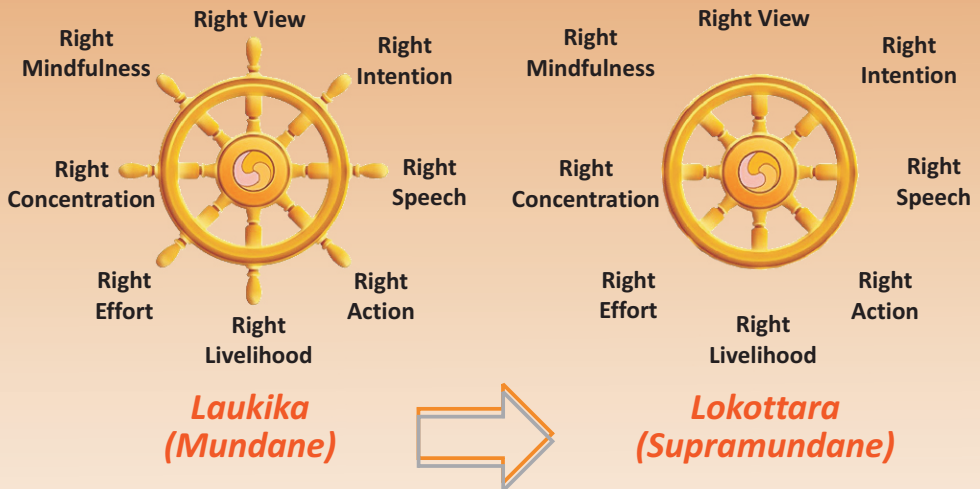


# REFLECTIONS OF AN AMATEUR THE BEGINNINGS

## The Noble Eight-Fold Path



*The Pathway to Absolute Freedom, Bliss and Peace  
based on the  
Philosophy of Buddhism*

*By*

*Chula Goonasekera*

**Publisher:**

**Ariya Dhamma Meditation Group UK**

UK Registered Charity: 1185126



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The Pathway to Absolute Freedom, Bliss and  
Peace

*based on the*

Philosophy of Buddhism

Writer

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---

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1<sup>st</sup> Published 2020



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## PREFACE

I was born in a Buddhist family and learnt the subject in school. This was mostly limited to selected historical events of Lord Buddha's life and the prevailing '*Buddhist Practice*' in Sri Lanka. We memorised historical stories and chanted selected slogans in 'Pāli-Sanskrit' that nurtured the current practice without much understanding on what it all meant. Its memory recall earned me a credit pass at the ordinary level examination. We honoured the 'five precepts' of good conduct, the basic code of the accepted norm. These commitments were to abstain from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication that merged well into my peaceful and simple village lifestyle in Southern Sri Lanka.

My 'free' entry to a national medical school, transformed my life cycle to a never ending 'race' of academia, service and teaching in Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom for over 40 years. It is in late life I could spare a few hours to learn and focus on Lord Buddha's teachings and Buddhist Philosophy, first instilled passively on me by my wife, Chuli. I overheard much of it at home, what she watched, listened and conversed.

This book reflects my initial summative thoughts and understanding on original Buddhist teachings and its Philosophy learnt after attending several preaching and meditation sessions led by Venerable Walasmulle Abhaya Thēro in 2018-19 held in Leicester, London and Wales. I hope this small text written in simple English would be of assistance to many amateurs like me joining this forum seeking an initial understanding on Buddhist Philosophy irrespective of their own faiths or beliefs.

Venerable Walasmulle Abhaya Thēro undertakes his teachings mostly in Sinhalese and Pāli mixed language occasionally supported by some words in English. This makes it difficult, even for the proficient Sinhalese to understand what is said at the beginning. For this reason, some of the 'Pāli-Sanskrit' expressions and its meanings are summarised in a glossary at the end of this book. **Pāli words used in Buddhist literature has very deep and multiple meanings** and these may not have been grasped in full in this small glossary. Therefore, further reference to wider text is needed to comprehensively understand the full

meaning of the discourses given by Venerable Abhaya Thēro, especially in his Pāliextracts and references. If you understand some Sinhala, consider listening to 'Season 8' or else dhamma discussions conducted in English language available online at 'Nirapekshathwaye Maga' web site and it will walk you over this basic knowledge gap.

Venerable Abhaya Thēro teaches in 'dhamma' discussions of 5- or 10-days duration and retreats of 9- or 14-days duration. These retreats are designed to re-treat (re-repair) ourselves to keep us on the right path. Once repaired, you may leave a 'retreat' back to normal 'kāma lōka'society fully enlightened, but after some time, you may feel that it's time for another retreat. In other words, we need to practice what we learnt, otherwise what you learnt and achieved begins to decay.

Buddhist practices over the years has become more ritualistic and materialistic in nature. What we practice now are mostly rituals never described in Tripitaka (Oldest Pāli Buddhist Canon).The re-surfacing of original Buddhist teachings and its philosophy in this era through this mission has become a blissful hope for many of us who were bewildered by the current ritualistic practices.

The initial part of this book is 'theory' similar to what you learnt in your classroom. Its linked practical class is the 'meditation' that enables you test the validity of the 'theory' you learnt.

The original Buddhist teachings were in Pāli, a phonic language (no alphabet). This was transcribed into a written form 'Tripitaka' only centuries later. Thus, 'pronunciation' (how you speak it out) matters in these original Pāli words and needs to be preserved during translations. Therefore, despite attaching a meaning in English, I have used or kept the original Pāli words alongside them within brackets to minimise changes to its original meaning when read by someone else. It is like translation of idioms. Imagine translating an idiom in English such as 'raining cats and dogs' or 'once in a blue moon'. In practice these idioms describe 'heavy rain' and 'rarely' respectively. Imagine translation of these idioms to Sinhalese and then translating it back to English. It will read 'cats and dogs came down with rain' and 'happened once when the blue moon is

there'. Such massive changes to what was meant is possible during translation. Hence, there is a need to preserve all original Pāli words in all translations. The author has adhered to this principle in this book.

Please note the spelling of some words used in this book are in Sanskrit as its pronunciation seems closest to what we assume as correct. These words include Tripitaka, Abhidharma, Nirvāṇa, Sutra, Karma, Anichcha, avidya, Panchaskanda, Pancha-upādāna-skandha, and akushala written in Pāli text as Tipitaka, Abhidhamma, Nibbana, Sutta, Kamma, anicca, avijja, Pancakkhandha, Panca-upādāna-khandha, and akusala respectively.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Misinformation and distortion of 'dhamma' is defined as 'Sangha-bedha' or 'Karma Pathayak' in Buddhist literature and considered an irretrievable sin (anantarika-karma). Therefore, the author has sought wider review and opinions from learned seniors in this forum to ensure interpretations given in this book is closest to the absolute 'dhamma' (Buddhist doctrine) taught by Ven Abhaya Thēro. The following senior 'Ariyā' colleagues made an immense contribution to achieve this goal.

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In addition, the author deeply appreciates contributions of the following dearly friends who provided language scrutiny and revitalisation of the text to promote a wider understanding.

*Petal Mason-Lewin; Manager, National Health Service UK*

*Joanna Ray; Integrative Arts Psychotherapist and Counsellor UK*



## CURRENT BUDDHIST PRACTICE

Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka was increasingly masked by added rules and regulations introduced during post Buddha era by Buddhist communities. Such regulation was perhaps intended to protect Buddhism by promoting coded practices and promote authority for Buddhist clergy. Those added rules, slowly converted Buddhist doctrine (a set of understandings) to a Religion (a set of beliefs) with disciples expected to follow the rules and rituals similar to some other religions.

Currently promoted Buddhist practice are threefold; *selfless offerings* ('Dana'), *codes of good practice* ('Sīla') and *meditation* ('Bhāvanā'). Venerable Abhaya Thēro explains that 'wisdom'(Prajñāor Pannā)in understanding Buddhist principles is the foundation and *codes of good practice*('Sīla') will follow involuntarily and not vice versa. Sīla imposed by rule or fear is not going to bring any '*lokottara*' results. Today, 'Dana' has become the dominant form of practice with the expectation of '*laukika*' (mundane) 'returns'. Unfortunately, this has slowly distanced noble '*lokottara*' (supramundane) purposes of Buddhist philosophy from the public, paving the way to the prevailing culture of 'offerings' to monks, temples and other Buddhist institutions in the name of Lord Buddha for '*laukika*' (mundane) benefits. This follows the common belief that larger the 'offerings' made, better the results or returns are, **an absolute myth**. The Buddhist festivals have become commercialised 'fun' events, with seasonally sprouting organisations collecting donations for undeclared, unscrutinised and unaccounted spurious good Samaritan acts. Sadly, the perception of 'higher the value of the offering more the return' myth has polluted the Buddhist culture making it become a politicised religion with the public being treated in tiers or class. Some temples have become places of worship with shrines whilst competing between each other to host the tallest statue of lord Buddha or largest stupa in the region. The fundamental Buddhist values on selfless 'public' welfare based on kindness, sharing, and compassion has now become a form of 'temple' welfare. Some misguided 'monks'

have taken a political stand, vowing and chanting Buddhist thread to bless themselves, their aspirant leaders, a political stream or a fraction of community and discriminate the public based on race, religion or creed. For those misguided monks in politics and other shrewd politicians, Lord Buddha and Buddhism have become an 'inherited asset' to justify their brutal actions as protectors of Buddhism. This is despite non-violence been a fundamental and absolute first precept of Buddhism taught in our schools. Indeed, they are the enemies of Buddhism who are contributing to its destruction day by day. Despite this, I am glad there is still a minority of true Buddha Śrāvakas honouring the original teachings and selflessly sharing what they have and what they can with the less fortunate.

Consequently, over the years, true 'Sīla' has declined with reduced adherence to even the five precepts taught. Instead, there are publicised 'Sīla' events held in temples on full moon days striving to promote 'eight precepts' at least for the day amongst participants who mostly represent the elderly community. Meditation ('Bhāvanā') has become mostly mindfulness meditation or 'anapanasathi bhāvanā', considered as '*laukika*' i.e. mundane and applicable only for well-being of one's day-to-day life. This book focuses on '*lokottara*' (supramundane) bhāvanā, the pathway beyond this world to Nirvāṇa (Nibbana), the ultimate bliss described in Tripitaka (the oldest Buddhist canonical script) and interpreted and taught in detail by Venerable Abhaya Thēro.

Prince Siddhārtha Gautama (lord Buddha) was born into the aristocratic family of King Suddhodana in the Shakya clan around 623 BCE in a kingdom named Jambudvīpa. Gautama grew up in princely luxury, shielded from the outside world, destined to become a universal monarch. He was exceptionally intelligent and compassionate. When he came of age he married Yaśodharā, who gave birth to his son Rāhula. Despite supreme luxury, something drew him into the world beyond the castle walls. He finally bid an annulled farewell to his wife, child and parents and rode to the forest to become an ascetic. Dressed in simple

robes and under difficult circumstances he investigated many—atheists, materialists, idealists, and dialecticians and his own innovations in the deep forest in severe austerity and self-mortification for over 6 years before becoming 'enlightened' following the noble eight-fold path. He used all his spiritual knowledge and understanding over the next 45 years of life teaching his noble findings for many who became 'Arhats' or 'noble ones' attaining enlightenment for themselves. A couple of centuries after his death he came to be known by the title Buddha, which means “Awakened One” or the "Enlightened One".

Lord Buddha was not born a Buddhist and his teachings were applicable to anybody who lived in that era with whatever belief or faith. His original teachings, therefore, are equally applicable to anyone with whatever religion or faith today. In a nutshell, the original teachings were a set of 'understandings' on the true nature of the one's mind and behaviour, now considered philosophical to bring peace and tranquillity to anyone. Buddhist ritualistic religion is truly the 'mask' that we humans have created over the years to serve our own selves and the mundane (*'laukika'*) needs. Lord Buddha has never considered himself a form or individual seeking a ritual honour.

## TRIPITAKA – THE REVIVAL

The history tells us that Buddha's teachings were preserved by word of mouth through memorisation down the generations for at least 450 years before it was transcribed to written literature, in an abstract format, termed 'Tripitaka'. It encompasses the earliest collection of Buddhist teachings recognized as canonical by Theravada Buddhists. Many commentaries have been added since over the centuries.

Tripitaka means "three baskets" comprising of 57 volumes. The Vinaya Pitaka (Discipline Basket 1-9) deals with rules and regulations for the bhikshu and bhikshuni (monks), and guidelines for the behaviour and interaction between the Buddhist clergy (the 'bhikshu and bhikshuni') and the laity (Buddhist followers). The Sutra Pitaka (Discourse Basket 10-44) contains the Buddha's sermons on doctrine (school of thought) and application of this wisdom to real life events/situations in an 'abstract' or 'titular' format, focusing on core teachings of Four Noble Truths (Figure 5) and dependent origination ('Paticca Samuppāda'- Table 11). The Abhidharma Pitaka (Higher Knowledge or Special Teachings Basket 45-57) is essentially a detailed description of the facts given in Sutra Pitaka (Vibhaṅga), including deep dhamma poetry. Its primary subjects are Buddhist philosophy and psychology.



*Figure 1*

*The late Venerable Waharaka Abhyaratanalankara Thēro (1950-2017)*

There is also a script named Dhammapada (Dharmapada in Sanskrit), a popular slim anthology of verses. This constitutes a perfect compendium of the Buddha's teaching, elaborated at length inclusive of sayings of the Buddha and simple discussions of Buddhist doctrine based on the lord Buddha's daily life.

Tripitaka constitute sounds of Pāli words scribed using characters of other languages including Sinhala. This is because Pāli is a phonic language and has no alphabet. The latter translation is now considered to have been polluted. One main confusion is the interpretation of Anichcha (Insatiability), Dukkha (a state of corruption of our clean mind resulting in acts leading to misery), and Anattā (futile, worthlessness, uselessness) as Anithya (impermanence), Dukka (suffering) and Anātma (the belief that there is no soul, and nothing survives death). The latter expressions of Anithya, Dukka and Anātma are misinterpretations not compatible with the true Buddhist doctrine and hence not discussed any further in this text.

The late Venerable Waharaka Abhyaratanalankara Thēro (1950-2017) initiated a mission to resolve these destructive conflicts in written texts on Buddha's teachings, originating from misinterpretations in the Sinhalese translated 'Tripitaka'. Venerable Walasmulle Abhaya Thēro, was a follower of this school, a chartered civil engineer by profession and a diplomat in counselling. He is now spearheading this mission of Ven Waharaka Abhayalankara Thēro (Figure 1) and concurring the Buddhist Philosophy in its purest form, with added modern scientific explanations that seamlessly parallel the 2600-year-old Buddhist script. He teaches everyone interested, irrespective of their class, beliefs, faith or religion.

---

*Science corrects itself, and so would Dhamma.  
Both describe fundamental truths, known and unknown to mankind.*

---

Venerable Abhaya Thēro's scrupulous readings of the translated Tripitaka, reposted at 'Nirapekshathwaye Maga' on the web in English discussions or 'Season 8' in Sinhala has helped many of us understand how subtle errors in the written Tripitaka have misinterpreted fundamental Buddhist concepts resulting in major shifts in its doctrine. Erroneous translations and purposeful fabrications such as Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga have contributed. These erroneous words sounded almost the same as that of the Pāli original but created a major rift in the understanding within the Tripitaka itself. The erroneous interpretations were located as 'misfits' that did not explain the fundamental principle of the law of nature described. This has made Buddhist practice move towards '*laukika*' (mundane) goals closing the door to '*lokottara*' (supramundane) Nirvāṇa Path. Venerable Abhaya Thēro's original mission was to show disciples, word by word, where those errors were and its rectifications to restore the original meanings enabling the 'Tripitaka' in Sinhalese to be read without any conflict within. With the assistance of modern communication and transport facilities, this mission is now global, mainly among the expatriated Sinhala-Buddhist community. That is also the reason why I could now re-learn core teachings of Buddha (Dhamma) despite living in a Christian Country.

This renewed teaching offered in person and online has enlightened Buddhists worldwide as it all makes sense when explained. It does not promote a ritualistic '*laukika*' Buddhist Practice but a peaceful '*lokottara*' pathway to 'absolute freedom' or in other words 'Nirvāṇa'. Nirvāṇa is not a status that can be conferred on someone at funerals as we often believe. It is something we must learn, practice and earn ourselves before death.

Venerable Abhaya Thēro's mission is humbly self-supported by its volunteering laity, daily, mainly to promote meditation practices in a peaceful and quiet environment away from the ritualistic traditional offerings and chants. Understanding dhamma and meditation is the primary goal.



*Figure 2 Venerable Walasmulle Abhaya Thēro*

On the face of dhamma, all are equal. The world accepted norms of educational levels do not determine the pace of learning or achievements in meditation and entering the path of Nirvāṇa. However, some may find it difficult to enter Dhyāna due to invincible obstacles and may need the help of an Erudite Dhyāna Practitioner (Dhamma Sadachari) for resolution.

## LORD BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS - DHAMMA

Teachings of Buddha fundamentally describe a law of nature that explains what makes us travellers in this never-ending road, 'Saṃsāra'. This is fuelled by rebirth (a belief), in various forms, in many known and unknown worlds, including the animal kingdom, heaven, and hell. Our rebirth is dictated by our own 'Karma', a deed that is constantly revised and reposted by our own intents and actions.

Lord Buddha's teachings in Tripitaka (Pāli Cannon) seem to follow a 'top - down' strategy where chanting was often in an abstract format or just titular by default aimed at the audience with the highest order of understanding. This was only followed by any detailed description if someone asked for a clarification due to lack of comprehension. This is a common pattern of teaching recorded in Sutra Pitaka (abstracts) and Abhidharma Pitaka (details). Therefore, any reader of Sutra Pitaka often have to search for scattered explanations in Abhidharma Pitaka for a detailed understanding.

This book however follows a 'bottom-up' strategy of learning enabling any amateur with nil knowledge on the subject slowly build up the necessary understanding to concur the path of Nirvāṇa.

All we do in this world is to satisfy our sensory pleasures in whatever the format we can. Movies, music, foods, scents, and comfort are common pleasures we seek and chase to please our eyes, ears, tongue, nose and body endlessly. It is important to understand that all pleasures are mind-made and not something found in the material we chase. In other words, we are constantly chasing mind-made pleasures, and this is termed 'Assāda' (gratification) in Buddhist literature. Passionately driven attachment to our sensory pleasures is the driving force of Assāda, also termed as Raga (greed, craving, attachment, attraction). This same attachment/attraction can also become Dvesha (anger, aversion, repulsion, hatred) or Mōha (delusion) especially when Raga was not



fulfilled. All 'Assāda' (mind-made pleasures), are subject to 'Ādīnava' (drawbacks, consequences) and its 'Nissarana' (relinquishment) would be our escape.

### **Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana**

This is the fundamental principle that applies and explains most aspects of Buddhist Philosophy. Venerable Abhaya Thēro will frequently refer to above words in his discourses and discussions. 'Assāda' (Āsvāda) refers to mind-made pleasures, 'Ādīnava' are its drawback or consequences and 'Nissarana' is 'escape' from it or relinquishment.

For me as an amateur it was a puzzle initially to understand how perceived pleasures (Assāda) led to Dukkha or became the cause of future suffering. In other words, how did ādīnava (consequences) of assāda (mind made pleasures) caused suffering. This is a subtle but perhaps **the most important concept** that need to be understood carefully. There is no need to give up all these sense pleasures as a prerequisite. One's chasing of pleasures will slowly fade away with increased understanding of ādīnava resulting from assāda and how it becomes unfruitful.

There are two main categories of 'pleasures'; those arising due to (i) Karma Vipāka (past deeds), and (ii) Vacī, Kaya or Mano Saṅkhāra (mind-made pleasures due to lustful, hateful, delusional thoughts).

Eating a piece of cake and related enjoyment belongs to the pleasures of the first category (Karma Vipāka) whereas one's attachment to that taste is in the second category (Example 1). The latter generates Assāda. Even an 'Arhat' individual will feel taste (first category) but will not get attached to it and crave for more (assāda). It's the latter that links to extend the samsāric journey filled with suffering. The mechanism or process of how this becomes a 'suffering' or 'dukkha' is explained in 'Paticca Sammupada' (dependent origination) later in this book.

### ➤ *Example 1 A piece of cake and its taste*

A piece of cake gives you a certain taste (Vedanā), but this may double or treble if you were made to believe it was made by your fiancée. On the other hand, the same piece of cake, if you find out it was made by your enemy, it might not taste good at all. The enhancement or degradation of the taste that followed was made in your own mind, based on external factors that promoted Raga (attachment) or Dvesha (repulsion) in your mind. In other words, the taste of the piece of cake, i.e. Vedanā is escalated to a higher level or a lower level in your mind. That is Assāda in action.

