



# MONASTIC LIFESTYLE

SB 304 E



# **Monastic Lifestyle**

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## Preface

The course material for the Monastic Lifestyle, SB 304, is meant to educate and indicate the student some understanding of the value of the monastic life of Buddhist monks; in particular, the aim of ordination, Right Livelihood and methods of self-practice in attaining the ultimate aim in life to uproot all defilements.

The course material has been gleaned from the essential Sutta: ‘the Sāmaññaphala Sutta’ which mentioned about the fruits of monkhood as called ‘Sāmaññaphala’. This includes the conduct of monks to attain the fruits of monkhood.

This text has received special acclaim owing to Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Phadej Dattajivo)’ s special insight in recognizing the coherence of monastic practice which is useful for all students.

The Committee believes that the knowledge gained from learning the monastic way of life of Buddhist monk is beneficial and will be used as a path to improve the virtues.

The Committee  
August 2007

# Course Syllabus

## 1. Description of the Course Material

### SB 304: Monastic Lifestyle

It is the study of the monastic life of Buddhist monks; in particular, the aim of ordination, Right Livelihood and methods of self-practice in attaining the ultimate aim in life to uproot all defilements by practicing in accordance with the Sāmaññaphala Sutta.

## 2. Course Objectives

1. To enable the student to get an overall picture and the preliminary main points of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta.
2. To enable the student to appreciate the value of learning the Sāmaññaphala Sutta and to apply what he learns towards his accumulation of merit and pursuit of Perfections.

## 3. Topics Covered in the Course

1. Foreword to Sāmaññaphala Sutta.
2. Background to the Sāmaññaphala Sutta .
3. Seeking Audience with the Buddha at Ambavana.
4. Questions on the Mind of King Ajātasattu.
5. Elementary Fruits of True Monkhood.
6. The Virtues That Bring a Monk to Purity.
7. Intermediate Fruits of True Monkhood.
8. Higher Fruits of True Monkhood.
9. Conclusions.

# **Method of Study**

## **1. Preparation for Self-Study**

The steps for studying each chapter are as follows:

1. Spend an hour each day on the course material, and finish each chapter within one to two weeks.
2. Begin each lesson with an exercise to pre-test the student' s comprehension of the course material, and to complete the exercises contained within the lesson. When the lesson is over, the student should assess his comprehension by completing the exercise at the end of the lesson.
3. Study the lesson along with other teaching aids especially via broadcasted programs as detailed in 5).

## **2. Self-Evaluation before and after the Lesson**

The student should complete the pre-lesson self-evaluation form before beginning each lesson in order to gauge his prior knowledge of the topic. The student can then pay special attention to what he has no knowledge of. The student should also complete the post-lesson self-evaluation at the end of each chapter. The student would, then, know how well he has learnt the subject matter, and whether he is ready to proceed to the next chapter. The self-evaluation will only be effective if it is carried out honestly.

## **3. The Text**

Before beginning each chapter, the student should 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 details of each topic, the student should write down its main points and complete the exercise provided at the end of each chapter. The exercise helps the student to self-evaluate his comprehension of the material studied. It helps the student to better his life by applying what he has learnt to his daily life. Therefore, for best results, the student should regularly practice what is given in the exercise.

## **4. The Exercises**

The student should write down the main points of each lesson and complete all of the exercises provided. These exercises are crucially important to the study of the course material. The exercises should be completed by the student before checking the answers at the end of the chapter.



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

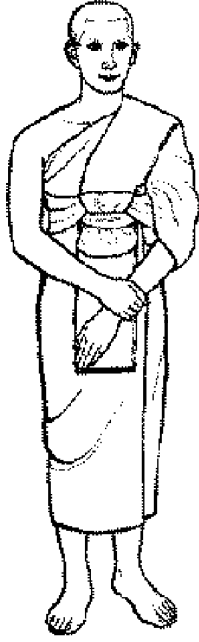
The Foundation for the Study of the Dhamma for the Environment broadcasts its programs via satellite to enable people to study about the Monastic Lifestyle as well as other Teachings of the Lord Buddha anywhere in the world. The student should endeavor to view these programs especially during the hours of the 'Inner Dreams Kindergarten'. This special program offers teachings related to the Lord Buddha's former existences, various case studies, etc.. Additional learning can be obtained through E-learning, which DOU has provided especially for this purpose. Interested students can obtain further information about Long-Distance learning through the satellite from the DOU administration office.

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

To further the student's understanding of the Monastic Lifestyle, the student should attend the 'Inner Dreams Kindergarten' that is broadcasted via satellite every Monday to Friday from 19:00 to 21:30 (Thai time). There are also reruns of the program as posted in the broadcasting schedule. The student can request the schedule from the DOU administration office.

## **7. Examination**

The examination contains multiple choices as well as essays. Evaluation of the student's comprehension of the course material is an important part of the study. However, it is more important that the student understands the course material well enough to apply it to his daily life. The completion of this course should allow the student to further his knowledge in the area, and to be able to live his life happily and appropriately anywhere.



– CHAPTER ONE –

*Foreword to the  
Sāmaññaphala Sutta*

This book enlarges upon a teaching (or ‘*sutta*’) given by the Buddha, in a scriptural collection called the *Digha Nikaya*, called the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*. The word ‘*sāmañña-phala*’ meaning the *result* or *fruit* of being a monk —it is the ‘purpose’ of ordaining as a monk within the Buddhist religion.

The Buddha taught that anyone who keeps purely and strictly to his vocation as a Buddhist monk will receive many benefits. Most things in the world, which you can do have both ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ but if the ordained follows his vocation purely, ordaining as a monk has only benefits.

The benefits received by a monk come sequentially starting with superficial benefits, which can be immediately seen — such as being honoured by the general public, peacefulness of body, speech and mind, the wisdom to consider matters of the world in a more thorough way, real understanding of life and the world — allowing one to develop responsibility for oneself, others and society at large, and spiritual attainments on the path to Nirvana.

Even if one is unable to attain Nirvana in the present lifetime, one’s experience, accumulated merit and efforts will not have been wasted — but will accrue as the foundation for progress in practice in future lifetimes in accordance with the Buddhist proverb:

Udakumbhopī pūrati āpūrati,  
Dhīro puññassa thokaṃ thokaṃpī ācinaṃ

“Drop by drop is the water-pot filled. Likewise the wise man gathering merit little by little, fills himself with it.”<sup>1</sup>

Once a person is replete with merit, that is the day they can enter upon Nirvana — the ultimate goal of the practice of Buddhism.

### **The *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* in Brief**

Towards the end of his dispensation the Lord Buddha was residing at Ambavana (the Mango Grove), temple grounds offered by the physician Jīvaka Komārabhacca close to Rājagaha the capital of the kingdom of Magadha in Northern India. At that time the reigning monarch was King Ajātasattu. The king requested audience with the Buddha in order to ask some questions, which had long been on His Majesty’s mind —namely the question of the immediate visible point or benefit of ordaining as a monk or becoming an ascetic. The king had previously asked the

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1. Dh.122

same question of six other contemporary religious leaders but had received no satisfactory answer from any of them.

The Buddha explained the benefits of ordaining as a monk starting with the most obvious benefits and continuing sequentially to the more subtle benefits.

The Buddha explained that the initial fruits of being a monk included elevating one's former status to the status of one worthy for respect.

The benefits at the medium level included the attainment of meditation states at different levels, such as, the first absorption, the second absorption, the third absorption, the fourth absorption, all of which make the mind more stable, joyful and peaceful.

The benefits at the high level included the attainment of Eightfold supra-normal knowledge [*vijjā*]:

1. Insight knowledge [*vipassanāñāṇa*].
2. Mental power [*manomayiddhi*].
3. Miraculous Power [*iddhivutthi*].
4. Angelic ear [*dibbasota*].
5. Mind Reading [*cetopariyañāṇa*].
6. Recollection of one's previous existences [*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*].
7. Recollection of other's previous existences [*cutāpapatañāṇa*] or angelic eye [*dibbacakkhu*].
8. Knowledge of an end of defilements [*āsavakkhayañāṇa*].

Before explaining the benefits of being a monk at the medium and high levels, the Buddha also outlined the way monks train themselves :

- Restraint according to the monastic code of discipline [*pāṭimokkha*].
- Right livelihood.
- Self-discipline.
- Restraint of the senses.
- Mindfulness and self-possession.
- Contentment.
- The Practice of meditation.

As a result of the teaching, King Ajātasattu requested to take refuge in the Triple Gem and to become a Buddhist for the rest of his life. He also asked forgiveness for having caused the death of his own father— King Bimbisāra — and the Buddha bore witness to his wrongdoing.

After the departure of King Ajātasattu, the Buddha revealed that if Ajātasattu had not murdered his own father, he would have attained the fruit of stream-entry as the result of hearing the teaching.

## Monastic Benefits Open To All

Buddhism is a teaching based on cause and effect. The benefits accruing to a monk do not come as the result of the grace bestowed by any god or angel — but as the result of his own earnest efforts and striving in accordance with the Buddhist proverb :

*Yādisaṃ vappate bijaṃ, tādisaṃ labhate phalaṃ*  
“You shall reap whatever you sow.”<sup>2</sup>

The Buddha laid down clear guidelines for monastic practice. Whoever practices strictly in accordance with these guidelines (not compromising according to his own convenience or whim) having set up the proper conditions — then the expected outcomes (the *sāmaññaphala*) will arise for him. Thus, if a monk wants to see results from his ordination he must *practise* in accordance with the monastic discipline, not just study it or memorize it. He must not be like the monk who :

“can repeat many Buddhist teachings but who never practices in accordance with those teachings and thus has no part in the fruits of ordination just like a cow-herd who does (no more than) count head of cattle for someone else (’s benefit).<sup>3</sup>

Even those who are very familiar with Buddhist teachings but who are reckless with those teachings and do not practice in accordance with them get no more benefit — the teachings than a herdsman gets from the cattle he looks after despite counting them morning and night, he never gets to taste the curds and whey made from the milk.

## Why the Monastic Life Is the Most Noble

The Buddha taught that, “the life of the householder is a narrow path which attracts dust.” The ordained life is a spacious path. The Buddha referred to the household life as narrow because the opportunities for accruing merit and practising Dhamma are minimal compared to the opportunities of a monk. Householders have to devote a lot of time supporting their families and earning their living — sometimes so much so that they do not even have time to venerate the Triple Gem each day. Furthermore, householders have so little opportunity to study the Dhamma that even

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2. S.i..227

3. *Bahumpi ce sahitaṃ bhāsamāno , Na takkaro hoti nara pamatto, Gopva gāvo gaṇayam paresuṃ, Na bhāgavā Sāmaññssa hoti. (Dh.19)*

though they might refer to themselves as Buddhist, they do not know how a Buddhist should regard and discerns<sup>4</sup> what is good or evil, or how to avoid blundering into craving and ignorance. Without such discernment, it is the nature of people just to fall under the sway of their defilements, such as, greed, hatred and delusion. In such a condition, householders tend to waste their time with worldly matters and have no opportunity to better themselves spiritually. This is why the Buddha called the household life a ‘narrow path’.

It matters little whether you are a distinguished householder in the aristocracy or disadvantaged householders whose life is from hand-to-mouth — the path is no less narrow. In society, there are both good and bad people amongst those we know — sometimes, we can choose who we associate with, sometimes not. The less scrupulous acquaintances can be the reason why we add to the toll of bad karma for ourselves in various ways. Trying to get the advantage — trying to be competitive, trying to make a profit, which might ultimately lead us to harm others physically — and this is the reason why the Buddha described the household life as ‘attracting dust’.

For as long as we are still leading the household life, it is hard to find time to work seriously on ourselves to extract ourselves from the influence of defilements — and ultimately that prolongs the time we have to spend undergoing the suffering of the cycle of existence — endlessly perhaps if we blunder into committing serious karma of violence or cruelty — and we have to make amends in the hell realms without anyone else being able to help us in our plight. It is for this reason that the Buddha encouraged ordination and praised the nobility of ordination as a ‘path of spaciousness’.

### **The Importance of The Sāmaññaphala Sutta**

The *Sāmaññaphala* Sutta explains the purpose of ordination; once one has ordained, how one must practise and not practise; the results of correct practice at various levels of advantage with the ultimate — that the Buddha called the “utmost of the Brahma-faring [*brahmacariya*]<sup>5</sup>” until the monk can understand for himself the meaning of the Buddha’s words that one’s life as a true monk within the Dhammavinaya is the most noble life.

Apart from giving benefit to monks themselves who are already pursuing the Brahma-faring, the *Sāmaññaphala* Sutta also has many useful messages for the household reader:

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4. A quality later described as the ability to be a teacher to yourself [*yonisomanasikāra*].

5. *brahmacariya*: A way of life whereby one trains oneself by keeping (vows of) celibacy. It is considered as the Buddhist holy life and those who attain arahantship are referred to as “having completed the Brahma-faring.”

**1. Monastic Standards:** The information contained in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* is advice at the level of principals and virtues of a true monk —because the Sutta paints a clear picture of the ideal monk —no matter whether they are a Buddhist monk or a monk from another religion —and the sort of virtues he should have. Such information is useful for householders —to know and be selective about monks —whether they are practising properly or not. Whether they are earnest or lax, whether they can offer us refuge or not. In such a way, we can avoid paying too much attention to monks teaching unorthodox or possibly damaging practices — and to protect ourselves from becoming a tool for undisciplined monks or from being gullible in the face of monks practising outside the guidelines laid down by the Buddha.

**2. Conduct towards Monks:** After reading the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, householders will have a clearer understanding of how they should interact with monks in a way that makes it easier to keep the code of monastic discipline [*vinaya*] — whether it be the elementary training [*cūlasīla*], intermediate training [*majjhimasīla*] or greater training [*mahāsīla*] of the monk. It gives valuable information about how laypeople should treat monks in order to procure knowledge, goodness or merit from them. Even though they have not ordained themselves, they can still have extended opportunities for accruing wholesomeness — by being a real support to monastic work, thereby facilitating the emergence of peace in the world.

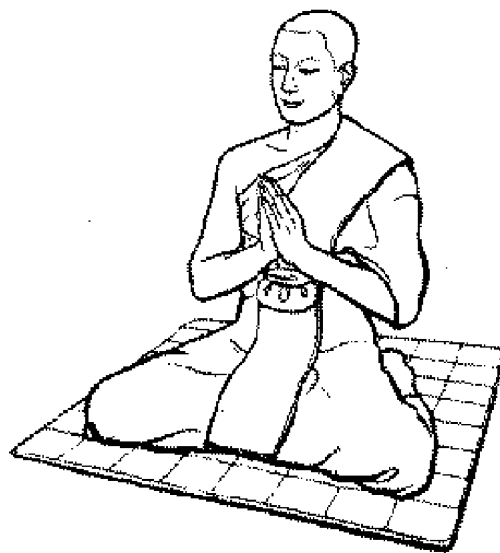
**3. Preparing Oneself for Ordination:** Even though householders may not have decided to ordain in the present time, if one day in the future they should decide to ordain with the understanding they have obtained from the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, they still have sufficient understanding to be able to prepare themselves correctly to get real benefit from the ordination experience — and will thereby manage to avoid becoming the sort of monk who undermines Buddhism by deluding the public or creating controversy. When it comes to his time for ordination, he will be able to be selective about where he ordains and who he chooses as his preceptor in order to get real benefits from the ordination experience. If he should choose to take lifelong ordination, he will truly be able to align himself to attain the paths and fruits of Nirvana. If he should choose; however, to take temporary ordination (such as men who ordain for the duration of the rainy season according to Thai tradition) then, he will reap benefits in measure of his efforts. Ordination will help him to gain Buddhist discretion of wholesomeness [*yoniso-manasikāra*] which will bring direct benefits when he returns to the household life. It will bring indirect benefits to his family, society, and the nation at large — giving life and perpetuity to Buddhism for future generations.

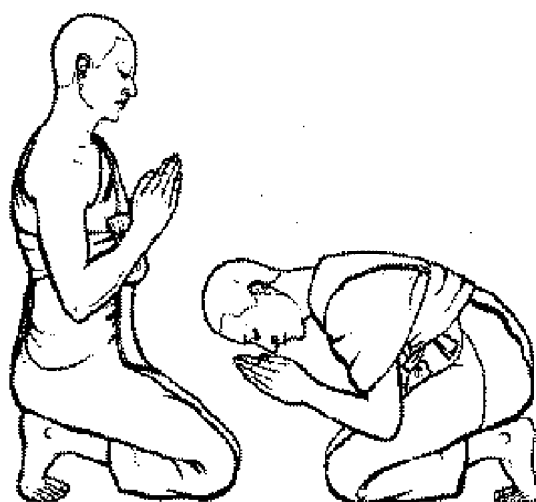
**4. Offers the Principles of Buddhism in a Nutshell:** The Sāmaññaphala Sutta offers a succinct understanding of both Buddhist principles and methods of practice. From the Sutta, the picture is clear that Buddhism is a religion of *cause and effect*. ‘Cause’ in this case means the ways of practice the Buddha gave as guidelines for monastics to follow or avoid. ‘Effect’ is the outcome, which the practitioner can expect to receive as a result of practice — there are many successive levels. The Sāmaññaphala Sutta is thus an incomparable source of information for both monks and religionists who can take its principles as a blueprint for successful administration of religion towards success stability and harmony. For this reason, monks need to understand and apply the principles and practices of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta for themselves throughout their lives. Those who master the Sāmaññaphala Sutta will be able to explain Buddhism correctly, succinctly and lucidly to others — even five or ten minutes is enough to give newcomers the knowledge for them to think Buddhism through to an understanding for themselves. Even those subscribing to other religions can learn much from a comparative study of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta to compare and contrast their own and Buddhist principals of practice — and to reach a state of peaceful co-existence with Buddhists instead of coming into dogmatic confrontation.

**5. The Acquisition of Perfections:** The Sāmaññaphala Sutta is of particular interest to those interested to pursue perfections. The understanding gained from this Sutta will allow those pursuing perfections to do so to the utmost, following confidently in the footsteps of the Lord Buddha and the arahants, without mistake — with the capacity to attain the paths and fruits of Nirvana — and even while still training oneself, to gain guidelines for what it is beneficial to pursue and what to avoid.

From all that has been outlined above, the reader will see that the Sāmaññaphala Sutta is indeed a miraculous teaching — indicating the correct path of practice for monks and those pursuing enlightenment while also giving a precious outlook for practising householders.







– CHAPTER TWO –

***Background to the  
Sāmaññaphala Sutta***

## Magadha: Buddhism's First Foothold

Buddhism originated in Northern India 2,500 years ago. The hometown of the Buddha himself was Kapilavatthu, although the Buddhism took its firmest foothold in Magadha. The kingdom of Magadha was prosperous in the time of the Buddha because it contained three rivers. It was bounded on the east by the River Campā, on the west by the River Soṇa and on the north by the River Ganges. Its capital city was Rājagaha. The kingdom was endowed with wealthy bankers, such as, Meṇḍaka, Jotika, Jaṭila, Puṇṇaka and Kākavaliya. Magadha was also known for knowledgeable scholars, such as, Moggallāna, Sāriputta and Kassapa. In the (five) mountains surrounding the capital of Rājagaha, there were caves where it was traditional for hermits and ascetics to take up residence in order to train themselves.

## Bimbisāra: A King of Righteousness

The king of Magadha, Bimbisāra was also a man of great talent and sensitivity. He was expert in diplomacy and built up an alliance with the neighbouring kingdom of Kosala by taking the Kosala Devī as his Queen. He also annexed the kingdom of Angā<sup>1</sup> (by killing King Brahmadatta in the times before he learned the teachings of the Buddha — after meeting the Buddha and attaining stream-entry [sotāpana]<sup>2</sup>, he subsequently lost interest in power). He also made an alliance to King Pukkusāti of Gāndhara<sup>3</sup> by corresponding with him on subjects of Dhamma. He was to send Jīvaka to heal King Caṇḍappajjota of Avanti<sup>4</sup> and he was the one to donate Veḷuvana Monastery for the use of the Buddhist monastic community. Although Bimbisāra was a benefactor for the best part of his life, the bad karma from having slain Brahmadatta of Angā was eventually to catch up with him. Soothsayers predicted that he would be murdered by his own son Ajātasattu as a result of his waging war in his earlier days. Seeing that Prince Ajātasattu was indeed growing up into a strong and ambitious youth, he tried to instil virtue in his son by taking him to see the Buddha. His efforts were; however, to no avail because Ajātasattu was to kill him in the end.

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1. Angā : The kingdom of Angā was one of the sixteen major kingdoms in India in the time of the Buddha. It was situated to the east of Magadha on the other side of the River Campā. The capital of Angā was Campā. In the time of the Buddha, Angā had been annexed by Magadha.

2. sotāpana : The lowest level of enlightenment in Buddhism characterised by destruction of the defilements of false view of individuality [sakkāyadiṭṭhi], doubt [vicikicchā] and adherence to rites and rituals [silabbataparāmāsa].

3. Gandhāra : One of the sixteen major kingdoms in India in the time of the Buddha. It was situated around the north of the Sindhu Basin in the northern area of present-day Paścāpa. The capital of Gandhāra was Takkaśilā, the university town of ancient times. Gandhāra bordered with the modern region of Kashmir.

4. Avanti : One of the sixteen major kingdoms in India in the time of the Buddha. It was situated to the north of the Vindhya Mountains and to the south-west of the kingdom of Vamśa. The capital of Avanti was Ujjeni.

## Devadatta: The Jealous One

Ajātasattu's murderous intentions were elicited through his association with the Buddha's jealous cousin Devadatta. Devadatta was a monk, but in spite of his efforts in meditation, because his mind was clouded by jealousy for the attentions lavished on the Buddha and His major disciples, he could attain only the absorptions [*jhāna*] and could not progress to any higher states. Devadatta conceived a plan whereby he could murder the Buddha and lead the monastic community in his place.

He decided to try and win over Ajātasattu as a fellow conspirator. He used the mental powers attained by his meditation to appear to Ajātasattu as child to Ajātasattu and before his very eyes, turned gradually back to his normal appearance. Ajātasattu was, thus, beguiled into faith for Devadatta and would do all he said. Devadatta's mental attainments (ability to enter the absorptions in meditation) subsequently disappeared because of all his evil intentions and False View<sup>5</sup>[*micchā diṭṭhi*], but Prince Ajātasattu's support for him did not wane.

