

WORLD BUDDHIST MISSIONARY TOUR

DISCOURSES ON VIPASSANÆ MEDITATION
WRITTEN AND EXHORTED
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“A DISCOURSE ON SUDDHA VIPASSANÆ” DELIVERED

BY

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MAHÆSØ MEDITATION CENTRE YANGON MYANMAR

The fully Enlightened Buddha gave a sermon to Susima Paribbajaka as mentioned in Nidæna Vagga Saṃyutta Pæ¹i canon: - “Pubbe Ko Dhamma Thiti Ñæ¼a Picca Nibbæne Ñæ¼a” meaning meditators who are practising Vipassanæ meditation should first and foremost strive to attain the Dhamma Thiti Ñæ¼a and later on Nibbæna Conscious Ñæna.

Now one should try and understand what these two Ñæ¼as are. First “Dhamma Thiti Ñæ¼a” is the awareness of the impact of the external objects with our sense organs in the body. We have six faculties for sense perceptions in our bodies. That is the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind-named Ajjhattika Yatana in Pæ¹i. Then we have six corresponding external objects namely the sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and the mind-objects called in Pæ¹i as Bahirayatana which come into contact with six Ajjhattikayatana or personal bases. When the external objects come into contact with the corresponding internal sense bases, that particular sense perception occurs.

For example, when the sight come into contact with eye, visual perception or eye consciousness occurs. When the sound come into contact with the ear, audio perception or ear consciousness occurs. When the smell comes into contact with the nose, olfactory perception or nose consciousness occurs. When the taste come into contact with the tongue, gustatory perception or tongue consciousness occurs. When the touch comes into contact with the body, tactile perception or body consciousness occurs. When the mind object comes into contact with the mind base, mental perception or mind consciousness occurs. The awareness of these perceptions are called Dhamma Thiti Ñæna.

The meditators should first and foremost strive ardently to attain this Dhamma Thiti Ñæ¼a the moment it arises. If not, these perceptions will excite the feelings of like or dislike according to one’s mentality. That will invariably give rise to greed or attachment if it is pleasing, anger or hatred, if it is not satisfactory and thus Kilesæ or mental defilement developed. Furthermore, out of delusions, one will affirm these physical and mental phenomena as “I”, “my”, self or Ego-entity and so on resulting in unwholesome consequences. If a meditator is able to attain Dhamma Thiti Ñæna by diligent contemplation as we have instructed, the chain of events will stop at the stage of contact of the external and internal Æyatana.

Then the meditator will clearly see for himself that all physical and mental objects are incessantly appearing and disappearing from moment to moment. As he relentlessly and carefully continue noting the arising and dissolution of the physical and mental phenomena, he become firmly convinced that these physical and mental phenomena are impermanent, unsatisfactory or suffering and there is no self nor ego-entity.

Developments of such Vipassanæ or meditational insight will gradually eliminate meditator’s mental defilement or Kilesæs such as craving or attachments in sensual objects (Ærammanæusaya Kilesæ) and craving or attachments deep rooted in every creature (Santanæusaya Kilesæ), and deluded personality belief (Sakkæya Dññhi) etc.

When the mental defilement or Kilesæs are eliminated step by step momentarily, periodically and completely (Tada³ga, Vikkhambhana and Samuccheda) meditators will reach a state of cessation of all the physical and mental phenomena and realization of Nibbæna-the ultimate bliss of peace and tranquility due to the cessation of the sufferings.

That is the Nibbana Conscious Nāṃa which the meditator must strive to attain it as a final goal. May all the meditators most ardently and diligently contemplate the Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā as instructed by as and reach the cessation of all sufferings and realize the ultimate peace and tranquility-Nibbana.

SADHU! SADHU! SADHU!

THE THREE REFUGES AND THE FIVE PRECEPTS

(TISARAṀA & PAÑCA SŪLA)

At the time when the great world of ours evolves according to Great Natural Law of the Ultimate Truth in conjunction with the Great Mahābhūtas, the four great essential elements viz.,

- (i) Pathaw, the element of extension, the substratum of matter. Without it objects cannot occupy space.
- (ii) Āpo, the element of cohesion. Unlike pathaw it is intangible. It is this element that makes scattered particles of matter cohere and gives rise of the idea of "body".
- (iii) Tejo, the element of heat. Cold is also a form of tejo. But heat and cold are included in tejo because they possess the power of maturing bodies.
- (iv) Vāyo, the element of motion. It is inseparably connected with heat.

