



# THE BUDDHIST MANUAL

PD 004E



# ***THE BUDDHIST MANUAL***

***PD 004E***

*English Translation by: Dr. Anunya Methmanus, 2561 B.E.*



## **PREFACE**

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The long-distance learning offered by Dhammakaya Open University California not only aims to provide courses in Buddhist Studies, but to also enable the learner to put what he has learnt into practice in his daily life. The practice of the Lord Buddha's Teachings enables the practitioner to live life accordingly and in such a way as to facilitate his work towards his true life goal.

This course book, the Buddhist Manual, PD 004E, and its accompanying workbook have been compiled to facilitate the learner's understanding of the Dhamma topics contained in the course book.

The preparation of this course book has been a team effort. It is possible that even after many rounds of editing; the material may still contain some mistakes. The Committee hopes to receive comments and feedback which will allow it to improve upon this course book.

**The Committee  
Dhammakaya Open University California  
April 2554 B.E.**

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## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

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### **1. About this Course**

The course, The Buddhist Manual PD 004E, provides basic information about Buddhism which every Buddhist must have. It includes the Triple Gem, fundamental Dhamma Principles as contained in the Tipitaka, the practice leading to the extinguishment of Dukkha (suffering), Nibbana explained, and what to know before attending the temple.

### **2. Course Objectives**

1. To enable the student to have some basic knowledge and understanding about Buddhism.
2. To enable the student to practice what he has learnt so that he can be a practicing Buddhist and play his part in supporting and growing Buddhism.
3. To enable the student to apply what he has learnt to performing the work of a virtuous friend.

### **3. Relevant Learning Tools**

1. The course book
2. The workbook
3. The Inner Dreams Kindergarten Program broadcasted via satellite or its rerun via [www.dmc.tv](http://www.dmc.tv)

### **4. How to Pass This Course**

1. The student must complete and submit all the pre-tests, the tests, and the assignments provided in the workbook at the scheduled time.
2. The student must complete and submit the final exam.

## HOW TO STUDY THIS COURSE

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### 1. Preparation for Self-Learning

In order to achieve the objectives of the course, the student should follow the steps for studying each chapter as follows:

- a. Spend an hour each day on the course material and try to finish each chapter within one to two weeks.
- b. Complete the pre-test provided at the beginning of each chapter so that the student can gauge his existing knowledge of the subject matter. Complete the exercises provided for the chapter at the scheduled time. At the end of the chapter, the student should assess his/her comprehension of the material covered in the chapter by completing the test.
- c. Spend time on other learning tools especially the long-distance learning provided through satellite as detailed in 5.

### 2. Self-Evaluation before and after Each Chapter

The student should complete the pre-test before beginning each chapter in order to gauge his knowledge of the subject matter. The student should also complete the test at the end of each chapter. Completion of the test will allow the student to know how well he has learnt the material covered in the chapter; and whether he/she is ready to proceed to the next chapter. The test score should be at least 80%. Self-evaluation would be meaningful only if it is carried out honestly.

### 3. The Course Book

The student should first go over the layout of each chapter in terms of its topics, concepts, and objectives before proceeding with the detailed study. After having finished reading the entire chapter, the student should write down its main points and complete the exercises provided at the end of each chapter. The exercises will help the student to evaluate how well he has learnt the material covered so that he can apply what he has learnt in his daily life. Therefore, the student should not wait until the last minute to do all of the exercises because such practice is missing the point.

### 4. Completing the Assignments

The student should write down the main points of each subject and complete all of the assignments provided at the end of each chapter. The assignments are an integral part of the coursework.

### 5. Long-Distance Learning via Satellite and Other Media

The Dhamma study for the Environment Foundation broadcasts its programs via satellite 24 hours a day. Each program aims to give the general public practical

information for the promotion of morality. There are different programs that can help the student with this course. These include Buddhist Words, the Law of Kamma, Meditation for Beginners, Luang Por's Answers, Life in the Round of Rebirth, Dhamma for the People, etc. Additional learning can be obtained through E-learning provided by DOU. For more details of these learning tools, please contact DOU's coordination center.

#### **6. Attending the Inner Dreams Kindergarten Program**

The student can learn about how to apply the Lord Buddha's Teachings in his daily life through real life examples by attending the Inner Dreams Kindergarten. This valuable program is broadcasted via satellite every Monday to Saturday from 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. (Thai time). There are also reruns of the program as posted in the broadcasting schedule. The student can request the broadcasting schedule from the DOU Coordination Center.

#### **7. The Exam**

The student will be evaluated for his knowledge of this course by a multiple-choice exam (70 points) and the completion of all assignments (30 points). Assignments allow the student to put what he has learnt into practice. Therefore, it is important that the student completes each assignment at the allotted time.

CHAPTER



INTRODUCTION

## **The Buddhist Manual, PD 004E contains eight chapters as follows.**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction: An overview of the Buddhist Manual  |
| Chapter 2 | Basic Knowledge about Buddhamamaka: The meaning of the word Buddham amaka, how to proclaim oneself a Buddhamamaka, a Buddhamamaka's practices, and important Buddhamamakas in Buddhism  |
| Chapter 3 | The Triple Gem: Basic knowledge about the Triple Gem – What is the Triple Gem, categories of the Triple Gem, the life history of the Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya, the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni or Luang Pu Wat Paknam   |
| Chapter 4 | Fundamental Dhamma Principles: Fundamental Dhamma Principles for a Buddhamamaka: Nibbana, Heedfulness, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Three fold Training, etc.  |
| Chapter 5 | How to Put an End to Suffering: Four main points, namely, the reality of life – the Dukkha (suffering) encountered by every human being; the Lord Buddha's discovery of the means to put an end to Dukkha; the Lord Buddha's way of teaching the Dhamma; and the steps necessary for putting an end to Dukkha (suffering) – Garnered from the Dhamma lectures given by the Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Padet Dattajeevo), Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya |
| Chapter 6 | Nibbana Explained: It aims to settle the question about the existence of Nibbana – Garnered from the analysis of Professor Kiettikhun Sangjun-ngam, former Dean of Humanities, Chiangmai University   |
| Chapter 7 | Getting Ready to Attend the Temple: How to dress for the temple, how to prepare alms, different Buddhist practices – How to worship the Triple Gem, how to approach the Buddhist monk, how to request the presence of a monk, etc.  |
| Chapter 8 | Conclusion<br><br>The study and practice of the information contained in each chapter will enable the student to be a good Buddhamamaka such that he can play his part in supporting and growing Buddhism   |

# CHAPTER



BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT  
BUDDHAMAMAKA  
EDGE ABOUT

## **Chapter 2 - Basic Knowledge about Buddhamamaka**

- 2.1 What is Buddhamamaka?
- 2.2 How to Declare Oneself a Buddhamamaka
- 2.3 The Buddhamamaka's Virtues
- 2.4 Important Buddhamamakas in the History of Buddhism

## **CONCEPTS**

1. A Buddhamamaka means a person who not only has an earnest and deep reverence for the Triple Gem, but also practices the Lord Buddha's Teachings. Whoever does not practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings cannot call himself a Buddhamamaka.
2. Declaring oneself a Buddhamamaka means making a public statement that one has an earnest and deep reverence for the Triple Gem. It is a ritual which has been practiced since the Lord Buddha's time. For a Buddhist, declaring oneself a Buddhamamaka whenever an occasion arises is one way to remind oneself that one is a practicing Buddhist. For a new convert, it is the way to make it known to others that one is now a Buddhamamaka. Today, more and more people are being converted to Buddhism.
3. It is every Buddhamamaka's duty to practice as follows. A Buddhamamaka must have faith in the Lord Buddha and His Teachings. A Buddhamamaka must observe at least Five Precepts. A Buddhamamaka must exercise good judgment in terms of rumors and false news. A Buddhamamaka must not put his faith in anything or anyone other than the Triple Gem. A Buddhamamaka must do what he can to support and grow Buddhism.
4. There have been many important Buddhamamakas in the history of Buddhism, but here only three will be mentioned. These include Asoka the Great, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong, the founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To enable the student to learn about the meaning of Buddhamamaka.
2. To enable the student to learn how to declare oneself a Buddhamamaka.
3. To enable the student to learn about the practices of a Buddhamamaka.
4. To enable the student to learn about certain important Buddhamamakas in the history of Buddhism so that he will be inspired to emulate them.

# BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BUDDHAMAMAKA

## 2.1 What Is Buddhamamaka?

The term “Buddhamamaka” means a person who takes the Lord Buddha for his own; a person who has declared to take refuge in the Lord Buddha; a person who has declared himself a Buddhist.<sup>1</sup> According to the Tipitaka, the term “Buddhamamaka” means a person who worships the Triple Gem; a person who worships the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, whoever worships the Triple Gem is considered to be a Buddhamamaka. A Buddhamamaka can be a male Buddhist monk, a female Buddhist monk, a novice monk, a male lay devotee or a female devotee. Whoever has converted to Buddhism is also considered to be a Buddhamamaka. Although Buddhamamaka can refer to a monk or a novice monk but more often than not, it refers to a male lay devotee, a female devotee or a Buddhist in general. To be a Buddhamamaka, one must earnestly venerate the Triple Gem and one must also practice the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. A person whose parents are Buddhamamakas but he himself does not venerate the Triple Gem or practice the Lord Buddha’s Teachings cannot be considered to be a Buddhamamaka. It may show in the census that he is a Buddhist or he may even have spent sometime in the monkhood, but according to the Lord Buddha, he is not considered a Buddhamamaka. “Any Buddhist monk who is dishonest, uncultured, careless with his speech, who is conceited and faithless, can be said to have no respect for me. Any Buddhist monk, who is honest, careful with his speech, wise, cultured, and filled with faith, can be said to have respect for me.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, only a Buddhist monk who practices the Lord Buddha’s Teachings can be called a Buddhamamaka. To be a Buddhamamaka, the emphasis is on practicing the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. A non-Buddhist can choose to live his life according to the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma Principles. One western professor, Calora Andujo, Ph.D.<sup>4</sup> said that it does not matter whether or not one is a Buddhist but what matters is whether or not one subscribes to the Dhamma Principles and Buddhist practices. Why should a person not learn, seek, and practice what will ultimately improve the quality of his life? Everyone has the right to study and practice the teachings of any religion. The outcome of the study and practice depends entirely on the person.”<sup>5</sup>

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1 Phradhamkittivong (Thongdee Suratejo, graduate of the 9th level Pali Studies, Royal Scholar), **Kum Wat - Dictionary for Buddhist Studies: The Series of Buddhist Temple Vocabulary** (Bangkok: Liang Chiang Publishing, 2548 B.E.) p. 687

2 *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Mahāniddes*. Siamrath Pali Language (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 29, no. 195, p. 156

3 Ibid.

4 Professor Calora Andujo, Ph.D. received a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Harvard University. He once came to Thailand to study Buddhism and practiced meditation at Wat Tum Tong in the District of Chom Thong, Chiangmai Province.

5 Andujo, Calora, Ph.D., “Faith in Buddhism”, **Khao Sod**, 19 March 2549 B.E., article 5589, p.1

## **2.2 How to Declare Oneself a Buddhamamaka**

### **2.2.1 The Buddhamamaka Declaration**

In Pali: Esahan bhante suciraparinibbutampi, tan bhagavantam saranam gacchami, dhammanca sanghanca, buddhamamakoti man sangho dharetu.

In English: Venerable Sangha, I take refuge in that particular Lord Buddha who has attained Complete Nibbana a long time ago, in the Dhamma, and in the Sangha for the rest of my life. May the Sangha remember me as a Buddhamamaka who worships the Lord Buddha and takes the Lord Buddha for his own!

### **2.2.2 How to Make the Buddhamamaka Declaration**

A person wishing to declare himself a Buddhamamaka needs to follow the steps as stated below.

1) Make an appointment with the Sangha at the temple of his choice, and make available whatever items as advised by the Sangha.

2) On the day of the appointment, the person is to dress himself in white or in his official government uniform and show up at the temple at the appointed time.

3) The person is to kneel down in front of the altar, light the candles, make an offering of the flower arrangement, keep his mind on the Triple Gem and its virtues, and say,

Iminasakkarena buddhan pujemi, I worship the Lord Buddha with these offerings (place your palms together and held them at the chest level in the Wai and then bow low to the floor in the Abhivada).

Imina sakkarena dhamman pujemi, I worship the Dhamma with these offerings (place your palms together and held them at the chest level in the Wai and then bow low to the floor in the Abhivada).

Imina sakkarena sanghan pujemi, I worship the Sangha with these offerings (place your palms together and held them at the chest level in the Wai and then bow low to the floor in the Abhivada).

If the declaration is being made as a group, let the group leader light the candle, make an offering of the flower arrangement, and kneel down with his palms pressed together in the Wai. When the group leader begins to recite the words mentioned above, the rest of the group is to repeat after him.

4) The person is to offer the platter containing articles of worship to the venerable monk in charge of the ceremony, and bow low to the floor with the five-point bow (Patitthitapanca or Abhivada) three times. In a group situation, let the rest of the group kneel down and press their palms together in the Wai. Let the leader of the group make the offering for the entire group. Afterward, everyone in the group bows low to the floor together in the Abhivada.

5) While kneeling and pressing one's palms together, one is to make the declaration succinctly as follows.

Worship the Lord Buddha by saying, Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa (I worship the Lord Buddha) three times.

Making the Buddhamamaka declaration by saying,

Esahan bhante suciraparinibbutampi, tan bhagavantam saranam gacchami, dhammanca sanghanca, buddhamamagoti man sangho dharetu

Venerable Sangha, I take refuge in that particular Lord Buddha who has attained Complete Nibbana a long time ago, in the Dhamma, and in the Sangha for the rest of my life. May the Sangha remember me as a Buddhamamaka who worships the Lord Buddha and takes the Lord Buddha for my own!

In a group situation where both men and women are present,

Esahan becomes Ete mayan (for the men), Eta mayan (for the women);

Gacchami becomes Gacchama (for both the men and the women);

Buddhamamakoti becomes Buddhamamakati (for both the men and the women);

Man becomes No (for both the men and the women);

and the pronoun “I” becomes “We”.

In the case of just one female, nothing changes except for Buddhamamakoti which becomes Buddhamamakati.

For a man and a woman making the declaration together, nothing changes for the man but for the woman, Buddhamamakoti becomes Buddhamamakati.

6) Once the declaration has been made, the Sangha press their palms together in the Wai and say, “Sadhu!”. Now the person can sit sideways on the floor while keeping his palms pressed together in the Wai to listen to the teaching monk’s words of advice.

7) Once the words of advice have been given, the person is to pledge the Five Precepts. Having pledged the Five Precepts, the ceremony is over. And the person is now a Buddhamamaka who sits near the Triple Gem.

The ceremony can be shorter or longer depending on the customary practice of each temple or each region. The main point is to pledge to take refuge in the Triple Gem.

The simplest way to declare oneself a Buddhamamaka is to recite the words in one’s own language in front of the altar at home, at a temple or somewhere else as follows.

I take refuge in that particular Lord Buddha who has attained Complete Nibbana a long time ago, in the Dhamma, and in the Sangha for the rest of my life. May the Sangha remember me as a Buddhamamaka who worships the Lord Buddha and takes the Lord Buddha for my own! One can become a Buddhamamaka just by earnestly reciting these words.

### **2.2.3 Making the Buddhamamaka Declaration during the Lord Buddha’s Time**

After Prince Siddhattha attained Self-Enlightenment and became the Lord Buddha, He and His Perfected Disciples (Arahats) taught the Dhamma to the people. As a result, a large number of Indians were converted to Buddhism. Among them were kings, civil servants, millionaires, ascetics, and the general public. Having listened to the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma lecture, the people became believers and declared themselves male and female lay devotees. The ascetics that became believers made their Buddhamamaka Declaration before asking to be ordained a Buddhist monk.

### 1) King Bimbisara<sup>6</sup>

When the Lord Buddha went to teach the Dhamma to King Bimbisara and the people of Rajagarh in the kingdom of Magadha, the Lord Buddha was accompanied by 1,000 monks, all of whom had previously been fire-worshipping ascetics. Their leader was called Uruvelakassapa. Having witnessed the supernormal feats displayed by the Lord Buddha and having listened to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lecture, they became believers and asked to be ordained a Buddhist monk. Soon after entering the monkhood, all of them were able to attain Arahatsip

Having arrived in the city of Rajagarh, the Lord Buddha took a rest under the Banyan tree in the place called Supatittha Cetiya located inside the Palm Grove. King Bimbisara, the ruler of Magadha, and 120,000 people came to see the Lord Buddha. They were given one Dhamma lecture called the Anupubbikatha which had to do with Dana (alms-giving), Sila (morality practice), the Celestial Realm, the harm of sense-desire, and the fruit of putting an end to sense-desire and another Dhamma lecture on the Four Noble Truths which included Dukkha (suffering), Samudaya (the cause of suffering), Nirodha (the cessation of suffering), and Magga-8 (the path leading to the cessation of suffering).

At the end of the second Dhamma lecture, King Bimbisara and 111,000 men were able to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna while 1,000 men declared themselves a Buddhama-maka. Having attained the Fruit of Sotapanna, King Bimbisara declared himself a Buddhamamaka by saying, "I take refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. Please remember me as a lay devotee from this day onward and for the rest of my life."

### 2) Anathapindika, the Millionaire<sup>7</sup>

On one occasion, Anathapindika, the millionaire, went to visit his brother-in-law in the city of Rajagarh and it was there that his brother-in-law told him of the happening of the Lord Buddha. Anathapindika was overjoyed to hear the greatest news of his life. He had to ask his brother-in-law three times to make sure that he had heard correctly. When he knew for certain that the Lord Buddha had indeed happened, he wanted to go and see Him immediately. But it was then nighttime and he had to wait for the morning to come before he could go and see the Lord Buddha. However, he could not sleep and all he could think of all night long was the Lord Buddha and how he would be able to see Him the next morning. He got up three times that night thinking it was already morning. At dawn, the millionaire hastened to go and see the Lord Buddha. He was given one Dhamma lecture by the Lord Buddha called the Anupubbikatha followed by the Four Noble Truths which enabled him to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna. The millionaire subsequently declared himself a Buddhamamaka by saying, "I take refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. May the Lord Buddha acknowledge me as a lay devotee for the rest of my life!"

<sup>6</sup> *Vinayapiṭaka Mahāvagga*. (tBangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 6, no. 56-59, p. 110-114

<sup>7</sup> *Vinayapiṭaka Cullavagga*. Part II, (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 9, no. 241-248, p. 121-126

### 3) Vacchagotara, the Ascetic<sup>8</sup>

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha was staying at the Veluvanna Temple in the city of Rajagarh, the ascetic called Vacchagotara<sup>9</sup> came to see the Lord Buddha with some Dhamma questions. The answer given by the Lord Buddha to each of his questions was such that he exclaimed, “Your teaching is so profound and yet easy to understand. It is like turning something upside down right side up. It is like giving directions to someone who has lost his way. It is like a guiding light in the dark.” The ascetic subsequently declared himself a Buddhamaṃsa and asked to be ordained a Buddhist monk, “I take refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. And I wish to be ordained a Buddhist monk.” Having entered the monkhood, the new monk endeavored to study and practice the Lord Buddha’s Teachings until he was able to attain Arahatship.

#### 2.2.4 How to Make the Buddhamaṃsa Declaration in the present time

##### 1) How to Make the Buddhamaṃsa Declaration in India

Although the Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana a long time ago, but making the Buddhamaṃsa declaration is still being practiced in India. And each year during the Visakha Puja month, a large number of Hindus<sup>10</sup> convert to Buddhism in a conversion ceremony. Wat Thai Kusinara Chalermraj is one of the Buddhist temples attended by former Hindus for this purpose. The conversion ceremonies are held from the beginning to the end of the Visakha month. In 2553 B.E. from May 28 onward, many Indians traveled to Wat Thai Kusinara in order to declare themselves a Buddhamaṃsa. The ceremony was conducted by Thai monks who also led these Indian Buddhists to pledge to observe the Five Precepts. As a practicing Buddhist, they are poised to gain happiness and peace by studying and practicing the Lord Buddha’s Teachings.<sup>11</sup>

On May 27, 2553 B.E., tens of thousands of Hindus gathered in the city of Mumbai to attend the ceremony where they declared themselves a Buddhamaṃsa. The organizing team said that the number of attendees might be as high as 100,000. These Hindus wished to convert to Buddhism in order to escape from the Hindu caste system. As a Buddhist, they have the rights of a Buddhist which enable them to get a job or a better job.<sup>12</sup>

The largest conversion ceremony in recent times took place on October 14, 2499 B.E. where Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, former Minister of Justice in India, led more than 500,000 Indians to declare themselves a Buddhamaṃsa. They also made twenty-two vows as follows.

1. I will no longer worship Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu.
2. I will no longer regard Rama or Krishna to be God; I will no longer worship them.
3. I will no longer worship Hindu deities.

<sup>8</sup> *Suttantapīṭaka Majjhimanikāya Majjhimaṇṇāsa. Mahāvaccagotara Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 20, no. 253-267, p. 456-467

<sup>9</sup> An ascetic belonging to the Vaccha family.

<sup>10</sup> Hindus are the people who believe in Hinduism which evolved from Brahmanism.

<sup>11</sup> Indians declared themselves a Buddhist at Wat Thai Kusinara Chalermraj on May 6, 2553 B.E.

<sup>12</sup> Tens of thousands of Indian convert to Buddhism, BBC NEWS, Sunday, 27 May 2007, 19:28 P.M. (UK), on-line [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6695695](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6695695)

4. I will no longer believe in the Avatar concept.
5. I will no longer believe that the Buddha is an Avatar of Vishnu; only an insane person can believe such a thing.
6. I will no longer perform Hindu practices.
7. I will not do anything that goes against the Lord Buddha's Teachings.
8. I will no longer invite Brahmins to perform a religious ceremony.
9. I believe that every human being on earth has equal status and dignity.
10. I will fight for equal rights.
11. I will practice the Noble Eightfold Path.
12. I will pursue the Ten Perfections.
13. I will spread love and kindness to every person and every animal.
14. I will not steal.
15. I will not commit sexual misconduct.
16. I will not lie.
17. I will not drink alcohol.
18. I will practice Dana (alms-giving), Sila (morality), and Bhavana (meditation).
19. I will stop believing in Hinduism which subscribes to the caste system and wreaks havoc in society.
20. I believe that only Buddhism is the true religion.
21. I believe that by converting to Buddhism, I am truly reborn.
22. From now on, I will earnestly practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

After the Buddhamamaka Declaration was made, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, "I was born in a Hindu family, but I will die a Buddhist." He also added, "The Lord Buddha said, "Behold, monks, you have come from different families but once you enter the monkhood, all of you are equal. It is like the ocean into which water from every river and every sea flows. Once water has flowed into the ocean, its source is obliterated." Buddhism negates the caste system. Some people may have wanted to attack Buddhism but they cannot find anything to undermine the Lord Buddha's Teachings and so they say that Buddhism belongs to the outcasts. The famous name regarded with deep respect outside of India is not that of Rama or Krishna but is that of the Lord Buddha." When asked by the reporter why he converted to Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar said, "It is because of the uncivilized way that the Hindus have treated us Shudras for more than 2,000 years." He also added, "As soon as we are born, we are marked Shudra, lower in value than that of a dog. Nothing can beat leaving such an uncivilized cult and such a dark corner for the light and happiness that Buddhism affords every person. It matters not to Buddhism if he belongs to the Kshatriya caste, the Brahmin caste, the Vaishya caste or the Shudra caste. Actually, I did want to convert to Buddhism since the year 2490 B.E., but the time was not yet right. I would like to say that the caste system should disappear totally from India. But for as long as the people in India still worship the Vedas, the caste system will continue to exist in India bringing suffering and deterioration to the country. The Brahmins hate Buddhism.

They have no idea that during the Lord Buddha's time, 90% of the Buddhist monks came from the Brahmin caste. I would like to ask today's Brahmins what is happening to them?"

## 2) How to Make the Buddhamamaka Declaration in the West

In recent times, a large number of Americans and Europeans have converted to Buddhism. But their conversion may be unofficial or official. Some people have chosen to undertake the Buddhamamaka Declaration. Some people are not so concerned with rituals but are more concerned about practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings. For the latter, they are also considered to be a Buddhamamaka. Buddhism entered the West through the study of Buddhism by academicians, and it was only later that it spread to the general public. Why did some westerners decide to convert to Buddhism? The German professor of etymology, Maxmiller (1823 – 1900) said that he found the Lord Buddha's teaching on morality to be the most complete. The Swiss psychiatrist, Professor Carl Jung (1875 - 1961) said that as a student of comparative religion, he found the Lord Buddha's Teachings to be the most complete. The Lord Buddha's philosophy, His teachings on the evolution theory, and the Law of Kamma are far above and beyond the teachings of other religions. A large number of celebrities including Hollywood actors, musicians and athletes have converted to Buddhism. These include Richard Gere, Steven Seagal, Angelina Joli, Jennifer Lopez, Tom Cruise, Keanu Reeves, David Beckham, Roberto Baggio, Tiger Woods, Tina Turner, etc. These people came from a Christian background and had subscribed to Christian beliefs, and yet, all of them were interested in learning about and practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings. Tom Cruise, the American actor said that Buddhism forms the basis of all scientific knowledge. It teaches people to know themselves and to spread love to others. His contact with Buddhism is considered a very worthwhile life experience. David Beckham, the football star, practices meditation every morning after converting to Buddhism. Tina Turner, the American singer and actor who is called the Queen of Rock & Roll said that from personal experience, she has found refuge in Buddhism. Chanting helps one to get to the core of one's subconscious.

## 3) How to Make the Buddhamamaka Declaration in Thailand

Buddhism has flourished in Thailand for a very long time so much so that the leaders of international Buddhists claimed "Putthamonthon Park" to be the world's center of Buddhism. The decision was made during the meeting of Buddhist leaders from forty-one countries worldwide during the Visakha Puja festival taking place between May 18 to 20, 2548 B.E. at the Putthamonthon Meeting Hall and at the U.N. office in Bangkok. The meetings were attended by 1,600 monks and people.<sup>13</sup> Currently, Thailand has a large number of Buddhist temples and organizations that do the work of propagating Buddhism. One such temple that is actively propagating Buddhism abroad is Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Its aim is to enable Thai people and the people in every corner of the world to understand and practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings. In

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.manager.co.th/Dhamma/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9480000072264>

other words, its aim is to enable people everywhere especially in Thailand to be a Buddhamamaka or a practicing Buddhist through such merit-making projects as the offering of food to 1,000,000 monks nationwide, the renunciation practice of female lay devotees, V-Stars, etc. The offering of food to a total of one million monks in different provinces has been organized by the Sangha in Wat Phra Dhammakaya together with the Buddhists in every province all year long. Each time, 1,000 or 3,000 or 5,000 or 10,000 monks are invited to receive food from the laity. The laypeople are informed of the food-offering event ahead of time. During the food-offering ceremony, the people have the opportunity to declare themselves a Buddhamamaka. This serves to remind the merit-makers to earnestly practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

The food-offering project has met with great success in that a large number of Buddhists have come to offer food to the venerable monks. This is especially so when 10,000 monks attend the ceremony. It is a rare occasion and about twenty of such events have already been organized from 2551 to 2554 B.E. The food-offering event where less than 10,000 monks are present has been organized many times nationwide. The female lay devotees' renunciation practice has been organized for 100,000, 500,000, and one million female lay devotees respectively. During each of these events, the participants have the opportunity to declare themselves a Buddhamamaka. Each participant also receives the special breast cloth. The first event took place at Wat Phra Dhammakaya from March 8 to 15, 2553 B.E.

The V-Stars Project aims to produce leaders of world morality revival by teaching the students to put the Lord Buddha's Teachings into practice in their daily life. These include Dana practice (alms-giving), Sila practice (Precepts observation), meditation practice, respect, etc. Each participating student is given a notebook to record the wholesome deeds he has performed each day. The notebook is then checked by his parents and teacher. There are awards for the students who have earnestly performed all of the required activities. The gathering of V-Stars nationwide at Wat Phra Dhammakaya has taken place five times altogether. The first gathering took place on May 19, 2551 B.E. and the event was attended by 200,000 V-Star students. The last gathering took place on December 11, 2553 B.E. and the event was attended by one million V-Star students. During these events, the students had the opportunity to declare themselves a Buddhamamaka.

Wat Phra Dhammakaya has many other projects that enable the people to be a Buddhamamaka. These projects include the mass ordination of 100,000 monks, the nationwide Path of Progress Quiz which in 2553 B.E., was participated by more than five million students, the first Sunday of the month worship and regular Sunday worship, the propagation of the Dhamma via satellite, etc. These projects give Buddhists the opportunities to study the Lord Buddha's Teachings in depth so that they can put them into practice. As a Buddhamamaka, one is able to live life accordingly and derive happiness from his wholesome practices.

No.	Buddhamamaka Declaration	Date
1	<b>V-Stars Projects</b>	
	1.1 The gathering of 200,000 V-Star students 1.2 The gathering of 500,000 V-Star Students 1.3 The gathering of 500,000 V-Star Students 1.4 The gathering of 500,000 V-Star Students 1.5 The gathering of one million V-Star Students	May 19, 2551 B.E. Dec 13, 2551 B.E. July 11, 2552 B.E. Dec 12, 2552 B.E. Dec 11, 2553 B.E.
2	<b>Nationwide Upasikas' Renunciation Practice</b>	
	2.1 The renunciation practice of 100,000 Upasikas 2.2 The renunciation practice of 500,000 Upasikas 2.3 The renunciation practice of one million Upasiks 2.4 The renunciation practice of one million Upasikas	March 11, 2553B.E. April 22, 2553B.E. Dec 25, 2553B.E. March 6, 2554B.E.
3	<b>Nationwide Offering of Food to One Million Monks</b>	
	3.1 To 10,000 monks in Lamphun City, Lamphun Province 3.2 To 11,111 monks in Yaowarat, Bangkok 3.3 To 12,076 monks in Jaturud District, Chaiyaphum 3.4 To 10,000 monks in Mueang District, Rayong 3.5 To 10,000 monks in the Youth Center, Lopburi 3.6 To 10,000 monks in the city center of Hat Yai 3.7 To 10,000 monks in Vongvienyai, Bangkok 3.8 To 10,000 monks in Salaklang, Khon Kaen 3.9 To 10,000 monks in the city center of Hat Yai 3.10 To 10,000 monks in Mueang District, Sakon Nakhon 3.11 To 10,000 monks at the Rajburi Hospital, Ratchaburi 3.12 To 10,000 monks in Suphanburi Province	May 17, 2551 B.E. Aug 9, 2551 B.E. Aug 10, 2551 B.E. Nov 29, 2551 B.E. Dec 20, 2551 B.E. Aug 16, 2552 B.E. Oct 3, 2552 B.E. Nov 14, 2552 B.E. Aug 29, 2553 B.E. Oct 21, 2553 B.E. Oct 22, 2553 B.E. Oct 30, 2553 B.E.

### 2.3 The Buddhamamaka's Virtues

The Buddhamamaka's virtues mean the Dhamma Principles as applied to the householders (male lay devotees or Upasakas and female lay devotees or Upasikas).

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha was staying at the Nigodharam Temple near the city of Kapilavastu in the kingdom of Sakka, one royal member of the Sakya House called Mahanama came to see the Lord Buddha. He wanted to know what a man must do in order to become an Upasaka.

The Lord Buddha said, "Behold, Mahanama, whenever a man takes refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, he can be called an Upasaka."

An Upasaka is a male layperson who sits near the Triple Gem.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Royal Institute, an Upasaka is a male householder and a devout Buddhist.<sup>15</sup>

An Upasika is a female layperson who takes refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, an Upasika is a female householder who takes refuge in the Triple Gem, who sits near the Triple Gem, who is a devout Buddhist.

In other words, Upasakas and Upasikas are the Buddhists who take refuge in the Triple Gem. They are practicing Buddhists in that they practice the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. They do not worship ghosts and other non-human entities.

A good Buddhist or a Buddhamaṇava must have the following five attributes, namely, having Saddha (faith), practicing Sila (observing the Precepts), not being gullible, not seeking merit-fields outside of Buddhism, and supporting Buddhism.<sup>17</sup>

1) Having Saddha: It means believing in the Buddha-Virtues.

Saddha here means the belief born of having studied and understood the Buddha-Virtues. And it has nothing to do with blind faith.

2) Practicing Sila: Here, it means observing the Five Precepts, namely, abstaining from killing, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from sexual misconduct, abstaining from false speech, and abstaining from alcohol consumption.

For the Upasakas and Upasikas who practice chastity, they must observe the Eight Precepts. The three additional Precepts include abstaining from eating after the midday meal; abstaining from using cosmetics and perfume, from listening to unwholesome music and watching unwholesome plays and movies; and abstaining from sleeping on a large and soft bed.

The third Precept is changed to abstaining from things that threaten chastity practice.

3) Not Being Gullible: It means believing in the Law of Kamma and not believing in luck, talismans, magic spells, lucky time, lucky date, etc. Believing in the Law of Kamma means anytime is a good time to perform a wholesome deed.

4) Not Seeking Merit-Fields Outside of Buddhism: It means not supporting heretical teachers especially ones who harbor Wrong View. Any Buddhist supporting these heretical teachers run the risk of being misled.

5) Supporting Buddhism: It means supporting everything that has to do with preserving, protecting, propagating, and perpetuating Buddhism. It means offering alms and funds to the monks and novice monks, making donations to help fund the construction of necessary buildings in the temple, sponsoring ordination ceremonies, organizing different merit-making events, providing medical care to the monks and novice monks as exemplified by Jivaka,

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<sup>14</sup> *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī Aṭṭhakathā-dīgha-nikāya Sīlakhandhavagga* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 11, p. 490

<sup>15</sup> *Royal Institute Dictionary 2542 B.E.* (Nanmee Books Publications, 2546 B.E.), p. 1385.

