom (*Paññā-bala*)

### **Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhaṅga*)**

The next group is the *Bojjhaṅga* (Factors of Enlightenment). *Bojjhaṅga* is made up of *bodhi* and *aṅga*. When these two terms are combined together, *Dh* is changed to *jh*, because the first word ends with a vowel and

the second word starts with another vowel. Here, “*aṅga*” means a part or a factor and “*bodhi*” means enlightenment. So “*Bojjhaṅga*” means Factors of Enlightenment. They are of seven in number:

1. Mindfulness (*Sati sambojjhaṅga*)
2. Investigation of dhamma (*Dhamma-vicaya sambojjhaṅga*)
3. Effort (*Vīriya sambojjhaṅga*)
4. Ecstasy (*Pīti sambojjhaṅga*)
5. Calmness (*Passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*)
6. Concentration (*Samādhi sambojjhaṅga*)
7. Equanimity (*Upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*)

### **Eight Factors of Path (*Maggaṅga*)**

And the last one is the *Maggaṅga*. There are two words: *Magga* (Path) and *aṅga* (factor). So “*Maggaṅga*” means Path Factors. There are eight Path Factors:

1. Right Understanding (*Sammā-ditṭhi*)
2. Right Attention (*Sammā-saṅkappa*)
3. Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*)
4. Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*)
5. Right Livelihood (*Sammā-ājīva*)
6. Right Effort (*Sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-sati*)
8. Right Concentration (*Sammā-samādhi*)

When you add up all the factors mentioned above, you get thirty-seven. So, there are Thirty-Seven Members of Enlightenment, thirty-seven *dhammas* that are conducive to



enlightenment and also arise together with enlightenment.

## **FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS**

The first group is *Satipaṭṭhāna* (Foundations of Mindfulness). As you know, there are four Foundations of Mindfulness: contemplation of body, contemplation of feeling, contemplation of consciousness, and contemplation of *dhamma*. "Contemplation" here means mindfulness. So the four Foundations of Mindfulness can also be described as mindfulness of body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of *dhamma* (or general objects). I hope you remember that mindfulness is a single mental factor (*cetasika*) out of the fifty-two *cetasikas*. It is here classified into four kinds. Why? Because it has four different kinds of objects as follows:

### **Contemplation on the Body**

People usually have wrong perceptions about things. They think things are beautiful. Even those who practice *Vipassanā* meditation think that way, too. You think a rose is beautiful, right? A picture is beautiful? You or other persons are beautiful? This is a wrong perception which people usually have. So long as there is this wrong perception, we will always have attachment or craving for that object or for that person. Attachment or craving is one of the mental defilements which causes suffering. So, in order to get rid of suffering, we need to get rid of attachment or craving. In order to get rid of attachment to things, Buddha taught us contemplation on the body.

In the section on the contemplation of the body of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* Discourse, what do you find? Mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of postures, mindfulness of general

actions (called the section on clear comprehension), contemplation on the thirty-two parts of the body, mindfulness of repulsiveness or contemplation of corpses are found. So the contemplation of the thirty-two anatomical parts and the contemplation of corpses, for instance, help us see things as they really are beyond illusory sense of beauty. So, when we practice contemplation of the body, we will be able to get rid of attachment to ourselves and to others. For that purpose, Buddha taught us the contemplation on the body.

## **Contemplation on the Feeling**

The other wrong perception about things is that of pleasure. People think that, although life is filled with some kind of suffering, there is some kind of pleasure in life. So long as we see life as something enjoyable, as something which can give us happiness, we will be attached to our lives. The Buddha wanted us to get rid of attachment in whatever form. So the Buddha taught us the contemplation on feeling, so that we can experience that life is full of suffering, not pleasurable as we think.

When we practice meditation, sometimes we may have pain. When there is pain, what we feel is suffering. Sometimes the pain becomes more acute and we want to get rid of it, but we can't. So, being subject to several kinds of pain, disease, and illness, we are like in hell. Although we experience pleasant feeling from time to time, it lasts only a few moments. But we are attached to it and are afraid to lose it. By its nature, it disappears, of course. When it disappears, we are sorry and long for that feeling badly. Paradoxically, therefore, pleasure even makes us unhappy while pain makes us happy when they leave us. So, whether we are experiencing pain or pleasure, there

is always suffering. This fact will become obvious to us when we contemplate on feeling, by making notes or being mindful of feelings.

## **Contemplation on the Mind**

We are taught that things are impermanent. Although we accept this teaching in general, we venture to think that there must be something lasting for some time, say, our bodies. Our bodies feel like the same today as they were yesterday; or, they feel like they don't change for some time. Only after a year or two, we say: Oh, it has changed or something like that. So this notion of permanence is ingrained in our mind. That is why the Buddha once said, "It may be permissible to take the body as permanent since it seems to last for some time. However, it is not permissible or appropriate to take one's mind or consciousness as permanent because consciousness changes very, very quickly."

