

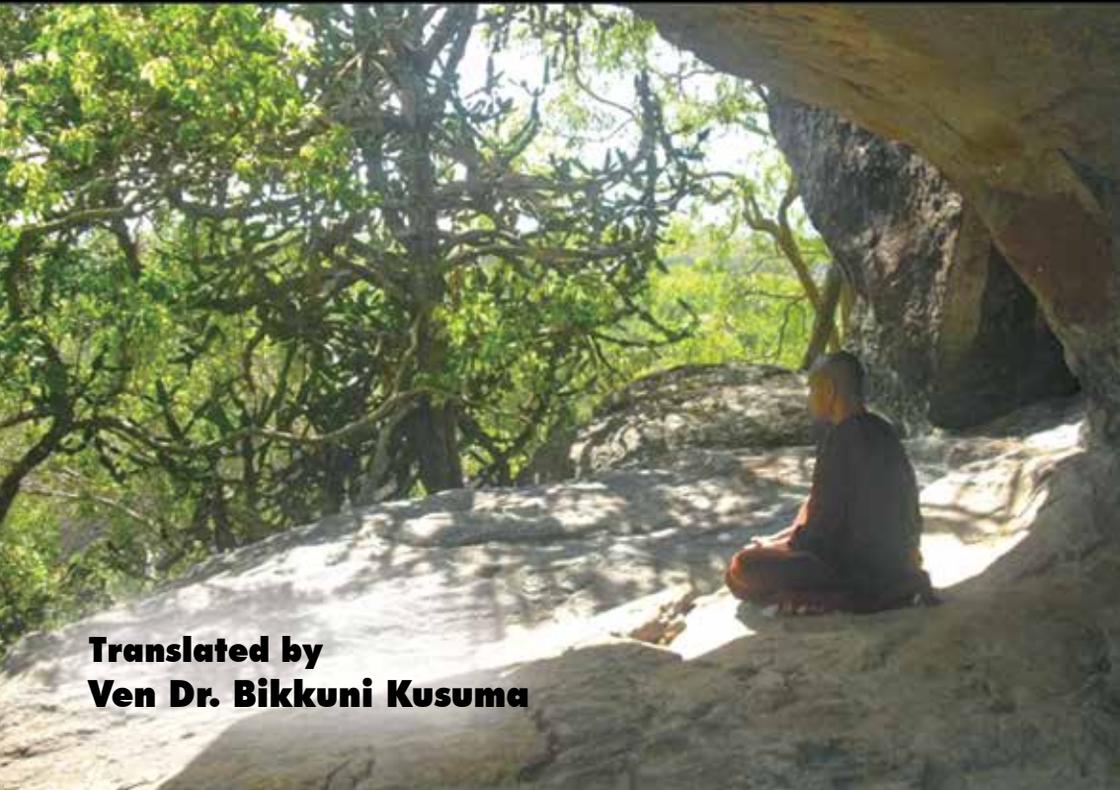


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GIVING UP 4

Maharahatun Wedimaga Osse

(On the trail of Arahat)



**Translated by
Ven Dr. Bikkuni Kusuma**



Giving up
Part 4

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The English Translation of the series of articles on
"Maharahatun Wedimaga Osse Part 4"

Translated by:

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Giving up

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May this humble effort
be a help, strength
and an easy path,
only for the clergy and the laymen,
who have clearly understood,
the in and out of this ruthless and
dreadful journey of 'Sansara'
and are trying hard,
with much determination and
perseverance, to realize
the Four Noble Truths
within this life-span itself.
May all of you be wise enough to
get the maximum benefit
for what you need or
what can ease your efforts and also
to ignore what you do not need,
what you do not accept or
any thing false in facts.
"May you be merciful to all,
May all beings be happy and
be a help unto themselves."

(Note by the Reverent Thero)



This work is dedicated to
my revered mentor
Most Venerable
Dodampahala Chandrasiri
Mahanayaka Thero
and all Venerable Bikkhus
who were towers of strength
behind me during this worthy cause
and May all of them
be blessed with good health
and longevity
and realize Four Noble Truths
within this life itself



YAGAYA **(SANSKRIT): YĀJNA,** **(PALI): YAÑÑA**

The exalted Lord Buddha was once travelling in Maghada, accompanied by a vast retinue of Maha Sangha. The famous Brahmin who lived there, named Kutadanta was at that time preparing for a massive yaga – a sacrifice of animals. In his vast compound there were 700 bulls, 700 cows, 700 heifers, 700 goats and 700 sheep, all tied to posts, ready to be sacrificed. According to his status and fame, Kutadanta had to sacrifice 3,500 animals in all, and he had invited 500 reputed Brahmins of pernicious view and all his neighbors to come and view the sacrifice and also receive the spoils once the ritual was completed. Thus everyone was eagerly awaiting the yagaya to begin, never caring or sparing a thought for the death

agonies of all the animals. They all believed that they will be liberated and happy once the sacrifice was completed. These Brahmins who were venerated by the society at that time had popularized these false views and carried out such sacrifices just for their own benefit. Because people believed in the words of the Brahmins, thousands of animals were killed ritually with the idea of gaining liberation.

For the great good fortune of Kutadanta, however, when he heard that Lord Buddha was visiting Maghada at that time, he too wanted to join the thousands of people who were going to see Lord Buddha. So, in spite of the protests by the 500 Brahmins, he postponed his yagaya and followed the people to where Lord Buddha was staying.

That day, Lord Buddha, possibly divining what was going to happen, preached that there are different kinds of yaga, but only some of them can bring happiness and liberation to people in this life and the life hereafter.

If a man or woman, preached Lord Buddha, takes refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, keeps the five Precepts and supports the Sangha with the four requisites, he or she would be performing the best

yaga as this will bring great rewards multiple fold. This yaga does not harm or kill any living being, which will bring only suffering in hell worlds. Also a decent society abhors mass killing and spilling of blood, so such animal sacrifices will only bring disrepute to the perpetrator, instead of fame and fortune. As such, a wise man should refrain from such yaga.

After listening to the sermon, Kutadanta was so amazed and pleased that he immediately decided to change his lifestyle and vowed to keep the Precepts and took refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

This effectively put a stop to the massive animal sacrifice, and the 500 Brahmins were most annoyed and left, blaming and scolding Lord Buddha for disrupting the yaga.

When thinking of karma and Causality, one cannot visualize where these 500 Brahmins, who advocate mass killing, would be reborn after death. Perhaps they may be reborn as chickens or goats, ready for slaughter! During those times yaga was not only animal sacrifice. Sometimes humans too were ritually sacrificed. Such human sacrifices have occurred since the beginning of time, sometimes in

the battle fields too. Though people believe that this will bring liberation and power, it only brings about hell births and untold suffering in the long run. Never will one receive the crown and glory that is expected.

We can never forget the massive “yagas” which happened in our own island in 1971, 1983, 1989 and of course the 30 year strife in the North and East. Human beings were massacred in their thousands. Warriors enjoyed seeing the flow of the blood of the enemy. Unfortunately, human beings bereft of virtue and morality commit these crimes in the hope of liberation.

However we witnessed the dire results of such yaga, where it was proved beyond doubt that it only brought pain and suffering in its wake. It was only a perfect illusion of victory!