<sup>16</sup> *Vinayaṭṭhaka Mahavibhaṅga Part I* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 3, no. 634, p. 667

<sup>17</sup> *Suttaṇṭapīṭaka Aṅguttaranikāya Pañcakanipāta, Caṇḍāla Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 36, no. 175, p. 373

the great physician, protecting and propagating Buddhism as exemplified by the millionaire, Citta. This millionaire was known for his extraordinary ability to give Dhamma lectures and teach the Dhamma.

When Upasakas and Upasikas have cultivated these five attributes, they will receive at least two benefits. These include personal benefit in that the merit and Perfections accumulated will bless them with happiness and prosperity here and now and in future existences; the benefit received by Buddhism in that their financial and other supports will help Buddhism to continue to flourish.

## **2.4 Important Buddhamamakas in the History of Buddhism**

There were many important Buddhamamakas during the Lord Buddha's time. These included King Bimbisara, King Ajatasattu, King Pasendikosala, Anathapindika, the millionaire, Mendaka, the millionaire, the great Upasika Visakha, etc. For this course, three important Buddhamamakas after the Lord Buddha's time will be mentioned. These include Asoka the Great, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong. These three Buddhamamakas had done so much for Buddhism. Moreover, they serve as great role models for current and future Buddhists.

### **2.4.1 Asoka the Great**

#### **Asoka the Great's Story**

It is said that of all the thousands and tens of thousands of names of kings, one name stands out in history. And that is the name of Asoka the Great.

Asoka the Great of the Moriya House was one of the greatest kings of Jamabhudavipa (ancient India). The city of his kingdom was called Pataliputta. His parents were King Bindusara and Queen Siridhamma. When he was seventeen years old, he became the viceroy of King Bindusara and ruled the city of Ujjeni and the kingdom of Avanti. Prince Asoka married Princess Vedisa, and had their first son when Prince Asoka was twenty years old. His name was Prince Mahidakumara. Their first daughter was born when Prince Asoka was twenty-two years old. The couple had altogether eleven children.

King Bindusara had altogether 101 sons and after he died, Prince Asoka returned to the city of Patali to claim the throne by having all of his half-brothers executed except for his brother, Prince Tissakumara. Still, Prince Asoka did not officially assume the throne until four years later.

In his past, Asoka the Great used to give alms to the Brahmins and different categories of ascetics after the manner of his father. Later, he lost faith in these ascetics after having witnessed their complete lack of table manners. On one occasion, Asoka the Great came across the novice monk, Nigoradha. The novice monk was formerly the son born of Asoka the Great's half-brother, Prince Sumana, whom he had executed. The novice monk's composed and dignified mannerism inspired Asoka the Great to invite him to come to the palace and give him a Dhamma lecture.

After the Dhamma lecture, Asoka the Great became a believer. He declared himself a Buddhamaṃsa and took refuge in the Triple Gem for the rest of his life. He also pledged to observe the Five Precepts. He had the great monastery, Asokaram, built so that he could give alms every day. He also had 84,000 Vihara containing 84,000 Cetiya built in 84,000 cities in Jambhūdvīpa.

When Asoka the Great learnt from Venerable Moggalliputtatissa Thera that to become a relative of Buddhism, he needed to have his children ordained as a Buddhist monk. Therefore, he had his son, Prince Mahindakumara and his daughter, Princess Sanghamitta ordained as a Buddhist monk by Venerable Moggalliputtatissa Thera (a male monk) and Venerable Dhammapalita Therī (a female monk) respectively.

At one point during the reign of Asoka the Great, a large number of heretics entered the monkhood on false pretense, and the Sangha refused to perform Sanghakamma (obligatory monastic rituals) together with them. In order to remove these false monks, Asoka the Great had the Sangha hold a meeting of all the Buddhist monks at the Asokaram Temple. The intensive investigation forced 60,000 false monks to disrobe.

Asoka the Great was the sole sponsor of the third Sangiti or Satiyasangiti which lasted for a total of nine months. This Sangiti was presided over by Venerable Moggalliputtatissa Thera. Venerable Moggalliputtatissa Thera selected 1,000 monks out of six million monks who were well-versed in Pariyatti (Scripture) or the Tipitaka, well-versed in Patisambhida (Analytic Insight) and Vijja-3 (The Three Higher Knowledge) to join him in performing the Sangiti. This third Sangiti was also called Sahassikasangiti because it was performed by 1,000 monks.

One of the most important things that Asoka the Great did for Buddhism was to send monastic envoys out in nine different directions which according to the Tipitaka included the following.

1. Venerable Majjhinitika Thera – Destination: Gandhara
2. Venerable Yonakadhamrakkhita Thera – Destination: Aparantaka countryside
3. Venerable Majjhima Thera – Destination: The Himalayas
4. Venerable Maharakkhita Thera – Destination: The kingdom of Yonaka
5. Venerable Mahadhamrakkhita Thera – Destination: Maharatha countryside
6. Venerable Rakkhita Thera – Destination: The kingdom of Vanavasi
7. Venerable Mahanama Thera – Destination: Mahisaka Province
8. Venerables Sona Thera and Uttara Thera – Destination: Suvannabhūmi
9. Venerable Mahinda Thera, Venerable Itthiya Thera, Venerable Samabala Thera, and Venerable Bhaddarasala Thera – Destination: Tambapannidavipa Island (Sri Lanka).

Sometime later, Asoka the Great asked Venerable Sanghamitta Therī to bring a Bodhi sapling from Buddhagaya to be planted in the city of Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. Many Sri Lankan ladies were also ordained a Buddhist monk by Venerable Sanghamitta Therī.

Having become a Buddhamaṃsa, Asoka the Great ruled his kingdom according to the Dhammaraja Principles. He studied and practiced the Dhamma earnestly. He had many things built for the benefits of his people. He also put great emphasis on Dhammadana or the giving

of Dhamma knowledge. He advised his people on how to live their life correctly and on how to practice the Dhamma. He fostered good parent and child relationship, good teacher and student relationship, good master and servant relationship, etc.

### **A Role Model**

Despite being one of the greatest kings that have ever lived, Asoka the Great was a lay devotee and the greatest benefactor of Buddhism. He also studied the Tipitaka at the feet of the Arahats as evidenced by the stone inscription found in the city of Virata (now being kept in the museum in the city of Calcutta). Asoka the Great said to the Buddhist monks,

“Venerable Ones, you well realize the faith and reverence I have for the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.”

“Venerable Ones who are deserving of reverence, whatever our Great Teacher has taught us is good and proper in every way.”

In order to preserve the Lord Buddha’s Teachings, Asoka the Great had the Lord Buddha’s Sayings inscribed on stone tablets. The first stone tablet was about the first virtue that every Buddhist must cultivate, namely, heedfulness or Appamada in the Pali language.

It was inscribed in the first stone tablet, “Heedfulness leads to deathlessness. Recklessness leads to death. A heedful person can never die. A reckless person is already dead.”

Asoka had a high regard for anyone who endeavored to attain the Dhamma, “Not only the great ones can endeavor to attain the Dhamma, but every human being if he works really hard will be able to achieve emancipation regardless of his station in life, however lowly he may be. It is for this reason that we wish to propagate the Dhamma far and wide so that believers can be motivated to work hard in order to achieve emancipation for themselves. May as many people as possible that come after me pay attention to this truth and endeavor to achieve emancipation for themselves!”

In the book<sup>18</sup>, India in the Days of Asoka, the Golden Ages of History, Joseph McCabe said to the effect that...

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<sup>18</sup> McCabe, Joseph, India in the Days of Asoka, the Golden Ages of History, 3rd ed., (London: Watts and Co., London 1944), p. 79-91

King Asoka not only caused his own kingdom to prosper by transforming his subjects' conduct, but he also built hospitals where sick people and sick animals could be treated. He planted herb gardens for his subjects all throughout his kingdom. He revolutionized the crime and punishment system by letting the criminal know what wrong he had committed so that he would stop his wrongdoing instead of simply punishing him for his crime. He made it possible for his subjects to be educated. He taught his subjects to be kind and compassionate to their slaves and servants. He had built shelters where travelers could stay (Dhammasala). He had wells dug and trees planted along different roads to provide shade for the people that used these roads. He found jobs for widows and poor women. He provided care for the elderly.

Along the roads inside the city of Pataliputta, King Asoka had barrels of water placed at strategic points in case of a fire. He decreed that whoever did not help his neighbor put out a fire would be fined. People were not allowed to dump trash or dead animals on public roads. Offenders who violated the rule of law would be punished. He set up offices to look after the welfare of backward tribal people. He wanted every kingdom large and small to have a good relationship with each other. He sent monastic envoys to propagate Buddhism in the west in such countries like Syria, etc. He treated his subjects like his own children and he regarded all human beings as his relatives as evidenced by the thirteenth stone tablet found in the city of Kalasi, "My children, my grandchildren, and my great grandchildren must never think about waging war again."

King Asoka had kept records of important activities and events using inscribed stone tablets. These included the work that he did; how he enabled his subjects to practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings, etc. He visited the places where the Lord Buddha was born, attained Self-Enlightenment, gave the first Dhamma lecture, and attained Complete Nibbana. He always checked his information for accuracy before having it inscribed on the stone tablets.

King Asoka was honored as Asoka the Great. And in the stone tablet about the Dipavansa Scripture, it was written that King Asoka called himself, "Piyadassi". Asoka the Great caused Buddhism to flourish in Jamabhudavipa. He had sent monastic envoys to propagate Buddhism in different lands such that more and more people in Asia were being converted to Buddhism. He had changed the battlefields for the purpose of expanding his sovereignty into the Dhamma Fields for the purpose of expanding the realm of Buddhism. Historians have regarded Asoka the Great as one of the greatest men that have ever lived.

#### **2.4.2 Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**

##### **Dr. Ambedkar's Story**

Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was called Bhim by his parents. He was born into one of the poorest Dalit (Untouchables) families in the city of Nagpur in the state of Maharashtra in central India on April 14, 2434 B.E. The village he was born was that of the Adhisudra (one of the names used to call the Dalits; other names include Haricandra and Candala) called Ambavati. He was the youngest and 14th child of Mr. Ramji and Mrs. Bimmabai Sakpal.

It was told that before he was born, his father's uncle who had taken up the religious life as a Sanyasi (an ascetic who practiced Hinduism's Four Ashrams) and was living in the forest up in the mountain, returned to visit his hometown and so Dr. Ambedkar's father went to invite his uncle to receive food at his house, but his invitation was not accepted. However, the Sanyasi said to Dr. Ambedkar's father, "May you have a son that will become famous and honored and whose name will be written down in the history of India!" What the Sanyasi had said proved to be true later on. Despite being born in a lowly and poor family, Dr. Ambedkar's father endeavored to send him to school until he completed his sixth-grade education. His father continued to scrimp and save until the boy Bhim was able to graduate from high school. But during his school years, Bhim had to endure contemptuous treatment from his teachers and classmates who were members of the higher castes.

When Bhim entered the classroom, his classmates would become visibly repelled by his social status. He was not allowed to sit on a chair and had to sit on a sack cloth in the corner of the classroom. When he submitted his homework, his teachers were also visibly repelled.

When he had to get up in front of the classroom, all the students whose lunch boxes were placed on the blackboard's ledge would rush to fetch their lunch boxes for fear that Bhim's presence might taint them.

He was not allowed to drink from the drinking water station because his classmates feared that the drinking cups would be tainted by him. He had to ask some of the classmates that had some kindness in them to give him water by carefully pouring the water down his throat to make sure that no contamination occurred.

**These events were etched deep in Bhim's heart.**

Still, not everyone during his school years was heartless. He had one teacher belonging to the Brahmin caste who was especially kind to him. Sometimes, he would share his lunch with Bhim. But the teacher could not do much more because he might be chastised by his peers. This Brahmin teacher thought that Bhim was treated with such contempt because his last name was Sakpal which was a clear indication that he was an Adhisudra (the last name of an Indian person shows the caste he belongs to). This kind teacher decided to change Bhim's last name to that of his own, Ambedkar, in Bhim's school registration. Since then, Bhim began to use his new last name. (And it was because of his new last name that many people mistook him for a member of the Brahmin caste.)

Having put up with the contemptuous treatment of his teachers and peers until he graduated from high school, which was considered a very high level of education for the members of his caste. Bhim's father could no longer afford to send him to college. Fortunately, at the time the Maharaja of Baroda was a compassionate person who did not pay much attention to the caste system. In fact, he wished for the members of the Adhisudra caste to have the opportunity to get a higher education. One social worker took Bhim to see the Maharaja and the Maharaja gave him a scholarship which amounted to twenty-four rupees a month which enabled him to earn a Bachelor's Degree. When the Maharaja wanted to send some Indian students to further

their study at Columbia University in the U.S., Bhim was among them. What Bhim found in the U.S. was freedom and equality. No one in the U.S. was repelled by the fact that he was born an Adhisudra. Having received his Ph.D., Dr. Ambedkar returned to India. He had worked hard to fight for the rights of his fellowmen and for the injustice experienced by the members of his caste.

Dr. Ambedkar had accomplished much. In 2461 B.E., he taught in Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. Sometime later, he was assisted by the prince of Gorakhpur who shared the same ideal with Dr. Ambedkar in uprooting caste discrimination. He helped members of the Adhisudra caste to become civil servants. Even his mahout was a member of the Adhisudra caste. He also provided financial support for the launching of Dr. Ambedkar's newspaper, "Mooknayaka" (leader of the silent). He wrote articles for the newspaper. Part of an article written by him stated to the effect that India is a land of discrimination. The Hindu social structure is as elevated as a watchtower that stands tall with many floors but there are no stairs leading to it. The people in each of the floors are stuck in their own floor. They can neither descend nor ascend to another floor. The people of different floors cannot communicate with each other. People are born and die on the exact same floor. Dr. Ambedkar said that the Hindu society has three components, namely, the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins, and the Adhisudra. Brahmin teachers often say that God exists everywhere. If that is so, then God must also exist in the Adhisudra caste members as well. But the Brahmins view the Adhisudra as being repulsive and a curse. If so, does it not mean that they also view God as a curse?

Dr. Ambedkar was a member of the Defence Advisory Committee and the Viceroy's Executive Council as Minister for Labor. His reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first Law Minister and chairman of the committee responsible for drafting a constitution for independent India. Dr. Ambedkar was appointed the chairman of the constitution drafting committee on August 29, 1947. His emphasis was on the construction of a virtual bridge between all classes of society. According to him, it would be difficult to maintain the unity of the country if the differences among the classes still existed. He put particular emphasis on religious, gender and caste equality. He received the Assembly's support in introducing reservation for members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in education, government jobs and civil services. (<https://www.culturalindia.net/reformers/br-ambedkar.html>). It was said that the way he answered questions and explained things having to do with the drafting of the Indian constitution was almost like the way Venerable Upali Thera answered questions and explained the Vinaya during the first Sangiti presided over by Venerable Mahakassapa and participated by 500 Arahats.

Dr. Ambedkar married twice, the first time with a woman of the same caste, and the second time with a woman of the Brahmin caste when he was 56 years old. Her name was Dr. Sharada Kabir. His wedding was attended by important people, politicians, businessmen, and members of different castes. He later retired from politics to work solely against caste discrimination and

for equal rights.

### **Making the Buddhamamaka Declaration**

One of the movements led by Dr. Ambedkar has done much good for Buddhism in India. And it had to do with leading more than 500,000 members of the Sudra caste to make the Buddhamamaka Declaration. He had long been interested in Buddhism especially after having read the book called “Bhagavan Buddha” (the history of the Lord Buddha) written by Phradhammanandakosambi. He found that the caste system did not exist in Buddhism, and that everyone, regardless of his social class, had equal opportunity to learn the Lord Buddha’s Teachings.

Spiritually, Dr. Ambedkar had already been a Buddhist, but he wanted to do something concrete about it. What he wished for was to make the Buddhamamaka Declaration together with his fellow Adhisudras. On the occasion of Buddhajayanti, he had written books on Buddhism which included Buddha and His Dhamma, the Essential of Buddhism, and compilations of his speeches such as the Downfall of Buddhism in India.

Prior to the Buddhajayanti Celebration, India at the time had practically no Buddhists. But how came the celebration? The answer might be found in His Excellency Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Indian Parliament about Buddhajayanti to the effect that...

The Buddha is India’s great and brilliant son. In this world of chaos, ill-will, and violence, the Buddha’s Teachings are like the shining sun. No one has brought such honor and pride to India like the Buddha. If we do not celebrate Him, who else should we celebrate?

He also said to the effect that I do not subscribe to any religion. But if I am to choose a religion, I will choose Buddhism.

The Indian government had set aside funds to be used for celebrating Buddhajayanti from one state to another for an entire year. The government provided funds for improving roads leading to the Four Important Places of Buddhism, for building Dhammasala, for making it convenient for visitors from different countries to visit the Four Important Places of Buddhism, for the publication of the book praising Buddhism, for the publication of an academic book on Buddhism written by several sages. President Radha Krishnan wrote the Forewords for the book praising Buddhism calling it, “2,500 Years of Buddhism”.

The Buddhamamaka Declaration was made by Dr. Ambedkar and members of the Sudra caste in the city of Nagpur. When asked why the declaration was not made in cities like Mumbai or Delhi, Dr. Ambedkar said that when Buddhism was first propagated, the Nag tribal people had been mistreated by the Aryan people. After the Nag people met the Lord Buddha and heard His Dhamma lectures, they became believers. They made the Buddhamamaka Declaration and helped establish Buddhism in this city. (When Buddhism began to disappear from India, the city of Nag still retained the most number of Buddhists. It was also the city which had a large number of the Sudra caste. It was for this reason that the center of Buddhism in India in the present time is in the city of Nag.

On October 14, 2499 B.E., 500,000 people made the Buddhamamaka Declaration where they also made Dr. Ambedkar's twenty-two vows which included I will no longer worship Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, etc.

#### **Dr. Ambedkar's Death**

Unfortunately, three months after making the Buddhamamaka Declaration, Dr. Ambedkar passed away after suffering a serious illness on December 6, 2499 B.E. (or 2500 B.E. in India, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka). This was hard for the new Buddhists because they now lacked an inspiring leader.

Dr. Ambedkar was born a member of the Sudra caste, and yet he had fought for equality for himself, for his fellow Sudras, and for India as a whole. He has left behind an inspiring and great legacy.

### **2.4.3 Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong**

#### **The Master Nun's Story**

Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong (most often referred to as Khun Yai which means grandmother) was born on the tenth day of the second waxing moon in the year of the Cock in 2452 B.E. which corresponds to January 20, 2452 B.E. in Nakornchaisri District, Nakorn Pathom Province. She was the fifth of nine children. Her parents' names were Ploy and Pun Khonnokyoong. They were rice farmers of medium income.

Khun Yai's life as a rice farmer made her both tough and patient. Her rice paddies were devoid of weeds and more productive than her neighbors' because she was exceptionally hard working. She went out to work in the paddies earlier than her neighbors. She was so hard working that she earned the nickname "Iron Shin". She was exceptionally diligent, motivated, and patient. Her exceptional diligence made it possible for her family to earn a good income. Importantly, they were not in debt. Khun Yai never received a formal education because it was not widely available at the time. As a result, Khun Yai could neither read nor write.

#### **Looking for Her Late Father**

Khun Yai's father was an alcoholic who consumed ten Stang worth of alcohol every day. Normally, he was a good-natured man. But whenever he started drinking, he would become argumentative. Khun Yai's mother had one special remark which worked to neutralize her husband's drunken state: "You weaverbird, don't you realize that you are living in someone else's house? What is it that you are mumbling about?" She made this remark because her husband came to live with her in her house because her family was financially better off than his. This was always a sensitive issue for him.

One day after Khun Yai's mother made the remark, instead of silencing him as was usually the case, for some reason, Khun Yai's father had a reaction. So, he asked his children, "Is it true what your mother just said?" No one dared give him an answer except for Khun Yai who said, "Mother did not say anything derogatory to you, Dad." She said this because she did not want her parents to quarrel. But her attempt to placate her father backfired and he cursed her, "Let

you be born deaf for 500 lifetimes!”

Her father’s remark stuck in Khun Yai’s mind because she believed a parent’s words to be sacred and have the power to make what they said come true. Khun Yai did not want to be born deaf for the next 500 lifetimes, so she had it in her mind to ask her father for forgiveness when it was near the time of his passing. She did not dare ask him for forgiveness while he was still living because she did not want to arouse his anger. Sometime later, Khun Yai’s father fell ill and on the morning of his passing, Khun Yai was out working in the paddies after attending to her father. But upon her return, she saw how everyone in the family was crying because her father had just passed away. Her siblings faulted her for not returning in time to ask her father for forgiveness as was the customary practice. Khun Yai was calm and quiet because she knew that death was part of life. What bothered her more was the fact that she did not have the opportunity to ask her father for forgiveness and the fact that his curse might come true for her. It was then that she felt she had to find the way to find her father in the hereafter.

### **On the Path of the Dhamma**

It was around the year 2470 B.E., that people were talking about Luang Pu Wat Paknam (the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni) and his Vijja Dhammakaya. (Luang Pu means Venerable Grandfather.) It was said that he could teach people to attain the Dhammakaya and whoever could attain the Dhammakaya could also visit the Hell Realm, the Celestial Realm as well as Nibbana. One could visit his departed loved ones in the Hell Realm and helped them out of the Hell Realm, for example. When Khun Yai heard the news about Luang Pu Wat Paknam, she was overjoyed. She was determined that one day, she would go and see Luang Pu Wat Paknam. In 2478 B.E., when Khun Yai was twenty-six years old, she decided to go and stay with a relative in Bangkok against her mother’s wish. She did, however, give Khun Yai two baht for her traveling expenses. Once Khun Yai arrived in Bangkok, she found out that Mrs. Liap went to make merit at Wat Paknam regularly. She was an important lay supporter of Wat Paknam. Therefore, Khun Yai went to see Mrs. Liap with the intention of working as a servant for her despite the fact that Khun Yai came from a debt-free and well-respected family. Khun Yai willingly lowered herself in order to gain access to Wat Paknam. In those days, it was difficult to gain access to Wat Paknam, since it already had a large number of monks and nuns living in the premises. By nature, Khun Yai was hard-working, patient, disciplined, clean, and honest. Mrs. Liap trusted her enough to let her keep the key to her treasure room where she could freely come and go in order to keep everything clean and tidy. Mrs. Liap’s children did not have the same privilege, however. With Khun Yai in her household, Mrs. Liap now felt free to leave the house whenever she wished. It was for these reasons that Mrs. Liap came to love and trust Khun Yai. Khun Yai Tongsook Samdangpun was one of Luang Pu Wat Paknam’s top students. She had been assigned by Luang Pu to teach Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation to Mrs. Liap at her house. Khun Yai wished to learn Vijja Dhammakaya, and did her best to take care of Khun Yai Tongsook. Eventually, Khun Yai was able to learn Vijja Dhammakaya from Khun Yai Tongsook. Khun Yai’s determination and endeavor enabled her to attain the Dhammakaya

soon afterward. It was then that Khun Yai Tongsook told Khun Yai that she could go and look for her late father in the hereafter. Khun Yai did find her father in the fifth site of the Hell Realm of Yamaloka. He was receiving punishment there for his habitual drinking. Khun Yai was finally able to ask her father for forgiveness. And by the power of the Dhammakaya, she told her father to pledge the Five Precepts. Having pledged the Five Precepts, Khun Yai's Dhammakaya took him up to the Celestial Realm. Khun Yai's Dhammakaya taught him how to practice meditation and told him that he needed to practice meditation regularly if he did not want to return to Yamaloka again.

#### Practicing Vijja Dhammakaya

In 2481 B.E., Khun Yai asked Mrs. Liap for some time off so that she could go and practice renunciation for one month at Wat Paknam (Wat is the Thai word for temple). Khun Yai Tongsook took her to pay homage to the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam. Luang Pu looked at Khun Yai quietly for a moment and remarked, "You've come too late!" He sent her into Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop on that very day. Normally, to gain access to Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop, one had to first be thoroughly screened by senior Vijja Dhammakaya practitioners. But Khun Yai did not have to go through any screening process at all.

Luang Pu Wat Paknam made it a breeze for Khun Yai to gain access to Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop. But life in the new surroundings and among the strangers was quite difficult. Being a newcomer, all the necessary items needed to live in Wat Paknam given to her were old and in need of repair. But Khun Yai did not mind. She washed and cleaned everything. She repaired whatever was broken. Existing female members of Wat Paknam did not allow Khun Yai to join them at mealtime because Khun Yai was very thin with deep and hollow eyes. They suspected her of having a serious illness, and treated her with contempt. Not many could put up with such a situation day in and day out. But Khun Yai was pure in heart and thought only that these women were exhausted from their kitchen duty. She did not mind their rude treatment of her. She thought that it was her duty to eat whatever was provided by Luang Pu so that she could have the strength and stamina to learn and practice Vijja Dhammakaya to the fullest extent. She thought that being left alone was a good thing actually because it gave her the opportunity to keep her mind on her Dhammakaya during her mealtime. Khun Yai had never allowed anything however undesirable to disturb her or perturb her equanimity.

Khun Yai was constantly making progress in her Vijja Dhammakaya meditation such that whatever question Luang Pu had for her, she was able to provide him with the correct answer. Khun Yai's Vijja Dhammakaya prowess was such that she was assigned the head of the night shift of Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop. Khun Yai's Supernormal Insight was extraordinarily sharp and precise because of her endeavor and constant mindfulness. She was a highly responsible person and fortunately she was also healthy and strong.

In those days, Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation in Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop was carried out in shifts around the clock. There were two shifts, each shift lasted for six hours straight. After the six hours were up for the first shift, the second shift would take over. Here again, Khun Yai

was extraordinarily conscientious in that she would start her shift at least half an hour earlier than others and ended it at least half an hour later than others. She wanted to hear Luang Pu's last and first instructions to the other shift. It was for these reasons that whatever Higher Knowledge Luang Pu had gained access to, Khun Yai was able to keep up with Luang Pu every step of the way.

During WWII, Bangkok was frequently bombed. The Most Venerable Luang Pu had every accomplished Vija Dhammakaya practitioner deploy Vija Dhammakaya to quell the root cause of the war. Luang Pu would often ask where and when the bombs would be dropped. If the answer came from Khun Yai, all the lights would be switched off because everyone knew how precise Khun Yai's Supernormal Insight was. If one was not mindful and did not keep his mind on his Dhammakaya at all times, he would not be able to provide such a precise answer to Luang Pu's question. Any practitioner of Vija Dhammakaya who did not keep his mind on his Dhammakaya at all times would be chastised by Luang Pu. Luang Pu would call the person, "Cinder" because the person had to be poked at before he wanted to work. But Khun Yai had never been called "Cinder" by Luang Pu.

Khun Yai was always content with whatever she had. She had a penchant for solitude. She was not given to accumulating things. Whatever she did have was freely given to anyone who asked for it from her. Khun Yai was not at all interested in things external. She was completely devoted to Vija Dhammakaya and its practice. Khun Yai was outstanding in terms of gratitude. She attended to Khun Yai Tongsook, her first Dhamma teacher very closely until the last moment of her life. Near the end of her life, Khun Yai Tongsook suffered from the final stage of uterus cancer, and it was Khun Yai who was constantly by her side attending to her, taking care of all her needs, all day and all night long until Khun Yai Tongsook departed from this world. It was Khun Yai who organized a grand funeral for Khun Yai Tongsook befitting her exceptional virtues.

Before the Most Venerable Luang Pu passed away, he called a meeting of his followers where he told them to help propagate Vija Dhammakaya worldwide because Vija Dhammakaya was beneficial to everyone on earth. He told Khun Yai to stay put and wait at Wat Paknam for the arrival of the inheritor of Vija Dhammakaya. Sometime later, the inheritor of Vija Dhammakaya came to see Khun Yai. He studied Vija Dhammakaya from Khun Yai and after graduating from university, he decided to enter the monkhood for life. His monastic name is Luang Por Dhammajayo (Luang Por means Venerable Father). His former name was Chaiyaboon Suttipon. Khun Yai, Luang Por Dhammajayo, and their followers started together to build Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

## A Role Model

Despite the fact that Khun Yai could neither read nor write, every word of Dhamma uttered by her corresponds with what is written in the Tipitaka. The following are some examples of what Khun Yai taught to everyone she met,<sup>19</sup>

1. “Abstain from unwholesomeness, perform wholesome deeds, and keep your mind clear,” corresponds with the teaching given by the Lord Buddha to the Arahats on Magha Puja Day in the Dhamma lecture called “Ovadapatimokkha”.<sup>20</sup> The Lord Buddha said, “Do not commit misdeeds, perform wholesome deeds, and keep your mind bright. This is what every Buddha teaches.”

2. “Every human being possesses his own Kamma. Wholesome deeds beget wholesome consequences. Unwholesome deeds beget unwholesome consequences. Therefore, you must abstain from unwholesomeness. You must earnestly observe the Five Precepts. Perform wholesome deeds. Attend the temple to give alms and listen to Dhamma lectures so that you can know the many ways to perform wholesome deeds. Chant and practice meditation daily to keep your mind bright,” corresponds with the Lord Buddha’s Teaching in Abhinahapaccavekakkhanapatha.<sup>21</sup> The Lord Buddha said, “One’s Kamma is one’s own. One is the heir of his Kamma. One’s Kamma determines his birth and his race. One’s Kamma is his refuge. Whatever Kamma one performs, wholesome or unwholesome, he stands to reap its consequences.”

3. Khun Yai was extraordinarily loving and kind. She often taught the Dhamma to students from high school to undergraduate levels in order to instill in them Buddhist moral values and virtues. She gave them words of advice and encouragement. She encouraged them to attend the temple regularly and perform volunteer work at the temple. The reason was that when attending the temple, they had the opportunity to undertake self-training, accumulate merit, keep the company of virtuous friends, and learn to realize the true life-objective of a human being.

4. Khun Yai never tired of teaching the Dhamma. She did not mind saying the same thing over and over again to different groups of laypeople and lay children. Her conduct corresponded with the Lord Buddha’s Saying as appeared in the Mahasunnata Sutta,<sup>22</sup> “Behold, Ananda, I will not treat you gently like a potter treats his unbaked pots. But I will chastise you and teach you over and over again. Those who can put up with the process will prevail.”

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<sup>19</sup> Venerable Rangsarit Iddhicintako, *Born of Khun Yai’s Two Hands* (Bangkok, PVP Supplies, 2551 B.E.), p.303-315

<sup>20</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2553 B.E.), vol. 45, p. 620

<sup>21</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Aṅguttaranikāya Pañcakanipāta, Ṭhana Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2553 B.E.), vol. 36, no. 57, p. 138

<sup>22</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Majjhimanikāya Uparipannāsa* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2553 B.E.), vol. 23, no. 356, p. 25

5. Khun Yai was a great virtuous friend. She treated everyone equally. She wished for everyone to be a contributing member of the world and able to accumulate as much merit as possible as provisions for his future existences. Khun Yai was a gifted teacher. She has produced great Buddhist role models to preserve, protect, and perpetuate Buddhism. All the male householders taught by Khun Yai who later entered the monkhood have done great good work for the cause of Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakaya. Such remarkable examples include the Most Venerable Luang Por Dhammajayo, the Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya; and the Most Venerable Luang Por Dattajeevo, the Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya and other founding monks of Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

6. Khun Yai was extraordinarily patient. She often taught that the pursuit of Perfections required a great level of patience. She said that during the Most Venerable Luang Pu's time, she put up with everything undesirable just so that she could do whatever Luang Pu wanted her to do. She had served Luang Pu so well that once, Luang Pu remarked out loud in Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop that "Chandra is peerless!" Luang Pu had not given anyone else the same recognition.

7. Khun Yai had the highest reverence for the Triple Gem.

- Khun Yai's mind was constantly focused on the Lord Buddha in that she practiced Vijja Dhammakaya at all times as witnessed by the fact that she could recall the former existences of previous Buddhas while she was planting trees. Khun Yai sat down to practice meditation every day. Her mind traversed the Middle Way in the center of her body and stayed in the center of countless Buddhas' Dhammakaya at all times.

- Despite not being able to read or write or study the Scriptures, Khun Yai's conduct and every word uttered by her corresponded with the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

- Khun Yai had the highest reverence for the venerable monks. During Luang Pu's time, Khun Yai revered Luang Pu and followed his orders unconditionally. Although Khun Yai was the Dhamma teacher of the Abbot and Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, she venerated them both. In fact, Khun Yai venerated every monk and novice monk. She had the refectory built, and she was in charge of the preparation of food to be offered to every monk and novice monk. Whatever money she had, she offered it to the venerable monks. She regarded herself as merely a temple resident.

All of her life, Khun Yai had been an exemplary Buddhama. She performed only wholesome deeds. She practiced the Lord Buddha's Teachings to perfection. She had put her life on the line to accumulate merit and pursue Perfections. She was pure in body, speech, and mind. She was a person of her word. She is an exemplary role model of someone who follows in the footsteps of the Lord Buddha.