In order to see the impermanence of things, we have to practice contemplation on the mind or watch our thoughts. When you practice meditation, you have thoughts and you watch them. At one moment, your mind is, say, at the tip of your nose. And the next moment, your mind may be far away, going back to your home country or another place. So, if you really pay attention to it, you will see, even within a single rising or falling of the abdomen, that you can have many thoughts. Each thought comes and goes. There is no thought which you can take as permanent. So, when you practice contemplation on the mind, you will come to see the impermanence of mind or mental states. Then we can infer that our physical bodies also are impermanent, although their impermanence is not as evident as that of the mind.

## Contemplation on the Dhamma

We are taught that there is no such permanent entity as soul or ego. But we still have such a belief. We still use the words “soul,” or “self,” or “ego” in our talks. So it is very difficult to get rid of the perception of an everlasting entity. In order to get rid of such wrong perception, the Buddha taught us the last of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, contemplation on *Dhamma* objects. When we contemplate on *Dhamma* objects such as five aggregates, sense bases, factors of enlightenment, and so on, we come to see them arise and disappear. There is nothing over and above these mere phenomena.

When we practice meditation, we may try to find whether there is a permanent entity. With the help of mindfulness and concentration, we will find that there are only two things existing at each moment of observation: the mind that is observing of the object and the object that is being observed by the mind. Besides that, there is nothing. There is no soul, no ego, no permanent entity. At every moment, there are just interactions of senses, sense-objects and their resultant consciousness. We cannot find anything apart from them. When we pay attention to the *Dhamma* objects, such as the aggregates and so on, we will come to realize that there are just the mere phenomena coming and going. And there is nothing over and above these phenomena.

So the Buddha taught mindfulness in four different aspects: mindfulness of body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of minds, and mindfulness of *dhamma*. It is because the mindfulness has four functions to counteract four wrong perceptions. The contemplation of body counteracts the wrong perception of beauty; the contemplation of feelings the wrong perception of happiness; the contemplation of consciousness the wrong perception of permanency; and

the contemplation of *Dhamma* the wrong perception of a permanent soul, or ego.

The mindfulness of the abdomen or the breath is included in the contemplation on the body. When we are mindful of pain, it is contemplation on feelings. Whenever we talk of feeling, our mind goes to pain. Actually, pleasant feeling is also the meditative object of the contemplation on feeling. When we are aware of our thoughts, we are doing the contemplation on mind. When we are aware of, let us say, our anger or attachment, we are contemplating on *Dhamma* objects, since anger and attachment are among the Five Mental Hindrances. When we practice meditation, we are doing all four contemplations or all Four Foundations of Mindfulness. I think that is enough for the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. If you want to know more about the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, you have to read the *Sutta (Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta)*.

## **FOUR SUPREME EFFORTS**

The second group is Four Supreme Efforts (*Sammappadhāna*). Actually, the effort is a single kind of mental factor called *vīriya*. It is classified into Four Supreme Efforts because it has four function as follows:

1. To eradicate the arisen demerit
2. To prevent the unarisen demerit from arising
3. To give rise to the unarisen merit
4. To develop the arisen merit

### **To Eradicate the Arisen Demerit**

There are two kinds of arisen demerits: the demerit that arose before but no longer exists, and the demerit that has arisen and is still present in our minds.

With regard to the first one, what should we do? The Buddha said, "Forget about it." That is because the demerit we did in the past can't be undone anyway. If we are thinking of this demerit again and again, or if we are remorseful for having done this evil again and again, we just increase our demerit. We acquire fresh demerit. We cannot abandon or get rid of it in this way. The best thing to do with such a demerit is: Don't think about it. Then make effort to avoid doing it again in the future.

What about the second one, that is, the demerit that has arisen and is still present in our mind? What must we do with it? Stop it, right? Buddha said, "He does not retain any thought of lust, ill will, grief or whatsoever unwholesome state that may have arisen." He abandons them, dispels them, destroys them, and causes them to disappear. Actually when such evil thoughts arise in our minds, we must stop them by mindfully watching them. That kind of effort is called the effort to abandon demerit which has already arisen.

## **To Prevent the Unarisen Demerit from Arising**

Regarding the unarisen demerit, throughout the cycle of rebirths there were no misdeeds that we've never done, for which we paid painful price in the woeful states. However, there are many evil deeds we have never committed in this life, like matricide, patricide, and so on. Before we attain the first stage of enlightenment, we are still liable to carry out any evil deed in this life and to be reborn in the woeful states after death. So we need to make great effort to prevent unarisen demerit from arising.

What must we do to prevent the unarisen demerit from arising? We must apply mindfulness. In this regard,

the Buddha instructed us to prevent evil from arising by restraining our senses:

*“When a monk perceives a form with the eye, a sound with the ear, an odor with the nose, a taste with the tongue, a touch with the body, or an object with the mind, he neither adheres to the whole nor to its parts. He applies restraint to senses, which otherwise would bring about such unwholesome states as desire and discontent.”<sup>15</sup>*

When we see someone, we must stop at seeing. If we pay attention to whether this is a man or a woman, we are said to be taking the sign of gender. If we pay attention to particular body parts by thinking that the hands are beautiful, the face is beautiful, the nose is beautiful, then we are said to be taking the particulars. Taking the sign or the particulars, we will be either attached or averse to that person.

