

BASIC PATICCASAMUPPÂDA

ÑÂTAPARINÑÂ STAGE

**A Discourse on
Causes and Effects**

delivered by

**Ashin Sumana,
the Presiding Sayadaw
of Sagaing Siri Sumana Gyaung**

translated into English by

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This translation is dedicated to the translator's parents--
both blood and foster--and his teachers of English language
in general and U Maung Maung in particular
whose teaching has made this possible.

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*Namotassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammâsambuddassa**

Translator's Note

This booklet has come into being in sheer reverence of the Buddha's Teaching as well as the teacher who has managed to convey the original Teaching in Pali as taught by the Buddha in understandable Myanmar language. The teacher himself has been a student of Venerable Mogok Sayadaw Baddanta Vimala and is a very able instructor in reproducing the same instructions he received from the Sayadaw for the benefit of ordinary laymen. The teacher is also one of the very few and very rare group of monks who abide strictly by all the rules laid down by the Buddha Himself. As far as my knowledge about this teacher is concerned, he would never hesitate even to be rude to point out to anybody who would consciously or unconsciously become instrumental in obligating him to breaking even one of these rules. Consequently he is respected not only by laymen like us but by members of the Buddhist Order who have come into contact with him. The Buddha once said that the breach of *vinaya*, the rules, would be the cause for disappearance of His Teachings. The teacher is one who is trying very hard to live by the Buddha's Rules so that His Teachings will perpetuate. He is also the one who would say nothing but what the Buddha wanted all living beings to hear i.e. the Doctrine on the Four Truths.

This book will give you the message the Buddha wanted to deliver to all living beings i.e. the way to get out of suffering they have

* *Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One.*

always been submerged in and be elevated to a higher stage that will get them to their goal which is *nirbâna* where all suffering ends. *Patīccasamuppâda* is the doctrine that tells you of the causes and effects of what is happening in this mundane world from the time immemorial. I said “immemorial” because the beginning of *samsarâ* is not supposed to be known by anyone and the Buddha Himself never encouraged anyone to contemplate on it. Through the study of *patīccasamuppâda*, you will find that nothing is permanent in this world. When you know that what you think or regard as permanent is not permanent, you will eventually try to find the way out of this impermanent world. If you do that, we have accomplished what we aim to do.

Before I give a brief explanation on the subject matter, it is appropriate here to elucidate the rationale in the creative process of the cover design. The ocean or the sea seen there represents the unending process in various forms of life as conceived by all Buddhists or what is widely accepted as *samsarâ*, the cycle of rebirths and inevitable deaths. It symbolizes the deepness, seriousness, calmness, roughness of all life cycles. The sailboat is the human life itself. To get to the goal where we are to find the end of all forms of suffering experienced in our life cycles, we must know how to steer the helm, which direction we have to head our boat into, which sails we have to get aloft in exact harmony with the type of wind blowing at any moment, and when to use or lower the sails. If we let the boat float and move on its own in the direction the wind blows without the correct knowledge and necessary expertise as mentioned above, we could be drifting along on the ocean's surface and might not get to any land at all or might get grounded on some beach where we do not want to. The clouds and reflections on the ocean surface represent what we call *moha*, the lack of correct knowledge and

the hallucinating force which could impede us from seeing the right direction to our goal. The horizon is the limitation imposed by *moha* beyond which no layman would see without meditational training. The goal is not shown there because it is something you know only when you reach it.

Although I do not pretend to be an expert who is fully capable of delivering the message that the Buddha wanted all beings to know, I have tried my best to do that by translating the original text as exactly as it has been explained by the teacher. However, in some chapters I have left out repetitions that might bore the readers. At the same time, nothing is left out which is important for the readers to know about this Doctrine of Dependent Origination or the Doctrine on Causes and Effects. Please allow me, however, to summarise the whole book in this note of mine.

According to the Buddha's Teaching and to what is experienced by every living being, life is suffering, agedness is suffering, pain or sickness is suffering and death is suffering. However, when you are attacked every moment by external sensations most of which appear to be pleasant to the receiving organs of a layman, you do not tend to regard them as suffering. If it were not for this delusion or in Pali, *moha*, everybody would have fought tooth and nail to get out of this life of suffering. When you know that from the moment of birth, which is the beginning of one's life, through the last breath, you have to struggle your best to keep on living, you will accept that life itself is nothing but suffering. This knowledge is never available to laymen whose eyesight would not go beyond what *moha* or *avijjâ* wants them to see. The discussions that follow will tell them that *avijjâ*, the lack of knowledge of the real truth or what should be called delusion, is the main culprit

instrumental in causing all beings to perform deeds that would prolong the suffering they have to live with all their lives.

When all occurrences are dissected into minute portions, you will find that life is series of arising and perishing or subsiding of whatever takes place at each moment. The fact that whatever comes into being perishes just after its appearance is so clear when you go into meditational practice, you will certainly feel aversion to the body and mind generally accepted and known as you and which is full of suffering all the time and will find a way to the end of this continuous and persistent state of suffering. No layman wants to go into meditational practice because he is not convinced of suffering he has to undergo throughout his life. Although every occurrence is the result of *kamma* i.e. what he did before and in present life, one tends to think that it is “he” or “self” that is originating this occurrence. You can get rid of this delusion through study of *paticcasamuppâda*. It will help you be free of not only delusion but your doubt on the fact that life is suffering and will help get you onto the path leading towards the extinction of all forms of suffering.

The meditational practice, as explained in subsequent chapters, is nothing but your attempt through mental concentration to find in your body the truth of life as seen by the Buddha Himself. Please imagine that you are scrutinizing your body (*although it is singular, it is a combination of physical and mental aspects of a living being*) under a microscope with so huge a magnifying power that you would see every minutest portion of that body. You will see that everything disappears right after the moment of its arising. The moment here also means so small an element of time that it would be mind-boggling to even consider it. When your mental concentration is deep and stable, the

power of scrutiny very strong, the arising and perishing of both physical and mental aspects of your being will become very clear as mentioned above. Then what follows is inevitable. You will find that you no longer have delusion over suffering and the wish to escape that situation will also become very strong. What I can assure the readers is that once you have started and clung to this practice, there is nothing whatsoever in your path to find the truth because although I do not claim to be a person who has attained any level of enlightenment I am a devout student, a staunch believer and an avid practitioner of the practice.

To conclude this note of mine, I must tell the readers that if there is anything that is not understandable or confusing in this translation, it is only I who will have to take the blame because not even one word of the Buddha's Teachings is anything near incorrectness or confusion especially *paticcasamuppâda* which is above criticism and dispute. The teacher's explanation in Myanmar also is very clear and understandable.

As this is the first attempt to deliver the teacher's sermon to the interested foreigners in English, their valued comments are invited on this edition so that the next one could be better than this. The queries and comments are to be addressed to the following:

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As far as the translator and the instructor of this discourse are

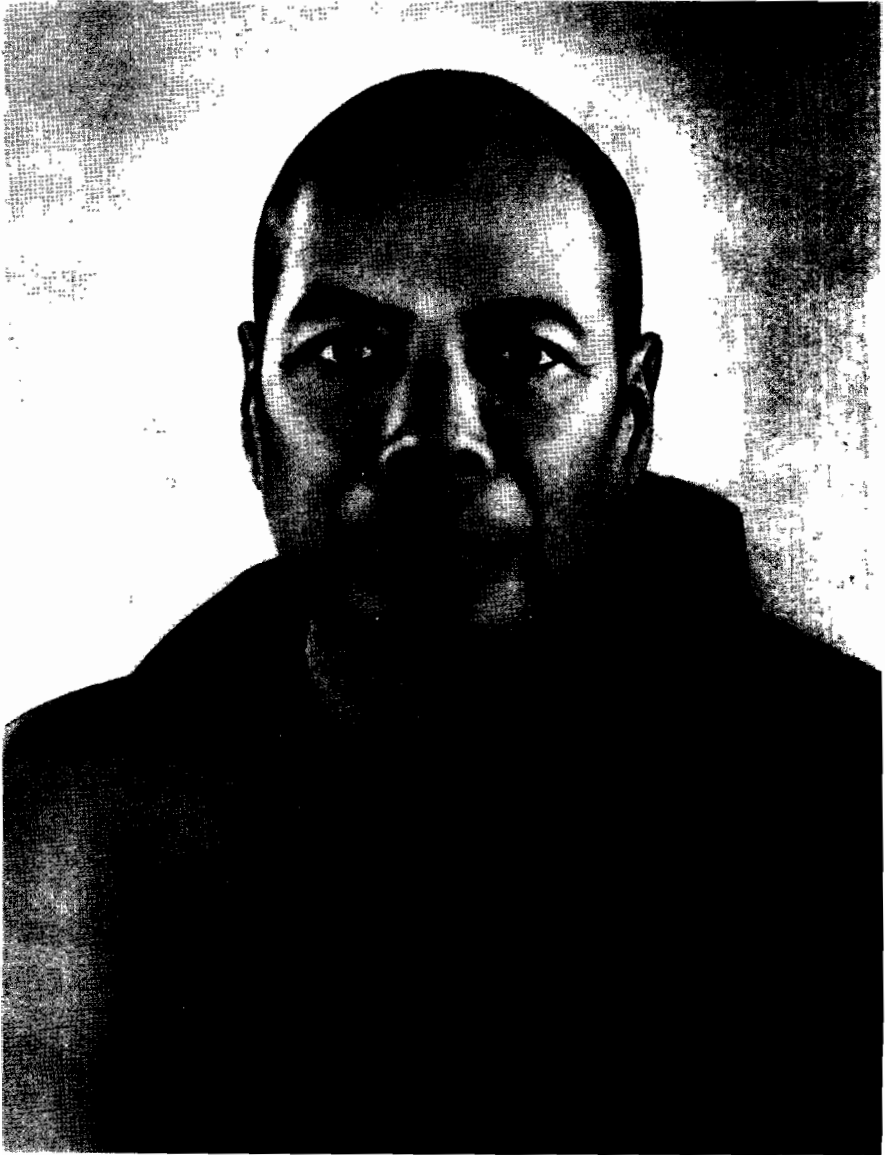
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Acknowledgement is due here to U Kyaw Myint, a director from Motion Picture Enterprise, his family and the regular group who have been going through a weekly meditational practice for more than a year with me for their support in my work; to Professor Daw Hla Myint of Management Studies Department, Institute of Economics, Yangon, for her accurate proof reading; to my family and all others whose encouragement pushed me through many obstacles until I reached the finish line; to Tun Zaw Myint, my son in Singapore, for his complimentary graphic design of this book's cover and Zaw Htoo Aung for his design work of the *padiccasamuppâda* cycle produced at half the cost; and the last but not the least, to the officials from the Press Scrutiny & Registration Division for their invaluable assistance in obtaining permission to print this book.

Buddha Sâsanān Cīran Tittāhtu !
May the Buddha's Teachings perpetuate !

Translator

Note: *The translation of the original Myanmar language text into English was completed on the 25th day of December, 1996; and the transfer of text into the computer finished on the 25th day of July, 1997.*



Venerable Mogok Sayadaw Baddanta Vimala



Instructor Ashin Sumana

PREAMBLE

After being born a human being and for that matter to a religious Buddhist family, after having been in proximity with the Teachings of the Buddha who had passed through infinite aeons[#] devoting Himself to no other objective than becoming a Buddha for acquiring all comprehensive knowledge known as *sabinñutañâna*, after having the opportunity to hear the *paticcasamuppâda* (a doctrine on endless cycle of causes and effects leading towards *nirbâna*, a state of being free from all forms of suffering prevailing in mundane world), the fate that has put a person in such a position where he can practise *vipassanâ*, transcendental meditation that would lead him to *nirbanâ*, is definitely not an ordinary, commonplace occurrence.

Engagement in charity or observance of Buddhist disciplines or practice of meditation for the sake of mental power alone (*samahta*) can be performed any time whether there is the Buddha's Teaching or not. After having been a Buddhist, a person should not therefore be satisfied with having an opportunity to engage in charity alone or to observe Buddhist disciplines alone or to practise *samahta* alone. Any fully knowledgeable Buddhist would certainly accept the above statement without any reservation.

What fate has delivered within our reach, which is the rarest opportunity to practise *vipassanâ*, should definitely be regarded as something akin to receiving a priceless gem without having to pay for it. Only if we take advantage of this opportunity to practise *vipassanâ*, some-

Note: According to some scholars, one aeon is more than (10 to the power 17) years.

thing that we can do only at a time when the Teachings are in existence, we would become true believers living in exact accordance with the Buddha's wishes.

Out of many diverse methods, if you have chosen Mogok Sayadaw's instruction as a base for your *vipassanā* training, you must at least know what it boils down to in as few sentences as possible. According to the Mogok Sayadaw's instruction, you do not have to go straight into meditation training. There are three stages known as *parinñā* in getting to your goal if you are going to take the path shown by the Sayadaw.

The first is known as *ñātaparinñā* and it is nothing but learning and trying to understand what *paticcasamuppāda* is. Only when you are completely sure that you know the ins and outs of this *dhamma*, you go into the second stage of *tiranaparinñā*, the actual training of meditation. When you have penetrated deep into this training with unrelenting persistence, it is an automatic process that you pass through the advanced final line of enlightenment and enter the third stage of *pahānaparinñā*, getting to your goal.

It is appropriate here to say that the first step *ñātaparinñā* is really important. Why? It is because without this preliminary knowledge, the mental process of a student during the second stage of training period tends to veer off to wrong conclusions. Boiled down to essential specifics, there are only five *khandā* (mental and physical aggregates of humans) which can be further summarised into two main portions: *rūpa* (physical body) and *nāma* (mental process) for a *vipassanā* student to observe. If a student is not taught of *paticcasamuppāda*, the mental and physical processes taking place all the time in the human body will not be conceived as they are but as something brought about

by “self” or “I” which this training will get rid of so that at the end you will find the truth that you are seeking. *Sakkâyaditthi*, the leader of all the misconceptions, will always be preventing you from reaching the truth you seek if you conceive the mental and physical processes of a human body as those being created or caused by yourself. *Sakkâyaditthi*, regarding a human body as “self”, “you” or “I”, is always followed by two other misconceptions: *sassataditthi*, thinking that there is no end to life cycle, and *ucchedaditthi*, thinking that the present life is the one and only life you have to live through. If these two misconceptions are present, then *vicikicchâ*, being doubtful of the Teachings and the truth they convey, comes naturally into existence. It would then be like trying to cure a disease without taking away its root cause. Without getting rid of misconceptions blocking the path to the Truth, it would only be *dubbalavipassanâ*, a weak kind of mental training which will never deliver the trainee to his or her goal. That is why a student wanting to get to the Truth should cleanse himself or herself of *sakkâyaditthi* and *vicikicchâ* before entering the actual training sessions. That is the main unique feature of Aggamahapandita Mogok Sayadaw’s meditation instructions: Get rid of misconceptions through *ñâtaparinñâ* before practising *vipassanâ* in *tiranaparinñâ*.

Dispensing with the deep-rooted misconceptions cannot be easily done just by literary knowledge acquired through reading and hearing the Teachings. They will disappear only through first-hand knowledge received by meditation training. It follows then:

- * *Khandapatibbhasanâ* must be learnt from a book or from a teaching monk;
- * When *khandapatibbhasanâ* is understood through

first-hand practical knowledge, you will have both consciously and subconsciously dispensed with misconceptions and lingering doubt of the path and where it leads to, the Truth.

- * Only then, you can enter the actual *vipassanā* training.

It has therefore become obvious that a book that would explain correctly and in detail what a student has to learn during *ñātaparinñā* stage should be written without veering one little bit off the original instructions of the Venerable Sayadaw.

While such a necessity was noticed, the long-term disciples of the Venerable Sayadaw and trustees of the Sayadaw's museum approached me with a suggestion that I should try to bring about the much needed book on *ñātaparinñā*. I had at that time also been wanting to repay the debt owed to the Sayadaw for his instructions (a) by personal practice, (b) by teaching others the *dhamma* received from the Sayadaw and lastly (c) by writing what the Sayadaw had taught. That is how this booklet came into being.

A beginner who has never heard of the Mogok Sayadaw's instructions on *patikkasamuppāda* should take advantage of the attached schematic drawing to learn through each chapter of discussion. To make a student's learning a bit easier, the book has been arranged in order of the discussions usually given by the author in a formal session. Questions and answers are included in some places and the concluding chapter is made to carry the instructions required for practical training.

Acknowledgement of appreciation is due here to U Pyinñawbāsa

and children of the monastery who volunteered to copy by hand my manuscript draft; to Aggamahâ Ganhtavâcaka Pandita U Pandita Bivumsa of the State University of Buddhist Scriptures for his advice on my draft; to Sâsanadaja Siripawara Dhammacariya Ashin Vimala Buddhi, a writer and the librarian of Mahâgandâron Monastery of Amarapura who not only edited the manuscript but wrote an introduction also; and to Daw Myint Myint of 32nd Street and Daw Khin Pyone Yee of 29th Street both from Mandalay for their financial contribution.

May all practitioners be able to rid of their sufferings—both mental and physical—quickly!

Ashin Sumana

Note: *The meanings of Pali words have been over-simplified here for the benefit of a foreign student. However, they will become more and more clear as he goes through subsequent discussions.*

Translator

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammâsambuddhassa

BASIC PATICCASAMUPPÂDA

ÑÂTAPARINÑÂ STAGE

Discussion One

Beginning with the two origins, helped by two truths and twelve factors, in four strata, *paticcasamuppâda* begins turning the wheel of life in three links bringing about three consequences in three periods with eventual occurrences of twenty. Trying to understand and accepting the truth of *paticcasamuppâda* will deliver one to freedom from *samsarâ*.

In accordance with the Venerable Mogok Sayadaw's instruction, there are two points to be noted i.e. *paticcasamuppâda* is an evolutionary process of aggregates of being (*khandâ*); and *paticcasamuppâda*, *khandâ* and *samsarâ* (endless cycle of deaths and rebirths) are the same. And to start discussion on *paticcasamuppâda*, it would be necessary to explain the short note seen at the bottom of the schematic chart and in the box above.

What are the two origins? They are the source or originator of the aggregates of being (*khandâ*). If you look at the centre of the circle, there they are the two origins: *avijjâ* (ignorance of the Truth) and *tahnâ* (desire or craving). For the time being, let us just note that the two origins are *avijjâ* and *tahnâ*.

Let us see what two truths are. Although they are shown in all

four quadrants of the circle on the board, there are only two truths here: *samudaya* and *dukkha*.

In speaking of four strata, there are: a causal stratum of the past in quadrant (1); a consequential stratum of the present in quadrant (2); a causal stratum of the present in quadrant (3); and a consequential stratum of the future in quadrant (4). In other words, we can say that there are two causal strata and two consequential strata. To understand this part, look at the second circle from the centre. When we say a causal stratum of the present, we mean the effect resulting out of the action of the present period. We have to mention a causal stratum of the future because the consequence of the action which takes place in the present period becomes a cause for the future events.

Let us talk about the twelve factors now. There are in quadrant (1) *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* (changes taking place due to action of the person concerned); *viññâna* (consciousness of what is happening around oneself), *nâmma-rupa* (mental and physical aspects of human body), *salâyatana* (six organs of receptions), *phassa* (contact of *salâyatana* with what is happening outside the body), and *vedanâ* (accepting effect of the contact) in quadrant (2); *tahnâ*, *upâdana* (desire or craving that is so strong there is hardly anything that could deter it), *kammabhava* (action taken due to *upâdâna*) in quadrant (3); and *jâti* (birth or beginning of life) and *jarâ-marana* (old age and death) in quadrant (4). If we add up all these factors, you will find that there are twelve of them.