Assāda is a 'mind-made pleasure' or a delusion based on sensory perceptions (Example 1) Such arising of Assāda is dependent on Avidyā or 'Ignorance'. Avidyā is lack of understanding on Four Noble Truths explained later (Figure 5). Our slippery pathway towards Assāda is described in detail in 'Paticca Samuppāda'.

### ➤ *Example 2 Eating dog meat*

Eating dog meat is an assāda for those who desire dog meat, but repulsive and Dvesha for the 'people from other cultures who learned it as repulsive'. It may be indifferent or neutral for another. Those emotions are made in respective minds, based on their conditioning based possibly on cultural and other influences, but are not really a property found in the meat itself.

We chase sensory perceptions, also called 'Rūpa-forms' (Table 6) for pleasure (Assāda) and this is likened to chasing a 'mirage' to find water. This is because Assāda (mind-made pleasures) is not found in the 'place' that we are looking for it. The more we chase such 'mind-made pleasures' the craving too will surge. This leads to dependent arising of 'klesha'.

Kleshas are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. Kleshas include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. Contemporary translators describe kleshas as: afflictions, defilements, destructive emotions, disturbing emotions, negative emotions, mind poisons, etc.

Adīnava means the 'drawback' or 'consequence'. An alcoholic or an addict is generated this way. Repeated drinking or drug misuse driven by initial pleasures (Assāda) leads to addiction, financial trouble, family breakups and deterioration of health. When we pursue such 'mental pleasures' (assāda), bad consequences will eventually surface both in this life (social, economic and health issues) and in Saṃsāra. The 'lokottara' consequences of Dvesha (repulsion) however can be worse (Example 3).

### ➡ *Example 3 The consequences of dvesha is worse*

A strumpet woman and a spiritual lady lives in the same street. The spiritual lady follows strict behavioural principles and lead her life as a vegan, with complete adherence to Buddhist precepts. The strumpet however leads a 'happy go lucky' life with no restrictions on her pleasure-seeking behaviour.

Having seen activities of her neighbour, the spiritual lady was in constant anger (Dvesha). Dvesha was stronger than Raga. Ultimately, therefore, the spiritual lady was collecting more kleshas than her neighbour strumpet. Therefore, at death, the spiritual lady ended up in Hell as a result.

Our minds are constantly seeking sensual pleasures and hence always under stress. We seek sensual pleasures because we don't realize the value of having a calm, peaceful state of mind that is 'neutral'. Being neutral is termed Upekṣā. A state of a neutral mind can be experienced at least temporarily during meditation. It is like getting rid of a headache that one had for a long time.

---

### **Craving or Greed (Raga), Aversion or Hatred (Dvesha) and Delusion (Mōha)**

---

Since birth, we all are engaged in one thing. We are constantly chasing means and modes of pleasing our sensory organs that never seem to satisfy to its saturation. The quest for better visual forms, sounds, tastes, smells, and comfort is never ending.







In order to de-construct the process of our wheel of 'Saṃsāra' we need a fundamental understanding on the 'five aggregates' or heaps that arise from our sensory organs, the faculties (Table 1). This is because our 'attachment and bonding' to our sensory perceptions is the root cause of the problem.

We perceive the world around us via the six perceptions (Table 1). We may 'like' or 'dislike' or even be 'indifferent or neutral' to the signals (Vēdanā and Sañña) we receive via our sensory organs. We may or may not be pleased with what we see or hear or touch or taste or smell. These perceptions are common to all human beings including 'arhat' people. This is also termed the 'five aggregates' (Panchaskanda - Table 1). These are also called vipāka vedanā.

Vipāka vedanā results from your own Karma or past deeds (spiritual principle of cause and effect). Some may call it fate or being lucky. It is believed that we have no control over those encounters or opportunities leading to initial 'thoughts' pleasurable or not so pleasurable vipāka vedanā arising in our 'prabhāsvara' (radiant or clean) mind. Our natural tendency thereafter is to chase those vipāka vedanā with Raga, Dvesha or Mōha.

What is consciousness (Vijñāna)? It consists of six groups of consciousness; visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, tactile consciousness, and mental consciousness. This comes from the signals of the six sensory organs, the doors of perception.

**Table 1 Panchaskanda in a nutshell**  
(five aggregates for each = a total of 30)

<b>SENSORY ORGAN</b>	<b>PERCEPTION</b>	<b>'PANCHASKANDA'</b>
<b>EYE</b> 	See (Rūpa)	Impression (Rūpa- visual form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)
<b>EAR</b> 	Hear (Sound)	Impression (Rūpa- sound form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)
<b>TONGUE</b> 	Taste (Gana)	Impression (Rūpa-taste form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)
<b>NOSE</b> 	Smell (Jeeva)	Impression (Rūpa-odour form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)
<b>BODY</b> 	Feel (Kaya)	Impression (Rūpa-sensation form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)
<b>MIND</b> 	Thoughts	Impression (Rūpa-invincible, intangible form) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)

Each sense organ gives rise to five aggregates named 'panchaskandha' detailed above. 'Panchaskandha' (the 5 aggregates) is common to all including people attaining 'Arhat' status who has achieved complete control of mind. We ordinary people (up to the status 'Arhat') naturally inclined to go further attempting to satisfy our sensory organs through attachments of desire/lustfulness (Raga), hate/ anger (Dvesha) or delusion (Mōha). This leads to 'Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha' (Table 6). This is the driving force of all beings except 'Arhat's'. 'Arhat's have 'panchaskandha' but they have no dependent arising of 'Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha'.

#### ➔ *Example 4 What is Prabhāsvara mind?*

Prabhāsvara mind is the initial pure unpolluted mind at the inception of a thought. It's similar to clear clean water. Water gets muddy because of pollutants. If we can prevent the water from becoming polluted, then water remain clear and clean. It is the same effort that we take in trying to keep our mind clean, preventing its thoughts becoming polluted from Raga, Dvesha or Mōha.

We all have been chasing pleasures ('Assāda') for years and years, but none known has reached a satisfaction to saturation. We must maintain an effort or 'work' continuously to feed the happiness. The moment we stop working, the happiness will also start to decay.

The pursuit for pleasures is the beginning of 'sadness' or more accurately 'Ariyā dukkha'. Thus, in Buddhist terms, pursuit of any of above endlessly, creates a greed, that is insatiable and eventually resulting in sadness, misery or Dvesha (hatred, aversion, anger, hostility, ill will, jealousy). Attraction for Assāda leads to Raga. Any obstruction for this will cause Hatred or Dvesha. Neither hatred nor raga will ever end. Therefore, its pursuance is futile.

If one is in the pursuit of happiness, and constantly looking for ways and means of maintaining one's happiness, it becomes a delusional state

(Mōha). Mōha is the belief or delusion that the 6 senses can be satisfied at the end. Mōha is just as or even more detrimental than Dvesha. Mōha can coexist with both Raga and Dvesha. This is because ego and pride (Māna) and doubt and suspicion (Vicikiccā) are part of Mōha. Cooling down of your Dvesha (hatred) and Raga (attraction) will also address Mōha indirectly. In other words, Raga/Dvesha/Mōha puts our senses on fire. Getting rid of or reducing Raga/Dvesha/Mōha is the same as a kettle starting to cool the moment the fire is extinguished. The 'ignorance' to above truth is 'Avidyā' the root-cause of the fire or in 'Ariyā' terms 'dukkha'.

### **Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā**

Assāda (mind made pleasures arising from lustful attachment to the perceptions of the six faculties) carries Ādīnava (drawbacks, consequences) at its inception. This is a universal truth ('dharmathawayak'). Stopping creation of Assāda by avoiding attachment to the six faculties (Table 1) through Raga is the way to kibosh Ādīnava.

Assāda is Anichcha, Dukkha and Anattā (Table 2). 'Anichcha' is the opposite of 'ichcha', or 'what I wish' i.e. *perceptions in one's mind* about those “things” and “events” in this world. This refers to our inability to fulfil and maintain anything to our satisfaction (including “our” own body) in the long run. In other words, nothing will go in the way I wished. We cannot satisfy our six faculties however hard we try. Because of 'Anichcha' we eventually become distraught and that is Dukkha. We are truly helpless in preventing this sequence of events. Therefore, finally we end up with nothing of any real substance. That is Anattā (futile, worthless).

**Table 2 The Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā**

<p><b>Anichcha (insatiability)</b></p>	<p>Insatiability means inability to satisfy our six faculties with Assāda in the way you wish. Nothing can be controlled in the way you wish to bring everlasting happiness.</p>
<p><b>Dukkha (suffering)</b></p>	<p>There is nothing that can bring true happiness. Despite our struggles, we will be subjected to much more suffering than pleasures if we keep pursuing Assāda (see glossary).</p> <p>The accepted meaning of suffering in this world is sadness, pain, death of relatives or oneself, loss of possessions, assets, sickness, miseries, anxiety, depression, phobia, etc. This is easily understood by everyone and called Dukka in layman's terms. But, in original Buddhist teaching the Dukkha is the pollution of 'Prabhāsvara Mind' (clean or unpolluted mind) by Raga, Dvesha and Mōha created at a given moment (momentaneous). The entire lifespan is a series of such moments. If someone promotes these moments with Raga, Dvesha, Mōha , then the entire lifespan gets filled with Dukkha.</p>
<p><b>Anattā (futile)</b></p>	<p>Since there is no fulfilment of satisfaction to be achieved by chasing Assāda, the entire process is worthless or futile.</p>

**➔ Example 5 All senses are insatiable.**

We are endlessly looking at pictures, movies and figures. Do we ever get satisfied?

We are always searching for happiness, but this can never be fulfilled however much money you have.

Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā is a 'delusion' for a person who does not understand the Four Noble Truths (see below). Such a person believes everything is satiable (ichcha), pleasurable (sukha) and controllable and



fertile (atta). Ichcha mean what I wish. 'An-ichcha' means 'not what I wish'. How often do you come across the feeling 'this is not the way I want, or not the way I like'? That is Anichcha. This is because our sensory perceptions are never fully satiable to our liking. That is why the cessation of this delusion 'senses are fully satiable' creates an opening for end of suffering. This is the central theme described in the 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Noble Eight-Fold Path'.

In other words, a person must realize/experience/understand that one cannot maintain any state of mind continuously (to be happy all the time - nichcha) in the way one wish (Anichcha). Thus, happiness and unhappiness (Sukha-Dukkha and Dukka-Dukkha) both ends in Dukkha (suffering). This makes one is destitute/forsaken/helplessly lost (this is the true meaning of Anattā) if they dwell in Raga, Dvesha and Mōha. Once you are free of those, the problem is solved.

Why is it that assāda can never satisfy to saturation? Assāda is focussed at the 18 dhātu points (Table 4) of Impression (Rūpa), Sensation (Vēdanā) and Perception (Sañña) of the senses. Trying to satisfy these 18 dhātu points (sensory realms) is a waste of time. Why? The Assāda is not found or generated at any of the above 18 dhātu points but it is in mind, or more accurately a 'mental fabrication'. Therefore, however much you look for assāda, it will never be found at the 18 Dhātu points (sensory realms).

That is why one needs to obliterate assāda through the understanding of; nichcha (thinking that one can maintain a fully satisfied status of six senses all the time), sukha (believing that happiness/good can be maintained), atta (thinking that this is a stable, fulfilled, fertile state of mind). Buddha saw that the impulse to crave and desire to grasp something for pleasure or assāda as the principal cause of suffering.

Understanding the Four Noble Truths is the beginning of the cessation of 'Avidyā' (ignorance). The Four Noble Truths comprise the essence of

Buddha's teachings. They are the truth of *suffering*, the truth of the *cause of suffering*, the truth of the *end of suffering*, and the truth of the *path that leads to the end of suffering which is* called the 'Noble Eightfold Path' (Figure 5).

Ritual and meditation practices of beliefs and faiths were also engraved in ancient society even during Buddha's time. He initially studied the existing spiritual norms and practiced it to achieve an end to the sufferings. Having realised its failure, he rejected those and explored the causes for it on his own and found the one and only '*lokottara*' pathway to the end of suffering.

Buddha did not aim to create a religion that focuses on devotion to his person. He used the existing spiritual norms and discovered his own path in higher order i.e. the '*lokottara*' Noble Eight-Fold Path (Ariyā aṭṭhaṅgika magga).

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*Who is our Teacher ?*  
*Dhamma is Our Teacher*  
*- Tripitaka -*

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The human form of life is the supreme of all realms as it is the only 'window' available for us to lay a foundation to begin the exiting process from this Suffering or 'Saṃsāra'. This is the meaning of the slogan 'The Beginning of the End of our Journey' rhyming at the inception of most online scripts and discourses of Venerable Abhaya Thēro.

## A STEPWISE GUIDE

Buddhist literature is so vast. Learning and understanding the Four Noble Truth is a cumbersome process for an ordinary person. I needed a study plan and guidance. I could not enter an 'Advanced' level class and hope for a hunky-dory success if I have not attended the lower grade classes and learnt the basics. Listening to Dhamma laid the foundation for me. There was no need to memorise all that was said. Understanding was the key. Reduce engagement in obstructive oḷārika dasa akushala (immoral actions).

The main purpose of successful meditation practice is achievements of '*lokottara*' (*supramundane*) value. A learning ladder (Table 3) based on the supramundane Noble Eight-Fold Path was a realistic start. It was a stepwise guide as well as a scaffolding.

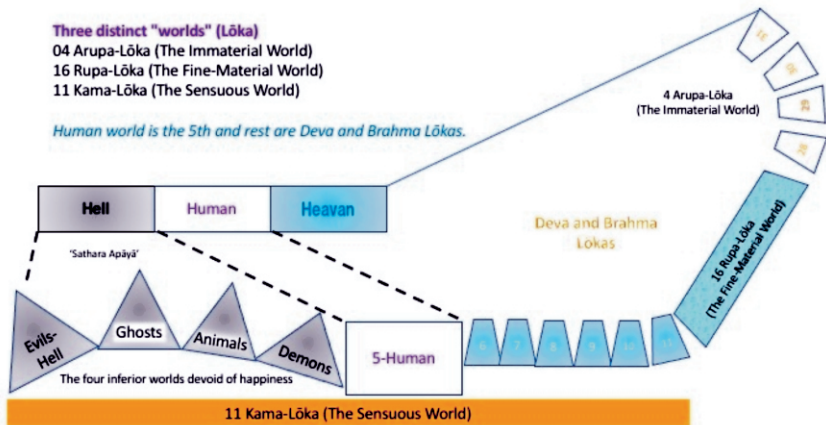
For the maintenance of successful progress, all steps achieved needs to be held and nurtured. This is the 'norm' and 'experience' described by supramundane preachers (dhamma gurus). If you forget or do not follow your steps of learning and practice, all your achievements will fall to base resulting from the broken scaffolding (Table 3).

**Table 3 A supramundane (lokottara) eight step guide on where to start and proceed**

Right understanding - Samma Ditthi	Right thought - Samma Sankappa	Right speech - Samma Vaca	Right action - Samma Kammanta	Right livelihood - Samma Ajiva	Right effort - Samma Vayama	Samma Sati	Enter Samma Samādhi	'Arhat' Status is Nirvāṇa. This is the ultimate attainment. No more craving, No more hatred, No more delusion. <i>Raga-khayo Nibbāna, Dvesha-khayo Nibbāna, Mōha-khayo Nibbāna</i>	
								Maintain steps 1-8 until you go up the ladder from Sōtapaññā-bhāvanā to Arhat status. 1. Samma Vimukthi: Escape from 'gratification' by cessation of Raga, Dvesha, Mōha 2. Samma Gnana: Experience the 'wisdom' of tranquillity by cessation of 'gratification'	
								8	Supramundane (lokottara) meditation using assigned chanting (Karmasthana) to concur four stages of Dhyāna Your Exam
								7	Practice diligent awareness, mindfulness, and attentiveness on activities of the body, sensations or feelings, the mind and thoughts related to lust, hate and delusion
								6	Develop energetic will to prevent the rise of evil thoughts and promote to perfection good, and wholesome states of mind. Try to cease gratification by using the wisdom of its insatiable nature
								5	Minimise or abstain from making one's living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms, lethal weapons, toxins, poisons, killing animals, cheating, etc.
								4	Promote moral, honourable, and peaceful conduct and abstain from destroying life, from stealing, from dishonest dealings, from illegitimate sexual misconduct. Help others to lead a peaceful and honourable life in the right way using 1-3.
								3	Abstain from telling lies, slander and talk that may bring about hatred, enmity, disunity, and disharmony. Get rid of harsh, rude, impolite, malicious, and abusive language, and idle, useless, and foolish babble and gossip. Use words that are friendly and benevolent, pleasant and gentle, meaningful, and useful. Follow the Four Noble Truths.
2	Understand Salāyatana, Raga, Dvesha, Mōha and Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha. Promote thoughts of selfless detachment, love and non-violence grouped on the side of 'wisdom' and get rid of selfish desire, ill-will, hatred, and violence. Promote loving kindness (metta), empathy (mudita), equanimity (upekkha). It is also termed 'nekkhama, viyapada, avihimsā' sankalpana.								
1	<i>Listen to Dhamma Season 8.</i> Learn the four noble truths; Dukkha, Samudaya, Nirodha, Magga. This is ' <i>Sam-ma-ditthi</i> ', meaning the vision of distancing from or cessation of attachments for Assāda (gratification). Learn its Ādinava (drawback), and Nissarana (escape). Understand the insatiable nature of the six faculties by gratification. This is the path to achieve "Absolute Peace and happiness" called Nibbana.								

There are two sorts of understanding. The first is knowledge, based on an accumulated memory, an intellectual grasping of a subject according to certain given data. This is called 'knowing accordingly' (anubodha). It is not very deep. The real deep understanding or 'penetration' (pativedha) is seeing a thing in its true nature, without name and label. This penetration is possible only when the mind is free from all impurities and is fully developed through meditation. That is our goal.

We need to be aware of our thoughts that may escalate from Raga (greed), Dvesha (hatred), and Mōha (delusion) that often promotes 'akushala' unwholesome actions leading us towards the four lowest realms of Kāma-Lōka. Such pāpa kamma are done with lōbha, dōsa, and mōha, the stronger versions of greed, hate, and ignorance. Wholesome actions resulting from absence of greed, absence of hate, and absence of delusion are generally of 'kushala' nature favouring rebirth in higher level worlds such as human or deva realms or brahma lōka (Figure 3).



**Figure 3 The realms of existence**

In other words, we should note that different levels of Raga (greed), Dvesha (hate) and Mōha (delusion) may be expressed using alternative wording. Lōbha, Dōsa, and Mōha are the deepest levels of greed, hate, and delusion, respectively, that can lead to stronger versions of akushala karma (pāpa karma) making one likely to be reborn in the lower four

worlds. Unwholesome actions, whether they are bodily, verbal or mental actions, originate from the three unwholesome roots of greed (lōbha), aversion (dōsa) and delusion (Mōha). When lōbha decreases one's tendency to give up attachments to worldly matter increase. Hate decreases as 'metta'(loving-kindness), 'karuṇā'(compassion), 'muditā'(empathy) increase. Lower levels of the state of mind attained at the Sōtapanna stage may be named 'rāga, paṭigha, avijjā'. Alōbha (absence of greed), Adōsa (absence of hate), and Amōha (absence of delusion) may be used to indicate complete abolishment of those characteristics favouring higher levels of achievement. For example, 'Dana' in alōbha, adōsa, amōha state of mind is the most spiritual act. The cause and effect (hethu-pala) described in Buddhism is based on lōbha / dōsa / mōha (oḷārika forms of Raga / Dvesha / Mōha associated with the four lowest realms) and alōbha, adōsa, amōha (lesser forms seen in human, deva and brahma realms), the drivers of unwholesome or wholesome actions respectively. With increased understanding of the Four Noble Truth slowly you will reach a state of alōbha, adōsa, amōha.

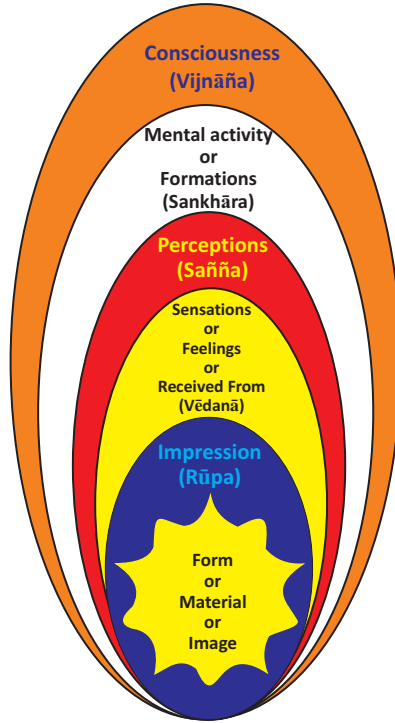
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### **The Six Faculties**

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All beings in this universe have 6 senses; eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. These are our six 'internal' faculties (*indriya*) that allows us to see, hear, taste, feel, smell and think.