The world was in complete darkness with all the beings pertaining to it. For the refuge of those beings the sun and moon has to appear for reliance.

So also for the knowledge of those beings to know exactly and truly the wholesome and unwholesome, the good and the bad, the three Great Ratanas, Triple Gem, have to appear to adorn the world. "Triple Gem" or "Triyatana" possess the most precious qualities. They are the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. We also call them "Three Refuges" (Tisaraṃa) because they make possible complete security from suffering. The Buddha is the Enlightened One who discovered and taught the path to liberation; he has with his omniscient knowledge perceived the Four Noble Truths and He has expounded them to all beings in a clear vivid manner. The Dhamma is the path itself, the state of Nibbana to which the path leads, and the teaching which explains the way to practise the path. The noble Dhamma Ratana has saved beings from all the sufferings of the four lower worlds, viz., the animal world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell, and from the rounds of saṃsāra. Through the power of vipassanā magga (path) and phala (fruition) wisdom can be attained. The Dhamma guides all beings on the path leading to the end of all sufferings. By practising the Dhamma sincerely, and step by step, knowledge of higher wisdom will arise.

The sangha is the community of ariyans, the noble disciples of the Buddha who practising the path have reached the graded attainments culminating in full liberation. They undertake to purify their minds and abandon the moral defilements by practising Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā meditation as expounded by the Buddha.

MORAL DEFILEMENTS (KILESAS)

- (1) Latent defilements which are deep rooted in living creatures arise only when conditions are favourable. These latent defilements are known in Pāli as santanānusaya kilesas.
- (2) Defilements which are caused by the perception of external objects, such as visible, audible, olfactory, gustative, tactile and mental-objects. This group of kilesas is referred to in Pāli as arammanānusaya kilesas.

Therefore the monks who are well established in the Sangha and practise Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā meditation can attain Nibbāna, which is everlasting peace and freedom from greed, anger and delusion.

Now that you know the three Ratanas are full of power that can lead beings to Nibbāna, which is the everlasting peace, you good people should go to the three Ratanas for refuge by reciting the following: "Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa." Homage to the Exalted One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One! (Please say three times.)

TISARAṬṬA

Buddham saraṅgam gacchāmi. I go to the Buddha for refuge.

Dhamam saraṅgam gacchāmi. I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

Sangham saraṅgam gacchāmi. I go to the sangha for refuge.

Dutiyampi Buddham saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the second time I go to the Buddha for refuge.

Dutiyampi Dhamma saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the second time I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

Dutiyampi Sangham Saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the second time I go to the sangha for refuge.

Tatiyampi Buddham saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the third time I go to the Buddha for refuge.

Tatiyampi Dhamman saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the third time I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

Tatiyampi Sangham saraṅgam gacchāmi. For the third time I go to the sangha for refuge.

Monk: Saraṅgamanam sampunnam - The going for refuge is completed.

Laitiy: Āma, Bhante - Yes, bhante. (Bhante: a term of respectful address used for Buddhist monks)

As treasures should be kept in a good safe or in a bank in order that they can last for a long time, so also the three Ratanas should be kept with the five precepts by laymen. (Now you are to repeat after me)

PAÑCA SŪLA - THE FIVE PRECEPTS

(MONK FOLLOWED BY LAITY)

- (1) pæ½ætípætæ verama½i sikkhæpadam samædiyæmi.
I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking life.
- (2) Adinnædænæ verama½i sikkhæpadam samædiyæmi.
I undertake the training rule to abstain from stealing.
- (3) Kæmesumicchæcæra verama½i sikkhæpadam samædiyæmi.
I undertake the training rule to abstain from sexual misconduct.
- (4) Musævædæ verama½i sikkhæpadam samædiyæmi.
I undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech.
- (5) Suræmeraya-majja pamæda½hænæ verama½i sikkhæpadam samædiyami.
I undertake the training rule to abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness.

Monk: Tisara½ena saha pañca - sŏlam dhamma sædhukam surakkhitam katvæ appamædena sampædetha.

Maintaining well the five precepts together with the three refuges strive on with diligence.

Laity: Æma, Bhante = Yes, Bhante.