Subsequently, Devadatta interrupted the Buddha in the middle of a sermon to royalty to request the Buddha to retire from his position as leader of the Buddhist monastic community and let him reign in his place. Devadatta said the Buddha was too old to lead the Saṅgha any more. The Buddha politely turned down Devadatta's offer to take over from him. Not easily dissuaded from his efforts, Devadatta made the same request three times. After the third request, the Buddha explained:

“Devadatta! Even though Sāriputta and Moggallāna are very accomplished, I have never considered to let them lead the Saṅgha in my place — much less would I ever consider to allow you — who are no better than a corpse frittering away the monastic requisites as if they were no more than worthless spittle — to lead the Saṅgha.”<sup>6</sup>

## Ajātasattu Commits Patricide

Undissuaded from his mission, Devadatta hoped to find an ally in Ajātasattu. He hoped to undermine the Buddha's power by disposing of King Bimbisāra who was one of his most influential supporters. He visited Ajātasattu often and persuaded him with arguments such as:

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5. *micchā diṭṭhi* : False View is a state of having erroneous core values about certain features of life and the world which concern accruing virtue, especially concerning aging, materialism and the purpose of life.

6. The Buddha was to lead the monastic community until the end of his life. Before passing away he named his teachings [*dhammavinaya*] as his successor rather than any one of his disciples.

“In the olden days, our lifespans were much longer, but nowadays we cannot be sure — who knows if you will live to succede to throne while still in the prime of life...”

Even though the plan to kill his own father was monstrous, because of his trust in Devadatta, he was convinced. Even though Ajātasattu was convinced to follow through with the patricide, it didn't mean that his mind wasn't full of guilt and hesitation. He had always had great respect for his father. When his plans were overheard by the courtiers, he confessed all of his plans to them. In response to the plans, the courtiers in the palace became divided amongst themselves, subscribing to one of three different types of opinion about what should be done.

- The first group thought Ajātasattu should be executed along with Devadatta and all of Devadatta's disciples too.
- The second group thought that monks who had no direct connection with the conspiracy should be spared — only Ajātasattu and Devadatta should be executed.
- The third group thought that King Bimbisāra should be informed of the whole conspiracy and any punishments should be up to his discretion.

The third group was in the majority and King Bimbisāra was informed of the whole affair. When King Bimbisāra heard the news, instead of being angry, gave up the throne to Ajātasattu immediately and without reluctance. At the same time, he ordered the courtiers in the first group to be dismissed, the courtiers of the second group to be demoted and the courtiers of the third group to be promoted and given a special pension. The king's punishment and rewards for the courtiers created disharmony in the palace. From that day on, although Ajātasattu was anointed King of Magadha, he was still suspicious of his father. Devadatta fanned the flames of suspicion saying that for as long as Bimbisāra was still alive, Ajātasattu would not be safe — the courtiers in the palace still had their old allegiances. Accordingly, Ajātasattu decided to put an end to the matter by putting his father to death by torture in the most cruel way possible. Bimbisāra was imprisoned by his son in a prison cell — and there he was left to starve. As if that wasn't enough, his prison cell was constantly filled with smoke by Ajātasattu. However, because Bimbisāra had already attained the level of stream-entry in his meditation, he was able to survive the smoke and starvation inflicted on him. The only visitor he was allowed was the Kosala Devī. She smuggled food for the king to eat, but later was discovered. She even tried smearing herself with four types of sweets for the king to lick from her person. Later, this was discovered too and her visits were banned completely. The king continued to live by walking meditation — keeping his mind full of the bliss of his meditation. Hearing that Bimbisāra was not yet dead, Ajātasattu had his barber slice the soles of Bimbisāra's feet with a razor and had salted ghee rubbed into the wounds. The soles of Bimbisāra's feet were then roasted with red-hot embers in an attempt to stop Bimbisāra from his walking meditation. Eventually, Bimbisāra died

from the extreme suffering inflicted upon him<sup>7</sup>.

On the very day, Bimbisāra passed away, a first son was born to Ajātasattu. Experiencing the love of a father for his son for the first time, Ajātasattu realized with remorse the error of his ways in imprisoning his father — but his intention to release his father came too late and Ajātasattu learned of his father's death with grief and guilt. Bimbisāra's queen, the Kosala Devī, was so filled with grief by the news of Bimbisāra's death that she could not bear to set eyes on Ajātasattu ever again. She returned to Sāvatti, the capital of Kosala and was to die there of grief. The queen's death earned Ajātasattu yet more enemies in Kosala and King Pasenadi marched against Magadha, capturing back the town of Kāsi as a punishment. King Caṇḍappajjota of Avanti also mustered troops in preparation to march against Magadha on hearing news of Ajātasattu's ingratitude. From the time of Bimbisāra's death, Ajātasattu's mind was so filled with remorse and unrest that even though he was to go to bed at night, he could no longer get a wink of sleep — all he could do was to lie awake at night thinking about his sorrows.

### **Ajātasattu Wondered about the Point of Being a Monk**

Reflecting on the reason for all his new-found troubles, Ajātasattu realized that they had come from one single cause — the advice of Devadatta. King Ajātasattu wondered what possible reason could be behind a monk, who should be an exemplar of virtue and morality and who furthermore was a cousin of the Buddha himself, wanting to persuade someone to commit patricide? Serious doubt arose in Ajātasattu's mind of the virtue of being a monk at all — if this was the way monks in general conducted themselves. He wondered if his whole kingdom was full of other 'monks' creating exactly the same harm as Devadatta had done to him. Ajātasattu was seriously perplexed by such a prospect. Even though he knew that in any spiritual community, there must be extremes of both good and bad members — how could an outsider recognize whether a monk could be trusted or not? Not only would there be many varieties of monks — the disciplined and the undisciplined — but the differences did not stop there — there were a wide variety of spiritual traditions in India to choose from too — and each had their own definitions of what represented a good monk. The question of the definition of a 'true monk' so perplexed Ajātasattu that he took every opportunity to seek an answer to his question — partly to satisfy his own curiosity and partly to protect his citizens from being cajoled by shameless monks into actions of karma so heavy<sup>8</sup> as parricide. :

After making the rounds of six major teachers in vain, trying to find a comprehensible answer to his dilemma, King Ajātasattu was to receive a clear answer from the Lord Buddha and from that time onwards was to adopt the Triple Gem as his refuge. This is the background to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*.

7. Some wonder what such highly attained and righteous king should have done to die in such a violent way — but in a previous lifetime he had refused to remove his shoes before entering a pagoda and had soiled both the pagoda and mats laid for the congregation to hear a Dhamma sermon with the dirt on his shoes. This bad karma combined with the murderous karma he had accrued for himself earlier in life when he fought on the battlefield against neighbouring kingdoms.

8. This category of karma is called the heaviest karma [*anantariyakamma*].





– CHAPTER THREE –

*Seeking Audience  
with  
the Buddha at Ambavana*



Ambavana Temple was situated between Rājagaha city wall and Gijjhakūṭa<sup>1</sup> Mountain. Formerly, the temple grounds had belonged to the physician Jīvaka Komārabhacca, but later he was to offer it to the Lord Buddha. At that time, Jīvaka had offered healing to Buddha until the Buddha had regained health. Jīvaka had offered two fine robes and had consequently attained 'stream-entry'. Subsequently, it occurred to him that he should follow up the health of the Buddha more often (two or three times per day) but found that neither Gijjhakūṭa or Veḷuvana Temple were sufficiently close to Rājagaha to allow him to make his medical rounds. Thus, Jīvaka had a temple built on his own land at Ambavana and had a red-painted eighteen-cubit-high wall built around it together with sufficient accommodation to serve the needs of the Buddha and the monastic community. He offered the completed temple to the Saṅgha.

On this occasion, the Buddha was in residence at Ambavana with 1,250 monks and the news of his sojourn reached all people of Rājagaha — news which greatly interested King Ajātasattu.

### **King Ajātasattu Wishes Audience with the Buddha**

After killing his own father, King Ajātasattu had become full of guilt — so much so that he hadn't been able to sleep from the day of his father's death. King Ajātasattu felt the need to search for holy men who could give him advice to relieve his anguish.

The tradition of the Ariyan people in those days was that every full-moon day, disciples would go to their respective temples in order to discuss spiritual matters with their teacher. Seeing that it was the full-moon night, Ajātasattu exclaimed:

“Which holy master should I go to hear the teachings of tonight who will help to lighten my heavy heart.”

Each of the courtiers suggested their favourite holy master of the time for the king's consideration. Each waxed lyrical about how great a community leader, how famous, how honoured, how publicly praised, how senior, how long-ordained was their sect leader. Each of the six contemporary religious gurus were mentioned:

1. Pūraṇa Kassapa.
2. Makkhali Gosāla.
3. Ajita Kesakambala.
4. Pakudha Kaccāyana.
5. Saṅjaya Belaṭṭhiputta.
6. Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta.

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1. *Gijjhakūṭa* : A mountain (lit. the Vultures' Peak), one of five hills encircling Rājagaha, was a favourite resort of cave-dwelling ascetics.

Each of the courtiers wanted to attract the king to be patron to their favourite teacher so they could receive a more trusted position from the king. In fact, King Ajātasattu had already been disappointed at the hands of all six teachers but was too polite to say so. He just looked at Jīvaka. Jīvaka kept his silence wanting to measure the King's strength of interest to visit the Buddha. King Ajātasattu asked "Jīvaka why are keeping quiet?" Jīvaka knew that the King wanted to visit the Buddha but was scared to go himself because of guilt about his killing his own father. Jīvaka told the King that the Buddha was at Ambavana with 1,250 monks.

### **Jīvaka Praises the Buddha**

Jīvaka praised the nine virtues of the Buddha with the words:

1. Homage be to Him, the Exalted One, the Worthy Lord [*namo tassa bhagavato arahato*];
2. The Fully Self-Enlightened One [*sammā sambuddho*].
3. Who has attained the Supra-mundane knowledge and so perfectly conducted His life [*vijjā caraṇa sampanno*].
4. Who has already travelled the Path of Righteousness [*sugato*].
5. Seer of the world [*lokavidū*].
6. Who is the incomparable trainer of those worthy of training [*anuttaro purisadammasārathi*].
7. Who is a teacher of gods and men [*satthā deva-manussānaṃ*].
8. Who is awakened and joyous [*buddho*].
9. Who is an analyst of the Dhamma [*bhagavā*].

All other courtiers remained silent because they were amazed that any world teacher could be so well-endowed with virtue. Meanwhile King Ajātasattu had many reasons for wanting audience with the Buddha:

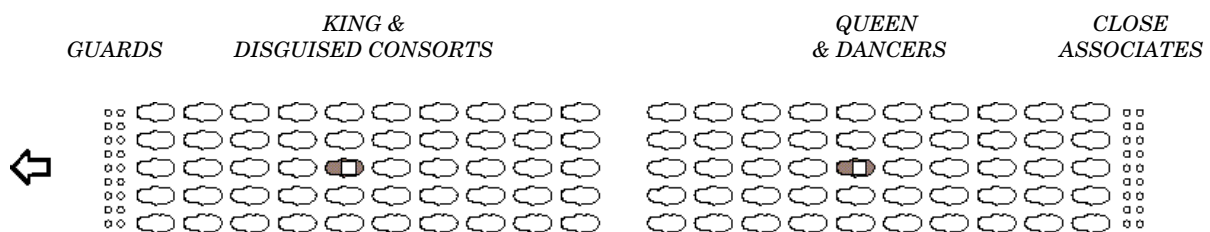
- He had guilt remaining in his mind of having killed his father at the persuasion of Devadatta and conspiring with Devadatta to shoot the Buddha dead with an arrow.
- He wanted to ask the forgiveness of the Buddha and take refuge because could see no one else in world who might protect him from his retribution.

Ajātasattu agreed to go to see the Buddha and had Jivaka prepare the royal procession.

## The Procession

The procession consisted primarily of elephants — one for Ajātasattu and five-hundred for his followers. Five-hundred (female) consorts were disguised as soldiers with swords, spears and daggers to frighten away enemies. Jīvaka positioned himself close by the king to be the first to lay down his life for the king if there should be any danger. Ajātasattu was suspicious by nature and it was not often that the king would travel outside the closed city gates at night. If he did so the one hundred or more large and small gates<sup>2</sup> of Rājagaha would all have to be closed — even to invite the king outside the city gates was a suspicious manoeuvre hinting at ambush. The female consorts would be no risk themselves to the king and would shield the king in case of ambush because enemies would never harm women. There was a section of the route where the moonlight would be obscured by Gijjhakūṭa's peak — presenting an obvious lair for ambush. Jīvaka wanted to avoid the king even suspecting danger. Furthermore, as a stream-enterer, Jīvaka knew that if Ajātasattu had gone alone, maybe the Buddha would not have taught anything seeing that Ajātasattu was beyond help — but if accompanied by a retinue, the Buddha would decide to teach for the benefit of the followers.

The composition of the royal procession was as follows:



When the intention of the king was announced in the town, the people of the town forgot their festivities and brought flowers and incense to line roadside where the royal procession would pass.

## Evil-Doers Are Wont to Suspicion

As procession neared Ambavana the music was stopped out of respect. The elephants walked quietly. At the part of the route where the moon was obscured by the mountains, the king suddenly became fearful of ambush. The king feared deceit by Jivaka because he could hear no single sound made by the 1,250 monks supposed to be there.

2. The city gates of *Rājagaha* comprised thirty-two large and sixty-four small gates according to the sources.

“You are not trying to trick me, are you, friend Jīvaka? You are not deceiving me, are you, friend Jīvaka? You are not betraying me to my enemies, are you, friend Jīvaka? How indeed can it possibly be that with twelve hundred and fifty members of the *bhikkhu* community here there should be no voice to be heard, not even a sneeze or a cough?”

Jīvaka’s was within a hair’s breadth of his life, but he reassured the king that the Buddha would not cheat him and that the large number of monks could be clearly seen by the number of lamps lit ahead.

As he came closer to the Buddha and all the assembly was still in silence without even a cough. The next fear of the Buddha was that the Buddha would not receive him.

The king asked “Which monk is the Buddha?”

Jīvaka replied:

“The Buddha is the monk sitting with his back against the central pillar<sup>3</sup> facing East sitting in honour among the members of the *bhikkhu* community.”

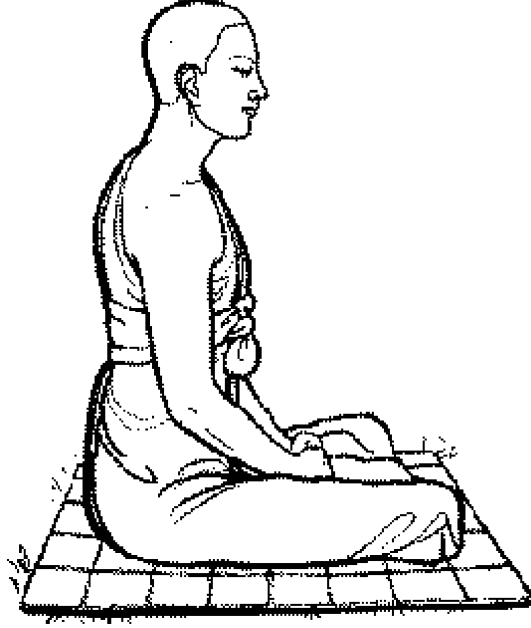
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3. That the Buddha leant against a pillar shows that the Buddha must have been advancing in years at the time of this teaching. The Buddha’s anatomical weakness came as the result of having been a champion wrestler in previous lifetimes who had been able to throw his opponents with such force that they had broken their backs.

## OVERVIEW OF MONASTIC TRAINING

Ga.naka Moggallaana Sutta		Samaññaphala Sutta			
			ORDINATION WITH AIM IN MIND		
SELF-DISCIPLINE	Self-discipline [siila]				
	Restrained in Paa.timokkha	Conduct & haunts	RESTRAINED IN PAA.TIMOKKHA	paa.ti mokkha sa.m- vara	paa.ti mokkha sa.m- vara siila
	Conduct & haunts				
	Seeing danger in the smallest things	Seeing danger in the smallest things			
	Study of the Rules of Training	Study of the Rules of Training			
		Avoid Deceit	RIGHT LIVELIHOOD	aajiiva- pari suddhi	
		Avoid Soliciting			
		Avoid Beating Around the Bush			
		Avoid Shaming			
		Avoid Profiteering			
		Culasila	SELF-DISCIPLINE		
		Majjhima Sila			
		Maha Sila			
RESTRAINT OF SENSES	general appearance	indriyasa.mvara	RESTRAINT OF SENSES	indriya sa.mvara	indriya samvara
	any part of appearance				
MODERATION IN EATING		bhojane matta-n-nuta			
CONTINUOUS AWARENESS	1st watch of the night	jaagriyaanuyoga	MINDFUL & SELF-AWARE	paccaya pacca vekkhana	compo- sure
	2nd watch of the night				
	3rd watch of the night				
MINDFUL & SELF-AWARE					
		what received	CONTENTMENT		
		what strengths			
		what appropriate			
SEEK SOLITUDE	overcome 5 hindrances	overcome 5 hindrances	SEEK SOLITUDE		solitude
ATTAIN 4 ABSORPTIONS			ATTAIN 4 ABSORPTIONS		right view
			ATTAIN VIJJA 8		

Table I. Correlation between the Gaṇakamoggallāna Sutta, the Sāmaññaphala Sutta and other teachings with related content. Practices correlating with different levels of Fruits of Monkhood are colour coded as follows : Red = Elementary ; Orange = Intermediate ; Green = Higher. Apanṇaka Paṭipada, parisuddhisīla and Five Dangers of a New Monk are demarcated in faded boxes.



– CHAPTER FOUR –

***Questions on the Mind  
of King Ajātasattu***

King Ajātasattu appreciated the silence of the monastic assembly so much that he exclaimed:

“If only my own son Udāyibhadda could have such a peaceful heart as these monks.”

The nature of people who see something they like is to think one step further to want to possess that thing or be like that thing. Perhaps it was half out of fear of becoming victim of parricide at the hands of his own son.

The Buddha knew what was on Ajātasattu’s mind and greeted him with the words:

“Your majesty has arrived together with love.”

This put the king immediately at ease and he admitted his wish to the Buddha with the words:

“Oh! That my own son could have such a peaceful heart as the assembly of *bhikkhus*.”

### **The Question of the Fruits of Monkhood**

The King bowed to the Buddha, and keeping hands in a gesture of prayer sat down at one side, King asked permission to ask a question of the Buddha:

“The general public use their knowledge and ability to earn their living to support themselves, their family and their parents. The rest of their wealth they offer in support of the ordained community for benefit in this lifetime and the next. As for becoming a monk — what is the benefit in this lifetime?”

The Buddha knew that King Ajātasattu had asked the same question of the other six teachers. Before answering, the Buddha intended to show Ajātasattu the weaknesses of the other six teachings. However, if the Buddha was himself to mention those weaknesses, followers loyal to those teachers would pay no attention to His teaching — but of the criticism came from Ajātasattu himself, they would accept those observations.

## The Responses of Contemporary Teachers

The Buddha asked where King Ajātasattu had already asked the question and what answer he had received. King Ajātasattu replied that:

1. **Pūraṇa Kassapa** had answered, “There is no such thing as merit or demerit” — no matter how heinous one’s action — killing, stealing, committing adultery or lying (also no matter how good your actions of generosity, self-discipline or meditation) — nothing makes a difference to one’s quality of life. It is again likely that Pūraṇa Kassapa answered this way to try to win over the king — to make him think that killing his father did not matter. The king had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.
2. **Makkhali Gosāla** had answered, “All beings in the world are born and reborn at random. After being born and reborn for long enough, they will become pure of their own accord.” It is likely that Makkhali Gosāla answered this way to try to win the King over — to make him think there is no need to make any special effort in order to become pure. The answer did not fit the question. The king had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.
3. **Ajita Kesakambala** had answered, “Evil or virtuous actions have no effect. This world and the next do not exist. Mother and father have done us no favour, spontaneous birth [opāpatika]<sup>1</sup> is non-existent, it is impossible for anyone to become enlightened or to teach others to become enlightened, death is the end of the story — all that is left is bone and ashes. There is no rebirth. It is only liars who claim generosity is beneficial to the giver.” It is likely that Ajita Kesakambala answered this way to try to win over King Ajātasattu as someone who had killed his own father. The King had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.
4. **Pakudha Kaccāyana** had answered, “Our life consists of seven types of ‘aggregates’ earth, water, fire, air, happiness, suffering and life force. Killing someone is no more than piercing your weapon between the spaces between the various elements.” It is likely that Pakudha Kaccāyana answered this way to try to win over King Ajātasattu as someone who had killed his own father. The King had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.

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1. *opāpatika* : A category of beings arising spontaneously in adult form — arising not because of their parents but as the result of karmic action they have committed themselves in the past — includes angels [*devatā*], Brahmas, denizens of hell, hungry ghosts [*peta*] and monsters [*asurakāya*].



**5. Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta** had answered giving a rendition of the four forms of Jain restraint [*saṃvara*], “The purity of people depends on fluid. Jain monks must have four types of restraint: restraining water, consisting of water, getting rid of water and being sprinkled (prabram) with water.” According to Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta restraint of the water can purify you of all defilements. The King had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.

**6. Saṅjaya Belaṭṭiputta** could not answer so gave a dizzying rendition of his own beliefs. The King had not shown his dissatisfaction with the answer, but had taken his leave.

King Ajātasattu said it was like asking about a mango and getting an answer about a jackfruit or vice versa. The reason was because none of those six teachers knew the point of being a monk but simply wanted to describe their own beliefs in the hope that the King would support them.

### Beliefs Contemporary to the Buddha

The beliefs of other contemporary schools at the time of the Buddha can be summarized as follows:

**1. Pūraṇa Kassapa** subscribed to the false view of non - efficacy of action. [*akiriyadiṭṭhi*]<sup>2</sup>. According to this school, evil action has no effect if no one sees or knows or catches you red-handed. There is no result of doing evil. Goodness can only have an effect if someone sees you do it and praises or rewards you.

**2. Makkhali Gosāla** subscribed to the false view of random retribution [*ahetukadiṭṭhi*] which is assumption that retribution is random and doesn't depend on action. Fortune or misfortune depends on fate. You can do nothing to change it.

**3. Ajita Kesakambala** subscribed to the false view of no-self [*natthikadiṭṭhi*] and nihilism [*ucchedadiṭṭhi*] which are the assumptions respectively that

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2. *akiriyadiṭṭhi* : False view of the non-efficacy of one's actions. In the present day and age, there are many people from all walks of life with assumptions about the world which resemble 'akiriyadiṭṭhi'. The reason is that they do not understand 'merit' and 'demerit', and thus they have no scruples of conscience about behaving in an immoral way. Seeing such behaviour from their bosses, even though some subordinates know better, they become immoral in order to gain acceptance or else find themselves doing wicked things secretly. Such behaviour is responsible for a so much chaos in modern society that it is difficult to know where to start solving the problems unless everyone makes a unified effort to give up all forms of evil behaviour — manifest and covert.

there is no self (one is just an aggregate of elements) and that death is the end of the story. Our body consists of nothing but elements so there is no doer for an action. The false view of nihilism relies on the assumption that there is nothing left to store karmic information beyond death. Thus, because there is no merit or demerit, stupid are those who give and the smart are those who receive.