If you look at the circle again, the arrow that starts from the top goes straight down and divides the circle into two halves: the right containing seven of the factors—*avijjâ*, *sankhara*, *viññâna*, *nâmma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa*, and *vedanâ* with *avijjâ* as their leader; and the right

the remaining five—*tahnâ*, *upâdana*, *kammabhava*, *jâti* and *jarâ-marana* with *tahnâ* as their leader. You will find, when we have gone through the discussions to be followed, that these twelve factors are instrumental in turning the wheel of life or the cycle of deaths and rebirths or *paticcasamuppâda*.

We are now with the three links. The first link is between *sankhara* of the first quadrant and *vinñâna* of the second quadrant. The second link is between *vedanâ* of the second quadrant and *tahnâ* of the third quadrant. The third link is between *kammabhava* of the third quadrant and *jâti* of the fourth quadrant.

If we speak in terms of occurrences, there is a link between five causal occurrences of the past and five consequential occurrences of the present, a link between five causal occurrences of the present and five consequential occurrences of the present, and a link between five causal occurrences of the present and five consequential occurrences of the future.

If we speak in terms of strata, there is a link between the cause of the past and the consequence of the present, a link between the consequence of the present and the cause of the present, and a link between the cause of the present and the consequence of the future.

If we speak in terms of truths, there is a link between *samudaya* and *dukkha*, a link between *dukkha* and *samudaya*, and a link between *samudaya* and *dukkha*.

These links can be conceived in any form as far as the intellect and imagination of the person concerned goes. However, the most

essential links are that between *sankhâra* and *vinñâna*, that between *vedanâ* and *tahnâ*, and that between *kammabhava* and *jâti*.

Now we deal with three consequences (of previous deeds, good or evil). *kilesâ vutta* and *kamma vutta* would be seen in quadrant (1) and *vipâka vutta* in quadrant (4). *Kilesâ* means something that tires or depraves or causes misery or burns anybody who comes in touch with it. *Vutta* means a revolving circle or sphere.

Kilesâ vutta therefore means something that tires, depraves, causes misery in endless cycle to anybody in touch with it. If we look at the circle on the board, three *kilesâ vutta* are connected by a red line. They are *avijjâ*, *tahnâ* and *upâdâna*.

Kamma is an act and hence, *kamma vutta* is the endless cycle of acts that cannot be stopped by any other means than *vipassanâ*. There are two *kamma vutta*. They are *sankhâra* and *kammabhava*.

Vipâka means the resulting effect of a deed performed. *Vipâka vutta* is the endless effect imposed on the doer for what he or she has done. There are eight *vipâka vutta*. They are *vinñâna*, *nâmma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanâ*, *jâti*, *upapattibava* and *jarâ-marana*. Some tend to omit *upapattibava* and count *vipâka vutta* as seven. To list this *vutta* in gist, they are actually all forms of aggregates of being (*khandâ*) whether they are mental or physical.

Although the circle of *paticcasamuppâda* contains four quadrants, there are only three types of *vutta*: *kilesâ* and *kamma vutta* are to be noted for the time being as causal *vutta* and *vipâka vutta* as consequential *vutta*.

Let us see the three periods. The first quadrant is of the past, the second and third of the present and the fourth quadrant is of the future. The second quadrant is of the causal period and the third of the consequential period in the present time.

As for the twenty occurrences, let us look at the circle on the board and then go into a question and answer session. Questions will be posed by me and the answers are to be given by you. (Answers are shown in parentheses).

What occurrences and how many of them do you find in Quadrant (1)?

[Venerable Teacher, there are 5 causal occurrences of the past in Quadrant (1).]

Could you enumerate these occurrences?

[Yes, Venerable Teacher, they are *avijjā*, *sankhāra*, *tahnā*, *upādāna* and *bava*.]

What do we have in Quadrant (2)?

[Venerable Teacher, we have five consequential occurrences of the present in Quadrant (2) and they are *vinñāna*, *nāmma-rupa*, *salāyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanā*.]

Would you enumerate what we have in Quadrant (3)?

Note: *Questions and answer sessions might appear to be duplication of the main discussion. However, they are intended to drive the main discussion into the receiving mind of the student. The advice of the translator is that the reader of this book should imagine himself to be listening to the discussion of the teacher in a formal class.*

[Venerable Teacher, we have five causal occurrences of the present in Quadrant (3) and they are *tahnâ*, *upâdâna*, *bava*, *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.]

What about the occurrences in Quadrant (4)?

[There are, Venerable Teacher, five consequential occurrences of the future in Quadrant (4) and they are *vinñâna*, *nâmarupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ*.]

We therefore have twenty occurrences in four quadrants of the circle or the wheel of life of *paticcasamuppâda*.

If we summarise this discussion, we will come to find out that the note seen at the beginning of this discussion says that if the student tries to understand the ingredients of this wheel of life and accept them as truth, he or she can reach *nirbâna*, the state of having abolished all forms of *dukkha*. Here it comes out that there should be respective responsibilities on the part of the teacher, the student and the *dhamma*, the Teaching itself.

- * The teacher's responsibility is to teach until his teaching is fully understood by the students.
- * The students' responsibility lies in repeatedly practising what has been taught.
- * When above responsibilities are fully carried out, the Teaching by itself would deliver the practitioner to the goal he is seeking.

Let us therefore conclude this discussion by making a vow that both the teacher and the students would fully carry out their responsibilities.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Note: *Sâdu* is an expression meaning excellent, usually said at the end of a sermon to express appreciation of what has been delivered.

Discussion Two

We have gone through the summarised note on *paticcasamuppâda* during the previous session. Now we at least know the ingredients of the wheel of life. We will go on to find out the meaning and essence of each ingredient in this session.

What is *avijjâ*? *Avijjâ* essentially is ignorance. What is it ignorant of? It is called *avijjâ* when it is ignorant of the Four Noble Truths which are *dukkha saccâ*, *samudaya saccâ*, *niroda saccâ* and *magga saccâ*.

What is *dukkha saccâ*? *Dukkha* is suffering and *saccâ* is the truth. It therefore means that suffering is a true fact of life.

What is *samudaya saccâ*? If we want to explain this term fully, we have to add *dukkha* to it. It then becomes *dukkha samudaya saccâ*. *Dukkha* is suffering; *samudaya* is the cause, and *saccâ* is the truth. The meaning of the whole phrase therefore is that the cause of all forms of suffering is a true fact of life.

Niroda saccâ also should be added to with *dukkha*. It therefore becomes *dukkha niroda saccâ*. Since we know the meaning of other words than *niroda*, we will only see what *niroda* is. *Niroda* is the end, conclusion, cessation or termination. Hence, *dukkha niroda saccâ* means that the cessation of all forms of suffering is a true fact of life. This is what the Buddha called *nirbâna*. We can therefore say that the state where all forms of suffering end is *nirbâna* or *niroda saccâ*.

Magga saccâ also needs *dukkha* to complete its full meaning but

there should be addition of some other hidden words. The phrase actually should be *dukkha niroda gâmini padipadâya saccâ*. The meaning is that the path or the training which terminates all forms of suffering is a true fact of life.

Let us now go into a question and answer mode. Like in Discussion One, answers are shown in parentheses.

What is *avijjâ*?

[Venerable Teacher, *avijjâ* is ignorance]

What is it ignorant of?

[It is ignorant of the Four Noble Truths. It is ignorant of *dukkha saccâ*, *samudaya saccâ*, *niroda saccâ* and *magga saccâ*.]

Why is *dukkha sacca* so named?

[Because *dukkha saccâ* is a true fact of life which is full of suffering.]

Why is *samudaya saccâ* so named?

[Because *samudaya saccâ* originates all forms of suffering which is a true fact of life.]

Why is *niroda saccâ* so named?

[Because *niroda saccâ* is the cessation of all forms of suffering.]

Why is *magga saccâ* so named?

[Because *magga saccâ* is the right path or training that would terminate all forms of suffering.]

We have said that *avijjā* is ignorance of all Four Noble Truths. We must however stress here that *avijjā* is not purely a fact of life where ignorance is the only dominant thing. It is a fact that *avijjā* is ignorant of the Four Noble Truths but it is not ignorant of all the paths which lead to where suffering abounds. We can therefore say that *avijjā* is a fact of life which knows nothing about the right path or deeds but that which is well conversant with everything about the wrong path or deeds.

Could I therefore ask what the additional meaning of *avijjā* is?
[Venerable Teacher, it is something which is ignorant of right path or deeds but is well conversant with the wrong path or deeds.]

According to the Venerable Mogok Sayadaw , *avijjā* has ignorance as its character and indecisiveness as its task.

Please answer what *avijjā* has as its character and task.
[*Avijjā* has ignorance as its character and indecisiveness as its task.]

Because of indecisiveness as its task, *avijjā* is sometimes known as *moha* (lack of ability to make a right decision).

Why is *avijjā* also called *moha*?
[Because as its task *avijjā* has inability to make the right decision.]

1. *The original teaching came from the Buddha, of course. Reference to Mogok Sayadaw is made due to the fact that this discussion is based on the Sayadaw's explanation.*

Avijjâ also has the nature of hiding the right path or deeds. For this nature, *avijjâ* is also known as darkness.

Why is *avijjâ* known as darkness?

[It is known as darkness because it has the nature of hiding the right path or deeds.]

Because *avijjâ* does not know the right but only the wrong, it is also called *micchâñâna* (the wrong knowledge).

We can now say that we have managed to exhaust the meanings of the word *avijjâ* as expounded by our Venerable Mogok Sayadaw¹. Let us now move on to *sankhâra*.

Sankhâra means alteration or modification. What is the objective of this alteration or modification? Its objective is the formation of *khandâ*, the aggregates of being. *Sankhâra* modifies to cause five aggregates of being; it modifies to cause four mental aggregates only; and it modifies to cause physical aggregate only. Let us see how many *sankhâra* we have. There are three types of *sankhâra*. They are:

Punñâbhisankhâra: modification by good deeds;

Apunñâbhisankhâra: modification by bad deeds; and

Ânanjâbhisankhâra: modification by mental training.

Due to the action of a type of *punñâbhisankhâra*, which is known as *kammâvasara-punñâbhisankhâra*, human bodies and bodies of celestial beings come into being. Due to *rupâvasara-punñâbhisankhâra*, another type, bodies of *rupabrahmah*, *brahmah* (celestial beings living in abodes above where normal ones live) with physical bodies but with-

out mental attributes are born.

Apunñābhisankhāra brings about bodies of beings from four *apāya* abodes: dwelling places of *niraya* (those who have to live the life of intense suffering as a penalty for the misdeeds they have done in previous lives) *tiricchāna* (animals), *pittā* (those who have to live the life of utmost scarcity in food, clothing and shelter) and *asurakē* (beings who although they have some supranatural power cannot fully enjoy their lives like other celestial beings).

Ānanjābhisankhāra brings about existence of *arupabrahmah*, those brahmah with mental attributes but without physical bodies.

As resultant existences of these *sankhāra*, there are altogether 31 abodes in the mundane world as enumerated below:

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---------------------------------|
| (a) | <i>Kāmasugati</i>
(superior life but where
<i>kāma</i> , the greed,
still prevails) | : | 1 human abode |
| (b) | " | : | 6 celestial abodes |
| (c) | " | : | 16 <i>rupabrahmah</i>
abodes |
| (d) | <i>Kāmadukkhati</i>
(inferior life where <i>kāma</i> ,
the greed, prevails) | : | 4 <i>arupabrahmah</i>
abodes |

We can therefore conclude here that *sankhâra* is the root cause of all forms of being in 31 abodes of existence.

Let us move on to *vinñâna*, the chief meaning of which is consciousness of what is happening around oneself. And for our purpose here, it will suffice to note that there are two kinds of *vinñâna*: *patisandevinñâna* and *pavuttivinñâna*. It would again be enough here to note that *patisandevinñâna* is consciousness during conception in the womb of one's mother and *pavuttivinñâna* is the consciousness one experiences during his or her entire life from birth through death.

All of us have passed through *patisandevinñâna* stage and are now in *pavuttivinñâna* stage. There are six kinds of *vinñâna* as mentioned below:

When consciousness is with the eye, it is eye consciousness (*cakkvinñâna*);
when it is with the ear, it becomes ear consciousness (*sotavinñâna*);
when it is with the nose, it is nose consciousness (*ghânavinñâna*);
when it is with the tongue, it becomes tongue consciousness (*jivâvinñâna*);
when it is with the body, it is body consciousness (*kâyavinñâna*);
and
when it is with the mind, it is mind consciousness (*manovinñâna*).

All living beings have to continually experience one of the abovementioned consciousnesses at one time or another throughout their lives. In other words, there is not a moment in one's life without experiencing one of these consciousnesses. However, we must note here

that although there are six types of consciousness, at each moment, one experiences only one kind of consciousness because a person can never experience more than one type of consciousness at one moment. That is why the aggregates (*khandā*) of being which survive in contact by turn with each *vinñāna* are known as *vinñānekhandā*.

It is the turn of *nāma-rupa* for discussion now. *Nāma* is the tendency to always lean towards senses and *rupa* is that which changes all the time.

For example:

That which wants to eat is *nāma* and that which eats is *rupa*;
that which wants to move is *nāma* and that which moves is *rupa*;
that which wants to sit is *nāma* and that which sits is *rupa*;
that which wants to sleep is *nāma* and that which sleeps is *rupa*;
that which asks to do is *nāma* and that which does is *rupa*;

When the driving force (*nāma*) and that which does in exact compliance with the dictation of the driving force (*rupa*) are merged, we have *nāma-rupa*. There are four *nāma* and one *rupa*.

Following are the four *nāma*:

- * *Vedanā*, feeling the effect that arises out of the contact of sense organs of the body with external sense objects;
- * *Sanñā*, the perception;
- * *Sankhāra*, the force which modifies and changes both mental and physical attributes of beings; and
- * *Vinñāna*, the consciousness.

There is only one *rupa*, the nature that does in compliance with the wish and the command of *nâma*.

All these five categories of *nâma-rupa* are known as *khandâ*, the aggregates of being.

We must stop here the discussion on *nâma-rupa* for the time being and move on to *salâyatana*. *Salâyatana* is *cha-âyatana*, a Pali word. *Cha* is six and *âyatana* is the force that prolongs the cycle of rebirths, the *samsarâ*. *Salâyatana* therefore is the six forces that prolongs the cycle of rebirths. If you want to note a bit more easily, we can say that *salâyatana* are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. If you want to note in Pali, however, they are *cakkhâyatana*, *sotâyatana*, *gânâyatana*, *jivâyatana*, *kâyâyatana* and *manâyatana*.

Let us now pose some questions and try to find the answers just to help ourselves memorise what has been discussed so far.

Could you tell me what *salâyatana* are?

[Yes, Venerable Teacher, they are the six forces with the power to prolong the cycle of rebirths.]

Will you tell me in simple language what they are?

[Yes, Teacher, they are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind.]

And if enumerated in Pali?

[Yes, Venerable Teacher, they are *cakkhâyatana*, *sotâyatana*, *gânâyatana*, *jivâyatana*, *kâyâyatana* and *manâyatana*.]

Let us now pose the questions in reverse order.

Would you tell me in simple language *cakkhâyatana*, *sotâyatana*, *gânâyatana*, *jivâyatana*, *kâyâyatana* and *manâyatana*?

[They are, Venerable Teacher, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the remaining part of the body and the mind respectively.]

What are they, by the way?

[They are the six forces that prolong the cycle of rebirths, sir.]

Could you tell me the alternative names of these forces?

[They are also known as *cha-âyatana* which is shown in the circle on the board as *salâyatana*.]

The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the body are categorised as *rûpa-âyatana* and the mind as *nâma-âyatana*. In summarised form, they can be noted as only *nâma* and *rûpa*.

We can now go on to *phassa*, the contact. There are six categories of *phassa*:

When contact is made through the eye, it is known as sight-contact;

when it is made through the ear, it is known as hearing-contact;

when it is made through the nose, it is known as smell-contact;

when it is made with the tongue, it is known as taste-contact;

when it is made with the body, it is known as touch-contact; and

when it is made with the mind, it is known as

consciousness-contact or thought-contact.

They can be expressed in Pali thus: *cakkhusamphassa*, *sotasamphassa*, *gânasamphassa*, *jivasamphassa*, *kâyasamphassa*, and *manosamphassa*.

After *phassa* comes *vedanâ*, that which accepts the input of the six senses. If we categorise *vedanâ* by six sense-accepting organs of the body, we have six categories of *vedanâ*.

With the eye, we see, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *cakkhusamphassaja-vedanâ*.

With the ear, we hear, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *sotasamphassaja-vedanâ*.

With the nose, we smell, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *gânasamphassaja-vedanâ*.

With the tongue, we taste, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *jivâsamphassaja-vedanâ*.

With the remaining portion of the body, we touch, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *kâyasamphassaja-vedanâ*.

With the mind, we think, we conceive and we accept the feeling arising out of this conception. This is known as *manosamphassaja-vedanâ*.

The first five are the *vedanâ* relating to *rupa*, the physical body, and the last is that relating to *nâma*, the mental part or the mind.

Vedanâ can again be categorised into three for *rupa* and three for *nâma*:

- * *Sukha-vedanâ*, the sensation of physical well-being on *rupa* side and *somanassa*, that of mental well-being on *nâma* side;
- * *Dukkha-vedanâ*, the sensation of physical suffering on *rupa* side and *domanassa*, that of mental suffering on *nâma* side;
- * *Upekkhâ-vedanâ*², the sensation arising out of indifference

2. *It is very hard to understand upekkhâ-vedanâ because we naturally argue that if there is indifference to both well-being and suffering, then how there could be a vedanâ. To know this, we have to analyse vedanâ in a deeper way. Then we will find that: vedanâ takes place right at the instant of accepting the sensation of sight and at that instant it has not begun to recognise the said sight as pleasing or repugnant. It therefore does not sense the feeling of either sukha (well-being) or dukkha (suffering) and this is known as cakkhu-upekkhâ-vedanâ, an indifferent type of vedanâ arising out of sight sensation. So also is vedanâ that takes place right at the instant of accepting the sensation of sound, smell, and taste on rupa side and of thinking on nâma side. We can therefore say that four types of rupa, the physical body, have four types of upekkhâ-vedanâ, and nâma, the mental part, has one upekkhâ-*

to both well-being and suffering on *rupa* side and *kammasakâ*, mentally leaving all occurrences as whatever will be will be on *nâma* side.

Merging identical happenings in both *rupa* and *nâma*, we only have three categories of *vedanâ*: *sukha* (well-being), *dukkha* (suffering) and *upekkhâ* (indifference).

Khandâ of all sentient beings, having to live with these three types of *vedanâ* throughout their lives, are therefore known as *vedanakkhandâ*.

Since we are finished for our purpose in this session with *vedanâ*, let us hop on to *tahnâ* (craving). There are three types of *tahnâ*:

- * *Kâmatahnâ*³: craving for five sensitive causes;
- * *Bavatahnâ*³: craving for life; and
- * *Vibavatahnâ*: lack of craving for any form of life without practical insight knowledge.