Buddha said, *“Stop at just seeing when you see something, at just hearing when you hear something, and so on.”* That means practice of mindfulness. With the practice of mindfulness, we can avoid or we can prevent demerit from arising in our minds. That is how we make the great effort to prevent the unarisen demerit from arising and also to overcome demerit that has ever arisen.

## **To Develop the Unarisen Merit**

With regard to merit that has not yet arisen, what must we do? What effort must we make? We must make effort for them to arise. Right? “Merit that has not yet arisen” this phrase refers to *jhanic* concentration, *Vipassanā* insights, and Path enlightenment (*magga*). Say, you have never

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<sup>15</sup> *This passage is mentioned in many places in the discourses regarding sense-restraint.*

practiced meditation before. This is the first time you practice. Then this means you give rise to the merit that has not arisen in you before. So, with regard to merit that has not yet arisen, the great effort should be made to give rise to it.

## **To Develop the Arisen Merit**

With regard to the merit that has already arisen in us, the great effort must be made for it to happen again and again, or to multiply, or to increase. You practiced meditation before. Now, you practice again. This means you are multiplying the merit which has already arisen in you.

## **Four-limbed Effort**

To what extent do we need to make effort? Sometimes when we are encouraged to put great effort in the practice, for example, people may say or think it would be self-mortification. In this regard, below is a remarkable advice from the Buddha:

*“The disciple who is possessed of faith and has penetrated the teaching of the Master is filled with the thought: May rather skin, sinews, and bones wither away, may the flesh and blood of my body dry up, but I shall not give up any effort so long as I have not attained what is attainable by manly perseverance, manly energy, and manly endeavor.”<sup>16</sup>*

In order to attain what is attainable, we should not give up our effort even if there would remain just skin, sinews, and bones, as our flesh and blood dry up. Here, flesh and blood are collectively taken as one limb. Hence it is known as four-limbed effort (*caturaṅga-vīriya*).

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<sup>16</sup> This passage is mentioned in many places in the discourses regarding great effort.



So, we have to make real strong effort to practice meditation and achieve what we intend to achieve. Buddha said in another *Sutta* that enlightenment cannot be achieved with just a little effort. The effort we make must be very strong enough. However, it must not be too much or not imbalanced with concentration.

## FOUR MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

The next group is Four Means of Accomplishment or Four Bases of Success, which are called *Iddhi-pāda*. “*Iddhi*” means accomplishment, or achievement, or success. The accomplishment here refers to the spiritual attainment, such as *jhāna*, *Magga* (Path), and *Phala* (Fruition). “*Pāda*” means bases or means. So, “*iddhi-pāda*” means “the means of accomplishment,” or the means to attain *jhāna*, *magga* and *phala*. There are four of them:

1. Strong Desire (*chanda*)
2. Strong Effort (*vīriya*)
3. Strong Mind (*citta*)
4. Profound Understanding (*vīmaṅsa*)

First, the desire, which here means the will to do something (*chanda*), not attachment (*taṇhā*). The desire can be either wholesome or unwholesome. In this particular case, it refers to wholesome desire, which is also translated as zeal (*chanda*). We need to have strong desire to achieve or to accomplish something wholesome. If we do not have strong desire, we cannot practice meditation successfully. So such wholesome desire is one of the bases for accomplishment or success.

The second base of success or the second means of accomplishment is strong effort. So here “desire” means

strong desire and “effort” means strong effort. We also need a strong mind. If we do not have a strong and stable mind, we do not have strong effort and strong desire to accomplish anything. So, the strong mind is the third base of accomplishment or success.

Understanding is the fourth base of success or accomplishment. The Pāḷi word for this is “*vīmaṃsa*,” usually translated as investigation. Although “*vīmaṃsa*” literally means investigation, it does not mean just investigation. It means investigation and understanding. So it is better to translate it as understanding rather than just investigation. Investigation can mean you just investigate and may jump into right conclusion or wrong conclusion. Here, “*vīmaṃsa*” means understanding. Even though we have strong desire, strong effort and strong mind, if we don’t understand what we are doing, we cannot achieve anything. We cannot have success.

Thus, there are Four Bases of Success or Four Means of Accomplishment: strong desire, strong effort, strong mind, and understanding.

So far, we have learned twelve members of enlightenment: four kinds of mindfulness, four kinds of effort, and four means of accomplishment.

These members are those that arise during meditation, especially *Vipassanā* meditation. They also arise together with enlightenment. When they arise with *Vipassanā* insights, they are mundane members, but when they arise with enlightenment (*magga-phala*), they are supramundane members. Actually, it is the mundane members that lead to supramundane members because in order to reach enlightenment we must develop *Vipassanā* insights.

## FACULTIES / POWERS

There is a group of five mental factors that are known by two names: *indriya* (controlling faculties) and *bala* (mental strengths or powers). They are as follows:

1. Faith or confidence (*saddhindriya, saddhā-bala*)
2. Effort (*vīriyindriya, vīriya-bala*)
3. Mindfulness (*satindriya, sati-bala*)
4. Concentration (*samādhindriya, samādhi-bala*)
5. Wisdom (*paññindriya, paññā-bala*)

For example, the faculty or the teaching staff of a college or university refers to the group of important figures who play a leading role in their institutions. In the same way, these five factors are called mental faculties, because they play a leading role in the performance of wholesome deeds like deeds of generosity (*dāna*), moral conducts (*sīla*), and spiritual development (*bhāvanā*).