4. **Pakudha Kaccāyana** subscribed to the false view of the eternalism [*sassatadiṭṭhi*] which is the assumption that the body is made of permanent elements, that the mind is also unchangeable — eternal even when body breaks up. Nirvana is no more than knowing the relationship between body and mind.

5. **Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta** subscribed to the false view of the efficacy of self- mortification [*atthakila-methanuyoga*] as a means of spirital furth rance. This is major tenet of Jainism, which at that time was a religion of naked ascetics where reality depended on one's point of view.

6. **Sañjaya Belatṭhiputta** subscribed to the false view of the uncertainty of all principles [*amara vikkhepikadiṭṭhi*] which is an assumption of uncertainty, a mistrust of principles like an eel moving through water. Followers of this tradition would negate everything because: they were scared of telling lies, scared of dogma, scared they will be asked and basically ignorant.

All of these categories of heretical views are considered as 'False Views' [*micchā diṭṭhi*] by the Lord Buddha.

### The Positive Backlash of Extreme Evil

If you were to analyse the thoughts and assumptions in the mind of King Ajātasattu you would find that he was not unintelligent because at the very least he had the conscience to realize the gravity of the evil deed he had done. The king even tried to do his own spiritual research to find a way to make amends for what he had done, and not to allow himself to slide further down the slippery slope of unwholesomeness, by seeking out the leaders of various spiritual traditions — especially those of the six contemporary spiritual leaders mentioned above.

Having heard the teachings of those six contemporary teachers, the king was able to discern that the beliefs propounded by those teachers were in fact 'False View' and he had left the *ashrams* of those teachers without indicating any displeasure at those teachings but without taking them seriously either. From the king's behaviour, two things can be concluded:

1. His discretion was sufficiently sharp to ‘see through’ the pretence of those six teachers — which might come as a surprise for those who thought him gullible in his reasoning, to have been so easily ‘taken in’ by Devadatta.
2. He didn’t give his patronage to those contemporary teachers, but at the same time, he didn’t openly dismiss them or discredit them.

To analyse what must have happened to King Ajātasattu to abandon his usual discretion and be ‘taken in’ by Devadatta to the point he did the extreme evil deeds, Devadatta suggested can only be accounted for by his mind having been obscured by the darkness of defilements, to the degree he could find no way out of his delusion.

The key defilement to which King Ajātasattu succumbed was ‘delusion’ [*moha*]. The first count of delusion by which King Ajātasattu was overcome was by being ‘taken in’ by Devadatta’s ability to perform ‘miracles’ — thinking that he must be superior to all others. Another factor contributing to Ajātasattu’s gullibility was his young age and lack of worldly experience, not allowing him to see through the deceit of someone bent on evil.

A second defilement to which Ajātasattu had succumbed was that of greed [*lobha*]. Ajātasattu was no different from other unenlightened beings [*puthujjana*] in desiring for power and wealth. When delusion was added to such greed in sufficient measure, in keeping with Devadatta’s evil designs, Ajātasattu became no different from a traveller groping in the dark, who must put himself completely in the hands of his guide.

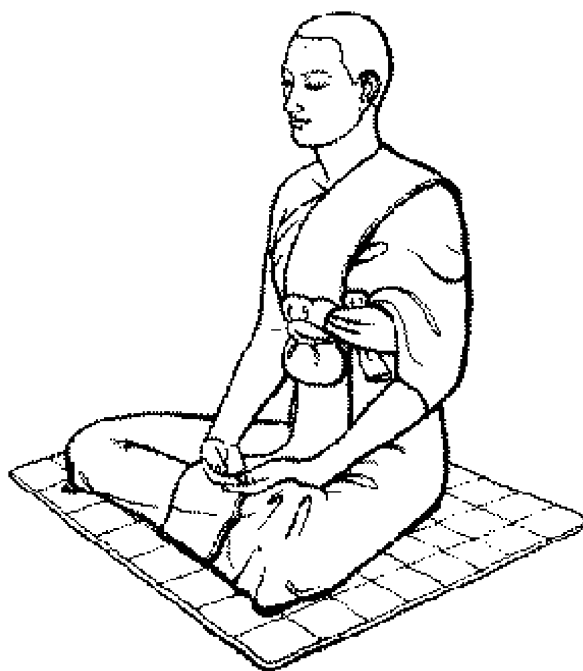
Even if Ajātasattu had such strong trust in Devadatta, it might still seem incredible to readers that he would go as far as to execute his own father at Devadatta’s behest. It is difficult for us to know if we would react any differently in such a situation — sometimes if you have never been through a situation personally, you have no way of knowing how you would react. We cannot blame Ajātasattu for what he did in his circumstances — any more than you can say that it is stupid for some people to want to commit suicide — you could not guarantee you would never be put in the same situation.

Even after having committed the heavy karma of parricide and having obtained the throne of Magadha for himself, Ajātasattu was to find that his new power brought him no happiness — on the contrary, it caused him spiritual unrest, firing his quest for the truth — eventually, seeking audience with the Lord Buddha. Thus, one might say that such a quest is the ‘positive backlash of extreme evil deeds’.

As for Ajātasattu not giving his patronage to the six contemporary teachers, but at the same time not, dismissing or discrediting them — this is something we can learn much from in the society of modern Buddhism. In the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, monks can only survive dependent on the support in alms given by the lay-supporters. When Buddhists support and respect the monastic community, it is important for them to reflect whether the behaviour or teachings of the monks is suitable or not, represents Right View or Wrong View. If it happens that monks practice or teach unsuitable things, the congregation should withdraw their support in the same way as Ajātasattu withdrew his. All it takes is for a congregation to withdraw their support for undisciplined or heretical monks and this will be the prime-mover causing those monks to have to 'pull their socks up', re-establishing themselves in proper monastic discipline — or else disrobing — either of which are better than leading the life of a householder while masquerading as a monk.

In the case, readers doubt which criteria to use for considering whether monks conform with proper monastic discipline, detail can be found in the chapters to follow.





– CHAPTER FIVE –

***Elementary Fruits  
of True Monkhood***

After his disappointment with the answers of the other six contemporary teachers, King Ajātasattu asked the same question of the Lord Buddha. The Buddha used a way of reply called ‘returning the question’ [*paṭipucchā-vyākaraṇa*]<sup>1</sup> to show that the other six teachers were suffering from False Views — but without saying a word of criticism against them — so that the king could work out the answer for himself, with the words:

“To that end, I wish to put a question to you. Please answer in whatever way you please. Now what do you think, great king: suppose among the people of your household, there is a slave who works for you, who rises up in the morning before you do, and goes to bed only when you have done so, who is keen to do whatever you wish, anxious to make himself agreeable in what he does and says, a man who anticipates your every need. Now, suppose he should think: “This matter of meritorious deeds, this result of merit, is very strange. For here is the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, son of the Videha princess — he is a man, and so am I. But, the king lives in the full enjoyment and possession of the five pleasures of senses, virtually a god, it seems to me. And here am I, a slave, working for him, rising before him, and going to bed late, keen to carry out his pleasure, anxious to make myself agreeable in deed and word, and anticipating all his needs. I wish I could be like him, so that I should have the chance to earn merit. So why don’t I have my hair and beard shaved off, and put on the yellow robes, and leave my home and ordain as a monk?” And suppose, after a time, he does this. Having been admitted into the monastic community he, lives a life of restraint in action, speech and thought, is content with the minimum of food and shelter, and delights in solitude. And suppose your people should tell you about him, saying, “If you please, your majesty, do you know that so, and so who used to be your slave, and work for you... has now put on the yellow robes, and has ordained as a monk and lives a life of restraint, content with the minimum of food and shelter, and delights in solitude?” Would you then say, “Let the fellow come back. Let him come and work for me again as my slave?”

King Ajātasattu answered,

“No, sir. On the contrary, we should greet him with reverence, and stand up out of deference to him, and request him to sit down. And we should have robes, and a bowl, and a place to sleep, and medicine, and anything else a wandering ascetic needs all made ready for him, and beg him to accept them. And we should give orders for him to be regularly protected.”

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1. *paṭipucchā-vyākaraṇa* : Dialogue technique of ‘returning the question’. There were four styles of questions used by the Buddha for answering questions: 1. direct answer [*ekamsavyākaraṇa*]; 2. answer by analysis [*vibhajjavvyākaraṇa*]; 3. returning the question [*paṭipucchā-vyākaraṇa*], and; 4. keeping silent (or questions, not useful to answer) [*ṭhapanīyavyākaraṇa*].

## Elementary Fruit#1 : Elevating One's Social Status

Thus, the first benefit (at the lowest level) of becoming a monk, which King Ajātasattu was able to discern from the Buddha's question was that by becoming a monk, one is able to elevate one's social status. Even if formerly one was a slave or worker from a lower caste — when ordained, even a king must pay respect — however, it follows that the monk must keep his part of the bargain by having the following baseline qualifications:

**1. Being Possessed of Right View** [sammā diṭṭhī]<sup>2</sup>: He must have a correct understanding of life and the world for example, that doing good deeds brings favourable outcomes for oneself and others, that there is life after death, that meritorious deeds bring happiness as their fruits and that evil deeds bring unhappiness as their fruits.

**2. Understanding the Purpose of Being a Monk**: As furthering one's perfections because merit allows us to make progress both in worldly and in spiritual ways. Evil only serves to drag our lives further and further downwards.

**3. Restraining Himself in Body, Speech and Mind**: Not allowing the mind to think evil thoughts.

**4. Leading a Life of Contentment and Simplicity**: You must be content with alms received and not wish for extravagance and convenience like that of a householder's life.

**5. Maintaining a Peaceful Life**: To have restraint of body, speech and mind, the whole of the time — as a foundation for training in meditation.

That was all Ajātasattu needed to know in order to realize that Devadatta with whom he had associated had none of the characteristics of a real monk — and to realize how foolish he had been to associate with him until being persuaded into doing the most evil of sins.

The reason that the other contemporary religious leaders could not answer the question was that:

1. They did not know the real reason for ordaining.
2. They did not know the foundation of virtue for a monk.

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2. *sammā diṭṭhī* : Right View means assumptions about the world based on the reality of the Four Noble Truths that include the assumptions that good deeds have good retribution, wicked deeds have wicked retribution, that we have a debt of gratitude to our parents and that the Five Aggregates are impermanent.



3. They did not know even the fundamental practices of the monk. So, they never knew the benefits of ordination [*sāmaññaphala*].

The Buddha asked whether the king had yet perceived the benefits at ordaining — and the King answered with confidence that he had. The Buddha said that this was only the fruit of ordaining at the fundamental level. This kindled the flame of Ajātasattu's interest that would lead him to ask whether there was any further benefit.

### **Elementary Fruit#2 : Being Offered Respect, Honour & Offerrings**

The second benefit (at the lowest level) of becoming a monk, is that a man who ordains as a monk will be offered respect and honour and the offering of requisites. The Buddha explained this benefit to King Ajātasattu again by means of a question:

“If a farmer used to be a taxpayer but decided to become a monk instead — would the king still order him to pay tax?”

The king said he would never do that but would pay homage to that monk and honour him with offerings of requisites.

The Buddha, thus, concluded that the second fruit of being a monk was *to be* offered respect and honour and offerings of requisites.

The king his thirst for knowledge further quenched, continued by asking whether there was any further benefit of being a monk.

### **Buddha Announces the Nine Virtues of Buddhahood**

Before going any further into the benefits of being a monk, the Buddha announced the nine virtues of the Buddha as follows:

1. Being an exalted and worthy one.
2. Being fully self-enlightened.
3. Being endowed with wisdom and perfect conduct.
4. Having already travelled the path of righteousness.
5. Being a seer of the world.
6. Being a trainer of those worthy of training.
7. Being a teacher of angels and men.
8. Being awakened and joyous.
9. Being an analyst of the Dhamma.

## **The Importance of Announcing the Qualities of the Buddha**

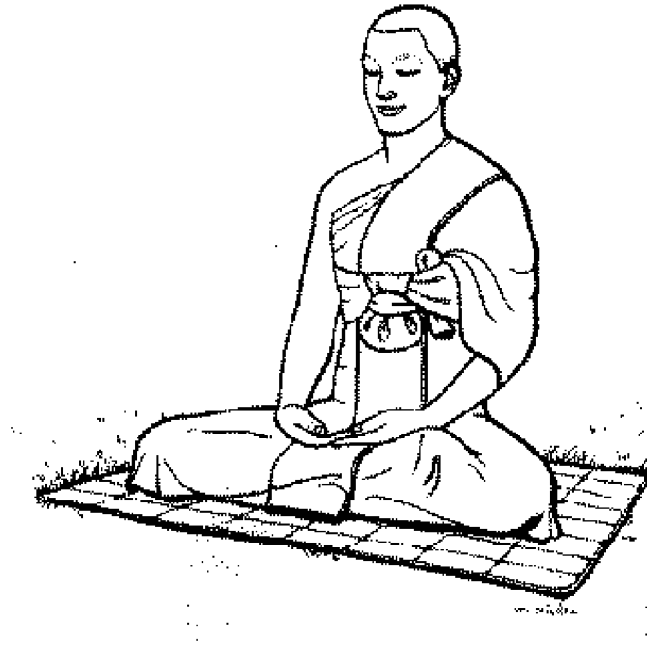
Mentioning the qualities of the Buddha to Ajatasattu at this juncture is as good as ‘introducing the speaker’ as is done at a conference in the present day. At such a conference, usually the speaker will be introduced by a third person — but in the case of the Buddha, there is no-one worthy to do this duty. However, as in the case that an M.C. has not properly introduced a speaker, the speaker has to take the task on himself, so that the listeners realize who they are listening to.

In a conference, it is necessary to introduce a speaker in order to know his qualifications, knowledge, ability and experience, but without boasting or looking down on the qualities of the listeners. At this point in the teaching it is pertinent for the Buddha to introduce himself because:

1. Aside of the Buddha, it is difficult for unenlightened beings to appreciate the true qualities of the Buddha — and certainly King Ajātasattu might not realize how the Buddha differed in quality from those of the rest of the world.
2. Even though Jīvaka had already announced the qualities of the Buddha to King Ajātasattu, he estimated that hearing them from Jīvaka was not equal to hearing them from the Buddha’s own lips.
3. To emphasize the difference between himself and the six teachers the king had already visited — in addition to the silence of the assembled 1,250 monks which already bore ample witness to the Buddha’s abilities as a teacher.
4. To show that his virtue was worthy of the support of such dignitaries as the late King Bimbisāra, the father of King Ajātasattu.
5. To make the king listen attentively to the answer to his question.
6. To reinforce the faith of King Ajatasattu so that he could fully understand the higher fruits of true monkhood, which would be more abstract than those that had already been mentioned.

The Buddha had not stated these qualities at the start for fear that it would be interpreted as boasting.





– CHAPTER SIX –

***The Virtues that  
Bring a Monk to Purity***

## Insight into the Purpose of Ordination

The Buddha taught that men who come to ordain in Buddhism do not do so because forced:

“When the Tathāgatha teaches beings, monks, brahmins, angels, and men to know the enlightenment I have known, householders and the sons of householders or the descendants of any family, and become faithful in the Tathāgatha — they are of a nature to see that the life of a householder is a narrow one, attracts dust. By contrast, the life of a monk is spacious. That for a householder to pursue brahma-faring properly is difficult (to be as spotless as a polished conch shell. Only then will he decided to shave his hair and dress in a saffron robe-leaving his possessions and his family to become a monk.

Thus, people ordain because:

- 1) They have faith in the teaching of the Buddha.
- 2) They see the danger of the household life as attracting defilements.
- 3) They use monkhood as a way to pursue brahma-faring in its entirety.

People do not ordain because heartbroken or can think of no better alternative. In brief, the true reason people ordain is:

- 1) To escape unwholesomeness.
- 2) To practise purity.

The sort of ‘dust’ the householder’s life attracts is of two types:

- 1) Mind-side sensuality [*kilesakāma*].
- 2) Object-side sensuality [*vatthukāma*].

When the two sorts of sensuality come into contact with one another, the response of the mind is to see all forms of sense-object as desirable, and will try to control and own them all. If mind-side sensuality should take the upper hand again, it can bring us suffering. If one does not become so slothful, despairing or disappointed that one wants to destroy oneself, then anger, ignorance, views or shamelessness will drive us to destroy others — accruing only unwholesomeness for oneself. If you let object-side sensuality go out of control without knowing where to draw the line, one day you will lead yourself to suffering because eventually people compete for the same objects of desire — until it becomes the most important thing in life of the competition for wits that is the basis of the investment business these days.

The Buddha taught many things about the dangers of desire, for example, that:

“Desire appears sweet and refreshing, but will trample your mind in various ways. Thus, the life of a householder under the sway of desire is to attract defilements.”<sup>1</sup>

The word ‘*pabbajā*’<sup>2</sup> or “ordaining” means “to abstain from all sorts of evils” - or to access oneself to nobleness. Thus, someone ordained as a monk should avoid all evils and do all good to bring themselves to nobility.

The ordained life of a monk is pure because it does not contain the possible compromises concerning the earning of a livelihood — a monk is dependent on householders for his support. Thus, he can devote his time to study and practice.

The Buddha explained all these things to King Ajātasattu to inform him that all of his disciples ordain with an aim, not out of carelessness or to avoid earning a living.

### Elementary Conduct of a Monk

Next the Buddha summarized the proper practise of a Monk at the elementary level:

“ When a monk has ordained, he lives restrained according to the monastic code of conduct and respects the ‘haunts’, sees the danger in small things, follows the monastic rules is pure in livelihood, is endowed with self-discipline, is restrained as to sense doors, is mindful and self-possessed, and rich in contentment.”

This shows that the Buddha intended King Ajātasattu to understand that those ordaining as Buddhist monks have certain duties and abstentions to practice summarized under the following six headings:

- 1) Restraint according to the monastic code of conduct [*pāṭimokkhasaṃvara*].
- 2) Restraint by pure livelihood [*ājīva-parisuddhi*].
- 3) Restraint by the possession of discipline [*sīlasaṃvara*].
- 4) Restraint of the senses [*indriya-saṃvara*].
- 5) Restraint by mindfulness [*sati*] and self-possession [*sampajañña*].
- 6) Contentment [*santuṭṭhi*].

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1. *Kama Sutta SN.151*

2. *pabbajā* : Originally the word ‘*pabbajā*’ meant full ordination (as when Prince Siddhattha renounced the princehood), but now it has come to mean lower ordination as a novice.

## 1. Restraint According to Monastic Code of Conduct

Restraint according to the monastic code of conduct means taking care of the manners of one's actions and speech in a way that will code of conduct lead to liberation from suffering. There are three main ways in which restraint according to the monastic code of conduct can be put in to practice, namely: being of good conduct and respecting the 'haunts', seeing danger even in small things and following the monastic rules of training.

### 1.1 Being of Good Conduct and Respecting the "Haunts"

#### 1.1.1 Conduct

**1.1.1.1 Good Conduct:** Those endowed with good conduct are those who have freed themselves of bad conduct, such as, talking advantage of others through use of body and speech; living by talking in a flattering way in order to attract people to offer wealth or trying to win people over by serving them or giving them material rewards.

**1.1.1.2 Bad Conduct:** This includes acquiring one's living by dishonest means (as above) or asking to hold a devotee's baby in one's arms — speaking in a mixture of truth and fun. Also, includes lacking basic manners ,such as, going to pay respect to elder monks. Sitting in an inappropriate place in monastic meetings, sitting blocking the view of more senior monks, swinging one's arms when speaking to more senior monks, wearing shoes when a senior monk is barefoot, barging through a doorway in front of a senior monk or discriminating against junior monks, not asking permission of seniors (or chairman of a meeting) before expressing an opinion, sneaking in to the rooms in devotee's house where one has not been invited, patting children on the head or encouraging devotees to offer particular sorts of food. On the contrary, one should show respect towards senior monks, robbing oneself properly and smartly, taking care of manners and gestures when moving about, with down cast gaze, not looking left and right, avoiding childish mannerisms, demanding little, being steadfast, patient and saying only thing full of self restraint and compassion.

#### 1.1.2 Haunts [*gocarō*]

##### 1.1.2.1 Haunts that are in bounds<sup>3</sup>:

- 1.1.2.1.1 Haunts of abiding [*upanissayagocarō*].
- 1.1.2.1.2 Haunts of maintenance [*ārakkhagocarō*].
- 1.1.2.1.3 Haunts of attentiveness [*upanibandhagocarō*].

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3. Vism. 19

These include people and places that are conducive to one's further study.

#### 1.1.2.1.1. Haunts of Abiding [*upanissayagocaro*]

These include all manner of words that are skilful topics of conversation:

1. Words that lead to contentment with little; non-extravagance, shunning of fame and humility [*appicchakathā*].
2. Words that lead to contentment and non-extravagance [*santuṭṭhikathā*].
3. Words that lead to peacefulness of body and mind [*pavivekkathā*].
4. Words that lead to non-gregariousness [*asaṃsaggakathā*].
5. Words that lead to striving [*viriyārambhakathā*].
6. Words that lead one to abide in self-discipline [*sīlakathā*].
7. Words that lead one to concentrate the mind [*samādhikathā*].
8. Words that lead one to establish yourself in wisdom [*paññākathā*].
9. Words that lead one to liberation from defilement [*vimuttikathā*].
10. Words that lead one to seeing and knowing of liberation from defilements [*vimuttiñāṇa-kathā*].

Those possessing speech of these ten qualities<sup>4</sup> [*kathāvatthu*] are appropriate for a monk to seek out for advice.

**1.1.2.1.2 Haunts of Maintenance** [*āraṃbhagocaro*]: Possessing haunts of maintenance means that one is able to maintain good habits of deportment, such as, walking politely with downcast gaze, not looking at men or women, left or right, not looking up or down.

#### 1.1.2.1.3 Haunts of Attentiveness [*upanibandhagocaro*]:

1. Mindfulness of the body in the body — this means specifically awareness of the inner bodies within the physical body.
2. Mindfulness of feeling in feeling — this means specifically awareness of happiness, suffering or neither happiness nor suffering of inner bodies.
3. Mindfulness of the mind in the mind — this means specifically awareness of states of mind tainted with defilement or otherwise in the various inner bodies.
4. Mindfulness of the Dhamma in the Dhamma — this means specifically seeing the sphere of Dhamma in the various inner bodies.