If you can safely keep the qualities of the three Ratanas by these precepts, you embody in yourselves the special and noble dhamma, i.e., path (magga) and fruit (phala) which can make you free from the four lower worlds (four apæya bhŏmis). It is certain that special and noble Dhammas will arise in all your physical and mental phenomena according to the Buddha's version:"

"Catuhi bhikkhave dhammehi samannægato ariyasævako sotæpanno hoti avinipæte dhammo niyato sambodhipara-yahoti-Katamehi catuhi samannægato?

1. Buddhæ avecca pasæ dena samannægato.

Ala' taOpïyoma' e orEñ*avm?

2. Dhamme avecca pasæ dena samannægato.

"ar@taOpïyoma' e orEñ*avm?

3. Sanghe avecca pasæ dena samannægato.

o½C taOpïyoma' e orEñ*avm?

4. Ariyækantehi sŏlehi samannægatati.

t&ŏ muaEñ[do½v [dorEñ*avm?

What the version means is this.

The noble disciple has absolute confidence in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and he keeps the precepts, he is similar to "Stream-winner" (Sotæpanna). He/She is sure not to fall into the four

lower worlds. He/She is positive to reborn in good and higher realms in future existences. So he/she is sure to attain higher paths (magga) and fruits (phalas)

Now in my conclusion I would like to say briefly the well known pā'i admonishment "Appamādena sampādeṭṭha" in order that you can be full of the said four factors by carefully practising vipassanā insight meditation in accordance with the instructions given by Buddha.

Here appamādena sampādeṭṭha means this: You are to note whatever psychophysical phenomenon arises and strive on with diligence.

You may ask what are the things that arise?

- (1) Because you have eyes, there can arise many kinds of vision and visible objects.
- (2) Because you have ears, there can arise many kinds of sound and audible objects.
- (3) Because you have nose, there can arise many kinds of odour and odorous objects.
- (4) Because you have tongues, there can arise many kinds of taste and sapid objects.
- (5) Because you have bodies, there can arise many kinds of tangibility and tangible objects.
- (6) Because you have mental phenomenon (citta which knows or experiences something), there can arise many things to be known and cognizable object.

In the above mentioned objects there are many things to which you are attached or which you hate as they may be meant you or things that will delude you. If you crave the objects, lust (rāga) defilements (kilesās) will arise in you. If you hate them, hatred (dosa) defilements will arise in you. If you are deluded by them, delusion (moha) defilements will arise and remain in your psychophysical phenomena. Such defilements can make your morality (sīla) impure, and they will cloud the faith (saddhā) you have in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Therefore, I want you to note the things every time you see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think with diligence so that the defilements cannot arise and you can abandon them.

Because you practise vipassanā insight meditation continuously, the defilements caused by the objects cannot cloud the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha which you go for refuge. That is why, the doubt on the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha will disappear from your heart when you meditate without *stopping*, with diligence, your mind becomes pure and serene. Because you have pure and serene mind inside your body, the blood in your body becomes so purified that there come out some great physical comfortness from your body.

Because the physical comfortness appear the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the penetrative insight, the light will arise in you and other concerning psycho-physical phenomena according to the Pā'i text of "The Wheel of Dhamma (Dhammacakkappavattana) sutta. Finally all your defilements will disappear and you will attain and realize Nibbāna through the Ariyan Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge.

Therefore, beginning with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, you are to constantly observe the arising of the psycho-physical phenomena as much as you can. With such observation, may you develop extraordinary vipassanā insights, rapidly attaining knowledge of the noble path (Ariya Magga-ñāḥa), Knowledge of the fruition of the path (Phala-Ñāna) and Nibbāna!

SÆDHU! SÆDHU! SÆDHU!

A DISCOURSE ON DULLABHA.

“Manussata bhāvo dullabho”- Thus is well-known pāḥi saying. This means that to become or becoming a human being is difficult. It is very difficult to obtain human life.

Even though you obtain a human life, you are to encounter old age, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. These sufferings follow you forever. Before the sufferings come to you, you should strive to attain the noble dhamma which must be completely reliable. Therefore Buddha, the Enlightened One delivered this “Pañci me Ænandā anisamsā pubba yogavacare”. Before the said sufferings come to you, you can practise vipassanā insight meditation so that you can get the five advantages. These are the following:-

(1) “Diḥhe va dhamme paccattanne va annam ærædheti”. This means: if you practise vipassanā insight meditation, you can realize the fruition of holiness (arahatta-phala) even in the present early life. You can realize the bliss of Nibbāna, Supramundane, the cessation of cravings at the last moment of death.