After *tahnâ*, we get to *upâdâna*, the attachment. After craving for anything, you come to the stage where you are so attached to an item, it becomes very difficult for you to disentangle yourself from this attachment. This is known as *upâdâna* in Pali.

vedanâ. In *vipassanâ* meditation, it is a stage when a practitioner reaches a state of equilibrium where difference between pleasure and suffering is not recognized.

3. The difference between *kâmatahnâ* and *bavatahnâ* is that the former is craving produced on contact with external sensations while the latter is craving produced on contact with internal sensations. However, *tahnâ* is nothing but *lobha*, the greed, in essence.

There are four *upādāna* as follows:

- * *Kārmupadāna*: attachment to sensual craving or desire;
- * *Ditthupadāna*: attachment to all forms of misconception⁴;
- * *Thilabattupadāna*: attachment to wrong evil precepts and practices such as actions of dogs, cattle, etc. thinking that they are right; and
- * *Attavādupadāna*: attachment to all forms of *sakkāyaditthi* (wrong egoistic view).

Although we say there are four types of *upādāna*, in essence there are only two i.e. attachment to *tahnā* and attachment to *ditthi* which can eventually be categorised as nothing but *lobha* (greed). There is actually not much difference in meaning between *tahnā* and *upādāna*. The former is craving in a mild form while the latter is the same mental attitude in a stronger form.

We are now with *kammabava*. *Kamma* is action and *bava* is exertion to effect that action. *Kammabava* therefore is attempting or exerting to effect an action.

We have three types of *kammabava*:

- * *Kāyakamma*: bodily exertion sub-categorised as follows:
 - * *Pānatipāta*: taking life of others;
 - * *Adinnadānā*: taking possessions of others without their knowledge or consent; and

4. *There are 62 types of misconception (micchādītthi) in all. However, they are too numerous for the student to understand. Those scholars who want to study them should be advised to read other books.*

- * *Kâmesumicchâcâra*: committing improper sex (consumption of alcohol being a cause for lack of mindfulness on the Teachings is usually included here);
- * *Vacikamma*: verbal exertion sub-categorised as follows:
 - * *Musâvâdâ*: telling lies;
 - * *Pisunavâcâ*: speaking to break the unity or good relation of people or a team;
 - * *Pharussavâcâ*: speaking in a vulgar, unrefined, offensive manner; and
 - * *Sampappalâpa*: speaking in a worthless, profitless manner.
- * *Manokamma*: mental exertion sub-categorised as follows:
 - * *Abijjâ*: wishing to possess properties of others, wishing to have more than deserving;
 - * *Byâbâda*: wishing to see downfall, ruination, destruction of others; and
 - * *Micchâditthi*: wrong conception.

All these ten *kammabava* are also known as *ducarita*, wrong actions which can deliver a person to *apâya*, the four abodes where suffering prevails. The opposite of *ducarita* is *sucarita*, right actions which can deliver a person to *sugati*, pleasant incarnation. It is appropriate to compare *sankhâra* and *kammabava* here. *Sankhâra* is action taken in the past and *kammabava* is action taken at present. Nobody can save himself from the consequences brought about by *sankhâra*; however, *vipassanâ* practice which keeps a person away from *kilesâ* (impurities of mind) can save a person from the consequences of *kammabava*

because they can be negated by *magga* (the path) which can deliver a person to *nirbhāna*, the final goal of *vipassanā* practice.

We have now got to *jāti*, a new life brought about by *sankhāra*. There are four ways of forming a new life:

- * *Jalabuja*: by being conceived in the womb of a mother-to-be;
- * *Āndaja*: by being conceived in an egg shell and hatched by the mother-to-be;
- * *Sansedaja*: by being conceived inside a tree trunk, a bamboo shoot, or attached to seaweed or rotten meat until it becomes fully independent; and
- * *Upapattika*: by appearing suddenly in fully-grown body in a new abode. They are usually from 16 to 20 years old when they take a new form of life.

In essence, *jāti* is the beginning of a new life either in the form of all five *khandā*, the aggregates, or of all four *nāmakkhandā* (mental aggregates) or of *rupakkhandā* (physical aggregates).

Once there is *jāti*, it is followed by *jarā-marana*, getting old and death. There are four types of *marana*:

- * *Kammakkhaya-marana*: death due to having no more *kamma*;
- * *Āyukkhaya-marana*: death due to having come to the end of normal life span;
- * *Ubayakkhaya-marana*: death due to both of above-mentioned causes; and

- * *Upaccedaka-marana*: death due to sudden external causes.

This discussion must come to an end here because we have gone through all twelve factors in brief.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Three

If a query is posed to find out what benefit a person will accrue by studying the Buddha's Teachings and practising in accordance with them, the only correct and fitting answer would be avoidance of four *apāya* abodes and delivery to *nirbāna* where there is no agedness, no pain or disease, no death, or no rebirth. Getting to *nirbāna* is impossible without engaging oneself in *vipassanā* meditation. To practise *vipassanā* meditation and to tread the path leading towards *nirbāna*, one cannot do it without first getting rid of the obstructions and obstacles on the way. Ten *kilesā* (impurities of mind) are noted as obstacles obstructing the way to the goal. Out of these ten, *micchāditti*⁴ (wrong conception) and *vicikicchā* (having doubt on the Teachings and the benefit of *vipassanā* meditation) are the main obstacles even to the lowest rung in the stairway to *nirbāna*, *sotāpanna-magga*.

There are 62 types of *micchāditti*, any one of which could pull a person down to *apāya* abodes. Out of 62, 55 belong to eternalistic view of human existence and seven belong to annihilationistic view of the same. The former school thinks that life is eternal with two adjacent lives connected with soul or *vinñāna*; and the latter group thinks after death there is no life at all. It will be clear as our study goes on that both views are wrong. The leader of all these 62 *micchāditti* is *sakkāyāditti*, wrongly accepting *khandā* or *nāma-rupa* as man, woman, person, I, you, he, etc. As long as a person cannot perceive a knock-down view of *khandā*, it is very difficult to begin *vipassanā* meditation. It is therefore essential that this view is dispensed with before going onto any other *ditti*⁵. Once *ditti*⁵ is established, it is naturally followed by *vicikicchā*. Hence, it is essential that *ditti*⁵ should be deleted before starting the meditational journey.

There are three steps in getting rid of *ditthi*⁵ and *vicikicchâ*. This has been explained in the introduction already but it would not cause any harm to our study by repeating it here. According to the Venerable Mogok Sayadaw, there are three steps to be attained in our pilgrimage to where we will find the ultimate truth of four and get into the realm of *nirbâna*. The first one is *ñâtaparinñâ*, where the teaching on the causes and effects of all occurrences in the world known as *paticcasamuppâda* is studied so thoroughly that *ditthi*⁵ and *vicikicchâ* are dispensed with by personal insight or by deep personal conviction, at least on a temporary basis. The Venerable Sayadaw insisted that this step should not be skipped if a person really wants to know the Truth. Only after this should come *vipassanâ* meditation, which is *tiranaparinñâ*, which will on its own accord when the insight knowledge is ripe deliver the practitioner to the third stage, *pahânaparinñâ*, the attainment of *nirbâna*. It is therefore appropriate to say here that *ñâtaparinñâ* stage should by all means be passed through before going into actual meditation. In other words, *ñâtaparinñâ* is something that a true believer or a true scholar of Buddhist Teachings should not miss. *Ñâtaparinñâ* can definitely help a practitioner get rid of the leader of all misconceptions, *sakkâyaditthi*, after which it is not very difficult to discard other *ditthi*, other misconceptions.

To dispense at least temporarily with *sakkâyaditthi* and *vicikicchâ*, the doubt, by means of cultivating personal conviction through study, we must discuss *khandâ-paticcasamuppâda* thoroughly. Let us revert to question and answer mode. Please shift your attention to the circle on

5. It must be noted that in most if not all cases, a teacher will say *ditthi* when he actually means *micchâditthi*. *Ditthi* only means a view.

Translator

the board.

Our students, can you tell me what *avijjâ* is?

[*Avijjâ* is ignorance of the Four Truths, Venerable Teacher.]

The answer is correct but, in the context of our discussion here, please take the meaning of *avijjâ* as not knowing that what we see in the second quadrant of the circle are all *dukkha saccâ*. We can then say here that under the influence of *avijjâ*, we have through our lives in unending cycle of deaths and rebirths performed many activities that would lengthen the said cycle.

Have we not, students?

[We certainly have, Venerable Teacher.]

In other words, *avijjâ* is the cause of *sankhâra*, the activities lengthening *samsarâ*, the cycle of rebirths. These activities in the past continuum have brought about in this present life what we know as five aggregates (*khandâ*) namely *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ*. And in accordance with what we did in our past lives, we have inherited bodies (*rupa*) in different planes of living.

If we revert to what we went through in Discussion Two, we will see that *punñâbisankhâra*, simply good deeds, create *khandâ* in human and celestial abodes accepted as pleasant forms of living. Some forms of *punñâbisankhâra* also send beings to *brahmah* abodes. If we had performed *apunñâbisankhâra*, bad deeds, then we would land in unpleasant abodes, *apâya*. We can therefore summarise here that whatever bodies you get in different planes of living are the resultant effect of what you did in the past life or *sankhâra* in pali. We can also say that

avijjâ and *sankhâra* are the main culprits creating bodies of different forms (*khandâ*). We must ask some questions here.

Are Celestial King or *brahmah* creators of different forms of life? Or are these life forms created by *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*?
[They are created by *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.]

Are different forms of life created by supernatural beings with supernatural powers? Or are they created by *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*?
[They are created by *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.]

Do *khandâ* or *nâma-rupa* come into being on their own accord? Or do they come into being due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*?
[They come into being due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.]

Are we now sure that only *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* but no other things or beings create bodies of different forms (*khandâ*)?
[Yes, we are.]

I must ask here one more question. Now that you know what creates your body, do you still have doubt that *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* but nothing else create *khandâ*?
[We no longer have any doubt of that, Venerable Teacher.]

Can we then say that we have dispensed with the doubt, *vicikicchâ*, when we have no more doubt on creation of our bodies or any other *khandâ*? If we have no doubt on this, we can certainly say that *vicikicchâ*, the doubt on all the Buddha's Teachings, is no longer with us. Let me ask you to find an answer to this question again.

Do you find a living being like a creator in *avijjâ*, the cause of the cycle of rebirths?

[There is definitely no living being in *avijjâ*.]

If there is no living being in *avijjâ*, do you find one in *sankhâra*, the follower of *avijjâ*?

[There is no living being in *sankhâra* also.]

Then how can the resulting *khandâ* be regarded as I, you, he, she or they when what creates them is only *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, ignorance of Truth and volitional activities leading towards *samsarâ*, the cycle of rebirths, with no such living being as a creator in them?

[It cannot be, sir.]

The students can just say that this is a law of cause and effect. When there is no cause, how can there be an effect?

Would there be I, you, he, she or they when only *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* are the causes of what come into being?

[There would not be anything else except *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, Venerable Teacher.]

Certainly so. I, you, he, she or they are the abstract terms created by mankind when they are actually mere creations of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*. This knowledge that accepts the fact that there is no I, you, he, she or they in *khandâ* is what is known as *sammâditthi*, the right conception. When there is *sammâditthi*, the misconception *micchâditthi* naturally disappears. Now, when we know the true cause of *khandâ*, we get rid of *vicikicchâ*. When we accept that there is no such thing as I, you, he, she or they in the resulting *khandâ*, we get rid of *micchâditthi*. This is the

result of studying *paticcasamuppâda*, the cause and the effect. On the day that *micchâditthi* and *vicikicchâ* are thrown out of our system, we can be sure that we have become what is known as *culasotâpan*, the person who has attained, at least through knowledge, the lowest rung of attainment. Being a *culasotâpan* means that you can be sure that you will not get to four unpleasant abodes of *apâya*, at least in your next life.

Let us take a breather for this lesson.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Four

Let us start this discussion by turning our attention to Quadrant One of the circle on the board. Now that we have gone through the discussion on the cause of our being in this life, we cannot be wrong in saying that we have in our past been living with *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* all through our lives.

According to what we have found out so far, what is *avijjâ*, students?
(*Avijjâ* is the lack of knowledge of the four Truths.)

Then, would it be wrong if we say that we have been in our past lives living with *avijjâ* and have been performing *sankhâra* all through those lives?
(No, Verable Teacher, it would not be wrong.)

Let us see what activities of *sankhâra* we have been performing by analysing the current *khandâ*. This analysis alone would give you insight into the Truth. If we look at Quadrant Two, we will find *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ*. All of them are nothing but five aggregates, *khandâ*.

Since all of us are human beings, what *khandâ* are we in possession of at present?
(Our five aggregates are those of human beings, sir.)

As the human abode is one of the pleasant places for being alive in, we can say that we are now in *sugati* (pleasant) abode. The aggregates that we are in possession of are also pleasant aggregates.

However, we are quite sure that it is impossible to get to this abode without performing good deeds in our past lives.

Then would it be possible to say that if we did not engage ourselves in good deeds in our past lives, we would not in our current lives be in possession of human *khandâ*?

(It is possible, Venerable Teacher.)

Actually, our readiness to share what we had--which is *dhâna*--has brought us to this *sugati* human abode and *sila*, ardent observation of precepts, is the cause of our still being alive up to this moment. Then, it would not be wrong to say that the mere fact of our being humans and being alive up to this moment is the proof that in our past lives we had been good samaritans. Again, when we look at our *khandâ* we are in possession of, what we see is that this body of ours is the result of staying inside the filthy wombs of our mothers for more than nine months and that we are aging slowly to be infested at one point of our life span with some kind of disease which is painful so that at the end we would have to pass away. Nobody would say that it is a good prospect. Does it not seem that we have come to this human abode just to be cruelly treated by agedness, pain and death?

(Yes, it does look that way, sir.)

Then, could we call our existence in the human abode *sukha cassâ* (truth that claims pleasantness)?

(Certainly not, Venerable Teacher.)

Though our abode is a pleasant one, our experience in this pleasant abode is nothing but one full of an unpleasant event after another. We can therefore call it the living proof of *dukkha cassâ*. The

good deeds that we have performed in the form of *dhâna* and *sila* have landed us in the filthy wombs of our mothers and let us stay there like prisoners in solitary cells for more than nine months. It looks as if we have made all-out efforts to get into this suffering situation. When we are born into this so-called pleasant abode of human life, from that moment of birth onwards, we begin being the victims of agedness—sometimes gradually, sometimes very fast, to be followed at any moment by infestation with painful diseases. Then at the end, we land ourselves into the hands of the death itself. Our life is a path moving from birth through agedness and pain towards death. It may sound pessimistic but it is the truth, nothing but the truth and the whole truth. My questions at this juncture may also sound sarcastic but they are necessary to help you find the truth in life. Let me ask a question here.

We performed the good deeds in our past lives like *dhâna* and *sila* to get to this abode of human beings and then at the last moment to offer ourselves on the gold platter, so to say, into the hands of death. Doesn't it look that way?
(Yes, it does look that way, Venerable Teacher.)

But if you are asked whether you have the courage to perform deeds so that you get to this abode to be dragged to death at the last moment, I think your answer would be “no”. Is that correct?
(Yes, sir, it certainly would be.)

However, without having courage to do so, why are we trying so hard to be in such an unpleasant situation? It is because of *samudaya*, attachment to what we are, that we do things without knowing that they would land us in *dukkha cassâ*. That is why our Venerable Mogok Sayadaw urged us to heed his warning which is: “Leave aside your

intention to share your possessions with others, *dhâna*, and try to know the Truth first” which is followed by another warning: “Forget your intention to indulge in *dhâna* and try to get rid of *micchâditthi* first.” The Sayadaw gave these warnings because with *micchâditthi*, the misconception, it is impossible to avoid landing in *apâya* abodes. And without knowing the Truth, it is definitely impossible to get to *nirbâna* whatever you do. If there is no teacher to enlighten you of the Four Truths, it is impossible to find the right path to your goal. That is why the Buddha had warned his disciples exactly 44 times to find the right teacher who would let him get to the Four Truths.

Let us see. The fact that we had tried so hard to be in the human or supra-natural abodes is the proof that we did not know that these abodes belong to *dukkhacassâ* when we were doing that. A question arises here.

Why did we not know that human and supra-natural abodes belong to *dukkhacassâ*? The culprit is *avijjâ*, the ignorance of the Four Truths. Now we are getting into the realm of Buddha’s philosophy. Let us therefore become philosophical again.

The reason that we have so far not known or accepted our existence in human and supra-natural abodes as *dukkha cassâ* is the ignorance of the Four Truths, *avijjâ*. The force that had delivered us to human and supra-natural abodes is *punñâbisankhâra*. In other words, the desire to be human and supra-natural beings is *tanhâ*; the obsession for such existence is *upadâna*; and the physical, verbal and mental acts that create the force of delivery is *kammabava*.

Then, it should be clearly understood that because of the five causes

of the past which are *avijjâ*, *punñâbisankhâra*, *tanhâ*, *upâdâna* and *bava*, we have in this present existence the *khandâ*, the five aggregates, which are also *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ*.

Are the human and spiritual *khandâ* the creation of supernatural beings or are they the result of *punñâbisankhâra*, the effect of *avijjâ*?

(They are the result of *punñâbisankhâra*, sir.)

Did these *khandâ* appear on their own accord?

(No, sir, they came into existence due to *punñâbisankhâra*, the effect of *avijjâ*.)

Now that you know the truth that this existence of human or spiritual bodies is the result of *punñâbisankhâra*, the effect of *avijjâ*, would it be necessary on your part to have doubt about how these bodies or *khandâ* have come into being?

(There is no reason whatsoever for any doubt on the origination of our existence, Venerable Teacher.)

It should therefore be reiterated here that if you know the true origination of your bodies, there would not be any doubt in your mind. In other words, there would be no *vicikicchâ* on the origination of *khandâ*. That is knowing the cause of what is happening at present. When we through our study are convinced without reservation the truth about the effect i.e. what is happening now, then you automatically and temporarily get rid of the wrong view you have been living with so far. That is the riddance of *micchâditthi* by knowing that the *khandâ* that have so far misled us with all the misnomers such as body, man, woman, I, he, she, they and whatever names that have been attached to them are nothing

but forces which cannot be controlled by our will or body. *Khandâ* (the five aggregates) are the only forces which are in existence and they are also known as *sakkâya*. When *micchâditthi* is uprooted from *sakkâya*, we can also say that we have done away with *sakkâyaditthi*, the wrong view perceiving the five aggregates as I, he, she or they.

This great achievement in being cleansed of *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi* is the result of learning *padiccasamuppâda*, the cause and effect of all forms of life. However, it must be reminded that this riddance of *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi* is only through learning and discussion; and this acceptance by the students also is only of temporary nature. That is what is known as *ñâtaparinñâ*, a necessary step in clearing the path to our goal of obstacles namely the doubt and the wrong view of life.

Let us take a time-out from this discussion.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Five

In the previous discussion, we went through an effort to make the students understand that due to our wish which later became obsession and the deeds performed in our past lives—mind you they were meritorious ones but—under the influence of our ignorance of the Four Truths, we are in the bodies of humans and some might be in the bodies of supranatural beings.

Brahmâ bodies are also the result of the same process. Guided or you might say misguided by the ignorance of Truths, one performed *rupâvacara jâna samahta*, mental training aimed for *rupa* (the physical form) only, which also is of course one of the meritorious deeds, wished for and were also obsessed for *brahmâh* bodies that he performed physical, verbal and mental activities and consequently got them.