A certain Ven. Bhikkhu, in a moment of mental tranquility in meditation, observed the death of a soldier in high command, and his rebirth as a ghostly spirit of a huge snake. The snake’s body was as stout as a well grown banana tree trunk and it was sunk into the ground. It had the face of a tiger which was raised up above the ground about three feet, and it was unable to move, being stuck on the ground, probably

due to a Kammic result of being extremely attached to land, when alive. Being so attached to “My Land” at the moment of death, gave this soldier such a re-birth. Having extreme anger and hatred, had given him birth as a snake, no doubt undergoing immense mental and physical suffering.

Thus, there is no freedom or liberation when one labours under misconceptions. Whatever religion or faith, one has to expect such returns for one’s own Kamma. In animal and human sacrifices, non-humans and sub-humans indulge in the pleasures of smell, sight and taste of blood and these non-humans surround the humans who practice such sacrifices and support them in such yagas, finally dragging them down to hell worlds, as well. These non-humans like to increase their retinue and all the war mongers and killers join their ranks after death because in their human lives before, they were constantly under the spell of these non-humans, for example like those 500 Brahmins who wanted Kutadanta to carry out that mass killing of animals.

Power developed without virtue and the benign influence of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, dominated by a pernicious view, is bound to give such fearful

results. If one comes under the influence of such non-humans, it will only impel one to commit crimes.

A Ven. Bhikkhu in deep tranquility meditation had a vision of a ferocious ghost about 25 years old in appearance, a young man wearing shorts, with its upper body bare. It was revealed to the Bhikkhu that this man had died as an armed soldier. It's whole body was smeared with blood and it obviously enjoyed the sight and smell of blood which covered his body. As a soldier in his previous life, his mind was always dominated by feelings of anger and hatred and his wish was to spill the blood of the enemy. Now in his non-human re-birth, his life was spent near a butcher's shop, where the slaughtered carcasses of animals were hanging, and he was always applying the blood dripping from the carcasses all over his body. As such he always frequented slaughter houses and butcher's shops.

I am sure you will not be surprised about the result of such a confused mind. When more and more unvirtuous and uncompassionate people are there, there will be more and more "yaga" of this kind. With the result, more and more perpetrators will lay foundations for a re-birth in the ghost world, whatever

their religious faiths may be. Most people talk about “metta” in a weak voice, in theory only, while they are building up their animal and non-human instincts. When this mindset gets beyond control, then the world becomes a killing field and a stadium for such “yaga”.

Thus people will fast approach this end by their own lack of moral standards. Such unvirtuous people will like to see the red colour of blood, will enjoy seeing the death struggles of animals and will love to hear the screams and cries of pain and agony, just like a virtuous and pious person would enjoy hearing a religious chant or a beautiful song of love and compassion.

The Ven. Bhikkhu remembers a certain man in a village. He is the man who kills the chickens at a chicken farm. There is always a big demand for the chickens killed by him. His method of killing is different. Without cutting off the heads of the chickens, he would put about ten live chickens in to a bag and after tying up the mouth of the bag, he would dash the bag again and again on the ground. The chickens are smashed to death, their flesh beaten soft, becoming red in colour, for which there is a high demand from

the consumers. Similarly, when he slaughters a pig, he will apply the blood on the carcass so that it looks fresh and red, which attracts more customers, who never even bother to imagine the intense pain and suffering that these animals undergo before dying.

The greed and the immorality of human beings will eventually cause the depletion of natural food in the environment and it is predicted that as time goes by there would be such a shortage of food from the environment that people will have to depend on coarse and tasteless food such as Kurakkan as their staple diets. Even tasty food like ice cream and watalappan will lose their flavor. Chemical fertilizer, weedicides and pesticides will deplete the natural fertility of the soil. So whatever that is manufactured will taste more artificial in flavor. What Lord Buddha predicted in the Agganna Sutta is already happening and eventually the earth will become uninhabitable. The Buddha has said that ultimately the earth will gradually disintegrate and disappear. This view is now endorsed by scientists who also predict the same – that the earth will disintegrate and the dispersed matter will recombine to form a new earth.

The Agganna Sutta further states that the newly

formed earth will have a soft crust and beings from the heavenly abodes while astral travelling will alight in this new earth and after consuming the soft earth crust will become earth bound. After a long period of time, there will arise all kinds of mushrooms, colourful, sweet smelling and tasty. But, because of the insatiable greed of the earth dwellers and their unwholesome Kamma formation, all this food disappears rapidly due to overconsumption. Then a new kind of weed called “Badatala” , which is also very tasty, will appear. This too will get depleted due to the greed of the inhabitants. After this a paddy without any husk will spring up, growing so fast that it could be reaped the same day. This too will soon become extinct due to the greed of the consumers. Then the inhabitants resort to the storage of food and again the greed for such activity depletes the stock and deprives some inhabitants of food. Thus Lord Buddha emphasized how the destruction and depletion of the environment occurs due to the insatiable greed of the earth dwellers.

Today we see the destruction and depletion of not only the food supply and nutrition, but also the depletion of energy producing natural sources of fuel that is used to power the developments in science and

technology. Human beings today have taken up the contract to destroy nature and natural resources on a large scale and already the symptoms of this malady are appearing in the form of unknown mental and physical sicknesses and diseases. Sometimes these disease producing organisms can resist even the most advanced modern medical sciences and technology.

Even though there is an outward appearance of development in the modern age, there are also danger signals which cannot and should not be ignored. Karma and the ensuing results are clearly apparent. Greed and unwholesome thinking can be seen as the primary causes for most of the ills afflicting mankind today. Unfortunately, new technology and innovations are mostly geared towards consumerism and the promotion of more greed.

To satisfy the jaded taste buds, food is even manufactured with the blood of living monkeys, cattle, goats, etc. which is gaining demand in today's society. The flesh of animals which are still alive, is considered to be a delicacy. Enzymes and hormones are used to fatten the animals, even though it may harm the humans who would consume the meat.

The Kammic involvement of such acts are conveniently ignored, the resulting disasters are not considered and certainly the results after death are not known. However, it has become imperative that we take note of all the danger signals which are becoming more and more apparent, as predicted by Lord Buddha so long ago.

Sometimes even the good and noble people, who do not indulge in the inflicting of pain and suffering on others, tend to generate anger and irritation towards those who misconduct in society, with the result that they too acquire bad Kamma, which yields painful results. Thus, those that kill and commit crimes and those that do not indulge in such acts, all come under the spell of the Mara – the evil one. So whatever category one may fall into, one is still in an unpredictable situation.

Thus one should be very alert to observe these whiplashes heralding a non-Buddhistic era that is fast approaching, where the immoral and unethical will take precedence over the good and the moral in society. The Dhamma applicable to human beings will be distorted, misrepresented and falsified with

the result that humans will degenerate to act worse than animals. We can see this happening already.

The Bodhisatta, before taking a human birth is said to have considered the “time” – that is, whether it is the right time to be born on this earth. It is said that after eating the Milk rice offered by Sujata, he placed his empty alms bowl on the waters of the flowing Neranjana river and took a determination, “If I am to accomplish my mission of Buddhahood, let this bowl float upwards against the current”. The bowl did float up against the current, defying the natural downward flow of the river, thus indicating the success of the mission of the Bodhisatta.

But of course, if we do the same thing today at the Kelani River near Ambatale, Kohilwatte in the morning, we would see the bowl floating upwards against the current, because the sea water flows into the mouth of the river forcing the river water backwards! This strange occurrence is not due to any supernatural cause, but to environmental pollution, where the sea water levels are rising dangerously. Because of man’s senseless search for more and more acquisitions, along with the changing times and environment, the whole world has moved to the brink of disaster.