They are also called mental strengths or powers because, without these mental factors, we cannot be strong enough to accomplish our spiritual purpose. If someone is very weak, for example, he or she will find it very hard to carry out a successful business. In the same way, without these mental factors, we cannot be mentally strong enough to carry out our spiritual activities such as deeds of generosity (*dāna*), moral conducts (*sīla*), and spiritual development (*bhāvanā*). So these five mental factors are also called mental strengths or mental powers.

### Faith

The first mental factor is faith. Without faith in our doctors, for instance, we won't follow their advice and, therefore,

won't take the medicine they prescribe. Then we can never get our diseases cured. If we don't believe in the benefit of education, we won't devote our time and energy to the education. Then, we would be never educated. So faith is mental faculty or mental power required for our secular achievement. In the same way, faith is also necessary for spiritual achievement, although the blind faith is never encouraged. If we have rightful faith in the benefits of the practice, we will become strong and powerful enough to practice until we realize the enlightenment. So faith is a controlling faculty (*saddhindriya*) and a mental power (*saddhā-bala*) to carry out wholesome deeds successfully. It is, therefore, taken as one of the thirty-seven members of enlightenment.

## Effort

The Pāli word for effort is *vīriya* that literally means courage, or courageous effort (*vīrānaṃ kammaṃ*). If we don't make enough effort, if we are lazy and coward to face hardships and inconveniences, we can by no means succeed in any field. So we must be courageous to face any hardships, especially during the intensive meditation retreat to accomplish our spiritual goal. That is why the Buddha said:

*“This dhamma is for the sincerely zealous, strong and firm in purpose, and not for the indolent.”*<sup>17</sup>

So effort is honored as a mental faculty (*vīriyindriya*) and mental strength or power (*vīriya-bala*), one of the thirty-seven members of enlightenment.

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<sup>17</sup> Araddhviriyaṣā'yaṃ dhammo nāyaṃ dhammo kusitassa. (Dasuttara Sutta, Pāthika-vagga)

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is considered something that is always needed for any accomplishment, whether secular or spiritual. It is honored as a guard. Where there is no guard, there can never be peace and harmony among the peoples. In the same way, the moment we are mindless, we are exposed to intruders of mental defilements and most likely to make mistakes or to commit unwholesome deeds. Thus, we cannot live a peaceful life and regain blissful rebirth, not to mention the spiritual attainments. So the Buddha honors mindfulness with many benefits by comparing it to the elephant's foot-print that can cover in size all the footprints of other animals.

When we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, we develop this mindfulness by observing present phenomena one after another whether physical, mental, or emotional. The more mindful we become, the more stable and tranquil our minds develop, and the faster the progress will come. So this mindfulness is honored as a mental faculty (*sati-indriya*) and mental strength (*sati-bala*), one of the thirty-seven members of enlightenment.

## Concentration

The concentration is also something necessary for our achievements worldly or spiritual. Without concentration, our minds scatter or wander here and there. Then we cannot learn anything effectively. Only with the help of concentration, can our mind become stable and tranquil enough to see something real, something true.

So, the Buddha said:

*"With concentrated mind, one can see things as they really are."*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This passage is mentioned in many discourses.

That is why concentration is honored as a mental faculty (*samādhindriya*) and mental power (*samādhi-bala*), one of the thirty-seven members of enlightenment.

## Wisdom

Wisdom is the ultimate goal in our spiritual life. Basically, there are three kinds of wisdom. The first kind is *suta-maya*, which is the wisdom that comes from learning, study, or research. The second is *cintā-maya*. It is the wisdom that arises from the logical thinking or reasoning. The third and most powerful wisdom called *bhāvanā-maya* can come from spiritual development. However highly educated we may be, we are still regarded as ignorant until we realize that we are just the compound of mind and body changing every moment. Only when we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, can we attain the real wisdom that enables us to see mind and body as they really are and to overcome illusory sense of something or someone everlasting.

So wisdom is honored as the mental faculty (*paññindriya*) and mental strength (*paññā-bala*), one of the thirty-seven members of enlightenment.

## SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

There are seven factors of enlightenment:

1. Mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*)
2. Dhamma Investigation (*Dhammavicaya-sambojjhaṅga*)
3. Effort (*vīriya-sambojjhaṅga*)
4. Rapture (*pīti-sambojjhaṅga*)
5. Calmness (*passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*)

6. Concentration (*samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*)

### **Mindfulness** (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*)

Let's now deal with the enlightenment factors one by one. The first is *sati*, mindfulness. It is fourfold: mindfulness of the body, feeling, mind, and mind-objects.

The Buddha's final admonition to his disciples on his death bed is this:

*"Transient are all conditioned things. Work out your deliverance with mindfulness!"*<sup>19</sup>

Here the most significant word is *appamāda*, which literally means forgetfulness; that is, incessant mindfulness. We cannot be mindful unless we watch over our actions — whether they are mental, verbal, or physical — at every moment of our waking life. Only when we are mindful of our activities, can we distinguish good from bad and right from wrong. It is in the light of mindfulness that he will see the truth and reality.