# CHAPTER



THE TRIPLE GEM

## **Chapter 3 - The Triple Gem**

3.1 What Is the Triple Gem?

3.2 The Inner Triple Gem

3.3 The Outer Triple Gem

3.4 The Life History of Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)

## CONCEPTS

1. The Triple Gem means the three gems which include the Buddha Gem, the Dhamma Gem, and the Sangha Gem. There are two categories of Triple Gem, namely, the Inner Triple Gem and the Outer Triple Gem.
2. The Inner Triple Gem means the three inner gems which dwell at the seventh base in the center of every human being's body. The Inner Buddha Gem means the Coarse Dhammakaya. The Inner Dhamma Gem means the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Coarse Dhammakaya and dwells in the center of the Dhammakaya. The Inner Sangha Gem means the Refined Dhammakaya that dwells in the center of the Coarse Dhammakaya's Dhamma Sphere. The Inner Triple Gem can be attained through Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation which requires the practitioner to keep his mind still and quiet at the seventh base in the center of his body.
3. The Outer Triple Gem is a Nemitaka name used to call the personages who have attained the Inner Triple Gem and include the Lord Buddha, the Lord Buddha's Teachings, and the Lord Buddha's Disciples or the Sangha.
4. Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) or the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam was a senior monk who had earnestly practiced Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation until he attained the Inner Triple Gem. Luang Pu discovered Vijja Dhammakaya after it had completely disappeared 500 years after the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To enable the student to understand the meaning of the Triple Gem.
2. To enable the student to learn about the Inner Triple Gem and the meditation practice which leads to the attainment of the Inner Triple Gem.
3. To enable the student to learn about the Outer Triple Gem.
4. To enable the student to learn about the life history of Phramonkolthepmuni, the Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya.

# THE TRIPLE GEM

In the last chapter, the student has already learnt that a Buddhamamaka is the worshipper of the Triple Gem. In this chapter, the student will learn about the meaning of the Triple Gem in greater detail.

## 3.1 What Is the Triple Gem?

The Triple Gem means the three kinds of gems, namely, the Buddha Gem, the Dhamma Gem, and the Sangha Gem.

There are two categories of Triple Gem, namely, the Outer Triple Gem and the Inner Triple Gem. People in general take the Triple Gem to mean the Lord Buddha, the Lord Buddha's Teachings called the Dhamma, and the Lord Buddha's disciples called the Sangha. In other words, people in general only know about the Outer Triple Gem. But the fact remains that there is still another category of Triple Gem called the Inner Triple Gem which dwells inside the body of every human being regardless of his race or creed.

However, both the Outer Triple Gem and the Inner Triple Gem are highly important. They represent the core of Buddhism. Only the Triple Gem has the power to extinguish suffering. The Lord Buddha says, "In the face of danger, human beings tend to take refuge in mountains, forests, buildings, or trees thinking them able to help them. But these things cannot help them to put an end to suffering. But whoever takes refuge in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha will be able to see (with his Supernormal Insight attained through meditation practice) the Four Noble Truths, namely, Dukkha (suffering), Samudaya (the cause of suffering), Nirodha (the cessation of suffering), and Magga-8 (the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of suffering. The penetration of the Four Noble Truths by the power of one's Supernormal Insight leads one to the end of suffering. Therefore, whoever takes refuge in the Triple Gem will be able to eventually put an end to suffering."<sup>1</sup>

## 3.2 The Inner Triple Gem

### 3.2.1 What is the Inner Triple Gem?

The Inner Triple Gem can be found inside every human being. It includes the Buddha Gem, the Dhamma Gem, and the Sangha Gem. The Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam described the Inner Triple Gem as follows.

The Buddha Gem means the Dhammakaya. The Dhammakaya, in turn, means the Kaya or the Body which leads to the attainment of Self-Enlightenment. Dhammakaya exists inside every human being. It is the Dhammakaya that leads the accomplished meditation practitioner to attain the Super-knowledge having to do with the Four Noble Truths, namely, Dukkha or suffering; Samudaya or the cause of suffering; Nirodha or the cessation of suffering, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Gāthā-Dhammapada* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 42, no. 24, p. 276-277

Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the end of suffering.<sup>2</sup>

Dhammakaya looks like a crystal clear Buddha Image complete with the thirty-two physical attributes of the Perfect Man. He is gloriously perfect in every way.

The Dhamma Gem is the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Dhammakaya or the Buddha Gem and dwells in the center of the body of the Buddha Gem.<sup>3</sup> Its duty is to preserve the Buddha Gem. The Dhamma Gem looks like a sphere and is as crystal clear as the Dhammakaya. The Sangha Gem is the Refined Dhammakaya dwelling inside the Dhamma Gem. His duty is to preserve the Dhamma Gem.

The Dhammakaya or the Buddha Gem is called “the Coarse Dhammakaya”. And it is the Coarse Dhammakaya that gives rise to the Dhamma Gem and the Sangha Gem. When the accomplished meditation practitioner is able to attain the Inner Buddha Gem or the Coarse Dhammakaya, he will also be able to attain the Dhamma Gem and the Sangha Gem respectively. The reason is that these three gems exist together. They depend on each other and they cannot be separated from each other.

The Inner Triple Gem is the true Triple Gem because it gives rise to the Outer Triple Gem. The Outer Triple Gem can happen only when the Inner Triple Gem has been attained. Therefore, the different names of the Outer Triple Gem are called Nemitaka<sup>4</sup> names because they are derived from their sources as follows.

Buddho means the Lord Buddha; it is the Nemitaka name derived from the Inner Buddha Gem. Dhammo means the Dhamma; it is the Nemitaka name derived from the Inner Dhamma Gem. Sangho means the Sangha; it is the Nemitaka name derived from the Inner Sangha Gem.

There are many Nemitaka names. For example, for the reason that the Lord Buddha’s mind is pure and bright and devoid of Kilesa (defilements), He is called “Arahan”.

The Lord Buddha’s Teachings are all about cause and effect. Having attained Self-Enlightenment, the Lord Buddha has taught others to do likewise. Therefore, He is also called “Sammāsambuddho”. Nemitaka name is also used in the secular world. For example, Queen Mallika was called Mallika by her family because at the time that she was born, a rain of jasmine flowers fell from the sky.

The Most Venerable Luang Pu said, “The Inner Triple Gem is thus called because it is crystal clear.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **Luang Por Wat Paknam’s Dhamma Legacy**, Article 13: Khemakhe-masaranagamana and Article 31: The Rattana Sutta (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2539 B.E.), p. 173-174, 381

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Article 28: Bhattanumodanakatha, p. 350

<sup>4</sup> Royal Institute Dictionary 2542 B.E. (Nanmee Books Publications, 2546 B.E.), p. 595

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 48

In the book “Tippayaamnat” published by the Mahamakut Buddhist University compiled by Phraariyagunadhara of Wat Suan Kuang in Konkaen Province described the appearance of an Arahant who has attained the Inner Triple Gem as follows. “The Indriya (sense-faculties) of an Arahant is called Indriya Gem because his eyes, ears, nose, body, and mind are crystal clear in that they are as pure as a crystal sphere. He has attained the crystal realm. He has seen the crystal Buddha who is an Arahant and who has already attained Complete Nibbana.”<sup>6</sup>

The Outer Triple Gem includes the Lord Buddha, the Lord Buddha’s Teachings or the Dhamma, and the Lord Buddha’s disciples or the Sangha.

The reason they are referred to as gems is because gems are the things that delight their owners. Whoever possesses diamonds delights in the fact that he is not a poor person. Gems delight whoever sees them whether or not they are the owner.

The Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam said, “The Inner Triple Gem which includes the Buddha Gem, the Dhamma Gem, and the Sangha Gem is the true identity of Buddhism. It is the core of Buddhism. A good Buddhist, whether he is a householder or a Buddhist monk, must attain the Inner Triple Gem. Otherwise, he cannot be called a true Buddhist.”<sup>7</sup>

The Outer Triple Gem is thus called because it is a Nemitaka name, for the real Triple Gem is the Inner Triple Gem which exists inside the Lord Buddha and inside each member of the Four Buddhist Communities as well as every human being regardless of his age, gender, race or creed. Had not the Bodhisatta Prince Siddhattha attained the Inner Triple Gem, he could have never been called the Buddha.

### **3.2.2 The Exact Location of the Inner Triple Gem**

The Inner Triple Gem can be found inside the body of every human being at the seventh base two fingers’ width above his navel in the center of his body.<sup>8</sup> Since the Inner Triple Gem is made up of highly refined elements, it is invisible to the naked eye. And it cannot be detected by any instrument, however hi-tech it may be. Therefore, people have scant understanding of it. Some claim that it does not exist. The Inner Triple Gem is however visible to the highly accomplished practitioner of Majjhimapatipada Meditation called Vijja Dhammakaya.

The Term Majjhimapatipada has two meanings, namely, the Middle Way and the Middle Way conduct.<sup>9</sup>

The Middle Way means the seventh base, two fingers’ wide above one’s navel in the center of one’s body.

The Middle Way conduct means the Noble Eightfold Path. It includes Sammaditthi or Right View; Sammasankappa or Right Thought; Sammavaca or Right Speech; Sammakammanta or Right Action; Sammaajiva or Right Livelihood; Sammavayama or Right Effort, Sammasati or

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<sup>6</sup> Phraariyagunadhara (Pusso Seng 6th Level Pali Studies graduate), **Tippayaamnat** 9 (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 2535 B.E.) p. 507-512

<sup>7</sup> Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **Luang Por Wat Paknam’s Dhamma Legacy**, Article 29: Bhattanu-modanakatha, (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2539 B.E.), p. 362-363

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 363

<sup>9</sup> Phrarajvaramuni (Prayut Payutto), **Buddhist Studies Dictionary** 3 (Bangkok: Daansuttakarnpim, 2528 B.E.) p. 228

Right Mindfulness; and Sammasamadhi or Right Concentration.

The Inner Triple Gem exists in the center of the body of every human being past, present, and future. The only difference between the Lord Buddha and other human beings is that He is the first human being to attain the Inner Triple Gem and then teaches it to others. A Paccekabuddha is a personage who has attained Self-Enlightenment but does not teach it to anyone. The Lord Buddha's Perfected Disciples are the Arahats who have practiced the Lord Buddha's Teachings until they are able to attain the Inner Triple Gem. Arahats are also called Anubuddha.

### **3.2.3 How to Attain the Inner Triple Gem**

To attain the Inner Triple Gem, one must practice Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path. Whoever practices Magga-8 earnestly will be able to gradually scrub his mind clean of Kilesa or defilements in the forms of Lobha or greed, Dosa or anger, and Moha or delusion. An accomplished practitioner will be able to eventually attain the Inner Triple Gem such that all of his defilements can be extinguished.

The Lord Buddha tells us that the crux of practicing Magga-8 is meditation practice, "Behold, monks, when you earnestly practice meditation, you will be able to extinguish all defilements whether or not you wish it. For by practicing meditation, you are essentially practicing Magga-8 in terms of Satipatthana-4 or Sammasati."<sup>10</sup>

This Buddha's Saying indicates that meditation practice is synonymous with practicing Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path.

What is meditation practice? It is written in the Atthakatha Commentary, "What natural state is practiced and maintained by a Yogi, that natural state is called Samadhibhavana or meditation."<sup>11</sup>

Samadhi here means Sammasamadhi or Right Concentration. It can be said that whoever practices Sammasamadhi is practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. The Lord Buddha says, "Behold monks, Sammasamadhi is composed of Sammaditthi (Right View), Sammasankappa (Right Thought), Sammavaca (Right Speech), Sammakammanta (Right Action), Sammaajiva (Right Livelihood), Sammavayama (Right Effort), and Sammasati (Right Mindfulness). Behold monks, the still and quiet mind is called Sammasamadhi and is composed of these seven components."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Aṅguttaranikāya Saṭṭakanipāta. Bhāvanā Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 37, no. 68, p. 252

<sup>11</sup> *Saddhammapakāsinī Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 68, p. 46

<sup>12</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Majjhimanikāya Uparipannāsa Mahācattārisaka Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 22, no. 253, p. 341

This Lord Buddha's Saying can be elaborated to mean that the first seven components of the Noble Eightfold Path give rise to Sammasamadhi such that when one practices Sammasamadhi, one is automatically practicing the first seven components of the Noble Eightfold Path as well. The higher the level of one's Sammasamadhi, the higher the level of one's Sammaditthi, Sammasankappa, Sammavaca, Sammakammanta, Sammaajiva, Sammavayama, and Sammasati will be. The higher the level of one's Sammasamadhi, the purer one's mind will be. The Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam said that when practicing meditation, one is to bring one's mind to a standstill at the seventh base in the center of one's body. One does so in a relaxed and continuous manner until one's mind falls into one's center and the "Pathamamagga Sphere" appears in the center of one's body. This is the Dhamma Sphere which will lead the practitioner to the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. Once one has attained the Pathamamagga Sphere, one continues to keep one's mind at a standstill in the center of one's Pathamamagga Sphere in a relaxed and continuous manner. When everything is just right, one will attain five other Dhamma Spheres, namely, the Sila Sphere, the Samadhi Sphere, the Panna Sphere, the Vimutti Sphere, and the Vimuttinanadassana Sphere respectively. One will have attained altogether six Dhamma Spheres. One continues to keep one's mind at a standstill in the center of the Vimuttinanadassana Sphere until everything is just right and the Refined Human Body or the Astral Body appears.

The next step requires one to continue keeping one's mind still and quiet at the seventh base in the center of one's Refined Human Body. When everything is just right, one will attain the six Dhamma Spheres dwelling in the center of one's Refined Human Body, namely, the Pathamamagga Sphere, the Sila Sphere, the Samadhi Sphere, the Panna Sphere, the Vimutti Sphere, and the Vimuttinanadassana Sphere respectively. One continues to keep one's mind at a standstill in a relaxed and continuous manner in the center of the Refined Human Body's Vimuttinanadassana Sphere until when everything is just right, the Coarse Celestial Body appears.

One continues to keep one's mind at a standstill in the center of one's Coarse Celestial Body until when everything is just right, one will attain the six respective Dhamma Spheres dwelling in the center of one's Coarse Celestial Body. When everything is just right, one will attain one's Refined Celestial Body, so on and so forth, to one's Coarse Form Brahma Body, Refined Form Brahma Body, Coarse Non-Form Brahma Body, Refined Non-Form Brahma Body, Coarse Gotrabhu Dhammakaya, Refined Gotrabhu Dhammakaya, Coarse Sotapanna Dhammakaya, Refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya, Coarse Sakadagami Dhammakaya, Refined Sakadagami Dhammakaya, Coarse Anagami Dhammakaya, Refined Anagami Dhammakaya, Coarse Arahat Dhammakaya, and Refined Arahat Dhammakaya. Each coarse and refined body has its own six Dhamma Spheres.

Once one has attained the Dhammakaya, it means that one has attained the Inner Triple Gem. The Inner Buddha Gem is the Coarse Dhammakaya.

The Inner Dhamma Gem is the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Coarse Dhammakaya

and dwells in the center of the Coarse Dhammakaya.

The Sangha Gem is the Refined Dhammakaya that dwells in the center of the Inner Dhamma Gem.

There are several levels of the Inner Triple Gem starting from Gotrabhu Dhammakaya to Arahant Dhammakaya.

In practicing Sammasamadhi for the purpose of attaining the Inner Triple Gem, all one has to do is to keep one's mind at a standstill at the seventh base in the center of his body in a relaxed and continuous manner until everything is just right and falls into place from the respective Dhamma Spheres to the respective coarse and refined bodies all the way to the Dhammakaya.

The attainment of the different levels of Ariyahood from Sotapanna Dhammakaya to Arahant Dhammakaya is dependent on the practitioner's level of Perfections or Parami. If the level of his Parami is not enough to attain Ariyahood, he will be able to attain Gotrabhu Dhammakaya and become one with Gotrabhu Dhammakaya making him a Gotrabhu Personage. The Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam insisted that everyone can attain the Dhammakaya if he practices Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation earnestly. The Pathamamagga Sphere: It means the entrance to the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. The term "Pathamamagga" appears in an ancient Buddhist Scripture called, "Mulakaccaya". But in the Tipitaka, it is called "Dhammanupassana-satipatthana" or "Ekayanamagga" which means the only path, that is, the only way which leads to the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. It means that no other way can lead to the Path and Fruit of Nibbana.

The Pathamamagga Sphere appears as a result of the meeting together of all eight components of Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path. This supernatural event is called "Maggasamangi"<sup>13</sup> A person who is able to cause the coming together of Magga-8 is called "A person replete with Maggasamangi".<sup>14</sup> If the person has attained the Maggasamangi at the Lokutara level, he is called "an Ariyamaggasamangi personage."<sup>15</sup>

The size of each person's Pathamamagga Sphere is different depending on the person's level of Perfections or Parami. It can be as small as the star seen in the sky or it can be the size of the moon or the sun as seen from the earth. The Pathamamagga Sphere is as pure and clear as a mirror. The Sila Sphere, the Samadhi Sphere, the Panna Sphere, the Vimutti Sphere, and the Vimuttinadassana Sphere are of the same size as the Pathamamagga Sphere.

More details about how to attain the Inner Triple Gem can be found in the group of courses on Samadhi or meditation practice which comprises eight different courses from MD 101: Meditation 1, Basic Meditation Practice to MD 408: Meditation 8: Vipassanakammathana.

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<sup>13</sup> Dattajeevo Bhikku, **The Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta** (Bangkok 2537 B.E.) p. 144

<sup>14</sup> *Abhidhammapiṭaka Aṭṭhasalini Aṭṭhakathā-dhammasaṅghī* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 76, p. 514

<sup>15</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 68, no. 147, p. 754

### 3.2.4 Evidences of the Dhammakaya

There are mentions of Dhammakaya in several scriptures, namely, the Tipitaka, the Tika Commentary, the Visuddhimagga, the Milinda Questions, the Pathamasamabodhikatha, in gold leaf inscriptions, stone tablet inscriptions, and other Buddhist texts. There are a large number of mentions found in the Mahayana School Scriptures. But here, only those found in the Theravada School Scriptures will be mentioned.

1) The Lord Buddha said in the Agganna Sutta that the terms “Dhammakaya”, “Brahmakaya”, “Dhammabhuta” or “Brahmabhuta” are the names used to call the Tathagata.<sup>16</sup>

2) In the Sarabhangatheragatha, Venerable Sarabhangha Thera said that whatever was practiced by the Lord Vipassi Buddha, the Lord Sikhi Buddha, the Lord Vessabhu Buddha, the Lord Kakusandha Buddha, the Lord Konagamana, and the Lord Kassapa Buddha was also practiced by the Lord Gotama Buddha. All of these seven Buddhas are devoid of craving and attachment. They have achieved emancipation and are reborn of Dhammakaya. The Dhammakaya enables them to teach living beings the Four Noble Truths, namely, Dukkha, the Cause of Dukkha, the Cessation of Dukkha, and the Path Leading to the Cessation of Dukkha.<sup>17</sup>

3) In the Paccekabuddhapadana, it is written that all Paccekabuddhas possess great Dhamma, possess a large number of Dhammakaya, have achieved emancipation, and have put an end to Dukkha.<sup>18</sup>

4) In the Mahapajapatigotamitheriyapadana, Mahapajapatigotami Theri said, “Most Exalted One, I was once like a mother to you. But now you are like my father, for you have given me the happiness born of your Teachings. You have caused me to be reborn. I took care of you and raised you. But you have caused my Dhammakaya to grow.”<sup>19</sup>

5) In the Atthasandassakatherapadana, Venerable Atthasandassaka said, “The Lord Buddha teaches us the Dhammakaya that gives rise to every gem. Who then can resist having faith in Him?”<sup>20</sup> Evidences of Dhammakaya as cited above have three notable features which correspond with the teaching of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Luang Pu Wat Paknam) as follows.

1) To be the Buddha or the Tathagata means “Being one with the Dhammakaya” or having attained the Dhammakaya. Buddhahood does not mean the human body but it means the Dhammakaya as stated by Venerable Sarabhangha Thera, “All seven Buddhas happened as a result of having attained the Dhammakaya”; or as stated by the Lord Buddha, “Dhammakaya is the name of the Tathagata.”

<sup>16</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Pāṭikavagga Aggañña Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 11, no. 118, p. 88

<sup>17</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Theraggāthā Sattakanipāta Sarabhaṇagāthā* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 26, no. 490-492, p. 422

<sup>18</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Apadāna Paccekabuddhapadāna Buddhavagga* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 32, no. 134, p. 24

<sup>19</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Apadāna Mahāpajāpati-Gotamī- Theriyāpadāna* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 33, no. 130-131, p. 404

<sup>20</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya Apadāna Atthasandassaka-Therāpadāna* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 32, no. 50, p. 301

2) It is written in the Sarabhangatheragatha that all seven Buddhas happened as a result of having attained the Dhammakaya; therefore, they could teach the Four Noble Truths. Luang Pu Wat Paknam said that Dhammakaya enables the Bodhisatta to attain Self-Enlightenment and penetrate the Four Noble Truths, namely, Dukkha, the cause of Dukkha, the cessation of Dukkha, and the path leading to the cessation of Dukkha (the Noble Eightfold Path).<sup>21</sup>

3) Dhammakaya exists inside the body of every human being. He exists inside the body of every Buddha, every Paccekabuddha, every disciple of the Lord Buddha, and every human being. “All Paccekabuddhas possess great Dhamma, possess a large number of Dhammakaya;” and “But you have caused my Dhammakaya to grow.”

It is for these reasons that the Lord Buddha’s disciples who are able to attain Enlightenment after the manner of the Lord Buddha are called Buddhasavaka, Anubuddha, Sutabuddha or Bahusuttabuddha. All of these names have the same meaning in that they have attained the Inner Buddha or the Dhammakaya.

4) Dhammakaya is the source of gems as stated by Venerable Atthasandassaka Thera, “The Lord Buddha who manifests the Dhammakaya is the source of all gems.” According to the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam, gems here mean the Three Gems or the Triple Gem, namely, the Buddha Gem, the Dhamma Gem, and the Sangha Gem. These three gems exist together.

### **3.2.5 Dhammakaya’s Supernormal Power**

The Dhammakaya that exists inside the body of every human being possesses great supernormal power. Once a person has attained the Dhammakaya, he can accomplish such supernormal feats as recalling his previous existences, reading another person’s mind, knowing the future, curing a sick person, visiting Nibbana, visiting the Hell Realm, helping someone out of the Hell Realm, etc. But the most important supernormal power of the Dhammakaya is the ability to extinguish all of the person’s defilements.

Much has been written about the supernormal power of the Dhammakaya. Here, examples will be given of the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam who has attained the Dhammakaya. Luang Pu is the Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya which had completely disappeared 500 years after the Lord Buddha’s attainment of Complete Nibbana.

Somdet Pa or Somdet Phraariyavongsakatayana (Poon Punnasiri) of Wat Chetupon, the 17<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, wrote...Once, the writer (meaning Somdet Phraariyavongsakatayana) came for lunch at Wat Paknam. Many laypeople came to offer alms to the monks and novice monks. Having offered food to the monks, a wealthy merchant from Sampeng Market paid homage to Luang Pu Wat Paknam and said, “Luang Por, will anyone come to the temple today to make a donation towards the cells used for practicing meditation?” (During Luang Pu’s time, he was called Luang Por which means venerable father.) No less than twenty persons heard the question, and everyone was watching Luang Por and waiting for his answer.

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<sup>21</sup> Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), Luang Por Wat Paknam’s Dhamma Legacy, Article 13: Khemakhemasaranagamana and Article 31: The Rattana Sutta (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2539 B.E.), p. 173-174, 381

At the time, the writer felt annoyed at the merchant and could not help but fret. The writer watched Luang Por but his countenance was bright and cheerful. He closed his eyes for five minutes and said, “Yes!” followed by “two or three cells.” He repeated his answer.

The writer could not taste the food afterward, for he was annoyed at the merchant for putting Luang Por on the spot. He should not have asked the question out in public like that but should ask Luang Por in private instead. The writer also found fault with Luang Por for not having the wherewithal to resolve the situation by saying something like he had not yet looked into it. But to answer two or three cells like that was putting himself at risk; and his reputation might come to harm. All the writer could do was to pray that some persons would come to make the donations. After dessert, no one came yet. The writer kept finding fault with Luang Por for not being more circumspect.

When it was near the time for the monks to give their blessings, a group of men and women came to pay homage to Luang Por and tell him that they were moved to fund the building of two or three additional cells at the cost of three to four hundred baht per cell. Luang Por merely smiled and beckoned to the merchant, “These are the owners of three new cells.” The merchant jumped up and bowed low at Luang Por’s feet while saying, “Truly incredible!” The writer felt so relieved that he broke out in a sweat.

The writer thought perhaps the whole thing was pre-planned so he talked to one of the donors, “Did you tell Luang Por beforehand that you would come to make your donation today?” And he said, “No! What happened was that I wanted to make a donation after seeing the cells, but I was afraid that I did not have enough money on me. It so happened that I ran into some friends and they thought it was a good idea too. That is why together we have enough money to pay for a few cells.” This incident happened before WWII or about twenty years ago.

After the laypeople had left, the writer had a conversation with Luang Por in private where he praised Luang Por for his insight. Still, the writer cautioned him to be more circumspect next time and to avoid answering such a question in public; otherwise, he might risk losing his reputation if his answer did not turn out to be correct. Luang Por said to the writer, “You are a fool! The Lord Buddha’s Teachings are all about Truth. Dhammakaya never deceives anyone!” With that answer, the writer had to keep quiet.

When Somdet Pa was holding the monastic title of Phrathammadilok, the Most Venerable Luang Pu predicted that he would one day become the Supreme Patriarch. No one believed it at the time because there were other more senior and more qualified candidates. And yet, in 2515 B.E., thirteen years after Luang Pu’s passing, Somdet Pa did indeed become the Supreme Patriarch.

It was for this reason that Somdet Pa went to pay homage to Luang Pu’s body on August 8, 2515 B.E. On that occasion, he said, “I came here today with the intention to pay homage to Luang Por for the very reason that what he had predicted has now become true.”

These are but a few examples of the Dhammakaya’s Supernormal Power. Additional information can be found in the book, “Stories about Luang Por Wat Paknam as told by Somdet

Pa” and other books. Whoever practices meditation earnestly until he can attain the Dhammakaya will possess Supernormal Power. During Luang Pu’s time, a large number of people were able to attain the Dhammakaya.

### **3.3 The Outer Triple Gem**

The Outer Triple Gem includes the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma or His Teachings, and the Sangha or His disciples. More details about the Outer Triple Gem are as follows.

#### **3.3.1 The Lord Buddha: Phrasammasambuddha**

The prefix “Phra” is used as an expression of reverence.

The word “Samma” means rightly or correctly.

The word “Sam” means by one’s self or without a teacher.

The word “Buddha” has several meanings according to the Atthagatha Commentary. Buddha means penetrating the truth; waking living beings up; being omniscient; being all seeing; attaining Self-Enlightenment; being joyful; being removed of all defilements.

In summary, the term “Sammāsambuddha” means the attainer of Self-Enlightenment.

The Lord Gotama Buddha’s history has been known for more than 2,500 years. He was born the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Sirimahamaya of the city of Kapilavastu. Queen Sirimahamaya came from the House of Koliya of the city of Devadaha. At the end of her ten-month pregnancy, she returned to her birthplace in order to give birth to her infant as was the customary practice in those days. Half-way there, she decided to visit the Lumbini Park. While there, she experienced the birth pangs and gave birth to her infant son under the Burmese Sal tree. The birth took place on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon just before noon eighty years before the Buddhist Era.

Five days after the infant prince was born, King Suddhodana invited 108 learnt Brahmins to dine at the palace. Out of these 108 Brahmins, only eight were experts in the art of predicting a person’s fortune based on his physical attributes. They were also called upon to name the infant prince.

Having seen the infant prince’s physical attributes, seven Brahmins predicted that the prince could turn out in two ways. If he remained a householder, he would become a Universal Monarch. But if he took up the religious life, he would attain Self-Enlightenment and become the Buddha. Only the youngest Brahmin called Kondanna predicted that the infant prince would definitely take up the religious life, attain Self-Enlightenment, and become the Buddha. All eight Brahmins were unanimous in terms of the infant prince’s name which was “Siddhattha” or “Siddharatha”. It means wish fulfillment. When Prince Siddhattha was seven days old, his mother passed away. The infant prince then came under the care of King Suddhodana’s second queen who was also the prince’s maternal aunt called Queen Mahapajapati.

Prince Siddhattha had one half-brother called Prince Nanda and one half-sister called Princess Rupananda. He also had several cousins of similar age. These included Prince Mahanama and Prince Anuruddha, the sons of Prince Asukakodana; Prince Ananda, the son of Prince

Amitodana; and Prince Devadatta, the son of his paternal aunt Queen Amita. Out of these cousins, only Prince Mahanama was older than Prince Siddhattha.

When Prince Siddhattha was seven years old, he was educated by the learnt Brahmins of the court. King Suddhodana realized the prince's extraordinarily high level of intelligence, and sent him to be educated at the school of the renowned sage, Master Visavamitta. Prince Siddhattha was learnt in all the branches of the art such that he could easily assume the position of king and Universal Monarch in the future.

When Prince Siddhattha was sixteen years old, King Suddhodana arranged a marriage between the prince and Princess Yasodhara or Bimba, the daughter of King Suppabuddha and Queen Amita and the sister of Prince Devadatta. The couple later had a child together called Prince Rahula. Prince Siddhattha lived the life of uncommon ease and luxury. King Suddhodana did everything he could to provide the prince with every desirable thing hoping that the prince would continue to live the householder's life and eventually become a Universal Monarch.

The Prince's accumulated merit and Perfections caused him to meet with the four celestial messengers in the forms of an old person, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk. These messengers reminded the prince of life's inherent suffering which caused him to want to find the way to put an end to suffering once and for all. He knew that the only way he could do this was to take up the religious life. One night when Prince Siddhattha was twenty-nine years old, he decided to leave the palace on the royal steed called Kanthaka in order to take up the religious life. He was accompanied by his page, Channa. When they arrived at the bank of the Anoma River, Prince Siddhattha vowed to become a monk and cut off his hair.

As a monk, Prince Siddhattha went to study under the two Yogis called Alara and Udaka respectively. He had learnt from them all that they had to teach him. He realized that what he had learnt could not yet lead him to put an end to suffering. Therefore, he decided to take up self-mortification which in those days was believed to lead to the attainment of Self-

Enlightenment. Having practiced self-mortification to the fullest extent for six long years, he realized that it could not lead him to attain Self-Enlightenment. He then decided to practice Majjhimapatipada (Middle Way) Meditation. He eventually attained the Dhammakaya that enabled him to penetrate the Four Noble Truths and extinguish all defilements. As a result, He became the Lord Buddha. This momentous event took place on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon forty-five years before the Buddhist Era.

It is amazing how the Lord Buddha's birth, attainment of Self-Enlightenment, and attainment of Complete Nibbana fell on the same day which was the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon. This very special day is called, "Visakha Puja Day". It is the Lord Buddha's Day.

Having attained Self-Enlightenment and become the Lord Buddha, the Lord Gotama Buddha spent the rest of His life teaching the Truth to all living beings, to the people of every social class, and to the people outside the caste system. A large number of human beings and celestial beings were able to attain the Dhammakaya. A large number of people pledged themselves a Buddhama by taking refuge in the Triple Gem for the rest of their lives. The Lord Buddha

was an exemplary teacher and He knew exactly how to teach each person based on his level of education, background, and intrinsic nature. The Lord Buddha had spent a total of forty-five years teaching the Truth or the Dhamma until His Teachings had spread far and wide. The Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon when He was eighty years old.

The Lord Buddha's life history is well known. There are a large number of evidences which attested to His existence and include ancient scriptures, ancient writings, archaeological artifacts, archaeological structures, and other archaeological findings. Before attaining Self-Enlightenment, Prince Siddhattha had known the ultimate in terms of ease and luxury. He was replete with corporeal wealth, material wealth, and desirable attributes. He could have easily become a Universal Monarch having dominion over the four human worlds. In terms of corporeal wealth, it was the most sublime, since He possessed all the thirty-two physical attributes of the Perfect Man. Every Buddha past, present, and future possesses all the thirty-two physical attributes of the Perfect Man. At the very most, only five Buddhas can happen within a Kappa or an Earth Age.

The Lord Buddha's attainment of Self-Enlightenment cannot be accomplished using His intelligence and intellect, however high they might be. But it can only be accomplished by Bhavanamayapanna or the Supernormal Insight gained through the Middle Way Meditation where His mind was brought to a complete standstill. The Lord Buddha said, "The Dhamma (the Truth) which I have attained is profound and difficult to see and penetrate. It is tranquil and refined. It cannot be gained just by thinking..."<sup>22</sup> The Pali term Attakavacaro means it cannot be gained by thinking. It can be discovered only by the Nana (Supernormal Insight).<sup>23</sup> Nana or Supernormal Insight can be gained only through elevated meditative attainments. It is the kind of Panna or insight called Bhavanamayapanna as opposed to Sutamayapanna or the insight gained from listening and Cintamayapanna or the insight gained from thinking. At the time that the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam attained the Dhammakaya, he made the remark, "Gambhirocayan: How profound indeed is the Dhamma! Who will ever guess it? It is beyond thinking. As long as thought is present, the Dhammakaya cannot be attained. To attain the Dhammakaya, one must first bring all thoughts to come to a standstill. The still mind leads to the cessation of all thoughts. Cessation of all thoughts leads to the birth of Supernormal Insight. Without cessation of all thoughts, the birth of Supernormal Insight cannot happen. This is the truth. This is the know-how. If one's mind cannot be brought to a complete standstill in just the right way, one can never attain the Dhammakaya."

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<sup>22</sup> Vinayapiṭaka Mahāvagga. Apposasukakathā (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 6, no. 7, p. 29

<sup>23</sup> Sāraṭhapakathāsīnī Aṭṭhakathā-samyuttanikāya Sagāthavagga (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 25, p. 115

### 3.3.2 The Dhamma: The Lord Buddha's Teachings

In 3.2, the student has already learnt that in regards to the Inner Triple Gem, the Inner Dhamma means the Inner Dhamma Gem. It is the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Dhammakaya and can be found at the seventh base in the center of the body of every human being. In regards to the Outer Triple Gem, the Dhamma means the Lord Buddha's Teachings which flow out of the Inner Triple Gem.

