

The image shows two large, upright bundles of dried bamboo or reeds, standing in a field of tall green grass. The bundles are made of many thin, light-brown stalks, bound together with thin, light-colored twine. The background is a dense field of green grass, with some stalks in the foreground slightly out of focus. The overall scene is natural and outdoors.

The Law of Dependent Arising

The Secret of Bondage and Release

Volume IV

Bhikkhu Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda

The Law of Dependent Arising (Paṭicca Samuppāda)

The Secret of Bondage and Release

Volume IV

by

Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

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*'yo paṭicca samuppādaṃ passati
so Dhammaṃ passati
yo Dhammaṃ passati
so paṭicca samuppādaṃ passati'*



*'He who sees Dependent Arising
sees the Dhamma
He who sees the Dhamma
sees the Dependent Arising'*

*“What, monks is Dependent Arising?
Conditioned by birth, monks, is decay-and-death.
Whether there be an arising of the Tathāgatas
or whether there be no arising of the Tathāgatas
that elementary nature
that orderliness of the Dhamma
that norm of the Dhamma
the specific conditionality
does stand as it is.*

*THAT – the Tathāgata awakens to
and intuits into.
Having awakened to it
and intuited into it
he explains it
preaches it
proclaims it
reveals it
analyzes it
elucidates it
and says –
LOOK!”*

Contents

About the K.N.S.S.B.	vii
Introduction	viii
Abbreviations	xi
Sermon 16	1
Sermon 17	24
Sermon 18	47
Sermon 19	71
Sermon 20	91

About the K.N.S.S.B.

It is the express wish of Venerable Bhikkhu Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda that all his Dhamma Books and recorded sermons be offered as a pure gift of Dhamma free of charge to the Dhamma-thirsty world.

Accordingly, K.N.S.S.B. has taken upon itself the duties of publication and distribution of books written by the venerable author as well as the recording and distribution of his sermons on C.D.s, in addition to maintaining the website, www.seeingthroughthenet.net and the social networking site www.facebook.com/seeingthrough. Those wishing to participate in this multifaceted Dhammadāna may note the account number of our Trust given below.

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Introduction

The Buddha, soon after his enlightenment, reflected on the depth of the Dhamma he had realized. He saw two points in this Dhamma that transcends logic (*atakkāvacara*), which it is difficult for the worldlings immersed in defilements to see. One is the Law of Dependent Arising (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) or conditionality (*idappaccayatā*). The other is *Nibbāna* – the stilling of all Preparations (*sabba-saṅkhāra-samatha*).

Owing to the very profundity of the Law of Dependent Arising, hardly a century after the passing away of the Buddha, a number of Buddhist sects that sprang up offered a wide variety of interpretations of this central philosophy. Both as a term and as a philosophy *Paṭicca Samuppāda* happened to be a ‘stranger’ to the contemporary religious environment. The outcome of philosophical attempts to get familiar with this ‘stranger’ was a miscellany of treatises offering conflicting views. Each Buddhist sect had its own interpretation of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. This makes it all the more difficult to ascertain the exact significance of the term that accords with the Buddha’s teaching.

Against this hazy background, the Pahan Kanuwa series of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* sermons came to be inspired by an urge to clarify the correct position in the light of the Buddha’s sermons. Some 25 years ago I happened to deliver a series of 33 sermons on *Nibbāna* before the assembly of meditative monks in Meetirigala Nissarana Vanaya hermitage, which came out in eleven volumes under the title ‘Nivane Niveema’. The English translation of it titled: ‘*Nibbāna The Mind Stilled*’ followed in seven volumes. There too, I took the opportunity to discuss the Law of Dependent Arising to some extent. However, some of our readers invited me to write a separate book on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Now that this series of 20 Pahan Kanuwa sermons on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* has come out in four volumes, I suppose the above request is fulfilled. The similes I used in the *Nibbāna*

sermons to explicate certain aspects of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* find fuller expression in this series addressed to the local audience.

I am glad that the translation of this series of sermons titled ‘**Law of Dependent Arising – The Secret of Bondage and Release**’ will be published by the K.N.S.S.B. with the enthusiastic help of the generous supporters who appreciate the deep Dhamma.

Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

Sanghopasthāna Suwa Sevana
Kirillawala Watta
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Sri Lanka
(B.E. 2559) September 2015



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I wish to thank Mrs. Lilian Ratnayake for translating on my behalf sermons No. 16, 17, 18 and 19, in this volume. Due to failing health I could translate only sermon No. 20.

– Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda
(B.E.2559) April 2016



Abbreviations

Pāli Texts:

(References are to page numbers in P.T.S. Editions)

- D. *Dīgha Nikāya*
M. *Majjhima Nikāya*
S. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*
A. *Anguttara Nikāya*
Dhp. *Dhammapada*
Ud. *Udāna*
Itv. *Itivuttaka*
Sn. *Sutta Nipāta*
Thag. *Theragāthā*
M.A. *Majjhima Nikāya Commentary*
S.A. *Saṃyutta Nikāya Commentary*
Vism. *Visuddhimagga*
Vin. *Vinaya*
- M.M. The Magic of the Mind
S.H.B. Simon Hewavitharana Bequest Series
B.J.T.S Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series

Sermon 16 (Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 198)

'Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa'
'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Sukham vā yadi vā dukkham – adukkhamasukham sahā
ajjhattañ ca bahiddhā ca – yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ
etaṃ dukkhanti ñatvāna – mosadhammaṃ palokinaṃ
phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ – evaṃ tattha virajjati
vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu – nicchāto parinibbuto¹*

– *Dvāyatānupassanā Sutta, Sutta Nipāta.*

Dear Listeners,

Attainment of Nibbānic peace by overcoming saṃsāric suffering is generally considered as the aim of the Buddhist spiritual path. The problem of misery and happiness invariably reminds us of *vedanā*, feeling. The above two verses with a deep philosophical interpretation of feeling, which are chosen as the topic for this 16th discourse on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Law of Dependent Arising, provides an ideal introduction to our discussion on the significance of feeling as revealed in the twelve links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

These two verses in the *Dvāyatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, were uttered by the Buddha in order to emphasize the significance of the duality of arising and ceasing. In several of our previous discourses on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, this *sutta* provided the key to our explanation. In the present context too the relevance of the above two verses is established by the Buddha's remark: "Monks, if someone inquires whether there could be another mode of contemplating dualities, you must reply in the affirmative. How is it possible? Whatever suffering arises, all that is dependent on *vedanā* – feeling. That is one mode of

contemplation. With total cessation and detachment from feeling, suffering ceases. That is the other mode of contemplation. Monks, if a monk applies himself to the (*dvāyatānupassanā*) twofold method of contemplation without delay, with undeterred effort at cleansing of defilements (*kiḷesa*) he may expect to attain either Arahant hood, or the stage of Non-returner, *Anāgāmi* in case his clinging is not totally extinct.” The Buddha uttered the above two verses following this explanation.

Now let us find out their meanings.

*Sukham vā yadi vā dukkham – adukkhamasukham sahā
ajjhatañ ca bahiddhā ca – yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ*

Whatever feelings one experiences, either pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant, internally or externally,

etaṃ dukkhanti ñatvāna – mosadhammaṃ palokinaṃ

Realizing their deceptive and breakable nature,

phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ – evaṃ tattha virajjati

Seeing their waning at every sense contact, there arises disenchantment,

vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu – nicchāto parinibbuto

With the elimination of feeling, the monk overcomes the hunger for craving and attains extinction.

That is the meaning of the two verses. It is clear that all feelings, according to the Buddha, pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant, lead to suffering due to their deceptive breakable nature and their total cessation amounts to extinction (*Parinibbāna*).

Now let us try to understand ‘feeling’ (*vedanā*) as found in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Law of Dependent Arising. You are familiar with the twelve links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* such as *avijjā* and *saṅkhāra*. Among them *vedanā* is described as ‘*Phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā*’. I have once mentioned that for the clarification of any particular link, the two links before and after it have to be put in place. To give a simile, in order to illustrate one link in a chain, the two links on either side must be visible at least in part. In this case *phassa* and *taṇhā* are the links on either side of *vedanā*, which need special mention here. In the previous discourse we discussed *phassa*, which was given a six-fold analysis by the Buddha,² such as *cakkhu samphassa, sota samphassa* etc. Similarly, *vedanā* is six-fold as *cakkhu samphassajā vedanā, sota samphassajā vedanā, ghānasamphassajā vedanā, jivhā samphassajā vedanā, kāya samphassajā vedanā* and *mano samphassajā vedanā*. ‘*jā*’ means arising. Therefore *cakkhu samphassajā vedanā* means feelings arising from (born of) eye contact. The others are the ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact and mind contact. The deepest implications on *vedanā* are brought out in the *Cūlavedalla Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.³ By way of introduction to this discourse, I wish to quote a part of it. Visākha, an *anāgāmi* lay disciple, seeks explanation to a series of complicating questions from the nun Dhammadinnā, an Arahant *Therī*. She tackled them in an expert manner. We would like to quote the last few questions and answers which were based on *vedanā*.

“Venerable Lady, how do you classify *vedanā*?”

“Friend Visākha, *vedanā* is threefold, pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. *Sukha vedanā, dukkha vedanā* and *adukkhamasukha vedanā*.”

“Can you please explain what they mean?” (Visākha pretended not to know what they meant.)

“Whatever pleasant feeling is experienced physically or mentally, it is *sukha vedanā*. An unpleasant physical or mental experience is *dukkha vedanā*. Whatever physical and mental feeling is neither pleasant nor unpleasant is called *adukkhamasukha vedanā*.”

“Venerable lady, what is pleasant about a pleasant feeling? and what is unpleasant? What is pleasant about an unpleasant feeling and what is unpleasant? What is pleasant about a neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling? and what is unpleasant?”

“Friend Visākha, a pleasant feeling is pleasant only as long as it lasts. Its change is unpleasant. *Ṭhitisukhā viparināma dukkhā*. An unpleasant feeling is unpleasant only as long as it lasts. Its change is pleasant. *Ṭhitidukkhā viparināma sukhā*. A neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling is pleasant if surveyed with wisdom. It is unpleasant if surveyed without wisdom.”

“What is the latency (*anusaya*) underlying a pleasant feeling? What is the latency underlying an unpleasant feeling? What is the latency underlying a neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling?”

Before we quote Arahant Therī Dhammadinnā’s reply to this question, let me explain the term *anusaya* in case it is unfamiliar to some. In discussing *kīlesa*, we come across three stages, the dormant stage called *anusaya*, the awakening (activating) stage called *pariyuṭṭhāna*, and the active stage that violates a precept called *vītikamma*. Our present discussion is on the *anusaya* stage. The *Therī*’s reply is as follows:

“Friend Visākha, the latency that lies hidden underneath a pleasant feeling is lust (*rāgānusaya*). The latency that lies hidden underneath an unpleasant feeling is anger (*paṭighānusaya*). The

latency that lies hidden underneath a neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling is ignorance (*avijjānusaya*).”

“Venerable Lady, is the latency of lust found underneath every pleasant feeling? Is the latency of anger found underneath every unpleasant feeling? And is the latency of ignorance found underneath every feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant?”

“No friend Visākha. Lust is not found underneath every pleasant feeling. Anger is not found underneath every unpleasant feeling. Ignorance is not found underneath every feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.”

This position is further explained when the *Therī* answers Visakha’s questions that follow.

“Venerable Lady, what must be eradicated in the case of pleasant feelings? What must be eradicated in the case of unpleasant feelings? What must be eradicated in the case of feelings neither pleasant nor unpleasant?”

“Friend Visākha, in the case of pleasant feelings, the latency of lust must be eradicated. In the case of unpleasant feelings, the latency of anger must be eradicated. In the case of feelings neither pleasant nor unpleasant, the latency of ignorance must be eradicated.”

“Venerable Lady, must the latency of lust be eradicated in every instance of pleasant feelings? Must the latency of anger be eradicated in every instance of unpleasant feelings? Must the latency of ignorance be eradicated in every instance of feelings neither pleasant nor unpleasant?”

“No friend Visākha. *Anusayas* need not be eradicated in the case of every pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling or every feeling that is neither pleasant or unpleasant.”

With this brief reply the *Therī* presents an unusual description introducing three very special situations.

First and foremost a monk who deviates from lustful thoughts and unwholesome thoughts and immerses in seclusion with reflection and investigation (*vitakka vicāra*) attains the first absorption endowed with joy and ease (*pīti sukha*). The latency of lust is absent here although joy and ease are present. That is a very special mental state.

Secondly the Buddha declares something special about anger '*paṭigha*': A meditative monk entertains a longing, a yearning to speedily attain the noble emancipation through *Arahatphala Samādhi*, which is signeless (*animitta*) undirected (*appaṇihita*) and void (*suññata*), which the noble arahants attain and continue to abide in. The longing to attain that spiritual state is identified in the Dhamma as *nekkammasita domanassa*, dejection within renounced life and not *gehasita domanassa*, dejection within lay life.⁴ Dhammadinnā Therī declares that underneath this dejection no anger is found. That is a very special situation. Only a yearning prevails that the spiritual state has not yet been acquired, but no anger prevails.

The third factor is then explained. A certain monk who keeps aloof from pleasant and unpleasant feelings attains the fourth absorption which has only feelings that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. No latency of ignorance is found underneath it. That is a special situation.

Followed by this explanation, the lay disciple Visākha comes up with an out of the ordinary question.

Venerable Lady, what is the counterpart of pleasant feeling?

This term needs explanation. Think of a coconut or something similar that has two halves. *Paṭibhāga* means the counterpart. Now lets get back to the questions and answers.

Venerable Lady, what is the counterpart of pleasant feeling?

Friend Visākha, the counterpart of pleasant feeling is unpleasant feeling.

Then, what is the counterpart of unpleasant feeling?

The counterpart of unpleasant feeling is pleasant feeling.

This answer establishes a relationship between the two.

Then, what is the counterpart of feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

The counterpart, Friend Visākha, is ignorance (*avijjā*).

This answer is also unusual. The questioning continues.

What is the counterpart of *avijjā*, ignorance?

The counterpart is *vijjā*, knowledge.

What is the counterpart of *vijjā*, knowledge?

The counterpart is *vimutti*, emancipation.

What is the counterpart of *vimutti*?

The counterpart of *vimutti* is *Nibbāna*, extinction.

What is the counterpart of *Nibbāna*?

Friend Visākha, unable to restrain yourself from questioning, you are overstepping the boundaries. Higher life of *Brahmacariya* ends with *Nibbāna*, extinction. That is the end. Your question is erroneous.

But I am sure you can see, when you go deep into this subject, that the worldlings exist between pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Emancipation on the other hand arises in mid position called neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

Now we know the counterpart of pleasant feeling is unpleasant feeling, and the counterpart of unpleasant feeling is pleasant feeling. But the feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant goes deeper. When ignorance that lies hidden is dispelled knowledge dawns. When knowledge is dispelled, emancipation dawns, and *Nibbāna* emerges. Everything ends there. There is another valuable *sutta* relevant to this subject in the *Vedanā Saṃyutta* named *Salla Sutta*.⁵ Here the Buddha directly calls a person ignorant of the Dhamma as an illiterate common man. Afflicted with unpleasant feelings he desires for sensual pleasure. What is the reason for this? Being illiterate and worldly, he can visualize no other escape from misery than through sense pleasure. He is totally ignorant of feelings that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. In an attempt to clarify this point on an earlier occasion, we remember bringing out the simile of a see-saw. A ride on the see-saw is similar to the ride on the head of a coconut frond which was a game of long ago. We see the ordinary worldlings ride the see-saw between joy and misery. They are not aware of the neither pleasant nor unpleasant position in the center. Only the noble disciple who dedicates himself to the serious practice of contemplation on feeling according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, is capable of identifying the neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling. The worldlings on the run between the two extremes know nothing about the mid-position.

This point is well illustrated in the commentary with the simile of deer footprints. On a stretch of flat land there was a rocky plateau. A deer used to walk across it leaving footprints on the bare land but no trace on the rock. The feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant is similar to the rocky plateau. Emancipation lies there, although the worldlings are not aware. Emancipation is found concealed. Talking of the two extremes and the middle, I would like to switch on to *Majjhe Sutta*⁶ again for clarification, as we have done earlier. First let me give a summary of the *sutta* for the benefit of the new-comers.

When the Buddha was residing at Isipatana in Benaris, a group of *theras* (senior monks) while relaxing after the mid-day meal, initiated a dhamma discussion. They selected a riddle like verse with subtle meaning from the *Metteyya Pañha*⁷ in the *Sutta Nipāta*, and sitting in conference as it were formulated four questions for interpretation.

*Yo ubhante viditvāna
majjhe mantā na lippati
taṃ brūmi mahāpurisoti
sodha sibbanimaccagā*

knowing the two ends, he who with wisdom
refrains from attachment to the middle,
I call him a great man (*mahā purisa*)
who transcends the seamstress in this world.

The four questions formulated were What is the first end? What is the second end? What is the middle? Who is the seamstress? Six senior monks contributed their deep interpretations which were even suitable as objects of meditation. When presented to the Buddha he approved all six as correct. Here, we will discuss the third interpretation, as it is the most relevant to us.

“One end is pleasant feeling. The other is unpleasant feeling. In the middle is the feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant. The seamstress is craving.”

This makes it clear that the ordinary worldling runs between pleasure and pain driven by craving. Craving ignores the middle position and keeps tying knots with the two extreme ends. On the sly, she conceals ‘neither pleasant nor unpleasant’ feelings and keeps tying up the two ends. It is similar to the ride on the see-saw totally ignorant of the emancipation in the middle.

Now lets go into another relevant *sutta*, the *Phassamūlaka Sutta* in the *Vedanā Saṃyutta*.⁸ The Buddha begins as follows “Monks, there are three feelings”. To quote the Pāli statement “*Tisso imā bhikkhave vedanā, phassajā phassamūlakā, phassanidānā, phassapaccayā*”.

‘Monks, Feelings are of three types whether arisen from contact, rooted in contact, founded on contact or conditioned by contact. What are they? Pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant’. The Buddha further clarifies how they arise. ‘Monks, a contact conducive to a pleasant feeling, generates a pleasant feeling’. That contact is referred to as ‘*tajjam*’ a word which has to be broken up as *tat+ja*. *Tajja* means ‘born of that’ ‘arisen from that’. When a contact which gives rise to a pleasant feeling ceases, the resultant pleasant feeling ceases. The Buddha stresses this fact with reference to unpleasant feelings as well. ‘*dukkhavedaniyam bhikkhave phassam paṭicca uppajjati dukkha vedanā*’. Dependent on contact which generates an unpleasant feeling there arises an unpleasant feeling. With the cessation of that contact, the unpleasant feeling ceases. The same applies to feelings neither pleasant nor unpleasant. With a contact conducive to the generation of a feeling neither pleasant nor unpleasant, such a feeling is generated. With the cessation of such contact, the resultant feeling ceases.

The Buddha gives an ideal simile in order to explain contemplation on feeling, *vedanānupassanā*. ‘Monks, just as heat is generated by rubbing two pieces of wood together, that heat disappears then and there, when the two sticks are taken apart’. Here the word *tajja* is used. “*Yā tajjā usmā sā nirujjhati*”. The heat that arises by rubbing ceases then and there. Heat is generated by rubbing. By separating the two sticks, it cools. The message conveyed here is very deep. The Buddha has brought it up as a very important theory regarding *vedanānupassanā*. Here, in the *Phassamūlaka Sutta*, the Buddha declares it in poetic Pāli words, which can be easily committed to memory, as follows.

“*Tajjam tajjam phassaṃ paṭicca tadjā tadjā vedanā uppajanti. Tajjassa tajjassa phassassa nirodhā tadjā tadjā vedanā nirujjhanti*”. Let us see its meaning. We can translate *tajja* as ‘specific’. Then the statement would be roughly converted into English as ‘Depending on each different contact, each specific feeling is generated. With the cessation of each different contact, each specific feeling ceases’. That is the general idea. You have to understand the implication of *tajja*, which has a very specific meaning.

Generated by different contacts, feelings arise. With their disappearance, feelings vanish. Contemplation on feeling rests on this reality. The ordinary worldlings are unable to see impermanence. They ignore the middle. They always lean towards the ‘arising’ aspect. With reference to this, let us discuss the first interpretation in the *Majjhe Sutta*. Out of the six interpretations the first one on contact will help us here. It was the first to be approved by the Buddha as well. He said he too meant this interpretation, when uttering the verse although the other interpretations are also correct. What then is the first interpretation? Contact (*phassa*) is one end. Arising of contact (*phassa samudaya*) is the other end. It is not easy to grasp this. The middle is the cessation of contact (*phassa nirodha*). Now think what the seamstress does. She always sews the two opposite ends of the cloth, avoiding the middle. So are the worldlings who always live between contact and the arising of contact. Each time one contact fades away, they manoeuvre another to take its place. They never see the cessation in the middle. What does the seamstress craving (*taṇhā*) do? As in the simile of the two sticks, the Buddha says, if feeling arises dependent on contact, feeling should cease when contact ceases. But the worldlings are inclined towards origination. When one disappears, the stage is set for others to appear immediately. The implication here is deep, since it is suggestive of the perception of impermanence (*anicca saññā*). The term *tajjam* can be grasped through *yoniso manasikāra* or seeing as it is with true insight. You must keep this in mind.

Depending on different contacts, different feelings arise. With the cessation of these different contacts, those feelings cease.

I think much has been said about contemplation on feeling, (*vedanānupassanā*). Let us remember as background knowledge the similes the Buddha gave for each of the five aggregates of grasping. Many of you are aware of them. Physical form is a cluster of foam. Feeling is a bubble. Perception is an illusion. Preparations are a banana stump. Consciousness is a deception.⁹ They all suggest impermanence, lack of solidity, lack of essence. Take the above simile given for feeling, for further contemplation. ‘Monks, rain coming down on water in large drops in the summer, causes bubbles to rise and break up fast. They arise and break up. A wise man will look at it as it is, and see its essencelessness. It ceases then and there. It ceases then and there’. That is the simile the Buddha gave to demonstrate the emptiness of feeling. Please retain it at the back of your mind.

Now let us go into a very special discourse among the *suttas*, with reference to contemplation on feeling, (*vedanānupassanā*), called *Nandakovāda Sutta*, in the *Majjhima Nikāya*.¹⁰ It’s a unique one. This is the background in brief. The Buddha was once residing at *Jetavanārāma*. According to a rule of discipline, senior monks were expected to give a fortnightly advisory talk to the nuns. On this particular day, Therī Prajāpatī Gotamī too dropped in, to remind the monks of the talk. The monks informed the Buddha that it was Nandaka Thera’s turn to advise the nuns. But, he showed reluctance until the Buddha himself made a request. He approached the nunnery *Rājakārāmaya* and addressed the anxiously waiting nuns. He said at the outset that the discussion would take the form of a question and answer session. Whenever necessary they should clarify their doubts by questioning him. The discussion began with the usual subject of *tilakkhana*, the three characteristics, beginning with the internal sense organs.

‘Sisters, is the eye permanent or impermanent?’

‘Impermanent, Venerable Sir’.

‘That which is impermanent, is it pleasant or unpleasant?’

‘Unpleasant, Venerable Sir’.

‘That which is impermanent, unpleasant and subject to change, is it worthwhile calling it I and mine?’

‘Definitely not, Venerable Sir’.

The other internal sense organs the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind were also discussed through a similar series of questions. The nuns concluded their answering by saying ‘Venerable Sir, we had already realized through noble wisdom the impermanence of all six internal sense spheres’.

The next series of questions was about the external sense objects.

‘Sisters, is the physical form permanent or impermanent?’

‘Impermanent, Venerable Sir’.

In a similar manner the nuns were questioned about sound, smell, taste, contact and cognizable objects. Again they concluded their answering by saying that they had already realized the impermanence of the six external sense objects through their noble wisdom.

The third series of questions was on the six *viññāṇas*, the six types of consciousness.

‘Sisters, is eye consciousness permanent or not?’

‘It’s impermanent, Venerable Sir’.

The series of questions was as above, to emphasis the quality of impermanence. At this point too, the nuns declared that they had already realized it.

Now this *sutta* offers us three wonderful similes. That I think makes this *sutta* invaluable. This is the first one:

‘Sisters, there is a kindled oil lamp. The oil in it is impermanent. The wick is impermanent. The flame is impermanent. So is the light. But if someone were to say that the oil, the wick and the flame are impermanent, but the light is permanent, would you agree?’

‘Definitely not, Venerable Sir, because if the oil, the wick and the flame are impermanent, the light produced by them is bound to be impermanent’.

Here the nuns spontaneously came out with the Buddha’s theory “*tajjam tajjam phassam*”. They answered in unison as follows.

“*Tajjam tajjam bhante paccayam paṭicca tadjā tadjā vedanā uppajjanti. Tadjassa tadjassa paccayassa nirodhā tadjā tadjā vedanā nirujjhanti*” ‘Venerable Sir, the reason is that different feelings arise dependent on different contacts. With the cessation of these contacts, the feelings cease’.