Therefore, you of the fortunate few, who still wish to follow the Dhamma, please practice the Buddha word, “appamada” – “do not delay or tarry”. In this word the future hope is embodied. Mara, the evil one, will show you fashionable ways to observe precepts, give Dana, take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, listen to sermons by famous monks, to get more and more marks and credit in society. But please be aware and do not yield to the temptation of giving yourself any marks or credit. What should be done is to develop meaningful “sila, samadhi and panna” – Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom, in your own hearts and minds. The Ven. Bhikkhu is taking the trouble to scribble these thoughts on paper, to show you the extreme suffering of samsara. Unfortunately, people do not fear samsara as much as they would fear a cockroach found inside their toilet!

Once the Bhikkhu met a Monk who had no fear of samsara. He was a middle aged person living in a forest retreat. The Bhikkhu worshipped the Monk since he was senior in ordination and asked about his life and achievements. The monk said that he used to do “Peace Walks” and walked great distances in order to take the message of peace to different areas. However, he said that at the moment he is in this forest retreat

trying to develop super normal power such as astral travelling. Then the Bhikkhu asked him, “Venerable, why do you want to develop such powers?” Then the Monk answered that it was to show the Western world, so that they would be amazed and admire and respect his super normal powers! He went on to say that there is a need to display such powers and he is trying to fulfill this need.

Unfortunately, this venerable Monk did not know that he is being tricked by Mara, the evil one, who is instrumental in the creation of such a need in the world. In other words he is trying to pander to the wishes of the Mara by trying to gain super normal powers to impress others.

Lord Buddha has preached that the greatest super normal power that an ordained Monk could achieve is the keeping of the patimokkha Precepts very meticulously, while subduing the Five Hindrances through the practice of Samadhi – mental concentration. If one did wish to develop jhana - absorption which leads to super normal powers, then Lord Buddha said that this act must be followed by vipassana to see the impermanence of such things.

There was a retired Government servant who was about 70 years of age. He had tried to get ordained many, many times but failed to do so due to some reason or another. Then after many years of trying, he at last managed to enter the Order and was happy to become a Bhikkhu. However, his wife and son who had been living abroad for many years, came back to the country and forcibly got him disrobed after only three months of being ordained. Having taken so much of trouble to become a Bhikkhu, unfortunately he was unable to sustain it for more than three months. Perhaps this may be a Kammic result of having misconducted as a Monk in some past life in samsara. Therefore, Monks in robes must realize what a unique opportunity they have got to wear the robe, since they must have done immense good Kamma in the past to deserve this honour.

Having done much merit, we have gained the luxury of a human re-birth. However, if we misuse this opportunity and misconduct, we will have to face unhappy results. It will be so unfortunate if our good kamma in the past leads us to do bad kamma in this birth. As such, we must be very aware and observe that this does not happen. In fact, if we make it a habit to observe ourselves constantly so that we do not create

bad kamma, it will be a lesson for life and will become a “kammasthana” – an object of contemplation. We need to remember always that the very Kamma that raised us to the top, will also push us down the precipice, if we do not watch out carefully. In fact this is the fear we must have regarding Kamma. The reaction of good and bad Kamma is pushing us either to heaven or hell, throughout samsara.

A human being who takes refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, develops “saddha” – Confidence, and takes an effort to practice the Precepts. With this, his human feelings and inherent human nature will blossom out. This will in turn, make the five-fold “nivarana” – Hindrances, gradually disappear and he will become a peaceful citizen, who is able to give up the insatiable thirst for sensual pleasures and greed for acquiring worldly goods, which will be a cause for his happiness and contentment here and hereafter.

If one develops non-greed, non-hate and non-self, and makes an effort not to develop greed, hate and selfishness, it will certainly lead to a happy and contented life. In today’s world the never ending quest for material gains and power, is unfortunately giving

a deadly blow to the Dhamma. The power of virtue that the Lord Buddha proclaimed is undermined and seen as of no value and the human beings go about destroying the very happiness they are seeking by becoming slaves to “tanha” – Greed.

Just as man has destroyed the natural resources and the nutritional qualities of the earth because of their greed, they are also destroying the potent quality of the Dhamma. The “Come and See” quality of what Lord Buddha preached, has become invalid and besmirched due to lack of faith and confidence in the Dhamma. The Dhamma which speaks of the fearful samsara and the way to escape from it, has now become “reconditioned” due to the lack of morality and overactive greed of man, and is now “made easy” thus lulling the humanity into total ignorance of the actual facts.

Lord Buddha has emphasized that Dhamma is not preached to lull humanity or to astonish them by miracles. Neither is it to be used for profit and gains or for display. Dhamma is to be used only for the good of human beings in this birth and the next. When man loses his human qualities, he becomes disgusting, low, indecent and wicked. His mind is deranged and

he becomes almost sub-human. A certain gentleman who met the Bhikkhu said, "Ven. Sir, when we see the society today we get so scared. Killing, robbing raping and wicked and shameless behavior is rampant everywhere. Even you must be seeing this in the daily reports in the media"

Therefore, one must be clever enough to see this potential danger with wisdom and understanding. Be alone, seeing the world around you as if you are a stranger, observing and being apart from the crowd that is rushing towards disaster. Alone, seeing the fearful samsara, is the best meditation you could practice today. The Bhikkhu will not teach you the anapanasati (Watching your breath) or the 32 impurities of the Body, or the four satipatthana (Mindfulness). Before such meditations can be developed, one needs to have the right mindset. This can be achieved only if you see the fearfulness of the samsaric sojourn again and again. It is this fear that will induce man to practice morality. Thus practicing morality today, will make way for the practice of meditation tomorrow.

Just think of a child that is born today. What kind of a society will he be in ten years hence? Remember that your own immorality will be a contributory

factor for the society your own child will grow up in. Actually it will be like taking revenge on your own flesh and blood if you do not take immediate steps to alleviate all this harm done to the society.

The Bhikkhu in deep meditation had a vision when he focused on a 15 year old boy, who took revenge on himself. He drank poison because his parents and elders objected to his love affair. He had no other reason to die, except for his own ignorance and delusion. Because of his extreme greed, hatred and ignorance of the Kammic law, he thought that killing himself was the best way to take revenge on everyone. His pride and conceit told him to "Teach a lesson to the whole world!". His sense of human feelings such as faith, confidence, gratitude, morality, etc. were non-existent. Thus he died without learning the lesson that he was trying to teach others by this act. Today, just like we are trying to get nutritious food from a earth that is depleted of nutrition, we expect to see human qualities from minds that are deplete of human qualities!

The Bhikkhu saw this boy being born again and again as a chicken fated to be killed again and again, every 45 days. Thus how can one question the Kammic

result of an action committed with a depraved mind? In a fraction of a second, the death consciousness of a 15 year old school boy becomes the birth consciousness of a chicken. He who willingly drank poison to die, is now being reborn and killed every 45 days, again and again. The nature of the Kammic Law can be clearly observed. This observing leads to “sanditthika” – the Dhamma of the Right View, as proclaimed by the Buddha.