During the Lord Buddha's time, His Teachings can be divided into two parts, namely, the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Before attaining Complete Nibbana, the Lord Buddha said, "The Dhamma I have taught, the Vinaya I have decreed will be your teacher after I am gone."<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the term "Dhamma" does not apply to all of the Lord Buddha's Sayings. It applies to all the Lord Buddha's Teachings except for the Vinaya. However, when the term is meant as part of the Triple Gem, then it includes all of the Lord Buddha's Sayings.

The term "Vinaya" means all of the Precepts observed by the male and female monks, the novice monks, and the householders. It includes the Five Precepts, the Eight Precepts, the Uposathasila, etc.

To be more precise, it can be said that the Dhamma means the Lord Buddha's Teachings whereas the Vinaya means the Lord Buddha's Commands. Therefore, Dhamma-Vinaya means the Lord Buddha's Teachings and Commands.

In the beginning, the Lord Buddha taught the Dhamma which included the Four Noble Truths, etc., but no Vinaya had yet to be decreed. With the increasing number of monks who came from different backgrounds and differed in terms of their intrinsic nature, some of the monks did not conduct themselves properly especially in regards to honor and gain. Their improper conduct induced the laypeople's criticism. Each improper incident prompted the Lord Buddha to decree a command forbidding the Buddhist monks to behave improperly.

After the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana, Buddhists have adhered to the Dhamma-Vinaya. However, at the time that the Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana, the Dhamma-Vinaya had not yet been written down and part of the Dhamma-Vinaya had gone missing. It was therefore necessary for the Perfected Disciples (Arahats) to conduct a Sangiti. The term "Sangiti" means rehearsal, chanting together, compilation. It means a general convocation of the Sangha in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the Scriptures.<sup>25</sup>

To date, Sangiti has been conducted several times but only three are acknowledged by every Buddhist school. These included the first three Sangiti conducted in India.

The First Sangiti was conducted near the city of Rajagarh three months after the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana. It was participated by 500 Arahats. The presiding Arahats was Venerable Mahakassapa. He also acted as the questioner. Venerable Upali answered all

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<sup>24</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga. Māhāparinibbāna Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 13, no. 141, p. 320

<sup>25</sup> Phradhamkittivong (Thongdee Suratejo, graduate of the 9th level Pali Studies, Royal Scholar), Kum Wat (Bangkok: Liang Chiang Publishing, 2548 B.E.) p. 1041

the questions in regards to the Vinaya whereas Venerable Ananda answered all the questions in regards to the Dhamma. Venerable Ananda's answers were always preceded by the phrase, "Evamme sutan: I have heard thus." It means that he had heard it either from the Lord Buddha or other Arahats such as Venerable Sariputta, etc.

The Second Sangiti was conducted in 100 B.E. And the Third Sangiti was conducted in 236 B.E. in the city of Pataliputta in India during the reign of Asoka the Great. During the Third Sangiti, all of the Dhamma-Vinaya was categorized into three parts called the Tipitaka. The Tipitaka consists of the Vinayapitaka, the Suttantapitaka, and the Abhidhammapitaka. The word "Pitaka" means a basket and "Tipitaka" or three baskets are used to contain the three different categories of the Lord Buddha's Teachings and Commands. The Lord Buddha's Commands or Disciplinary Rules are contained in the Vinayapitaka. The Lord Buddha's Teachings are divided into two categories, namely, the Suttantapitaka which contains the Sutta or the Dhamma lectures given to different persons on different occasions; and the Abhidhammapitaka which contains such Dhamma topics as Citta, Cetasika, Rupa, Nibbana, etc.

Both the Sutta and the Abhidhamma are the Lord Buddha's Sayings as evidenced by the writing about Venerable Dabbamallaputta who was in charge of arranging accommodations for the Buddhist monks. It was written, "The monks who are well versed in the Sutta are given accommodations in one area so that they can rehearse the Sutta together. The monks who are well versed in the Vinaya (the Disciplinary Rules) are given accommodations in another area so that they can consider the Vinaya together. The monks who are well versed in the Abhidhamma are given accommodations in yet another area so that they can converse about the Abhidhamma together."<sup>26</sup>

In those days, the Tipitaka was not yet written down and it was passed on through the oral tradition. It was therefore necessary that the monks who committed certain parts of the Tipitaka to memory got together to rehearse what they had memorized to make sure that they had memorized it correctly. It was how chanting the Lord Buddha's Teachings originated. The Tipitaka had been kept and passed on through the oral tradition until it was written down in the Magadha language on palm leaves during the fifth Sangiti held in Sri Lanka in 433 B.E. during the reign of King Vattagamaniabhaya.<sup>27</sup> There was great concern at the time that with the limited capacity of each monk's memory, it was difficult for the entire Tipitaka to be memorized. Therefore, the fifth Sangiti was held for the specific purpose of rehearsing and writing down the Lord Buddha's Teachings.<sup>28</sup>

Another name used to call the Magadha language is "Pali" which means origin or example. The word Pali was the word used to call the dike surrounding a rice paddy. Its function is to

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<sup>26</sup> *Vinayapiṭaka Mahāvibhaṅg Part I. Saṅghādisesasikkhā* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 3, no. 541, p. 448

<sup>27</sup> *Vinayapiṭaka Mahāvagga* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2539 B.E.), vol. 4, p.1

<sup>28</sup> Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara Somdet Phra Sangharaj (Charoen Suvaḍḍhano), *Dhammadussadi*, (Bangkok: Songsiam, 2537 B.E.), p. 25

define the area of each rice paddy as well as serving as irrigation for rice farming. In Buddhism, the word Pali is used to define the contents of the Lord Buddha's Teachings such that nothing else can be added to them. Therefore, the word Pali is not the name of a language. The name of the language is called Magadha or Magadhi spoken by the people of Magadha.

However, the term Pali language has come to be more frequently used than the term Magadha language. For this reason, when referring to the language used to write down the Tipitaka, it is often referred to as the Pali language.

It is the customary practice of the Buddhist monks to conduct every Sanghakamma (important monastic rituals) using the Pali language. Examples include the ordination ceremony and chanting. The Thai language contains many words borrowed from the Pali language. The words Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha are Pali words which have no counterparts in the Thai language.

In writing down the Tipitaka on the palm leaves at the time, the Sinhala alphabets were used. Later, other Buddhist countries recorded the Tipitaka on the palm leaves using their own alphabets. Today, the Tipitaka can be found written using the Sinhala alphabets in Sri Lanka, the Devanagari alphabets in India, the Khom alphabets, the Burmese alphabets, the Thai alphabets, and the Roman alphabets of the Pali Text Society in Great Britain. The Thai alphabet Tipitaka was written down for the first time during the reign of King Rama V between 2431 and 2436 B.E. The king had the palm-leaf Khom Tipitaka copied using the Thai alphabets. The Thai alphabet Tipitaka was edited and published in thirty-nine volumes for the first time.<sup>29</sup>

Between 2468 and 2473 B.E., King Rama VII had the first Thai Alphabet Tipitaka edited and published by Mahamakut Buddhist University in forty-five volumes called "The Siamratha Tipitaka". Sometime later, the Atthakatha Commentary was translated into Thai at Mahamakut Buddhist University and published as an appendix to the Siamratha Tipitaka giving it a total of ninety-one volumes as it exists today. In 2539 B.E., the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Tipitaka was published for the first time.

The Atthakatha Commentry includes the texts explaining the Tipitaka and was written in 956 B.E. Other Buddhist texts include the Tika and the Anutika. The Tika includes the texts explaining the Atthakatha Commentary and was written in 1587 B.E. The Anutika includes the texts explaining the Tika. The Tipitaka, the Atthakatha Commentary, the Tika, and the Anutika are four important texts in Buddhism, the Tipitaka being the most important because it contains the Lord Buddha's Teachings. The Atthakatha Commentary, the Tika, and the Anutika assume a secondary role. There are also many other Buddhist texts in existence.

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<sup>29</sup> Phraamornmethajarn (Nakhon Khemapali), Phrametheedhammaporn (Prayoon Dhammajitto) and Tipitaka Team ((Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2538 B.E.), p.3

### 3.3.3 The Sangha: The Lord Buddha's Disciples

The term “Sangha” is a Pali word and means the Buddhist monk (Bhikkhu) or Buddhist monks (Sangha).<sup>30</sup>

In referring to the Buddhist monks, the term Sangha can mean one Buddhist monk or more than four Buddhist monks since the word Sangha means a group. It is written in the Atthakatha Commentary, “Sangha va gana va: It means a group, a team or a community.”<sup>31</sup>

Words used to mean the Buddhist monks or Sangha include: Phra, Bhikkhu, Phrabhikkhusangha, Pabbajita, Samana.

The word “Phra” is derived from the Pali word “Vara” which means sublime, excellent, wondrous.<sup>32</sup>

The word “Bhikkhu” is a Pali word which means seeing the danger of the round of rebirth.<sup>33</sup>

The word “Bhikkhu” is derived from the words, “Bhaya + Ikkha + Ru + Paccaya”. Bhaya means danger specifically danger in the round of rebirth. Ikkha means seeing. Therefore, Bhikkhu means seeing the danger in the round of rebirth or a person who sees the danger in the round of rebirth.

The word “Phra” is used to precede the word “Bhikkhu” as a complimentary address and becomes “Phrabhikkhu” to mean a Bhikkhu who is sublime, excellent, or wondrous. A female Bhikkhu is called a Bhikkhuni.

The word “Pabbajita” comes from the Pali phrase “Pabbajito” which means having taken up the religious life.<sup>34</sup> The Royal Institute defines Pabbajita as a Buddhist monk whereas the monks of other religions are called Titthiya.<sup>35</sup>

The word “Samana” comes from the Pali word “Samano” which means the extinguisher of Pāpa or demerit.

There are two categories of Sangha, namely, Samatisangha and Ariyasangha.

Samatisangha means Sangha by convention, agreement, authorization or appointment. These Buddhist monks have been carefully screened by a company of Buddhist monks for their qualifications and have been ordained (Upasamapada) according to the Dhamma-Vinaya. The term is used to call the Buddhist monks who have not yet attained the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. Those who have attained the Path and Fruit of Nibbana starting with Sotapanna are called Ariyasangha.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya Theragāthā. Atthakathā-nāgī-theragāthā* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 50, p. 415

<sup>31</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya Itivuttaka. Atthakathā-pasāda Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 45, p. 566-567

<sup>32</sup> Phradhamkittivong (Thongdee Suratejo, graduate of the 9th level Pali Studies, Royal Scholar), **Kum Wat** (Bangkok: Liang Chiang Publishing, 2548 B.E.) p. 635

<sup>33</sup> *Saddhammapajjotikā Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya. Mahāniddes Guhaṭṭhakasuttaniddes* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 65, p. 291

<sup>34</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya Theragāthā. Atthakathā-sugantha-theragāthā.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 50, p. 170

<sup>35</sup> **The Royal Institute Dictionary, 2542 B.E.** (Bangkok: Nanmee Books Publications, 2546 B.E.) p. 606

<sup>36</sup> Phradhammakittivong (Tongdee Suratejo, graduate of the Ninth Level Pali Studies, Royal Scholar), **Kum Wat** (Bangkok: Liang Chiang, 2548 B.E.), p. 1006

A householder who has attained for example the Fruit of Sotapanna is also called Ariyasangha for his attainment of the Sotapanna Dhammakaya.

Ariyasangha is also referred to as Ariyapuggala (Ariya Personage), Ariyahood, etc.

Ariyasangha consists of four pairs of personages or eight categories of personages that include:

A personage who has attained the Path (Magga) of Sotapanna or the Coarse Sotapanna Dhammakaya;

A personage who has attained the Fruit (Phala) of Sotapanna or the Refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya;

A personage who has attained the Path (Magga) of Sakadagami or the Coarse Sakadagami Dhammakaya;

A personage who has attained the Fruit (Phala) of Sakadagami or the Refined Sakadagami Dhammakaya;

A personage who has attained the Path (Magga) of Anagami or the Coarse Anagami Dhammakaya;

A personage who has attained the Fruit (Phala) of Anagami or the Refined Anagami Dhammakaya;

A Personage who has attained the Path (Magga) of Arahatsip or the Coarse Arahats Dhammakaya; and

A Personage who has attained the Fruit (Phala) of Arahatsip or the Refined Arahats Dhammakaya.<sup>37</sup> The four pairs of Ariyasangha are as follows.

The first pair: Sotapattimagga and Sotapattiphala

The second pair: Sakadagamimagga and Sakadagamiphala

The third pair: Anagamimagga and Anagamiphala

The fourth pair: Arahatsmagga and Arahatsphala<sup>38</sup>

The Lord Buddha said to the ascetic Subhadda, “Behold, Subhadda, wherever the eight components of Ariyamagga are not taught, Samana numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 cannot be found there. Wherever the eight components of Ariyamagga are taught, Samana numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be found there. Subhadda, this Dhamma-Vinaya (religion) teaches the eight components of Ariyamagga; therefore, Samana numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be found in this Dhamma-Vinaya. All other Dhamma-Vinaya are devoid of Ariyasangha.

Subhadda, for as long as these Ariyasangha exist, the world will not be devoid of Arahats.”<sup>39</sup>

The Atthakatha Commentary explains further that Samana number 1 is Sotapanna; Samana number 2 is Sakadagami; Samana number 3 is Anagami; and Samana number 4 is Arahats.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, the word Samana applies only to Ariyasangha. And such Samana exist only in this

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<sup>37</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Atthakathā- Abhidhammapiṭaka Puggalapāññati. Atthakaniddes.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 79, no. 150, p. 455

<sup>38</sup> *Papañcasudhanī Atthakathā-Majjhimanikāya Mūlapaṇṇāsa. Atthakathā-Cullasīhanād Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 18, p. 15-16

<sup>39</sup> Suttantapiṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga. Māhāparinibbāna Sutta. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 13, no. 138, p. 318

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 436

Dhamma-Vinaya, that is, in Buddhism.

Do Ariyasangha exist today? No one can tell for certain. But what is certain is that most of the Buddhist monks today are Samatisangha. Still, they play a very important role in perpetuating the Lord Buddha's Teachings. It can be said that Buddhism still exists today because of these Samatisangha. And the human beings who have the best opportunity to advance themselves to the level of Ariyasangha are the Samatisangha. That is not to say that householders cannot do so. They can but very rarely since they have to bear the burden of worldly obligations. A large number of Buddhist monks during the Lord Buddha's time started out as Samatisangha. But with the help of the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures and their earnest meditation practice, they eventually advanced themselves to the level of Ariyasangha.

Therefore, it would behoove the householders to support and provide for the Sangha without regards to whether or not they are Ariyasangha so long as they continue to practice righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya as well as practicing meditation. They will be able to attain Ariyahood if not here and now then in a future existence. Importantly, supporting and providing for the Samatisangha bear tremendous fruit as taught by the Lord Buddha, "In the future, there will only be Gotarabhubhikkhu...any alms offered to the Sangha of the future bears uncountable and incomparable fruits..."<sup>41</sup> Gotarabhubhikkhu means Samatisangha.

Some students may feel that today the Buddhist monks seem to be receiving a bad press quite frequently and they feel disinclined to support and provide for the Buddhist monks. It must be pointed out here that news today emphasizes what is negative, bad or even false. Someone puts it aptly, "Bad news receives free press. Good news costs money to print." In surveying the front page of the Daily News Newspaper on Sunday, May 24, 2552 B.E., it is found that there are altogether eleven different news items. Two of them have to do with politics. Two of them have to do with things in general. But seven of them are bad news which include murder, suicide, criminal acts, etc. Such bad news is presented in large letters and accompanied by ghastly photos.

In fact, political news these days is about gossips and scandals. Some of them are true but others are not. What seems to be most popular is some negative aspects about a certain celebrity's personal life which in some cases put an end to one's career. Young people unwittingly fall prey to such news in that when something bad is printed, it is only a matter of time before the same act is repeated by some young person somewhere.

All the newspapers are similar in that of all the news printed in the front page, 60-80% of it is bad or negative news. At the time when General Surayut Julanon was Prime Minister, he had the following to say to the media. "...The media are part of society. If they choose to emphasize and print only bad or negative news without printing anything useful or positive, society will suffer." He also referred to a comment made by the physician, Dr. Pravate Vasi, a senior citizen,

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<sup>41</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Majjhimanikāya Uparipannāsa. Dakkhināvibhaṅg Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 23, no. 713, p. 395

‘If it is bad news, it gets printed. But if it is good news, someone has to pay for it to get printed.’ The general cautioned the media that they must be cognizant of these things in order to help the society.<sup>42</sup>

Today in Thailand, there are around 300,000 Buddhist monks and novice monks. It should not be surprising that there may be incidents where the Dhamma-Vinaya has been transgressed. After all, there are good and bad people in this world. It is possible that some bad persons have entered the monkhood. During the Lord Buddha’s time, there were some Buddhist monks who had transgressed against the Dhamma-Vinaya to the point where they could no longer considered to be a Buddhist monk. At the same time, a large number of monks had practiced the Lord Buddha’s Teachings to the point where they were able to attain Ariyahood. Today, there are a large number of monks who practice righteousness accordingly to the Dhamma-Vinaya. At Wat Phra Dhammakaya, 100,000 monks nationwide have come to chant and practice meditation together not just once but several times. But such news has never found its way to the newspapers. It is no wonder that as far as the general public is concerned, righteous monks appear to be far and few in between.

It is therefore necessary that practicing Buddhists do their best to support Buddhism by providing for the Buddhist monks and novice monks with the four necessities so that they can study and practice the Dhamma-Vinaya to the fullest extent. They should also regard righteous monks as a role model for the people. This way, morally good men will be inspired to enter the monkhood and practice accordingly. However, should anyone find that a certain monk or novice monk does not conduct himself properly, he needs to find a way to address the situation and not wait until the monk or novice monk’s inappropriate conduct gets splashed on the front page of the newspapers. The situation can be handled by informing the offender’s superior or by providing needed information for the offender so that he can correct his way. If the transgression is slight and the monk or novice monk is willing to reform himself, he may ' become a contributing member of the monastic community later on. Members of the Buddhist Communities need to help each other to protect, preserve, and perpetuate Buddhism so that it can be around to benefit humanity to bless them with peace and happiness for as long as possible.

### **3.4 The Life Story of Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)**

**His Birth:** The former name of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni or Luang Pu (Luang Pu means Venerable Grandfather) Wat Paknam was Sodh Meekaewnoi. He was born on Friday, the 6th day of the 11th waning moon in the year of the Monkey which corresponded with October 10, 2427 B.E. His father’s name was Ngern Meekaewnoi, and his mother’s name was Sudjai Meekaewnoi. They lived in Songpinong District in Suphanburi Province. His father earned a living as a rice merchant.

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<sup>42</sup> Surayud Chulanont, Online Manager (17 November 2549 B.E.)  
<http://www.manager.co.th/Politics/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9490000142121>

His Childhood: The future Luang Pu Wat Paknam was educated in the temple as were the children in those days. Leadership and earnestness had been part of his character since childhood. He was good at school. And he was learnt in the Thai and Khom languages. He was an accomplished student.

After the future Luang Pu Wat Paknam completed his schooling, he helped his parents with the rice business until he was around fourteen years old when his father passed away. Since he was the eldest son, it was his duty to run the business and support the family in his father's place. Being hard-working and intelligent, the family's rice business continued to grow until the family became quite well-off.

Wishing to Enter the Monkhood: When the future Luang Pu Wat Paknam was around nineteen years old, he had an epiphany where he realized the lack of substance of a householder's life. It was then that he wished to enter the monkhood in order to put an end to suffering. His familial obligations prevented him from entering the monkhood at the time, so he lit up some incense sticks and vowed, **“Let me live. Let me be able to enter the monkhood. And once I can enter the monkhood, I will remain in it for the rest of my life.”** He continued to work hard to accumulate enough money for his mother to live on for the rest of her life so that he could enter the monkhood for life.

Entering the Monkhood: In July 2449 B.E. when the future Luang Pu Wat Paknam was twenty-two years old, he was ordained a Buddhist monk at Wat Songpinong in Songpinong District in Suphanburi Province by the Preceptor, Venerable Dee of Wat Pratusarn. During the ordination ceremony, Phrakruvinyanuyoga (Niang Indajoto) of Wat Songpinong acted as Phrakammavacariya, and Venerable Noang Indasuvanno of Wat Songpinong acted as Anusavanacariya. He was given the Pali name of Candasaro.

Being in the Monkhood: Since the future Luang Pu Wat Paknam entered the monkhood for the purpose of penetrating the Path and Fruit of Nibbana, he had started to study the Vinaya or Disciplinary Rules and learn to recite the words for requesting ordination during the ten days that he had spent as an ordinand. Therefore, he was able to practice righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya as soon as he became a Buddhist monk.

The future Luang Pu Wat Paknam began practicing meditation and studying and researching the Lord Buddha's Teachings written in Pali especially the Mahasatipatthana Scripture which dealt directly with meditation practice.

He also learnt meditation practice from different venerable monks in different temples. These included Phramonkoltipmuni (Mui), the former Abbot of Wat Jakkравad, Phrakrunanaviratti (Po) of Wat Phrachetupon, Venerable Singha of Wat Lakorntum, and Venerable Plerm of Wat Kao Yai. All of whom had attained Supernormal Insight and were well-versed in the Dhamma. They were righteous monks with a large number of followers. The future Luang Pu Wat Paknam was able to learn everything from every teaching monk until they asked him to remain with them and help them teach meditation practice to others. But Luang Pu knew that what he had learnt could not yet lead him to put an end to suffering.

In terms of Dhamma study (Pariyatti), he had pursued the study until he could translate the entire Mahasatipatthana Scripture in Pali written on palm leaves. From that point onward, he devoted his time to meditation practice by adding to the practice what he had learnt from the Visuddhimagga Scripture which dealt specifically with meditation practice.

Discovering Vijja Dhammakaya<sup>43</sup> : In 2460 B.E., the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam had been twelve years in the monkhood. At the time, he was spending the Rains-Retreat at Wat Boatbon located in Koo Wieng District in Nonthaburi Province in order to repay the Abbot for providing for his study certain Buddhist texts by helping him teach the Dhamma to the laity.

In the middle of the Rains-Retreat on the 15th day of the 10th waxing moon, Luang Pu realized how he could not yet attain the Dhamma known and seen by the Lord Buddha. So he decided to make a vow by putting his life on the line, “This time when I sit down to practice meditation, if I cannot attain the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma, I will never rise again.” Having made the vow, he entreated the Lord Buddha,

“May the Lord Buddha kindly help me by giving me the least and the easiest of the Dhamma that You have attained. If my attainment of the Dhamma brings harm to Your Teachings, then do not give it to me. But if my attainment of the Dhamma can benefit Your Teachings, please give it to me. And I will act as the defender of Your Teachings for the rest of my life.”

That very evening, Luang Pu endeavored to practice meditation until he finally attained the Dhammakaya at midnight.

It was then that he realized the profundity of the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma. It was beyond visualizing, imagining, thinking or guessing. For if one is still visualizing, imagining, and thinking, one can never attain the Dhamma. To attain the Dhamma, visualization, imagination, and thought must cease altogether. Cessation leads to the extinguishment of all thoughts; the extinguishment of all thoughts leads to Supernormal Insight. Later still, Luang Pu said, “Cessation Is the Key to Success.” The discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya by the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam is the greatest discovery because it has nothing to do with practicing what one has learnt and memorized. But it has to do with knowing, seeing, and penetrating the true nature which exists inside one’s self by moving one’s mind along the Middle Way through the center of one’s body. It is by attaining the Dhammakaya through the Middle Way meditation practice that leads to the end of suffering.

Once the accomplished practitioner’s mind has journeyed to the end of the Middle Way, the root cause of all suffering or Kilesaasava (defilements and mental intoxication) will be extinguished. The end of suffering or true and lasting happiness is what every being wishes for. It is for this reason that Luang Pu’s discovery is monumentally beneficial to humanity. His attainment of the Dhammakaya also confirmed the Lord Buddha’s words, “Dhammakaya is the name of the Tathagata.”

It took a most extraordinary personage like the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam to discover Vijja Dhammakaya, for he had pursued Perfections to the very greatest ex-

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<sup>43</sup> Vijja Dhammakaya means knowing and seeing with the Dhammakaya’s Eyes or Dhammacakkhu.

tent all throughout his previous existences. His Perfections, his persistence, and his endeavor led him to eventually discover Vijja Dhammakaya. Therefore, Luang Pu's attainment of the Dhammakaya at Wat Boatbon in Bangkoovieng on the 15th day of the 10th waxing moon attests to the fact that the Dhammakaya, who is the source of happiness, purity, and truth penetration, exists inside the center of every human being's body.

Propagating Vijja Dhammakaya: Initially, Luang Pu wished to seek solitude in the forest or in the mountain in order to continue practicing Vijja Dhammakaya. But when he thought about his fellow humans and their great suffering, he knew that he had to teach Vijja Dhammakaya to as many persons as possible and for as long as possible. His is the heart and mind of the great Bodhisatta.

Having received the Kathina Robe at the end of the Rains-Retreat, Luang Pu decided to go and teach Vijja Dhammakaya at Wat Bangpla in Banglane Sub-District, Nakorn Pathom Province. There, three Buddhist monks and four male lay devotees were able to attain the Dhammakaya after four months of earnest Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation Practice. This was the start of the propagation of Vijja Dhammakaya.

Luang Pu later went to different places to teach Vijja Dhammakaya. Many Buddhists came to learn Vijja Dhammakaya from him with satisfying results depending on each person's level of diligence and earnestness.

The Abbot of Wat Paknam: In the middle of the year 2461 B.E., when Luang Pu was staying at Wat Chetupon, he was appointed the Abbot of Wat Paknam, a dilapidated temple at the time. Initially, Luang Pu had met with some difficulties running the temple because the existing monks and the people around the temple were unruly. Luang Pu encouraged the monks and novice monks to practice righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya. He started in earnest to teach meditation practice to the monks, the novice monks, the male and female Buddhists. A large number of people were able to derive satisfactory result from their practice. As a result, Luang Pu's reputation began to spread far and wide.

The Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam was a senior monk who was replete with Pariyatti (Dhamma knowledge), Patipatti (practice especially meditation practice), and Pativedha (Supernormal Insight gained through meditation practice). He has benefited Buddhism to a very great extent especially his discovery and propagation of Vijja Dhammakaya. He had both studied and taught Vijja Dhammakaya until a large number of people were able to attain the Dhammakaya.

In 2498 B.E., Luang Pu called a meeting of all of his followers and announced that he would pass on five years hence. He wanted everyone to help propagate Vijja Dhammakaya to the rest of the world because Vijja Dhammakaya is the true substance of life. It can help humanity to be emancipated from the suffering of the round of rebirth as well as being instrumental to world peace and happiness. In 2502 B.E., after the passing of Luang Pu, Master Nun Chandra Khon-nokyoong, one of Luang Pu's top pupils, began her mission to propagate Vijja Dhammakaya to the rest of the world as commanded by Luang Pu by founding Wat Phra Dhammakaya.



# CHAPTER



FUNDAMENTAL DHAMMA  
PRINCIPLES  
IN THE TIPITAKA

## **Chapter 4 - Fundamental Dhamma Principles in the Tipitaka**

4.1 An Overview of the Tipitaka

4.2 Nibbana

4.3 Heedfulness

4.4 Abstaining from Unwholesomeness, Performing Wholesome Deeds,  
Keeping One's Mind Bright and Clear

4.5 Magga-8

4.6 Sikkhattaya

4.7 The Tipitaka

4.8 Kilesa and Its Extinguishme

## CONCEPTS

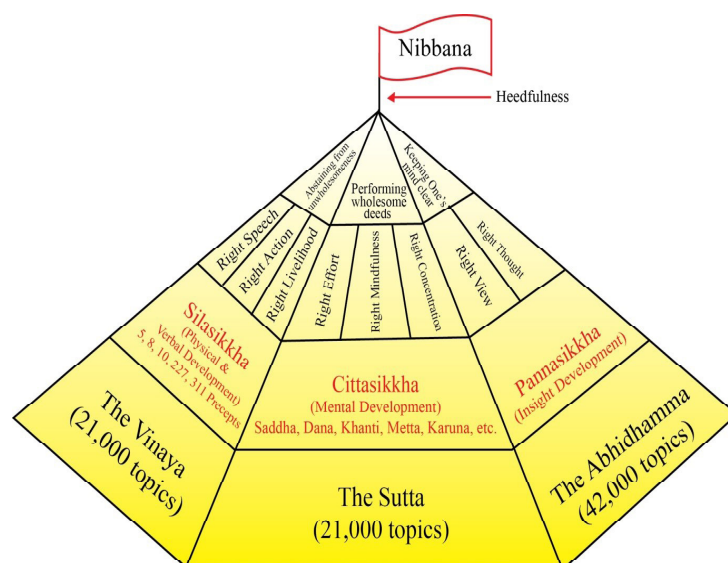
1. The different Dhamma Principles contained in the Tipitaka deal with the practices leading to the attainment of Nibbana. Every topic of the Lord Buddha's Teachings is interconnected and never conflicting. The Lord Buddha's Teachings can be condensed or elaborated. Maximum condensation becomes just one word, "Heedfulness". Maximum elaboration becomes 84,000 topics or Dhammakhandha which can be divided into 21,000 topics of the Vinaya (Disciplinary Rules); 21,000 topics of the Sutta; and 42,000 topics of the Abhidhamma.
2. All of the Dhamma Principles contained in the Tipitaka can be divided into three topics, namely, abstaining from unwholesomeness, performing wholesomeness, and keeping one's mind bright and clear. Another name for these three topics is Sikkhattaya which includes Silasikkha, Citasikkha, and Pannasikkha. These three topics can be elaborated as Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path which includes Sammaditthi(Right View), Sammasankappa(Right Thought), Sammavaca(Right Speech), Sammakammanta(Right Action), Sammaajiva(Right Livelihood), Sammavayama(Right Effort), Sammasati (Right Mindfulness), and Sammasamadhi (Right Concentration).

## OBJECTIVES

To enable the student to obtain an overview of important Dhamma Principles in the Tipitaka.

# FUNDAMENTAL DHAMMA PRINCIPLES IN THE TIPTTAKA

## 4.1 An Overview of Fundamental Dhamma Principles in the Tipitaka



### An Overview of 84,000 Topics in the Tipitaka by Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Padet Dattajeevo)

The Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun, the Vice Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, has given us an overview of the Tipitaka in the chart shown above. All of the Dhamma Principles contained in the Tipitaka aim to lead their practitioner to attain Nibbana, which is the ultimate goal of all beings.

All of the Dhamma Principles in the Tipitaka are interconnected and never conflicting. They can be condensed or elaborated. These Dhamma Principles can be given its most condensed form which is “heedfulness”. When elaborated, they include altogether 84,000 topics or Dhammakhandha, namely, 21,000 topics of the Vinaya; 21,000 topics of the Sutta; and 42,000 topics of the abhidhamma.

All the Dhamma Principles can also be put into just three phrases, namely, abstaining from unwholesomeness, performing wholesome deeds, and keeping one’s mind bright and clear. Another name for them is Sikkhattaya which includes Silasikkha, Cittasikkha, and Pannasikkha. Sikkhattaya can be elaborated as Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of Sammaditthi (Right View), Sammasankappa (Right Thought), Sammavaca (Right Speech), Sammakammanta (Right Action), Sammaajiva (Right Livelihood), Sammavayama (Right Effort), Sammasati (Right Mindfulness), and Sammasamadhi (Right Concentration). Sammaditthi and Sammasankappa belong to Pannasikkha. Sammavaca, Sammakammanta, and Sammaajiva belong to Silasikkha, and Sammavayama, Sammasati, and Sammasamadhi belong to Cittasikkha. Some details of certain important Dhamma Principles can be presented as follows.

## 4.2 Nibbana

Nibbana means the extinguishment of Kilesa (defilements) and Dukkha (suffering). Nibbana is the ultimate goal of all living beings. The Lord Buddha teaches two categories of Nibbana, namely, Saupadisesanibbana and Anupadisesanibbana.<sup>1</sup>

1) Saupadisesanibbana: It means an Arahant who is far removed from Sanyojana (Fetters), emancipated, devoid of Raga (lust), Dosa (anger), and Moha (delusion) but can still experience emotions, both the pleasing and unpleasing kinds, happiness and unhappiness as a result of his Indriya-5 (Five Sense-Faculties).

The Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun explained that Saupadisesanibbana is Nibbana inside the self. Sometimes it is called “Living Nibbana”. It means an Arahant who has completely extinguished Asavakilesa (mental intoxication and defilements) but his physical body or Khandha-5 (the Five Aggregates) still exists. He is one with the Dhammakaya at all times. And he experiences the true and complete bliss of Nibbana with his human body.<sup>2</sup>

2) Anupadisesanibbana: It means an Arahant who is far removed from Sanyojana (Fetters) and emancipated from the round of rebirth. All of his Vedana (feeling) can no longer be dominated by Kilesa.

The Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun explained that Anupadisesanibbana exists outside the self. Sometimes it is called “Dead Nibbana”. It means that once the Arahant’s body or Khandha-5 is no more, his Dhammakaya in Saupadisesanibbana enters the center of His body and reappears in the Anupadisesanibbana. This destination, called “Ayatananibbana” is the ultimate aim of every Ariya Personage.<sup>3</sup>

## 4.3 Heedfulness

Heedfulness means being mindful, attentive, prudent. Heedlessness means being unmindful, inattentive, neglectful. Heedfulness encompasses all of the Dhamma topics contained in the Tipitaka.