When a form or material or image meets with a sensory organ/faculty it creates an impression (Rūpa). An impression leads to sensations (Vēdanā) at the sensory organ that trigger signals, also referred as perception (Sañña) to your mind. The mind processes (Saṅkhāra, mental fabrication) these signals or perceptions. This leads to final identification or consciousness of the material or image by consciousness (Vijñāna) (Figure 4). This is the origin of a clean thought in an unpolluted state in our minds. Consciousness (Vijñāna) is the final state of a thought in an enlightened 'arhat' person.



**Figure 4** *The signal processing pathway of the sensory organs*

Our internal faculties (*indriya*) link up with six 'external' faculties namely visual forms, sounds, smell, taste, touch and thoughts (Table 4). From among the six internal faculties the most controllable is your mind.

If something goes in the way you wish, want, desire or like then it gives you happiness, pleasure and 'positive' thoughts. If something is not according to the way you wish it to be, want, desire or like that ends up with unhappiness, anger, hatred and 'negative' thoughts.

**Table 4 The process of bonding (paticca) between internal and external faculties**

Vision Hearing Smell Taste Touch - Thoughts						
External faculties (perception)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Internal faculties (processing)	→	Consciousness/ Recognition (Vijñāna)
Visual form (Rūpa Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Eye (Chakku Dhātu)	→	Visual Consciousness (Chakku Vijñāna Dhātu)
Sound (Shabda Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Ear (Sotha Dhātu)	→	Sound Consciousness (Sotha Vijñāna Dhātu)
Odour (Ghandha Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Nose (Ghandha Dhātu)	→	Smell Consciousness (Ghandha Vijñāna Dhātu)
Taste (Rasa Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Tongue (Jivha Dhātu)	→	Taste Consciousness (Jivha Vijñāna Dhātu)
Touch (Pottabba Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Body (Kaya Dhātu)	→	Body Consciousness (Kaya Vijñāna Dhātu)
Thoughts (Dhamma Dhātu)	→	Bonding (Paticca)	→	Mind (Mano Dhātu)	→	Mind Consciousness (Mano Vijñāna Dhātu)

Constant desire or cravings (Tanhā) in ordinary human beings to satisfy the six senses (Vijñāna) for pleasure and happiness leads to clinging (Upādāna). This process is also called 'Saṅkhāra' (value added mental fabrication) or more specifically 'Abhi-Saṅkhāra'. This pollutes our minds to drive ourselves further to satisfy or gratify ourselves. But the 'truth' is, that the senses are insatiable (impossible to satisfy) in the long run. Just reflect for a moment. Is it not all activities we do daily are directly or indirectly an attempt to satisfy our senses/faculties in the short-term or long-term? This process never ends as the craving (Tanhā) for more escalates with it.

One might wonder why is it that some people naturally receive facilities and opportunities to please themselves without much effort. This results



from our past deeds (Vipāka). Unpleasant experiences may also occur due to past deeds (Vipāka) and we need to be careful not to escalate it further with Raga/Dvesha/Mōha.

**Table 5 Vipāka-Vēdanā generation in the six senses**

<b>World (Lōka)→</b>	<b>Rūpa →</b>	<b>Vēdanā →</b>	<b>Sañña →</b>	<b>Sañkhāra →</b>	<b>Vijñāna ('consciousness or getting to know')</b>
<b>Eye: Chakku-Rūpa (image)</b>	RūpaRūpa (Impression)	RūpaVēdanā (Sensation)	RūpaSañña (Image perception)	Chakku Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Chakku Vijñāna (Recognition of different colours or persons or things or optical objects or forms)
<b>Ear: Sotha-sabdha (sound)</b>	Shabdha Rūpa (Impression)	Shabdha Vēdanā (Sensation)	Shaba Sañña (Sound perception)	Sotha Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Sotha Vijñāna (Recognition of different sounds and its pleasant or unpleasant natures)
<b>Nose: Ghana-ghandha (smell)</b>	Ghandha Rūpa (Impression)	Ghandha Vēdanā (Sensation)	Ghandha Sañña (Odour perception)	Ghandha Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Ghana Vijñāna (Recognition of different nature of odours pleasant or otherwise)
<b>Tongue: Jivka - rasa (taste)</b>	Rasa Rūpa (Impression)	Rasa Vēdanā (Sensation)	Rasa Sañña (Taste perception)	Jivha Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Jivha Vijñāna (Recognition of different tastes; sweetness, bitterness, sourness)
<b>Body: Kaya pottabbha (touch)</b>	Pottabbha Rūpa (Impression)	Pottabbha Vēdanā (Sensation)	Pottabbha Sañña (Sensory perception)	Kaya Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Kaya Vijñāna (Recognition of different feeling sensations of warmth, coldness, roughness, smoothness, pleasantness, painfulness etc)
<b>Mind: Mana-dhamma (thought)</b>	Dhamma Rūpa (Impression)	Dhamma Vēdanā (Sensation)	Dhamma Sañña (Thought perception)	Mano Sañkhāra (Mental fabrication)	Mano Vijñāna (Recognition of different thoughts or ideas of sensuality, kindness, averseness, forgiveness, friendliness etc.)

It is important to understand that happiness (Preethi) and pleasure (Sukha) are thought processes that are made in our minds and not found on the materials or images triggering our senses (Table 6). Therefore, different people coming into contact with the same image/material that triggers the same signal within our sensory organs feel differently. The following is an example of the same image creating lust or hate in different minds at the same time (Example 6).

### ➡ *Example 6 The cricket match*

In a cricket match played between England and Sri Lanka, a Sri Lankan batsman scores a six. This gives so much pleasure (raga) to Sri Lankan supporters and sadness to English supporters (dvesha). In the next innings the opposite happens inverting the feelings of the respective supporters.

All witnessed a ball going over the borderline hit by a batsman. This gives Raga (pleasure) to some and Dvesha (hatred) to others. It is the same event. A person watching the same event with no links to either side will perhaps feel neutral (a state of Upekṣā).

It is important to understand this distinction between the trigger of senses (object), the sensing organ (eye) and its perception (sight) and what follows it i.e. self-promoted attachment by one's emotion (lustfulness, hatred or delusion) towards the material/object/image (Example 7). This understanding is fundamental to meditation.

When we do not achieve our craving to satisfy our senses, the result is sadness or misery (Example 7). It may also extend as 'hate' (Patigha/Dōsa/Dvesha) against another who prevented you reach it. Attachment, bonding, greed and pursuit of pleasure through the 6 Faculties (Indriya), are never satiable. This is called 'an-ichcha'. This eventually builds up 'dukkha'. Bonding on perceptions in the form of Raga (greed), Dvesha (hate) or Mōha (delusion) is therefore the cause of suffering and this book is dedicated to discuss this in detail based on Venerable Abhaya Thēro's Tripitaka quotations and interpretations.

### ➤ Example 7 Attachment is in your mind. It differs between persons

A boy and a girl go to a shop. The boy is craving for a toy car whereas the girl wants a teddy. If the parents buy it for them, both will be happy and if not both unhappy. If we mix and give the teddy to the boy and the car to the girl, they both will be unhappy. Therefore, happiness is not something found in the toy. It was something created in their own minds.

Happiness was created by lustfulness towards this item. This can go further leading children getting attached to their respective toys. This is Raga. Loss or a broken toy at this state will only bring extreme unhappiness to the children. If the toys were stolen or damaged by someone, children may not only feel sad but also develop an anger towards the person who broke it. This is hatred (a form of Dvesha). Hatred was not found in the toy; it was a creation in the child's mind.

All attachment to senses and its perceptions ultimately ends up in 'dukkha' (sadness, misery and more). Therefore, getting rid of or diminishing attachment in the forms of lust, hate or delusion to the perceptions of all senses should eventually prevent the onset of 'dukkha' (Table 6). Lack of dukkha is nothing but a state of ultimate happiness. In '*laukika*' (mundane) terms, this formulates the essence of mental health. Ego and pride (Māna) and doubt and suspicion (Vicikiccā) constitutes ignorance 'Mōha'. They are also forms of attachment that can propagate greed (Raga) and aversion (Dvesha). Mōha is greatly reduced when one removes 'micchā diṭṭhi' i.e. the wrong view that gratifications are embedded in all worldly objects that you connect with. Then you step into '*lokottara*' (supramundane) '*Samma Ditti*' (the understanding that all gratifications are insatiable). As you learn Dhamma and start comprehending all gratifications are insatiable (*Samma Ditti*), Prajñā (wisdom) will grow.

Leaving a world of Dukkha is a bliss. This is termed 'Nibbāna' (departure from crave, lust, hate and delusion). It is the net result of cessation of all attachments in any form to the six faculties (Indriya) described earlier. It is not yet the end of dukkha unless one has reached the status of 'Arhat'.

**Table 6 Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha in a nutshell**

Sensory organ signal Perception	<i>Panchaskanda'</i> (Five Aggregates). (Vipāka)		<i>'Pancha-updhana-skandha'</i>
<b>Eye See (Rūpa)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-visual) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)	<b>'Arhat'</b> people develop no further bonding it ends here  <b>We ordinary humans develop further bonding with each perception (all originates in our mind and not in the perceiving faculty or the trigger)</b>	Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
<b>Ear Hear (Sound)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-hearing) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)		Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
<b>Tongue Taste (Gana)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-taste) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)		Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
<b>Nose Smell (Jeeva)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-odour) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)		Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
<b>Body Feel (Kaya)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-sensation) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)		Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
<b>Mind Thoughts (Delusions)</b>	Impression (Rūpa-thoughts) Sensation (Vēdanā) Perception (Sañña) Mental fabrication (Saṅkhāra) Consciousness (Vijñāna)		Raga (attraction) Dvesha (repulsion) Mōha (delusion) } Attachment to Panchaskanda
			<b>Consequential pursuit to satisfy our sensory organ 'Panchauphanaskandha' will never satisfy any perception leading to the end result of loss and suffering.</b>

Raga (attraction), Dvesha (repulsion) and Mōha (delusion) are the three important states of mind that moves us away from Nirvāṇa. Raga-Dvesha (attraction vs repulsion or like vs dislike or love vs hatred) are the main causes of bondage. Raga and Dvesha are the two currents in

mind which binds a human to this world, the wheel of birth and death. All emotions come under the category of Raga-Dvesha (Example 8). The pleasure and pain, (Harsha and Soka), and exhilaration and depression are due to Raga-Dvesha. If Raga and Dvesha vanishes from our minds, pleasure and pain and exhilaration and depression will also disappear from our minds.

### ➤ *Example 8 Angry neighbours*

There were two angry neighbours who hate each other. They both had all they need, and their luxury cars were parked outside of their houses. One day there was a cyclone and a fallen tree demolished both cars. Looking at the demolished car of your neighbour will make one happy but looking at his (car) makes him truly sad and this feeling is reciprocal for the other. Thus, both sadness and happiness can arise from damaged cars, but it's based on one's raga and dvesha and not something found in the cars.

In meditation, what we are trying to achieve is to reduce our likelihood of further delusional attachment or bonding (paticca) with the pleasant or unpleasant perceptions with Raga (greed) or Dvesha (hatred) i.e. Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha (Table 6). This would minimize us going in pursuit in life looking for more pleasurable images, sounds, tastes, touch or smells or promoting hatred and revenge. In general, the effects of Dvesha are more detrimental than Raga and its best you reduce Dvesha first.

In summary, all the beings in Universe, are always trying to satisfy their senses, chasing gratifications which are only fabricated/ created in their own minds by 'attachment' to the worldly 'objects' through Raga, Dvesha or Mōha. What is been looked for is never found in the 'objects'. That is the reason why our sensory organs are never satiable. Our sensory perceptions are like Oceans (Samudrá) that can never be filled.

## WHAT IS NIRVĀṆA?

Among the faculties, your mind is the most controllable and obedient to you. But, is it? Try to think and focus on something or a person you really like and try to keep your mind thinking about it and nothing else for 10 minutes. Can you? Does it not your mind wander away without your permission elsewhere? In other words, your mind is also not controllable as much as you thought you would be able to. What about your body? It does not behave in the way you want either. It will decay despite what you do to prevent baldness, grey hair, wrinkled skin will inevitably creep in.

Thus, basically there is nothing we can control in the way we like. This principle is universal. We cannot change it, but we need to understand it. Take Newton's law of gravity. Even before he found this, things were happening according to gravitational forces. Thus, whether we understand or not, things will happen according to a universal principle, a law, known or yet unknown to the mankind.

Thus, it is foolish for us to make any effort to control things in the way we want. There is one word that describes it all what we wish is 'ichcha' and the opposite is 'anichcha'. The whole world is 'an-ichcha', i.e. never able to satisfy to saturation what you wished. Suffering results from your attempts to control these laws of the nature. Therefore, try not to get attached to any perceptions generated by your faculties and control it to your liking.

If you keep on thinking this law of the universe, your anger and hatred will gradually decrease. If someone is shouting at you, it is his or her problem, not yours. Thus, you need not get upset about it. If someone is not cleaning up house, and not listening to the explanation for its need, just do it yourself. This will allow you keep both your mind and house

clean. Do not develop hate on these trivial matters of conflict as the consequences could be disproportionate suffering.

We now recognise that all worldly matters and gratifications are insatiable, and it is subject to Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā. Our attempt to cease gratifications by relinquishing ourselves from lustful, hateful and delusional attachments is called “Nibbana or Nirvāṇa”.

Minimising and eventually giving up attachment to above six faculties (Indriya), i.e. cessation of Raga, Dvesha, Mōhas is termed 'nirodha'. This prevents development of Ariyā dukkha. In 'arhat' status, this state of mind is unbroken. In other words, your mind is maintained in the 'prabhāsvara' status without pollution by Raga, Dvesha, Mōha. This is the ultimate fulfilment of Nirvāṇa, the absolute freedom or happiness. An 'arhat' does not belong to any religion. An 'Arhat' has got rid of “upādāna” for bhava in all realms, even though he/she may have an uncountable number of kamma seeds from the past.

## PATH TO NIRVĀṆA, OR NIBBĀNA

The first step to enter the path of Nirvāṇa is to listen to the Sath Dhamma (beneficial dhamma) preached by a Dhamma Sadachari (A Noble Friend who has reached at least the state of Ariyā Dhyāna level 1). The purpose is to comprehend 'Dassanena Pahathabba' (correct vision) i.e. the Four Noble Truths (Figure 5) to reach the state of Sammādiṭṭhi (Right view). For me, listening to discourses of late Venerable Waharaka Thēro (recorded) or Venerable Abhaya Thēro (recorded or live) served this purpose. This is termed 'yoniso manasikāra' i.e. "appropriate attention" or "wise reflection". At the end, 'yoniso manasikāra' means thinking and realisation of Anichcha, Dukkha, and Anattā. Ayoniso manasikāra refers to the opposite i.e. "inappropriate attention or unwise reflection or ego-centric demanding thought processes. Manasikāra (Pāli) includes both and should be interpreted in the context of its application.

When one fully understands the bad drawbacks (ādīnava) of these 'mind-made pleasures' (assāda), that means one has understood the first Noble Truth (Figure 5) as well as the causes for it. How to eliminate those causes, and the way to do it, are the four Noble Truths. That leads to the cessation of one's samsāric journey and that is called 'Nissarana' (end of "carana" or journey i.e. "nis" + "charana", which rhymes as 'nissarana'). This is called 'Majjima Patipada'. Only Nirvāṇa is nichcha, sukha, atta. All other things are Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā.

### 'Majjima Patipada'

'Majjima Patipada' has been wrongly translated as the middle path. It has nothing to do with the middle. Majjima means 'escape-attachment', in other words detach from intoxication and stupor. Intoxication and stupor are brought about by attachment (Raga desire/happiness), conflict



(Dvesha repulsion/unhappiness, sadness, anger) springing from losing what one was and attached to. Patipada is the path. This refers to the 8 steps, the Noble Eight-fold Path (Ariyā aṭṭhaṅgika magga, Table 7) one need to follow. The purpose is to not become intoxicated by delusion and to free oneself from the bonds of the materialistic world.

In Buddha's teachings, this refers to maintenance or sustenance of your mind in a state of unpolluted or uncorrupted radiant status termed 'Prabhāsvara Mind'. Thus, it is not an active process, but maintaining a state of inactiveness through non engagement with activated attachments.

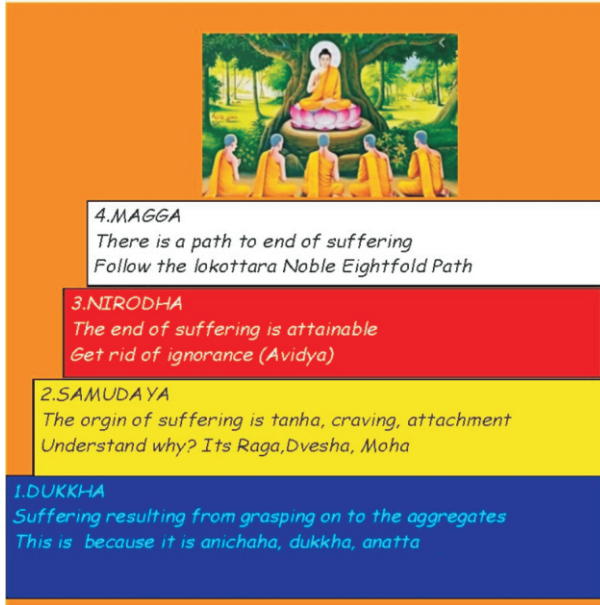
This process can be explained more simply as what a sculptor will do when designing a statue of Buddha. What should be realised is that Buddha statue was always there within the stone. What sculptor has done is to remove the unnecessary stone so that the statue will be displayed pure without the clutter that was around it. This is similar to the concept of our 'Prabhāsvara Mind' that has always being there but covered by unnecessary clutter and pollutants attracted by Raga, Dvesha or Mōha.

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### **The Four Noble Truths (Chathurārya Sathya)**

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The Four Noble Truths, named in Pāli as 'Chatusu-Ariyāsachchān or Chathurārya Sathya' (Dukka Samudaya Nirodha Magga) is a conceptual framework which must be personally 'understood or experienced'. In short, it is about suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering and the way out (Figure 5).



**Figure 5 The Four Noble Truths**

1. Dukkha - Truth of suffering  
 Dukka is pain and misery in '*laukika*' terms. Ariyā Dukkha has a deeper meaning and is an innate characteristic of existence (see glossary).
2. Samudaya - Truth of the origin of suffering  
 This is craving, desire or attachment. It is the cause of dukkha or '*Paticca Samuppāda*'
3. Nirodha - Truth of the cessation of suffering  
 This is the ending of dukkha by eliminating all craving, desire, and attachment.
4. Magga - Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering  
 This is the path to end this dukkha. It is the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

## **Dukkha – The 1<sup>st</sup> Noble Truth.**

What a normal person thinks as 'good feelings in the mind' or 'assāda' can actually become the cause for future suffering, only if one gets attached to it. This is another way to express the First Noble Truth.

However, in Ariyā terms the meaning is deeper: Ariyā Dukkha (supramundane suffering) is not something anyone can feel (perceive) with sensations. It is best explained in terms of corruption of radiant or Prabhāsvara (clean) mind (Example 9) through attachment that leads to suffering.

### **➡ Example 9 What is Ariyā Dukkha?**

A farmer may be burnt under the hot sun, but if he thinks nothing of it, the pain that he endures is Vēdanā and not suffering (Dukkha). A person may cut her finger, so it bleeds profusely, but if she attaches no meaning to it, she has not suffered the Dukkha of Paticca Samuppāda. However, if she attaches blame for this for someone else, that is Dvesha and that is the beginning of Ariyā Dukkha.

Ariyā Dukkha can be broadly explained under 3 sub-headings; Dukkha-dukkha, Viparinama-dukkha and Saṅkhāra-dukkha.

**Dukkha-dukkha:** (Vipāka with dukkha) This is the 'dukkha' of painful experiences. It arises in response to unpleasant physical or mental experience, physical or mental such as the feeling you get if you broke your ankle (physical) or loss of a friend to cancer (mental). This includes sufferings such as birth, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, association with the enemy or separation from the loved. It is basically not getting what you desire i.e. through 'attachment'. All above becomes Ariyā Dukkha. In other words, would we worry about someone else's birth or death if we do not know them or attached to them? Dvesha is a dominant cause of Dukkha-dukkha.

**Viparinama-dukkha:** (Vipāka with pleasant experience) This results from your past deeds and includes pleasant or happy experiences. Raga associated attachment or abhisāṅkhāra' for mentally fabricated pleasure (Assāda) is the cause of Viparinama-dukkha. Great success, which fades with the passing of time, is dukkha. Even the purest state of bliss experienced in spiritual practice is dukkha. This doesn't mean that happiness, success, and bliss are bad, or that it's wrong to enjoy them. If you feel happy, then enjoy feeling happy. Just don't cling to it.