If a precious human life is terminated thus due to ignorance and anger, the retribution meted out by nature equals the act. This is the Kammic Law. One has to perceive this Stream of Consciousness – “vinnana”. What you think of as “me” and “mine”, in reality is this consciousness which arises and passes away as a result of Karma. It is exceedingly fast in arising and passing away and is empty and bereft of any tangible “soul” or identity. Therefore it is futile to grasp it as “me”, “I” or “mine”.

The Bhikkhu knows of a very successful gentleman who tells his workers, “Do not believe such rubbish that there were Arahants in the past, who could do astral travel. How can any human being fly across the sky? This is nonsense!” And then there was the Monk to whom

the Bhikkhu referred to earlier, who wanted to develop super normal powers to do astral travel and astonish the western world! Thus we see two human beings holding diametrically opposite view points on the same subject! When the Five Hindrances – “nivarana” become strong and intense, we see how human beings could get trapped into wrong views.

Such human beings who are overwhelmed by sensual pleasure, can never perceive the comfort and tranquility of one in whom the Five Hindrances are suppressed through wisdom. The Consciousness – “vinnana”, the magician, makes things appear when they are not in existence, and then makes them disappear, when they actually exist. Those who are self-opiniated and hold wrong views, becomes prey to this illusion, which misleads them into holding false views.

It is true that this Bhikkhu who is keeping these notes and also you, are not capable of doing astral travel. But just because of this, we must not disclaim others, specially those enlightened ones in the past, who did perform such feats of wonder. If we did reject these super normal powers, it would amount to holding a Wrong View. In fact, the Buddha

himself has declared that when the mind and body of a human being is infused with the perception of joy and lightness achieved through the concentration of the mind, the body could rise into the air. Many miracles were performed, both by the Buddha and the Arahants, by such means.

By way of contrast, there are those who are heavily weighted down by tons of mental hindrances such as sensual pleasures and craving. How can these human beings raise themselves up? It is necessary to do so, because otherwise they will be weighted down so much with the Five Hindrances that they might even gravitate towards the sub-human levels of the four hell worlds.

A certain gentleman who came to meet the Bhikkhu, said that his nephew was very obedient and studying well and is always doing meritorious acts. However, just a couple of weeks later this same person came and said that now his nephew has changed so much and had become disobedient, lazy, does not study and stays locked up in his room for hours, looking at the internet on his computer! The Bhikkhu wondered what he could tell this gentleman, who believed what is impermanent as being permanent?

The good behavior of his nephew is as transient and changing as his bad behavior! Thus there is nothing permanent. As Lord Buddha said, if someone sees what is impermanent as permanent, what is painful as being pleasurable, what is ugly as being beautiful, that person is bound to be disappointed and disillusioned before long.

Once when the Buddha was residing at Purvarama, lady Visakha came to see him, very hot and tired since she had come at noon under the hot sun. She told the Buddha that she wanted King Kosala to do something for her, but he never did it according to her need. "Even today I went to see him and I am very tired and frustrated" she complained to the Buddha. Then the Buddha replied, "Visakha, don't expect things to happen according to your wish, because if you do, you will only be disappointed!" Lord Buddha never told her to go and see the King again and tell him that as she is the chief benefactor to the Buddha and because of that the Buddha told him to do this thing for her! Thus the Buddha only showed her that expectations could lead to unhappiness and disappointment.

The society today is fast moving towards the lack of confidence – “saddha” in the three Gems, Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Hence the belief in Kammic Laws and impermanence has become lessened and in some instances, non existent. Lord Buddha has instructed that whenever one feels the pain and suffering which arises due to the lack of morality, one should always see the impermanence of such feelings. This wisdom will show the Path toward overcoming of all suffering. If you do not develop this wisdom to see the impermanence, then you might even accumulate bad Kamma because of others, by trying to correct them forcibly and so on. We may not be able to satisfy everyone in society, but we should endeavor to be virtuous and do meritorious deeds and always see Mara, the evil one, when he appears in the guise of doing bad kamma. It is through this that the springs of Merit will open up, giving you contentment and happiness.

Those that do not cultivate virtue, confidence and merit, have to indulge in rotten, unclean acts to gain satisfaction. Today’s society has plenty of ways to pander to such needs! However, as a result of such activities, one’s next life will surely be in the hell worlds, having to undergo untold suffering.

Once when the Bhikkhu was going in his alms round, he saw the dead body of a cow. On the second day when he went past he noticed that the dead body was bloated. Since the dead body was not removed, on the third day he saw that there were many dogs who were eating the partly rotted flesh. Thus in one week, dogs and crows and iguanas and other carrion eaters had eaten away the carcass completely and only the gnawed bones remained. A cloud of flies and bluebottles were enjoying the left over bits and pieces. It is as if these animals were at a wedding feast! There is so much value given to a rotting carcass in the animal world. If you too indulge in chasing after unvirtuous, low and harmful activities blinded by all the latest technological advances in society, there may be a chance that you too could be born into the animal world in your next birth and enjoy eating rotten flesh. When one observes and contemplates on this, surely it will become an excellent object of meditation on the fearfulness of this Samsara. The Bhikkhu was able to see the similarity of these carrion flesh eaters and humans eating roast beef and drinking bottles of Arrack.

Once the Bhikkhu was in a remote village, and was going on an alms round. Suddenly a woman came

up to him with two pieces of milkrice on a saucer. When she served one piece into his alms bowl, the Bhikkhu placed his hand over it to show that it was enough. But the woman said, “No, both these pieces were meant to be served to the devil, so I have to serve you this piece also!” Immediately the Bhikkhu realized that this woman belonged to some other faith and saw him as a devil incarnate. So rather than annoying her, he accepted the second piece also and tried to give her Merit by reciting “abhivadana silissa...” Then she promptly retorted, “We do not want your Merit!” Then the Bhikkhu said, “May God bless you!” and she was really pleased. The Bhikkhu thought that he would lose nothing by saying those words and he managed to avoid making her angry and displeased. On the other hand he prevented her making bad Kamma for herself, by becoming angry after offering him Dana. As such, one’s own virtue must save not only oneself but also save others and stop them from making bad Kamma. Also the Bhikkhu was careful not to go on alms round to that area ever again. He also makes it a point only to stay in a village as long as there are no problems or objections. If any trouble arises, he immediately leaves for another village.

One day when the Bhikkhu was going on his alms round he overheard two women talking. One woman was saying, "If he comes to my house when he can't get food from anywhere else, I will set the dog on him and chase him off!" So the Bhikkhu never visited her place on his alms round. However, on the last day of his stay in the village he happened to go on his alms round near her house, and then she served some rice to him. However, when he shared Merit, she refused to worship him and then went and untied the dog thinking that the dog will chase him away. But the dog never even barked and simply did not attack the Bhikkhu. So the Bhikkhu gave metta and left peacefully. Obviously, the dog was much better tempered than his mistress!

Thus one must be very careful and aware about the anger that rises within you. Otherwise you will lose many opportunities of acquiring good Kamma because your anger will prevent you doing meritorious acts. It is the pride and conceit within you that causes anger. When we receive high praise and accolades, if we are not mindful, pride and conceit will develop. Then we will lose the Dhamma in our hearts and in turn lose many opportunities of doing good Kamma, which we will never get a chance of doing again.