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4. *Paṭhama Vatthukathā Sutta A.v.129 , Rathavinītha sutta M.i 145ff*



### 1.1.2.2 Wrongful Haunts [agocara]:

It is unsuitable for monks to frequent the following:

1. Prostitutes.
2. Widows.
3. Mature women.
4. Nuns.
5. Transvestites.
6. Alcohol shops.

In present day, wrongful haunts would also include entertainment halls, and merchandise centres.

Good monks should shun wrongful haunts out of fear of bringing a bad reputation upon the monastic community — in the words of a Buddha:

“Like a cow avoids lion-infested country or like a fish never strays in a place of hooks.”<sup>5</sup>

The only reason a monk can go to such places is to perform duties he is invited to do — once the duties are completed he must quickly remove himself.

**1.2 Seeing Danger in Small Things** [aṇumattesu vajjesu bhaya-dassavī] : Not overlooking possible dangers even in small things. Avoiding doing risky things and if one happens to do them unintentionally to set one’s mind to never do them again.

**1.3 Following the Monastic Rules** [samādāya sikkha] : From the time of ordination onwards, it is as if a monk has agreed to keep all the monastic discipline. Thus, from the time he is ordained, he must study the reasons behind each of the items of discipline. As no-one knows better than a monk how strictly he keeps his Precepts, a monk must take his own responsibility looking after the intactness of his Precepts like :

“... a bird guards its eggs, a schomburg deer guards its tail, a mother guards her child or a man with one eye guards his last remaining eye.”<sup>6</sup>

or

“Just as the water fills the sea without spilling over the edges, monks should keep their Precepts with their life.”<sup>7</sup>

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5. In the Footsteps of the Arahants p.179 (thai ed.)

6. Vism.36

7. Pahāṇada Sutta, A.iv.200

## **2. Right Livelihood for a Monk [*āchīvaparisuddhi*] :**

Monks are not allowed to earn a living in same way as a householder but must live from donations of clothing, food, shelter and medicine — the four basic requisites of survival. Monks who are contented with four requisites they have and they receive are possessed of Right Livelihood. Furthermore, they must be endowed with wholesome behaviour of body and speech to ensure they are worthy of such donations.

Monks who lack such Right Livelihood can be divided into those who seek income in one of five unwholesome ways: deceitfulness, soliciting, beating around the bush, shaming and profiteering. To describe each of these malpractices in detail:

### **1. Deceit [*kuhanā*] can be divided into three types :**

- 1.1 A monk pretending to be contented with what they have only to inspire supporters to look for special things to offer them (the supporters thinking it must surely be a special merit to that monk). When it is offered the monk says really he does not want such a thing but is only receiving it to please the supporters — this sort of deceitful behaviour to the end of expecting supporters to offer special things to themselves is False Livelihood.
- 1.2 A monk dropping hints in conversation about knowledge of higher mental states or about their formality with certain monks who have attained higher mental states in order to get supporters to understand that they have attained higher mental states, (a monk is forbidden by the monastic discipline from boasting directly of mental attainments) and offer special requisites.
- 1.3 A monk adopting certain positions or gestures to make supporters misunderstand that they are particularly pious about the monastic discipline and offer a lot of requisites.

### **2. Soliciting [*lapanā*] can be divided into two main types:**

- 2.1 A monk persuading or flattering supporters with the aim of receiving donations (for example, as soon as a supporter arrives in the temple to ask if they have any invitation for him.)
- 2.2 A monk who has the tendency, in the course of conversation, to boast about all the eminent people who are his disciples — or who engages others in conversation with the sole intention of being pleasant so that those people will come again — or who attempts to get them to offer things a second time by talking over and over again about the benefits of the last gift.

Some monks see a layperson eating a certain food and they say, “I’m sure that certain food must be very tasty.” The layman replies, “If you want to know you have to taste it yourself.” The monk says, “But, it would not be appropriate to ask directly!” — so that the layman feels compelled to offer some of the food. Some monks try to show intimacy with a certain family of supporters by picking up their babies or letting their children ride on their shoulders.

**3. Dropping Hints** [*nemittikatā*]: A monk who speaks in an indirect way in order to get people to offer certain things (because ashamed to ask directly) — maybe saying that there is a need for something or what he prefers — even if the supporter guesses what he is talking about and implies refusal or moves off the subject, the monk still continues or tries to solicit that thing from the supporter until eventually they feel forced to offer that thing.

**4. Shaming** [*nippesikata*]: A monk who speaks in a way that is challenging or embarrassing or forceful to get supporters to offer special things — for example, saying, “You can’t expect such and such a family to offer things — they never do” — in a way that makes a listener offer things out of spite instead of wholeheartedly — or a monk who makes comparisons between how generous one another of two houses is, to shame the lesser into offering more. In summary, 1. threatening; 2. slandering; 3. forcing; 4. chasing; 5. mocking; 6. ridiculing; 7. looking down; 8. insulting; 9. blaming; 10. flattering to someone’s face but gossiping maliciously behind their back are all forms of ‘shaming’.

**5. Profiteering** [*nijigimṣanatā*]: A monk who seeks for a profit (using his acquisitions to further his acquisitions). Some monks receive an offering with which they are not contented, but give it away so that they have the excuse to ask for the same thing again in the anticipation of receiving something better and so on until receiving something so expensive that they can be content with it.

Monks who procure donations by any or all of the above methods are no longer within the limits of Right Livelihood. Apart from this, there are more variations of mixing black magic with ways of procuring wealth, which will be discussed under the heading of ‘to be endowed with self-discipline’.

Punishments laid down by the Buddha for offences involving solicitation include:

1. Monks who make false claims to higher mental states are subject to disrobing [*pārājika*].
2. Monks who engage in matchmaking for a living are subject to an initial and subsequent meeting of the monastic community [*saṅghādisesa*].
3. Monks who claiming to a patron of a *kuti* that the co-habitant is an *arahant* cause a serious transgression [*thullaccaya*].
4. A healthy monk who requests special food for himself causes an offence requiring expiation [*pācittiya*].
5. A healthy nun who requests special food for herself commits an offence requiring confession [*pāṭidesanīya*].
6. Any monk who begs food from a donor commits an offence of wrongdoing [*dukkata*].

Monks who disentangle themselves from wrong livelihood can devote their time and effort to striving for enlightenment. The true income of monks comes from almsround where only those who wholehearted want to give support will do so.

Monks are taught to use the four requisites with consideration so as not to become slave to sensual desire:

- Robes [*cīvara*] should be used only to ward off cold, to ward off heat, to ward off the touch of gadflies, mosquitos, wind, sun and reptiles, only for the purpose of covering the shame-causing sexual organs.
- Almsfood [*piṇḍapāta*] should not be used playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for fattening, nor for beautification, only for the continuation and nourishment of the body, for keeping it unharmed, for helping with the Brahma-faring, with the thought, “I shall destroy the old feeling of hunger and not produce a new feeling of overeating.” By the food will therefore come freedom from bodily troubles and living at ease.
- Lodging [*senāsana*] should be used only to ward off cold, to ward off heat, to ward off the touch of gadflies, mosquitos, wind, sun and reptiles, only for the purpose of removing the dangers from weather and for living in seclusion.
- Medicines [*bhesajja*] should be used only to ward off painful feelings that have arisen for the maximum freedom from diseases.

### 3. To Be Endowed with Self-Discipline [*sīla sampanno*]

Self-discipline in Sāmaññaphala Sutta comprises the practise of rules of training on three levels: Elementary Training [*culasīla*], Intermediate Training [*majjhimasīla*] and the Greater Training [*mahāsīla*]:

#### Elementary Training in Self-Discipline [*culasīla*]:

Training in self-discipline at the elementary level means training in speech and action to help monks to give up doing and saying wicked things and to establish their speech and action in wholesomeness, comprises a total of twenty-six rules as follows:

1. Restraint from killing living beings — an moreover to cultivate compassion to all living beings.
2. Restraint from stealing — and moreover to receive only what is given;
3. Following the Brahma-faring — and moreover to refrain from all sexual relations, from householders' behaviour or doing of things opposed to the Brahma-faring.
4. Restraint from telling — and moreover to maintain truthfulness and to speak only sensibly and reasonably.
5. Restraint from divisive speech — but instead to use one's speech to harmonize others.
6. Restraint from insults and swearing — but instead to use only polite, harmless and endearing speech.
7. Restraint from idle gossip — but instead to speak at the right time, truthfully, in letter and in spirit, according to the monastic discipline and the Buddha teaching and speak only useful speech.
8. Restraint from damaging plants for food or shelter.
9. Taking only one meal per day — taking no meal from midday to dawn of the next day.
10. Restraint from dancing, singing, playing musical instruments or sensually provocative entertainment.

11. Restraint from self-ornamentation with flowers, perfume, cosmetics for beauty.
12. Restraint from sleeping on large or luxurious beds not suitable for a monk.
13. Restraint from accepting gold or silver.
14. Restraint from accepting raw food with the thought to prepare one's own food.
15. Restraint from accepting raw meat.
16. Restraint from accepting gifts of princes and princesses.
17. Restraint from accepting gifts of slaves.
18. Restraint from accepting gifts of sheep and goats.
19. Restraint from accepting gifts of chickens and pigs.
20. Restraint from accepting gifts of elephants, buffalos, horses and donkeys.
21. Restraint from accepting land.
22. Restraint from diplomatic bartering (oneself), serving others for wages or engaging in other professions.
23. Restraint from buying and selling.
24. Restraint from swindling by tricks of scales or forgery.
25. Restraint from accepting bribes.
26. Restraint from torturing, killing, stealing, mugging.

These rules of training are designed to protect monks from the suspicion of householders.

### **Intermediate Training in Self-Discipline [*majjhimasīla*]**

Intermediate training in self-discipline is an expansion upon the Elementary Training with inclusion of examples to facilitate understanding, clarifying the accepted scope of monastic behaviour — to produce behaviour worthy of having given up one's lay life to pursue perfection as a monk — in all, a total of ten regulations:

1. Restraint from picking plants (sprouts, plants, fruit, shoots, seeds or crops) for consumption.
2. Restraint from consumption of requisites that have been stockpiled.
3. Restraint from watching sensually provocative entertainment — singing, dancing, music, entertainment, local or native shows, funeral shows, elephant-fighting, horse-racing, buffalo-fighting, goat-fighting, cock-fighting, boxing, wrestling, warring, battlefields or flower gardens (in present day, this would also include watching television shows — which would also be considered sensually provocative).
4. Restraint from gambling — chess, draughts, solitaire, word guessing-games, poker, strip poker, roulette and childrens' games (like whistling through blades of grass, playing with dolls, throwing cartwheels, playing windmills, playing in a sandpit or playing with toy cars, bows and arrows or imitating handicapped people) — in conclusion to avoid gaming, sports and childish play.
5. Restraint from sitting or lying on a large or luxurious bed (that is, an excessively ornamented bed or one with excessive or expensive upholstery or fur coverings).
6. Restraint from bodily ornamentation, such as, bathing in scents, soaking oneself in perfume, washing in mineral water or milk, facial massage, looking at oneself in the mirror, wearing lipstick, eye shadow, wearing flowers, a sword, a dagger, a parasol, bracelets, decorative shoes or unauthorized colours.
7. Restraint from savage or uncultivated talk, such as, idle chatter, or discouraging talk, distracting talk (such as, praising the grandeur of a king, or of robbers, civil servants, politicians, soldiers, military strategies, families, vehicles, homes, villages, people, town and country fashion, men, music, theatre pieces, stars — in summary, monks should not talk outside the scope of monastic duties).

8. Restraint from boastful speech or looking down on others — such as, saying another monk “doesn’t understand an item of Vinaya but I do,” “a monk of that sort of intelligence has no way of understanding such Vinaya,” “that monk has behaved wrongly, but I have behaved correctly,” “my teachings are useful but another monks are not,” “his sermons are useless and cannot compare with my teaching skills,” “before I could never find fault in his teaching, now I have learned so much I can advise him of this and of that”.
9. Restraint from serving anyone as an employee e.g. as an ambassador to the king, being a courier or go-between to take a message, matchmaking, recruiting employees or electioneering.
10. Restraint from deceitful speech, beating about the bush to keep secrets or flattery with the ulterior motive of gains.

### **The Greater Training in Self-Discipline [*mahāsīla*]**

The Greater Training in Self-Discipline incorporates seven rules of monastic conduct to protect monks from earning their livelihood through the Black Arts in seven different ways:

1. Restraint from the livelihood of fortune telling from bodily signs (for example, palm- or sole-reading), interpretation of omens, dreams, portents, organizing ceremonies of fire worship, blood offerings or sacrifices, inspection of the *feng-shui* of a house, being a witch doctor, or procuring protective numbers or written charms [*yantra*] for a house.
2. Restraint from the impure livelihood of interpreting the vital signs of crystals, weapons, arrows, men, women, princes, princesses, slaves, elephants, horses, buffalos, bulls, cows, sheep, goats, chickens, pigeons, monitor lizards, tortoises, moles or deer.
3. Restraint from the impure livelihood of giving prophecies to kings of auspicious times to make military attacks.
4. Restraint from making astrological predictions.
5. Restraint from making predictions concerning rainfall, famine and drought.
6. Restraint from procuring astrologically auspicious dates for marriages, divorces, savings, expenditure, good luck, bad luck, or administering spells for fertility or for recovery of hearing, midwifery, recovery from being are gumentative, hardened cheeks or trembling hands.



7. Restraint from laying ghosts, exorcism, matchmaking, worship of the sun, deities, inviting the return of disembodied souls, turning transvestites back into men, ceremonies to honour land spirit or other quackery.

The Buddha taught that any monk endowed with self-discipline will be happy like the king who has no enemy.

#### 4. Restraint of the Senses [*indriyesu saṃvaro*]

The Buddha clearly advocated that monks must have restraint of the senses [*indriyesu saṃvaro*]:

“And how, great king, is the *bhikkhu* guarded as to the doors of his senses? When, great king, he sees an object with his eye he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for evil states, covetousness and dejection, to flow in over him so long as he dwells unrestrained as to his sense of sight. He keeps watch upon his faculty of sight, and he attains to mastery over it. Similarly, when he hears a sound with his ear, or smells an odour with his nose, or tastes a flavour with his tongue, or feels a touch with his body, or when he cognizes a phenomenon with his mind he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for evil states, covetousness and dejection, to flow in over him so long as he dwells unrestrained as to his mental (representative) faculty. He keeps watch upon his representative faculty, and he attains to mastery over it. And endowed with this self-restraint, so worthy of honour, as regards the senses, he experiences within himself a sense of ease into which no evil state can enter. Thus, is it, great king, that the *bhikkhu* becomes guarded as to the doors of his senses.”

Monks must keep the self-discipline of guarding the senses from inputs that might lead to development of covetousness [*abhijjhā*] or resentment [*domanassa*] by attachment to the sensory input of that object or a part of that object.

Attachment to the sensory objects means judging it or being affected by its external appearance (e.g. by the object’s gender or whether it is beautiful). Seeing such things, one should not elaborate on thoughts stimulated by external appearances — the same goes for external appearances contained in ‘parts’ of an object (e.g. the appearance of someone’s feet, hands, face, way of speaking, laughing, gestures — which might give one to defilements — seeing these things one should not elaborate thoughts on those things.)

Restraining the senses doesn’t mean closing your eyes and plugging your ears because that would be impossible — as soon as one opens one’s eyes, there

are a million things to see — therefore, the Buddha taught us to close our eyes though mindfulness — to guard our thoughts by mindfulness.

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam taught restraint of the senses by keeping the mind at the centre of the body. If mind is not at a standstill at the centre of the body when sensory stimuli come into contact with the mind, we will think that the stimuli are beautiful, pleasureable and so forth — however, if the mind is at a standstill, the mind says, “This is poison to us — it is undesirable” and the tendency will be to filter out that stimulus and to return to stopping the mind, not allowing the mind to be delocated.

In conclusion, ‘restraint according to the patimokkha’ is perfected through *faith*; ‘restraint of the sense-doors’ is perfected through *mindfulness*; ‘purity of livelihood’ is perfected through *striving*, and; ‘using the requisites with consideration’ is perfected through *wisdom*.

## 5. Being Mindful and Self-Possessed [*sati-sampajañña samannāgato*]

The Buddha clearly advocated that monks must not forget themselves and should, on the contrary, be mindful [*sati*] and self-possessed [*sampajañña*]:

“And how, great king, is the *bhikkhu* mindful and self-possessed? In this matter, the *bhikkhu* in going forth or in coming back keeps clearly before his mind’s eye all that is wrapped up therein: the immediate object of the act itself, its ethical significance, whether or not it is conducive to the high aim set before him, and the real facts underlying the mere phenomenon of the outward act. So, also in looking forward, or in looking round; in stretching forth his arm, or in drawing it in again; in eating or drinking, in masticating or swallowing, in obeying the calls of nature, in going or standing or sitting, in sleeping or waking, in speaking or in being still, he keeps himself aware of all it really means. Thus, is it that the *bhikkhu* becomes mindful and self-possessed.”

**Mindfulness:** Mindfulness means the state of mind is which you can remember things before they need to be done — such as, remembering when it’s time for meditation, remembering to prepare to go to court or remembering when it’s time to give a patient their medicine. Mindfulness is a virtue which is very beneficial — because it helps us to avoid all possible problems that arise from forgetfulness. Forgetting certain appointments (such as, appearing in court) might have very serious consequences like being put in prison. Forgetting to administer someone’s medicine might cause that person death. A monk who forgets to go to the fortnightly ceremony for the revision of the monastic code of discipline will have to be punished.

**Self-Possession:** Self-possession, sometimes known as ‘clear comprehension’, is knowing what you are saying *as* you do something. Mindfulness arises *before* you do something. Self-possession can be analyzed into four different types:

1. Awareness of benefit [*sātthaka sampajañña*]: This is the awareness of whether what we are doing is useful or not.
2. Awareness of appropriateness [*sappāya sampajañña*]: This is the awareness of whether what we are doing is appropriate or not.
3. Awareness of implicit happiness [*gocara sampajañña*]: This is the awareness of how what one is doing is suffering or happiness.
4. Awareness of gullibility [*asammoha sampajañña*]: This is the awareness of whether what one is doing is misunderstood or subject to gullibility or not.

Monks must do all things with mindfulness and self-possession. Mistakes a monk makes are not just bad for himself, but for the whole of the monastic community in the eyes of public. A person who has fallen in love with a diamond necklace in a shop window, but cannot afford it and walks home thinking of nothing, but the necklace and how to obtain it might have a car accident as they cross the road. Without these two qualities, it is hard for a monk to achieve success in the of the forgoing forms of training such as ‘restraint of senses’.

## 6. Contentment [*santuttho*]

The Buddha asked King Ajatasattu:

“And how, great king, is the bhikkhu content? The bhikkhu is satisfied with sufficient robes to cover his body, with sufficient food to keep him alive. Wherever he may go these he takes with him as he goes — just as a bird with his wings, wherever he may fly. So, the bhikkhu lives content.”

Contentment has two aspects: 1) Contentment with what one has [*santosa*],  
2) Having few needs [*appiccha*]

Many people confuse these two terms — they understand that you should want only a little therefore Buddhism is blamed for standing in the way of material progress.

To clarify this point, Buddhists would say that all of the following are good people: parents who love their children; a husband who loves his wife; monks who love their temple; citizens who love their country, and; spiritual people who

love their religion. Loving something you already have is ‘contentment’. Loving our possessions or our institution will lead us to protect, maintain and lead that thing towards progress. Thus, ‘contentment’ should lead one to progress.

Non-contentment leads to decline — for example, a husband who has a wife but doesn’t love her, loving someone else instead; a citizen who doesn’t have any pride for his country and serves other countries instead, or; a person who has a religion, but doesn’t love, protect or maintain it — not studying what it really teaches, but favours those who spread superstitions.

The Buddha named ‘contentment’ as one of the ‘virtues that can be a refuge’ [*nāthakaraṇadhamma*] because properly practised, it should arouse one to diligence rather than to look down on oneself — to have confidence in oneself — to protect, maintain oneself by not doing immoral things.

In practice, for monks contentment has three components:

1. Contentment with what you receive [*yathālābha santosa*]: Not being disappointed with what you receive or taking more interest in something else you have not been offered.
2. Contentment with what strengths you have [*yathābala santosa*]: This means being content with yourself as you are strength depending on your health, physical condition — not being miserly over things that are beyond one’s strength to use or using them to the determine of one’s health.
3. Contentment with the appropriate [*yathāsāruppa santosa*]: This means being content with what is appropriate for one’s status, position, walk of life and aim in life. A monks should be content with what is appropriate to his monastic status. If he receives something inappropriate, then he should be quick to give it to whom it is appropriate.

These three forms of contentment can be applied to each of the four monk’s requisites to give a total of twelve forms of contentment which are important for a monk, with detail as follows:

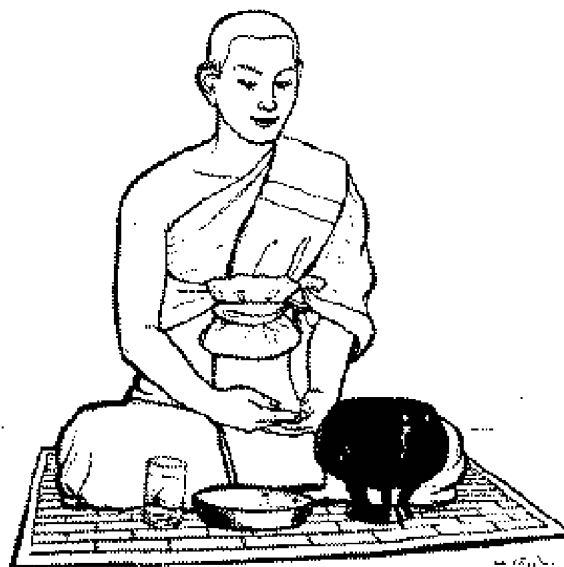
1. Contentment with robes received: Being contented with; however, much or whatever sort of robe is offered by supporters — irrespective of whether the robes are good or bad — the monks should use only that robe and no other without hankering after other robes. Even if, at a later date, better robes are offered, the monk should refuse them.

