

A Manual of Not-self

Anatta Dipani

Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

Aggamahāpaṇḍita, D.Litt.



Translated by

Ashin Sumaṇa

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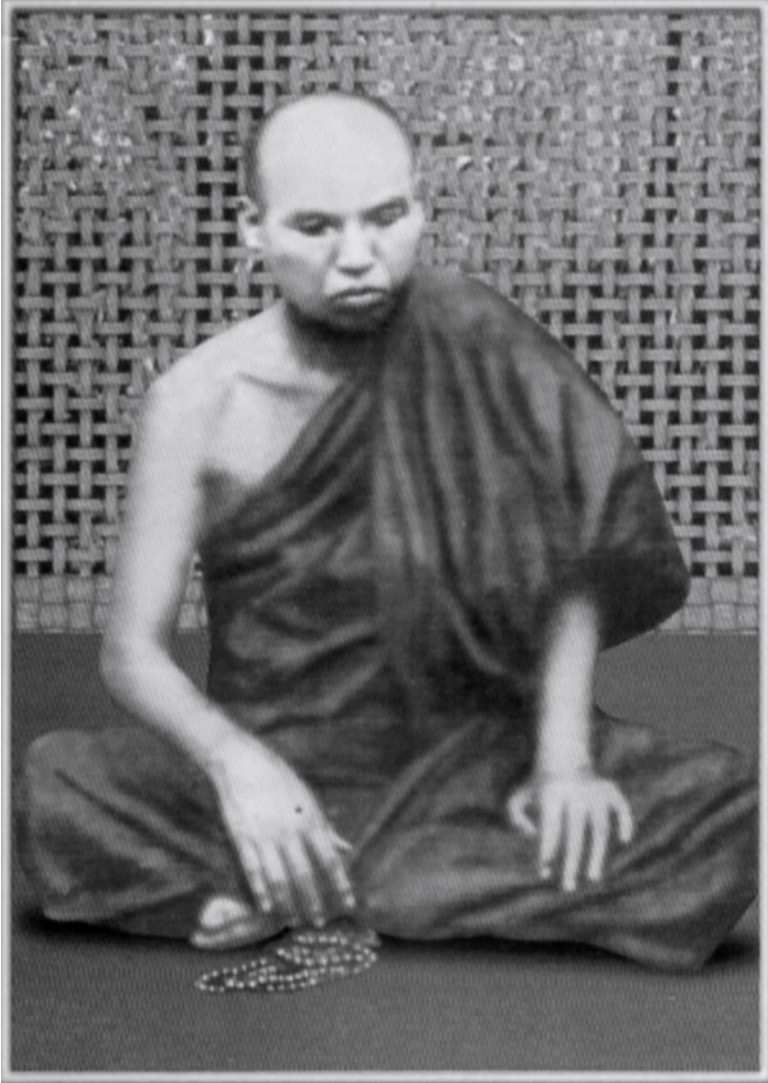
Edited by



Bhikkhu Pesala

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October 2021
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Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

Aggamahāpaṇḍita, D.Litt.

1846-1923

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Foreword

The world famous Ledi Sayādaw was perhaps the outstanding Buddhist figure of his age. He founded the Ledi monastery at Monywa and accepted many bhikkhu students from various parts of Burma. He imparted Buddhist teachings on all the aspects of learning (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), and realisation (*paṭivedha*), and wrote many essays, letters, poems, and manuals (Dīpani) in Burmese. In recognition of his noble work, the British Government awarded him the title of Aggamahāpaṇḍita in 1911 and later Her Majesty the Queen of England conferred on him the degree of D.Litt. (Honoris Causa).

While residing at Shwetaung-U monastery on the other side of Alone Myoma in 1262 Burmese Era (1901) he wrote this 'Anatta Dīpani.'

The Burmese edition was printed and published by "Zwe Printing and Publication."

U Phone Kyaw
Sāsanadhaja Siriparava
Dhammācariya

Editor's Preface

This book was given to me over thirty years ago by James Patrick Stuart Ross, an American who travelled to Burma several times to engage the help of able translators to make the works by Ledi Sayādaw available to Buddhists outside of Burma who were unable to read them in Burmese.

As far as I know, his edition has never made it into print, and I could not find it by searching the Internet.

I have reduced the use of Pāli (the original translation contained far too many Pāli terms that would be unintelligible to the majority of Buddhists), and I have added numerous footnotes. I have checked the quotations against the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka and corrected spellings. I have given the cross-references to the Roman script editions of the Pāli text, rather than to the Burmese MSS as most readers will not be able to find them otherwise.

Looking at the document properties of this publication is very revealing. Apparently, I first created it in 2004, which would have been with PagePlus 10, then edited it in PagePlus X5, X6, and X7, which were released in 2010, 2011, and 2013, before resuming work on it again in October 2021 with PagePlus X9. Still, on resuming work, fewer than twenty pages had been edited when I last stopped work on it in 2013.

The thirty-year-old edition that I have can be download from my website if you wish to see what a raw state it was in when I received it. I hope that readers will understand why it took so long to get it even to this stage, and make allowances for any defects in this edition, when they realise that I had to practically rewrite many paragraphs from scratch.

I hope that this first edition will go at least some way to making the late Sayādaw's writings accessible. I realise that there are still many defects, but I will endeavour to fix them as time permits. If anyone has the Burmese edition, they may be able to offer me valuable insights, and make suggestions to improve the translation to make it more faithful to the original.

Bhikkhu Pesala
London
October, 2021

Preface by James Patrick Stewart Ross

It should be noted that the reason Ledi Sayādaw began this manual with an instruction on the method of practicing insight meditation (*vipassanā*), is because any understanding of not-self (*anatta*) that is not based on insight will ultimately prove to be little more than an abstract idea unrelated to one's perception of the way things are. There is naught that can be called original outside of one's experience; not even the Buddha's infinite wisdom can be rightly perceived as original until one has undertaken the practice to perceive its original nature. Wisdom and understanding are strongest when they are supported by study and experience. Any idea that is held without study and experience is merely hearsay regardless of its import according to the Buddha's teaching. There is no such thing as a simple method of instruction that would only require a person to act without knowledge or regard like a mynah bird that repeats words unknowing of the meaning or the skill to investigate and consider their value and various effects. Common knowledge demands a good amount of analysis if it is to have any lasting value and the knowledge of things subtle demands much more still. What Ledi Sayādaw has done here is make a fair approach to understanding the Buddhist teaching of not-self through the method of mindfulness of feelings (*vedanānussati*). Although there are other methods of insight meditation by which one may understand not-self this should prove a valuable introduction for all readers.

For those curious about the other methods the Manual of Meditation (*Kammaṭṭhāna Dīpanī*) may be published later.¹

James Patrick Stewart Ross, esq.

¹ This probably refers to "A Treatise on Meditation," which is nearly 300 pages. I probably won't ever get around to editing it, but it is available [from my website](#) (ed.)

A Manual of Not-self

Anatta Dipani

Mindfulness of the Body

Anyone wishing to undergo one of the insight meditation exercises will first have to develop mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) so that the mind penetrates the body and becomes concentrated on the objects inside whenever one wants. Mindfulness of the body means:–

1. Mindfulness of respiration (*ānāpānasati*).
2. Clear comprehension of postures (*iriyāpatha sampajañña*), as stated in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Of these two, the mindfulness of respiration has been dealt with more fully in [A Manual of Respiration](#) (*Ānāpāna Dipani*).

Clear Comprehension of Postures

This is what has been taught by the Buddha regarding clear comprehension of the four postures (*iriyāpatha sampajañña*):–

*“Puna ca paraṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhu gacchanto vā ‘Gacchāmi’ti pajānāti, thito vā ‘Thitomhī’ti pajānāti, nisinno vā ‘Nisinnomhī’ti pajānāti, sayāno vā ‘Sayānomhī’ti pajānāti, yathā yathā vā paṇassa kāyo paṇihito hoti, tathā tathā naṃ pajānāti.”*¹

“Then again, monks, when walking, a monk knows that he is walking, he walks mindfully; when standing, he knows that he is standing, he stands mindfully; when sitting, he knows that he is sitting, he sits mindfully; when lying down, he knows that he is lying down, he lies down mindfully; whatever posture he adopts, he knows that he does so, mindfully.”

If mindfulness of respiration is too subtle and unsuitable, clear comprehension of postures (*iriyāpatha sampajañña*) must be practiced. How is it to be practised? There are four postures: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

1. In walking, whenever you make a step, apply your mind to your steps: “Walking, walking,” and then walk. Don’t make a single step without

¹ D.ii.292.

- mindfulness. Don't allow any external sense-objects to intrude. It is good if you are fully conscious of the three movements of your step: lifting, moving, and dropping. If, in the beginning, you are unable to pay attention to all three, please pay attention to every movement of dropping only. Please don't think it is easy. It is a matter of controlling the mind, which moves like the wind blowing. You will come to know that it is difficult when you try to make several steps.
2. In standing, you must know yourself: "Standing" and stand. Don't stand without acknowledgment of standing. Don't allow yourself to stand without mindfulness of standing. While standing, you must pay attention and apply your mind: "Standing, standing." Don't allow your mind to wander. Don't allow any sense-object to intrude.
 3. In sitting, you must pay attention to your own body and know yourself: "I am sitting" and then you must sit. Please don't sit without mindfulness of sitting. While sitting you must always apply your mind to sitting: "Sitting, sitting." Please don't allow your mind to wander and don't allow any other sense-object to intrude.
 4. In reclining, you must know: "I am reclining," and then you must recline. Please don't recline without mindfulness of reclining. While reclining you must always apply your mind to your body: "Reclining, reclining. Please don't allow your mind to wander and don't allow any other sense-objects to intrude.

Morality of Sense-faculty Restraint

If you see or hear something, just keep your mind on seeing or hearing only; don't allow it to wander to the object seen or heard. In this matter the Buddha taught sense-faculty restraint (*indriya-saṃvara*) as follows:–

*“Tasmātiha te, Bāhiya, evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: ‘Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati’ti. Evañhi te, Bāhiya, sikkhitabbaṃ.”*¹

“Therefore, Bāhiya, in seeing, is just the seen; in hearing, is just the heard; in the cognised (smelled, tasted, or touched), is just the cognised, and in the knowing, is just the known. Practice like this Bāhiya!”

¹ Ud.8, cf. S.iv.73 where the same teaching is given to Mālukyaputta.

This is the morality of sense-faculty restraint (*indriya-saṃvara-sīla*) of the Pāli text taught by the Buddha to Bāhiya not to allow any initial application (*vitakka*) or sustained application (*vicāra*), and to reject any other sense-objects as soon as they arise through the six sense-doors.

Undeluded Clear Comprehension

*“Yathā yathā vā paṇassa kayo paṇihito hoti,
tathā tathā naṃ pajānāti.”*

This Pāli text says that the four postures and bodily movements must be kept under observation so that they are not allowed to change without control and restraint as they have usually done before.

What is necessary, in brief, according to mindfulness of the body, is for the meditator to control the mind so that it does not run away from the physical body. It is called undeluded clear comprehension (*asammoha saṃpajañña*) when even small changes of postures are not allowed to occur without clear comprehension.

Clear comprehension of postures, and undeluded clear comprehension as shown in the Commentary are methods suitable only for those of profound knowledge and deep understanding. What is essential for the two types of clear comprehension? These methods as already described are suitable for the common people at the present time, who find it difficult to practise even the morality of sense-faculty restraint.

Even in the case of “I walk,” “I stand,” etc., which belong to the perception of “I,” a sentient-being, life, etc., they are still very far from the eradication of these perceptions. In fact, these perception of “I,” sentient-being, soul, etc., are not yet essential in the prior effort to develop mindfulness of the body such as “When walking he knows, ‘I am walking’,” etc.

What is essential is to focus your mind inside your own body with mindfulness, which means restraint by mindfulness (*sati-saṃvara*) sense-faculty restraint (*indriya-saṃvara*) and mindfulness of the body (*kāyagata sati*). As for eradication of perception of a sentient-being (*satta-saññā*), perception of a self (*atta-saññā*), perception of a soul (*jīva-saññā*), it is only at the end of Satipaṭṭhāna that knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) is developed as “He dwells contemplating origination factors (*samudayadhammānupassī vā kayasmiṃ viharati*),” etc., when perceptions of an individual, a living-being, a self, or a soul will be eradicated.

This completes the summary of clear comprehension of postures.

The same applies to the remaining sections on mindfulness of the body such as “He practices clear comprehension in going and coming (*abhikkante paṭikkante samajānakāri hoti*),” etc.

This completes mindfulness of the body.

Preliminary Mindfulness

As this book deals with feeling as a meditation subject, I should quote the Buddha’s words:—

“*Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu sukhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vediyamāno
’Sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmi’ ti pajānāti.*”

For the development of preliminary mindfulness (*pubbabhāga sati*) in dealing with the subject of mindfulness of feelings (*vedanā-satipaṭṭhāna*), I am inclined to think that it is difficult to comprehend various types of feeling. Therefore, I should first deal with mindfulness of the body, which is quite obvious. Mindfulness of the body that has been properly developed will have to be coordinated with insight meditation that may be undertaken later. By treating insight meditation as comprehension of sense-objects (*gocara sampajañña*), you will have to develop mindfulness of the body while your mind is being withdrawn from insight meditation. Mindfulness of the body should not be given up throughout your life.

Who Needs to Practice Mindfulness of the Body? Insight (*vipassanā*) is the outcome of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and wisdom (*paññā*). The business is finished if knowledge and wisdom become perfect with a break-through of intuition. For a man of powerful knowledge and wisdom, it is not necessary to devote his practice entirely to the development of mindfulness of the body, the correct clear comprehension of impermanence, suffering, and not-self will suffice. For those who cannot comprehend like this, it is suggested that they should first practice mindfulness of the body to develop calm and serenity before doing insight meditation exercises.

This completes preliminary mindfulness.

Mindfulness of Feelings

Let me now deal with meditation on feeling (*vedanā-kammaṭṭhāna*).

We should understand that there are three kinds of profound knowledge (*pariññā*): 1) direct knowledge (*ñāta-pariññā*), 2) analytical knowledge (*tīraṇa-pariññā*), and 3) dispelling knowledge (*pahāna-pariññā*).

1. Direct knowledge (*ñāta-pariññā*) means analytical knowledge (*vavatthāna-ñāna*), knowledge discerning conditionality (*paccayapariggaha-ñāna*), and profound knowledge of feeling regarding the truth of suffering.
2. Analytical knowledge (*tiraṇa-pariññā*)¹ means profound knowledge of feeling as impermanent, suffering, and not-self.
3. Dispelling knowledge (*pahāna-pariññā*) means profound knowledge of feeling that uproots craving, conceit, and wrong-view.

Only when we reach the culmination of dispelling knowledge can we come completely to the end of contemplating feelings. When we attain Arahantship, we perfect dispelling knowledge on feelings. The path of Stream-winning can completely dispel perceptions, thoughts, and views of permanence and self, regarding feelings.

Not-self can be fully comprehended by a Stream-winner. Suffering can only be dispelled completely by an Arahant. The other Noble Ones cannot comprehend suffering completely so they cannot dispel craving and conceit. Stream-winners still enjoy sensual pleasures.

The truth of the cause of suffering (*samudaya-saccā*) that is dispelled completely by the lower paths is the one that arises together with the perception, thought, and view of permanence (*nicca-saññā*, *nicca-citta*, *nicca-diṭṭhi*), self (*atta-saññā*, *atta-citta*, *atta-diṭṭhi*), and the thought and view of happiness (*sukhā-citta*, *sukhā-diṭṭhi*). The cause of suffering — craving (*taṇhā*) and conceit (*māna*) — that arises together with the perception of happiness, cannot be dispelled by the lower paths. It follows that Visākhā, who became a Stream-winner at the age of seven was enjoying sensual pleasures as long as she was giving birth to ten sons and ten daughters. She is still enjoying sensual pleasures now in the celestial realm as a queen of the Nimmānaratī devaloka.

Sakka, who is a Stream-winner, and also king of the deities in Tāvātimsa, is still enjoying sensual pleasures with thirty-six million celestial queens. One who is a mere Stream-winner cannot be known as such by his friends and companions, who are ordinary worldlings, living together with him. Like the ordinary worldlings, a Stream-winner enjoys, with the exception of misdeeds of word and thought (*duccarita*), all kinds of sense pleasures and luxuries of life including the accumulation of wealth and property.

These are the special items of interest of direct knowledge of abandoning (*pahāna-pariññā*).