The Buddha told the monks, “If you have to deal with lay people, be like the moon! The moon never stays still in one place. It rises in the West and sets in the East. Similarly, don’t stay in one place for too long among the lay people because you may get attacked or blamed by them. When you are looking in to a deep precipice, you must only bend your head forward and plant your feet firmly on the ground to prevent the danger of falling into it. In the same way you have to be very careful when dealing with lay people because overindulgence could deal a deadly blow to a Monk”. The Buddha also said, “Be a receiver of Dhamma and not a receiver of material wealth. Seeking material wealth will ultimately bring shame not only to you but to your teacher as well”. This Bhikkhu who is keeping these notes always tries to examine his own thoughts and see whether he is bringing disrespect or ingratitude to his Great Teacher.

Once a 30 year old novice Monk from a far off temple came to see the Bhikkhu. He said that he would like to go to the forest to meditate. Then the Bhikkhu asked him, “Are you keeping a proper conduct in your own temple?” Then the Monk replied that he was very much involved with Sunday school activities and busy making merit for the devotees. But

sometimes anger and attachment rises up in him when he is involved in these activities. He also said that he has a very high respect and regard for his own teacher as only the two of them are resident in the temple. The Bhikkhu out of compassion for this young monk advised him to first become a good “Temple Monk” by keeping the precepts, having confidence in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, looking after his old teacher very well and most of all carrying out all his duties towards the devotees, trying his best not to have any anger or attachment by always watching over his thoughts. Then all the devotees will start to say, “Our small Monk is so good now, even much better than before!” The Bhikkhu then told him, “Once you achieve this, then you must start to see that everything that attracts you, is impermanent and will lead to the fearful samsara. Be clever enough to make your own temple into a monastery suitable for meditation. After this, it will be no problem for you to go to a forest and meditate”

When one gives priority to keeping precepts and practicing virtue, this will help one to gain Concentration – “samadhi”. Nibbana is not found in the jungle or the temple, but in the equanimous mind, which is free from anger and attachment. Of

course, the solitude of the jungle will be very helpful in achieving this mindset. The Buddha always recognized the mistakes made by the monks and laid down the rules of discipline so that the mistakes were never repeated. He did this to preserve the pristine quality of the Dhamma. Through this the “Come and See” – “sanditthika” nature of the Dhamma can be protected and preserved. So the Monks who observe and keep the precepts can be truly happy that they are preserving the “sanditthika” quality of the Dhamma.

When thousands of lay devotees repeat daily the gatha, “sanditthiko, akaliko.....” they are venerating all those Monks who are virtuous and are keeping their precepts. Such Monks receive the blessings of the entire world of Buddhists, because it is they who are preserving this “Come and See” – “sanditthika” quality of the Dhamma. Some say that, “If the Sinhalese nation is preserved, the Dhamma will be preserved” But this is not true. It should really be the other way round. Actually what should be said is that, “If the Dhamma is alive in the minds and hearts of the Sinhalese, then the Sinhalese nation will be preserved!” If they do not live in the Dhamma, the Sinhalese nation will perish before long. In fact, this is becoming evident slowly through what is happening in today’s society.

To see the impermanence which occurs due to Cause and Effect, one needs to cultivate absolute confidence in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha and practice virtue by keeping the precepts. The Buddha has foreseen that the reason for the disappearance of the Buddha sasana some day, is because people will not keep precepts, practice virtue or have confidence in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Therefore, all those of you who wish to prolong the duration of the Buddha sasana, must immediately start to keep your precepts and develop absolute faith in the Buddha Dhamma. This is the greatest pooja that one could offer the Buddha. Everyone who carries out this duty will tread the Path to Nibbana without fail. They will come under the warmth and protection of the “Maha karuna” of the Buddha. This is the way you can show your gratitude and appreciation of the efforts that were taken to achieve Buddhahood, by practicing perfections for 4 infinite lakhs of eons in samsara, in order to realize the truth of the cessation of pain and suffering.

The non-practice of precepts and the lack of virtue, will weigh down the minds of the individuals so that they are unable to extricate themselves from the bonds of the five aggregates. But when one practices virtue and keeps the precepts, that person’s

mind will become so light and free that he could attain states of Mental Concentration – “samadhi” very quickly. Of course, one must always remember that this “samadhi” could lead to the bliss of jhanic states, which may become a deterrent to the realization of nibbana. So one must not become attached to the pleasures of jhanic states, which should be seen as being impermanent again and again. This indeed becomes the practice of “vipassana”. Thus the cessation of suffering must be realized only through one’s own mind. There is no other way because the pain and suffering is contained within the mind and body, likewise the Five Aggregates. It is actually the wisdom of seeing the impermanence in samadhi, that will take you towards nibbana.

A certain gentleman who came to see the Bhikkhu said that he had been meditating for long periods of time and used to do mostly walking meditation. Once when he was deep in walking meditation, he focused on his body in a moment of Samadhi, and he saw his whole body breaking down and regenerating. He was so moved by experience, that his eyes filled with tears at this revelation. However, if he had truly been in vipassana, he would not have shed any tears. Actually he had been duped by the bliss of Samadhi. Lots of

people who suppress the five hindrances and attain Samadhi are deceived by the exquisite pleasure of it. But one should be clever enough see this pleasure as being impermanent, through vipassana. Lord Buddha saw everything as impermanent and non-self. Seeing things this way is the true miracle of nibbana.

There are two kinds of persons who will attain the final sainthood as an Arahant. One is the “ubhoto vimutta” – “Liberated in both ways”. That is, he attains jhana and enjoys the pleasures of the material and non-material realms (rupavacara and arupavacara worlds). Then he sees the impermanence and non-self of all these pleasures through vipassana. Thus he realizes the Four Noble Truths through the practice of both samatha and vipassana. Such a person is capable of performing miracles – through his divine eye, divine ear, divine sensibility, etc. which is beyond human reckoning. The world would know him as an ubhoto vimutta Arahant – a noble being, with super normal powers.

The other kind of noble Arahant seen within the Buddha Sasana is called “panna vimutta” – “Liberated through panna – Wisdom”. He too has realized the Four Noble Truths. But since he has not developed

any Jhanic powers, he is unable to perform any miracles, as clearly mentioned in the “Susima Sutta” expounded by the Buddha.

Once a gentleman asked the Bhikkhu, “ Ven. Sir, do you find any Arahants having super normal powers in the world today?” Lord Buddha has said that as long as the Monks follow the rules of discipline of Higher Ordination – “Upasampada” and protect the “sanditthika” – “Come and See” quality of the Dhamma, the world would not be empty of enlightened saints. Thus no one can say that there are no Arahants in the world. However, according to the Bhikkhu’s own personal viewpoint, considering the cause and effect of the present world order, there may not be Arahants who are liberated in “Both Ways”, who are able to perform super normal feats in the world today. Since this is only a personal viewpoint, anyone could express a different view in this regard. The meaning of “iddhi” is “One above all others – the one in the forefront”. Thus an Arahant who has super normal powers, has more Merit and has fulfilled perfections for eons in samsara. This is why he is in the forefront. He has probably witnessed such Arahants with super powers during his long sojourn in samsara, and may have taken a determination to become one himself. He

would have paid homage to such Arahants in the past and wished, “May I too become an Arahant who is liberated in ‘Both Ways’ in a future Buddha Sasana”.

When the Buddha appointed Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana as his Chief Disciples, there were some elderly Monks who showed dissent and argued that it should be Ven. Kondanna who should be selected as the foremost disciple of the Buddha. However, the Buddha explained that Ven. Kondanna had aspired to become the first Arahant of the Buddha sasana, while Ven. Sariputta and Moggallana had aspired to become the Chief Disciples of the Buddha. Thus according to their samsaric aspirations, they were destined to receive their Kammic results. As such the Buddha did not bestow any special treatment or favour to any person at this instance. It was only a Kammic result.