In the Pada Sutta, the Lord Buddha says, “The footprint of every kind of animals can fit inside the footprint of an elephant. Likewise, all wholesomeness can fit inside heedfulness. Heedfulness is foremost where wholesomeness is concerned. Behold, monks, a heedful monk is one who earnestly practices Magga-8 (the Noble Eightfold Path).”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Aṭṭhakathā-khuddaka-nikāya Itivuttaka. Dhātu Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 45, no. 222, p. 304

<sup>2</sup> Dattajeevo Bhikkhu, *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, (Bangkok 2537 B.E.), p. 146

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Suttantapīṭaka Samyuttanikāya Mahāvālavagga. Pada Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 30, no. 253, p. 132

Just before the Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana, His final words were, “Behold, monks, I wish to remind you that all Sankhara (compounded things) undergoes deterioration. All of you must make sure to practice heedfulness.”<sup>5</sup> This final statement of the Lord Buddha summarizes every Dhamma Principle he had taught for forty-five years as being heedfulness. The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) explained in his Dhamma lecture about heedfulness as follows.

“Heedlessness has to do with the lack of mindfulness whereas heedfulness has to do with mindfulness in that one is constantly mindful. It is said that heedfulness means not being heedless where deterioration is concerned. The more one thinks about deterioration, the more startled one is. One suddenly realizes that one is born alone and will die alone. Where have all of one’s forefathers gone to? They are all dead. And one day one must also die. Now, one becomes really scared. One immediately decides to abstain from unwholesomeness and hasten to perform wholesome deeds, all because one has finally understood what it means by deterioration. Otherwise, one is not scared and dares to commit unwholesome deeds or hurls abusive remarks at one’s elders.”<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.4 Abstaining from Unwholesomeness, Performing Wholesome Deeds, Keeping One’s Mind Bright and Clear**

All of the Dhamma Principles can be summarized as heedfulness. They can also be summarized into three topics as taught in the Ovadapatimokkha in the Mahapadana Sutta by the Lord Buddha as follows.

- 1) Abstaining from all unwholesome deeds
- 2) Performing wholesome deeds
- 3) Keeping one’s mind bright and clear

This is what every Buddha teaches.<sup>7</sup>

1) Abstaining from unwholesome deeds corresponds with the Pali sentence, Sabbapapassa akaranan which means not committing unwholesome deeds physically, verbally, and mentally. This Pali sentence applies to everything covered under the Vinayapitaka. It comes under “Silasikkha” of the Sikkhattaya (the Threefold Training).

2) Performing wholesome deeds corresponds with the Pali sentence, Kusalassupasampada which means performing wholesome deeds physically, verbally, and mentally. This Pali sentence applies to everything covered under the Suttantapitaka. It comes under “Cittasikkha” of the Sikkhattaya.

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<sup>5</sup> *Suttantapīṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga. Māhāparinibbāna Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 13, no. 143, p. 322

<sup>6</sup> Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), *Luang Por Wat Paknam’s Dhamma Legacy (Phramonkolthepmuni)*, Dhamma lecture number 15, Pacchimavaca, (Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing, 2539 B.E.) p. 199

<sup>7</sup> *Suttantapīṭaka Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga. Māhāpadāna Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 13, no. 54, p. 55

3) Keeping one's mind bright and clear corresponds with the Pali sentence, Sacittapariyodapanan which means keeping one's mind bright and clear. This Pali sentence applies to everything covered under the Abhidhammapitaka. It comes under "Pannasikkha" of the Sikkhattaya.

#### 4.5 Magga-8

The Pali word "Magga" means way or path. Magga-8 means the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the extinguishment of Dukkha (suffering) and the attainment of Nibbana.

Magga-8 forms part of Ariyasacca-4 (the Four Noble Truths) which consists of Dukkha (suffering), Samudaya (the cause of suffering), Nirodha (the cessation of suffering), and Magga (the path leading to the cessation of suffering). Magga-8 and the other three Noble Truths are interconnected.

Magga-8 was taught in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta<sup>8</sup>, the Lord Buddha's first Dhamma lecture. The Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun, the Vice Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya summarizes and simplifies Magga-8 for the laity as follows.

1) Sammaditthi means Right View. It is the ability to make the right decision about what is right, what is wrong, what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is Punna (merit), what is Pāpa (demerit), what should be done, and what should not be done.

2) Sammasankappa means Right Thought. In practice, it means thinking things that bring about Punna (merit).

3) Sammavaca means Right Speech. In practice, it means saying things that bring about Punna (merit).

4) Sammakammanta means Right Action. In practice, it means doing things that bring about Punna (merit).

5) Sammaajiva means Right Livelihood. In practice, it means choosing to earn an honest living. What one does for a living must not violate the Law of Kamma.

6) Sammavayama means Right Effort. In practice, it means endeavoring to abstain from unwholesomeness, perform wholesome deeds, and keep one's mind bright and clear.

7) Sammasati means Right Mindfulness. In practice, it means endeavoring to keep one's mind clean and pure so that one can think, say, and do what is wholesome.

8) Sammasamadhi means Right Concentration. In practice, it means endeavoring to keep one's mind still and quiet in the center of one's body during meditation practice until when everything is just right, one can experience inner brightness and higher levels of the pure nature which exists within one's self.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Vinayapiṭaka Mahāvagga. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 6, no. 13, p. 45

<sup>9</sup> S. Pongsawat, on "Putting This Life on the Line" (Phrabhavanaviriyakhun's Dhamma lectures), (Bangkok: Roongsinkarnpim, 2550 B.E.) p. 72.

In the Parikkhara Sutta, the Lord Buddha says that the first seven parts of Magga-8 are components of Sammasamadhi. “Behold, monks, the components of Sammasamadhi include Sammaditthi, Sammasankappa, Sammavaca, Sammakammanta, Sammaajiva, Sammavayama, and Sammasati. Behold, monks, Ekaggatacitta (mental one-pointedness) comprising these seven components is called Ariyasamadhi.”<sup>10</sup>

It is for this reason that Sammasamadhi is the most important part of Magga-8. It is the same with heedfulness because a person can be completely heedful only when he is constantly mindful. And a person can be constantly mindful only if he has practiced meditation to such an extent that he can bring his mind to a complete standstill at the seventh base in the center of his body at all times.

#### **4.6 Sikkhattaya (The Threefold Training)**

Sikkhattaya means the three forms of training that requires studying. In the Bhava Sutta, the Lord Buddha says, “Behold, monks, what is Sikkhattaya? Sikkhattaya means Adhisilasikkha, Adhicittasikkha, and Adhipannasikkha. When you have achieved Sikkhattaya, you can be said to have put away Tanha (craving), to have put away Sanyojana (Fetters), to have put an end to Dukkha (suffering) because Mana (conceit) has been rightly removed.”<sup>11</sup>

The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) explained further that there are two levels to Sikkhattaya, the basic level and the elevated level.

Sikkhattaya at the basic level includes Sila, Citta (Samadhi), and Panna. They are also called Silasikkha, Cittasikkha (Samadhisikkha), and Pannasikkha. The basic level of Sikkhattaya has to do with “knowing” the meaning of Sikkhattaya and practicing it earnestly in order to attain Sikkhattaya at the elevated level.

Sikkhattaya at the elevated level includes Adhisila, Adhicitta, and Adhipanna. They are also called Adhisilasikkha, Adhicittasikkha, and Adhipannasikkha. The elevated level of Sikkhattaya has to do with the ability to “see” with one’s Supernormal Insight as a result of one’s elevated meditative attainments the Sila Sphere, the Samadhi Sphere, and the Panna Sphere that dwell in the center of each of his Inner Bodies.

The word “Adhi” as in Adhisila means beyond, above. Adhisila means the Sila which lies above and beyond the Sila at the basic level.

#### **4.7 The Tipitaka**

The Lord Buddha’s Teachings can be elaborated to include altogether 84,000 topics, namely 21,000 topics in the Vinayapitaka, 21,000 topics in the Suttantapitaka, and 42,000 topics in the Abhidhammapitaka.

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<sup>10</sup> Suttantapitaka Aṅguttaranikāya. Saṭṭakanipāṭa (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 37, no. 42, p. 110

The 84,000 topics in the Tipitaka can also be grouped as Sikkhattaya in that the Vinayapitaka is called Silasikkha; the Suttantapitaka is called Cittasikkha, and the Abhidhammapitaka is called Pannasikkha.

#### **4.8 Kilesa and Its Extinguishment**

As mentioned earlier, Nibbana means the extinguishment of Kilesa (defilements) and Dukkha (suffering). In this section, more details will be presented in terms of Kilesa and its extinguishment for the purpose of attaining Nibbana. Since every human being is tainted by Kilesa, more needs to be said about human beings.

##### **4.8.1 Human Beings and Their Makeup**

Human beings are made up of two major components, namely, body and mind.

The Human Body: The male and female human body and everything inside it is made up of the four primary elements which include earth, water, fire, and wind.

The Human Body: The human body cannot happen by itself. It requires the help of its father and mother. The human body must be delivered from its mother's womb. And it requires the four primary elements existing outside it in the forms of food, water, wind, sunshine, etc., to nourish it, grow it, and sustain it.

The Human Body: The human body in its original state is lifeless. It is neither good nor bad. It is only when good or bad deeds are said and done as dictated by its mind that Good or bad Kamma occurs.

The Human Body: The human body is made up of elements which are tainted or impure. It is the source of diseases from the time it is in its mother's womb. No amount of care and protection can keep it from dying in the end.

The Human Body: After the human body dies, it is buried or cremated and its four primary elements return to their sources. Earth returns to earth. Water returns to water. Fire returns to fire. And wind returns to wind. All the diseases of the body also die with it.

The Human Mind: The human mind is a refined element dwelling inside the human body since its birth. It gives life to the human body which is made up of the four primary elements.

The Human Mind: Since the element which makes up the human mind is refined, it is invisible to the human eyes. It cannot be touched. It can only be seen with the Dhammakaya-Eye. The element which makes up the human mind is cognizant. It is the human mind which allows one to know different things. The human mind enables one to know the Dhamma. It enables one to learn how to read and write. It enables one to know who one's friend is, what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is happiness and what is unhappiness, the cause and effect of things, etc.

The Human Mind: The human mind works with the human body's five sense-faculties, namely, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. It enables one to see with one's eyes, to hear with one's ears, to smell with one's nose, to taste with one's tongue, and to touch with one's body.

The Human Mind: The human mind in its original state is bright and clear. It enables one to know and see one's surroundings through the five sense-faculties clearly and accurately. It commands the body to say and do what is wholesome.

The Human Mind: But once the human mind is tainted and dominated by Kilesa, it becomes dark and gloomy. The dark and gloomy mind causes one to know and see one's surroundings fuzzily and inaccurately. The dark and gloomy mind is abnormal and causes the body to say and do unwholesome things. It turns one into a bad person.

#### **4.8.2 What Is Kilesa?**

Kilesa: Kilesa is made up of a refined element which is utterly filthy, utterly foul, and utterly sticky. It possesses enormous destructive power. It destroys the quality of one's mind. It brings about all kinds of tremendous suffering. Being made up of an extremely refined element, it is invisible to the human eyes. However, it can be seen with the Dhammakaya-Eye.

Kilesa: Kilesa adheres tightly to one's mind from birth. Kilesa can be compared to the different diseases expressed in the genes and chromosomes which are biding their time to attack the human body whenever it becomes weak. Likewise, Kilesa is constantly looking for an opportunity to attack the human mind whenever it is unaware.

Kilesa: When one's mind is tainted and dominated by Kilesa, it permeates, coats, and covers one's mind making it dark, gloomy, and filthy not unlike a dark cave which is dirty and dangerous or a person wearing a pair of eyeglasses covered with mud. When tainted and dominated by Kilesa, one's mind loses its quality which causes one's five sense-faculties to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch wrongly and inaccurately. Kilesa causes one's body to think, say, and do what is unwholesome in response to the wrong and inaccurate perception of one's five sense-faculties. The ensuing results are all kinds of suffering and trouble. The human mind is thus plagued by Kilesa every second of life from birth to death.

Kilesa: When the human body dies, the Kilesa in its mind does not die with it. But it works to compel one's Refined Human Body (or Astral Body) to be reborn in the realm of existence as dictated by his unwholesome deeds and the Law of Kamma. When reborn in the Human Realm, one is once again forced by the Kilesa in his mind to repeat the same mistakes over and over again, lifetime after lifetime. The end result is that one is forever kept a prisoner inside the round of rebirth.

Kilesa: Therefore, Kilesa is the real cause or the real culprit which brings about suffering, unwholesomeness, and every evil deed committed in this world. Each living being on earth is like a puppet on a string being pulled by Kilesa to commit unwholesome deeds.

Kilesa: There are three main families of Kilesa. These include Lobha (greed), Dosa (anger), and Moha (delusion).

##### **1) What is Lobha?**

Lobha: This family of Kilesa drives a person to feel inordinately greedy. His mind is in a constantly restless and unhappy state as it tries very hard to think of a way to get what it wants

by such dishonest means as stealing, cheating, robbing or even killing.

Ordinary wants such as wanting new clothes, wanting to get rich, wanting to be a good person, so on and so forth and using honest means to obtain what one wants is not considered to be Lobha. If one wants to gain 100 million baht by honest means, it is not considered to be Lobha. However, if one wants to gain just one baht by dishonest means, it is considered to be Lobha.

Lobha: It has the power to hijack one's emotions in that whenever one finds something pleasing in terms of physical form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a mind object, his mind will move from the center of his body to be with that something. When one is seized by that something which one wants to have, the desire can grow to the point of becoming toxic and difficult to shake off. It is like a monkey being completely trapped by sticky tree sap such that it becomes an easy target of a hunter to do whatever he likes with.

Lobha: It is caused by such unwholesomeness as inordinate extravagance, the desire to take advantage of others, greed, etc.

Lobha: It can be compared to a bamboo basket which can never be filled with water. Lobha causes its victim to think dishonest thoughts and do dishonest things in order to take possession of what he wants. It can drive its victim to think, say, and commit what unwholesome deeds he has never committed before.

How to Remove Lobha

- One must exercise self-awareness by not allowing himself to be dominated by his want.
- One must consider the outcome of one's unwholesome deeds. In other words, one must cultivate Hiri (being ashamed of unwholesome deeds) and Ottappa (being fearful of the ill consequences of an unwholesome deed).
- One must give alms frequently because alms-giving can counteract Lobha.

## **2) What Is Dosa?**

Dosa: This family of Kilesa causes one to be given to feeling angry, frustrated, annoyed, hateful, vengeful. Dosa drives one to want to destroy a thing or a person. One is physically violent against another person or causes another person to suffer embarrassment or lose face or lose money. Dosa makes one destructive.

Unwholesome deeds caused by Dosa includes shooting birds or killing rats for ravaging one's rice crop. However, hunting and fishing as a sport is caused by Moha.

Dosa: It can be compared to a beaten poisonous snake in that it can rear its ugly head and bites someone again. Dosa causes one to think that one is superior, inferior or equal to another person. Should someone arouse his anger, he is ready to start a verbal or physical fight or both with that someone and bodily harm or death can ensue. Dosa wreaks havoc for one's self and others.

Dosa: When a person is dominated by Dosa, he thinks about destroying everything including

himself. Dosa causes 1) the destruction of one's thought process; 2) the destruction of one's body and mind; 3) the destruction of properties; 4) the commitment of unwholesome deeds. A person dominated by Dosa refuses to do anything for anyone and refuses to receive anything from anyone. He is also bent on destroying himself.

Dosa: It can be compared to a bomb planted inside one's mind. Its detonation destroys oneself first of all before it destroys everyone and everything around him.

How to Remove Dosa

- One must exercise self-awareness and self-restraint.
- One must consider the outcome of one's unwholesome deeds.
- One must prevent himself from being dominated by Dosa by keeping the Five Precepts.

- To fend off Dosa, one must regularly spread love and kindness to all beings.

What Is Moha?

Moha: This family of Kilesa causes one's thought process to be fuzzy. Moha dulls one's judgment. It makes one gullible and blind to reason. A person dominated by Moha cannot perceive things that he sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches for what they really are. He is deluded and perverted because he cannot differentiate between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome; what is beneficial and what is harmful; what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is bad. A person dominated by Moha is given to all forms of self-indulgence in terms of alcohol, sex, gambling, etc. Moha means delusion.

Lacking knowledge in different fields such as mathematics, computer science, cooking, dressmaking, etc., is not considered to be Moha.

Moha: A person dominated by Moha or delusion cannot perceive the reality of the physical form, the sound, the smell, the taste, and the touch of something he comes into contact with. Moha darkens one's mind, clouds one's judgment, and blocks one's reasoning. The person may be well-educated but he is not given to using his knowledge to help him see reality. For example, he thinks of drinking alcohol with his friends as the means to show one's sincerity. He thinks of gambling as the means to grow the economy, etc. A person dominated by Moha can become moody, irresponsible, and misguided. He is like a person kept in the dark where his eyesight does not allow him to see anything clearly.

Moha: A person dominated by Moha lacks Yonisomanasikara or analytical reflection.

Moha: It can be compared to mental darkness. As a result, a person dominated by Moha is given to guessing, taking risk, believing in luck, believing in fate, and committing unwholesome deeds. Moha causes fights, killing, and war. It can drive a person to cause his parents bodily injury or even death.

How to Remove Moha

- One must endeavor to learn the Dhamma by listening to and reading the Dhamma so that one can increase one's Sutamayapanna (the insight gained through listening).
- One must endeavor to contemplate, test, and research the Dhamma in order to increase

one's Cintamayapanna (the insight gained through thinking).

- One must endeavor to keep one's mind still and quiet in order to increase one's Bhavanamayapanna (the insight gained through meditation practice).

In summary, it can be said that...

- Kilesa is the Dhatudhamma (existing element) which is foul, filthy, dark, unwholesome, and invisible to the human eyes.

- The mind which is tainted and dominated by Kilesa causes one to think, say, and commit what is unwholesome.

- Every physical, verbal, and mental deed committed as a result of Kilesa is unwholesome and gives rise to unwholesome Kamma which incurs Pāpa or demerit.

- Pāpa is evil energy and works like fertilizer to cause one's Kilesa to grow and flourish.

- Kilesa is divided into three main families like three armies, each with its specific evil characteristics. When worked together, much suffering is wrought.

The First Army: Lobha – It causes one to hunger without end for persons and things.

The Second Army: Dosa - It causes one to be destructive.

The Third Army: Moha – It causes one to be irrational, unreasonable, selfish, self-indulgent.

Whoever allows his mind to be dominated by Kilesa such that he thinks, says, and do things as dictated by his Kilesa will meet with unhappiness whether he is standing, walking, sitting or lying down. Therefore, whoever wishes for happiness and prosperity must hasten to put his Kilesa at bay not by washing it away with water or by burning it but by accumulating as much Punna (merit) as possible.

#### **4.8.3 The Means of Removing Kilesa**

Punna (Merit): Punna is a very powerful energy because it is the only thing that can kill every form of Kilesa. Therefore, it has the power to counteract a mind which is dark, gloomy, misguided, and unwholesome and amazingly returns it back to its original pure, bright, and clear state.

Punna: Punna is a very pure form of energy because when present in any amount it is the source of happiness, prosperity, and wish fulfillment here and now as well as in future existences. Punna causes one to be blessed with longevity, good health, stamina, beauty, power, material wealth, high birth, etc.

Punna: Like every form of energy, Punna is invisible to the human eyes. But it is visible to the Celestial Eye (Dibbacakkhu), and the Dhammakaya-Eye (Dhammacakkhu). Importantly, it can be felt.

Electricity can be witnessed when a lightbulb, a hot iron, a fan is turned on or by feeling one's muscle twitch. Likewise, merit can be witnessed when the merit-maker feels happy and cheerful after having made merit. His countenance is bright and clear and he is motivated to continue performing wholesome deeds, exercising self-restraint, etc.

Punna: Punna can only be created inside the mind of the merit-maker himself. Once merit has

been earned, it can bear a great many fruits, a few of which can be presented below.

1. Punna is specific to the merit-maker. Merit can be created only by earning merit.
2. Punna follows the merit-maker everywhere and across lifetimes.
3. Punna cannot be stolen.
4. Punna provides protection for the merit-maker. For example, it prevents him from being reborn in the Hell Realm.
5. Punna can be sent to a great distance across the world, across the galaxy, and even further.
6. Punna is the source of human wealth, celestial wealth, Nibbana wealth, etc.

What must one do in order to create merit? Performance of every kind of wholesome deeds gives rise to merit. There are three main ways to earn merit, namely, 1) Dana practice (alms-giving); 2) Sila practice (Precepts observation); and 3) Bhavana practice (meditation practice).

#### 1) What is Dana?

Dana means to give for the purpose of chipping away the Kilesa which is deeply entrenched in one's mind. When giving to the Sangha (Buddhist monks), Thai people generally refer to the act as "making Punna". When giving to charity out of one's compassion, Thai people generally refer to it as "making Dana".

Dana: It means alms or the things that should be given to those who deserve them. The things that should be given to the Sangha are called Danavatthu or Dayadhamma. There are ten categories of Danavatthu, namely, food, water, clothing, means of transportation, garlands and flowers, scented items (incense sticks, candles), skin treatments (soaps, etc.), bedding, shelter, and light sources (electricity, light bulbs, etc.). These categories of Danavatthu are beneficial and not harmful to the recipients. Therefore, giving Danavatthu bears a great many fruits. The giver of Dana is called Danapati.

Dana: Dana practice earns the Dana giver Punna or merit because when a person is mindful enough to want to exercise generosity by giving away things, his mind returns to the pure nature within himself. The selfless act gives rise to a bright Punna Sphere right in the center of one's mind. It can be compared to electricity which can be generated when the positive charge comes into contact with the negative charge giving rise to a spark. The Punna which is created works instantly to counteract Lobha (greed), one family of Kilesa. It can be compared to a lit bulb or the sun which can lessen or chase away darkness.

Dana: Whether or not Dana practice bears many or few fruits depends on the following factors.

1. Vatthu (objects): The things that one intends to give away must be obtained by an honest means.
2. Intention: The intention to practice Dana must be mainly for the purpose of removing Kilesa or cleansing one's mind.
3. Puggala (persons): The giver must be pure in that he observes at least the Five Precepts; and the recipient must also be pure in that he observes whatever number of Precepts befitting his status.

Dana: Dana practice has a direct impact on the giver in that it can remove miserliness, greed, selfishness while at the same time it promotes love, kindness, compassion, and selflessness.

Dana: Dana practice bears favorable fruits for the giver of Dana or Danapati here and now as well as in future existences as follows.

1. The Danapati will be shown compassion by an Arahant.
2. The Danapati will be approached by an Arahant.
3. The Danapati's Dana will be received by an Arahant.
4. The Danapati will be the first to be given a Dhamma lecture by an Arahant.
5. The Danapati's reputation will spread far and wide.
6. The Danapati is never awkward when in the company of others.
7. The Danapati will be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

## 2) What is Sila?

Sila means normalcy, tranquility. In practice, Sila means abstaining from unwholesomeness physically and verbally. It means exercising self-restraint. In short, Sila means not committing unwholesome speech and unwholesome deeds.

There are three levels of Sila as follows.

Sila at the Basic Level: It means Sila-5 for the laypeople.

Sila at the Intermediate Level: It means Sila-8 for the laypeople and Sila-10 for the novice monks.

Sila at the High Level: It means Sila-227 for the male Buddhist monks and Sila-311 for the female Buddhist monks.

Sila: A person earns merit when he practices Sila. Such a person knows to exercise self-restraint because he realizes that nothing outside of him can be more important than his own wholesomeness. He is mindful and knows to control his words and deeds such that they do not become abnormal or unwholesome. His mind returns to the Dhamma which is the pure nature within him. His Sila practice gives rise to a bright Punna Sphere right in the center of his mind. It can be compared to electricity which can be generated when the positive charge comes into contact with the negative charge giving rise to a spark. The Punna which is created works instantly to counteract Dosa (anger), another family of Kilesa. It can be compared to a lit bulb or the sun which can lessen or chase away darkness.

Sila: Sila practice makes it possible for human beings to live together normally, that is, in peace and harmony. Sila prevents aggression, violence, killing, stealing, etc. Sila practice blesses its practitioner with peace. Sila practice keeps human beings in line such that peace and happiness can prevail.

Sila: Sila practice has a direct impact on its practitioner in that it causes him to be clean physically and verbally. It removes ill-will and violence. It keeps Dosa (anger) under control and prevents it from rearing its ugly head.

Sila: Sila practice bears favorable fruits for its practitioner here and now as well as in future existences as follows.

1. Sila practice blesses its practitioner with material wealth.
2. The reputation of a person practicing Sila spreads far and wide.
3. The practitioner of Sila is never awkward in the company of others.
4. The practitioner of Sila will leave this world fully conscious.
5. The practitioner of Sila will be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

### 3) What Is Bhavana?

Bhavana means growth, training, making something happen. It means keeping one's mind still so that Supernormal Insight can be developed through different mental practices such as Kammathana practice, Samadhi practice, Bhavana practice, Cittabhavana practice, etc.

In practice, Bhavana is divided into two major categories as follows.

1. Samathabhavana: It means learning to keep one's mind quiet. Samathabhavana can also be called Cittabhavana or Samadhibhavana.

2. Vipassanabhavana: It means cultivating Panna (Supernormal Insight). Vipassanabhavana can also be called Vipassanakammathana. Bhavana: When practiced earnestly, it can earn the practitioner a huge amount of merit because it has to do with learning to keep one's mind still and quiet in the center of his body. When practiced to the point where one's mind can be kept continuously still and quiet, the Dhamma will be attained. It means staying focused on the Dhamma for hours or days at a time. It is like focusing one's mind which can be compared to the egg-yolk on the Dhamma which can be compared to the egg-white. Dhamma in this context means the pure nature within one's self. When one has learnt to keep one's mind continuously still and quiet for hours or days in the center of one's body as in Samathabhavana, there will arise one bright Punna-Sphere after another in the center of one's body. In the case of Vipassanabhavana, it means the ability to keep one's mind continuously still and quiet for weeks, months, or years as a result of having attained the Dhammakaya. The incomparable amount of Punna earned works to quell Moha, the worst family of Kilesa as well as other families of Kilesa just like the midday sun quelling the darkness on earth. Bhavana: The level of Punna (merit) earned depends on how long one can keep one's mind completely still and quiet and immersed in the Dhamma. If it is a permanent state, every kind of Kilesa will be extinguished. And the accomplished practitioner will be able to attain Nibbana. Such a practitioner is called an Arahant. Bhavana: It should be obvious to the student by now that Bhavana or meditation practice is not confined to the elderly but it is the work which must be performed by anyone who wishes for Panna, the end of suffering, and lasting peace and happiness.

### Conclusion

Every form of merit-making, insignificant or significant, is the means by which Kilesa can be resisted, destroyed, and extinguished. Since Pāpa attacks the human mind with the three armies of Kilesa, the Lord Buddha teaches human beings the three Dhamma armies which have the power to resist, destroy, and extinguish Kilesa. The Dana Army serves to destroy Lobha. The Sila Army serves to destroy Dosa, and the Bhavana Army serves to destroy Moha. And the battle is being fought inside one's mind.



# CHAPTER



HOW TO PUT AN END TO SUFFERING



## **Chapter 5 - How to Put an End to Dukkha**

5.1 The Reality of Life

5.2 The Perfect Man

5.3 How the Lord Buddha Teaches the Dhamma

5.4 The Self-Training Required to Put an End to Dukkha

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Such forms of Dukkha (suffering) as hunger, the heat, the cold, aging, sickness, death, etc., are encountered by every human being. And yet, most if not all human beings have no idea what the root cause of Dukkha is or how to extinguish it.
2. The Lord Buddha is the personage who discovered the root cause of Dukkha as well as how to extinguish it. Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path is the practice which leads to the extinguishment of Dukkha. Buddhism is the only religion that teaches Magga-8.
3. There are five steps to the Lord Buddha's teaching on Magga-8: He describes firstly the different forms of Dukkha or suffering; secondly, the different categories of people; thirdly, the different laws which operate in the Human Realm; fourthly, the practice leading to the extinguishment of Dukkha and how it must be practiced by each person; and lastly, the simple practice of Magga-8 as outlined in the Ovadapatimokkha lecture.
4. To undertake self-training for the purpose of putting an end to Dukkha, the following steps are required. One must be able to take refuge in one's self. One must have a virtuous friend to serve as his guide. One must live his life according to the principles given in the Ovadapatimokkha lecture. And one must put his life on the line practicing Magga-8.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To enable the student to learn about the reality of Dukkha.
2. To enable the student to recognize the significance of the Lord Buddha and His discovery of Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path.
3. To enable the student to learn how the Lord Buddha teaches His followers about Magga-8.

# HOW TO PUT AN END TO DUKKHA

## 5.1 The Reality of Life

Every infant is born together with different forms of Dukkha such as hunger, thirst, aging, sickness, death, etc. It is taken for granted that Dukkha is part of life. No one knows why and how Dukkha must become a part of everyone's life.

All one knows is that these different forms of Dukkha have caused human beings countless tears all throughout the ages. If the amount of tears shed by all the human beings that have ever lived and died could be collected, it would have filled oceans.

Such is the reality of life for human beings. In fact, all living beings encounter Dukkha.

Human suffering has been with human beings from time immemorial, and the effort taken to try and solve the different forms of suffering has come to naught. Some forms of suffering may be temporarily alleviated at best. But eventually, everyone must get old, get sick, and die.

When one's time comes, he must die leaving his life experiences and knowledge behind for others to learn from. One feels that at least, one's life has not been for nothing because one has left behind a legacy.

Every problem in life all throughout the ages can be called "Dukkha".

Dukkha is the sum of all the problems faced by humanity.

Dukkha is the fate suffered by every human being.

Dukkha puts an end to every person's life regardless of his social status.

Dukkha forces every person to acknowledge the fact that life is filled with Dukkha and Dukkha is unavoidable.

Dukkha serves to warn us that for as long as we cannot extinguish Dukkha, we will be endlessly trapped inside it.

Dukkha serves to remind us that every person must strive to personally find the way to be emancipated from Dukkha. No one else can do it for him.

Dukkha serves to warn us that if we find the wrong way to deal with Dukkha, we only end up with more and more Dukkha.

Dukkha serves to warn us that the weaker we are against Kilesa, the more Dukkha we will encounter.

Dukkha serves to remind us that we must fight against Kilesa every step of the way.

Dukkha serves to remind us that every human being is born with the same duties which include the following.

- 1) One is here to undertake self-training such that he is ready to face Dukkha.
- 2) One is here to find the way to put an end to Dukkha.
- 3) One is here to help each other create world peace.

We owe these three duties to our self as well as others. And the only thing that can help us to fulfill these three duties is called the Dhamma.

Dhamma means truth, purity, righteousness, goodness. Dhamma is the very means of putting

an end to Dukkha.

If one can discover the Dhamma needed to put an end to Dukkha, one can benefit one's self as well as others.

The only problem is so few people on earth know what the Dhamma needed to put an end to Dukkha is, where it can be found, and what it is like. This problem has existed all throughout human history. Such ignorance causes human beings not to be able to fulfill their three duties, hence, they must continue to encounter all forms of suffering in life.

## **5.2 The Perfect Man**

All throughout history, world leaders of each age realized the problems facing the human life and endeavored to find an enlightened person to come and teach them and their citizens the means of putting an end to suffering.

In some cases, kings were willing to abdicate the throne in order to go in search of an enlightened person. Some millionaires traveled everywhere just to look for an enlightened person who could help them and their people to put an end to suffering.

People living in enlightened times thirsted for truth and the means of putting an end to suffering. Today, the world as a whole has a wealth of knowledge accumulated all throughout the ages about the means of putting an end to suffering. And anyone can take advantage of such knowledge.

Education enables one to get an overview of the different means of putting an end to suffering from the past to the present time such that one can carry out a comparative study of these different teachings to see how they work and how effective they are. One does not have to reinvent the wheel so to speak.

Enlightened personages in the past who were able to put an end to suffering can be divided into two groups as follows.

The First Group: These were the personages who had to learn by trial and error until they could finally find the way to put an end to suffering.

The Second Group: These were the personages who had successfully found an enlightened personage who was able to put an end to suffering and endeavored to practice accordingly until they too could put an end to suffering.

Who were the personages that could put an end to suffering and subsequently taught others to do likewise? What did they discover and how did they go about discovering the means of putting an end to suffering?

Study shows that of all the people that have ever lived, the only personage who can put an end to suffering and teach others to do likewise is the Lord Buddha, the world's foremost teacher.

### **The Lord Buddha's Discoveries:**

1) The Lord Buddha discovers that not only are human beings made up of two basic components, namely, body and mind, there exists inside each human being something called the Dhamma. There are two levels of Dhamma: Lokiyadhamma – It is the level of Dhamma

which cannot yet put an end to Dukkha permanently; and Lokutaradhamma – It is the level of Dhamma which can put an end to Dukkha permanently. These two levels of Dhamma can be attained by keeping one's mind continuously still and quiet in the center of one's body.

2) The Lord Buddha discovers that the Lokutaradhamma which can be deployed to completely extinguish Dukkha is called Nibbana. Nibbana is the state of nature which is the purest, brightest, and most tranquil. The moment one's mind can merge as one with Nibbana completely and permanently, Dukkha will be completely extinguished.

3) The Lord Buddha discovers the method by which one can undertake self-training for the purpose of putting an end to Dukkha. This method is called Magga-8. The Lord Buddha teaches Magga-8 to everyone regardless of his race and creed. His followers are told to protect and propagate His Teachings for as long as possible for the sake of all human beings.

These three discoveries make the Lord Buddha the most important personage in the world because people need His Teachings in order to put an end to Dukkha.