### **Keen Investigation** (*Dhammavicaya-sambojjhaṅga*)

The second enlightenment factor is *dhamma-vicaya*, keen investigation of the *Dhamma*. It is seeing things as they really are, seeing things in their proper perspective. It is the analysis of all conditioned phenomena into their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimate. Through keen investigation, we understand that all conditioned things pass in an inconceivably rapid manner. The whole

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<sup>19</sup> *Vaya-dhammā sankharā, appamādena sampādettha. (Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta)*

universe is constantly changing, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments.

### **Effort** (*vīriya-sambojjhaṅga*)

The third enlightenment factor is *virīya*, energy. It is a mental factor (*cetasika*) and the sixth limb of the Noble Eightfold Path meaning right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*).

The life of the Buddha clearly reveals that he was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. From the hour of his enlightenment to the end of his life, he strove tirelessly to elevate mankind, regardless of the bodily fatigue and many obstacles and handicaps that hampered his way. He never relaxed in his exertion for the welfare of all beings. So, though physically he was not always fit, mentally he was always vigilant and energetic.

In the words of the Buddha, each individual has himself to put forth the necessary effort and work out his own deliverance with diligence. The Buddha is only a path-revealer, not a savior. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be worked out by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

*"Be the islands unto yourselves, be your own refuge."*<sup>20</sup>

Thus did the Buddha exhort his followers to acquire self-reliance.

So we should put forth the necessary effort to fight our way out. As a would-be Buddha (*Bodhi-satta*), he had as his motto the following inspiring words:

*"Falter not; advance."*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Dhammapada*

<sup>21</sup> *Mā nivatta, abhikkhama (Buddha-varṇsa Pāḷi Stanza-107)*



## **Rapture** (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*)

The fourth enlightenment factor is *pīti*, rapture. This, too, is a mental factor (*cetasika*) and is a quality which suffuses both the body and mind.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odor, tasting a flavor, feeling some tangible thing, cognizing an idea, people are moved. From those sense objects and mind-objects, they experience a certain degree of pleasure. Real happiness or rapture comes not through grasping or clinging to things animate or inanimate but by giving up (*nekkhamma*). What brings us the true happiness is the detached attitude toward the world. There are two kinds of happiness: the happiness that comes from enjoying sensual pleasure (*sāmisa-sukha*) and the happiness that arises from overcoming sensual desire (*nirāmisa-sukha*). The first one is compared to the pleasure from scratching an itch, and the second from no more itches to scratch. So the second one (*nirāmisa-sukha*) is far superior to the first one (*sāmisa-sukha*).

Says the Dhammapada <sup>(373)</sup>,

*"To the bhikkhu who has retired to a secluded place, whose mind is calmed and who clearly discerns the dhamma, there comes unalloyed joy and happiness transcending that of humans."* <sup>22</sup>

## **Tranquility** (*passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*)

*Passaddhi*, calm or tranquility, is the fifth factor of enlightenment. It is two-fold: *kāya-passaddhi* and *citta-*

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<sup>22</sup> *Suññāgāraṃ pavīṭṭhassa, santa-cittassa bhikkhuno;*

*Amānusī ratī hoti, sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.* (Dhammapada)

*passaddhi*. “*Kāya*” here means all the mental factors rather than the physical body; and, *citta* means consciousness. So “*passaddhi*” means the calm of consciousness and mental factors. It is compared to the happy experience of a weary walker who sits down under a tree in a shade, or the cooling of a hot place by rain.

*“Hard is to make the mind tranquil. It trembles and is unsteady, difficult to guard, quivers like a fish taken out of its watery home and thrown on the dry ground.”*<sup>23</sup>

Calmness is not weakness. The calm attitude at all times shows a man of culture. It is not too hard a task for us to be calm when all things around us are favorable. But to be composed in mind in the midst of unfavorable circumstances is hard indeed, and it is this difficult quality that is worth achieving.

### **Concentration** (*samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*)

The sixth enlightenment factor is *samādhi*, concentration. It is only the tranquil mind that can easily concentrate on a meditative object. The calm concentrated mind sees things as they really are. The unified mind brings the five hindrances under subjugation.

Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to an unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind aright and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. Right concentration dispels passions that disturb the mind and brings purity and placidity of mind. The concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects.

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<sup>23</sup> *Dhammapada*

Without developing *Samatha* concentration, *jhāna* or its neighborhood concentration, we practice *Vipassanā* to develop momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*) and insights by constantly observing the present objects one after another.

### **Equanimity** (*upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*)

The seventh and the last factor of enlightenment is *upekkhā*, equanimity. In the *Abhidhamma*, *upekkhā* is indicated by the term *tatra-majjhataṭṭā*, neutrality. It is mental equipoise, not neutral feeling. The equanimity here is a state of not falling to either side, the state of being in the middle. That is called *tatra-majjhataṭṭā* in Pāli. It is translated as equanimity or equilibrium.

When there is equanimity, our mind hits the object by itself without making much effort. That is what is called equanimity here. So, when we reach that stage of equanimity, we do not have to make effort to be mindful of the object. Our mind is always on the object, hitting the object squarely.