The Arahant who is liberated due to Wisdom is also referred to as “sushka vidarshaka”. “Sushka” means “Arid, Dry and Harsh”. So a “sushka vidarshaka” Arahant, even though he has fulfilled his aspirations to achieve Nibbana, does not have the tranquility of “samatha”. In the time of the Buddha, there was an Arahant names Cakkhupala who had

been liberated through Wisdom. He had a strong belief and faith in the Buddha and had even risked his life in trying to achieve Nibbana. However, he was able to save his life and also achieve sainthood due to his good Kamma in the past. But due to the harshness of his endeavour, he became blind at the very instance he became an Arahant. It is said that even the king of heaven, Sakka, saw his efforts and came to help him at a certain instance.

Possibly in our past sojourn in samsara , both you and I may have met such Arahants and have made vows and determinations to become enlightened likewise, in a future birth. Who knows how much of meritorious acts we have performed and how much of Kamma we have created towards achieving this goal? So you must think about this with wisdom and be clever enough to know your Kammic potential to become an Arahant. If you constantly think about the wonderful qualities of an Arahant , if you have a wish in your heart to become an Arahant, if you feel that you are able to achieve nibbana, then it is very possible that you have this consciousness carried over from a forgotten past birth. So now is the time to activate this consciousness. If ever you have had an inclination towards Arahamhood, it surely must

be an inborn habit which is now surfacing slowly and you must strive hard to achieve the fulfillment of your goal. Perhaps you may have had a wrong view and even may have been born in hell worlds, because this stream of consciousness is impermanent and changing all the time. But now the opportunity has re-surfaced and the time has come to practice Sila, develop fear and shame to do evil and generate saddha and effort. Even people who are totally uninterested in the Arahants could at least make a beginning and get positive results, with the proper effort.

In these present times, there is a marked deterioration of the sasana and human beings are becoming more and more inclined towards evil. So if there were any Arahants with super normal powers, surely such compassionate and enlightened beings will not hide away. Instead, they would display feats of wonder to convince and educate people to follow the path. Of course these enlightened Arahants would never use their powers for personal glory or commercial use. But they will have no reason to hide when there is such a crying need to reform the present day society and lead the deluded human beings towards nibbana, by using their wonderful super normal powers. So the

obvious conclusion is that there are no such Arahants enlightened “Both Ways” in today’s world.

Sometimes we hear people say that there was such and such an apparition which appeared and then disappeared. But an astral-travelling Arahant would not act in such a manner. Out of compassion towards the suffering humanity, he will perform miracles with altruistic joy and certainly would not raise doubts and wonder in the minds of the people and then disappear. The character of such an Arahant is open and clear, not mystic or hidden like secretive occult practices. So we can surmise that firstly, there are no such “Both Ways” enlightened saints. However, we also should not reject another aspect to this surmise. Perhaps the people today do not have the good Karma to witness such miracles. They do not have the good fortune to see such wonders and direct their minds towards enlightenment and Nibbana.

Today, the world is deteriorating spiritually and morally. Human beings are motivated by animal instincts, and what they relish is the collection and amassing of rotting material possessions and making rusting heaps of metal and concrete their dream castles, which do not give them a chance of seeing the

Dhamma which Lord Buddha preached. Nor would they have the good fortune of seeing miracles which would strengthen their morality and spirituality since they are far too enamoured of their possessions. They see only deceptive “Magic Shows” instead of reality.

Therefore, all of you lay and ordained fortunate ones, please remember the Buddha words, “appamada” – “Do not tarry”. You are still not too late to become a “panna vimutti” – “Wisdom Oriented” Arahant. Very soon even the Wisdom Oriented Arahants too may become extinct, and the world will lose this wonderful strength and influence. So it is imperative to take action now. Do not delay to tread the Path. Whosoever believes what the Bhikkhu says, must become “Appamada” and quickly make strenuous efforts to see the “sanditthika” – “Come and See” quality of the Dhamma. However, if someone does not realize this fact and continues to hanker after the idea of seeing Arahants doing astral travel and performing miracles, he may get misled by the magicians in yellow robes who will masquerade as Arahants in the future and thus lose his chance of seeing the Dhamma and also prolong his sojourn in samsara.

The “Panna Vimutti” – “Wisdom Oriented” Arahants of today have realized the Four Noble Truths by seeing the impermanence of the body and mind. Of course, they too may have jhanic powers and the ability to perform super normal acts. However, these Arahants prefer to see the impermanence of even jhanic pleasures. In fact, the Bhikkhu who is keeping these notes knows very well about a “Panna Vimutti” Arahant who has reached the “Akasannayathana” – the 5th jhana. That is why this fact is written down so confidently. Even among the present day Arahants, there are different levels in ability. If one studies the “Panna Vimutta Sutta” in the Anguttara Nikaya, one would be able to get a very clear idea about these facts.

If anyone can develop the 4th Jhana, he will be able to perform super normal powers such as “cutupapata” – seeing death and rebirth, “pubbenivasa” – seeing past lives, “dibba cakkhu” – reading other’s thoughts, “dibba sota” – hearing sounds from very far away, etc. But not every “panna vimutti” Arahant will possess these abilities. Lord Buddha has pointed this out very clearly in the “Susima Sutta” and the “Kitagiri Sutta”. Also, it is said that even the Rishis living in the Himalayas and who have not taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, could

develop these super normal powers. In fact, such Rishis were existing even before the advent of the Buddha. For instance, the Brahmins, Alarakalama and Uddakaramaputta who had thousands of disciples, had such powers. They practiced “sila” – Virtue and “samadhi” – Concentration. However, this is not the Path to nibbana. This amounts to more or less enjoying worldly pleasures. Even though they had developed Super Normal powers, since they have not taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, unfortunately, once they lose these powers, they may have the potential to get reborn even in hell worlds. Only persons who have taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha would be capable of seeing the impermanence of these Super Normal powers through wisdom and understanding. Thus you would be able to clearly see the difference between the Buddhist and the Non-Buddhist practice of Super Normal powers.

In fact, there may be persons who are able to perform these miracles in society today, like the Rishis of yore. But, not having the wisdom to see the impermanence of the enjoyment of these powers, they become attached to it through pride and conceit, just like enjoying any other pleasure. However, in case of Jhanic pleasure, the “nivarana” – the Five Hindrances

are suppressed, as long as the powers exist. Sometimes such a person may not even be inclined to show his powers, but just remain overwhelmed by the jhanic pleasures.