¹ **Tiraṇa:** (p. 304) [from *tireti* 2] measurement, judgment, recognition, Nd2 413 (*v. l. tir°*); Nett 54 (*+vipassanā*), 82 (*-ñāna*), 191; Vism 162. — *tiraṇa* is one of the 3 *pariññā*, viz. *ṭ°*, *pahāna°*, *ñāta-pariññā*. See under **pariññā**. (PTS Dictionary)

The Three Hallucinations

There are three kinds of hallucination (*vipallāsa*) to be dispelled by insight:—

1. Hallucinations of perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*),
2. Hallucinations of thought (*citta-vipallāsa*),
3. Hallucinations of view (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*).

Of these three, the hallucination of perception is of three kinds:—

1. In the impermanent, permanence is perceived (*nicca-saññā*),
2. In suffering, happiness is perceived (*sukhā-saññā*),
3. In not-self, self is perceived (*atta-saññā*).

These are the three wrong perceptions (*micchā-saññā*).

The hallucination of thought is also of three kinds:—

1. The impermanent is thought of as permanent,
2. Suffering is thought of as happiness,
3. Not-self is thought of as self.

These are the three wrong thoughts (*micchā-citta*).

The hallucination of view is also of three kinds:—

1. The impermanent is viewed as permanent,
2. Suffering is viewed as happiness,
3. Not-self is viewed as self.

These are three kinds of wrong-view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). Altogether there are nine hallucinations.

Hallucination of Thought

Due to wrong-perception, wrong-thought, and wrong-view, which are absolute realities (*paramattha-dhammā*), the mind can only comprehend a single combination of mind and matter as a whole. This is the concept of aggregation (*samūha-paññatti*), which means a composition, just as the flowing water of a river is seen as one solid mass of water, or as a fire is thought of as one whole solid mass of fire.

Due to wrong-view the mind cannot cognise mind and matter analytically and separately as ultimate realities, but it can only cognise mind and matter as a single solid mass according to the conception of aggregation,

which is the conventional truth. It is just like a flowing river or a burning flame are seen by ordinary people as a single solid mass of water or fire.

Likewise, the mind cannot cognise the various kinds of mind and matter analytically and separately at every moment of their arising and vanishing; it can only cognise them as a solid continuum of a mental and physical process, as a concept of continuity (*santati-paññatti*), each arising and vanishing at every separate moment. Ordinary people see the mind inside the body as one single whole throughout the span of life. The current of river water flowing down from upper Burma is as the same single volume of water, when it enters the sea. The flame of a fire that was burning during the first watch of the night is seen as the same flame when it was still burning during the second watch of the night. This is the hallucination of thought (*citta vipallāsa*).

Hallucination of View

It is hallucination of view if you hold that the mind inside the body is only one mind lasting throughout the span of life and that this mind is the essence or self (*atta*) of the living-being concerned. This is the hallucination of view.

Hallucination of Perception

Perception (*saññā*) holds no view of its own to discern what is what; it is mere perception of what the mind or wrong-view cognises as being right. This is the hallucination of perception. Perception grows more powerful when it lasts longer, and it is then very difficult to dispel.

These are the specific descriptions of the three hallucinations

The three hallucinations are complete.

Diseases to Be Cured by Insight

Three Kinds of Grasping

There are three types of grasping (*gāha*) or clinging:—

1. Grasping of craving (*taṇhā-gāha*),
2. Grasping of conceit (*māna-gāha*), and
3. Grasping of wrong-view (*diṭṭhi-gāha*).

Strong attachment to the world is called grasping (*gāha*). There are also three other kinds of grasping attached firmly to phenomena:—

1. Craving grasps onto mind and matter as its own.
2. Conceit grasps onto “I” such as “I am a deity,” “I am a millionaire,” “I am a man,” “I am a woman,” “Who am I,” “I see,” “I hear,” “I plan,” “I know,” “I speak,” “I shout,” “I go,” “I come,” etc.
3. Wrong-view grasps onto self or soul. “I have a self that sees, hears, plans, knows, speaks, moves, goes, comes,” etc.

Disappearance of the Three Kinds of Grasping

If you comprehend correctly the impermanent nature of the aggregates of mind and matter, the wrong perception of what is impermanent as permanent, and the wrong thought and wrong-view will disappear. With the disappearance of these three, craving, conceit, and wrong-view — which are the three kinds of grasping — will also disappear.

Similarly, if you comprehend correctly the suffering nature of mind and matter, the three kinds of wrong-view of happiness, which are errors, and the three kinds of attachment as happiness, which are grasping, will disappear.

If you comprehend correctly the not-self nature of mind and matter, the three kinds of wrong-view of substantiality or self, which are the three kinds of grasping, will disappear. This is to be understood.

If you wish to dispel those three errors with the three kinds of grasping, you will have to practice insight meditation. When those errors and grasping disappear completely from your mind without remainder you can take it for granted that your practice of insight is complete. Then direct knowledge, analytical knowledge, and dispelling knowledge, which are the three profound knowledges of the Omniscient Buddha’s dispensation, have all been successfully accomplished.

This is how the medicine of insight is to be used to cure all kinds of disease.

Five Kinds of Feeling

Now, the three kinds of feeling will be discussed in serial order. In dealing with direct knowledge, the natural characteristics and various kinds of feeling should be understood. The cause and dependent origination of feeling should be understood, the satisfaction (*assāda*) and danger (*ādinava*) of feeling should be understood, and also the features of the truth of suffering. How to understand the natural characteristics and various kinds of feeling out of these five? The answer is that feeling is of five kinds:—

1. Painful feeling (*dukkha-vedanā*),
2. Sorrowful feeling (*domanassa-vedanā*),
3. Pleasant feeling (*sukha-vedanā*),
4. Happy feeling (*somanassa-vedanā*),
5. Neutral or indifferent feeling (*upekkhā-vedanā*).

Painful Feeling

In brief, this means not feeling well, unhappy, painful, tiresome, unwholesome, aching, wearisome, hot, feverish, cold, shivering, agony, itching; all these are the elements of suffering (*dukkha-dhātu*), phenomena of suffering (*dukkha-dhamma*), and the nature of suffering (*dukkha-sabhāva*).

Pain is very clearly understood in this world. It is so obvious that you will have to complain about it, or weep about it. It is so familiar that you worry about it, and fear it. People are terrified of suffering that poses a threat to their body. Many kinds of diseases could cause all sorts of physical suffering. Therefore, diseases are universally feared in the world.

Harmful foods, adverse climate, extreme heat and cold, dangerous places, risky activities, life-threatening accidents and incidents are feared and avoided because people are afraid of physical pain. The fear of the four lower realms (*apāya*); the three calamities (war, plagues, and famine); fear of the five kinds of enemy (floods, fires, wicked kings, thieves, bad heirs); danger from tigers, elephants, snakes, mosquitoes, flies, parasites, ogres, ghosts *etc.* are the causes of the fear of suffering.

This pain pervades the entire body whenever disease breaks out. Note that this element of suffering arises over the entire body wherever there is a painful feeling if a test is made with a sharp needle — from the soles of the foot to the scalp, including inside the skin and flesh, veins, bones, bone-marrow, intestines, liver, lungs, brains *etc.* A meditator who is striving to perfect this meditation on feeling, if determined to catch this element of suffering must try and penetrate the entire body inside and out to see with knowledge and wisdom what has been experienced throughout life, what is being experienced now, or what is going to be experienced in the future; one must catch hold of this element. If one cannot catch it with knowledge and wisdom, insight will not arise even though one contemplates feeling as impermanent, which is meditation on the three characteristics. Genuine insight arises only when the element of suffering is fully comprehended.

This completes painful feeling.

Sorrowful Feeling

Sorrowful feeling (*domanassa-vedanā*) means mental sadness, weariness, grief, aversion, misery, sorrow, distraction, anger, discontent, worry, disappointment, annoyance, despair, distressed, lamentation, anxiety, melancholy, hate, etc. These are all mental attitudes related to hatred and anger, which are painful mental feelings or sorrow.

Any unpleasant or unhappy mind caused by the seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or knowing belongs to sorrowful feeling. This is obvious. This is so clear that you will have to weep or complain when you get offended. An outbreak of anger gives rise to sorrow. Any worldling confronted with the four undesirable vicissitudes of life: i.e. loss (*alābha*), defame (*ayasa*), blame (*nindā*), or pain (*dukkha*), is bound to have sorrowful feelings.

Fear of a bad reputation and unpopularity, humiliation and slanderous rumours, are all causes of sorrow. There are similar fears about separation from beloved children, gold, silver, and jewellery, or association with the unloved such as enemies and disliked that one has experienced, is experiencing, and is going to experience, throughout life. Whatever sorrowful feeling appears from moment to moment, one is advised to catch it with knowledge without fail. Only when one can catch it with knowledge, will one be able to develop insight knowledge. Otherwise, one will not gain insight in spite of repeated contemplation of the three characteristics of feeling.

This completes sorrowful feeling.

Happy Feeling

Happy feeling (*somanassa-vedanā*) means happiness, satisfaction, gladness, bliss, joy, satisfaction, delight, peace of mind, joy, smiling, laughing, expression of delight by one who is able to see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or to think whatever one wishes. It refers also to pleasant feeling (*sukha-vedanā*).

Neutral Feeling

Neutral or indifferent feeling (*upekkhā-vedanā*) means that there is no distinct feeling in the absence of pleasure, pain, happiness, or sorrow. It is a feeling that is neither good nor bad. Whenever consciousness arises through any of the six sense-doors there is always a feeling, and there can be no consciousness without it. The kind of feeling that is neutral occurs intermittently. It is in the human world that feelings of indifference mostly occur.

This completes the exposition of the five kinds of feeling.

Cause and Effect

The following is an exposition of feelings, their causes, and their dependent origination. In the Buddha's teachings, eye-contact (*cakkhu-samphassa*), ear-contact (*sota-samphassa*), nose-contact (*ghāna-samphassa*), tongue-contact (*jivhā-samphassa*), body-contact (*kāya-samphassa*), and mind-contact (*mano-samphassa*), are the six kinds of contact (*phassa*) that are the causes for feelings to arise. Any of the six sense-objects that comes into contact with its sense-door, gives rise to consciousness. It is the nature of consciousness just to cognise, nothing more. There is no such thing as feeling at this stage.

Consciousness, Contact, and Feeling

Three Divisions

When the element of consciousness (*viññāṇa-dhātu*) arises, the element of contact arises with it. As a result, the essence (*rasa*) of the sense-object manifests clearly. Meanwhile, feeling arises together with the phenomenon of contact to enjoy the essence of the sense-object. This is how feeling arises through the influence of contact. Please try to understand this clearly.

A simile: the six kinds of sense-objects are like sugarcane full of sweet juice. The six mortars are like the six kinds of consciousness. The six pestles are like the six kinds of contact. The sweet sugarcane juice is like the essence of the sense-object. Those who drink and enjoy the sweet juice are like the six kinds of feeling. These are the three divisions of the elements of consciousness, contact, and feeling respectively, Please try to make the divisions correctly.

Eighteen kinds of Contact

There are eighteen kinds of contact: contact felt as pleasant (*sukha-vedaniya-phassa*), contact felt as painful (*dukkha-vedaniya-phassa*), contact felt as neither painful nor pleasant (*adukkhamasukha-vedaniya-phassa*), each numbering six, thus eighteen in all. Eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and mind-contact are each of three kinds: pleasant, painful, or neutral.

Because of longing (*icchā*), a feeling of happiness arises. Of the above eighteen, a pleasant feeling of contact arises when a desirable object is seen by the eye. This kind of contact gives rise to a feeling of happiness. A feeling of unhappiness arises when an undesirable object is seen by the eye; this is a kind of contact that gives rise to a feeling of unhappiness. A neutral

feeling arises when an object that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant is seen by the eye. This is a kind of contact that gives rise to a neutral feeling. The other five sense-doors each have three kinds of feeling.

There could be two kinds of contact and two kinds of feeling if the contact experienced as neutral, and neutral feeling, were added to the contact experienced as pleasant and pleasant feeling, and included in the three kinds of contact, and three kinds of feelings. If the indifferent neutral feeling that arises on an unwelcome pleasant object were added to painful feeling, and if the neutral feeling that arises on an agreeable neutral object, were added to pleasant feeling there could be two kinds of pleasant and painful feelings.

There are differences between the various kinds of contact (the causes) and various kinds of pleasant feelings *etc.*, (the effects).

Dependent Origination of Consciousness

In the exposition of the dependent origination of feeling, let us deal first with painful feeling. If you step on a sharp stone and your sole is hurt, you feel that your foot is painful. At the spot where pain is felt, consciousness, contact, and feeling appear simultaneously. At that point there is a sensitive body-base (*kāyapasāda-rūpa*), and the object of hardness (*paṭhaviphoṭṭhabba-ārammaṇa*). Those two are materiality (*rūpa*). The sensitive body-base (*kāyāyatana*) is the internal sense-faculty (*ajjhātāyatana*) whereas the sharp stone is the external sense-faculty (*bāhirāyatana*). The external base comes into contact with the internal base, which means hardness *etc.* As a result of contact, consciousness arises which is body-consciousness.

Dependent Origination of Knowledge

Dependent origination means the arising of mental phenomena as a result of contact of an internal sense-faculty with an external sense-faculty. It is not that body-consciousness was present inside the body before the contact, nor has it come from outside. It is just the knowledge that cognises the phenomenon of contact at the very moment it occurs. It is called knowledge of dependent origination. For example, a spark is emitted when a flint is struck by another stone. That spark was present neither in the flint nor in the stone before the striking. It is just a momentary event at the instant of contact. It is the same as a sound made when one object strikes another. It is just a momentary sound produced at the instant the objects strike one another. This is the dependent origination of the element of body-consciousness.

The exposition of the dependent origination of consciousness is complete.

Dependent Origination of Contact

*“Kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ,
tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso.”¹*

“Body-consciousness arises dependent on the body and the tactile sense-object, the coincidence of the three is contact.”

It is like a certain amount of ripened tamarind put into a mortar and pounded by a pestle as a result of which gum come out. The three: tamarind, mortar, and pestle, are involved simultaneously. The mortar represents the body-faculty, the pestle represents the tactile object, the tamarind represents body-consciousness, and the gum represents contact.

The example of a spark and that of sound referred to in the exposition of the element of consciousness hold good in this and should be treated as momentary phenomena.

The exposition of the dependent origination of contact is complete.

Dependent Origination of Feeling

It is because of the element of contact that a violent impact of contact with the earth element (*paṭhavi-phoṭṭhabba*) arises and causes painful feelings. That is why the Buddha said: “Dependent on contact, feeling arises.” This is to show that the element of contact gives rise to feeling. For other details of the dependent origination of feeling refer to the section on consciousness.

The exposition of the dependent origination of feeling is complete.

Dependent Origination of Painful Feeling

One who is practicing meditation on feelings will have to contemplate the three characteristics of consciousness, contact, and feeling together as a whole. In contemplating this as a whole, the three characteristics need not be separated, but in the present case of dependent origination these three characteristics must be separated. Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) is being discussed here to enable the meditator to understand clearly with clear comprehension that the painful feeling caused by a sharp stone piercing the sole of the foot was a momentary incident that happened instantly as if it had fallen from the sky. Only when this important aspect of dependent origination is understood perfectly, will the characteristics of impermanence and not-self be understood properly.

¹ M.iii.282.

Attachment to Perceptions of Permanence and Self

It is because the above important point of dependent origination is not realised perfectly that there is attachment to permanence, self, the three hallucinations, and the three kinds of grasping. How is it attachment? In feeling pain when hit by a stone, the man complains: "I feel pain." This is attachment. The attachment: "I feel pain" is the perception of permanence and the perception of self. It is perception of permanence when one perceives in the mind that the "I" who feels pain has existed all the time in the body.

Pain is a kind of feeling. It is the perception of self when one perceives that feeling is the essence of "I," a sentient-being, or self attached to "I" since conception in the mother's womb; and it appears whenever or wherever a sense-object comes into contact with a sense-door, and that it is always latent inside the physical body when there is no sense contact through the sense-door.

Comprehension of Dependent Origination

When the important point that feeling is just a momentary phenomenon, arising according to dependent origination is understood, it becomes clear that feeling is not something that has existed inside the body since its very beginning, but it has happened as a result of an accident when a stone or thorn comes into contact with the sole as if it had come from space, and that it is not a permanent thing nor an essence of self existing always inside the body. If it is the injury done to the sole of the foot that gives rise to a painful feeling, you will have to accept that any similar feeling that arises anywhere on your body is the dependent origination of a painful feeling.

As a meditator, you should do your best to realise that it is the dependent origination of painful feeling that you have been experiencing as pain, aching, *etc.*, due to excessive cold or heat inside or outside the physical body.

End of brief comments on the dependent origination of painful feeling.