As it is said that you can realize the Fruition of Holiness even in the present life, there is nothing to say about attaining the three lower Fruitions, which are under the Fruition of Holiness and they can be surely attained.

(2) If you cannot realize the Fruition of Holiness and Nibbāna in the present life, you can realize them at the dying moment.

“No ce diḥhe va dhamme annam ærædheti atha maraḥa kæle annam ærædheti”. This is Buddha’s additional word, according to this word, the yogḥ who has strenuously practised vipassanā insight meditation, as he has already gained some vipassanā knowledge on his continuum of mental and physical phenomena, he can attain Nibbāna at the last moment of his death.

When the yogḥ is about to die, the new kammaja rppas, i.e. matters that are conditioned by the past kamma do not spring up with effect from the thiti, i.e. the static instant of the 17th consciousness counting in reverse order from the death-consciousness. The yogḥ knows by his/her vipassanā knowledge that old kammaja rppas are passing away. So, when it comes to the bha³ga, i.e. cessation instant of the 17th consciousness i.e. the death-consciousness the yogḥ realizes that all types of consciousness along with the death kammaja rppas pass away and that new and kammaja rppas (matters) cease to arise and there is the annihilation of further existences.

Seeing that all psychophysical phenomena have completely annihilated, the yogḥ realizes the complete extinction of existence, i.e. Bhava Nirodha. Hence the pāḥi version is as follows: Atha maraḥa kæle ærædheti”. By this, the yogḥ, at the death-door, can surely realize Nibbāna, the extinction of existences.

(3) If the yogḥ cannot attain the fruition of holiness because he/she has any hindrance or remorse or paying attention in an improper manner at the dying moment, he/she may be reborn as a deva, (a celestial being who, as a rule, is invisible to the human eye) in the next existence for he/she has already done wholesome deeds before. Then he/she can attain the fruition of holiness in accordance with the Master’s encouraging pāḥi version “No ce maraḥa kæle ærædheti atha deva putto ærædheti”.

It is true. But some yogis cannot attain Nibbāna as mentioned above at the last moment because of their paying attention in an improper manner to the bad feeling of any serious disease though they had strenuously practised vipassanā insight meditation as instructed by the master. Although they happen to die as they cannot repel the pain of the disease, they can remember the special dhamma (vipassanā insight) once they had gained in the previous life as soon as they get to the Deva world. There were many many examples at the time of the Enlightened One. They were Samañña Deva putta and many others. They were the Devas who attained the special dhamma (vipassanā insight) after they had reached Deva world. That is why there should be no doubt about this.

(4) Having reached the deva world some enjoy sensual pleasures and forget to practice vipassanā insight meditation. So they cannot attain vipassanā knowledge. Concerning such persons, in order not to lose or lessen their energy, the teacher instructed them to try their utmost to practise vipassanā insight meditation. If they do so, they can attain Nibbāna any time, finally they are sure to realize the Fruition of Holiness at the times of future Enlightened Ones. These persons should not be disheartened for not having realized the special dhamma. They should not do unwholesome deeds at random. Having saddhā, the faith that they can realize the special dhamma, vipassanā knowledge, when they come across the Buddha who can deliver the dhamma which is proper for their knowledge, and perfection.

(5) So you should cultivate good and purify your mind instead of doing evil. You must wait until you have a mature knowledge of perfection. Having been stimulated by essential perfections, you can become Pacceka Buddha, that is one who has attained, like a Buddha, by his unaided powers the knowledge necessary to realize Nibbāna, but can not teach it to others. At that time you will be furnished with the eight requisites (parikkharas) and you will attain Pacceka Buddhahip whatever difficulty you may meet.

Now that you have obtained a human life which has knowledge and have met Buddha's Teachings that can save and free you from the rounds of rebirths, you should practise satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā meditation.

Now in conclusion, I urge you to meditate beforehand, i.e., before you come across old age, sickness and death, as it is the very time you should make effort to practise Vipassanā insight meditation. I mean you should make full use of time so that you can get one of the said five advantages delivered by Buddha for your own sake.

May you all soon realize Nibbāna, cessation of sufferings!

SÆDHU! SÆDHU! SÆDHU!

“EXPOSITION ON ULTIMATE TRUTH”

(PARAMATTHA DHAMMA) BY

OVÆDÆCARIYA ASIkkHANA MAHÆTHERA

MAHÆSÏ MEDITATION CENTRE YANGON. MYANMAR

“Citta, Cetasika, (Mind) matter and Nibbæna”, four types of Dhamma-Paramattha. Excepting Nibbæna, the rest three Dhammas are found in every living being as Næma - Rppa.