Again because one is misled by *avijjâ*, the ignorance, to think that *brahmâh* abode without form or matter is not also one with *dukkha*, one practises *samahta*; but this time *arupâvacara* training aimed for formless *brahmâh* bodies is carried out, and as a result get them.

We can therefore say without a hint of doubt that the supposed-to-be pleasant bodies such as those of humans, *nats* (supranatural beings) and of *brahmâ* are the result of our wish and obsession for them. They are certainly pleasant abodes. However, what about our descent into unpleasant abodes like those which belong to four *apâya*. Do we wish for and are we obsessed with the desire to be there? Do we and are we? Definitely not, with the capital D and the capital N.

But why are we there sometimes? When we do not know that

khandâ, the mental and physical aspects of your body, is nothing but *dukkha*, the matter for pain and suffering, we become attached to them and later obsession follows. When you are like that you do not flinch from doing physical things like stealing or robbing nor from telling lies or improper things nor from carrying out improper thinking to feed and nurture this body which is the source of pain and suffering. It is therefore not incorrect to say that it is our attachment to *khandâ* that drives us to performing extremely undesirable acts. Nothing is wrong for such people in trying to protect and prolong the life of their bodies.

Trying to obtain butcher licences, fishing rights, hunting licences, robbing and cheating other people and even assaulting and hurting own parents and performing any other morally unacceptable activities are the results of attachment to one's own body. Inability to accept even mosquito or bug bites is the work of this body attachment.

Statements revealing human frailties like “whoever die, I don't care as long as I am healthy”, “if there is treasure to get, why should I hesitate digging into my own father's head” and “we should not be low in rank and status” come from this attachment to one's own body.

Inability to perform charitable deeds, nor to observe *sila*, the five, eight or nine precepts, nor to carry out meditation whether *samahta* or *vipassanâ*, is also the result of this attachment, *tahnâ*.

Not knowing the *khandâ* to be the source of suffering is *avijjâ*; attachment to the *khandâ* is *tahnâ* whereas obsession with the *khandâ* is *upâdâna*. Making all-out efforts to perform the bad deeds because of *avijjâ*, *tahnâ* and *upâdâna* is *apunñâbisankhâra*. When all undesirable deeds have already been performed due to the cause explained, it is

imperative whether you like it or not that you will obtain *khandâ* of four *apâya* abodes, the places of suffering. It is therefore right to say that, regardless of your acceptance or lack of it, getting into the bodies of *apâya* abodes is the work of *tahnâ* or in other words, *samudayacassâ*.

When we say that *avijjâ* is the cause of *apunñâbisankhâra*, or in Pali words “*avijjâ pyaccayâ apunñâbisankhâra*”, it also encompasses *tahnâ* and *upâdâna* at the same time. It would of course be followed by “*apunñâbisankhâra pyaccayâ apâya khandâ*”. Let me repeat my discussion by asking some questions.

Are the bodies of *apâya* abodes created by the King of *nats* or *brahmahs* or by *apunñâbisankhâra* as a result of *avijjâ* ?
(Venerable Teacher, they are created by *apunñâbisankhâra* which in turn is caused by *avijjâ*.)

Are they created by some supernatural beings with power of creation ?
(No, sir, they are created by *apunñâbisankhâra* which in turn is caused by *avijjâ*.)

Do these bodies come into existence on their own accord ?
(No, sir, they are the results of *apunñâbisankhâra* caused by *avijjâ*.)

Then what is the force that causes the *khandâ* of *apâya* abodes to arise?
(Venerable Teacher, it is *apunñâbisankhâra* caused by *avijjâ*.)

Is there any cause for us to be perplexed and uncertain over the

force that causes the *khandâ* of *apâya* abodes to arise ?
(No, sir, there is no cause for such uncertainty because we now know the true cause of our Khanda.)

As there is no uncertainty over the origination of *khandâ*, can we now say that we have through our learning have gotten rid of *vicikicchâ*, the doubt ?
(Yes, sir, we can now.)

Those who have to suffer in the four abodes of *apâya* are uncountable in quantity and in kind when we consider them in the names coined by the human world. However, they boil down to the five aggregates of *khandâ* or *nâma-rupa* caused by *apunnâbisankhâra* under the guidance of *avijjâ* when considered in terms of the Truth as expounded by the Buddha. We can therefore say that the bodies and their mental components of cattle and other animals, and those of *pittâ*, the ever-hungry beings, *athurakè*, the beings who partially live happily and partially not, and those of beings suffering in hell are nothing but conglomeration of physical bodies, *rupa*, and their consciousness, *nâma*. In other words, there is no creature or being as we call them in the aggregates of *khandâ* or *nâma-rupa*.

When we know and accept that fact, what *ditthi* can we dispose of?
(*Sakkâyaditthi*, the wrong view which sees living and self-propelled beings as creatures as we conventionally accept them, Venerable Teacher.)

When we know the cause which brings into existence *rupa* and *nâma*, what have we disposed of?

(We have disposed of *vicikicchâ*, Sir.)

But when we really know the effect or result, we have disposed of *sakkâyaditthi* as you have pointed out just now. We can therefore say that knowing the cause and effect of the *khandâ* will help us in ridding of *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi*. After obtaining this knowledge, are we not free from *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi*? And when we are, we can at least temporarily call ourselves *culasotâpan*, persons who will not get to *apâya* abodes at least for the next life.

All of us for the moment are now *culasotâpan*. It is therefore the best moment to take our time-out for this discussion.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Six

This discussion would concentrate on Quadrant 1 and 2 of the circle on the board. (The readers of this book should refer to the circle on the attachment sheet). In the Quadrant 1, we would see *avijjâ*, the cause, and its effect *sankhâra*, the physical, verbal and mental action taken by the five *khandâ* that you are in possession of. There is a question to be asked here. Why do we take physical, verbal and mental action ? The answer, referring to our previous discussions, would definitely be “because of *avijjâ*, the disillusion or the lack of knowledge on the Truth as explained by the Buddha.

What takes place when there are *sankhâra*, the action taken due to the lack of knowledge on the Truth ?

(We of course obtain *khandâ*, the five aggregates, sir.)

If the result is *khandâ*, then in accordance with the laws as expounded in *padiccasamuppâda*, where do those *khandâ* originate ?

(They of course originate in *vinñâna* or conception, Venerable Teacher.)

This *vinñâna* is the cause of physical and mental aspects of every living creature’s body. Here, we can say that *avijjâ* is the cause of *sankhâra*; *sankhâra* is the cause of *vinñâna* and *vinñâna* is the cause of *nâma-rupa*. I must ask you a question here.

What do we have in *nâma-rupa* ?

(Venerable Teacher, we have what is known as *salâyatana* which are nothing but the eyes, ears, noses, tongues, bodies and minds,

the instruments to perceive what comes from outside.)

We can therefore say here that *avijjâ* is the cause of *sankhâra*, *sankhâra* is the cause of *vinñâna*, *vinñâna* is the cause of *nâma-rupa* and *nâma-rupa* is the cause of *salâyatana*. Now, because of these *salâyatana*, the sensual receptors, there is *phassa*, the contact with external senses. Then the *salâyatana* becomes the cause of *phassa*. If we revert to the first initiator of this process, we will find that *avijjâ* is the cause of *sankhâra*, *sankhâra* is the cause of *vinñâna*, *vinñâna* is the cause of *nâma-rupa* and *nâma-rupa* is the cause of *salâyatana*, and *salâyatana* is the cause of *phassa*.

When there is the contact with external senses, there comes *Vedanâ*, the feeling aroused in three different types as has been explained in the previous discussions. Just to refresh our memory, we can now say that *avijjâ* is the cause of *sankhâra*, *sankhâra* is the cause of *vinñâna*, *vinñâna* is the cause of *nâma-rupa* and *nâma-rupa* is the cause of *salâyatana*. *salâyatana* is the cause of *phassa*, and the *phassa* is the cause of *vedanâ*.

Studying the Quadrants 1 and 2, we have come to find out that *Avijja* and *Sankhara* are the two causes of *khandâ*; and *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ* are the five resultant effects of the two causes mentioned. Let us categorize these resultant effects in the forms of *khandâ*. Then we will find that *vinñâna* becomes *vinñânakkhandâ*; when we come to *nâma-rupa*, we must separate *rupa* from *nâma* and form another *khandâ* which is directly connected to *rupa* alone and known as *rupekkhandâ*. *Vedanâ* becomes *vedanekkhândâ*; *sanñâ*, which is nothing but accepting and recording senses from outside the body, becomes *sanñekkhândâ*; *sankhâra* becomes *sankhâhrekkhândâ*. If we try to categorise the *salâyatana*, then we will

find that the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body would go into *rupekkhandâ* whereas only the mental aspect goes into the category of *vinñânekkhandâ*. *Phassa* is something that helps connect the external senses and the receiving organs of the body, then, when categorised as a *khandâ*, it belongs naturally to *sankhâra*. So it becomes *sankhâhrekhandâ*.

According to *padiccasamuppâda*, when we try to categorise *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanâ*, we find that they become five *khandâ*. Let us now go into question and answer session. Before we go into this session, we must assure ourselves that five integral parts of *padiccasamuppâda* namely *vinñâna*, *nâma-rupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa*, and *vedanâ*, are nothing but five *khandâ* as explained above.

To make it short, what are the causes of these *khandâ* ?
(Venerable Teacher, the causes are *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.)

When we know the causes, we have already gotten rid of the doubt, *vicikicchâ*. When we know the results, we have gotten rid of thinking too much of ourselves which is *sakkâyaditthi*. When you have gotten rid of *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi*, then you can be sure that at least for one more life from this you would not land in four unpleasant abodes, *apâya*.

Let us end our discussion for the day here.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Seven

Let us begin our discussion today with the way the Bodhisatva Gautama himself, just before he got enlightened and became the Lord Buddha, contemplated to find out the originator of *khandâ*, the five aggregates. It went like this:

- * Oh ! All kinds of creatures whenever they have been born to any form of life have to get aged, to suffer pain and finally die. They must be very tired of this unending cycle.
- * What is the origin of these agedness, pain and death ?
- * When would all these agedness, pain and death come to an end ?
- * When would the knowledge that understands the way to end these agedness, pain and death come to me ?

It should be pointed out here that the Bodhisatva was contemplating on *jarâ*, the agedness and *marana*, the death, shown in the fourth quadrant of the cycle on the board to find out the Four Truths.

We must explain to the audience here that:

- * when he was contemplating on the agedness and death, he was aiming at the *dukkha cassâ*.
- * when he was contemplating on the origin of the agedness and death, he was aiming at the *samudaya cassâ*.

* when he was contemplating on the end of the agedness and death, he was aiming at the *niroda cassâ*.

* when he was contemplating on the way to end the agedness and death, he was aiming at the *magga cassâ*.

During his contemplation, it appeared in his knowledge that the origin of the agedness and death was nothing but *jâti*, the birth to a form of life. Here it must be noted that *jâti* is the origin and *jarâ* and *marana* are its results. In other words, we can say that as long as we have *jâti*, we will have *jarâ* and *marana*. Again, *jâti*, the *samudaya cassâ*, is the cause and *jarâ* and *marana*, the *dukkha cassâ*, is the result. If it is accepted that the agedness and death are caused by *jâti*, then it should also be accepted that if there is no *jâti*, there would definitely no agedness nor death. In simple words, if there is no birth, there would not be no agedness and death at all. I think that it can be accepted. In Pali, *jâti niroda, jarâ marana nirodo* meaning the end of *jâti* means the end of *jarâ* and *marana*. However, the birth cannot be disposed of without the effort of the person concerned. In other words, nothing comes without giving on the part of the person who wants it. Only if that person performs a specific deed that would end the birth, then will there be the end of the birth which is *niroda cassâ*. This deed is known as *magga cassâ*, the Truth that shows the path or the performance to end the *dukkha*, the suffering which embodies the agedness and death. We can call this way of thinking the reverse way of thinking i.e. from the end to the beginning. To clarify this, we can think of a gourd tree where if we find the sprouts and follow through we will come to the roots.

If we do not stop here and follow up with the progress of our knowledge, we will find that *jâti*, the birth, is also caused by what we

call *kammabava*, the deeds performed before *jâti*. In Pali, *kammabava Pyaccayâ jâti* meaning *kammabava* is the cause of *jâti*. We can therefore come to the conclusion that as long as there are *kammabava* deeds—physical, verbal and mental—there would be *jâti*, the birth. In other words, *kammabava* is the *samudaya cassâ* and *jâti* can be interpreted as *dukkha cassâ*. We can again say here that if there is no *kammabava*, then there would be no *jâti* at all. In Pali, *kammabava niroda, jâti nirodo* meaning the end of *kammabava* means the end of *jâti*. Here again, this end does not come on its own accord. The person who wants it should perform a specific deed that would bring about the end. This performance that would bring *jâti* to its end is the *magga cassâ*.

Let us ask ourselves another question to find out why there is *kammabava*. *Kammabava* is the result of *upâdâna*, the attachment. In Pali, *upâdâna pyaccayâ kammabava* meaning *upâdâna* is the cause of *kammabava*. We can also say that *upâdâna* represents *samudaya cassâ* and *kammabava* represents *dukkha cassâ*. When you are attached to something, you naturally would like to perform some deeds which are nothing but *kammabava*. In other words, if there is no *upâdâna*, there would be no *kammabava*. Pali canon would say: *Upâdâna niroda, kammabava nirodo*. It is quite clear that if there is no attachment to anything, nobody would do anything at all because he does not need anything. That represents *niroda cassâ*. If you perform something to dispose of *upâdâna*, then it represents *magga cassâ*.

Upâdâna when analysed again is the result of *tahnâ*, the desire and the want. When you really want something, you become attached to that thing and do something so that the thing you want comes into being. This is, in Pali, *tahnâ pyaccayâ upâdâna* meaning *tahnâ* is the cause of *upâdâna*. *Tahnâ* represents *samudaya cassâ* and *upâdâna* represents

dukkha cassâ. The end of *upâdâna* by disposing off of *tahnâ* represents *niroda cassâ* and the deed performed to get to that end *magga cassâ*.

Let us summarise our discussion now.

As long as there is *tahnâ*, there would be *upâdâna*.

As long as there is *upâdâna*, the attachment, there would always be *kammabava*.

As long as there is *kammabava*, there would always be *jâti*, the birth.

As long as there is *jâti*, there would always be *jarâ*, the agedness, and *marana*, the death along with pain.

We go through the agedness, the pain and the death because we have the *khandâ* which is the result of *jâti*.

We have *jâti* because we have gone through *kammabava*, the deeds.

We perform these deeds because we are attached to things that we should not.

We are attached to things because we want and desire these things.

Retrogressively:

If we have no *tahnâ*, there would be no *upâdâna*.

If we have no *upâdâna*, there would be no *kammabava*.

If we have no *kammabava*, there would be no *jâti*.

If we have no *jâti*, there would be no *jarâ* nor *marana*.

We should therefore conclude this discussion by saying that if we do not want the agedness, the pain nor the death, then we should from now onwards engage ourselves in *vipassanâ* meditation which would show us the way to enlightenment of all these points discussed today.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Eight

Today's discussion is the continuation of the last discussion. In our previous discussion, we said that *tahnâ* is the cause of *samsarâ*, the cycle of rebirths where we have to suffer from agedness, pain and eventual death. Let us keep on going backwards to find out how *tahnâ* comes into being. What we will find is *vedanâ*, our acceptance of and being affected by external and internal senses. Hence, *vedanâ* is the cause and *tahnâ* is the resulting effect.

We can therefore say that as long as there is *vedanâ*, there would be *Tahna*. In Pali, it is said: *vedanâ pyaccayâ tahnâ*. We can also say that *vedanâ* represents *samudaya cassâ* whereas *tahnâ* represents *dukkha cassâ*. When you accept external or internal senses, you come to a stage when you start liking these senses which is nothing but *tahnâ*. In other words, if there is no *vedanâ*, there would be no *tahnâ*. Pali canon would say: *vedanâ nirodâ, tahnâ nirodo*. It is quite clear that if there is no acceptance of and being affected by any senses--external or internal --nobody would start liking these senses at all because he is not effected by them. That represents *niroda cassâ*. If you perform something to dispose of *vedanâ*, then it represents *magga cassâ*.

Let us go on with this trend of reasoning and ask ourselves how *vedanâ* comes into existence. Then we would find *phassa*, the situation which makes us come into contact with the external as well as internal senses. Here, *phassa* is the cause and *vedanâ* the resulting effect.

Here we can say that as long as there is *phassa*, there would be *vedanâ*. In Pali, we would say: *phassa pyaccayâ vedanâ*. *Phassa* then

represents *samudaya cassâ* whereas *vedanâ* represents *dukkha cassâ*. When you come into contact with external or internal senses, you come naturally tend to accept and get affected by these senses which is nothing but *vedanâ*. In other words, if there is no *phassa*, there would be no *vedanâ*. Pali canon would say: *phassa niroda, vedanâ nirodo*. It is quite clear that if there is no contact with any senses external or internal, nobody would get affected by these senses at all because he is not in contact with them. That represents *niroda cassâ*. If you perform something to dispose of *Phassa*, then it represents *magga cassâ*.

Ask ourselves again why there is *phassa*, then the answer would be because we have six organs or internal bases for accepting senses expressed in Pali as *salâyatana*. *Salâyatana* then is the cause of *phassa*. We say in Pali: *salâyatana pyaccayâ phassa*. As long as we have six organs or internal bases for accepting senses, there would always be contact with them. *Salâyatana* represents *samudaya cassâ* while *phassa* represents *dukkha cassâ*. If you have no organs or internal bases for accepting senses, then there would never be contact with them. This is said in Pali: *salâyatana nirodâ, phassa nirodo*. This cessation of contact represents *niroda cassâ*. *Phassa* would not disappear on its own. It needs the effort of the person concerned to dispose of *salâyatana*. This of course represents *magga cassâ*, treading the right path to where *phassa* would be eliminated.

Then again why *salâyatana*, the six internal bases for accepting senses, are there ? We will find that they are there because we have *rupa*, the physical body, and *nâma*, the mental part. In other words, *nâma-rupa* is the cause and *salâyatana* are the effect. In Pali, we say: *nâma-rupa pyaccayâ salâyatana*. When we are made up of physical body and the mind that conceives the senses from outside, it is natural that the

six organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue, the remaining portion of the body and sense-knowing and sense-accepting mind—will always be there. If there is no *nâma-rupa*, then there would be no *salâyatana*. The cessation of *salâyatana* in Pali is: *nâma-rupa nirodâ, salâyatana nirodo*. This cessation represents *niroda cassâ*. However, like before, *nâma-rupa* would not cease on its own. It requires the right effort of the person concerned to eliminate it. This effort or practice on the part of the person wishing to eliminate *salâyatana* represents *magga cassâ*, the Truth revealing the way to elimination of *salâyatana*.

Let us not stop our attempt to dig backwards into the causes and effects happening to us until we get to the root cause. What then is the cause of *nâma-rupa* ? We get the physical body and its mental part because of *vinñâna*, the consciousness received right at the time of conception in our mothers' wombs. *Vinñâna* therefore is the cause and *nâma-rupa* is the effect. Or in Pali, *vinñâna pyaccayâ nâma-rupa*. Without *vinñâna*, there would be no *nâma-rupa*. *Vinñâna* represents *samudaya cassâ*, *nâma-rupa* represents *dukkha cassâ* and disappearance of *nâma-rupa* represents *niroda cassâ*. Pali version would be: *vinñâna nirodâ, nâma-rupa nirodo*. When you try to eliminate *nâma-rupa* by means of meditational practice, it represents *magga cassâ*.