**Saṅkhāra-dukkha:** This is more subtle or “existential”. This is the dukkha of conditioned experience. It can be rendered as the dissatisfaction and “suffering” experienced due to our conditioned state. Avidyā causes Vipāka, Upekṣā experiences become a subject of AbhiSaṅkhāra leading to bonding. Saṅkhāra-dukkha has its origins in Tanhā because that mental activity reflects a craving for things to be or how we want them to be. Avidyā is the dominant cause of Saṅkhāra-dukkha.

<b>Vipāka (experience)</b>	<b>The way of attachment (nirodha possible)</b>	<b>Abhisāṅkhāra' (cessation possible)</b>
<b>Pleasant</b>	Raga	Mentally fabricated pleasure
<b>Unpleasant</b>	Dvesha	Mentally fabricated suffering
<b>Indifference</b>	Avidyā	Mentally fabricated upekṣā

In short, the attachment (grasping) to the five clinging-aggregates (Rūpa, Vēdanā, Saṅṅā, Saṅkhāra, Vijñāna) via Pancha-updhana-skandha' is the eventual cause of Ariyā Dukkha.

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## **Avidyā (Ignorance)**

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Ignorance (Avidyā) is non-realization of the four Noble Truths (Figure 5). This leads to nurturing and attachment to the 18 elementary aspects of perception ('Pancha-Skandha') referred in Table 6. This is followed by 'value-added mental fabrication' or Abhi-Saṅkhāra (sometimes referred as Saṅkhāra in short-form).

Ignorance (Avidyā) through 'the law of dependent origination' ('Paticca-Samuppāda') eventually takes you along the Saṃsāra. Ignorance (Avidyā) can mature into many (21 described) stages of Mōha. It's the deepest stages of Mōha that leads you to 'Sathara Apāyā'; a group of four inferior worlds devoid of happiness. These are (1) The asuras – demon world (2) The animals - animal world (3) The petas - ghost world (4) The evils -hell.

Ignorance (Avidyā) is the first link or cause of the wheel of life, Saṃsāra. Ignorance (Avidyā) governs the 'Saṅkhāra' (thought processing) in one's mind and therefore it clouds all the rightful understanding. Ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (Avidyā) leads to activities (Saṅkhāra) -- both moral and immoral. Saṅkhāra includes conditioning and formation processes within your own mind.

## WHAT IS (SANCHETANA) SAÑKHĀRA?

Feeling and perceptions are what causes a mind to arise. This is essentially Vēdanā and Sañña. Our thoughts or sañkhāra(sanchetana) define and guide our destiny. Sankhāra refers to 'mental formations' and 'formations'. It comes from 'sankhāra' or actions that results in Samsāra. All sañkhāra arise in mind. When they lead to conscious thinking or speech, they are called vaci-sañkhāra. Those that lead to bodily actions are kaya-sañkhāra; those that arise involuntarily in mind are manō-sañkhāra.

- *Watch your thoughts; they become words.*
- *Watch your words; they become actions.*
- *Watch your actions; they become habits.*
- *Watch your habits; they become your character.*
- *Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.*

Therefore, Sankhāra is responsible for getting things done to live the current life (everyday activities). They can also lead to moral/immoral actions that can bring results (vipāka) in future lives. The latter type (those that can bring vipāka in future) are called 'strong-sañkhāra' or 'abhi-sañkhāra' or value-added mental fabrication.

### **There are three types of 'abhisañkhāra'.**

1. Puñña abhisañkhāra (or punnābhisañkhāra) are thoughts responsible for proper or moral speech and actions. These have good karmic consequences that facilitate the progress towards human/deva/ brahma-lōkas and initiate path to Nirvāṇa.
2. Apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apunnābhisañkhāra) are immoral thoughts. Thinking about executing any of the 'Ten immoral acts' (e.g. killing any being) is 'vaci-abhisañkhāra' and carrying it out is 'kāya abhisañkhāra'. These are sañkhāra with severe karmic consequences (Karma vipāka) such as birth in hell or apāyās.

3. **Aninja abhisankhāra** This refers to thoughts that promote vipāka in the Arūpa-Lōka (Formless Realms) such as brahma-lōka.

The word saṅkhāra (mental formations or fabrications) is a word commonly used to indicate those with bad or good karmic consequences, as in 'avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra' in 'Paticca Samuppāda', where it really means, “avijjā paccayā apunnābhi saṅkhāra” (bad or akushala) or “avijjā paccayā punnābhi saṅkhāra” (good or kushala).

All our thoughts, speech, and bodily actions are based on mental formations or fabrications (saṅkhāra) that arise in our minds. Therefore, it is essential to realize that both vaci-saṅkhāra and kaya-saṅkhāra also arise in mind. One speaks and acts based on those thoughts.

Sankhāra are also responsible for just getting things done to live the current life i.e. everyday activities. They can also lead to moral/immoral actions as discussed above and bring results (vipāka) in future lives. The latter type which can bring vipāka in future are often called abhi-saṅkhāra.

1. **Kaya Saṅkhāra:** These are “conscious thoughts” that make our bodies move. Killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct are due to apunnābhi kāya saṅkhāra. Punnaṅbhi kāya saṅkhāra leads to good karmic actions such as selfless dana. Kāya saṅkhāra (vipāka neutral) is also what sustains our life and keeps the body together including our breathing.
2. **Vaci Saṅkhāra:** This is what sustains the formations of thoughts for verbal response. Such speech thoughts need to form, without them one cannot speak. Vaci saṅkhāra are conscious thoughts that we silently generate, and lead to a speech by moving the lips, tongue, etc. Hate speech is due to apunnābhi vaci saṅkhāra.

Thinking about a dhamma concept is a punnābhi vaci saṅkhāra. These are also termed Vitarka-Vichara or more specifically focussed on dhamma as Savitarka-Savichara. This can be essentially thought of as how we apply logic and contemplate things within the mind both moral and immoral.

3. **Manō saṅkhāra:** These are “unconscious thoughts” that arise involuntarily. We are not aware of it when they appear. These can also be moral or immoral or vipāka neutral. They arise due to our 'gati' (character/habits) and can indicate our level of mōha or avidyā.

The activities whether good or bad rooted in ignorance (Avidyā) leads to consciousness (viññana) that can escalate further by 'abhi-saṅkhāra' and generate Assāda. Simultaneous with the consciousness there come into being 'mind' and 'body' named 'Nāma-rūpa'. One meaning of Nāmarūpa refers to the constituents of a living being: 'nāma' refer to the mental component of the person, while 'rūpa' refers to the physical component. Nāma and rūpa are mutually dependent, and not separable; as nāmarūpa. They designate an individual being.

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*Sabbe Saṅkhāra anicca ti  
yada pannaya passati  
atha nibbindati dukkha  
esa maggo visuddhiya.*

*Sabbe Saṅkhāra dukkha ti  
yada pannaya passati  
atha nibbindati dukkha  
esa maggo visuddhiya.*

*Sabbe Saṅkhāra anatta ti  
yada pannaya passati  
atha nibbindati dukkha  
esa maggo visuddhiya.*

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All Saṅkhāra are anichcha, dukkha, anatta. This helps 'suffering' to be understood with 'wisdom'. Dissociation from Saṅkhāra is the beginning of the end of suffering. This is the path of purity ('essa maggo visuddhiya').

### ➤ *Example 10 Illustrations of the three types of Saṅkhāra*

To move the physical body, the mind must first generate thoughts about moving the body. Then that thought is executed with the help of the brain that sends necessary signals to the leg muscles, say, to move the legs. So, those kāya saṅkhāra are responsible for moving the legs. If the purpose were to go to the bathroom (Karma neutral), then it would be just a kāya saṅkhāra, not an abhisāṅkhāra. Breathing involves moving body parts (lungs), done even without your own awareness, but they are kāya saṅkhāra too. If the purpose of moving the body was to go somewhere to commit an evil deed, then it becomes an apuññaabhi-saṅkhāra. If the purpose were to go somewhere to do a good deed, then it would become a punnābhi saṅkhāra. The Karma nature of an act is decided by the intention that is in mind influenced by mental factors i.e. 'Sati'.

If a person gets angry at another person, he may generate evil thoughts like: "I wish I could hit this person right now". Those are vaci saṅkhāra. When those vaci saṅkhāra build-up energy, one may say those words out. They are still vaci saṅkhāra. Whether one is just talking to oneself or speaks out such evil words, they are both 'apuñña abhisāṅkhāra'. Of course, vaci saṅkhāra can be 'puñña abhisāṅkhāra' too. Person X watching a good deed by person Y may be generating good thoughts about Y; those are puñña vaci saṅkhāra.

All other thoughts that arise in mind are manō saṅkhāra. When one is hit by a cane, one feels the pain associated with it, and then realizes that another person is hitting with a cane that caused the pain. The manō saṅkhāra that arose at the beginning was saññā (recognition of what happened) and vēdanā (pain caused). Thus, manō saṅkhāra is involved in this vipāka stage. Based on the fact that "sense input" of getting hit, one could start generating vaci saṅkhāra and even kāya saṅkhāra. Those vaci saṅkhāra may involve just creating evil thoughts about that person or saying bad things to him. If the pain was intense, one might start generating bad kāya saṅkhāra and hit that person.

Those initial manō sañkhāra (Vipāka without Raga, Dvesha, Mōha) are influenced by one's 'gati' in a non 'arhat' person. The seeds for thinking, speaking, and acting start at the instant of the first sense input, say, seeing something or hearing something that gets one's attention. If the sense input is substantial (and one gets interested in it via like or dislike), one will start many thought processes in a short time. This leads to corresponding vaci- and kaya- sañkhāra to 'talk to oneself' or speak out or to take bodily action. However, when vaci- and kaya- sañkhāra are generated, we do have a 'time lag' for control over those.

Sometimes, we can see people getting angry by the minute. They are generating a lot of vaci-sañkhāra even without getting a word out. But one can see the person getting highly agitated: the face gets red and facial expression shows their extreme anger. Therefore, even if he start generating vaci- and kaya- sañkhāra, he may not become aware of it for a short time. In other words, if one gets angry, one may lose control and may not even realize that one is getting into a bad situation.

'Catching oneself early' in the process of becoming angry is the key to control anger. When one understands how this process happens and how it can escalate quickly into a bad situation, one can determine to catch it earlier next time (Example 11). We can prevent a lot of suffering in this life by catching such vaci and kāya sañkhāra early. This is discussed in "Satara Satipathāna".

### ➔ *Example 11 Anger management*

Suppose person X starts generating bad vaci sañkhāra because he is verbally abused by enemy Y. Those vaci sañkhāra give rise to a 'bad state of mind' or 'domanassa'. If the situation escalates, stronger vaci sañkhāra, i.e., thoughts of hitting Y, may arise and may lead to kāya sañkhāra for hitting Y.

One generates manō abhi-sañkhāra involuntarily based on one's 'gati' detailed in Satara Satipathāna. Then, conscious vaci-sañkhāra and kaya-sañkhāra lead to the critical upādāna (willingly binding or craving) stage that may follow on to Tanhā.

## WHAT IS KARMA (KAMMA) ?

Karma is an impersonal natural law that operates in accordance with our actions. It is a law in itself and does not have any lawgiver. Karma operates in its own field without the intervention of an external, independent, ruling agent. Since there is no hidden agent directing or administering rewards and punishments, prayer to some supernatural forces or rituals to influence karmic results have no value.

Karma in the simple language is 'do good and good will come to you' or 'do bad and bad will come to you'. Karma can be explained in this way: if you sow good seeds, you will reap a good harvest. If you sow bad seeds, you will reap a bad harvest.

Karma in the language of science, is the law of cause and effect: every cause has an effect. Mind is the forerunner of all good and bad states. If you speak or act with a good or bad mind, then happiness or unhappiness follows you just as the wheel follows the hoof of an ox or like your shadow which never leaves you. That is Karma.

In its ultimate sense, Karma means both good and bad, mental action or volition. Thus, Karma is not an entity but a process, action, energy and force. Some interpret this force as 'action-influence'. It is our own doings reacting on ourselves. The pain and happiness man experiences are the result of his own deeds, words and thoughts reacting on themselves. Our deeds, words and thoughts produce our prosperity and failure, our happiness and misery.

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*A man will reap what he has sown; we are the result of what we were, and we will be the result of what we are. In other words, man is not one who will absolutely remain to be what he was, and he will not continue to remain as what he is. Thus, Karma alone is not a complete determinant of our destiny.*

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The Buddha pointed out that if everything is determined, then there would be no free will and no moral or spiritual life. We would merely be

the slaves of our past. On the other hand, if everything is undetermined, then there can be no cultivation of moral and spiritual growth. Therefore, the Buddha accepted neither strict determinism nor strict indeterminism.

Karma explains the inequalities that exist among mankind. These inequalities are due not only to heredity, environment and nature but also to Karma or the results of our own actions. Indeed, Karma is one of the eight factors which are responsible for the success and the failure of our life.

Since Karma is an invisible force, we cannot see it working with our physical eyes. To understand how Karma works, we can compare it to seeds. The results of Karma are stored the same way as the leaves, flowers, fruits and trunk of a tree are stored in its seed. Under favourable conditions, the fruits of Karma will be produced just as with moisture and light, the leaves and trunk of a tree will sprout from its tiny seed.

### **Misconceptions regarding Karma**

The wise should investigate and abandon the following views.

- *the belief that everything is a result of acts in previous lives*
- *the belief that all is the result of creation by a Supreme Ruler*
- *the belief that everything arises without reason or cause.*

If a person becomes a murderer, a thief, or an adulterer, and, if his actions are purely due to past actions (karma), or caused by creation of a Supreme Ruler, or if that happened by mere chance, then this person should not be held responsible for his evil action. This cannot be true, is it?

Yet another misconception about Karma is that it operates only for certain people according to their faiths. But the fate of a man in his next life does not in the least depend on what faith he chooses. Whatever may be his faith, man's fate depends entirely on his deeds by body, speech and thought.

## SATARA SATIPATTHĀNA

The word *lokottara* 'Satipatthāna' refers to an approach in meditation aimed at establishing Sati. Sati is a 'good' mental factor. Sati arises only during moral thoughts (*kushala citta*). Sati does not arise in immoral thoughts (*akushala citta*). Sati is the seventh of the eight path factors in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Satara Satipatthāna is a self-training process (Satipatthāna) that comes in four steps (Satara), and that is why it is also called 'Satara Satipatthāna'. Sati promotes only moral thoughts (*kushala citta*), and not immoral thoughts (*akushala citta*). Of course, Sati will be paying attention to catch any immoral thoughts that may arise in his mind.

### ➔ Example 12 What is not Sati

A suicide bomber has to pay close attention in wiring up the bomb; otherwise, he can detonate it accidentally. A professional thief making plans for a grand robbery in minute detail needs to pay total attention to it too, in order to make sure he does not get caught. This is not moral or 'Sati'. The suicide bomber or the thief would not have that 'sati', the good mental factor.

When a person stops and contemplates the consequences of an action that one is about to take is moral or immoral and carries out only those actions that have moral consequences, then that person is acting with “Sati”, the “good mental factor”.

Patthāna in Sati-patthāna means establishment, training or moulding the mind to act with “Sati”. This training process comes in four steps, and that is why it is also called “Satara Satipatthāna”. Even though the four steps are interrelated, there is a sequence. In this process one contemplates on the five aggregates (*Panchaskanda*) via four categories of 'anupassanā'.

### The four steps are;

1. Kāyānupassanā (Kāya - Kāyānupassanā)  
will not bodily react to feelings of any senses on an impulsive  
oḷārikabasis
2. Vedanānupassanā (Vedanā - Vedanānupassanā)  
think about how to respond when certain feelings arise
3. Cittānupassanā (Citte - Cittānupassanā)  
think morally involuntarily
4. Dhammānupassanā (Dhamme – Dhammānupassanā)  
contemplate anichcha, dukkha, anattā

What is the meaning of 'anupassanā' that rhymes in all four *Sati-paṭṭhāna*? “Anupassanā” means looking at, thinking about, reviewing, and contemplating on the basis of 'Anichcha, Dukka, Anattā' to ultimately get rid of 'Raga, Dvesha, Mōha'.

In Kāyānupassanā, 'kāya' refers to the body, as well as to collections or aggregates of any rūpa, vēdana, saññā, saṅkhāra, or viññāna. In other words, 'kāya' is also thinking about Raga, Dvesha, Mōha influences on our actions.

Buddha Dhamma is all about keeping the mind clean. A defiled mind generates defiled thoughts that damages the purity of the mind. Defiled thoughts lead to defiled speech (with a time lag) and defiled actions (with even longer time lag).

First control bodily actions, then speech, and finally thoughts as they arise (the hardest). Our thoughts are dictated by our character and habits ('gati'). These character qualities ('gati') can be changed with concerted effort by controlling one's speech and actions.

Therefore, 'kāyānupassanā' comes first in Satipaṭṭhāna. There we learn not to use five senses for Raga, Dvesha or Mōha. We must discipline ourselves by making sure we speak only moral words and do only moral actions. Both speech and actions arise from thoughts, but they come with a 'time lag' after the thought. That is our window of opportunity to control ourselves. We first think that “this person has done something bad to me”, and then we start saying something bad to the person. But there is enough of a 'time lag' to stop saying it.

We tend to take 'bodily actions' with even longer delay than for speech. So, unless one is in a rage, there is enough time to catch oneself and stop any bad actions. Actually, when we get good at it, and control both speech and actions, such instances of acting with rage will diminish with time and will go away. This is because the more we act with “*sati*”, the more that we give up bad “*gati*” and cultivate good “*gati*”. Thus, *kāyānupassanā* basically means “catching ourselves before we say or do something wrong”. Thus, *kāyānupassanā* makes us aware of our speech and actions before we engage in it. This makes us undertake good actions in '*laukika*' terms and also disengage from 'Raga, Dvesha, Mōha' attachments opening the path to Nirvāṇa in '*lokottara*' terms.

When *kāyānupassanā* is practised, one's “*gati*” will gradually change and one will start to calm down. One will not react to feelings on an impulsive basis, and thus it will be easier to practice the next stage of Satara Satipaṭṭhāna, “*vedanānupassanā*”. *Vedanā* is exactly in between the two events, sense impingement and emotional reaction. Thus, '*vedanānupassanā*' gives an opportunity to think about how to respond when certain feelings arise.

When both those are practised, “*gati*” will change to an extent that even initial thoughts will have 'less venom', and thus it will be easier to practice “*cittānupassanā*” or “think morally” involuntarily.

Finally, it will be easier to get into *Samādhi* and to contemplate *anichcha, dukkha, anattā* (or any other *Dhamma* concept), which is “*dhammānupassanā*”.

Thus, one starts with *kāyānupassanā* first and then move on to other three “*anupassanā*”. When one completes all four, it would be a status of “*Sammā Sati*”. This helps us get on to the ladder to reach *Sotā-Paññā-Bhāvanā* stage and ultimately “*Sammā Samādhi*” in full, i.e., *Arhathood*.

We say or do things in response to what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think. The speech or actions have time delays from the time we get the “input” from outside or even if generated by the mind itself. Even if we start saying something bad, we can catch ourselves and stop (and apologize if we hurt someone's feelings). Even if get up to hit someone, we can realize the bad consequences of such an action and immediately stop. That is how one starts. With practice, one's '*gati*' will change, and such awkward instances will occur less and less. Therefore, it is easy to see that *kāyānupassanā* is the first and most important initial part of the *Satara Satipatthāna*.



## THE NOBLE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

### (Ariyā aṭṭhaṅgika magga)

'The Noble Eight-Fold Path' named 'Ariyā aṭṭhaṅgika magga' in Pāli encompasses eight practices that would eventually liberate one from 'klesha' leading to the dissociation from Saṃsāra (Table 7). These eight practices are; right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right Samādhi (meditative absorption or union). This is symbolised by the '*lokottara*' Dharma Wheel, the 'dharma chakra' displayed on the cover page of this book. The purpose is to promote Wisdom (Prajñā), Ethical Conduct (Sīla) and Mental Discipline (Samādhi).

The Noble Eight-Fold Path may take two main streams depending on how you practice or the way you are directed. People who follow this in '*laukika*' (mundane) terms expect pleasure and successful lives in the future and ultimately heaven. This is through Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā strategy described as 'current Buddhist practice' at the beginning of this book.

People who follow the same in '*lokottara*' (supramundane) terms would place Nirvāṇa as the ultimate aim. It is also named under the three headings, 'Prajñā' (insight), 'Sīla' (morality), and 'Samādhi' (meditation). This Noble Eight-Fold Path is the pathway to 'Arhat' status.