Out of the above mentioned four Paramattha Dhammas every living being is endowed with Citta, Cetasika (mind) and matter that is Næma and Rppa or five Khandæs (Group of existence). Inside the Næma Rppa or five Khandæs inevitably lies the inherent-ta¼hæ Væna (craving) which is the chief root of suffering and of the ever continuing cycle of rebirths and deaths.

That is why these Næma-Rppas are savænas and they are far from realization of Nibbæna as they will be swept away in the birth-death-rebirth cycle of existence endlessly. So it is very important for everyone to strive most urgently and ardently to set oneself free from this entangled Væna (ta¼hæ) by studiously and mindfully contemplate the satipa¶hana Vipasanæ meditation in accordance with the Noble Eight-fold paths as expounded by the perfectly Enlightended-One-Sammæsam-Buddha.

(1) In the core of one’s Næma-Rppa deep seeded is the Ta¼hæ-Væna. Being the subject of the Ta¼hæ-Væna, Næma Rppas become Savæna (Ta¼ha associates)

(2) If one most mindfully contemplate with full awareness, one’s Næma-Rppa will be free of Væna and will surely become Nivæna. (Ta¼ha free)

(3) By making use of one’s three Paramatha Dhammas Citta, Cetasika (mind) and matter (Rppa) one should strive to realize Nibbæna. When one’s Næma Rppa is free from Væna one surely becomes Nivæna.

All of the layman’s mind are clouded by the kilesæs or mental defilements. When one has done intensive Satipa¶hana Vipassanæ meditation studiously and methodically by treading Majjhima-patipadæ (Middle path) or the Noble Eight-fold paths as expounded by the Lord Buddha, meditator’s mind becomes clear and bright with wisdom as the mind is set free from the Vænas. This deliverance from the Vænas is called Nivæna and that is interpreted as Nibbæna in the commentaries. The mind that is clear and untainted by Vænas attain Vipassanæ Næna’s progressively and finally realised the extreme bliss of the Nibbæna.

(4) Nivæna is called Nibbæna clean, clear, free from Væna. If one is Noble eight-fold path steadfast, all Vænas will depart.

VIÑÑĀĀM ANIDASSANAM, ANANTAM SABBHATO PABAM

(5) Viññāna of the mind is boundless, immeasurable and formless. So it is not something to be seen.

(6) With the right method of satipaṭṭhāna meditation, the mind is free from defilements. When deepseeded unwholesome Vānas are wiped out, the Noble Nivānas sprout. This Nivāna is interpreted as Nibbāna in the commentaries.

(7) Nibbāna, being free from Vāna, clean, clear and bright. There is nothing comparable to its might. As the defilement can no longer insist, the Nibbāna is the supreme bliss.

SĀDHU! SĀDHU! SĀDHU!

“SĀRASŪYA OVĀDA KATHĀ”

BY THE VENERABLE ASIKKHANA MAHĀTHERA
MAHĀSŪ MEDITATION CENTRE, YANGON, MYANMAR

All the creatures that come into being in this world are like travellers. They set their own goals for their journey in accordance with their own outlooks and imaginations. In the past, many leaders in a variety of communities have expounded diverse ethical and religious philosophies for the followers of the sect to practise. But no single doctrine was conducive to the attainment of the ultimate truth and the final deliverance from sufferings and realization of extreme bliss of Nibbāna.

In the 6th Century BC, the truly Enlightened One the Lord Buddha strongly and bravely declared the doctrine of the Middle Path (Majjhima-Patipadā) or the noble Eight-fold path as one and only way to attain Enlightenment and deliverance from suffering. The best single method for everyone regardless of race, sex, class or faith to adopt and practise is The Satipaṭṭhāna Vapassanā meditation through the noble eight-fold paths or middle path.

If practised with ardent faith and diligence, one can invariably gain the seven kinds of benefits:-

1. Purification from all kinds of defilements
2. Overcoming sorrow and worry
3. Overcoming lamentations
4. Cessation of all kinds of mental sufferings
5. Cessation of all kinds of physical sufferings
6. Attainment of enlightenment
7. Attainment of Nibbāna

Thus the Buddha had shown to the world the correct and sure way to enlightenment and deliverance from all sufferings of life which he had personally found, practically followed and finally attain the supreme bliss of Nibbāna.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā meditation- the sure way to Nibbāna as expounded by the Most Venerable late Mahāśū Mahāthera has been practised widely by meditation centres all over the world.