Vinñâna also has its cause which is nothing but *sankhâra*, the deeds performed by the person concerned—wholesome, unwholesome or unshakable deeds—which in Pali would be *punñâbhi-, apunñâbhi-* and *ânanjâbhi-sankhâra*. *Sankhâra* is the cause representing *samudaya cassâ* and *vinñâna* is the effect representing *dukkha cassâ*. When *sankhâra* ceases, *vinñâna* automatically ceases too. Pali canon would say: *sankhâra nirodâ, vinñâna nirodo*. This cessation of *vinñâna* represents *nirodâ cassâ* and the path followed by the *vipassanâ* practitioner

represents *magga cassâ*.

There is one more step to go to get to the root cause of all these occurrences. We perform all forms of deeds only because we are ignorant of the four Truths which is known as *avijjâ*. This *avijjâ* activates *sankhâra* in a person. In Pali, *avijjâ pyaccayâ sankhâra*. We can therefore say that *avijjâ*, the cause, represents *samudaya cassâ* and its effect *sankhâra* represents *dukkha cassâ*. When *sankhâra* ceases due to cessation of *avijjâ*, we say: *avijjâ nirodâ, sankhâra nirodo*. This cessation of *avijjâ* represents *niroda cassâ* and the attempt to tread the right path to this cessation of *sankhâra* through cessation of *avijjâ* represents *magga cassâ*.

If we summarise today's discussion, the following trend will be revealed:

- * when *avijjâ* is eliminated, *sankhâra* is eliminated;
- * when *sankhâra* is eliminated, *vinñâna* is eliminated;
- * when *vinñâna* is eliminated, *nâma-rupa* is eliminated;
- * when *nâma-rupa* is eliminated, *salâyatana* is eliminated;
- * when *salâyatana* is eliminated, *phassa* is eliminated;
- * when *phassa* is eliminated, *vedanâ* is eliminated;
- * when *vedanâ* is eliminated, *tahnâ* is eliminated;
- * when *tahnâ* is eliminated, *upâdâna* is eliminated;
- * when *upâdâna* is eliminated, *bava* is eliminated;
- * when *bava* is eliminated, *jâti* is eliminated;
- * when *jâti* is eliminated, *jarâ*, the agedness, *marana*, the death, *soka*, the anxiety or sorrow, *parideva*, the lamentation, *dukkha*, the suffering, *domanassa*, the anger, and *upâyâsa*, the despair are eliminated..

To conclude this discussion, if we can eliminate *avijjâ* through persistent practice of *vipassanâ* meditation, then the occurrences that we do not want which are agedness, physical as well as mental pain, the death and rebirth, the *jati*, will all cease. Let us therefore persistently and regularly practise *vipassanâ* meditation starting from today.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Nine

This discussion will deal with detailed explanation of five *khandâ*. In accordance with the *paticcasamuppâda* system, due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, we have already found out that there arise *vinñâna*, *nâmarupa*, *salâyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanâ*. In Discussion Six, it was explained how *rupekkhandâ*, *vedanekkhanda*, *sanñekkhanda*, *sankhârekkhanda* and *vinñânekkhanda* come into being. Here in this discussion, we will delve into the detailed aspects of these *khandâ*. Let us go into what we have done before i.e. into a question-and-answer mode.

Can you recollect the meaning of *khandâ* that we have discussed before ?

(*Khandâ* means the aggregate of things, Venerable Teacher)

Please do not forget this meaning of *khandâ* for our further discussion. Let us recollect some points.

- * *Rupa* represents the ever changing nature of the body.
- * *Vedanâ* represents the nature of accepting senses—external as well as internal—and being affected by them.
- * *Sanñâ* represents the nature of recording the accepted senses.
- * *Sankhâra* represents the nature of driving force that changes what one is made of.
- * *Vinñâna* represents the nature of knowing the senses.

Let us ask some questions again to refresh our memory.

Dear students, why is the physical body called *rupa* ?
(*Rupa* is so called because it is the ever-changing nature of the body, sir.)

Why is *vedanâ* so called, students ?
(*Vedanâ* is so called because it is the nature of accepting external and internal senses and getting affected by them, sir.)

Why is *sanñâ* so called, students ?
(*Sanñâ* is so called because it is the nature memorising the accepted senses, sir.)

Why is *sankhâra* so called, students ?
(*Sankhâra* is so called because it is the nature driving oneself to change what one is made of, sir.)

Why is *vinñâna* so called, students ?
(*Vinñâna* is so called because it is the nature of knowing the senses, sir.)

Why is *khandâ* so called, students ?
(*Khandâ* is so called because it is the aggregate of things, sir.)

Let us try to combine the natures and the aggregate to see what we get.

* When you add the changing nature to the aggregate, you get the aggregate of changing nature known as *rupekkhandâ*.

* When you add the nature of accepting senses and getting affected

by them to the aggregate, you get the aggregate of sense-accepting and suffering nature known as *vedanekkhandâ*.

* When you add the sense-recording nature to the aggregate, you get the aggregate of sense-recording nature known as *sanñekkhandâ*.

* When you add the change-originating nature to the aggregate, you get the aggregate of change-originating nature known as *sankhârekkhandâ*.

* When you add the sense-knowing nature to the aggregate, you get the aggregate of sense-knowing nature known as *vinñânekkhandâ*.

Here we can draw some conclusion that *khandâ* is the aggregate of natures discussed or we can say that it is the aggregate of physical and mental natures because when we see the natures discussed they are found to be nothing but *rûpa* and *nâma*. Our bodies are also nothing but the aggregates of *rûpa* and *nâma*.

Can we then say that there are persons, we, you or they in the nature where the five aggregates create the forms of what we call man ? Can we also call these aggregates *atta*, self, or *jîva*, the life ? Definitely not. When the aggregates are broken into individual parts, each part may carry some name that we have given it but it is definitely not man, self nor life. The aggregates themselves even when they are bound together as a whole, they are nothing but names that we attach to them.

Let us now find out what characteristics the aggregates have. Regardless of the forms or shapes they take, all *khandâ* have their origin in *jâti*, go through *jarâ*, the agedness accompanied by pain, and end in

marana, the death. The beginning moment of *khandâ* is known as *jâti*, the time a person has to spend going through aging process accompanied by pain is known as *pavutti*, and the moment when death occurs is known as *marana*. Life therefore is nothing but a process of being born, getting old, suffering pain and eventually dying. This may seem a bit fatalistic. However, that is a fact of every one's life. If explained in *vipassanâ* language, a person's life is a process of arising, momentary staying and of eventual decaying to death, the end. It can also be said as arising and disappearing which in Pali is *udaya* and *vaya* respectively. We can now say that the characteristic of a *khandâ* is only arising and ending.

If we add up this characteristic, to get a full meaning, to the *khandâ* that we have discussed, it will come out like this :

- * The arising and ending of the aggregate of changing nature is *rupekkhandâ*;
- * The arising and ending of the aggregate of sense-accepting and suffering nature is *vedanekkhândâ*;
- * The arising and ending of the aggregate of sense recording nature is *sanñekkhândâ*;
- * The arising and ending of the aggregate of change-originating nature is *sankhârekkhandâ*;
- * The arising and ending of the aggregate of sense-knowing nature is *vinñânekkhandâ*;

Let me ask you a question here.

Since we have found out the meaning of *khandâ*, tell me what forces originate these *khandâ*.
(Venerable Teacher, they are nothing but *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.)

When we say that we understand *khandâ*, we must know the causes that let *khandâ* arise and must also know the characteristic of each *khandâ* truthfully. Now that we have discussed all these, let us try to get rid of *ditthi*, the wrong conception, and *vicikicchâ*, the doubt, out of our system.

Are *nâma* and *rûpa*, the two components making up a *khandâ*, created by the King of *Devas*, the spritual beings and *Brahmahs* or do they arise because of *avijjâ* or *sankhâra* ?
(Sir, they arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.)

Are *nâma* and *rûpa*, the two components making up a *khandâ*, created by supernatural beings or do they arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ?
(Sir, they arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.)

Do *nâma* and *rûpa*, the two components making up a *khandâ*, come into being on their own accord or do they arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ?
(Sir, they arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*.)

Then what are the true causes of *khandâ* ?
(The true causes of *khandâ* are *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, sir.)

If we accept the fact that the true causes of what we call our bodies or all other forms of animate or inanimate bodies, do we still bear any more doubt on the cause of *khandâ*, the aggregates ? Of course, not. When we get to this stage in our learning, we have definitely disposed of what is known as *vicikicchâ*, the doubt.

Now that we have gone through the cause, let us ask ourselves some questions on the effect side.

What are those that arise due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ? Are they we, you, they or only five aggregates, the *khandâ* ?
(Sir, they are only the *khandâ*.)

What are those that arise due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ? Are they people, creatures or only five aggregates, the *khandâ* ?
(Sir, they are only the *khandâ*.)

What are those that arise due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ? Are they men, women or only five aggregates, the *khandâ* ?
(Sir, they are only the *khandâ*.)

Then are there we, you, they, people, men or women in the *khandâ* caused by *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ?
(There is none of them in *khandâ*, sir.)

Now that we know truthfully the resultant effects of the causes we have discussed, what *ditthi* have we disposed off ?
(We have disposed off *sakkâyaditthi*, sir.)

When we know the true causes and effects of all animate and

inanimate things around us through learning *paticcasamuppâda*,
what have we disposed off ?

(We have disposed off *vicikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi*, sir.)

I must now conclude this discussion by urging you to note that
this discussion is one that can make you what we call *culasotâpan*, a
person who has been enlightened temporarily at least.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Ten

This discussion is to analyse the difference between *pyanñat*, the names attached to all unreal things, and *paramat*, the true aspects of all things.

- * *Pyanñat* is what does not really exist whereas *paramat* is what does exist.
- * *Pyanñat* is what has only names attached to it whereas *paramat* is what is really there.
- * Wherever there are only names, we have *samuticassâ*, a temporary truth whereas when there are things that really exist, we have *paramathacassâ*, the truth that always prevails.
- * *Pyanñat* is what we cannot find even if we search for it whereas *paramat* is what we find whenever we try to find it.
- * *Pyanñat* is a intangible thing whereas *paramat* is a tangible one.
- * *Pyanñat* is what we cannot see through insight wisdom whereas *paramat* is what we can see.
- * *Pyanñat* is what we can see only through natural eyes whereas *paramat* is what we can see only through the eyes of wisdom.
- * Knowing *Pyanñat* is wrong whereas knowing *paramat* is right.
- * *Pyanñat* knowledge is *Micchaditthi*, the wrong conception, whereas *paramat* knowledge is *sammâditthi*, the right conception.
- * *Pyanñat* is what we know during the absence of any Buddha whereas *paramat* is what we know only when there is the Teaching of a Buddha.
- * *Pyanñat* is what we know when we have no *sâsanâ*, the time when you have no opportunity to hear the Teaching of a Buddha whereas *paramat* is what we know during the time of *sâsanâ*, the time when you can hear the Teaching of a Buddha,.

* Because we usually pass away with *pyanñat* knowledge, we end up in *apāya* abodes, the four abodes of suffering, whereas when we cannot acquire *paramat* knowledge, we can never attain *nirbana*.

* What we acquire from the moment of our birth is *pyanñat* knowledge whereas what we learn from a teacher is *paramat* knowledge.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge leads you to *samudaya cissa* and *dukkha cissâ* whereas *paramat* knowledge would lead you to *magga cassâ* and *niroda cassâ*.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge is nothing but mundane knowledge whereas *paramat* knowledge is extra-mundane knowledge.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge alone would never get rid of agedness, pain or death whereas *paramat* knowledge would definitely get rid of agedness, pain and death.

* A person with *pyanñat* knowledge is what we call *andaputhujana*, a foolish person who has not attained any level of enlightenment, whereas one who has acquired *paramat* knowledge is what we call *kalayâna-puthujana*, a right-thinking person but who has not attained enlightenment.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge is a path taken by a *puthujana* whereas *paramat* knowledge is one taken by an *ariyâ*, one who has attained enlightenment.

* Rely on *pyanñat* knowledge if you want to end up as an *andaputhujana* whereas you should rely on *paramat* knowledge if you want to end up as a *kalayana-puthujana*.

I presume that we have fully gone through discussion on *pyanñat* and *paramat*. Let us check up our knowledge we have learned up to now again.

* The names—human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other crea-

tures—come from the realm of *pyanñat*. Only five *khandâ* are from the realm of *paramat*.

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures are names attached to them by *pyanñat*. Only five *khandâ* are what really exist.

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures therefore represent *samuticassâ*. Only five *khandâ* represent *paramatthacassâ*.

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures are only names that can never be found. Only five *khandâ* can be found wherever you look for them.

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures are intangible things, *pyanñat*, whereas only five *khandâ* are tangible things, *paramat*.

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures that belong to the realm of *pyanñat* cannot be seen through the eyes of wisdom. Only five *khandâ* that belong to the realm of *paramat* can always be seen

* Human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures that can be seen through natural eyes belong to the realm of *pyanñat*. Five *khandâ* that can be seen only through the eyes of wisdom belong to the realm of *paramat*.

* What we think that we see as human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures is actually a wrong notion whereas only the wisdom that enables us to know that they are only five *khandâ* is *paramat*.

* Accepting whatever we see like human beings, *devas*, *bramahs* and all other creatures under the names attached to them by ourselves is only a wrong notion, *micchâditthi*, whereas seeing them as what they truly are i.e. five *khandâ* is *sammâditthi*.

* Whatever we learn while there is no Buddha to teach us is *pyanñat*, the notion acquired from accepting what we see as human beings, *devas*, *bramahs*. When there is a Buddha to teach the right path, then only

we know that they are nothing but five *khandâ*, the *paramat*.

* Because we pass away accepting only *pyanñat* knowledge, we end up in Apaya abodes, the place of suffering; and because we have been deprived of having the right knowledge of *paramat*, we have never attained enlightenment.

* What we acquire at birth is nothing but *pyanñat* knowledge whereas what we learn from a true teacher is *paramat* knowledge of five *khandâ*.

* The end of *pyanñat* knowledge is *samudaya cassâ* and *dukkha cassâ*; and that of *paramat* knowledge is *maggâ cassâ* and *niroda cassâ*.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge is a mundane knowledge whereas *Paramat* knowledge is an extra-mundane knowledge.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge, the notion acquired from accepting what we see, hear, smell, taste or touch as human beings, *devas*, *bramahs*, would never get rid of agedness, pain or death whereas *paramat* knowledge perceiving them as five *khandâ* would definitely get rid of agedness, pain and death.

* A person with *pyanñat* knowledge is what we call *anda-puthujana*, a foolish person who has not attained any level of enlightenment, whereas one who has acquired *paramat* knowledge is what we call *kalayâna-puthujana*, a right-thinking person but who has not attained enlightenment.

* *Pyanñat* knowledge is a path taken by a *Puthujana* whereas *paramat* knowledge is one taken by an *Ariya*, one who has attained enlightenment.

* Rely on *pyanñat* knowledge if you want to end up as an *anda-puthujana* whereas you should rely on *paramat* knowledge if you want to end up as a *kalayâna-puthujana*.

However, if you are a truly lucky person who obtains the opportu-

nity to hear and accept the Teaching of a Buddha during the period of His *sâsanâ*, then you must take care to avoid two extremes of *pyanñat* and *paramat*.

If you are at the *pyanñat* extreme, there is no opportunity whatsoever for you to stay away from rebirth in *apâya* abodes, places of suffering. When you get to another extreme of *paramat* again, your perception will be so distorted, it will again be difficult to stay away from *apâya* abodes.

You cannot entirely dispose of *pyanñat* but at the same time you will have to acquire *paramat* knowledge. Because if you dispose of *pyanñat*, it will be impossible to expound or explain anything. And if you do not try to acquire *paramat* knowledge, you will be very far away from attaining enlightenment.

For your knowledge, I must let you know here the eight causes for not disposing totally of *pyanñat* knowledge. They are :

- * for the sake of having *hiri*, being ashamed of committing evil deeds, and *otapa*, being afraid of doing the same.
- * for acquiring *kamma-sakata* wisdom i.e. accepting effects as the result of your own deeds.
- * for knowing that your own charity is more meritorious than your ability to let others do the same.
- * for being able to refrain from five *panca-nandriya*—killing own father, killing own mother, making a Buddha bleed in some way, killing

an *arahat* (the person who has attained all four stages of enlightenment) and attempting to ruin close relationship among *Sangha* (the Buddha's disciples).

- * for acquiring ability to see and know the past lives.
- * for acquiring ability to differentiate between the good and bad recipients of charity.
- * because the Buddha Himself did not dispel *pyannat* knowledge.
- * for being able to send and receive *metta*, the loving kindness, towards intended persons and all the people as a whole.

Please allow me to stop this discussion here for now.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Note : *I must request the reader to put up with some repetitions you see in this discussion. The only objective is to sink the idea into the students' mind so that they will benefit from this knowledge when they go into actual meditational practice.*

Translator

Discussion Eleven

This discussion would deal briefly with five *dhamma* that could only be learnt and observed during the period of a Buddha's *sâsanâ* and then would go on to explain the causes that have been sustaining the present *khandâ*, the physical and mental portions of the bodies you are in possession of now.

There are five *dhamma* that shall be understood by the Buddhists or any student learning Buddhism who are born in a period where the Teaching of a Buddha can be learnt either through books or the explanations by a person conversant with the Teaching. They are what we call in Pali (a) *khandâ* (b) *âyatana* (c) *dâtu* (d) *paticcasamuppâda* and (e) *cassâ*. Most of the words mentioned are familiar to you due to the discussion that we have had before. *Dâtu*, however, is a new word. It means a nature that takes its own course by itself.

We have already discussed in detail in our Discussion Nine about *khandâ*. I therefore think that it would only be a waste of our time to dwell too long on this subject. Regarding *âyatana*, we have also found out that there are six internal and six external *âyatana*. Six internal *âyatana* are the organs that we have on our bodies for accepting senses from outside namely eyes, ears, noses, tongues, bodies and minds. External *âyatana* are as you are all aware the senses outside our bodies which come into contact with internal *âyatana* to form consciousness in our brain. *Âyatana* means the nature that prolongs *samsarâ*, the unending cycle of deaths and rebirths. We therefore have twelve *âyatana*.

As to *dâtu*, there are eighteen of them. They are actually nothing but those six internal organs mentioned above, six external senses also

mentioned above and six types of consciousness that come into being because those internal organs and external senses come into contact with each other. If we are to tabulate them, we will get the following:

Internal Organs	External Senses	Consciousness formed
The eye	+ Senses to see	= Sight Consciousness
The ear	+ Senses to hear	= Hearing Consciousness
The nose	+ Senses to smell	= Smell Consciousness
The tongue	+ Senses to taste	= Taste Consciousness
The body	+ Senses to touch	= Touch Consciousness
The mind	+ Senses to think	= Mental Consciousness

Paticcasamuppâda, as you have already learnt, is a discourse on causes and effects of five *khandâ*.

All the happenings that we encounter in *khandâ*, *âyatana*, *dâtu* and *paticcasamuppâda* are *cassâ*, the truth.

When we say that *khandâ* arise because of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, we are referring to the effect that takes place at present due to what took place in the past. I would now like to discuss the effect that takes place at present due to what is done at present time.

