

**A Discourse on the
Purābheda Sutta**
by
The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw
of
Burma



An English rendering by
U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin)

Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization
Mahāsī Translation Committee, Rangoon

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First printed and published in the Socialist
Republic of the Union of Burma
December 1982

New Edition
Edited by
Bhikkhu Pesala
May 2011
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Editor's Preface

A number of the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's lectures have been translated into English for the benefit of a wider audience. Most of these valuable books have been reprinted before in Malaysia but this new edition has been specially prepared for distribution in the UK.

The Venerable Sayādaw's discourses were addressed to meditators practising intensively at Mahāsi Sāsana Yeiktha, in Rangoon. They therefore contain many Pali words which, though familiar to those who have heard regular discourses, may not be so familiar to others. I have prepared this edition of the Sayādaw's discourse on the Purābheda Sutta bearing in mind that it will be read by many who may be unfamiliar with Pali terms. Nevertheless many Pali terms remain for the benefit of those who are familiar with them.

In the footnotes, references are to the page numbers of the Pali texts of the Pali Text Society which, in the translations, are given at the top of the page or sometimes in the body of the text. But in the case of the Dhammapada or Sutta Nipāta, references are simply given to verse numbers.

This edition, which was first published in 1982, was not completed before now due to the large number of changes required. Even now, I am hesitant to publish it with so many alterations from the original without being able to consult the translators. I apologise for any errors I may have introduced in my attempt to fill in gaps that I found in the translation of the Pali verses of the Purābheda Sutta. I hope that readers will benefit from the Sayādaw's teachings in spite of any shortcomings in this edition.

The discourses were delivered in Burmese, and the recorded discourses were later translated to English and published in book form. They were never written as books, but I have done my best to adapt them, so that my edition will be easier to follow.

Please do not host the PDF file on your own web site, nor link directly to the PDF file hosted on mine, but by all means post a link to the page on my web site where visitors can read the book in its proper context.

Bhikkhu Pesala
London, May 2011

Foreword

This Purābheda Sutta is the last of a series of six discourses delivered by the Buddha on the Great Occasion (Mahāsamaya), which took place in the Great Forest (Mahāvana) in the Himalayan foothills near the city of Kapilavatthu. Present at this unprecedented gathering were innumerable devas and brahmas from ten thousand world systems who had come of their own accord without being invited, to pay obeisance to the Buddha and the five hundred Arahants. These Arahants gathered round the Buddha soon after their attainment of Arahantship to pay homage. The wide expanse of the pleasant forest and entire universe overflowed with devas and brahmas eager to listen to what the Buddha would teach. The illustrious gathering of celestial beings was unparalleled. The Buddha occupied a central position emitting brilliant rays of six different colours, flanked by noble Arahants who had just cleansed themselves of all defilements. The Buddha, after observing with his divine eye the latent dispositions of the respective devas and brahmas, taught six different discourses suited to those present according to their respective mental disposition to enable them to gain awakening.

Of the six discourses, this Purābheda Sutta was meant for individuals with very keen intellect. realising that no other individual had the aptitude to raise questions to satisfy the curiosity of those devas and brahmas, the Blessed One created an image of himself by his supernormal powers. Descending from the sky with radiance, this created image of the Buddha majestically took a seat before the real living Buddha, and began raising questions related to the six discourses. The first was the Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta, intended for those devas and brahmas who were dominated by lust (*rāga*). The last of the six was this Purābheda Sutta.

It is so profound that men of ordinary intellect would find it difficult to explain. It will even be far more difficult to make it comprehensible with particular reference to the actual application and practice of meditation. Yet, the Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw, with his penetrating wisdom and great compassion, explained this remarkable discourse, outlining a variety of methods with reference to the Commentaries and Subcommentaries. The discourse was couched in plain Burmese to enable the audience to easily understand the deeper aspects of the discourse.

The Purābheda Sutta comprises fourteen verses of which only one is a question, while the remaining thirteen are replies. The object of

the question is to find out what kind of morality and insight a person should possess to deserve being regarded as a wise and noble person with serenity of mind. The Buddha purposely made repeated utterances in verse conveying the same sense to make his audience understand easily. The fundamental point stressed therein is to strive for personal realisation of the Dhamma during one's present lifetime before death. The answers relating to the noble attributes of the Dhamma lay emphasis on the need to eradicate craving in as much as attachment to the pleasures of life can drag a person down to the lower realms. The noble qualities of peaceful sage are described fully with lucidity. It has also been made obvious that such an individual is an Arahant in whom all defilements have been extinguished. The method of severing the bonds of defilements has been effectively prescribed, and this method of practice is nothing but insight meditation. This would involve contemplation of the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). It has been clearly stated that this meditation exercise must be developed to ensure better prospects for future existences after one's demise. It is also revealed that while living, an ordinary person will be beset with so many kinds of pitfalls in his lifetime and with obsessions in the shape of anger, hatred, envy, pride, worry, and improper behaviour, and that if these evils cannot be rejected by contemplating and noting in his pursuit of worldly affairs or spiritual knowledge, he will remain unliberated from crushing misery and suffering in the present existence, and in the life hereafter. If vices become predominant by the inflammation of craving, it is most likely that he will descend to the lower realms. The best remedy therefore lies in practising insight meditation for one's own salvation to attain the Noble Path. Different stages of achievement that can be reached up to knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) leading to nibbāna has been elaborated by the author of this discourse. While emphasising the significance of insight meditation, the method of rejecting all kinds of vulgarity and remorse, verbally, mentally, and physically, has been lucidly explained. Clear exposition has been made that by contemplating and noting with good concentration after equipping oneself with purity of morality, one can achieve the highest state in progressive insight. Further amplification has been made in this discourse relating to the essential need to avoid all improper behaviour, to

subdue anger, and to eschew self-conceit, which can hinder progress in the realisation of the noble Dhamma.

Furthermore, this Purābheda Sutta has been clearly explained by the author, besprinkling it with relevant anecdotes, making it all the more effective and interesting. The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw with his genius has made us fully understand without skepticism the attributes of insight meditation. This is the only way to gain insight knowledge stage by stage bringing Arahantship within easy reach if there is faith, devotion, and diligence. Furthermore, the noble attributes of an Arahant are amply described.

The unprecedented nature and scope of this highly philosophical discourse, here expounded by the Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw in simple language, which had once made its impact on a deeply appreciative audience to attain Arahantship in myriads on the spot, will, I am sure, likewise bring beneficial results to all meditators, monks, and lay persons. The Venerable Sayādaw emphasised the goal of nibbāna as attainable in this very life existence. The proper practice of Buddha's doctrine is clearly manifested to have involved a technique of living, which, while not worrying about the past, or the present or the future, would place upon the individual the art of living in sanctity until he has attained in this life the goal, nibbāna. This way of living is essentially to practise insight meditation by developing constant mindfulness on the phenomenal occurrences of body and mind to the extent of gaining full awareness or perception of their true characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, which will eventually lead to insight wisdom of varying degrees up to the attainment of Arahantship. By this ultimate attainment, defilements together with craving and wrong view which in fact bind a person from one existence to another, will be completely eradicated. One should therefore strive to accomplish this Dhamma. It is quite obvious that neither Buddha, nor anyone, prayer nor bribe, can help and that man alone is the architect of his future.

May you all be able to put forth effort to practise virtues unceasingly as a good person does, and follow a way of life that would end in the realisation of the goal, here and now.

Min Swe (Min Kyaw Thu)

Secretary, Buddha Sāsanañuggaha Organization

Mahāsī Sāsana Yeikthā, September, 1982

A Discourse on the Purābheda Sutta

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahanto Sammāsaṃbuddhassa

Introduction to the Discourse

The teaching to be delivered today is on the last of a series of six discourses, taught by the Buddha at the gathering of a huge multitude of devas and brahmas, known as the Great Occasion (Mahāsamaya). The essence of each different discourse is related to the natural inclinations and propensities of the respective deva or brahma. This is the Purābheda Sutta (Sn vv 854-867).

Purābheda is a compound of two words: *bheda*, which means ‘annihilation’ or ‘destruction’, while *purā* conveys the meaning of before, prior to, or foremost. Hence, *Purābheda* connotes ‘before destruction,’ or ‘prior to death.’ The discourse has therefore been given the name of *Purābheda* for being related to or in reference to the things that one should accomplish and would surely come across before his final death or utter destruction of his life.

The essence of what is contained in the Discourse will be clearly revealed in the course of my lecture explaining the basic facts of the Dhamma. In delivering this Discourse, as in the case of the Sammāparibbāṇi Sutta, the created image of the Buddha raised the following question as desired, for the benefit of those who were very learned with keen intellect, having a natural aptitude and inclination to acquire profound knowledge.

Verse One: The Replica Buddha’s Question

“Kathaṃdassī kathaṃsīlo, upasantoti vuccati.

Taṃ me Gotama paṇḍita, pucchito uttamaṃ naraṃ.”

“Addressing the Buddha who belonged to the noble lineage of the Gotama clan, the question that we ask is what kind of insight and moral conduct should a person possess to be worthy of being called a sage (*upasanta*)? Please tell us who is such an excellent person.”

This is the question put by the created image of the Buddha to the real Buddha. These two Buddhas, the created image and the Buddha himself had a dialogue, the one putting questions while the other giving answers. There was only one question as stated in the above

Pāḷi verse, whereas the answers comprised thirteen verses. I will amplify in full only a few verses since an elaborated statement would probably be considered as mere repetition by some of the audience. In fact, there are only a very few unique features in each verse — there are many which have similarity in meaning. I will therefore deal with only a few verses comprehensively.

Listening to a Discourse to Gain Peace of Mind

The primary object of the question is to find out what kind of conduct and what sort of insight a person should possess to be regarded as a distinctive individual endowed with serenity. In so far as this Dhamma is concerned, serenity or peace of mind refers to freedom and liberation from every aspect of suffering, toil, and strife. Those presently listening to this lecture who are meditating, aim at achieving that kind of peace and calm. All meditation practices in the realm of this Buddha's dispensation seek to realise real peace and happiness. Other religions outside the domain of the Buddha's teaching likewise expect to gain such kind of peace. In their own way they all strive wishing to achieve that objective. The only difference between the two concepts lies in the kind of peace derived as to whether it is genuine or not.

There is no reason to doubt that in this universe every individual wants to enjoy peace and happiness. Nowadays, peace initiatives advanced by countries all over the world are intended to bring about World Peace with the sole object of finding a way for the defence of peace in the interests of all mankind. The main intention, however, is to avoid conflicts between nations and catastrophic consequences. This aim and object does not embrace a wider scope. The peace envisaged in this Dhamma is ultimate peace that would eradicate all troubles, tribulations, anxieties, miseries, and pain, and would result in extinguishing all kinds of sufferings and worries, thereby bringing eternal peace and happiness. One who finds such noble peace and calm is called a sage. This means a person who has a tranquil state of mind. Such a person must be learned, wise, and noble and must have adequate worldly experience and knowledge.

The created image of the Buddha asked the Blessed One as to what kind of knowledge and worldly experience and good conduct such a peace-minded man should competently and sufficiently possess.

I will recite the following motto for you to memorize easily. "What knowledge and what conduct, if acquired, would deserve to be called peace a sage?"

The thirteen verses taught by the Blessed One in response to the query made by the Replica Buddha disclosed the noble attributes of a sage. Some of the words in the answers convey almost the same sense. To make the teachings understood by different kinds of devas and brahmas with different outlook and idiosyncrasies peculiar to the celestial realm to which they belonged, repeated explanations were rendered in a variety of ways. Among such an audience who were present at the Great Occasion, there were some who could not grasp the essence of the teachings if rendered ordinarily by the Buddha. This is why different versions of teachings conveying the same underlying meaning were repeated.

Repeated to Make Everyone Understand

Likewise, I have to repeat teachings in a variety of ways although they carry the same sense to enable the audience to gain fuller appreciation. At the Great Occasion innumerable devas and brahmas from different celestial realms were present. Even in the human world different dialects spoken in a variety of languages are involved. Likewise, colloquial expressions with different shades of meaning could be in use among different celestial beings.

Verse Two: The Buddha's Answer

*"Vītaṇho purā bheda, (iti Bhagavā) pubbamantamanissito.
Vemajjhe nupasaṅkheyyo, tassa natthi purakkhataṃ."*

The meaning conveyed by the above verse is: "Venerable sir! I would say that a person who is not obsessed by craving, or in other words, who is free from clinging desires is a sage."

Before one meets with death, one should be free from passion and craving. Such a person who gets rid of craving is said to be a sage, having been imbued with peace of mind. It means that one should be able to equip himself with the Dhamma emancipated from the bonds of attachment, i.e. free from the taint of craving. It is vital to remain unblemished by craving. Those who possess morality and sound intelligence, naturally have the ability to judge properly. This

discourse was taught purposely for such learned people. This initial single expression itself stands out in conveying a profound meaning for the wise. There are different kinds of religious doctrines that earn reverence in this world. In most of these religions, reference is made to what will happen after death, such as the destiny that will befall a person after death. However, no one can verify what really happens to a person after death.

The fundamental point is to gain personal realisation of the Dhamma before death comes. One can rest assured if one could achieve the Dhamma that ought to be practised, and reap the benefits during the present existence. The wise would probably be satisfied and find contentment only if they could clearly realise the truth of the Dhamma before death occurs. Only that would give them positive assurance for the future.

Noble Attributes of the Dhamma

Some intelligent laymen, brahmins, and wise ascetics asked the Blessed One: “Venerable sir! Frequent utterances are made saying that this Dhamma can be achieved right now. To what extent should a person possess the noble qualities to be able to claim that he has personally gained immediate results?”

The Buddha extolled his own Dhamma as: “It is a Dhamma that can be experienced personally in this present lifetime through practice leading to personal insight (*sanditṭhiko*). It bestows benefits without delay (*akāliko*). It invites investigation as: ‘Come and see for yourself’ (*ehi-passiko*). It is worthy of practising and conducive to perfect realisation by oneself (*opāneyyiko*). It can benefit and be experienced by each and every person (*paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*).”

The question relates to these noble qualities. The Buddha answered the wise interrogators to their entire satisfaction. However, these questions and answers are not from this Purābheda Sutta. I have clarified by drawing references from other discourses to make the meaning clearer and more convincing since they are relevant to the statement that craving should be dispelled before death.

The Way to Gain Immediate Benefits

The Buddha’s answer to the question on the Dhamma being realisable here and now was: “Brahmin! You should reflect thus: a

person who is overwhelmed and oppressed by lust and passion, may do things that are detrimental to himself and others, being incited by passion. He or she is capable of committing immoral deeds, by actions, speech, or thought. On the other hand, if one is free from lust, one will abstain from doing any such evil deeds. Hence, is it not true that freedom from lust and abstention from unwholesome acts are benefits to be actually realised in this present lifetime?"

It is, in fact, a counter-question put by the Buddha to let the questioners reflect and consider the immediate beneficial results of being able to expel lust and avoid evil deeds. This enabled the questioners to understand clearly. Of course, not all of them were able to dispel lust completely. There were some who just perceived the significance of the answer given in the form of a counter-question. The gist of it is urging them to practise meditation to get free from lust and passion. It is essential to get free from lust in the present lifetime, for as long as lust has a firm grip, one is liable to commit evil deeds that are detrimental to oneself and to others.

Such malicious actions or evil deeds might also be done out of spite or anger, blinded by delusion. Lust is one of the contributory factors that stir up a person to commit evil deeds. It is because they are gripped by lust, being obsessed by their own happiness at the expense of others, that they tend to do evil wilfully and without shame. There are many instances where murder, theft, robbery, and other harmful and foolish offences are committed. Commission of such evil deeds is mainly attributable to the presence of lust. Other evil deeds are committed due to pride or conceit (*māna*). Some do evil, make mistakes, and utter obscene words impelled by egoism. Wrong view (*ditṭhi*) is a belief which is erroneously considered as true. Depending on such wrong views, evil deeds are likely to be done. Sometimes, harm may be inflicted upon those holding different beliefs. Leaving aside religious beliefs, in the world, hot controversies often arise in political affairs among bigoted persons. Such incidents occur due to greed, hatred, delusion, pride, and wrong views.

Dogmatic and irrational views cause animosity and violence, which harm the interests of both the wrong-doers and their victims. We see these effects in the present day. The ill-effects will be even greater in the next existence. With the extinction of lust and the complete eradication of delusion, pride, and wrong views, such evil

kammas will have no opportunity to occur. No harmful acts will be done to others. To get rid of these abominable feelings of lust, anger, ego, *etc.*, there is a method of practice. If this method is adhered to and practised in the right way, you will realise the truth personally. This truth of the Dhamma is realisable here and now.

When the Buddha replied those who asked the question became convinced and enlightened. Nobody can say with certainty what the destiny of a being will be after death. That is why the Buddha taught this Dhamma that could be personally realised in the present lifetime. Before death, that is, before the destruction of these aggregates of attachment, craving is utterly destroyed. In other words, craving should be completely expelled before death. What the Buddha taught is that a person who is totally liberated from craving should be called a person endowed with serenity of mind — a sage.

How to Eradicate Craving Before Death

The method to get rid of craving before death is the Noble Eightfold Path. In terms of conduct and moral training there are three aspects: morality, concentration, and wisdom. It is essential to observe precepts, to practise ecstatic concentration, and to gain insight knowledge. Morality, or living according to precepts, will dispel the gross form of active defilements (*vitikkama-kilesā*), passionate cravings, both physical and verbal, which exceed the limits of moral restraint. Concentration expels wild imaginings that arise in a person's mind. Wisdom expels latent defilements (*anusaya kilesā*), which may give rise to defilements when circumstances are favourable.

Sensual craving is of six kinds: craving for beautiful visual objects, melodious sounds or a sweet voices, fragrant odours, delicious tastes, soft touches, and refined ideas. If elaborated, the kinds of craving would be innumerable. Just try to imagine how many delightful sensations may occur at the sight of a single visual object. There is a multitude of different aspects. Attachment and craving not only occur in connection with one's own looks and personality, but also has an inclination to find others, such as family members and friends, as beautiful and smart. You want to possess pretty and dainty clothes of fine texture and other luxury goods. You may dream of nice things that you wish to own. If these have come into your possession, you will again continue to have pleasurable attachment to them. You like

to choose different colours and designs of garments pleasing to your eye for your dress, foot-wear, umbrellas, motor-cars, *etc.* Everything that affords satisfaction will attract craving. In regard to beautiful sights and scenes, pleasant tunes and sweet voices, fragrant odours, tasty food, and tender touches, these would stimulate delightful sensations. Such sensations are too many to enumerate. In the case of fantasies and day-dreams that may find a place in your heart, enjoyable feelings might arise in longing to have them. This is craving for mental objects. All those cravings, which are likely to occur through the six sense-doors, and bring pleasurable sensations, must be extinguished. Such cravings can be got rid of if you maintain constant vigilance by full accomplishment of morality, which will eliminate the extreme forms of physical and verbal intrusions.

How to Expel Defilements by Morality

A person who does not respect and observe the rules of morality, may cheat, steal, or even commit murder to get something that seems highly attractive. If such an evil deed is committed, it would amount to a breach of morality. Then it means that craving arose and went beyond the bounds of morality. One who respects morality and keeps it intact will not give way to craving, and so will abstain from cheating, stealing, or killing. By so doing, he or she is free from the craving which could have urged him or her to resort to an evil deed. This shows how extreme forms of craving could be expelled.

As for monks, there are many things that they ought not to do or say, though they may wish to. Mental perversion should also be kept in check. Self-restraint or avoidance of perverse thoughts amounts to keeping oneself free from craving. It is not permissible for a monk to ask for a thing from a lay person with the motive to make him offer it. Restraint should be exercised even though a monk may be eager to obtain some property. No attempt should be made directly or indirectly to ask for anything. Inducing others to offer donations is prohibited. If such inducement or insinuation is made, irrespective of whether a thing or property is received or not, the purity of morality is deemed to have been broken according to the rules of monastic discipline. If morality is properly protected and kept pure, it would amount to remaining free from craving that goes beyond the bounds by virtue of moral restraint.

In brief, observance of these moral principles by way of refraining from committing evils either physically or verbally, the least that must be done in this Buddha's dispensation is to eliminate the gross forms of craving that lead to moral transgressions (*vitikkama kilesā*).

How to Expel Defilements by Concentration

However, the subjugation of craving by morality is not sufficient. It becomes more stable with the development of concentration through tranquility meditation (*samatha*). Fixed concentration on the meditation device (*kasiṇa*), a process inducing *jhāna* with constant mindfulness is *samatha-bhāvanā*. By being mindful with fixed concentration, the mind is riveted on a single object. If the mind sometimes wanders, it should be recalled and put back on the object of contemplation. Therefore, during tranquility meditation, pleasurable attachment to sensations on sights, sounds, *etc.*, that may arise by wishful thinking, will cease to occur. This is how nascent craving is expelled by developing concentration.

How to Eradicate Defilements by Wisdom

Concentration can only dispel craving during meditation. Once meditation is over or loses its momentum, craving will infiltrate and overcome concentration. To root out craving, insight meditation must be practised to develop wisdom. This simply means meditation to gain insight knowledge. Accordingly, contemplation with mindfulness must be made at every moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking, whether walking, standing, lying down, bending, stretching, or moving. In brief, all phenomena arising at the six sense-doors must be contemplated. If this is done, what is seen, heard, or cognised will not be regarded as delightful or pleasurable, and so no passionate desire will have the chance to occur.

An ordinary worldling who fails to contemplate and note, will find pleasure in everything good and agreeable that is seen, heard, or cognised, giving rise to craving. If disagreeable things are encountered, craving will arise for agreeable sense-objects. However, a meditator who constantly contemplates every phenomenon arising at the moment of seeing, hearing, or knowing, will (if insight is developed to the stage of knowledge of dissolution) no longer think of the phenomena as being agreeable or disagreeable, but will become

aware of them as being impermanent, having truly realised the phenomenal arising and dissolution of things. Moreover, because of the natural characteristics of impermanence, the meditator will realise them as unsatisfactory. Having appreciated this in relation to all that is seen, heard or cognised, no pleasurable sensation associated with craving will occur. In respect of every sense-object contemplated, no craving will arise, and so the mind remains at peace. This is how latent craving is removed.

Two Kinds of Latent Defilements

Ārammaṇānusaya means the passionate desire that can occur with retrospective reflection on the objects of sense that have escaped the attention of contemplation by means of insight. A meditator whose insight knowledge has matured to the stage of dissolution, will not miss a single phenomenon that occurs at every moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing. All mental and physical phenomena that appear will be found to vanish and dissolve immediately whenever they are contemplated. Thus the meditator will realise these phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. Having realised them as such, the phenomenal nature of all such happenings will be reflected upon and perceived in the light of their true characteristics thereby preventing craving from arising. This explains the eradication of the subtle form of craving latent in sense-objects by means of insight.

Santānānusaya means the passionate desire that can occur in an ordinary person under suitable circumstances, and which has not yet been dispelled by the Noble Path. These latent defilements can only be eradicated by the Noble Path. The manner of removal is that while in the process of contemplating on the continual dissolution of mind and matter, the arising and passing away of mental formations is realised through the achievement of the path of Stream-winning. When nibbāna is reached all latent defilements are found to have been exterminated by mature insight. A Stream-winner is totally free from the latent defilements of personality-view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), and doubt (*vicikiccha*). Whether practising insight meditation or not, no false view or doubt about the Dhamma can possibly occur connected with any kind of sense-object. Nevertheless, a Stream-winner is not yet free from passionate desires. However,

powerful and unruly passionate desires, which can drag down an ordinary worldling to the lower realms, will not arise in a Stream-winner. Therefore, a Stream-winner will abstain from killing, stealing, lying, *etc.*, which could relegate a person to the lower realms. An ordinary worldling could do these misdeeds, either because of attachment to property, to family members, or to his or her own life.

In connection with this fact, there are many instances in the Pāli texts. Among these, the most interesting example relates to the personal guarantee or affirmation made by the Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Sīha, who was a Stream-winner.

The Guarantee Given by General Sīha

“Na ca mayaṃ jīvitahetupi sañcicca paṇaṃ jīvitaṃ voropeyyāmaṃ”ti.¹

The gist of the above Pāli phrase is: “Having regard for life, we will never intentionally take the life of another living being in self-defence to protect our own life from imminent danger of death.”

This is not just a fanciful statement. It is a guarantee by General Sīha, a Stream-winner, of his own mental attitude. In that statement the word ‘jīvitahetupi’ should be given particular attention. Some may hold the opinion that a Stream-winner in whom greed and anger still remain, could commit an act of killing in self-defence or in anger, when faced with an enemy who is going to harm him or her to the extent of causing death. General Sīha’s statement is that even to save his own life, he could not possibly kill another. This statement accords fully with the Buddha’s teaching. It should be remembered that though a Stream-winner is not totally free from craving, he or she is free of the strong craving that could lead to rebirth in the lower realms for having committed such acts of killing, stealing, *etc.*

An ordinary person who has not rejected even a fraction of craving, will no doubt commit evils as urged by violent passions, which can cause rebirth in the lower realms after death. Neither will he or she avoid doing unwholesome acts such as stealing other’s property. This reveals the unabated strength of craving. There are some ordinary people who dare not commit evil deeds. They have sincere devotion due to having heard or studied the Dhamma with concentrated attention. However, this is not guaranteed. If falling into bad

¹ Sihassutta, Gradual Sayings, Book of Eights. (A.iv.187)

company and repeatedly hearing evil or profane talks, an ordinary person might deviate from the right path either in this present life-time or in future existences. A Stream-winner is not like this. Passionate desires invoking attachment have become weak, and so he or she cannot even think of doing unwholesome actions that will lead to the lower realms, neither in the present or in future existences. This is indicative of the liberation or disengagement of craving.

On the attainment of Once-returning one will be free from the strong forms of craving, ill-will, and anger.

When reaching the stage of Non-returning, the passionate desire and ill-will are totally eradicated. As such, a Non-returner becomes tranquil in the matter of sexual desire. Despite this achievement, as feelings of delight and pleasure in respect of existence remain, a Non-returner is not totally free from suffering. The desire for existence will be eliminated only after one has reached Arahantship. Then only, all other defilements such as delusion and pride are completely annihilated. Such a state of sanctity can be realised in this very life existence. A noble person possessing such attributes and devoid of craving is called a sage, one who has attained tranquility of mind according to the teaching of the Buddha. Such an Arahant, after *parinibbāna*, will not be reborn again since the aggregates of mind and matter have become extinct. No new existence will come into being and with the absolute extinction of becoming eternal peace will be gained. Such a blissful stage is called “cessation without remainder (*anupādisesanibbāna*).” A sage who is freed from craving before death remains in a blissful state known as “cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesanibbāna*),” which means annihilation of everything except the five aggregates.

How Calm and Blissful Is It?