It is like the autopilot taking over the operation of airplanes. A jet plane is equipped with the autopilot feature. Right? After flying for some time, the human pilot turns it on to fly the airplane by itself. All he needs to do then is to generally observe the aircraft without much concern. In the same way, when there is equanimity, we don't have to worry about being mindful. Mindfulness is just there doing its own function.

In a certain stage of *Vipassanā* meditation, this kind of equanimity becomes predominate or pronounced. When we reach such a state, our meditation is good. We don't have to make much effort. It goes by itself and we can

enjoy it for hours.

These are the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

## **EIGHT-FOLD PATH**

What is the next group? Eight Factors of Path or Eight-fold Path (*maggāṅga*). They are as follows:

1. Right Understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)
2. Right Attention (*sammā-saṅkappa*)
3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)
6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*)
8. Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*)

You all have learned about these eight factors. So, I don't think I need to explain them in detail. These Path Factors arise at the moments of *Vipassanā* meditation, as well as at the moment of enlightenment. They belong both to mundane and supramundane.

## **Mundane Path**

There occur *Vipassanā* insights when we see mind and body in terms of their own characteristics beyond the illusory sense of permanence, pleasure, and person. The *Vipassanā* insights are constituted of the five Working Path Factors. When we make effort and see mind and body as they really are, there arise five Path factors: right effort (that is made to be aware of present psycho-physical phenomena), right attention (that is paid to present

phenomena), right mindfulness (that is to be mindful of them), right concentration (that is to be concentrated on them) and right understanding (of the true nature of psycho-physical phenomena. These five Path factors are called the Working Path Factors (*kāraṅga-maggaṅga*), because they are working together to develop *Vipassanā* insights until they culminate in maturation of the Supramundane Path, or Noble Eight-fold Path.

As for the three moral factors (right speech, right action, and right livelihood), they are usually fulfilled ahead of the practice, but may be fulfilled during practice. So we are said to develop all the eight Mundane Path Factors every time we see mind and body as they really are.

## **Supramundane Path**

*Vipassanā* insights (i.e., mundane Path factors) progress gradually until they culminate in *magga*-enlightenment, that is, Supramundane Path Factors. Here, Mahasi Sayadaw compared the Mundane Path (*Vipassanā* insights) and Supramundane Path (*magga*-enlightenment) to jumping over a canal and landing on the other bank, respectively. There are four tasks that are accomplished at the moment of enlightenment: first, seeing mind and body being constantly tormented by impermanence; second, eradicating attachment to them, which is responsible for the cycle of rebirth; third, experiencing their cessation, *nibbāna*; and, lastly, developing eight factors of Supramundane Path, which reach their full maturity at this moment.

## **CLASS WORK**

Now, I want you to do some classwork. There are said to be Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment. You may

have noticed that all these Members of Enlightenment are mental factors (*cetasika*). So, are there thirty-seven *cetasikas*? How many *cetasikas* are there? Now let's find that out.

1. For *Satipaṭṭhāna*, there is only one *cetasika*, that is, mindfulness (*sati*).
2. For the second group, although there are Four Supreme Efforts, there is only one *cetasika*, effort (*vīriya*).
3. For Means of Accomplishment, there are four mental factors: desire, effort, mind, and understanding.
4. Let's see if there is anything new in the Faculties. How about faith? Yes, it is new. Mindfulness? No, as it is already on the list. Concentration? Yes, as it needs to be put on the list. Understanding is already there.
5. The mental strengths (*bala*) are the same as the mental faculties (*indriya*).
6. Then there come the Factors of Enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*). How about mindfulness? No, we already have it. Investigation of *Dhammas*? No, we have. Effort? No. *Pīti*? Yes. Tranquility? Yes. Concentration? No, we have it. Equanimity? Yes.
7. Now Factors of Path - Right Understanding? No. Right Thought? Yes. Right Speech? Yes. Right Action? Yes. Right Livelihood? Yes. Right Effort? No, we have it. Right Mindfulness? No. Right Concentration? No.

Then how many are there? Fourteen: thirteen mental factors (*cetasika*) and one consciousness (*citta*). So, although we say there are Thirty-Seven Members of Enlightenment, in reality, there are only these fourteen

factors.

These wholesome consciousness and mental factors do their functions properly during different stages of *Vipassanā* meditation. Also, they arise together at the moment of enlightenment. So they are called *Bodhipakkhiya Dhammas*, those that are on the side of enlightenment, or members of Enlightenment, or Factors of Enlightenment, or whatever you want to call it.

Now, we come to the end of a series of classes for well-informed Buddhists. If you have gone through this class and remember all, then you can claim yourself to be a well-informed Buddhist. As I said before, if you do not remember, you have to study them again. So, I am very glad that we can accomplish this class. I am satisfied with myself because I am able to make you well-informed Buddhists. And I hope you are also happy, since it is not easy to become a well-informed Buddhist.

In our country, the majority of the people are Buddhists. They take Buddha's teachings for granted. And they think they know enough about the Buddha's teachings. Actually, what they know is just how to pay respect to the monks, to the Buddha, how to take precepts, to offer to the monks and to the Buddha. They know just that, but these are not even the basic teachings of the Buddha. If you can, ask them about the Four Noble Truths, or the Noble Eightfold Path, or Dependent Origination. They may have heard the names, but they may not be able to explain them to you. So you may take pride in yourselves, although pride is not a wholesome mental state that you have become well-informed Buddhists and true followers of the Buddha.