The six internal organs and six external senses arise because of (1) what we do, (2) what we think, (3) the weather we feel around us and (4) the food that we take. We can say here that the physical aspect of our

being come into existence due to the four elements shown above; and as to the mental aspect, we can say that due to *phassa*, the nature that creates opportunity for internal organs and external senses come into contact with each other, six types of consciousness arise.

We can come to a conclusion here that as long as what we do, we think, the weather we feel around us and the food that we take are in a favourable position, there will always arise physical things which are six internal organs and six external senses. And if there is *phassa*, there would arise types of consciousness mentioned which could also be called *nâma khandâ*, mental aggregates. We can therefore say here that the originator of *nâma khandâ* is nothing but chance contact of internal organs and external senses; and the originators of *rupa khandâ*, the physical aggregates, are nothing but what we do, what we think, the weather around us and the food that we eat.

Let us go through our usual question and answer mode.

What arise because of what we do, what we think, the weather we feel around us and what we eat ?

(Physical bodies and physical natures, sir. They are *rupa khandâ*.)

What arise because of the contact between internal organs and external senses, my students ?

(Mental bodies and mental natures, Sir. They are *nâma khandâ*.)

What we have discussed so far is about the present causes and present effects. They are therefore the causes and effects of the present.

Now that we know the causes that make physical and mental

khandâ, what have we disposed of ?
(We have disposed of the doubt, *viccikicchâ*, sir)

If we accept the idea that there is no I, they, man, woman or creature in the effect caused except five *khandâ*, then what is disposed of ?
(*Sakkâyaditthi* has been disposed of, sir.)

When we know the present causes and effects of the *khandâ*, what do we get rid of ?
(We dispose of *viccikicchâ*, the doubt, and *sakkâyaditthi*, the wrong conception based on “self”, sir.)

If we can dispose of *viccikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi* through *ñâtaparinñâ* study, what have we become ?
(We have become what is known as *culasotâpan*, a temporarily enlightened person, sir.)

What is the benefit that we accrue out of being a *culasotâpan* ?
(At least, the next life of ours would not be in *apâya* abode, sir.)

With my request for you to regard today’s discussion as a very beneficial one for you because it has made you a *culasotâpan*, I would like to end this discussion.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Twelve

The previous discussions dealt with the causes and effects on five *khandâ* and I believe they have helped all of you in disposal of *viccikicchâ* and *sakkâyaditthi*. In the present discussion, we will try further to get rid of *sassataditthi*, eternalism or the notion that says that there is no gap between disappearance and arising of all occurrences, and that says that all *khandâ* are permanent; and to get rid of *ucchedaditthi*, the heresy of annihilation or the notion that says that when one passes away, it is the end of everything and there is nothing else.

There are 55 kinds of *sassataditthi* and 7 kinds of *ucchedaditthi*. The total number of misconceptions or *micchâditthi* is 62.

Anybody who still has not disposed of *sakkâyaditthi* thinks, believes in and acts under either what *sassataditthi* teaches or *ucchedaditthi* teaches.

The nature of *micchâditthi* is such that whatever *micchâditthi* you have, you are after this life bound to land in *apâya* abodes. They are obstacles that deter you from reaching your goal, the enlightenment. It is quite natural that whoever has a specific goal must get rid of what deters him from reaching his goal. So is the one who is aiming for enlightenment.

We can say that all misconceptions, *micchâditthi*, are the seeds that grow up to deliver you unto *apâya* abodes. If they are not removed, they would always force you down to where you do not want to go i.e. *apâya* abodes.

Sassataditthi and *ucchedaditthi* are two obstacles that must be removed out of our way to reaching *nirbâna*, the enlightenment. We have reached a point of time in our life when we must try to get rid of these two *Micchaditthis*.

Let us look at the circle on the board showing *paticcasamuppâda* and actually at the first quadrant of the circle so that we will be able to get rid of the two *micchâditthi*.

What are the *dhamma* that *avijjâ* is ignorant of ?
(It is ignorant of the Four Truths, sir.)

What have we done because of *avijjâ* ?
(We have done what is known as *sankhâra*, deeds to change what is happening, sir.)

In Pali, it is said *avijjâ pyaccayâ sankhâra*.

When do *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* occur ?
(They occurred in the past, sir.)

Are they causes or are they effects ?
(They are causes, sir.)

What are they written on the circle as ?
(They are written on the circle as: "Past Causal Stratum", sir.)

What *khandâ* do we obtain at what time due to *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* of the past ?

(We now obtain *khandâ* of the present for what we did in the past.)

When we have the *khandâ* of the present arising out of what we did in the past with the Khandas of the past, where have the latter gone ?

(They have perished, passed away and disappeared, sir.)

Then the fact, that the *khandâ* of the past that due to *avijjâ* have performed *Sankhâra* have perished, means that they are impermanent. Is it right ?

(Yes, sir, they are impermanent.)

If you accept the fact that the *khandâ* of the past are not permanent, then can we say that we no longer have *sassataditthi*, the misconception that believes in permanency of things ?

(We can certainly say that we have disposed of *sassataditthi*, Sir.)

Please therefore note that perishing, disappearing and passing away are nothing but words which describe the same phenomenon.

I must ask you a question here again.

When the Khandas of the past have perished and passed away, is it the end of everything concerning our bodies and mind ? Do they leave the seeds for new *khandâ* which are nothing but *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* ?

(The seeds in the form of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* are left behind, sir.)

Can we therefore say that although the *khandâ* of the past which are not permanent have perished, they have not become totally extinct because they have left some seeds for its arising in new forms and shapes?

(The seeds for future arising have been left in the form of *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, sir)

Although the old five *khandâ* have perished because they are not permanent, can we say that they have ended everything related to them there ?

(No, Venerable Teacher.)

Then, when we know that there is no cessation after our death, what *ditthi* would we get rid of ?

(*Ucchedaditthi* is what we would get rid of, sir.)

The questions I posed and the answers you gave have disposed of *sassataditthi* and *ucchedaditthi*. Our questions and answers were based on the occurrences of the past which were nothing but *khandâ* that have perished and disappeared. Let us now try to get rid of the two *ditthi* through arising *khandâ*.

We are in the *khandâ* of the present. I must ask you here whether these present *khandâ* have come into being on their own accord. Or are they the resulting effects that have some relationship with the old *khandâ* of the past ?

(Venerable Teacher, they are the effects of the old *khandâ*, sir.)

What are the causes that bear relationship with the present *khandâ*?
(They are nothing but *avijjâ* and *sankhâra*, sir.)

Then is there any connection between the present existing *khandâ* and the perished *khandâ* of the past through cause and effect sequences or is there no connection at all?

(They are somehow connected through cause and effect sequences, sir.)

If we believe in this, what *ditthi* that gives a person an illusion of thinking that there is lack of connection in anything would we get rid of?

(We would get rid of *ucchedaditthi*, sir.)

In other words, if we conceive that arising of things, births, substitutions, or *jâti* and *sankhâra* take place because there is no lack of connection through cause and effect sequences, we no longer have *ucchedaditthi*. However, any part or parts of things, bodies or *khandâ* that have perished have no chance whatsoever to become a part or parts of the present existing *khandâ*. Can the perished *khandâ* be any part or parts of the present existing *khandâ* ?

(They certainly cannot, sir.)

Can the old *khandâ* also move to the present so that they become parts of the existing *khandâ* ?

(They certainly cannot, sir.)

If you believe in the fact that the old *khandâ* can by no means be the existing *khandâ*, then what *ditthi* that gives a person an illusion of thinking that old *khandâ* become present existing *khandâ* would we dispose of ?

(We would dispose of *sassataditthi*, sir.)

We can therefore say here that if we know and accept notion in the cause of *khandâ*, we get rid of *ucchedaditthi*; and if we know and accept the notion in the effect of *khandâ*, we get rid of *sassataditthi*.

We can now see why Venerable Mogok Sayadaw had been asking his disciples throughout his life to find out through meditational practice the cause and effect sequences of *khandâ*.

(We now know that the Sayadaw did that to enable us to get rid of *ucchedaditthi* and *sassataditthi*, sir)

Can the nature that arises and perishes or *nâma-Rupa* or *khandâ* be seen as I, you, man, woman, or creature ?

(No, sir, it cannot be seen like that.)

When we know that, what *ditthi* that we get rid of ?

(We get rid of *sakkâyaditthi* in a way, sir.)

We can reiterate here that meditational practice that enables us to get rid of the main three *ditthi*--*ucchedaditthi*, *sassataditthi* and *sakkâyaditthi*--is certainly the most valuable practice that would help us get rid of all other *ditthi*. When we have disposed of all the *ditthi*, the doubt *vicikicchâ* also perishes automatically.

Let us rest for the day here.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Thirteen

Since we have made some leeway on our explanation on *sassataditthi* and *ucchedaditthi* during our previous discussion, let us refresh our memory by going through question-and-answer mode again.

What *ditthi* would we be under the influence of when we accept the notion that any type of *khandâ* is permanent?
(We would be under the influence of *sassataditthi*.)

What *ditthi* would we be under the influence of when we accept the notion that any type of *khandâ* would perish after death and there is nothing else after that?
(We would be under the influence of *ucchedaditthi*.)

What *ditthi* would be disposed of when we accept the notion that all *khandâ* being impermanent eventually perish?
(*Sassataditthi* would be disposed of. sir)

What *ditthi* would be disposed of when we accept the notion that although all *khandâ* because of their impermanence always perish, there always is a new *khandâ* to take the place of the perished old *khandâ*?
(Venerable Teacher, *ucchedaditthi* is disposed of.)

Let us take our time out to analyse some of the words used in our mundane world. When we say that life has come to an end, in actual fact, is it the “life” which has no connection whatsoever with *nâma* and *rupa*, one of the *khandâ*?
 (“Life” does not have a separate entity, sir.)

We must therefore say that what we call “life” is nothing but a combination of *nāma* and *rupa*. When we say that “life” has come to an end, where does that statement come from?

(It originates from our acceptance of *sassataditthi*, Venerable Teacher.)

When we say that “life”, *bava* here, has gone over to another *bava*, we miss the fact that what we mean by *bava* is that we have the *khandā* which is nothing but *nāma* and *rupa*, impermanent items of *bava*.

If we accept the notion that this *khandā* is moving from one *bava* to another without any change, then what would you call this notion?

(This notion is *sassataditthi*, sir.)

I must therefore say that all these notions are the results of our belief that only *rupa*, the physical aspect of the body, perishes but *nāma*, the mental aspect, goes on without changing in any way.

In this discussion, let us analyse whether *vinñāna*, the consciousness of things around us, is impermanent or not. In other words, let us find out whether *vinñāna*, the mental element of the body, can move from one *bava* to another.

Would you please tell me what *vinñāna* means?

(*Vinñāna* is being conscious of what is happening around you, sir.)

How many kinds of *vinñāna* are there?

(There are two kinds, sir. One is the consciousness that we have while we are conceived in the womb of a potentially pregnant mother. It is called *padissanta vinñâna*. Another type is the consciousness that we possess after our birth. That is called *pavutti vinñâna*.)

When we come to *pavutti vinñâna* how many variations are there?
(There are six variations and they are nothing but eye-*vinñâna*, ear-*vinñâna*, nose-*vinñâna*, tongue-*vinñâna*, body-*vinñâna* and mind-*vinñâna*, sir.)

Can we therefore say that we have been living with these six variations of *vinñâna* while we are alive as beings ?
(Certainly, Sir.)

What *vinñâna* is one that sees things?
(It is known as *cakkhuvinnâna*, Venerable Teacher.)

Can this *cakkhuvinnâna* arise when the body which has the eyes is dead?
(No, sir. Only a living body can see and only with it can *cakkhuvinnâna* arise.)

Then why can a dead body not see things and let *cakkhuvinnâna* arise?
(Because there is no *cakkhuvinnâna* with a dead body, sir.)

Cakkhuvinnâna is the mental portion of a *khandâ*. What is missing on the physical portion?
(It is the eyes of a dead body which are no longer in working

order, sir.)

It is therefore obvious that without the live eyes in existence it is impossible to have *cakkhuvinñāna*. It is against the logic or correct perception that *cakkhuvinñāna*, when a body is dead, would be transferred to another body in the next life.

How about the ear consciousness or Sotavinana also? Let us go into the same routine as above.

What *vinñāna* is one that hears sounds?
(It is known as *sotavinñāna*, Venerable Teacher.)

Can this *sotavinñāna* arise when the body which has the ears is dead?
(No, Sir. Only a living body can hear and only with it can *sotavinñāna* arise.)

Then why can a dead body not hear sounds and let *sotavinñāna* arise?
(Because there is no *sotavinñāna* with a dead body, sir.)

Sotavinñāna is the mental portion of a *khandā*. What is missing on the physical portion?
(It is the ears of a dead body which are no longer in working order, sir.)

It is therefore obvious that without the live ears in existence it is impossible to have *sotavinñāna*. It is against the logic or correct perception that *sotavinñāna*, when a body is dead, would be transferred to an-

other body in the next life.

The identical conclusion would be arrived at if we discuss about nose consciousness (*gānavinñāna*), or tongue consciousness (*jivāvinñāna*) or body consciousness (*kāyavinñāna*) or mind consciousness (*manovinñāna*). We can therefore say with full conviction that not one *vinñāna* would be transferred to a new body from an old dead body. Then can we accept *sassataditthi* which gives the idea of *vinñāna* moving from one body to another of the same person in the next life?

(Venerable Teacher, *sassataditthi* is an impossible idea, sir.)

For any *khandā*, it would therefore be appropriate to say here that when a physical portion of the body, *rupa*, ceases its existence, the mental part, *nāma*, also ceases its existence. And it is true vice versa also. Accepting the notion that no *rupa* nor *nāma* nor for that matter, *khandā* also would move from one body to another, let us purify the mental portion of our bodies by getting rid of all wrong perceptions like *sassataditthi*.

Sādu, sādu, sādu !

Discussion Fourteen

This discussion would try to dispose of *sassataditthi* born out of action or deed or *kamma* in Pali. We would try to find out whether the action taken in one life gets to or can get to the next life.

If we look at the Quadrant One of the *padiccasamuppâda* circle on the board, could we say that in our past lives meritorious or non-meritorious deeds were performed through *avijjâ* and *sankhâra* because we did not know the Truth? Is it also true that what we have and what we enjoy during the present life is the result of what we did in our previous lives? The Buddha Himself explained this phenomenon by giving examples like “the shadow of a person following in his wake all the time” and “the wheels of a bullock cart following the cart”. And again in some of His discourses, the Buddha said in Pali that “*sabbe sankhârâ anacca*” meaning that all deeds are not permanent. He said that all *dhamma* perish after their appearance. It therefore comes to a point where we have to consider which is correct of two statements made by the same Buddha i.e. Does *kamma* of the present life follow the person to the next life ? We must know here that there are two types of discourses delivered by the Buddha. One is that which should be taken the meaning directly of and the other indirectly. It is known respectively as *abidhamma* and *sutta*. All Buddhas have no discrimination whatsoever in bestowing Their compassionate love, Metta, to all beings. If the Buddhas did not say that *kamma* follows the person to the present life, those who are stupid would be happy to perform all their misdeeds and land in *apâya* abodes. This statement by the Buddhas is true to a stage meaning that people would attain what is known as *kammasakatañâna* which would not of course let them attain what is required for obtaining enlightenment, *nirbâna*. If the Buddhas did not say that *kamma* perishes as it appears, then those who are of high

intelligence would not have the opportunity to reach *nirbâna*. This knowledge is known as *caccanulomikañâna*, the knowledge about the Truths. We must be aware that the statement *kamma* of the past is the creator of the present is to prevent irrational people from getting to the *apâya* abodes and the statement *kamma* perishes as it appears is to let those who have adequate knowledge and practice to reach *nirbâna*.

If we accept the statement that *kamma* follows the person to the present to create form and shape deserved by what has been performed before, we have *sassataditthi*. Only when we accept the statement that *kamma* perishes as it appears, we will want to practice *viapassanâ* meditation and reach what we aim for, *nirbâna*. *Kammasakatañâna* would not get you to *nirbâna* and can be attained even in the absence of a Buddha. However, *caccanulomikañâna* can be attained only when there is a Buddha. Would it therefore benefit us who have been born into the *sâsanâ* era of a Buddha to accept only *kammasakatañâna*? We should be satisfied only when we obtain *caccanulomikañâna* that would convey us to *nirbâna*. However, there is a question to be asked. If we accept the notion that *kamma* of the past does not follow the person to the present, we would be victims of *ucchedaditthi*. *Kamma* does not follow a person to the present life. However, its momentum and its effect do follow him to the present life. The *khandâ* of our present life are the results of the past deeds. This fact we should not be doubtful of.

I must conclude this discussion by praying that all of you be alienated from both *sassataditthi* and *ucchedaditthi*. and attain enlightenment for *nirbâna*.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Fifteen

This discussion is to deal with the causes which bring about *ditthi*. *Ditthi* is something which deters a person from obtaining enlightenment. Hence it is something which should not be accepted on physical aspect nor on mental aspect of a *khandâ* nor on *kamma*, the deed performed. That is why the discussions so far have been trying to dispose of *ditthi* in any form, shape or notion.

However, we must understand that all these *ditthi* do not come into existence on their own accords. They come into being due to the following factors :

* **Lack of knowledge about five *khandâ* and their physical and mental aspects, *rupa* and *nâma*.** What this means is that you are accepting your five *khandâ* as I, you, she, he, they or as creatures, men, women, etc. That is, as you have already been explained to, known as *sakkâyaditthi*. And again, as you accept the non-durable *khandâ* as something durable and permanent, you become a victim of *sassataditthi*. When you do not accept the notion that as the old *khandâ* perish, there arise new *khandâ*, you become a victim of *ucchedaditthi*. When you do not understand the cause of *khandâ*'s arising, you are still with *vicikicchâ*. We can make a conclusion here that if we do not understand *padiccasamuppâda*, the cause and effect of *khandâ*, then we are with *ditthi* and *vicikicchâ*.

* **Existence of *avijjâ*.** *Avijjâ*, as you all know, is the lack of knowledge about the Four Truths. When you do not understand how your life, present or past, comes into existence, you would naturally lose track of *jâti*, the beginning of life, and tend to regard five *khandâ*

you are composed of as “self” or “I” When you are successful in your economic activities, you again think that it is “I” who have made myself a rich man and lose track of the truth that you are getting old and are a victim of agedness and fall prey to *ditthi*. When you are still successful while you are on the brink of losing your life, you do not naturally see that pain and death are nothing but *dukkha*, the forms of suffering and think so highly of yourself that you again become a victim of *ditthi*. Those are the examples of how *ditthi* come into being due to lack of knowledge about *dukkhasaccâ*.

Happy-go-lucky people, thinking just to be happy would make them live longer than those who are not so lucky as they are, have become victims of *sassataditthi* because they believe that it would be hard for them to die if they are always happy. Some adventurous dare-devils thinking that if they die they would only be buried down in the earth and if they live they would be successful in life also become victims of *ucchedaditthi*. Economically successful people thinking so highly of themselves look down on less successful ones and become victims of *sakkâyaditthi*. Those are the examples of how *ditthi* come into being due to lack of knowledge about *samudayasaccâ*.

Those thinking *nirbâna* as a grand golden paradise or in other words as a place with material wealth and grandeur become victims of *sassataditthi*. Those having heard of *nirbâna* as a place having no physical or mental aspects of being and believing that *nirbâna* is a place of nothingness again become victims of *ucchedaditthi*. These are the examples of how *ditthi* come into being due to lack of knowledge about *nirodasaccâ*.