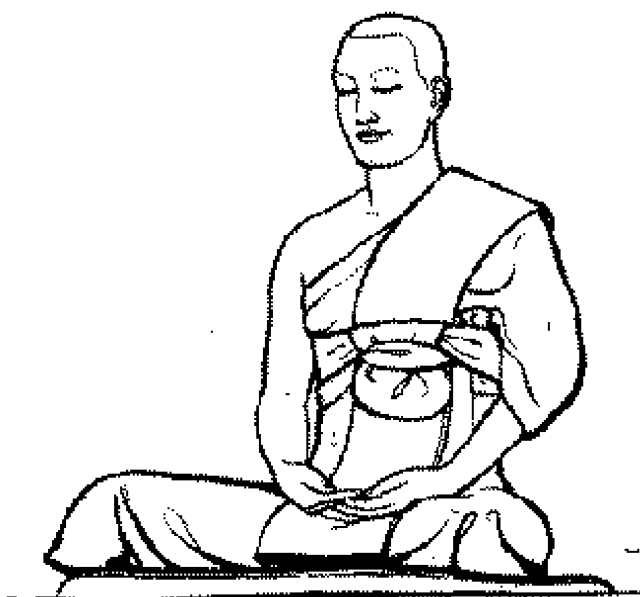
2. Contentment with robes appropriate to one's strength : Supposing a monk is weak in health or sick or frail with age, and he knows that it is inconvenient to wear a heavy robe — he should be contented to exchange robes with a fellow monk who has a lighter one and should be contented with that light robe from then on.
3. Contentment with robes appropriate to one's status : Supposing a young monk receives robes or a bowl which are expensive or of good quality — he should realize that that requisite is not appropriate for his status and offer it to an elder monk who has been ordained for a long time, is one who is learned [*bahusūta*], a monk who is ill, or receives few offerings, and offer it to a monk more fit to receive it, not keeping it for his own use but exchanging it for the old robes of an elder monk.
4. Contentment with almsfood received: Being contented with; however, much or whatever sort of almsfood is offered by supporters — irrespective of whether it is good food or bad — the monk should eat only that food and no other, without hankering after other food. Even if, at a later date, better food is offered, the monk should refuse it.
5. Contentment with almsfood appropriate to one's strengths: Supposing a monk knows that certain foods will make him ill, he should be content to give it to fellow monks, being contented to eat only almsfood which is appropriate to maintaining his health, maybe food obtained from fellow monks who have no preference — and having obtained it, should be contented to continue with his monastic practice.
6. Contentment with almsfood appropriate to one's status: Supposing a monk receives a large quantity of delicacies, he should share it with an elder monk or one who is learned, a monk who receives few offerings or who is ill — and should himself eat only what is left over.
7. Contentment with accommodation and bedding received: Being contented with; however, much or whatever sort of accommodation is received, even if it is only a simple, inexpensive straw mat of low quality, then, a monk should be contented with it .
8. Contentment with accommodation or bedding appropriate to one's strength: A monk should be contented with accommodation or bedding that is amenable to himself. Monks who know that accommodation or bedding received will make him ill, should exchange with that of another monk who has no preference.

9. Contentment with accommodation or bedding appropriate to one's status:  
If a young monk should receive accommodation or bedding which is of high quality, such as, a cave or a pavillion, he should give it up to an elder monk, or one who is learned, a monk who receives few offerings, or who is ill. A monk should be content with accommodation appropriate to his status — rather than one which makes one sleepy, or reminds one of one's former laylife. One should be content to stay in a place which doesn't cause one sleepiness or preoccupation with sensuality [*kāma vitakka*].
10. Contentment with medicine and medical care received: Being contented with; however, much or whatever sort of medicine or medical care is received — irrespective of whether it is good medicine or bad, without hankering after better medicine. Even if, at a later date, better medicine is offered, the monk should refuse it.
11. Contentment with medicine and medical care appropriate to one's strength: a monk should be contented with medicine that is amenable to himself. If as monk needs ghee as a medicine, but is offered sugar-cane juice, he should be contented to exchange with a monk who has no medical preference.
12. Contentment with medicine and medical care appropriate to one's status: Supposing a young monk receives medicine of good quality, such as, ghee, honey or sugar-cane juice — he should be contented to give it up to an elder monk, a learned monk, a monk who receives few offerings or who is ill.

Thus, 'contentment' is different from 'contentment with little' — contentment has no limit on the amount. It is contentment with how much one receives. Contentment leads to peace of mind. Non-contentment leads to anxiety.

From this explanation of the lower fruits of seeing a monk, King Ajātasattu, was able to conclude that if a monk in Buddhism is a true monk, he ordains in order to pull himself out of the sensual desire, follow the Brahma-faring and to accrue merit and perfections. Those who train themselves in strict accordance with the six practices mentioned above will set the conditions by which the lower fruits of being a true monk can be realized.





– CHAPTER SEVEN –

***Intermediate Fruits  
of True Monkhood***



The medium fruits of monkhood come from the practice of meditation. A monk who has acquired: self-discipline, restraint of the senses, mindfulness and self-possession and contentment, should:

“Choose some lonely spot where he can rest on his way — in the woods, at the foot of a tree, on a hill side, in a mountain glen, in a rocky cave, in a cemetery or on a heap of straw in the open field. Returning there after his round for alms he seats himself, when his meal is done, cross-legged, keeping his body erect, and his intelligence alert, intent.”

“Putting away all hankering after the world, he purifies his mind of sense desires. Putting away the corrupting wish to injure, he remains with a mind free from ill will, and purifies his mind of malevolence. Putting away torpor of heart and mind, keeping his perception bright, and being mindful and self-possessed, he purifies his mind of weakness and of sloth. Putting away flurry and worry, he remains free from fretfulness, and with mind serene, he purifies himself of irritability and absent-mindedness. Putting away wavering, he remains as one who has passed beyond perplexity; and no longer in suspense as to what is good, he purifies his mind of doubt.”

You can see that for all a *bhikkhu*’s good conduct if he is unable to overcome the five hindrances, he will be unable to bring his mind to concentration. Once one has overcome the five hindrances, the mind will automatically remove itself from the influence of object-side sensuality: images , sounds, smells, taste and touch [*vatthukāma*] and from mind-side sensuality: desire and revulsion for those things [*kilesakāma*] from unwholesome intentions, such as, covetousness [*abhiṭṭhā*] and resentment [*domanassa*] which may influence the mind to think to do evil.

### **The Five Hindrances [*nīvaraṇa*]**

Hindrances are subtle defilements that obstruct the mind, withholding it from wholesome states — keeping the mind shifting instead of focusing or coming to a standstill. There are a total of five hindrances:

1. **Sense-Desire** [*kāmachanda*]: This is a hindrance of attachment to sensepleasure with consequent stirring up of emotions. The Buddha compared sense-desire to debt. If you are in debt to someone you have to tolerate any sort of abuse from them in relation to returning the money. Once we are no longer in debt we have freedom and contentment — similarly, those who are able to escape the clutches of sense-desire have the same joy and pleasure;
2. **Illwill** [*byāpāda*]: Illwill is a hindrance which occurs when the mind is clouded by our dislike of things or lack of contentment with things — resulting in anger, vengefulness and hatred. Such a feeling causes the mind to ‘move’

instead of being still. The Buddha, thus, compared anger to an ‘illness’. Just as a patient must tolerate the bitter medicine, a monk whose mind is angry must tolerate the advice of his preceptor. Those who have to force themselves to listen to the teaching of the preceptor who are still under the influence of their illwill will never manage (in this way) to discover the happiness rising from the absorptions.

**3. Sloth and Torpor** [*thīna-middha*]: This hindrance incorporates sleepiness, dullness and lack of enthusiasm, lack of encouragement and lack of hope about life. Those still in the clutches of such a hindrance will lack the energy and fortitude to train themselves. The Buddha compared sleepiness to being locked up in prison because in prison you lack the opportunity to get cheered up by going to see anything entertaining — in the same way, those subject to sleepiness or depression lose their opportunity to taste the joy of Dhamma.

**4. Absent-Mindedness** [*uddhacca-kukkucca*]: This hindrance comprises absent-mindedness and irritation which comes from letting the mind be affected by things that come into contact with it and elaborating on these things. Buddha taught that being absent-minded is like being a slave. Even if you go to enjoy yourself you have to return early in case you are punished by your master. Monks who have uncertainty about whether their discipline is pure or not should be quick to go and visit their preceptor to settle uncertainties or else will be fruitless in their search for solitude.

**5. Doubt** [*vicikicchā*]: This hindrance incorporates doubts and hesitation. For as long as doubts and questions still persist in mind we will be unable to achieve peace of mind — like a traveller loaded with money travelling long distance in remote area. If he were to stop half way and worry about robbers and not be able to decide whether to go on or turn back, just as these things hinder his journey, doubts are a hindrances to the progress of meditation to noble attainment.

### Definition of ‘Meditation’

From the explanation of the hindrances above, it can be seen that the presence of even a single hindrance can stop ‘meditation’ from arising. Thus, we can say that ‘meditation’ is:

1. The absence of the Five Hindrances.
2. The steadfast establishment of the mind in a continuous state of one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].
3. The stopping of the mind without further movement.

4. The settling of the mind to continuous peace and unity at the centre of the body, exhibiting only purity, radiance, brightness and giving rise simultaneously to encouragement, morale, wisdom and happiness.

### Characteristics of the Mind

Our mind has the characteristics of being clear, sphere shaped and invisible to the naked eye but it is visible to meditators who have attained the Dhammakāya and who are adept in the use of the Dhammakāya. Such people can even observe the minds of others. The mind normally has a diameter of about ten millimetres and is situated at the centre of the body. The mind is in the form of four concentric spheres. The sphere of perception, is the outermost. It encloses the sphere of sensory registration (memory), sphere of central processing (thought) and the sphere of cognition (knowing).

***Sphere of Perception:*** This outermost sphere has the function of receiving sensory data from eyes, ears, nose, taste buds or touch or (from the other side) the mental objects.

***Sphere of Sensory Registration:*** This sphere is enclosed within the sphere of perception. It is slightly clearer and has the function of filtering the useful things from the un-useful we have perceived.

***Sphere of Central Processing:*** This sphere is enclosed within the sphere of sensory registration. It is slightly clearer and has the function of considering information.

***Sphere of Cognition:*** This is the innermost area of the mind which has the function of giving meaning to the stimuli that have been picked up by the mind.

To think about the structure of the mind in an easier way, you might compare the sphere of perception to a coconut husk, the sphere of sensory-registration to the outer coconut shell, the sphere of central-processing to the inner coconut shell and the sphere of cognition to the coconut flesh.

All four spheres are enclosed within the sphere of Dhamma of the human (physical) body at the level of the body's seventh base of the mind.

### A Complete Definition of Meditation

A complete definition of meditation means that all four spheres of the mind, whether they be perception, sensory-registration, central-processing or cognition are brought to a standstill at the same point in the centre of the sphere of dhamma of the human physical body (as the above). Once all spheres are united. The five hindrances can no longer take any effect on the mind. Consequently: 1. The mind is steadfast in a single state of mind; 2. the mind is established in a single state;

3. the mind has no further movement.

Thus, meditation is ‘a state of freedom from the hindrances, where the mind is focused at a single point, in a single state, with no further movement, manifesting a bright clear sphere of purity at the centre of the body which has the potential for further cultivation towards states of enlightenment.’

### The Absorptions

The absorptions are states of refinement of the mind where meditation is well established. When monks are able to pacify the mind, they will be able to enter upon the various absorptions [jhāna]:

“ Just so the bhikkhu, so long as these five hindrances are not put away within him, looks upon himself as in debt, diseased, in prison, in slavery, lost on a desert road. But, when these five hindrances have been put away within him, he looks upon himself as freed from debt, rid of disease, out of jail, a free man, and secure; and gladness springs up within him on his realizing that, and joy arises to him, gladdened as he is, and so rejoicing all his body becomes at ease, and being at ease he is filled with a sense of peace, and in that peace his heart is stayed.

Then estranged from desires, aloof from evil dispositions, he enters into and remains in the first absorption — a state of joy and ease born of detachment, reasoning and investigation going on the while.

His very body does he so pervade, drench, permeate and suffuse with the joy and ease born of detachment, that there is no spot in his whole frame not suffused therewith.

Just as, great king, a skilful bathman or his apprentice will scatter perfumed soap powder in a metal basin and then besprinkling it with water, drop by drop, will so knead it together that the ball of lather, taking up the moisture, is drenched with it, pervaded by it, permeated by it within and without, and there is no leakage possible.”

“ This, great king, is an immediate fruit of true monkhood, visible in this world, higher and sweeter than the last.”

“ Then further, great king, the *bhikkhu*, suppressing all reasoning and investigation, enters into and remains in the second absorption, a state of joy and ease, born of the serenity of concentration, when no reasoning or investigation goes on — a state of elevation of mind, a tranquillization of

the heart within. And he so pervades, drenches, permeates and suffuses with the joy and ease born of concentration, his whole body that there is no place in his body they do not reach.”

“ Just as if there were a deep pool, with water welling up into it from a spring beneath, and with no inlet from the east or west, from the north or south, and the heavenly one should not from time to time send down showers of rain upon it. Still the current of cool waters rising up from that spring would pervade, fill, permeate and suffuse the pool with cool waters, and there would be no part of the pool unreached by it.”

“ This, great king, is an immediate fruit of true monkhood, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

“ Then further, great king, the *bhikkhu*, holding aloof from joy, becomes equable; and mindful and self-possessed, he experiences in his body that ease which the *arahats* talk of when they say: “The man serene and self-possessed is well at ease,” and so he enters into and abides in the third absorption. And he so pervades, drenches, permeates and suffuses with that ease that has no joy with it, his whole body that there is no place in his body it does not reach.”

“ Just as, great king, when in a lotus tank the several lotus flowers, red or white or blue, born in the water, grown up in the water, not rising up above the surface of the water, drawing up nourishment from the depths of the water, are so pervaded, drenched, permeated and suffused from their very tips down to their roots with its cool moisture that there is no place in the whole plant, whether of the red lotus, or of the white, or of the blue, which it does not reach. This is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

“ Men further, great king, the *bhikkhu*, by the putting away alike of well-being and of suffering, by the passing away alike of any elation, any dejection, he had previously felt, enters into and abides in the fourth absorption, a state of pure self-possession and equanimity, without suffering and without well being. He sits there so suffusing even his body with that sense of purification, of translucence of heart, that there is no place in his whole body which it does not reach.”

“ Just as if a man were sitting so wrapped from head to foot in a clean white robe, that there were no place in his whole body not in contact with the clean white robe — just so does the *bhikkhu* sit there, so suffusing even his body with that sense of purification, of translucence of heart, that there is no place in his whole body which it does not reach.”

“ This great king is an immediate fruit of true monkhood, visible in this world, higher and sweeter than the last.”

Thus, we can see that anyone who can dispose of the five hindrances can enter upon “the first absorption” — and be characterized by the arising of five factors: initial application of mind [*vitakka*], continued application of mind [*vicāra*], joy [*pīti*], happiness [*sukha*], one-pointedness [*ekaggatā*].

If one practice the mind further, the mind will be further purified, initial application of mind and continued application of mind will fall away and “the second absorption“ will be attained. (joy, happiness and one-pointedness remain).

Application	Initial Application of Mind [ <i>vitakka</i> ]	Continued Application of Mind [ <i>vicāra</i> ]	Joy [ <i>pīti</i> ]	Happiness [ <i>sukha</i> ]	Equanimity [ <i>upekkha</i> ]	One-Pointedness [ <i>ekaggatā</i> ]
1 <sup>st</sup> Absorption	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
2 <sup>nd</sup> Absorption	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
3 <sup>rd</sup> Absorption	-	-	-	✓	-	✓
4 <sup>th</sup> Absorption	-	-	-	-	✓	✓

✓ = Attainment of Main's Feeling

If one practise the mind further, joy will fall away leaving only happiness and one-pointedness at the level of the third absorption.

If one practise further, happiness will fall away leaving only equanimity [*upekkhā*] and one-pointedness.

## Types of Meditation

The attainment of the Four Absorptions (Jhanas), which the Lord Buddha explained to King Ajatasattu, is all fruits of monastic practice.

**Meditation in Buddhism can be divided into two levels.**

**1. Lower Meditation:** is the attainment of a mind which is not influenced by the six forms of sensory stimuli (form, sound, scent, taste, touch, and mind objects). Therefore, the five hindrances are absent from the mind and the mind can be unified into a bright sphere as taught by the Lord Buddha mentioned earlier in this chapter. The meditative practice which unifies the mind is called Lower Meditation. It has not yet penetrated the ultimate depth.

**2. Higher Meditation:** is the state of meditation where the ultimate depth has been penetrated. This state of meditation is experienced by individuals who have attained the Four Absorptions respectively.

### **Meditation in Practice**

For the purpose of explaining both types of meditation more clearly, we will cite what Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) or Luang Phaw Wat Paknam, the Great Abbot of Wat Paknam had taught on the subject.

**Lower meditation in practice** means not letting our mind come under any extraneous influence › to give an example, if at the time of going to bed, sensory stimuli from any of the six senses (form, sound, scent, taste, touch, mind objects) is affecting the mind and we cannot shake off its influence, we will not be able to sleep all night because we are dominated by the stimuli. It is only after our mind can shake off its influence that we can fall asleep.

This is in the same manner as when we practice meditation. If our mind is affected by any of the sensory stimuli, our mind will be swayed by it. We must shake off its influence so that the mind and the stimuli can be disconnected just like the white and the yolk of an egg can remain separate although they are contained in the same eggshell. When the mind and the influence from the sensory stimuli are disconnected, the mind can become still and the Dhamma Sphere within can then be experienced.

A completely still mind, devoid of any sensory stimuli, is said to be in a unified state. This state is indeed what characterizes ‘Lower Meditation in practice’ as taught in Buddhism.

**Higher meditation in practice** means the meditative states of the Jhana Absorptions. If the practitioner rests his mind at the center of the sphere of cognition until it comes to a standstill, he will enter upon ‘Higher Meditation’. This sphere of absorption is one span in size, clear as glass and has the astral body seated at its center, which is the consummation of the first absorption. Initially, the mind wonders what this never-seen- before form is and goes deeper into the absorption. The mind observes the astral body thoroughly and it feels joy. Once joy is experienced to the fullest extent, the mind becomes still and detachment is experienced.

This state of mind where the astral body is in meditative absorption is called ‘Higher Meditation in practice’ at the level of the First Absorption.

The astral body thinks this First Absorption to be quite crude still and wants to elevate it so the astral body’s mind expands from the First Absorption to stay still in the astral body’s Dhamma Sphere. As the astral body’s mind stays more and more still and more and more quiet, a new sphere one span in size appears.

This new sphere represents the Second Absorption. Then, the celestial body appears. Employing this crude celestial body, the refined celestial body which lies within the crude celestial body goes into meditative absorption in the same manner that the astral body went into the First Absorption. This time the refined celestial body bypasses the feeling of wonder and goes directly into joy. At this point, the joy is greater, cleaner and clearer than what was experienced by the astral body. Having experienced joy to the fullest extent, the mind of the refined celestial body is filled with detachment.

The refined celestial body thinks that there is something more elevated than the Second Jhana, so the mind of the refined celestial body expands from the Second Absorption to stop still in the middle of his Dhamma Sphere. At the right condition, a new sphere occurs. It is the same size as the first two spheres but is clearer and more magnificent. This sphere is called the Third Absorption and the Brahma being body is seated in its middle. Employing this Brahma being body, the refined Brahma being body goes into meditative absorption in the middle of the Third Absorption Sphere. Now, the refined Brahma being body bypasses the feeling of joy. There are only happiness and detachment. The mind is immersed in the happiness and detachment that are equally full. Once the happiness and detachment are experienced to the fullest extent, the refined Brahma being body thinks that there is still something more elevated.

The mind of the refined Brahma being body expands beyond the Third Absorption and keeps still within his cognitive sphere. At the right condition, a new sphere appears. This fourth sphere is the Fourth Absorption within which sits the Non-Form Brahma being body. Employing the Non-Form Brahma being body, the refined Non-Form Brahma being body enters the Fourth Absorption. Deeper and deeper into the Fourth Absorption, happiness is abandoned and only equanimity remains. The mindfulness is pure.

All Four Absorptions or the four levels of Jhanas are meditative absorptions belonging to the Three Spheres (the Sense Sphere, the Form Sphere, and the Non-Form Sphere). Sometimes they are referred to as the Four Form Absorptions and are considered Higher Meditation.

These practices allow the truth about reality to be experienced and are part of the Penetration (Pativedha).

The attainment of the Jhanas and the interior bodies are all part of the Penetration.

The Penetration in the First Absorption is the astral body.

The Penetration in the Second Absorption is the celestial and refined celestial bodies.

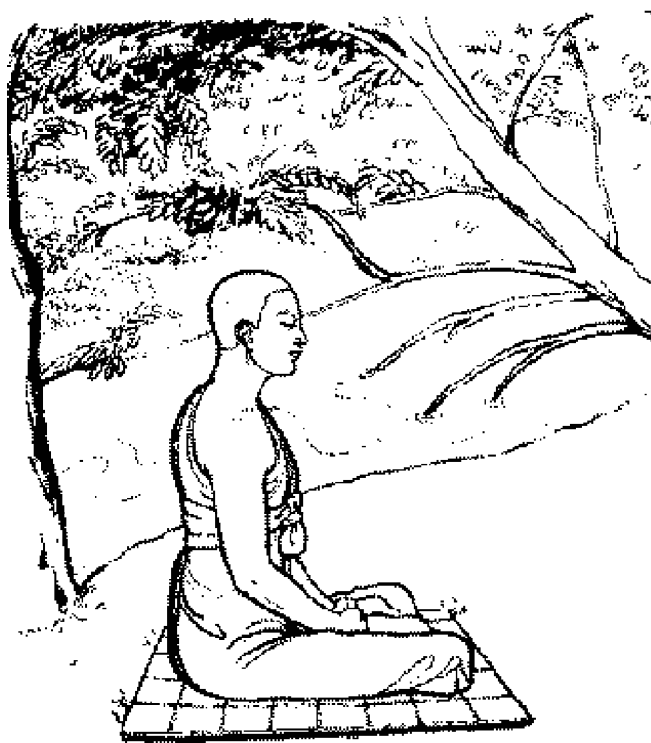


The Penetration in the Third Absorption is the Form and refined Form Brahma being bodies.

The Penetration in the Fourth Absorption is the Non-Form and refined Non-Form Brahma being bodies.

Once the Form Jhanas have been attained, the mind of the refined Form Brahma being body is kept still at the center of his Dhamma Sphere from which the refined Non-Form Brahma being body rises and is ready to enter into the Non-Form Jhanas. These include the Akasanancayatana Jhana, the Vinnanancayatana Jhana, the Akincannayatana Jhana, and the Nevasannanasannayatana Jhana. The refined Non-Form Brahma being body is employed to attain both the Form and Non-Form Jhanas.

Higher Meditation comes from the practice of meditation and is considered the fruits of true monkhood at the medium level.



– CHAPTER EIGHT –

***Higher Fruits  
of True Monkhhood***

Just listening to the explanation and metaphors of the Buddha impressed King Ajātasattu in a way he had never experienced when listening to the rhetoric of the six other contemporary teachers. From this point onwards, the Buddha was to reveal the highest and most esoteric fruits of being a monk. The Eightfold Supra-normal knowledge that leads to the Path and fruit of Nirvana.