#### ❖ WISDOM (PRAJÑĀ)

Wisdom constitute two factors of the noble Eight-Fold path, namely *right understanding* and *right thought*. This promotes two qualities: compassion (*Karuṇā*) on one side, and wisdom (*Prajñā*) on the other. This is the beginning of '*lokottara*' (supramundane) way. This is also the understanding that the five grasping aggregates are Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā.

### ★ ETHICAL CONDUCT (SĪLA)

Ethical conduct (Sīla) is built on the conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings. This is included in the next three factors of the noble Eight-Fold path: namely, *right speech, right action, and right livelihood*. Sīla imposed by rule or fear is not going to bring any 'lokottara' results. It may even be counter-productive by generating Dvesha. What matters is 'Sanwara' Sīla.

### ★ MENTAL DISCIPLINE (SAMĀDHI)

Mental discipline is achieved through the next three factors of the Eight-Fold path: namely, *right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration*.

The key difference between a person following the '*laukika*' (mundane) Eightfold Path and the '*lokottara*' (supramundane) Noble Eightfold Path is their drive. The one in '*laukika*' (mundane path) avoids immoral activities because one is afraid of their consequences. However, a '*lokottara*' (supramundane) Ariyā Śrāvaka or Sōtapanna avoids Dasa Akusala (ten immoral acts) because he/she understands the fruitlessness of such immoral activities.

**Table 7 The Noble Eight-Fold Path in a nutshell**

<b>PRAJÑĀ</b>	<b>Right understanding (Samma Ditthi)</b>	<p>There are two sorts of understanding. What we generally call “understanding” is knowledge, an accumulated memory, an intellectual grasping of a subject according to certain given data. It is not very deep.</p> <p>The real deep understanding is the understanding of things in reality, and it is the Four Noble Truths (Chathurārya Sathya). This is '<i>Sam-ma-ditthi</i>' meaning 'distancing-the attachments vision'. This is possible only when the mind is free from all impurities and is fully developed through meditation fulfilling the understanding of Assāda, Ādinava, Nissarana.</p>
	<b>Right thought (Samma Sankappa)</b>	<p>This denotes the thoughts of selfless renunciation or detachment, thoughts of love and thoughts of non-violence, which are extended to all beings.</p> <p>It is important to note here that thoughts of selfless detachment, love and non-violence are grouped on the side of 'wisdom'. Thus, true 'wisdom' is endowed with these noble qualities. All thoughts of selfish desire, ill-will, hatred, and violence are the result of a lack of 'wisdom' in all spheres of life whether individual, social, or political. (Metta, Mudita, Upekkha)</p>
<b>SĪLA</b>	<b>Right speech (Samma Vaca)</b>	<p>This means abstention (1) from telling lies, (2) from backbiting and slander and talk that may bring about hatred, enmity, disunity, and disharmony among individuals or groups of people, (3) from harsh, rude, impolite, malicious, and abusive language, and (4) from idle, useless, and foolish babble and gossip. Therefore, right speech is the use of words that are friendly and benevolent, pleasant and gentle, meaningful, and useful. It includes speech to show the correct path for Nirvāṇa. If your speech not useful, maintain 'noble silence'.</p>
	<b>Right action (Samma Kammanta)</b>	<p>Right action aims at promoting moral, honourable, and peaceful conduct. It admonishes us to abstain from destroying life, from stealing, from dishonest dealings, from illegitimate sexual misconduct and helping others to lead a peaceful and honourable life in the right way.</p>
	<b>Right livelihood (Samma Ajiva)</b>	<p>Right livelihood means that one should abstain from making one's living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks or poisons, killing animals, cheating, etc.. Take up a profession which is honourable, blameless, and innocent of harm to others.</p>
<b>SAMĀDHI</b>	<b>Right effort (Samma Vayama)</b>	<p>Right effort is the energetic will (1) to prevent evil and unwholesome states of mind from arising, and (2) to get rid of such evil and unwholesome states that have already arisen (3) to produce, to cause to arise, good, and wholesome states of mind not yet arisen, and (4) to develop and bring to perfection the good and wholesome states of mind already present. The main purpose is to get rid of 'micchā ditthi'(thoughts that bonds you to this world) through understanding.</p>
	<b>Right mindfulness (Samma Sati)</b>	<p>Right mindfulness is diligent awareness, mindfulness, and attentiveness with regard to (1) the activities of the body (<i>kaya</i>), (2) sensations or feelings (<i>Vēdanā</i>), (3) the activities of the mind (Saṅkhāra) and (4) ideas, thoughts, conceptions, and things (<i>dhamma</i>). The main purpose is to get rid of Assāda and all klesha.</p>
	<b>Right concentration (Samma Samādhi)</b>	<p>Right concentration, (<i>lokottara meditation</i>) leads to the four stages of <i>Dhyāna</i>, generally called trances. This is described in detail in the latter part of this book.</p>

## PATICCA SAMUPPĀDA

### (Pattichcha Samuppādaya)

The six senses (Salāyatana) are the inevitable consequences of mind and body. Because of the six senses contact (Phassa) sets in. Contact leads to feeling (Vēdanā). This leads to craving (Taṇhā). Craving results in grasping (Upādāna). Grasping is the cause of Karma (Bhāva) which in its turn, conditions future birth (Jāti). Birth is the inevitable cause of old age and death (jara-marana).

Pattichcha Samuppāda is a series of wording that explains the progressive deterioration of Avidyā to Dukkha (see below). It encompasses a law of dependent origination, or the causation in eleven stages. In this process, our radiant, clean, and luminous mind begins its corruption.

“Avidyā Pachchaya Saṅkhāra, Saṅkhāra Pachchaya Viññana, Viññana Pachchaya Nāmarūpa, Nāmarūpa Pachchaya Salāyatana, Salāyatana Pachchaya Passa, Phassa Pachchaya Vēdanā, Vēdanā Pachchaya Taṇhā, Taṇhā Pachchaya Upādāna, Upādāna Pachchaya Bhavo, Bhāva Pachchaya Jāti, Jāti Pachchaya Jara Maranang, Shoka Parideva Dukka Domanassupasa, Sambhavanthi, Evamethassa Kevalassa Dukkakkandassa Samudayo Hothi”

#### This means;

- *With Avidyā (ignorance) Saṅkhāra arise*
- *With Saṅkhāra (disposition) Viññana arise*
- *With Viññana (consciousness) Nāmarūpa arise*
- *With Nāmarūpa (individuality) Salāyatana arise*
- *With Salāyatana (senses) Phasso arise*
- *With Phassa (contact) Vēdanā arise*
- *With Vēdanā (feeling) Taṇhā arise*
- *With Taṇhā (craving) Upādāna arise*

- *With Upādāna (clinging) Bhavo arise*
- *With Bhāva (becoming) Jāti arise*
- *With Jāti(rebirth).. Jara-Marana arise..(old age, death, tribulation, grief, sorrow, distress & despair).*

Paticca means dependent upon or bonding; Samuppāda is the result. Paticca-Samuppāda, therefore, literally means resulting from bonding, the cause of suffering. The beginning of Paticca-Samuppāda is Avidyā.

Arhat people also have (Vipāka) Paticca-Samuppāda. But they do not have Avidyā, Taṇhā and Upādāna. That is the result of this process of Nirodha. Thus, Paticca-Samuppāda in an 'arhat' person consists of;

- *With Saṅkhāra (disposition) Viññana arise*
- *With Viññana (consciousness) Nāmarūpa arise*
- *With Nāmarūpa (individuality) Salāyatana arise*
- *With Salāyatana (senses) Passa arise*
- *With Phassa (contact) Vēdanā arise*
- *With Bhāva (becoming) Jāti arise*
- *With Jāti (rebirth) Jara-Maranana arise*

Therefore, 'Arhat' person can also see, hear, smell, taste, feel and think without any attachment or bonding or its consequences.

## TEN IMMORAL ACTIONS (DASA AKUSHALA)

Immoral acts are purposeful and committed via your own mind, speech, and body (manō, vaci, kāya). This process begins with Manō Saṅkhāra leading to Vacī and Kāya Saṅkhāra. Assāda is the root cause of Manō Saṅkhāra that leads someone to commit the ten immoral acts described in Buddhist text (dasa akushala). Therefore, relinquishing Assāda through the understanding of Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā will involuntarily move one away from Dasa Akushala. However, just moving away from Dasa Akushala is not going to get rid of Assāda.

These ten immoral acts are divided into three categories arising from mind, speech and body (manō, vaci and kaya).

### *Three Manō Saṅkhāra acts (immoral acts done with the mind):*

1. Abhijjā (covetousness; greed for other's belongings)
2. Vyāpāda (ill-will, hatred)
3. Micchā Ditthi (wrong views)

### *Four Vacī Saṅkhāra acts (immoral acts done with speech):*

4. Musāvāda (lying)
5. Pisunāvācā (slandering)
6. Parusāvācā (harsh speech)
7. Sampappalāpā (frivolous talk)

### *Three Kāya Saṅkhāra acts (immoral acts done with the body):*

8. Pānātipātā (killing)
9. Adinnādānā (taking what is not given)
10. Kāmēsu micchācārā (not just sexual misconduct, but also excessive of sense pleasures)

Ariyā Śrāvakas will naturally come off above immoral actions spontaneously as they understand the Four Noble Truths, and entered the Noble Eight-fold Path not because of any fear but understanding. Sīla will also become the norm with enhancing Prajñā.

Observing above and entering a 'Dasa Kushala' state of 'Sīla' through fear (ritualistic approach) is not going to be fruitful towards '*lokottara*' (supramundane) achievements and Nirvāṇa. This is because 'Sīla' observed through fear will start to generate Dvesha within yourself with time undermining the Four Noble Truths and Eight Noble Path.

## THE FOUR STAGES OF ATTAINMENT

Buddhist practice alone is not going to bring us freedom from 'Saṃsāra'. Leaving 'Saṃsāra' is inactivation of an active process of attachment. We must try not to engage in Raga (lustful attachment), Dvesha (hateful attachment) and Mōha (delusions) in all formats. The problem is our mind. When a thought arises in our mind based on a signal from any of the sensory organs, our mind is in an unpolluted state. In other words, our mind is at a 'Prabhāsvara' state when we initially receive a thought. Our aim is to maintain this unpolluted state of mind without actively pursuing pleasures and pain through Raga, Dvesha or Mōha.

Getting to the point of being able to experience “tasty things” without getting attached to it is not easy; that is not attained fully until one is at the spiritual level of the 'Anāgāmi'. This requires more learning and contemplation i.e. meditation (Satipatthāna bhāvanā). This is a step-by-step process that starts with the Sōtapaññā-bhāvanā, and progress to Sakadāgāmi, then Anāgāmi and culminates at the 'Arhat' stage.

The four stages of attainment (Table 8) need not come in identifiable steps with long gaps. Some have achieved 'Arhat' status instantly during Lord Buddha's era, but no one will know, as neither they will declare nor there will be any extraordinary signs to indicate one has achieved 'Arhat' status.

An 'Arhat' individual no longer possess ignorance (Avidyā), craving (Taṇhā) or grasping (Upādāna). However, they will still experience Vipāka Pattichcha Samuppādaya (Table 11). In an 'Arhat' person, the Samma Samādhi never breaks.



**Table 8 The 'statuses' of 'escalating mind' with meditation**

<b>Arhat</b> ↑	<p>This is the ultimate attainment. Sammā diṭṭhi is 100% complete. 'Arhat' people can perceive all senses but no more craving, no more hatred, no more delusion. This person will leave Saṃsāra this life. Rūparāga, Arūparāga, Māna, Uddhacca and Avidyā is totally removed. Arhat' Status is Nirvāṇa.</p>
<b>Anāgāmi</b> ↑	<p>This is the status of 'non-returner' attained by overcoming sensuous desire and ill will. This person is believed to be reborn after death in a higher heaven, where he will become an 'Arhat'.</p> <p>An Anāgāmi is free from the lowest five chains or fetters. The remaining five higher fetters an Anāgāmi yet has to free from are; Craving for fine-material existence (rūparāga), Craving for immaterial existence (arūparāga), Conceit or pride (māna), Restlessness and worry (uddhacca) and Ignorance (avidyā).</p>
<b>Sakadāgāmi</b> ↑	<p>This 'once-returner', is a partially enlightened person, who has cut off the first three chains (Sakkāya-diṭṭhi, Sīlabbata-parāmāsa, Vicikicchā) with which the ordinary mind is bound, and significantly weakened the fourth and fifth (Kāma-rāga: Sensuous craving and Vyāpāda: Ill-will). The Sakadagami will be reborn into the realm of the senses at most once more.</p> <p>The <i>Sakadāgāmi</i> is an intermediate stage between the <i>Sōtapaññā</i> who still has comparatively strong sensuous desire and ill-will, and the <i>Anāgāmi</i> who is completely free from sensuous desire and ill-will. A <i>Sakadāgāmi</i>'s mind is very pure. Thoughts connected with greed, hatred and delusion do not arise often, and when they do, do not become obsessive.</p> <p>This is a person who has seen the Dhamma and consequently, has dropped the first three bonds that bind a being to rebirth, namely self-view (sakkāya-ditthi), clinging to rites and rituals (sīlabbata-parāmāsa), and skeptical indecision (Vicikitsa).</p>
<b>Sōtapaññā</b>	<p>This is the beginning of the end of our journey and hence termed 'stream-enterer'. It is achievable by listening to Sath Dhamma (beneficial dhamma) preached by a Dhamma Sadachari (A Noble Friend who has reached at least the state of Dhyāna 1) and not by meditation. At this Sōtapaññā stage, one sees with 'wisdom' that Assāda leads to ādīnava and Assāda is Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā. This prevents one from committing 'apāyagāmi' karma. There is cessation of Raga(greed). A Sōtapanna individual is inherently incapable of doing anything immoral (pāpa kamma) that would qualify one to be born in the apāyā, even under extreme pressure. At this Sōtapaññā stage, ones Sammā diṭṭhi is 51% free of wrong views. At this stage one "sees with wisdom" that Assāda is Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā.</p>

**Table 9 A summary description of attainments**

	Got rid of these fetters	Attainment						
12	Avidyā (ignorance)	Arhat : Nirvāṇa						
11	Restlessness and worry (uddhacca)							
10	Māna (conceit or pride)							
9	Arūparāga (craving for immaterial existence)							
8	Rūparāga (craving for fine-material existence)							
7	Vyāpāda (ill-will, aversion)							
6	Kāma-rāga (sensuous craving)				Anāgāmi: non-returner			
5	Oḷārika Vyāpāda (ill-will, aversion)						Sakadāgāmi : once-returner	
4	Oḷārika Kāma-rāga (sensuous craving, vastu Kāma)							
3	Vicikicchā (skeptical doubt, indecision)							
2	Sīlabbata-parāmāsa (attachment to rites and rituals)							
1	Sakkāya-diṭṭhi (vision leading to generate klesha)							
D	Oḷārika Raga, Dvesha, Mōha removed							
C	Understands Assāda is Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā							
B	No more 'apāyagāmi' karma							
A	Sammā diṭṭhi is at least 51% free of wrong views	Sōtapaññā : stream-enterer						
<b>Kāma-Lōka (The Sensuous World)</b>								

In Ariyā Sāsana, someone who has attained Sota-paññā level is referred to as an Ariyā Śrāvaka. 'Sota' means the noble Eightfold path and 'Paññā' means entered. In Tripitaka, this group of disciples are recognised as 'lokottara' Ariyā monks or Ariyā Śrāvakas. Thus, 'lokottara' (supramundane) 'Sanga' are the group of monks and others who are at this level of achievement. If a robed monk is displaying excessive Raga or Dvesha, they are very unlikely to be in this 'Ariyā Śrāvaka Monk' category.

## OUR PHYSICAL WORLD

Our physical world can be divided to two categories; Internal (within in myself) and External (outside myself).

Our internal world has two components: Mind and Body. The supreme power of these two is the mind. Let's try to keep our mind in one place for a few minutes. Can we? We can't. This makes us realise that we are unable to control our own minds ourselves. Can your mind control your body? For example, can we stop greying of hair or wrinkling of our skin? This means that we can neither control our mind nor our body to our liking.

Yet, it is our nature that we want to control our external world. When we can't, we develop anger and hatred. Just think for a moment. When we cannot control our own minds, would there be any hope for us to control our external world? Therefore, is there any point developing hatred for not being able to control your external world, however close to you, including your own son, daughter, wife or husband?

### Sathara Mahābhūta

The four main elements of the world are described in Buddhist text as patavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, (solid, liquid, heat and air). Those are the four great primary elements detailed below.

1. **Earth element** (*pruṭhavī-dhātu*): Any matter where attractive forces are in prominence (solidness) are called earth elements. Internal earth elements include head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bone, organs, intestinal material, etc.
2. **Water (or liquid) element** (*āpa-dhātu*): Any matter where relative motion of particles is in prominence are called water elements. Internal water elements include bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, nasal mucus, urine, semen, etc.

3. **Fire element** (*teja-dhātu*): Any matter where energy is in prominence are called fire elements. Internal fire elements include those bodily mechanisms that produce physical warmth, ageing, digestion, etc.
4. **Air (or wind) element** (*vāyu-dhātu*): Any matter where expansion or repulsive forces are in prominence are called air elements. Internal air elements include air associated breathing, winds in the belly etc.

➤ **Example 13 Aren't we made of Sathara Mahābhūta?**

You are born from a combination of two cells. It is the feeding that makes you grow. Food comes from animals and plants. Animals feed on plants. Plants feed on our earth's air, water and soil. Our world is 80% water. Our body is also 80% water. All this makes you an adult of 70 kg from above elements. When you die your body will decompose. Ultimately it will break up into above elements and join the earth.

## MEDITATION: ĀRYA BHĀVANĀ

Meditation is the tool that enables you reach Samma Samādhi. There are seven key processes/other methods described in Dhamma to purify the mind away from fermentation of bad thoughts/habits resulting from karmic predilections. This will pave the way to Nibbāna. These are;

1. Dassanena Pahathabba (clear vision by understanding of Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā)
2. Sanvarena Pahathabba (disciplined use of the sense faculties)
3. Patisevana Pahathabba (association with good friends and good deeds)
4. Adhivasana Pahathabba (tolerance and patience)
5. Parivajjana Pahathabba (staying clear of bad influences and environments)
6. Vinodana Pahathabba (dissociate from bad thoughts that come to mind)
7. Bhavana Pahathabba (meditation to purify and understand what to contemplate)

Meditation is the process to minimise and relinquish our natural tendency for external attachment and promote internal happiness. Supramundane '*lokottara*' meditation is designed to maintain your mind away from pollution and retain its original '*Prabhāsvara*' unpolluted status. A calm peaceful mind can be achieved by mundane '*laukika*' meditation techniques such as *Laukika*-Anapana, Kasina or Yoga but this is not the focus of this book. During such '*laukika*' meditation promoted Dhyāna, '*Sīla*' components may not be preserved as they are practised as rituals. In contrast, '*Sīla*' is the naturally installed (virtue, moral conduct) cornerstone upon which the entire '*lokottara*' Noble Eightfold Path is built.

The polluters of your original prabhāsvara mind is Raga, Dvesha and Mōha. Venerable Abhaya Thēro's teachings are focussed in maintaining your mind in its original 'Prabhāsvara' i.e. clean unpolluted state. This refers to the beginning of a thought in your mind and not the beginning of a life. Sometimes, your actions that you interpret as good, may not be that favourable to prepare a foundation for successful meditation and attain Dhyāna (Example 14).

### ➤ *Example 14 Dvesha is more Oḷārika than Raga*

Imagine that you are a vegan, you do not like anyone hurting animal, but your neighbour is a meat eater. He wants it daily. That is his Raga. But, you must not start thinking about your neighbour and his actions and start a dislike for him that can escalate into Dvesha. Now, who has most klesha? It's you. Dvesha is more Oḷārika than Raga and hence you will suffer more in Saṃsāra.

To begin this, one need to understand that all perceptions from the external world are insatiable. A basic understanding is sufficient. This understanding should be 'installed' (like a computer program) within your mind and not 'copied' with excessive detail for memory recall. There is no need to memorise the words. Meditation is designed to decouple you from all bonding, including hatred and delusion. Understanding is the key. That is why you need a full understanding of Satara Sathipattana before you begin. Sharing, kindness, compassion, are also some qualities that you need to possess to proceed (Table 3). Thus, meditation is the tool that makes you encompass 'Samma Samādhī.

## **Meditation Postures**

Although you often get introduced into or engage in meditation in groups, this is a process unique to yourself and expected to be conducted at your freedom and freewill without any external interference. In the converse, it is also your duty to behave in such a way not to interfere or be obstructive to others.