Paccaya or conditions here refers to *phassa* or contact, although the *sutta* doesn’t say so. We are compelled to believe that the nuns were not listening passively. For example, if they had continued to sit throughout in one posture, they would have experienced physical pain. They may have contemplated on *vedanā* in conformity with the discourse. That is why perhaps they answered in unison “*Tajjam tajjam*”, “With the cessation of different contacts, the relevant feelings cease.” Here the fundamental theory emerges, which is then applied to the simile as follows.

If someone says the internal sense spheres such as the eye, the ear and the nose are impermanent but the feelings that arise thereof such as happiness and pain are permanent, is that

statement correct? It was in relation to this question that the similes were brought in. the simile of the oil lamp refers to the impermanence of internal sense spheres, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. Now the Thera presents his second simile.

‘Sisters, think of a huge tree. The roots are impermanent. The trunk is impermanent. The foliage is impermanent. The shadow is impermanent. If someone were to say that the root, the trunk and the foliage are impermanent, but the shadow is permanent, would you agree?’

‘No Venerable Sir. If roots, the trunk and the foliage are impermanent, the shadow has to be impermanent as well.’

‘Sisters, in the same way if the six external sense objects, physical form, sound, smell, taste, physical contact and cognizable objects are impermanent, the resultant pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and feelings neither pleasant nor unpleasant are bound to be impermanent’

To prove this argument the Buddha’s theory is cited “*Tajjam tajjam bhante paccayam paticca tadjā tadjā vedanā uppajjanti. Tadjassa tadjassa paccayassa nirodhā tadjā tadjā vedanā nirujjhanti*”. With this logical argument most probably realization dawned upon the nuns regarding the cause – effect relationship although not mentioned in the *sutta*. The third simile is more peculiar.

‘Sisters, a butcher or his assistant, slaughters a cow, and skins it with a very sharp butcher’s knife. It is delicately done without damaging either the flesh or the skin. Only the nerves that joined the skin to the flesh were severed. He then expertly covers the body with the skin and says ‘There you are. The cow is there just as she was. No difference whatever’. Do you think that statement is correct?’

‘Certainly not, Venerable Sir. The nerves are severed between the skin and the flesh, with a butcher’s knife’.

‘Yes sisters. It is the simile I cited. Now I shall give you the interpretation. The flesh within the skin stands for the six internal sense faculties. The skin is compared to the external sense objects. The nerves that join the two, represent passion for lust, *nandirāga*.

Dear listeners, *nandirāga* is a synonym for *tanhā* (craving). *Nandi* is to take delight in. *Rāga* is attachment. *nandirāga* is compared to the nerves that join the flesh and the skin of the cow together. Once the nerves are severed, the cow though apparently the same, is not really the same. The skin merely lies spread over the flesh.

Now I want you to recall some facts I stressed in the previous discourse. With reference to the Buddha’s sensitivity to taste it is said “*Rasa paṭisaṃvedī bhagavā hoti, no ca rasa rāga paṭisaṃvedī*”. He is sensitive to taste but not attached to taste. Let us interpret the simile of the cow on these lines. The nerves were severed by means of *Nibbāna*. The nerves are compared to passion for lust, *nandirāga*. *Nandirāga* is a synonym for craving. These nerves need not be cut off. It’s the passion for lust that has to be eliminated. Finally, what is the butcher’s knife? It is a synonym for noble wisdom. Noble wisdom is used, for the delicate job of severing the cow’s flesh from the skin. Only the nerves are severed leaving the false appearance that the body is intact. But there is a difference, the difference between worldly and transcendental. You must try to understand it. Try to apply it to the simile of a drop of water on a lotus petal.

Nandaka Thera, before concluding the discourse, briefly touched on the seven Factors of Enlightenment *bojjhangas*, that is, mindfulness, investigation of Dhamma, effort, rapture, repose, concentration and equanimity.

‘Sisters, if one disciplines oneself in each of these seven Factors of Enlightenment with *Nibbāna* as the goal, one is certain of Arahant hood. What does ‘with *Nibbāna* as the goal’ means? The specific terms used are ‘*viveka nissitam*’, founded on seclusion, ‘*viraga nissitam*’, founded on detachment, ‘*nirodha nissitam*’, founded on cessation, ‘*vossagga parināṃim*’, founded on total relinquishment. They all stand for *Nibbāna*.’

‘Sisters, now the time is up. You can leave.’

The nuns rose respectfully and proceeded to meet the Buddha. They stood by after venerating him. He then dismissed them saying briefly ‘Sisters, you may go’. Then the Buddha addressed the monks. ‘Monks, the *Cātuddasa* is the 14th day. The *pañcadasa* is the 15th day. Looking at the moon on the 14th day many will not notice that the moon is not fully visible, though really it is not. Similarly, here the Buddha makes the simile clear – the five hundred nuns were gladdened by Nandaka’s discourse but their expectations were not fulfilled. Then he advised the Venerable Nandaka to repeat the same discourse, the following day. If technology had been as advanced as it is today the task would have been simple. Venerable Nandaka was asked to repeat word to word the entire discourse, the following day.

This second day’s account is recorded briefly in the text. Venerable Nandaka, after the mid-day meal, entered the nunnery and repeated the discourse word for word, in the form of questions and answers, and finally said ‘Sisters, that’s all for today’. The nuns, as on the previous day met the Buddha, and were given permission to leave. Once they left, the Buddha addressed the monks and cited his simile again. ‘Monks, looking at the moon on the 15th day, many people have no doubt whether the moon appears full or not. It’s full without doubt.

Similarly the nuns are not only gladdened but their expectations are fulfilled. Their ultimate objective has been

realized. The final statement in this account is amazing. Of these five hundred nuns, the nun who acquired the lowest spiritual attainment is *Sotāpanna*, that of stream winner. At the end of the first hearing of the discourse, there were no spiritual attainments but on the following day, the lowest attainment was *Sotāpanna*. It indicates that contemplation of feeling or *vedanānupassanā* as explained in the statement “*tajjam tajjam*” is the force underlying it.

I wish to now introduce to you a dangerously critical *sutta* in the *Māra Saṃyutta*. Take care. Even certain educated people have misinterpreted this and insulted the Dhamma. Some have even committed suicide through misunderstanding. Although it has caused a lot of confusion, this *Godhika Sutta*¹¹ touches the Dhamma at its depth. This is how it goes. When the Buddha was residing in Rajagaha, the monk Godhika lived in a cell on the slope of the *Isigili* rock. Striving hard in meditation he attained a worldly state of concentration or *samādhi* called ‘*sāmayika ceto vimutti*’. Due to some mysterious reason as his mind touched on the *samādhi*, it slipped away. He made the highest effort again and again but for the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth time the *samādhi* slipped away. In deep disappointment he decided to commit suicide by severing his neck.

This is how the text records it. The Māra, reading this thought of Venerable Godhika, approached the Buddha with a show of deep reverence and said ‘Great Hero, a disciple of yours who is a *Sekha* (*Sotāpanna*) is planning to commit suicide. Please prevent him’. This request is very unusual of Māra. It reveals his shrewdness. Strange enough, at this very moment Venerable Godhika cut off his neck with a sharp weapon. Seeing this, the Buddha gives a very unusual reply.

“*Evam hi dhīrā kubbanti – nāvakaṃkhanti jīvitam,
samūlam taṇham abbuyha – Godhiko parinibbuto*”

Instead of criticizing the monk he praised him. “*Evam hi dhīrā kubbanti*”, ‘That is how the wise men act’. “*nāvakaṃkhanti jīvitam*”, ‘They have no expectations in life’. “*samūlam taṇham abbuha*”, ‘extracting craving at its very root’ “*Godhiko parinibbuto*”, ‘Godhika has attained *parinibbāna*’. This story invites criticism. Let us see what followed. The Buddha informed the monks of this unusual incident and together with them climbed *Kālasilā* rock in *Isigili* to see the monk. At a distance they saw that the monk’s neck was completely severed from the body. They also observed a smoky cloud floating in all ten directions. The Buddha explained the mystery behind it, “Monks, can you see that smoky cloud floating about? That’s Māra trying to detect where Venerable Godhika’s consciousness is established”. Finally what the Buddha disclosed was surprising “*Appatitṭhitena viññānena Godhiko parinibbuto*”, ‘The Venerable Godhika attained *parinibbāna*, his consciousness unestablished’.

Let us explain the above statement. Those of you who have read our discourses on *Nibbāna* know that this reference is to the mind that wanders in continuous existence *Bhava*. The ordinary worldling is one who is forever grasping, forever pulling at. In *Pañca upādānakkhandā*, *upādāna* means grasping, grasping the five heaps of aggregates. A man grasping for life on his death bed is engaged in a tug-of-war with Māra or death. Death tries to pull him out of this life. The man, holding on to dear life pulls in the opposite direction. Now that’s exactly what the shrewd Māra wishes for. He suddenly lets go saying ‘Have it’. The unfortunate man falls back into continuous existence. Existence leads to birth. Birth has in store a package of birthday gifts such as decay, disease and death. That is the result of not letting the rope go at the moment of death. Holding on means victory to Māra. What is the benefit of letting go as Venerable Godhika did? This point is too subtle even for erudite westerners to understand. Too subtle. At the moment of death, Venerable Godhika lets go not only craving but also feeling which craving accompanies. Cutting off one’s neck is unbelievable. Due to some hidden spiritual strength

in him he was unable to retain the *samādhi* which he attained six times over. Perhaps he wished to practice insight meditation with the help of the *samādhi*, failing which he was determined to practice it simultaneously with the *samādhi*. Unbelievably bold, wasn't he?

Ultimately he seems to have succeeded. These are extremely disputable points. We have heard that certain monks misinterpreting this incident, committed suicide. Some are foolhardy. Those who think 'I have no more prospects in life' 'My health has deteriorated' or 'I wish to be physically stronger' and wish for a future life, easily get caught to Māra. It's essential to let go of everything. Some have attained *Nibbāna* even while being impaled, by letting go. You have heard perhaps of such stories in the commentaries, though somewhat superfluous. A monk in the grip of a tiger, gradually attained each stage of spiritual development with each attack and finally attained *Nibbāna* when his heart was being attacked.

To get back to our serious discussion, *vedanānupassanā* or contemplation on feeling is a very effective object of meditation. We sometimes call it a strenuous path to *Nibbāna*. Everyone is reluctant to practice it. But if you practice it correctly, victory is certain. Let's take another simile. In horse racing, the final stage is so uncertain that an instant camera decides the winner. The most unexpected horse may win. What Venerable Godhika did was similar to that. But anyone who believes, cutting off one's neck is a shortcut to *Nibbāna*, he is certainly on the wrong track. Some have tried it out, unfortunately. On the other hand some may be critical of this story ignorant of the fact that *vedanānupassanā* underlies it.

This subject needs serious thinking. Imagine the tug-of-war with Māra at the moment of death. What do the ordinary worldlings do? They think of sensuality in the presence of unpleasant feeling. They wish for *Deva loka* or the comforts at

home. Māra lets go his firm grip saying ‘Have it’. What Venerable Godhika did was quite the opposite. He let go when Māra was pulling with his might. We can imagine Māra’s plight when he crash-landed on his back. That’s the lesson we learn here.

It would be beneficial, I think, to discuss the experiences of a *vipassanā* meditator, at this point. One of the main obstacles a meditator faces, is sitting in cross-legged position for long. Some cannot sit for more than thirty minutes at each sitting. Soon they reach the climax. That is the right moment to recall the four-fold effort practiced by the Buddha.¹²

*Kāmaṃ tacoca nahārū ca aṭṭhi ca avasissatu sarīre
upasussatu maṃsa lohitaṃ, yaṃ taṃ purisa thāmena,
purisaviriyena, purisaparakkamena pattaḃbaṃ
na taṃ apāpuṇitvā viriyassa santhānaṃ bhavissati*

Let the skin nerves and the bones remain. Let the flesh and blood dry up. I shall not lay down my effort until I attain that stage which has to be attained through unshaken manly energy, manly vigor, manly strength. With unshaken determination as demonstrated above, if a meditator takes his mind off the meditation object, to apply firmly on the pain saying ‘Let it break to pieces. I don’t care’, that effort will strengthen the Enlightenment Factors (*bojjāṅga*). You might sweat as a result. But haven’t we had more bitter experiences in life?

Putting up with unbearable pain unmoved, some meditators, even laymen, though without our advice, have tried out this method and have had strange experiences. The pain burns the meditator beyond the bearable point and suddenly turns cool and feels like concrete. Then one could sit for hours. Awareness develops under the circumstances which at the same time, introspection on feeling develops, the meditator comes to realize that feeling is not one solid unit but a cluster similar to a cluster

of rain drops. He also realizes that he revolted against pain taking it to be one unit whereas he now sees each streak of pain revealing the true nature of name-and-form. Dear listeners, each streak of pain reveals the true nature of name-and-form. Finally, to use two terms I often repeat, the perception of the compact, *ghana saññā* fades away allowing the perception of cluster or *rāsi saññā* to emerge. There lies introspection. The worldling lives within the perception of the compact. He sees things as a complete whole. Through meditation one realizes the plurality of everything, true to the Buddha's simile of a cluster of bubbles, arising and breaking. It takes one, deep into *vipassanā*, insight meditation and in fact, if applied correctly, one could firmly establish oneself in *samādhi*, awareness and even attain arahant hood while in that seat by means of *vedanānupassanā*, contemplation on feeling. That's why ancient books contain such stories as that of the monk in the tiger's grip. It's important to remember this topic is of practical importance to meditators. It's well worth taking Venerable Godhika as an example, not in the negative but in the positive aspect. It is not an invitation to commit suicide but an invitation to eliminate craving. Only an invitation to eliminate craving. In this discourse something practically useful to meditators cropped up. When we discussed feeling, contact and *taṇhā* automatically came into the scene.

From today's discourse if you got any inspiration, any courage to continue with your meditation practice, we will feel satisfied. If you give importance to *vedanānupassanā* in you daily meditation instead of casting it aside as only appropriate for the educated, you can go far. You can sit and practice awareness longer and also attain a *samādhi*. Through insight meditation you could attain transcendental paths and fruits and even attain Arahant hood in this very life.

If you wish to cross over the *samsara*, before the lamp of this dispensation goes out, I do wish you would make use of the objects of meditation we explained in this discourse. The lamp of

the dispensation is about to go out. If you want release from repeated births and deaths, it's worth practicing them even at the risk of your life as Venerable Godhika did. We wish 'May you soon attain release from continued existence'. Whatever being there be, from the lowest hell 'Avīci' to the highest Brahma world 'Akanitṭha' may they rejoice in this discourse. May it conduce to their attainment of *Nibbāna*. May they attain the Deathless *Nibbāna*!



1. Sn. 738 – 739 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S. II 2 Vibhaṅga Sutta
3. M. I 299 Cūla Vedalla Sutta
4. M. III 215 Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta
5. S. IV 140 Salla Sutta
6. A. III 399 Majjhe Sutta
7. Sn. 1042 Tissametteyyamāṇavapucchā
8. S. IV 215 Phassamūlaka Sutta
9. S. III 142 Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta
10. M. III 270 Nandakovāda Sutta
11. S. I 122 Godhika Sutta
12. A. II 5 Upaṇṇāta Sutta

Sermon 17 (Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 199)

'Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa'
'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Tañhā dutiyo puriso – dīghamaddhāna saṃsāraṃ
itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ – saṃsāraṃ nātivattati
etamādīnavaṃ ñatvā – tañhā-dukkhassa sambhavaṃ
vītataṇho anādāno – sato bhikkhu paribbaje*¹

– *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta, Sutta Nipāta*

Dear Listeners,

Worldlings undertake the unending journey of births and deaths in a mad pursuit that holds no gratification, revealed the Buddha. They do not realize misery in the samsaric journey due to the foolish expectation of encountering contentment. Māra is the tempting force in hiding, who creates a false shadow of contentment. We hope to discuss the significance of craving, (*tañhā*), as relevant to the subject of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Law of Dependent Arising, taking the above two verses as the topic of the seventeenth discourse on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, because they well demonstrate the worldling's samsāric journey with *tañhā* as the partner. The two verses are found in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. We have explained to you the style of presentation in the *sutta*, through several discourses on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. It presents the different topics of the Dhamma one by one in a way conducive to contemplation as a duality. This is how the Buddha introduces the duality of craving.

“Monks, if someone inquires whether there could be another mode of contemplating dualities, you must reply in the affirmative. How is it possible? However much misery arises, all that is conditioned by craving. This is one mode of

contemplation. With the complete detachment and cessation of craving, suffering ceases to arise. This is the second mode of contemplation. Monks, a monk who trains himself well in this duality of contemplation applying strenuous effort to burn out the defilements, can hope to realize one of these two spiritual attainments, either Arahant hood in this very life or in case any residue of grasping is left over, the stage of Non-returner (*Anāgāmi*). At the end of this account the Buddha recited the two verses selected as our topic.

Taṇha dutiyo puriso – dīghamaddhāna saṃsāraṃ
The man wandering long, with craving as his partner

itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ – saṃsāraṃ nātivattati
Does not transcend this *saṃsāra* which is an alternation between ‘thisness’ and ‘otherwiseness’.

Next he declares:

etaṃādīnavaṃ ñatvā – taṇhā dukkhassa sambhavaṃ
Seeing the evils of craving which generates misery

vītataṇho anādāno – sato bhikkhu paribbaje
Let the monk conduct himself mindfully with craving dispelled and grasping abandoned.

When discussing the topic craving, *taṇhā*, we must recall how *Paṭicca Samuppāda* deals with it. You all know the ‘Law of Dependent Arising’ with twelve links. “*Vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādānaṃ*” from feeling as condition arises craving, from craving as condition arises grasping. You have to remember right along, the two links on either side of craving.

Craving is sixfold in the Buddha’s analysis in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda Vibhaṅga Sutta* of the *Vibhaṅga Saṃyutta*² in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. They are based on the six sense objects as

craving for physical form, sound, smell, taste, physical contact and mental objects.

The most popular and the most heard of interpretation is found in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.³ Those listeners who chant or listen to pārittas know well, that the Buddha in the interpretation of the Four Noble Truths, analyses the origin of suffering in relation to craving. We have often emphasized that statement for your benefit. “*Yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobhavikā nandirāga sahaḡatā tatratatrābhinandinī seyyathidaṃ kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā.*” This craving is *ponobhavikā*. It has the inherent nature of causing repeated birth. *Nandirāga sahaḡatā* – Delights in and attaches to lust. *Tatratatrābhinandinī* – takes delight here and there. Those are the three characteristics of *taṇhā*. Then come the three types of craving *kāma taṇhā*, *bhava taṇhā* and *vibhava taṇhā*. *Kāma taṇhā* is craving for the five sense pleasures. *Bhava taṇhā* is in short, the longing for the soul to continue forever as the eternalists advocate. *Vibhava taṇhā* on the other hand is the craving to cease existence as nihilists teach. That is how craving is classified in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.

Now I wish to introduce to you something that calls for serious thinking. The Buddha in the *Titthāyatana Sutta*⁴ of the *Tika Nipāta* in the *Anguttara Nikāya* proclaims these words. “*Katamaṃ ca bhikkhave dukkha samudayaṃ ariyasaccam?*” “Monks, what is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering?” Do you think it’s craving? You are mistaken. The Buddha says it’s the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* consisting of twelve links. *Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇam, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarupaṃ* etc. This is sure to pose a problem to many. Are the Buddha’s statements contradictory? In one place he says suffering is conditioned by craving. In another place it’s *Paṭicca Samuppāda* with its twelve links. How do we clarify this? Why didn’t the Buddha speak of craving in connection with suffering? It is simple logic that if there is a mother, a father has to be

present somewhere. You all know that. Similarly the father is revealed through the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* Dhamma.

I shall now explain it to you. In the earlier discourses on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* I have repeatedly stressed the fact that the important point here is not *avijjā* but the inter-relations between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa*. It is this inter-relatedness of conditions that was referred to as the undercurrent. It's the central spot in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Then what is *avijjā* or craving? I think it will be more lucid if I put it this way.

In the blindness called ignorance, with the darkness of preparations, a process of groping takes place. During this groping, two things get caught within one's grip, consciousness, and name-and-form, *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa*. They have an interdependent relationship. But the worldlings being unable to see this connection, always treat them as two. As a result there arise greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), attachment, clashes and deception and many more problems. We have given many a simile to illustrate this situation, so it suffices to touch on them in brief. The simplest simile of the dog on the bridge appears in "Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled". A dog walking across a bridge sees its own shadow in the water and believing it to be another dog will react by wagging its tail or growling or staring inquisitively. That illustrates greed, anger and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*). We have modernized it using an ancient Greek mythical story. It has appealed to many. Narcissus the Greek youth who had never seen his handsome face in a mirror, saw its reflection in a pond as he bent towards it. Assuming it to be a goddess in the water, he spent several days in a futile effort to hold her in his arms and ultimately sacrificed his own life. He was not aware that it was his own reflection.

We have brought out many more similes to show the misconception of duality. We hope you remember in the first discourse, the game of draught between Ajith and Sumith which

terminated in utter confusion. In the same way, in the game of cricket that you know so well, the moment two teams are formed, the original inter-relatedness is forgotten. Then there is the simile of the cinema. The worldlings are not capable of understanding this interdependent origin of things, due to its subtle nature. Ven Sāriputta has expertly demonstrated it using the simile of two bundles of bamboo. Two bundles of bamboo maintain their upright position supported by each other. When one is pulled out of position, the other is bound to fall. Interdependent origination is exactly like that. They are not one, and neither are they two. We have to refer to a simile from folk lore as the last resort in explaining this intrinsic relationship. If consciousness is questioned “Who are you?” it would answer “Please ask name-and-form”. If *nāmarūpa* is questioned “who are you?” it would reply “please ask *viññāṇa*”. They are so closely inter-related. The worldlings cannot grasp this subtlety and hence the division into two teams. It should be now clear that *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* are closely inter-dependent.

Now see whether you can agree with me here. It’s name-and-form that is divided into six sense spheres. They are activated by craving (*taṇhā*), to function as craving for physical form, craving for sound, craving for smell and so on. Eye consciousness arises through eye and physical form coming together. Forgetting this truth the eye runs in pursuit of form, the ear in pursuit of sound. This apparent duality creates the deception of the five aggregates of grasping instigated by *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (delusion). This analysis may not correspond to what appears in certain books. Commentators attempt to find the root cause of ignorance, which I think is a futile attempt. Ignorance is the father. In other words, the duality of consciousness and name-and-form springs up through preparations in the background of ignorance. The worldlings pick it up as a duality. Craving begins to function from this point. The Buddha proves this in several places such as the *Samiddhi Sutta*⁵ when he says “*acchecchi taṇhaṃ idha nāmarūpe.*” Cut off craving towards this name-and-

form. It is this name-and-form that divides itself into six sense spheres. We think this explanation is sufficient because there is no contradiction here. In certain places where the Buddha talks of the Law of Dependent Arising the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering is directly identified as the Law of Dependent Arising.

What we have been discussing is the background of craving. To put it in brief what *Paṭicca Samuppāda* depicts is nothing more than the background of craving which is ignorance. It changes into an undercurrent and conceals the inter-relationship from the worldlings. The worldlings always live imprisoned between two ends, two extremes, which create attachments, friction and illusion. The final result is suffering, or the weaving of the five aggregates of grasping.

In the discourse on the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha specifically referred to craving as the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering. Even when talking of the cessation of suffering, he did not refer to ignorance.

“*Tassā yeva taṇhāya asesā virāga nirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo*”

The total detachment and destruction of craving is called the cessation of suffering. At this point one may ask “Where is ignorance?” In the earlier mentioned *Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta*, the cessation of suffering is explained through the reverse order of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

“*Avijjāyatveva asesā virāga norodhā saṃkhāranirodho.*” With the cessation of ignorance each of the other links cease to be. In fact the most detailed analysis of the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering is found in the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.⁶ Here the Buddha exposes the place where *taṇhā* arises and where it remains hiding, in the following words “*sā kho pana esā taṇhā kattha uppajjamānā uppajjati, kattha nīvisamānā nīvisati.*” This is presented in the form of a question.

Before I proceed further, I want to point out to you that *taṇhā* is a feminine gender noun, in Pāli. It's useful to know this, because the term 'mother' is used in this context. Some *suttas* say "*taṇhā janeti purisaṃ.*"⁷ Craving gives birth to man. Craving is the mother. "*Sā kho pana esā taṇhā...*" if translated in conformity with the gender rules in ancient Pāli grammar – though an accurate English translation is not possible – it would appear as follows. "That this lass craving, in taking birth, where will she take birth?"

Another important point, dear listeners, is the correct rendering of '*nivisaṃānā*' into English. The idea of "lying under, hiding or creeping under" is implied here. So let's take it as 'lying in hiding'. Then the Buddha's question would be "That this lass craving (*taṇhā*), in taking birth where will she take birth? In lying in hiding where will she lie hiding?" Now comes the Buddha's reply' "*Yaṃ loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ etthesā taṇhā uppajjamānā uppajjati. Ettha nivisaṃānā nivisati*". Please remember that '*piya rūpa*' here means 'delightful in nature'. '*Sāta rūpa*' means 'agriable in nature'. Since this reference is to the place where birth takes place, whatever is delightful in appearance and agriable in appearance, that is where craving takes birth and lies in hiding.