### Attaining the Path and Fruit of Nirvana

The most fundamental requirement for attaining The Path and Fruit of Nirvana is to be able to train one's mind in meditation — namely by making the centre of the body, the permanent location of the mind. Once one has trained the mind to become peaceful and unified in a single harmonized awareness, the mind will be pure, radiant and clear continuously until it becomes unified as a clear bright sphere at the centre of the body. The appearance of this sphere demonstrates that defilements of the medium level — the Five Hindrances — have completely disappeared from the mind allowing the mind to be drawn inwards, allowing the meditator to attain each of the Four Absorptions in sequence as already explained in Chapter 7.

### Higher Fruit # 1 : Insight Knowledge

If after attaining the Four Absorptions, the meditator is able further to maintain his mind at a standstill, the mind will become yet more clear and bright breaking free of both defilements [*kilesa*] and subtle defilements [*upakilesa*]<sup>1</sup> allowing the mind to enter upon insight knowledge [*ñāṇa*] of the initial form i.e. *ñāṇadassana* — the knowledge which will arise spontaneously in the mind that “this body of ours that was given to us by our parents is made up of form [*rūpa*] and consciousness [*viññāṇa*]. The material part of our body is made up of the four great elements [*mahābhūta*] earth, water, wind and fire. The mind, by contrast, consists of consciousness. We realize that the human body that is brought up on food is something impermanent and is subject to old age and sickness. Although we can try to take good care of our health, in the end, we must die and the physical and non-physical parts of our being must separate and this is the nature of the world:

“With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to that insight that comes from knowledge. He grasps the fact:

“This body of mine has form, it is built up of the four elements, it springs from father and mother, it is continually renewed by so much boiled rice and juicy foods, its very nature is impermanence, it is subject to erosion,

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1. *upakilesa* : The sixteen subtle defilements [*upakilesa*] comprise: 1. covetousness [*abijjhāvisama lobha*]; 2. vengefulness [*byāpāda*]; 3. anger [*kodha*]; 4. grudge or spite [*upanāha*]; 5. denigration [*maṅgalā*]; 6. envious rivalry [*palāsa*]; 7. jealousy [*issā*]; 8. stinginess [*macchāriya*]; 9. deceit [*māyā*]; 10. hypocrisy [*sātheyya*]; 11. obstinacy [*thambha*]; 12. contentiousness [*sārambha*]; 13. conceit [*māna*]; 14. conceit [*atimāna*]; 15. vanity [*mada*]; 16. recklessness [*pamāda*] (see subtle defilements)

abrasion, dissolution, and disintegration; ” so also consciousness is bound up with it and depends on it.”

Sometimes seeing and knowing [*ñāṇadassana*] is referred to as insightful knowing [*vipassanādasana*]. It is knowledge by which one sees the arising and falling away relating to one’s own body and that one’s body is indeed frightening and disadvantageous — and doing such we become disenchanted with the body. When disenchanted, we have neither pleasure nor displeasure with the body which is to see the four noble truths at the level of one’s own body — suffering, cause of suffering, and path to the cessation of suffering. Seeing and knowing is the state of mind of the initial attainment of Dhammakāya i.e. Dhammakāya Gotrabhū which is a step lower than stream-entry. Therefore, for a person to attain ‘seeing and knowing’ is to attain Dhammakāya Gotrabhū.

### Higher Fruit # 2 : Mental Powers

When the meditator has attained insightful knowledge, if he is still able to keep his mind at a standstill, the mind will become yet purer enabling the formation of mental powers allowing many ‘bodies ’ to be produced (that is to see many inner bodies from the astral to the angelic, form-Brahma, formless-Brahma and Dhamma body) in accordance with the words of the Buddha:

“With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to the calling up of a mental image. He calls up from this body another body, having form, made of mind, having all his own bodies’ limbs and parts, not deprived of any organ.”

“Just as if a man were to pull out a reed from its sheath. He would know: This is the reed, this the sheath. The reed is one thing, the sheath another. It is from the sheath that the reed has been drawn forth.”

“Similarly were he to take a snake out of its slough, or draw a sword from its scabbard.”

“This, great king, is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this life, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

We see that the fruit of being a monk at the second level after insightful knowledge is mental powers [*manoma-yiddhi*]. At this point, we have to consider our aim in training ourselves in meditation — to elevate ourselves to

purity or to fall short at simply attaining mental powers. Mental power should be recognized as nothing more than a spin-off from our pursuit of purity.

### **Higher Fruit # 3 : Miraculous Powers**

When the meditator has attained mental powers if he is still able to keep his mind at a standstill, the mind will become yet purer enabling the formation of miraculous power [*iddhividhi*].

“With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to the modes of marvellous power. He enjoys the marvelous power in its various modes — being one he becomes many, or having become many becomes one again; he becomes visible or invisible; he goes, feeling no obstruction, to the further side of a wall, or rampart, or hill, as if through air; he penetrates up and down through solid ground, as if through water; he walks on water without breaking through, as if on solid ground; he travels cross-legged in the sky, like birds on the wing; even the moon and the sun, potent and mighty as they are, he touches and feels with his hand; he reaches in the body even up to the heaven of Brahma.”

“Just as a clever potter or his apprentice could make, could succeed in getting out of properly prepared clay, absolutely any shape of vessel he wanted to have, or an ivory carver out of ivory, or a goldsmith out of gold. This, great king, is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

### **Higher Fruit # 4 : Angelic Ear**

When the meditator has attained miraculous power if he is still able to keep his mind at a standstill, the mind will become yet purer enabling the attainment of supra-normal hearing [*dibbasota*] as in the words of the Buddha:

“With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, he applies and bends his mind to supra-normal hearing, by means of which, far surpassing as it does normal hearing, he hears sounds both human and celestial, far and near.”

“Just as if a man were on the high road and were to hear the sound of a kettle drum, or a tenor-drum, or the sound of trumpets and side-drums, he would know:”

This is the sound of a kettledrum, this is the sound of a tenor-drum, this of trumpets and side-drums. “This is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this life, and higher and sweeter than the last.

## Higher Fruit # 5 : Mind Reading

If after attaining supra-normal hearing, the meditator is able further to maintain his mind at a standstill, the mind will become yet clearer and brighter, breaking free of defilements giving the mind greater efficiency by which he can know the thoughts of other people, knowing the level of progress in meditation of another person, knowing whether a person's mind is concentrated and whether someone else has yet become enlightened as shown in the Ālavaka Sutta:

“Once the ogre [*yakkha*] Ālavaka went for audience with the Lord Buddha to ask questions. The ogre thought to himself, “if the Buddha can't answer my questions, I will pick him up and throw him from this side of the ocean to the other.” When the ogre arrived at the place of residence of the Buddha, it made various threatening gestures to make the Buddha come out to see him. The Buddha knew what Ālavaka was going to say even before he had opened his mouth. The Buddha said, why are you trying to call the Tathāgatha? I already know that you intend to throw me from this side of the ocean to the other — and continued by telling the ogre the question he had on his mind. He told the ogre that the origin of the question was from the ogre's father and told him to tell his father that the answer was to be found from Kassapa Buddha.”

This is an illustration of the ability to read the minds of others [*cetopariyayañāṇa*] of the Lord Buddha. The Buddha explained to King Ajātasattu that:

“With his heart thus serene, he directs and bends his mind to the understanding of the mind. Having understood his own mind, he is able to understand the minds of other beings, of other men. He is, thus, able to discern: the passionate mind, the calm mind, the angry mind, the peaceful mind, dull mind, the alert mind, attentive mind, the wandering mind, broad mind, the narrow mind, the mean mind, the lofty mind, the steadfast mind, the wavering mind, free mind, and the enslaved mind. He recognizes each for what it is.”

“Just as a woman or a man, or a lad, young and smart, considering carefully the reflection of his own face in a bright and brilliant mirror or in a vessel of clear water would, if it had a mole on it, know that it had, and if not, would know that, too.”

“This is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

### Higher Fruit # 6 : Recollection of One's Previous Lives

If after attaining the ability to read the minds of others, the meditator is further able to maintain his mind at a standstill, the mind becomes yet clearer and brighter, breaking free of defilements allowing the meditator to recollect previous lives [*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*] — seeing which birth he took in previous lifetimes and his previous mode of life as in the words of the Buddha:

“With his heart thus serene, he directs and bends his mind to the knowledge of the memory of his previous existences. He recalls to mind his various existences in days gone by — one birth, or two or three, or ten or twenty, or a thousand or a hundred thousand births, through many ages of world dissolution, many ages of world evolution.”

“In such a place such was my name, such my family, such my caste, such my food, such my experience of discomfort or of ease, and such the limits of my life. When I passed away from that state, I took form again in such a place. There I had such and such a name, and family, and caste, and food, and experience of suffering or of well-being, such was the length of my life. When I passed away from that state I took form again here.”

“Thus, he calls to mind his former existences in all their circumstances.”

Just as if a man were to go from his own to another village, and from that one to another, and from that one should return home. Then, he would know: “From my own village, I came to that other one. There I stood in such and such a way, sat, spoke, and held my peace. From there I came to another village; and there I stood in such and such a way, sat, spoke, and held my peace. Now, from that other village, I have returned back again home.”

“This is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last.”

This is knowledge that allows one to recollect previous existences. All of the accounts of the lives of the Buddha previous to his final lifetime as found in the *Jātaka* stories are all evidence of the Buddha's ability to recollect his previous lifetimes.

## Higher Fruit # 7 : Recollection of Other's Previous Lives

If after attaining the ability to recollect previous lifetimes, the meditator is further able to maintain his mind at a standstill, the mind becomes yet brighter and clearer, breaking free of further defilements allowing him to see the arising and passing away of beings according to their karma [*cutūpapātāñāṇa*] (sometimes also known as the 'angle eye' [*dibbacakkhu*]) in a way the naked eye cannot see — as explained by the Buddha's words:

“With his heart thus serene, he directs and bends his mind to the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings. With the pure supra-normal vision, he sees beings as they pass away from one form of existence and take shape in another; he recognizes the mean and the noble, the well-favoured and the ill-favoured, the happy and the wretched, passing away according to their deeds: “Such and such beings, my brethren, who in act and word and thought, are revilers of the noble ones, holding to wrong views, acquiring for themselves that karma which results from wrong views, they, on the dissolution of the body, after death, are reborn in some unhappy state of suffering or woe. But, such and such beings, my brethren, who are well-doers in act, and word, and thought, not revilers of the noble ones, holding to right views, acquiring for themselves that karma that results from right views, they, on the dissolution of the body, after death, are reborn in some happy state in heaven.” Thus, with the supra-normal vision he sees beings as they pass away from one state of existence, and take form in another; he recognizes the mean and the noble, the well-favoured and the ill-favoured, the happy and the wretched, passing away according to their deeds.”

“Just as if there were a house with a high balcony overlooking a crossroads, and a man standing on it who had keen eyesight, and could watch men entering a house, and coming out of it, and walking here and there along the street, and sitting in the square in the midst. He would know: “Those men are entering a house, and those are leaving it, and those are walking up and down the street, and those are sitting in the square in the midst.” This is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last.”



### Higher Fruit # 8 : Knowledge of an End of Defilements

If after attaining knowledge of the rising and falling away of other living beings, the meditator is further able to maintain his mind at a standstill. The mind becomes brighter and clearer allowing him to attain knowledge of an end of defilements [*āsavaḥkhayañāṇa*] allowing him to become an arahat — the highest fruit of being a monk. In the Buddha's words:

“With his heart thus serene, he directs and bends his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He knows [as it really is]: “This is suffering.” He knows as it really is: “This is the origin of suffering.” He knows as it really is: “This is the cessation of suffering.” He knows as it really is: “This is the Path that leads to the cessation of suffering.” He knows [as they really are]: “These are the defilements.” He knows as it really is: “This is the origin of the defilements.” He knows as it really is: “This is the cessation of the defilements.” He knows as it really is:

“This is the Path that leads to the cessation of the defilements.” To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the bias for sensuality, is set free from the bias for eternal existence, is set free from the bias for ignorance. In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows: “Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no rebirth.”

“Just as if in a mountain vastness there were a pool of water, clear, translucent and serene; a man, standing on the bank, with keen eyesight, could perceive the oysters and the shells, the gravel and the pebbles and the shoals of fish, as they move about or lie within it, and he would know: “This pool is clear, transparent, and serene, and there within it are the oysters and the shells, and the sand and gravel, and the shoals of fish are moving about or lying still.” This, great king, is an immediate fruit of the life of an ascetic, visible in this world, and higher and sweeter than the last. There is no fruit of the life of an ascetic visible in this world that is higher and sweeter than this.”

At this stage of attainment, no further defilements remain in the mind. From what we have studied of these knowledges, stillness and steadfastness of mind is the key to progress.

Steadfastness means stillness and not moving away from the centre of the body — which is the gate to the mind. Attaining insight knowledge is equivalent to attaining ‘Dhammakāya Gotrabhū’, ‘which is the foundation to attainment of Dhammakāya at the levels of sainthood: ‘Dhammakāya Sotāpana’, ‘Dhammakāya Sakidāgāmi’, ‘Dhammakāya Anāgāmi’ and ‘Dhammakāya Arahant.’ By the

final of these, Dhammakāya Arahant one will have attained knowledge of the end of all defilements.

The other special power to see the supramundane and *know* the supramundane, can only arise by the presence of the ‘Eye of the Dhammakāya’ and ‘Knowledge of the Dhammakāya’ respectively — they are beyond mundane human knowledge. Thus to attain supernormal knowledge is to attain Dhammakāya.

King Ajātasattu had followed the whole of the sermon with attentiveness — deeply impressed at every stage by the reasoning and ability to explain the fruits of being a true monk in accordance with what he had wanted to know for so long. King Ajātasattu declared:

“Most excellent, lord, most excellent! It is as though someone had set up again what had been thrown down, or had revealed what had been hidden away, or had pointed out the right road to someone who had gone astray, or had brought a light into the darkness so that those who had eyes could see the shape of things — just so has the Truth been made known to me, in many a figure, by the Master.”

As the result, King Ajātasattu requested refuge in the Triple Gem for the rest of his life:

“Now I go for refuge, Lord, to the Buddha, to the Doctrine and to the Community. May the Buddha accept me as a disciple, as one whom, from this day forth, as long as life lasts has taken them as his guide. Evil had overcome me; I was weak and foolish and wrong; for the sake of power, I put to death my father, that righteous man, that righteous ruler. May the Buddha accept this from me, that I do acknowledge it as evil, so that in future I may restrain myself.”

King Ajātasattu had not only overcome his doubts, and disappointment at never before having received a satisfactory answer. The Buddha alone had been able to remove the suffering he felt — and for this reason King Ajātasattu confessed his patricide sin to the Buddha. The Buddha acknowledged his witness of the King’s sin with the words:

“ Indeed, great king, it was sin that overcame you. But now that you look upon it as evil, and confess it according to what is right, we accept your confession of it. For that is the practice in the discipline of the noble ones, that whoever looks upon his fault as a fault, and rightly confesses it, attains to self-restraint in future.”

King Ajātasattu was overjoyed that the Buddha accepted his confession without a word of criticism or by further burdening his conscience. In fact, it was a virtue

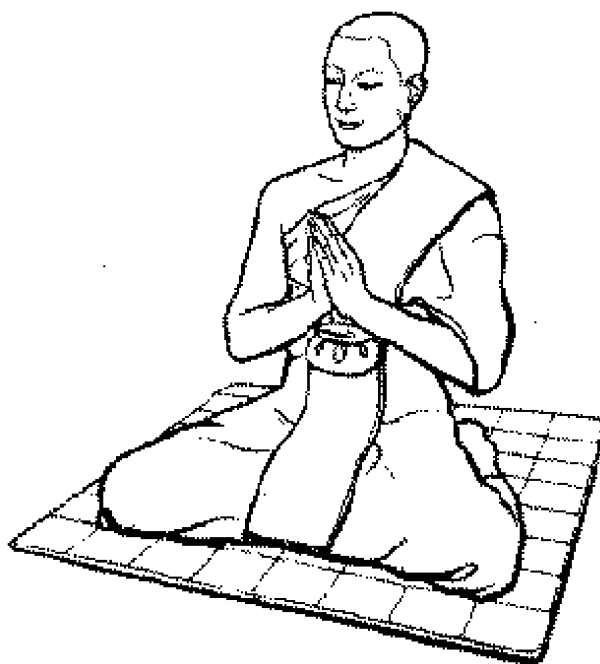
of King Ajātasattu that he was able to admit his mistakes. Although the unwholesom deed of King Ajātasattu must take it's toll, by confessing in front of the Buddha, at least he brought to an end day further karmic feud that might otherwise ensue between himself and his late father.

The king, seeing it was appropriate to leave, paid respect to the Buddha by bowing and circumambulating by the right and returned in procession back to the palace.

When the King and all the royal retinue had left, the Buddha revealed to the remaining disciples that the unwholesom deed of patricide had obscured for the King the path to either haven or Nirvana — if this had not been the case, the King would have attained the sotapana fruit as the result of listening to the sermon.

In the commentaries, it adds that as the result of the sermon, the king was able to overcome his insomnia to take refuge in the Triple Gem, develop great faith in the Triple Gem - in a way unrivalled in other disciples without any personal attainment [*putthujana*].

Even though King Ajātasattu would have to undergo the retribution of patricide in the lowermost stratum of the Lohakumbhī Hell for 30,000 hell years— but the Buddha predicted that as soon as the King had overcome the fortune of the lower stratum of the Lohakumbhī Hell, he would spread another 30,000 hell years in the upper stratum of the same hell — and then would manage to attain enlightenment as a paccekabuddha called 'Jīvitavisesa' attaining Nirvana in the end.



– CHAPTER NINE –

***Conclusions***

## 1. Characteristics of a Good Buddhist Monk

As a result of the teachings in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, we can clearly see that the characteristics of a Buddhist monk have three levels:

### 1. Elementary Level

- 1.1 Ordination with an Aim in Mind: A monk should ordain with the aim to train himself to be a good person in every respect: restraint of senses, education of the mind in theory and practice [*pariyatti* and *paṭipatti*] by study of the scriptures and following a correct method of meditation until being able to tame the mind — bringing peace, radiance and eventually wisdom to understand life and the world in accordance with reality.
- 1.2 Restrained in accordance with the Monastic Code of Conduct : A monk should be possessed of both manners and haunts — seeing danger even in the smallest things and to have the pre-intention to follow the rules of training.
- 1.3 Pure in Livelihood : The only way by which a monk can procure his livelihood is by almsround.
- 1.4 Possessed of Self-Discipline : All of these characteristics can be observed by the outward manner and behavior of monks. If monks are possessed of such characteristics, they are worthy of the praise, faith, homage and support of householders.

### 2. Intermediate Level

Those with these five characteristics are good monks at intermediate level.

- 2.1 Restraint of the Senses : When in public it is especially important for monks to restrain the sense doors — to be worthy of the homage of laypeople or younger monks. Monks who are habitually restrained according to the monastic code of conduct [*patimokkha*] will find that it comes naturally to restrain the senses both in public and behind closed doors.
- 2.2 Endowment with Mindfulness and Self-Possession: This means not allowing the mind to wander or to drift in a way that undermines the faith of others.
- 2.3 Endowed with Contentment : This means contentment with what one has and what one receives — not in a way that undermines the faith of others.

- 2.4 Freedom from the Hindrances : Although the hindrances are an internal affair of the mind, a monk must be careful not to let hindrances manifest themselves as e.g. losing one's temper, hatred of others, sleepiness, reluctance, boredom with life, doubt in the teaching — on the contrary, a monk should show enthusiasm for a life of training, restraint and giving encouragement and guidance to laypeople.
- 2.5 Attainment of the Absorptions: This is not something that is obvious to the observer. Also, a monk will not inform you — because to inform you would be in breach of the Vinaya. However, for a monk who is able to overcome the hindrances and make further progress, attainment of the inner brightness of absorption will be visible by improved conduct, ability to teach clearly and from a bright physical complexion.

### 3. Higher Level

The higher fruits of true monkhood mentioned above which come as the result of self-training in meditation are eight in number and sometimes referred to as the Supra-Normal Eightfold Knowledge. Whether it be the Eightfold Supra-Normal Knowledge, the Sixfold Super-Knowledge [*abhiññā*] or the Threefold Knowledge, all these higher fruits of true of monkhood are considered extraordinary attainments [*uttarimanussadhamma*] which according to monastic discipline, monks are not allowed to discuss in public, as boasting of attainments not actually achieved is punishable by disrobing [*pārājika*]. Even if a monk speaks publicly of his attainments in accordance with reality, such behaviour is still punishable. Thus, when we are judging whether a monk is good or not, normally we have to make a judgement on the basis of the elementary and intermediate levels.

### 2. Characteristics of a Monk not Worthy of Respect

The Sāmaññaphala Sutta teaches us not only the things which identify a good monk but also characteristic of monks to be avoided:

1. Ordained in spite of lacking faith in the Vinaya — without any intention to train oneself or improve oneself as a monk. Some ordain simply to run away from their worldly problems or to avoid the hard work of earning a living. Some ordain to escape legal proceedings or as a tool in earning their living.
2. Laxity in following, the monastic code of conduct — perhaps shown by monks lying, taking drugs, taking an evening meal or listening to music.

3. Frequenting wrongful 'haunts' — such as, going to places of entertainment or commerce on personal business instead of by invitation.
4. Gambling or encouraging supporters to waste time with gambling.
5. Being interested to converse on subjects such as waging war or fashion — or other subjects not directly concerned with monastic duties.
6. Volunteering to help with jobs that are the domain of a householder, such as, matchmaking, being a go-between or canvassing for votes.
7. Making a living out of black arts — fortune telling, initiations, charms, witch doctery, numerical house charms and written charms [yantras], making predictions looking at the vital signs of adults, children or animals — predictions and lucky stars for marriage.
8. Playing games, such as, chess draughts, cards, computer games or even Takraw.
9. Boasting about one's personal ability or looking down on the abilities of other monks.
10. Having no restraint of the senses.
11. Explaining and teaching Buddhism in a way that deviates from the Dhammavinaya or spreading or perpetuating False Views, such as, that heaven and hell don't really exist, that death is the end of the story or that there is no afterlife.
12. Monks using means to mislead the public e.g. into understanding that they have attained the stages of Sainthood.
13. Displaying a lack of contentment — noticeable from the way a monk's accommodation is furnished (excessive luxury or with a television or radio — which are not for helping to practice Dhamma — and accumulating lots of things in their *kuti* beyond any possible usefulness.

There may be more characteristic of a monk which makes them less worthy of respect — but any one of the thirteen behaviours mentioned above is sufficient for supporters to suspect whether a monk is really strict in the Vinaya or not.