The means by which the Lord Buddha makes these three discoveries is called meditation practice. It was through meditation practice that He could bring His mind to a complete standstill at the seventh base in the center of His body to the point that He could attain the Nana or Supernormal Insight which in turn brought about Supernormal Knowledge called Vijja-3. Vijja-3 includes the following.

The First Vijja – Pubbenivasanusatinana: It is the Supernormal Knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to recall his previous existences.

The Second Vijja – Cutupapatanana: It is the Supernormal Knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to recall the previous existences of other living beings.

The Third Vijja – Asavakkhayanana: It is the Supernormal Knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to extinguish Asavakilesa (the root cause of Dukkha).

It was Vijja-3 which enabled the Lord Buddha to not only penetrate the truth about life and the world but to also extinguish Dukkha. His attainment of Self-Enlightenment turned Him from the Bodhisatta into the Lord Buddha. He has made it possible for earnest practitioners of His Teachings to put an end to Dukkha.

As a result of the Lord Buddha's incomparable loving-kindness and compassion, a huge number of people from every social class had taken up the religious life as a Buddhist monk in order to learn about and earnestly practice Magga-8. These personages had put their lives on the line keeping their mind constantly bright and clear until they were able to attain the Lokutaradhamma called Nibbana.

Magga-8 is also called by other names such as the Sublime Path, the Path of Heedfulness, etc. Sometimes, it is called "Kusala" which means righteousness, wholesomeness. Magga-8 may be called by different names, but its meaning is the Path Leading to the Cessation of Dukkha. Sometimes, the Lord Buddha called Magga-8 "Samadhi comprising seven components" when He wished to indicate the two levels of Magga-8 in practice.

1) The Basic Level: This is the level of Magga-8 practiced by the laypeople who cannot yet put

an end to Dukkha.

2) The High Level: This is the level of Magga-8 practiced by Ariya personages that include Sotapanna Personages, Sakadagami Personages, and Anagami Personages who are close to putting an end to Dukkha and the Arahats who have successfully put an end to Dukkha.

It was Magga-8 that Prince Siddhattha as a Bodhisatta had been searching for ever since he witnessed the four celestial messengers in the forms of an old person, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk on his way to the royal park. These celestial messengers reminded Prince Siddhattha that life is Dukkha and everyone on earth is waiting to die, for no one can avoid death.

Seeing the four celestial messengers started Prince Siddhattha to seriously think about finding the means of putting an end to Dukkha.

As a result of his serious contemplation, Prince Siddhattha concluded that...

1) Nibbana which is the state free from Dukkha exists.

2) The practice leading to Nibbana must be a Kusala (wholesome) practice and not an unwholesome (Akusala) practice.

But what Prince Siddhattha did not know was the particular practice which could lead him to Nibbana. And to search for this particular practice, it required him to take up the religious life so that he could work earnestly on finding the answer. It was not until the fifth celestial messenger showed up in the form of the birth of his son that he decided to take up the religious life right away. This fifth celestial messenger served to remind him that birth is the beginning of Dukkha. The more times one is reborn, the more times one has to encounter Dukkha. His newborn son would be encountering the same forms of Dukkha encountered by him and the rest of humanity. Therefore, he had to hasten to find the means to put an end to birth, aging, sickness, and death before anything happened to him. He realized that for as long as he could not find the solution to the problem of Dukkha, no one on earth would be able to avoid death and rebirth.

Prince Siddhattha bade his son farewell, for he had to get on with his work immediately. The only thing he had left for his son was the name “Rahula” which meant fetter. Its deeper meaning is the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death. Prince Siddhattha realized how everyone’s life was still trapped within the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death. His priority was to find the solution to the problem of Dukkha because it was the only way that he and everyone else could free themselves from this vicious cycle.

Prince Siddhattha left his kingdom, his opportunity to become a Universal Monarch, and everyone and everything precious to him to become a monk. He subsisted by begging for food, wearing the robes made from discarded cloths, finding shelter under a large tree, treating his illnesses by drinking his own urine, etc. Prince Siddhattha had a real sense of urgency, for time was passing by taking with it his vitality and the opportunity to find the solution of the Dukkha problem. No amount of material wealth on earth could help him to find what he was looking for.

It can be said that Prince Siddhattha took up the religious life in order to attain Nibbana. What he had to do was to find the wholesome practice which could lead him to attain Nibbana. It was the reason he went to study under different Yogis. But after all the study and practice, he was still nowhere near what he was searching for. Therefore, he decided to search for the solution by himself.

Having put his life on the line practicing self-mortification to the fullest extent, Prince Siddhattha suddenly remembered the practice which he had discovered when he was just seven years old. And that was keeping his mind still and quiet in the center of his body until he attained the First Jhana. This particular practice had not yet been discovered by any religious teacher so far. He was convinced that what he had discovered when he was a child had to be the way leading him to attain Nibbana.

Therefore, on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon, on his 35th Birthday Anniversary, Prince Siddhattha decided to sit down and practice Majjhimapatipada (Middle Way) Meditation. He subsequently made a vow, “My flesh and blood can dry up leaving only skin, tendons, and bones, for as long as I cannot yet attain the Dhamma (the Truth), I will not leave this seat.”

Prince Siddhattha began practicing meditation from evening to dawn the next morning. During which time, his mind merged as one with Nibbana, and all the Dukkha within him was completely extinguished. Prince Siddhattha attained Self-Enlightenment and became the Lord Buddha.

As the Lord Buddha, He realized that the Kusala (wholesome) practice that He had been searching for since He took up the religious life was Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path. He also realized that Magga-8 was the exact same practice leading all of the previous Buddhas to attain Self-Enlightenment.

Having realized His wish, the Lord Buddha knew that to help His fellow beings, He needed to teach them about Magga-8 and how to practice it accordingly. He could only serve as their guide, but they would have to practice it for themselves.

The Lord Buddha had spent the rest of His life teaching everyone who was interested in Magga-8 and its practice. Minutes before His attainment of Complete Nibbana, the Lord Buddha asked His disciples if they had any question about what He had been teaching for the past forty-five years. The Lord Buddha had perfectly performed the duty of a Great Teacher until He attained Complete Nibbana on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon, the day of His birth and His attainment of Self-Enlightenment. He has left His Teachings behind to benefit as many persons as possible and for as long as possible.

It is for these reasons that the Lord Buddha has benefited humanity to the greatest extent. He has shown us the means of putting an end to Dukkha. Therefore, He is the Greatest Teacher on earth.

Although we were not born during the Lord Buddha’s time and did not have the opportunity to listen to His Dhamma lectures, but we are extremely fortunate that His Teachings (the Dhamma) have been passed on from one generation of righteous Buddhist monks to

another since the Lord Buddha's time. It is only right that as a Buddhist, one must practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings such that one can be a role model for others. As a Buddhist, one must help to perpetuate and propagate Buddhism as widely as possible by earnestly supporting the learning of the Dhamma, the practice of the Dhamma, the propagation of the Dhamma, and the continuation of the Dhamma.

In recent history, one personage in Thailand had emulated the Lord Buddha by putting his life on the line practicing Majjhimapatipada Meditation until he was able to attain the Dhamma. This personage is the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), more frequently referred to as Luang Pu Wat Paknam. (Luang Pu means Venerable Grandfather in Thai). He vowed, "If I sit down to practice meditation this time and cannot see the Dhamma that the Lord Buddha wishes me to see, I will not rise from this seat."

Having made the vow, Luang Pu earnestly practiced meditation until he attained the Dhamma on the 15th day of the 10th waxing moon. He had spent the rest of his life teaching the monks, the nuns, and the laypeople to practice Magga-8. He summarized his teachings in just one short sentence, "Cessation Is the Key to Success." It means that to attain the Dhamma as taught by the Lord Buddha, one must practice Majjhimapatipada Meditation until one can bring one's mind to a complete standstill at the seventh base in the center of his body. The process works to refine the practitioner's body, speech, and mind and makes them purer and purer until the purity of his mind matches that of Nibbana. It is then that he can see Nibbana with his Supernormal Insight, attain Nibbana, and be one with Nibbana.

Since the Lord Buddha's time, the world has from time to time witnessed such great Buddhist monks as the Most Venerable Luang Pu Wat Paknam. Buddhists are truly fortunate to have had such great Buddhist monks as the great teachers of Magga-8. In the place of the Lord Buddha, they have made it possible for Buddhists all throughout the ages to learn about Dukkha and how to put an end to it.

### **5.3 How the Lord Buddha Teaches the Dhamma**

The Lord Buddha well realized that Magga-8 was the only practice which could lead humanity to put an end to Dukkha. But teaching about Magga-8 and how to practice it required ingenuity. Therefore, the Lord Buddha devised a unique teaching method to make His teaching of Magga-8 suitable to each audience's level of intelligence and intellect so that His audiences would be motivated to practice it accordingly. This unique teaching method can be summarized as follows.

- 1) The Lord Buddha describes the different forms of Dukkha.
- 2) The Lord Buddha describes the different categories of people.
- 3) The Lord Buddha describes the different laws which operate in the Human Realm.
- 4) The Lord Buddha describes the method which leads to the extinguishment of Dukkha and how it must be practiced by oneself.
- 5) The Lord Buddha gives the Ovadapatimokkha lecture as the master plan for studying the Dhamma.

### 1) The Different Forms of Dukkha

The Lord Buddha teaches the three categories of Dukkha faced by human beings as follows.

**Dukkha Born of Living One's Life:** Examples include inclement weather, poor health, shortage of the four necessities as a result of poor earning, etc.

**Dukkha Born of Living Together with Others:** Examples include conflicts, exploitations, competition, deceptive schemes, etc.

**Dukkha Born of Kilesa:** Examples include greed, ill-will, the Causes of Ruin (Apayamukkha), hurt feelings, envy, jealousy, etc.

Human life is ravaged by these three categories of Dukkha. They are real and if they are not contained, they can lead humans to destroy one another, the environment, and the entire earth.

### 2) The Different Categories of People

The Lord Buddha teaches that not everyone on earth understands life for what it really is.

**The First Category of People:** The people in this category understand all too well how life is plagued by Dukkha; hence, they have struggled hard to find the way to put an end to Dukkha. Their struggle will soon pay off. They can be compared to the people swimming across the river against the strong current and are motivated by the sight of those who have already reached the other side of the river. People in this category include the Bodhisattas.

**The Second Category of People:** The people in this category understand all too well how life is plagued by Dukkha, but they have not yet found the way to put an end to Dukkha. They can be compared to the people swimming across the river against the strong current, they cannot catch sight of the other side just yet. People in this category include the personages who are about to attain Arahantship.

**The Third Category of People:** The people in this category are not yet aware of life's Dukkha. Therefore, they do not struggle to find the way to put an end to Dukkha. They can be compared to the people floating in the river along the strong current waiting for their time to drown.

**The Fourth Category of People:** The people in this category are not yet aware of life's Dukkha because they are too busily committing immoral acts, engaging in Apayamukkha (the Causes of Ruin). They can be compared to the people floating blindly in the river against the strong current waiting for their time to drown.

These four categories of people are not equal in terms of their view on the reality of life, their willpower, their ability to undertake self-training. Hence, they require the Lord Buddha's Teachings tailored to their specific needs in order to motivate them to start working on putting an end to Dukkha so that they can attain Nibbana after the manner of the Lord Buddha. Naturally, the time it takes for each person to attain Nibbana differs from one person to another.

### 3) The Different Categories of Law Operating in the Human Realm

The Lord Buddha teaches that there are four main categories of law in this world.

3.1) The Rule of Law: This category of law includes the different laws being legislated to govern the citizens of each country so that they can live together in peace. The rule of law differs from one country to another.

3.2) Customs and Traditions: This category of law includes local or national customs and traditions which do not violate the country's rule of law. They deal with the way people eat, live, consume the four necessities, take care of the sick, etc.

3.3) The Law of Kamma: This category of law exists in nature. The Law of Kamma creates diversity in human beings in terms of looks, the level of material wealth, the level of desirable attributes, the quality of one's surroundings, etc. The Law of Kamma determines a person's mental, verbal, and physical deeds in terms of what is right; what is wrong; what is wholesome; what is unwholesome; what is Punna (merit); what is Pāpa (demerit); what is beneficial; what is harmful. It is each person's mental, verbal, and physical deeds and the Law of Kamma that determine the levels of each person's happiness and unhappiness here and now as well as in future existences.

3.4) The Three Characteristics (Tilakkhana): This category of law exists in nature. The Three Characteristics include Aniccan (impermanence), Dukkhan (the inability to remain the same), and Anatta (the absence of true selfhood). This law governs every living being and everything such that every living being and everything come into being, exist for a time, and come to an end.

The rule of law, customs and traditions come from human beings. They are not always foolproof. They are not always true. They can change with changes in society, in technology, and in weather condition. They must be changed to suit the conditions and the climates of the time.

However, the Law of Kamma and the Three Characteristics exist in nature as discovered by the Lord Buddha through His Nanadassana (Supernormal Insight). These two categories of law govern every human being. But the Lord Buddha did not reveal the origin of these two categories of law or the entities responsible for creating them. Such knowledge is reserved for those who can attain Nibbana.

The Law of Kamma and the Three Characteristics are highly dangerous to human beings. Whoever transgresses the Law of Kamma either intentionally or unintentionally must be punished. He is not punished for his misdeeds just here and now but in future existences as well. When someone transgresses the Law of Kamma just once, he must be punished for his one misdeed untold times which of course is hardly fair. And yet, that is the way the Law of Kamma works. It is like being punished for the same crime over and over again.

The Lord Buddha discovered that the only way human beings could escape from Dukkha, from the danger of the Law of Kamma, and from the dictate of the Three Characteristics was by teaching human beings to earnestly practice Magga-8 until they could attain Nibbana. The reason is that Nibbana is the realm of existence which is devoid of

Dukkha, devoid of the ill consequences of one's misdeeds, and devoid of the dictate of the Three Characteristics. Nibbana is the realm of existence which is characterized by eternal bliss and purity.

4) The Practice Leading to the Extinguishment of Dukkha

The Lord Buddha teaches the practice of Magga-8 as follows.

Attahi Attano Natho  
Ko Hi Natho Paro Siya  
One Must Be One's Own Refuge,  
For No One Else Can.  
Attana Hi Sudantena  
Nathan Labhati Dulalabhan  
A Person Who Has Undertaken Self-Training to the Fullest Extent  
Can Find Refuge in Nibbana Which Is Difficult to Attain.

This Lord Buddha's Saying attests to the fact that...

4.1) The extinguishment of one's Dukkha must be carried out by oneself. No one else can do it for him.

4.2) To extinguish Dukkha, one must be able to attain Nibbana which is an extremely difficult feat.

4.3) To attain Nibbana, one must practice as follows.

1. One must endeavor to undertake self-training to such an extent that the level of his physical, verbal, and mental purity matches that of Nibbana.

2. Once the level of one's physical, verbal, and mental purity matches that of Nibbana, one will be able to see Nibbana, attain Nibbana, and be one with Nibbana.

3. Once a person can be one with Nibbana, the purity of Nibbana can be deployed to extinguish his Dukkha and the root cause of his Dukkha.

4.4) To attain Nibbana, one must have already undertaken self-training to the fullest extent. One must have already possessed the following five attributes to the fullest extent.

**1. Saddha (Faith) :** One must have already had a deep faith in the Buddha-Virtues, and must have already endeavored to undertake self-training to the fullest extent for the purpose of putting an end to Dukkha.

**2. A Strong Constitution :** One must have already been in the earnest habit of taking care of one's body, and must have already known how to exercise moderation in regards to the consumption of the four necessities.

**3. Humility :** One must have already cultivated breadth and depth of knowledge, ability, and self-reliance. One must have already cultivated generosity and the wish to see others happy (Metta or loving kindness), the wish to help those in need (Karuna or compassion), the wish to congratulate others for their wholesome deeds whether or not they are

above, equal or inferior to oneself (Mudita or altruistic joy), and the willingness to accept the Law of Kamma in that wholesome deeds beget wholesome consequences; unwholesome deeds beget unwholesome consequences (Upekkha or equanimity).

Only a self-reliant and generous person can be ready to cultivate higher and higher virtues. Nothing can deter him when it comes to performing wholesome deeds. He knows his true self-worth. He is not concerned that others may not know his virtues or doubt if he possesses such and such virtues. Therefore, he is not given to affectation. Neither is he given to pretentiousness.

**4. Endeavor :** One must have already been in the habit of practicing meditation regularly, practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings earnestly in order to continue refining his body, speech, and mind.

**5. Supernormal Insight :** One must have already penetrated and seen with the Supernormal Insight gained through his Magga-8 practice the birth and the extinguishment of Dukkha at the Lokutaradhamma level leading him to see Nibbana, attain Nibbana, and be one with Nibbana.

To escape from life's Dukkha, from the danger of the Law of Kamma, and the destructive effects of the Three Characteristics, one must earnestly practice Magga-8 to the extent that one has fully cultivated the five attributes as described above.

But for those who are still working on cultivating these five attributes, it is crucially important that they find a virtuous friend who can help them with their self-training.

A virtuous friend who can serve as one's guide must possess at least the following three attributes.

- 1) He must be a role model where the extinguishment of Dukkha is concerned.
- 2) He must be able to teach others how to practice Magga-8.
- 3) He must be able to provide others with the willpower needed to work on extinguishing Dukkha.

The personage who can best serve as humanity's refuge is the Lord Buddha. Next to Him are the Arahats. Next to the Arahats are the Buddhist monks who have dedicated their lives to practicing Magga-8 after the manner of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats.

The ceremony where a person can pledge himself a Buddhamaṃsa is for the purpose of taking refuge in the Lord Buddha while he is working on putting an end to Dukkha. This ceremony has persisted to this day to remind the Buddhists of the incomparable Buddha-Virtues of all the previous Buddhas as well as those of all the future Buddhas.

### **5) The Ovadapatimokkha lecture as the master plan for studying the Dhamma.**

The Lord Buddha well realized that He could not possibly help every human being to attain Nibbana; therefore, He had devised ways of teaching Magga-8 to help His disciples to be able to take refuge in themselves as soon as possible. These Teachings have been passed down from the Arahats and the righteous monks all throughout the ages.

The Lord Buddha had ways to teach Magga-8 to enable people to easily understand

the importance of Magga-8, to easily learn about Magga-8, and to easily propagate the knowledge about Magga-8. His aims were to help people of every level of education, every level of intelligence and intellect, every race, every creed, every gender, and every age to easily put Magga-8 into practice. It is an important way to help as many people as possible to attain Nibbana in the quickest way possible. It is also the way to provide future generations with the means of escaping from Dukkha, the Law of Kamma, and the Three Characteristics.

These Teachings are given by the Lord Buddha in the Ovadapatimokkha Lecture. Ovadapatimokkha means the teaching having to do with humanity's escape from Dukkha. This teaching enables people to easily understand the importance of Magga-8, to easily learn about Magga-8, and to easily propagate the knowledge about Magga-8. This Teaching is timeless because it applies to people of every generation.

The Ovadapatimokkha Lecture contains three topics as follows.

The First Topic deals with the instilling of Sammaditthi (Right View) and consists of three main points as follows.

1) The Lord Buddha teaches that the successful extinguishment of Dukkha requires "Patience". This is the first requirement. Every person must exercise patience from the very second that he is born. It is the most critical second of his life because he is at his most vulnerable and most ignorant point where his life is hanging in the balance. Should he not know how to take a breath, he can die. It is his first lesson on self-reliance because he has to breathe for himself, no one else can do it for him. Every person must exercise patience, for it is patience which can help one to extinguish Dukkha.

2) The Lord Buddha teaches that a human being's *raison d'être* is to "Attain Nibbana" because Nibbana is filled with incomparable bliss. Nibbana is the realm of existence which is devoid of Dukkha, the Law of Kamma, and the Three Characteristics. It is for these reasons that every Lord Buddha says, "Nibbana Is Sublime!"

3) The Lord Buddha teaches that there is only one way which leads to Nibbana, and it is the way which does not incur retribution. It is the way of the Buddhist monk who has abstained from all unwholesome deeds. A person destined for Nibbana must undertake self-training to such an extent that his body, speech, and mind are as pure as that of Nibbana. Only then can he see Nibbana, attain Nibbana, and be one with Nibbana. The way of unwholesomeness is not the way of a person pure in body, speech, and mind. But it is the way of a person destined for the state of loss and woe and endless Dukkha.

The Second Topic deals with the instilling of Sammasankappa (Right Thought) and consists of three main points as follows.

1) The Lord Buddha teaches that before doing anything, it would behoove one to think through whether what one wants to do is wholesome or unwholesome. The Lord Buddha teaches a person to abstain completely from every form of unwholesomeness even at the point of putting one's life on the line. An unwholesome deed however slight may lead

one to be reborn in the Hell Realm. Whenever an unwholesome deed is committed, one is essentially incurring additional Pāpa and retribution which will only add more and more Dukkha to himself. Pāpa (demerit) is a form of energy invisible to the human eyes, but it has immeasurably destructive power.

2) The Lord Buddha teaches that it would behoove one to perform only wholesome deeds and that one should be willing to put one's life on the line in order to perform wholesome deeds to the fullest extent. The reason is that wholesome deeds work to eliminate Dukkha from one's life and add happiness to it. The more wholesome deeds one performs, the better one's life will be. This is because wholesome deeds earn one Punna (merit), and Punna is a form of pure energy which has the power to eliminate Dukkha and attract happiness and prosperity. It is said that when merit is accumulated, problems go away; when merit is lacking, problems come in.

3) The Lord Buddha teaches that it would behoove one to endeavor to keep one's mind bright and clear at all times. If one accumulates Punna with a bright and clear mind, he stands to gain even more Punna. The more Punna is accumulated, the purer one's body, speech, and mind will be. And when the level of purity of one's body, speech, and mind is equal to that of Nibbana, one will be able to see Nibbana, attain Nibbana, and become one with Nibbana as shown by the Lord Buddha and the Arahats.

The Third Topic deals with the lifestyle which enables one to abstain from all unwholesomeness and keep one's mind bright and clear. It consists of six different points as follows.

1) The Lord Buddha teaches a person to take care that he does not commit unwholesome deeds verbally by not maligning anyone. It is about Sammavaca or learning to use words which issue forth from a bright and clear mind.

2) The Lord Buddha teaches a person to take care that he does not commit unwholesome deeds physically by not inflicting physical harm on anyone. It is about Sammakammanta or learning to do things with a bright and clear mind.

3) The Lord Buddha teaches a person to earn an honest living. It means not earning a living by dishonest and immoral means. This is carried out by observing the Precepts and exercising good manners. It is about Sammaajiva or learning to earn a living with a bright and clear mind.

4) The Lord Buddha teaches a person to take care when consuming the four necessities because careless consumption is a waste of time, effort, and money. It can lead to bad habits, selfishness, self-indulgence, etc. The Lord Buddha teaches a person to first of all exercise moderation in terms of food consumption. It is about Sammavayama or learning to abstain from unwholesomeness with a bright and clear mind.

5) The Lord Buddha teaches a person to keep his mind inside his body by choosing a quiet place to sit and sleep. Solitude is conducive to a calm and quiet mind such that one has the time to address his weaknesses which have the potential to drive him to commit

unwholesomeness. It is about Sammasati or learning to keep one's mind bright and clear at all times.

6) The Lord Buddha teaches a person that in order for him to keep his body, speech, and mind pure, he must endeavor to steadily increase the brightness and clarity of his mind. This is carried out by earnestly practicing meditation where one learns to keep one's mind still and quiet at the seventh base in the center of one's body. Such meditation practice is the means of refining one's body, speech, and mind so that they can be kept pure, bright, and clear at all times.

The Ovadapatimokkha Lecture was given by the Lord Buddha to 1,250 Arahats as the policy for propagating His Teachings. These Arahats were charged with the task of traveling in different directions to different places in order to pass on to the people in these places the reality of life such that they would be motivated to earnestly practice Magga-8. It is through the earnest practice of Magga-8 that one can put an end to Dukkha and escape from the Law of Kamma and the Three Characteristics. The Ovadapatimokkha Lecture can be considered to be basic Dhamma knowledge in Buddhism. It serves as the entrance to Nibbana.

## **5.4 The Self-Training Required to Put an end to Dukkha**

### **1) One Must Learn to Be Self-Reliant**

In learning to be self-reliant, a person must understand why it is important for him to endeavor to put an end to Dukkha. In learning to be self-reliant, he must cultivate the following five attributes.

**1.1) Saddha (Faith):** One learns to cultivate Saddha by studying the Lord Buddha's history and the self-training He had undertaken as a Bodhisatta from the time he first aspired to Buddhahood until the time He attained Self-Enlightenment and became the Lord Buddha. Having been able to extinguish Dukkha, He has taught other beings to do likewise so that they too can attain Nibbana.

**1.2) A Strong Constitution:** One learns to take good care of one's body by knowing how to exercise moderation when consuming the four necessities. It means knowing what is just right in terms of amount, quality, how something works, how long something lasts, and how it fits into one's budget.

**1.3) Humility:** One learns to cultivate humility by taking responsibility for one's work, one's education, one's household chores, etc. One learns to do things in terms of meeting their objectives. One learns to do things well in terms of quality and amount. One learns to do things well in terms of people, time, money, situations, and places. A person thus trained has breadth and depth of knowledge, high ability, and good conduct such that he is self-reliant, trustworthy, and true to himself. He does not suffer from an inferiority complex or conceit or the need to deceive others.

**1.4) Endeavor:** One learns to be self-disciplined in regards to punctuality, cleanliness, tidiness, respect for rules and regulations. Most importantly, he is self-disciplined in

regards to meditation practice. He practices meditation earnestly and regularly.

**1.5) Insight:** One learns to make decision in regards to what is right, what is wrong, what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is Punna, what is Pāpa, what should be done, and what should not be done. One learns these things from the Jataka Stories and other stories that teach about morality as well as from daily life events. One develops insight so that one can be aware of Dukkha, Kilesa, the Law of Kamma, and life's problems.

## **2) Finding a Virtuous Friend**

In learning to be self-reliant, one important factor is finding a virtuous friend who can teach and guide one in regards to the Lord Buddha's Teachings. To qualify as a virtuous friend, one must have already undertaken self-training as taught by the Lord Buddha to the point where one has already witnessed its result.

2.1) One's virtuous friend must be able to serve as a role model where the extinguishment of Dukkha is concerned.

2.2) One's virtuous friend must be able to teach one how to put an end to Dukkha.

2.3) One's virtuous friend must be able to inspire one to earnestly undertake self-training.

Such a virtuous friend must have practiced Magga-8 by putting his life on the line after the manner of the Lord Buddha. An example of such a virtuous friend includes the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Luang Pu Wat Paknam).

## **3) Living One's Life According to the Ovadapatimokkha**

The Lord Buddha's Ovadapatimokkha Lecture contains the ideal, the principle, and the method necessary for the Buddhist's self-training.

The Ideal: It spells out the importance and the necessity of one's life-goal.

The Principle: It is the standard used to decide...

- that certain things are forbidden; otherwise, it will jeopardize one's effort.
- that certain things should be worked on in order to help one to realize one's goal.
- that certain things must be earnestly worked on in order to speed up one's success.

The Method: It spells out the steps necessary to realize one's life-goal.

The Lord Buddha teaches the Ovapadapatimokkha in order to provide people with the ideal, the principle, and the method necessary to undertake self-training for the purpose of putting an end to Dukkha.

The Buddhist Ideal has to do with Sammaditthi (Right View) in that one must endeavor to undertake self-training without committing any more unwholesome deeds.

The Buddhist Principle has to do with Sammasankappa (Right Thought) in that one is constantly reminding himself that he must never commit any unwholesome deeds; that he must perform every form of wholesomeness to the fullest extent; that he must learn to keep his mind bright and clear at all times.

The Buddhist Way of Life must consist of Punna (merit) alone from morning until night. One must not harm anyone verbally or physically. One must observe the Precepts and exercise

good manners. One must exercise moderation when consuming the four necessities. One must choose to sit and lie down in a quiet place. And one must earnestly and regularly practice meditation.

Whoever practices the Ovadapatimokkha will be able to undertake self-training for the purpose of putting an end to Dukkha.

#### 4) Practicing Magga-8 by Putting One's Life on the Line

To see Nibbana, to attain Nibbana, and to become one with Nibbana, one's physical, verbal, and mental purity must be equal to that of Nibbana. It is through the purity of Nibbana that Dukkha can be successfully extinguished. The successful extinguishment of Dukkha nullifies the Law of Kamma and the Three Characteristics.

To purify one's body, speech, and mind means to practice Samadhibhavana or meditation. Samadhibhavana, in turn, consists of the first seven components of Magga-8. Samadhibhavana enables one's mind to become clean, bright, and still. When one's mind can be brought to a complete standstill, one can attain the Dhamma as shown in the following diagrams (1-3).

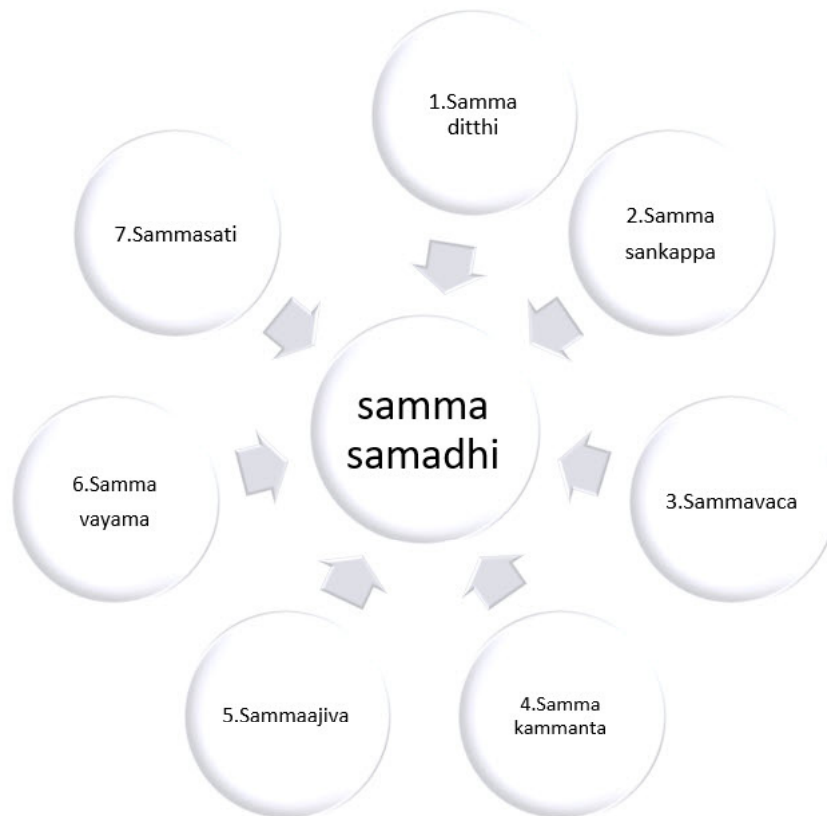


Diagram 1: Sammasamadhi Consisting of Seven Components

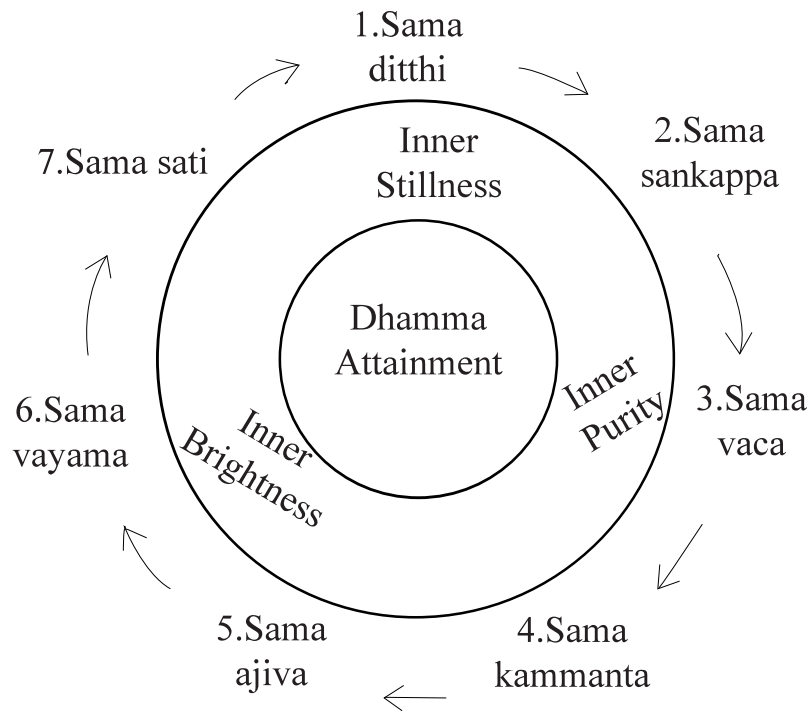


Diagram 2: Magga-8 Leading to the Attainment of the Dhamma

Diagram 3: Repeated Cycles of Magga-8 Practice for the Purpose of Dhamma Attainment  
 Right View--->Right Thought--->Right Speech--->Right Action--->Right Livelihood--->Right Effort--->Right Mindfulness--->Right Concentration

By the time the Lord Buddha was able to discover the means of purifying one's body, speech, and mind, He had had to put His life on the line countless times as a Bodhisatta while working towards Buddhahood.

To get started, an aspiring practitioner of Magga-8 needs to cultivate the following four habits.

1) Staying Close to His Virtuous Friend: It means finding a good and virtuous teacher, visiting him often, giving him permission to point out one's weaknesses.

2) Listening to Dhamma Lectures: It means finding every opportunity to learn the Dhamma to make sure that one is staying the course.

3) Contemplating the Dhamma: It means contemplating what one has learnt, understanding the reason why one is practicing Magga-8, and valuing the Dhamma more than one's life.