Dependent Origination of Pleasant Feeling

As regards pleasant feeling (*sukhā vedanā*), there are (1) soft and delicate touches of the earth element, (2) cool and warm touches of the fire element, and (3) motion or pressure of the air element. These feelings are found in the brains, in the flesh, in the lung, in the heart, in the intestine, outside the head, on the back and on the breast. There are the places, as we have already shown above, where touches inside and outside the body come into contact with the sensory surface of the body. As a result, feelings of pleasure, such

as “this is very good,” “this is sublime,” arises from time to time. Please refer to the details of the previous discussion including examples on dependent origination of painful feeling.

Change of Pain to Pleasure

If you observe your own body when you suffer painful feelings due to excessive heat, you may find that a certain part of your body feels cold like cold air coming from the east or from fans. Contact with this cold air gives rise to pleasant feelings, which you think are very good. On cessation of this contact with the cold air, all the pleasant feeling will subside when heat may come again. At the time you are suffering from painful feeling due to excessive cold, you may find by chance someone or something to help you with heat from a fire or from the sun, or a blanket, *etc.* It will be seen from this that dependent on contact there arises pleasant feeling and when this contact is withdrawn, pleasant feeling ceases and the unpleasant feeling arises again.

Please notice the special characteristics of your body as stated above to get a realistic view of the dependent origination of feeling as it really is.

Dependent Origination of Happy Feeling

Happy feeling (*somanassa vedanā*), which means joy, gladness, happiness, well-being, peace of mind, *etc.*, arises when you feel joy and happiness on seeing an object that you like to see. That visible object comes into contact with your eye and mind at the same time.

When you see the moon, one form of the moon appears in the eye and the form of the moon appears in the mind too. At this time subconsciousness (*bhavaṅga*) begins to vibrate, like the mechanism of a pocket-watch being wound up, with the impulsive consciousness of happiness (*somanassa-javana-citta*), as a result of which the face immediately becomes full of joy and fresh materiality. Those near you who see your face will realise at once that you are experiencing the impulsions of a happy mind because you have seen what you like to see or have got what you wanted to get, *etc.*

The word ‘contact’ denotes the element of contact. The words ‘joy, gladness, happiness, well-being,’ *etc.* denote happy feeling.

Although they may say those words, they do not understand the dependent origination of the impulsive consciousness, impulsive contact, or impulsive feeling. They know, see, and understand only on the basis of an hallucination. Why is this? Because they do not understand the analysis of momentary elements they say: “That man knows,” “That man touches,”

“That man is happy,” “That man laughs,” “That man smiles,” etc., which are all based on the wrong notion of a person, a living-being, or a self. They neither know, nor do they see the nature of dependent origination.

Correct Understanding of Dependent Origination

To understand dependent origination correctly means:–

You see what you wish to see and the influence of the image of that visible object gives rise to the following elements in your heart as if they had come from space:–

1. The element of mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) cognising that shape or form.
2. The element of mental contact (*mano-samphassa-dhātu*).
3. The element of happy feeling born of mental contact (*mano-samphassajā-somanassa-vedanā-dhātu*).

Due to the influences of these elements, the whole of your face becomes full of joy or material qualities born of mind (*cittaja rūpa*). This is how to understand what happens correctly by way of dependent origination.

Wrong Understanding

People are accustomed to saying: “A person knows and sees,” “A living-being knows and sees.” This is a habitual way of thinking that the man or animal who knows or sees is the same throughout life. It follows, therefore, that in saying: “That man knows,” “That man visualises,” or “That man is satisfied,” it conveys the impression that the man or animal is identified with a single permanent entity who knows throughout life. Who sees in his mind, who is satisfied? Those elements do not exist in this way. They are just visiting elements (*āgantuka-dhātu*). They appear suddenly as a result of subjective and objective contact as if they had come from space. It is therefore clear that what ordinary people know and see is mistaken.

You should realise that whatever object you see or hear, whatever food you taste every morning, whatever sensual pleasure you enjoy, whatever good chance and opportunity you get at any time, any animate and inanimate things, whatever praise you hear about yourself, whatever you think that makes you feel so delighted that you sometimes burst out laughing and smiling several thousand times a day, all those are nothing but contact of subject and object in accordance with the law of dependent origination.

The exposition of dependent origination of happy feeling is complete.

Dependent Origination of Sorrowful Feeling

Sadness, worry, misery, weeping, helplessness, all of these are feelings of unhappiness, and are similar in nature to happy feelings — the only difference being sorrow instead of happiness.

The exposition of dependent origination of sorrowful feeling is complete.

Dependent Origination of Neutral Feeling

Please refer to Sukhā, Dukkha, Somanassa, Domanassa, already dealt with above and pick up those that are appropriate for application with due alteration of details to neutral feeling, which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It a feeling of indifference on seeing, hearing, smelling *etc.*, at places where there are trees, bushes, houses, gardens *etc.*

The exposition of dependent origination of neutral feeling is complete.

Expositions of five feelings, and the dependent origination thereof are complete.

Satisfaction and Danger of Feelings

This is the exposition of the satisfaction (*assāda*) and danger (*ādinava*) in pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Assāda means satisfaction or enjoyment. Satisfaction means the presence of happy feeling (*somanassa*).

Ādinava means dissatisfaction or the absence of joy. Dissatisfaction means the presence of sorrowful feeling (*domanassa*).

There are eight vicissitudes of life (*aṭṭha-lokadhamma*):—

1. Gain (*lābha*), the acquisition of wealth and property,
2. Loss (*alābha*), the loss or non-acquisition of property,
3. Fame (*yasa*), a good reputation,
4. Defame (*ayasa*), a bad reputation,
5. Blame (*nindā*), rebuke, contempt, scorn,
6. Praise (*paṣaṃsā*), admiration, commendation,
7. Pleasure (*sukha*), peace of body and mind,
8. Pain (*dukkha*), misery of body mind and body.

Of these eight, four belong to feelings satisfaction or enjoyment (*assāda*), and four belong to feelings of dissatisfaction (*ādinava*).

It is like a man, sitting on an open plain in the months of June or July when heavy rains begin to fall accompanied by strong winds blowing from the four directions and striking him from all sides, that the beings in the

sensual realm, the realm of form, and the formless realm (*tebhūmaka-loka*) are suffering from various good and bad worldly vicissitudes.

Occurrence of Satisfaction and Danger

Out of the eight worldly vicissitudes you will enjoy pleasant and happy feelings when desirable results occur, and painful and miserable feelings when undesirable results occur. That is, while pleasure and happiness are present, satisfaction will occur, which means joy and happiness. On the cessation of joy and happiness, the danger (*ādīnava*) will arise in the form of grief (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkha*), sorrow (*domanassa*), and despair (*upāyāsa*).

On the occurrence of painful or miserable feeling the danger occurs. On the cessation of painful or miserable feelings, satisfaction (*assāda*) will arise, which means the appearance of joy or happiness.

Satisfaction occurs at the start of every kind of sensual pleasures of human or celestial beings, but at the end of their existence there is danger, because satisfaction is bound to perish in the end. As regards those beings in the lower realms, it is danger, which means, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair, at the beginning, and at the end, when they are released from the lower realms, it is satisfaction.

Oppression by the Suffering of Danger

In other words, it is natural that each and every satisfaction is oppressed by danger from two sides, one at the beginning and the other at the end. How does this oppression occur? For the sensual pleasure of a brahma, which is satisfaction, he had to practice absorption (*jhāna*) in his past life; that practice was the suffering of mental formations (*saṅkhāra dukkha*). After the attainment of absorption, he had to maintain it until his death. That was also the suffering of mental formations. These two types of suffering constitute the danger oppressing the life of a brahma. The subsequent death and demise of a brahma after attainment of his celestial bliss was the danger that oppressed his life at the end. Those who wish to become a brahma are being oppressed by those two kinds of suffering constantly.

The life of human or celestial being is indeed a sensual pleasure, and the result of past meritorious deeds, which means the suffering of mental formations, which is the danger oppressing at the beginning. The subsequent death and demise of a human or celestial being is also a danger. This is the suffering of oppression at the end. The life of a man working on

a farm or trading for a livelihood is the danger of suffering oppressing him at the beginning. The wealth and property acquired through this labour are subject to impermanence, which means their loss or decay. This is the danger of suffering oppressing him at the end.

To eat food is satisfaction of pleasure. Cooking this food is the suffering of danger at the beginning. After eating, the food inside the digestive tract mixes with various repulsive things such as undigested food, excreta, urine, saliva, etc. Also, various kinds of physical pain and mental suffering, are all the suffering of danger oppressing at the end.

It is the satisfaction of pleasure when one enjoys family life with one's wife and children. It is suffering when he has to find a livelihood to support himself, his wife, and his children, for protection, and for other social and economic affairs, which are accompanied by worry, discontent, dissatisfaction, disobedience, disease, and death. Those are the suffering of danger oppressing him, in addition to other defilements and misdeeds due to earning a living, that lead to rebirth in the lower realms or in hell.

Continuous Process of Satisfaction and Danger

Let me now deal with the problem of satisfaction and danger relating to the appearance of human and celestial beings on this earth and multifarious realms or worlds in the past, including during the various intervening periods in the present world-cycle when a series of kingdoms and dynasties beginning from Mahāsammata — the great republican of that time — and those Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Noble Ones who appeared and passed away during the beginningless cycle of existences. It was satisfaction when the abode of celestial and human-beings appeared. It is danger when what appeared subsequently disappears.

Countless world-cycles have dissolved together with the abodes of celestial and human-beings. The intervening world-cycles have dissolved, together with all celestial and human-beings living on the earth, under the water, and in the sky. In the present world-cycle too, countless dynasties of universal monarchs, emperors, and kings, together with infinite number of cities, towns, and villages of the continent of the rose-apple (Jambudipa) and an infinite number of men and women living therein, have all disappeared now; not a single atom of any of them has been left behind. It is satisfaction when they are living and it is danger when they are no longer living.

It was satisfaction when all of the Buddhas, an infinite number of Pacceka Buddhas, great disciples, elders, and others appeared, and it was a danger

when they disappeared. Beginning from the time of the Buddha Taṇhāṅkara to the time of our teacher, the Buddha Gotama, there were twenty-seven Buddhas. Their names have been recorded in the texts, but their aggregates are no more since they were burnt up by the fire of danger (*ādinava*).

Even the names of the infinite number of Buddhas who appeared and disappeared prior to the appearance of Taṇhāṅkara Buddha have been lost. It is the same with the infinite number of Pacceka Buddhas, and disciples, who have also disappeared. From this, it will be seen that only far-sighted people will be able to judge the seriousness of the fire of danger.

Of these two — satisfaction and danger — satisfaction is able to capture living-beings and keep them in bondage, where danger attacks, harasses, and oppresses them. Danger is the assailant and aggressor, while satisfaction is the bait that keeps all creatures in bondage so that they cannot escape from *saṃsāra*. It is due to the love of satisfaction that living-beings become victims of oppression by danger.

Example of the Three Castles

Dangers in the front

There are two murderers. There are also three large enclosures within which three big castles have been built. In front of those castles, there are very beautiful parks and gardens, with lovely flowers and delicious fruits, in which, several residential buildings are standing, well-provided with all kinds of pleasures and luxuries such as plentiful food, drink, and clothing. There are handsome men, beautiful women, fine wine, sweet music, graceful dancing, athletic sports, *etc.* which are always available to those who come there for enjoyment. Advertisements about these parks have been widely published and distributed. Most of the food and clothing contain alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs that are popular with human-beings. These are the dangers in front of the three castles.

Dangers at the back

At the back of these three castles, there are scenes of killing, beating, torturing, and burning. Large cess-pits have been dug for urine and excrement, and charcoal pits to burn rubbish. There are man-eating dogs, crows, vultures, and jackals. Any number of people may come, but the place never gets crowded. These are the three dangers at the back of the three castles.

Two Murderers

One of the murderers has paid men to entice the visitors from the front of the three castles to the back. Thousands of visitors, drunk, and senseless after enjoying sensual pleasures, are brought to the back of the three castles.

The murderer and his men at the back of the three castles, kill all the people who come by the thousands, by cutting off their limbs, heads, ears, noses, and tongues, gouging out their eyes, and burning the corpses before some are discarded for the dogs, jackals, and vultures, or thrown into the cess-pits and pits of burning charcoal.

These are the three great castles of the sensual pleasures of the world.

Those who come there are very happy. Tens of thousands of them who come every day disappear into thin air, but the general impression is that they are enjoying themselves. They come from far away, spending a lot of money. Every visitor is sent to his doom at the back. No one is able to escape.

Explanation of the Analogy

The human, celestial, and sublime abodes of brahma gods are likened to feelings of happiness, which means the murderer.

The defilements are like the alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

The four lower realms are likened to the three dangers at the front.

The danger of the four lower realms is the murderer at the back.

Beings enjoying sensual pleasures of in the human, celestial, and sublime abodes are the visitors who enjoy the dangers at the front of the castles.

People who offer alms, observe precepts, or perform other meritorious deeds for the enjoyment of celestial pleasures are visitors who come from afar at great expense to enjoy themselves at the three castles.

The rest of the simile is easy to understand.

Three Who Fall into the Lower Realms

As beings in all three abodes are liable to fall into the four lower realms, we must understand that there are inherent dangers in all of these abodes.

Example of Fish-bait

Satisfaction together with craving is like a piece of meat attached to a fishing hook. The danger is like the fisherman sitting near the fishing rod, who kills the fish after taking out the fishing hooks stuck to the innards of every fish that swallows the bait. The three abodes are like the three ponds full of fish. The wives and families of the human plane are like the fishing

rods planted outside the ponds. Beings living in their respective abodes are like the fish, jumping up and down all around the fishing rods, with their innards stuck to the fishing hooks attached to the cord of the fishing rods. The four lower realms are like the enclosure of the fisherman where the fish are beaten to death.

This is one example.

Example of a Man with Eczema

There is another way to show that it is because of craving that feeling arises and because of feeling that craving arises. To cite an example: a man suffers from an eczema all over his body. He rubs his body with his hands to allay the itching, but to no effect. So he has to ask another person to rub his body. He feels that is very pleasant when another person rubs his body as the itching disappears, but when there is no one to rub his body, the itching reappears. When there is no one to rub his body, he runs to a post or to the wall of his house to rub his body with the post or with the wall. Then blood and pus come out from the sores on his body.

Craving (*taṇhā*) and passion (*rāga*) lie latent in the mind of celestial and human-beings is like that itching sore. As that man has to go to a post or wall whenever itching appears on his body so the craving for appearance of form gives rise to itching in the mind, which then becomes restless and runs to the post or wall, when he rubs his body and gets some relief when the itching subsides and he feels alright, which means feelings of happiness and pleasure. This craving for form is very troublesome.

The same applies to the craving for sounds, odour, tastes, touches, or for mental objects, ideas, etc.

Variety of Craving

Craving for mental objects (*dhamma taṇhā*) means recollection of mental or physical objects that craving has enjoyed before. In addition to all these, the following are also craving:—

1. Craving for fame and popularity.
2. Craving for the virtue of offering alms.
3. Craving for the virtue of observance of moral precepts.
4. Craving for the virtue of meditation.
5. Craving for the virtue of faith.
6. Craving for the virtue of knowledge.
7. Craving for misdeeds that have been perpetrated before.

8. Craving for meritorious deeds that have been performed before.

All these are craving for mental-objects.

The human and celestial realms (*kāma bhūmi*) are fraught with craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma-taṇhā*), and as such they have to approach sensual objects whenever their minds start itching (with craving or desire). They want to keep in their possession objects of sensual pleasures (*kāma-vatthu*); they are unable to give up these objects, hence they are always subject to various kinds of suffering, defilements, and vices or misdeeds, as well as the danger of suffering in the lower realms. Sense-objects are all satisfaction, while various kinds of suffering are the danger.

This completes the exposition of satisfaction and danger.

The exposition of the dependent origination of feeling will serve the purpose of understanding impermanence and not-self very well and the exposition of satisfaction and danger will serve the purpose of understanding suffering very well.

This is the end of the section on satisfaction and danger.

Direct Knowledge

The Truth of Suffering in Five Kinds of Feeling

Let me now deal with the exposition of the truth of suffering in the five kinds of feelings.

Sacca means real truth or absolute truth. Therefore, it follows that all the five kinds of feelings are real or absolute truths, which again means the real truth of suffering (*dukkha sacca*).

Feelings and Answers Thereto

Feelings such as pain, sorrow, etc., are all the suffering of mental states (*cetasikā dukkha*) and therefore, real truths of suffering. This may be obvious in the case of painful feelings, but it may be asked “Why are feelings of pleasure and happiness suffering?” It may be argued, “If they are all truly suffering, the Abhidhamma terms such as pleasant sound, joyful sound, pleasant feeling, happy feeling, are all wrong.”