### 3. Conduct of Householders towards Monk's Community.

When the only correct way by which monks can earn their living is by almsround and the true way a monk should spend his time is in self-training and teaching, the householder should recognize their own duty to support the monks, specifically:

#### 3.1 Conduct towards Monks Who Practice Well

- 3.1.1 Supporting monks with the four requisites.
- 3.1.2 Supporting monks with the wherewithal for study and self-training.
- 3.1.3 Supporting monks with the wherewithal to spread the Dhamma.
- 3.1.4 Showing respect towards the monks — following and learning from them as much as possible — taking them as an example.
- 3.1.5 Reminding yourself that monks who are well established in self-discipline [*sila*], meditation [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*] are the perpetuators of Buddhism and without such monks, Buddhism would founder.

#### 3.2 Conduct towards Monks Lax in the Vinaya

It is hard for a monk to be ideal in every respect — especially if he lacks a proper aim in his ordination. Even with a proper aim, sometimes it takes considerable time before a monk can develop the virtues of purity described in Chapter 6. Thus, when observing the manner of monks, it is useful for supporters to consider the following factors:

- 3.2.1 Whether he is a new monk or a monk ordained long ago. The new monk (a monk ordained for less than five years) has the special term '*navaka*'. If a monk is newly ordained he might not have had sufficient time to train himself time to train himself in the necessary virtues. Whether a monk is young or old and conducts himself inappropriately, you should tell his preceptor or the abbot of the temple where he resides so that the monks can sort out the problem themselves.
- 3.2.2 If you have evidence of serious misdeeds by a monk, you can report it to the monastic governor of that area - so that instant action can be taken and such a thing not happen again.
- 3.2.3 Don't show respect to particular monks who have performed misdeeds (but don't tar all monks with the same brush!)



3.2.4 Remind yourself that monks who perform misdeeds are the death of Buddhism.

3.2.5 Don't give personal support to such a monk.

If a monk (especially those already long ordained) continues to perform misdeeds and receive no support, as a result, before long, he will be unable to continue as a monk. Before long, he will consider his own faults and make some improvements. It is interesting to note that from Devadatta down to the present day, monks with scandals have always managed to do with the complicity of laypeople (sometimes those who collaborate with a vested interest or who stupidly respect a monk who doesn't teach Buddhism).

#### **4. Man's Aim in Life**

One of life's greatest questions is "why were we born" — for which it is hard to find a satisfactory answer. Most people just shrug off the question thinking it is no use to worry about such a thing or that it is a subject unsuitable for speculation or beyond rational thinking. By adjusting the question slightly, it becomes a little more practicable — "Having taken human birth - how should we set our aim in life?" — Because a ready answer is waiting for us in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*. We see that "aim in life" has three levels:

1. Exclusively Materialistic Level.
2. Material/Spiritual Level.
3. Exclusively Spiritual Level.

##### **4.1 Aim in Life at the Exclusively Materialistic Level**

This is an aim in life common amongst householders still heavily subject to defilements. You could call such an aim an 'earthly' aim or 'worldly' aim. It is for those whose only purpose is to find immediate fulfillment and convenience — similar to the ambition of King Ajātasattu in taking the throne from his father as illustrated in his question to the Buddha:

"The general public use knowledge and ability to earn their living to support themselves and their family — and their parents."

Such an aim in life fits with the majority of people who see money as power — according to them, the richer you are, the happier you can be. Then, they spend the whole of their time earning their living to get themselves power

and influence. If they can't earn as much as they would like honestly, they turn to dishonest means, risking imprisonment. Such people are not interested to accumulate merit or perfections and may not be ashamed to do evil. Once having set oneself to accumulating wealth and influence, generally people are not concerned how much is enough — and tend to hurt themselves and others in the process. Hurting oneself means accumulating wealth without end until the imperative becomes greed, anger with competition or delusions of power. Harming others means competing and destroying the environment and natural resources. Harming either yourself or others is the sign of a person of false view [*micchā diṭṭhi puggala*].

#### 4.2. Material/Spiritual Level

This is an aim in life where you also take into account lives that must come in the future. People with such a level of aim in life understand that death is not the end of the story. Some might call such an aim as “aim in the clouds.” Human beings are superior to other animals in their ability to discern virtue [*dhammasaññā*]. It is a component of Right View. Such people are able to distinguish between good and evil don't believe that death is the end of the story — thus, they think to accumulate merit for the next life, think to support monks and ascetics. As in the words of King Ajātasattu:

“Those, in general, who use their knowledge and ability and earn their livelihood to support themselves, their family, their parents and who use the remainder of their resource to cultivate generosity towards monks and ascetics hoping for happiness both in this life and the next.”

Anyone with such a thought is obviously of Right View (at a precursory level)

At any time, Ajātasattu associated with Devadatta his aim in life was reduced to the exclusively material level (thinking only to get power and influence by killing his father). Thus, through the power of False View, a person with the potential to attain ‘stream-entry’ was reduced to performing the heaviest karma [*anantariyakamma*]. After ascension to the throne, the retribution of his sin brought only suffering of mind and made him search for a way to reduce his suffering.

This illustrates how (for a smart person) evil circumstances might be the reason to turn towards virtue as with the King's decision to go and hear the teaching of the Lord Buddha. (Incorporating an intermediate aim in life.)

“Those who decide to leave the household life to enter the monkhood also share a more developed “material/spiritual aim in life.”

Devadatta would have had such an aim as he first ordained and managed to attain the absorptions. However, on becoming of False View, his attainments disappeared and his aim in life was reduced to the exclusively material level. Getting carried away with his own mental attainments is an example of good circumstances leading one to recklessness. The same thing can happen to those in a privileged walk of life who take advantage of their privileged circumstances to do immoral things and end up destroying their future.

#### **4.3.Exclusively Spiritual Level**

Some might refer to such an aim in life as ‘above the clouds.’ It is an aim in life that you will find only in Buddhism as a ‘religion of wisdom.’

In Buddhism, practice is the important thing and the theory is only as much use as it can be put into practice. One must start with the Vinaya and progress to the Suttas. As a householder, one cannot practice the Vinaya in its entirety. It is useful to have experience of ordination. Eventually, even a householder can become enlightened at the initial level of Buddhist sainthood.

Practice of the *Dhammavinaya* has many levels — from the level of simply using it as discipline to that of applying it to meditation for liberation and Nirvana.

A large number of householders — even those who call themselves Buddhist— misunderstand the importance of practising meditation seriously and are, therefore, doubtful about the existence of the transcendental paths, fruits and Nirvana. Even so, the Buddha has pointed clearly to the stages of attainment in meditation and has told us what sort of result can be expected through practising in accordance with the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*. Those who have an exclusively spiritual aim in life will have unshakeable faith in Buddhism and will practice meditation with a seriousness that they would even agree to sacrifice their own life to succeed.

#### **5. Associating with Fools Has Retribution to Falling into Hell**

Having a mind which is habitually clouded can be the reason why some people have a view of the world removed from reality — i.e. wrong view, wrong values and wrong direction, with an inability to be a teacher to themselves. Faulty discretion can be the reason why one is unable to distinguish good from evil, or to reason things through properly. There is always a tendency to use oneself as a standard for the rest of the world — not being able to tell appropriate from inappropriate and not giving things due respect. You cannot admire something you like without wanting to own it for yourself — and you end up wanting to obtain it even while knowing that taking it will cause regret to others or even their death. When one has no thought whether one’s behaviour complies with morality or the law — one’s behaviour starts to exhibit the signs of a ‘fool’ or that of a person ‘infected’ by foolishness.

Another characteristic of a fool is immoral behaviour which knows no rest. Having successfully pulled off a successful piece of trouble-making, they will move onto something new in the way of trouble-making immediately. Sometimes the continuity of trouble-making is a result of the pressure of need. For example, having pulled off a murder, if there was a witness, then, there is more work left to do — to silence them. However, sometimes the continuity is because of the nature of that person's own mind which has the tendency to give in to the power of defilements in the mind.

Anyone who associates with the fools runs the risk of picking up their bad habits with ease. Fools are like those who are ill with a deadly infectious disease. Anyone with such a disease will tend to infect everything surrounding them within a certain radius the whole of the time. Those who associate closely with them will be the first victims. For the same reason, doctors always recommend the isolation of patients with dangerous contagious diseases and don't let them mix with the healthy, fools whose mind is obscured by defilements need to be kept in isolation in case their way of thinking infects those whose discretion is still healthy.

Furthermore, the mind of every person of mundane mental attainment has the seeds, of 'foolishness' — if such seeds come under the sway of a similar condition of mind — then, there is the temptation to follow the example of the fool 'just for the experience', 'just for a laugh', 'to try it and see.', 'just for a kick' or with an ulterior motive — as there are many examples for us to observe in today's society.

One clear example is that of teenage drug addiction in the present day. From education, the school, college, university and the media, we are all aware of the damage produced by drugs from the most innocuous, such as, tobacco and marijuana to the deadly and expensive — but why do so many teenagers become addicted to drugs often to the point of death or to the loss of their future? Despite those deadly drugs being difficult to access and being sold only in secret in particular places to particular groups?

The answer is that only because of keeping bad company (i.e. with fools) can young people be led so far off track from consideration for their future. There is no way of estimating the retribution these teenagers face in lives to come as a result from keeping bad company, let alone looking at the damage in this lifetime in terms of lost future and family suffering simply being careless about the quality of one's associates can cause life to degenerate into a living hell.

Another example which is clearly seen as the origin of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta. From King Ajātasattu's murder of his own father and from aiding and abetting Devadatta's attempt to harm the Buddha — in fact, all these actions originate from association with Devadatta.

By the time King Ajātasattu managed to realize the damage done, it was beyond repair. Even though later he had the chance to meet the Buddha, hear a teaching,

understand his error, ask the Buddha's forgiveness and take the Triple Gem as his refuge, giving incomparable patronage to Buddhism (especially the First Council) — but he could not evade the retribution of tens of thousands of years in hell in subsequent lifetimes.

Thus, beyond to the retribution of missing the chance of heaven and Nirvana, it led directly to hell as with the Buddha's saying:

“Those who associate with bad company will suffer extended sorrow” (Dh.207) and

“Associating with bad company leads to none other than disaster.” (Haliddarāga Jātaka J.iii.524)

## 6. Associating with the Wise Gives the Opportunity to Attain Nirvana

It is only as the result of the helping hands of other that we have managed to survive up to the present day. It would be a foolish person to claim otherwise. Even when working and ‘supporting ourselves’, we still have to rely on others in order to make our living. In our relationship, the Buddha divided our connections into six directions:

1. Parents.
2. Teachers.
3. Spouse and offspring.
4. Friends.
5. Subordinate and employees.
6. The monastic community.

Among these six categories, there is only one group for whom we have no choice — that is our parents. If our mother and father are sound in mind and body whether rich or poor, they must surely have at least good wishes for their children — and for this reason we dub them our ‘real good friends’ or ‘*kalyāṇamitta*’. We have the opportunity to choose those in the other five social groups (we are able to raise our children as we would like them to be) — but what principles can we use to make sure we associate only with the ‘wise’ and avoid the ‘fools’? The Buddha taught:

“You should not trust those with whom you are unfamiliar. And even those with whom you are familiar, you should not trust.” (Vissāsabhojana Jātaka J.i.387)

In other words, no matter what society we are in, we should not be reckless — but we should try to observe what other's real habits are like. If the sort of person who we observe:

- Protects you even when you are off your guard.
- Helps protect your property even when you neglect it.
- Is your refuge in times of danger.
- Always provides you with twice as much as you asked for.
- They confide in you.
- They don't go spreading your secrets around.
- They don't abandon you when you fall on hard times.
- They would even die in your place.
- They warn you against unwholesome behaviour.
- Encourage you towards wholesome behaviour.
- Save up new things to tell you.
- Point you in the direction of heaven.
- They don't laugh at your misfortunes.
- They congratulate you on your good fortune.
- They speak out against anyone who maligns you.
- They stand up for those who speak well of you.

All of these characteristics are those of a 'good friend' — and they are the marks of those with whom we should associate — and be sincere in the long - term for our own future. The Buddha warned us:

“ No one should associate with evil friends.  
No one should associate with lowly friends.  
One should associate with 'good friends' .  
One should associate with the highest of men. ”

(Dh.78)

In the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, because of associating with Devadatta, Ajātasattu committed a crime so heinous that he could not sleep from that day forth. However, when he met a 'good friend', the evil suffering was removed from his mind, allowing him to renew his practice of good deeds — so that the retribution of karma was lessened.

The first 'good friend' of King Ajātasattu was Jivaka Komārabhacca — who led the king to meet with the Buddha for the first time. If it wasn't for Jivaka, the king might have been persuaded to give patronage to other sects and do resulting bad deeds that were worse than the last, because a king with his power has the chance to do greater merit or demerit than the man in the street.

The second 'good friend' to King Ajātasattu was the Buddha — the greatest 'good friend' to the whole world. Through hearing only a short teaching from the Buddha, he could understand the meaning of characteristics of being a good monk and to see that Devadatta was no true monk — and to be careful in the future when

considering which monks to adopt as teachers. Right View, therefore, came to prevail for King Ajātasattu.

The good deeds of King Ajātasattu would eventually lead him to be born as a Paccekabuddha in the future. Thus, the existence of ‘good friends’ in the world is beneficial without any shadow of a doubt.

## 7. Demerit in the Mind can be Diluted by Merit

We have to keep our physical possessions clean. If we leave them dirty apart from being unattractive, they eventually become unusable — deteriorate in quality and value. Even our own body is the same — if we get dirty, then, we have to spend time washing otherwise we will become repulsive to others and attract illness. The mind is no different — we cannot just allow the mind to be overrun by defilements, like rust which eats into the surface of a metal.

We have already mentioned that the infectious part of a ‘fool’ is always the clouded mind, which leads to unwholesome behaviour. The mind is clouded by defilements. If someone has done something wrong and they realize themselves or because of the advice of a ‘good friend’ — the thing they should be quick to do is to eradicate defilement from the mind by doing good deeds. If we are slow to remove defilement, then, they will lead us back to do further evil deeds. The Buddha taught:

“We should be quick to do good,  
and be quick to prohibit the mind from evil.  
If we are slow to do good,  
the mind will become caught up in evil.”<sup>1</sup>

As dirty objects need to be cleansed with clear water, the defilements of the mind can be diluted by merit. Thus, those who wish to purify the mind need to verse themselves in generosity [*dāna*], self-discipline [*sīla*] and meditation [*bhāvanā*] or self-discipline [*sīla*], meditation [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*] which all bring purity of mind. The Buddha, thus, taught his monks:

“Do not fear to do good, because merit is of the nature of happiness”.  
(Puñṇavipāka Sutta: A.iv.91)

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1. Dh.116 *Abhittharetha kalyāṇe, pāpā cittaṃ nivāraye, dandhaṃ hi karoto puññaṃ, pāpasmīṃ ramati mano*

In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, we see that King Ajātasattu appreciated the value of good deeds, changing completely (for the better) during the course of the Buddha's teaching. From then on, King Ajātasattu took refuge in the Triple Gem. He asked forgiveness and gave his patronage to Buddhism so that from that time on there was no further space in his mind for any thought of evil — in just the same way that once a lamp is lit, darkness cannot come close any more.

Thus, anyone with evil in their past must be quick to realize their mistake — and cleanse the mind of evil by instantly doing meritorious deeds — and stopping any further evil. This is to protect the mind from relapsing to the former state and to build up familiarity with goodness — developing the shame of evil [hiri] and the fear of the consequences of evil [ottappa] — and build up so much momentum of merit for the mind that the fruits of our evil cannot catch up with us:

“Those who do meritorious deeds  
ought to do them often.  
You should find contentment in good deeds  
because accrual of merit will bring you happiness.”<sup>2</sup>

## 8. Society can be Performed Only by Reforming Human Nature

If you consider your immediate social environment — right from the smallest building block of society — the family — which consist of only four to five people (mother, father and children), you will see that all it takes is for any one person in the family to break the Precepts and the whole of the family suffers as a result.

An example often seen in society is of the drunken father who fights with his wife and children — bringing unrest and fear to the rest of the family. If the father really loses control of himself, he might even beat other members of his family destroying all harmony and refuge the family might have offered.

Supposing the mother separates and moves away as a result, the ones who suffer are the children. If they are young, they lack refuge. If they are teenagers, they might also run away from home and might become prey to bad company who persuade them into drug-abuse and criminality as can be found in the headlines of the newspapers every day. Thus, even one black sheep can cause all the others in society to suffer.

Fools who are unable to help themselves will spread the infection of faulty discretion to social units on all levels — like a weed which spreads in the crop field. Even though the farmers never rest from their weeding, the fields are never completely free from weeds. In the same way, society is never completely free from his influence of ‘fools’.

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2. *Dh.118 puññassa puriso kariyā, kayirāthenanam punappunam, tamhi chandam kayiratha, sukho puññassa uccayo*



Fools with a little experience, knowledge and influence might even manage to crawl up to positions of responsibility in society. Such people can bring whole societies and countries into peril — leaving innocent people without any connection to themselves dead on the battlefield as a result of their aggressive policies. History is full of such examples and many such regimes still exist. As long as such people still exist in society, any real peace cannot emerge — only when people are good and through good people can peace come into existence.

From the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, you can see that the pressure of just one evil person — Devadatta — caused untold aggression and damage both in the royal and religious establishments. For the royal establishment, we see the execution of the king as the outcome of his delusion and division of the Saṅgha was damage he caused to the religious establishment.

## 9. Factors in Becoming a Good Person

Our rationale in bringing peace to the world is to make good people of the world's inhabitants — but to make everyone in the world good is no easy matter. We need to know what factors lie behind peoples' goodness.

In Buddhism, a good person is called by the technical term '*paṇḍita*' — a pundit — but according to our definition a pundit might easily be someone illiterate or a poor farmer — the decisive factor is that he must have a clear mind, Right View and the ability to be a teacher to himself [*yonisomanasikāra*] — or put more simply he must be someone whose thought, words and deeds are good. By his good behaviour, a good person will be more than capable to live his life in accordance with moral standards — avoiding inappropriate behaviour and wickedness, but seeking out opportunity to do good deeds show compassion and be a good friend [*kalyāṇamitta*] to others.

There is no person in the world who manages to become a good person spontaneously or by accident. Supposing you were to compare the development of a person's character with growing a fruit tree — supposing you would like to grow yourself a mango tree which gives delicious fruit — you have to go out of your way to prepare many things — the pedigree of the mango seed, the quality of the soil, regularity of watering, aeration of the soil, fertilizer and removal of weeds. When the tree starts to bud, you have to give extra water and keep pests from eating the flowers with insect deterrent. Even when the fruit has developed, we need to find a way of protecting the fruit from bruising — a farmer cannot afford to sit idle and wait for the tree to bear fruit. In the same way, when it comes to creating good people in the world, you have to prepare yourself for hard work — you have to start training them from an early age. You have to use a complex variety of techniques more difficult than growing mangoes by far.

In the training of young people, there are two major components, which need to be developed if virtue is to emerge, namely:

1. The ability to be a teacher to yourself.
2. The ability to be a good friend to others.

### **The Ability to be a Teacher to Yourself**

In fact, the literal translation of the Pali ‘*yonisomanasikāra*’. This particular factor means ‘giving things due consideration according to their reality’ — considering things sequentially by cause and effect until one can reach back to the root causes of things, separating and analyzing components to see the nature and the relationship between the concomitants — knowing what is good and bad for oneself — opting for the things which lead to wholesomeness and which do not lead to ignorance or craving.

Someone who is able to be a teacher to himself will be someone who has the wisdom to understand life and the world according to reality and who is able to distinguish good and bad, right or wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. Once you are able to distinguish, then you will want to do nothing else but wholesome things and not waiting to have any involvement with unwholesomeness.

One can only develop the ability to be a teacher to oneself by training oneself in it directly — you have to base your knowledge on real experiences — you need to have had many case histories and examples and most important of all you need someone more experienced than yourself to oversee your decision-making and help if necessary.

### **Having a Good Friend**

In any family, the best good friend [*kalyāṇamitta*] to the children are the parents. In other words, the parents have to be the prime mover in the instilling of virtue for the children. Furthermore, parents have to be an example to their children and to follow up the behaviour of children intimately and regularly. To do this, parents need to ask themselves regularly whether they are really a teacher to themselves or not.

Indeed, not only parents but the categories of person in the other five social groups — if we associate with them as good friends incorporating the ability to be a teacher to ourselves — we will manage to evade the suffering which comes from associating with fools. In conclusion, being a teacher to oneself and a good friend to others are the components of being a good person.

From the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, we see that even though Devadatta had sufficient merit to be born in a royal family, with wealth and retinue, he was handicapped by his inability to be a teacher to himself. May be he wasn’t closely trained from

an early age — and, therefore, developed false view, mistaking evil for good, and doing evil things continuously — finding fault with others, or envying their successes. Eventually, when taking ordination along with another five princes, all the others achieved enlightenment or stages of sainthood but Devadatta attained only mundane absorptions, which were only transitory.

Seeing the special attention lavished on the Buddha and close disciples but not receiving such attention himself — instead of developing the ability to be a teacher to himself and mending the errors of his ways, he reverted to worse jealousy, thinking to destroy the Buddha and set himself up as leader in His place. Even though his bad intentions caused him to lose his mental powers, it still didn't make him think to change his ways.

If you look in a superficial way at Devadatta you would see that he is a fool without discretion suffering from False View and unsuitable to associate with. However, if you consider his case in more depth you will see that he is a pitiful case. Apart from getting no benefit from his own distinguished birth, the eminence of his birth actually becomes an impediment, making him look down on everyone else — even those who might be able to help him — even the ultimate good friend of the world — The Buddha himself.

From the case of Devadatta you can see that it can be disastrous not to have sorted out one's ability to teach oneself since an early age. Leaving it to later life can be too late — green wood is easily shaped but seasoned wood is hard to shape.

Compare the case of Prince Ajātasattu who received a lot of training from an early age in his family but was later eclipsed by the discretion of a fool he associated with (Devadatta) making him temporarily of false view. Later, however, with the help of good friends, he was able to realize his mistake and reform himself.

Therefore, you can see that the ability to be a teacher to yourself is the first and foremost component of a good person — followed closely by the example and care of a good friend such as our own parents. If you can get discretion right from the time you are in the hands of your parents, later you can extend your social relations to those of the other five directions, without making mistakes in life — as in the words of the Buddha.