# **Biographical Sketch of Venerable U Sīlānanda**

(Ashin Sīlānandabhivamsa - Agga Mahā Paṇḍita)

(based on Sayadaw's biography from the website tbsa.org)

Sayadaw U Sīlānanda was born in Mandalay, Burma (now known as Myanmar) on Friday, December 16, 1927. His father is Wunna Kyaw Htin Saya Saing and his mother Daw Mone. Saya Saing was a renowned Burmese architect credited with many famous religious buildings throughout the country. He was awarded the title "Wunna Kyaw Htin" by the Government of Burma for his outstanding achievements in Burmese architecture and religious activities. He was a very religious man and a meditator as well. Two brothers of Sayadaw are also prominent Burmese architects.

His sister, Daw Thandasari, is Chief Nun of a Buddhist nunnery institute known as "Shwezedi Sāsana-pala Chaung<sup>1</sup>," in Sagaing Hills. Sayadaw thus comes from a highly religious family.

On April 14, 1943, during the Japanese occupation, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda at the age of 16 became a novice at Mahavijjodaya Chaung monastery in Sagaing Hills under the preceptorship of Sayadaw U Pannavata, a very famous and popular preacher. He was then given the religious name "Shin Sīlānanda."

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<sup>1</sup> 'Chaung' here means a secluded place or a religious sanctuary for monks or nuns.



With the consent of his parents, on Wednesday, July 2, 1947, he became a full-fledged monk at the same monastery with the same preceptor. Four days later, re-ordination ceremony was held in his honor at Payagyi Taik monastery in Mandalay by U Ba Than and Daw Tin (his aunt), dealers in religious artifacts. Again, in 1950, a second re-ordination ceremony was held in his honor at Kyaungdawya Shwegyin Taik, Rangoon (now Yangon), by rice merchants U Ba Thein and Daw Ngwe Saw.

He received his early years' education at Kelly High School, an American Baptist Mission School for boys, in Mandalay. He had his religious education in Tipitaka (Buddhist Scriptures) under the guidance of his preceptor and many other renowned Sayadaws, both in Sagaing Hills and in Mandalay.

He took the religious examinations held by the Government of Burma and passed the Phatamange (1st Grade) in 1946, Phatamatat (2nd Grade) in 1947, and Phatamagyi (3rd Grade) in 1948. He attained the 1st position in the 2nd Grade in the whole of Burma and 2nd position in the 3rd Grade. He got the degree of Dhammācariya, Master of Dhamma, in 1950, and was awarded the title Sāsanadhaja Siripavara Dhammācariya. In 1954, he attained another degree when he passed the examination held by Pariyattisāsanahita Association in Mandalay, which was renowned to be the most difficult examination in Burma. He duly got to add to his name the word "abhivamsa," hence his full name and title: U Sīlānandabhivamsa, Sāsanadhaja Siripavara Dhammācariya and Pariyattisāsanahita Dhammācariya.

He went to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1954 and while there

passed the GCE Advanced Level Examination (General Certificate of Education Examination held by the University of London in Ceylon), with distinctions in Pāḷi and Sanskrit.

While he was in Ceylon, he made a brief return to Burma and during that trip he practiced Vipassana meditation in the Mahasi Sayadaw's tradition.

He taught as a lecturer Buddhist Scriptures, Pāḷi, Sanskrit at Atothokdayone Pāḷi University in Sagaing Hills, and Prakrit languages at Abhayarama Shwegu Taik monastery, Mandalay and was an External Examiner for Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Department of Oriental Studies, Arts and Science University, Mandalay.

Sayadaw U Sīlānanda was the Chief Compiler of the Tipitaka Pāḷi-Burmese Dictionary and was one of the distinguished editors of the Pāḷi Canon and the associated Commentaries at the Sixth Buddhist Council held at the Kaba Aye Hlaing Gu (World Peace Cave) in Rangoon (Yangon) from 1954 to 1956. Sayadaw U Sīlānanda had a golden opportunity to work for Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and Venerable Mingun Tipitaka Sayadaw.

In 1960, he inherited the Mahavijjodaya Chaung monastery after the passing away of his preceptor and became the Abbot of that monastery. He moved to the Abhyarama Shwegu Taik monastery, Mandalay in 1968, and, in 1969, was appointed the Vice Abbot of that monastery. Later, he became the Chief Abbot.

He was also appointed a member of the Executive Committee of Shwegyin Sect and, in 1993, became a Senior Member of that sect. He participated in the meeting of Cleaning-up of the Sāsana held at Hmawbi (50 miles from Yangon).

In 1993, he was appointed a member of the Advisory Board of Meditation Teachers of Mahasi Sāsana Yeiktha in Yangon.

Sayadaw was requested to be the Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University of Yangon in Myanmar (which opened in December, 1999).