The first step in setting yourself up for meditation is finding a comfortable position. There's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to the best meditation posture. It can be done in one of four postures: sitting, standing, lying down, and walking comfortable to you. Sitting is the optimal position as it provides a balance of focus and relaxation. It is also the best when meditating in groups. Since there is a complete shutdown of all external senses beyond 4<sup>th</sup> Dhyāna except your mind, it is prudent that you select a suitable safe posture if planning to proceed to 5-8<sup>th</sup> stages of attainment.

In a suitable posture, we breathe deeply and exhale slowly for a few minutes to create awareness of one's breathing. This will give an initial focus for your mind and a general relaxation.

Meditation commences on a basic Karmasthana premise that one would not indulge on any activity that would bring any harm, overtly or covertly, to Lord Buddha, his teachings (dhamma) or his Ariyāfollowers, Sangha. After a period of silence and rethinking what you have just said, we seek out for a share of power and radiation emitted by all enlightened beings to the universe to assist us in this meritorious adventure. Then, a personal pledge is offered to not hurt anyone with a pre-emptive pardon for any unintended harm that may occur to anyone (living in the outside unseen world) as a result of radiation (aura) that we may emit during this process of meditation. Thereafter, meditation begins with one 'Karmasthana' chanted at a time, with a period of silence (3-4 minutes) in between each to reiterate/rethink/relive what you have just chanted. Try to achieve a Savitarka-Savichara state. Savitarka means chanting the Karmasthane and Savichara means maintaining an understanding on the Karmasthane you are just chanting.

In order to maintain our mind in an unpolluted state, in real time, we need to actively engage in meditation. The purpose is to train ourselves not to engage in the development of bonds through Raga, Dvesha and Mōha at

least at this moment. You may achieve higher status of mind during meditation by understanding above.

Karmasthana are 'small steps' one is promoted to think about, again and again keeping the mind distracted away from Raga, Dvesha and Mōha. This is Savitarka -Savichara. The purpose is to promote your own metta, mudita, upekkha or more specifically in Pāli Nekkhamma, Aviyapada, Avihimsā sankalapanā. However, this is not an easy task. For this reason, if your mind starts wondering elsewhere without focussing on the Karmasthana given, it is best you resolve back to the default position i.e. concentrate on breathing awareness. This will bring your mind back to its original stability enabling focus on the next 'Karmasthana'. On the other hand, there may be some Karmasthana that suits you best and understand. Another alternative is to keep focussing on those ones you like and understand best.

## **Aura**

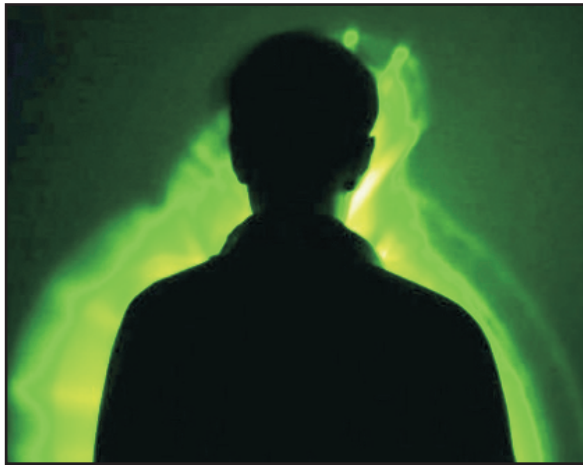
During meditation, Ariyā Śrāvaka may radiate an 'aura' of differing waveforms. These radiation waves constitute energy and formulates an electromagnetic field around the person. These can harm people not usually seen with the naked eye around you. For this reason, before meditation begins, it is usual practice to claim a pardon in advance from any such beings who may encounter discomfort from one's aura during Karmasthana chanting. Aura in modern language can also be explained as the 'vibe'. Bad (black) and Good (white) aura also named as 'vibe' or vibration.

Aura is the energy radiated around you. It is similar to a hologram. Its actual format is yet to be known. However, in recent times an 'aura machine' has been developed using data of the hand resistance to show calibrated colour emissions. It is visualised as a combination of the three



primary colours, red, blue and yellow. It records the emotions linked changes that occur in hand in a colour emission. Its emissions are consistent in colour and changes with emotional status of the individual at the time i.e. Raga, Dvesha, Mōha and between individuals and in the same individual at different times.

The origin of Aura is mind based one motions, Raga, Dvesha or Mōha. Emotions create energy and its emitting radiant waves. In the absence of any Raga, Dvesha or Mōha, or in other words in the absence of greed, hate and delusion, one's aura will become white. This is the inner illumination experience referred to by the spiritually motivated reaching Dhyāna. There is however a need for more scientific exploration.



**Figure 6 Aura (reproduced from [spiritualevents.co.uk](http://spiritualevents.co.uk))**

When 'aura machine' is used, red aura indicates desire for power greed, hatred or dvesha. Yellow aura is linked to cheerful, optimism, intellectuality, i.e. Raga. Blue aura is linked to loyalty, devotion, trust related to Mōha. People with blue aura have a better ability to meditate. Blue colour has more energy than yellow, and red is the lowest, just like in the gas burner (Figure 7).



***Figure 7 Blue, yellow, red in a flame represent basic aura colours and energy***

There is a link between the 'aura' and your volition (mental state or 'chetanā' or intention). Aura has energy and therefore your volition can control the energy you emit. This links with the lord Buddha's teaching 'Cetanāhaü Bhikkhave Kammaü Vadāmi'. This can be translated as 'Volition determines Karmic energy and consequences'. We are yet to fully scientifically validate this concept.

At the 4<sup>th</sup> level of 'Dhyāna' during meditation one may experience a 'lightened-up' body in parallel with a white aura. This is because the creator of light is the mind. The aura constitutes karmic energy. It is not uncommon for many who engage in meditation for several days to experience this blissful white colour during those sessions.

Lord Buddha's 'aura' is different. It reflected supreme psychic power and did not originate from emotions such as lustfulness or hatred.

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## **Mantra and Harm**

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On a similar note, radiant waves emitted during the chanting of bad sentences (mantra) can also collectively harm individuals. One radiation wave may not do any harm, but a collection of waves can burn similar to what will happen if you use a lens to converge all rays coming from the sun. In a similar way, radiation emerging from purposeful mantra can come together to harm people.

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## **Astral body**

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Out-of-body experience, also called astral travel is a rare phenomenon during which one has the feeling of being located outside of the physical boundaries of the body, along with the sensation of perceiving the world from an elevated perspective.

The astral body is a hypothesized spiritual counterpart to the physical human body that is said to exist on a different plane. It is a subtle counterpart accompanying the physical human body but not usually separated from it in life but survives its death. It is believed that the astral body is linked to your next Bhava (existence).

The phenomenon of an out-of-body experience is an act of separating the spirit (also called as an astral body) from the physical body. Venerable Abhaya Thēro states that it is a reproducible experience that can be attempted during meditation; Just relax in bed reduce weight mentally then make an 'Adhiṣṭhāna' (mental vow, position) to go out of body there is a chance that you encounter astral body experience.

## KARMASTHANA

### (Kammaṭṭhāna)

Karmasthana is a focus point to stabilise your wandering mind away from delusional thoughts. Karma-asthana basically means Karma-displacement. Karmasthana are generally focussed thoughts designed to distract one's mind from lustful, hateful, and delusional thoughts. If you are mostly able to maintain focus on the Karmasthana, at least temporarily during meditation, one should be able to attain various forms of 'trances' or Dhyāna. The fundamental need is that you understand and focus on the meaning of Karmasthana during chanting. All Karmasthana are chanted in the 'present' tense and refers to current time. It is a deconditioning process. The 'core meaning' of all 'Karmasthana' are the same and this will become self-apparent to the advanced learner.

It is most important to understand that the purpose of Karmasthana is not to keep the mind in focus at one point, but prevent the Prabhāsvara mind getting polluted from Raga, Dvesha or Mōha based distraction. An experienced meditator do not need to chant Karamsthane to achieve Dhyāna.

Karmasthana are offered in a stepwise fashion, escalating the focus point to higher levels based on the general level of understanding of the audience. At the beginner's level Karmasthana will reiterate Assāda, Ādīnava and Nissarana. At the advanced levels, whilst maintaining foundation the Karmasthane will add experiences of *Samma Ditthi* and *Samma Samādhī*.

During meditation, you may experience symptoms and signs of change such as tearing eyes, body stiffness, seeing lights of different colour and white light enlightenment and extreme happiness. These are all signs that you are on the right path (Table 10). However, focusing on these will not bring Dhyāna states to you. What is needed is to maintain focus on your Karmasthana.

In general, the meditation session begins with chanting of Lord Buddha's supreme nine qualities. The purpose is to remind ourselves about the target qualities we are also seeking. Therefore, it is a self-motivation as well as a devotional song.

We reach Samma Sati (right mindfulness) in our mind for the present time during meditation. It is not in the past or in the future. We focus for the present moment and get rid of raga, dvesha, Mōha maintaining the focus on Karmasthane during meditation.

## The Nine Qualities of Buddha

The Buddha inspires us with His qualities. Here are the 'bava-uddha', buddha qualities in Pāli.

**'Iti pi so bhagavā, araham, sammā-saṃbuddho,  
vijjācaraṇa-saṃpanno, sugato, lōkavidū, anuttara-purisa-  
dammasārathī, satthā-dēva-manussānaṃ, buddho' bhagavā ti'**

1. *Araham (arhat) - has eradicated all the defilements (bad thoughts, bad reactions like anger, anxiety, hatred, frustration, stress, depression, ignorance, jealousy, gossip, attachment, dogmatism).*
2. *Sammā-saṃbuddho has discovered and understood fully, the Four Noble Truths.*
3. *Vijja-Carana-Sampano - has knowledge and conduct, or theory and practice; the Buddha is endowed with both. He says as He acts and He does what He says.*
4. *Sugato is a great speaker, who is adept in the art of choosing the right words, saying them at the right time, and in such a way as will benefit the listener.*

5. *Lōkavidu - is the person who knows the six worlds: the seeing world, the hearing world, the smelling world, the tasting world, the touching world and the thinking world.*
6. *Anuttaro Purisa Dhamma-Sarathi - is the best teacher who can bring the wayward back into the fold. The Buddha can make people understand with either just one sentence or a whole series of talks.*
7. *Satta Dēva-Manussanam the teacher and leader of dēvas and men.*
8. *Buddho - is the person who knows the Four Noble Truths.*
9. *Bhagava - is the person endowed with special powers. The merits of Buddha are the acts of sharing, ethical morality, patience, renunciation, wisdom, diligence, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness and equanimity.*

Most Karmasthana are chanted in Pāli but it is very important to understand the exact meaning of the words. This is paramount for meditation as the chanted words have 'energetic' power. The meditation focus should be on the meaning of the words and not the words that you are chanting. Rethinking Karmasthana at the end of chanting enhances this focus.

Here are some main examples:

### **Karmasthana 1**

*“Ahaṃ avero homi, Abyāpajjho homi, Anīgho homi, Sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi, Sabbe Sattā Bhavantu Sukhitattā”.*

This is a 'metta' meditation. See explanations below

☉ *Ahaṃ avero homi*

may I be free from enmity, hostility and danger

☉ *Abyāpajjho homi*

may I be free from malice, ill will

☉ *Anīgho homi*

may I be free from mental and physical suffering

☉ *Sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi*

may I look after myself and live happily

☉ *Sabbe Sattā Bhavantu Sukhitattā*

may all beings be well, happy and free from suffering

## **Karmasthana 2**

*“Etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ, yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho  
sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbāna'ti”*

“This is peaceful, this is excellent, namely the stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction”

It is the only peace, the only happiness. If I do not attach lustfully, hatefully or by delusion to any senses, my mind will not be contaminated. I cease all these attachments from my mind and experience the resulting pure mind filled with happiness and blissfulness. Prevent Saṅkhāra from arising through eliminating 'Taṇhā' (excess greed) and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is Nibbāna.

'Nirodho' mean 'distancing from' and 'Nibbāna' is 'detachment'. This detachment creates liberation from this world.

## **Karmasthana 3**

*“Aniccā vata sankhārā, Uppāda vaya dhamminō, Uppajjitvā  
nirujjhanti, Te san vūpa samō sukhō”*

This a common Karmasthana ascribed by Buddhists particularly at funerals. Unfortunately, it does not serve any purpose for the dead, but it is perhaps a good opportunity to understand what was meant by it for the living.

◎ *Aniccā vata sankhārā*

We remain with the 6 senses generating kleshas until we realise all that is Anichcha

◎ *Uppāda vaya dhamminō*

We get rid of all Abhi-Saṅkhāra and prevent generation of all 'pancha-upadana-skandha'

◎ *Uppajjivā nirujjhanti*

In the future all Raga, Dvesha, Mōha related 'klesha' and 'assāda' should be 'nirodha' as its all anichcha and dukkha.

◎ *Te san vūpa samō sukhō*

When that happens, we become close to ultimate happiness Nirvāṇa

◎ *Raga khayō Nibbāna, Dvesha khayō Nibbāna, Mōha khayō Nibbāna*

No more craving, No more hatred, No more Mōha

### **Karmasthana 4**

◎ *“Sabba pāpassa akaranan,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacitta pariyō dapanan,  
Etan Buddhānasāsanan”*

Cease all immoral evil

Cultivate moral kushala and truth

Control your kushala/akushala thoughts

This is the Buddhist core principle in doctrine



## Karmasthana 5

A Karmasthana session ends with this, but devotees are not disturbed. They are allowed to remain in their trances as long as they like. The silent environment is strictly maintained. Others may leave quietly.

- ⊙ *“Natthi me saraṇam aññam, Buddho me saraṇam varam,  
Etena sacca-vajjena, Soṭṭhi me hotu sabbadā.*
- ⊙ *Natthi me saraṇam aññam, Dhammo me saraṇam varam,  
Etena sacca-vajjena, Soṭṭhi me hotu sabbadā.*
- ⊙ *Natthi me saraṇam aññam, Sangho me saraṇam varam,  
Etena sacca-vajjena, Soṭṭhi me hotu sabbadā.”*

No other refuge do I seek, The (1) Buddha (2) Dhamma (3) Sangha are my refuge true. May I seek complete detachment to leave this 'Bhana' (Saṃsāra). By the speaking of this Truth, May the peaceful victory be mine.

## Karmasthana thoughts in English

A core interpretation of Karmasthanain English may be written as following.

- ⊙ *One sees what one sees, one recognise what one sees, and one enjoyed what one saw*
- ⊙ *One hears what one hear, one recognises what one hear, and one enjoyed what one heard*
- ⊙ *One tastes what one see, one recognises what one tastes, and one enjoyed what one tasted*
- ⊙ *One smells what one smells, one recognises what one smells, and one enjoyed what one smelled*
- ⊙ *One feels what one feel, one recognises what one feels, and one enjoyed what one felt*

⊙ *One thinks what one think, one recognises what one think, and one enjoyed what one thought*



⊙ *One liked what one saw, one seek no lust for what one saw, one has no lust for what one saw*

⊙ *One liked what one heard, one seek no lust for what one heard, one has no lust for what one heard*

⊙ *One liked what one tasted, one seek no lust for what one tasted, one has no lust for what one tasted*

⊙ *One liked what one smelled, one seek no lust for what one smelled, one has no lust for what one smelled*

⊙ *One liked what one felt, one seek no lust for what one felt, one has no lust for what one felt*

⊙ *One liked what one thought, one seek no lust for what one thought, and one has no lust for what one thought*



⊙ *One sees what one see, one recognises what one see, and one hated what one saw*

⊙ *One hears what one hear, one recognises what one hear, and one hated what one heard*

⊙ *One taste what one tastes, one recognises what one tastes, and one hated what one tasted*

⊙ *One smells what one smells, one recognises what one smells, and one hated what one smelled*

⊙ *One feels what one feels, one recognises what one feels, and one hated what one felt*

⊙ *One think what one thinks, one recognises what one think, and one hated what one thought*



⊙ *One hated what one saw, one seeks no hatred for what one saw, and has no hatred for what one saw*

- ◎ *One hated what one heard, one seeks no hatred for what one heard, and has no hatred for what one heard*
- ◎ *One hated what one tasted, one seeks no hatred for what one tasted, and has no hatred for what one tasted*
- ◎ *One hated what one smelled, one seeks no hatred for what one smelled, and has no hatred for what one smelled*
- ◎ *One hated what one felt, one seeks no hatred for what one felt, and has no hatred for what one felt*
- ◎ *One hated what one thought, one seeks no hatred for what one thought, and has no hatred for what one thought*



- ◎ *More one thinks of it, more one realises  
That lust and hate are in one's mind  
It is not in the person or the material one saw  
Then why should one bother and burn or yearn for more*



- ◎ *Root no bonding  
It only runs one down and not the person or material one yearned*

Some Karmasthana reminds you of each sensing organ perceptions getting into difficulty.

- ◎ *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Eye is aflame. The images are aflame...  
Why is it aflame?  
It is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion.*



© *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Ear is aflame. The sounds are aflame...  
Why is it aflame?  
It is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire  
of delusion.*



© *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Nose is aflame. The aromas are aflame...  
Why is it aflame?  
It is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire  
of delusion.*



© *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Tongue is aflame. The flavours are aflame...  
Why is it aflame?  
It is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire  
of delusion.*



© *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Body is aflame. The tactile sensations are aflame...  
Why is it aflame?  
It is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire  
of delusion.*



© *All is in aflame. What is aflame?  
Consciousness at the intellect is aflame.  
What has put it all aflame?  
World is aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the  
fire of delusion.*



## DHYĀNA (TRANCES)

Dhyāna is a personal experience of a level of achievement. This is at the upper end of *Satara Satipatthāna*. There are 8 levels described but experiencing 1-4 is plenty of reassurance that our meditation is on the correct path. What is referred here is Ariyā Dhyāna attained during meditation with the focus on achieving Nirvāṇa (Table 10). Other forms of '*laukika*' meditation can give various experiences similar to what is described with Ariyā Dhyāna but not considered a foundation to attain higher levels of Dhyāna. Dhyāna is not Nirvāṇa; it's only a Nirvāṇa 'taster' experience. '*Laukika*' Dhyāna, leads you for a Bāmbalowa (heavens) experience. '*Lokottara*' Dhyāna leads you to a Nirvāṇa experience.

How can we achieve Dhyāna?

1. *Listening to Dhamma*
2. *Teaching Dhamma*
3. *Dhamma Sathgayana (chanting)*
4. *Dhamma Manasikara (thinking)*
5. *Laukika methods*

The latter two are used in meditation but meditation do not essentially need both. You can do it on your own by Manasikara.

Dhyāna is a performance indicator. It is like a speedometer. If you achieve the speed of 70 km/hr, then the indicator will show that you are at a speed of 70. It cannot be done vice versa. Thus, you need to focus on Karmastane, and meditate to gradually decommission Raga, Dvesha and Mōha to lower levels. You will experience Dhyāna effortlessly when your meditation is truly bringing your mind to focus on Karmastane. This enlightening experience is not your purpose, and it will disappear as soon as you defocus your mind, away from Karmastane. In other words, this will be indirect confirmation that you have been meditating correctly

successfully. If your main effort and focus is to attain Dhyāna experiences, you will never get it. Instead focus your mind on 'Dutu Nirvana'. Dutu Nirvana refers to the pleasant experience or 'Shanthi' (peace, rest, calmness, tranquillity, or bliss) experience that you gain through dhamma discussion and understanding the Four Noble Truths. You would slowly develop and 'Dutu Nirvana' during meditation. Focus on expanding this appeasement.

Dvesha is tangible and constitute jealousy, anger, hatred, fear all negative thoughts (burning). All positive thoughts are Raga (fun thoughts). Raga needs to be reduced to curtail Dvesha and that removes burning and hence your mind now starts to cool down. Understanding Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā will help you get rid of Mōha too.

Kleshas are 'anichcha' but Nirvāṇa is 'nichcha'. Avidyā is now reduced. Avidyā means the belief that 'assāda' can be achieved somewhere in the 18 dhātu points (sensory realms) to satisfy my 'ichcha' (Table 5). This will never happen as none of above is in the 18 dhātu places but within your own mind.

Passionate desires and certain unwholesome thoughts like sensuous lust, ill-will, languor, worry, restlessness, and sceptical doubt are discarded, and feelings of joy and happiness are maintained, along with certain mental activities in the first stage of Dhyāna. Then, in the second stage, all intellectual activities are suppressed, tranquillity, and “one-pointedness” of mind developed, and the feelings of joy and happiness are still retained. In the third stage, the feeling of joy, which is an active sensation, also disappears, while the disposition of pleasure/comfort remains in addition to mindful equanimity. Finally, in the fourth stage of Dhyāna, all sensations, even of happiness and unhappiness, of joy and sorrow, disappear, only pure equanimity and awareness remaining. Thus, the mind is trained and disciplined and developed through right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

There is no Raga in Dhyāna 1. Once achieved, some may be even working whilst in Dhyāna 1 maintaining Sarvitarka-Savichara. Dhyāna is a 'passive' indicator of successful engagement in Sarvitarka- Savichara i.e. Karmasthane.