The meaning is that an Arahant who is totally devoid of craving, still possesses the five aggregates, which continue to undergo the process of arising and dissolution. For this reason, he or she still experiences and perceives the sense-objects of sight, sound, odour, etc. In particular, he or she is still subject to bodily suffering caused by heat and cold. Owing to the indisposition and transient nature of the bodily elements, the body has to suffer ailments such as stiffness, pains, and aches. An Arahant may also fall sick. However, there is

a complete absence of miserable mental feelings even if an Arahant has to endure excruciating pain. This is the extraordinary characteristic of an Arahant, who is mentally unperturbed and at peace, the mind being calm, unaffected, and purified. It is the sobering and unflinching effect of feeling extremely better and tranquil.

Those Stream-winners and Once-returners who have not yet escaped from the fetter of craving will have two kinds of suffering: disagreeable sensations while in physical pain or discomfort, and unhappiness when reflecting on misery endured. It is like getting a thorn stuck in the hand or the foot, then taking out the thorn with a needle. Pain will be felt in two ways, the painful sensation caused by the piece of thorn that remains in the flesh and the pain that is felt when extracting the thorn with the needle. Likewise, an ordinary worldling will suffer two kinds of misery: one from disagreeable sensations and the mental distress caused by having a sensitive mind.

As for an Arahant, he seldom meets disagreeable sensations. If disagreeable sensations do occur, there will be no consequential unhappiness. The mind remains serene and pure. Apart from that, all defilements such as anger, delusion, conceit, pride, *etc.*, have been removed. Therefore, the Arahant is neither irritated nor excited by any form of feeling no matter how unpleasant or pleasant it may be. That is why, when an Arahant attains *parinibbāna*, the mental and physical aggregates will not arise again. It is eternal peace. Such a person is, therefore, said to be a sage. As stated earlier, a sage is freed from craving before death. He or she holds no attachment to the present, and neither longs for the future nor reminisces about the past, remaining calm and serene, free from craving.

Let us recite this motto:

“Whoever eradicates craving before death, neither relying on the past nor longing for the future, avoiding the two extremes by being mindful of the present, is called a sage.”

If that is so, the question may arise as to why the teaching is repeated as “*pubbamanta manissito*,” *etc.* In brief, due to not being understood yet by the devas and brahmas, repeated utterance was made to amplify the teaching. This has been referred to in the beginning of this lecture. In the part that follows too, teachings are repeated in the same way.

How to Eradicate Craving

How to eradicate craving before death is explained as “*pubbamanta-manissito*,” etc. That means practice to escape from clinging to the past, and abandon all hope for the future. In the present, practice to avoid enlistment. This statement is not easy to comprehend either. However, as mentioned at the beginning, this Sutta was intended for those who possessed the highest degree of intellect. These intelligent individuals were able to understand the teachings, though persons of mediocre intellect might not comprehend. Since it is meant for the learned, it is necessary to mention a few things that need reflection. As such, from the very outset, it has been taught in this discourse that craving must be eradicated before death.

This is interesting for intelligent people. In practising religion, only if its benefit could be derived before death, can one rest assured. It is uncertain what will happen after the present life has ended. For instance, when suffering from a disease, only if it could be cured will it be worth taking treatment. If it could be cured in the next life, no one will be inclined to take treatment. The quicker the recovery, the better. In the same way, if peace of mind can be acquired in the present lifetime, it will be extremely satisfactory. Only if one practices seriously, can one attain Arahantship in this very existence. If such an attainment is achieved, one can be called a sage. Therefore, in the ninth verse given in reply, it states: “*Taṃ brūmi upasantoti*,” which means: a person totally liberated from craving is called a man of serenity. In the last verse too, it has been taught as: “*sa ve santoti vuccati*.” All qualities mentioned in the previous verses shall be ended with either one of the aforesaid two phrases. Hence, a person who is devoid or entirely freed of craving is said to be a sage. The method of practice embracing morality, concentration, and wisdom, has already been described fully. However, a few points deserve mention on how serenity occurs without the slightest tinge of craving at the moment of insight contemplation.

Insight means constant contemplation of all phenomena arising at the six sense-doors at every moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and cognising. It is done to get rid of craving. In respect of every sense-object contemplated, defilements cease to occur momentarily. Meanwhile, craving also becomes extinct. The more intense contemplation becomes, the more craving can be mopped up. When contemplation is prolonged, defilements will be greatly reduced.

Vehement and coarse defilements will be minimized. At times, serenity of mind will be achieved to the extent that one might think the coarse defilements will never arise again as before. This serenity is only a momentary achievement while contemplation is going on. Some people have a wrong notion that this peaceful state of mind is indicative of the complete cessation of defilements. However, until and unless the Noble Path is attained, the serenity achieved is not stable yet. After a considerable lapse of time, say, a number of days after insight practice has stopped, coarse defilements will gradually reappear. Serenity is realised while contemplation is being done. This serenity is the benefit gained before one's own death.

It is more obvious to those whose concentration is strong. Pleasurable sensations that may arise will vanish without recurrence after contemplating and noting them once or twice only. Craving will be found to have ceased altogether. When concentration becomes deep, pleasurable and delightful sensations will subside without being able to manifest. Although the pleasurable sense-objects are noticed, since contemplating and noting are vigorous, they will be vanishing so fast that they will not even be thought of as pleasurable. Hence, serenity of mind prevails without pleasurable attachment. This is the way that craving is removed while contemplation is proceeding. It is the benefit realised before death comes.

As contemplating and noting continue to accelerate, the Noble Path is reached by virtue of insight knowledge, which becomes mature with full accomplishment. All craving that can cause one to land in the lower realms will then be extinguished followed by personal realisation of real peace. This is also evidence of how freedom from craving is experienced prior to death. All passionate desires and pleasurable attachments will be completely eliminated when Arahantship is attained. This is, in fact, the clearing away of craving, human passions, before demise.

Immediate Personal Realisation

Craving, lust, and attachment cease altogether in an Arahant, then all is peaceful. This realisation is achieved in this very life (*sandiṭṭhiko*), and without delay (*akāliko*). To put it another way, this Dhamma can be achieved in no time. Moreover, as the benefits can be reaped immediately, it warrants urging and inviting others to come and see

(*ehipassiko*). After extending an invitation to others, if no beneficial results are derived at once by them despite their practice of the Dhamma, it would be unsatisfactory. Satisfaction will be obtained only if the benefits are gained more or less immediately or without undue delay. If satisfaction is obtained, thanks will be showered upon the person who urges or encourages others to do the practice.

An analogy may be given. If a sick man was advised to take medical treatment failed to recover immediately, he may lose confidence in the physician. Only if he recovered overnight after taking medicine, will he have confidence in the medicine prescribed, the physician, and the person who earnestly offered advice. Similarly, the Buddha's Dhamma deserves inviting and encouraging others as: "Come and see" and "Try the practice for yourself." If practice is performed with diligence as urged, one will be liberated from craving in this present life. Certainly, if the truth of Dhamma is realised, one who practices meditation will be grateful to the one who urged him to practise the Dhamma as prescribed by the Blessed One.

Let the Dhamma, which is worthy of practising (*opāneyyiko*), permeate your mind. Let it pervade the whole body and remain absorbed just like taking medicine orally or as an injection to cure a disease or to rejuvenate one's strength. It is a Dhamma deserving of practice to spread it within yourself. If the Dhamma could be retained in oneself by practising it, pleasant or odious sensations can be resisted. The disease of defilements can be completely cured. How? When encountering a sensation that may arouse defilements, it should be rejected by contemplating and noting it, as it arises. If it is noted and contemplated, the sensation, whether good or bad, will be found to vanish. Then, no craving will occur at all, and anger will cease too. If craving or anger do occur, they will disappear at once if contemplated and noted with constant mindfulness. This vanishing will become even more conspicuous when unhappiness occurs. If a person who practises cannot as yet dispel such miserable feelings of distress by contemplating and noting, then it may be considered as unsatisfactory. If so, it should be noted that one is not yet accomplished in the Dhamma.

Courage Is Tested When Faced with Danger

Under ordinary circumstances, a person's true calibre cannot be judged, though he might have been extolled as a brave person with

great ability. It is only when faced with danger that a person's true courage can be known (*āpadāsu thāmo veditabbo*).¹ An accurate assessment of courage and ability can only be made if someone can tolerate severely adverse conditions, and make decisions that run counter to personal interest in a perilous situation. However much someone may show bravado, it is hard to judge their true colours. Only when confronted with real danger and put into a tight corner that calls for decisive combat and true valour, if he is found fighting against his foe valiantly at the risk of his life, then it can be said that he is a tough and courageous man. Likewise, in matters concerning the Dhamma, one may be said to be highly accomplished and noble, but unless he faces adverse conditions, he cannot be vouched for as truly noble and knowledgeable. Only if he can tolerate and exercise self-restraint in subduing passionate desires, which when they occur, or in suppressing his anger to the point of near obliteration, or when sorrowful sensations that might arise do not manifest, he is praiseworthy. According to the quality of the Dhamma that is achieved, the more tolerance and forbearance he will show, no matter from which sense-door unpleasant and harmful sensations might appear. This Dhamma therefore needs to be practised with all one's might to let it permeate one's whole body and mind (*opāneyyiko*).

Then this Dhamma can be realised by oneself by practising it (*paccattaṃ veditabbo*). It is solely dependent upon one's own effort and cannot be achieved indirectly. The Dhamma that has been gained by one's own personal perseverance cannot be given or shared with another. The teacher cannot bestow the Dhamma he has in him upon his disciple. Parents cannot hand it down to their children. Neither can children give it to their parents, nor can close friends share it with each other.

One Only Gets Satiated If One Eats

In this world, during one's lifetime, only by doing the work that needs to be done, will one's objective be achieved. Even in taking meals, only if one eats, will one be satiated. If another person eats one will not be satiated. Likewise, one should sleep for one's own recuperation. A good sleep cannot be hired. Any kind of phenomenon that occurs in one's self cannot be done by a proxy. Similarly, if one

¹ S.i.78 and in many other places (ed.)

personally devotes oneself to practice, no one but oneself will gain accomplishment in the Dhamma. The Dhamma can be fully appreciated individually and separately by those who practise. To make the meaning of this *sandittika* aspect of Dhamma, more distinct, the Buddha taught in this Purābheda Sutta that before the destruction of the aggregates, craving should be eradicated. The phrases that followed the first were statements of explanation in detail, that is why there is similarity in their meanings. Let me continue by explaining the subsequent phrases.

Do Not Rely on the Past

No reliance should be placed on the former existences (*pubbamantaṃ*), if said in terms of existences. However, it is rare for humans to recall past existences. There are only a few who are said to remember their former existences. As the majority of human beings are unable to do this, the expression should be taken to mean “earlier,” that is all preceding years, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. Looking back from this time of teaching, what has been seen, heard, sensed, or known are all recollections of the past. Even the words just spoken and heard already belong to the past. What is being spoken or heard at this very moment constitutes the present. What is going to be said or heard may be regarded as the future. In this case, what has been seen, heard, sensed, or known previously are what is meant by “former existences.” It was stated that these should not be relied upon.

Relying on Craving and Wrong View

Relying on means nothing but craving and wrong view. I have given lectures about craving and wrong view so often that the subject has become somewhat stale for our benefactors. However, I have to repeat it here or there will be a gap in my teaching. In all the Buddha’s teachings, whenever the expression “relying on” is used, it refers to craving and wrong view. Only with reference to these two, either relying on (*nissito*) and not relying on (*anissaya*) has been taught. This is true. When a pleasurable sensation occurs in respect of a sense-object, it amounts to relying on the sensation. Because of wrong view, if craving or grasping is occurring, it is relying on the sensation that arises, without letting go of it. If there is attachment to past events,

it is said to be relying on with craving. For instance, if one sits against a wall, it may be said to be relying on the wall. One is leaning against the wall, which lends its support. If sitting against a column, the column is relied upon as a support. If sitting on the floor, it amounts to relying on the floor. Likewise, craving, by reflecting repeatedly on the past sensations that had been perceived, it relies on them with pleasure. Various kinds of sense-objects that have been seen, heard, smelt, tasted, or touched in the past, are often reflected upon with pleasure. Such reminiscence constitutes acts of reliance accompanied with and stimulated by craving. Delightful and pleasant sensations that have arisen in retrospect relating to events of the former existence should be regarded as reliance made with craving. Those who remember their former existences are few.

However, since this discourse was delivered at the Great Occasion, the devas and brahmas who were present could probably remember the events that happened in their former existences. If pleasurable sensations are felt by reflecting on the events that had occurred in the former existences, it must be interpreted as being relied upon with craving. As far as human beings are concerned, it is hard to remember past events from one's childhood, let alone from former existences. The key point is that events occurring in the past could be reflected upon from the time of becoming adults. There are past events relating to food taken with relish, or joy and happiness found, or activities done in the company of friends, *etc.*, to which pleasurable sensations have become attached. Sometimes, such events might come into one's head spontaneously without making any special effort. This kind of recollection of the past with pleasure means relying on the past. Such a state of mind should not be allowed to occur. As taught before, if craving is eliminated, it can no longer be relied upon. Therefore, the phrase stating that no reliance should be made on the past appears to be redundant. Nevertheless, the first phrase wherein mention has been made as "free from craving," is the summarised statement. Teaching was done to elaborate that no reliance should be made on the past, and it was meant for those people who could not yet understand with just a brief statement.

This is important for those who are currently engaged in meditation. While meditating, if one reflects on past events with pleasurable feelings, it would amount to relying on the past. No such reminis-

cence should be allowed to occur. If such feelings do appear, they should be abandoned by contemplating and noting them. If imagination occurs by reflecting on what has been seen, heard, or tasted with enjoyment before, it must be dispelled by contemplating and noting. All such events of the past should be contemplated and noted the moment they creep into one's mind. If this is done, reminiscence, which is likely to attract pleasurable attachment, will not occur. One will then be completely free from relying on the past.

With regard to this, it includes all kinds of recent events. It may be things that took place on the previous day, in the morning or afternoon, or events that have only just been heard, sensed, or known. Recent events are more conspicuous. Things that happened just a few seconds ago, or in the morning or afternoon might appear in the mind's eye without reflection. They appear spontaneously, so more care should be taken regarding recent events. All such sensations should be abandoned by contemplating and noting at every moment of their arising. This is how reliance on with craving is abandoned. Relying on with wrong view is similar. What has been seen, heard, touched, or known is wrongly assumed as "I saw, or heard, or knew." The sense-object is reflected on as a person, a human being, an animal, *etc.* Since the manner of this reflection is as a person or being, it may be said that reliance has been made on wrong view. This is retrospection with personality-view and self-view. If such thoughts arise, they must be contemplated and noted, and thus abandoned. Therefore, the motto was said: "He who eradicates craving before death neither relying on the past, *etc.*"

The expression "neither relying on the past" refers to the events that had happened in the past. A pleasurable sensation with craving should not be allowed to occur by reflecting on past events. If such a sensation or thought arises, it should be abandoned by contemplating and noting. This method is extremely subtle. If noting is done through mindfulness on the consciousness that arises, it will be found to be disappearing. This state of mind or mental activity was absent before. It occurs at this very moment and vanishes at once, hence it is clearly realised as impermanent. Nor is there any living being. It will be vividly known as a natural phenomenon arising and passing away. Having realised the truth, craving for the pleasurable sensation cannot arise. Nor will wrong view appear with the idea that it is a

living being or a person. Therefore, this method of contemplation and noting is very effective in abandoning the craving and wrong view that occur by relying on the past. All imaginations that may arise relating to past events should be dispelled by contemplating and noting in the way stated. If rejection is done by contemplating and noting with mindfulness, it will eventually lead to the attainment of Arahantship. On reaching that stage, craving and wrong view, which are prone to rely upon the past, will be uprooted. This is why practice should be done from the very beginning by an ordinary person to get rid of craving and wrong view completely. Without practising in this way, craving and wrong view could never be abandoned. If one takes up the practice as an ordinary person, one will become a Stream-winner after one has developed insight knowledge in the course of meditation. When one reaches this status, coarse craving that could lead to the lower realms will be removed.

If a Stream-winner continues to meditate, he or she will become a Once-returner. Further practice will bring progressive insight and one will become a Non-returner. On reaching that stage, all desires connected with sensual pleasures will be extinct. If a Non-returner proceeds with contemplation, he or she will become an Arahant, whereby all defilements will be eradicated. Of course, wrong view has been expelled since the time of Stream-winning. However, Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners still have pride or conceit (*māna*). This conceit, though devoid of attachment to the existence of a self, it resembles wrong view. Pride may cause one to think of virtues as one's own. It is because of the presence of wrong view working as an agent, it is called self-pride (*asmimāna*) or pride of views (*ditthimāna*). The three lower stages of the path attained by insight will abandon wrong view. However, on reaching Arahantship, all clinging, wrong view, and pride will be completely eradicated. It was with the intention of eradicating all leaning or grasping that may appear in connection with the past that it was taught that the past is one extreme that should not be relied upon.

Abandon All Hope for the Future

Let me explain how to restrain oneself from looking forward to the future, having mentioned about non-reliance on the past, according to the motto. This was contained in the teachings as the

fourth stanza of the verse, which runs as "*Tassa natthi purakkhatam.*" It means, a person who does not hold any expectations for the future. For example, one who intends to travel by train will have to arrange to get to the railway station, and reserve a seat for a comfortable ride on the train to reach a certain destination, without any hitch. This is planning and making arrangements in so far as travelling is concerned. The same thing is found in the Dhamma. All beings are mere travellers journeying without a pause in the cycles of existence. They are therefore looking forward to what might happen to them in their next existences, hoping to find things according to their desires. They yearn for a better life, aspiring to gain greater power and prosperity in the next existence in the human world. They wish to be born into an aristocratic family, or a wealthy family of higher social status. Moreover, they wish to be born with handsome looks, fair complexion, and hope for a luxurious life in the company of followers and attendants. If they were to be born in the celestial realms, they hope to become powerful devas. In the present existence too, they want to be free from all dangers, and to become opulent among a high class society of friends and relatives. These are longings for the future. It is just looking forward, and hence in the motto, it has been stated as: "nor looking forward to the future." The gist of it is not to look forward to and yearn for the future. If you happen to imagine so, you should contemplate, note it, and then abandon it.

This advice is intended for those who are practising meditation and not for those who are preoccupied with their daily chores at home. As regards people who have to perform their domestic duties and are fully preoccupied, not having time to meditate, it is impossible to take up the practice and to contemplate and note. Therefore, the method of practising contemplation on the right lines is only important for those who are meditating. If and when practical exercise in meditation is made, say, for an hour or so, or both day and night continuously, it will be the meditator's duty to contemplate and note with diligence. Hence, if any thought or imagination occurs relating to matters concerning the future, it must be noted. There are so many things to be contemplated and noted. If what is going to happen in the future is reflected upon, the thought or imagination that arises must be noted. In the present lifetime, one is likely to think and yearn for what one wishes to acquire or to be done according to

his own will or desire. Sometimes, one may be imagining and longing for happiness in the world of human beings or devas by virtue of morality which one has gained. These arising thoughts and imaginations should be contemplated, noted, and then abandoned. Also, one may be planning to promote the practice of meditation. That of course, is a virtuous thought. However, if one dwells on it for a significant period, it will interfere with the practice of meditation. If this happens, knowledge through concentration will fail to occur. Then the progress of insight will be deterred. So even virtuous thoughts should be abandoned by contemplating and noting them. If one intends to develop deep concentration, contemplation and noting will be hindered. As such, this type of imagination must always be abandoned by proper contemplation and noting.

If all such thoughts, ideas and longings for the futures are rejected, progressive insight knowledge will develop leading to the attainment of the Noble Path. On the achievement of Arahantship such thoughtful imaginations will be totally eradicated. For this reason an Arahant, having got rid of all craving, will have no new existence of mental and physical aggregates after death thereby gaining eternal peace. Ordinary people and trainees on the path, having had craving, will cling to one of the sensations appearing as kamma, signs of kamma, and signs of destiny visualized on the verge of death. Then the mind being fixed on that particular sensation, the decess-consciousness, sometimes called relinking-consciousness, hangs on to it leading to rebirth. That is how they will be reborn in another existence with a new set of aggregates. Rebirth and a new existence opens the door to misery such as old age, disease, and death. Therefore, to be able to avoid such misery, do not reflect on past events or long for anything to take place in the future. These thoughts should be abandoned after contemplating and noting.

Do Not Get Enlisted in the Middle

No attachment should be made between the two extremes, that is, do not permit oneself to reach a situation whereby enlistment could occur in the present existence. This means to avoid being regarded as a person indulging in sensual pleasures or debauchery. Avoid being regarded as a person full of anger and spite. Give no chance to be regarded as a deluded, egoistic, or arrogant person; nor

as a faithless sceptic, nor as an immoral person full of licentious desires. Don't become one heading for the lower realms of animals or hungry ghosts; nor even one who will be reborn a human being or a deva. In essence, meditation should be practised to escape from enlistment as a person belonging to any of the foregoing categories.

The statement, "Do not rely on the past, and abandon all hope for the future" was the terminology used in the discourse. It is nearly impossible to understand for the present generation. This Dhamma taught in ancient times was not meant for ordinary people. It was meant for persons of very high intellect. It would be easier for them to understand. The expression "Do not get enlisted in the middle (*nupasaṅkheyyo*)," is even more profound, so I will explain it again.

In the phrase, "Do not get enlisted in the middle (*vemajjhe nupasaṅkheyyo*), 'the middle' refers to the phenomena occurring at the six sense-doors on every moment of seeing and knowing. One should not allow oneself to be enlisted as a person dominated by passion or seething with rage regarding any kind of sensations that occur in the present. If pleasurable sensations occur with attachment at the sight of a visual object, one should be called a lustful person. All kinds of sensations arise at every moment of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, knowing, *etc.* A person who feels angry on seeing a sense-object, may be called an angry man. Then, one can be called deluded if one does not appreciate the truth of the phenomena that have arisen and attracted one's attention. Similarly, if one feels elated and honoured in connection with the sensations arising from what have been seen, heard, touched, or known, a person deserves to be called proud. If one considers that it is one's own self who sees or hears, then one should be called a holder of wrong views. If demerits occur relating to what has been seen, heard, or known, one may be said to be heading for the lower realms. On the other hand, if merits are being achieved one may be called a virtuous person who will be reborn as a human being or a deva. Hence, one must conduct oneself to avoid being enlisted as stated.

Then, what should one do to achieve that objective? The method is to contemplate and note, as they really are, all mental and physical phenomena that arise at the six sense-doors on every moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing. If thus contemplated and noted, it will be clearly known that the arising phenomena are merely

mind and matter, which, in fact, arise and vanish immediately and that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. If this is truly realised, pleasurable feelings and attachment will cease to occur. If not, all sensations will stick to the sensitive mind just like an image sticks to a film when taking a photograph. Delightful sensations may occur repeatedly when the mind is impressed with the picture of a pleasurable sensation on which mental reflection is made. If it happens to be a grudging or spiteful sensation, anger may arise. I will relate a story where anger became prominent.

A Story from the Mahosadha Jātaka

In the Mahosadha Jātaka,¹ the Brahmin Kevaṭṭa advised the king: “Your Majesty! If you follow my advice and carry out everything exactly in accordance with my directions, you will become a Universal Monarch.” The king replied, “Venerable sir! This is quite simple and easy.”

“You should mobilise your troops and raise a big army, and subdue with the great force at your command all neighbouring states that are weak.”

The king remarked in agreement: “What has been stated by the Brahmin Kevaṭṭa is true. It is easy for a powerfully nation to invade a weak nation and conquer it. This plan is acceptable and will be adopted. Threaten them by a show of force and pressure them to submit to our authority as vassal states. Any country that concedes to our demands will be left unharmed and will be allowed to maintain its status quo. We will tell them to follow our leadership and extend full co-operation according to our dictates. These smaller nations will no doubt obey our directions through fear. With the enlistment of their support, as our country gets strengthened, we will proceed to coerce and subdue the bigger nations in a similar way. These big nations too will have no alternative, but to acquiesce to our will.”

The Brahmin Kevaṭṭa therefore gave orders that all neighbouring states should be subjected to their king’s control. Kevaṭṭa was quite intelligent. Of course, if one has the necessary strength, plots can be hatched. In the modern world, imperial colonists assume a similar aggressive attitude.

¹ In the DPPN and PTS translation it is called the Mahā Ummagga Jātaka (Jā 546), but in the Burmese Tipiṭaka it is the Umaṅgajātika (Jā 542), (ed.)

King Cūḷani Brahmadatta found it appropriate to adopt the policy of aggrandizement — the strong oppressing the weak — as advocated by Kevaṭṭa. He met with outstanding success in his venture as advised by Kevaṭṭa. If a small nation is threatened with aggression by a big nation backed up by a huge army with overwhelming superiority of strength, the small nation has to give way and obey in the face of an imminent danger to avert disaster. In this way, all neighbouring states, big or small, had to capitulate and concede to humiliating negotiation as dictated by King Brahmadatta.

After succeeding in its efforts to subjugate a good number of states, and on making further incursions with their military strength, some of the big nations became concerned and could not endure any more. The mighty force was gradually advancing towards the country of Videha. It was a modest sized state in central India, lying to the north of Māgadha. In those days, the states were not very big. None of them would be comparable in size to the Union of Burma, though their size is exaggerated in literature. The Brahmin Kevaṭṭa purposely delayed the execution of his plan to invade the country of Videha simply because of the presence of the minister Mahosadha, who was a reputed sage. In the Commentary, it mentions that the royal army besieged a fairly small state of Videha with eighteen divisions of armed forces. It was very large and broad-based. In those ancient times, the weaponry used in warfare was mainly swords, spears, and bows. There were then no sophisticated weapons as there are in modern times. As such, it is likely that the strength of the fighting forces might have been fairly large. Mithilā, the capital city of Videha, was surrounded by eighteen army divisions. The attacking force sent a message to the besieged city whether they would make an unconditional surrender. The king of Videha sought the advice of Mahosadha asking, “How would you suggest that we combat this dire situation which calls for an urgent solution?”

The Wisdom of Mahosadha

Mahosadha had envisaged beforehand that Kevaṭṭa’s armed forces would one day march on Videha and lay siege. He had therefore made early preparations to make the city self-sufficient within its own city limits in food and other essential materials. Dams, lakes, and canals were constructed within the precincts of the city to ensure

an adequate supply of water both for consumption and for cultivating crops. Spies and informers had been sent to various other countries. Even among Kevaṭṭa's army there were fifth-columnists who had done the work of propaganda to the effect that food supplies were in abundance within the city, *etc.* They, of course, made exaggerated statements regarding the stock-piling of all sorts of provisions, and the state of preparedness in the event of a siege. This information had made Kevaṭṭa's troops to consider an alternative strategy to the original plan. Their new strategy was to propose a battle of wits between intellectuals of either party and mutually agree to submission to the winner of the contest.