The answer is “According to the Abhidhamma Ṭikā, there are sensual pleasures of devas and brahmas, which are pleasant bodily feelings (*kāyika-sukha*) and happy mental feelings (*cetasikā sukha*), which are momentary feelings of pleasure or happiness. It is only a temporary pleasant feeling. It

is not a permanent or eternal entity. This feeling¹ is divided into three: (1) essence of pleasant feeling, (2) essence of unpleasant feeling, and (3) essence of neutral feeling. Of these three, the essence of unpleasant feeling is suffering (*dukkha*), the essence of pleasant feeling is pleasure (*sukha*), and the essence of neutral feeling is called neither pain nor pleasure (*adukkhamasukha*). Thus there are three essences of feeling, of which, pleasure or enjoyment is called happiness (*sukha*).

This happiness is not the total cessation of suffering; this happiness is still full of suffering, inside and out. Thus, it is not real or absolute bliss according to the teaching on the noble truths; this happiness is, in reality, suffering. What is most important here, according to teaching on the noble truths, is not whether absolute bliss contains feeling or not; complete cessation of suffering is the key point. It means that the complete cessation of all forms of suffering is the real and absolute bliss of peace (*santi-sukha*).

Happiness Compounded with Suffering

Compared with the bliss of peace (*santi-sukhā*), that happiness referred to in the triad of feeling is bound up with suffering; So it is not real happiness, but only suffering. Why is that happiness bound up with suffering? Because sensual pleasures are bound up with various forms of suffering, such as birth, aging, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair. It is bound up with manifold diseases, various types of suffering in performing actions (*kamma-karaṇa-dukkha*), every type of external danger, suffering in the lower realms, and all of the defilements. In brief, that happiness is bound up with the three main types of suffering: the suffering of pain (*dukkha-dukkha*), the suffering of mental formations (*saṅkhāra dukkha*), and the suffering due to change (*vipariṇāma dukkha*).

Why is that the happiness of mankind is bound up with the suffering of birth, aging, and death? The answer is that mankind is always subject to disease, grief, lamentation, and the vicissitudes of life that originate from birth. While enjoying that so-called happiness, the undesirable vicissitudes can always intervene, causing loss and damage to life and property through fires, floods, and manifold diseases.

Why is that happiness bound up with the various types of suffering in performing actions? There are five kinds of dangers: (1) flood, (2) fire (3)

¹ The original has “Anubhanarasa,” of which I can make no sense. Perhaps it should be “Anubhavana-rasa,” = the essence of experiencing or feeling. The spelling of Pāli in the edition that I have is very poor from hereon: I am often left guessing to make sense of it (ed.)

rulers (4) robbers (5) the unloved, including wild animals such as tigers, elephants, snakes, ogres, ghosts *etc.*, who are external dangers or enemies.

The reason why that happiness is bound up with the suffering of the lower realms is that for the sake of enjoying sensual pleasures or to earn a livelihood, people commit crimes and carry out unwholesome deeds.

The three types of suffering — the suffering of pain, the suffering of mental formations, and the suffering caused by change — will be dealt with when we come to characteristic of suffering (*dukkha-lakkhaṇa*), which is one of the three universal characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*). The rest are easily understandable.

This is how man's pleasures known as pleasant feeling, happy feeling, *etc.*, have all been mixed up with the infinity of suffering. It follows, therefore, that the so-called man's pleasure is not real happiness, which is completely free from all forms of suffering, but in reality is only suffering according to the Buddha's teaching on the noble truths. It is, of course, the noble truth of suffering.

It is the same with those types of happiness in the celestial and sublime abodes, all are fraught with the undesirable worldly vicissitudes (*anittalokadhamma*) of pain, defilements, aging, death, suffering in the lower realms, and so forth. It is clear that the happiness of devas and brahmas belongs only to the truth of suffering. True happiness is not a feeling of happiness, but it is the cessation of all forms of suffering, which is the true bliss of peace.

End of the exposition of the truth of suffering in five kinds of feeling.

This completes direct knowledge, the first of the three knowledges.

Discriminating Knowledge

Discriminating knowledge (*tīraṇa pariññā*) consists of (1) discriminating knowledge of impermanence (*anicca-pariññā*), (2) discriminating knowledge of suffering (*dukkha-pariññā*), and (3) discriminating knowledge of not-self (*anatta-pariññā*). Among these three, discriminating knowledge of impermanence means the elimination of the perception of permanence (*nicca-saññā*), thoughts of permanence (*nicca-citta*), and the view of permanence (*nicca-diṭṭhi*), regarding feelings. When these wrong perceptions, thoughts, and views are eliminated completely, the discriminating knowledge of impermanence is realised. When these three wrong ideas (*micchā-dhammā*) are eliminated, three defilements — craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong-view (*diṭṭhi*) — will cease. Only when these three cease, the perception

of impermanence is fulfilled. Of the three wrong ideas (*micchā-dhammā*), the perception of permanence (*nicca-saññā*) means: “The perception that feeling is a phenomenon to enjoy what is good or dislike what is bad, is always present inside the body.” To cognise according to this perception is the thought of permanence (*nicca-citta*), and to hold a view according to this perception is the view of permanence (*nicca-ditṭhi*). To eliminate these three wrong ideas, the discriminating knowledge of impermanence (*anicca-pariññā*) will have to be developed. Discriminating knowledge of impermanence means that, according to the instructions given under the dependent origination of feelings, the meditator will have to view things as they really are, appearing and disappearing through the six sense-doors, as if you had seen with your own eyes, with discriminating knowledge.

Contemplation of Impermanence in Painful Feelings

As already stated under the topic of dependent origination, the meditator will first have to contemplate painful feelings in any part of the body where there is pain or injury caused by any disease, accident, or injury. One should contemplate this so that the instants of arising and vanishing are directly comprehended in the present moment.

Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind

The painful injury on the sole of the foot is painful feeling or the element of suffering (*dukkha-dhātu*). The difference between the sole, which is materiality (*rūpa*), and the painful feeling, which is mentality (*nāma*), must be comprehended to penetrate painful feeling with insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). This knowledge is called analytical knowledge of phenomena (*dhamma-vavatthāna-ñāṇa*), knowledge of apprehension (*dhamma-pariggaha-ñāṇa*), or analytical knowledge of body and mind (*nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*). This is the knowledge discerning the difference between mind and matter.

Knowledge of Things as They Truly Are

After that, the meditator will have to contemplate why this painful feeling occurs. It is because of contact that feeling arises (*phassa paccaya vedanā*). As this is what the Buddha taught, we have to comprehend that because of contact with a stone or thorn, feeling arises. If you are asked in ordinary conversation why this painful feeling arises, you will answer that it was caused by a stone or thorn. In this case, the cause of feeling is contact or the

accidental contact caused by a stone. It must be realised that feeling was not inside the body before the occurrence of contact. This kind of realisation is called knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*), purification by overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*), or knowledge of things as they truly are (*yathābhūta-ñāṇa*), respectively.

When the meditator gets this contact, the caused phenomenon, together with painful feeling of suffering in his insight knowledge he will have to comprehend clearly the characteristic of impermanence (*anicca-lakkhaṇa*).

How to Contemplate the Characteristic of Impermanence

The characteristic of impermanence means that pain is not a permanent entity. If it were permanent, it could have happened once only at the time of conception in a life-time. It could not have happened again as a new one as it is now. We have now seen clearly here and now that it is because of contact that a new feeling arises. Although we have seen it like this, we don't take it for granted that it is a permanent entity lying always inside the body. It is an impermanent phenomenon that arises only at the moment of contact. It is only impermanent entity that arises dependant on contact. It is only a momentary phenomenon.

It is like a flash of lightning that appears an electrical discharge occurs in the sky. In the present case, feeling arises dependent on the contact that arises as a result of the element of hardness in external material qualities of a stone or thorn striking the internal sensory surface of the material qualities of the sole as if feeling had just come from space as a phenomenon occurring for just a moment. This is how it should be comprehended clearly. This is how to understand the essence of impermanence through the realistic comprehension of dependent origination at the instant of arising.

Then, on the disappearance of contact together with the pain from injury caused by a stone or thorn, the painful feeling also disappears. It is said: "The pain has disappeared." Here, this cessation, the instant of dissolution, should be comprehended clearly here and now. If this instant of dissolution is comprehended clearly here and now, this dissolution, being death in other words, the characteristic of impermanence is comprehended quite well.

This is the essence of impermanence on clear comprehension of the instant of dissolution.

*End of the discovery with insight knowledge of painful feelings,
together with analytical knowledge, knowledge by discerning conditionality,
and knowledge of arising and passing away.*

Contemplation of Painful Feelings in Several Places

If impermanence is discerned clearly now, it will be discerned clearly in the future too. After comprehending it on the sole, comprehend it on the right instep by discovering the contact caused by the stone with the help of the phenomena of feeling, dependence, and arising and passing away. The same applies to the foot, calf, knee, thigh, and then on the other leg.

Then go to the hip, waist, back, shoulder, head, face, neck, chest, and stomach. Then inside the head, inside the brains, knowing hot and cold, pain and itching. Then inside the lungs, liver, heart, intestines, all along the spine, all along the thigh, and all the remaining painful feelings.

In discerning all of these one after another, painful feeling must be apprehended separately. Do not allow it to be confused with material qualities. The instants of arising and vanishing must be caught red-handed. When those instants are discerned clearly everywhere on a thorough search of the body, the characteristic of impermanence in painful feelings will be discerned as clearly as a shining ruby jewel kept on the palm of your hand.

End of contemplation of painful feelings.

Contemplation of Impermanence in Pleasant Feelings

Pleasant feelings must be contemplated in the same way as above beginning from the soles of the feet to the rest of the body. Pleasant feelings requires clearer discernment. For this purpose, attention is invited to the details referred to in the section dealing with the dependent origination of pleasant feeling. What is most important in this matter of the three characteristics is to actually discern the instants of vanishing of pleasant feelings. If these instants are not discerned clearly the three wrong ideas — the perception, thought, and view of permanence — will not disappear. The work of insight into impermanence is to remove these three wrong ideas.

If you wish to know for yourself whether your insight knowledge of impermanence is effective, you will have to test yourself and find out whether your personal experiences such as pain and itching, hot and cold, comfort and discomfort, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, happy and unhappy, etc. which are usually interpreted as “I am in pain,” which is wrong-perception, or “I know pain,” which is wrong-thought, or “I believe, I am in pain,” which is wrong-view, have all disappeared. If they have not, you can take it that the work of insight is not yet complete; if they have, then insight is complete.

End of contemplation of impermanence in pleasant feelings

Contemplation of Impermanence in Happy Feelings

When you see any beautiful object with your eyes or within your mind's eye, it gives rise to feelings of happiness. This kind of visible object comes into contact with the eyes and mind at the same time. As it is contact with the heart or mind a feeling of happiness arises on the blood vessels of the heart. When happy feeling arises, the beating of the heart becomes quicker and stronger,¹ manifesting as a smiling face. The meditator should try to apprehend this element of happiness with insight knowledge. It is a kind of joyous mind and should be comprehended at the instant of its arising. When this contact of the object with the heart vanishes, the impulsion of happy feeling will also vanish slowly, when the beating of the heart returns to normal, and returns to normal. It is very important to comprehend clearly the impulsive mental process of happy feeling at the instant of its dissolution.

The meditator will have to contemplate several times at each sitting to comprehend clearly that the impulsive feelings of happiness arise and vanish several times in the heart due to laughing and smiling. The repeated appearances of arising and vanishing must be comprehended clearly so that the perception, thought, and view of permanence will disappear. Only when these three wrong ideas disappear from the mind, contemplation of impermanence will be complete.

It gives pleasure and happiness to hear pleasant and delighted voices, to smell fragrant odours, to taste delicious food, to touch what you enjoy touching. All of these are feelings of happiness for contemplation.

End of contemplation of impermanence in happy feelings.

Contemplation of Impermanence in Sorrowful Feelings

On seeing an ugly object, mental unhappiness appears, unpleasant facial expressions manifest when dark and sad feelings arise in the heart. When that object disappears what has been said regarding happy feelings should be understood regarding the disappearance of sorrowful feelings.

End of contemplation of impermanence in sorrowful feelings.

Contemplation of Impermanence in Neutral Feelings

In the matter of neutral feelings, unlike happy and sorrowful feelings, the work of contact is not clear, nor is that of feeling. The element of consciousness

¹ The original says "The blood of the heart will become clearer and brighter," which the present readers will probably not understand, so I have used modern terminology (ed.)

(*viññāṇa-dhātu*) is, however, clear most of the time. The meditator is well advised, therefore, to apprehend the sense-objects and consciousness that appear and disappear through the six sense-doors, via eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness, while comprehending clearly the instants of arising and vanishing of neutral feelings.

It is natural that when one feeling arises on the body, another one vanishes. Two feelings never arise together in the same place. When any kind of feeling, apart from neutral feeling, arises on the body, the cessation or dissolution, of neutral feelings by way of inference (*anumāna*) must be comprehended in the present moment.

End of Indifferent Feeling.

The discernment of impermanence makes possible the discernment of suffering. It is necessary to discern the characteristic of impermanence in the five kinds of feeling by persistent contemplation for months or years.

If impermanence is discerned perfectly, suffering will also be discerned well; and it is the same with not-self. If impermanence cannot be discerned properly, suffering and not-self will also not be discerned clearly.

If anyone asks why this is so, the answer is:—

It is like a man climbing a tree knows very well that some of the branches are in such a condition that if he steps on them it is unlikely that they will break and send him to his death. It is also like a man trying to climb a bamboo scaffold on a monastery or house, knows very well which parts of the structure are likely to break if he pulls or steps on them, causing his death or serious injury. It is also like one going aboard a boat, a steamer, or a coach, who knows that all those means of transport are vulnerable to accidents that can cause sudden loss of life and property.

In the same way, the so-called feelings of pleasure, happiness, and equanimity — which are nothing but the pleasures of mankind — are subject to the law of impermanence and therefore liable to sudden death and destruction. If this controlling faculty of impermanence is discerned very clearly, the characteristic of suffering of that feeling will also be discerned very clearly. Therefore, anything that transmigrates from the happy human realm to hell or the realms of misery is nothing but impermanent feeling.

Example of the Toddy Tree Climber

There was a toddy tree climber in a forest of toddy trees. He kept a device on each toddy tree to trap any thief coming up into any toddy tree to steal

toddy water. Any thief who come to steal toddy water from a toddy tree fell down and died as a result of what he had touched, pulled or stepped on in the darkness of the night. In this illustration, it is the forest of toddy trees that is like the plane of man, it is the toddy water that is like the sensual pleasures of mankind; feelings are like the trap; transmigration from the human realm to the lower realms or hell is like a fall from a toddy tree; ignorance is like the toddy climber.

It will be seen that ignorance (*avijjā*) — the toddy tree climber — sets a trap of impermanent feelings, the so-called sensual pleasure for humans, to pull human-beings down to suffering in the lower realms. The same applies to the sensual pleasures of the celestial realms, and the so-called pleasures of brahma realms. Falls from the tops of toddy trees to death and destruction are to be discerned as the suffering of impermanent phenomena.

From this illustration, it will be seen clearly that the human-beings, devas, and brahmas, who are said to be enjoying sensual pleasures, are in reality heading towards the doors of hell, which are wide open at the moment of dissolution of relinking-consciousness and at every moment of the vanishing of impulsive pleasant, happy, or neutral feelings.

It may be asked “Why?” The answer is that every vanishing moment of each of these feelings, the so-called pleasures of human-beings, devas and brahmas, is the death or destruction of each of these feelings. It is because of the latent life-process (*āyu-saṅkhāra*) that each of these feelings is revived from moment to moment. It is clear, therefore, that in one sitting alone, the doors of hell for each of these feelings are flung open more than a hundred thousand times.

Old and New Life-processes

In the present life-time also, the impermanent characteristic of each feeling is very rapid. So livelihood is very difficult. Livelihood here means that at the moment of the demise of an old life-process, there is relinking-consciousness of a new life-process. It is natural for an old life-process to be replaced by a new one. It is natural that the life replacement process takes place more than a hundred thousand times at one sitting. As soon as the old life-process stops, some store of nutrition, which is called the latent life-process inside the physical body gives rise to a continuum of new life-process. To maintain this continuum of a life-process food must be taken in advance. This taking of food in advance is called livelihood. This food taken as latent life-process inside the body, being impermanent disappears

immediately after being consumed. It is natural for a continuum of life-process, generated by nutritious food, to cease as soon as the nutrition disappears. This is why there is always a constant change of old and new life-processes every day. These are the deaths and causes of deaths every day on account of food. In other words, those are the suffering of the lower realms taking place every day; the doors of hell are flung wide open every day. If you realise the magnitude of the problem of livelihood, you will realise the difficulty of the impermanence and suffering of feeling.