4) Practicing Meditation: It means earnestly and regularly practicing meditation in order to achieve elevated meditative attainments for the purpose of gradually putting an end to Dukkha.

The earnest practice of Magga-8 as described above enables the practitioner to put an end to Dukkha, to nullify the Law of Kamma and the Three Characteristics, and attain Nibbana. Such is the way to escape from the round of rebirth as taught by the Lord Buddha. It remains for one to decide if one wishes to continue being kept a prisoner of the round of rebirth or to earnestly undertake self-training for the purpose of following the Lord Buddha to Nibbana. The Lord Buddha says, "I can serve only as your guide."

# CHAPTER



NIBBANA EXPLAINED

## **Chapter 6 - Nibbana Explained**

- 6.1 Categories of Nibbana
- 6.2 Nibbana Being a Sphere of Existence
- 6.3 The Lokuttara Realm VS. the Lokiya Realm
- 6.4 The Meaning of Lokuttaradhamma-9
- 6.5 Nibbana Being the Dwelling of Arahats
- 6.6 Nibbana Is Not Emptiness.
- 6.7 More Than All the Grains of Sands in the Ganges
- 6.8 Two Categories of Nibbana

## **CONCEPTS**

There are two categories of Nibbana, namely, Saupadisesanibbana and Anupadisesanibbana. Saupadisesanibbana is the Nibbana of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats who still possess the human body. Anupadisesanibbana is the Nibbana of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats who no longer possess the human body. Nibbana exists as attested by the Lord Buddha, “It matters not the number of Arahats attaining Anupadisesanibbana, they can all be accommodated in the same way that the ocean is not at all affected by how little or how much rain it receives.”

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To enable the student to understand how the attainment of Nibbana is life's ultimate goal.
2. To inspire the student to endeavor to practice meditation for the purpose of extinguishing Kilesa and attaining Nibbana.

# NIBBANA ENPLAINED

## 6.1 Categories of Nibbana

The attainment of Nibbana is the ultimate life-goal of every Buddhist. There are two categories of Nibbana as follows.

**1. Saupadisesanibbana:** It is the Nibbana of the Arahats who still possess the human body. Modern academics call it Psychological Nibbana because it is the heightened psychological experience of an Arahata who has successfully extinguished his Kilesa. Therefore, his heart and mind is filled with brightness, purity, peace, and happiness.

This category of Nibbana exists and can be experienced by practicing Magga-8 to the fullest extent as in the cases of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats.

**2. Anupadisesanibbana:** It is the Nibbana of the Arahats who no longer possess the human body. The existence of Anupadisesanibbana has been a topic of debate since ancient times. Someone asked the Lord Buddha what happened to dead Arahats and if they continued to exist. The answer is provided by the Lord Buddha and the Arahats as found in the Tipitaka. And yet, it is still being said by different persons that the answer is not clear. Some persons deny the existence of Anupadisesanibbana. Some persons say that Nibbana is far too profound to be explained.

Venerable Buddhadasa was one of the Theravada Buddhists who believed that only Psychological Nibbana existed but not the Nibbana as a separate sphere of existence. One modern academic (Professor Dr. Wit Wisatawait) calls it Metaphysical Nibbana. These persons believe that when the Arahats died, they disappeared altogether.

The question this coarse book will try to answer is whether or not Metaphysical Nibbana exists as a realm of existence. And according to the Tipitaka, it does.

## 6.2 Nibbana Being a Sphere of Existence

Some schools are being attacked for deviating from the Tipitaka by teaching that Nibbana is a sphere of existence called Ayatananibbana. The Lord Buddha says, “Nibbana exists as a sphere of existence. It is written in the Tipitaka, Atthi Bhikkhave Tadayatanan<sup>1</sup> which means...

“Behold, monks, this Ayatana exists. But it does not contain earth, water, fire or wind. It is not Akasanancayatana. It is not Vinnanancayatana. It is not Akincannayatana. It is not Nevasannanasannayatana. It is not this world or another world. It is not the sun or the moon. In this Ayatana, there is no coming or going. There is no temporary existence, birth or death. This Ayatana is not temporary. It is not changing. It is devoid of sense-fields. It is the end of Dukkha.”<sup>2</sup>

In this Buddha’s Saying, the Lord Buddha uses the term “Ayatana” to mean Nibbana. Ayata-

<sup>1</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 24, no. 158, p. 206

<sup>2</sup> *Paramatthadīpanī Atthakathā-khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 44, no. 158, p. 714

na means acknowledging or being acknowledged. The instruments for acknowledging are called Inner Ayatana and include eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The instruments for being acknowledged are Outer Ayatana and include physical form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, and mind-objects.

It is noteworthy that Ayatana as applied to Nibbana exists but it has nothing to do with Inner Ayatana, namely, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. In other words, Ayatana as applied to Nibbana is not Inner Ayatana. Neither is it made up of Outer Ayatana, namely, the four primary elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. Ayatana as applied to Nibbana is not this world or another world. It is not the sun or the moon. It has nothing to do with coming, going, temporary existence, death, and birth. Ayatana as applied to Nibbana is not temporary, is not changing, and is devoid of sense-fields. What the Lord Buddha is saying implies that Nibbana is Outer Ayatana and it has the capacity to acknowledge things.

The Lord Buddha also says that Ayatana as applied to Nibbana is not Arupajhana-4, the state of elevated meditative attainments having to do with emptiness, consciousness, etc.

In the Buddha's Saying mentioned above, the Lord Buddha wishes to confirm that Nibbana is a type of Outer Ayatana but it has nothing to do with such coarse Ayatana as earth, water, fire and wind or such refined Ayatana as Arupajhana-4. Despite being the most refined Ayatana, Nibbana can be acknowledged by a pure and clean mind: Yogavacara (an accomplished meditator) who has practiced meditation until he can attain the Gotarabhunana and his mind is constantly focused on Nibbana will be able to advance to Ariyahood.

Somdet Phrananasanvara, the former Supreme Patriarch wrote, "Therefore, Buddhism does not deny the existence of things called Visankhara or Asankhatadhamma especially different levels of elevated meditative attainments all the way to Nibbana which is called Ayatana by the Lord Buddha who said, "Atthi Bhikkhave Tadayatanan: Behold, monks, Ayatana exists." The Lord Buddha used the term Ayatana to mean advancing in that it can be attained by the accomplished meditator. Visankharagatancittan means the mind which has attained Visankhara which is Nibbana, for it is devoid of mental formations. Tanhanan Khayamajjhaga means the end of Tanha or craving.

If Nibbana is not a type of Ayatana, it cannot be attained. But it is attainable for the very reason that it is Ayatana. It is Visankharadhamma. It is the state of mind which is devoid of selfishness, for if craving exists still, one cannot attain Visankharadhamma. To attain Visankharadhamma or Asankhatadhamma, one's mind must be completely devoid of Fetters. The word "Atta" in Buddhism has two meanings, namely, a) the illusion that the human body is the self; and b) true selfhood.<sup>3</sup>

### **6.3 The Lokuttara Realm VS. the Lokiya Realm**

There is another Buddha's Saying in the Udana Scripture where the Lord Buddha confirms the existence of Nibbana as an Ayatana or a sphere of existence as follows.

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<sup>3</sup> Buddhajayamankalagatha Explained, **Dhammacakkhu**, year 83, article 5, February 2542 B.E. p. 17-18

Atthi bhikkhave ajatan abhutan akatan asankhatan... No ce tan bhikkhave abhavissa ajatan abhutan akatan asankhatan... Nayidha jatassa bhutassa katassa sankhatassa nissaranan pannayetha... Yasma ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajatan abhutan akatan... Tasma jatassa bhutassa katassa sankhatassa nissaranan pannayatiti<sup>4</sup>

“Behold, monks, the Dhammajati (nature) which is not formed, not changing, not created, not made up of aiding conditions, exists. Behold, monks, if such Dhammajati does not exist, it will not be possible to be emancipated from the Dhammajati which is formed, constantly changing, created, and made up of aiding conditions. It is for the very reason that the Dhammajati which is not formed, not changing, not created, not made up of aiding conditions exists that makes it possible for one to be emancipated from the Dhammajati which is formed, constantly changing, created, and made up of aiding conditions.”<sup>5</sup>

## 6.4 The Meaning of Lokuttaradhamma-9

Lokuttaradhamma-9 is the Buddhist’s ultimate life-goal. It includes Magga-4, Phala-4, and Nibbana. Magga-4 includes Sotapattimagga, Sakidagamimagga, Anagamimagga, and Arahattamagga. Phala-4 includes Sotapattiphala, Sakidagamiphala, Anagamiphala, and Arahattaphala. Magga-4 plus Phala-4 causes the mind to possess supernormal attributes which include light (Nana), purity (Visuddhi), tranquility (Santi), and compassion (Karuna). Magga-4 plus Phala-4 or Lokuttaradhamma-8 gives rise to Saupadisesanibbana. Lokuttaradhamma-8 plus Nibbana becomes Lokuttaradhamma-9 and indicates clearly that Nibbana exists as Amatadhatu (eternal element), Amatadhamma (eternal nature).

## 6.5 Nibbana Being the Dwelling of Arahats

There is another Buddha’s Saying which shows clearly that after death the Arahats did not become nothing. Instead, they attained Nibbanadhatu called Anupadisesanibbana which exists as a sphere of existence as shown in the Udāna Scripture.

Seyyathapi bhikkhave ya ca loke savantiyo mahasamuddan appenti... Ya ca antalikkha dhara papatanti na tena mahasamuddassa unattan va purattan va pannayati evameva kho bhikkhave bahupi bhikkhu anupadisesaya nibbanadhatuya parinibbanayanti na tena nibbanadhatuya unattan va purattan va pannayati...<sup>6</sup>

Behold, monks, water in the rivers and rainwater flow into the ocean. Yet, it has no effect on the shallowness or the fullness of the ocean. Likewise, if all of the Buddhist monks were to attain Complete Nibbana called Anupadisesanibbanadhatu, it would have had no effect on the

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<sup>4</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna. Siamrath Pali Language.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 24, no. 160, p. 207

<sup>5</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna. Tatiyanibbāna Sutta* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 44, no. 160, p. 722

<sup>6</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna. Siamrath Pali Language.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 24, no. 160, p. 207

shallowness or fullness of Nibbanadhatu.<sup>7</sup>

The above Buddha's Saying shows clearly that Nibbana is a sphere of existence in the same way that the ocean exists. It also shows that having attained Complete Nibbana, the Arahats did not disappear altogether. But they continued to exist in Nibbana in the same way that all the rivers are connected to the ocean. It may be inferred that Nibbana is stationary while the Arahats move towards it in the same way that all the rivers flow into the ocean.

It also shows that Nibbana can accommodate countless Arahats in the same way that the ocean can accommodate all the water in the rivers.

## 6.6 Nibbana Is Not Emptiness

The Theravada School during the time of the Atthakatha writers or the time that learnt sages were writing the Atthakatha Commentary (700 – 1,000 B.E.) explained that once an Arahant attains Complete Nibbana, nothing remains of him like a fire gone out because no more fuel is available. However, this explanation is in contrast with what is written in the Pali Tipitaka on this subject.

It is written in the Aggivacchagotata Sutta<sup>8</sup> that a Paribbajaka (a wandering religious mendicant) called Aggivaccha asked the Lord Buddha, "After attaining Complete Nibbana, does or does not an Arahant continue to exist?" The Lord Buddha answered,

"Behold, Vaccha, it is said that a being exists because it possesses Rupa (physical form), Vedana (feeling), Sanna (perception), Sankhara (mental formations), and Vinnana (consciousness). And yet, these things have already been eradicated by the Tathagata like a topless palm tree which can no longer live and can no longer be reborn.

The Tathagata is beyond Rupa, Vedana, Sanna, Sankhara, and Vinnana. He has attained what is as unfathomable as the ocean. Therefore, one should not say if He is born or not born; if he exists or does not exist; if there is birth or there is no birth."

This Buddha's Saying indicates that when an Arahant or the Tathagata (the Buddha) attains Complete Nibbana, his Khandha-5 (Five Aggregates) ceases to be according to its nature. And all the things having to do with Khandha-5 also cease to be. But something remains which is unfathomable and too profound to understand. This something cannot be described by any human language.

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<sup>7</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Khuddaka-nikāya. Udāna. Uposatha Sutta.* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 44, p. 527

<sup>8</sup>

The Supreme Patriarch, Somdet Phrananasanvara affirmed that a sphere of existence which has no death must also have no birth. And that sphere of existence corresponds to Nibbana as taught in Buddhism. Once Nibbana is attained and all Kilesa and Dukkha have been extinguished, no rebirth can occur. It means that Amatadhamma (eternity) has been attained. Amatadhamma is the Dhamma or nature which has no death, no birth, no aging. Sabbe dhamma anatta: All nature as existed in the round of rebirth is Anatta (the absence of true selfhood). Therefore, it would behoove a person not to think of his body as his true self. Attaining Nibbana means no rebirth but it does not mean nothingness. Existence continues but such a state of existence cannot be described by any human language. Therefore, it is pointless to continue saying Nibbana is this or that, for it will be endless and it will lead nowhere. It is like once a fire has gone out, people continue to discuss where the fire could have gone to. A personage who has attained Nibbana, being devoid of Kilesa and Dukkha, will not know rebirth again. However, he continues to exist but his state of existence cannot be explained or described. Any attempt to explain it is pointless and must end. It cannot be said to be Citta, Vinnana, or anything else. It cannot be called a self either.<sup>9</sup>

## 6.7 More Than All the Grains of Sands in the Ganges

Some schools are criticized for teaching that Nibbana is Atta and that the number of previous Buddhas dwelling in Nibbana is more than all the grains of sands in the oceans, hence, they are criticized for deviating from the Tipitaka and the Dhamma-Vinaya.

But there appears in the Tipitaka<sup>10</sup> a Buddha's Saying where mention is made of the number of all the Buddhas, who have attained Nibbana to-date, can be compared to the grains of sands in the Ganges and the amount of water in the ocean.

On one occasion, King Pasendikosala was conversing with the Bhikkhuni (a female monk) called Khema where he said, "Hoti tathagato paran marana..." which has to do with some puzzling questions regarding the previous Buddhas who have already attained Nibbana.

Venerable Khema said to the king, "The Lord Buddha does not answer such questions." The king asked, "Why not?" Venerable Khema did not answer the king's question directly, but she said to the king,

Atthi te koci ganako va muddiko va sankhayako va yo pahoti gangaya valikan ganetun ettaka valika iti va...pe...ettakani valikasatasahassani iti vati...

which means do you have an expert mathematician to calculate the number of sand grains in the Ganges in the hundreds, the thousands, or the hundreds of thousands?

King Pasendikosala said that he did not. Venerable Khemika asked the king if he had a mathematician who could calculate the number of bowls of water in the ocean in the hundreds, the thousands, or the hundreds of thousands? The king answered that he did not. Venerable Khemika asked, "Why not?" The king answered, "Because the ocean is far too deep to fathom.

<sup>9</sup> Buddhajayamankalagatha Explained, **Dhammacakkhu**, year 83, article 6, March 2542 B.E. p. 18-19

<sup>10</sup> Suttantapitaka Samyutta-nikāya. Sahāyatanavagga (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 18, no. 754-761, p. 456-462

Venerable Khemika said to the king,

Evameva kho maharaja yena rupena tathagatan pannapayamano panyetha...tan rupan tathagatassa pahinan ucchinnamulan talavatthutan anbhavangatan ayatin anuppadadhamman... rupasankhayavimutto kho maharaja tathagato gambhiro appameyyo duppariyagalaho... seyyathapi maharaja mahasamuddo...which means,

Behold, great king, in the same manner, it is said that a being exists because it possesses Rupa (physical form), Vedana (feeling), Sanna (perception), Sankhara (mental formations), and Vinnana (consciousness). And yet, the Tathagata has already eradicated these things like a topless palm tree which can no longer live and can no longer be reborn.

Great king, the Tathagata is above and beyond Rupa in a state far too profound to fathom sort of like the ocean.

Venerable Khema said further that the Tathagata has also risen above and beyond the four Khandha of Vedana, Sanna, Sankhara, and Vinnana in the same way that He has risen above and beyond Rupa. Such a state is far too profound to fathom.

Sometime later, King Pasendikosala asked the Lord Buddha the same question. It turned out that he received similar answers from the Lord Buddha. On that occasion, the king exclaimed, “Acchariyan bhante abbhutan bhante yatrahi nama satthu ceva savikaya ca atthena attho byanjanena byanjanan sansandissati samessati na vihayissati...”

“How amazing it is that the words of the Great Teacher and His female disciple should coincide perfectly! They are not conflicting in either contents or alphabets.”

This Buddha’s Saying, like the other ones cited earlier, confirms that once an Arahant or the Tathagata dies, only his Khandha-5 (Five Aggregates) dies. It is not the end of everything for him, for if it is so, the Lord Buddha would have said it. Something of him remains, but it is far too profound to explain or fathom. It is a state as unfathomable as the number of sand grains in the Ganges or the amount of water in the ocean.

But however unfathomable that state may be, the Lord Buddha affirms that certain groups of humans can know it.<sup>11</sup>

“This Dhamma is profound and difficult to see and know. It is tranquil, still, and refined. It cannot be fathomed using logic and only learnt sages can know it.

That Dhamma can hardly be known by those who have a different view, a different penchant, a different inclination, a different endeavor, disciples of other teachers.”

The Lord Buddha ended by saying that one cannot see it, but others may be able to see it. Therefore, do not accuse them of being gullible.

There are no less than thirty names used to refer to Nibbana in the Tipitaka.<sup>12</sup> Some names indicate clearly that Nibbana is a type of Ayatana. Some of the names given to Nibbana are

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<sup>11</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Majjhima-nikāya. Majjhimaṇṇāsa* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2543 B.E.), vol. 20, no. 250-251, p. 450-451

<sup>12</sup> *Suttantapiṭaka Samyuttanikāya. Sahāyatanaṇṇāsa. Siamrath Pali Language*. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, 2538 B.E.), vol. 18, no. 720-751, p. 450-453

listed below.

Paran (Shore): It means that all living beings are floating in the sea of Dukkha. But when Nibbana can be attained, one has escaped Dukkha and reached the safety of the shore.

Paran ca vo bhikkhave desessami paragaminca maggan tan sunatha...which means “Behold, monks, I will teach you the way to reach the other shore. So, listen carefully.”

Dipan (Island): After the shipwreck, survivors found safety in an island. Likewise, once Nibbana can be attained, one is safe from all forms of Dukkha.

Senan (Cave): It is a safe shelter.

Tanan (Protection): It protects one from Dukkha.

Antan (End): It is the end of Dukkha.

Saranan (Refuge): Once Nibbana can be attained, one is safe from all forms of Dukkha.

Parayanan (Future Existence): This name is interesting because it shows that Anupadisesanibbana can be attained only after Khandha-5 is gone. It is a different Dhamma or nature separate from life on earth. If Nibbana exists when living on earth, it will have to be the so-called Metaphysical Nirvana. And if that is the case, the Lord Buddha would have used the term Ditthadhamman instead of Parayanan. These two words have opposite meanings.

## 6.8 Two Categories of Nibbana

Evidences found in the Tipitaka show that there are positive Anupadisesanibbana and negative Anupadisesanibbana.

The Theravada School especially during the time of the Atthagatha writers (700 – 1000 B.E.) emphasizes negative Anupadisesanibbana in that it is emptiness, nothingness, Anatta, annihilation.

Some Theravada School sages emphasize positive Anupadisesanibbana in that Nibbana exists as an Ayatana (sphere of existence) somewhere in the universe. It is not told whether or not the Lord Buddha and the Arahats after attaining Complete Nibbana still maintain their personal identity; whether or not they are Atta. It is told only that Nibbana is profound nature (Gambhiro), difficult to fathom (Duppariyogalaho), cannot be calculated (Appameyyo), like the sand grains in the Ganges (Gangaya valika), like water in the ocean. The unclear information presented in the Tipitaka causes some Theravada groups to explain that all of the previous Buddhas and all of their Perfected Disciples (Arahats) exist as Dhammakaya that can be attained through elevated meditative attainments.

There are more evidences in the Tipitaka for Positive Anupadisesanibbana than for Negative Anupadisesanibbana. All of the vocabularies used to describe Nibbana have positive meanings as shown as follows.

Asankhatan – It is not made up; it is pure Dhatu.

Amatan – It is eternal; it is without death (because there is no birth.)

Anasavan – It is devoid of the three categories of Asava (mental intoxication), namely, Kamasava, Bhavasava, and Avijjasava

Ajjaran – It does not know aging; it is devoid of aging (because there is no birth.)

Apalokinan – It does not know deterioration; it is indestructible.

Anidassanan – It has no characteristics which are visible to the Cakkhu (eyes) and Vinnana (consciousness)

Nippapanca – It is devoid of Kilesa, a burden which slows one down.

Abbhuta – It is not changing.

Anitikan – It is devoid of Dukkha.

Anitikadhamman – It is the nature which is devoid of Dukkha.

Abyapajjhan – It is not dangerous; it is not harmful.

Analayan – It does not know lamentation.

These words have negative but good meaning. For example, “Amatan”: being devoid of death which means eternal.

The words presented below have positive as well as good meaning.

Saccan – Truth

Nipunan – Being refined in nature

Sududdasan – Being difficult to see

Dhuvan – Being permanent

Santan – Being still

Panitan – Being refined

Sivan – Being happy and tranquil

Kheman – Being blissful and safe

Tanhakkhayan – Being the end of craving

Acchariyan – Being wondrous of nature

Viragan – Being devoid of Raga

Suddhi – Being pure

Muttan – Emancipation (being emancipated from all forms of Dukkha)

(Some persons cited the Pali teaching – Deva me bhikkhave dhamma dhuva sassata nicca ameta cakata asankhata...katame deva...akaso ca nibbananca – Behold, monks, these two things are true, steadfast, lasting, eternal, not created, not being made up. What are these two things? They are space and Nibbana.)

Some words have negative meaning but they have a positive connotation. Some examples include...

Nibbanan – Extinguishment. It is explained as the extinguishment of Lobha, Dosa, and Moha.

Sunnan – Emptiness. It is explained as being empty of Kamasava, Bhavasava, and Avijjasava.

## **6.9 Knowledge about Nibbana and Its Effect on One's Psyche**

A person's view on things has an effect on his mind and his conduct. A person who believes that he has only this lifetime to live tends to view that life is short; hence, he feels that he must

enjoy life to the fullest. And in his pursuit of enjoyment, he does not care whether or not what he is doing is wholesome or unwholesome so long as it is enjoyable. He takes no responsibility for his conduct, since he has just one life to live and to him, the hereafter does not exist. A person who believes in the round of rebirth tends to take more responsibility of his conduct. He is more aware of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome knowing that what he does here and now will determine the conditions of his future existences.

How a person views Nibbana also has an effect on his mind.

If he views Nibbana as being negative in that it is annihilation and emptiness, he will not be inspired to attain Nibbana since it is nothing but emptiness.

Some sages said that the reason Buddhism disappeared from India fairly quickly was due to the teaching that Nibbana is emptiness. When the Chinese Buddhist monk, Yan Cha Wan went to India in 12 B.E., he found that there was little left of Theravada Buddhism. But Mahayana Buddhism was flourishing as witnessed by its Nalanda University, Vikramasila, and Odantapuri. The situation was such that residual Theravada Buddhism could only be found near Buddhagaya. And the Theravada monk, Venerable Buddhaghosacariya, had to go to Sri Lanka in order to learn Theravada Buddhism. He translated many Buddhist Scriptures from Sihala to Magadha. Mahayana Buddhism disappeared from India in 18 B.E. Some persons even said that Theravada Buddhism has an empty core, since at its core there is nothing but emptiness. Therefore, it was incapable of holding its own against Hinduism whose core has substance.

In teaching Nibbana as an Ayatana, a sphere of existence which is filled with bliss is much easier to understand and much more attractive. In Thailand, Nibbana used to be taught as being a crystal city. Therefore, Thai people in the old days used to make a resolute wish whenever they earned merit by saying, Nibbanapaccayo hotu, which means may the merit earned lead me to Nibbana.

Nowadays, few Buddhists aspire to Nibbana because its negative aspects have been popularized.

However Nibbana may have been explained, positively or negatively, Nibbana is and does exist. It does not become positive or negative depending on people's view of it. But teaching Nibbana in its positive aspects does much more to inspire Buddhists to practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings to the extent that they can attain Nibbana. And once they have attained Nibbana, they will be able to see for themselves what Nibbana is really like. By then, any positive or negative descriptions of Nibbana will become completely irrelevant and meaningless.

# CHAPTER



GETTING READY TO ATTEND THE TEMPLE

## **Chapter 7 - Getting Ready to Attend the Temple**

7.1 Important Days in Buddhism

7.2 How to Get Ready for the Temple

7.3 Buddhist Traditions

## **CONCEPTS**

It is every Buddhamamaka's duty to know such important days in Buddhism as the Buddhist Holy Day, Visakha Puja Day, Magha Puja Day, etc. Getting ready to attend the temple means being ready mentally, dressing appropriately, preparing requisites, etc. Buddhist traditions include how to pay homage to the Triple Gem, how to hold a conversation with a Buddhist monk, how to stand, walk, and sit in the different areas of the temple.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To enable the student to learn about important days in Buddhism, how to get ready to attend the temple, and Buddhist traditions.
2. To enable the student to put what he has learnt into practice and to enable the student to perform the duty of a virtuous friend.

# GETTING READY TO ATTEND THE TEMPLE

## 7.1 Important Days in Buddhism

Important days for the Sangha (Buddhist monks) include the Buddhist Holy Day, Visakha Puja Day, Magha Puja Day, Asalha Puja Day, the Rains-Entry Day, the Rains-Exit Day, the Kathina Robe Offering Day, etc. Some explanations of these important days in Buddhism are presented as follows.

### 7.1.1 The Buddhist Holy Day

Generally, the Buddhist Holy Day is the day for the Buddhists to get together at the temple to observe the Precepts and listen to Dhamma lectures. There are four Buddhist Holy Days in a month in accordance with the lunar calendar, namely, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon, and the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon.

The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon and the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon are the days that the Sangha meet to review Sila-227 or the 227 Disciplinary Rules. This meeting is called the chanting of the Patimokkha. During the meeting, a representative monk does the chanting while the rest of the Sangha listen attentively. It is the way for the Buddhist monks to review how well they have been observing their 227 Precepts, and if there is any Precept which needs their particular attention.

The day before these two major Buddhist Holy Days is called “Shaving Day”, for it is the day that the Buddhist monks have their heads shaved in preparation for the chanting of the Patimokkha.

Laypeople usually attend the temple on every Buddhist Holy Day to make merit and listen to Dhamma lectures. The Buddhist Holy Day used to be a day of rest for the Buddhists where they were free to attend the temple.

### 7.1.2 Visakha Puja Day

Visakha Puja Day falls on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> waxing moon (except for an Adhikamasa year<sup>1</sup> which falls on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> waxing moon). There are three important events concerning the Lord Buddha on Visakha Puja Day.

- 1) It was the day of His birth.
- 2) It was the day of His attainment of Self-Enlightenment.
- 3) It was the day of His attainment of Complete Nibbana.

Therefore, Visakha Puja Day is an important day in Buddhism for both the monks and the laypeople. It is the day that every Buddhist attends the temple to commemorate the Lord

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<sup>1</sup> **Adhikamasa** means the year that has 13 lunar months instead of the usual 12. In an Adhikamasa year, the eighth month is counted twice. The first one is called the first eighth month, and the second one is called the second eighth month. Each lunar year contains 354 days instead of the Gregorian calendar year of 365 days. The year 2553 B.E. was an Adhikamasa year.

Buddha and earn merit by giving alms and practicing meditation.

### **7.1.3 Magha Puja Day**

Magha Puja means the worship held on the 15th day of the Magha (third) moon.

Magha Puja day commemorates four important events that happened during the Lord Buddha's time.

- 1) 1,250 Arahats met together at the Veluvanna Temple.
- 2) All of these Arahats were ordained by the Lord Buddha in a ceremony called Ehibhikkhuupasampada.
- 3) These Arahats came together without prior arrangement.
- 4) The day of their meeting fell on the 15th day of the 3rd waxing moon.

It is for these reasons that Magha Puja Day is also called Caturangasannipata Day which means the day of the meeting together of four factors.

Today, Buddhists attend the temple on Magha Puja Day in order to worship the Lord Buddha and commemorate the 1,250 Arahats with lit lanterns.

### **7.1.4 Asalha Puja Day**

Asalha Puja means the worship held on the 15th day of the Asalha (eighth) month. Asalha Puja Day is another important day in Buddhism where three important events occurred during the Lord Buddha's time.

- 1) It was the day that the Lord Buddha taught the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta for the first time.
- 2) It was the day that the Outer Sangha happened for the first time in this Buddha-Eon in that Venerable Annakondanna attained the Fruit of Sotapanna after listening to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta lecture from the Lord Buddha. It was then that he decided to ordain as a Buddhist monk.
- 3) With the ordination of Venerable Annakondanna, it signified the completion of the Outer Triple Gem, namely, the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.

### **7.1.5 The Rains-Entry Day**

The word "Vassa" means the rainy season. The Rains-Entry Day is the first day of the Rains-Retreat where the Sangha stay in one place for the duration of the rainy season (Vassa) or three months as decreed by the Dhamma-Vinaya. Every Buddhist monk must observe the Rains-Retreat; otherwise, he is committing an offence. The Buddhist monk observes the Rains-Entry Day by making a resolution called, "Adhisthanavassa".

Observation of the Rains-Retreat can be carried out at two different times, namely, from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> waning moon to the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waxing moon (Purimavassa); and from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> waning moon to the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing moon (Pacchimavassa). However, most of the Buddhist monks prefer to observe Purimavassa.

It is for this reason that there are two Rains-Entry Days, namely, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> waning moon and the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> waning moon.

#### **7.1.6 The Rains-Exit Day**

The Rains-Exit Day signifies the end of the Rains-Retreat.

No resolution needs to be made for the Rains-Exit Day.

The Rains-Exit Day can be either the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waxing moon or the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing moon (Loy Krathong Day).

On the Rains-Exit Day, the Dhamma-Vinaya decrees that all of the Buddhist monks who have spent the Rains-Retreat together meet to conduct Pavarana (where the monks invite each other to speak of any offence or unbecoming behavior they have seen of each other). It is for this reason that the Rains-Exit Day is also called the Pavarana Day.

#### **7.1.7 The Kathina Robe Offering Day**

Kathina in the sense of the Dhamma-Vinaya means the special robe which the Lord Buddha permits the Buddhist monk who has completed the Rains-Retreat to receive.

Kathina means an embroidery frame which was used to stitch the monk's robe in the old days. Therefore, a robe which is stitched using an embroidery frame is called a Kathina robe. During the Lord Buddha's time, the Buddhist monks helped each other to stitch their robes using the embroidery frames.

Kathina robes are offered to the monks who have completed their Rains-Retreat at the temple. The offering of Kathina robes can be made within a month from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waning moon to the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing moon. This period is called Kathinakala or the Kathina Robe Offering Season.

Each temple can schedule its own day for the Kathina Robe Offering but it has to be within this time period of one month.

The information on the important days in Buddhism is taken from the book "Kum Wat" compiled by Phradhammakittiwong (Tongdee Suratejo).

### **7.2 How to Get Ready for the Temple**

Wat or Temple is an important place used to teach Dana practice (alms-giving), Sila practice (Precepts Observation), and Bhavana practice (meditation Practice) to the people as the means of quelling Kilesa. The Buddhist monks are the teachers of the Dhamma and the role models of righteousness.

Besides being a place for teaching the Dhamma, Wat or Temple also serves as the spiritual center of the laypeople. It is where they can come and practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana, cultivate good manners, cultivate favorable attributes and virtues, etc.

It is for these reasons that make Wat or Temple the most sacred place. While attending the temple, it would behoove everyone to watch their thoughts, words, and deeds and make sure

that they are wholesome. It is every temple attendee's duty to help keep the temple peaceful, clean, and orderly. Any attendee's misconduct can reflect negatively on the Wat as a whole.

### **7.2.1 Getting One's Mind Ready for the Temple**

The Main Objective of Attending the Temple

One attends the temple in order to learn and practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings for the purpose of scrubbing one's mind clean of Kilesa. It must be borne in mind that Kilesa has been permeating and saturating one's mind for countless lifetimes; therefore, scrubbing one's mind clean of Kilesa is a most difficult feat. Moreover, if one is not careful, Kilesa can regrow very quickly. The work of removing Kilesa from one's mind requires Sati (mindfulness) and Panna (insight). It also requires uncommon willpower.

To get one's mind ready to attend the temple, these are the things that one should do.

- Complete whatever work one is doing or if possible, assign someone trustworthy to complete the work for him. This way, one will not need to be concerned about one's work while one is at the temple.

- Keep one's mind cool and calm as one recalls all the merit and wholesomeness that one has accumulated so far. This way, one can look joyfully forward to accumulating more and more wholesomeness.

- Before going to bed, worship the Triple Gem, do the evening chanting quietly or out loud, alone or together with one's family to keep one's mind clean and ready to receive the merit about to be earned on the following day.

In the morning before leaving the house, leave every concern behind temporarily as one attends the temple for the purpose of accumulating as much merit and wholesomeness as possible.

1. Practice Dana or alms-giving for the purpose of quelling Lobha (greed).
2. Practice Sila or observe the Precepts for the purpose of quelling Dosa (anger).
3. Practice Bhavana or meditation for the purpose of quelling Moha (delusion).

This way, one's mind will be anchored in wholesomeness and kept cheerful, bright, and clear all day long.