Mahosadha accepted this proposal. He therefore sent word to the enemy camp that on the next day at sunrise, he would come out from the western gate of the city with valuable gifts to hold negotiations, and that they should wait for him. Kevaṭṭa's party with a huge array of armed forces awaited eagerly for the occasion. Since they had to wait at the western gate, selected for the rendezvous, their faces were scorched by the burning rays of the rising sun. The climate in India at that time was unbearably hot. They were facing the sun as they looked up at the eastern horizon while waiting for Mahosadha's arrival. Mahosadha did not arrive early. His delay was intended to keep the other party in suspense and make them suffer with the heat. It was a cunning way of ill-treating others. Kevaṭṭa's troops, who were perspiring heavily, had to suffer. Only about midday, Mahosadha and his party made their appearance. Kevaṭṭa then said, "Friend! As we two are men of wisdom, courtesy should have been shown between intellectuals. Depending upon you all, Mahosadha, we arrived here a few days ago, yet, until today you have not made a friendly gesture by presenting us with gifts." This was an insinuation. Mahosadha then responded that he had not been able to offer gifts yet, due to the time taken in considering what kind of gifts would be appropriate. "I have brought a priceless gem to be presented as a gift, please honour us by accepting it," said Mahosadha. So saying, he made as if about to hand over the gem.

Kevaṭṭa reflected in this way. "As Mahosadha has come to offer this gift, it amounts to paying homage and submitting to subjugation." So he thought he was the victor. With great delight and eagerness, he extended his hands and spread his palms to receive the gift.

Mahosadha put the gem on the top of Kevaṭṭa's fingers so that it slide down. Being heavy, the gem dropped through the gaps in the Brahmin's fingers and landed on the ground between Mahosadha's feet. Impelled by greed, Kevaṭṭa bent forward to pick up the gem. At that moment, Mahosadha caught hold of the Brahmin's neck, pressing his head down, causing his brow to touch the ground, and exclaimed loudly, "Venerable Brahmin! I'm obviously younger than you. You are senior to me. Please don't worship me. It is highly improper."

In fact, Kevaṭṭa was certainly not paying homage to Mahosadha, he merely bent forward and tried to pick up the gem. However, it would appear to others by his posture that he was paying homage. Mahosadha therefore, placing his one hand on the neck of the Brahmin and holding the knot of the garment at the waist of the Brahmin with the other hand, pressed him down, brushing the Brahmin's forehead against the ground, and exclaiming, "Oh, teacher! Please stand up, I'm too young to be deserving of reverence in this way. I'm only about the age of your grandson. Don't worship me." So saying, he swept the Brahmin off his feet by pulling him hard.

Almost at once, Mahosadha's spies among Kevaṭṭa's retinue proclaimed, "Our teacher, the great Brahmin Kevaṭṭa is paying homage to Mahosadha for having failed in the battle of wits." When this loud proclamation rang forth, the entire armed forces of King Brahmadatta ran helter-skelter. King Brahmadatta also fled having been caught unawares. Many soldiers must have suffered injuries in the commotion. Fear usually spurs men to take to their heels in a mêlée to save their own lives. It is really dreadful. In ancient times, it must been all the more horrible.

The victors in battle plunder the property of the vanquished as they please. Both life and property may be destroyed, plundered, or seized. Towns and villages are razed. Men are captured and might be executed. Prisoners-of-war are treated as slaves. Those defeated in battle and the country that is invaded, lose their freedom, sovereignty, and national prestige, and may be cruelly suppressed. This fear of impending disaster must have made King Brahmadatta and his armed forces take flight.

The Brahmin Kevaṭṭa caught up with King Brahmadatta and prevented him from running away. He explained that they were not defeated yet, and that he had not paid homage to Mahosadha. The

battle of wits had not started and it was merely a trick played by Mahosadha by offering a gem as a gift. King Brahmadatta, realising what had actually happened, rallied his scattered and disorganized troops, came back again, and laid siege to the city of Mithilā with his armed forces firmly pitched for battle.

Despite the siege, the sage Mahosadha deputed a Brahmin of his own choice, named Anukevaṭṭa under sham orders of expulsion. Anukevaṭṭa sought to attend on Brahmadatta and schemed to incite suspicion about Kevaṭṭa, and among other ministers and the troops. Investigations were made by King Brahmadatta, and soon he could no longer trust any of his generals and other courtiers including his adviser Kevaṭṭa, having found with them in possession of weapons and presents bearing the insignia of Mahosadha. Suspicion overwhelmed him, thinking that his courtiers had surreptitiously pledged allegiance to Mahosadha. One night, Anukevaṭṭa and King Brahmadatta secretly fled the place as arranged by the spy, Anukevaṭṭa. At the same time, other spies working for Mahosadha publicly announced the secret and sudden departure of King Brahmadatta. The royal army of great magnitude woke up in surprise and dismay, and fled at once in confusion. From the point of view of some these days, such an incident might be regarded as just a myth. However, considering Mahosadha's remarkable ability, wisdom, and glorious attributes, it could have really happened in those superstitious days. Even in Burmese history, such incidents were said to have taken place when people were seized by fear.

As a result of this battle, Kevaṭṭa's forehead was disfigured by an ugly scar. It is said that every time he looked at a mirror, the scar reminded him of past events. Brooding over the past humiliation infuriated Kevaṭṭa who swore vengeance on Mahosadha for causing him injury, humiliation, and ignominy. Every time he saw the scar on his forehead, it made him reflect on the past incident, which stirred up his imagination: "Mahosadha deceived me. I failed to get the gem and the only result I have is this scar on my brow. He is really wicked. I will take my revenge one way or another, and make him suffer." With this resentment goading him, he was constantly plotting against Mahosadha. The ruse he employed was to invite the king of Videha to be given the daughter of King Brahmadatta in marriage. The intention behind this move was when the king of Videha with Mahosadha and

their retinue came without taking due precautions for their security, they were to be captured and massacred. However, this plot was spoilt by cautious handling of the situation by Mahosadha who had taken preventive measures, being aware of the plot prior to the occasion.

How Anger Arises on Reflection

The point that needs emphasis here is the way in which anger arises when reflecting on past events. Anger does not normally arise on seeing a scar. In this case, however, the reason for the upsurge of anger at the sight of the scar was because Kevaṭṭa, the Brahmin, had an indelible impression of the past events. If he could forgive Mahosadha, there is no reason why he should get angry with Mahosadha. It happened because of the presence of the wrong notion of self and the scar on his forehead as being “mine,” which is a concept, just as Mahosadha was thought of as a “being,” an illusion that is known or manifested in name only. If it was truly known and realised, anger would not have had any place to stand on. If the mind clings to a sensation, and if reflection is made on it, it would be the root cause for the occurrence of greed, anger, delusion, and other defilements. These sensations arise from what is seen, heard, touched, or known. It is true. If no contemplation and noting is done at the moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing, greed, anger, delusion, pride, *etc.*, can occur.

It resembles taking a thing from one's pocket and looking at it frequently. Repeated occurrences of greed, anger, and other defilements, occur by reflecting on what has been seen, heard, and known. A person who fails to contemplate and note at every moment of seeing, *etc.*, will be wrapped up in greed from the time of seeing, hearing, or knowing. Such a person can be called avaricious. They may also be said to be someone in whom anger, delusion, and pride have arisen. Since he or she has been enlisted as a person accepting and receiving unwholesome kamma, he or she is included in the list of those who are destined for the lower realms, such as animals or hungry ghosts. If that is the case, it is truly a cause for great alarm.

How to Avoid Enlistment

This is to say that if one fails to contemplate and note at every moment of seeing a sense-object or hearing a sound, *etc.*, greed and

anger can arise out of the sensation that occurs from what is seen, heard, touched, or known. When greed, anger, *etc.*, have become overwhelming, either foul or fair deeds are liable to be done. If it yields unmerited results, he will descend to the lower realms. Therefore, he has been enlisted as one who will go down to hell, the lower realms, or the animal kingdom.

Merits can also be derived depending on greed or anger. How? It is done, for example, by giving donations wishing to acquire and enjoy the kind of pleasurable sensation that can be derived from what is seen, heard, touched, or known in the next existence even though it may not be within one's reach in the present lifetime. One may keep the moral precepts wishing to gain merits. It shows how moral merits are derived depending upon greed. If meritorious deeds are done in anger with a view to fulfilling one's own desire, the resultant effects will be gained relying upon anger. If merits are acquired in this manner, these actions will pave the way or bring good results to be reborn as human beings or devas. If exertion is made to achieve *jhāna*, it can bring beneficial results even to the extent of becoming a brahma. Such kinds of action, speech, or thought bringing forth good and bad effects are experienced by everyone. These have so happened and made their appearance at the time of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing, and since then they have become enlisted.

Meditation should be practised to avoid being enlisted. The way of practising is to contemplate and note constantly without a break on the arising phenomena of mind and matter from the six sense-doors at every time of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing. While contemplating, the true characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self should be clearly perceived. Awareness occurs in this way. It will be known as vanishing if contemplation and noting is carried on at the moment of seeing. It is also realised as arising and passing away instantaneously. Hence, it becomes obvious that it is impermanent and not lasting. If also what is heard is contemplated and noted, it disappears all at once after hearing has taken place. It is also found disappearing and dissolving. Awareness then comes of the truth of impermanence. In the same way, what has been contacted and known immediately disappears. It arises and dissolves, and this phenomena will be realised as impermanence. If realisation occurs in the way stated, no enlistment is possible as a man of greed, anger, or

delusion. Such a person should not be called greedy or lustful. Nor should he or she be called an angry or deluded person, nor one who is puffed up with false pride, nor one with defilements, nor, one deriving merits or demerits. One will then escape from enlistment as a person who will have take rebirth either in the lower realms or in the human or celestial realms as a result of demeritorious or meritorious deeds. Meditation should be practiced to escape from being enlisted by every sensation that may arise, to avoid becoming entangled.

An Arahant Is Free from Entanglement

On becoming an Arahant, all sensations that cause entanglement and pave the way for enlistment are eradicated. Even a Non-returner is not yet be free from all kinds of sensations. Sensations which are listed and present in a most complex form remain to be accounted for in the case of an ordinary person. Those that need be reckoned, comprise rebirths as a human or a deva, or in the lower realms of animals and hungry ghosts. Hence, ordinary people have all these things to be reckoned and to give their results. In this regard, a Stream-winner is better off, being less entangled. There is no cause to be relegated to hell or the lower realms. He or she has been enlisted to become a human being, deva, or brahma. A Once-returner is in the same boat. A Non-returner, however, has hardly anything to be accounted for since there is no enlistment to be reborn a human or a deva. He or she has been firmly enlisted to become a brahma. When Arahantship is attained, there is nothing left to be reckoned. Everything has been completely settled and fully accounted for. That is why it is vital to practise — to settle and liquidate all entanglements. Regarding this point, the teaching is profound. However, those who have the right inclination with noble attributes can understand and appreciate these profound aspects of the teaching.

In the motto, the statement is to avoid being enlisted in the middle, *i.e.* in the present existence, by practicing meditation. To elucidate further, the middle means the arising of mind and matter at the moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing. This is how contemplation is done by our meditators. They have to contemplate at every moment that physical phenomena arise according to the method of mindfulness. They have to contemplate every sensation that occurs at the moment of seeing, hearing, or thinking, and on all

sensations of stiffness, heat, pain, aching, *etc.* This is done to prevent defilements from arising in the present, and to avoid being assailed by passion, ill-will, and delusion, or to avoid being enlisted as one destined for heavenly abodes, or the lower realms, or drifting in the endless cycle of existences. On becoming an Arahant, the things to be accounted for will be totally removed. A person becoming fully accomplished as such, is a sage who has gained real peace.

The first verse uttered by the Buddha in answer to the question was:

“Vītaṇho purā bheda, pubbamantamanissito.

Vemajjhe nupasaṅkheyyo, tassa natthi purakkhataṃ.”

The above Pāli stanza may be explained thus: an individual who is free of craving in the present lifetime, neither reminisces about the past, nor craves for the present, nor longs for the future. Such an individual is truly a sage with peace of mind. It is adequate even with this explanation relating to a single verse. However, when the Buddha delivered this discourse, only a few devas and brahmas were able to grasp the full meaning of this first verse. Some were unable to appreciate it fully. For those who still failed to comprehend, the Blessed One proceeded to deliver the remaining twelve verses to enable them to realise the Path and Fruition and become well accomplished.

Verse Three

In the text of this Sutta, there is only one question in the form of a verse while the answer embraces thirteen verses. Therein, it is stated that if craving has been got rid of before death, one has already become an Arahant. If a person does not deserve being called one who relies on the past, longs for the future, or is wrapped up in defilements in the present, he is said to be an Arahant. After attaining Arahantship no further practice is needed. That is why the Dhamma is found to be adequate and comprehensive even with the exposition given in the first verse. However, to make some of the devas and brahmas clearly understand the Dhamma, which they had failed to appreciate fully, the Blessed One continued to elucidate it in detail.

“Akkodhano asantāsī, avikatthī akukkuco.

Mantabhāṇī anuddhato, sa ve vācāyato muni.”

The meaning of the above phrase is: “One who is not prone to anger.” In other words, a person should be free from anger, mild and gentle, without spite or resentment. He is also free from worry and anxiety. Neither is he egoistic and boastful. He is far above contempt in regard to his physical and mental behaviour and does not adopt a despicable attitude in speech or deed. He does not speak without reflecting wisely. He is not restless, and is endowed with stability of mind. A monk possessing such noble attributes is one who exercises restraint in speech. The Buddha said: “Such an individual is, I say, a person who is at peace, calm, and serene — a sage. For the sake of memorising, let us recite a motto. Then, I will explain its meaning a bit more.

“Tame the anger and avoid worry without being arrogant and stay free from restlessness and remorse (*kukkucca*).”

Restlessness and remorse (*kukkucca*) cannot be translated satisfactorily in one word — it will be explained later. It should be reflected upon with one’s own knowledge. These are the six noble attributes of a sage. As it would be hard to understand in Pāḷi, it is composed in plain English as concisely as possible.

Tame Anger and Exercise Restraint in Speech

A person should not allow himself to become indignant. In other words, do not let the anger overwhelm you. All individuals with the exception of Non-returners and Arahants, have anger to varying degrees. When loathsome sensations arise, anger generally occurs. Leaving aside ordinary people, even Stream-winners and Once-returners still have anger. Anger arises in them when disagreeable sensations are felt. Fury or violence is the natural characteristic of anger. It is far from being meek and mild. It resembles a cobra, which raises its head and hisses with anger the moment it is touched. Anger may suddenly become vehement beyond control. Anger rages on hearing unfair criticism or any kind of harsh talk. It is just like a snake hissing with great fury. Greed and anger are in rivalry. Anger is, of course, more conspicuous because of its ferocious nature. Anger truly reflects the mood of an individual or a person’s mental disposition. Since anger is rough, wild, and fierce in nature, contemplation should be done to dispel it completely.

Ill-will usually arises when one comes across loathsome sensations. The moment contact occurs, causing disagreeable sensations, ill-will arises. Unpleasant and hideous sounds stimulate wrath almost simultaneously the moment they are heard. It is more likely that feeling of ill-will will arise when a sound or voice is heard rather than when an object is perceived by the eye. One can tolerate to a certain extent when a disagreeable object is seen, but it is hard to tolerate abuse or derision, which cause bitter feelings or indignation.

Ill-will becomes violent anger if one is abused with obscene words. Such words, however, do not cause even a slight injury, not even an abrasion on the physical body. It is just a voice, yet it may provoke bitterness to the extent of murder. Such a human tragedy begins from the time of hearing harsh words. Nations may even declare war over disputes arising from disparaging talk due to divergent dogmatic views about political issues, which eventually lead to a crisis. Hence, abusive speech may cause a great deal of trouble.

Sometimes, a foul odour from a neighbouring house may cause a nuisance to others living nearby, and may lead to petty quarrels between neighbours. Disagreeable or bitter food can make a person angry. A married couple may quarrel over likes and dislikes of food according to their preferences. Such cases are fortunately very rare.

One's patience may be tested by sensations of touch. Painful sensations arising from touch may make a person angry, such as the irritation caused by mosquitos biting. One may also get angry if striking one's toe against something hard even though it was one's own fault. If someone shoves us while rushing in a crowd, or hits us with a stick, these are obviously instances when anger might arise. Anger may not always occur at once. If someone insult us or talks rudely, it might lead to anger later either after repeated provocation or by brooding over what was said. Anger brings about a change in one's appearance, which becomes sullen. When tempers flare, angry words follow. Anger gradually make one irate, leading to fits of rage, or it may develop into a blind fury to the extent of committing murder or suicide. Anger may progressively swell up to a raging fury.

Resembles a Toad

It has been taught in the Vammika Sutta that anger is like a toad that puffs up if touched. In Shwebo district, such a toad is called a

“Phar-om.” Some called it “Phar-gon-hnyin.” In some places it is called “Phar-byoke, which is poisonous. The toad called “*uddhumāyika*” in Pālī is not poisonous. Everybody will know if it is described as a frog that swells in size every time it is touched. It stays among dry leaves or at the foot of a tree. Sometimes, it may stay inside a hole in the earth. As it grows swollen every time it is touched, it eventually becomes unable to move. If it is put upside-down, it will not be able to resume its normal posture on its legs. It cannot even move about if crows or other birds come to prey on it. It will then become a victim to crows and birds.

Anger is similar to that kind of toad. On hearing unpleasant or undesirable sounds, unpleasant sensations become puffed up. If such contacts occur repeatedly, anger grows in proportion. It may cause one to do things that should not be done. It can go to extremes.

The Remedy for Anger

Since anger tends to increase, the moment it arises, it should be dispelled by contemplating and noting. Those unfamiliar with contemplating and noting will have no remedy. They will suffer mentally whenever anger arises just as a sick person has to suffer due to lack of medicine. If medicine is readily available, relief can be obtained and the patient can recover from his illness. If the Dhamma is not available, there is no helping a person if anger has gripped him. He will suffer from mental distress. Some are so blinded by ignorance that they cannot help behaving impulsively in fury. This shows the nature of anger. However, those who know the Dhamma well, can easily contemplate, note, and dispel anger whenever it appears.

Nine Causes of Resentment

When arising anger is unabated and becomes intense, malice and desire for vengeance can occur. The vengeance or ill-will that occurs in connection with human beings, is of nine categories. This is known as nine occasions for ill-will or resentment (*āghāta*).

A person may bear a grudge merely out of discontent. Then, awareness of grievance will occur. He may reflect on the past, remembering and feeling hurt that a particular person has given him a lot of trouble detrimental to his well-being. This is bearing

resentment against that person to retaliate for the ill-treatment received. Again he may think of taking revenge on a person who is doing him harm at the present, assuming that in future this person is likely to harm his interests. These are the three kinds of resentment arising out of the present situation. This kind of resentment may be generated not only against people, but also against other sentient beings. Vindictive thoughts can occur even against mosquitoes, fleas, ants and other biting insects. These tiny insects may be regarded as a nuisance, and so feelings of disgust or hatred may occur. If no virtuous thoughts were entertained, these insects would be killed. A person may take revenge on a dog that had once bitten him, or barked at him. These sorts of grudge are not uncommon. Much worse are massacres of innocent people that can happen due to resentment and vindictive feelings.

The above three forms of wreaking vengeance due to resentment will usually happen after brooding over incidents where harm has been done in the past, is being done at present, or worrying that harm may be done in the future. There are three further kinds of resentment relating to a person for whom one has deep love and affection. One may harbour resentment against someone who has done harm to a loved one in the past, is doing wrong now, or may do harm in the future. Then, with regard to a person whom one hates, vengeance may be taken on another person for giving help to the person whom one hates, for giving assistance to that person at the moment, or for any offering assistance that may be rendered in the future. Thus, in all, there are nine kinds of basis for resentment. Apart from these, one may unnecessarily become angry with lifeless or inanimate things, such as, sharp-pointed stumps, pegs and thorns, or the burning rays of the sun, a sudden downpour, and so on. This is called *"atthānakopa."*

Including resentment of inanimate things, there are ten categories in all. I will explain a little more how resentment of inanimate things occurs. Anger may arise if the weather becomes hot when coolness is desired, or, if there is a heavy downpour when rain is not wanted, or if a strong wind blows when it is not needed. Sometimes, one may get angry with the disease he is suffering, which may be prolonged in spite of his wish for a speedy recovery. When natural phenomena such as, wind, rain, thunder, *etc.*, occur, or if unpleasant sensations arise in him according to circumstances, one may be intolerant and

angry. These events are indicative of wrath in cases where angry sensations should not have arisen. Some people even become angry at a stump on which they have stumbled while walking. If this happens, they may even kick it repeatedly in a rage. Some may become so enraged by having dropped something from their hands that they throw it away or beat it in an uncontrollable temper.

There are occasions when anger arises without any known reason. To prevent such anger from arising, it should be contemplated, noted, and then rejected. All undesirable sensations arising at the six sense-doors that invoke impulsive angry moods should be dispelled by contemplating and noting. If anger appears, it should be suppressed from the very outset to bring it to cessation to prevent any improper physical behaviour. After the rejection of such undesirable sensations, when insight becomes stronger, the Noble Path can be attained. A Stream-winner is not yet free from anger, but no vehement anger will arise in him or her to be capable of killing another person, which if committed, would have caused one to descend to the lower realms. A Stream-winner will be able to control his or her temper from becoming furious though he may still become angry with undesirable sensations that may arise. However, no anger that can cause him to steal other people's property, or bring financial ruin to others, or to tell lies, will occur. He or she may therefore be said to be relieved of sinful acts.

On reaching the stage of Non-returning, all kinds of anger will cease. Nothing need be said of an Arahant in whom all defilements have become extinct. Hence, it is stated as "one not prone to anger (*akkodhano*).” Non-returners and Arahants, in whom anger does not reside, are liberated from suffering and misery in so far as defilement of ill-will is concerned. Such a person is called a sage.

Should Have No Fear or Anxiety

Moreover, it is stated as free from fear and anxiety (*asantāsi*). In this world, the majority become anxious, worried, and dejected if unable to fulfil their desires. In the verse referred to, this feeling of anxiety or worry is called "*santāsa*." Monks may become worried and dejected due to scarcity of donors or helpers. Sometimes they may become down-hearted for not having friends and disciples on whom to rely. In brief, out of eight worldly conditions, if any

unpleasant or unhappy circumstances such as, loss, dishonour, blame, or suffering, are met with, a person may become dejected. He may be disappointed or discontented for lack of hoped for gifts or privileges, or for having no followers or companionship, or for want of assistance when the need arises. It is only natural for people to wish for fame and honour, and to avoid criticism. They hope to be fortunate and find happiness, and to avoid misery. Hence, if they have come across miserable conditions that bring them no happiness, they may become depressed, reflecting that misfortune has come as a result of bad kamma.

The above instances reveal how dejection occurs because of unfulfilled desires brought about by unfavourable circumstances. Hence, such depression should be discarded. If such bad moods do occur, they must be abandoned by contemplating and noting them. There is no reason why a person should be morose and dispirited. He needs encouragement from others. Some people are optimistic while others are pessimistic. Some people become very disheartened and miserable when they are sick. It is vital to learn how to withstand the onslaughts of worldly conditions. One should remain serene and unaffected whatever the consequences of worldly vicissitudes. If one does become dejected, dejection should be contemplated, noted, and abandoned. Therefore, the motto says, “Avoid anger and worry.” Do not let anger raise its ugly head. If anger does arise, it should be contemplated, noted, and then dispelled. Then it says “Avoid worry.” Do not become dejected due to not getting pleasant sensations, property, companions, or helpers that you want. If you are disappointed this should be contemplated, noted, and abandoned.

Should Have No Pride

Apart from getting rid of anger and worry, a person should also have no pride. It has been stated as “*avikatthī*” and that means not to allow pride to manifest. This discourse was taught with particular reference to monks for whom it is intended, and the Commentators have therefore expounded the nature of a variety of circumstances that are likely to happen in connection with monks. Particularly, monks should have absolutely no pride — all pride must be avoided. Some speak falsehood relating to their lineage as if they have descended from a noble and distinguished family line. Some boast

of possessing morality although they do not, or without having much learning, they may pretend to be learned in the scriptures. Some pretend to have undertaken the ascetic practises, without having done so. They may even boast of having attained *jhāna* or *samāpatti* without any genuine attainment. This discourse does not embrace the supramundane. Hence, without being fully accomplished in worldly Dhamma, one should not boast of accomplishments.

As regards lay people, they should not be proud of their success in social and financial status in worldly and business affairs. Neither should they be proud of their relatives, friends, and good company. Some have a natural inclination to brag, while some are humble and honest. In this regard, even as a lay person who is practising the noble Dhamma, if the feeling of pride appears, it should be noted, contemplated, and then discarded. Efforts should be made to get rid of this pride by constant practice. A Stream-winner will have no such pride. That is why it has been stated that meditation should be practised, and pride rejected by contemplating and noting. Let us recite the motto:

“Suppress anger, don’t worry, subdue pride, dispel remorse.
Consider carefully and don’t talk rashly. With the mind
restrained, six attributes are his glorious array.”

These are the six attributes:

1. Not to getting angry,
2. Not being anxious and worried because of unfulfilled desires.
3. Not being boastful.
4. Being free from doubt, remorse, *etc.*
5. Speaking what is appropriate when the occasion arises, after careful consideration.
6. Remaining calm and serene with complete control of the flitting mind after gaining concentration.

Remorse Should Be Dispelled

It has now time to speak about freedom from remorse (*kukkucca*) — one of the attributes just mentioned. It needs to be explained in detail, as it is noteworthy. It is of three kinds: 1) *Hatthapāda-kukkucca*, 2) *Vinaya kukkucca*, and 3) *Vippaṭisāra kukkucca*. “*Kukkucca*” means misbehaviour. It is so called because it is devoid of benefit to have

bad manners or misbehaviour. Being contemptible, misbehaviour may be said to be malevolent.

Haṭṭha-kukkucca and *pāda-kukkucca* are misbehaviour with the hands and feet. People who lack mindfulness and concentration are restless, and unable to keep their hands and feet still. Nor can they remain silent. They chatter and often change their sitting posture by moving their hands and feet to relieve discomfort even while delivering a lecture. This restlessness is indicative of a fickle mind that wanders without steady mindfulness. Not only the hands and feet, but also the head or the entire body not remaining still, being in a state of agitation, may be regarded as *haṭṭhapāda-kukkucca*. Only an Arahant will be totally free from restlessness. It is therefore advised that all others should devote themselves to mindfulness to get rid of this defect. Care should be taken to reduce feelings of restlessness. Those who are mindful will be calmer than those who do not meditate. The Kandaraka Sutta serves as evidence of this.