Those ignorant of the path or training that would deliver them to

their goal which is *nirbâna* usually veer off from the right path and become members of miracle workers, alchemists, and believers in miracle tables and diagrams and in clairvoyance and psychic phenomena. Those are the examples of how *ditthi* come into being due to lack of knowledge about *maggasaccâ*.

* ***Phassa***, the contact with external senses. Here, *ditthi* comes into being because whenever the person concerned comes into contact with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, physical touches and mental sensations, the person thinks that it “he” not the *khandâ* which is in contact. So whenever there is contact with any of the abovementioned senses, there arises *sakkâyaditthi*.

* ***Sanñâ***, the perception of the senses. When a person sees a sight, if it is not perceived as only a sight seen through physical and mental process known as *sakkhuvinnâna*, then there arises *ditthi* because usually it is perceived as what names and adjectives are attached to the sight like a beautiful girl, a big house, a pretty flower, etc. by “I”, the person not as the form which comes into being through combination process of aggregates. It would suffice, for our purpose, to say here that the same explanation would be true for perception of sounds, smells, tastes, physical touches, and mental processes. That is by thinking that the external senses are perceived not by *khandâ*, the aggregates, but by “I”, “he”, “she” or “they”, we become victims of *sakkâyaditthi*.

* ***Vitak***, the wrong acceptance of notions. Whenever you see something, you would not stop at accepting the fact that it is only a sight which is not permanent and it would deteriorate and perish eventually; but you would naturally go on through the thinking process that you like or do not like that sight. The same would hold true for sounds, tastes,

physical touches and mental processes. That is how you become victims of *ditthi*.

* **Wrong Company.** There are a good deal of stories about people during the Buddha's era. One of which is that about *Azatasat*, the son of *Beinbisâra*, the king killed by his own son, who happened to make friend with *Devadata*, a person who was always against the Buddha and his *Dhamma*. *Azatasat's kamma* of the past was to enable him to obtain enlightenment during that life but his wrong company pushed him down to *apâya* abode, the unpleasant form of living where cruelty prevails. During the present days also, there are people who have come into contact with wrong company like miracle workers, alchemists, and believers in miracle tables and diagrams and in clairvoyance and psychic phenomena. When you become like these people, you are no longer true Buddhists because you no longer believe in the fact that you will be the results of what you did in your past lives and present ones. That is the result of having a wrong company.

* ***Ayonisomanasikâra***, the wrong attitude towards realities of life. Here, in one of His discourses, the Buddha Himself said that "it is not difficult to acquire *samâditthi*, the correct perception, if the right attitude towards realities of life leads the way". If one accepts whatever occurs on his body while in meditation as something that is to be aware of and he is aware of such occurrence at the time it occurs, then there would arise *samâditthi*. However, when we analyse how one attitudinizes while the occurrence takes place on one's body, we find that although there arises *cakkhuvinnâna* due to the presence of the sight to be seen, the eye to see and the appropriate condition to see, one always thinks that it is "he" who sees something that has a name attached. In cases of sounds, smells, tastes, physical touches and mental objects, one always

thinks that it is “he” not the contact or coincidence of the sounds, smells, tastes, physical touches and mental objects and the ability to perceive these senses which brings about *vinñāna*, the conception. That is how and where *ditthi* come into being due to *ayonisomanasikāra*.

* **Hearing a wrong discourse or teaching.** Even during the era of the Buddha, there were people clinging to *ditthi* because they had occasions to hear wrong discourse from wrong teachers. At present days, there are those with *ditthi* who have become such by listening to other wrong teachings. Even hearing a discourse which teaches on donation and observation of precepts only would not enable a person to dispose of any of his *ditthi*. So we can say it for sure that by hearing teachings which would give rise to only *kammasakatannāna*, it is definitely possible that there would arise *ditthi*.

What we have discussed lets the students know the eight causes of *ditthi*. We can therefore come to our conclusion that if you do not meet a person who can teach you *padiccasamuppāda*, the law of dependent origination, then it is impossible for any of you to reach your goal, the *nirbāna*. Vice versa is true.

Sādu, sādu, sādu !

Discussion Sixteen

The present discussion will deal with how the cycle of rebirths revolves around the six locations for acceptance of senses. If you look at the second quadrant of the *padiccasamuppâda* circle, you will find *salâyatana*, the six causes that prolong *samsarâ*, the cycle of rebirths. As you have been explained before, the six causes prolonging *samsarâ* are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind found on your *khandâ*.

Let us see how the eye prolongs *samsarâ*. When the eye that can see gets into contact with the sight through *phassa*, the result is *sakkhuvinnâna*, the sight consciousness. If we show this process as an equation, it would appear like this :

The eye + the sight = the sight consciousness

In Pali, it is said thus : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhuvinnânan*”.

This is the beginning of *padiccasamuppâda* through the sight consciousness. When the sight happens to be pleasant to your eyes, then there arises *sukhavedanâ*, a pleasant feeling or sensation.

The Pali version would be : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhuvinnânan; tinnam sangati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ sukhavedanâ*”.

Where and when does this pleasant sensation appear ? We will find that it appears in the second quadrant of the circle and in the present

period. We will also find that it appears as an effect of the coincidence of the eye and the sight. We can therefore say here that this coincidence of the eye and the sight has brought about the person's acceptance of pleasant sensation. When you accept and like this pleasant sensation, there arises *tanhâ*, the craving for this sensation.

We would express this in Pali thus : “*Sukhavedanâ pyaccaya tanhâ*” .

Where do you find *tanhâ* in the circle ? You would find it in the third quadrant. The items found in the third quadrant are all causes and they appear in the present period. So *tanhâ* here is a cause again; so it means that a cause has come into being from an effect. When that craving becomes so big and uncontrollable, it turns into a strong attachment, *upadâna*.

In Pali : “*Tanhâ pyaccaya upadâna*” .

When it comes to the stage of *upadâna*, the person concerned naturally cannot resist to commit one or all three of *kamma*, which are nothing but deeds and acts. It would be noticed that starting from the sight perception we have got to carrying out deeds and acts which can be seen in the circle as *kammabava*

The Pali version is : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijjati sakkhuvinnânan; tinnam sangati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ sukhavedanâ; sukhavedanâ pyaccayâ tanhâ; tanhâ pyaccayâ upadânan; upadâna pyaccayâ bavo*” .

We can say here that starting from the sight consciousness taking

place in the present period, we have come to a stage where a deed has been performed that would effect the future. This deed has been performed under the influence of *tanhâ* and *upadâna*. And *tanhâ* and *upadâna* are nothing but *lobha*, the greed, in small and big scales respectively. If *lobha* is what is going to deliver the person concerned to an abode he deserves, then that abode would certainly be that of *pitta*, the ever-hungry creatures of *apâya* abodes. It is therefore be not incorrect to say that every time you open your eye, there arise deeds performed under the influence of *tanhâ* and *upadâna* which would get you down to *pitta* of *apâya* abodes.

If we consider the number of times that we open our eyes every day, every month, every year and every life in *samsarâ*, then we can certainly not count that number by any means and the causes we have accumulated that would put us down to *pitta* abode. The explanation so far gives us the idea of how through *padiccasamuppâda*, the sight consciousness could get us to *pitta* abode.

For other senses which are sounds, tastes, physical contacts and mental sensation, if deeds are performed under the influence of *tanhâ* and *upadâna* because respective consciousness comes into being through *sukhavedanâ*, the persons who perform those deeds would certainly land in *pitta* abode.

I hope what we have discussed so far has revealed how *padiccasamuppâda* revolves around the six accepting organs of our *khandâ* and prolong *samsarâ* through *lobha*.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Seventeen

In the previous discussion, we explained about how *padiccasamuppâda* revolves around the sight consciousness, *sakkhivinñâna* through “*sukhavedanâ pyaccayâ tanhâ*”. In the present discussion, let us see how the eye prolongs *samsarâ* because *padiccasamuppâda* revolves around the sight consciousness through “*dukkhavedanâ pyaccayâ dosa*”. As in the previous discussion, when the eye that can see gets into contact with the sight through *phassa*, the result is the same as before i.e. *sakkhivinñâna*, the sight consciousness. The process shown in an equation is also the same i.e.

The eye + the sight = the sight consciousness

In Pali, it is said thus : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhivinñânan*”.

This is the beginning of *padiccasamuppâda* through the sight consciousness. When the sight happens to be unpleasant to your eyes, then there arises *dukkhavedanâ*, an unpleasant feeling or sensation.

The Pali version would be : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhivinñânan; tinnam sangati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ dukkhavedanâ*”.

Where and when does this unpleasant sensation appear ? We will find that it appears in the second quadrant of the circle and in the present period. We will also find that it appears as an effect of the coincidence of the eye and the sight. We can therefore say here that this coincidence of the eye and the sight has brought about the person’s acceptance of

unpleasant sensation. When you accept but does not like this unpleasant sensation, there arises *dosa*, the hatred towards this sensation.

We would express this in Pali thus : “*Dukkhavedanâ pyaccayâ dosa*”.

Where do you find *dosa* in the circle ? *Dosa* is an element that belongs to the fourth quadrant. When *dosa* appears, it is always followed by *soka*, *parideva*, *dukkha*, *domanasa* and *upâyâsa*. All these items tend to drown a person and let him drift along the stream of *samsarâ*. Whatever that drowns and lets a person drift along in the stream of *samsarâ* is known as *âsava*. It is a certainty that this *âsava* would originate *avijjâ*, the lack of knowledge about the Fourth Truths. This is how a cause of *padiccasamuppâda* in the fourth quadrant of the circle originates an effect in the first quadrant. When *avijjâ* is originated, there definitely follows *sankhâra* and a deed has been performed letting the wheel of *samsarâ* revolve again.

In Pali it would be expressed thus : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijjati sakkhuvinnânan; tinnam sangati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ dukkhavedanâ; dukkhavedanâ pyaccayâ dosa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanasa, upâyâsa; âsava samudaya avijjâ samudayo; avijjâ pyaccayâ sankharâ*”.

From the origin of “*dukkhavedanâ pyaccayâ dosa*”, we have come to the stage of “*avijjâ pyaccayâ sankharâ*”. We can therefore say that this *sankhâra*, the deed, is performed under the influence of *dosa*. Hence, the resultant *khandâ* would arise under the influence of *dosa* and accordingly would be *khandâ* of *niraya*, the most unpleasant abode and the cruellest abode for punishment in the whole universe. The Buddha

Himself said that if you pass away with *dosa*, your destination is *niraya* abode.

It is therefore not incorrect to say that every time you open your eye, there arise deeds performed under the influence of *dosa* which would get you down to *niraya* of *apâya* abodes. There would be no way whatsoever for that person to get up out of this abode.

If we consider the number of times that we open our eyes every day, every month, every year and every life in *samsarâ*, then we can certainly not count that number by any means and the causes we have accumulated that would put us down to *niraya* abode. The explanation so far gives us the idea of how through *Padiccasamuppada*, the sight consciousness could get us to *niraya* abode.

For other senses which are sounds, tastes, physical contacts and mental sensation, if deeds are performed under the influence of *dosa* because respective perceptions come into being through *dukkhavedanâ*, the persons who perform those deeds would certainly land in *niraya* abode.

I hope what we have discussed so far has revealed how *padiccasamuppâda* revolves around the six accepting organs of our *khandâ* and prolong *samsarâ* through *dosa*.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Eighteen

In the two previous discussions, we explained about how *Padiccasamuppada* revolves around the sight consciousness, *Sakkhuvināna* through “*sukhavedana pyaccayā tanhā*” and “*dukkhaveda pyaccaya dosa*”. In the present discussion, let us see how the eye again prolongs *samsarā* because *padiccasamuppāda* revolves around the sight consciousness through “*upekkhāvedanā pyaccayā moha*”. As in the previous discussion, when the eye that can see gets into contact with the sight through *phassa*, the result is again the same as before i.e. *sakkhuvināna*, the sight consciousness. The process shown in an equation would also be the same.

The eye + the sight = the sight consciousness

In Pali, it is said thus : ‘*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhuvinānanā*’.

This is the beginning of *padiccasamuppāda* through the sight consciousness. When the sight is accepted before it is recognized as pleasant and unpleasant, then there arises *upekkhāvedana*, an indifferent feeling or sensation.

The Pali version would be : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijati sakkhuvinānanā; tinnam singati phasso; phassa pyaiccayā upekkhāvedanā*”.

Where and when does this indifferent sensation appear ? We will find that it appears in the second quadrant of the circle and in the present period. We will also find that it appears as an effect of the coincidence

of the eye and the sight. We can therefore say here that this coincidence of the eye and the sight has brought about the person's indifferent acceptance of a sensation. When you accept a sensation in an indifferent way, there arises *moha*, the lack of knowledge causing *avijjâ* because *moha* and *avijjâ* are the same.

We would express this in Pali thus : “*Upekkhâvedanâ pyaccayâ moha*”.

When *avijjâ* is originated, there definitely follows *sankhâra* and a deed would be performed letting the wheel of *samsarâ* revolve again.

In Pali it would be expressed thus : “*Sakkhonca padicca rupeca uppijjati sakkhuvinnânan; tinnam singati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ upekkhâvedanâ; upekkhâvedanâ pyaccayâ moha (avijjâ); avijjâ pyaccayâ sankhâra*”.

From the origin of “*Upakkhâvedanâ pyaccayâ moha*”, we have come to the stage of “*avijjâ pyaccayâ sankhâra*”. We can therefore say that this *sankhâra*, the deed, is performed under the influence of *moha*. or *avijjâ*. Hence, the resultant *khandâ* would arise under the influence of *moha*. or *avijjâ* and accordingly would be *khandâ* of *tiricchâna*, the animal abode. The Buddha Himself said that if you pass away with *moha*, your destination is *tiricchâna* abode.

It is therefore not incorrect to say that every time you open your eye, there arise deeds performed under the influence of *Moha* which would get you down to *tiricchâna* of *apâya* abodes. There would also be no way whatsoever for that person to get up out of this abode.

If we consider the number of times that we open our eyes every day, every month, every year and every life in *samsarâ*, then we can certainly not count that number by any means and the causes we have accumulated that would put us down to *tiricchâna* abode. The explanation so far gives us the idea of how through *padiccasamuppâda*, the sight consciousness could get us to *tiricchâna* abode.

For other senses which are sounds, tastes, physical contacts and mental sensation, if deeds are performed under the influence of *moha* because respective consciousness comes into being through *upekkhâvedanâ*, the persons who perform those deeds would certainly land in *tiricchâna* abode.

I hope what we have discussed so far has revealed how *padiccasamuppâda* revolves around the six accepting organs of our *khandâ* and prolong *samsarâ* through *moha*.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Note: According to the collection of answers to some mysteries of life by Science and Technology Department at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, the human eye blinks about once every five seconds. Assuming 16 waking hours, the average person blinks about 4.2 million times a year.

Discussion Nineteen

The present discussion would deal with the method to end the ever-revolving cycle of rebirths, *samsarâ*. The body you have, as has been explained to you, has two aspects i.e. physical and mental or *rupa* and *nâma*. This body has six locations where external senses are accepted. I do not think that we have to go through this again. Through the previous three discussions, we have explained that every time you open your eye, through these six locations, there arise deeds performed under the influence of *lobha*, the greed or craving, *dosa*, the anger or hatred, and *moha*, the lack of knowledge.

In the same way :

Whenever you hear some sound, there arises a deed under the same influences.

The same holds true under the same influences :

when you accept a smell or

when you accept a taste or

when you accept a physical contact or

when you accept a mental process.

What we mean is that under these conditions there arise deeds or *kamma* that would influence you in some way in your future lives. These deeds already performed would not drift away like leaves in the path of a strong wind due to the presence of *tanhâ* or *upâdâna* which act like accumulators of these deeds with the sole intention to affect the future. You may regard them as warehouses of *kamma*. Due to the presence of these warehouses, there appears to be no end to the effects you suffer

from because as long as you are in *samsarâ* they would be affecting your lives. In other words, we can never repay enough through various forms of *khandâ* that we might have to be in during the course of *samsarâ* what we owe for the *kamma* that we have performed during the course of our lives.

And as these deeds have been performed under the influence of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, the resultant *khandâ* would naturally be those of *duggati* abode not of *sugati* abode. The Buddha Himself said that the permanent residential places of all creatures are nothing but four *apâya* abodes and thus *sugati* abodes are only places for their temporary visits.

We can therefore come to the conclusion that if we do not try to cut short the ever-revolving cycle of rebirths or *padiccasamuppâda* by means of the insight wisdom obtained through *vipassanâ* meditation, there is no way whatsoever to get out of the four *apâya* abodes. The end of agedness, pain and death is definitely not in our sight. Hence, it has become very important that we should start our effort immediately to cut short *padiccasamuppâda*. Let us therefore discuss now how we can do it.

When the ear comes into contact with the sound through *phassa*, there arises *sotavinñâna*, the sound consciousness. In the form of an equation, it would appear thus :

The ear + the sound = the sound consciousness

It would be expressed in Pali as : “*Sotinca padicca saddeca upijjati sotavinñânan*”

When the sound appears pleasant and nice, there would arise *sukhavedanâ*. In Pali, we would say : “*Sotinca padicca saddeca upijjati sotavinñânan; tinnam singati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ sukhavedanâ*”.

When the sound appears unpleasant and jarring to the ear, there would arise *dukkhavedanâ*. In Pali, we would say : “*Sotinca padicca saddeca upijjati sotavinñânan; tinnam singati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ dukkhavedanâ*”.

When the sound is accepted as it is heard at the moment of hearing it without knowing whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, then there would arise *upekkhavedanâ*. In Pali, we would say : “*Sotinca padicca saddeca upijjati sotavinñânan; tinnam singati phasso; phassa pyaccayâ upekkhavedanâ*”.

If you notice the arising of sound perception at the moment it arises and accept it accordingly; if you accept the fact that arising of *sukhavedanâ*, *dukkhavedanâ* and *upekkhavedanâ* are caused by the sound consciousness, and that this sound perception is not “I” nor “he”; and that there is no person nor creature in the *vedana* caused, then you have disposed of *sakkâyaditthi*, the wrong perception on “self”.

And again if you clearly understand yourselves that the sound consciousness and the *vedanâ* caused do not appear on their own accord but that they appear due to the presence of some causes, then you have disposed of *vicikicchâ*, the doubt.

Sakkâyaditthi and *vicikicchâ* should be out of your system before you start your meditation in the way mentioned above. The sound consciousness and the *vedanâ* caused by the sound consciousness are

actually nothing but items to be aware of through *vipassanā* insight. Whichever one you are aware of during your meditation, awareness of either one means awareness of both because mind which accepts the sound, *vedanā* which is the suffering in mind, *saññā* which perceives the sound, and *sankhāra* which is the deed performed due to the above three always appear simultaneously. However, as our discussion about the *padiccasamuppāda* process above has ended all in *vedanā*, let us concentrate on *vedanā* alone.