For the easy understanding by the man in the street, Mahāthera had adopted simple but invaluable method of meditation after he had studied and sifted the various discourses from all the Scriptures of Buddha's Dhamma.

He had himself practised under the guidance of the most learned and highly esteemed teachers of the Noble Order in this country. So I would like to urge all of you to take time and opportunity to practise Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā meditation at the meditation centres of your convenience as the most urgent priority.

Now to justify my advice, I shall relate and explain to you our Lord Buddha's very words of advice which he had frequently spoken in His lifetime as well as on His deathbed just before His death. (Parinibbāna).

“VAYADHAMMA SAĒKHARĒ, APPAMĒDENA SAMPĒDETHA”

That is the Lord Buddha's final sermon meaning “All the mental and physical phenomena (Sa³khāras) that arise disappear immediately. So strive for your deliverance diligently.”

As we have come into this world as living being, we are born with mind and body - Nāma and Rūpa. These mental and physical phenomena (Sa³khāras) are never permanent as they appear and disappear immediately from moment to moment. (Vayadhamma Sa³khāra)

Now, as the Lord Buddha had exhorted “Appamadena Sampādeṭha”, as the meditator most earnestly and strenuously contemplate on these mental and physical phenomena, the meditator will gradually perceive their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness.

As he contemplates on relentlessly with full awareness his delusion of Sa³khāras as I, he, she, man or woman etc (Atta – Diṭṭhi and Sakkavā Diṭṭhi) will be abolished and the linkage of existence - Vāna (taṅhā) will be gradually eliminated. That is the Nivāna (void of cravings)

When the meditator's Vipassanā Ñāna (Insight) progresses through the higher stages, he will perceive the complete cessation of physical and mental phenomena and there will also be the ultimate and absolute deliverance from all sufferings and misery resulting in attainment of supreme bliss of Nibbāna.

As the Lord Buddha had expounded in A³guttara Pā¹i text “Your body is the place to search for the Dhamma” you, humble meditators contemplate with full awareness the physical and mental phenomena occurring and disappearing in your body at the moment of actual happening.

By so practising Saṭṭipathāna vipassanā meditation as we have instructed, may you all find the four noble truths and realize the supreme bliss of Nibbāna-the cessation of all sufferings in the shortest possible time.

SĀDHU! SĀDHU! SĀDHU!

“THE NOBLE EIGHT FOLD PATH-THE ONLY WAY TO NIBBĀNA”

(TRANSLATED BY DR. U THAN NAUNG)

“The Lord Buddha’s sermon on request by his last disciple to become Arahāt-Ascetic Subhadda, as mentioned in sutta Mahāvā, Mahāpari-Nibbāna Sutta Pāṭi canon.”

In the Garden of Saltrees owned by the Malla kings of Kusinagara, just on the eve of His Mahāparinibbāna, the Lord Buddha exhorted the wandering ascetic Subhadda as follows:-

“Yasamin Kho Subhadda Dhamma Vinaye, Ariyo
Añña³ko Maggo Upalabbhati Tattha Pathamopi Maggo
Upalabbhati Dutiyopi Maggo-Tatīyopi Maggo

Catutthopi Maggo Upalabbhati meaning:- “O Subhadda! Only a master who laid down the sacred Noble eight fold path as the law and discipline of his school will be able to profess you to attain firstly the Sotāpatti Magga Phala (path & fruition), secondly the Sakadāgāmi Magga Phala (path & fruition), thirdly the Anāgāmi Magga phala (path & fruition), and fourthly the Arahatta Magga phala (path & fruition).”

To practise the Satipaññāna meditation in accordance with the Noble eight fold path. Sati or Mindfulness is the most important requisite. One must make unwavering effort to keep one’s awareness on the objects one is contemplating at the moment of actual happening.

For example, when one is breathing, the abdominal wall rises with inspiration and falls with expiration. A meditator must observe and note with keen interest to perceive clearly the actual process of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Full awareness of any mental and physical phenomena that arises and passes away continuously is Sammasati Magga³ga-Right Mindfulness.