The Reverence of Kandaraka

Two wandering religious mendicants, Pessa and Kandaraka, once visited the Blessed One. At that time monks had come to pay homage to the Buddha. Kandaraka noticed that the monks were serene. None of them were fidgeting their hands, feet, or head. None were talking, fidgeting, or even coughing. Not one of them made a sound. All of them were absolutely still, calm, and serene. It is stated in Pāḷi¹ as: *“tuṇṇhībhūtaṃ tuṇṇhībhūtaṃ.”* Despite the presence of a large number of monks, all of them were tranquil. The effect of the quiet and peaceful atmosphere was such that as a wandering hermit himself, it generated profound respect and awe in Kandaraka, who marvelled at the effect of the Buddha’s noble teachings. This state of mind had aroused faith in him, and he respectfully told Buddha, “Venerable sir! It seems to me that all Fully Enlightened Buddhas of the past must have taught their disciples in the same way as you do now. The audience in those days might be similar to the present audience. Fully Enlightened Buddhas in the future will teach their disciples just as you are now doing. Moreover, the entire gathering of noble ones is likely to be of the same kind, and being calm, serene, and gentle, they are indeed worthy of reverence.”

¹ Kandaraka Sutta, Sutta 51, M.i.339.

In response to this praise, the Blessed One said, "Kandaraka! You know only this present audience. I will explain to you the reason for their tranquility and serenity. Among this assembly, there are Arahants who are fully accomplished in the practical knowledge of mindfulness, having eradicated all defilements after practising the noble Dhamma. Of course, no commendation is called for in regard to the noble Arahants. Being Arahants, the noble quality of mindfulness reflects in them and makes a full display with reference to all sensations arising from the six sense-bases. How could one refrain from respecting and revering them? All have become admirably noble, gentle, and refined. The Buddha then went on to say that among the congregation present were those practising meditation called trainees (*sekkha*). This includes Non-returners, Once-returners, Stream-winners, and ordinary good people. All of them are called trainees having lofty morality, lofty thoughts, and lofty wisdom, and they are undergoing training in the four foundations of mindfulness (*catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu suppatitṭhitacittā*). The meaning of this Pāli phrase is that, possessing mental stability by earnest devotion to the four foundations of mindfulness, they remain in a tranquil state of mind cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness: mindfulness on the impurity of the body, on the evils of sensations, on the evanescence of thoughts, and on the conditions of existence.

Meditators are well aware of these four foundations of mindfulness. Nevertheless, an explanation will be given to make the meaning vivid. Some have established their mindfulness on the body, some on feelings, some on consciousness, and some on mental states. If attention is established on the four foundations of mindfulness, one does indeed become calm and tranquil. No change of posture is made without mindfulness. If any change in posture is made, or arising thoughts are noted, since mindfulness is established, they are always gentle and composed. Nothing is done haphazardly or in a disorderly way. This is because contemplation and noting is done with mindfulness acting as a forerunner. That is why the Blessed One said that this entire assembly was extremely calm, unruffled, and fully refined.

King Kosala's Solicitation

King Pasenadi of Kosala once reverentially said to the Buddha: "Venerable Sir, we are monarchs with absolute powers. We have the powers to confiscate the property of the people and impose penalty

on them. We can also punish them with death sentence according to our own will, or banish them if we prefer.”

It is true. Such despots wielded supreme sovereign powers unlike the present day rulers of states in which the rule of law prevails. Hence, in modern times, cases involving any breach of law are brought before the courts for trial where the accused has the right to be defended by lawyers and advocates. Only in cases where there is sufficient evidence against the accused for the offences committed, appropriate punishments are imposed. In cases where there is no clear, substantiated evidence against an accused person for the alleged offence, he is either discharged or acquitted by the court according to law. These despotic rulers of ancient times had unlimited powers and their word was law. There was no right of appeal against the orders passed by them. Sometimes, however, there had been instances where the ministers commented upon the king's orders or pronouncements with the best of intention, though their behaviour might have been looked upon as disrespectful. On such occasions, it was stated that they had to be entreated or appeased.

The audience consisting of the disciples of the Blessed One was extremely gentle. The Buddha never resorted to force, influence, coercion, or threats. He merely gave his exhortation or due admonition by way of delivering a lecture. Yet, his adherents who formed the congregation were remarkably refined and delicate in manners. While listening to a discourse with great reverence, the whole congregation was perfectly calm. If a monk could not help coughing, the other monks nearby would nudge him to remain silent to avoid causing interference to others. King Pasenadi of Kosala extolled the qualities of the members of the Saṅgha in the way described above stating that all of them were perfectly pure in thoughts and faultless in manners, and were therefore entirely free from restlessness. In the era of the Buddha's dispensation, if meditation is practised with mindfulness and clear comprehension (*satisampajānaṃ*), one would become gentle. However, some people who are not able to exercise restraint in action and thoughts, would speak ill of others, disparaging them while acting pretentiously. Some monks teach without dignified manners, yet some people may appreciate that kind of misbehaviour. Different people have diverse outlooks and mentalities. Such an improper attitude bears testimony to the absence of the noble

quality of mindfulness. These improper acts and misconduct should be discarded. If they cannot be completely eradicated, practice should be done to avoid or reduce such misbehaviour as far as possible. It has therefore been stated that restlessness should be dispelled.

Scruples about Disciplinary Rules

We now come to the subject of *vinaya kukkucca*. Doubt may arise concerning certain matters relevant to the rules of discipline (*vinaya*). Sceptical doubt may arise regarding one's own actions or the use of requisites as to whether it is suitable or allowable. When such doubt occurs, it has not yet reach the stage of committing an offence. This kind of doubt is relevant to the rule of discipline. It is therefore regarded as an attribute that all monks should possess. Yet some monks pay no heed to any such doubt that might occur. In the absence of any such doubt or hesitation, they may do a misdeed that amounts to contravening the rules of discipline. These monks will not have purity of mind or morality. Without reflecting on the propriety or impropriety of any such acts, they may do anything they like regardless of the rules of discipline laid down for monks. If they misbehave in this way, they are open to derision and it amounts to dereliction of their duty as monks. It is quite natural that this doubt will arise where it should and it cannot possibly be entirely dispelled. However, if one knowingly eats, drinks, or makes use of anything with doubt in the mind, it amounts to committing an offence. This worry and doubt about the disciplinary rules should be expelled by avoiding any dubious actions.

Remorse and Regret

The next type of remorse is called "*vippaṭisāra kukkucca*," which is the remorse where there is regret. This regret is of two kinds: one may occur for any wrong-doing one has done, and the other for not doing something that should have been done. Wrongful acts means unwholesome acts or evil deeds. Feelings of repentance may occur when reflecting that one has done something wrong, and how unskillful it was, relating to any improper act done physically, verbally, or mentally. One may become sad and remorseful with bitter regret for any wrong-doing. If this state of mind pervades, it is known as "*vippaṭisāra kukkucca*." It is good if this remorse could be dispelled. Of course, it will be almost impossible to get rid of this feeling entirely. To find a

person who is totally free from regrets for wrong-doing, which could have taken place at any time from the time of birth up to the present moment, will be extremely rare. The only difference may be that remorse may or may not occur though wrongful acts would have been committed. Hence, feeling of remorse may or may not take place. Nevertheless, if it occurs, it should be rejected after contemplating and noting it. This wrong-doing was a thing of the past, and therefore, it is not worth recalling and regretting what had been done previously. This kind of thought may be dispelled determining that such acts will in future be avoided. It is best to dispel any regrets that may arise.

Acts that ought to be done are meritorious deeds. These virtuous deeds are charity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), etc. Repentance may occur for not having performed such merits. Such remorse should be discarded too. Acts of charity and observance of morality should be done as far as possible within one's own means and capability. One may worship the Buddha whenever time permits, and pay respects to the teachers as and when an opportunity arises. If such good actions or meritorious deeds are performed, there is no need to worry. That means one should do everything that ought to be done within one's own capability. When such feelings of remorse appear, these should be dispelled by contemplating and noting them with a firm resolve that no such shortcomings will be allowed to happen again and that what should have been done, would certainly be done without lapse in the future.

Among such remorse, feelings of regret that may arise for not being able to fully accomplish morality is particularly important. Remorse may arise for having so far failed to practise meditation to gain concentration, wisdom, and the Noble Path; and then for not being accomplished in Dhamma to escape from the cycle of existence. Is it not true that you are now practising meditation to subdue such worries? Those who are now practising meditation have this objective in mind and, if full accomplishment is achieved, no such feelings of regret will worry them. This is even more important on the threshold of death. On the verge of death, one will no doubt reflect on what has been done throughout life to ensure well-being in future existence. When reflecting thus, one would have bitter feelings of regret if one has not yet accomplished the Dhamma. Therefore, to get rid of such worries and anxieties, one should practise as early as possible. The sooner the better.

The Story of a Sick Young Monk

During the lifetime of Buddha, there was a sick monk. Usually, of course, a number of monks were on the sick list. For easy remembrance, we shall give an account relating to only one such sick monk.¹ Another monk was deputed to inform the Buddha about the serious illness of a young monk. Though this young monk was an ordinary monk the Buddha was requested to give him a blessing in person. Hearing the news of this poor sick monk belonging to an unknown lowborn family without any helper to nurse him, the Blessed One, with great compassion, decided to visit him. On his arrival at the place of where the young monk was residing, the Buddha asked the young monk how he was faring and whether he was getting better or worse. Under ordinary circumstances, the young monk would have been greatly encouraged and enraptured by the presence of the Buddha in person before him. However, his condition being serious, he replied that the condition of the disease was deteriorating. Although the condition of a patient is known to be bad, an inquiry should be made in that way. In any case, the Buddha had come over to this place to bless him with some teaching. The Blessed One then asked the young monk whether he had anything to be worried about. The young monk replied that he was full of remorse, saying: "*Anappakaṃ kukkuccaṃ anappako vipphaṇṇasāro.*"² The Buddha then asked him whether he had feelings of repentance for not being accomplished in morality. The answer given was that he had nothing to regret whatsoever in connection with morality.

It is important that monks are scrupulous³ regarding morality. They may not be free from doubt about their morality. This point is important for monks. It is easier for the laity if they have breached the principles of morality, they can regain moral purity by taking the five precepts. It is more difficult for the monks to do so. Certain offences cannot be expiated by merely uttering and listening to the formula for confession. They must abandon any property in their possession that

¹ The two different answers given by sick monks are from two different discourses — one saying that the Dhamma was taught for the cessation of passion, the second saying that it was for the sake of attaining *parinibbāna* (ed.)

² Paṭhama Gilāna Sutta, S.iv.45.

³ The Pāli word, "*kukkucca*" conveys all shades of meaning from being scrupulous to avoid wrong-doing, to anxiety that one might be blameworthy, and remorse that one has done wrong, hence it is difficult to translate with a single word (ed.)

was acquired improperly, or they must undergo probation (*parivatttha*) and rehabilitation (*mānattaṃ*) if they have committed a Saṅghādisesa offence. That is why they would usually become repentant in connection with their moral conduct. This is why the Buddha asked whether the young monk had any regrets regarding his morality.

The Buddha further asked the young monk, “If your morality is purified, what else are you concerned about?” This question was put to let the young monk divulge his problem. The young monk fervently replied. “Venerable sir, as I understand it, the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One is not practised only for the purification of morality.” The Buddha asked further: “Dear son! If it is not meant just for the sake of purity of morality, do you know the other purpose for which it is intended?”

The young monk then respectfully replied: “For the attainment of nibbāna which is devoid of cravings for human passions (*rāga virāgaṭṭhaṃ*),¹ one should follow the practice leading to the extinction of passionate desires to attain nibbāna with no remainder (*anupāda-parinibbānaṭṭhaṃ*).² I understand this is the Buddha’s teaching, so I have been practising the Dhamma to reach nibbāna, where all craving for human passions is annihilated. However, nibbāna not being within my reach as yet, I have become very anxious.”

The reply given by the young monk was quite realistic and natural. It is essential to have something to rely on to face any crisis that may arise when death approaches. To have such reliance close to death is more important than other matters. If there is nothing to depend on, feelings of remorse and anxiety may occur. If one feels sure of the purity of his morality, he will have full confidence in rebirth in the celestial realms in the next existence. This young monk’s objective was not just to reach the heavenly abode of devas after his demise. His ultimate goal was to achieve nibbāna. However, not having achieved his objective yet, he was greatly worried. This feeling of anxiety is nothing but “*kukkucca*.” So one should practice meditation to get free from this kind of anxiety. In response to the young monk’s answer, the Buddha taught as follows:

“Oh, dear son, you shall pay careful attention to my teachings.” The Buddha began by asking whether the eye is permanent or impermanent. It asks if the material form of the eye is everlasting or not. If the answer

¹ Paṭhama Gilāna Sutta, S.iv.45.

² Duttiya Gilāna Sutta, S.iv.47.

were to be given according to the sense conveyed in the question, it would be quite easy. If such a question were raised at a congregation, the questioner's expected answer being clearly known, the answer to be given would be simple enough to meet the wish of the teacher. The question now put by the Buddha was however to be answered after the underlying meaning of the question had been fully grasped. That is why it is rather difficult to give the right answer. Therefore, the answer would be meaningful as expected, only if one has the knowledge of the characteristic of "impermanence" in as much as what has been ascertained is whether the eye is permanent or not. Roughly speaking, when death occurs, the material eye is destroyed. If this is appreciated and if the answer were that the eye is impermanent, it would be relevant. Then also, if the eye were damaged by some kind of accident, it could have been destroyed. The destruction of the eye may be caused by serious injury or by affliction of the disease. Hence, the answer can be considered as proper if it is stated that the eye is not permanent. However, such an answer, being simplistic without the essential or deeper meaning, is not derived from insight knowledge.

Insight can be gained only through the practice of meditation. While contemplating on mind and matter at the moment of their occurrence at the six sense-doors, every time it is perceived by the eye, if contemplated as "seeing," "seeing," both the tangible physical eye, the visual object, the eye-consciousness, and the mind that is contemplated and noted, will be found to disappear at every moment of noting. Only if these natural phenomena are truly known and realised, would it be possible to give a proper and accurate answer. The young monk, being an insight meditator, was able to give a proper answer. Hence, he replied: "It is impermanent, venerable sir."

A question may, therefore, arise as to why it is impermanent. It is because at every moment seeing occurs, it disappears, or in other words, the moment it is perceived, dissolution of the sensation arising from perception follows suit. When asked if the thing that is seen is permanent, or impermanent, the answer given by the young monk was: "It is impermanent." In the same way, the subsequent answers given in respect of consciousness of sight, awareness of the visual contact, and the pleasurable or unpleasurable sensations arising out of contact with the eye and the visual object, were "impermanent and not lasting." The characteristic of impermanence is likewise

found when hearing occurs. The sound, the knowing mind, the sound that is perceived by the ear into which it flows, and the pleasurable and unpleasant sensations arising from contact with the sound, disappears all at once the moment it is heard.

Similarly, when smelling, tasting, and touching, all good and bad sensations that arise from contact, pass away or disappear at every moment they are contemplated and noted.

“Bending” and “stretching” are tactile. Every time it is noted as “bending” or “stretching,” the mind that perceives the sense of touch will be found to be arising followed immediately by dissolution. The same nature of phenomena will be realised at every moment of noting “stiffness,” “heat,” “pain,” or “aching” as they occur. Such occurrences are personally found to be occurring by the meditators themselves.

When imagination or mind-consciousness occurs, the mind that imagines, the sensation that appears and the knowing mind, and all contacts and awareness of thoughts will be found to be vanishing. While imagining, delightful or unpleasant feelings, or feelings of indifference may occur. All these sensations whether good, bad, or neutral are impermanent simply because they arise and then disappear, being transient by nature.

All those who are meditating now should note each and every phenomenon that arises at any of the six sense-doors and all of them will be found to be arising and vanishing. Nothing will be found to remain constantly. Their true nature will be realised personally through the mind’s eye. Realisation then comes of their transient nature incessantly appearing and disappearing in a state of flux. Being impermanent, they are unsatisfactory. There is, therefore, no such thing as an individual or a living entity. All these are conditions coming into being and passing away in a ceaseless whirlwind. This is natural phenomena occurring in accordance with their own conditions under different circumstances, and all are arising and vanishing. Hence, they are stated to have the characteristic of impermanence. They are unsatisfactory and never oblige one with what one wishes to happen. They are unmanageable and ungovernable. As such, they are to be contemplated with awareness as being uncontrollable, and as not-self.

Then, although they are said to be unsatisfactory or suffering (*dukkha*), it is not that they are unendurable. What is meant is that they are conditions that cannot be regarded as desirable and reliable.

How could one rely upon them if they fade away in a split second after emergence? In fact, every time they vanish, death can take place. If new mind and matter fail to appear, death is inevitable. As this is so, it is really terrifying. For this reason, it is said to be painful, misery, and suffering, and as they appear and disappear on their own because of their phenomenal nature, they are also ungovernable. Since these conditions are uncontrollable, how can they be a self? Yes, they are truly not-self. The Buddha therefore taught the young monk to contemplate on impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.

When impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self are realised, one becomes weary of the vanity of life, or in other words, disgusted with existence (*nibbindati*). On becoming disgusted with these wearisome conditions, one will be free from craving and attachment (*nibbindaṃ virajjati*). Then, one is fully released or emancipated, having got rid of desire for human passions (*virāgā vimuccati*). When fully liberated in accordance with what has been stated as having destroyed birth (*khīṇā jāti*) and having lived the holy life (*vusitaṃ brahmācariyaṃ*), and so on, no new existence will take place. The Supreme Buddha gave his teachings up to the stage of Arahantship, saying that one would also come to realise by one's own personal insight knowledge that one had reached the final goal of practice. While listening attentively to this Dhamma, the sick young monk attained Arahantship. All remorse and regrets were eradicated.

It is vital to get rid of all restlessness and remorse as explained above. I exhort all meditators not to become dispirited, though they may not yet be fully accomplished in the practice of the Dhamma. You can all gain realisation of the special Dhamma if you carry on with the contemplation like the sick young monk on his deathbed. This young monk achieved the highest stage of Arahantship. This should serve as an encouragement. Hence, it is vital to practice before one becomes old or sick, and before death arrives, to dispel anxiety. Remorse will be eradicated on becoming a Non-returner. Nothing further need be said regarding an Arahant. A person who is entirely free from restlessness and remorse is called a sage.

Consider Carefully before Speaking

Next, one should consider carefully before saying something. Only speak what is proper and appropriate to the occasion. It has

been taught as: “Weigh things up before speaking (*mantabhāṇī*), after careful consideration and reflection, and be one who speaks in this way. Avoid talking nonsense, but speak what is suited to the occasion. It is not time-consuming. What is to be spoken will come into one’s head automatically while conversation is going on. Avoidance of making improper and inaccurate statements amounts to weighing things before speaking. If one does so, words that will bring demerits cannot come out of one’s mouth. It will have the effect of deterring one from speaking falsehood or telling lies (*musāvāda*). Nor will one slander others or gossip (*pisuṇavācā*). Harsh or abusive speech (*pharusavācā*) will be avoided too. It is important to tame and control the tongue simply because, if something disagreeable is heard, anger can suddenly arise, possibly leading to the use of aggressive and offensive words that insult others. Vulgar and unbridled speech must be restrained. A person who ponders before speaking is likely to avoid frivolous, trifling, and futile talk (*samphappalāpa*). However, it will not be easy for some to abstain from talking foolishly if they are habitually inclined to talk insolently. Those not accustomed to talk rudely seldom slander or insult others. Only appropriate words suited to the occasion should be spoken gently. Words of Dhamma are included in the ten suitable topics for conversation (*kathāvatthu*).

1. Speech relating to lack of greed.
2. Speech relating to contentment.
3. Speech on how to remain in solitude for meditation to eradicate defilements.
4. Speech relating to the manner of exemplary behaviour avoiding contact and familiarity with male and female benefactors without attachment.
5. Speech relating to the practise of meditation seriously with relentless exertion.
6. Speech relating to morality.
7. Speech relating to concentration.
8. Speech relating to wisdom.
9. Speech relating to liberation.
10. Speech relating to knowledge and vision of liberation.

These are specifically for monks. Lay people need to be talk about business dealings as and when necessary. When talking, only beneficial speech should be used without harming others’ interests.

With the Mind Restrained

Next, the mind should not be permitted to wander. This requires accomplishment in concentration. To gain concentration, one must practise meditation strenuously. Only when meditating, the mind will remain stable without flitting. While not engaged in meditation, one should continue to maintain mindfulness. The mind shall be restrained to prevent it from flitting here and there. All Arahants possess a tranquil mind that does not stray. An Arahant with peace of mind remains calm with constant concentration. Such a person who has deep concentration is called a person with serenity of mind. What has just been stated are the noble attributes possessed by a sage.

Verse Four

The Buddha proceeded to repeat the noble attributes of a sage in the fourth verse:

*“Nirāsatti anāgate, atītaṃ nānusocati.
Vivekadassī phassesu, diṭṭhīsu ca na nīyati.”*

This verse has almost the same meaning as that conveyed in the verse beginning *“Vītaṇho purābheda.”* I mention it now briefly to avoid any possible criticism, as it was omitted in my first lecture.

The gist of it is that in connection with anything that may happen in the future, one should not speculate with desire, yearning for anticipated results. If this kind of thought anticipating the future occurs it should be rejected by contemplating and noting. If something has happened in the past, such as the destruction of one's own limbs or sense-organs, or of one's personal property, or the death of relatives and friends, one is likely to become anxious, tearful, and sad. This worry, regret, and lamentation should be avoided, and if such feelings do occur, they should be dispelled by contemplating and noting them. All occurrences of what has been seen, heard, smelt, touched, or imagined, should be realised by contemplating and noting them as governed by the law of impermanence and that they immediately pass away. Having caused suffering and harassment without let up by continuously arising and disappearing, they are not dependable, and do not provide any satisfaction. Thus they should be known and realised as impermanent. Since they depend on conditions, appearing and disappearing according to circum-

stances, one should know that they are ungovernable and not-self. Contact does not mingle with or concern the nature of impermanence. Neither does it mingle with the nature of pleasure, nor is it a self. This should be fully comprehended. Furthermore, what has been seen, heard, smelt, tasted, and touched has nothing to do with the present sensations arising from such occurrences. It will bring satisfaction with the realisation that what is going to happen after subsequent contacts will be quite separate from what is presently happening or what has already occurred. This is clearly evident because of the fact that a meditator who is continuously contemplating and noting such transient phenomenal occurrences will find them in a state of flux, appearing and disappearing without a break.

Then also, one should not be subjected to persuasion in respect of wrong views. This means that one should practise to free oneself from all kinds of wrong views. The Buddha taught that a person endowed with these attributes is a sage with serenity.

One who is accomplished with the four attributes: not anticipating the future, not regretting nor reminiscing about the past, having distinguishing knowledge of seeing, knowing, touching, *etc.*, and not being persuaded by wrong views, is said to be a sage. This means that a person is recognised as such by the Buddha.

Verse Five

After explaining this verse, the Blessed One continued to teach as follows:

*“Patilīno akuhako, apihālu amaccharī.
Appagabbho ajeguccho, pesuṇeyye ca no yuto.”*

This means that such an individual is inclined to hesitate. He is not pretentious. Neither does he anticipate, long for or indulge in pleasure, nor become envious, disgusted, or slanderous. A person endowed with such attributes is a sage. To hesitate in performing noble and meritorious deeds is bad. Such reluctance or hesitancy is laziness. Here, the meaning of the word ‘hesitate’ is not concerned with defilements. It refers to preventing desires from arising, in cases where passion is likely to occur. As regards ordinary people, they become enthusiastic and invigorated when passion arises. In those who are meditating strenuously, the strength of passion becomes

weak commensurate with the different stages of progress in the achievement of the Dhamma. Though passion may appear, it does not become strong and violent. For instance, if the parents have neglected to give due and proper advice to their children, the young children will have no control over themselves, and may utter or behave or do anything according to their own wishful thinking. They will, however, have the power of restraint from the time they have received instructions or parental advice as to how they should conduct themselves in worldly life. Then they will not be very unruly and rude in their manners as they had been before. The same thing applies in the matter of noble Dhamma. In those who make no effort to enhance their morality and knowledge of the Dhamma through meditation, passion, anger, and delusion will wreak havoc without restraint. People who are following a virtuous path will be able to minimise passion. Shame and fear of doing what is improper will abide in them. Therefore, what has been stated is that a sage would hesitate to do anything that is connected with passion, anger, and delusion. Reluctance to avoid doing unvirtuous things should be cultivated to the best of one's ability. It is wise to restrain to the extent of totally suppressing passionate desires, anger, and delusion. How could one be said to have calmness of mind and serenity if desire, anger, and delusion are generated with vigour and delight?

Among mankind, it is because of desire, anger, and delusion that heroes and other outstanding individuals have appeared. In this world, those who are capable of achieving Herculean tasks and who thereby become famous and distinguished with their inherent lust for power or fame, passion, anger, and delusion, are regarded as outstanding personalities. They are said to have achieved success. On the other hand, from the point of view of Dhamma, it is quite the contrary. They are not regarded as heroes, and only those who dare not perform things connected with the contaminating influence of desire, anger, and delusion are considered to be truly outstanding. If seen from a different angle, they might be regarded as persons who are inferior in strength, will-power, and courage — who are just mediocre without any ambition. Those who have undertaken meditation practice hesitate to indulge in mundane affairs though they might have been very active, vigorous, and enthusiastic prior to taking up meditation. Some of them may even abandon their worldly activities. It might

seem that they have become enfeebled and indolent. Nevertheless, after reaching Arahantship, they will be devoid of worldly desires and defilements, which become extinct. They will be entirely scrupulous, being careful to offend in nothing and always calm. Such hesitation in worldly affairs is another attribute of a sage.

It is for those who are meditating or listening to this lecture to weigh things and see for themselves how they have become hesitant in the matter of desire, anger, and delusion. The strength of desire, anger, and delusion will diminish to a certain extent. This is stated as reluctance or hesitancy. Hence, the motto says: "Seemingly hesitant without making pretence."

Make No Pretensions

One should not make pretension to evoke awe in others. This was said regarding monks. Pretension aims to make oneself appear worthy of reverence by acting deceptively. There are three kinds of pretence: 1) in the way of using property, 2) relating to attainment of noble attributes, 3) in connection with the way of deportment.

1. Pretension in the Use of Property

When male and female benefactors offer donations, the pretender would say, "Oh, my benefactors! Why do you offer such nice and valuable things? I am content with robes that have been discarded by others. As regards a monastery, I am content to remain in solitude or dwell at the foot of a tree. For my meals, it is enough to accept what is offered on alms round. In regard to medicine diseases can be cured by drinking cow's urine as medicine. Extremely good requisites are not required." After telling the donors that such valuable properties are not wanted, the properties which are donated are stated to have been refused. Such utterances are made under false pretence although the monk may be really fond of the things that are offered. He is in fact willing to accept them. When speaking in the said manner under false pretences, the benefactors' faith and generosity will be greatly enhanced thinking that the monk is indeed a noble person with hardly any greed. As such, the benefactors will become all the more generous and offer more and more. When things are donated profusely, the pretension monk accepts the offerings feigning reluctance, "If I refuse, the benefactors would not gain any

merits.” The offerings are then accepted as if he has great compassion for the donors. This kind of pretence concerns monks only. Such pretentious behaviour should be avoided and dispelled.