“Associating with the virtuous ensures prosperity”

*Bhaddo sappurisenā saṃgamo*

(Thag. 91)

## 10. Instilling Virtue in Children Is an Important Parental Duty

The first ‘good friends’ to each and every one of us in the world are our parents or guardians — they are the ones to instil the virtue of ‘being a teacher to yourself’ [*yonisomanasikāra*]. Each parent must take responsibility for such a duty — from the time their child first opens their eyes to the world onwards. There is ample medical and psychological evidence to suggest that every individual is impressionable right from the time of being a baby — for example, a baby whose nappy is left unchanged regularly and soiled for long period of time is liable later in life to unhygienic and messy habits.

Thus, parents should not be neglectful in setting up the sort of habits they would like to see in their children. As for higher virtues, the importance is proportionally greater. You cannot just wait for teachers or schools to do the job for you. They will never be able to give full attention to the task because their students are many and the time for each is limited. Furthermore, a child’s time spent at school is still less than the time spent at home.

For all of these reasons, the instilling of virtue in children is an important duty for the parents — right from the time the child is still a baby. It is a duty which requires perseverance and consistency and requires an understanding or sequencing and graduation in virtues taught to know what to teach a child first and what to keep until they are older.

Of course, the possible virtues you can teach to a child are many, but the most important in the development of ‘being a teacher to yourself’ [*yonisomanasikāra*] are:

1. Knowledge of the highest aim of Buddhism (the highest aim in life of humankind). Buddhism teaches us to pursue perfection — when our perfections are fulfilled, we will be able to overcome the last of the defilements in our minds — and we will be able to break free from the cycle of rebirth.
2. Knowledge of how to practice in order to achieve our highest aim in life: normally the threefold practice of self-discipline [*sīla*], meditation [*samādhi*] wisdom [*paññā*].
3. The four virtues for a householder [*gharavāsadhamma*].
4. That Buddhists have the job of supporting their religion. Because man’s highest refuge is the Triple Gem, it means that care should be taken to support the Saṅgha or monastic community who perpetuate and spread Buddhism. If any monastic member is deprived of the support of house holders — before long, he will be unable to continue in his duties — and in turn that is the end of the life of Buddhism — in other words, it is the job of Buddhists to support their religion.

5. Principles in keeping with (especially the first six) blessings of the Maṅgala Sutta:

- 1) **Not associating with the fools:** Mother and father must teach children how to choose appropriate friends and spouse.
- 2) **Associating with the wise:** Those who are adept in self-discipline [*sīla*], meditation [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*].
- 3) **Honouring those worthy of respect:** Especially the Buddha, monks who practice well, monarchs established in the Ten Virtues of a monarch [*rājadhamma*], parents and elder relatives and various teachers — even one's boss if he is honest. Having respect for such people means at tempting to follow the good example set by such people.
- 4) **Living in an amenable location:** An unpolluted environment with good prospects for work and education both in worldly and spiritual ways — and even government — not somewhere dominated by the criminal underworld.
- 5) **Get down to the pursuit of the Perfections:** Our work, in the present time will bring its fruits in the future. In the same way, the happiness we receive in the present must be the result of our pursuit of perfection. In the past, the merits we accrue will bring fruits ensuring our intelligence, prosperity and progress in our duties in the future — and happiness in life in accordance with the Buddhist proverb:

“The accrual of merit brings happiness.”<sup>3</sup>

and

Merit is the refuge of beings in the world to come.

Furthermore, the faith of those who are steadfast the accrual of merit will be a shield to protect them from the temptation of evil ways.

#### 6) A correct aim in life.

Anyone who has accumulated all the foregoing virtues will be sure to have developed the ability to be a teacher to themselves — with the flexibility to adopt appropriate to any circumstances — and will be able to earn their living successfully. Life is happy and such a person has worth to society.

Even so — if a person is instilled with many other virtues, such as, cleanliness, economy, enthusiasm and conscientiousness etc., but has missed out on the

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3. *Puññassa paralokasmim patiṭṭhā honti paṇinaṃ* (J.iv.62)

important virtues already mentioned — the ability to be a teacher to yourself might not develop.

Therefore, it is vital that parents take their role in supporting their children to develop the ability to be a teacher to themselves. Without this virtue, your children might just make a mess of their lives — and their after life might just consist of torment in hell, as in the case of Devadatta — in technical parlance — suffering in both the two worlds (this world and the hereafter).

## **11. Confession of Mistakes Is a Necessity**

When the Buddha had finished teaching the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* to King Ajātasattu, King Ajātasattu praised the Teaching of the Buddha and took refuge in the Triple Gem. However, another important thing which the King did was to confess his fault to the Lord Buddha.

“I was overwhelmed by (i.e. I have committed) a misdeed, being foolish, bewildered and unwise. For the sake of gaining sovereign power, I put my father to death, who ruled with righteousness and kingly virtue. Venerable Sir, I request the Bhagavā to accept this admission of my guilt so that I can restrain myself in the future.”

“Great King! True indeed that you were overwhelmed by a misdeed, being foolish, bewildered and unwise. You have put to death your father who ruled with righteousness and kingly virtue. But now, as you have realized your guilt and admitted it to make amends, we accept your admission. Great King! Realizing one’s guilt, making amends and abstaining from such misdeed in the future means enhancement according to the injunctions of the Ariyas.”

We can see that confession is part of the Ariyan or noble culture of the time — not a way of removing evil. As part of Buddhist culture, we ought to practice it as follows:

1. Confession for the offender to acknowledge that he is aware of his mistake.
2. Confession is an indication of the intention not to repeat the mistake. It shows one’s courage and one’s sincerity in making sure the mistake does not happen again and to take special care of oneself not to get mixed up with other unwholesomeness. In others words, it is an effective way of setting up armour to protect oneself against any further evils.

Confession needs to be made out loud in front of a witness. To confess in one's mind or simply in front of a Buddha image or to write a letter of confession to another may not give the full effect. The best sort of confession is in the presence of the Buddha or an arahant. Without such conditions, the offender may return to his old ways again (or worse than before) because:

- 1) The mind can change at any time. The mind of the unenlightened is always and are always changeable — thus, if someone confesses simply to their parents or a respected monk, later, they might relapse to their old ways of thinking, or the confession might be forgotten.
- 2) Confession in the presence of the Buddha or an Arahant will bring the greatest self-confidence, because such people are incomparable in their ability to see the reality of the world — and a confession in their presence will transform guilt to the thirst for self-improvement. Once one has re-aligned oneself with goodness, wholesomeness etc.. Then, one can get down to doing good deeds in earnest again.

In the case of King Ajātasattu after his confession, he turned his life around and performed many good deeds.

Even though, in the present day, we have no more Buddhas or arahants to be witness to our confessions, we ought to perpetuate the noble tradition of confession by confessing instead to parents, guardian, or teacher. We should teach our children and grandchildren and students to do the same. It will teach them not to repeat mistakes and protects against the habit of lying.

Furthermore, children's mistakes are generally minor — and they are easier to admit openly and to take responsibility for. It will build up their habit to reflect on their own conduct, be thorough in their thinking before doing things - especially evil doing. Otherwise, they will have to bear their guilt eternally and their embarrassment doesn't go away. Evil kept as secrets just give rise to continuing anxiety.

Therefore, confession is a way of developing the key virtue of conscience in keeping with the Buddhist proverb:

“Evil has the nature to scald one at a later date.”<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, elders who are witness to confessions must hear out confession with compassion, seriousness and attentiveness to every word of the confession — instead of criticizing or punishing the confessor cruelly by losing one's temper, try to put yourself in the confessor's shoes — be patient enough to listen out the confession to the end — because no matter how angry you may be, the mistake is already done and cannot be changed.

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4. *pacchā tappati dukkaṭaṃ* (S.i. 49)

Instead of shouting or criticizing the offender immediately at the end of the confession, one should first ask the reason for saying or thinking in such a mistaken way. Only then should one start lecturing that person. Sometimes, a good way of teaching or advising the confessor is to ask them rhetorical questions [*pucchāvyākaraṇa*]. If they are able to answer the questions for themselves, it may show they have already understood the reason for their mistake — thereby helping them to be more prepared to guard themselves from doing the same mistake again in the future. It also maintains the channel of ‘warmth’ and communication between you and them with no generation gap - which is helpful and facilitates a parent’s duty for the future.

## 12. Youth Training Needs Parental Co-operation

It is generally understood that one can only grow up into a virtuous person if instilled with virtue from an early age - in accordance with the expression “it’s easy to curve tender wood but old wood cannot be moulded” (you can’t teach an old dog new tricks). In the olden days, (two generations ago) children used to be sent to the temple in order to learn about virtue. The monks were their teachers. The main subject matter, apart from language was Buddhist virtue. Vocational subjects were studied separately in such schools. The people of old considered virtue even more important than occupational skills - that is why they needed to start learning them from an early age.

Furthermore, whenever young men reached the age of twenty, they had to undergo a period of monastic ordination for a period of at least one rainy season (three months). In order to get an earnest insight into virtue before setting themselves up in life in work or with a family. Those men who underwent their period of training would be praised by society, as ‘mature’ like a cheese or a fruit fit for consumption. Those who remained ‘unripe’ or ‘immature’ (not having ordained) were regarded as being of limited value and in need of further development.

Gentlemen of the younger generation would receive their education from monks in former days — and when coming of age would have the opportunity to spend time in the monkhood. Some might stay in the monkhood for several years before disrobing. This period of contact with Buddhism in their youth was the time when they would acquire Right View [*sammā-diṭṭhi*] and the ability to be a teacher to themselves [*yonisomanasikāra*]. At the very least, the population of the country would be able to tell the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate — being able to apply these standards in their everyday lives and avoiding the risk of accumulating evil during their lives. When such men came to work for a living, they were able to maintain themselves within the boundaries of virtue. If they were to start their own household, they would at least have something of virtue to pass on to their children. This is perhaps the reason why in olden days society was much more free of crime and indecency than in the present day.



Later, when state education was established with education to the level of university, people began to overlook the importance of temple schools and temporary ordination. Parents together with the powers that be in society decided that anyone who graduates from university ought to be sufficiently well-educated to look after their own assimilation of virtues. Therefore, they abandoned moral education and no longer supported their sons to take temporary ordination. However, their thinking was seriously flawed.

The by-product we see clearly in examples of hypocritical behaviour in the present day, such as, Thais calling themselves Buddhist but not even keeping Five Precepts [*pañcasīla*] properly — with society degraded to cruel murders, thefts, rape and the idealization of wealth in spite of claims of economic progress.

All of this helps to explain why vocational training doesn't help to train people in virtue. Furthermore, the more that is known about technology in the absence of morality, the worse the wickedness people become capable of. It turns out that 'intelligent' people are even more vulnerable to False View than those of average or low intelligence.

If you look at the variety of subjects taught in institutes of tertiary education nationwide, you would find that the majority are vocational subjects. Subjects concerning virtue are pitifully few and subjects concerning Buddhism are almost non-existent. The only place where such subjects are available is where there are departments of religious education — and even these tend to teach only theory with no chance of practical application of knowledge.

Even when you study science, you have to test out your knowledge in the laboratory. So what of Buddhism which claims to be a science deeper than science itself? Without the opportunity for practical application of knowledge — certainly it becomes very difficult to understand as a subject.

When Buddhism is not taught at the university level, how can we even hope that our 'bachelors', 'masters' and 'doctors' who graduate and take leading positions in society will have any understanding of Buddhism or be endowed with Right View? How do we expect any of this generation who are our own children and grandchildren to have the ability to perpetuate our nation and religion when we are gone?

Therefore, to restate our problem, it is a mistake to think that our university graduates have become endowed with virtue as a result of their studies. Vocational expertise is a completely different area from that of virtue. When we need a qualified workforce we have plenty of places teaching vocational subjects — but when we need genuine Buddhists in our society, why don't we teach them Buddhism?

Computer programmers are very smart. Even those who think up the most wicked of computer viruses are undoubtedly smart. However, their thinking may be seriously twisted at the same time because what they have done is devoid of virtue.

Therefore, we have to be able to distinguish between vocational knowledge and virtue. Knowledge and virtue have to go hand in hand — because only virtue can make our vocation into Right Livelihood. We cannot do without virtue any more than a boat can do without a rudder. If a boat has no rudder, we need to equip it with one. In the same way, when young people lack virtue, then, we have to take responsibility for equipping them with it — and not to assume that the virtue will come as a by-product of vocational training.

The state of modern society where technology is advancing faster and faster forces educators to be constantly re-adjusting their curricula to keep up with the forefront of technology. It is, therefore, no surprise that more than ever, there is no space left in the curricula for any training in virtue.

The result of insufficient attention to moral training is now beginning to show through in modern society — from misuse of power by authorities at the top, to crime in society at large. Our youth are becoming more aggressive and more addicted to drugs — even teachers themselves are often part of the racket.

All these problems are things we need to work together to solve. But, the question remains of when to start and how?

Why don't we take a retrospective glance at the approach of our ancestors who insisted on training their children and grandchildren through ordination in Buddhism? Why don't the parents of today take an interest in sending their children for ordination during the school vacation instead of vying for scholarships to send their children abroad? Why not give young people the option of taking a year or two “out” from their studies to give themselves experience of ordination before returning to their studies — or a year or two between graduation and starting work?

If only parents were to see the value of Buddhism for their children and encourage their children to study Buddhism too, apart from availing themselves of children who will bring them pride throughout their lives — they help to build the future of the nation and Buddhism too. However, if you can think of nothing more than getting your children through education system as quickly as possible to start earning a wage — you have no guarantee that your child will not make the same heinous mistake as Prince Ajātasattu — and by that time the problem will be beyond repair.

Try thinking from a mother's standpoint as with Queen Videha, Ajātasattu's mother — at the time of the crisis, she could only count her regrets. Even though she might have liked to see her son ordain, now he had forgone his chance of ordination — the karma was too heavy. Even with all Ajātasattu's talent, he had erred into association with a fool. Eventually, the mother grieved so heavily, it led to her death. Who can stand tall in the eyes of others when someone in one's family has committed such a heinous crime?

In modern society, there are many examples of children murdering their parents in spite of their education — and this ought to be food for thought for parents who are weighing up the importance of including study of Buddhism alongside academic studies — to see the importance of teaching their children to distinguish good and evil, merit and demerit, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate or a life avoiding trial and error in both spiritual and worldly ways, success in Right Livelihood, bringing praise to the family and accruing merit for benefit in the hereafter.

Supposing someone who graduates, spends time in the monkhood, likes it, deciding to stay on in the monkhood for the rest of his life — it should be considered an honour for that person and luck for Buddhism. If he should leave the monkhood and start a family — then, at least, he will be able to keep himself on the right side of the law and to bring up his own children into moral citizens.

As for ladies in the younger generation — although they cannot ordain like men (these days) but they can still join summer camps for training in virtue during their summer vacation. They might even join longer courses of Buddhist study for as long as one or two years taking a ‘year’ or ‘two years’ out from university studies. Alternatively, after graduation, they can do the same for a period of one or two years before starting their working life. Even if they want to be a teacher of virtue to others for a profession, they would certainly be experienced enough to do so.

If parents dare to give their children the opportunity to study Buddhist virtues, those children can cultivate virtue without too much trouble as long as they themselves are clear how valuable such training is for their own future.

Given the opportunity and support of the educational policy-makers on national level, a restoration of a valuable tradition will be achieved and many of the most critical social problems will be averted.

### **13. Standards of Human Quality**

We have already concluded that any person’s goodness depends on their ability to be a good teacher to themselves — thinking, speaking and acting virtuously. There are some people who try to win our trust by saying and doing good things while in our presence — and if we are misled into associating with them, by the time we realize our mistake, it might be too late. Therefore, how can we tell whether any person is ‘good’ to the core ?

A simple answer is that ‘a good person is one who does their duty purposefully’. If a person behaves out of step with their purpose, even if it seems beneficial, it is indicative of malevolence. A student has the duty to study hard — not to take to the streets in protest against political policy. In crisis, they might have an important role to play in protecting the national infrastructure which allows them to study

— but when the crisis is over, they should be quick to get back to the classroom. If students sometimes help with humanitarian work that is good — but they should not do so much that it distracts from their study performance. In a field of corn, there is a time to plant corn and the farmers will remove all other plants that get in the way of the planting because they are considered ‘weeds’. However, if corn sprouts up on a golf course, it will be considered a ‘weed’ and removed because although beneficial, it is not in keeping with the purpose of the land where it is growing. In the same way that ‘weeds’ are out of place, a person who does things of benefit but out of keeping with their duty can never flourish as a virtuous person.

And what about Buddhist monks? Buddhism gives us three major principles of training, self-discipline [*sila*], concentration [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*]. Any monk who doesn’t follow these three trainings cannot be considered to be fulfilling his duty. Monks who practice the ‘black arts’, tell fortunes, give lottery predictions, organize marriages or who are witch doctors — might be justified from time to time if it is for the faith of the congregation — but if it is the monk’s main occupation, it is not in keeping with that monk’s true purpose and only makes it more difficult for him to attain the ‘fruits of being a true monk’.

In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, the Buddha clearly described the stages of purification of the mind — all arising from the prime movers of self-discipline, sensual restraint, mindfulness and contentedness — once one is able to practice these trainings purely, and get down to meditation, one will be able to overcome the Hindrances — concentration will deepen to the point of attaining the first to the fourth absorptions. If the mind is yet stiller, one can attain the Eight Supramundane knowledges and eventually liberation.

If a monk is unable to keep his Precepts purely, how can he hope to fulfil his duty or attain his aim?

Some critics might claim that ‘black arts’ are not aimed to accrue wealth but only to help others — but once it goes beyond the scope of the Vinaya, it might well be accused of heresy.

Furthermore, as soon as one monk practices black arts, he sets a bad example to other monks — and it opens the door to monks of False View who only ordain in order to amass wealth — eventually undermining Buddhism as a whole.

Even so, as a supporter of Buddhism, if you come across monks who practise heretical teachings — you should avoid close association with them or showing them respect — in just the same way that King Ajātasattu treated the six spiritual teachers contemporary to the Buddha by discontinuing his support for them.

Furthermore, withdrawing support from monks lax in their discipline is one way of helping the gullible not to follow teachings of some spiritual gurus might lead us into unwitting evil-doing — followers of Pakuddha Kaccāyana (one of

the six contemporaries of the Buddha) taught that killing people is no sin because people are no more than a collection of elements and stabbing them is just inserting a knife between those elements. Following such teaching how can we expect society to be peaceful ?

Therefore, the spiritual mentor we follow deserves careful and thorough consideration — and should fall within the scope of the standard of human goodness defined above.

#### 14. The Cause Behind the Arising of a New Religious Teacher

A study of pre-Buddhist history shows us that ancient Indian social structure was based on a caste system with four different castes:

- Warrior king [*khattiya*].
- Brahmin [*brāhmaṇa*].
- Merchants [*vessa*].
- Manual workers [*sudra*].

This social system caused social inequality and disadvantage for the lower castes. The religious beliefs in all castes consisted of worshipping gods. However, no matter how much they prayed to their gods, when it came to suffering, sorrow, illness and danger, the gods didn't seem to be able to help.

Social inequality and unabated suffering made people bored and they craved for security — leading to a virtuous spiritual search for something better, giving use to a wide variety of philosophies of which the six spiritual traditions described in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* are representative. In technical vocabulary, we call these six teachers '*tittha-kara*'. Even Buddhism can be considered as a member of the 'new wave' of thought.

Every one of the six teachers described was revolutionary for their time because they sought to overthrow old beliefs, such as, worship of gods. Also, excepting Pakudha Kaccāyana all six rejected the idea of castes.

When the Buddha started teaching, the other six teachers lost a lot of their followers to him — and some even went as far as to hire men to discredit him — but without success.

The reason for the drop in popularity of the other teachers was because their teaching were irrelevant or ineffective in solving the problems of everyday life.

**The ability to be a teacher to yourself** [*yonisomanasikāra*] can be applied at two levels of description:

- 1. General understanding of life and the world:** This means an understanding of phenomena according to perceived reality (common sense) — such as an understanding that birth, sickness and death really happen — or that those who are too lazy to earn a living end up poor — or that those who persevere and are industrious will achieve success and attain goals.
- 2. Understanding of life and the world at the level of ‘view’:** This means an understanding of life and the world through the insight of attaining the Dhammakāya of the arahats and the Buddha — insight in both worldly and spiritual ways into such things as merit and demerit, the law of karma, this world and the next, the cycle of rebirth, the Four Noble Truths and Nirvana.

As the six teachers lacked the ability to ‘be a teacher to themselves’ at the level of ‘view’ — they were unable to advise their disciples how to lead their lives in a truly peaceful way — detracting from the faith they earned from their supports thereby.

In those days, as now, new movements arise as people become bored of old ones. Often, they are unable to say precisely what is wrong with the old system. Often, they are not even able to say precisely whether their own teachings are right or wrong — all they know is that they want to start their own school and be the leader of it. They allow time to be the test of the value of their tradition — the better ones lasting longer than the less good — new ones replacing old ones throughout history.

Buddhism is different because it describes a higher reality which has already existed for as long as or the world itself. It is a timeless teaching:

- Not doing evil [*sīla*].
- Doing only good [*samādhi*].
- Purifying the mind [*paññā*].

Even so, there are still a large number of people (including Buddhists) who overlook the core of Buddhism which emphasizes the importance of actually practising Buddhist teachings themselves. The reaction has been regression into ‘black arts’ — because you don’t have to practice for yourself but you can rely on someone else to be your refuge for you. Eventually, many Buddhist have come to understand that such ‘black arts’ are actually part and parcel of Buddhism and for some these admixtures give people more solace even than Buddhist teachings themselves.

Thus, if you want to protect Buddhism from the infiltration by ‘black arts’ you should get down to earnest study and practice of what the Buddha actually taught from this moment onwards.

All of the observations collected herein are put only a part of the possible observations drawing from the Sāmañña-phala Sutta. If you, the reader, study this Sutta for yourself, you will manage to find many other possible details and viewpoints not mentioned here.

In any case, the main subject matter of the Sutta is the principles and objectives of Buddhism as a whole i.e. three major principles of training self-discipline [*sīla*], concentration [*samādhi*] and wisdom [*paññā*].

The aim is to overcome and uproot every last defilement in the mind.

The Buddha has explained every detail of the precepts and how they lead to attainment of the goal. Such teachings had never before appeared in any other teaching or scripture of any religion in the world.

The Buddha had the compassion to teach that the life of a householder is minimal in its opportunities for amassing merit (narrow path) and is mixed up with evils (attracts dust). He taught life as a monk gives more opportunities to amass good than the household life — the broad message we get from this Sutta is that in every person, no matter whether male or female, poor or rich all have access to liberation, if they practice properly according to Buddhist principles. Furthermore, only monks who practice properly according to those principles are truly ‘monks’. Householders should try to apply these teachings in their everyday life — only in this way can the Sāmaññaphala Sutta bring success and happiness every lifetime until attaining Nirvana.