This is to show that, as you have seen for yourself that the impermanence of feeling happens within your body, having come to realise here and now that sentient-beings are struggling over the difficulty of maintaining pleasant, happy, and neutral feelings, the so-called sensual pleasures are, in reality, only suffering, worry, and hell-fire.

Besides all of this, painful feelings are also impermanent and subject to change more than a hundred thousand times in one sitting. Under certain circumstances, sudden death or destruction may befall the physical body. sentient-beings are therefore very much afraid of losing the so-called sensual pleasures through death and destruction, and worried by the threat of painful feelings, and other internal or external dangers, which they have previously experienced from time to time. The suffering arising from the characteristic of impermanence are manifold. Please try to gain a clear comprehension of the beginningless *samsāra*, the infinite cycle of lives of sentient-beings.

This is the summary to show that if impermanence is comprehended clearly, painful feelings are also comprehended clearly.

By Discerning Impermanence, Not-self Can Be Discerned

When we say that it is with the discernment of the impermanence of feeling that not-self can be discerned, we mean that there is a belief that in one life-time there is only one single person, personality, living-being, I, he, she, man, woman — one birth, one death, one conception in a mother's womb. After birth, a person renews himself repeatedly, seeing only one death on the cessation of material qualities generated by death-proximate kamma; there is no belief in the view that this person dies repeatedly before cessation at the moment of death.

Annihilationism and Eternalism

It is a superstitious belief to maintain that an individual is a solid essence or self (*atta*). It is believed that an individual (*puggala*) is born once and dies

once in one life-time, so the self is born once and dies only once in a life-time. This view of one single birth and one single death is the wrong-view of annihilationism (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*).

The wrong-view of eternalism (*sassata-diṭṭhi*) maintains that the self is permanent in the beginningless *saṃsāra*, that only the physical body renews itself in a series of new lives; there is a series of deaths in the individual's life-process; however, it is believed that the self is not born repeatedly nor does it die; on the death of the physical body, the self is believed to transmigrate to a new life created by kamma and exists in that new body.

It is believed that life-force (*jīva*) is a permanent self or soul. The belief in one life-time only is annihilationism. It maintains that this life does not perish, does not cease nor does it die after birth and before final death; that only on the cessation of the material qualities generated by death-proximate kamma does life cease and dies. It is eternalism to maintain that as the self is eternal in the beginningless *saṃsāra*, so is the soul. If the physical body perishes, it the self transmigrates to a new physical body and abides there.

Feeling Is Not a Self or Soul

There is such a conventional term “life-span” among human-beings, devas, and brahmas. It is generally believed that it is the limit between one life and another. When anyone asks: “What is your age?” The answer is usually in the form of so many years, indicating that life has been existing continuously for that number of years. This is a false reply, which is superstitious belief.

Through dependent origination, feeling arises repeatedly through contact, which similarly arises repeatedly. If the characteristic of impermanence is comprehended clearly, it is clear that an individual (*puggala*), being (*satta*), self or soul (*atta*), and life-force (*jīva*) are one thing, while feeling is another. Feeling is not an individual, a being, a self or soul, nor a life. It is not he or she, nor a man or woman. There is no repetition of birth or rebirth, no repetition of death during one sitting. However, it can be understood clearly that feeling arises and vanishes repeatedly, so the perception of permanence, self, or soul — which are an obsession with feeling — disappears.

This is the explanation of why a clear comprehension of the impermanence of feelings means a clear comprehension of the not-self characteristic of feelings. It is, therefore, essential to comprehend the characteristic of impermanence.

End of exposition on why comprehension of the characteristic of impermanence is necessary.

Direct Knowledge of Suffering

Oppression Caused by Meritorious Deeds

The suffering of performing meritorious deeds is the suffering of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-dukkha*). Let us first deal with the problem of the direct knowledge of suffering (*dukkha-pariññā*). Of the five kinds of feeling, the feelings of suffering and unhappiness are the most obvious. All living-beings are deeply afraid of these two kinds of feeling. Even animals are afraid of these them, and extremes of temperature. They are afraid of any enemy, any weapons such as arrows, sticks, swords, spears, guns, stones, rocks, and the dangers of the lower realms, ghosts, and demons, all of which belong to these two kinds of suffering — feelings of pain and unhappiness.

According to the Buddha's teaching, these two feelings must be understood as barbed hooks and poisonous arrows. If either of these are thrust into the flesh of your body you will feel terrible pain, and the are very difficult to remove. Pain, suffering, aching, and burning inside or on the physical body are feelings of physical suffering (*kāyika-dukkha-vedanā*). Mental sorrowful feelings of (*domanassa-vedanā*), that afflict the heart are dreadful suffering, which is very difficult for remedy. The meditator will have to try to realise the signs of these feelings on the body and mind.

It is the suffering of mental formations, and the suffering caused by change, that is the characteristic of suffering in pleasant and happy feelings, which are the sensual pleasures of human-beings, devas, and brahmas. It follows, therefore, that pleasant feeling must be understood as the suffering of mental formations and the suffering of change, and likewise with happy feelings.

An Example of the Suffering of Mental Formations

A man, who is in need of money, works as a labourer. To work as labourer is the suffering of mental formations. Herein, money is the suffering of mental formation; which is dreadful. As long as a person has the desire to have some money, that person will be kept in the bondage of labour for money. Herein, the work of labour is the suffering of mental formations created by the desire for money, which is very dreadful indeed.

It is the money obtainable by a boatman labouring onboard a steamer, that is oppressing the boatman; it is most dreadful. It is the money obtainable by cutting wood that is always oppressing the sawyer, and so on.

Like this example, the good life of human-beings, or the pleasure and happiness of human-beings is obtainable by good morality and meritorious

deeds such as offering alms and observing moral precepts in the past. They are not obtainable by mere prayers or mental desire. They cannot be created by devas and or by Sakka, the king of the gods. From this it will be seen that a person desiring human happiness and a pleasurable life is always oppressed by the mental formations of almsgiving and morality. All mental formations, including becoming a recluse or a bhikkhu, are due to the desire for the pleasure and happiness of human life.

Meritorious Deed Are Not Suffering

Why are the meritorious deeds of offering alms and observing moral precepts, or becoming a bhikkhu, suffering? Of course, a demeritorious deed is suffering in accordance with the Pāli text.¹ However, alms-offering and observance of moral precepts are meritorious deeds and are not to be feared. They are really good and wholesome deeds. They should not be regarded as fearful suffering.

In what way are meritorious deeds suffering? Those meritorious deeds are indeed feared. To become a recluse or a bhikkhu is feared. Most people are afraid to become bhikkhus. There is not even one in a thousand men who become a bhikkhu; not even one in ten thousand. If becoming a bhikkhu is really good, everyone will become a bhikkhus or recluse.

In the same way, observance of moral precepts and meditation are also feared. If these are really good, everyone will become observers of precepts and practitioners of meditation. Most refuse to observe even one precept for life. There can be no doubt, therefore, that morality and meditation are also fearful suffering (*bhayaṭṭhena dukkhā*).

Whatever is done, it is the suffering of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-dukkha*). Of course, we used to praise excellent meritorious deeds, *etc.* because morality and meditation are really feared, and it is very difficult for the common people to perform these meritorious deeds. It is rare to see someone come forward to perform noble deeds of merit, and receive the high praise and admiration of the public. No doubt, this noble act earns not only merits in this life, but also good fortune in future existences.

If the pleasures and happiness of men, devas, and brahmas were obtainable without becoming bhikkhus or recluses, without observing moral precepts, or without meditation, not a single person in this world will become a recluse or a bhikkhu. No one will observe precepts, and no one

¹ Vism. 368. They are impermanent in the sense of [liability to] destruction (*khayaṭṭhena aniccā*); they are painful in the sense of [causing] terror (*bhayaṭṭhena dukkhā*); they are not-self in the sense of having no core [of permanence, and so on] (*asārakaṭṭhena anattā*).

will meditate. In the same way, there will be no one to offer alms if the pleasures and happiness of devas was obtainable without offering alms.

This is not the case; if there are no bhikkhus or recluses, if there were no almsgiving or observance of precepts, no one will enjoy pleasures and happiness; but there will be many who will go to hell. People are therefore unable to abstain from these meritorious deeds. Any deed, either meritorious or demeritorious, is only suffering. In this world people are fond of gold, silver, and jewels. If they want gold, silver, and jewels, they must work to get them; they cannot get them if they abstain from working.

If gold, silver, and jewels are obtainable to anyone who wants them without doing any kind of work, there will be no one to do any work from which gold, silver, and jewels are obtainable. From this example, it will be seen that there has been a countless number of actions of merit (*puñña-kiriya*) such as almsgiving, observance of precepts and meditation — they are unavoidable.

This is how, in this beginningless *saṃsāra*, living-beings are always oppressed by the pleasures and happiness of men with the suffering of mental formations in performing meritorious deeds.

Pleasure and Happiness Are the Suffering of Mental Formations

Having sustained the suffering of mental formations in performing meritorious deeds in his past life, a person was born in the fortunate realm of human-beings. If he can exert himself every day for his livelihood, which is the suffering of mental formations, he will survive until the end of his life-span. His life of sensual pleasures and happiness is oppressed by the effort he must put forth daily to maintain a wife and children, which also means that the feelings of sensual pleasures and happiness associated with his wife and children are suffering for the man devoted to his unavoidable work of family maintenance. The same should be applied *mutatis mutandis* to other unavoidable cases of the suffering of mental formations.

This is a brief summary showing that mankind's pleasures and happiness in the beginningless *saṃsāra* are the causes of the present suffering of mental formations. Similar sufferings are applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the sensual pleasures and happiness of devas.

Regarding a brahma's life of pleasure and happiness, the work done in advance for development of absorption (*jhāna*) in the past, are also very dreadful suffering of mental formations. If you can practise meditation for development of the absorptions at present, after death you will be able to get to the plane of brahmas, and go forth at the time of the dispensation of

the Buddha Metteyya. There is no fear of misconduct for the sake of earning a livelihood. You can enjoy the absorptions and super-normal powers for the whole period of an intervening world-cycle (*antara-kappa*), then go forth for liberation at the time of the Buddha Metteyya. Every bhikkhu and lay person knows that there is this kind of opportunity for all of us, but people are afraid of striving for the attainment of absorption. This is the why we do not see many individuals with the factors of *jhāna*.¹ This is how all living-beings are oppressed by the blissful life of brahma with the weapon of meditation, which are all the suffering of mental formations.

The four Paths are really the truth of suffering, because it was the suffering of mental formations when one had to accumulate the ten perfections in numerous past existences, and in the current life-time when attaining the Path is possible, a potential Noble One has to develop purification of morality, purification of mind, and purification of view. All of these meditations to gain purity, are the suffering of mental formations. Only when you are able to undergo these two sufferings, can you accomplish the Path and its Fruition. This is why the Path and its Fruition are really the truth of suffering.

The Path and Its Fruition Are Not Suffering

It is true that only one who can withstand the two very great suffering of mental formations — *i.e.*, the development of insight meditation to gain the three purifications, after accumulating the perfections in past lives — will be able to attain the four Paths and the four Fruits. However, once the Path and its Fruition are realised, which is the suffering of mental formations, one has no need to worry about that suffering for the remainder of beginningless *saṃsāra* from which one will have been liberated. One will have been simultaneously liberated from the suffering of the lower realms.

After realising the Path, if a comparison is made between the suffering endured to attain the cessation of *saṃsāra*, and the suffering endured to gain the three purifications through insight meditation, it will be seen that the former is like the entire earth compared to a single atom.

It is therefore clear that the Path and its Fruition, which can put an end to the suffering of beginningless cycle of existence once and for all, should not be called the truth of suffering merely due to the trifling suffering of developing the perfections in previous lives, and practising insight meditation to develop the purification of morality, mind, and view.

¹ The original has “any individuals,” but there are allegedly some who can gain *jhāna*, (ed.)

A Simile to Prove that Striving for the Path Is Not Suffering

At one time, a wealthy man buried a large treasure trove containing gold, silver, and jewels worth several hundred thousand. A recluse possessing the divine-eye (*dibbacakkhu*) told a poor man to dig the ground about ten feet deep, and remove six large stone slabs from their place, to reach the several hundred thousand worth of gold, silver, and jewels, if he wanted to get rich quickly. Accordingly, the poor man dug down ten feet and removed the six large stone slabs before helping himself to the treasure, becoming a wealthy man whose descendents also became rich.

In this simile, digging the ground ten feet deep means the development of the ten perfections in the past; the removal of the six stone slabs means practising insight meditation to gain the six mundane purifications — purification of morality, purification of mind, purification by overcoming doubt, purification by knowledge and vision of what is Path and Not-path, purification by knowledge and vision of the course of practice — the treasures of gold, silver, and jewels refer to the Path and its Fruition, which is purification of by knowledge and vision. The recluse possessing the divine-eye means the Buddha, the poor man means a follower of the Buddha; and the poor man who became wealthy refers to a Noble One who has entered the stream.

The two kinds of suffering of mental formations referred to in the above simile, *viz*: digging the ground and the removal of the six slabs, are nothing, compared to the suffering of mental formations for the enjoyment of pleasure and happiness from the gold, silver, and jewels. For the purpose of the suffering of mental formations, this treasure trove of gold, silver, and jewels, worth several hundred thousand, should not be classified as suffering.

Wrong Happiness versus Right Happiness

There are meritorious deeds that give rise to rebirth in the fortunate realms of human-beings, devas, and brahmas. These sensual realms of human-beings, the form realms of devas, and the formless realms of brahmas are only momentary. They are not real pleasure nor real happiness; they are deceitful, wicked, hoax, and sham pleasures and counterfeit happiness; they are wrong, dishonest, and untruthful pleasures and happiness.

Let us elaborate. For fear of the suffering of the lower realms and to free themselves from this hellish suffering, people offer alms in the hope of enjoying pleasures and happiness as celestial and human-beings. As a result of alms-giving, some enjoy the pleasures and happiness of celestial and

human-beings, but they are only impermanent things, and some fall back into the misery of the lower realms. In this beginningless *saṃsāra*, each and every living-being has given alms countless times. Everyone who gave alms has enjoyed the pleasures and happiness of celestial and human-beings countless times. Yet the gates of hell remain wide open, and the danger of the lower realms persists. The same state of affairs will continue from the present life into the infinite future of *saṃsāra*. It is clear that the pleasant and happy feelings of celestial and human-beings, generated by the meritorious deeds of offering alms, are not real and genuine happiness; but are like a magic show, and like gold and silver, they are deceitful pleasures and deceitful happiness; they are wrong and crooked pleasures and happiness.

Is Cessation Real Happiness?

Real and genuine happiness means for example, a person fearing the suffering of the lower realms performs various kinds of alms-giving in the hope of attaining celestial and human pleasures to be free from the suffering of the lower realms. After the realisation of that state due to the effectiveness of alms-giving, he never loses it through any changes. It is real and genuine happiness only if he accomplishes the cessation of the suffering of the lower realms on a permanent basis.

The state of happiness, which we call the pleasure and happiness of celestial and human-beings, is not like the above stable happiness. It is because that there is no guarantee to limit the number of world-cycles that are required in the beginningless *saṃsāra* for making alms-giving so that celestial and human pleasures are permanent, and the suffering of the lower realms cease. Any period of celestial and human happiness that comes in the future will be impermanent and last only a while, like one meal.

It is clear, therefore, that whatever meritorious deeds are done, not for permanent happiness, but for the sake impermanent happiness, is the suffering of mental formations. Every type of rebirth generated by this kind of meritorious deed — in the planes of human-beings, devas, and brahmas — is also the suffering of mental formations. All living-beings involved in this type of rebirth are oppressed by the suffering of mental formations. During this dispensation, if one can develop the seven purifications effectively — which is also the suffering of mental formations — one will liberate oneself in this very life. The suffering of developing the seven purifications will cease for ever. There will be no more oppression from developing them, and the suffering in the lower realms will also cease.

This is the summary of the suffering of mental formations, which is the pleasure and happiness of human-beings, devas and brahmas.

Suffering Caused by Change

Let me now deal with the suffering of change (*vipariṇāma dukkha*). Change means decay and death. Aging (*jarā*) means decay, deterioration, and getting old. All of these are the change of decay. Death (*maraṇa*) means ending, termination, destruction, dissolution, and cessation. All of these are the suffering of change, which is of two kinds:–

1. Change coming at the end of every kind of life.
2. Change coming intermittently from the time of conception to the time of death.