2. Pretension Relating to Noble Attributes

Under this sub-heading, pretension is by making misleading statements to make others think highly of him as an Arahant saying that a monk who can be content with whatever has been provided, such as robes, a begging bowl, a monastery or other requisites (like himself), is an Arahant or a Noble One. Such kind of insinuation should be avoided. Generally, it concerns the monks. However, at the present day, even among laymen, some impostors present themselves as Non-returners or Arahants, while leading an ignoble life with wife and children, are ridiculed by some for not being liberated from human passions and sensuous pleasures. In refuting such derogatory remarks, they explain that their mode of living is permissible as they enjoy no pleasurable sensations. This is ridiculous. What is even more surprising is that some people revere such pretenders as real Arahants. Such cases are mentioned to make you ponder and be wary.

3. Pretensions Relating to Deportment

Pretension relating to postures or deportment is to make others think one is practising meditation without actually doing the practice. Although lacking in concentration, he moves about as if he is calm and tranquil. He pretends when taking a sitting posture to give a good impression to others who might see him. Or, when walking, he pretend to walk with complete mindfulness. In this way, whatever he does, he will change his deportment to make himself appear noble in the eyes of others who will overestimate his good qualities. Such pretension should be avoided and dispelled. These three kinds of pretensions are dealt with comprehensively in the Pāli texts.

Do Not Be Envious

If one admires fine clothes or jewellery one may yearn to possess similar things. Yearning is of different kinds. Having seen something, one may wish to possess the object seen to fulfil one’s desire. Similarly, while contemplating and noting what is heard, smelt, tasted, touched, or cognised, one may wish to be accomplished like others, to emulate

their achievements in Dhamma. This is longing for attainments, and such yearnings should be dispelled. Wishing to reach the abode of devas to enjoy celestial pleasures and the luxurious life of celestial beings either through reading books or listening to others, is another kind of yearning. One should not entertain such feelings. If they do appear, they should be rejected by contemplating and noting.

To yearn for the Noble Path is a wholesome desire, which one should cultivate. Those who practise meditation wish to gain the noble attributes of insight knowledge. They are intent on gaining the Path and its Fruition. However, if this desire becomes extreme, it will not be proper. If extreme yearning appears, it should be rejected by contemplating and noting, otherwise concentration will not develop. It is vital to reject such yearning by contemplating and noting it. In some cases, although concentration becomes deep, no insight is achieved because of excessive zeal. Excessive yearning is improper, but if zeal is slack it won't do either. It is difficult to maintain the proper balance, but the mind must be restrained within proper limits.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga says that the mind, which is very much inclined towards passion, always follows in pursuit of it. (*Abhinataṃ cittaṃ rāgānupatitaṃ*).¹ If one becomes over-enthusiastic to achieve the Path and its Fruition, it amounts to passion trailing behind. This might give a wrong impression of the appearance of a desire to gain merits because he would have in mind that what has been longed for is a virtuous thought in connection with the Noble Path, but in fact, passion is following the mental activities. Moreover, extreme yearning is a danger to concentration. It says: "*Taṃ sampajāno hutvā rāgaṃ pajahati*." This means that passionate yearning should be rejected after contemplating and noting. The presence of a mental process with extremely strong yearning would deter the development of concentration, it should therefore be rejected. Meditation teachers should correct such thoughts. As concentration gains momentum, such yearnings are bound to arise. The meditator usually wishes to gain speedy accomplishment of the Dhamma. When becoming overzealous, yearning accompanied by mental distress will become exuberant, and the development of concentration is likely to be hindered.

One should suppress such thoughts, and keep the mind restrained, calmly reflecting: "Let concentration take its own course. Special

¹ Ps i.167.

knowledge may not be gained even though I make the utmost effort to bring about progress. Insight cannot be forced. Under favourable circumstances that occur on their own, knowledge will arise by itself. My business is only to contemplate and note continuously whatever sensations arise from the six sense-doors. I shall therefore simply carry on contemplating and noting these sensations without a break."

If carried out like this, progressive insight through stable concentration will soon be realised. However, yearning should not be dismissed completely by getting disappointed. If there is a lack of yearning through some kind of disappointment, it would be what is stated as: "*Apanataṃ cittaṃ byāpādānupatitaṃ*," which means the mind that shirks will abide in the person who will remain aloof. If yearning is avoided in that way, it will amount to shirking the burden of practice. Then the mind would embrace discontent. All such thoughts should be rejected by contemplating and noting. As such, one should have at least a modicum of yearning relating to Dhamma. If extreme forms of yearning are dispelled by contemplating and noting, progressive knowledge of the Dhamma is likely to be achieved. The motto therefore runs as: "If no pretension is shown as being reluctant, envy is discarded." One should not be envious. To resent another's good fortune is meanness (*macchariya*). Being unsociable and unwilling to befriend others, avaricious and unwilling to share one's own property, and envious of another's good fortune is meanness. The Commentary says that meanness will be got rid of on attaining Stream-winning. One should therefore meditate diligently to reach that stage.

Vulgarity Should Be Avoided

The motto says: "Reject vulgarity which is disgusting, without being envious." One should not be vulgar. Vulgarity comprises three kinds: physical misbehaviour, coarse language or speech, and perverse thoughts. It has been explained for monks as indiscreet or rude behaviour without giving due respect when meeting other monks. Those deserving respect and reverence, may be jostled while walking. One may stand in front of a senior monk, blocking his way, or remain sitting nonchalantly if he enters the room, or pass by while walking, without showing respect. Such behaviour is rude and vulgar. There are cases where seats are occupied in places reserved for the elders, and where some of them would squeeze in making the junior monks

feel congested and become uncomfortable. These bad manners are rude and vulgar. This kind of conduct is very disrespectful. There are other bodily behaviours which are ugly and disgusting. Some may spit carelessly, expel nasal secretions in the presence of others, or cough, heedless of good manners. People in Burma are, of course, accustomed to those kind of mannerisms which may be excused as being habitual. Foreigners may make a wry face at such indecent mannerisms.

In regard to speech, vulgarity is commonplace. Indecent or harsh words obviously run counter to any civilised culture. In an assembly of monks, teaching should be done only when granted permission by the elders. To join in a group discussion without invitation is considered uncivilized. All such misbehaviour should be avoided.

As regards vulgarity or corruption of the mind, the occurrence of wild and evil thoughts without proper restraint is regarded as vulgar. Competing with others in personal status and social standing, and putting oneself on an equal footing with others of higher status is considered to be vulgar mental behaviour. This, of course, concerns laymen or ordinary persons. However, in connection with the matter relating to Dhamma, a person may speak ill of others without having purity of morality, if thought or imagination arises regarding himself on the same level with others accomplished with purity of morals. Or, he may consider himself as being equal in ability to others who can practise ascetic practices, while he himself is lacking in any such practice. Or he may think of himself as being accomplished in scriptural knowledge placing himself on equal footing with other more learned scholars, though he himself has not studied the Commentaries and Subcommentaries. Some individuals may think of themselves as being equal in to those who are meditating though they themselves are unable to meditate and contemplate. All these are instances of mental vulgarity.

Reject vulgar thoughts if they occur by contemplating and noting them. However, if morality, concentration, and wisdom have been methodically practised, no vulgar thoughts will have the opportunity to arise. Those who are well-accomplished will be free from vulgar thoughts. If they do happen to occur, they can easily be dispelled by contemplating and noting.

All behaviour that is disgusting and rude should be completely dispelled. Here, what is disgusting or rude refers to immorality. Those

lacking morality are disgusting to those who are pure in thoughts and deeds. A vagabond arouses disgust in others who may harbour strong feelings of dislike. People do not wish to mix with a person who is dirty in ways of living, dress, or in thoughts. A person whose morality is polluted will be detested by people who have a pure mind. If a person of pure morality associates with a wicked person, others may think of him as being the same. They shun the evil-minded because they are disgusted with immoral persons. However, it is not out of hatred. Such disgusting immorality must be got rid of.

Morality means observance of precepts by which one should refrain from committing improper acts both physically and verbally. To eradicate these immoral acts, one should earnestly practise meditation. The Buddha's dispensation is where holy persons dwell in peace. It can be considered in that light. This dispensation is the abode of Noble Ones with purity of mind like Venerable Sāriputta, Venerable Moggallāna, Venerable Mahākassapa, and others. People living in such a holy abode should also sincerely practise to become pure in mind like these Noble Ones. If morality is observed, all disgusting factors will disappear. This observance, however, is not as yet the practice of meditation. Those who have come to this meditation centre are fulfilling the need to acquire concentration and wisdom, not only morality. Therefore, both their physical and mental behaviours are really courteous and worthy of reverence. If, by practising to get accomplished in noble qualities, one becomes free from all loathsome misdemeanours, one is deemed to be regarded as a sage who is calm and serene. The motto goes on to say: "Disgust and rudeness are wholly shattered. Words devoid of love and fondness shall not be uttered."

Backbiting causes discord. No vile words should be spoken to create a dissolution of friendship between one person and another who are on good terms. If malicious thoughts arise intending to slander, they should be either discarded as improper by seeing them as such, or rejected by contemplating and noting.

Reluctance means to lessen one's enthusiasm in worldly affairs. In connection with sensations likely to occur concerning passion, one must be reluctant to prevent such passions from arising. Similarly, reluctance should be minimized in connection with anger, pride, or other defilements that may occur. Practice should be done to let all cravings and vehement desires become subdued or dormant.

Next, making no pretence means not to pretend to possess attributes that one does not really have. Pretension should not be made to having finer attributes than those that one truly possesses. This is relevant to monks as well as others who deserve reverence and respect. Monks should refrain from claiming the attributes of morality, concentration, and wisdom that they do not truly possess. They should not boast about these attributes to earn reverence from benefactors. Monks who are genuinely modest usually remain silent regarding their own virtues. An Arahant will usually conceal his attainment of the Dhamma, and reveal it to his fellow monks only on the eve of his *parinibbāna*. Next, no yearning means not to yearn for pleasurable sensations envying others' accomplishments. It also conveys the sense that a meditator should avoid extreme yearning to attain special Dhamma, because that will hinder the development of concentration and wisdom. The matter concerning free from envy has already been explained quite clearly.

"Disgust and rudeness be wholly shattered" means, to avoid and reject all forms of aggressive or gross forms of physical, verbal, and mental behaviour. Disgusting moral impurities should also be dispelled. Then it says, "Words devoid of love and fondness shall not be uttered." It is also necessary to abstain from backbiting and slander to cause others to lose confidence or respect, or create dissension among any group of individuals. These are the seven attributes of a sage who remains tranquil.

Verse Six

I have already explained the answers given in four verses. I will now start with answering the sixth verse.¹

"Sātiyesu anassāvī, atimāne ca no yuto.

Sanhō ca paṭibhānavā, na saddho na virajjati."

A person should not indulge in and drift towards sensations connected with sensual pleasures. This is one of the attributes. Another attribute is not to be vain and look down on others. The other attribute is to be gentle and devoid of vulgarity in bodily, verbal, and mental behaviour. The next attribute is to be wise, that is, to be endowed with knowledge that will enable him to understand

¹ The first first of the Sutta is a question put by the replica Buddha, the remaining thirteen verses are the answers given by the Buddha. The sixth verse is the fifth verse given in reply to the question. (ed.)

problems relating to study and practice. Moreover, one should not become completely dependent on others. This is also one of the attributes. This discourse, being for those of great intellect and sound wisdom, contains some expressions that are profound. Since it is said not to repose complete confidence in others, it would perhaps amount to inhibiting faith and generosity. This expression is a riddle. I will explain it later. Then, the words "*na virajjati*" which means not yet free from clinging attachment. (This expression has a double-meaning in that the usage "not as yet free from clinging attachment" may carry the meaning as "still having clinging attachment." It is not, however, intended to convey that sense. The expression "not yet free from clinging attachment," in fact means "free from clinging or grasping desires." Since totally devoid of such clinging attachment, it means that no further practice needs to be done.) This also is one of the attributes. Buddha had taught thus: "I say that such a person is a tranquil sage." A person who is fully endowed with such attributes is a sage. The Buddha stated that he gave due recognition to such an individual. This is really worthy of noting and bearing in mind. The practice of meditation is also included in this verse.

To make the above statements easily understandable, the motto that is couched in plain language, may be recited as follows:

"Not drifting into the current of pleasurable sensations,
with pride dispelled and gentleness maintained, gaining
wisdom, incredulous, cravings detached by clearing
away, these six attributes are his glorious array."

"Not drifting into the current of pleasurable sensations" means: not to be mentally inclined towards pleasurable sensations with attachment. "With pride dispelled and gentleness maintained" is not to think highly of oneself with egotism or pride, assuming others to be inferior, and so having a low opinion of them. "Gentleness maintained" is to be refined in physical, verbal, and mental behaviour by dispelling all rude and vulgar manners. "Gaining wisdom, incredulous, cravings detached by clearing away" means to easily understand with ready wit all profound questions relating to study and practice, and to gain person realisation, not solely placing trust in others; and to be free from craving. A total of six attributes are embraced in this verse, and they constitute the six noble attributes.

Not Drifting towards Pleasurable Sensations

The expression “Not drifting into the current of pleasurable sensations” may be elaborated in this way. Pleasurable sensations give delight to people who crave what is desirable. Beautiful sights, melodious sounds, fragrant odours, delicious food, delightful touches, and inspiring ideas are desirable. Delightful sensations naturally attract one to gravitate towards them. Those who are not yet free from the fetters of defilements, find them pleasurable, with delight and fond attachment. Do not, therefore, allow your mind to drift into this current of pleasurable sensations. Every time the mind drifts towards them, restrain it by contemplating and noting.

Regarding those who have no control over their mind, the raging torrent of defilements will be rushing into the sensations of sight through the eye-door. The ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind will, likewise, flow in a torrent into all the respective sensations of sound, odour, taste, touch, and imagination. It is like a torrent of flood-water in a mountain stream flowing down to a lower level when it rains heavily. In Pāli this flowing is called “*āsava*.” This human passion or mental defilement is of four kinds: sensuality (*kāmāsava*), becoming (*bhavāsava*), wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*), and ignorance (*avijjāsava*). As far as this verse is concerned, it refers to sensuality and becoming, which are prone to flow into the stream of pleasurable sensation. In essence, they are passionate desire.

Flowing to the Highest Existence

This passionate desire flows up to the highest formless realm, if stated with reference to abodes. From the point of view of the nature of Dhamma, it flows right up to maturity knowledge (*gotrabhū ñāṇa*), a stage where the mind inclines towards the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna. The highest and the noblest existence is called “*bhavagga*.” To understand this highest and noblest abode, one must know about the intermediate and lowest forms of existences. Of the thirty-one realms of existence, the lowest are hell (*naraka*), hungry ghosts (*peta*), animals (*tiracchāna*), and the world of jealous gods (*asūrā*), which together form the four lower realms (*apāya*). The lowest of them all is hell. Of all the hells, the lowest level is known as Avīci. For this reason, when merits are shared at a libation ceremony, it is usually stated as from the highest existence (*bhavagga*) to the lowest (Avīci).

The human world is higher in the scale of existences than the four lower realms. Above that are the six celestial realms (*devaloka*) in order of precedence: Cātumahārājika, Tāvātimsa, Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati, and Paranimmitavasavatti. In the six celestial realms, as in the human world, both male and female beings are present. There, all pleasures of sense are enjoyed in abundance. Above the celestial realms, there are three abodes of the first *jhāna*. Though it is said to have three stages in the world of brahmas, they are on the same plane. They are called three abodes depending upon the three types of brahmas residing in that world. Extending above that, there are three abodes of the second *jhāna*. They too are on the same plane and because of the presence of three different kinds of brahmas it is stated to be three abodes. Beyond that abode, come three abodes of the third *jhāna*. These are also on the same plane inhabited by three kinds of brahmas. Above the abodes of third *jhāna*, there exists the world of fourth *jhāna*. The lowest stage in this realm is inhabited by two kinds of brahmas: Vehapphala and Asaññasatta. This is also to be called the two abodes.

Out of these two kinds of brahmas, Vehapphala brahmas like other brahmas, have both mind and matter. Therefore, the Vehapphala brahma and the nine other kinds of brahmas belonging to the lower three abodes or heavens, altogether ten kinds of brahmas, can come down to *devaloka* and the human world to listen to the teachings of the Buddha. They also have the ability to teach. What is special about them is that they have no masculine or feminine sexual characteristics. Though their facial features contain the shape or figure of a nose, they have no sense of smell. They can however talk for having possessed the figure of a tongue, but have no sense of taste. They have the body but not tactile, without the sense of touch. They possess no parts or limbs of the body which are vile to be able to enjoy the depraved forms of sensuous pleasures, such as, the sensations of smell, taste, and touch. This is pretty good. They have eyes and ears and are therefore capable of developing merits. That is why they can revere and worship the Buddha, and listen to the Dhamma. Apart from that, since they possess mind, they can practise the Dhamma. So the majority of these brahmas attained special Dhamma when they heard the discourse delivered by the Buddha. It is indeed very fine. In the case of Asaññasatta brahmas, they do

not have the knowing mind that brings consciousness. They have only material form. It may be similar to the carved images hewn out of wood or marble. Since they are deprived of mind they have no consciousness. Neither do they move about, nor have the power of mobility. They cannot even shake. They are like lifeless images. They are therefore not aware of the appearance of Buddhas. Nor can they listen to the Dhamma. After the life span of five-hundred aeons is exhausted, they die and return to their original abodes in the human world or the celestial realms. For them there is absolutely no benefit. That is why the Asaññasatta is included in the eight faulty abodes.

Above the Vehapphala and Asaññasatta abodes, come the realms of *Suddhāvāsa*, having five different levels in serial order, populated only by Non-returners and Arahants. The names of these realms are: *Aviha*, *Atappa*, *Sudassa*, *Sudassī* and *Akaniṭṭha*. These five realms of form, being inhabited only by the Non-returners and Arahants, who are free from any attachment that can relegate them to the lower sensual realms, are known as the pure abodes (*Suddhāvāsa*). The inhabitants are collectively called *Suddhāvāsikā*.

Above the *Suddhāvāsa* abodes, there are the abodes of formless brahmas (*arūpabrahmāloka*), consisting of four levels: the sphere of infinite space (*akāsānancāyatānaṃ*), the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatanaṃ*), the sphere of nothingness (*akiñcaṇñāyatanaṃ*), and the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatanaṃ*). In these formless realms, the brahmas have no bodily forms, but are mere radiance endowed with intelligence, and with mind and matter. Being formless without material aggregates, they are invisible. They can neither see, nor hear, nor appear before the Buddha to listen to the Dhamma. Ordinary beings who reach this abode will revert to the human world or the *devaloka* when their life-span expires. They derive no benefits, so these abodes of formless brahmas are included in what are known as the eight unfavourable existences. Beings living in such abodes will miss the opportunity of attaining nibbāna. However, the Noble Ones can progress on the path of the Dhamma while residing in these abodes. Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners who are reborn in such abodes can attain Arahantship through the proper method of contemplation and by practising mindfulness which they have learnt before, and while living in these abodes they will eventually

attain *parinibbāna*. Of the four formless realms, the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception is the highest and noblest existence (*bhavagga*). The clinging mind flooded with pleasurable sensations is likely to flow into the realm of thirty-one abodes beginning from the lowest Avīci hell, to the highest abode of neither perception nor non-perception. Because of its tendency to flow into the pool of passionate desires, it is called *āsāva* in terms of abode. Since, it is expressed as “*anassāvi*” according to the verse, it may be stated as “*assāva*.” Hence, passionate desire called “*assāva*,” which tends to drift along should be dispelled. It is therefore essential to practise meditation not to let oneself drift towards any of the thirty-one abodes, with pleasurable attachment.

Is Hell Pleasurable?

In this regard, a question may arise. Is it possible for pleasurable attachment to despicable existences, to occur, since hell is the worst abode among the thirty-one different realms of existence, and the worlds of hungry ghosts, jealous gods, and animals are obviously inferior and ignoble? The answer is quite simple. It is true that a person who knows hell and how bad it is, will surely have no yearning for it. However, one who is not aware of hell will become attached to it with passionate desire. This is evident if considered in the light of what had happened to Mittavindaka.

At one time, a person by the name of Mittavindaka left his home after offending his own mother verbally and disrespectfully, and was roving about like the present-day youngsters playing truant. While thus roaming about aimlessly, he reached a wharf at a seaport, and boarded a ship, which later left the port for a distant land. When the ship got into trouble on the high seas, the ship's crew believed there must be a vicious person among them who had committed a serious fault. They devised a method of drawing lots by which the vicious person could be identified. Mittavindaka, having drawn the short straw, was set adrift on a raft. From that moment the ship began to sail smoothly. While drifting in the ocean, Mittavindaka, by virtue of merits derived from having observed moral precepts in a previous existence, reached a palatial mansion, an abode of four female hungry ghosts. Though they were hungry ghosts, their abode was the results of mixed merits and demerits. They enjoyed the pleasures of *devas*

for a period of seven days, and then for the next seven days they had to endure various kinds of severe pain and suffering, similar to those in hell. After arriving at this abode, Mittavindaka was very well looked after during the first seven days. Then after the period of warm reception was over, he was asked by the four hungry ghosts to continue to stay in that abode and wait for them for seven days telling him that after expiry of that duration, they would come back and that in the meantime, they had to leave the place to undergo torment in hell. Mittavindaka, however, refused to comply with their request and left, floating away on the small raft. With his good fortune still smiling on him for his virtuous kamma of the past, he again reached the abode of eight hungry ghosts. After a period of seven days' sojourn as in the former case, he left and like this passed through the abode of sixteen hungry ghosts, eventually reaching the abode of thirty-two hungry ghosts. He put up at that abode for seven days as previously, and then proceeded from there on his journey. Finally, he landed on an island of Hell in the sea for having done wrong, a demeritorious act, to his mother. While he was walking about on the island, he found a person whose neck was chopped off by a machine-driven knife. He saw the red blood spilling out profusely from the neck which had been cut, and the person was found shouting at the top of his voice and crying bitterly in great pain and suffering.

Wrong Notion of Bad as Being Good

The above sub-heading in the original Burmese version of the lecture is a well-known proverb which may be literally translated as "The hell of a fiery flower is wrongly conceived as a heavenly fine flower." Finding the man being subjected to immense suffering in hell, Mittavindaka had a different opinion as to why the person was screaming and yelling despite the fact that he was adorned with an extremely beautiful flower on his head. He imagined how nice it would be if he were to have this big pretty flower stuck on his head. Referring to this incident, sages of the past had provided us with a proverb: "The hell of a fiery flower was wrongly conceived as a heavenly fine flower." He therefore told the man, "Please give me that full-bloom flower on your neck." Thereupon, the man suffering in hell entreated him truthfully thus: "I could not possibly dodge the

terrible knife when it is about to fall right on my neck to slice it off. The thing on the back of my neck is not a golden flower but a sharp blade of a machine-driven knife. It is really terrible. Please do not wish to suffer that great pain and misery.” However, Mittavindaka did not believe the man’s words. He therefore retorted, “My friend, I have seen that big flower with my own eyes. Don’t tell me lies. Perhaps the way you have just spoken to me was probably because you are unwilling to offer me that flower. You must have worn this big flower on your head for a long time.” Mittavindaka persistently asked the man to yield to his request and hand over the flower to him. This repeated utterance made that condemned man reflect: “This man is driven by awfully bad kamma just like me. It seems that the time has arrived for me to get released from the terrible suffering in this hell.” Thinking thus, he conceded, saying. “Well, my friend, since you want that flower, you may have it now.” So saying, he threw the automatic knife to fall onto Mittavindaka. The moment it came to rest on the back of his neck, the mechanical device started to function on its own, cutting off his neck. Only then, Mittavindaka realised that it was not a golden flower at all, as he had thought, but a terrible cutting machine with a sharp blade. Now he was helpless and could not get away from it. As long as his bad kamma was not exhausted, he was cruelly cut by the automatic knife.

Considering this tragic episode, it is obvious that those who have unwholesome kamma, not knowing that hell is terrible, would probably think of it as pleasurable. Then also curiously enough, although one may know what hell really is, when he himself has become an inmate of hell, he could find delight and pleasure in his own existence. One may, on his own volition, be inclined to find happiness though he might even consider hell as undesirable. This amounts to taking pleasure in the hellish aggregates. It is therefore clear enough that pleasurable attachment to hell itself is caused by this clinging desire and that the very clinging desire is drifting towards the hellish aggregates.

The Abode of Hungry Ghosts Also Seems Pleasurable

Some hungry ghosts suffer misery almost as much as those in hell. A hungry ghost also finds existence pleasurable. Since they are indulging in matrimonial affairs among their own kind, there is

hardly any doubt that they have their own pleasurable attachment to one another who have the same fate and are living a similar existence. Moreover, among hungry ghosts, there are some known as Vemānika Petas who, because of the effects of mixed merits and demerits, are suffering all day long but enjoying pleasures at night time, or undergoing suffering for seven days, and then becoming enraptured with pleasurable life during the next seven days, alternately. When the turn of meritorious kamma comes, they have a luxurious and pleasurable life as *devas* do. Therefore, even an ordinary person who has come across such pleasurable conditions, would have delightful attachment to such a low existence. Jealous gods are somewhat similar to hungry ghosts.

Animals Also Enjoy Their Own Existences

Among animals, there are dragons of the Nāga world, which have supernormal powers. It was stated that during the lifetime of our Buddha, a daughter of the king of dragons, named Erakapatta created herself as a human and then danced while singing a riddle. It was mentioned that having heard an announcement made by the king of dragons conveying the news that anybody who could solve the riddle would be given his daughter's hand in marriage, the number of people who visited the place wishing to get the dragon princess as a wife, was so large that there was hardly space to stand. In the Bhūridatta Jātaka also, mention was made that children were born of the two parents, the father being a human prince, and the mother, a dragon princess, and vice-versa. In the Campeyya Jātaka, it was stated that the Bodhisatta, having yearned for the existence of a dragon, had indeed been reborn as a dragon. In the Vidhura Jātaka, a deva of an inferior type belonging to the lowest celestial abode, by the name of Puṇṇaka, was said to have fallen in love with a female dragon. He carried off a renowned sage by the name of Vidhura to the realm of dragons as prompted by his sweetheart, the female dragon, and her parents. Hence, it cannot be disputed that one can be attracted to the animal kingdom, with pleasurable attachment impelled by desire. People keep dogs as family pets caressing them with love and attachment. In the same way, other kinds of animals are brought up with affectionate care and attention. These are all pleasurable attachments.