While a meditator is contemplating thus, as he is making utmost effort to be mindful of the objects he is developing Sammāvāyama Magga³ga the Right Effort. Keeping of his conscious mind steadily on the object of contemplation is Sammāsamādhi Magga³ga-Right Concentration.

One’s sending of one’s noting mind to locate exactly on the meditating objects is Sammāsa³kappa Magga³ga-Right Thoughts. As one keeps on meditating continuously, one gradually perceives the basic and characteristic nature of the arising and dissolution of all the physical and mental phenomena, that is, Sammādiñhi Magga³ga-Right Views.

As the meditators are observing morality of five or eight precepts or sōla, they have already attained Sammāvācā Magga³ga-Right Speech, Samma-Kammanta-Right Action and Sammājīva-Right livelihood, beforehand.

Now in this way, a conscientious meditator who is already and strenuously contemplating in conformity with the Noble eight fold path composed of five pubbabaga Magga³ga (Sammā sati, Sammā Samādhi, Sammā Vāyama, Sammā Diñhi, Sammā Sa³kappa) and three Virati Magga³ga (Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ājīva) can anticipate the attainment of the Magga phala (path and fruition) and Nibbāna.

The above mentioned instruction is cited for the sitting meditation. Similarly, one can meditate in other three postures of meditation either walking, standing or lying down. For example, when the meditator is changing from sitting to standing posture, one must make note firstly of the intending mind to stand as (Wanting to stand, wanting to stand, wanting to stand), then when standing up, noting the whole process of standing as (standing, standing, standing). It is of paramount importance that every movement should be done very slowly with continuous mindfulness.

When one starts walking one first make note of the intending mind as (Wanting to walk, Wanting to walk, Wanting to walk). Then when walking, one makes note of left step, right step or lifting (the foot), dropping or lifting, moving, dropping etc. as instructed by the teacher. At the end of the walk, when one stops, make note as (standing, standing, standing), then when turning (turning, turning, turning) and so on.

From walking, when one sits, makes note as (sitting, sitting, sitting). When lying down, (lying, lying, lying). Always start noting from the intending mind. Whatever the body posture may be the relevant fact is for one to do every bodily movement very slowly with full awareness and making note of every physical and mental phenomena like wandering or thinking mind, feelings or sensations and sensory perceptions.

Such systematic and diligent contemplation of saṃvīpaṭṭhāna vipassanā meditation is in compliance with the features of Noble eight fold path which can lead one to extreme bliss of Nibbāna. It is clearly evident that to have satisfactory progressive meditation insight or vipassanā ñāṇa successively, it is absolutely essential for the meditators to practise the contemplation earnestly and continuously from the moment of awakening until falling off to sleep without any interruption.

There are two major kinds of craving (kilesa or taḥā) that dwell in every living creature. One is inseparably deep rooted kilesa since the origin of a life being from the start of the saṃsāra-unbroken chain of birth-death-rebirth cycle of every creature. That is the Santana nusaya Kilesa (Inherent Taḥā).

The other, known as Aramananusaya Kilesa, which is induced, originated and invigorated when the external sense objects are impacted with the sense base in our body. As Kilesas naturally have great affinity for sense objects, they flourish uncontrollably in unmindful non-meditating persons. But they attenuate gradually in studious and faithful meditators, who finally relinquish all the defilements or Kilesas and there by attain the deliverance from all sufferings and realize Nibbāna.

To eliminate the Kilesas or defilements completely and attain the deliverance from all sufferings and realization of Nibbāna, the meditators must (1) associate with wholesome, learned and able master in the field of practical vipassanā meditation "Sappurisasansevo" (2) be paying heed to their teaching and strictly and respectfully complying their instructions "Saddhamma Savanam" (3) have wise, reasoned and methodical attentive reflection of circumstances "Yoniso Manasikāro" (4) have strict observance and studious practice of mental, verbal and bodily morals in conformity with the nine supra mundane states-(4 paths and 4 fruitions with Nibbāna ninth)" Dhammānu Dhamma Paṭipatti.

So may you all meditators, by making good use of various methods as enumerated above be able to completely cleanse all kinds of mental defilements or kilesas and deliver yourselves from all sufferings and realize the supreme bliss of Nibbāna in the shortest possible time.

SÆDHU! SÆDHU! SÆDHU!

Mahāso Ovāḍācariya
 Aggamahā Kammaṅghānācariya
 Bhaddanta Asikkhana
 Saddhama Sotaḡp Pathein Mahāthera
 18-6-95