From the time of conception (*paṭisandhi*), mind and body of human-beings, devas, or brahmas is always subject to change, that is death and destruction. Whenever circumstances permit, death and destruction can occur at any time. There are many things that cause death and destruction. There are many dangers, internal and external, and most living-beings are aware that when the time their lives and limbs are bound to decay, disappear, and disintegrate at any time. People are, therefore, afraid of internal and external dangers.

Aggregates Are Subject to Change

If the physical bodies of men, devas brahmas were not subject to change of death and destruction, there will be nothing to fear or worry about in this world. However, this not the case. The world is full of things to be afraid of and worry about. As there are all sorts of suffering, such as the fear of internal danger, the suffering of anxiety, *etc.*, due to the presence of change in every physical body, people are unable to live wherever they like. They have had to live in towns and villages after building houses and enclosures. Whenever they move about here and there, they have to be wary of external dangers; they have to look out for any threat, and have to worry about it. This state of affairs is due to the suffering of change. In spite of great care and precaution the suffering of change, such as loss of wealth and property, loss of spouse, children, and relatives, infectious diseases, and accidents, is significant.

Every Aggregate Is the Suffering of Change

The destruction of successive worlds since the beginningless *samsāra* was the work of the fire of change. The deaths and destruction of infinite

aggregates of human-beings, devas, and brahmas was the work of the fire of change. The demise of an infinite number of Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Noble Disciples, far greater than the sands of the Ganges, was the work of the fire of change.

The aggregates of human-beings that appeared due to the merits of alms-giving, morality, and meditation, and subsequently died in this beginningless *saṃsāra*. It is the same with the aggregates of devas and brahmas. The same will be the case, with all of the aggregates in the beginningless *saṃsāra* coming in the future. In the world, there are fire and fuel. Fuel never defeats fire, it is fire that always defeats fuel. The more fuel there is, the stronger the fire becomes. In the end, all fuel become charcoal.

In the same way, the life of human-beings, devas and brahmas, which were conditioned by the mental formations of meritorious deeds of offering alms, observance of moral precepts, *etc.* will become like charcoal. All the meritorious deeds that living-beings have done throughout beginningless *saṃsāra*, by becoming recluses and bhikkhus are purely for the purpose of becoming like charcoal. From this it is clear that every life-span has come to an end together with its fuel. Even nowadays, these traditional performances of meritorious deeds for the sake of human and celestial happiness are still in fashion. It is the same with those who become recluses and bhikkhus. All of these sufferings are the unavoidable suffering of the lower realms or in hell. These conditions will prevail in all future existences too.

At the present time farmers working on their land will have to work every year until their deaths. Paddy, wheat, sesame, *etc.*, produced from farmland every year, are finished every year, as they are just fuel for the fire of change. There is no rest for those farmers who follow the way of change. They will have to work as farmers until the end of their life-time with the suffering of mental formations hanging upon them.

All activities in the whole world should be regarded in the same way.

Eternal Peace

If there were no such a thing as change in this world, anyone who had done his work with complete success once and for all, would not have the trouble of working repeatedly. If anyone working on the eightfold path achieves complete success, they will have complete rest or eternal peace throughout the beginningless *saṃsāra*, and this suffering of mental formations, which is the development of the eightfold path, does not need to be repeated. The Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, Noble Ones, and other wise

and enlightened individuals worked for complete rest and eternal peace thereafter. As regards ignorant foolish worldlings they lacked the foresight or ability to do good deeds such as the above, but only those of their regional and ancestral traditions thinking that they were of great importance. They wasted days, months, and years of labour on accumulating fuel for the fire of change.

This is the summary of the suffering of change in feelings.

Comprehension of the Characteristic of Suffering

In the foregoing section on direct knowledge of the satisfaction and danger described with various examples and illustrations, the truth of suffering in feelings, and in the section on direct knowledge of impermanence, all the features of suffering realised on the comprehension of impermanence, are all the characteristics of suffering. This section is very broad, with details of teaching, ideas, knowledge, understanding, comprehension, and insight. It is very difficult to comprehend with fear. Only an Arahant can comprehend suffering thoroughly. Non-returners, Once-returners, and Stream-winners cannot comprehend it thoroughly.

These Who Cannot Comprehend Suffering Thoroughly

Non-returners comprehend all suffering in the sensual realm (*kāma-bhūmi*); they do not comprehend the suffering of the realms of form (*rūpa-bhūmi*), nor that of the formless realms (*arūpa-bhūmi*). They still see the suffering there as happiness because they still have desire for material and immaterial phenomena. Once-returners and Stream-winners comprehend the suffering of the lower realms caused by wrong-view and doubt, but they do not fully comprehend the pleasures and happiness of human-beings, devas, and brahmas as suffering. They still have perceptions of pleasure, sensual lust, and desire for the realms of form, and formless realms. That is why **Visākhā**, who was a Stream-winner at the age of seven, gave birth to ten sons and ten daughters, and lived to the age of a hundred and twenty, enjoying all sensual pleasures and happiness of her luxurious human life. Even now in the Nimmānaratī devaloka, she is enjoying celestial pleasures as the chief queen of Sunimmita, the king of the Nimmānaratī devaloka.

Sakka, the king of devas, became a Stream-winner on hearing the **Sakkapañha Sutta**. He is still enjoying the luxurious life of a king of devas with thirty-six million celestial princesses and celestial queens.

The remaining men and celestial Stream-winners are all the same.

Who Comprehends Not-self Thoroughly?

How could a meditator engaged in insight meditation comprehend the characteristic of suffering? One who is capable of comprehending the characteristic of not-self may be able to comprehend the characteristic of suffering. The group of knowledges: awareness of fearfulness (*bhaya-ñāṇa*), knowledge of misery (*ādinava-ñāṇa*), knowledge of disgust (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*) knowledge of desire for deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*), belong to the group of contemplation of the noble truth of suffering. If this group of knowledge is capable of comprehending the characteristic of not-self it is all right. Only those who are able to comprehend these two characteristics of impermanence and not-self well enough will be able to realise the path knowledge of a Stream-winner. Those, who realises Stream-winning are able to clearly comprehend the characteristic of not-self in all three planes of life: the sensual realm, the realm of form, and the formless realm.

End of illustration of difficulty to comprehend characteristics of suffering.

Direct Knowledge of Not-self

Let us now explain the direct knowledge of not-self (*anatta-pariññā*). The characteristic of not-self is clear on full comprehension of impermanence. It is also clear on the full comprehension of suffering and on the full comprehension Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).

Feeling must be clearly comprehended in accordance with these three:–

1. Having no self, soul, or essence.
2. There being no control over it.
3. Not obeying anyone's command.

Feeling Is Not a Self

From a clear comprehension of feeling as impermanent, it is clear that feeling also is not-self. Why is it so clear? Because, it is clear from the analysis already shown in the section dealing with [direct knowledge of an individual](#), a living-being, I, he or she, a man or woman, self, life *etc.* When we say it is self it means that feeling is substance of individuality and individuality means the five kinds of feeling. This is to show that the five kinds of feeling are wrongly cognised as an individual's self or essence.

The same is applicable to all wrong statements, such as: "It is the self or essence of a living-being," "It is my self or essence," "The self or essence of others," "The self of a man or a woman."

When someone says “I,” he may be asked to show what is “I,” or what person is “I.” He may reply: “When I comes into contact with a sensual object, I enjoys it very much. Does this enjoyment not really exist? This enjoyment is really I, self, or essence. Herein, the personification of pleasant feeling is “I” or “self” *etc.* The same with painful feelings, and other feelings. Here too feeling is wrongly cognised as “I” or “self.”

Feeling as Not-self

When one comprehends the impermanence of feeling very well, one may be able to comprehend that feeling is not-self. How? People used to refer to an individual, a living-being, I, he or she, man or woman, because everyone has been known as a living person throughout his or her life-time; each appears once only at the time of birth. There is no repetition of rebirth in a single life-time. Death also takes place only once in each life-time. There is no repetition of death, either. Feeling, however, takes rebirth repeatedly even at one sitting, and dies repeatedly even at one sitting. We can see all these repeated births and deaths, here and now. Is feeling, which arises and dies repeatedly at one sitting the essence of an individual, a self, or life-principle? If the answer is “Yes,” then feeling must live as long as an individual lives. However, this feeling is not able to exist as long as the blink of an eye, or as long as a flash of lightning. If this feeling were an individual’s self, life, or essence, and died repeatedly at one sitting, an individual must be dying repeatedly at one sitting. The same with living-beings, I, he or she, man or woman, would be dying repeatedly at one sitting.

To answer this question, it is clear that feeling, whether pleasant or unpleasant, happy or sad, *etc.*, is not an individual, nor the essence of self, nor a person. All this means that feeling is not-self. To one who is able to comprehend clearly, with the help of direct knowledge of impermanence, as if he had seen through by his own eyes, that feeling has been arising and dying repeatedly at one sitting, that means that feeling is not the body of an individual, nor that of a living-being, nor is it mine nor another’s, nor that of a man or woman. For a detailed explanation refer to the section dealing with direct knowledge of impermanence.

This is how the characteristic of not-self is clear on clear comprehension of impermanence, and on the clear comprehension of suffering.

I will explain how on good comprehension of painful feeling, the characteristic of not-self is clear. All living-beings naturally desire peace, and wish to enjoy happiness constantly. They do not want even a little

poverty and suffering. If pleasurable and happy feelings are the essence of an individual, and the essence of a living-being, they will always be in full agreement with the desires of individual living-beings, there will be no differences between them; there will be no suffering of change or instability. If there is no suffering of change, there will be no suffering due to mental formations or the transient nature of phenomena.

Clear Existence of Two Kinds of Suffering

There can be no doubt about the existence of two kinds of suffering; they are obvious. For an example, in the winter when it is very cold, fire gives us pleasurable feelings, while in the summer when it is very hot, cool water gives us pleasurable feelings. One oppressed by cold can get peace and happiness from fire and the other oppressed by heat can get happiness from cool water. If those peace and happiness are separated from fire and water, suffering from cold and heat return. If peace and happiness are desired again fire and water must be obtained again. To make fire is the suffering of mental formations, so to is fetching water.

It will be seen from this example that six desirable sense-objects give us pleasant and happy feelings. Those who want these sensual objects will have to make efforts to get them. Those, who are separated from these pleasurable and happy feelings, will become feelings of suffering or indifference, which are joyless and undesirable. If pleasure and happiness are wanted again, efforts must be made to get them. These sensual objects are preserved with care. To get these sensual objects we have to earn money and get rice and other foods. All efforts made both day and night are for the purpose of getting these sensual objects that gives us pleasure and happiness, which is all the suffering of mental formations.

Both Pleasure and Happiness Are Not-self

Individuals and sentient-beings are very fond of pleasurable and happy feelings. Once separated from desirable sense-objects, these good feelings dry up. Becoming dried up is the suffering of change, which is oppressive to these sentient-beings, so they suffer from mental and physical distress and ailments. They are pushed against their will into the bottomless pit of beginningless formations. As soon as pleasure and happiness dry up in their aggregates, they will have to go down the bottomless pit of the suffering of mental formations again so that they can enjoy pleasant and happy sensual objects again. This is all what we mean to say.

This is how pleasurable and happy feelings give rise to suffering of change, which has oppresses individuals and sentient-beings. If these feelings were the essence of a self or an individual, these feelings could not give rise to the suffering of changes that were not desired by individuals and sentient-beings to oppress them. If the pleasurable feelings of a millionaire, a king, an emperor, or a Universal Monarch, were their own essence or self, they would remain perpetually in complete agreement with their wishes and desires; they would not have decayed and vanished as a result of the suffering of change, which those being all detest. The sufferings of change may arise at any of the three stages of life when the life, wealth, or property of an individual or sentient-being can be put in jeopardy. The same remarks apply equally to pleasure and happiness of devas and brahmas.

This is the explanation of characteristics of suffering and not-self in pleasurable and happy feelings put altogether in agreement. It is very clear that feeling of sufferings and sorrow are not a self or soul. A person suffering from a disease wishes for relief, which means pleasure, instead of which he or she gets more pain. This shows that feeling has no favour for suffering individuals. Although the patient is crying himself or herself hoarse to get relief from the pain, feeling has no sympathy at all and takes no notice of the patient who is now rolling with pain until death. It is the feeling of suffering inside the body, that is real suffering like hell. For a being suffering hopelessly in Avici for 100,000 years, there is not a single moment of kindly help or relief although he is crying and rolling restlessly up and down due to the acutely painful feelings. The same applies to the suffering of the lower realms.

End of the not-self characteristics of painful and sorrowful feelings.

This completes the exposition on the not-self characteristic of feelings on the clear comprehension of the suffering of feeling.

Discerning Not-self on Comprehending Dependent Origination

Let me now explain the characteristic of not-self that is very clear on perfect comprehension of the dependent origination of feeling.

Please refer to dependent origination mentioned earlier in the section on direct knowledge. What is to be noted essentially here is that dependent on three factors, *viz:* the ground, a tree, and sun-light, the shadow of a tree appears on the earth, but this shadow is not earth. If it is earth, it must be in that place always. It is not there always; so that shadow of the tree is not the tree either. If it is the tree it must be situated on that tree. That shadow of the tree is not the light of the sun either; it contrasts the sun. When a light

of the sun appears, the shadow disappears. As it appears in the shape of the tree, it is only a property of the tree; so it is called the tree's shadow.

Relationship between Example and Analogy

Painful feeling arises when there is a serious injury caused by a stick or a spear to any part of the body of a person. That painful feeling is analogous to the shadow of that tree. The earth is analogous to the body of the person. The tree is analogous to the stick or spear. The shadow of that tree is on the earth and depends on the earth, but it is not the earth; nor is it a kind of earth. If something hot comes into contact with the body, it becomes hot, which is painful feeling. If something cold comes into contact with it, it becomes cold, feeling cold, which is painful feeling. So, this feeling is analogous to anything that comes into contact with the body. It is therefore clear that feeling is the result of the stick or spear. People used to say, therefore, that the feeling is a stick injury, when it is caused by a stick, or a spear injury when it is caused by a spear, or it is a burn when it is caused by fire.

The same remarks apply to the cases of the shadows of trees, logs, or men appearing through the light of the sun, moon, or a flame.

The same applies to the shapes and forms of the sun, moon, a man's face, a tree or branch appearing on clear surfaces of glasses or water.

The shape of a man's face appearing on a mirror is not the materiality of the glass nor is it the materiality of the face; it is analogous to the face only in shape and form. We must therefore say that it is the result of the face, the image of the face and we call it the reflection of the face. This reflection of the face is analogous to painful feeling. The surface of the mirrors analogous to the body of the man. The face is analogous to a stick or spear. Besides all these, there are old sores, wounds, and injuries, together with moisture-born worms, inside the head, bowels, liver, lungs, stomach, intestine, and other parts of the body. Here too, old sores, wounds, injuries, and other parts of the physical body are analogous to aggregate of matter (*rūpakkhandhā*). Moisture-born worms, consciousness, contact, and feeling are analogous to the aggregate of mind (*nāmakkhandhā*).

In other words, a man is suffering from leprosy all over his body, wet with pus and sweat from flies and their eggs. There are other worms also all over his body. These worms and their eggs are not parts of the man's organism. They are the offspring of the flies. In this example, worms are analogous to painful feelings, flies to the stick and spear, and the wet leprosy is analogous to the physical organism or the aggregate of matter.

Feeling Arises on Contact with Sense Objects

This is to show that the five kinds of feeling, referred to in a series of examples here, are not our own, nor our bodies, nor our property, nor do they remain perpetually in our aggregates. All this is true. Shadows and images appearing on the surface of water or on the surface of a mirror do not remain there. They appear momentarily when the surface of water, or a mirror, appears facing the sun, the moon, or the face of a man. When the sunlight disappears, the shadow disappears. When the moonlight disappears, the shadow of the moon disappears. When the face of the man disappears, the reflection of the man's face disappears from the surface of water or the mirror. In the same way, feeling arises only at the moment when a sense object contacts with it. Feeling disappears as soon as the sense object disappears from its contact. This is the way of dependent origination.

Image of a Child and a Mad Man

A mad man believed that the image of a child on the surface of a mirror was his child. He was really pleased and happy when he was looking at the image of the child on the surface of the glass in his hand. When the child's image disappeared he became restless and distressed. The image of the child appeared on the surface of the mirror when a child came and looked into it, and when the child went away from the mirror, the image also disappeared. The mad man used to bring a mirror to the child whenever he wanted to see the image. There was a lot of suffering of mental formations for him when he had to run and come to the child more than a hundred times a day whenever he wanted to see the image of the child. The mad man was sad and disappointed whenever the child image disappeared because the child's image that used to appear on the surface of the mirror was governed by the law of dependent origination.