If a person, who moulds his destiny according to the law of kamma, by force of unwholesome kamma, is reborn as an animal such as a dog, pig, ox, buffalo, horse, or elephant, then pleasurable attachment to the physical self in any kind of existence is bound to take place, wherever he may be reborn. Pleasurable attachment with delight also occurs in the company of those belonging to the same worldly existence. This can definitely be known with reference to the *Campeyya Jātaka*. Having seen the remarkably high status and charming appearance of *Campeyya*, the king of dragons, who had come in the guise of a human with all pomp and splendour to pay reverence to his father, the great hermit, the *Bodhisatta* was greatly enchanted. Accordingly, he had a longing to become the king of dragons. He was therefore reborn as *Campeyya*, the king of dragons, after his death. Initially, after his rebirth in the new existence, when he found that he possessed the despicable body of a snake, he was said to be greatly depressed and disappointed. However, no sooner had he become a dragon amidst the pleasant company of a retinue of young female dragons in the guise of charming and sprightly human dancers, singing and dancing to the accompaniment of music, his dejection and sorrow evaporated as he was dominated by pleasurable sensations derived from the pageantry and rejoicing. Hence, the presence of pleasurable attachment or clinging to one's own existence is common to everyone. No further comment is necessary relating to the pleasurable and luxurious life in the abodes of human beings and devas. Even the lives of brahmas afford them pleasure and delight in their own way.

Followers of other religions desire such brahma realms under the false belief that such abodes are paradise, a divine state of supreme bliss free from old age, suffering, and death. During the lifetime of the Buddha, a brahma god by the name of *Baka*, assumed that his abode was eternal, devoid of old age, suffering, and death. He even invited the Blessed One to his heavenly place with great delight and satisfaction. Without even entertaining such thoughts, some have been enjoying their lives there for having found happiness with longevity. One of the brahmas, having seen the human beings and devas coming into being and passing away in so short a time with a brief span of life, was said to be teaching with eagerness to practise mental development in order to reach their abode of brahma and to be able to live long, as:

“One should earnestly endeavour to practise for the attainment of *jhāna* by which sensual desire can be dispelled similar to a person who would have tried in emergency to pull out the spear which is pierced through and stuck in the vital part of his body at the mouth of the abdomen, or to extinguish the burning fire on his head.”

However, a question may arise if pleasurable sensations will occur in the Suddhāvāsa abode which is inhabited only by noble persons whose minds are purified. Even in this abode, Non-returners not yet free from desire for existence find pleasure in their own existences.

Moreover, ordinary people, Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners, take delight in the formless brahma realms. In the formless realms where there is only consciousness without the material body, being fairly comfortable, some people have thought of it as nibbāna, and crave for it.

Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta

Immediately after his renunciation of worldly pleasures, the Bodhisatta practised meditation under the guidance of the great hermits Ālāra and Udaka learning the method of practising *jhāna*, that these hermits were then practising to reach the heavens of the sphere of nothingness and the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, thinking that these realms were free from suffering. They were also teaching others with this misconception. The Bodhisatta, however, was aware that the achievement of *jhāna* is not the right way to attain nibbāna. That is why he abandoned them, and sought for the true Dhamma, eventually gaining Enlightenment. After becoming an Omniscient Buddha, when he thought to deliver his first discourse, he came to know through his divine eye that the two hermits, Ālāra and Udaka had unfortunately passed away and had reached the abodes of the aforesaid formless realms, which they thought of as being nibbāna.

Since these heavenly abodes are formless, the inhabitants residing there cannot listen to discourses. Such abodes have a very long life-span. The life-span in the realm of nothingness is sixty-thousand world cycles, and in the realm of neither perception nor non-perception it is eighty-thousand world cycles. After the expiry of the respective life-span, they will die, and revert to the human world. However, by then the Buddha's dispensation will have long since faded out. So the

attainment of the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna is remote from them. The Blessed One therefore said that it was a tremendous loss for them. In view of these facts, if spoken of in terms of abodes, craving with pleasurable desires is likely to drift from the lowest abode of Avīci up to the highest existence. Therefore, to prevent drifting in the current of existence, insight meditation must be practiced.

Likely to Drift Up to Maturity Knowledge

This craving, according to the nature of Dhamma, tends to drift right up until the stage of maturity knowledge. Looking at it from the aspect of phenomena, it clings with delight to all phenomena within the domain of sensual pleasures. It grasps at realms of form and formless realms with the lofty and virtuous qualities of *jhāna*. That is to say that craving continues with delight and attachment right up to maturity knowledge, which occurs close to the attainment of the Noble Path. It also tends towards and holds onto all pleasurable sensations that arise at every moment of seeing, hearing, contacting, and knowing. One who is practising to gain form and formless *jhānas*, has a desire for their achievement. Moreover, one continues to find pleasure with clinging attachment in *jhāna* when it is achieved.

One who is practising insight meditation eagerly expects to gain good concentration before concentration becomes strong. Then, when mental tranquility becomes stable, pleasurable sensations associated with concentration occur. Again, while the power of contemplation and noting is still weak, one wishes to strengthen it. When it becomes strengthened, one is happy with joy and attachment to what is good. One who is not yet able to distinguish between mind and matter is eager to know their distinctive features. When it is known, one takes delight and pleasure in the knowing-mind. One then inclines to know the characteristics of impermanence, *etc.*, and when appreciated as such, one is greatly satisfied with this insight knowledge during the continual process of contemplating and noting. At the stage of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), when brilliant light or radiance are found or visualized, one is likely to become extremely satisfied with rapture, tranquility, bliss, and confidence in respect of this insight knowledge, which occurs with great speed.

Briefly stated, when reaching the stage of equanimity about formations, all sensations that need be contemplated and noted will

appear one after another automatically without making any special effort. Sensations that may occur will be automatically realised with ease and comfort without exertion. This fine realisation with awareness will continue for one or two hours or more at a stretch without losing momentum. This progressive insight gained by contemplation will also be looked upon with pleasurable attachment. When this knowledge of equanimity about formations becomes fully strengthened, all noting and awareness will take place in an accelerated motion, and will be found pleasant in its own peculiar way. This is known as insight leading to emergence (*vuṭṭhānagāmini ñāṇa*), which also may be found pleasurable. Noting will then becomes fast, and while insight knowledge is continuously occurring, consciousness will appear inclined towards nibbāna where all mental and physical formations cease. This realisation and mental inclination will bring about the knowledge of the Path and its Fruition, which will move towards the experience of nibbāna. In this way, path and fruition consciousness glimpses nibbāna. Thereafter, knowledge of reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*) occurs.

Among what has so happened, the nature of the mind that inclines towards nibbāna is maturity knowledge. After reflecting on it with the knowledge of reviewing, pleasurable attachment to maturity knowledge can also take place. After that, nibbāna — where all formations cease — and the consciousness of the path and fruition that realise cessation, are not obvious as being pleasurable. Only the nature of cessation is clearly known. Hence, no pleasurable attachment to the path, its fruition, and nibbāna can arise. Pleasurable attachment can only happen up to the earlier stage of maturity knowledge. That is the why it has been stated that craving desires drift up to maturity knowledge.

Resembles a Wealth-conscious Person

Without being well-accomplished in Dhamma by personally practising meditation, some may talk with ego or conceit. They offer advice not to get involved in any kind of sense-pleasures and not to crave for anything pleasurable. This kind of talk may be considered valuable if made by a credible person at the right time. However, if one who talks in that way is a person without any dependable knowledge of the Dhamma by which he can aspire to be reborn in a

happy condition such as the world of human beings or devas, it would be highly improper. Furthermore, if he himself is still clinging to trivial pleasures of life, it will be inappropriate for him to talk like that. Some may slander others, criticising, finding fault, and disparaging contemplation and noting of all phenomena arising at the six sense-doors are mere tranquility. Such derogatory speech might be due to ignorance regarding the distinguishing features of tranquility and insight. It may also be due to impudence, not knowing that tranquility meditation is a fundamental exercise practised by the Buddhas and Noble Ones. Such people talk with vanity, thinking highly of themselves without any basic knowledge of the Dhamma. They may be likened to a person who assumes himself as a man of substance without possessing any wealth or property and also without the ability to conduct any business enterprise considering the venture as one below his dignity and financial standing.

Any Kind of Merit Should Be Cultivated

Any kind of meritorious deed that will lead to nibbāna is something worth doing, and needs to be cultivated. None of the texts indicate that the method of contemplating and noting every phenomenon arising from the six sense-doors is tranquility meditation. It is only mentioned as amounting to insight meditation.

Not to enjoy pleasure and yearn for it is easier said than done. From the practical point of view, it is extremely difficult to restrain oneself from enjoyment. It is because the defilement of craving, which is susceptible to enjoyment and inclined to generate passionate desires, and is likely to drift along with delightful sensations up to the highest realm of existence if described in terms of abodes, and up to maturity knowledge, with reference to the Dhamma. As such, in regard to one who has practised meditation to achieve *jhāna*, craving and attachment to such an achievement, which arose before that attainment, can occur. After the attainment of *jhāna*, the meditator again takes pleasure in what has been achieved. As regards a meditator indulging in the practice of insight, the mind is not at rest or tranquil at the initial stage. It is mixed up with the five hindrances to the progress of concentration. The mind is then still polluted. So the meditator is eager gain purity of mind and concentration. He or she also wishes to make good progress in noting with serenity,

without the mind going astray. Then again, when noting can be done vigorously and effectively with a calm mind, he or she finds is delighted with being able to note thoroughly and satisfactorily. While contemplating, the mind remains calm and fixed, continually dwelling on the objects that ought to be noted, without wandering and flitting. The object that is noted change constantly, but the mind that is noting remains stable. The mind is calm and steady without deviating from the point to which it is directed. This is called momentary concentration for insight (*vipassanā-khaṇika-samādhi*). It is similar to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) obtained through tranquility meditation. Hence, it is to be called purity of mind (*citta visuddhi*). When the mind becomes purified and strengthened during the process of noting, the body and mind, are distinguished. It becomes clear that the sense-object that is noted is one thing, and the knowing mind is another. This means that analytical knowledge of body and mind (*nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*) occurs, and the two distinctive features are clearly known in the act of noting. Then satisfaction arises regarding the insight that is gained.

As one proceeds with contemplating and noting, awareness becomes clear that phenomena are merely arising and passing away in an instant being governed by the law of cause and effect, and that everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and unreliable. In the process of contemplating and noting, realisation comes with satisfaction that all these are mere natural phenomena without any self or living entity. Brilliant lights will also be visualized, and both body and mind will be pervaded with intense joy, happiness, and rapture. These experiences are also regarded as delightful. All such feelings must also be contemplated, noted, and then rejected. After rejecting them, if contemplation and noting is carried on, insight will deepen, leading to the knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*) regarding every object of awareness, and the awareness itself at every moment of noting. In brief, if further contemplation is made, insight will gradually develop right up to knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārūpekkha-ñāṇa*). How this knowledge arises will be explained at length later. On reaching this stage, noting becomes very easy, smooth, and gentle without making any special effort, with awareness occurring spontaneously and incessantly. This constant awareness is also appreciated by the meditator with delight.

Maturity Knowledge Can Be Pleasurable

If the pleasurable sensations that have arisen have been rejected, and if contemplating and noting is continuous, insight will progress to a stage where the Noble Path can be achieved. On reaching this stage, noting accompanied by awareness will automatically become accelerated. While becoming aware in this way, the insight knowledge inclines towards the sensation of formations. This is the stage of insight called maturity knowledge. The mind inclines in the way stated and flows into the cessation of formations. This realisation is the Path and its Fruition. At that moment, there is no chance for pleasurable attachment or craving to arise. The arising of path and fruition knowledge (*magga-phala ñāṇa*), which have penetrated into the nature of cessation does not also afford any opportunity to think of any pleasurable condition. As such, there cannot be any pleasurable attachment to those Dhammas conditioning the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna. However, the mind that has become very active and has arisen earlier with insight towards the cessation known as maturity knowledge, may be regarded as pleasurable if and when reflection is made retrospectively. There can also be expectations before realisation of these insight knowledges. For this reason, it has been stated that, according to Dhamma, this pleasurable attachment of craving, can flow right up to maturity knowledge.

What has now been taught describes the way in which the flood of craving drifts into the current of pleasurable sensations, with delight. These defilements or harmful cravings are indeed truly awful. Therefore do not permit this craving to drift along and to arise. To prevent it from drifting and arising, all sensations that occur should be continuously contemplated and noted without any break. If contemplation is done continuously, since any object will vanish immediately after it is seen, the realisation will dawn that it is impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*). Similarly, it will be truly realised as such at the moment of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and knowing. Hence, nothing will be found to be pleasurable. It is only because of one's own inability to contemplate and note, and to know the truth, that sensations arising from the six sense-bases are erroneously thought of as being pleasurable. If so considered as pleasurable, suffering will follow in train with worry and anxiety over all of these sensations.

Gestation for Seven Years and Seven Days

During the life-time of the Buddha, a lady by the name of Suppavāsā, belonging to a royal family was pregnant for seven years instead of the usual period of nine or ten months, as the result of an unwholesome deed done in a previous life. During labour, she had to endure great pain and suffering for seven days continuously before giving birth to a son. The child was a prodigy who was later to become an eminent elder — Venerable Sīvali. In one of their previous existences, these two were the queen and son of the king of Benares. At that time the king of Kosala invaded the kingdom of Benares, and after his annexation of that country, he put the king of Benares to death. The Queen, however, was made one of his wives. Her son fled, and after rallying a mighty armed force, advanced towards Benares in an attempt to reoccupy it. Taking advice from his mother, he laid siege to the city and sent a message to the king of Kosala asking whether he would surrender or fight a battle. The king of Kosala, however, would neither surrender nor fight. The citizens, being able to bring food and other supplies into the city through a small gate in the city wall, were quite at ease. On receipt of further advice from his mother, the prince blocked all of the city gates, large and small. After seven days' siege, the citizens revolted and killed the king. Thereafter, they proclaimed the young prince as their monarch. For this evil deed in laying siege to the city, the prince had to suffer in hell for innumerable years. In his final existence, he had to remain in his mother's womb for seven years. Moreover, for having closed all the gaps in the city wall for seven days without leaving any loop-hole, he had to endure immense suffering for seven days at the time of his birth as a result of his past bad kamma. The effect of unwholesome kamma is truly terrible!

As a mark of honour for having given birth to a healthy son, a ceremony was held by offering alms food to the Buddha and his disciples. On that occasion, Venerable Sāriputta beckoned the infant prince to come nearer to him and spoke to him. Although this child was newly born, he was seven years old. Therefore, he was able to understand what was said. Not only that, he could already speak and walk. Venerable Sāriputta asked the young child, "How are you son? Did you suffer pain and misery staying so long in your mother's womb? Was it not terrible?" Sīvali replied, "Yes, Venerable sir. It was

indeed terrible.” Having heard her son’s reply, Suppavāsā was overjoyed and thought, “My son is outstanding. Just imagine, he can ably answer on the Dhamma even to an eminent elder like Venerable Sāriputta.” At this point, the Blessed One asked, “My dear daughter Suppavāsā, are you willing to have another son like Sīvali, if it were possible?” Suppavāsā replied, “Yes, Venerable sir! I wish I could have seven like him.” Hearing her reply, the Buddha uttered this verse:

*“Asātaṃ sātārūpena, piyarūpena appiyaṃ. Dukkhaṃ
sukhassa rūpena, pamatta mativattati.”*

“Anything that is neither good (*asātaṃ*) nor delightful (*appiyaṃ*), seeming to be good (*sātārūpena*) and delightful (*piyarūpena*), makes a heedless person (*pamattaṃ*) suffer immensely (*ativattati*).”

Deceiving by Pretending to Be Pleasant

In this regard, the word ‘heedless’ does not mean “not being conscious of something.” It means becoming careless without the mindfulness usually acquired by meditators who are contemplating and noting with awareness. Such a heedless person is said to be preoccupied with trivial matters that seem pleasurable. It is like an imposter practising deception on a simple person. Do you understand this point? Suppavāsā had undergone a great deal of suffering for seven years to get a son, and had to suffer pain for seven days during labour, yet she still wanted such a son for whom she had to suffer so much. This is evidence of the fact that she had found pleasure in what was actually suffering, because of her ignorance of the noble Dhamma. This shows that what is unpleasant has been deceiving under the guise of being pleasant. Whom does it ill-treat? The answer is that it ill-treats a heedless person. The question then arises how one should properly reflect or bear in mind. Reflection should be made with mindfulness bearing in mind that all these unsatisfactory things are, in fact, stressful, painful and suffering. The cause leading to such suffering should also be reflected upon and fully realised. From the worldly point of view, one who is lazy and negligent in connection with business matters and livelihood, and hopes to succeed, without effort or taking care, is heedless. It may be said that he or she has no wisdom regarding the results to be expected. Such a simple person can easily become a victim to unscrupulous swindlers.

From the Dhamma point of view, one is heedless and lacking insight, overwhelmed by the desire to gain prosperity in this present existence without thinking about merits and demerits for future existences in saṃsāra. Sensual pleasures, which last only for the duration of this life-time, under the guise of having great value, will swindle a heedless person. A heedless person will be unaware of the deception until on the threshold of death. To others, realisation comes only in the next existence after death.

Kammic Effects Known after Death

In the country of Suratttha during the time of King Dhamma Asoka, there lived a general by the name of Nandaka. He believed in the false doctrine that there was no result of kamma, and no future existences. Hence, his personal endeavours were limited to the extent of deriving worldly benefits during his life-time. When he passed away, he became a hungry ghost (*peta*) within the confines of a forest named Vindhya. Then only he came to realise personally that there really exists the law of kamma with its causes and effects, and future existences after death, and that he had been swindled by worthless things which, in fact, should not have been regarded as pleasurable. While he was reminiscing about the past and reflecting on his present existence, his daughter Uttarā was making a libation after her donation in offering food and drinking-water to the Saṅgha. She prayed for him to share in the merits. After saying *Sādhu* to appreciate the merits shared by his daughter, he immediately received food and other comestibles, such as might be available to devas, to his heart's content. The benefits so derived made him all the more convinced that he had wrongly accepted a false belief in his previous existence. He realised that he had been a victim of fraud in his previous existence.

Essential Not to Forget

What is essential is not to forget about matters concerning saṃsāra. It means to say that all vices and unwholesome mental states should be avoided to gain real happiness and to minimise misery throughout future existences. Meritorious deeds and wholesome mental states should be cultivated as far as possible. This is the main point. If this is done, a person may be said to be always alert and heedful relating to the cycle of existence. In particular, what is most significant is not

to forget to escape from the whirlpool in the deep ocean of saṃsāra. The way to escape is to be always mindful of the continuous arising and dissolution of mind and matter occurring within, by contemplating and noting. This is all that need to be done. If one is unable to contemplate and note as stated above, the continuous flux of mind and matter will be regarded as good and pleasurable. Pleasurable sensations will occur from the seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and knowing.

All natural phenomena will be regarded as pleasurable, then suffering will arise from these pleasurable sensations in the present existence. If, under unfavourable circumstances, one goes down to the lower realms, misery will ensue. This is the cruel treatment given by things which are, in fact, not pleasurable. If mindfulness is maintained by incessantly contemplating and noting, mind and matter will be known by their true characteristics as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. If realised as such, there will be no suffering during the present life-time because of such sensations. Neither will one be relegated to hell in the rounds of saṃsāra. If circumstances permit, the special dhamma of the Noble Path can be achieved in the course of contemplating and noting. If the Path is gained, one will be fully liberated from the lower realms. Therefore, emphasis is laid on the importance of heedfulness, and on the need to exercise vigilance so that trivial matters, which do not deserve to be regarded as pleasurable, cannot possibly deceive you.

The verse says further: Any sense-object that is not delightful (*appiyaṃ*), seeming to be delightful (*piyarūpena*), makes a heedless person (*pamattaṃ*) suffer immensely (*ativattati*).

Suffering from the Viewpoint of Insight

Though a sense-object is not delightful, it pretends to be, arousing love, which cruelly causes one to suffer. These are the things or objects that people see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and know. Seen with the naked eye, it would seem as if the visual object is a male or female being, he or she, which is perceived with a misleading notion as delightful and fascinating. That is why people hanker after these ostensibly delightful things. Looked at from the point of view of insight knowledge, they are found to be mere natural phenomena of mind and matter, which are continually arising and disappearing,

and are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. With insight, they will be perceived as detestable and terrible. If the truth is realised as it truly is, these sensations will have no power to deceive.

It was also stated as “*dukkhaṃ sukhassa rūpena.*” The meaning of this is that all painful and unsatisfactory phenomena appear to be pleasant and a source of happiness. They cruelly deceive a heedless and unwary person. In fact, all animate or inanimate things that people encounter, give rise to pain and suffering, which is the Truth of Suffering (*dukkha saccā*), from the viewpoint of a Noble One, who perceives them in their true light with the eye of wisdom. At every moment of seeing with the eye-base, all these are found to be ceaselessly arising and vanishing, and are therefore miserable. Similar perceptions occurs at every moment of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and knowing. However, to those who are unable to contemplate and note, due to being heedless and lacking insight, these miseries seem to be pleasurable and delightful. Due to this deception, worldlings always crave for things, trivial or not so trivial, with pleasure and delight, hoping that they would one day find real happiness. This clearly shows that what is really suffering, is cruelly deceiving by pretending to be objects of pleasure and joy. It is, therefore, vital to diligently contemplate and note these unsatisfactory phenomena every time they arise and disappear. On attaining Arahantship, one will become always mindful without any heedlessness, so no unsatisfactory phenomenon can deceive him or her.

An ordinary worldling who practises insight meditation will be better off to the extent of being able to contemplate and note with mindfulness. The statement that a thing is not really pleasurable as mentioned in the verse, conveys the same sense as pleasurable things (*sātiyesu*), as stated in this Purābheda Sutta. Hence, care should be taken not to allow one’s mind to flow into pleasurable sensations. If pleasurable attachment occurs to those who cannot practise insight meditation, they should take care not to go to extremes. An insight meditator must continuously contemplate and note all occurrences arising out of the six sense-doors to prevent himself drifting towards pleasurable conditions. If pleasurable attachment occurs, it should be rejected by contemplating and noting. The process of rejection should continued relentlessly by contemplating and noting until attaining the Noble Path, since it has been stated that pleasurable

conditions drift up to the stage of maturity knowledge (*gotrabhū nāṇa*). If rejection is done in the way stated, knowledge of the path will ultimately be reached. The motto has, therefore, been couched as:

“Not drifting into the current of pleasurable sensations, with pride dispelled and gentleness maintained, gaining wisdom, incredulous, cravings detached by clearing away, these six attributes are his glorious array.”

According to this motto, a sage in whom defilements have become extinct, is endowed with the six noble attributes. The first attribute: “Not drifting not into the current of pleasurable sensations” has already been explained.

Not Puffed Up with Conceit

The next attribute is: “One should not be arrogant and haughty with excessive conceit (*atimāne ca no yuto*), belittling others and regarding them as unworthy of attention.” It is important not to underestimate others in either worldly affairs or spiritual matters. Low estimation of a person in respect of worldly affairs may refer to parentage, financial standing, or education. Do not disparage a person in any way, since you may be mistaken. By holding a low opinion of a person who really deserves respect, one may get into trouble. I will relate a story in connection with this.

During the Buddha’s life-time, King Pasenadi of Kosala daily invited five-hundred monks for alms. The Saṅgha led by Venerable Ānanda accepted the offering of alms. The king himself took the lead in serving meals for a period of seven days in succession. For the remaining days, however, the king was unable to do so personally, but he failed to delegate others to perform his duty. Without specific orders, no one dared to carry out what should be done, the serving of meals being in the king’s palace. So, not even seating arrangements were made to receive the monks. A number of the invited monks therefore left, due to not being provided with seats. On the following day, a similar situation prevailed and more of the monks left. On the third day, only Venerable Ānanda was left alone at the place of offering, the rest of the monks having departed. Venerable Ānanda remained out of regard for the faith and generosity of the benefactor. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was witnessed by the king himself

when he came over to the place personally. Finding Venerable Ānanda alone, and all dishes of rice and curry being wasted, the king felt very sorry and upset. He therefore, proceeded to the Buddha to whom he respectfully asked, “Venerable sir! I extended my invitation to five-hundred monks to honour me with their presence at my palace for alms. However, only Venerable Ānanda came.” He asked why the other monks had failed to visit his place in response to his request.

Nine Qualities of a Good Benefactor

The Blessed One replied: “Oh, king! My disciples have probably failed to visit your palace due to not being familiar with you.” Then the Buddha said: “The monks should not associate with a benefactor who does not possess nine qualities.” The Buddha then taught that monks should only visit a benefactor’s house and sit down there if the benefactor is endowed with nine qualities:¹

1. He stands up and welcomes him courteously,
2. He is pleased to pay homage,
3. He allocates a suitable seat with reverence,
4. He does not hide things that he owns,
5. He donates generously, according to his means,
6. He donates the best of what he has,
7. He gives the donation respectfully,
8. He sits close to listen to the Dhamma, and
9. He listens attentively to what is said.

The Buddha then recounted the story of a hermit named Kesava,² who though fully provided with delicious meals and good medicines by the king of Benares who was not familiar with him, had become sick to the point of death, but regained his normal health within a few days after returning to stay with his intimate disciples, both lay supporters and ascetics, having been provided with wild fruits.

The Pride of the Sakyans

It thus occurred to the king that he should try to get well-acquainted with the Saṅgha. He sought to make himself related by marriage to the Sakyans. He therefore sent his emissaries to ask for a daughter of

¹ Kula Sutta, A.iv.386. “*Manāpena paccuṭṭhenti, manāpena abhivādenti, manāpena āsanaṃ denti, santamassa na pariḡhanti, bahukampi bahukaṃ denti, paṇītaṃ paṇītaṃ denti, sakkaccaṃ denti no asakkaccaṃ, upanīdanti dhammassavanāya, bhāsitaṃ sussaṃsanti.*”

² Kesava Jātaka, Jā.346 and Dhammapada Commentary to verse 47.

the Sakyan royal family. The Sakyans lived and ruled one of the semi-independent states in the country of Kosala. It was akin to the Shan state within Burma, under the guardianship of the ancient Burmese kings. On receiving the message, the Sakyan rulers realised that refusal to comply with the express demand made by King Pasenadi would lead to trouble. The Sakyans were extremely proud and conceited. They considered themselves as belonging to the noblest race. Due to their egoism they held the view that Sakyan women should not, under any circumstances, marry anyone not of their own clan. They were very close-knit and had a strong sense of racial superiority. They convened an emergency meeting to discuss the matter. King Mahānāma said that he had a daughter born of one of his maids-of-honour, a mistress, and suggested that this girl should be offered to King Pasenadi. She was not a real maid-servant though. Ancient absolute rulers regarded the people as servants. She might have belonged to a rich family, but not to the royal family. This advice given, was unanimously accepted by all those present at the meeting, and hence, the king's daughter, a commoner, was proposed to be given in marriage. This, of course, amounted to deceiving King Pasenadi who had asked for a Royal Princess, a pure descendant of the Sakyan family.