**Dhyāna 1:** Dvesha thoughts ('Sankalpana') must be totally removed before entering Dhyāna 1. Vitarka-Vichara and Sarvitarka-Savichara are in a mix but the latter will prevail. Chant Karmasthane with an understanding to reduce Vitarka-Vichara. To accelerate this process read it with the monk and then follow on with the audience, so that you are more occupied with Sarvitarka -savichara component.

Avidyā is reducing but it is still there in Dhyāna 1-3.

**Dhyāna 4:** An Ariyā in Dhyāna 4 has achieved complete Samma Samādhi at that particular moment. There is no Avidyā. 'Taṇhā' and 'Upadana' are also not there.

When you go beyond the 4 Rūpa Dhyānas, which is the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Dhyānas, you go into what are called the Arūpa Dhyānas. The distinction between Rūpa Dhyānas and Arūpa Dhyānas is that Rūpa Dhyāna means a state of absorbed concentration to a 'form', whilst Arūpa means 'space'. In other words, Rūpa is 'form' and Arūpa is 'formless'. Arūpa Raga is a desire for even higher states of bliss of concentration.

In Arūpa Worlds there is only one sense base active and that is your mind. In the Brahma World, there are three bases in action i.e. the mind, the eye and the ear. In the Kāma Worlds, there are six bases in action with added nose, tongue and body to above. These are the three worlds. The world of the 'senses', the world of 'form' and the world of 'formless' (Figure 3).

## **Dhyāna achiever categories**

There are four main categories of achievement. These are;

1. Dhyāna only
2. Dhyāna and Samāpatti
3. Samāpatti only
4. No achievement

About 20% attendees of a 9-day Dhyāna retreat falls into the last category. There may be many reasons for not making progress and some of which are discussed later. This is however not a 'hopeless' situation. It could also be because of one's karmic predilections. There is a method for the last category of people to follow and move up to Samma Samādhi described in Tripitaka. This is discussed in glossary under the term 'Anyathara Chetho Vimukthi'.

During any state of Dhyāna you are fully aware of your surroundings. You can also engage in any activity, for example talk, walk, listen. In contrast, Samāpatti is a kind of a 'locked in' situation. Since all five sensory receptions get locked out, you remain only with activities of the mind. You cannot move and the body is locked. Do not panic or get frightened. You decide to move out of Samāpatti, open eyes if you can and remain in the same position for 10-15 minutes until you are completely back to normal before moving.



**Table 10 The first four levels of Dhyāna (trances)**

<p><b>Dhyāna Level 1</b></p>	<p><b>Dhyāna Level 2</b></p>	<p><b>Dhyāna Level 3</b></p>	<p><b>Dhyāna Level 4</b></p>	<p><b>Dhyāna Level 5 and above</b></p>
	<p>By continuing your focus on Sarvitarka-Savichara, you will now begin to experience feelings of happiness (Preethi) and pleasure (Sukha) in your mind, and comfort and coolness. There is no Raga at this stage. Try to get rid of happiness (Preethi) by thinking of it as Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā to reach Dhyāna level 3. The mind will remain only in Sarvitarka-Savichara. Concentrate on 'Preethi' Nirodha at level 2 to reach level 3.</p>	<p>Maintain your focus on Sarvitarka-Savichara, and you will now begin to experience intense feelings of pleasure (Sukha). Do not be attached to this pleasure. Try to get rid of pleasure (Sukha) by thinking of its Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā to reach Dhyāna level 4.</p>	<p>Feelings of pleasure (Sukha) will cease at this level. This level has no 'Avidyā' and totally devoid of Tanhā and Upadana (Samma Samādhi). This is Avidyā Pachchaya Sañkhāra'Pattichcha Samuppādaya'. This is not Nirvāṇa, but a temporary experience of the status of Nirvāṇa.</p> <p>At this level you experience various forms of light, bright or otherwise even if you are in a dark room eyes closed. These lights can be very bright, and it does not arise in front of your eyes. At the fourth Dhyāna you may experience that your whole body is lit in white or covered in a white robe.</p>	
	<p>To achieve this state one must genuinely understand 'Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana', 'pancha-upadana-skandha' and 'anichcha, dukka, anattā.'</p> <p>Some early signs of entering to this level of Dhyāna include involuntary tearing, straightening of your back with no effort or discomfort (awakening of Kundalini or energy), excessive thirst and diarrhoea. These results from a detoxification processes of your own body.</p> <p>At this state it is not uncommon for your mind to temporarily defocus from Savitarka (what you think on meditation) and Savichara (sharp attention to your Karmastana) to the opposite of Vitarka-vichara (wondering mind moving to think of family, home, food etc). This will cease as you continue to meditate. At this level of Dhyāna, 51% or more of Raga is relinquished.</p>			
	<p>This is 'Karma Bhūmi or Kāma Lōka', the 'land of action', both good and bad. It is full of klesha, affecting one's destiny or fate in the future and in subsequent lives.</p> <p>The three poisonous roots of kleshas are Mōha (delusion, confusion), Raga (greed, sensual attachment), and Dvesha (aversion). These are afflictions or character flaws innate in a being, the root of Taṇhā (craving), and in part the cause of Dukkha.</p>			

Dhyāna cannot be achieved by yearning for it during meditation. In other words, it cannot be achieved by going on a 4-wheel drive quest.

Venerable Abhaya Thēro on his advice on meditation states that he can support an Ariyā Śrāvaka achieve only 1-4 levels Dhyāna through preaching. Beyond the 5th, the achievement is based on your own meditation practice and cannot be helped by anyone else. There is however one important warning. Do not engage in any communication with various forms/images that you may see during Dhyāna as no one will be able to disengage yourself from the difficulties/ unpleasant consequences that may follow in real life.

Please note that Dhyāna 1-4 can be achieved in any position; sitting, standing, lying down, and walking. It is important to note that you can engage with Samma Vaca even in '*lokottara*' Dhyāna 4. This is the main distinction between '*lokottara*' Dhyāna and Dhyāna Samāpatti. If you enter Dhyāna Samāpatti at any level, you would experience that the body is locked down unable speak, move etc. One easy method to come out of this Samāpatti is to open eyes. Please note that you can maintain even '*lokottara*' Dhyāna-4 with open eyes. In '*Laukika*' Dhyāna, there is no ability to conduct Samma Vaca. During '*lokottara*' Dhyāna meditation you are aware of the surroundings all the time and can engage in Samma Vaca. If you have lost awareness, that means you have gone to sleep during that time. At 4th level, Venerable Abhaya Thēro states that through step by step adhiṣṭhāna (a personal vow), previous forms of your existence may be visualised.

In the fifth Dhyāna, you will switch off your sensory organs and will not process any signals in your mind and reach a status of feeling no material but just the sky. Thus, there are no figures to see (Arūpa). There is no scientific explanation for this. At this level, your body will be very light or weight less. Fifth Dhyāna, can escalate to 8th and that is the stage in which you escape from materialistic world.

Unfortunately, we Buddhists with engraved views need more time for unlearning before learning this basic truth. What we have learnt, may not be the truth and there is a lot to unlearn. Thus, attaining Dhyāna may need several days of meditation before we Buddhists see any signs of achieving Dhyāna.

There is a shorter but an aggressive method that can be applied to rise up to Dhyāna 4 through meditation. This is not practical or realistic for a person in employment but a monk. We can reduce development of attachments (Raga, Dvesha, Mōha) and tame our sensory organs by starving it for some time (several weeks) without giving the 'food' it needs to promote abhi-saṅkhāra. To do this, try to stop detailing all perceptions. For example, if you see a new car, do not try to explore it in detail. If you taste something good or new do not try to explore its ingredients or how it was cooked. If you smell something bad do not try to see how and where it was generated. This way you can minimise development of Abhi-saṅkhāra and the Saṅkhāra will eventually learn not to proceed to Abhi-saṅkhāra. This is another method to reduce Klesha development.

### **Five Mental Hindrances (Pancha Nivarana)**

These are the unwholesome negative mental states or mental defilements that can hinder and obstruct the progression of mental development (maintaining a Prabhāsvara radiant mind) during meditation and achieving Dhyāna. 'Ni'-'varana' means the factors that cover or prevents you from entry to 'Nirvana' path. Reducing these helps you move your mind from a state of 'Kāma-Bhūmi' to 'Ariyā-Bhūmi'. One needs to be in Ariyā Bhūmi to enter a successful meditation path.'Pancha Nivarana' include;

1. Sensual desire (Kāmacchanda)
2. Ill-will (vyapada)

3. Sloth and torpor (thina-middha)
4. Restlessness and remorse (uddhacca-kukkucca)
5. Sceptical doubt (vicikicca)

These arise due to unwise attention (ayoniso manasikara) given to the 'objects/perceptions' of the sense organs. These can be prevented from development and eradicated through wise attention (yoniso manasikara) in the terms of anichcha, dukkha and anatta.

These five mental hindrances are the foods or nutrients that nourish and fuel the development of 'ignorance' or delusion (Avidyā). Here, 'ignorance' is the lack of a proper understanding of the four Noble Truths of suffering (dukkha), the cause of suffering (samudaya), cessation of suffering (nirodha) and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (magga).

### **Sensual desire (Kāmacchanda)**

Kāmacchanda means desire or craving for sense pleasures; pleasant visible objects, pleasant sounds, pleasant smells, pleasant tastes and pleasant tangible objects received through the five sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue and the body.

### **Ill-will (vyapada)**

Ill-will can include several states of negative emotions such as anger, resentment, aversion, animosity, irritation, hostility, grief, fear and hatred towards others. Well developed, loving kindness, compassion and empathy can be the perfect antidote to negative feelings like resentment, anger, ill-will and hatred.

### **Sloth and Torpor (thina-middha)**

Sloth and torpor is a negative mental state that can arise during meditation in the form of lethargy, laziness, lassitude and sluggishness of the mind which can hinder and obstruct the progress of meditation. Sloth (thina) can be described as the state of sluggishness or dullness of the

mind while torpor (middha) is the state of heaviness and drowsiness in the body which can quite easily lead to sleepiness.

### **Restlessness and Remorse (uddhacca-kukkucca)**

Restlessness or agitation (uddhacca) of the mind will hinder and obstruct the development of concentration and tranquillity of the mind during both concentration and insight meditation. The application of too much of effort (viriyā) into meditation is one cause. Remorse, worry, guilt or anxiety (kukkucca) is the preoccupation with the unwholesome things that one has done or wholesome things that one has not done which can equally hinder the proper development of concentration and tranquillity.

### **Sceptical Doubt (vicikicca)**

Doubt, uncertainty, indecision or perplexity of the mind can hinder and obstruct the progress in both concentration and insight meditation.

## **Dhyāna distractors**

Dhyāna is a measure of your success in dissociation from Assāda. This is done by understanding of the futility of Assādaby looking at its consequences (Ādīnava) through the vision of Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā. During meditation and Dhyāna, some individuals may experience unexpected visual or auditory forms of attraction or direction. In other words, visual images of extreme pleasure may appear, or auditory sounds of direction may be heard. These are interventions brought by individuals in the unseen world. It is most important that you apply the same principle, Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā to those as well. Developing Raga towards those images or auditory sounds and linking with it may create unexpected difficulties to yourself.

## **Black Energy**

If there is white energy, there is also the opposite, i.e. black energy. This is believed to be linked to some physical disabilities. It may also contribute

to inability to make progress during meditation and attain Dhyāna. Venerable Abhaya Thēro occasionally engage in a process leading to the removal of one's black energy during meditation through a Buddhist chant. I have seen a friend of mine attending meditation sessions in clutches and throwing it away walking unaided within 2-3 days following the removal of 'black energy'.

Since our default position is re-birth, we adhere to and engage in many good practices, in '*laukika*' (mundane) terms mainly to ensure a better place of rebirth, such as Heaven but neither permanent nor unlimited. Even the inhabitants in Heaven, living in tiers, will have to leave it at the end of their term and re-enter the cycle of rebirth once again. This process is never ending as our good deeds will expire as we go. We have already come a long way in this '*Saṃsāra*', although we cannot instantly recall our past. Indirect evidence for this exists; paranormal phenomena captured on camera and occasionally proven past life recall by very young children. At the end of each life, we have nothing but our 'good' and 'bad' deeds. We cannot reclaim any of our belongings, or lifestyles or possessions from our previous life when we are reborn. Our 'good' deeds will only help us secure a better place of reincarnation with less suffering. This is also temporary and does not last for ever.

A word on 'bad' deeds. In general, 90% of defilements can be rectified except a few. 'Karma' will result in *Vipāka*, whatever your status is. There are 5 heinous crimes, which cannot be apprehended. These five are named '*Anantarika-karma*'. These are (1) Injuring a Buddha (2) Killing an Arhat (3) Creating schism in the Dhamma (*Sangha*) (4) Matricide and (5) Patricide. These should never be committed, and you will have to suffer the consequences. There is no escape from this even if you are an 'Arhat'.

## **NIRAPEKSHATHWAYE MAGA: THE PREACHING PROCESS**

Nirapekshathwaye Maga means nirapeksha-maga (path to absolutism). Venerable Abhaya Thēro and his fellow disciples engage in teaching us above principles in three main forms; lecture discussions, directed meditation and Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions. All these can be face-to-face or online or both.

It is important to understand how each of these work for us amateurs. It is usually a daunting task initially not knowing 'what to do' and how to engage.

The trouble for the beginner is the very common use of Pāli words with some explanations in Sinhala. Therefore, one needs to understand Pāli words and their deep meaning to make sense of what is being taught. This is one reason why Venerable Abhaya Thēro insists that people attending meditation sessions should have at least followed the teaching available online at 'Seasons 8'. The latter is in Sinhalese, but there are English discussions reposted in the Nirapekshathwaye Maga website that is adequately informative for the beginner.

### **Lecture Discussions**

Most basic concepts can be understood easily if you have time to listen to on-line discourses. A summary of above is usually presented and discussed very briefly at the beginning of any new meditation retreat or discussion session. Venerable Abhaya Thēro and his other disciples always welcome engagement with the audience as much as possible to promote and enhance bilateral understanding.

## Directed Meditation



*Figure 8 Directed meditation*

Venerable Abhaya Thērou usually makes an assessment of the audience at the beginning of any session. The reason is to ensure that what is taught and asked matches the skill level of the audience in relation to their individual learning. The Karamasthana too would escalate during meditation to suit the audience. Therefore, understandably one needs a basic knowledge as compiled in 'Season 8' constituting 32 discourses of 2-hour duration each.

Meditation is not a therapeutic tool to treat diseases although some conditions may improve during this process. Further, it is not recommended for people with severe depression, schizophrenia and illnesses believed to be linked to unseen evil forces or ghosts. This is mainly because the consequences could be worse.



## Question and Answer sessions



*Figure 9 Q & A sessions*

There are two types of Q & A sessions. These are informal discussions held face-to-face or via remote sessions (Zoom) related to Dhamma or issues resulting from meditation. Both are open forums.

There is also a provision for any devotee to raise any dhamma question and obtain answers from Venerable Abhaya Thēro himself by joining a WhatsApp group.

## SUMMARY

There are two streams of Buddhist practice, '*laukika*' and '*lokottara*'. Some of us who are seeking better lifestyles and higher returns including that in heaven focus on '*laukika*' methods. Selfish '*Dana*' predominantly falls into this category. However, Lord Buddhas original teachings were designed for '*lokottara*' achievements i.e. how to reach ultimate happiness through detachment. The latter path opens for you through '*Samma Samādhi*', starting with the attainment of the four Dhyāna.

Unguarded sensory contact gives rise to craving and clinging to insatiable states and things, which are dukkha, "incapable of satisfying" and painful. This craving keeps us caught in Saṃsāra, the endless cycle of repeated rebirth, and the continued dukkha that comes with it. There is a way to end this cycle, namely by attaining Nirvāṇa, cessation of craving. This can be accomplished by confining our automatic responses to sensory contact by restraining one selves, cultivating discipline and wholesome states, and practicing mindfulness and Dhyāna (meditation).

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*Your Mind is Clean*

*Keep it Clean*

*Do not allow Raga, Dvesha, Mōha to pollute it.*

*Promote Metta , Mudita, Upekkha.*

*All in this world is*

*Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā*

*The Nirvāṇa*

*is the only*

*Nichcha, Sukha, Atta.*

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**Raga-khayo Nibbāna, Dvesha-khayo Nibbāna,**

**Mōha-khayo Nibbāna.**

## DEEP DHAMMA REVELATIONS

As we alluded to the reasons earlier, what we know, what we understand and what we read in literature may not always reflect or close to absolute teachings of Lord Buddha. Sometimes there is no explaining mechanism today for what was taught in Dhamma. There are many reasons for this including translation related deformation and misinterpretation, malpractices and rituals induced by humans for various reasons. Another explanation is that it could be a law of nature not yet understood by us in science. Therefore, our understanding will evolve, and this is best done linking our dhamma interpretations with our own experiences to ensure what is taught parallels our experience without conflict. In a similar manner there are many areas that are not very clear or subject to criticism. Some of these are mentioned here for your own thought and exploration.

### The Precepts: five or fifty?

There is a discrepancy in the interpretation of the five precepts of code of conduct taught for lay people that we described at the beginning of this book. The five precepts described in Tripitaka are not rules but behaviours involuntarily installed and observed in AriyāŚrāvakarising towards higher levels of Dhyāna. The five precepts can be described also in relation to each Dasa Akushala (ten immoral acts).

	Ten Immoral Acts (Dasa Akushala)	Precepts
<b>Manō Saikhāra acts (immoral acts done with the mind)</b>	Abhijjā (covetousness; greed)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Vyāpāda (ill-will, hatred)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Micchā Ditthi (wrong views)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)

<b>Vaci Saṅkhāra Acts</b> (immoral acts done with speech)	Musāvāda (lying)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Pisunāvācā (slandering)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Parusāvācā (harsh speech)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Sampappalāpā (frivolous talk)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
<b>Kāya Saṅkhāra Acts</b> (immoral acts done with the body)	Pānātipātā (killing)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Adinnādānā (taking what is not given)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)
	Kāmēsu micchācārā (excessive of sense pleasures)	Quitting (Prahana Sīla) Dissociation from (Vermani Sīla) De-motivation (Chethana Sīla) Opposition to (Sanwara Sīla) Non-provision of fuel (Avithikkama Sīla)

Therefore, the number of true precepts described in relation to 'dasa akushala' will constitute fifty.

Above precepts and sub-precepts need to be 'installed' within the individual through understanding and not imposed by rule. Do not anticipate that we can send a whole nation to Nirvāṇa by asking them to follow above precepts by military style rule with an added fear of reprisals or punishments if breached.

## Sīla

Raga-Virāga-Nirodha is the only way to achieve the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

*Right Understanding (samma-ditthi) → Right Thoughts (samma-sankappa) → Right Speech (samma-vaca) → Right Actions (samma-kammanta) → Right Livelihood (samma-ajiva) → Right Effort (samma-vayama) → Right Mindfulness (samma-sati) → and Right Concentration (samma-Samādhi).*

When one comprehends *anichcha*, one stays away from immoral actions. That happens not because one is firmly adhering to a set of precepts or rituals. It is because one now knows deep inside that such activities are fruitless and dangerous in the long run.

Thus, Sīla is not something to be 'taken' by rule, but involuntarily 'installed' when one enters Sōta-Paññā state. Śraddhā (faith) starts from Prajñā and not by conducting rituals.

## Salāyatana works in combination

Our faculties work together in some instances and that is why they are called faculties. For example, a smell of a particular food, can generate a craving or feeling for a particular taste, only to mentally enhance the taste of the food that you are about to consume.

On the other hand, if you have a common cold, would you taste your food the same? Often you may not feel any taste at all. Why is this difference?

## Citta-Bhāvanā

A (pure) citta (mind) is clean (prabhāsvara) in nature. That citta (mind) is contaminated by defilements (klesha). Avidyā, and Tanhā are the roots of klesha generation. Once you cease those, the amount of klesha you have will significantly diminish.

In Pāli Canon, 'bhāvanā' is often found as a compound phrase describing personal and intentional effort over time with respect to the development of a particular faculty. Some of these descriptions include;

*Citta-bhāvanā is "development of mind and consciousness".*

*Kāya-bhāvanā (Indriya Bhavana) is "development of body."*

*Mettā-bhāvanā is the "cultivation" or "development of benevolence."*

*Paññā-bhāvanā translated as "development of wisdom" or "development of understanding."*

*Samādhi-bhāvanā translated as "development of concentration."*

*Samatha-bhāvanā, means development of 'tranquillity'.*

*Vipassanā-bhāvanā, meaning the development of insight.*

Citta-Bhāvanā is thoughts contemplation and insight meditation. It is believed that a human who has not heard of Dhamma (assutavā puthujjano) is not aware of its true nature. Citta bhāvana is not recommended unless one is a 'lokottara' Ariyā Śrāvaka in Samma Samādhi.