Next the Buddha proceeds to analyze this position. "*Kiñca loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ?*" What is delightful and agriable in this world? The answer consists of a long list which begins with "*cakkhuṃ loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ etthesā taṇhā uppajjamānā uppajjati ettha nivisaṃānā nivisati.*" "The eye is delightful and agriable in this world. Therein is craving born. Therein craving lies concealed." In this manner the Buddha talks of the six internal sense spheres, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. Then he proceeds to list the six external sense objects, physical form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects. I hope you can understand them, though I have listed

them in brief. They are all delightful and agreeable to the worldling so that craving takes birth in them and lies in hiding.

That is not all. The six-fold consciousness that arises due to contact between each pair such as the eye-consciousness, *cakkhu viññāṇa* the ear consciousness *sota viññāṇa* and so on are delightful and agreeable to the worldling. There too craving arises and lies in hiding. Then the Buddha points out that the six sense contacts eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact and mind contact (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya and mano samphassa*) are also delightful and agreeable so that craving can arise and wait in hiding. So also the six feelings generated through six sense contacts (*samphassajā vedanā*) are also delightful and agreeable. Next comes *saññā* or perceptions such as the perception of form, the perception of sound, the perception of smell and so on. This is followed by the six intentions *samcetanā*. Worldlings like to think of the intention of physical forms, sounds, smells, tastes etc. as delightful and agreeable There too craving arises and waits in hiding.

Next comes an amazing statement from the Buddha. “*Rūpaṭaṇhā loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ etthesā taṇhā uppajjamānā uppajjati.*” Worldlings are delighted by craving for physical form (*rūpaṭaṇhā*). They are comforted by it. They are delighted by craving for physical form, craving for sound, craving for smells, craving for taste, craving for physical contact and craving for mental objects. This reveals the unbelievable truth that there is craving within craving, *taṇhā* within *taṇhā*. *Taṇhā* is born within itself and lies in hiding. Can you believe it? The next list is under *vitakka* or reflection. Reflection on physical form, *rūpavitakka* is enticing. So is investigation of form, *rūpavicāra*. The ten-fold analysis of craving with reference to its arising and lying in hiding is found in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

Then the Buddha explains how the cessation of craving is brought about. I shall put it briefly to you. I am confident you can follow the entire procedure. “*Sā kho panesā taṇhā kattha pahīyamānā pahīyati, katta nirujjhamānā nirujjhati.*” Where does that *taṇhā* cease? Where does *taṇhā* get eliminated? Where craving arises, there it ceases. “*Yaṃ loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ etthesā taṇhā pahīyamānā pahīyati. Ettha nirujjhamānā nirujjhati.*” A lengthy and descriptive analysis is given in this manner on the cessation of craving in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

Let us now move on to the *Majjhe Sutta* in the *Ekaka Nipāta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*.⁸ In our discussion on craving or *taṇhā*, this *sutta* is of great relevance to us. We have discussed it several times because we are compelled to draw on its content when talking of craving. You will remember it when I tell you its background. Once when the Buddha was residing at Isipatana Deer Park in Benaris, a group of Senior Monks, after the mid-day meal sat in conference in their conference hall. Their main topic was a verse from *Metteyya Pañha*, a discourse of the Buddha.

*Yo ubhante viditvāna
majjhe mantā na lippati
taṃ bhrūmi mahā puriso 'ti
sodha sibbanimaccagā.*

Knowing the two ends, he who with wisdom refrains from attachment to the middle, I call him a great man who transcends the seamstress in this world.

Based on this verse four questions were formulated. What is the first end? What is the second end? What is the middle? Who is the seamstress? Six senior monks addressed the assembly and gave six different interpretations.

The first interpreter presented his view as follows. The first end is contact (*phassa*). The second end is the arising of contact. The middle is the cessation of contact. The seamstress is craving. Here he explains how craving functions. “*Tañhā hi nam sabbati tassa tasse’va bhavassa abhinibbattiyā.*” “Craving stitches him on to repeated births.” That is why craving is called the seamstress.

To state the other interpretations in brief, the second monk said “The first end is the past, the second end the future and the middle is the present. The seamstress is craving.” We too can agree with this argument, watching how our thoughts work, running between the past and the future. We are not even aware of the existence of a present. That’s because craving keeps tying up the ends. The third interpretation suggests pleasant feelings as one end, painful feelings as the second end, the feelings that are neither pleasant nor painful as the middle and the seamstress of course *tañhā*, craving. Here too we are so engrossed in the two ends, we are hardly aware of feelings that are neither pleasant nor painful. In the fourth, name (*nāma*) is one end. Form (*rūpa*) is the other. In the middle is consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Here again the seamstress is craving who keeps stitching together the two ends, name-and-form. What is the fifth interpretation? The internal sense spheres eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, consist of one end. The six external objects, physical form, sound, smell, taste, physical contact and cognizable objects form the other end. In the middle is consciousness. Craving, playing her role as the seamstress ties up the two ends, ignoring the middle. The sixth and final interpretation gives the view of self (*sakkāya*) or the five aggregates of grasping as one end. The other end is the arising of the view of self (*sakkāya samudaya*) or the arising of the five aggregates. The middle is the cessation of the view of self. Craving is the seamstress in this sixth interpretation as well, who keeps tying up the knots every moment, taking care that the cessation of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and its arising, is impossible. These

interpretations give ample proof of the vicious activity of *taṇhā*, craving.

We have occasionally used the sewing machine as a modern simile to explain the behavior of *taṇhā*. Each time the needle goes in, the thread of the shuttle ties a knot. Tying knots is a specific characteristic of craving. *Tatratatrābhinandinī nandirāgasahagatā* are words that well demonstrate the function of the needle, piercing into the machine, tying a knot and coming up and repeating the process. *Majjhe Sutta* well describes the ruthless behavior of craving.

I would like to discuss this topic from yet another angle, using another expression in the same verse, since I am very particular that you understand it clearly. “*Taṇhā dutiyo puriso dīghamaddhāna saṃsaram itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ saṃsāraṃ nātivattati.*” The true nature of this *saṃsāra* is summarized as something found between ‘thisness’ and ‘otherwiseness’. Let me explain it. Think of a being taking birth here from somewhere, let us say from the animal world. This baby seeing things, hearing sounds around him, he develops the notion ‘here’ followed by the idea of ‘thisness’ or *itthabhāva*. From the moment thisness is established, it keeps changing into ‘otherwiseness’, or *aññathābhāva*.

It is an amazing thing. The nature of ‘*bhava*’ (becoming) – what is called *bhava* – is something that happens due to grasping. Whenever a being grasps – clings to – something, impermanence begins to function from that moment. Explaining this subtle point is no easy task. Try to comprehend it yourself. We have explained before that only subsequent to arising of a ‘thing’ that it becomes ‘otherwise’. When something becomes a ‘thing’, from that point onwards it starts to change. I shall give a simile though not a perfect one. Think of buying a toy from a toy shop for a little baby. Paying for it adds more value to it. What they have brought home has its own nature or ‘thisness’ –

itthabhāva. The moment the little one breaks it, it changes into ‘otherwiseness’ – *aññathābhāva*. From then onwards it begins to change. The notion of a ‘thing’ with its particular characteristics is called ‘*maññanā*’. It means to assume something to be a ‘thing’ with its own identity. From then onwards it begins to change.

The Buddha, immediately after his enlightenment has proclaimed as follows:⁹

“*Aññathābhāvī bhavasatto loko
bhavapareto bhavamevābhinandati*”

The worldling attached to *bhava* – continuous becoming – which has the nature of otherwiseness, and overcome by *bhava*, delights in it. It is the seamstress craving who instigates the worldling. For example, imagine you lost something. Craving would say “Don’t worry. There is another one beyond. Have it.” It expresses what is implied by *tatratatrābhinandinī*, *taṇhā ponobhavikā*. *Ponobhavikā* is not merely suggestive of the moment of death. It takes place every moment. *Punabbhava* apparently means the next birth. But every moment something becomes a ‘thing’ or a ‘this’. It keeps changing. Due to this change, it is discarded and another ‘thing’ is grasped. Another ‘thing’ is grasped. This grasping is done through craving, which lies in hiding. This process is referred to as *tatratatrābhinandinī*, the fact that the beings wander in *samsāra* between ‘thisness’ and ‘otherwiseness’. This happens not only from life to life and birth to birth but also within a lifetime. This change is extremely subtle. I have given you these details to enable you to understand *itthabhāva* and *aññathābhāva*.

There are several meaningful verses in the *Taṇhā Vagga* of the *Dhammapada*,¹⁰ that expand on this subject but unfortunately the meanings of some verses are lost to us. Anyway let us discuss one verse for our purpose.

Tasiṇāya purakkhatā pajā
parisappanti sasova bādhitō
saṃyojana saṃgasattā
*dukkhamupenti punappunam cirāya*¹¹

Here is its meaning. *Tasiṇā* is a synonym for *taṇhā* – craving. “*Tasiṇāya purakkhatā pajā*” The human race placed in the forefront by craving “*parisappanti sasova bādhitō*” like a rabbit entrapped in a snare. What happens to the humans? The commentary says *parisappanti* means frightened. Frightened like a rabbit in a snare. This interpretation overlooks a very valuable implication referred to here. Why was the rabbit taken as simile? It can lean far. Think of a rabbit with its hind foot caught in a noose. Ignorant of the confronted plight it leaps far. Then realizing the perilous situation, it leaps in all directions but is hopelessly caught. Similar is the noose of craving. *Saṃyojanasaṃgasattā* – stuck in the bond of sticky craving. “*Dukkham upenti punappunam cirāya*” – humans are gripped by suffering repeatedly for long. In short, unless one attains the stage of Non-returner, even though born in Brahma world, one is destined to return here, due to the trap of craving.

This verse in the *Dhammapada* which you are quite familiar with, emphasises how strong the fetter of craving is.

Yathāpi mūle anupaddave daḷhe
chinnopi rukkho punareva rūhati
evampi taṇhānusaye anūhate
uppajjati dukkhamidaṃ punappunam

“*Yathāpi mūle anupaddave daḷhe*” – When the root is uninjured and firm, *chinnopi rukkho punareva rūhati* – even though the tree is cut down, grows again and again. “*Evampi taṇhānusaye anūhate*” – similarly as long as the latency of craving is not eliminated, “*uppajjati dukkhamidaṃ punappunam*” – this suffering arises again and again. This verse reveals the

strength of craving. It's not different from the plight of the rabbit. I am not trying to include everything in this discourse. I am only trying to bring out the hidden meanings of these valuable verses, which have not been given their due.

Now let us look at another aspect of *taṇhā* as given in another *sutta*. we have explained how conditioned by craving, grasping (*upādāna*) arises. In some places craving itself plays the role of grasping. I would like to cite an example from *Kutuhalasālā Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Niyāka*, which has been subjected to much criticism.¹² To put it in brief, the *Paribbājaka* Vacchagotta visited the Buddha and made a critical comment. He said the six teachers such as Pūranakassapa, Makkhalī Gosāla and Ajithakesakambalī, when their ordinary followers die, reveal their destinations and also when their spiritually developed disciples pass away, reveal their destinations as well. But the Recluse Buddha reveals where ordinary followers are born, but is silent about the next birth of his disciples with high spiritual attainments. The Buddha only utters the phrase “*Acchecchi taṇham vāvattayī saṃyojanam, sammā mānābhisamayā antamākāsi dukkhassa.*”

Even the Buddhists of today do not know what Vacchagotta knew about the Buddha. This statement is about the emancipated person. “*Acchecchi taṇham*” – cut off craving. “*Vāvattayī saṃyojanam*” – reversed the hooks of bonds. “*Sammā mānābhisamayā antamakāsi dukkhassa*” – comprehending pride correctly, expelled suffering. That is what the Buddha says about the emancipated person after death. Vacchagotta puzzled by this explanation, confesses his doubt, his confusion. The Buddha says he well understands Vacchagotta's confusion and explains his position as follows.

“*Saupādānassa khvāham vaccha uppattim paññapemi no anupādānassa.*” I disclose the birth of him who grasps, not of him who is detached. The Buddha then gives a simile. “*Vaccha,*

just as a fire, “*saupādāno jalati.*” Here the fire is a *saupādāno* fire, which needs an explanation. *Upādāna* is used in Pāli to mean fuel. A fire burns only when it grasps some sort of fuel, such as wood. The Buddha here explains that a fire burns “*saupādāno*” only by grasping a fuel, “*no anupādānassa*” not without a fuel. That is the simile of the fire. This simile prompts Vacchagotta to pose another question. “Friend Gotama, if a flame (*acci*) is carried far by the wind, what would you say is the fuel – *upādāna*?” You can imagine a forest fire, where the wind could carry a flame even up a tree. That is the simile here. The Buddha replies that the wind is the fuel. We refer to this as “caught in the wind.” The flame was definitely caught in the wind and carried afar. This reply instigates Vacchagotta to ask an unusual question. “Friend Gotama, if a being lays down this body and enters a certain other body, what then would you point out as the fuel?” This *sutta* words it as “*aññataram kāyaṃ anupatto hoti.*” ‘*Aññataram*’ here means ‘a certain’. “A being reaching (entering) a certain other body, lays down this body” means he gives up this body and reaches another. The Buddha specifically states that craving is the fuel in that situation. This shows how forceful the functioning of craving is. But unfortunately, Dear listeners, due to misinterpretation of this simile and this paragraph, the modern readers understand this as ‘*antarābhava*’ – a period of existence between death and next birth.

We have often explained in our books that the theory of interim birth is unacceptable. How did this misconception come about? One reason is the misinterpretation of the simile. Here Vacchagotta questions, not regarding the gap between two existences, but regarding the passage from one existence to the next. There is also a very intricate language problem visible here. In the process of the Buddha word passing from one generation to the next generation, confusion regarding phrases and words occurred. Sometimes the version in one written copy differed from another. Those who profess the theory of *antarābhava* read ‘*anupatto*’ which means ‘reached’ as ‘*anupanno*’ which means

‘not born’. *Anuppatto* means the opposite of *anuppanno*. These theorizers explain their position thus.

A being lays down the body. Did he enter the next birth? No, not yet. ‘*anuppanno*’ ‘not born’. What is the grasping during this gap? That is their interpretation. But I have emphatically pointed out the special word ‘*aññataram*’ that occurs here. It means ‘a certain’. We use this adjective always with something existing, not with something non-existent. If we select something really existing and use the word *aññam* before it, it is correct. This is a very subtle point. But why go so far? It’s clear that Vaccha questions how one birth leads to another. These theorizers, imagining that there is a time gap between the two, have in the recent past continuously argued that an interim birth exists. They have not understood the *suttas* correctly.

One thing is clear however. The Buddha confirms that craving itself is the grasping at the moment of death. It can be proved with several examples. A synonym for craving is ‘*bhavanetti*’. *Netti* is a projection, a point that juts out. *Bhavanetti* – ‘bent’ is another term used. During a rainy season like this, somebody levels a strip of high ground leaving a projection at the top. With a shower of rain that projection would collapse. Similarly, the projection in continuous becoming is craving. Why so? Because there is a shortcoming, a possibility to collapse. ‘*ūno loko atitto taṇhādāso*’.¹³

In this world there is always a flaw, a shortcoming to be seen. ‘*atitto*’ no contentment. *Taṇhādāso* – a slave to craving. *ūno loko atitto taṇhādāso* is a statement in the *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta*. The worldlings always find shortcomings. Even a millionaire would complain he is short of something or the other. ‘*Atitto*’ means never gratified. *Taṇhādāso* means a slave to craving. In this sense craving is called *bhavanetti* because craving alone is sufficient to create continuous existence. Due to the presence of that projection ‘*netti*’, one is bound to fall into existence

somewhere. That itself explains why the Buddha referred to craving as grasping. This statement contains not one or two but several important facts.

Next let us talk about the cessation of craving. The term used to describe *Nibbāna* on certain occasions is ‘*taṇhakkhaya*’ “*taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho Nibbānaṃ.*” The very ceasing of *taṇhā* is treated as *Nibbāna*. It’s the very ceasing of *taṇhā*, craving. Many educated people are confused by this. They argue if craving means ‘wishing for’ something, wishing for *Nibbāna* is also craving.

There is a *Sutta*¹⁴ that offers a solution to this problem. When Venerable Ananda was residing at Ghositārāma in Kosambi, a certain Bhikkhunī sent a man to say that she was seriously ill and wished to meet him. Venerable Ananda accepted the invitation. As he was approaching the nunnery, she lay down on her bed fully covered, with a hidden intention. Venerable Ananda, seeing through this lowly behavior, delivered an effective discourse to suit the occasion. Thanks to the nun’s unseemly plan, we are rewarded with a valuable discourse.

Let us first listen to four statements which conveys the essence of the discourse.

Āhāra sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo
āhāraṃ nissāya āhāro pahātabbo.
taṇhā sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo
taṇhaṃ nissāya taṇhā pahātabbā.
māna sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo
mānaṃ nissāya māno pahātabbo.
methūna sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo
methūneva setu ghāto vutto bhagavatā.

Then follows an analysis of each statement by Venerable Ananda. First let us understand their meanings. “*Āhāra sambhūto*

ayaṃ bhagini kāyo” Sister, this body has arisen based on food, “*Āhāraṃ nissāya āhāro pahātabbo*.” Food has to be eliminated through food. *Tañhā sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo*.” This body has arisen based on craving. “*Tañhaṃ nissāya tañhaṃ pahātabbo*.” Craving has to be eliminated through craving. This sounds rather contradictory. Then he says “*Māna sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo*.” Sister, this body arises based on conceit. But conceit has to be eliminated through conceit. The final statement seems rather queer. “*Methūna sambhūto bhagini ayaṃ kāyo*.” Sister, this body arises through sexual intercourse. Here the phrase ‘*methūnaṃ nissāya*’ does not occur. It says ‘*methūneva setu ghāto*’. That bridge has to be pulled down. All relations have to be severed. That is the approach suggested with reference to sex.

Now Venerable Ananda goes into detail taking one statement at a time. “*Āhāra sambhūto ayaṃ bhagini kāyo*.” That can be understood easily. Food is essential. One cannot go into total starvation like the Nigaṇṭhas. A monk partakes of food contemplating as follows; “*Neva davāya, na madāya, na maṇḍanāya*” etc. It is known as ‘*ñāṇa saṃvara*’,¹⁵ restraint through wisdom. One partakes of food, contemplating on food. It turns out to be meditation. We have time and again reminded you that eating is not a game, not a source of entertainment. It’s merely for maintenance of the body so that higher life could be fulfilled. Such a monk, says Venerable Ananda, will eliminate food.

Next is ‘*tañhā sambhūto*’ which is rather difficult to grasp. Venerable Ananda explains it as follows. A certain monk comes to know that a certain bhikkhu attained Arahant hood, through destruction of influxes. This monk thinks “When will I be able to become an Arahant like that monk?” A wish, a yearning arises in him. We admit that it is craving. But inspired by that wish, that yearning, he strives hard and becomes an Arahant.

Māna sambhūto is also somewhat similar. A certain monk comes to hear that a particular bhikkhu known to him had become an Arahant. The monk's thoughts are given in a peculiar phrase. "*Kimaṅga pana aham?*" Why can't I? It shows conceit. Perhaps this Arahant monk was uneducated or belonged to a low caste. "If he can, why can't I achieve it?" is an expression of conceit. But this conceit might pave the way to Arahant hood.

The fourth statement was handled very briefly without explanation. Venerable Ananda only said "*Methūneva setu ghāto vutto bhagavatā.*" What he said about *methana* is not similar to what he said about the earlier three. He advocated the breaking off of all connections. Thoroughly embarrassed, the nun, jumped off the bed, fell at the feet of Venerable Ananda and apologized for her disgraceful suggestion due to her foolishness and unwholesome thoughts. Through her foolishness and evil thoughts, we were rewarded with a useful *sutta*. Although we look at it positively, certain Buddhist sects have taken undue advantage of it by misinterpreting the statement. The *Tantrayāna* sect took it as "*Methūnaṃ nissāya methūnaṃ pajahati*". *Methūna* is abandoned through *methuna*. These are indecent trends not worth discussing.

I am reminded of another incident centered round Venerable Ananda, again at Ghositārāma in Kosambi, which sheds light on the same topic.¹⁶ One day a Brahmin named Uṇṇābha inquires the Venerable Ananda "For what purpose do you practice celibacy (higher life) under the Ascetic Gotama?" Being a non-Buddhist, he questioned out of curiosity. Venerable Ananda's reply was "*chanda pahānattham*" We practice the disciplines of higher life in order to dispel desire (*chanda*). The second question was, "Is there a path of discipline laid down to dispel desire?" The reply was purposely given with the intention of arousing more critical inquiry. "Yes. The path is the four bases of success – *iddhipādas*, desire, resolution, will and investigation." Most probably you have heard of them. *Chanda* is described as

“*chanda samādhi padhāna saṅkhāra samannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti.*” Basing his effort on the contemplation of desire, a monk develops *iddhipāda*. It implies that desire can be eliminated by developing *iddhipāda*. It is a contradictory statement inviting criticism. Naturally, the Brahmin retorted, “*chandeneva chandaṃ pajahissatīti netam thānaṃ vijjati.*” ‘Desire is dispelled by desire itself’ is an impossibility. Venerable Ananda gives a simple simile to clarify the situation. “Brahmin, do you admit that you had a desire to visit the monastery, but it vanished on arrival here?” “Yes friend.” Do you admit you had some resolution to visit the monastery but it vanished on arrival here?” “Yes friend.” Do you admit you had the will to visit the monastery but it vanished on arrival?” “Yes friend.” “Do you admit you had a sense of investigation when arriving at the monastery but it vanished on arrival?” “Yes friend.”

Similarly, Brahmin, a monk following the path of discipline with the support of the four *iddhipādas*, attains total destruction of desire, which is his goal. When the aspiration of a worldling is accomplished, more aspirations crop up. Goals in the life of a worldling are all created by craving. They help to multiply craving. But here, what is the goal? *Nibbāna* which is a synonym for the elimination of craving (*taṇhakkhayo*). The effort directed towards the destruction of craving, ends at achieving the goal. We have on earlier occasions given you various similes to clarify this point. Then the critics cannot say that the desire to attain *Nibbāna* is also desire. We have to face facts. Here we see the Middle Path in action. We have explained it in diverse ways such as the simile of crossing a current. The fundamental characteristics of the Middle Path are practicability and relativity.

Even what is harmful is not totally discarded but utilized to achieve the goal. To give an example, the Nigaṇṭhas gave up food altogether and even untied the knot of their robe. They walked about naked. The Buddha, with the experience he went through, always avoided the extremes. He introduced

contemplation, through which the Middle Path was made a reality. Contemplation became an essential feature in it. *Samsāra* or continuous existence is such that, crossing the current of *samsāra* calls for extreme caution. That is exactly why the Buddha resorted to the middle path. “*Taṇham nissāya taṇhā pahātabbā*” is perfectly applicable in this context. *Taṇhā* craving is abandoned by means of craving. The difference lies there. With regard to worldly goals, when one is achieved, when one is realized, another crops up. But *Nibbāna* terminates everything. What is *Nibbāna*? It is not something like Siyadoris’s *Nibbāna – Nibbāna* of Simple Simon. ‘*Taṇhakkhayo*’ means the destruction of craving. In the discourse on the Four Noble Truths, the arising of suffering is illustrated by ‘*taṇhā ponobhavikā*’. Cessation of suffering was illustrated by “*tassāyeva taṇhāya asesā virāga nirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo.*” It speaks of nothing but the destruction of craving.

At the same time, remember the question asked by Vacchagotta Paribbājaka. In talking of the birth of the emancipated person, the Buddha used the most appropriate term ‘*Acchecchi taṇhām.*’ Cut off is craving. ‘*Vāvattayī saṃyojanaṃ.*’ Reversed the hooks of fetters (*saṃyojanas*). These fetters are fixed one to the other like the railway compartments connected to one another by hooks. Reverse the hooks and they are disconnected. Try to understand the fetters as similar. Hooks or bonds of rebirth are turned backwards. Another phrase that adds depth to this idea is ‘*sammā mānābhisamayā*’. It gives the reason for endless births. The final target is the destruction of *māna*, conceit. It is the final attack on Māra’s *asmimāna* or conceit of self. In other words the pride of self as “I am” is the subtle attachment to continuous becoming. Those who have read the Dhamma will know, that after the attainment of *Anāgāmi* (Non-returner) one is born in the Brahma world, because the conceit of self still remains. Concealed within the fivefold fetters such as passion for worlds of form, passion for formless worlds, conceit, agitation and ignorance, there is self-pride in a very subtle form.

That too has to be eliminated. I have been trying to emphasize the significance of craving, which is treated as the mother.