A person not knowing that deception has practised on him is usually pleased, but when the truth is known, can become very angry. Later, when King Mahānāma's half-caste daughter was handed over to King Pasenadi's envoys, they took her away and presented her to their king. The king, believing that the girl was of pure royal blood of the Sakyan family, was delighted and made her his Chief Queen. Her name was Vāsabakhattiyā. Later, she gave birth to a son. The name given to the young prince was Viṭaṭubha. The king, being very fond of his young son since his infancy, appointed the prince though still young, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. When Viṭaṭubha was about seven years old, he asked his mother whether she had no relatives on her side, since he had never received gifts from his maternal grandma and aunts while others among his play-mates had received gifts of toy-elephants, toy-horses *etc.* He inquired if the Queen Mother was still living. The prince's mother, realising that trouble would brew if the truth were revealed, wilfully told a lie that her parents and relatives were of the royal blood of the famous Sakyan clan residing in Kapilavatthu. She mentioned that King

Mahānāma of Kapilavatthu was her royal father and that the said king was, therefore, the prince's grand-father. She further comforted her son that no gifts could be sent to him as all of them were residing in a far distant land.

When the young prince reached the age of sixteen, he sought his mother's permission to allow him to visit his grandfather, King Mahānāma, and his maternal kinsmen. His mother at first refused, but he persisted in asking to go to Kapilavatthu. He asked so often that she was unable to dissuade her son from visiting her relatives, so eventually she had to give in. She sent a message to Kapilavatthu so that there might not be any unpleasantness on her son's arrival. She feared that members of the Sakyan family might not give a fitting welcome to her son and might treat him with disrespect.

Viṭaṭūbha Was Slighted

The royal family of the Sakyan clan sent away all princes younger than Viṭaṭūbha to a remote place before the prince's visit. When Viṭaṭūbha arrived they accorded a very warm reception. He was introduced to the elder members of the royal family, including the king himself who was his grandfather, and his uncles, and so on. Viṭaṭūbha paid his respects to all the elders who were introduced to him. He then remarked that it was surprising to find no younger princes (who would have to pay respects to him). They replied that at all of the younger princes had gone to a far off place. Later, they held a ceremonious feast in his honour. When he left after his two or three days, a servant of the royal family washed and cleaned up the place with cows' milk uttering, "This is the place where the son of the maid-servant, Vāsabakkhattiyā, sat." While this ritual cleansing with milk was going on, one of Viṭaṭūbha's body guards returned to to recover a small weapon that was inadvertently left behind. He saw the ritual cleansing being performed and overheard the disparaging remarks. This body guard gossiped among his colleagues that Viṭaṭūbha's mother was not a genuine princess of the royal family, but the daughter of a maid-servant. This news spread and ultimately reached the ears of the young prince, Viṭaṭūbha. This shocking news enraged him, and he made a vow swearing vengeance that when he became king, the same places would be cleansed with the blood from the throats of the Sakyan royal family.

The Sakyans Meet Disaster

When Viṭaṭūbha succeeded his father and ascended the throne in the kingdom of Kosala, he marched against the state of Kapilavatthu with his armed forces with the intention of killing all the members of the Sakyan royal family. Seeing this unfortunate state of affairs, the Buddha made his way to where the troops were advancing towards Kapilavatthu, and intervened to prevent bloodshed. Three times the Blessed One prevented Viṭaṭūbha from waging war against his own kinsmen, and three times Viṭaṭūbha withdrew his armed forces. However, on the fourth occasion the Buddha remained equanimous, foreseeing that the Sakyan rulers' past unwholesome kamma would inevitably bear fruit. After entering the city walls with his troops, Viṭaṭūbha ordered all members of the Sakyan royal family to be executed except for King Mahānāma and those present with his grandfather, the king. The soldiers of Viṭaṭūbha killed all those who admitted to being descended from the Sakyan royal family. They did not even spare the lives of babies in their mother's arms. Only a few found in close proximity to King Mahānāma, and those who were not descended from the royal family, were left unharmed.

The reason for this disaster and misery for the entire Sakyan royal family was simply because of their own pride and racial superiority-complex. They treated people other than their own race as low-born, ignoble, and inferior to themselves. When one becomes egoistic, it is natural to look down upon others. They would also speak disparagingly of others. In the present day too, there are some who are egoistic and conceited. They can face trouble like that suffered by the Sakyans. They are liable to be deprived of help and assistance when the need arises. There were also instances where people got into trouble and distress for slighting an enemy.

What has been stated above concerns mundane affairs, However, the point stressed in the Purābheda Sutta is to dispel feelings of superiority from the aspect of Dhamma. To clarify this point, it may be that a person regards others as inferior thinking: "This person does not come up to the required standard of morality and is far behind me in the purity of moral conduct. He cannot maintain the Dhamma as I do. He is unable to practise meditation. Neither is he pious. He is uncivilised, worthless, and ignorant. If one considers another as inferior to oneself, one is inevitably conceited. One may

take proud as: “My moral conduct, is more purified than others. I’m fully accomplished with the noble Dhamma. My efforts in practising meditation bear fruit and are far-reaching. I’ve become a Stream-winner, a Noble One!” If it is true as imagined, there is no fault. However, one should not underestimate others though one might think very highly of oneself. The reason being that it might ultimately prove to be untrue — not as one has imagined. Later, the other might attain a higher stage of insight than oneself. Thinking highly of oneself is conceit (*māna*). This conceit is not only present in the mind of an ordinary worldling, but also in Noble Ones such as Stream-winners, Once-returns, and Non-returns. Nevertheless, the peculiar feature is that the feeling of pride or conceit that occurs in the minds of the Noble Ones, only arises depending on their own real attainment of those noble attributes. It is not that they think highly of themselves without reason. Hence, this kind of conceit is called “*yathā-māna*.” It means taking pride where it is deserved. Ordinary worldlings may think themselves superior, taking pride in trivial things. Such false-pride is called “*āyathāvamāna*.”

On becoming a Stream-winner by practising insight meditation, this false-pride is removed. However, the kind of conceit that occurs in connection with real attributes still remains. It will be eradicated completely on reaching Arahantship by practising insight meditation in serial order. This teaching, therefore, says that efforts should be made to meditate to eradicate conceit and become an Arahant.

The motto was therefore stated as: “Not drifting into the current of pleasurable sensations, with pride dispelled and gentleness maintained.”

Becoming Gentle in Behaviour and Speech

To become gentle in bodily behaviour, one should avoid all acts detrimental to others and do wholesome deeds as much as possible for their welfare. Therefore, killing, stealing, and adultery, which are immoral physical vices, should be avoided.

To be gentle verbally may be explained as abstaining from lies, slander, obscene abuse, and idle chatter, the four vices of speech. Of the two stated above, to be gentle and polite in speech is more important than to be gentle in behaviours. This is because, among those who have a religious inclination, only a few will be found to

be coarse in their physical behaviour. Concerning speech, anything that has sprung up in the mind will ordinarily find an outlet or expression through the mouth, which makes utterances, polite or vulgar, either intentionally or inadvertently. Any perverse or indiscreet utterances should therefore be avoided.

Gentle Mental Character

The meaning of gentleness of the mind is that one should be free from covetousness (*abhiṇṇā*) — unlawfully or unfairly wishing to possess other's property — and ill-will (*vyāpāda*), or vicious thoughts wishing others to meet with death or destruction of property, should be dispelled. Wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*) such as believing that there is no harmful or beneficial results of kamma, or no future existences, should be expelled and banished. In short, it means that one should have a virtuous mind devoid of malevolent feelings towards others. Virtuous thoughts comprise the requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya dhamma*), such as the four foundations of mindfulness. So mindfulness should always be practised. The four right efforts (*sammappadhānaṃ*), should be aroused. If contemplation and noting is done continuously based on the four foundations of mindfulness, cruel thoughts or activities will have no chance to occur. The mind will become very gentle. If the four foundations of mindfulness are practised, it would embrace the four right efforts, the four bases of success (*iddhipāda*), the five faculties (*indriya*), the five powers (*bala*), the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*), and the eight factors of the path (*maggaṅga*), otherwise known as the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*). The thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment comprise the constituents of true knowledge.

Therefore, if the practice of mindfulness is developed, not only the mind, but also both physical and mental behaviours become gentle. This is to say that if one is developing mindfulness for insight one will invariably consider carefully before doing anything, and will only do things considered to be proper. One will not perform any act casually or carelessly. When about to speak, one will ponder whether it is sensible and reasonable. While speaking too, one continues to contemplate and note. By so doing, one will undoubtedly restrain oneself from uttering harsh or rude words. Every time any thought or imagination arises, it must be contemplated and noted.

So coarse mental behaviour will barely occur, and even if it does, it will not last long. Therefore, if mindfulness is well developed, all physical, verbal, and mental behaviour will become pure and gentle. Moreover, since the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment are embraced, as they may be relevant, at every moment of contemplating and noting while practising and developing mindfulness meditation, it has been stated in the Mahāniddeśa¹ as: “*Sanhehi satipaṭṭhāne hi samannāgato*,” which means accomplishment is achieved with gentle mindfulness. The motto says: “Not flowing into the stream of pleasurable sensations, with pride dispelled and gentleness maintained, gaining wisdom ...”

Ready Wit

After gentleness comes reflective knowledge with which a person should be equipped. In connection with learning, one should have quick comprehension or ready wit (*paṭibhāna*). One should also possess intelligence and be able to quickly comprehend the Dhamma connected with practical meditation exercises. Regards any problem that is posed, one must be able to reply intelligently with presence of mind. Relating to learning, it would manifest in a person who is knowledgeable in the Pāli texts, Commentaries, and Subcommentaries as knowing readily what should be said next when delivering a lecture. To a person who systematically practises insight with diligence, this ready wit is likely to occur, even without scriptural learning. One who has practiced meditation will readily grasp the profound meaning of the Dhamma relating to mind and matter or stages of insight. One may easily and deeply appreciate though the teacher has made a mere mention of the gist of the Dhamma.

Truly Learned Only after Meditating

Those who have already practised insight meditation will easily understand the meaning of the scriptural texts just by reading them. Whatever was not properly understood before, practising insight meditation, will perhaps be understood clearly. A great teacher once stated that he had passed his examinations on scriptures with credit and that he had also taught others. He then considered himself as being truly learned. However, it was found to be wrong, simply

¹ Nd.1.234.

because the philosophical aspect of the Dhamma which had not been fully grasped before was vividly comprehended only after he had practised meditation. It is true and correct. This comprehension of the deeper meaning of the Dhamma is the knowledge of ready wit (*paṭibhāna ñāṇa*), which is achieved through insight meditation. This knowledge becomes more obvious to those who have meditated after having studied the Dhamma. This knowledge is distinctive because it is not book knowledge. What has been stated above is how this knowledge occurs in relation to learning.

Theoretically Easy but Practically Difficult

In connection with the practise of insight meditation, the way of gaining ready wit is that it would easily arise in the minds of those meditators what is feasible if they just reflect about the practice. The ability to understand the texts relating to practice is the quality of ready wit connected with practice. As regards practical realisation (*paṭiveda*), it will be clearly realised by one who has practised meditation. This means that the natural phenomena of mind and matter can easily be explained in a theoretical way. However, it is not so easy to appreciate from the practical point of view. In fact, it is extremely difficult. One who has practised meditation seriously will know the true nature of mind and matter with direct insight, which is hard to perceive and understand. At every moment of noting it will be known that matter — which is the sense-object noted and realised — is quite different from the knowing mind.

Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind

According to the texts, matter (*rūpa*) consists of the elements of earth (*pathavi*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), air (*vāyo*), and so on, a total of twenty-eight forms of primary and derived matter. Common mind consisting of eighty-one kinds of consciousness (*citta*), together with fifty-two mental factors (*cetasikā*), is mentality (*nāma*). All of these constitute the body and mind of an individual — an aggregate of material elements and properties (*rūpa*) and mental aggregates (*nāma*). It has to be mentioned arithmetically to emphasise the fact that there are only two categories, namely mind and matter, found in the Buddhist texts. However, not all of these are present in a person. Merely knowing as such is not analytical knowledge of body and

mind. This knowledge is only perception (*saññā*). Consider this: of the abovementioned twenty-eight kinds of matter, a man has no element of femininity. A woman has no element of masculinity. Then, of the eighty-one types of consciousness, one who has not attained *jhāna* will have no consciousness of the formless realms or the realms of form. Only the Arahants have functional consciousness (*kiriya*)—ordinary people have no such mental faculty. Therefore, could this be the real personal knowledge that knows the Dhamma or conditions which do not abide in one's own personality? No, it cannot possibly be. It is merely the knowledge of perception.

Even the Illiterate Can Realise the Dhamma

People who are now meditating, although they may not be learned, or unable even to read and write, can know the distinctive features of mind and matter through direct personal insight. Every time it is contemplated and noted, it will be realised that there are only two kinds of phenomena: matter, which is the object to be known, and the mind that knows. A similar realisation will occur whenever seeing, hearing, smelling, or tasting occurs. Touching has a very wide scope. All acts of bending, stretching, walking, standing, sitting, lying down, moving, and changing the postures are included. When bending and stretching, the mind that intends to bend or stretch is one thing, the acts of bending and stretching are another, and the noting mind is something else. It can be differentiated and clearly known. The same realisation takes place when walking and so on. Imagining and knowing, as well as noting and awareness are mind, which has the faculty of knowing. Moving and stiffness are matter, which has no consciousness. The arising phenomena of mind and matter in pairs combined together are vividly known by personal realisation.

How to Know Arising and Dissolution

Some teachers say to contemplate on arising and dissolution without having had any personal experience of the realisation of the transient nature of matter and mind. They are simply contemplating by uttering verbally or mentally without the faculty of perception. This is quite unnatural. A meditator who is continually contemplating and noting will perceive mind and matter at every moment of their arising, and will become aware of them both at the beginning of their

arising, and when concentration becomes mature, will be aware that their dissolution follows immediately. For instance, when painful sensation occurs, while noting “painful, painful” with fixed concentration, the painful sensations will clearly be found to arise and disappear, falling away at each moment. Such occurrences will be revealed to the mind’s eye as if they are known and felt by one’s hands without needing to utter a word. Similarly, joy (*pīti*) and tranquillity (*passaddhi*) are rarely appreciated by mere book-knowledge. However, on reaching the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), a meditator will definitely realise joy and tranquillity since they occur conspicuously. Moreover, the mental state of evenmindedness (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*) can hardly be known by mere book-knowledge. This will, however, be known automatically when the stages of arising and passing away and knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) are reached.

On reaching those stages, these will be clearly found equally balanced, and on attaining the knowledge of equanimity all sensations will be known and realised without special effort as they occur spontaneously, and that awareness of noting becomes obvious on its own as it occurs automatically. At that moment, the sensation that is known and the knowing mind, while in the process of knowing and disappearing, will be found to be incessantly arising and vanishing. Hence, their inherent nature of impermanence (*anicca*), is extremely obvious. Similarly, it will be clearly manifested that they are inherently unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*). Having personally realised with clarity and without ambiguity in the course of contemplating and noting, the three characteristics of phenomena will be clearly perceived through knowledge when reflected upon even while taking a brief respite from meditation. Also, if contemplated and noted, the usual insight knowledge will be gained. One who has reached the stage of the cessation of formations, would recall such cessation while contemplating and noting. If later reflecting on what has already been achieved, realisation will take place as before. This quick and easy revival of his comprehension of the nature of Dhamma every time he reflects is the attribute of the ready wit relating to realisation (*paṭivedha*).

The knowledge of ready wit regarding questions on scriptures will readily come into the mind of a person who has taken a course

of lessons to be able to tackle the questions relating to learning. In the same way, one who is accomplished with the knowledge of insight meditation will have a ready wit to deal with the questions relating to practice. These are the qualities of ready wit in so far as questions are concerned. One should be accomplished with the three kinds of ready wit as stated just now. Therefore, the motto says as follows: "Not flowing into the stream of pleasurable sensations, with pride dispelled and gentleness maintained, gaining wisdom ... "

Not Being Credulous

In the sixth verse it states: "*Na saddho na virajjati.*" This means: no faith has arisen because others have stated with a mistaken view is ready wit. If that is so, it would have amounted to saying that there is no faith. In fact, it means to say that one should be accomplished with wisdom after personal realisation of the Dhamma and not just by blindly believing what others say. The expression "*na saddho*" if literally translated, conveys the meaning of "not having faith." It has been taught thus, to differentiate between "believing in what others have said" and "personal realisation or knowledge." If one has no knowledge of one's own, one will believe what others say. To put it in another way, if it is known and realised personally, it will not be necessary to believe what others have said. The term "*na saddho*" has been used in the verse to make this clear.

Knowing Is More Noble than Believing

To give an example: even among people in Burma, those who have not been to the Shwedagon pagoda will have to believe by remembering what others have said in connection with the said shrine. If they have personally visited the Shwedagon pagoda and observed it closely, it will be unnecessary to take it for granted what others have told them is true. In the same way, a person who has no personal realisation of insight concerning the path, its fruition, and nibbāna should believe what others would teach according to the scriptures. It is similar to the case of people who believe in the existence of satellites launched into space by rockets though they have not personally seen them with their own eyes.

One who has personally discovered and realised the truths relating to insight, the path, its fruition, and nibbāna does not accept

mere hearsay. It is belief through personal achievement and realisation. This is not believing others, but knowing the truth. The Blessed One asked Venerable Sāriputta, “Sāriputta! Do you believe that by developing the faculty of faith (*saddhindriyaṃ*), one will reach the the ultimate goal of deathless nibbāna?” Venerable Sāriputta answered, “Venerable sir, in this regard, I don’t believe the word of the Buddha.” Ordinary monks who heard this answer misjudged Sāriputta. They imagined that Venerable Sāriputta being a Brahmin, belonging to the Brahmana caste, had not yet gained faith in the Blessed One. It would appear justifiable to think so. Those who have a bias towards the doctrine of the Brahmins, do not believe or have faith in the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha. It was therefore reasonable to think so, for the simple reason that Venerable Sāriputta belonged to the Brahmin caste. What it really meant was that Venerable Sāriputta had personally realised the fact that nibbāna could be attained by developing faith. Therefore, in this regard, he did not believe just because the Buddha had said so, but because he had personally realised it himself.

Imagine the previous example of a man who had visited and reverently observed the Shwedagon Pagoda. If he were asked whether he believed that the main masonry structure of the pagoda was covered with gold plates, he would have replied that he believed so not because others had told him, but because he himself had witnessed it. Yes, indeed. Likewise, what Venerable Sāriputta said was stated was because he himself had personally found and realised the truth that developing the faculty of faith would lead the way to nibbāna. In connection with this reply, Venerable Sāriputta had been extolled in the Dhammapada as stated below:

*“Assaddho akataññū ca, sandhicchedo ca yo naro.
Hatāvakāso vantāso, sa ve uttama poriso.” (Dhp v 97)*

“The man who is not credulous, who knows the uncreated,
who has cut off rebirth, who has destroyed all results,
and expelled all desires, he is truly an excellent man.”

This verse, which has been recorded in the Dhammapada in reference to Venerable Sāriputtā, is not contained in this Purābheda Sutta. However, as it contains terms similar in meaning to the verse in this Sutta, I mention it for you to note and remember. **Yo:** a certain

person, **assaddo**: has no faith, **sa**:, this person **ve**: actually **uttamaporiso**: is a noble and eminent person. This is a literal translation that might be given without knowing the real intention. As it stands, it will be entirely wrong and misleading. In the text of Alīṅkā this kind of secret word is called “Paheli,” a conundrum. The real meaning of this verse is: **Yo**: a certain person, **assaddho**: who is not credulous, i.e. one who has personal realisation, **sa**: this person, **ve**: actually, **uttamaporiso**: is a noble and eminent person. This is clear enough. Then the literal meaning of what follows is:

Akataññū: a person who does not appreciate the debt owed to another. Or in other words, one who is ungrateful to another who has done good to him. This is the usual translation. According to this, it conveys the meaning of a person who does not appreciate indebtedness to others, and may, therefore, be called a wicked person, not a noble and eminent person. This is the opposite to the expected meaning. In fact, what it really means is “a noble person who truly knows the uncreated (*nibbāna*).” **Sandhicchedo**: is literally a burglar who commits house-breaking. This is not the intended meaning. The essential meaning is “a person who has brought renewed existences to an end.” In other words, “one who has cut off all links with the suffering of saṃsāra.” This would mean, according to the Doctrine of Dependent Origination:

1. One link is relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi viññāṇaṃ*), which arises in the present existence due to good or evil deeds (*kamma*) of the past existence (*saṅkhāra*).
2. A second link is craving that arises because of feeling (*vedanā*) in the present existence.
3. A third link is future rebirth that occurs because of the kamma of the present existence (*bhava*).

Among these three links, since the past and present links have already arisen, joining together or connected with one another, it cannot possibly be severed, nor does it need to be severed. What needs to be done is to sever the two links, namely, to break the link between feeling to craving, and to prevent rebirth in a fresh existence caused by the arising of new kamma. Of these two links, breaking the link between feeling and craving is the essential point. The meditators here are contemplating and noting at every moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing to prevent feeling from

giving rise to craving. If contemplation is practised continuously, progressive stages of insight and knowledge of the path will occur in sequence, and on attaining Arahantship, the links of continued existences will be severed. Hence, a person who has already cut the connecting link of existence is called an eminent or noble person.

The next word is **hatāvakāso**. 'Hata' means 'destroyed,' 'āvakāsa' means 'opportunity' in an ordinary sense. If it is said that opportunities for success and prosperity are destroyed, the meaning is wrong. The meaning in this context is a person who has destroyed the opportunity to be reborn is a noble and eminent person.

The next word is **vantāso**. If this compound is interpreted as the food that is vomited (*vanta*) is eaten (*asa*), it would be highly improper from the worldly point of view. The meaning required in this context is that desire is called 'āsā.' Hence, some used to say that desire cannot be quenched, which indicates insatiable appetite or unfulfilled desires. An Arahant is totally free from all passionate or lustful desires, and has renounced all desires relating to mundane affairs and even to the fulfilment of Dhamma. With this intent, it has been taught as one who has rejected all desires (*vantāso*), like one who has rejected the food that has been vomited. Therefore, the Dhammapada verse has been translated to arrive at the appropriate meaning to say what is really intended.

Yo naro: a man or a certain person, **assaddho ca:** who is not credulous, having realised it himself, **akataññū ca:** who has seen the uncreated (*nibbāna*), **sandhicchedo ca:** has severed all the links and cut of rebirth, **hatāvakāso:** has destroyed the opportunity to be reborn in a fresh existence, **vantāso ca:** has expelled all desires, **sa:** such a person, **ve,** is truly, **uttamaporiso:** a noble and eminent person.

The point stressed in this verse is not to be credulous, relying entirely on what others say, but investigating and knowing from one's own personal realisation. It is vital to practise the Dhamma to achieve personal realisation. The arising and dissolution of mind and matter — which are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self — is the Dhamma that must be realised. Phenomena must be investigated to become fully aware of their nature. Insight knowledge, the path, and its fruition are Dhammas that must be practised to be clearly known and acquired. A person who has realised these Dhammas, need not rely on or believe others. Neither should one

depend on and believe in the scriptural texts of Dhamma. One need not even depend on the Buddha, because one has gained personal realisation with one's own awareness.

The statement regarding practising meditation to know for oneself without depending upon others, refers only to matters which could be known and realised personally. In respect of other things that one cannot know on one's own, one should believe others who are learned. Even Venerable Sāriputta had to depend on the Buddha in matters beyond his comprehension, and believed what the Buddha had taught. Some with meagre knowledge might refuse to believe even trivial things on the grounds that they have had no personal experience in the matter concerned. This is unrealistic. If an experienced traveller gives an account of a place that he has personally visited, others who have not been there should believe him.

Leaving aside people who have visited and seen certain places personally. Even what is learnt from newspapers or brochures, though these may be secondhand information, will have to be regarded as probably true by those who have read it. It will be ridiculous if one says that he cannot possibly believe the information just because he has not personally seen what is says in the printed material. Regarding the Dhamma, it is the same. If a person who has personally experienced and realised the Dhamma tells another about it which the other has not yet known, it is reasonable to believe that person who does have experience and personal realisation. Thereafter, believing what is stated, it would be wise to personally practise to achieve realisation. When realisation is gained through diligent practice, it would accord with the teaching not to be credulous.

Citta the Householder and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta

During the lifetime of the Buddha there was a rich man by the name of Citta who was a Non-returner. One day, Citta, paid a visit to Nigaṇtha Nāṭaputta, the leader of a sect of naked ascetics, called Nigaṇṭha. This great teacher Nāṭaputta, was regarded as a Jina, a Buddha, with great reverence by the Jains. He had gained popularity well before our Buddha became an Enlightened One. On his arrival, Nāṭaputta asked Citta: "Do you believe that your teacher Venerable Gotama has attained concentration whereby he is free of initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*), and is able

to free his mind from reasoning and investigation which have thus ceased?" To this question, Citta replied, "In regard to the point relating to the cessation of initial and sustained application, it is not that I have to recognize it for my having believed the Buddha." This answer gave Nāṭaputta the wrong impression that Citta did not believe the Buddha. He therefore went on to say. "Hey, my disciples! Look! This Citta is very simple and honest. He says truly and candidly what he has in his mind that he does not believe. It is, indeed, not worth believing. It is impossible to make initial and sustained application cease. It is really absurd just as air cannot be caught hold of by a net, or, as the running waters of the Ganges river cannot be prevented from flowing by the palm or a clenched hand."

Personal Knowledge versus Believing Others

Such being the case, Citta inquired, "Venerable Nāṭaputta, which of the two — knowing and believing — is more noble?" Nāṭaputta replied "Knowing is more noble than believing." Then, Citta proceeded to say, "Oh, teacher! I can at any time enter into the first *jhāna* by virtue of which initial and sustained application are present, *i.e.*, the mind will reason upon and investigate the subject chosen for contemplation. I can also enter into the second *jhāna*, at which stage the mind is free from reasoning and investigation while joy and tranquility remain. Then, I can also enter into the third *jhāna* where joy is abandoned, and also I can pass on to the fourth *jhāna* and abide in it, by which the mind, blessed and purified, is indifferent to all emotions, pleasure and pain alike." He then retorted, "Would you therefore think it necessary for me to rely on and believe any other monk or a noble person in connection with the questioned raised that there is concentrated contemplation upon a single thought and getting into a profound trance, despite the fact that I myself have personally found, realised, and attained the *jhāna* which is entirely free from this initial and sustained application?" Then Nāṭaputta spoke in derision discrediting Citta: "Look, my disciples! This rich man Citta is a fraud and a liar. Just a while ago, he stated that he did not disbelieve the Buddha. Now he expresses his belief. He is an extremely dishonest man."

Citta did not submit to this jibe. He retaliated, "Venerable teacher! You previously told your disciples that Citta is a very candid and

honest man. Now you say that he is dishonest. Your statements are inconsistent. If what you stated first is correct, then the statement made by you later must be wrong, and vice versa.”