In the Buddha sasana, the person who is considered to have received the ultimate result is the Arahant who has understood the Four Noble Truths. The only Path to this realization is the Noble Eightfold Path. Starting with the Noble Eightfold Path, the one with faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha – “saddhanusari” and the ones with wisdom – “dhammanusari, will gain the stages of Sainthood, such as “sotapatti”, “sakadagami”, “anagami” and “arhat”. This is way of the “panna vimutti” Arahant. One needs endurance and mindfulness to traverse this Path. One also needs a “kalyana mitta” – a true friend and a great teacher to proceed in this Path. This Bhikkhu depends on the Buddha, who is a true friend and a great teacher to proceed onwards. Sometimes one may think, “Lord Buddha has passed away, so how can we depend on him to help us?” However, Lord Buddha in his wisdom foresaw such questions arising. So he has said that people must depend on his Dhamma to guide them once he is no more. So you can make Buddha Dhamma your teacher and

guide. The very first lesson the Dhamma will teach you is that you will need to practice only three things to understand the four Noble Truths. The Dhamma will direct us without any confusion towards the right path and will first tell us to develop “saddha” – Confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Then we need to develop “viriyā” – Effort. Lastly, we need to have “hiri otapā” – fear and shame to do evil. Actually, the Noble Eightfold Path is contained in this simple practice. When one accepts this fact without any doubt or vacillation, one will develop “saddha” – Confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, which will automatically make you have “samma ditthi” – the Right View. In the absence of this Confidence, one will have only “miccha ditthi” – the Wrong View, which will hinder your progress.

Lord Buddha has said that the most valuable treasure in this world is “saddha” – Confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. In fact, “saddha” is the key to the Path of liberation. However, when you go in search of this key, you must be careful, because there are two keys, one true and one fake that exists in the world. The fake key is called “amulika saddha”, which is full of ignorance and blind faith. This will not open the right door. The true key is “akaravati

saddha", which is made out of absolute confidence in the Buddha's noble qualities and which does not transcend the Dhamma preached by him. The Bhikkhu who is keeping these notes always saw only the wisdom and virtue of the Buddha and always saw the Dhamma and Sangha through the perfect virtues of the Buddha. As soon as one develops confidence in the Buddha, the confidence in the Dhamma and Sangha will automatically follow.

The strength and power of the Dhamma is truly unsurpassed. We should always look at life through the shelter of this strength. The Bhikkhu always saw the great compassion of the Buddha. This compassion gave the Bhikkhu safety and protection to tread the Path to nibbana. The Bhikkhu always felt that this wonderful Dhamma was preached specially for his own benefit. Likewise you too should make Lord Buddha your own. He should be your protector and mentor. The Bhikkhu could never see any difference between the Dhamma preached by the Buddha and his own life. As such, the Bhikkhu never needed to go in search of the Dhamma because it existed within his own self. The Bhikkhu realized this simple fact through the absolute confidence he had in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Now the Bhikkhu is a

safe, protected person because he has found his own “kalyana mitta” – faithful friend, within himself. This wonderful thing was achieved through the absolute faith he had in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Now the Bhikkhu does not need to roam the world in search of Dhamma. He is fortified with the mindfulness of the true goal, the goal that Lord Buddha expected from all his disciples. This army named Mindfulness is now always ready to chase away the enemy of the Noble Eightfold Path, being the “nivarana”. The mind which has subdued the “nivarana”, thinks only of the goodness and greatness of the Buddha. What this mind is now striving to do is to convert the confidence it has on the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha into an unshakeable and immovable “saddha” – Confidence. The Bhikkhu knows that the first step towards Nibbana is the development of “saddha”, which is the first step of the Noble Eightfold Path. He is not in a hurry to think about “samadhi” – Tranquility or “panna” – Wisdom. This is because he knows that he should accomplish the first step of “saddha” without any doubts or vacillations in the mind. When “saddha” grows in you, wisdom too awakens slowly within you along with the development of “saddha”. Along with the dawning of this wisdom within your

mind, “virya” – Right effort, “sati” – Mindfulness and samadhi – Tranquility will also spring up. This is the instance where you should get very close to the Buddha’s great compassion.

The Bhikkhu, when he reached this stage constantly thought of the immense sacrifices that Lord Buddha made through his infinite sojourn through samsara. Until he was re-born as Prince Siddhartha, how much did he sacrifice, how much time and trouble was taken? In the presence of Dipankara Buddha, he could have easily terminated his own samsaric journey. But no. He sacrificed this wonderful opportunity, entirely for the sake of the suffering humanity, because he wished to show the way to end all suffering to thousands and millions of beings wallowing in the terrible abyss of samsara bearing untold trauma and suffering. Lord Buddha took this decision and decided to embark on this arduous journey through the terrors of samsara, for your sake and this is what you must always remember. During this infinite period of hundreds and thousands of eons, it is said that he gave his eyes, body flesh, and life as Dana to anyone who was in need. It is said that the amount of blood he donated was more than the water in the oceans. For the sake of Buddhahood, how many

times did he relinquish his kingdoms, fortunes, wives and children? Therefore, you should think of all this again and again.

Lord Buddha has given an example to show how long a period of time, one eon is. Imagine a box, 7 miles X 7 miles in height and width. If someone fills this box up with tiny mustard seeds, and takes out one seed in every hundred years, an eon would take longer than the period to empty the box of all mustard seeds. So you can imagine the amount of time the Bodhisatta spent traversing the samsara for your sake. You will realize that no one, not your mother, father, siblings or relations have ever made such a sacrifice for you. Your parents may have sacrificed perhaps 50 years for you, thinking that, "This is my son" or "This is my daughter". You cannot even visualize this sacrifice. When you think of the Buddha, you should not merely start with Prince Siddhartha. Start thinking from the days of the Dipankara Buddha. Think of the infinite sacrifices he made and the merit he accumulated through eons and eons of time. Being born as a prince in his final birth, with all the wealth, comforts, luxuries, with beautiful Yashodara as his wife and Rahula his little son, he makes the ultimate sacrifice by leaving all this and going into the jungle

to live a life of extreme mortification. He did this for the sake of you and me and for all suffering human beings. His only companion was his own unshakeable determination, thinking that suffering could be overcome only through further suffering.

Lord Buddha has stated later on that there is no Brahma, no god nor man who gave so much suffering to their bodies as he did. Sometimes he ate only one grain of rice or one Mung seed per day. He had lost so much weight that when he touched his abdomen, he could feel the vertebra. He was so weak that he could sometimes only crawl up to a sleeping cow and drink milk from its udder. Sometimes he even ate the dung of the calves. Such was his extreme sacrifice and suffering. But he was never frustrated or unhappy, because his goal was to relieve the suffering of others.

Finally, however, realizing that he could not find a solution to his problem by undergoing such extreme suffering, he decided to choose a more moderate path. After having consumed Lady Sujata's Dana of milk rice, he made a firm resolution not to get up from his seat under the Bo tree until he attains Buddhahood, even if he dies from the effort. "Let my flesh and blood, skin and nerves, tendons and organs dry and

wither. Let my body die. I will not shift my posture nor give up my efforts” he thought. His resolution was successful and through his immense effort and determination, he won the hallowed Buddhahood. Thus, a miracle happened for all suffering beings in the universe.

Could one imagine anyone else who has made such a tremendous sacrifice for your sake? Maybe your parents would have made sacrifices to further your education, profession, house building, marriage, etc. In other words they sacrificed to show you the way to live a material life which ultimately would bring you only suffering since they are all impermanent and unsustainable. One cannot compare this to the supreme sacrifices made by the Buddha for eons in Samsara to lead mankind into the path of non-suffering and the cessation of all suffering. And after attaining Buddhahood, for forty-five years, he walked the length and breadth of the country, until his feet were sore, to bring solace to suffering people.