There seems to be some confusion regarding the connection between the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and craving. That's why some people, not excluding the Hindus and our Pāli commentators, keep guessing what the root cause of ignorance is. It is an unnecessary attempt. Let us understand it this way. The groping that takes place in the darkness of ignorance is called *kāya saṁkhara*, *vacī saṁkhara* and *mano saṁkhara*, that is the preparation of the body, speech and the mind. In this process of preparation, there arises *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa*, (consciousness and name-and-form). These are the two forces we referred to as the undercurrent. The worldlings unable to understand their interdependent nature take a firm stand, mistakenly seeing something to grasp in the form of subject-object. This is what activates in *upādāna* or grasping. To facilitate better understanding of this position, let me recall the simile of the mirage which I have often referred to. Imagine a row of posts fixed far apart on a flat land. The deer imagining there is water, runs upto the first post, then upto the second and the third, and so on. This is the deception which we call *taṇhā ponobhavikā* or craving that leads to continuous existence. Craving is the force that pushes beings forward. All this should make you realize the depth of the Buddha's Dhamma. It is an amazingly rewarding dhamma, if you have the correct vision of the goal. Many people understand *Nibbāna* to be another birth. When explaining the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, we have emphasized that the speciality about the Dhamma is that one has to terminate the entire mass of suffering as the final goal. The attachment to continuous birth and the very notion of becoming has to be eliminated, or else it will persist even after the attainment of Non-returner (*Anāgāmi*). Such is the subtlety of the dhamma.

Now Dear Listeners, I hope you will support your meditation with what I have explained, particularly in seeing the

negative aspect of craving as the Buddha has taught us. If you are aware of the conditions under which craving arises and ceases, you can definitely reach the spiritual attainment described as “*taṇhakkhayo virāgo, nirodho Nibbānam.*” I want you to put this discourse into practical use in improving your meditation and religious practices, so that you could attain the different stages of the path and the peace of *Nibbāna* in this very life. Whatever beings there be from the lowest hell *Avīci* to the highest Brahma world *Akaniṭṭha*, may they rejoice in this discourse and may they attain the peace of *Nibbāna*!



1. Sn. 740 – 741 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S. II 2 Vibhaṅga Sutta
3. S. V 421 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta
4. A. I 176 Tittthāyatana Sutta
5. S. I 8 Samiddhi Sutta
6. D. II 290 Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta
7. S. I 37f. Paṭhama, dutiya, tatiya Janeti Sutta
8. A.III 399 Majjhe Sutta
9. Ud. 32 Lokavolokana Sutta
10. Dhp. V 334 – 359 Taṇhā Vagga
11. Dhp. V 342 Taṇhā Vagga
12. S. IV 398 Kutuhala Sālā Sutta
13. M. II 54 Raṭṭhapāla Sutta
14. A. II 144 Bhikkhunī Sutta
15. Vism. Sīla Niddesa 6 (S.H.B.) Sinh. Script.
16. S. V 271 Brāhmaṇa Sutta

Sermon 18 (Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 200)

'Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa'
'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Upādāna paccayā bhavo – bhūto dukkham nigacchati
jātassa maraṇam hoti – eso dukkhassa sambhavo
tasmā upādānakkhayā – sammadaññāya paṇḍito
jātikkhayaṃ abhiññāya – nāgacchanti punabbhavam¹*

– *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta, Sutta Nipāta*

Dear Listeners,

Religious teachers from ancient times have introduced various theories and views in an attempt to reveal the secret of continuous existence. Some even attempted to hand over the responsibility of existence to gods and Brahma. The Buddha, disproving all these theories and views disclosed that grasping (*upādāna*) is the root cause of existence as clearly explained in the Law of Dependent Arising, (*Paṭicca Samuppāda Dhamma*). We have chosen as the topic of this 18th discourse on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, two verses that shed light on our subject. These two verses are also from the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta*, of the *Sutta Nipāta* which has already provided us with suitable topics for several discourses on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. I have explained its style of presentation on earlier occasions. It is a *sutta* where the Buddha makes a very impressive analysis of the duality of arising and ceasing, surveying it from different angles. This is how the Buddha introduces the two aspects – arising and ceasing – with regard to grasping – *upādāna*, which is a link in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

“Monks, if someone inquires whether there could be another mode of contemplating dualities, you must reply in the

affirmative. How is it possible? Whatever pain arises, all that has grasping as condition. This is one mode of contemplation. With the total detachment and cessation of grasping, pain ceases to be. This is the second mode of contemplation. A monk who practices the dual technique of contemplation striving hard to burn out the defilements (*kilesa*) with vigilance, can expect one of these two rewards, either Arahant hood in this very life or the attainment of Non-returner in case a trace of grasping remains as residue.” The above two verses were uttered to clarify that point.

Upādāna paccayā bhavo – Continues existence called *bhava*, depends on grasping called *upādāna*
bhūto dukkham nigacchati – The born experience suffering
jātassa maraṇam hoti – Death comes to the born
eso dukkhassa sambhavo – This is the origin of suffering
tasmā upādānakkhayā – Therefore through the destruction of grasping
sammadaññāya paṇḍito – The well informed wise men
jātikkhayaṃ abhiññāya – realizing the extinction of birth
nāgacchanti punabbhavam – Will not seek birth again.

That is the meaning of the two verses. Let us try to first understand the term *upādāna*. Many of you know the position of ‘*upādāna*’ in the Law of Dependent Arising. “*Taṇhā paccayā upādānam, upādāna paccayā bhavo*”. We have mentioned on earlier occasions that when making an analytical study of any one of the links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the two links on either side have to be taken into account. Then conditioned by craving is grasping, conditioned by grasping is continuous birth. In the analysis of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Buddha explains the significance of grasping through the question answer method.² ‘*Katamañca bhikkhave upādānam?*’, What is grasping? ‘*Kāmuṇupādānam*’, grasping of sense pleasure, ‘*ditṭhupādānam*’,

grasping of views, ‘*sīlabbatupādābam*’, grasping rules of morality and views, ‘*attavādudupādānam*’, grasping of the notion of self.

This term *upādāna* also deserves some thought. The prefix ‘*upa*’ gives the general idea of closeness, ‘coming near’, sometimes explained as ‘*upeti upādiyati*’, ‘reach close and grip’. In fact the implication here is to continue to grip firmly. Gripping not with the hands but with the mind.

Now, when discussing *upādāna*, you are automatically reminded of the often mentioned topic *pañca upādānakkhandha*, the five heaps of grasping – *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* (physical form, feeling, perception, preparation and consciousness). These are the five heaps we reach and grip. ‘*Etam mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*’ ‘This is mine, This am I, This is myself’.

The *Puṇṇama Sutta*³ of the *Majjhima Nikāya* refers to a certain moonlit night when the Buddha allowed the monks to ask him questions. A monk on this occasion asked two questions about *upādāna* and *upādāna khandha*. What is the root cause of the five aggregates of grasping? *kiṃ mūlakā*? The Buddha replied “*Ime kho bhikkhu pañcupādānakkhandā chandamūlakā*”. *Chanda* or desire is the root of the five aggregates of grasping. The term *chanda* embodies the idea of *taṇhā*. *Chanda* is wish. Now comes his second question, which seems complicating at a glance. “Venerable Sir, is *upādāna* the same as *pañca upādānakkhandā* or are they different?” The reply is “Monk, grasping and the five aggregates of grasping are not identical. Neither are they altogether different from each other. If there is any desire towards the five aggregates of grasping, that is called grasping.” Dear listeners, you must remember that the lustful desire towards the aggregates is the quality of grasping within it.

Now let us find out what *bhava* means in ‘*Upādāna paccayā bhavo*’. The general meaning is existence. But on hearing the word, many think of different worlds such as the world of sensuality, the world of form and the formless world. The connection between becoming (*bhava*) and the mind is not clear to many. That perhaps is the reason why Venerable Ānanda once asked the Buddha,⁴ “*Bhavo bhavo ti bhante vuccati. Kittāvatā nukho bhante bhavo hoti?*” “Venerable Sir ‘Existence existence’ they say. To what extent can it be called existence?” Then the Buddha replied as follows “ Ānanda, in the absence of a *kamma* (action) that could carry its results into a sensual sphere or a sensual world (*kāma dhātu*), is sensual existence possible?” Here *kāma dhātu* refers to a world of sensuality. Venerable Ānanda replies “No Venerable Sir”. Then the Buddha explains his position using some unusual terms “*kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ, taṇhā sineho*”. *Kamma* is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving is the moisture. The consciousness of beings who are overwhelmed by ignorance and tied down by craving, tends to seek birth in a sensual world. Now it’s clear that birth in a sensual world takes place in a field called *kamma* with *viññāṇa* as the seed when the moisture of craving is available. Venerable Ānanda’s second question was somewhat similar to the first, though based on a world of form. The Buddha explains ‘Ānanda, in the absence of a *kamma* that could carry its results to a world of form (*rūpa dhātu*), is existence of form possible?’ ‘No Venerable Sir’. Here the explanation is similar to that of the earlier question. For beings overwhelmed by ignorance, and tied down by craving who seek birth in a world of form, *kamma* provides a field with *viññāṇa* as the seed and craving as the moisture. Apply this same explanation regarding birth in a formless world (*arūpa dhātu*). Existence in a formless world is possible only if a *kamma* conducive to such a birth is present. In short, in the analysis of the Law of Dependent Arising, the Buddha refers to existence as threefold, existence in the world

of sensuality, (*kāma bhava*) in the world of form (*rūpa bhava*) and in the world of no-form (*arūpa bhava*).

Now we have discussed “*Bhava*”. What do you think is *bhūta* in “*Bhūto dukkhaṃ nigacchati?*” A *bhūto* is one who has come into existence. “*Upādāna paccayā bhavo – bhūto dukkhaṃ nigacchati*”, One who falls into continuous existence, one who enters continuous existence – he is referred to as *bhūta* – he experience pain, suffering. How? Herein you must remember that contained within *bhava*, both birth and decay-death are found. These two inherent features birth and decay-death (*jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa*) are thereby proved. “*bhūto dukkhaṃ nigacchati*” implies that a person who comes into existence, has birth and decay-death, which are an inseparable pair yoked together. Every religious teacher has attempted to remove decay and death from birth, to create an external birth. The Buddha has confirmed the impossibility of such a position in the *Salla Sutta*.⁵

“*Nahi so upakkamo atthi yena jātā na mīyare, jarampi patvā maraṇaṃ evaṃ dhammāhi pāṇino*”

There is no devise whatsoever by which a born person can avoid death. Death is certain even after decay. This makes it clear that *upādāna* (grasping) has existence within it. Grasping is suggestive of existence. If grasping is suggestive of existence, the idea of birth, decay and death are also obvious. That is why the above verse winds up with ‘*Eso dukkhassa sambhavo*’. That itself is the arising of suffering. That is the positive aspect. The other verse suggests ‘*Tasmā*’ Therefore with the total destruction of grasping, ‘*sammadaññāya paṇḍitā*’ the wise with right understanding ‘*jātikkhayaṃ abhiññāya*’. This is an unusual phrase, which we will explain now. ‘*jātikkhayaṃ abhiññāya*’ means seeing the destruction of birth, the non-existence of birth, with wisdom par excellence, *nāgacchanti punabbhavaṃ* – shall not seek rebirth again.

Due to this series of discourses on the Law of Dependent Arising, we were compelled to talk of a direct order procedure and a reverse order procedure. Now you are familiar with it by reading and listening to it often. This is how the direct order begins. *Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇa paccayā nāma rūpaṃ*. It ends with “*Jātipaccayā jarāmaṇaṃ soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa samudayo hoti*”. Although the entire process has not been mentioned here, we can see that conditioned by birth, there arise decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and retribution. In this manner the entire mass of suffering arise. That is the Law of Dependent Arising, in direct order, which reveals that dependent on birth, there arises the entire mass of suffering, decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and retribution.

How do we look at this in the reverse order? ‘*Avijjāyatveva asesa virāga nirodhā*’. With the total destruction, detachment and cessation of ignorance, ‘*saṅkhāra nirodho*’ preparations cease. ‘*saṅkhāra nirodhā viññāṇa nirodho*’, with the destruction of preparations consciousness ceases. ‘*viññāṇa nirodhā nāmarūpa nirodho*’, with the destruction of consciousness, name-and-form cease. It goes on till the last link. ‘*Jāti nirodhā, jarāmaṇa soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa nirodho hoti.*’ This is the reverse order. “With the cessation of birth, it is obvious that decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and retribution also cease. In this manner, the entire mass of suffering comes to an end.” But Dear Listeners, we have come across an unusual discourse, delivered by the Buddha himself, which suggests the possibility of attaining *Nibbāna*, through the direct order alone. It is the *Upanisa Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Saṃyutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.⁶ Most educated westerners, who dislike the negative quality in the discourses on

causality, seem to prefer this *Upanisa Sutta*, which follows the direct order adding up link by link and finally ending up in *Nibbāna*. The simile used here is the same as what is found in any other discourse on Dependent Arising. This is how it goes “Just as, Monks, a shower of rain with piercing rain drops pours down on a summit of a hill and the water takes a downward course along the slopes filling rugged crevices, and small ditches, and when they overflow, the small holes and when they overflow, the large holes and when they overflow, the rivulets and large rivers and finally fills the great ocean, in the same way monks,.....”

Supported by this illustrative simile, the Buddha proceeds to explain the links of the Law of Dependent Arising. Please try to remember the links even though not familiar with the meanings.

“Evameva kho bhikkhave, avijjūpanisā saṅkhārā. saṅkhārūpanisā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇūpanisā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpūpanisā saḷāyatanāṃ, saḷāyatanūpaniso phasso, phassūpanisā vedanā, vedanūpanisā taṇhā, taṇhūpanisā upādānaṃ, upādānūpaniso bhavo, bhavūpanisā jāti, jātūpanisā dukkhaṃ.....”

Now follows, from there onwards, a process that even you may prefer.

“Dukkūpanisā saddhā, saddhūpanisā pāmujaṃ, pāmujjūpanisā pīti, pītūpanisā passaddhi, passaddhūpanisā sukhaṃ, sukhūpaniso samādhi, samādhūpanisā yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ, yathābhūtañāṇadassanūpanisā nibbidā, nibbidūpaniso virago, virāgūpanisā vimutti, vimuttūpanisā khaye ñāṇaṃ.”

This account is very unusual, because it follows only the direct order. The reverse order is inapplicable here. The central point between the two processes is *Dukkha*, suffering.

At this juncture, I wish to critically comment on the Sinhala translation of the *Tipitaka*, where the Pāli word *upanisā* has been conveniently replaced by *paccaya*, thereby denying Sinhala readers the full significance of this special word *upanisā*.

The *Upanisā Sutta*, when translated, would appear as follows. Even without a knowledge of Pāli, one could notice its special quality. The earlier *sutta* was worded as followed, “Dependent on ignorance arises preparations, Dependent on preparations arise consciousness.” But this *sutta*, translated grammatically would appear as follows.

In reliance with	ignorance (arise)	preparations
In reliance with	preparations	consciousness
In reliance with	consciousness	name-and-form
In reliance with	name-and-form	six aggregates
In reliance with	six aggregates	contact
In reliance with	contact	feelings
In reliance with	feelings	craving
In reliance with	craving	grasping
In reliance with	grasping	existence
In reliance with	existence	birth
In reliance with	birth	suffering

The second part follows the same pattern.

In reliance with	suffering (arises)	confidence (<i>saddhā</i>)
In reliance with	confidence (arises)	delight (<i>pamoda</i>)
In reliance with	delight (arises)	joy (<i>pīti</i>)
In reliance with	joy (arises)	serenity (<i>passaddhi</i>)
In reliance with	serenity (arises)	ease (<i>sukha</i>)
In reliance with	ease (arises)	concentration (<i>samādhi</i>)
In reliance with	concentration (arises)	absolute knowledge (<i>yathābhūta ñāṇadassana</i>)
In reliance with	absolute knowledge (arises)	disenchantment (<i>nibbidā</i>)

In reliance with disenchantment (arises) detachment
(*virāgo*)

In reliance with detachment (arises) emancipation
(*vimutti*)

In reliance with emancipation (arises) wisdom of
extinction (*khaya ñāṇa*)

I hope my listeners have got at least a general idea of the grammatical problem here. The translation appears different because what is conveyed here is peculiar. Let me try to give you a general idea. You know that the term *paccayā* in this twelve links of the Law of Dependent Arising is repeated without any change. *Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇam* etc. But the term *upanisa* is declined with the subject it qualifies keeping to case, gender and number. Those of you who know grammar, will agree that an adjective will take the case, gender and number of the noun it qualifies. “*Avijjūpanisā saṅkhārā*” therefore, will have to be translated as ‘Preparations exist in reliance with ignorance’. *Avijjā* is a feminine gender noun in Pāli. “*Saṅkhārūpanisam viññāṇam*” has to be translated as ‘consciousness exist in reliance with preparations’. *Saṅkhārā* is in the plural in Pāli.

‘*Vedanūpanisā taṇhā*’ has been translated in the feminine gender in grammatical Sinhala, although an identical version is not possible in English.

I wish to draw your attention to an unknown aspect of the term ‘*upanisa*’, though it is used often. You have heard of ‘*Upanissaya sampatti*’. *Upanisa* means ‘in close association with’. Why the Buddha used the term *upanisa* instead of *paccayā* is a problem.

In order to clarify that point, I wish to quote as a brief commentary, the *Nibbedhikapariyāya Sutta*⁷ in the sixth *Nipāta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. This *sutta* holds within it several

valuable facts about the Dhamma. The Buddha addresses the monks in one place as follows “*Katamo ca bhikkhave dukkhassa vipāko?*”, ‘What is the consequence of suffering?’. A person oppressed by suffering, overwhelmed by suffering will grieve as a consequence, will become feeble, lament and beat his chest and finally ‘*sammohaṃ āpajjati*’ will fall into total delusion. There is another aspect. Instead of crying and lamenting overwhelmed by grief some may react in a different way.

“*Bahiddhā pariyeṭṭhi āpajjati, ko ekapadam dvipadam jānāti imassa dukkhassa nirodhāyāti.*” He directs the searchlight outwards. ‘Who knows a line or two to help me cease this suffering?’ Here the Buddha summaries this situation into an amazing theory “*sammoha vepakkam vāham bhikkhave dukkham vadāmi pariyeṭṭhi vepakkam vā*” “Monks, I declare two reactions to suffering, either total delusion (*sammoha*) or search (*pariyeṭṭhi*).” You may have now tuned in to the drama of Paṭācārā or Kisā Gotamī. Both reactions are involved here. Imagine the plight of Paṭācārā who lost her husband, her two sons and her parents, and was driven into a state of lunacy. She was humiliated and beaten on the roads. An unknown noble friend directed her to the world’s greatest and noblest friend. The outcome was that she became an Arahant Therī.

Kisā Gotamī’s drama was not different either. A mad woman who walked the roads, seeking for medicine for her dead child on her shoulder. She was ridiculed and beaten up. An unknown noble friend directed her to the Buddha. The mad walk finally ended up in Arahantship. It’s clear now that ‘delusion and search’ are both present here. Then why is the word *vā* (*vepakkam vāham*.....) used here. It gives an alternative. *Paccaya* has a specific idea. “*Jāti paccayā bhikkhave jarāmaṇaṃ*”, “*Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ, anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ ṭhitā va sā dhātu.*” Those are examples. ‘Decay and death have birth as the only condition. Whether Buddhas are born or not, this law persists unchanged. But the Buddha declared that suffering has

two consequences or results. Either one would fall into delusion or one would fall into a search outside.

Dear listeners, we have often fallen into the first of these two tracks, the reason being the absence of a noble friend. The search for a person who knows ‘one or two lines’ to direct us will be futile, until and unless a Buddha appears. That has to be well understood. The stories of Paṭācārā and Kisā Gotamī prove that the ordinary worldling’s reaction to suffering is delusion. Lying hidden underneath it one may discover an *upanissaya sampatti* a kammic force which is visible to a Buddha though hidden from us.

In this context ‘*upanisā*’ conveys the idea of ‘relying on’ or ‘in association with’. Two possible results are seen in association with the experience of suffering. One is delusion. The other is search. The positive results of the search have already been mentioned. It is an upward path of purification where suffering (*dukkha*) leads to confidence (*saddhā*). Confidence leads to delight (*pamoda*). Delight leads to joy (*pīti*). Joy leads to serenity (*passaddhi*). Serenity leads to ease (*sukha*). Ease leads to concentration (*samādhi*). Concentration leads to absolute knowledge (*yathābhūtañāṇa dassana*). It leads to disenchantment (*nibbidā*). Disenchantment leads to detachment (*virāgo*). Detachment leads to emancipation (*vimutti*). Emancipation gives rise to the wisdom of extinction (*khaye ñāṇa*) or the wisdom to understand everything. Most educated westerners prefer this explanation which leads you on a positive track.

A certain erudite person of modern times⁸ named this discourse as the circular Law of Dependent Arising. It is called circular because it follows the direct order to the end instead of using the direct order and the reverse order. Even though many are familiar with the *Upanisa Sutta*, the subtle difference between ‘*paccaya*’ and ‘*upanisā*’ is hardly recognized, as a result of which even translations have treated both words as identical. You must

understand that ‘*upanisā*’ has an alternative implication. That is why this *sutta* says. ‘In reliance with ignorance...’ instead of ‘Dependent on ignorance...’, which suggests a definite result based on conditionality.

Assuming that the *Upanisa Sutta* clarifies the difference clearly, let us understand the final result of this path. What was the final attainment of those Arahant Bhikkhunis? The cessation of birth (*Jātikkhaya*). If grasping gives rise to existence, and existence gives rise to birth and decay-death, we have to eliminate birth. There is no other alternative but the elimination of birth. That is called ‘*Jātikkhaya*’. A great many humans who promote and love existence, dislike extinction (*Nibbāna*) for that reason. It becomes the *Nibbāna* of Siyadoris. You cannot bargain for birth totally free of decay-death. Elimination of birth is the only solution to the misery that follows.

How could birth be eliminated? By eliminating grasping. It is the stage which is totally free of craving, grasping and lust. You can understand the significance of this *sutta*, from whichever aspect you scrutinize it. Then let us look at it from another angle. We just now said that one comes to know through highest wisdom, the total eradication of birth (*jātikkhaya*). How is that possible? How can one know that birth has been totally wiped out? The Buddha has been able to, for some reason, declare that there will be no more rebirth for him. “*Natthidāni punabbhavo*”. Similarly Arahants are referred to as ‘eliminated birth’ ‘*khīnā jāti vusitā brahmacariyam*’. The problem is, how are we to know whether birth has been eliminated? The solution to this problem will also clarify the *suttas* that deal with the profundity of *Nibbāna*. The *Ajāta Sutta*⁹ in the *Itivuttaka* provides an ideal solution to our problem. First make yourselves familiar with it in Pāli: “*Atthi bhikkhave ajātam abhūtam akatam asaṃkatam – no ce tam bhikkhave abhaviṣṣa ajātam abhūtam akatam asaṃkatam nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṃkatassa nissaraṇam paññāyetha.*”

This declaration invites for deep contemplation. The Buddha emphasizes the existence of something, which the worldlings never ever thought of. You will understand it as we translate the statement.

“*Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkataṃ*”, ‘Monks, there exists a state unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared.’ “*no ce taṃ bhikkhave abhaviṣṣa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkataṃ*”, ‘if such an unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared state was non-existent, “*nayidha jātaṣṣa bhūtaṣṣa kataṣṣa saṃkataṣṣa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyetha*”, ‘it would be impossible to declare the security of a state unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared, attainable in this birth itself. Then the Buddha declares the same statement in the positive order. “*Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkataṃ, tasmā jātaṣṣa bhūtaṣṣa kataṣṣa saṃkataṣṣa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyati ti.*” ‘Monks, since there exists an unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared state, there is a release from the born, sprung, made, prepared state.’ Now we must understand why the Buddha repeated it, emphasizing the negative and the positive points of view. The ordinary worldling is unable to imagine the existence of such a state. That is why we highlighted it in our series of discourses on *Nibbāna*. The worldling is unable to comprehend it due to his craving for existence. What is expressed here is the cessation of birth through the cessation of continuous existence which the Arahants experience with the attainment of *Phala Samāpatti*. As they transcend the world, they experience that continuous existence is dependent on the six aggregates, and their cessation leads to the cessation of continuous existence. The final mental state of the Buddha and the Arahants is the fruition of this realization.

Based on this realization, *Nibbāna* is called ‘*tāṇaṃ, lenaṃ, dīpaṃ, saraṇaṃ, parāyaṇaṃ*’¹⁰ a protection, a cave, an island, a refuge, a support. Whenever the Buddha and the Arahants are in a relaxed state of mind they dwell on the

elimination of existence (*bhavanirodha*) described as ‘*Bhava nirodho Nibbānam*’. If existence is a fire its elimination is the extinction of the fire. The mind firmly established in this state, far removed from the excitement of the world, cannot be disturbed even by thunder. What is the nature of the mind at that time? The truth has been realized. The end of birth has been attained. The continuous existence having been eliminated, birth too is ended. Decay and death are thereby terminated. This truth has been realized. That is the quality of the mind free from continuous existence.

The following verses in the *Itivuttaka* effectively condenses the ideas expressed above.

*Jāta bhūtaṃ samuppannaṃ – kataṃ saṅkhatamaddhuvam
jarāmarāṇasaṅghātaṃ – rogaṇiḍḍaṃ pabhaṅguraṃ
āhāranettippabhavaṃ – nālaṃ tadabhinanditum*

*Tassa nissaraṇaṃ santaṃ – atakkāvacaraṃ dhuvam
ajātaṃ asamuppannaṃ – asokaṃ virajaṃ padaṃ
nirodho dukkhadhammānaṃ – saṅkhārūpasamo sukho*

Here is its meaning. It gives a realistic description of the world.