In the story about Citta just narrated, Nāṭaputta had openly expressed his opinion that he had not experienced or discovered the *jhāna* free from initial and sustained application, and that he considered that there could be no concentration caused by mystic meditation by which one can free oneself from initial and sustained application, i.e., from reflection and investigation, by comparing with his own limitations. As regards Citta, since he had achieved and realised the attributes of *jhāna*, he had spoken courageously, guaranteeing the refined qualities of *jhāna*. This honest guarantee of his attainment of *jhāna* and of his personal realisation was given with firm conviction. It is not because he just believed it. It was his own personal acquisition of knowledge through practice. It is therefore essential that the Dhamma that ought to be known, should be earnestly practised for one's own personal realisation and achievement as done by Citta.

Referring to a person who has had his personal realisation, it has also been taught in this Purābheda Sutta as: “*na saddho*,” which means, “not credulous, but having acquired personal realisation of the truth of the Dhamma, by one's own effort.”

Should Be Free from Attachment

The last expression is: “*na virajjati*.” It means: “Not yet free from attachment.” According to this meaning, it would be reasonable to hold the view that there is still an attachment. It is not so. In fact, “not yet free from attachment,” does convey the sense as “entirely free from attachment,” as it refers to ‘*sekha*’ individuals and ‘*asekha*’ individuals. The term ‘*sekha*’ (sometimes spelled *sekkha*), applies to wise and virtuous ordinary persons (*kalyāṇa puthujjana*) who are striving after their spiritual welfare, and to those Noble Ones (*ariya*) who are still under training in the practice of the Dhamma. ‘*Aseka*’ individuals are Arahants who have fully completed the training and have eradicated all human passions.

Ordinary unwise worldlings (*bāla puthujjana*), who are those not yet practising the noble Dhamma, have attachment to all sensations flowing out from the six sense-doors, imagining them to be good and pleasurable. Then, if they think that some sensations are bad,

they crave for what is good, and become attached to such sensations. Therefore, those who fail to meditate will always be overwhelmed with attachments. They are rarely free from sensual attachment.

In the Process of Getting Free from Attachment

A wise and virtuous ordinary person, who realises by contemplating and noting that all phenomena arising at the six sense-doors are merely mind and matter. Due to their transient nature, these phenomena arise and pass away very rapidly, so he or she will be free from pleasurable attachment to the sensation that is noted every time contemplation is made with full awareness of their being mere impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. Wise and virtuous ordinary persons who are practising insight meditation by contemplating and noting, are thus deemed to be individuals on the path to eradicate attachment. While thus contemplating, concentration will gradually be developed gaining insight in serial order up to the path and fruition of Stream-winning. On reaching Stream-winning, one is free from pleasurable attachment that can drag one down to the lower realms. Then passionate desires that are eager to arise for more than seven existences will be eradicated. However, for the duration of seven existences in fortunate destinations (*sugati*), this pleasurable attachment will not yet be extirpated. Hence, it cannot be said that such a person is completely free from attachment yet. It may be stated that he or she is destined to be liberated from attachment. Similarly, even when one reaches Once-returning and Non-returning, one will still be in the process of getting rid of attachment. Only when one attains Arahantship, all these attachments will be expelled. Yet, at this point, it does not mean that attachment is totally exterminated. In other words, feeling of attachment is still clinging on and is still in the process of eradication.

Not in the Process of Getting Free from Attachment

Eventually however, only when Arahantship (Fruition of Arahantship) is attained and on becoming an Arahant, all such clinging attachments have been totally extirpated. As an Arahant, he is no longer in the process of eradicating the attachment. With this objective, it has been taught as: "*na virajjati*" i.e., it is not that attachment is being eliminated, but that it has been completely eradicated or rooted

out. This has been stated in the motto as: “craving detached by clearing away.”

The meaning of the sixth verse has now been adequately explained.

Verse Seven

The above verse may be explained literally as: **Yo**: a certain monk, **lābhakamyā**: expecting to receive remuneration, **na sikkhati**: does not follow the training. That is, he does not practise wishing to receive gifts in the form of a bribe. Some monks study the scriptures, acquire knowledge, or practise austerities (*dhutaṅga*), seeking praise and fame, or to receive offerings. A sage is not like that. He practises only expecting to gain liberation from the cycle of existences and to attain nibbāna. This is one of the attributes of a sage.

Alābhe ca: for not achieving his objective, **na kuppati**: he does not feel angry. Some monks, on not having devotees and benefactors, may get disappointed and resentful. They may also feel dejected and frustrated for not having adherents belonging to the same sect, or for not receiving approval or admiration, or for not receiving gifts of robes and so forth. A sage, as mentioned earlier, is neither disappointed nor resentful. This is also one of the attributes of a sage. **Aviruddho ca**: some individuals may be angry or irritated for having seen, or heard, or met with what is undesirable. Those living together may be at loggerheads. Some are inclined to bear a grudge against or quarrel with a stranger. An Arahant does not contradict anyone or come into conflict with anybody. He is tolerant and gentle without anger or hatred. This is a very noble attribute.

Taṇhāya rasesu na anugijjhati: not greedy or craving for any tasty food. Some have a great fondness for delicious food and so plan and imagine how to get what is delicious. They will reminisce about and long for delicious food which they have once relished. A sage is not like this. Wholesome or nourishing food that is taken is not for enjoyment or avarice. Neither is it taken to have a fair complexion, nor to become plump, nor to have good appearance and looks. In fact, nourishment is for the preservation of one's own body, to appease hunger, and to be able to practise the holy life. While eating, he reflects wisely, contemplating and noting with mindfulness. He does not yearn for the taste which he has not yet tasted, and does not find delight or become infatuated with what has been tasted. Such a holy

monk is said to be a sage, who possesses the attributes as stated in the foregoing.

Verse Eight

“Upekkhako sadā sato, na loke maññate samam.

Na visesī na nīceyyo, tassa no santi ussadā.”

The above Pāli phrase means that a person who is constantly mindful views thing with equanimity. It implies that one should always be mindful and capable of viewing things with a state of mind that is evenly balanced. One does not think of oneself as being equal to others, nor does one consider oneself as being extraordinary. Neither does one regard oneself as inferior or lower in status to others. There should be no conceit by comparing oneself with others. One will be free from all defilements that would prolong the cycle of existences. One should have no passion, anger, delusion, or conceit, which are cravings of wholesome and unwholesome states. This kind of a noble person is said by the Buddha, to be a sage who has extinguished the fires of defilements. The motto I composed in my discourse on the the Mahāsamaya Sutta about ten years ago, carries the sense contained in the present verse.

“Contemplating and noting systematically, reflecting with equanimity, and rejecting the three kinds of conceit, makes a person worthy to be called a sage.”

Being Mindful at All Times

Contemplating and noting systematically as in the above motto means always being mindful, day and night, without any break at all. If one goes into meditation for seven days, a fortnight, or a month, one should carry out the meditation exercises, continuously developing mindfulness without a break, day in and day out, night and day, with the exception of the time set apart for sleeping.

In the Mahāniddeśa it states that when contemplation of the body is done, one may be said to have gained mindfulness. Similarly, mindfulness will be achieved while practising the contemplation of feelings (*vedanā*), of mind (*citta*), or mind-objects (*dhamma*). Hence, one of the four foundations of mindfulness should be chosen to be developed as a fundamental basis. In general, it would be the most

feasible to start with the contemplation of the body. So what is obvious in regard to bodily behaviours must first be contemplated and noted. In practising insight, everything that occurs at the six sense-doors, should be contemplated. At the initial stage however, not all such occurrences can be noted, so contemplation should be commenced with bodily behaviour, which is the most conspicuous. Contemplation and noting can be done continuously while sitting, with concentrated attention on the sitting posture, noting as “sitting, sitting.” While inhaling and exhaling, the touch that is felt at the tip of the nostril can be contemplated and noted with constant attentiveness, as “touching, touching.” Contemplation and noting can be done continuously as “touching, touching” with fixed concentration on the point of touch at any place in the body from the head to toe.

The best is to contemplate beginning from the movement of the air element (*vāyodhātu*), namely, the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, as is done by the meditators at this centre. Moreover, when contemplation and noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, other imaginations or thoughts that arise should also be noted. Thereafter, the mind should revert to the rising and falling. All feeling or sensations such as stiffness, heat, pain, and itching must be noted. All changes in the bodily postures should be noted, and then one should revert to noting the rising and falling. When walking, every step taken must be noted continually, beginning from the moment of lifting the foot to the moment of dropping it. When sitting after walking, the movements involved in adopting the sitting posture must be noted. In the same way, when lying down the movements that occur must be noted. In brief, whether shaking, moving, or remaining still, all physical behaviours involved must be noted. Mental behaviours and thoughts that arise must also be noted. All sensations must be noted. Seeing, hearing, *etc.*, must be noted as far as possible. In the absence of anything special that deserves to be noted, the rising and falling of the abdomen must be continuously noted. This is the salient point that serves as a basis in body contemplation in the process of developing the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).

By being always mindful, a stage will be reached whereby contemplation is made with indifference to pain and pleasure — the mind being evenly balanced. However, I cannot guarantee that one will reach that

stage after only one or two hours at a stretch, nor even within a few days. A meditator whose wisdom is exceedingly keen and strong might reach the stage of equanimity within about seven days. It is rare to find such a person though, not even one in a hundred. We seldom find such a person even among those who have meditated for fifteen days. Of course, there are quite a number of people who have reached that stage after meditating seriously for a period ranging from twenty to thirty days. It takes time because of various stages that one has to pass through in the course of insight before the attainment of equanimity. Among these insight knowledges, the first is analytical knowledge of body and mind (*nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*). Even before reaching that stage, one needs to practise with great diligence to achieve purity of mind.

How Purity of Mind Is Achieved

A novice who starts meditating has to try hard with earnestness to note the rising and falling movements of the abdomen correctly. It is likely that the rising and falling will be missed as the mind flits away and wanders here and there. However, if one carries on contemplating and noting with strong faith, will, and perseverance, one will be able to note properly within one or two days, or at least within five days. At that stage, the mind does not go astray. Noting will be continuous, concentrating on rising and falling, and on other sensations that ought to be noted. Sometimes, when imagination or thoughts arise, they can be noted at once. Thereafter, noting can proceed as usual without any interruption. When noting like this, the hindrances, such as sensual desire are expelled. The noting mind becomes purified, which is Purity of Mind (*citta visuddhi*).

Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind

When the mind is thus purified, mind and matter are distinguished even while noting, and at every moment of noting, the sense-object is found to be quite distinct from the knowing mind. In other words, mind and matter are found to be clearly distinct from one another even while noting. This is analytical knowledge of body and mind (*nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*), both of which are merely conditioned states. From that stage, if noting is continued, cause and effect are found to be occurring in conjunction. This is the knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).

Thereafter, if continuous contemplation is made, it will be perceived that sense-objects are occurring and vanishing. The manner of perception is that when noting as “rising” (of the abdomen), the movements caused by distension will be found to recur repeatedly and then vanish. The same phenomena will also be noticed in noting the falling movement of the abdomen. It is more obvious when noting the mind that is planning and imagining. Sensations such as pain, heat, *etc.*, when noted with concentration as “painful, painful,” and so on, will be found to dissolve and vanish during the process of noting. The meditator will be satisfied to find these phenomena as impermanent, since they are incessantly arising and passing away. Then, realisation will come with satisfaction that these are undoubtedly suffering and are ungovernable in as much as mind and matter are appearing and disappearing according to their real characteristic of transience. This is knowledge by comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*).

From then onwards, while contemplation is carried on further, the arising and dissolution of phenomena that are contemplated and noted will not only become accelerated, but also vivid. At this stage, brilliant lights may be visualized. Extremely rapturous feelings may occur, and calmness of the mind may become obvious. Both body and mind may become buoyant (*lahutā*), and supple (*mudutā*). Mindfulness with awareness and knowledge will be very keen and penetratingly strong. Ecstasy and bliss (*sukha*) will become extreme with mental clarity and fervent faith. One may then be filled with delight and pleasure regarding these unusual events. All of these delightful and pleasurable sensations should be rejected by contemplating and noting.

When rejection can be made successfully by so contemplating and noting, the sense-object that is noted and the knowing mind will, in the course of noting, be clearly seen to be vanishing in pairs and dissolving in rapid succession just as one would see the pictures in movies without any shape or form. At this moment, all arising sensations and the mental processes of noticing them having been found to vanish incessantly, it becomes very obvious that these are all impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. This is knowledge of dissolution (*bhāṅga-ñāṇa*).

Then, let us summarize the remaining stages. When contemplation and noting is continued further, awareness of fearfulness (*bhaya-ñāṇa*), knowledge of misery (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*), knowledge of disgust (*nibbida-*

ñāṇa), knowledge of desire for deliverance (*muñcitu-kamyatā-ñāṇa*), or more precisely, the knowledge that arouses a great sense of urgency to escape from entanglement in the cycle of existence. On proceeding further with contemplation, knowledge of re-observation (*paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa*) with further vigorous contemplation and detailed analysis of the three characteristics, will arise.

Knowledge of Equanimity About Formations

If persistent and vigorous contemplation and noting is made, one will reach the knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*). At this stage, the knowledge that can view psycho-physical phenomena with equanimity is accomplished. No sensations arising from the six sense-doors are considered as pleasurable, but neither are they thought of as detestable. They can be viewed with equanimity, with a neutral feeling of neither love nor hatred. For having viewed as such with indifference, one who is accomplished with this knowledge is said to be fully endowed with six-factored equanimity (*chaḷaṅgupekkhā*). It is described in the Mahāniddeśa Pāḷi text¹ as follows:

*“Cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā neva sumano hoti na dummano,
upekkhako viharati sato sampajāno.”*

“Having seen a form with the eyes, there is neither happiness nor sorrow. Mindful and clearly comprehending, he remains equanimous.”

The meaning of the above is that there is an absence of happiness and pleasure no matter how pleasurable the sight may be. Ordinary worldlings will feel happy to see their loved ones — parents, wives, husbands, children, friends, and so on. A person who has reached the stage of equanimity, however, finds no enjoyment or pleasure. Even if the worst happens and he or she meets unfavourable conditions, he or she will not be miserable. It is because he or she views things with equanimity and contemplates what has been seen as transient, arising and then passing away at once. It has become possible to contemplate thus by reason of having realised the truth. A meditator who has attained that stage feels the same as stated, and realises the true nature of the objects of contemplation without

¹ Nd.1.240. (ed).

exertion and without any inclination towards either good or bad sensations as mentioned above. Those who have reached that stage will certainly know that it really is so, and therefore, those who feel dissatisfied with this statement should practise insight. They will then realise the truth of the Dhamma.

The ability to view things with equanimity at every moment of seeing, hearing, touching, and knowing is the inherent attribute of an Arahant. It is called six-factored equanimity. An ordinary trainee is accomplished with that attribute only at the moment of acquiring this knowledge of equanimity during the course of contemplation. He or she may be said to be endowed with the attributes of an Arahant only momentarily when reaching that stage. This is really most encouraging and worthy of respect for oneself as well as for others. After attaining the stage of equanimity, the knowledge of the path and its fruition is not very far off. It is within easy reach, even within one day. A person who has perfections (*pāramī*) will advance towards Arahantship, passing through the four progressive stages of the path serially. It has therefore been taught to practise assiduously to accomplish this. On becoming an Arahant, since everything is viewed with equanimity, conceit will be totally eradicated.

Free From the Three Kinds of Conceit

An Arahant will never regard himself or herself as equal to others and will never mentally or verbally compare himself or herself with anyone. An Arahant has no pride, ego, or conceit. Neither will an Arahant consider himself or herself as belonging to a higher strata of society than others, nor as being pre-eminent. Nor will an Arahant regard himself or herself as being inferior to others, or lower in status.

Conceit has the characteristic of haughtiness (*unnati*). Conceit sets too high a value on oneself and gives one the idea to become haughty. This is what it really means. The kind of conceit that is stated just now may give an impression that there is no feeling of superiority since one has become humble. However, this conceit does not include the nature of inferiority or humility (*nivāti*). Humility is one way of taking pride in low or vulgar behaviour. It may be put in this way: someone possessing no self-respect or dignity might boast, "I am more reckless than others, a real dare-devil! I dare to kill others, I don't care what anyone thinks, I dare to commit crimes and do as I

please." This sort of conceit is ignoble. Even among servants some might babble, "I'm a low-born servant or a personal servant to my master, *etc.*" Taking pride in this way is really ignoble and base. That is why it is stated that one who is competing with others by considering himself or herself as inferior to others is a way of being arrogant, insolent, or presumptuous, with a bad attitude.

An Arahant is devoid of such kind of conceit. Before attaining Arahantship, these three forms of conceit abide in the mind of a person as may be appropriate. As such, a person who is practising meditation should reject, by contemplating and noting, any one of the three kinds of conceit, which are likely to occur. For instance, one may become conceited as being on the same level in status with another person for having achieved insight knowledge up to a certain stage as acquired by the other, or that he has far surpassed the other in his attainment of insight knowledge. A novice in meditation practice at the inception, may, however, have in mind, that being just a beginner himself, it will not be necessary for him to exercise with care and attention in contemplating and noting just like others who have made progress in meditation exercises. He might even think, "I can be care-free, and it won't deter the progress." This dispirited feeling with apparent humility is also one kind of conceit that can occur. Whatever it may be, conceit that arises should be rejected by contemplating and noting. This feeling of pride or conceit is very potent just like craving. Even a Non-returner has some conceit. Conceit is totally rooted out only on attainment of Arahantship. It is therefore up to you to get to that highest stage.

On reaching that stage of Arahantship when becoming an Arahant, all defilements, craving, and kamma that proliferates (*ussada*) will be absolutely extinct. Such a person who is capable of viewing all three types of conceit with indifference, will have no passionate desire, anger, delusion, conceit, wrong views, or defilements that will perpetuate repeated existences. As long as these conditions remain, the cycle of existences will continue without end. These conditions are therefore called things that proliferate (*ussadā*). It has been stated that they are no longer in extant. This expression has been omitted in the motto stated earlier because of its nature of causative effect. The meaning of the said motto and the relevant verse is clear enough.

Verse Nine

*“Yassa nissayanā natthi, ñatvā dhammaṃ anissito.
Bhavāya vibhavāya vā, tanhā yassa na vijjati.”*

The gist of this verse is that craving and wrong view, which may be relied upon by a person, no longer exist. Realising the truth of conditioned mental and physical phenomena, one does not rely on anything. Craving is dependent on any phenomenon that occurs within or outside the physical body. Wrong view is another thing on which one may rely assuming something to be ‘I,’ ‘he,’ ‘she,’ or ‘a living being,’ who is eternal or who will totally be annihilated after death. A person who has no craving and wrong view on which reliance can be made in this way is an Arahant. An Arahant is, therefore, a venerable person who, having truly realised the truth of conditioned mental and physical phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self, will, it is stated, never think of any kind of mind and matter as being permanent, delightful, or, as a living being, a living substance, or self, and will have no attachment.

Yassa: an Arahant will have no attachment to eternalism (*sassata-dit̤ṭhi*) — the heresy that mind and matter are eternal for continued existences — or to annihilationism (*uccheda-dit̤ṭhi*) — the heresy that existence terminates with death. On the other hand, ordinary worldlings are likely to believe that what is called “I” or “he,” “a living being” or a “self,” is everlasting, and that although the crude form of material body may be destroyed, the living soul or self is not subject to destruction. They believe that it is transmitted to another place or existence to reside therein and that it can never be annihilated. A heretical view of this kind is called a view of existence (*bhava-dit̤ṭhi*), or eternalism (*sassata-dit̤ṭhi*). A heresy accepting that one passes into nothingness after death, that believes in non-existence after death, is a view of non-existence (*vibhāva-dit̤ṭhi*), otherwise known as annihilationism (*uccheda-dit̤ṭhi*). Ordinary worldlings have a liking for one of these two view. An Arahant, who entertains no such beliefs, will not long for any kind of repeated existence. An Arahant is called a sage relating to which it has been stated in the next verse.

Verse Ten

*“Taṃ brūmi upasantoti, kāmesu anapekkhinam.
Ganthā tassa na vijjanti, atarī so visattikaṃ”*

It has been taught by the Buddha as: “An Arahant who has reached the final stage of purity and who is fully accomplished with the noble attributes as stated before, without any attachment to sensual desires is as sage. Such an individual is said to have extinguished all the burning fires of defilements.” **Tassa:** this Arahant who is called a sage is not entangled in things that can tie him down. It is something like a string which, if tied at its ends with other pieces of string, knotted at the joints, will be linked to become a continuous chain of string without ends. In the same way, craving and wrong view, which serve as ties that link one existence to another at the end of every life, are known as bonds (*gantha*). As these bonds serve as a connecting link, ordinary worldlings are drifting along in the endless current of existence. A Stream-winner will have seven existences to undergo at the most. A Once-returner has two more existences. A Non-returner will be reborn in any one of the two existences, the realms of form or formless realms of Brahmā. As for an Arahant, he or she has completely severed the link by eradicating these bonds, which bring about a continuity of existences. An Arahant has therefore prevailed over the entanglements of craving, and has utterly destroyed its linking mechanism.

This should be clear enough.

Verse Eleven

*“Na tassa puttā pasavo, khettaṃ vatthuṇa vijjati.
Attā vāpi nirattā vā, na tasmiṃ upalabbhati.”*

The gist of the above verse is that a person who has become a sage will have no attachment at all, and will not cling to children or any tangible property, such as livestock, cultivated fields, land, or property, beginning from the time of attaining Arahantship, although he or she may have children and so on, before becoming an Arahant. An Arahant has also completely dispelled all heretical beliefs. This has been explained in the previous verses. It has been repeated to make people understand if spoken in one's own plain language.

Verse Twelve

*“Yena naṃ vajjuṃ puthujjanā, atho samaṇabrāhmaṇā.
Taṃ tassa apurakkhataṃ, tasmā vādesu nejati.”*

The above Pāli verse conveys the meaning that the majority of the uneducated or unwise devas and human being as well as wise hermits, monks and brahmins are alleged to be persons who are afflicted with the sores or sufferings of passionate desires, *etc.*, and who are infuriated with such afflictions. An Arahant, however, remains without mental distress not being dominated by such harmful and faulty passionate desires. As regards common worldlings and trainees on the path, they are slaves to the dictates of sensual desires and so forth. It amounts to selecting sensual desire and other defilements to be their guide who will lead the way for them. Furthermore, because of the presence of these defilements, the guide who leads them, ordinary worldlings and trainees may at time be driven by passion. That is why the ordinary worldlings and trainees have attachment. Sometimes, though they may not be influenced by passion and anger, but when circumstances so permit, they are ready by their own inclination to be overpowered by passion and anger. They are liable to be accused by others as being wrathful and so on. An Arahant entirely refuses to regard passion as a leader. He or she is impeccable and therefore free from any such allegations. An Arahant is totally devoid of attachment and anger, and so is immune from any kind of accusations. He is unperturbed and tranquil. This is obvious.

Verse Thirteen

*“Vītagedho amaccharī, na ussesu vadate muni.
Na samesu na omesu, kappam neti akappiyo.”*

Muni: a monk who is a noble Arahant, **vītagedho:** is free from greed or avarice, **amaccharī:** is not envious, **na vadate:** will not speak, **na ussesu:** of excelling others (neither because of seniority since ordination, nor regarding knowledge in scriptures, nor in the number of disciples or devotees), **na samesu:** being equal in status, **na omesu:** nor inferior, **akappiyo:** having no intention to speak thus with craving or wrong view, and will get rid of such evil thoughts.

Verse Fourteen

“Yassa loke sakaṃ natthi, asatā ca na socati.

Dhammesu ca na gacchati, sa ve santoti vuccatī”ti.”

The above Pāli verse denotes that an Arahant does not entertain any slightest feeling of attachment to property or any other substantial things whether it is the body, limbs, or organs such as the eyes. What it means is that an Arahant has extirpated both craving and wrong view. Having been fully released or liberated from such feelings, he or she is free from worry and grief, and will not be dejected due to the loss of any limb or organ, or any personal property. Neither will an Arahant be destined for any unfortunate existence because of any incident that may occur in relation to conditioned mental and physical phenomena. This term has several shades of meaning and applies to all things, animate or inanimate, such as sentient beings, clothing, food, paddy, gold, silver, houses, monasteries, *etc.*, for human consumption or use, if viewed from the perspective of insight. Even then, these conditioned mental and physical phenomena are regarded as “I,” “he,” “she,” “self,” “mine,” and so on. These are all included in the term phenomena (*dhammesu*).

Having been taught for the benefit of outstanding intellectuals who have profound wisdom, this Sutta contains a lot of terminology that is hard to understand properly. Ordinary worldlings do things that should not be done regarding themselves or others, merely for gratification and benefit of physical and mental aggregates that are inherently transient. They may resort to committing evils due to hatred, malice, envy, anger, delusion, or ignorance. An Arahant is free from the four wrong courses (*agati*) — acting through desire, hatred, delusion, and fear. He or she will avoid all demeritorious acts, including evil speech and thoughts. An Arahant who is pre-eminent and accomplished with all noble attributes as stated is called a sage with peace and tranquility of mind, fully emancipated from the burning fires of defilements.

Conclusion of the Discourse

The Purābheda Sutta Dhamma ends with the fourteenth verse. It contains one verse in the form of a question and thirteen verses in the form of an answer, fourteen in all, as catechism. The question put

was: "What kind of insight and moral conduct should a person possess to be worthy of being called a sage?" The answer can be comprehensive with the first of the thirteen verses only. However, considering the varying degrees of intellectual accomplishment of the respective devas and brahmas who formed the huge congregation, the Buddha answered in thirteen verses with appropriate language in use at that time. By hearing the answers repeatedly, the devas and brahmas gained the awakening to the path and its fruition, in groups, having heard the successive verses suited to each group according to their degree of intellectual attainment. On that auspicious occasion, with this one Discourse, it is stated that billions of devas and brahmas attained Arahantship and that those who became Stream-winners, Once-returners, or Non-returners were innumerable. Estimating the diverse abilities of the audience at this meditation centre on every Uposatha day, I suppose that if I were to deliver five verses out of thirteen as taught by the Buddha, my disciples would probably grasp the essence of the Dhamma. So I have expounded the first five verses in detail and briefly summarised the remaining eight verses.

It is my earnest wish that those who have listened to this discourse on the Purābheda Sutta, and those who read it, will be in a position to achieve the path and its fruition even while listening to the discourse or after scrutinizing it, if they are endowed with mature perfections. If they failed so achieve the path at once, it could serve as fresh seeds of perfections for future successful germination.

By virtue of your goodwill and keen interest for having listened attentively and respectfully to this discourse, may you all find happiness in body and mind, and strive for achievement of the noble attributes of a tranquil sage, attaining the bliss of nibbāna as quickly as possible, by making progressive progress on the path of insight up to the coveted knowledge of the path and its fruition.

Sādhū! Sādhū! Sādhū!

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