Lord Buddha never told you to build a large two storied house, do a good job, get married and have children and grandchildren and lead a prosperous life. This is because he knew very well that none of

these things would give you any lasting happiness. On the contrary, he knew that all these possessions would bring you only unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the long run. He also knew that if you get deluded and duped by these material things, you may get lost in eons of suffering samsara, and will wander on bewildered and confused, without seeing any kind of escape or deliverance. This is something that Lord Buddha wanted to prevent at any cost. So you must understand this and try your hardest to get closer and closer to this great compassionate father and loving mother, Lord Buddha, who has only your best interests at heart. Never get estranged from his supreme protection and wisdom.

The pain and suffering of mankind can only be addressed by the Buddha. No one else can take away all the samsaric suffering we have to undergo. For 45 years he told us how to do this and while on his final passing away he said, "All compounded things are impermanent" He also said that you must act like a person whose head is on fire and who is rushing to put it out, to put out the hell fires of samsara. His enlightenment as Samma Sambuddha gave him so much super normal powers, for example, seeing

the past Kammic commitment of beings, seeing their previous lives, seeing lives after death, having the divine eye and divine ear, knowing the state of development of the minds of different individuals, having the exquisite pleasure of jhanas and being free of all defilements. This has been declared in the “Maha Seehanada Sutta” – the Sutta of the Lion’s Roar.

Thus you must always remember and contemplate on the great wisdom and super normal powers of the Buddha. This is the way to build your unshaken confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Make an offering of your life to the Buddha. Put your life under the protection of the Buddha. Think that your life belongs to the Buddha. This is the way to build “akaravati saddha” – the true Confidence which will then lead you to the correct effort which will help you to traverse the Noble Eightfold Path with absolute confidence.

When you traverse the Dhamma Pathway, you must not use too much effort nor too little. It has to be the optimum effort supported by wisdom to contemplate on the suffering brought about by the Five Aggregates. You have to contemplate on the Five Aggregates in three ways, that is, in terms of

past, present and future. See the suffering of all living beings who are grasping the aggregates. Think of Lord Buddha's beautiful bodily form, his luxurious life before Buddhahood, the eons of sacrifices he made for your sake, see how all this is now no more. How impermanence even affected the Buddha. As such, how could we, just mere mortals have any hopes on these aggregates? What a misconception it is to think that this body is mine? Every time we are grasping at ever changing entities, none that could be called "me" or "mine". En mass, they appear to be entities, because the rapid change is not discernible with the physical eye. The Buddha saw how the five aggregates which were masquerading as "me", "I" and "mine", in the past, present and the future. Not only do we visualize an unchanging form, but we also grasp at it in terms of "me", "I" and "mine".

But, when you contemplate on your past aggregates through you present aggregates, you will become frightened because you begin to realize how much you have depended on impermanent entities and believing them to be real and permanent. At this point you will develop more and more confidence on Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The grasping for the Five Aggregates will make one shameless and fearless

about the consequences of this misconception so that one will commit Kamma in thought, word and deed.

The Buddha teaches how to give up the grasping for the Five Aggregates. Firstly seeing the impermanence of them develops the Right View. Then through this Right View , one realizes that the Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood should be practiced in daily living. Then one becomes pure in conduct and his sila becomes strong. Sila thus becomes an integral part of his life. When this happens, automatically Right Thought develops. Right Thought is the renunciation of sensual pleasures, hate and giving up of all forms of cruelty. This surely leads the way to the final goal of treading the path.

Thus the Buddha teaches how having absolute confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, developing fear and shame to do evil and the right effort should be the foundation or the base for the beginning of the practice to achieve Nibbana in this very life. When your sila is pure and complete, this will lead to “samadhi” - Concentration, which will show you the impermanence, the suffering and the non-self of the Five Aggregates. Thus, the Buddha is your “Kalyana Mitta” – the Noble Friend, who takes

you along the Path in comfort, without losing your way towards nibbana. We actually have the dhamma within us, but mistakenly go searching for it in the outside world. Our relations, friends and teachers of worldly reckoning however, always teaches us to do just the opposite. They teach us to enjoy the Five aggregates, buy them, sell them, nourish them....But only the Buddha teaches us the reality, he says to see the impermanence, the suffering of the aggregates and tells us not to be deceived. He teaches us how to give up the craving and grasping by practicing “sila” and “samadhi”. So this is the only way to go. If you miss the way, you will surely not reach the goal.

The Buddha said that unless we incorporate “saddha”, “sila” and “viriya” into our lives it will not be possible to traverse the Noble Eightfold Path. If we do not do so, we will have our constant companion, “dukkha” – Suffering, accompanying us for a very, very long time in Samsara. Therefore, consider the consequence of such a plight, which will even make us visit the hell worlds in many future births.

You must contemplate at leisure whether the obligations you fulfill, duties you carry out, the effort you take, are done with saddha or without saddha.

Even people who kill animals have effort. But this effort is made through non-saddha. They seek prosperity by killing animals to gain wealth. Thus their efforts will only drag them down to creating more and more kamma, resulting in their spending eons and eons in hell worlds without any deliverance in sight.

A certain Bhikkhu, in a moment of deep concentration, focused on the death and re-birth of a very famous gentleman. The Bhikkhu saw that this gentleman was re-born as a pig. Lord Buddha said that when a person is re-born as an animal, most of the time he will be re-born again and again in the same animal kingdom, maybe 500 times more, because he becomes used to that life. This gentleman who was re-born as a pig used to sacrifice pigs to preserve his wealth and high status in society. The life of a pig is a painful one because it is reared only for its flesh and when it is killed, it faces a very painful death. It is beaten to death mercilessly, hit on the head with long poles and its skin is singed with fire even before its' death. Why do animals suffer so much pain? This is because they, in their past lives as men of high rank, killed and sacrificed animals to preserve their lives, wealth, complexions, pleasure, power, etc. Having enjoyed

life as a man by sacrificing animals, he is conceived in the womb of an animal as soon as he dies. You must not get annoyed with the Bhikkhu who kept these notes for explaining what really happens if you lead such a life. On the contrary, what you should do is to immediately give up such a way of life and without delay start to cultivate saddha, listen to the dhamma, associate noble friends and make an effort to see the suffering of the Five Aggregates of clinging.

Please remember that Lord Buddha has said that there are three things that will lead you towards the ultimate goal of the cessation of all suffering. That is, the development of saddha – Confidence, virya – Right Effort and hiri otap – Fear and Shame to do evil. This is the path to developing “akaravati saddha” – the correct kind of saddha. Even when you meditate, you have to do it with “akaravati saddha” to reap the correct results. If you do meditation with “amulika saddha” – the false kind of saddha, saddha based on blind faith, then you will not reach the goal because such meditation will lead only to tranquility and focused bodily pleasure.

Therefore, if you wish is to end the samsaric suffering, then developing the right kind of saddha

should be your first priority. It is the correct saddha which develops the confidence in the Buddha, dhamma and sangha within you. Saddha makes way for the Right View. Without Right View, there is no Mindfulness. It will become a joke if you think of achieving right concentration – Samadhi, without having the Right View! If you do not have the Right View, you will merely be swinging here and there between pleasure and pain and will never attain nibbana. So if you meditate only for the sake of physical pleasure, relish the enjoyment of the ecstasy or meditate to relax your mind and sleep well, then you will not have proper saddha and will become only deluded and misguided.

But meditation based on “akaravati Saddha” – the right saddha, will bring you true happiness and real pleasure. This is something you have to realize within yourself and then you can win through to the wonderful goal of nibbana – the cessation of all suffering.



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