Jāta bhūtaṃ samuppannaṃ – born, sprung up, dependently arisen. *kataṃ saṅkhatamaddhuvam* – made, prepared, short lived. *jarāmarāṇasaṅghātaṃ* – bonded by decay and death. *rogaṇiḍḍaṃ pabhaṅguraṃ* – a nest for sickness, perishable. And what is the nest made up of? *āhāranettippabhavaṃ* – born of craving for food. *nālaṃ tadabhinanditum* – not fit to take delight in. *Tassa nissaraṇaṃ santaṃ atakkāvacaraṃ dhuvam* – departure from this called *Nibbāna* is peaceful, beyond reasoning and enduring. *ajātaṃ asamuppannaṃ asokaṃ virajaṃ padaṃ* – unborn not dependently arisen, free from grief and attachment. *nirodho*

dukkhadhammānaṃ – ceasing of all factors of sorrow.
saṅkhārūpasamo sukho – stilling of all preparations is bliss.

What is remarkable is that any verbal account about *Nibbāna* begins with the term *saṅkhārasamatho*, stilling of preparations. For instance ‘*Etam santam etam paṇītam yadidaṃ sabba saṅkhārāsamatho sabbūpadhi paṇinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virago nirodho Nibbānaṃ.*’ That is clear proof that with the cessation of preparations, all that is associated with it inclusive of existence ceases, because existence is dependent on preparations. I would like to make a comment here. Unfortunately, many have misinterpreted the term *asamkhata*. Instead of understanding it as a state free of preparations, it is treated as a ‘thing’. The ‘unprepared’ has become a world. Even *Nibbāna* has been converted into a world. A transformation has taken place within the Dhamma. That is what we have tried to explain to you the implication of *asamkhata*, the unprepared. That realization is called ‘*anidassana viññāṇa*’, a state of consciousness which does not display name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*), which represents the entire world. This mental state too had been misinterpreted as a world. We have attempted to clarify in our discourses on *Nibbāna*, particularly in some of our recent discourses, that *anidassana viññāṇa* is not a world but a realization attainable through the cessation of continuous existence (*bhava*). As further clarification I would like to point out something unforgettable. On the front cover of the book *Paṭicca Samuppāda* just out from the press, you see two bundles of bambo, one leaning against the other, so dependently that if one is pulled out the other falls. This demonstrates the mutual dependency (*aññamaññapaccayatā*) between consciousness and name-and-form, as explained by Venerable Sāriputta. With reference to this we have brought out as an analytical explanation, a very deep and valuable *sutta* called *Mahā Nidāna Sutta*.

The Buddha’s declaration of mutual dependency (*aññamaññapaccayatā*) between consciousness and name-and-

form based on dependent arising, is condensed in the *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* as follows.

“*Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā upapajjetha vā. Ettāvatā adhivacanapatho, ettāvatā niruttipatho, ettāvatā paññattipatho, ettāvatā paññāvacaram, ettāvatā vaṭṭam vaṭṭati itthattam paññāpanāya yadidam nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena.*”¹¹

This is its translation, ‘Ānanda, to this extent does a person’s birth or decay or death or departure or rebirth takes place’. Next he deals with another aspect. ‘To this extent is a path of attribute (*adhivacana*) a path of etymology (*nirutti*) a path of manifestation (*paññati*) displayed’. Concealed within these three words is the secret of language and logic. Only to this extent is it possible to express a path of attributes, a path of etymology and a path of manifestation. Furthermore the Buddha says ‘*ettāvatā paññāvacaram*’ ‘To this extent does wisdom reach’. This means that wisdom can reach in between name-and-form and consciousness but not beyond.

Next comes an explanation as to why the simile of the undercurrent was used. *Ettāvatā vaṭṭam vaṭṭati itthattam paññāpanāya yadidam nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena*. ‘Ānanda, to this extent does the undercurrent spin, for the continuity of existence, that is as long as name-and-form spins with consciousness’. We too have referred to the simile of *vaṭṭa*, the undercurrent to clarify this point. It is not our own creation but a simile hidden among the *suttas*. The undercurrent spins only as long as name-and-form spins with consciousness. One can take birth, go through decay-death, pass away and seek birth again only as long as name-and-form twirls with consciousness. Only to that extent can language and logic hold sway over beings. Only to that extent can wisdom penetrate. It cannot go beyond. Only to that extent does the entire undercurrent of existence (*saṃsāra*) spin.

The two words referred to above are the most significant, that is name-and-form and consciousness. ‘*nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena*’. We have attempted to emphasize the significance of this duality by using similes such as Narcissus and that of the dog on the bridge. Inability to understand this mutual dependency *aññamaññapaccayatā* is at the very root of delusion. In popular games such as cricket or draughts you see a clear division into two sides without understanding the mutual dependency of one on the other. This inability to understand it, leads to a process of preparations (*saṅkhāra*) between name-and-form and consciousness that results in the six sense spheres. Here too the presence of duality is significant such as the eye and physical form, ear and sound. We have discussed this on earlier occasions. This process goes through contact, feeling, craving and ends up in suffering.

This is the secret hidden behind the statement ‘Ānanda, to that extent does the undercurrent spin, for the continuity of existence, that is as long as name-and-form spins with consciousness’. Whenever one realizes this relationship and break them apart, suffering ends. I am sure you remember how the Bodhisatta Vipassi contemplated on the Law of Dependent Arising in the reverse order “*Kim paccayā jarāmaṇam?*” ‘Dependent on what is decay-death?’ ‘Birth’, ‘*Jāti*’. In this manner he proceeded until he saw that name-and-form, *nāmarūpa* is dependent on consciousness, *viññāṇa* and consciousness is dependent on name-and-form. He couldn’t proceed further because the secret key to the solution lay there. Due to the ignorance of the mutual dependency between these two, the view of self (*sakkāya diṭṭi*) or the view of ‘I’ arises. Ignorance paves the way for a division into two camps, two teams. An ideal example is the game of chess between two good friends Ajith and Sumith, who challenged each other over a game. What takes place in this world is similar. Narcissus assumed his own shadow to be a goddess. That explains the notion of self, *sakkāya diṭṭi*.

Now you can understand this delusion arises between these two, name-and-form and consciousness. It is absolutely essential to realize with wisdom that name-and-form is substanceless. It is a mere shadow. That is why we did an etymological study of these terms. Form in name-and-form is a form given to name, a form which is a mere name. Name in name-and-form is a mere characteristic of name. Here, name does not refer to the accepted names used in this world, but the five qualities of name called feeling (*vedanā*), sensation (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*passa*) and attention (*manasikāra*). It is a name given to name. Let us understand it as a name given to name. Form (*rūpa*) here refers to the created notion of form in association with the four great primaries (*mahābhūta*). That's why we call the form a mere name. This game takes place within the illusion of consciousness due to the inability to identify the two. Two camps have been formed in *samsāra* as 'self and others', as 'myself and the world'. The root cause lies hidden there. The *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* has been named so because it reveals these underlying facts regarding the primaries.

Now let us discuss how to attain its realization. Instructive verses are found here and there for this purpose. The *Muni Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*¹² is one such example although it has not drawn much attention.

*Saṅkhāya vatthūni pamāya bījaṃ
sinehamassa nānuppavecche
sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī
takkaṃ pahāya na upeti saṅkhaṃ*

This verse is extremely deep in meaning. It discusses the qualities of a *muni*, an Arahant. This jewel of a verse uttered by the Buddha, extremely deep in meaning, describes a sage (*muni*) an Arahant. *Saṅkhāya vatthūni*, here *vatthūni* means land or a field. Try to recall what helped the *viññāṇa* to establish itself. '*Kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ, taṇhā sineho*' 'if beings

blinded by ignorance, tied by craving seek birth in a world of sensuality or a world of form or a formless world, *kamma* serves as the field, consciousness as the seed and craving as moisture. This idea is condensed in ‘*saṅkhāya vatthūni pamāya bījam*’, identifies the field and the seed of consciousness. ‘*sinehamassa nānuppavecche*’. He refrains from watering it. He identified the field correctly and he identified the seed correctly. So he waters it no more. Then what is the result?

‘*sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī*’. He indeed is the sage who has seen has seen the cessation of birth.

‘*takkaṃ pahāya na upeti saṃkham*’. The term *takka* reminds us of *atakkāvacara*. ‘*takkaṃ pahāya*’ given up reasoning. ‘*na upeti saṃkham*’ seeks no recognition.

Here a special comment is necessary to clarify this phrase. The worldlings do not recognize Arahants. What is the reason? Worldlings recognize people with assets (*upadhi sampatti*) such as the possession of land, houses, designations or vehicles. The Buddha and the Arahants have given up the five assets called the aggregates of grasping (which they had been carrying all the way through *saṃsara*) and as a result they are not reckoned by the worldlings.

‘*takkaṃ pahāya*’ too suggests a deep meaning. The ‘*avyākata vatthu*’ or the ‘undeclared topics’ seem to baffle many. We have earlier discussed four points out of the ten undeclared topics. They deal with the position of a *Tathāgata* after death. Not only the religious philosophers of that time but even the educated class today are baffled by the Buddha’s silence regarding such popular topics. Educated westerners say that it revealed the Buddha’s ignorance. But the true position was, Dear listeners, that the Buddha and the Arahants were beyond all limitations of logic. Language and logic restricted by dilemma and quadrilemma are incapable of penetrating the after-death position of the Buddha and Arahants. The four questions are

mitigated by the misconception of a ‘personality or a soul’ after death.

This is how the Buddha rejects them. ‘It cannot be said that a *Tathāgata* is’ after death, or is not. Nor can it be said that he is both, ‘is’ and ‘is not’ or he is ‘neither is’ nor ‘is not’. Please try to understand this subtle point. It is not possible to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to these four positions. Neither can you confirm the four positions wholesale or reject them altogether. As such ‘*samkham na upeti*’, ‘seeks no reckoning’ is the best description of this post-*parinibbāna* position.

References made regarding the deep qualities of the Buddha in certain *suttas* are amazing. They are not empty sayings imposed on him. Here is an impressive one, “*Rūpasāṅkhā vimutto kho tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāho seyyatāpi mahāsamuddo.*”¹³ The *Tathāgata* is beyond reckoning by form. He is free from the qualities of form, having given them up. He carries a form which he has not grasped. For this reason, the world finds it too deep a concept to realize. *Gambhīro*, deep. *Appameyyo*, immeasurable. *Duppariyogāho*, difficult to penetrate. *Seyyatāpi mahāsamuddo*, like unto the great ocean. The reason for comparing it to the ocean is that it is beyond understanding, beyond grasping through logic. We know that logic functions within the limitations of consciousness and name-and-form. A break through reveals the sphere unattainable through logic. *Atakkhāvacaraṃ dhuvam* means beyond reasoning and stable. Logic is unstable but the worldlings dwell within the framework of logic. Since the Buddha has surpassed the worldly characteristics of form he is called ‘*rūpa saṅkhā vimutto*’. Although it sounds amazing I can’t help remarking here that the Arahants are the least recognized in the world due to the absence of expected qualifications. The world is reluctant to find out what *Nibbāna* is. Because of their craving for continuous existence they lean on logical reasoning. This problem is most serious among the educated westerners. The statement ‘*rūpa saṅkhā*

vimutto kho Tathāgato’ explains the reason. He is beyond reckoning by form. ‘*samkham nopeti vedagu*’ the knowing of the *veda* (wisdom) does not yield to reckonings. Now you can understand the depth of the simile in the verse. ‘*samkhāya vatthūni*’, An Arahant understands the true nature of the field, ‘*pamāya bījam*’ he understands the deceptive nature of the seed of consciousness. ‘*sinehamassa nānuppavecche*’ and he prevents the rain of craving supplying moisture, ‘*sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī*’ he is the sage who sees the cessation of birth. This idea is found in several places in the *Sutta Nipāta*.

Here is another statement about the sage in the *Sutta Nipāta*.¹⁴ “*Yo jātamucchijja na ropaye – jāyantamassa nānuppavecche.*” ‘*jātam ucchijja*’ – uprooting what is born. ‘*na ropayeyya*’ – refrains from planting. ‘*jāyantamassa nānuppavecche*’ – abstains from supplying water to what is growing. Arahants live but do not nourish life. They do not accumulate any *kamma*. This explains the “state of release”, described in several *suttas*. To put it in brief the Arahant with correct understanding prevents the seed of consciousness growing in the field of *kamma*, nourished by the moisture of craving, thereby putting an end to existence.

Let us condense this idea further. “*Uppāda paccayā bhavo – anupādā parinibbānam*”, ‘existence is dependent on grasping. Detachment brings extinction’. Many get caught up here because *Parinibbāna* reminds them of the *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*. *Parinibbāna* does not refer to the ‘death’ of the Buddha or an Arahant. It refers to the moment the Buddha or an Arahant attains fruition of Arahant hood experiencing the cessation of existence, birth and the cessation of birth. Those who have a confused notion regarding this, have distorted even very clear *suttas*. Let me give you an instance of a clear *sutta*. This is an occasion the Buddha talks of himself.

Tiṇṇo so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammam deseti

santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammaṃ deseti
danto so bhagavā damathāya dhammaṃ deseti
parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti

If we attempt translating verbally it will cause confusion.
Let us proceed carefully.

‘*Tiṇṇo so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṃ deseti*’, Having crossed over, the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for others to cross over (the ocean of *samsāra*)

‘*santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammaṃ deseti*’, Having attained peace the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for others to attain peace.

‘*danto so bhagavā damathāya dhammaṃ deseti*’, Having restrained himself the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma to restrain others.

The last sentence goes as

‘*parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti*’, If *parinibbuto* means passing away, how could he teach the Dhamma? ‘*parinibbuto bhagavā*’ means ‘free from the world’ ‘free from everything worldly’. Then the line reads ‘Having released himself from the world, the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for the release of others’. Please remember that *parinibbuto* means the total isolation of the Buddha or the Arahants from the world by entering the mental state of *Arahat phala samāpatti*. In that state they do not even hear the thundering. If one is unable to realize in this very life that one’s existence has been totally eliminated, doubt will remain. Doubt is ignorance. That means ignorance has not been totally eliminated. The most precious word in the Buddha’s teaching crops up here. ‘*Diṭṭheva dhamme*’, In this very birth. Many people try to evade this word. In this very birth, one can attain the cessation of

existence following the Buddha's teaching. No other religious teacher has been able to show the path to cease existence, in this very birth.

The Buddha has shown the way to cessation of birth, cessation of decay-death, cessation of suffering. Which explains the '*jātikhayattadassī*', '*khīnā jāti*', '*natthi dāni punabbhavo*'. They testify to the fact that the Buddha had no more births. He had reached the highest stage, *Phalasamāpatti*. So had the Arahants. The ordinary worldlings are unable to understand this discontinuity of the relationship between consciousness and name-and-form. They can only see the continuity of the physical form and the natural functioning of the five senses. The Buddha and the Arahants live their lives, they partake of food but the release they attained (*vimutti*) continues, though not visible. It is the release *vimutti*, that becomes their refuge at the last moment.

Today we were compelled to speak in a forceful tone. The reason is, many have distorted the Dhamma, due to lack of penetrative understanding. Dhamma has been converted into a path that promotes continuity of existence. The educated class here as well as abroad are responsible for it. We have done our best in clarifying misconceptions. I am sorry I have to state facts.

Dear Listeners, this is enough for today. I wish to remind you to adopt yourselves to the Buddha word, "*Sammoha vepakkāhaṃ bhikkhave dukkhaṃ vadāmi pariyeṭṭhi vepakkaṃ vā*" I declare that the outcome of misery is twofold, either delusion or search. The search can be fulfilled only during a period the Buddha's message survives. Suffering causes delusion endlessly in *samsāra*. Kisā Gotamī, Paṭācārā and many others overwhelmed by misery found the doors of *Nibbāna* open to them because the supreme friend (*kalyāna mitta*) the Buddha, showed the way. His path began with '*dukkhupanisā saddhā saddhūpanisaṃ pāmojjaṃ*' Misery gives rise to confidence, confidence leads to delight and proceeded on the positive track.

I want you to realize the value of this present moment and put it into practical use. This discourse may have appealed to some but irritative to some. Anyway I hope you will understand the Dhamma, realize the importance of *Diṭṭadhamma* (in this life itself) clarify any doubts and make the determination to tread the path of positivity even though you may be immersed in misery. We wish you would realize the four paths and fruits of purity through the perfection of your meditation, inspired by the precepts followed, meditation practiced and the discourses you have listened to, before the lamp of the Dhamma is extinguished. Whatever beings there be from the lowest hell *Avīci* to the highest Brahma world *Akaniṭṭa*, may they rejoice in this discourse and may they attain the peace of *Nibbāna*.



1. Sn. III 12 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S. II 2 Vibhaṅga Sutta
3. M. III 15 Mahāpuṇṇama Sutta
4. A. I. 223 Paṭhama Bhava Sutta
5. S. IV 208 Sallattena Sutta
6. S. II 29 Upanisa Sutta
7. A. III 410 Nibbedhika Sutta
8. B. M. Barua
9. Itv. I Ajāta Sutta
10. S. IV 372 Tāṇa Sutta, Lena Sutta, Dīpa Sutta, Saraṇa Sutta,
S. IV 373 Pārāyana Sutta
11. D. II 55 Mahānidāna Sutta
12. Sn. I. 12 Muni Sutta
13. M. I 483 Aggivacchagotta Sutta
14. Sn. I. 12 Muni Sutta
15. M. I 227 Cūla Saccaka Sutta

Sermon 19 (Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 201)

'Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa'
'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhōti
sabbhaṃ āhāra paccayā
ahārānaṃ nirodhena
natthi dukkhassa sambhavo*

*Etamādīnavaṃ nītvā
dukkhaṃ āhāra paccayā
sabbāhāraṃ pariññāya
sabbāhāraṃ manissito*

*Ārogyaṃ sammadaññāya
āsavānaṃ parikkhayā
saṅkhāya sevī dhammaṭṭho
saṅkhaṃ nopeti vedagu¹*

– *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta, Sutta Nipāta*

Dear Listeners,

Life of beings is dependent on food. But concealed within food is found craving which increases the misery of existence. As a result, the Buddha was compelled to present to the world an extraordinary vision based on nutriment. Full expression is given to this vision in three of the verses in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* in the *Sutta Nipāta* which I have selected as the topic of this 19th discourse on the Law of Dependent Arising.

In several of our earlier discourses we have drawn your attention to the style of presentation in this *sutta*. To state briefly, it is a style of presenting facts for the contemplation of the nature

of arising and ceasing. In this context the Buddha presents, for the first time, the method of dual contemplation on nutriment with regard to arising and ceasing aspects. He introduces it as follows: “Monks, if someone inquires whether there could be another mode of contemplating dualities, you must reply in the affirmative. How is it possible? Whatever suffering arises, all that has nutriment as condition. This is one mode of contemplation. With the total detachment and cessation of grasping towards nutriments, suffering ceases to be. This is the second mode of contemplation. A monk who practices this dual technique of contemplation, striving hard to burn out the defilements (*kilesa*) with vigilance, can expect one of these two rewards, either Arahant hood in this very life or the attainment of non-returner in case a trace of grasping remains.” The above three verses were uttered to clarify this point further.

Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti – sabbaṃ āhāra paccayā

Whatever suffering arises, all that is dependent on nutriment.

ahārānaṃ nirodhena – natthi dukkhassa sambhavo

With the cessation of nutriment, there is no arising of suffering.

Etamādīnavaṃ ñatvā – dukkhaṃ āhāra paccayā

Knowing the consequences of suffering dependent on nutriment

sabbāhāraṃ pariññāya – sabbāhāra manissito

With complete understanding of nutriment, with detachment towards nutriment

Ārogyaṃ sammadaññāya – āsavānaṃ parikkhayā

With the perfect understanding of health, through the elimination of influxes

saṅkhāya sevī dhammaṭṭho – saṅkhaṃ nopeti vedagu

The Arahant who has transcended the threefold knowledge and is firmly established in the Dhamma, does not come into reckoning.

The vision on nutriment presented in these three verses is extremely deep. The *Āhāra Sutta* of the *Āhāra Vagga* in the *Āhāra Saṃyutta*² found in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* presents a totally different attitude towards nutriment than that of the ordinary world. This is how the Buddha explains it to the monks: “*Cattārome bhikkhave āhārā bhūtānaṃ vā sattānaṃ t̥hitiyā sambhavesīnaṃ vā anuggahāya. Katame cattāro? Kabalimkāro āhāro oḷāriko vā sukhumo vā, phasso dutiyo, manosañcetanā tatiyā, viññāṇaṃ catutthaṃ.*” “Monks, there are four types of nutriments available for the maintenance of beings born, and for the welfare of those seeking birth. What are they? Material food either gross or soft, that can be made into lumps. Contact is the second. Mental intentions is the third. Consciousness is the fourth.” The root cause for all four, according to the Buddha is craving. “*Ime ca bhikkhave cattāro āhārā taṇhā nidānā taṇhā samudayā taṇhā jātikā taṇhā pabhavā.*” “These four types of nutriments have craving as the root cause, craving as the reason for arising, craving as the place of origin and craving as the place of birth.”

We come across another amazing account on this subject in the simile of ‘the flesh of a son’ in the *Nidāna Saṃyutta*.³ Although we have made general references to it earlier, I hope to analyse it now in direct reference to the Law of Dependent Arising. In this discourse on the “flesh of a son” capable of arousing emotions, the Buddha presents some valuable facts, as good as objects of meditation, in condensed form.

Let me first quote the Buddha word as it is. “Monks, imagine a couple who enters a desert track with their only loving son, equipped with simple requirements. Half way through, finding their food exhausted the couple confidentially surveying

their plight decided to kill the son. They killed their only son, made an edible preparation of the flesh and the fleshy bones and managed to traverse the rest of the journey. Had they not killed the son, all three would have perished. But as they ate the meat, being overpowered by intense grief they beat their chests lamenting “Where is our only son.”

At the end of the narrative the Buddha asked the monks a question. “Monks, what do you think? Did those parents consume their only son’s flesh as a sport or enjoyment? For strength or appearance or adornment?” “Certainly not” replied the monks. “Monks, did not the parents consume the flesh of the child, merely to cross over the desert?” (make note of the term merely). “Yes Venerable Sir” responded the monks.

The fable ends there. Now the Buddha sets about to drive home the hard facts related to food. “Monks, gross food has to be treated as illustrated in the simile. It has its rewards. A deep understanding of gross material food, partaken of in lumps, is equal to an understanding of lust in relation to the five-fold sensuality. The noble disciple who grasps this fact of reality will attain the fruit of Non-returner. He will not return to this world.” That is the Buddha’s teaching.

At this point, we are compelled, though reluctantly, to expose the immature childish story replaced by the commentator⁴ which underestimates the significance of the Buddha’s message. What did the man and wife traversing the desert do when they ran out of food? They sat down under a particular tree with few leaves and had a confidential discussion. The husband said, “We have no more food. It is not possible to provide for you by farming or trade. The only possible solution is for you to kill me, and reach your destination, with the child.” Then the wife replied, “I am unable to earn a living in this desert by an occupation such as weaving thread. So I suggest that you kill me, and cross the desert with the child.” To this the husband responded, “The child

will not survive if the mother is dead. The only obvious alternative is to kill the child and feed on the flesh until we cross the desert. If we survive we have the possibility of getting another son. Agreeing to this plan, the mother sent the son to the father. Recalling the trouble he went through, in order to bring him up, the father refused to kill him, and sent him back to the mother.

Thinking of the innumerable prayers offered to the gods and the pain she bore for ten months, the mother couldn't kill the son. The boy walking between the mother and the father continuously – but mind you under that tree with few leaves – fell down dead. Then the parents after much lamenting and grieving, fed on the flesh.

Do you notice how the sensitivity found in the Buddha's story has been revised in the second? I would like to add my comments here. Those who read the Dhamma and the *Vinaya* today in Sinhala hear of this childish story only. Can you see how the Buddha's teachings are undermined? Perhaps the commentators feared that the earlier story would encourage parents to kill their children. But the Buddha's intention was to show how dangerous the desire for food taken as a whole can be. The idea here is very deep indeed. In case you, my listeners, too have your doubts, let me annex another simile here.

You may have perhaps read the Buddha's simile on *Dhātumanasikāra* (attention on the primaries) about a butcher.⁵ A certain butcher or his apprentice slaughters a cow, slices it and sells it at a crossroad. Nobody thinks of the flesh in terms of a cow. Similarly, says the Buddha, a meditator should survey his own body by dissecting into the four elements earth, water, fire and wind. Thereby the Buddha doesn't encourage slaughter of animals. It is only a simile. A butcher is a merciless person who slaughters, cuts into parts and sells cattle with cruelty. The Buddha's advice was to dissect the body one loves into the four

elements as an object of contemplation. That is the message behind the simile.

Another doubt crops up regarding the simile of the son's flesh. Since meat eating is a common subject for discussion today, one might think the Buddha approved of meat-eating. The sole purpose of the simile here is to expose the danger concerning food in general. When discussing this topic once, I said if a grain of rice on our plate could speak, it would pour out the painful experience of misery in its life. With the introduction of agrochemicals that terminate thousands of insects, the grain of rice will not only complain but shed bitter tears, if it was possible. On the whole, food is a source of unhappiness. The purpose of the above simile was to bring about disillusionment regarding gross or delicate food, partaken of in lumps whether with or without meat. It must not be misinterpreted. I will touch on this again later.