What we must therefore do is whenever *sukhavedanā*, *dukkhavedanā* or *upekkhāvedanā* appears, we must try to be aware of its arising at the moment it arises. Then we continue by means of insight wisdom analyse whether there still exists any of the *vedanā* mentioned. What we will find is that there no longer exists any *vedanā* because at the moment the analytical wisdom arises, there cannot be anything else. It is due to the fact no two mental processes can exist simultaneously. Vice versa is also true. While there is *vedanā*, there cannot arise the analytical wisdom

In *vipassanā* terms, the disappearance of *vedanā* is known as *anacca*, impermanence of things, and the analytical wisdom is known as *magga*. This process would show that awareness of *anacca* alone would get you the *magga*. When we say *magga*, it is nothing but the combination of what is known as *samadhi magganga* i.e. *sammāvāyama*, the right effort or exertion, *sammāsati*, the right mindfulness, and *sammāsamādhi*, the right concentration, and what is known as *pyaññā magganga* i.e. *sammāsankappa*, the right thought, and *sammāditthi*, the right view. There therefore exist two groups composing of five *magganga* at the moment of awareness of *anacca*. The leader of the two is *pyaññā magganga* because it is the wisdom which has the ability to be aware of

anacca.

We can therefore say here that whenever we are aware of the disappearance of *vedanâ* when it is followed by *magga*, then at that moment of awareness we have five *magganga* in our system. In short, *vipassanâ* is nothing but this process of being constantly aware of the disappearance of whatever appears and disappears on the *khandâ*.

Actually, whenever you are aware of what appears, you will find that at the moment of your awareness it is no longer there. In the case of *vedanâ*, its disappearance is *anacca*; the knowledge of its disappearance is *magga*. In other words, *vedanâ* is a symbol of appearance and disappearance whereas the wisdom that knows this symbol is *magga*.

When you accept this phenomenon which shows that nothing is permanent as a fact of life, then you have disposed of *sassataditthi*. When this impermanent phenomenon is revealed, in its place is substituted five *magganga*. When this substitution phenomenon is accepted as a fact of life, you have disposed of *ucchedaditthi*, the notion that everything comes to an end when it disappears. As and when you are aware of the fact that *vedanâ* is impermanent, then it is natural that you would not crave or wish for it. Then you have disposed of *tanhâ*, the craving. We could say here that it is the five *magganga* that are instrumental in disposal of the *tanhâ*. According to the *padiccasamuppâda* cycle, *vedanâ* must be followed by *tanhâ*. However, when five *magganga* appear at the disappearance of *vedanâ*, *tanhâ* has no opportunity whatsoever to appear because five *magganga* are there where it has to appear.

Do we now have the obligation to get to *pitta* abode which is where the *kamma* under the influence of *lobha* or *upâdâna*

would push the *khandâ* concerned down to?

(No, sir, since there is no *tanhâ* or *upâdâna*, there also would be no obligation to go down to *pitta* abode.)

It can now be noted that what we have discussed so far is the method to cut short the *padiccasamuppâda* cycle at the middle of its revolution by getting rid of *tanhâ* through insight wisdom or five *magganga*. Look at the link between the Quadrants 3 and 4.

There could not be *dosa* also on the *vedanâ* that has already disappeared because *dosa* has no opportunity to appear at all because five *magganga* have already taken the place where it must appear. Since there is no *dosa*, all its companions which are *soka*, *parideva*, *dukkha*, *domanasa*, *upâyâsa*, and *sankhâra* have no place to appear at all.

Then, do we now have the obligation to get to *niraya* abode which is where the *kamma* under the influence of *dosa* would push the *khandâ* concerned down to?

(No, sir, since there is no *dosa*, there also would be no obligation to go down to *niraya* abode.)

It can now be noted that what we have discussed so far is the method to cut short the *padiccasamuppâda* cycle at the end of its revolution by getting rid of *dosa* through insight wisdom or five *magganga*.

And since *anacca* of *vedanâ* is seen through insight wisdom or five *magganga* whose leader is *pyanñâ magganga* or the path through wisdom, there is no opportunity for *moha* or *avijjâ*, the lack of knowledge about the Four Truths, to appear at all. *Kamma* under the influence of *moha* or *avijjâ* also cannot take place at all because its place

has been occupied by five *magganga*.

Then, can we say here that we now no longer have the obligation to get to *tiricchâna* abode which is where the *kamma* under the influence of *moha* or *avijjâ* would push the *khandâ* concerned down to?

(Yes, sir, since there is no *moha* or *avijjâ*, there also would be no obligation to go down to *tiricchâna* abode, the animal kingdom.)

The above discussion shows the method to cut short the *padiccasamuppâda* cycle at the beginning of its revolution by getting rid of *moha* or *avijjâ* through insight wisdom or five *magganga*.

We must conclude our discussion by saying here that once you are aware of *vedanâ* and its appearance and disappearance or *anacca*, the *padiccasamuppâda* revolution has been cut short at three places—the middle, the end and the beginning of its cycle.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Twenty

This is the second last discussion in our course and it would deal with the five elements that would hinder a person from reaching enlightenment. These elements would prevent a truth seeker from finding what he wants. Following are the five hinderances in the path to *nirbâna*.

- * *Kamma + antarè* = *Kammantarè*
- * *Kilesâ + antarè* = *Kilesantarè*
- * *Vipâka + antarè* = *Vipakkantarè*
- * *Ariyupavâda + antarè* = *Ariyupavâdantarè*
- * *Ânâvitakkama antarè*

Kammantarè is the hinderance caused by what you have done so far and it has five categories.

- * Killing one's own mother or in Pali : *Mâtugâtaka kamma*.
- * Killing one's own father or in Pali : *Pitugâtaka kamma*.
- * Killing an arahat or a person who has reached the final stage of enlightenment or in Pali: *Arahantagâtaka kamma*
- * Making blood come out of the Buddha's body or in Pali : *Lohituppâdaka kamma*
- * Destroying the unity in *Sanghâ* or in Pali : *Sanghabedaka kamma*.

They are also known as *pancânantariya kamma*, committing even one of which will deter you from reaching your goal in this life however hard you try in your practice of *vipassanâ* meditation. There is no way whatsoever to get away from the consequence of committing one of these *kamma*, because they are the heaviest offences in the world. The person who committed any of these offences is sure to get down to the

lowest and cruellest level of punishment abode, *niraya*.

Kilesantarè means mainly *ditthi* and *vicikicchâ* out of the ten *kilesâ* because *ditthi* has the ability to push one down to *apâya* abodes and deter one from reaching *nirbâna*. As you been explained, there are only three main *ditthi* the total of which would come up to 62. The three main ones have been familiar to you already. They are *sakkâyaditthi*, the view that sees the form and not the essence i.e. regarding *khandâ* as “I”, “you”, “he”, “they”, “persons”, etc., *sassataditthi*, thinking that *khandâ* are permanent, and *ucchedaditthi*, thinking that nothing would come after your death in this life. All these *ditthi* can be disposed of only when you understand *khandâ padiccasamuppâda* and accept it through learning from a teacher who can teach you *padiccasamuppâda*.

Vipakkantarè is the hinderance for a person whose present situation can in no way help him attain enlightenment. They are those :

- * who are in *niraya* abode;
- * who are in *tiricchâna* abode;
- * who are in *pitta* abode;
- * who are in *asurakè* abode; those belong to this abode have to live a double life—one pleasant and one very unpleasant;
- * who are *putthujanabramah*; those who belong to abodes higher than *nats*, superior beings living a very pleasant life but who have not attained enlightenment at all;
- * who are *âsanñassabramah*; those who have no facilities for accepting senses and have not attained enlightenment so far.
- * who are *dvihikpuggala*; those who do not have enough wisdom to attain enlightenment;
- * who happens to be one of the seven *sugati ahik puggala*. They

are:

- * *Jissanta puggala* meaning a person who has been blind from birth;
- * *Jissanta padira puggala* meaning a person who has been deaf from birth;
- * *Jissamuga puggala* meaning a person who has been dumb from birth;
- * *Jissajala puggala* meaning a person has been naive from birth;
- * *Jissummataka puggala* meaning a person who has been mentally deranged from birth;
- * *Pandut* meaning a person who is neither a man nor a woman;
- * *Upadobyi* meaning a person who has to be alternately a man and a woman or a person who has both male and female organs.

These are persons whose fate would not allow them to attain enlightenment.

Ariyupavâdantarè is the obstacle caused by some misdeeds performed against any of those who have attained enlightenment. This is not only true for *putthujana*, those who have not attained any level of enlightenment but is true for those who have attained lower levels and have committed physical, verbal or mental misdeeds against those who have attained higher levels of enlightenment. This could be remedied by paying physical obeisance and saying verbal apologies to the person against whom the misdeed has been performed.

Ânâvitikkamma antarè is meant only for the members of the *Sanghâ* order. It is meant for the members who have committed four

highest offences as designated by the Buddha Himself. However, if that person take reformative measures as instructed by the Buddha to remedy any of these offences, then he can of course attain enlightenment again.

Let me conclude this discussion by saying that I fervently hope none of you who has taken this course, because you would like to find the path to enlightenment, would find any of the abovementioned obstacles in your search for the Truth.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

Discussion Twenty One

We have now come to our final discussion of the course. Since we have gone through all there is to know as far as *nâtaparinñâ* stage of *vipassanâ* meditation as an effort to attain enlightenment is concerned, this discussion will tell you how to go into meditation in exact compliance with the teachings of Mogok Sayadaw.

Before we go into meditation, there are certain steps we must take to make ourselves worthy of what we expect to achieve. They are explained below.

1. **Observation of *sila***

Sila is nothing but precepts that when observed faithfully will cleanse the mental aspect of your *khandâ*. If the person who is going to meditate is a monk or a novice, he must be sure that he has in no way violated any of the disciplinary commandments as laid down by the Buddha. Even if there is one violation, he must go into confession and do as required by the Buddha. If the person to meditate is a layman, then he must at least be in observation of five precepts i.e. refraining from killing a living creature, taking another person's possessions without his knowledge, committing adultery, telling lies and drinking alcohol that impairs a person's mindfulness. If possible, he can observe either eight, nine or ten precepts laid down for laymen.

2. **Donation of one's *khandâ* to the Buddha and Mogok Sayadaw**

You must utter in your own words the following :

“In expectation of emancipation from agedness, pain and death that we have been suffering from in all our lives throughout the entire *samsarâ*, I donate these five meditating *khandâ* to the most benevolent, the most exalted Buddha . I also donate the same *khandâ* to the Mogok Sayadawgyi.”

This will get rid of your attachment to what has so far been known as *your* body and protect you from external intervention during your meditation.

3. Request for an appropriate method

Recite the following to request for an appropriate method from the Buddha :

“Kindly give me an appropriate method or *kamahtan* that would help me in my attempt to attain enlightenment and to be liberated from agedness, pain and death.”

4. Apology and request for their acceptance and forbearance for any misdeed done before

Recite the following :

“Kindly accept my apology and forgive me for any physical, verbal or mental misdeeds—light or serious—performed either knowingly or unknowingly, deliberately or accidentally, throughout the entire *samsarâ* up to the present moment, against those who have attained any of the four levels of enlightenment. I also forgive any person who has performed a misdeed against me.”

This is done because as explained in the previous discussion the reflection on any abovementioned misdeeds during the course of meditation could deter you from reaching your goal.

5. **Manifestation of faith in meditation by holding a primate cause**

When you have a cause, it will naturally help you have faith in what you do. As such, a person to mediate should hold any of the three following primate causes.

- * *Attâdipati* : Holding oneself as the primate cause of meditation;
- * *Lokâdipati* : Holding the surrounding as the primate cause of meditation; and
- * *Dhammâdipati* : Holding the Teachings of the Buddha as the primate cause of meditation.

Attâdipati is contemplating on what you are doing as follows :

“I do not practice *vipassanâ* meditation just because I have nothing to eat; I do not practice *vipassanâ* meditation just because I have nothing to clothe myself in; I do not practice *vipassanâ* meditation just because I have nowhere to stay; I do not practice *vipassanâ* meditation just because I want to make this body healthy; I do not practice *vipassanâ* meditation just because I aim for more pleasant life either as human being or a supernatural being; I only practice *vipassanâ* meditation because I detest, loathe and fear the cycle of rebirths of this *khandâ* involved with agedness, pain and death in every form of life so

much so that I want to be liberated from this cycle.”

6. **Having faith in meditation**

When you practice *vipassanā* meditation the Mogok Sayadaw’s way, you should regard what you are doing as follow :

“It is an effort that has its genesis in the Buddha’s exertion for four aeons and one lakh of *kappa* (a time span lasting from the beginning of one planet to its end). For some Buddhas, that exertion to attain enlightenment lasted eight aeons and one lakh of *kappa*; and for some, the time needed was 16 aeons and one lakh of *kappa*. The effort has that high a value in its origin but it is something you have never done before.

“It is an effort that is appreciated and valued by those who have already attained enlightenment.

“It is an effort most appreciated, most wanted, most valued by the Mogok Sayadaw himself.

“It is an effort that will deliver you from suffering like repeated experience of agedness, pain and deaths along the unending *samsarā*.

“I have been so lucky to have this rare opportunity to engage myself in this practice which is of so high a value that I am sure to be delivered out of four *apāya* abodes.”

You must start your practice in that type of mental frame. Although there are four postures—walking, standing, sitting and lying—

that a person in practice can take, we will for **our** purpose here discuss only of sitting posture.

7. **Correct Posture**

Gentlemen should sit in a cross-legged **posture** and ladies should sit in the usual way i.e. both feet on the same side. There is one rule you must obey here. That is you must sit in a way **in** which you can stay without movement for a long time.

You must keep your back as straight as **possible**. You must not be leaning forward, backward or sideways. The **vertebral** sections of the spinal cord should be straight and vertical.

You must also keep your neck in the same way—straight and vertical. The respiratory tract should be straight for easy, flawless breathing.

Both hands should be on the centre of cross-legged position with right hand on the left and thumb tips touching each other. This is a posture that helps your determination and continuous awareness that will assist you in your search for the Truth.

The upper and lower lips should be touching each other. While in practice session, the mouth should not be opened.

The eyes should be closed just enough to keep the external sensations away. They should not be closed too tightly or tears might move out of them and you might have undesirable sensations of light in them.

8. Developing Mental Concentration

Start with breathing which should be slow and deliberate. Do not breath strongly. It will tire you in a very short time. This is known in Pali as *attakilamathânu yoga*, being cruel to your own body needlessly. If the breathing is too soft, then again you will not be aware of the air going in and coming out at the tip of your nose. It should be in between those two extremes so that you will always be aware of the air going in and coming out.

Now, try to keep your mental awareness at the tip of your nose. Try to be continuously mindful of the air going in and coming out at that place at the moment it does. Please be aware that your knowing the passage of the air going in and coming out should be only at the tip of the nose or if you prefer, on the external part of your upper lips. You must not follow the passage of the air to anywhere else.

While you are doing that, you must never make even a slight conscious movement in any part of your body. The body posture throughout the practice should be as exactly as when you start your practice. The mind should also not wander to anywhere else. While you are developing mental concentration, your mind should not wander to any other sensations. You must keep your determination and awareness of what is happening at the tip of the nose all the time.

There are three *magganga* in the play at every moment of this effort to develop mental concentration. The first is *sammâvâyama*, the right effort, the second *sammâsati*, the right mindfulness, and the last *sammâsamâdhi*, the right concentration. We can therefore say here that you are in possession of three *magganga* while you are aware of the air

going in and coming out at the tip of your nose or on the external part of your upper lip whichever you prefer.

You have now started the initial stage of *vipassanā* meditation.

9. Stepping up to *vipassanā*

After about ten or 15 minutes of your effort to develop mental concentration, *samādhi*, if you are sure that you have the enough concentration power to change over to *vipassanā*, you can now let go your mindfulness of the air going in and coming out at the tip of your nose.

In this change-over stage to *vipassanā*, two additional *magganga* known as *pyaññā magganga* have come to be involved. The first to come is *sammāsankappa*, the right thought or thinking. With this *magganga*, what you must do is just to watch what is happening in your body and to understand what the body is trying to tell you and whatever shape or form it is trying to show you to let you understand your own body which is known as *khandā* in Pali.

Your effort not to confuse *khandā* with “I” or “Self”, nor to allow your mindfulness out of your *khandā*, and to continuously understand with insight wisdom what the body is trying to tell and show you is nothing but *vipassanā* practice. While you are at it, if some phenomenon appears in your body, you only have to be aware whether fore and hind portions of this phenomenon differ, change or perish. With *sammāsankappa*, you only have to be asking questions through insight wisdom to get the answers to attain your knowledge.

If you feel pain, you are only to follow that pain sensation with questions like :

“Is the person who feels this pain sensation “I” or “self” ?

“If there is “I” or “self” feeling this pain sensation, why could this pain sensation be not stopped ?

“If the pain sensation could not be stopped, how could there be “I” or “self” which is believed to have control of the body ?

“Is it *Khandā* which has the innate nature of pain that is naturally showing this pain sensation ?

“Should I conclude that there is no “I” or “self” in the appearance of this pain sensation ?

“Then should I again conclude that it is only *khandā* that is telling you its own nature ?

When you can make the conclusion that there is no “I” or “self” in the pain sensation you feel, you have disposed of *atta*, the Pali word for “self”, and *sakkāyaditthi* also. When you can make the conclusion that it is the *khandā* which is showing you its own nature, then you have acquired *anatta* insight disposing of *atta* and are now in possession of *sammāditthi*, the right thought or thinking.

When you have got rid of *atta*, you can be sure that the door to *apāya* abodes has been closed to you. When you are in possession of *anatta* insight, the door to *nirbāna* has been opened for you.

Do not stop there and be satisfied with what you have got now. Please go on asking yourself more questions like :

“In what way this pain sensation is taking place ?

“Does this pain sensation not change at all or does it ?

“Is this pain sensation permanent, imperishable and go on asserting its power all the time ?

Then what you will find is that this pain sensation is not permanent at all and it is changing at all times. You will find that the fore part and hind part of the phenomenon is not similar at all. When you accept this change of the phenomenon, then you have acquired the knowledge of constant appearance and disappearance of all phenomena in your body. This is the *vipassanâ* wisdom. We can therefore say that *vipassanâ* is nothing but the method to find out impermanence of all phenomena relating to your body through mental search.

In the same way, other sensations like cramp, itchiness, hotness, numbness, ache, etc. that appear on your body should also be contemplated. When no sensation is conspicuous enough for your contemplation then move your awareness to the air going in and coming out of your nose. You will find the impermanence of this phenomenon also.

Through this continuous contemplation of all the phenomena appearing on your body, if you accept the notion of their perishing, you have disposed of *sassataditthi*; if you accept the notion of their arising, you have disposed of *ucchedaditthi*. This is how you get rid of *ditthi* through contemplation or *vipassanâ* meditation.

In this practice, you must not stop at seeing what you contemplate on alone. You must see the arising and perishing of all phenomena that appear on your body. In other words, you must acknowledge *anacca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* of your body. If you are contemplating on *vedanâ*, what

you see is *anacca, dukkha, anatta* of *vedanâ*. If it is mind, what you must see is also *anacca, dukkha, anatta* of your mind.

The main object of this practice therefore is to look beyond what you are contemplating on until you see and acknowledge the arising and perishing of all phenomena or in Pali, *anacca, dukkha, anatta* of these phenomena. As all these efforts would deliver you to your finding the Truth, you have accomplished your aim as far as *tirañāparinñâ* stage of *vipassanâ* meditation is concerned.

Since you have accomplished your objective now, we must conclude the entire course here by praying that all of you be able to continue your *vipassanâ* meditation until you attain full enlightenment and reach *nirbâna*, your goal.

Sâdu, sâdu, sâdu !