According to the law of dependent origination, the child's image was not inside the mirror; it appeared on the mirror when it came face-to-face with the child. As soon as this contact was lost, it disappeared from the mirror. When the mad man wanted the image to appear he came to the child. This is the way of dependent origination. The five kinds of feeling, *viz*: pleasure, pain, happiness, sorrow, and equanimity, are analogous to the image of the child appearing on the surface of the mirror from moment to moment.

A foolish person (*bala-puthujjana*) who tenaciously clings to the view that these five kinds of feeling are "I," "me," or "myself," is analogous to that mad man. The six sensory surfaces of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, are

analogous to the child. Foolish persons, who have to approach those able to give these feelings whenever they want pleasurable and happy feelings to appear, are analogous to the mad man who approached the child frequently.

This completes dependent origination, which shows that a clear comprehension of dependent origination and adventitious phenomena, gives rise to the knowledge that feeling is not-self.

Besides this, there are many other aspects to the not-self characteristic of feeling. What is essential is two points: a clear comprehension of the impermanence of feeling and the dependent origination of feeling. It is certain that a clear comprehension of impermanence and a clear comprehension of the dependent origination of feeling give rise to comprehension of not-self. It is therefore necessary for the meditator to strive for months or years if necessary to gain a clear comprehension of impermanence and dependent origination.

*This completes the characteristic of not-self,
which is clear on comprehending dependent origination.*

End of Direct Knowledge of Not-self

Advantages of Comprehension of Not-self

Let me now point out the advantages of the comprehension of not-self.

One, who is able to comprehend not-self clearly, can realise the Path of Stream-winning, wherein self-view (*atta-diṭṭhi*) or personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) is totally eradicated.

All sentient-beings wander around in beginningless *saṃsāra* rarely encountering the dispensation of a Buddha. They have encountered one not even once in a hundred thousand world-cycles. An infinite number of human existences and an infinite number of world-cycles have elapsed during which evils and errors had been done, as a result of which every sentient-being must have accumulated to innumerable volitional actions liable to cause rebirth in the great hell of Avīci or in other large and small hells, as well as rebirth as a variety of ghosts, demons, and animals. The chief of all this past evil kamma is self-view (*atta-diṭṭhi*) or personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).

As long as there is personality-view, past immoral actions remain active. Even Sakka, the king of devas, and his following of gods, in the six celestial realms are inclining their heads toward the four lower realms, *viz*: hell (*niraya*), the animal realm (*tīracchāna*), demons (*asura*), and hungry ghosts (*peta*).

Higher celestial beings of the realms of form (*rūpa-loka*), and the formless realms (*arūpa-loka*), are also inclining their heads towards the four lower

realms. In a forest of toddy trees, toddy fruits are on the top of toddy trees. Every fruit on top of a toddy tree is liable to fall down at any moment as all the fruits on the top of the tree can remain there only as long as the branches of the tree remain to support them. As soon as the branches fall down to the ground, the fruits also will fall. In the same way, devas and brahmas, who hold self-view, remain there in the celestial realms only as long as their life-spans last. As soon as their life-spans elapse, they will fall down from the celestial realms, as the toddy fruits fall down from the toddy trees.

This is true. Personality-view is always latent in the mental continuum of every individual, is one always holding in its grasp an infinite number of unwholesome deeds. It is a very huge and more burdensome than Mount Meru. Therefore, sentient-beings of the highest brahma realms who still have personality-view in their mental continuum have fallen down one after another to the lower realms, let alone those beings of the lower brahma realms, deva realms, and human realm. Although they may be kings of brahmas, kings of devas, or wheel-turning emperors, they have in their hearts the cause of the eight large hells, an infinite number of smaller hells, a countless number of demons, hungry ghosts, and animal births. Because they do not know that these miseries remain in their hearts and minds, these kings of brahmas and devas are happy and delighted.

Advantages of Cessation of Personality-view

With the cessation of personality-view, which is their chief, all the past immoral actions will disappear. Let alone all karmas of the distant past that have ceased, karmas of the present such as killing living-beings, stealing, *etc.*, will cease if personality-view ceases. You may fear fleas and bugs on your body, but you have no fear of the infinity of number of immoral actions. Those living in the human world, whose mental continuum are free from personality-view will incline their minds in the direction of the sublime planes of brahmas and devas. Those living in the lower deva and brahma realms will incline their minds in the direction of the upper deva and brahma realms. It is just like the clouds of mist from hills and mountain ranges at the end of the rainy season rising always higher. This is the great advantage of the cessation of personality-view.

This the correct. Personality-view, which is always latent in the mental continuum of every being, always holding in it grasp an infinity of unwholesome actions, is very huge and more burdensome than Mount Meru because, wherever there is personality-view, there will be immoral actions.

Those having personality-view in their mental continuum may be morally good today, but tomorrow, the day after, months after, years after, or in the next existence, they may murder their mother or father, murder of Arahant, or commit other forms of killing, or other stealing, and an infinite number of other crimes or unwholesome kamma. Today they may be within the Buddha's dispensation, but later when the Buddha's dispensation disappears, they may become holders of wrong-view, opposed to the Buddha's teaching. With cessation of personality-view, there will be no more immoral actions.

Then, devas and brahmas who have realised perfectly the characteristic of not-self, and whose mental continua are free from personality-view will not commit, even in their dreams, immoral actions, crimes, or misdeeds, although they may be wandering around in *saṃsāra* for several life-spans and several world-cycles. From the time of the cessation of personality-view to the time of attainment of final nibbāna they will keep the Buddha teaching in their hearts wherever they roam in *saṃsāra*; they will no lives in world-cycles devoid of the Buddha's dispensation. This is the advantage of the cessation of personality-view.

Unwholesome Kamma Persists until Personality-view Ceases

If you ask how the infinite number of past immoral actions disappears on termination of personality-view, suppose there is a string of several small beads. If you draw one of the small beads out of the string, the rest of the beads will come out. If you pull out the cord string and draw one of the beads, the rest of the beads will not come out because the beads are no longer attached to one another after the removal of the cord. Like this example, one with personality-view believes: "I have been a person for several life-spans, or several world-cycles, or I have been a deva or a brahma, for several life-spans or several world-cycles in the past." This is why the infinite number of past unwholesome kammās, which have not yet ripened, are always following him. It is like a string of beads firmly strung on a strong silk cord.

Personality-view Becomes Extinct on Comprehension of Not-self

Those whose personality-view has become extinct on clear comprehension of the characteristic of not-self, are able to realise analytically in their knowledge even at one sitting that a psycho-physical phenomenon is a rising and vanishing process, that there is no self or abiding entity, that the process of aggregates is like beads without a cord, and that the past immoral kammās are not persons, kings, I, nor my kamma, it was just a momentary phenomenon

of an arising and vanishing process. it is clear therefore, that all the past immoral actions become extinct on the final extinction of personality-view. It is like the beads whose cord has been removed. However, the extinction of all past moral actions have not become extinct on the mere extinction of personality-view. Moral actions of the past become totally extinct only on the attainment of Arahantship on the final extinction of craving (*taṇhā*).

Foolishness of Personality-view

Personality-view is indeed very foolish. One, who has murdered his mother, personifies himself to the act of murder and accusing himself: “I have done it; I am a fool; I was wrong, *etc.* and gets worried. If he can give up personality-view with direct knowledge of not-self: “I did it, I am a fool *etc.*,” that murder of mother cannot give effect to his rebirth or new birth of mind and matter. That is not so; he has caught hold of the kamma forcefully: “I did it! I committed this kamma, this was my action *etc.*,” That is why this kamma has to give an effect. An ordinary person (*puṭhujjana*) who is attached to personality-view is so foolish. This is how personality-view follows those addicted to it and influences their new existences, one after another.

People suffering in hell who have not given up personality-view, still hold that they have been suffering because of their past bad kamma. This proves that even at the time when they are suffering severely in hell or other woeful states from their past bad kamma they cannot give up their past unwholesome actions, which they cannot escape. Personality-view is as terrible as this.

It is obvious that sentient-beings are very afraid of old age, decay, and death; still they are obsessed with their past old age, decay, and death. They still remember these dangerous past offences; they cannot give them up. As they cannot give up, these past old age, decay, and death follow them to their new life-processes of rebirth, aging, decay, and death. Personality-view is a dangerous state of misery.

Even at present, people suffer from internal and external diseases, which give them a lot of trouble. They believe that these dangerous diseases are the result of their past evil deeds, so they say: “I feel pain; I suffer from this or that disease; I burn with this fever, *etc.*,” as a result of which they are unable to detach themselves from their fevers, diseases, and sufferings attached to them up to this day.

Personality-view is very oppressive, but people are obsessed with it, and recognise it as their own self or ego, which has always been following them throughout *saṃsāra*. personality-view is such a deep-rooted delusion or evil.

Unless this personality-view is dispelled no sentient-being is free from the dangers of birth, aging, disease, and death.

This is the summary of personality-view as a deep-rooted evil.

Craving (*taṇhā*) and conceit (*māna*) are not attachment to a self. Craving regards the three realms of beings as “my property,” while conceit regards them as “I.” Craving and conceit regard personality-view according to the process of personality-view, and those Noble Ones who have extinguished personality-view — Stream-winners, Once-returners, and Non-returners — according to the process of hallucination of perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*) and hallucination of thought (*citta-vipallāsa*). Attachment to hallucination of perception and thought is superficial, while the attachment to personality-view is deeply rooted. This is to show that the extinction of personality-view extinguishes all past unwholesome kamma.

Dhamma Always Follows One Who Destroys Personality-view

It is said that those who have realised the characteristic of not-self always carry in their mental continuum the teaching of the Buddha from the time that personality-view is eradicated until they attain final nibbāna. During the life-time of the Buddha, only one man,¹ countless celestial beings, and one million and eight hundred thousand brahmas, were liberated when the Dhammacakka Sutta was taught. In the same way, throughout the forty-five year ministry of the Buddha’s teaching, countless numbers of those liberated at each discourse were mostly devas and brahmas. The human beings liberated are never numbered as countless (*asaṅkheyya*).

Amongst devas, those who became Stream-winners have been liberated from *saṃsāra*. The Cātumahārājikā deva realm is full of Stream-winners, Tāvatiṃsa is full of Stream-winners; the upper planes of brahmas are full of Stream-winners, Once-returners, Non-returners, and Arahants; and the six celestial planes have become full of Noble Ones. The Cātumahārājika devas will enjoy celestial pleasures for nine million years, then ascend to higher realms to enjoy the pleasures there. They will not return to the lower planes. They will pass away, attaining final nibbāna after enjoying celestial pleasures for long life-spans and many world-cycles in the Akaniṭṭhā brahma realm. Since they became Stream-winners, after hearing various discourses, until they attain *parinibbāna* after enjoying celestial pleasures, our Buddha’s teaching will always abide in their mental continua.

¹ The original edition has five, but the remaining four of the group of five monks (*pañcavaggiyā*) only attained the Path after practising Satipaṭṭhāna meditation for some days (ed.)

Nibbāna Always Follows One Who Destroys Personality-view

The sublime peace of nibbāna always dwells in the hearts of those impermanent brahmas wherever they go. Nibbāna is the extinction of defilements lead by personality-view. It is the extinction of vices and evil practices, the four lower realms, the three catastrophes, the five *māras*, the four failures (*vipatti-dhamma*). This sublime nibbāna is always latent in their mental continua wherever they go throughout *saṃsāra*.

Wherever they go, they enjoy the bliss of nibbāna, and worldly sensual pleasures alternately. How is it that they enjoy both the bliss of nibbāna and the worldly sensual pleasures? Those, who have realised the characteristic of not-self well in their present life-time, were people of right-view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) who had enjoyed great wealth and prosperity in their past as human beings. It is cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa nibbāna*) for one whose mental continuum is free from the wrong-view of self (*atta-diṭṭhi*). It will be seen that animals like dogs, pigs, and fowl are suffering in hell and that human beings are also suffering in hell. On seeing those inhabitants of hell, devas and brahmas are very glad that they are not suffering in hell like those unfortunate men and animals. This is the freedom from the suffering of hell, which means cessation with remainder.

On seeing people with wrong-view, those with vices and evil practices, those suffering from the three catastrophes, those suffering in undesirable places, those harassed by the five *māras*, those harassed by the four failures, or when reflecting on the bliss of cessation with remainder, which is always present in their mental continua they are very glad to enjoy themselves fully.

In the same way, devas the six celestial planes enjoy themselves with both mundane and supramundane peace and happiness, alternately. On the three planes of the first *jhāna*, and the three planes of the second *jhāna*. Brahmas enjoy both mundane and supramundane peace and happiness. On getting disenchanted with the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, peace, and happiness, devas and brahmas, for several life-spans and several world-cycles, will give up mundane pleasures and happiness, and realise supramundane bliss of nibbāna without remainder (*anupādisesa nibbāna*), Arahantship.

Age of the Dispensation Calculated by Devas and Brahmas

Compared with the age of devas, our Buddha's dispensation will last nine hundred thousand human years in the Cātummahārājika realm. The same applies to other upper celestial planes. The dispensation will survive for thirty-six million human years in the Tāvātimsa realm, a hundred and

forty-four millions human years in the Yama realm, nine billion, two hundred and sixteen million human years in the Vasavatti deva realm — the highest deva realm. On the plane of the first *jhāna*, the dispensation will survive until the destruction of the world. It will survive on the plane of second *jhāna*, for the duration of eight world-cycles (*mahākappa*), and on the highest Akaniṭṭhā Brahma realm, our Buddha's dispensation will last for the duration of sixteen thousand world-cycles (*mahākappa*). These are the calculations based on the duration of each plane of life or existence.

In terms of the various planes of the Noble Ones, the life-span of the dispensation in Tāvatiṃsa and those of other higher celestial planes must increase. In the highest Akaniṭṭhā realm, our Buddha's dispensation will survive more than twenty thousand world-cycles. It will be seen, therefore, that although these devas and brahmas had enjoyed celestial pleasures and happiness for several life-spans, several world-cycles before they attained final nibbāna, the dispensation of the Buddha remained latent in the mental life-continua of those devas and brahmas. There was never a lapse of the dispensation or an extermination of the dispensation. These were the advantages of clear comprehension of the characteristic of not-self and extinction of personality-view.

Those Who Become Noble Ones

Besides that, a few bhikkhus became Noble Ones during the life-time of our Buddha. As for lay-people, several hundred thousand lay persons became Stream-winners in Sāvatti, and several hundred thousand in Rājagaha. Similarly, there were several hundred thousand and several tens of thousands of lay people who became Noble Ones in Kapilavatthu and Vesāli. The entire continent of Middle India (Majjhimadesa) was full of Noble Ones. All of them, are now in the Cātummahārājikā, Tāvatiṃsa and Yama deva realms.

Ordinary devas and noble devas eventually meet together and proceed together up to Akaniṭṭhā brahma realm after enjoying various levels of celestial pleasure and happiness. Our Buddha's dispensation was always in their mental continua until they attained *parinibbāna*. For them, there could be no such a thing as lapse or extermination of the dispensation. This is the advantage of the clear comprehension of the characteristic of not-self.

At present, there are Dhamma centres on the six celestial planes. Religious discourses are delivered at every rest house eight times a month. Sakka and the kings of devas address these meetings. Sometimes, learned devas give religious lectures and other times, kings of brahmas delivered

religious lectures. On hearing those lectures, several ordinary devas became Noble Ones. Several other devas also became Noble Ones after hearing religious lectures given by friendly noble devas at other places.

At the present, the celestial realms are full of ceaseless activities for liberation from suffering. The newly liberated noble devas and brahmas have now met with their old counterparts with the Buddha's dispensation always in their hearts. The doors to the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna will be kept open for a duration of nine million years. Those of the Tāvatiṃsa devas will be kept open for thirty-six million years. The same applies with due alteration of details to the higher celestial planes. The statement of the dispensation lasting only five thousand years refers only to the human world.

In the present era, the human world has only five thousand years during which human beings can become Noble Ones. After that they cannot become Noble Ones. More than two thousand five hundred years of the dispensation have already elapsed by now, a little over two thousand years remain.

Three Places for the Attainment of the Path

In the *Anguttaranikāya*, the Buddha is quoted as saying that there are three places for those who take rebirth in the deva realms to realise the Path following their deaths as ordinary persons in the human world during the Buddha's dispensation. Then they will realise the Path.