Let us move on to contact as nutriment (*phassāhāra*). “How, Monks, must contact as nutriment be understood? Imagine a cow with infected skin? (*niccammā gāvī*)” The reference is not to a totally skinned cow in the slaughter house but to a cow with exposed wounds due to skin infection. If this cow stands by a wall, insects there would attack the wounds. If she rests under a tree, the insects on the tree would attack her. If she gets into the water, insects in the water would harass her. In an open area, animal life associated with the sky would inflict pain on her. Wherever the cow is, she has no escape. “That is how ‘contact nutriment’ should be understood” says the Buddha. If correctly understood, it's advantages are many. First it gives a profound understanding of the three aspects of feeling (*vedanā*) as pleasant, painful and neither pleasant nor painful. If a noble disciple reaches this level of understanding, nothing more remains for him to do. He becomes an Arahant. The Buddha reveals the strength of feeling (*vedanā*) as an object of meditation.

Considering the depth of the simile, I would like to offer a brief commentary here. We know that feeling is dependent on contact. Bodily contact rests entirely on the soft skin, as we all know. Let's imagine we have a wound on the right arm. A slight rub on the left arm with a velvet cloth brings immense comfort but the same impact on the right arm will cause the arm to be withdrawn with pain. Condensing and simplifying the statement of the Buddha, one could say he is comparing the pleasant feeling on the skin and the painful feeling on the raw flesh. In the ultimate sense, the skin is a mere bandage round a wound. If the entire body is a wound, a disease, and an ulcer, the skin is the bandage, as taught in the contemplation of impurities (*asubha bhāvanā*) as *gaṇḍabhūto*, *roga bhūto*, *vaṇa bhūto*. This subject of meditation leads one to disillusionment regarding contact and the attainment of *Nibbāna*. That is the nutriment of contact.

The next is mental intentions as food (*mano saṃcetanā āhāra*). How Monks should the food of mental intentions be identified?" Another simile is given here deep in meaning. There is a pit of burning coal as deep as the height of a man. It emits no smoke or flames. A man who longs to live but fears death, longs for enjoyment but fears pain, approaches this pit. Two strong men grip him by his arms and drag him towards the pit. Although he is physically drawn towards the coal pit, his intention (*cetanā*), his aspiration (*paṭthanā*), his resolve (*paṇidhi*) is bent away from it. He wriggles about but is dragged on. That is the simile. Next the Buddha applies it to the subject. "Monks, that is how mental intentions should be understood. The noble disciple who has the full understanding of the nutriment of mental intentions, will attain full realization of the lust of sensuality, the lust of existence and the lust of non-existence (*kāma taṇhā*, *bhava taṇhā*, *vibhava taṇhā*). To him who reaches this level of purity, Arahant hood is certain.

Here too a short commentary seems necessary. What is the painful nature of mental intentions? Here is an example. We

have to find the money tomorrow to settle a heavy loan. Can we fall asleep relaxed tonight? We might toss and turn in bed and our thoughts might torment us. Mental intentions (*mano saṃcetanā*) will drag us away forcibly. Here is another example. The deer runs after the mirage due to craving. Due to craving for water. It runs due to the deception there is water. It keeps running. Although too exhausted to keep running, it drags itself forward, prompted by craving. Watching the behaviour of mental intentions, one can understand the nature of craving. I think that is enough about *mano saṃcetanā*.

The last one, nutriment of consciousness is the most subtle of the four. “Monks, how would you understand the nutriment of consciousness? (*viññāṇa āhāra*). This is the simile given. “The ministers or the hangmen catch hold of a criminal and present him before the king for the final verdict. The king orders a hundred beatings in the morning with a short stick known as *aḍayaṭi*. At noon the king is informed that the criminal was still alive. A repetition of the punishment is ordered. Again in the evening another round of a hundred beatings was inflicted on him. Now the Buddha questions the monks, “Monks, what do you think? Does this man who gets three hundred beatings a day, experience pain? “Why not Venerable Sir? Even one beating would definitely bring pain and distress on him.” The simile ends there. The Buddha says “That is how, Monks, the nutriment of consciousness should be understood. A thorough understanding of the nutriment of consciousness will lead to the understanding of name-and-form. The noble disciple who reaches this level of understanding has nothing more to do. That is the nutriment of consciousness, the most difficult to comprehend. No one likes to treat consciousness as misery. In place of the *aḍayaṭi* story a simple but modern illustration will make this clear.

TV addicts face continuous attacks from morning till night not with the *aḍayaṭi* of ancient times but – If I may coin a new word to suit modern times – with the ‘add’-yati blows

leveled against them by the business hangmen of the commercial world.

Here is another illustration. When you enter a street at night, electric bulbs in some business places keep winking so as to draw our attention, and to tempt us through subtle devices. The worldlings cannot realise the misery within this, due to the presence of consciousness. We have come through *Samsāra* suffering severe *aḍayaṭi* blows but totally ignorant of name-and-form, the mischief-maker behind it. The meditators have to understand the rest through meditation. He who realizes fully the functioning of the nutriment of consciousness, attains Arahant hood.

Let me emphasize another aspect on the subject of nutriments. Life depends on nutriments. We cannot do without it. What follows is deep. You know the Buddha spent six years of physical torture. The Nigaṇṭhas advocated self-mortification as the only way to happiness. Self-mortification was the most favoured path both among the ascetics and Brahmins. So naturally, the Buddha too went to its extreme until he collapsed by fasting. Through trial and error he realized the only solution to suffering was the middle path.

We have discussed earlier a *sutta* that discusses the middle path, which we wish to touch on briefly. Once a certain Bhikkhunī, instigated by hidden evil intentions, invited Venerable Ananda on the pretext of listening to a discourse.⁶ Venerable Ananda, reading her mind, delivered a discourse based on four sub-topics. The first topic is very much relevant to us.

This is how it is presented. “*Āhāra sambhūto bhagini ayam kāyo. Āhāraṃ nissāya āhāro pahātabbo.*” “Sister, this body is made up of nutriment. With the help of nutriment, should nutriment be eliminated.” It is a puzzling statement but the middle path lies therein. Venerable Ananda gives a brief

explanation as to how nutriment can be instrumental in eliminating nutriment. You listeners are familiar with these facts. Monks are advised not to avoid food totally but to contemplate while partaking of food. With a clear perspective of the purpose of eating, it has to be converted into a subject of meditation through the restraint of wisdom (*ñāṇa samvara*). A monk when partaking of food, contemplates as follows with wisdom. “I partake of this food not for enjoyment or strength or adornment or beautification (*paṭisaṅkhā yoniso, neva davāya, na madāya, na maṇḍanāya, na vibhūsanāya*) – merely (*yāvadeva*) – for the maintenance of this body (*imassa kāyassa ṭhītiyā*) – for survival (*yāpanāya*) – to refrain from destruction to life (*vihinsūparatiya*) – for the fulfillment of higher life (*brahmacariyānuggahāya*). I shall thus dispel the pain of hunger and prevent the arising of any future pain by overeating (*iti purāṇaṃ ca vedanaṃ paṭikankhāmi, navañca vedanaṃ na uppādessāmi*). In this journey of life, I shall deviate from wrong, being frugal in food and other requirements (*yātrā ca me bhavissati*).

To this noble quest in life, meditative monks add a subject of meditation. Its purpose is indicated as follows; “This food is merely a speck of the elements (*dhātu mattako*). It is a preparation consisting of earth, water, heat and wind. Taken in terms of elements it is clean but after entering this putrid body (*imaṃ pūtikāyaṃ patvā*) it becomes extremely repulsive (*ativiya jigucchanīyo jāyati*). This statement includes both subjects of meditation, contemplation on the elements and the repulsiveness of food. That is how food is converted into a subject of meditation.

Finally contemplation on the elements leads to emptiness (*suññatā*). This mere speck of the elements is essenceless (*dhātu mattako suñño*).

This almsfood is subject to conditionality. The individual partaking of it is not a being or a living entity, but an essenceless

speck of the elements. This almsfood which is not loathsome becomes extremely repulsive after entering this body.

Yathāpaccayaṃ pavattamānaṃ dhātumattameveṭaṃ yadidaṃ piṇḍapāto. Tadupabhuñjakoca puggalo dhātumattako nissatto nijjīvo suñño. Sabbo panāyaṃ piṇḍapāto ajigucchanīyo jāyati. imaṃ pūtikāyaṃ patvā ativiya jigucchanīyo jāyati.

This almsfood as a requisite is nothing but a speck from the elements. He who partakes of it is not a being or a living thing but a mere empty speck of elements. This almsfood though clean would become extremely repulsive, once inside the fowl body.

This clarifies how one realizes the void (essencelessness) through contemplation on the elements. Contemplation on repulsiveness leads one to disillusion, letting go. Freedom from food, elimination of food is suggestive of the dispelling of craving. There lies the Middle Path. The *Sabbāsava Sutta* further clarifies this point. As we proceed in life we encounter certain things we can neither manage with nor without. The Buddha realized that food was one such requirement. The middle path has to be followed regarding food. Instead of rejecting it altogether, one partakes of food perfectly aware of its limitations, (*mattaññū*) with *Nibbāna* as the goal. Many other similes can be cited that are extremely effective in causing disillusionment towards food. *Khuraṃva madhunālittaṃ*⁷ and *khuradhārūpamo bhava*⁸ are two wonderful similes mentioned earlier. A man fond of honey is offered a generous dose of it spread on a razor blade. He cannot enjoy it without risking his tongue. This simile helps to eliminate the greed for taste. Partaking of food is similar to applying medication on a wound (*vaṇasssa ropanatthāya*) and lubricating the axle of the cart (*akkhassabbhañjanaṃ yathā*)⁹ are two similes that clarify the place of food on the path to *Nibbāna*. Food is not a source of pleasure but an essential commodity to carry the five aggregates across the desert of *Samsāra* safely, not different from oiling the axle of a wheel. The simile of the son's flesh is also

applicable here, although it stirs the emotions as well. The Buddha explains the repulsive nature of food inside the body and the importance of adopting the middle path with regard to food.

It is further explained in such *suttas* as the *Ogha Tarana Sutta*.¹⁰ If a person, on getting into a river with a strong current, to cross over, stops there without moving, he will sink. If he wriggles about, he'll get washed away. Wriggling is compared to self mortification, or rejecting all food. Stopping is compared to self indulgence, or endless consumption of food. Avoiding both these extremes, one should eat only what is required for survival. '*Mattaññū hohi bhojane.*' Know your limit when eating. Venerable Sarīputta's advice to meditative monks is to refrain from eating the last four or five mouthfuls of food so as to drink enough water. "*cattāro pañca ālope abhuvā udakam pive.*"¹¹ This gives ease and lightness for meditation. By means of various similes, the middle path regarding food has been always emphasized. The topic of food is so important that, the first of the ten questions asked at the higher ordination of novice Arahant Sopaka was based on food. You may have heard of it, perhaps. "*sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā.*"¹² Although this is subject to ridicule today, a deep understanding of this will lead to dejection, detachment and cessation which leads to *Nibbāna*.

In the *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta*¹³ we meet Venerable Sāriputta analyzing 'right view' in its diverse aspects, one after the other in response to the inquiry "Do you know yet another analysis?" According to one mode of analysis, based on the pattern of the four truths, if a monk has a comprehensive understanding of nutriment, the arising of nutriment, the cessation of nutriment and lastly the path leading to the cessation of nutriment, that alone can arouse correct view in him, and practice the four truths regarding nutriment meaningfully. Nutriment is of four kinds, gross material food consumed in lumps, contact nutriment, nutriment of mental intentions and nutriment of consciousness. Understanding them at depth is to understand the misery

associated with nutriment. The nature of craving underlying it represents the second Noble Truth. Cessation here stands for *Nibbāna*. The path is the middle path called ‘*paṭisaṅkhā yoniso*’ or the restraint through wisdom, or in other words, partaking of food wisely reiterating its purpose as an object of meditation.

The last verse touched on a very profound aspect of the topic “*Ārogyaṃ sammadaññāya – āsavānaṃ parikkhayā saṅkhāya sevī dhammaṭṭho – saṅkham nopeti vedagu*”. Lets go through its meaning again. *Ārogyaṃ sammadaññāya* – We partake food in order to maintain health. But the implication in this line is deeper than that. It refers not merely to physical health but enduring health which is *Nibbāna*. “*ārogyaṃ sammadaññāya*” understanding good health well, “*āsavānaṃ parikkhayā*” through the destruction of influxes, “*saṅkhāya sevī dhammaṭṭho*” well established in the dhamma, “*saṅkham nopeti vedagu*” – *vedagu* refers to an Arahant endowed with three-fold knowledge, and not a Brahmin learned in the three Vedas. “*saṅkham nopeti*” is not reckoned. An Arahant is ‘Not reckoned’ is a complicating concept which deserves some thought. Then let us discuss it at this point.

There is another *sutta* called the *Atthirāga Sutta*¹⁴ that mentions the four types of nutriments with a subtle simile. To begin with, the Buddha explains the four types of nutriments. Then three very significant words are introduced. If a disciple has passion (*rāga*) towards nutriment, pleasure (*nandi*) towards nutriment and craving (*taṇhā*) towards nutriment, its consequences are pointed out. If someone has passion, pleasure and craving towards, let us say, gross food which is made into lumps for eating, the consciousness gets established and strengthens itself. Many are interested in the secret of rebirth, an intricate subject. If passion, pleasure and craving are present towards nutriment, the consciousness towards nutriment gets established and strengthens. From then onwards the process of *Paṭicca Samuppada* is activated. Wherever consciousness gets

established and grows, name-and-form activates itself there. Wherever name-and-form is established preparations are activated. Wherever preparations are established, there ‘*āyatim punabbhavābhi nibbatti*’ another existence takes place. Existence gives rise to birth, decay, death. This is a very subtle point to grasp. This process is described in relation to gross food (*āhāra*), contact (*phassa*), mental intentions (*mano samcetanā*) as well as consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Attachment, pleasure or craving towards either of these four types of nutriment, leads to existence (*bhava*) with the consciousness well established there. It is followed by name-and-form (*nāma-rupa*), preparations (*saṅkhāra*) and then birth takes place.

The subtleness in this account is centered round the simile used by the Buddha “Monks, if a dyer or a painter were to paint on a smooth board or a wall or a cloth, using a rusty red, yellow or light red paint – now read the rest carefully – in the same way is created a figure of a male or a female, with details complete. (Now connect what was said). If at this point attachment, pleasure and craving are present towards nutriment, another birth is possible. Similar to a film reflected on a screen, the figure of the male or the female that seeks rebirth is registered on the foetus in the mother’s womb which we call the muddy patch. The Buddha discusses this at depth as if he was painting a picture. At this stage the three defilements passion, pleasure and craving (*rāga, nandī, taṇhā*) add a certain hue to the consciousness. That is what we call name-and-form. In brief it is a form in conformity with the name reflected on the consciousness. This is made explicit by the simile of the painter. This process takes place as long as the three-fold nutriment of consciousness ie passion, pleasure and craving last. A person excessively fond of food, may perhaps be born as a worm or a pig. It happens due to attachment to food. This illustrates the interrelatedness between consciousness and name-and-form.

The simile of the painter symbolizes defilements. The Buddha then deals with the opposite tendency with a deeper significance, which is a mystery to many. “If one has no passion or pleasure or craving towards the four types of nutriments, ...” Here the Buddha brings out an amazing simile. “Monks, there is a pavilion with windows on the north, south and east. When the sun rises, Monks, where will the sun’s rays fall?”

“On the western wall, Venerable Sir.”

“If there was no wall on the west?”

“In that case, on the earth, Venerable Sir.”

“If there was no earth?”

“On the water, if there was no earth.”

“Well, if there was no water?”

“In that case, Venerable Sir, the sun’s rays will not be established anywhere.”

The word used here is ‘*appatiṭṭhita*’ – ‘not established’. Can you see how deep its significance is. “Venerable Sir, if the sun’s rays do not fall on the wall or the earth or on the water, then it is not established” – ‘*appatiṭṭhita*’. We have earlier introduced the term ‘*anidassana viññāṇa*’ – non-manifestative consciousness. In the absence of passion, pleasure or craving, consciousness is unable to establish itself. In explaining the meaning of *anidassana*, the simile of the painter suggests a mental state where there is nothing to be seen, to be revealed. We have explained this position based on a simile in the *Kakacūpama Sutta*.¹⁵ Here too, the question answer method is used. “A man appears with some colour paints and a brush and declares that he would paint a picture in the sky” says the Buddha. “Monks, do you think it is possible?”

“No Venerable Sir. It is not possible because ‘*ayam hi bhante ākāso arūpī anidassano*’, this sky is formless, and is not capable of showing or revealing anything. This is a subtle point

many cannot understand. We have discussed the significance of ‘*anidassana viññāṇa*’ in the discourses on *Nibbāna*.

*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ – anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ
ettha āpo ca pañhavi – tejo vājo na gādhati
ettha dīghaṅca rassaṅca – aṇu thulaṃ subhāsubhaṃ
ettha nāmaṅca rūpaṅca – asesam uparujjhati
viññāṇassa nirodhena – ettethaṃ uparujjhati*¹⁶

This verse remained an unresolved mystery for ever so long. Some interpreted it as a peculiar world. We have pointed out that the consciousness is there – *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ* – but the released consciousness (*vimutta viññāṇa*) does not reflect name-and-form. Next, it discusses the characteristics of name-and-form. ‘*Anantaṃ*’ – as in the simile where there was no place for the sun’s rays to fall. It is similar to that. *Anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ – ettha āpo ca pañhavi – tejo vājo na gādhati*. In this *viññāṇa* the four elements earth, water, fire and wind can have no footing. Why? Contemplation on the four elements have brought about disillusionment. If this idea is attached to the story of rebirth discussed earlier, it would appear as follows. If the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) does not clasp the four elements firms, gives up attachment towards them, then “*ettha āpo ca pañhavi – tejo vājo na gādhati*.” – the four elements have no place in the consciousness.

On the other hand, if earth, water, fire and wind are present, the notion of long and short is present. Now think of its applicability to the painter. ‘*ettha dīghaṃ ca rassaṃ ca*’. Otherwise the concepts of ‘long-short’ would be inapplicable. *Subhāsubhaṃ* – beautiful or repulsive would also be inapplicable. As mentioned in the story, the figure of a man or woman is drawn with all the details. As long as *rāga*, *nandi* and *taṇhā* (passion, pleasure and craving) are present, the human figure acquires its relevant colours automatically. The paint here is lust. But in the consciousness that is released, called *anidassana viññāṇa*, name-

and-form does not reflect itself. The verse *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ* is extremely deep in meaning as you can see. Finally it says “*ettha nāmañca rūpañca asesam uparujjhati*”. Name-and-form ceases totally here. “*Viññāṇassa nirodhena*” – consciousness ceases. The implication behind this phrase is not understood by many. This is not a reference to the prepared and specially prepared consciousness. By consciousness we mean the consciousness that is accompanied by name-and-form. The worldlings do not know of the other consciousness which is identified as the ‘ceased consciousness’ – ‘*niruddha viññāṇa*’. How does it cease? It has no foundation or object. That is what is described as “*appatiṭṭham anārammanam*” in talking of an Arahant’s mind. you may have heard that the void state is referred to as “*animitta*” – signless, ‘*appatiṭṭhita*’ – not established, ‘*suññata*’ empty and void, devoid of self. It is this void state that is emphasized. In support of this position, here are two verses from the *Dhammapada*.¹⁷

*Yesam sannicaya natthi – ye pariññāta bhojanā
suññato animitto ca – vimokkho yesa gocaro
ākāseva sakuntānam – gati tesam durantayā*

This verse too is deep in meaning. ‘*Yesam sannicaya natthi*’ – they have no accumulated load, ‘*ye pariññāta bhojanā*’ – understood the intricacies of nutriment, ‘*suññato animitto ca vimokkho yesa gocaro*’ – whose pasture ground is void, signless, has the nature of release. Nutriment is not their prey. Realizing the void inherent in nutriment, the Arahants conduct themselves with ease in their signless essenceless pastures. The path they traverse is not visible. “*Ākāseva sakuntānam gati tesam durantayā*” – Like the path taken by the birds in the sky, the course taken by the Arahant’s mind is untraceable, due to its signless, unestablished nature. Deities and Brahmins venerating the Arahants say they are unable to trace the mind of the Arahants who have attained the Arahant *phala samāpatti*. The main thing emphasized here is the void (*suññato*) and signless (*animitto*).

The verse that follows emphasizes the above facts.

*Yassāsavā parikkhīṇā – āhāre ca anissito
suññato animitto ca – vimokkho yassa gocaro
ākāseva sakuntānaṃ – padaṃ tassa durantayam*

The qualities of the Arahant who has destroyed all influxes stated here are similar to those in the above verse. Those who have well comprehended the four types of nutriment will know that the path taken by the Arahant is untraceable because it is signless (*animitta*) and is undirected (*appaṇihita*). Now you understand why the Arahants are called “*sāṅkhāya sevī dhammaṭṭho saṅkham nopeti vedagu.*” Those Arahants do not come into reckoning means, the worldlings do not recognize them. Once, the Brahmin youth Uttara, the pupil of Brahmin Brahmāyu curious to know how the Buddha partakes of food and in order to examine his conduct, followed him for seven months like a shadow. The outcome of it, an amazing account of the Buddha’s daily routine is given in the *Brahmāyu Sutta*.¹⁸ The Buddha partakes of food contemplating on the eight factors beginning with “*neva davāya, na madāya*”. The most amazing revelation is that the Buddha is “*rasa paṭisaṃvedī bhagavā no ca rasa rāga paṭisaṃvedī .*” He is aware of taste. His taste buds are active but there is no lust for taste. The reason is that his consciousness is void (*suñña*) and signless (*animitta*).

Dear Listeners, you must clearly understand that according to these two amazing verses, understanding the significance of nutriment at its depth does not imply giving up nutriment altogether. It is the elimination of craving and lust for nutriment that is required. Unless one reaches this stage, the ordinary mind gets established somewhere by the force of craving, whether we expect it or not. A film is produced either in a mother’s womb or elsewhere. Everyone gets stuck there. “*Āyatim punabbhavo.*” Another existence takes place here if consciousness and name-and-form go together. If the

consciousness is removed, no name-and-form arises there. Even while the person is living, if the consciousness has released itself from the name-and-form, he does not seek a goal at death. The simile of the pavilion illustrated the mind that is signless. The sun's rays had no place to establish itself, whether on the wall or on the earth or on the water. Can you understand how deep the vision regarding nutriment is in the Dhamma? A correct understanding of nutriment, its arising, its cessation and the path to the cessation of nutriment corresponding to the Four Noble Truths, the final result would most certainly be Arahant hood. There is nothing more for him to accomplish. Dear listeners, considering the above facts, please treat this discourse as a subject for meditation. You must not put it away as too deep. It is true that the Dhamma is very deep. But if you train your mind on the lines of radical attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) the attainment of paths and fruits (*magga phala*) is not far away.

Today you have established yourselves on a higher *sīla* and disciplined your mind in meditation.

Not only the monks, but all those involved in meditation, contemplate on the nutriments. If this contemplation is correctly perfected, it certainly leads to paths and fruits in the Dhamma. I wish this discourse would be instrumental in the attainment of spiritual heights of *Sotāpanna* (Stream Entrant), *Sakadāgāmi* (Once-returner), *Anāgāmi* (Non-returner) and *Arahat* (Emancipation) and cross over the dangers of *Saṃsāra*. Whatever beings there be, from the lowest hell *Avīci* to the highest Brahma world *Akaniṭṭha*, may they rejoice in this discourse, and may they attain the peace of *Nibbāna*!



The Law of Dependent Arising

1. Sn. 747 – 749 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S. II 11 Āhāra Sutta
3. S. II 97 Puttamaṃsa Sutta
4. S.A II 79 Sāratthappakāsinī (S.H.B)
5. M. I 55 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta
6. A. II 144 Bhikkhunī Sutta
7. Thag. V 733 Pārāsariya Thera Gāthā
8. Sn. 138 Nālaka Sutta
9. S. IV 175 Rathūpama Sutta
10. S. I 1 Ogha Sutta
11. Thag. V 983 Sāriputta Thera Gāthā
12. Khuddhaka Nikāya, Khuddhakapāṭha, IV Kumāra Pañha
13. M. I 46 Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta
14. S. II 101 Atthirāga Sutta
15. M. I 122 Kakacūpama Sutta
16. D. I 211 Kevaḍḍha Sutta
17. Dhp. VII 92 Arahanta Vagga
18. M. II 133 Brahmāyu Sutta

Sermon 20 (Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 202)

'Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa'
'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Ye me pubbe viyākamsu
huraṃ gotama sāsana
iccāsi iti bhavissati
sabbam taṃ itihītihaṃ
sabbam taṃ takkavaḍḍhanaṃ
nāhaṃ tattha abhiramiṃ*

*Tvañca me Dhammaṃ akkhāhi
taṇhānigghātaṇaṃ muni
yaṃ viditvā sato caraṃ
tare loka visattikaṃ*

*Idha diṭṭhasutamuta viññātesu
piyarūpesu Hemaka
chanda rāgavinodanaṃ
Nibbānapadamaccutaṃ*

*Etad aññāya ye satā
diṭṭhadhammābhiniḅbutā
upasantāva te sadā
tiṇṇā loka visattikaṃ¹*

– *Hemaka Sutta, Sutta Nipāta.*

Those who explained to me before
Outside the dispensation of Gotama
All of them said: 'So it was and so it will be'
But all that is so-and-so talk
All that is productive of logic
I did not delight therein

But now to me, O! Sage
May you proclaim a Dhamma
That is destructive of craving
By knowing which and mindfully faring along
One might get beyond the world's viscosity

The dispelling here in this world
Of desire and lust for pleasant things
Seen, heard, sensed and cognized
Is *Nibbāna* that slips not away

Knowing this they that are mindful
And are fully appeased here and now
Are always calm and composed
They have crossed the world's viscosity.