He had visited many countries, both in Asia and in Europe, and, as a member of a party, visited the United States in 1959, at the invitation of the U.S. Government. In April 1979, Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and his entourage (including Sayadaw U Sīlānanda) visited San Francisco, California, USA, with a full program of discourses, meritorious offerings, dhamma talks, and meditation sessions. At a later stage of the visit, Mahasi Sayadaw agreed to leave behind U Sīlānanda and U Kelasa in San Francisco to fulfill the overwhelming request of Burmese community. (Sayadaw U Kelasa later moved to Maryland to become the Abbot of Mangalarama monastery.)

Since then, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda had been giving lectures on Buddhism, including Abhidhamma (Buddhist Psychology), and teaching Vipassana meditation in the country. He was a competent teacher and rarely uses Pāli words, which are not familiar to lay people, in his sermons. As one devotee said, “He teaches from an extraordinary depth of knowledge, communicating in clear and precise English. He is loved by his students and devotees as a skilled, patient and compassionate teacher.”

He was the Spiritual Advisor of the Theravada Buddhist Society of America (TBSA), which he had helped set up, and the Founder Abbot of the Dhammananda Vihara monastery.

He was also the Spiritual Director of the following: Dhammachakka Meditation Center in Berkeley, California, the Bodhi Tree Dhamma Center in Largo, Florida, the Society for Advancement of Buddhism in Ft. Myers, Florida. In addition, he was the Chief Meditation Teacher of Tathāgata Meditation Center (TMC) in San Jose, California.

Sayadaw had gone on numerous Dhammaduta missions to give Dhamma talks and to conduct short term and long term retreats. Sayadaw had also conducted retreats in Malaysia and Singapore.

Despite his busy schedules, Sayadaw had authored the following (in English):

- The Four Foundations of Mindfulness
- An Introduction to the Law of Kamma
- Thoughts for the Occasion (Some Sayings of Lord Buddha on Death)
- An Introduction to the Doctrine of Anatta (No-Soul)
- Meditation Instructions
- Protective Verses

Sayadaw had extensively revised and edited a translation of "Abhidhamma in Daily Life," by Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa.

Sayadaw had also published numerous works in Burmese:

- The First Sermon (a popular exposition of Buddha's First Sermon)
- Sayadaw U Narada of Mandalay (a biography)
- A Course on Sima (for monks)
- Mahasi Sayadaw (a biography)
- Burmese Architect - Saya Saing (a biography of his father)

- Comparative Study of Saddaniti Dhatumala and Paniniya Datupatha
- Exposition of Syllogism in Pāḷi
- A New Burmese Translation of Rupasiddhi Tika
- Tipitaka Pāḷi-Burmese Dictionary, as Chief Compiler
- Burmese translations of some short Sanskrit works

Sayadaw U Sīlānanda lectured to the M.A. (Pāḷi) students at Mandalay University. He was also invited to give guest lectures at University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University.

Sayadaw had conducted the following courses in both English and/or Burmese:

- In-depth Study of Matika of Abhidhamma
- An Introduction to Abhidhamma, Vissudimagga, Patimokkha and Jataka
- Fundamentals of Buddhism
- Four Foundations of Mindfulness
- Kalyana Buddhist
- Dhammapada
- Sutta
- Vinaya rules
- Thein-hnote (ensuring the consecration of sima )
- Theory and Practice of Vipassana
- Pāḷi Grammar.

Based on Sayadaw U Sīlānanda's lecture notes, U Nandisena has translated a Pāḷi Grammar text into Spanish.

Sayadaw had given numerous Dhamma talks in both English and Burmese. There are over 300 tapes holding

Sayadaw's talks. Some tapes (e.g., "Vassa," "Dana") have been distributed freely by TMC to its devotees.

Some talks have been transcribed and printed. They include 'The Meaning of Tathāgata , "Benefits of Walking Meditation," to name a few.

With the initial support from TBSA, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda had initiated several projects:

- Compilation of a CD-ROM to hold text of the Pāḷi Canon and the Associated Commentaries approved at the Sixth Buddhist Council
- Compilation of digital pictures of the kyauk-sa (stone inscriptions) holding the text of the Pāḷi Canon approved at the Fifth Buddhist Council
- Fund to support the propagation of Sāsana in the Frontier Areas in Myanmar

For his outstanding contribution to the Sāsana, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda was conferred the prestigious titles of Agga Maha Pandita in March, 1993, and Agga Maha Saddhamma-jotika Dhaja in March, 1999.

## 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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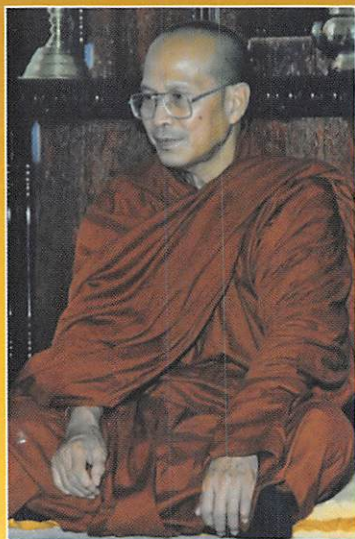
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“Ānanda, you should live as islands unto yourselves,  
being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge,  
with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as  
your refuge, with no other refuge.”

The Buddha  
(*Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya*)



Sayadaw U Silānanda



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