During the trip to the temple, do not converse about things that make one's mind gloomy such as crimes, inflation, fire, floods, adultery, politics, etc. One should keep one's mind on merit and wholesomeness. One can think instead about the benefits of spreading love and kindness, the benefits of meditation practice, how much or how little merit one has accumulated so far, etc.

### **7.2.2 How to Dress for the Temple**

One gets dressed to go out with the three following objectives in mind: Cleanliness, decency, and appropriateness. When attending the temple, the following points need to be borne in mind.

- 1) When dressing for the temple, white outfits or the official government uniform should be used.
- 2) The clothes should not be made of too thin, too luxurious or too expensive a material.

3) The clothes should not be tight fitting so that it can accommodate the posture taken while paying homage to the Triple Gem. Women should not wear short skirts or dresses and revealing blouses. For women, a lap cloth should be used to cover the knees when sitting sideways or in a half-lotus position on the floor.

4) Men's hairdo should be short or neatly combed if it is long. Women should abstain from elaborate hairdos.

5) Hair pomade should not be used. If necessary, choose one that is lightly scented to make sure that its smell does not disturb anyone.

6) Perfumes should never be used.

7) Women should not wear heavy makeup, paint their nails, etc.

8) Expensive jewelry should not be worn.

Every temple attendee should realize...

- that the temple is not a place for beauty contest or romantic overtures.
- that the temple is not a place to show off one's wealth.
- that the temple is not a stadium.
- that the temple is not a market.
- that the temple is not a theater.
- that the temple is a place of merit accumulation.

Therefore, any unbecoming or unwholesome tendencies should be parked outside the temple gate.

The Benefits of Wearing a White Outfit to the Temple

- 1) It affords a neat appearance.
- 2) It affords an atmosphere conducive to meditation practice.
- 3) It affords equality.
- 4) It affords mindfulness.
- 5) It affords a bright and clear mind.

### **7.2.3 Taking Children to the Temple**

It is recommended that children are taken to the temple at a young age to instill in them the love for Buddhism

Reminder:

- Infants should not be taken to the temple, lest they cry during meditation practice.
- Strong-willed children need to be closely supervised.

### **7.2.4 Chauffeurs and Servants**

It is every Buddhist's responsibility, whatever his economic status, to support and grow Buddhism. It is therefore important that chauffeurs and servants of well-to-do Buddhists are permitted to accompany their masters and accumulate merit at the temple.

Reminder:

- Chauffeurs and servants should be neatly dressed.
- They should not listen to loud music on the radio in the car while a ceremony is underway.
- Horns should not be used in the temple grounds. Speed limits should be observed.
- Cars should be parked on allocated lots.

### **7.2.5 How to Prepare Food for the Buddhist Monks**

The food prepared for the Buddhist monks should be the food prepared for general consumption and is made up of vegetables, meat, etc. But the food offered to the monks should never be leftovers.

Caution:

- The following kinds of meat must never be offered to the Buddhist monks.
  - 1) Human flesh
  - 2) Elephant meat
  - 3) Horse meat
  - 4) Dog meat
  - 5) Snake meat
  - 6) Lion meat
  - 7) Tiger meat
  - 8) Yellow tiger meat
  - 9) Leopard meat
  - 10) Bear meat
- Food offered to the monks should not be raw or not well cooked such as raw fish, raw shrimps, raw chicken, etc.
- Food containing alcohol where the alcohol content is still present and can be detected should never be offered to the Buddhist monks.

### **7.2.6 How to Organize Alms to Be offered to the Buddhist Monks**

Alms are items which can be consumed by the Buddhist monks without transgressing the Dhamma-Vinaya. Generally, they mean the four requisites.

1. Civara (Robes): To be worn to cover the body and protect it from the elements and biting insects.
2. Pindapata (Food and drink): To be consumed in order to assuage hunger and thirst so that one can continue to practice chastity.
3. Senasana (Shelter): To provide rest and sleep and protect one from the elements, biting insects, etc.
4. Gilanabhesajja (Medicine): To provide healing and pain relief.

Alms also include other items relevant to the four requisites as follows.

1. The three-robe set, bathing cloths, towels, etc.
2. Food includes savory and sweet dishes as well as fresh fruit and non-alcoholic beverages. Alcohol and addictive substances must never be offered to the Buddhist monks.
3. Items related to shelter include shelves, beds, bedding, desks, chairs, mats, pillows, mosquito nets, rugs, flowers, incense sticks, candles, money, bar or liquid soap, toothbrushes, toothpastes, tissue paper, laundry detergent, etc.
4. Items related to medicine includes all medications as well as clarified butter, cheese, oil, honey, sugar cane juice (sugar).

#### 1) Alms to Be Offered to the Buddhist Monks from Morning to Midday Only

The Dhamma-Vinaya decrees that no food items can be accepted by the Buddhist monks after midday. If the food items are being brought by a layperson after midday with the intention of offering them to the monks, the monks are to be informed about it. However, the food items must be kept by a lay official of the temple to be offered to the monks in the following day.

These food items include...

1. Fresh food such as savory and sweet dishes, fresh fruit.
2. Dry foods such as salted fish, salted meat, rice, salt, sugar, etc.
3. Canned goods such as milk, canned fruits, etc.

#### 2) Alms Which Can Be Offered Anytime

Apart from the items stated above, other items can be offered to the Buddhist monks anytime.

### **7.3 Buddhist Traditions**

The temple is the meeting place of different types of people that differ in age, economic status, lifestyle, education, occupation, and intrinsic nature. Therefore, conflicts may be inevitable. It would behoove every temple attendee to be extra careful in order to earn as much merit as possible. Temple attendees should conduct themselves in ways as follows.

- Restrain one's body, speech, and mind so that one can be a suitable vessel for receiving the merit to be earned at the temple.

- Alcohol, cigarettes, betel nuts are expressly forbidden in the temple grounds.

- Inside the ceremonial hall, every attendee must seat himself properly, men on one side and women on another side.

- During such ceremonies as chanting, pledging to observe the Precepts, making an alms-offering, etc., words should be recited clearly, joyfully, and in unison by way of worshipping the Triple Gem.

- Study the schedule for different merit-making activities such as alms-offering. One should know what charitable foundations have been established in the temple, what day Dhamma lectures are held and at what time, etc.

- Conduct oneself according to long-held and worthwhile customs and traditions.
- Anything that may be irritating such as hot and humid weather, hunger, thirst, another person's improper conduct, lack of convenience and comfort, etc., should be dispelled and replaced by patience. Think of it as cultivating Patience Perfection. Practice spreading love and kindness. Practice controlling one's temper.

### **7.3.1 How to Pay Homage to the Triple Gem**

The Triple Gem is the most helpful to living beings, far more than anything else on earth. The Triple Gem represents the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. It is a wise, Right View sage who knows to worship the Triple Gem with a grateful and joyful heart. It is important that temple-goers know how to worship the Triple Gem together in a correct and graceful manner.

#### **Paying Homage to the Triple Gem**

There are several ways as follows.

1) Press one's palms together against the chest (the Wai). The Wai is used when paying respect, when listening to the Sangha's chanting of sacred incantations, when listening to a Dhamma lecture, when receiving the Sangha's blessings, when conversing with a Buddhist monk, when chanting, etc.

In the Wai, both hands are held up and the palms are pressed together with every finger touching each other like a lotus flower. The pressed palms should be placed at a 45° angle against one's chest and elbow close to one's side.

2) In the Namaskar or Vanda, the pressed palms are held up against one's forehead with one's thumbs touching the point between one's eyebrows as one bows one's head. This form of respect is shown to the Buddhist monk when he is sitting on a chair, standing or walking by or when receiving something from or offering something to him. The Vanda should be performed just once in a smooth fashion. It should not be too fast or too slow.

3) The Krab or Abhivada is a form of prostration and is the ultimate form of showing reverence. It is performed in front of the Buddha Image, the Buddhist Scripture, and the Sangha.

The correct Krab or Abhivada is called Pancappatitthitenavandana because five parts of the body touch the floor at the same time, namely, knees (2), palms (2), and forehead (1). The Abhivada is performed differently for men and women.

#### **For Men**

Getting Ready – Kneel by sitting on one's heels with one's propped feet placed straight and close together with the knees about 250 meters apart and the back straight.

Step 1 – Press both palms together and hold them against the chest.

Step 2 – Lift the pressed palms to one's face with the thumbs between the eyebrows (the Brahma position).

Step 3 – Bow low to the floor (Abhivada) while lowering the hands before extending them forward and placing them flat on the floor (one smooth movement).

The arms are placed on the floor with the elbows touching the knees.

The forehead touches the floor between the two hands with the palms down such that the eyebrow touches the end of the thumb.

The back is slightly flattened until it can lay flat on the floor. The Abhivada is performed altogether three times.

For Women

Getting Ready – Kneel down and sit on the slightly overlapping soles of both feet, knees close together.

Step 1 – Press both palms together and hold them against the chest.

Step 2 – Lift the pressed palms to one's face and bow slightly such that the thumbs touch the point between the eyebrows (Devadhita position).

Step 3 – Bow low to the floor (Abhivada) and lower the pressed palms.

The elbow is placed beside the knee.

The forehead touches the floor between the two hands with the palms down such that the eyebrow touches the end of the thumb.

The hands are placed apart on the floor with sufficient space to accommodate one's forehead.

The back is slightly extended and flat. Once the forehead touches the floor in the space between the two hands, return to the getting ready position. The Abhivada is performed altogether three times.

Reminder:

- When performing the Abhivada, the movement should be smooth and graceful.
- Each step is performed not too slowly or too quickly.
- Learn how to perform the Abhivada correctly.
- When performing the Abhivada as a group, make sure that everyone is synchronizing his movement.

### **7.3.2 How to Pay Homage to the Buddhist Monks**

Each Buddhist monk should be regarded in the following ways.

- He is the keeper and the continuation of Buddhism because he studies and memorizes the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

- He performs the duty of passing on the Lord Buddha's Teachings to the laypeople so that they know what should be abstained from, what deeds should be performed, what is Pāpa (demerit), what is Punna (merit). He encourages them to abstain from unwholesomeness and perform wholesome deeds with a glad heart.

- He is the leader and the role model of righteousness.

It is for these reasons that the Buddhist monk deserves our veneration. He is the most abundant field of merit; therefore, he should be treated accordingly.

#### **1) Standing Up to Welcome the Buddhist Monk**

Buddhists express their respect for the Buddhist monk by standing up to welcome him.

When a Buddhist monk arrives at the ceremonial center, laypeople who have been sitting down will do the following.

1) If the laypeople are sitting on chairs, they will rise from their seats and wait until the monk is coming near to pay respect to him with the Vanda. They will remain standing until the Buddhist monk has already sit down.

2) If the laypeople are seated on the floor, they do not have to stand up but wait until the Buddhist monk is near to pay respect to him.

3) The host of the ceremony generally greets the monk and leads him to his seat in the ceremonial center.

### **2) Arranging Seats for the Buddhist Monks**

This is carried out as follows.

1) Upon the arrival of the Buddhist monks, he is generally seated in the front row.

2) If it is necessary for the men to sit in the front row, they are generally seated to the left of the monk.

3) Women should never be seated in the same row or on the same bench as the monks unless there is at least one man sitting between them.

4) If the laypeople are being seated on the floor, special cushions are usually provided for the monks in an area separate from the laypeople.

### **3) Seeing the Buddhist Monk Off**

When it is time for the Buddhist monk to leave, the laypeople should conduct themselves as follows.

1) If the laypeople are sitting on chairs, they should stand up and wait until the monk is near to pay respect to him.

2) If the laypeople are sitting on the floor, they do not need to stand up but should wait until the monk is near to pay respect to him.

3) The host of the ceremony should follow the monk out to the car and pay respect to him again just before he leaves.

### **4) Giving Way to the Buddhist Monk**

When giving way to the Buddhist monk, it is carried out as follows.

1) The layperson is to give way by stopping on the side of the path to the left of the passing monk.

2) The layperson is to stand straight and face the passing monk while holding his hands together at his front.

3) When the Buddhist monk is walking past, the layperson is to lower his body while paying respect to the monk.

4) If the Buddhist monk talks to the layperson, he is to pay respect to the monk with the Vanda.

5) If the Buddhist monk does not say anything to the layperson, he is to pay respect to

the monk with the Vanda and then hold his hands together to his front until the monk has walked well past him before following him.

### **5) How to Conduct Oneself in Front of a Standing Monk**

One does as follows.

- 1) Stop and stand erect.
- 2) Pay respect to the monk with the Vanda.
- 3) If spoken to, speak to him while holding the Wai position.
- 4) When leaving, walk on the left side of the standing monk.

### **6) How to Conduct Oneself in Front of a Sitting Monk**

1) Stop and sit down or sit sideways on the floor if it is clean. If not, sit on one's heels.

- 2) Pay respect to the monk with the Vanda.
- 3) If spoken to, speak to him while holding the Wai position.
- 4) When leaving, walk on the left side of the standing monk.

5) If the monk is sitting or standing in the sun where his body is casting a shadow, make sure not to walk over his shadow.

### **7) How to Walk Behind a Buddhist Monk**

Walking behind a Buddhist monk is an expression of respect and should be carried out as follows.

- 1) Walk behind the monk and slightly to his left.
- 2) Leave some space between the monk and you.
- 3) Follow him in a self-composed manner.
- 4) While walking behind him, it is not customary to greet another monk.
- 5) While walking behind him, it is not customary to talk to other people.

### **7.3.3 Appropriate Manners when Visiting a Buddhist Monk at the temple**

When visiting a Buddhist monk at the temple, one should be politely dressed and conduct oneself in a composed manner. One should also bring with him such articles of worship as flowers, incense sticks, candles, etc., on a tray. If the visit takes place before midday, one should also bring breakfast or lunch for the monk. If the visit takes place after midday, one should bring appropriate beverages (Pana) for the monk. If the visit is for the purpose of requesting the monk's presence at a ceremony, one should always bring with him flowers, incense sticks, and candles for the monk.

After arriving at the temple, the layperson should do as follows.

- Ask a monk or a novice monk in the temple if the particular monk is in and if he can spare sometime to see him. He should also make known to the monk the purpose of his visit.
- If there is no one around that one can ask, the layperson (male only) should knock on

the door for permission to enter.

- While waiting to see the monk, one should sit quietly.
- In the monk's presence, one should pay respect to him three times using the Abhivada.
- The layperson should then sit sideways on the floor. He should not sit on a seat cushion or on the same rug or on a chair at the same level as the monk.
- When sitting sideways on the floor, one should do so in a composed manner and arrange one's clothes properly.
- While the monk is sitting on the ground floor of his cell, no householders, males and females, should go up to the second floor of his cell or enter his private quarters.

#### **7.3.4 How to Converse with a Buddhist Monk**

The Buddhist monk practices righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya for the purpose of achieving emancipation and serving as the laity's merit-field. A conversation with the Buddhist monk should be conducted as follows.

- Do not joke around. Do not use offensive words. Do not talk about one's private life. Do not treat the Buddhist monk as an equal or someone inferior.
- If the Buddhist monk is a senior monk, one should hold one's hands up in a Wai during the conversation.
- For lay females, do not converse with the Buddhist monk alone even if they are relatives because it violates the Dhamma-Vinaya.
- The visit should only be as long as necessary.
- When leaving, pay respect to the monk three times using the Abhivada.

#### **7.3.5 Appropriate Salutations**

Monastic titles are listed as follows in the order of decreasing seniority.

- 1) Somdetphrasangharaja (Supreme Patriarch)
- 2) Somdetphrarajakana
- 3) Phrarajakanachanjaorong (Vice-Somdetphrarajakana)
- 4) Phrarajakanachantham
- 5) Phrarajakanachanthep
- 6) Phrarajakanachanraj
- 7) Phrarajakanachansaman
- 8) Rongphrarajakanachanphrakru and Thananukrom

(1) Words used to converse with Somdetphrasangharaja are the Thai royal words as applied to the nobility at the level of Phraongjao.

Somdetphrasangharaja is addressed using the term Faphrabard or Fabard.

A man uses the word Klaokramom or Kramom to mean himself.

A woman uses the word Kramomchan or Momchan to mean herself.

A man answers with Payaka or Kramom.

A woman answers with Peka.

(2) Words used to converse with Somdetphrarajakana, Phrarajakana (from the Raja level and above) are as follows.

They are addressed using the term Phradejphrakhuntaitao.

A man uses the word Klaokrapom or Klao to mean himself.

A woman uses the word Dichan to mean herself.

A man answers with Korupkrapom or Krupkrapom or Kruppom.

A woman answers with Jaoka.

(3) Words used to converse with Phrarajakanachansaman and below are as follows.

Phrarajakana is addressed as Phrakhuntan.

Phrakrusanyabut is addressed as Tanphrakru.

Phrakruthananukrom is addressed as Tan.

Phraprarian is addressed as Tanmaha or Tan.

Phraandubthammada is addressed as Phrakhunjao or Tan.

An elderly monk is addressed as Luang Pu or Luang Por.

A monk relative is addressed as Luang Por, Luang Loong, Luang Ah, etc.

(4) Words used to converse with the Buddhist monk are as follows.

A Buddhist monk is addressed as Phrakhunjao or Phrakhuntan or Tan.

A man uses the word Krapom or Pom to mean himself.

A woman uses the word Dichan to mean herself.

A man answers with Krup.

A woman answers with Jaoka or Ka.

(5) Words that are applied to the Buddhist monk are as follows.

Atamapaap is the word used by a Buddhist monk to mean himself.

Arathana means to invite.

Ahpat means being sick.

Ahhanbintabad means food.

Atthaborikhan means the eight necessary items used by a monk and include Sabong, Civara, Sanghati, Prakot-ew, alms-bowl, razor, needle, and a water filter. The first four items have to do with different parts of the monk's clothing.

Asana means a seat.

Ankad means an offering of food.

Janghun means food.

Taiyatham means alms.

Kilanapesaj means medicine.

Padiang means to invite, inform.

Nimon means to invite.

Chan means to eat.

Prakane means making an offering by hand.

Jatupajjai means the four requisites which include clothing, food, shelter, and medicine.

Yome means the laity.

Pavarana means giving the opportunity for the monk or novice monk to request for something so that it can be offered to him.

Moranapap means to die.

### **7.3.6 How to Extend an Invitation to Buddhist Monk**

1) To ask the Buddhist monks or Nimon in Thai to conduct a sacred ceremony somewhere, the request should be made at least a week in advance of the set date of ceremony. If it is a very senior monk, the invitation should be made months in advance.

An invitation or Nimon can be carried out verbally, but it is best carried out in writing which in Thai is called Wangdeeka. The written invitation should contain relevant details as follows.

- 1) The type of ceremony
- 2) The date and time of the ceremony
- 3) The place where the ceremony is to take place
- 4) The number of monks to be invited
- 5) If transportation is provided, the time must be specified.
- 6) Specify exactly what one requires the monks to do and what they need to bring with them such as alms-bowls, the Buddha Image, sacred thread, etc.

### **An Example of an Invitation or Deeka**

We request the presence of ..... monks from this temple to chant the sacred incantation and have breakfast (or lunch) in the ..... Ceremony taking place on.....(date) at ..... (time) which corresponds with the lunar date.....at the following address.....

We ask for Phrakhunjao's kindness and assistance  
to be present at this ceremony.

Signed.....

**Note :** Please arrange own transportation.

(or transportation will be provided at .... a.m. or p.m.)

### **Certain Observances to Be Made**

1. Specify whether they are invited to an auspicious or inauspicious occasion.
2. Specify whether they are invited to have breakfast or lunch but not the different dishes in the menu.

- 2) The Number of Monks Invited: At least four monks should be invited. Generally, for an auspicious occasion five, seven or nine monks are invited except for a wedding where an even number of monks is preferred. An even number of monks is also preferred for official occasions and a funeral service.

### **7.3.7 How to Offer Alms to the Buddhist Monks**

- 1) Prakane is the Thai word used to mean making a respectful offering to the Buddhist monk or monks by lifting the offering and giving it to the monk or placing it on to the cloth used by the monk to receive an offering if the person making the offer is a female. Buddhist monks are not allowed to eat anything that has not yet been offered except for water. Prakane helps the Buddhist monks to practice according to the Dhamma-Vinaya.

- 2) The Correct Way to Make an Offering or Prakane to the Buddhist Monk should proceed as follows.

- 1) The item being offered should not be too large. Prakane is not needed for a large item.

- 2) The person making the offering should hold the item with both hands and extend it forward at a distance of about half-a-meter from the monk.

- 3) The person is to offer the item to the monk in a respectful manner.

- 4) One can also place the item directly inside the monk's alms-bowl or shoulder bag.

- 5) A receiving cloth is used by the monk when the person making the offering is a female.

#### **3) How to Prakane**

- A male can kneel in front of the Buddhist monk at a distance of about half-a-meter from him and offer the item to him directly.

- A female must place the item onto the receiving cloth to be picked up by the monk.

- After making the offering, one is to pay respect by the Abhivada three times or the Vanda just once. If there is more than one item, one should finish making the offering of all the items before paying respect to the monk.

- If the monk is sitting on a chair or on an elevated platform and it is not possible for the person making the offering to do it kneeling down, he should first remove his shoes and make the offering in a standing position.

- Any item which has been offered must not be touched by a layperson again. If it is, the offering must be made again.

- The offering of non-food items such as spittoons, plates, cutlery, tissue paper, empty glasses, etc., used by the monks does not have to be made.

4) Things that Should Not Be Offered to the Buddhist Monk include money and everything representing money. What should be given to the lay staff member is a written pledge or Pavarana.

### **An Example of a Pledge of Money**

I hereby respectfully make an offering of the four requisites suitable for the consumption of the venerable monks in the amount of ..... baht (currency) which has already been given to the lay official. If the venerable monks have need of anything suitable for the consumption of the Buddhist monks, please make your need known to the lay official.

Signed.....

Date.....

The pledge of money is generally accompanied by certain alms.

5) Anamasa Items: It means things that must never be offered to the Buddhist monks and include the following.

1. Females of every age from newborn onward including anything having to do with females.
2. Ten kinds of gems, namely, gold, silver, pearls, red gems, coral, ruby, topaz, conch shell framed with gold, jade, and agate stone.
3. Weapons of every kind.
4. Traps of every kind.
5. Musical instruments of every kind.
6. Unhusked rice

### **7.3.8 How to Receive Things from a Buddhist Monks**

To receive things from a Buddhist monk, one does as follows.

#### **1) To Receive Something from a Monk Who Is Standing or Sitting**

- Approach the monk and pay respect to the monk with the Vanda, bowing slightly before extending both hands towards the monk and taking the item from the monk's hands for a male. For a female, put the palms of both hands close together to receive the item from the monk.

- If the item is light enough, hold it while paying respect to the monk with the Vanda. If the item is too heavy, simply step the left foot backward followed by the right foot, turn around and leave.

### **2) To Receive Something from a Monk Who Is Sitting on a Chair**

- About two steps away from the monk, kneel on the left knee and pay respect to the monk with the Vanda before extending both hands to receive something from the monk.

- If the item is small, hold the item and pay respect to the monk with the Vanda. If the item is large, set it down to your left, pay respect to the monk with the Vanda. Use both hands to pick up the item and stand up. Step backward with the left foot followed by the right foot, turn around, and leave.

### **3) To Receive Something from a Monk Who Is Sitting on the Floor**

- Approach the monk in a self-composed manner and kneel down. Walk with one's knees until one is about half-a-meter away from the monk, pay respect to the monk three times using the Abhivada before extending both hands to receive the item.

- After receiving the item, place it to one's right and pay respect to the monk three times using the Abhivada. Pick up the item with both hands while kneeling and walking with one's knees backward to a suitable distance before standing up.

- When walking with one's knees, one does so with one's back straight and one's hand to one's side if one is not holding anything. If one is holding something, hold it at the chest level with one's elbow close to one's side.

- While walking with one's knees, the torso should be upright.

### **7.3.9 Dedicating Earned Merit and Receiving Blessings**

When dedicating Merit, water is poured to symbolize the pure intention to dedicate one's earned merit to departed loved ones. It is a show of love and kindness to the dearly departed who are younger than oneself and a show of love and gratitude to the dearly departed who are older than oneself.

Receiving Blessings means receiving the blessings from the monks after earning merit. Blessings usually include being safe from all kinds of harm, being blessed with longevity, youthfulness, happiness, vitality, etc.

#### **How to Dedicate Merit**

- The water used for the ceremony should be clean.

- The vessel used to contain the water should be prepared in advance. If the ceremonial vessel is not available, a water bowl with some sort of saucer can be used.

- After making an offering of alms to the Buddhist monks, the host should sit down on the floor at a suitable distance from the monks. Pick up the water vessel and get ready to pour the water.

- As soon as the monks chant "Yatha varivaha...", pour the water out slowly in a stream while dedicating the earned merit to departed loved ones as follows.

Idan me natinan hotu sukhita hontu natayo: May the earned merit reach my departed loved ones! May they be happy!

- Merit can be dedicated using any language and the name or names of the departed

loved ones can also be mentioned.

- If the water vessel is wide-mouthed as is a bowl or a glass, it is the customary practice to hold out one's right index finger to direct the water and prevent it from spilling onto the floor.

- Having dedicated the earned merit to all the departed loved ones, some of their names can be mentioned if one wishes.

- When the second monk chants "Sabbitiyo...", all the water should have been poured out already. Press one's palms together in the Wai and get ready to receive the monks' blessings.

- During this time, it is important that the host remains in the ceremonial center.

- After the monks are finished chanting the blessings, pay respect to the monks before pouring the water outside on a tree or on the grass.

- One should dedicate the merit earned every time that one earns merit. One can dedicate one's earned merit anytime by oneself.

- One should make it a point to understand the Pali words used in dedicating merit so that one knows how to carry it out properly.

- The dedication of merit is a serious act. Those who do not have the use of the ceremonial water vessel should sit quietly as they dedicate their earned merit to their departed loved ones.

### **7.3.10 How to Stand, walk, and Sit in the Temple**

#### **1) How to Stand**

1. One should stand in a dignified and composed manner.

2. When standing in front of a Buddhist monk, one should not stand directly opposite him but should do as follows.

- 1) Stand straight, legs together, heels slightly apart, arms against the body.

- 2) Bend over slightly, hands held together to the front.

There are two ways to hold one's hands together.

- a) With the back of one's hand up, one hand over the other

- b) With the palm of one's hand up, fingers interlocking

#### **2) How to Walk**

1. One walks neither too slowly nor too quickly with back straight and arms swinging naturally. One does not drag one's feet.

2. When walking with a Buddhist monk, stay a few steps behind and to his left and walk in a composed manner, hold one's hands together if it is a short distance.

3. When walking into the assembly hall or the meditation room where chairs are provided, one should do as follows.

- 1) Walk into the room in a composed manner.
  - 2) When walking by a person already seated on a chair, bend forward slightly. If the seated person is older, bend forward a little more. Take care not to brush oneself against another person.
  - 3) If there are no assigned seats, choose any empty seat. If one needs to move a chair, do so quietly.
  - 4) If seats are assigned, look for one's assigned seat before sitting down.
4. When walking into the assembly hall or the meditation room where people are seated on the floor, one should do as follows.
- 1) Walk into the room in a composed manner.
  - 2) When passing a person who is already seated on the floor, bend forward and take care not to brush oneself against another person.
  - 3) Walk normally after passing the seated person.
  - 4) When passing a person who is already seated at a close distance, one should do knee-walking.

Knee-Walking: Kneel down on the floor and use the knees to move oneself forward or backward in small steps.

1. Kneel down on the floor, back straight, arm close to the side.
2. Lift the right knee followed by the left knee in short steps.
3. Arms swinging naturally.

When walking as a group, one should walk directly behind the person in front of him. When standing as a group, one should stand directly behind the person in front of him.

During the ceremony, peace and quiet must be observed. Should something unusual happen, continue to keep still and wait for an order from the person in charge of the ceremony. One should try to control oneself and do as instructed so as to prevent crowding, pushing, etc.

### **3) How to Sit**

1. When sitting on a chair, sit with the back straight against the back of the chair, knees and feet touching each other, hands on the lap. If the chair has an arm-rest, it can be used when sitting alone. Do not cross your legs. Do not rock back and forth. Special care is needed for females to make sure that nothing untoward is exposed.

2. When sitting on the floor, sit sideways, back straight. Being seated sideways is considered an appropriate posture when sitting in front of the Buddha Image and the Buddhist monks and when listening to a Dhamma lecture.

3. When sitting alone, sit sideways, hands on the lap. Females but not males may lean on one arm.

4. When sitting in the presence of the Buddhist monks, sit sideways with the toes in their proper place, hands folded on the lap.

Sitting on the Floor for Males

Sit sideways, toes towards the back, knees apart such that the sole of one foot touches the other knee, hands folded on the lap, back straight.

Sitting on the Floor for Females

The same posture applies for females except that knees are kept together.

How to Change Posture when Sitting on the Floor

When one needs to change from one side to another, put the weight on one's knees and quickly fold one's legs to the other side while keeping the feet in the back

# CHAPTER



CONCLUSION

## **CONCEPTS**

The Buddhist Manual contains basic knowledge about Buddhism which every Buddhist or Buddhamamaka must know such as basic knowledge about the Triple Gem, Fundamental Dhamma Principles in the Tipitaka, the practice leading to the end of Dukkha, Nibbana, and how to get ready to attend the temple.

To be a Buddhamamaka means having faith in the Triple Gem and practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

## **OBJECTIVES**

To enable the student to have an overview of the Buddhist Manual so that he can put what he has learnt into his daily practice.

# CONCLUSION

Buddhamamaka means having faith in the Triple Gem and practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

There are five attributes that must be cultivated by a Buddhamamaka, namely, Saddha (faith), Sila (morality), not believing in superstitious hype, believing in the Law of Kamma, not seeking merit-fields outside of Buddhism and supporting Buddhism.

Ratanattaya or The Triple Gem means the three kinds of gems which include Buddharattana or the Buddha Gem, Dhammarattana or the Dhamma Gem, and Sangharattana or the Sangha Gem. There are two categories of Ratanattaya, namely, Inner Ratanattaya and Outer Ratanattaya.

Inner Ratanattaya or the Inner Triple Gem means the three gems dwelling at the seventh base in the center of one's body. Buddharattana or the Buddha Gem is the Coarse Dhammakaya. Dhammarattana or the Dhamma Gem is the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Coarse Dhammakaya. Sangharattana or the Sangha Gem is the Refined Dhammakaya. Inner Ratanattaya can be attained through meditation practice by bringing one's mind to a complete standstill at the seventh base in the center of one's body.

Outer Ratanattaya or the Outer Triple Gem means the three gems that happen as a result of attaining Inner Ratanattaya. Outer Rattana includes the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma or the Lord Buddha's Teachings, and the Sangha or the Lord Buddha's disciples.

Every Dhamma Principle contained in the Tipitaka is to be practiced for the purpose of attaining Nibbana. All the Dhamma Principles are interconnected. They are never conflicting. They can be condensed, and they can be elaborated. The most condensed form is "heedfulness". They can be elaborated to the fullest extent to contain 84,000 topics or Dhammakhandha. These are divided into 21,000 topics of the Vinaya, 21,000 topics of the Sutta, and 42,000 topics of the Abhidhamma.

Human beings are born accompanied with all forms of Dukkha or suffering such as the heat, the cold, aging, sickness, death. Most human beings have no idea where these forms of Dukkha come from and how to put an end to them. The Lord Buddha is the personage who has discovered the cause of Dukkha and the means to put an end to Dukkha which is the practice of Magga-8 or the Noble Eightfold Path. The most direct way to practice Magga-8 is practicing meditation until one's mind can be brought to a complete standstill at the seventh base in the center of one's body.

There are two categories of Nibbana, namely, Saupadisesanibbana and Anupadisesanibbana. Saupadisesanibbana is the Nibbana of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats while they still retain their human body. Anupadisesanibbana is the Nibbana of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats after they die.

After they died or attained Complete Nibbana, the Lord Buddha and the Arahats went to live in Ayatanibbana which exists as a sphere of existence as confirmed by the Lord Buddha.

Important days in Buddhism include the Buddhist Holy Day, Visakha Puja Day, Magha Puja

Day, etc. A Buddhamamaka needs to get ready to attend the temple by being properly dressed, getting the alms ready, etc. A Buddhamamaka needs to learn about such Buddhist practices as how to pay respect to the Triple Gem, how to converse with a Buddhist monk, how to conduct himself at the temple, proper Buddhist manners, etc.

Having finished studying this coarse book and completed his workbook, the student is required to complete the three assignments as follows.

### **1) Consider If You Are Now Qualified as a Buddhamamaka**

It is necessary for the student to use the Buddhamamaka criteria to evaluate his belief, his faith, his conduct, his practice of the Lord Buddha's Teachings, etc. The reason is that far too many so-called Buddhists do not study or practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings. They tend to put faith in other things such as mediums, ghosts, deities, and even strange looking animals. But these things can never help them to put an end to Dukkha.

### **2) Cultivate the Virtues Necessary to be a Buddhamamaka**

One begins by studying the Lord Buddha's Teachings and putting what he has learnt into practice. One will find that no words of teaching can be compared to those of the Lord Buddha. It is for this reason that more and more people everywhere are beginning to study and practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings. It is unfortunate that people who are born Buddhists do not appreciate the true value of studying and practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

### **3) Perform the Duty of a Virtuous Friend**

Having studied and practiced the Lord Buddha's Teachings to a certain extent, it is crucial that one passes on his Dhamma knowledge and experience to those close to him and those around him.

The reason why one needs to perform the duty of a virtuous friend is that to live together in peace and happiness, it is crucial that everyone in the community shares similar Saddha (faith), Sila (morality), and Ditthi (view).

*THE*  
*BUDDHIST MANUAL*

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