Dear Listeners,

The uniqueness of the Law of Dependent Arising discovered by the Fully Enlightened One is the presenting of a solution to the Sāmsāric problem in the present itself. Until then, religious teachers in the world went on searching for a solution by entwining past and future with logic. In this well-preached (*svākkhāta*) Dhamma what becomes obvious by the other qualities like ‘*sanditthika*’ (can be seen here and now) ‘*akālika*’ (timeless) ‘*ehipassika*’ (inviting one to come and see) ‘*opanayika*’ (leading one onwards) and by the term often used ‘*diṭṭheva dhamme*’ (in this very life) is that solution in the present. Today we chose as the topic for the twentieth sermon on Dependent Arising, the *Hemaka Sutta* of the *Pārāyana Vagga* in *Sutta Nipāta* in order to turn your attention to this unique quality. Paraphrased, this is the meaning of those verses.

1. ‘*ye me pubbe viyākāmsu – huraṃ gotama sāsanaṃ*’
Those, who, outside the dispensation of Gotama
explained to me before –

‘iccāsi iti bhavissati’

Said so ‘it was’, ‘so it will be’

‘sabbam tam itihītiham’

All that is ‘so-it-was’, ‘so it was’ talk

‘sabbam tam takkavaḍḍhanam’

All that is productive of logic.

‘nāham tattha abhiramim’

I did not delight in it.

2. *‘Tvañca me Dhammam akkhāhi
taṇhānigghātanam muni’*

But may you preach to me the Dhamma that destroys
craving, O! Sage.

‘yam viditvā sato caram

tare loka visattikam’

Having understood which and faring mindfully, one can
cross over from world’s viscosity.

3. *‘Idha diṭṭhasutamuta viññātesu
piyarūpesu Hemaka’*

In regard to pleasant things seen, heard, sensed and
cognized here in this world, O Hemaka.

‘chanda rāgavinodanam

Nibbānapadamaccutam’

The dispelling of desire and lust is the state of *Nibbāna*
that does not slip away.

4. *‘Etad aññāya ye satā
diṭṭhadhammābhinibbutā’*

Knowing this, those that are mindful and fully appeased
here and now.

‘upasantāva te sadā

tiṇṇā loka visattikam’

Are always calm and composed and they have crossed
over the viscosity in this world.

In a previous sermon we happened to mention that according to the exposition in the *Visuddhimagga* that is now accepted, out of the twelve links the two links ignorance and preparations (*avijjā saṅkhārā*) are reckoned as belonging to the past, the last two links, birth, decay-and-death as belonging to the future, and the eight links in the middle, consciousness, name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping and becoming (*viññāṇa, nāma-rūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava*) as belonging to the present. If we accept that exposition – that interpretation – what the Brahmin youth Hemaka had stated as a charge against other religious systems, the explaining as ‘so it was’ and ‘so it will be’, that is to say the ‘so-and-so’ charge could be levelled at our Dhamma as well. But, dear listeners, this is not a ‘so-and-so’ Dhamma. This is something unique. In support of his interpretation, Venerable Buddhaghosa, the author of *Visuddhimagga*, gives a twenty-fold analysis of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* made-up of groups of five:²

*Atīte hetavo pañca
idāni phalapañcakam
Idāni hetavo pañca
āyatim phalapañcakam*

Five causes were in the past
Now there is a fivefold fruit
Now there are five causes
Which will have in future a fivefold fruit.

In the past there were five causes. In the present there are the five fruits. There are five causes in the present of which there will be five fruits in the future. What are these five causes? Ignorance, preparations, craving, grasping and becoming. What are said to be the five fruits in the present? Consciousness, name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact and feeling. Then again the five present causes are said to be ignorance, preparations, craving, grasping and becoming and the five fruits are

consciousness, name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact and feeling. By this analysis the wonderful inter-connection between the twelve links which is called ‘*idappaccayatā*’ (specific conditionality) is breached. We have already explained to you all that the basic principle of the Law of Dependent Arising obtains between any two consecutive links of the formula. That is to say:

This being – this comes to be
 With the arising of this – this arises
 This not being – this does not come to be
 With the cessation of this – this ceases.

The law holds good between any pair of links. It cannot be broken. It cannot take in additional things. Any two links are wonderfully interconnected. It is reinforced by the significant phrase ‘*yā tatra tathatā avitathatā anaññathatā idappaccayatā*’ – ‘That suchness, that invariability, that not-otherwiseness therein is the specific conditionality.’ The Buddha has thus confirmed that connection. We have to point out that by the analysis in the *Visuddhimagga* that basic principle is violated.

Not only that. Venerable Buddhaghosa speaks of three rounds or ‘*vaṭṭas*’ – namely, ‘*kilesa-vaṭṭa*’ (the round of defilements), the ‘*kamma-vaṭṭa*’ (the round of action) and ‘*vipāka-vaṭṭa*’ (the round of result). But, dear listeners, we have pointed out to you in our explanation of the *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* that the ‘*vaṭṭa*’ interpretation that is actually relevant to the Law of Dependent Arising is that between consciousness and name-and-form. We have cited on several occasions a very deep section of the Buddha’s sermon that confirms it. On this occasion too let me quote it for the benefit of those who are new-comers.

“... *Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā uppajjetha vā, ettāvatā adhivacanapatho ettāvatā niruttipatho, ettāvatā paññattipatho ettāvatā paññāvacaram*”

ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattaṃ paññāpanāya, yadidaṃ nāmarūpaṃ saha viññāṇena.”³

“In so far only, Ānanda, can one be born or grow old or die or pass away or reappear, in so far only is there any pathway for verbal expression, in so far only is there any path way for terminology, in so far only is there any pathway for designation, in so far only is there any sphere of wisdom, in so far only is there a whirling round of pointing out a ‘this-ness’ – that is to say, as far as name-and-form together with consciousness”

In this exposition we have birth, decay and death and all the rest of it. Nothing is lacking. Venerable Sāriputta, the foremost in wisdom, presents this more clearly through a very simple simile in the *Naḷakalāpa Sutta*⁴ in answer to a series of questions raised by Venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita. It is a wonderful simile. “Just as, friend, two sheaves of reeds are made to stand one supporting the other at the top, so consciousness stands with name-and-form as condition. And then with name-and-form as condition there are the six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving etc. Out of these two sheaves of reeds, if one is drawn, the other falls down. If the other is drawn, this will fall down. In the same way the cessation aspect is explained as follows: With the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of name-and-form occurs and along with the cessation of name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping and the rest of it falls. Just try to visualize this: Out of the two sheaves of reeds, suppose the one on the left is the consciousness sheaf of reeds. The one on the right side is the name-and-form sheaf of reeds. A number of other sheaves of reeds are leaning on the name-and-form sheaf of reeds. All those would fall if the name-and-form sheaf of reeds falls. Now you can understand why this is called ‘*sandiṭṭhika*’ (visible here and now) ‘*akālika*’ (timeless) and ‘*ehi-passika*’ (inviting one to come and see). There is no need to bring in three periods of time into the interpretation of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula.

Now that we have said all this about the exposition in *Visuddhimagga*, let us go on to another point. Out of the above mentioned mutual interdependence, even as a corollary of it, something called a duality (*dvayatā*) comes up. We have made use of the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* in selecting topics for a number of our sermons. As you may recall, there is a duality of arising and ceasing (*samudaya-nirodha*). There is another duality of internal – external (*ajjhata-bahiddhā*). It is these two dualities that you come across throughout the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. We have spoken about the two phrases ‘*iti ajjhataṃ vā kāye, bahiddhā vā kāye*’ (whether in the internal body or in the external body) and ‘*samudayadhammānupassī vā vāyadhammānupassī vā*’ (either seeing the arising nature or the passing away nature).⁵ This is the duality. But our *Theravāda* tradition has not recognized this term. It has not come up in the traditional exegesis. However we pointed out its importance. There are two discourses in the *Salāyatana Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* by the same titled ‘*dvayaṃ*’ (dyad). In one *Dvayaṃ Sutta*⁶ we find the Buddha addressing the monks and saying: “monks, I shall preach to you about a dyad. What is the dyad? Eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and mind-objects. This is the dyad.”

Then the Buddha declares a very striking challenge: “If someone says I will reject this dyad and make known some other dyad, it will only be a vain boast. When questioned he would not be able to make good his boast. And furthermore, he would come to vexation.” Just see, all that is about the duality. In the other ‘*Dvayaṃ Sutta*’ this is how it comes up: “*Dvayaṃ bhikkhave paṭicca viññāṇaṃ sambhotaṃ.*” “Consciousness, monks, arises depending on a dyad.” “*Kathaṅca bhikkhave dvayaṃ paṭicca viññāṇaṃ sambhotaṃ.*” “How monks, does consciousness arise ‘depending on a dyad?’” “*Cakkhuṅca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ.*” “Depending on eye and forms arises eye-consciousness.” Then the Buddha makes another declaration. “*Cakkhuṃ aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvī, Rūpā aniccā*

vipariṇāmino aññathābhāvino.” “Eye is impermanent changing and becoming otherwise. Forms are impermanent, changing and becoming otherwise.” Then he goes on: “*Itthetaṃ dvayaṃ calañceva vayañca aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi.*” “Thus this dyad is unstable, passing away, impermanent, changing and becoming otherwise.” Just understand in brief that the question of the two is resolved through the teachings on impermanence. There is another significant discourse that corroborates, the ‘internal-external’ part of the implications of *dvayaṃ* or dyad. There is in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* a discourse titled ‘*Bālapaṇḍita Sutta*’ – not to be confused with the ‘*Bālapaṇḍita Sutta*’ of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. Let us bring up a section of that discourse: “*Avijjānīvaraṇassa bhikkhave bālassa taṇhāya sampayuttassa evāyaṃ kāyo samudāgato. Iti ayañceva kāyo bahiddhā ca nāmarūpaṃ. Itthetaṃ dvayaṃ. Dvayaṃ paṭicca phasso saḷevāyatanāni yehi phuṭṭho bālo sukhadukkhāṃ paṭisaṃvediyati etesaṃ vā aññatarena.*”⁷ “Monks, to the fool hindered by ignorance and fettered to craving, this body has come up. Thus (there is) this body and name-and-form as external (to it). Thus there is this dyad. Depending on the dyad there is contact and the six sense-spheres, contacted by which or by any one of them, the fool experiences pleasure and pain.” That would suffice as far as the significance of the dyad is concerned.

Now let us pass on to the two words ‘*hetu*’ and ‘*paccaya*’. During the Buddha’s time those two words were used in every discourse as synonymous. Whenever the question comes up as ‘*Ko hetu ko paccayo*’ – ‘what is the cause, what is the condition?’ – the answer is one. There are no two answers. There is a delightful discourse titled ‘*Mahā Puṇṇama*’,⁸ which has as its setting a moonlit night out in the open air. The Buddha is seen answering questions raised by the monks. One monk strangely enough, rattled out five questions one after the other.

“Venerable Sir, what is the cause, what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of form?”

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of feeling?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of perception?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of preparations?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of consciousness?"

Now the Buddha is answering:

“The four great primaries is the cause, the four great primaries is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of form.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of feeling.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of perception.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of preparations.

Name-and-form is the cause, name-and-form is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of consciousness.”

What we need to glean from this quotation is the fact we had pointed out – namely that the two words were used synonymously in the discourses. But, dear listeners, it is evident that in the literature handed down as treatises – that is to say, in the ‘*pakarāṇa*’ literature – a semantic change, an undesirable change of meanings has occurred. First of all, let me give an instance of it. In the section called ‘*Parikkhā Vibhaṅga*’ in the

Nettipakaraṇa,⁹ ‘*hetu*’ and ‘*paccaya*’ are distinguished as two words. This is how it comes up:

“*Dve dhammā janayanti hetu ca paccayo ca*’

‘Two factors ‘bring forth’ (‘*janayanti*’) something – cause and condition.’

Out of them cause is said to be the special factor (*asādhāraṇo hetu*) and condition is said to be the common factor (*sādhāraṇo paccayo*). An illustration is also given. In the case of a germinating seed, the seed is called the cause and conditions are earth and moisture. Then is summing up *Nettipakaraṇa* says:

“*Iti sabhāvo hetu parabhāvo paccayo. Ajjhattiko hetu bāhiro paccayo. Janako hetu pariggāhako paccayo. Asādhāraṇo hetu sādharmaṇo paccayo.*”

In defining the two words it says, *hetu* or cause is intrinsic nature (*sabhāvo*) and *paccaya* or condition is extrinsic nature (*parabhāvo*). Here we find an unusual semantic twist. ‘*Sabhāva*’ (Skt. *svabhāva*) is a word used in general for ‘nature’. Now it has become a technical term. So ‘*sa-bhāvo*’ is intrinsic nature. ‘*Para-bhāvo*’ is extrinsic nature. Just see what a distortion it is. For the birth of a sapling or a seedling the seed is said to be the cause (*hetu*) and other things such as earth, water, fire and air are conditions (*paccaya*). But from the verses uttered by Selā Therī¹⁰ it seems that all the three factors – seed, earth and moisture are essential. Then ‘*ajjhattiko hetu*’ – cause is internal ‘*bāhiro paccayo*’ condition is external. Then again, ‘*janako hetu*’ – cause is what brings forth or gives birth – ‘*pariggāhako paccayo*’ – condition is what helps or contributes to it.

Now we cannot help saying something about the *Paṭṭhānappakarana*¹¹ too. When we come to it, we find the number of ‘conditions’ (*paccayā*) increasing up to twenty four. In the attempt to show the connection between thoughts, twenty four

conditions are listed. The first among them is called ‘*hetu*’ but not in the sense we mentioned above. So it seems at last ‘*hetu*’ (cause) became one of the ‘*paccayas*’ (conditions). To add to the confusion now the scholars are at pains trying to establish the ‘identity’ of the two conditions ‘*anantara*’ and ‘*samanantara*’ because the definition given to both happens to be the same. So this is the situation. Anyway, we do not wish to labour the point. Let us now pass on to ‘*Paṭisambhidāmaggappakaraṇa*.¹² When we come to it we find a similar semantic change. This is how the two words ‘*hetu*’ (cause) and ‘*hetusamuppanna*’ (arisen from a cause) are explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*:

“*Avijjā hetu saṅkhārā hetusamuppannā, saṅkhārā hetu viññāṇaṃ hetusamuppannaṃ.*”

According to this interpretation, out of the twelve links, the one that precedes a link is the cause from which that particular link is arisen. But we have pointed out with reference to the first two lines of the verse ‘*ye dhammā hetuppabhavā – tesam hetum Tathāgato āha*’ that what is called ‘*hetu*’ is not ignorance or any other link but that basic principle of ‘*idappaccayatā*’ (specific conditionality) – ‘This being – this arises’ etc. We have also shown that as for ‘*hetusamuppanna*’ each of these twelve links is arisen from a cause. Ignorance and other links are illustrations of the principle. This fact is further borne out by the qualification sometimes mentioned about a Stream-winner (*Sotāpanna*) that he has clearly seen the cause as well as things arisen from the cause (‘*hetu ca sudiṭṭho hoti hetu samuppanne ca dhamme*’).

But an even clearer proof of this fact – as we earlier pointed out – is the declaration made by the Buddha showing the distinction between the Law of Dependent Arising (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) and things dependently arisen (*paṭicca samuppannā dhammā*).¹³ It is a momentous declaration.

“*Jātipaccayā bhikkhave jarāmarañam. Uppādā vā tathāgatānam anuppādā vā tathāgatānam ñhitā va sā dhātu dhammaññhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā*”.

“Dependent on birth is decay and death. Whether there be an arising of *Tathāgatas* or whether there be no arising of *Tathāgatas*, that elementary nature, that orderliness of the Dhamma, that norm of the Dhamma, the specific conditionality does stand as it is.”

What corroborates the inter-connection between birth and decay is the norm that holds good whether there be an arising of *Tathāgatas* or there be no arising of *Tathāgatas*. That elementary nature ‘stands as it is’ – *ñhitā va sā dhātu*. That is the ‘suchness’ which cannot be changed – *tathatā*. That specific conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. ‘Things dependently arisen’ (*paṭiccasamuppannā dhammā*) are the twelve links beginning with ‘ignorance’. They all are ‘*hetusamuppannā*’. Every one of them is impermanent (*aniccam*), prepared (*sañkhatam*) and dependently arisen (*paṭiccasamuppannam*). All this shows that an undesirable semantic change has occurred with the passage of time in regard to the Law of Dependent Arising.

There are enough instances in the discourses to prove that the twelve linked formula of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* has been presented as an answer to questions of extremists which are of the dilemma type. The world rests on a duality (*dvayanissita*) – the question of two things. Either ‘it is’ or ‘it is not’. Either ‘it exists’ or ‘it does not exist’. Either ‘everything exists’ or ‘nothing exists’. Either it is ‘one’s own doing’ or ‘another’s doing’.¹⁴ The worldlings are immersed in such a duality (*dvayatā*). When such Brahmins come and raise questions, particularly in the *Kaccānagotta Sutta*,¹⁵ the Buddha pointed out that such questions with two ends rest on a duality (‘*dvayanissita*’).

“*Sabbaṃ atthīti kho Kaccāna ayam eko anto. Sabbaṃ natthīti ayam dutiyo anto. Ete te Kaccāna ubho ante anupagamma majjhena Tathāgato dhammaṃ deseti: avijjāpaccayā saṅkharā ... (etc.)*”

“(To say) ‘Everything exists’, Kaccāna, is one extreme. ‘Nothing exists’ – this is the second extreme. Without going to both extremes, Kaccāna, the Tathāgata preaches the Dhamma by the middle: Dependent on ignorance, preparations ... (etc.)”

Without going to both extremes the *Tathāgata* brings up the twelve linked formula of Dependent Arising. In that exposition both the direct (*anuloma*) and indirect (*paṭiloma*) orders are given. I hope you all can follow. Firstly, the direct order beginning with ‘*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*’ (Dependent on ignorance, preparations). Then the Buddha follows it up with the indirect order, ‘*avijjāyatveva asesā virāgaṇirodhā..... (etc.)*’ (But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance.....etc.). Between these two we find ‘*samudaya*’ (arising) and ‘*nirodha*’ (ceasing). One cannot say something absolutely exists or absolutely nothing exists. There is an ‘arising’ and a ‘ceasing’. It is that norm that is called Dependent Arising or ‘*Paṭicca Samuppāda*’. Not only that. Sometimes a tetralemma beginning with ‘one’s own doing’ (*sayam katam*) ‘another’s doing’ (*param katam*) and so on as well as six dilemmas were presented to the Buddha but he answered them with the twelve linked formula. There are many who do not know why the Buddha puts forward these twelve links as his answer. Why does he do so? In it there is the solution in the present. It lays bare the structure of the problem. What is the structure? Within the background of ignorance, preparations arise. It is these preparations that keep up the vortex between consciousness and name-and-form. The outcome of that vortical interplay is bifurcation within the six sense-spheres as internal and external. Now comes up the story of the ‘dyad’ (*dvayam*) – eye and forms, ear and sounds etc. That is why we illustrated the mutual

interdependence (*aññamañña paccayatā*) with reference to the simile of the two bundles of reeds. As a result of the bifurcation as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ in the case of the six sense-spheres, the entire story of feeling, craving, grasping, becoming and birth unfolds itself.

Though we explain this way, you might not understand. Now you had better recall the similes we have given while discussing the Law of Dependent Arising. Many of you would follow when it comes in the form of similes. We have given various kinds of similes like the cinema and the magic world. Let us take it this way. Suppose there are several worlds. There is the cinema-world. Now that we have spoken of the chess game between Ajith and Sumith, let us call it the gambler’s world. Then there is the magic world and the cricket world. There is another world which the dog on the plank represented earlier. Later we presented a more aesthetic simile in the form of the story of Narcissus. Everyone seems to like it. For those who haven’t heard it before let me give a summary of it. It is a Greek story we have read. A very handsome Greek youth who had never seen his own face, while wandering in a forest bent down into a pond to wash his face. Seeing the reflection of his own face there, he imagined it to be an angel’s. To embrace the angel he had a vain struggle with the ripples for several days and in the end sacrificed his life for love. That, of course, was self-love. Other affections are no better. We have to call it the world of romance. So we have now a lot of worlds. The cinema-world, the gambler’s world, the magic-world, the cricket-world and the romantic world.

Now let us see how in each of these worlds those twelve links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula play their part. Think of the cinema-world to begin with. When does the film-show actually start? When the entire cinema hall is steeped in darkness. At that moment the eyes get focused on the screen. Then the deluded interplay begins. In that strange world all the

‘preparations’ of the actors and actresses become meaningful in the darkness. When the interval comes, and lights are turned on, all the variety of colours on the screen fade away. But it is between the screen and the background of darkness that a wonderful world is created with the help of the behaviour of actors and actresses. That is the delusion. Then why does one go to the cinema hall and buy a ticket? To get deluded. What is the reason? The entire world is a world of sensuality. Within this sensual world, there are many tiny tiny worlds which we already named. The cinema world is easily understood.

Then let us take up the magic-world. The magic-world exists until the magician’s subtle tricks are understood. As soon as one discovers them at least by hiding in some corner of the stage, the magic-world is no more. Now what about the gambler’s world? We have clearly portrayed it with the help of the chess game between Ajith and Sumith. To put it in brief, that world exists on the chess-board. Those worthless pieces became ‘chessmen’. When the Zen master compelled the two friends to play a deadly chess game – a gamble for life – with sword in hand threatening to behead the loser, both of them mutually made up their minds to sacrifice their life for each other. But just at the critical moment of judging the winner and the loser, what did the Zen master do? He bent down and swept off the pieces from the chess board and that was the end of the game. Isn’t that enough for you to understand the gambler’s world?

Then as for the cricket-world, we need not describe it for you. You all know about it. But this is what has to be pointed out as important. When the two teams get down to the cricket-ground, the paraphernalia of the game dazzle with life. Players are dubbed with strange names. From then onwards it is all delusion. The cricket delusion is so powerful that in the end some even commit suicide. So that is the cricket-world. Between victory and defeat, all the twelve links are there – even birth and death, grief, lamentation, pain, unhappiness, despair and all the

rest of it. Then the world of romance. About that you all know more than we do. There again either it is self-love or love for another. It is that love for each other that make them say: ‘Of course the world outside is suffering but when we are together our world is wonderful!’ The day that soap bubble vanishes into thin air there is suicide or murder. So that is the world of romance. Remember, in everyone of those worlds, it is the twelve links that come into play.

What is of particular importance is that vortex – ‘*vaṭṭa*’. The real rallying point is the mutual inter-relation between consciousness and name-and-form. It is a very strange kind of delusion. That is why we said, if you ask consciousness ‘Who are you?’ it would reply ‘Ask name-and-form’. If you ask name-and-form ‘Who are you?’ It would also reply: ‘Ask consciousness.’ The two are neither to be reckoned as two nor are they one and the same. There is a delusion involved. That is why we pointed out that what is called ‘*nāma-rūpa*’ is a formal name and a nominal form. It is only a perception of form. But it is in name-and-form that consciousness finds an object. It is here that a world is created. All that happens within the darkness of ignorance. In that darkness of ignorance a preparation goes on. It is that preparation that in the Dhamma is called ‘*kāyasaṅkhāro*’ (body preparation), ‘*vacīsaṅkhāro*’ (speech preparation) and ‘*cittasaṅkhāro*’ (thought preparation). So much so, as we mentioned on an earlier occasion, in order to escape from the round of existence all those three preparations have to be stilled. Breathing in and breathing out are reckoned as the body preparation (‘*kāyasaṅkhāro*’), thinking and pondering are the speech preparation (‘*vacīsaṅkhāro*’) and perception and feeling are the thought preparation (‘*cittasaṅkhāro*’). These constitute the infra-structure of existence. That is why the yogins in the past stilled those preparations. *Nibbāna* is called ‘*sabba saṅkhāra samata*’ – the stilling of all preparations. When all preparations are stilled, that is the end of the whole story. But these are not stilled automatically. It is when the light of wisdom dawns that

they are stilled. That is what we call ‘*anidassana viññāṇa*’ – non-manifestative consciousness. Consciousness ceases, name-and-form ceases. In various ways we described it. Whether you call it ‘*saḷāyatana nirodha*’ (cessation of the six sense-spheres), ‘*viññāṇa nirodha*’ (cessation of consciousness) or ‘*nāma-rūpa nirodha*’ (cessation of name-and-form) it is the same. It shows that the Buddha solved this problem in the present itself. This is a wonderful Dhamma- a marvellous Dhamma.