1. One who is reborn in the happy celestial realms after death can realise the Path with insight knowledge, for which he or she underwent a full course of training in meditation exercises while in the human world.
2. If one cannot do it unaided, friends or companions who are Noble Ones will show them the way. Then he or she will realise the Path.
3. If the above is not possible, they can go to religious lecture halls to hear discourses eight times a month. Then they will realise the Path.

This is how people arriving in the celestial realms can realise the Path.

According to this Buddha's teaching, people who have attained the celestial realms from the human world will have realised the Path from one of these places. They will now meet with all those of devas or celestial kings, princes, and princesses, sons and daughters of the Buddha, who were the previous residents of Sāvatti, Rājagaha, Vesāli, Kapilavatthu, *etc.*, during the life-time of Buddha. All these old and new groups of devas and brahmas are now united. They will proceed together to the Akaniṭṭhā realm enjoying themselves along the way with celestial pleasures.

On arrival at the brahma plane of the first *jhāna*, they will meet the celestial sons and daughters of Kakusandha Buddha, Koṇāgamana Buddha, and Kassapa Buddha. On arrival at the Vehapphala and Suddhāvāsa Brahma realms, they will meet the celestial sons and daughters of Vipassī Buddha, Sikhi Buddha and Vessabhū Buddha. All this is the advantage of clearly comprehending the characteristic of not-self.

All lay people and bhikkhus will be well-advised, therefore, to pay more attention to the various centres for gaining the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna, kept open for over two thousand years in the human world. Similarly, there are centres for gaining the Path kept open for nine million years in Cātummahārājika and for thirty-six million years in Tāvātimsa. They should make every effort to meet the sons and daughters of the seven Buddhas counting from Vipassī Buddha. To achieve this they should:–

1. Permanently observe morality with right-livelihood as the eighth (*ājivaṭṭhamaka-sīla*),
2. Permanently practise insight meditation to realise the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self.

Those two are both required. The observance of morality with right-livelihood as the eighth leads to rebirth in celestial realms. However, rebirth in celestial realms alone is not sufficient. Without insight knowledge, rebirth in celestial realms is devoid of the opportunity to gain freedom in three places. In order to enjoy freedom in three places the three kinds of insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*) must be developed throughout this life-time. In developing insight, insight into not-self is the most important. Clear comprehension of not-self gives rise to the extinction of personality-view as has been stated repeatedly. To comprehend not-self properly, the key points of impermanence and the dependent origination of feelings must be clearly understood so that the characteristic of not-self will also be clearly understood.

This ends the exposition of direct knowledge of not-self and its advantages.

End of Discriminating Knowledge

Direct Knowledge of Abandoning

Let me now deal with the direct knowledge of abandoning (*pahāna-pariññā*). In brief, direct knowledge of abandoning means: attachment to feeling, viz: the latent tendency to craving (*taṇhānusaya*), the latent tendency to conceit (*mānanusaya*), and the latent tendency to wrong-view

(*diṭṭhanusaya*). Rooting out these attachments is the direct knowledge of abandoning (*pahāna-pariññā*).

In the first instance, it is most important to get rid of the latent tendency to wrong-view, which is the root of personality-view. With the eradication of wrong-view, even though the latent tendencies to craving, conceit, *etc.*, are not eradicated, the seed of rebirth in the lower realms is dead, it is uprooted, its artery is broken, and the life-blood of kamma leading to the lower realms is cut off. From this moment until *parinibbāna*, the Buddha's dispensation always exists in the heart, the dangers of evil practices, and wrong-livelihood, are no more. Even if reborn as a human being, you will not belong to a family of bad moral conduct, nor to a family in abject poverty; you will never encounter the three catastrophes, the eight kinds of undesirable locations, of the five *māras*. You will never adopt the sixty-two kinds of wrong-view, or the three dogmatic wrong-views. Therefore, every effort must be made get rid of the latent tendency to wrong-view by all means.

Pleasant and happy feelings should be regarded as great dangers. In the previous section dealing with the satisfaction and danger of feelings, the details of awareness of fearfulness (*bhaya-ñāṇa*), and knowledge of misery (*ādinava-ñāṇa*) have been discussed.

In the matter of feelings, fear and misery are nothing but the characteristics of suffering, a clear comprehension of which may lead to realisation of not-self. If feelings of pleasure and happiness were really my self, the functions of fear and misery, which are all against me, would not have been created for me. As stated already in the section on satisfaction and danger: previously, pleasure and happiness are all fear and misery. It is clear, therefore, that feeling is not my self, but is only not-self. This is how to comprehend it.

With a perfect comprehension of the three characteristics, comprehension of the six knowledges from awareness of fearfulness to knowledge of equanimity about formations is not difficult.

1. When the danger of *saṃsāra* is understood, happiness over feeling will disappear, which is awareness of fearfulness (*bhaya-ñāṇa*).
2. When the knowledge of misery (*ādinava-ñāṇa*) is understood, the craving for feeling disappears.
3. When the knowledge of disgust (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*) arises, which means being disenchanted with feeling, pleasure over feeling disappears.
4. When the knowledge of desire for deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*) arises, attachment to pleasant and happy feelings is cut off.

5. The knowledge of re-observation (*paṭisaṅkhānupassana-ñāṇa*) means knowledge of reflective contemplation of feeling by means of the forty meditation subjects to get rid of attachment to feeling.
6. The knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) means equanimity regarding the formations of existence after cutting off attachment to feelings with re-observation.
7. Preparation (*parikamma*), access (*upacāra*), and adaptation (*anuloma*), which are included in the thought-process of the Path (*magga-vīthi*), are called knowledge of adaptation (*anuloma-ñāṇa*).

There are no great difficulties regarding the seven preceding knowledges. There are great difficulties with regard to three stages: knowledge of comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*), knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), and knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*). To acquire these three knowledges you will need to clearly comprehend impermanence. If you gain direct knowledge of impermanence (*anicca-pariññā*) clearly, you will be able to comprehend direct knowledge of not-self (*anatta-pariññā*) as well. If you comprehend both of the former clearly the seven knowledges from fearfulness to adaptation will manifest themselves, one after another, whenever you contemplate each of them in serial order.

A detailed treatment of these seven knowledges has been given in my small book “[Paramattha Saṃkkhita](#),” a compilation of all the nine chapters of “[Paramattha Saṅgaha](#)” in verse form. Particulars of these knowledges are not given in detail.

One Confirmed in the Three Dispensations

For one who attains Stream-winning, personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*) are uprooted from his or her mental continuum, when he or she realises all the advantages of comprehending not-self in the past. Three types of the Buddha’s dispensation will remain throughout *saṃsāra* until the attainment of final cessation (*parinibbāna*):–

1. Higher training in morality (*adhisīla-sikkhā-sāsana*),
2. Higher training in concentration (*adhicitta-sikkhā-sāsana*),
3. Higher training in wisdom (*adhipaññā-sikkhā-sāsana*).

These three sublime dispensations, and also the three sublime dispensations of study (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), and realisation (*paṭivedha*), exist in that person permanently in all future existences until the realisation of *parinibbāna*. The same is the case with thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhi-*

paṅkhiya-dhamma), the thirty-eight blessings (*maṅgala*), the seven types of wealth of the Noble Ones; three jewels of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. This is the greatest advantage of the realisation of the characteristic of not-self.

Personality-view is the chief or leader of the foolish ordinary person who does not clearly comprehend the characteristic of not-self. That person is lead by personality-view. The right-view of insight (*vipassanā-sammā-ditṭhi*) is the chief or leader of one who clearly comprehends the characteristic of not-self. That person is lead by the right-view of insight.

Large rocks are situated in the earth. If any power would try to lift those rocks from the earth below the great ocean to the surface of the ocean they could float on the water as long as the power exerted its force. As soon as the force of that power subsided, the rocks would sink down below the ocean and remain there forever. In the same way, the place where personality-view is situated is in the four lower realms. It is due to meritorious deeds that rebirths occur in the happy planes of existence such as the world of human-beings, devas, and brahmas. As soon as the meritorious deeds lose their power, human-beings, devas, and brahmas in the happy planes of existence fall back to the four lower realms. When they fall into the lower realms, they may not be able to return again to the fortunate planes of existence for hundreds, thousands, or millions of life-spans. This was taught by the Buddha in the *Bālapaṇḍita Sutta*, citing the simile of a blind turtle swimming in the great oceans happening to pop its head through a yoke drifting about on the surface. From this simile, it will be clear that not a single one of those suffering in the lower realms would be likely to rise to the fortunate realms in time to meet the dispensation of Metteyya Buddha.

The Arising of a Buddha is Very Rare

In accordance with the teaching: “The arising of a Buddha in the world is very rare (*Buddhuppādo dullabho lokasmim*),” it is difficult to encounter the dispensation of a Buddha. One cannot encounter the Buddha’s teaching even once in a period of ten thousand or a hundred thousand world-cycles, most of which are devoid of Buddhas. Out of the four kinds of world-cycles, *viz*: a world-cycle of evolution (*saṃvaṭṭa-kappa*), a standing world-cycle (*saṃvaṭṭa-ṭhāyi-kappa*), a world-cycle of devolution (*vivaṭṭa-kappa*), and a standing world-cycle of devolution (*vivaṭṭa-ṭhāyi-kappa*), a Buddha appears only during the fourth type, which has sixty-four intervening world-cycles (*antara-kappa*), out of which one Buddha used to appear in one intervening world-cycle, two Buddhas in two intervening world-cycles; three Buddhas in three

intervening world-cycles, four Buddhas in four intervening world-cycles, five Buddhas in five intervening world-cycles, while the remaining intervening world-cycle are devoid of Buddhas. A Buddha appears in each intervening world-cycle within the life-span range of a hundred years to a hundred thousand years. If a Buddha appears during a period of a hundred thousand year life-span, the dispensation exists for two or three hundred thousand years. One intervening world-cycle means a countless number of years. So, the two or three hundred thousand year duration of the dispensation will be just like the blink of an eye or a flash of lightning. This is how the appearance of the Buddha's dispensation is very rare in the world.

As rare as it is, the number of Buddhas that have arisen in the distant past of *samsāra* has been much more than the sands of the Ganges, in spite of which innumerable beings have not been able to encounter a single one of the thousands of Buddhas who appeared in the world from time to time. There remains only one Buddha Metteyya to appear in this world-cycle, after which there will be a large number of empty world-cycles before the appearance of the next Buddha.

It is highly likely that those who survive the lapse of the Buddha Gotama's dispensation, will miss meeting not only Metteyya Buddha, but also miss meeting those thousands of Buddhas who appear in the world from time to time in the future, because there is only one way for them to meet, but there are infinite ways to miss them. It may be possible for a needle dropped from the sky to hit another needle fired up from the earth, but it will not be possible for them to encounter the Buddha Metteyya. Please beware of this fact.

One Who Dispels Personality-view Inclines to Nibbāna

It is nibbāna where the right-view of insight (*vipassanā-sammā-ditṭhi*) arises. If someone throws large iron balls into the ocean with certain magic power, the iron balls may float as long as the magic power lasts. When the magic power is exhausted, the iron balls will sink. In the same way, those who have established the right-view of insight firmly are well prepared for a break-through to nibbāna via the celestial planes although they are currently living among human-beings. It follows, therefore, that those living in the human and celestial planes without such right-view are headed to the four lower realms. Those who still attached to personality-view, can fall down anywhere after death; they have no assured destiny, so they are very much afraid of death, in spite of which they die and fall down anywhere in confusion like toddy fruits falling down from a tree to the ground.

Those men, devas, and brahmas who are free from personality-view, and have realised the characteristic of not-self, take rebirth on higher and better planes of existence than those where they were living at the time of their deaths. They can take rebirth on the same plane if they wish, or they can go anywhere they like on their deaths. Even on sudden death, they would go to higher and better planes, not lower ones. So, they do not fear death.

End of direct knowledge of abandoning feeling.

Feeling as a Meditation Subject

There are many mental and physical phenomena, but one feeling has been made a meditation subject here because it is one among consciousness (*citta*), contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and volition (*cetanā*), that enables a meditator to realise Path and Fruition knowledge.

Effective practice of the three types of direct knowledge with the use of only one mental phenomenon as the meditation subject will enable a meditator to reach the fruition knowledge of Arahantship. The element of contact alone can do that; or the element of feeling, the element of perception, the element of volition. Of these five mental phenomena; feeling, which belongs to the suffering or pain and pleasure, is the most evident and the easiest to grasp with the help of direct knowledge. I have, therefore, cited feeling alone as the meditation subject only for the purpose of realising Stream-winning and to accomplish direct knowledge of impermanence and not-self. The direct knowledge of suffering (*dukkha-pariññā*) is only accomplished on the realisation of Arahantship.

As regards the four remaining meditation subjects, *viz.*: consciousness, contact, perception, and volition, please see “[The Manual of Nutriment](#).”

The following Pāli text will convince meditators that any one of these five phenomena will suffice:—

*“Viññāṇe, bhikkhave, āhāre pariññāte nāmarūpaṃ pariññātaṃ hoti, nāmarūpe pariññāte ariyasāvakassa natthi kiñci uttarikaraṇiyanti vadāmi”*ti.¹

“Monks! If the nutriment of consciousness is fully comprehended, mental and material phenomena are also comprehended. With the comprehension of mental and material phenomena the noble disciple has nothing more to do in carrying out the supreme practice; thus I do declare.”

¹ S.ii.100, Puttamamsūpama Suttaṃ.

The nutriment of consciousness (*viññāṇa-āhāra*) means mind. If you control mind you control everything.

*“Phasse, bhikkhave, āhāre pariññāte nāmarūpaṃ pariññātaṃ hoti, nāmarūpe pariññāte ariyasāvakassa natthi kiñci uttarikaraṇīyanti vadāmi”*ti.¹

“Monks! If the nutriment of contact is fully comprehended, mental and material phenomena are also comprehended. With the comprehension of mental and material phenomena the noble disciple has nothing more to do in carrying out the supreme practice; thus I do declare.”

The nutriment of contact (*phassa-āhāra*) means the volition of contact (*phassa-cetasikā*). Control over the volition of contact means control over everything.

*“Manosañcetanāya, bhikkhave, āhāre pariññāte nāmarūpaṃ pariññātaṃ hoti, nāmarūpe pariññāte ariyasāvakassa natthi kiñci uttarikaraṇīyanti vadāmi”*ti.²

“Bhikkhus! If the nutriment of mental volition is fully comprehended, mental and material phenomena are also comprehended. With the comprehension of mental and material phenomena the noble disciple has nothing more to do in carrying out the supreme practice; thus I do declare.”

The nutriment of mental volition (*manosañcetanā-āhāra*) means volition (*cetanā*). Control over volition means control over everything.

Control over perception (*saññā*) means control over everything.

“Sukhaṃ vā yadi vā dukkhaṃ, adukkhamasukhaṃ saha. Ajjhattaṅca bahiddhā ca, yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ.

*“Etaṃ dukkhanti ñatvāna, mosadhammaṃ palokinaṃ. Phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ, evaṃ tattha vijānati. Vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu, nicchāto parinibbuto”*ti.³

“There are internal or external feelings of happiness, suffering, and indifference. All these three kinds of feeling are like a magic show, appearing and disappearing as suddenly as a lightning bolt or a bubble on seawater. One

¹ S.ii.101.

² S.ii.101.

³ Sn.144, verses 743-744.

who comprehends the true nature of all these three feelings in this way, will come to realise that they are impermanent, suffering, and not-self. A bhikkhu who realises these three characteristics will soon lose his interest in them, as a result of which, craving for feeling together with all the six sense-faculties will cease for eternal peace to prevail.”

This is the Pāli text to show that control over feelings controls all the rest, from which it will be seen that a thorough practice of a single phenomenon on the basis of three kinds of direct knowledge will win Arahantship.

This completes contemplation of feelings.

This book is entitled “Anatta Dipanī” as it contains many interesting expositions and many advantages thereof.

Conclusion

*“Sallāvati nadi tīre, aluṃnagara pārime.
Soṇṇapabbataṭṭabbhāre, silāguhāya caṅkame.
Vasatā mahātherana, saṃsārabhayadassinā.
Etādisāna mattāya, katā anatta dīpanī.”*

“Residing in the Guwa monastery built by Dāyaka Mg Aung Ba of Alone Town on the slope of the Shwedaungoo hill near the bank of Sallāvati river on the other side of Alone town, Mahāthera Ledi Sayādaw of Monywa has undertaken in the interest and for the welfare of men and monks who always foresee the danger of *saṃsāra* this noble work entitled “Anatta Dipanī” together with the advantages of realisation thereof and the exposition of direct knowledge of not-self (*anatta-pariññā*).”

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