Though we say so, you might wonder why all these facts have not come to light all this time. Neither the commentators, nor the Western scholars could understand such deep *suttas* like *Mūlapariyāya*, *Madhupiṇḍika*, *Mahā Nidāna* and *Mahāpadāna*. They were relegated to the limbo as abstruse discourses. What is the reason? There must be some reason. What is it? This is the reason, dear listeners. In the history of this dispensation an unfortunate thing had happened at some stage or other. Those extremely deep discourses were branded as ‘*vohāra desanā*’ (conventional sermons) and pushed into obscurity. In their place, other things came to be upheld as deep. The Buddha must have foreseen this predicament for he had made a prophesy that in future such monks would get the upper hand.¹⁶

“*Ye te Suttantā tathāgatabhāsītā gambhīrā gambhīratthā lokuttarā suññatāpaṭisamyuttā tesu bhaññamānesu na sussū-sissanti na sotam odahissanti na aññācittam upaṭṭhapessanti na te uggahetabbaṃ pariyāpuṇitabbaṃ maññissanti.*”

“Whatever discourses that are preached by the *Tathāgata* that are deep and profound in meaning, transcendental and dealing with voidness, when those discourses are being spoken about, they would not listen to them, they would not lend ear to them, they would not make up their minds to understand them. They would not think it worthwhile learning and mastering them.”

This is precisely what came to pass. At present ‘*vohāra desanā*’ or the so called ‘conventional teachings’ are supposed to have been addressed to simple people like us. You know, there were instances when such discourses like *Bāhiya Sutta*¹⁷ helped the listeners to attain Fruits of the Path or even Arahant hood. But unfortunately for some reason or other those sermons were branded as conventional teachings and relegated to the background. That is the reason for all this confusion.

At present what is called *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is a formula to be by-hearted and recited up and down. It has no other significance. But it is with this formula that the Buddha not only solved the entire Saṃsāric puzzle but presented through it a wonderful principle that lays bare the structure of the Realms of Form and Formless Realms as well as that of the miniature worlds found within this sensuous realm – as we highlighted above. This fact has been ignored all this time. It is because of this ignorance that they went on taking liberties with the two words ‘*hetu*’ and ‘*paccaya*’. We can’t change the Buddha word. If the Buddha has used the couple of words synonymously we have to accept it as it is. Playing with these two words had gone so far that concepts totally foreign to the spirit of the Dhamma came to be tagged on with the passage of time. That is why they went to the extent of bringing in like Brahmins, such concepts as ‘one’s own doing’ and ‘another’s doing’ or interpreting ‘*hetu*’ as intrinsic nature (*sabhāvo*) and ‘*paccaya*’ as extrinsic nature (*parabhāvo*). This confusion is not of recent origin. It has gone on for quite a long time. Our ideas may appear as revolutionary. But I cannot help pointing this out. The truth must come to light even in the face of criticism.

So then, dear listeners, in regard to the Law of Dependent Arising you should pay special attention to what we have said about ‘*Saṃsāra-vaṭṭa*’ (the vortex of *Saṃsāra*) and ‘*aññamaññapaccayatā*’ (the mutual inter-dependence) and the inter-connection between consciousness and name-and-form. The

term *viññāṇa* itself is suggestive of two things. ‘*Vijānāti*’ means discriminating as two things. It is due to that very discrimination that name-and-form becomes the object of consciousness. That happens in the darkness of ignorance which makes one grasp at the shadow. Name-and-form is only a shadow or a reflection. That is where the story of the deer and the mirage comes in. It leads to an imprisonment between two things. “Eye is here, form is over there”. The deer is unaware of the fact that with each step it is taking it is taking its eye along with it. Therefore it has posited two ends or driven two pegs for itself. The whole world has got caught between these two pegs and created a dichotomy to rest on (‘*dvayanissita*’). The Buddha gave a solution to this problem by giving up both extremes not by putting them together nor by compromising with them, but by avoiding both. The solution he gave is the twelve-linked formula of Dependent Arising.

By this solution the Buddha, for one thing, solved the Saṃsāric puzzle. Why did the commentator bring in the question of past lives and future lives into the interpretation of this formula? They could not appreciate the fact that if you understand the present life in *Saṃsāra* correctly the past and the future are already understood. Just ponder over this, dear listeners. Must you go on removing the sheaves of a plantain trunk to ascertain whether the tree has a pith? If you take a sharp sword and cut the trunk in two in the middle, can you not see from the cross-section that it is pithless? That is why a stream-runner (*Sotāpanna*) is said to have seen *Nibbāna*. We have explained earlier that he is said to have seen *Nibbāna* because for a split second he has seen in a flash, the cessation of preparations in the light of wisdom. In one of our *Nibbāna* sermons, we have compared it to the legendary Herculean feat of the soldier Nīla in parting the sea water with a giant iron bar. If the *Sotāpanna* has had that flash of insight, he has discovered the secret of *Saṃsāra* to that extent. Of course all fetters to existence are not broken by that initial insight. That realization is gradual but it is because of

this insight into the truth that he is irreversibly inclined to *Nibbāna*. He has thereby won the assurance of *Nibbāna*. He has had a glimpse of the true state of affairs which is none other than the Law of Dependent Arising. ‘This being – this comes to be’.

Nowadays when speaking about that attainment there are many who go on asserting: “We keep our precepts unbroken. We are already ‘*sotāpanna*’.” That is not the criterion. One has to see the norm of the Dhamma couched in the phrase: ‘*Yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ – sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*’ – ‘whatever is of a nature to arise – all that is of a nature to cease.’ Through that insight one has seen the norm of arising and ceasing. He has for a moment experienced the cessation of consciousness. Consciousness is what one grasps at last. By seeing its cessation he has understood the nature of arising and ceasing of the entire Five Aggregates. It is by that insight into the truth that he is inclined to *Nibbāna*. He is irreversible. By that much alone a stream-winner is great. Of course he has to proceed further. The Buddha has pointed out that it is when one directs radical attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) that there is, this breakthrough.

I have now said enough about *Nibbāna*. About this series of sermons I have to say something more. I have shown that there has been some historical evolution in the interpretation of the Law of Dependent Arising. These sermons might give rise to all sorts of criticism. So I would like to mention that there is a history for this little series of sermons too. Though it is something personal, let me tell you about it. About 20 years ago, when I was at Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya, my revered teacher, the Most Venerable Mātara Srī Ñāṇārāma Mahāthera, once when I saw him in his ‘*kuṭi*’ invited me to deliver a series of sermons on *Nibbāna* to the meditative Sangha there as they had some problems in understanding it. He even said that the sermons should be taped. But my first response, with a simile, was that if I came out with what I have to say, I would be the target of heavy

criticism. But the next day he encouraged me with a wonderful guarantee. “You had better mention in the sermon itself that I invited you to give these sermons.” It is because of that guarantee that you had the opportunity to listen to the series of sermons on *Nibbāna* and read the ‘*Nivane Niveema*’ volumes (i.e., ‘*Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled*’ series in 7 volumes). If not for that these things would have continued to remain concealed under the sands of time. I came to know that those who had a myopic eye for the *Nibbāna* series twenty years ago, are now showing a deep interest in it.

In the meantime, some suggested to me the feasibility of writing a book on Dependent Arising. But instead of writing a book, I thought it easier to deliver a series of sermons to you all because you have already listened to more than a hundred of my sermons. I had the confidence that you would not get up and go complaining that the sermons are too deep. That is why I started this series of sermons. But one thing, dear listeners, a preacher’s mode of presentation adapts itself to the level of understanding of the audience. Twenty years ago, I addressed those *Nibbāna* sermons to the meditative Saṅgha of Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya. Some of the similes I gave in those sermons are now well known in the country. But in these sermons addressed to a village audience I gave similes direct from village-life – even rustic ones. I suppose it does not detract our respect for the Dhamma. Please try your best to understand this deep Dhamma through them. It is because of the depth of this Dhamma that the Buddha hesitated to preach it at first – that Brahmā Sahampati had to bend his knees to propitiate and invite him to preach.

We have already mentioned on an earlier occasion that there are two things in this Dhamma that are considered exceptionally deep. As it is said in *suttas* like *Ariyapariyesana*,¹⁸ “*Duddasaṃ idaṃ t̥hānaṃ yadidaṃ idappaccayatā paṭicca-samuppādo*”. “This is something difficult to see, namely the specific conditionality – the Dependent Arising.” It is not easy for

the worldlings immersed in defilements to see the Law of Dependent Arising. So also the cessation (*nirodha*) which is *Nibbāna*. That too is difficult for the world to see. It comes with the cessation of preparations. Instead of that, the worldlings are steeped in the craving for existence or becoming (*bhavataṇhā*), all speculative views come ancillary to it. This dispensation is threefold as Precept, Practice and Penetration (*pariyatti, paṭipatti, paṭivedha*). Out of these the first to suffer from neglect was Penetration. Then Practice too gradually went down. In the end only Precept remained. So the intellectuals came to the forefront. From there onwards, it was the age of commentaries, treatises and compendia. It happened not only in our Theravāda tradition, but in other sects as well. It is said that eighteen sects sprang up even before the lapse of a hundred years from the Buddha's passing away. Not only that. Each sect had its scriptural heritage – cartloads of books. It was rarely that one with discernment took the trouble to make sense out of them.

Therefore you must not rest satisfied merely with listening to these sermons but make an effort to understand them. Don't be discouraged thinking: 'We are worldlings without that wisdom to understand such things.' The Buddha has pointed out the seed of wisdom – that is, 'radical attention' (*yoniso manasikāra*). We all have that in us to some extent or other. I have shown it by the 'simile of the five-fingers'. I shall repeat it for the benefit of the new comers. Up to now they explained the constituents of 'nāma' in *nāma-rūpa* differently giving first place to 'phassa' or contact. I gave the simile of the five-fingers – feeling (*vedanā*) the little finger, perception (*saññā*) the ring finger, intention (*cetanā*) the middle finger, contact (*phassa*) the index-finger and attention (*manasikāra*) the thumb. Out of these taking 'attention' as the thumb we pointed out with the help of a simile of a case of murder or theft how a judge gives crown pardon to an alleged culprit when there are no witnesses and gets the whole mystery out through him. The Buddha had to do a similar thing because

this Saṃsāric problem is so difficult to solve since consciousness is a magician's trick.

That is why the Buddha gave 'attention' out of the five constituents of name (*nāma*) free pardon and made him the crown witness. But he was made to give an oath of speaking the truth as if warning him. "You are the guy in the guise of '*ayoniso-manasikāra*' (non-radical attention) who committed this Saṃsāric crime with the other four guys plotting for the murder of all beings from beginningless times. At least now you had better be '*yoniso*' (radical)." That was the beginning. We have shown what happens when '*yoniso manasikāra*' reaches the climax of its development. It is with the help of this radical attention that one understands feeling as feeling. You should think why in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* there are the apparently awkward phrases like '*Kāye kāyānupassī*' (contemplating body in the body) and '*vedanāsu vedanānupassī*' (contemplating feeling in feeling). When one gives evidence under an oath one cannot help coming out with the truth – feeling as feeling, perception as perception, intention as intention. But one thing. In the end the culprit – the biggest culprit – is found guilty through his own confession. He is caught by his talk about the 'thing' – '*manasikāra sambhavā sabbe dhammā*'.¹⁹ All 'things' are found out by 'attention'. That is the deepest point. Mind finds out a thing by means of '*manasikāra*'. As we already mentioned, out of the five members on the '*nāma*' side namely, feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention – attention is the 'thumb'. It is the 'thumb' with the complicity of the other four fingers is carrying on this 'gang-murder'. He has the closest connection with contact (the index-finger). We have identified the five fingers. Of course this is not a part of the Buddha's teaching. I gave this simile only for clarification of issues involved.

So then take it that we all have the ability to arouse '*yoniso-manasikāra*'. Get it awakened. It is then that there is the dispelling of the four perversions (*vipallāsā*). In place of the four

perceptions so far pursued, namely the perception of permanence (*niccasaññā*), the perception of the pleasant (*sukhasaññā*), the perception of beauty (*subhasaññā*) and the perception of self (*attasaññā*), one begins to develop the perception of impermanence (*aniccasaññā*), the perception of suffering (*dukkhasaññā*), the perception of repulsiveness (*asubhasaññā*) and the perception of not-self (*anattasaññā*) according to the method of contemplation taught by the Buddha. That is the great revolution in one's way of attention. Then the world one sees is far different from the above mentioned worlds. This is a Dhamma that penetrates through the world. Gradually, the perception of the compact (*ghanasaññā*), which made one posit two ends, gets liquidated through the contemplation of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*). What happens with that liquidation? The perception of the heap (*rāsisaññā*) emerges. One begins to see a thing as a heap. Thereby the contemplation of impermanence goes deeper. One sees the flux of arising and ceasing. It culminates in disenchantment or disgust (*nibbidā*). In this Dhamma '*nibbidā*' is the key to *Nibbāna*. There is such a norm of Dhamma in this teaching. Supramundane Paths and Fruits cannot be realized through by-hearting the Dhamma or by getting certificates. You have to get down into the practice proper. It is to those who had practiced deeply in this Dhamma in past births like Bāhiya, that the Buddha preached very brief sermons like 'In the seen – just the seen.' It may not apply to everybody. You have to start from the 'nursery' itself. That is why virtue, concentration and wisdom have to be developed. Backed by them gradually one comes to realize those Supramundane attainments. It may be a miserable leper like Suppabuddha.²⁰ If he came to the Buddha with the correct Sāmsāric maturity, he could realize immediately on hearing the Buddha's sermon that norm of the Dhamma enshrined in the dictum: '*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ – sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*' – 'whatever is of a nature to arise – all that is of a nature to cease.' It is the insight based on the

Five Aggregates of Grasping which in effect is the insight into the Law of Dependent Arising.

The Buddha has proclaimed this regarding the Law of Dependent Arising.

“*Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ*
ṭhitā va sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā
idappaccayatā.”²¹

“Whether there be an arising of the *Tathāgatas* or whether there be no arising of *Tathāgatas*, that elementary nature, that orderliness of the Dhamma, that norm of the Dhamma, the specific conditionality does stand as it is.”

About this Law of Dependent Arising, the Buddha has used such words of affirmation like ‘*tathatā avitathatā, anaññathatā, idappaccayatā*’ – ‘That suchness therein, the invariability, the not-otherwiseness, the specific conditionality.’ When one sees this norm as a fact of realization – instead of saying ‘impermanent – impermanent’ – one begins to see the flux of arising and passing away. This is the path outlined in this Dhamma. Therefore this series of sermons is not meant for the scholar to pass exams and get degrees. Think of the purpose of these sermons – their practical aspect.

But what has been happening all this time? A basket was simply handed down without examining what is in it. “Our teacher has said this. We must not go beyond it. Our commentators have explained like this. We must not think beyond their explanations.” A vast delusion has gone on for a long, long period getting hold of the brains – lay – and monk – alike. Ignoring those extremely profound discourses, they ran after other things (I won’t say what they are). But the truth is here. Worldlings do not see it. We had to say in our *Nibbāna* sermons too, that a path of Dhamma overgrown for a number of centuries, had to be cleared up. On this occasion too it has to be

reiterated. We showed the inter-relation between name-and-form and consciousness in both aspects of arising and ceasing. The world is always on the ‘*samudaya*’ side (arising side). ‘Though there is nightfall today, there is a dawn tomorrow.’ That is their way of thinking. They do not like even to think of ‘*nirodha*’ (cessation). That is why we gave various similes. The seamstress craving stitches up those two ends, but it is when one sees the middle that there is a release. Now that we have mentioned about those two ends, let us hark back to that wonderful verse preached by the Buddha:

*‘Yo ubhante viditvāna
majjhe mantā na lippati
taṃ brūmi mahāpurisoti
sodha sibbanimaccagā’*²²

‘He who, having understood both ends, does not get attached to the middle with wisdom, him I call a great man. He has gone beyond the seamstress here.’

Six interpretations were given for this verse. But out of them, let me now mention a few. Pleasant feeling is one end. Painful feeling is the other end. The middle is neither painful nor pleasant feeling – which is the middle that no one is interested in. the six internal sense-spheres is one end. The six external sense-spheres is the second end. Consciousness is the middle. It is due to the magic trick of consciousness that those two ends are separated. Then again, ‘name’ is one end and ‘form’ is the other end. It is through ignorance of the fact that consciousness is in the middle that many scholars go on explaining ‘name’ and ‘form’ like materialistic scientists. The term ‘*rūpa*’ is interpreted as in physics. But we have pointed out that what we have here is only a ‘perception of form’ (*rūpasaññā*). It is with the help of the constituents of the name group that form is recognized. That is the basics for any consciousness. ‘*Rūpa*’ cannot be understood by such materialistic analysis. You can’t change this Dhamma into

an atomistic study. One has to see what actually is here. How can one see it? Certainly not through instruments. One can do it only through radical-attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). It is for that virtue, concentration and wisdom are required. This is what we presented through our sermons.

Therefore you should not think that these are too abstruse for us. Some are even scared of the term ‘*Paṭicca Samuppāda*’. They would say: ‘That is something even the author of *Visuddhimagga* could not understand. So how can we do it?’ That seems to be the general attitude. But the truth is here in the discourses which they underestimate as too simple conventional teachings (*vohāra desanā*). It is in such under-rated discourses like *Mahā Nidāna* and *Mahāpadāna* that the true explanation of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is found. One has to intuit into the meaning without getting involved in words. Of course all these are worldly conventions. There are the path ways of synonyms and terminology. Every vortex revolves round with the synonyms and terminology proper to it. Think for instance about the cricket world. As you know, it has its own ways of synonyms and terminology. It is within that environment that the cricket craze goes on. That is what gives rise to an ‘*itthatta*’ or a level of existence. Birth, decay and death go with it. Regarding that too there is a very wonderful discourse which we have already discussed. Let me now mention it in brief.

“*Kāye vā bhikkhave sati, kāyasañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ suhadukkhāṃ. Vācāya vā bhikkhave sati, vacīsañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ suhadukkhāṃ. Mane vā bhikkhave sati, manosañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ suhadukkhāṃ avijjāpaccayā va.*”²³

To put it simply – “When one has taken for granted that there is a body, due to intentions about the body there arise inward pleasure and pain. When one takes for granted that there is speech, due to verbal intentions there arise inward pleasure and

pain. When one takes for granted that there is a mind, due to mental intentions there arise inward pleasure and pain. Finally it is said: ‘*avijjā paccayā va*’ – all conditioned by ignorance.” But then it goes on to say: ‘*avijjāyatveva asesā virāgaṇirodhā so kāyo na hoti yaṃ paccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ sā vācā na hoti yaṃ paccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ so mano na hoti yaṃ paccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ.*’

‘But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance, that body is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain. That speech is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain. That mind is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain.’ Then it is said in affirmation: “*Khattaṃ taṃ na hoti, vatthuṃ taṃ na hoti, āyatanā taṃ na hoti, adhikaraṇā taṃ na hoti yampaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ.*”

“That field is not there, that site is not there, that base is not there, that reason is not there, owing to which there can arise for him that inward pleasure and pain.” That field, that site, that base, that reason which sustained all those are not there once ignorance ceases. That is what we tried to point out in various ways.

Well, everything comes to an end. When I started this series of sermons, I expressed my misgivings – as I did in the case of *Nibbāna* sermons – whether I would live long enough to complete the series. However, I survived the series. So I would like to wind up with a transference of merit. Whatever merit that accrued by my efforts to clean up a path of Dhamma overgrown for centuries, may it be rejoiced over by my departed parents who brought me up, teachers who gave me the vision of knowledge, and lay-supporters who helped keep his frail body alive. Whatever beings there be, from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world, may they too rejoice over that merit! May it

conduce to their attainment of Deathless *Nibbāna*! In this series of sermons I made use of various sections of the discourses. So let this floral garland of sermons woven out of the well-preached Dhamma flowers culled from the garden of profound discourses be a humble offering at the foot of the Dhamma shrine which received honour and worship from the Buddha himself!



1. Sn. 209 Hemaka Sutta
2. Vism. 436 (S.H.B. Sinh. script)
3. D. II 63 Mahā Nidāna Sutta
4. S. II 114 Naḷakaḷāpa Sutta
5. M. I 55 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta
6. S. IV 67 Dvaya Sutta
7. S. II 23 Bālapaṇḍita Sutta
8. M. III 15 Mahā Puṇṇama Sutta
9. Netti. 114 (B.J.T.S. 39 Sinh. script)
10. S. I 134 Selā Sutta
11. Paṭ. 1.1 (B.J.T.S. 50 Sinh. script)
12. Paṭis. 1-96 (B.J.T.S. 35 Sinh. script)
13. S. II 25 Paccaya Sutta
14. S. II 19 Acela Kassapa Sutta
15. S. II 16 Kaccānagotta Sutta
16. S. II 266 Āṇi Sutta
17. Ud. 6. Bāhiya Sutta
18. M. I 167 Ariyapariyesana Sutta
19. A. V 106 Kiṃmūlaka Sutta
20. Ud. 48. Suppabuddhakuṭṭhi Sutta
21. S. II 25 Paccaya Sutta
22. S. III 399 Majjhe Sutta
23. A. II 157 Sancetanā Sutta

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 11. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume II
 12. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume III
 13. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume IV
 14. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume V
 15. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume VI
 16. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Volume VII
 17. Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled, Library Edition
 18. Nibbāna and The Fire Simile
 19. A Majestic Tree of Merit
 20. The End of the World in Buddhist Perspective
 21. The Law of Dependent Arising, Volume I
 22. The Law of Dependent Arising, Volume II
 23. Walk to Nibbāna
 24. Deliverance of the Heart through Universal Love
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කතු හිමියන්ගේ සිංහල කෘති

සැ.යූ.: මෙම කෘති ලේඛනය සරලඥයට මුල්තැන දුන් අංක අනුපිළිවෙලක් සහිතව සකස්වී ඇති බවත්, ලේඛනයේ අගභරියේ එන කෘති බොහෝ දුරට ගැඹුරු විය හැකි බවත්, පාඨකයින් දැනුවත් කිරීම් වශයෙන් සඳහන් කරනු කැමැත්තෙමි.

- සම්පාදක

1. තිසරණ මහිම
2. හිතක මහිම - 1
3. හිතක මහිම - 2
4. හිතක මහිම - 3
5. දිවි කතරේ සැඳෑ අදුර
6. කය අනුව ගිය සිහිය
7. හිත තැනීම
8. පින් රුකෙක මහිම
9. අබ්නික්මන
10. පිළිවෙතින් පිළිවෙතට
11. කයේ කතාව
12. මා-පිය උවැටන
13. ප්‍රතිපත්ති පූජාව
14. පැවැත්ම හා නැවැත්ම
15. කමී වක්‍රයෙන් ධර්මී වක්‍රයට
16. මෙත් සිතේ විමුක්තිය
17. ඇති හැටි දැක්ම
18. තපෝ ගුණ මහිම
19. සක්මනේ නිවන
20. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 1 වෙළුම
21. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 2 වෙළුම
22. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 3 වෙළුම
23. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 4 වෙළුම
24. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 5 වෙළුම
25. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 6 වෙළුම
26. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 7 වෙළුම
27. පහන් කණුව ධර්මී දේශනා - 8 වෙළුම

28. පහත් කණුව ධර්ම දේශනා - 9 වෙළුම
 29. විදසුන් උපදෙස්
 30. භාවනා මාර්ගය
 31. උත්තරීතර හුදකලාව
 32. සසුන් පිළිවෙත
 33. වලන විත්‍රය
 34. දිය සුළිය
 35. බුදු සමය පුද්ගලයා හා සමාජය
 36. නිවනේ නිවීම - වෙළුම පළමු
 37. නිවනේ නිවීම - දෙවන වෙළුම
 38. නිවනේ නිවීම - තෙවන වෙළුම
 39. නිවනේ නිවීම - සිවුවන වෙළුම
 40. නිවනේ නිවීම - පස්වන වෙළුම
 41. නිවනේ නිවීම - සයවන වෙළුම
 42. නිවනේ නිවීම - සත්වන වෙළුම
 43. නිවනේ නිවීම - අටවන වෙළුම
 44. නිවනේ නිවීම - නවවන වෙළුම
 45. නිවනේ නිවීම - දසවන වෙළුම
 46. නිවනේ නිවීම - එකොළොස්වන වෙළුම
 47. නිවනේ නිවීම - පුස්තකාල මුද්‍රණය (1-11 වෙළුම්)
 48. පටිච්ච සමුප්පාද ධර්මය - 1 වෙළුම
 49. පටිච්ච සමුප්පාද ධර්මය - 2 වෙළුම
 50. පටිච්ච සමුප්පාද ධර්මය - 3 වෙළුම
 51. පටිච්ච සමුප්පාද ධර්මය - 4 වෙළුම
 52. මනසේ මායාව
 53. පැරණි බෞද්ධ චින්තාවේ සංකල්පය සහ යථාර්ථය
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කටුකුරුන්දේ ඤාණනන්ද සඳහම් සෙනසුන
කිරිල්ලවලවත්ත, දම්මුල්ල, කරඳන

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