### What are an 'Arhat's Vipāka Vēdanā?

Perception by a person in 'Arhat' is by Vipāka Vēdanā. It could be Sukha (pleasant), Dukkha (unpleasant) or Upekkhā (Neutral) final perception. The latter depends on the 'kushala' or 'akushala' Vēdanā status of the individual.

**Table 11 'Paticca samuppāda' in an Arhat**

Sensory organ	Perception	Paticca Samuppāda (vedhana)
Eye	See (Rūpa)	Upekkhā Vēdanā
Ear	Hear (Sound)	Upekkhā Vēdanā
Tongue	Taste (Gana)	Upekkhā Vēdanā
Nose	Smell (Jeeva)	Upekkhā Vēdanā
Body	Feel (Kaya)	Sukha or Dukka Vēdanā
Mind	Mana-Dhamma	Sukha or Dukkha or Upekkhā Vēdanā

Above perceptions, depending on one's Vipāka, may generate pleasurable or unpleasant event or be neutral.

## Upādāna

Upādāna means 'clinging', 'attachment' or 'grasping'. Upādāna and Taṇhā are the two primary causes of suffering. The cessation of clinging leads to Nirvāṇa.

### **The Tripitaka describes four types of clinging:**

1. Sense-pleasure clinging (kam-upādāna) repeated craving of worldly things
2. All views clinging (ditth-upādāna) such as eternalism (world and self are eternal), nihilism (rejection of all religious and moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless)
3. Rites and rituals clinging (silabbat-upādāna) believing that rites alone could lead to liberation
4. Self-doctrine clinging (attavad-upādāna). self-identification with self-less entities

## Nama-Rūpa or Mana-Dhamma

This is a concept that is not well understood but included in Tripitaka. If we think about our sensations, we do seem to record it in our memory, which is believed to be in our brain. But, this may not be what is described in Tripitaka.

The Vipāka Vēdanā that we receive from our sensations are transmitted through some kind of an 'aura' format, invincible to our naked eye and deposited for retrieval in the form of Nama-Gutta. We do not know where these are saved (in our brain?) but we are meant to believe that these can be recalled as Mana-Dhamma when we encounter another sensation.

For example, we know our mum's image and we recognise her instantly. This happens when we see her, through retrieval of our Mana-Dhamma of her previous images and processing. Thus, our Saṅkhāra involves the

Mana-Dhamma in a Vipāka Vēdanā but can also escalate to Abhi-Saṅkhāra.

It is this Nama-Rūpa and then Mana-Dhamma that is responsible for our Vipāka Vēdanā, that may be Kushala (white) or Akushala (black) or a mix. Humans will receive both forms of Vipāka Vēdanā whereas beings in Deva/Brahma Lōka will receive only 'white' *kushala* forms and beings in Hell only 'black' *akushala* forms. That is how pleasurable and unpleasurable experiences are distributed to Heaven and Hell respectively.

We are yet to know how Nama-Rūpa is created, where it all saved and what triggers its retrieval as mana-dhamma. The process is instant, does take virtually no time and hence may be a form of transmission that we are yet to understand in this science lōka.

Tripitika describes 108 forms of Nama-Rūpa (Energy emissions). This may have come from the types of aura that emits from different Paticca Samuppāda. How would be we get 108 forms of Paticca Samuppāda ? There are coincidental associations and explanations.

There are 6 internal and 6 external faculties. This makes 12. There are pleasurable, neutral and unpleasurable impression made from sensory faculties. This makes  $12 \times 3 = 36$ . Then add past, present and future. This makes  $36 \times 3 = 108$ . There are also only 108 stable material. Sun/Earth diameter = 108. Largest molecule Phenyltercubyl is  $C_{60}H_{48} = 108$ . Mantra is chanted 108 times with a belief that 108 negative effects are deleted by 108 positive mantra).

### **Ākāsa-Dhātu**

Above is a term often used by Venerable Abhaya Thero in his chanting's. ākāsa-dhātu seems to refer to the sublunar atmosphere of Akasha.



Akasha (ākāśa) refers to either 'space' or 'æther' described in traditional Indian cosmology that explore the origin and evolution of the universe. Ancient medieval science explains æther or ether (also called quintessence) as the hypothetical material that fills the region of the universe above the terrestrial sphere (sublunary geometric cosmos sphere below the Moon, consisting of the four classical elements Sathara Mahābhūta).

In Buddhist phenomenology Akasha is divided into limited space (ākāsa-dhātu) and endless space (ajatakasā). ākāsa-dhātu therefore seems refer to the same sublunar atmosphere referred above consisting of Sathara Mahābhūta.

### **Ariyā Greetings**

As an Ariyā Śrāvaka , we tend to offer blessing to others using the words '*Siyalu Sathwayo*' (All beings), '*Nidhuk Wethwa*' (be free of sadness), '*Nirogi Wethwa*' (be free of disease), '*Suwapath Wethwa*' (be healthy), '*Dukin Midethwa*' (be free of suffering) and '*Nivan Dakithwa*' (achieve Nirvāṇa). The meaning of these words should be interpreted in '*lokottara*' terms and not in '*laukika*' terms as done above. For example, we cannot directly cure disease or offer pleasures to people by such Buddhist chants. In '*lokottara*' terms the meaning of the above words refers to cessation of Ariyā-Dukkha that results from Raga, Dvesha and Mōha. However, there are several reports of unexpected disease resolution amongst people who engaged in this path of meditation.

### **What is really meant in Ariyā Metta Bhāvana is:**

- ***through conquering Sōtapaññā status 'Nidhuk Wethwa'***  
(be free of sadness),
- ***through conquering Sakadāgāmi status 'Nirogi Wethwa'***  
(be free of disease),

- *through conquering Anāgāmi status 'Suwapath Wethwa'* (be healthy),
- *through conquering Arhat status 'Dukin Midethwa'* (be free of suffering), and
- *'Nivan Dakithwa'* (achieve Nirvāṇa).

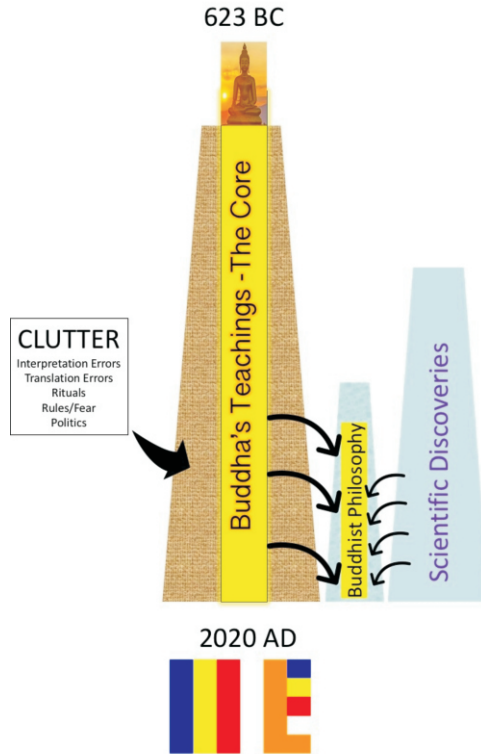
## Our Death

Since we have two bodies, (i.e. our physical body and an astral body) the question arises as to what happens to the latter after our death. It appears astral body has a stipulated life span and physical body will be reborn again and again until the end of the life span of the astral body. But that is more speculation than evidence.

On a similar note what happens at Nirvāṇa is another question. Although via Tripitaka we understand it would be the end of our Ariyā Dukkha, there is no mention in Tripitaka of having no rebirth or rebirth thereafter. In other words, Buddha has not described the beginning or the end of 'life' in this world. Was it because we humans were not designed to understand its complexity?

It is important to understand that original Buddhist teachings and what we learn now has a discrepancy because of translation errors, interpretation errors and malpractice. Therefore, we need further exploration of literature of the past along with an attempt to synchronise or match current experience of Buddhist practice to resurface the absolute truth of Buddhist Philosophy (Figure 10).

Today, we can at least comfortably believe and understand the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, and Dhyāna achievements through Venerable Abhaya Thero's guidance.



*Figure 10 Why your own 'wisdom' matter*

## A HYPOTHESIS

Having made an extensive review on this subject, it is the duty of the author to promote suggestions or hypotheses for future scientific exploration. This is how we advance ourselves as humans.

Meditation has a 'cooling' effect by calming and reducing mental provocation and mental drive. This results in a reduction in nervous, hormonal and other 'activating' mechanisms of your body required to facilitate actions provoked by Raga, Dvesha or Mōha.

In all forms of meditation, the attempt is to bring your mind to a less

provocative status by reducing its hyperactive vigilance that we are born with. Both '*laukika*' and '*lokottara*' meditation techniques reduces mind provocation leading to reduced body activity and metabolic rates and energy requirements. This results in a reduced heart rate, respiration rate etc. as noted during meditation. The Dhyana experiences such as '*sukha*' may be related this as reduced metabolic activity will reduce body heat production.

There is already scientific evidence supporting many benefits from meditation. It empowers people vulnerable to depression and mood disorders, improves chronic pain, quality of life and post-traumatic stress and reduces perioperative delirium. Meditation increases blood flow in brain, increases some areas of brain activation, and increases body immunity but the underlying neural mechanisms remain unclear. The effects of meditation on psychological variables are strongest for changes in emotionality and relationship. There are also anecdotal reports of 'cure' for severe allergy, disabling arthritis and mental health issues.

The superiority of '*lokottara*' meditation technique is it focuses on doing away with Raga, Dvesha, and Mōha, the root causes of mental provocation and body activation via the nervous system, hormones etc. '*Laukika*' meditation do not address this root cause but suppresses it by distraction leading to a reduction of Raga, Dvesha, Mōha stimuli. In other words, an advanced '*Laukika*' meditator is still provocative whereas a '*lokottara*' meditator is not.

Raga Dvesha and Mōha are the mental driving forces of unwholesome actions or '*Dasa Akushala*'. Thus, having no Raga, Dvesha, Mōha will involuntarily install '*Sīla*'. This explains why '*Sīla*' by rule has no overall benefit.

A 'cool' mind must have other associations. It may change '*Nama-Rūpa*' allowing differing phenotypes such as alterations in '*aura*'. However, we

are not yet scientifically clear as to what 'aura' constitutes or what electromagnetic wave range it belongs to. We also do not know what exactly 'Nama-Rūpa' constitute.

Continuous dissociation from Raga, Dvesha and Mōha by active meditation for a long duration may be expected to eventually 'switch off' the genes that control the mind and body provocation/activation triggered by Raga, Dvesha and Mōha. This must be the status of 'Arhat' where the mind or body cannot be provoked or activated in anyway by Raga, Dvesha or Mōha stimuli.

Generation of evidence to support above hypotheses will strengthen Buddhist Philosophy bringing it closer to a universal truth acceptable for all human beings irrespective of their religions, beliefs or faiths.

## GLOSSARY

Word	Dhamma meaning
Abhaya	No fear and a word to Nibbana
Akushala	<p>Akushala (bad karma) originate from desire (in the sense of greed), ignorance and ill-will; their consequence is suffering.</p> <p>All actions emanate from three sources the body, mind, and speech. Buddhist texts list ten negative actions (dasa Akushala) from these sources that comprise Akushala Karma:</p> <p>Actions of the body: Killing, robbing, sexual misconduct            Actions of the mind: Avarice, anger, delusion            Actions of speech: Lying, harsh words, spiteful gossip, slander</p> <p>Anything to do with Lōbha, Dōsa, Mōha is an akushala act.            Anything to do with Alōbha, Adōsa, Amōha is a Kushala act.</p>
'Anantarika-karma'	These are the five heinous crimes (1) Injuring a Buddhably ill will chetana (2) Killing an Arhat (3) Creating schism in the society of Sangha (4) Matricide (5) Patricide
Anichcha	<p>This is pronounced as 'Anichcha'. 'Ichcha' or 'icca' is what you like or your desire. 'Anichcha' is the opposite i.e. a state at which what you like did not or does not happen. This word is used to describe the 'insatiability' of the 6 perceptions.</p> <p>Anichcha is the realisation and stopping of 'Paticca' means bonding based on 'ichcha'. One can never have 'enough of' likable things resulting in a never-ending chase of satisfaction derived out of liking things. This whole process is a costly and unsatisfactory and leads to final disappointment.</p>
Anyathara Chetho Vimukthi	In this meditation technique, in addition to the promoted primary ' <i>lokottara</i> ' method, assistance is obtained to promote a meditator to achieve a status of Samāpatti and then focus on anichcha, dukkha, anatta to reach Samma Samādhi. During meditation Karmasthana is initially modified to demote sensations at Rūpa, Vēdanā, Sañña, Saṅkhāra, Vijñāna level. In between Karmasthana, during the silent gap, the meditator is promoted to focus on inhalation and exhalation and the pattern of breathing. It means one can concentrate on something else that is <i>laukika</i> that belongs to <i>Sathara Mahābhūtas</i> such as water, lamp, air. The breathing will begin to become slower and shallower followed by deep breaths that will slowly raise your mind to the next level. All your sensations will switch off gradually and you will not be able to move, talk when you reach the status of Samāpatti. Thereafter, now start to focus on Nibbana and anichcha, dukkha, anatta (remove samapathi). Can also focus on an external object <i>laukika</i> Anapana.

Arhat, (Sanskrit), Arahant (Pāli)	A perfected person, one who has gained insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved 'Nirvāṇa' (spiritual enlightenment). The arhat, having freed himself from the bonds of desire, will not be reborn.  Arhat will feel the five perceptions but they do not get attached by Raga, Dvesha or Mōha. In 'Araht' status there is no Avidyā.
Ariyā Śrāvaka	A true "hearer" or, more generally, "disciple" of Buddhist path who has achieved Sōtapaññā at least.
Assāda (Āsvāda)	Always humans look for credit for whatever they do and receive Assāda (Āsvāda) for it. This can also include looking for gratification, mentally fabricated pleasure and happiness.
Āyatana	The sense bases or faculties
Avidyā	This broadly refers to one's ignorance to the truth that Assāda is never going to fulfil ones wishes generated through Raga, Dvesha and Mōha.
Avyakrutha	What relates to 'panchaskandha' and not 'panchaupādānaskandha'
Ayoniso manasikāra	Ayoniso manasikāra refers to the opposite of Yoniso manasikāra i.e. "inappropriate attention or unwise reflection or ego-centric demanding thought processes. Basically, we think of anichcha things as ichcha, dukkha things and sukha and anattā things as attā.
Buddhist Philosophy	Buddhist philosophy refers to the philosophical investigations and systems of inquiry that developed among various Buddhist schools following the 'parinirvana' (death) of the Buddha and later spread throughout Asia. The Buddhist path combines both philosophical reasoning and meditation towards 'lokottara' (supramundane) stepwise achievements towards Nirvāṇa.  Buddhism is also considered a philosophy because it pays emphasis on human effort to achieve a good life and it is realistic. Philosophy refers to human experience and reality being reasonably explained, or a way of life focusing on "an organized body of knowledge."
Chathurārya Sathya (Four Noble Truths)	Four Noble Truths is the very foundation of the blessed one's philosophy. The eternal dissatisfaction of the life, the hidden cause that creates this state of mindset, the way to get out of this glitch and the state of liberation one achieves beyond the unsatisfactory state pathway to liberation are the four noble truths.
Delusion	This is a state of mind that leads one to think of controlling a past event in the way one wants to one's liking.

Dhamma	Can refer to many things; buddha's teachings, natural law, way of existence. Dharma signifies behaviours that are considered to be in accord with duties, rights, laws, conduct, virtues and "right way of living".
Dhammanudhamma Patipada	Directing your thoughts of anichcha, dukkha andanattā upon your Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha.
Dhātu	Fundamental elements
Dukkha	<p>Dukkha in Ariyā terms is beyond Vēdanā and involve Pancha-Upādāna-Skandha. AriyāDukkha can be described in 3 categories.</p> <p>Viparinama-Dukkha: This arises via assāda. This means dissatisfaction due to change, including loss or fear of loss of an existing favourable or happy condition in life (when being attached to an existing pleasure or joy in your life, afraid to see it ever go). Thus, even happiness is a seed of Dukkha if we are insisting it to be permanent.</p> <p>Dukkha-Dukkha: This arises via Dvesha. This is just the run of the mill things we encounter in life which we find painful or dissatisfying such a sickness, old-age, death, loss of loved ones. These things generally bring the same 'pain and sorrow' that we think of as pain and sorrow.</p> <p>Saṅkhāra-Dukkha: This arises via Mōha. This is more subtle or "existential". It can be rendered as the dissatisfaction and "suffering" experienced due to our conditioned state i.e., a world in which we think there is a "world" and an "me which is separate from the world".</p>
Dutu Nivan Shanthi	This is a phrase that Thero often uses to refer to what one experience in 'comfort, peacefulness, calmness, and pleasure' when you reduce or get rid of Raga, Dvesha or Mōha during meditation.
Dvesha	Means bonded with a dislike such as hate, anger, aversion, repulsion, hostility, ill will, jealousy. It's the opposite of Raga.
Indriya	Sensory organs/ Faculties



Karma	<p>Karma is a Pāli-Sanskrit term meanings action/words with sanchetana action or mental fabrication work or deed according to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect).</p> <p>The notion of Karma goes beyond a simplistic division into 'good' or 'evil'. Instead, Buddhist texts speak of 'Kushala karma' and 'Akushala karma'. Kushala means 'skilled', 'intelligent' and 'wholesome', while Akushala means the opposite. Wholesome actions benefit oneself and society at large. They arise from wisdom, feelings of love, kindness, compassion and lead to happiness. Unwholesome actions, on the other hand, originate from desire (in the sense of greed), ignorance and ill-will; their consequence is suffering.</p> <p>Anything to do with Lōbha, Dōsa, Mōha is an akushala act. Anything to do with Alōbha, Adōsa, Amōha is a Kushala act.</p>
Karmasthana	<p>Karmasthana (Kammaṭṭhāna) literally means the place of work. In meditation this refers to the focus, referring in many ways to the core effects of Anichcha, Dukkha or Anattā. Focussing on Karmasthana helps the meditator to slowly get rid of Vitarka-Vichara</p>
Khandha	Aggregate
Kleshas	<p>Kleshas are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. Kleshas include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. Kleshas could be described in English words such as afflictions, defilements, destructive emotions, disturbing emotions, negative emotions, mind poisons, etc.</p> <p>More broadly, the five hindrances sensual desire (kāmacchanda), anger (byāpāda), sloth-torpor (thīna-middha), restlessness-worry (uddhacca-kukkucca), and doubt (vicikicchā) are frequently associated with klesha.</p>
Kushala	<p>Kushala (good karma) means 'skilled', 'intelligent' and 'wholesome'. Wholesome actions benefit oneself and society at large. They arise from wisdom, feelings of love, kindness, and compassion.</p>
Laukika	<p>Any activity or practice associated with the profane world of unenlightened beings regarded as not conducive to liberation i.e. worldly, terrestrial, belonging to or occurring in ordinary life, common, usual, customary, temporal, not sacred.</p>

Lōka	<p>Lōka refers to realms of living in the world. The realms of existence are customarily divided into three distinct "worlds" (Lōka), listed here in descending order of refinement. These include; 4 Arūpa-Lōka (The Immaterial World), 16 Rūpa-Lōka (The Fine-Material World) and 11 Kāma-Lōka (The Sensuous World).</p> <p>The lowest realms are the four "bad" destinations in the latter group of Kāma-Lōka, which include the animal and hell realms. Human world is the 5th and rest are Deva and Brahma Lōkas.</p>
Lokottara (Pāli, lōkuttara)	Means supramundane. This includes things related to salvation and the quest for nirvāṇa as opposed to the mundane world (see laukika). The term is used especially of the 'four paths and four fruits' associated with the Noble Path (ārya-mārga).
Magga	Path
Māna	Māna refers to ones 'pride', 'arrogance' or 'conceit'.
Mōha	<p>Means thoughts of uncertainty and disbelief (delusions). Mōha includes the thoughts of controlling the event in the way he/she wants to his/ her liking. Mōha results from rethinking and self-living one's past experiences in mind, again and again and again. This is not the physical feeling or perception or sensation (Vedanā).</p> <p>Avidyāat the worst end of the spectrum is Mōha. Mōha takes you to 'satharaapāyā'. Avidyā is totally relinquished only when you reach arhat status.</p>
Nibbāna	End of
Nirodha	This is a Sanskrit term meaning "cessation" or "removal." This practically refers to moving away from using the six senses as institutions to promote Raga, Dvesha, Moha
Nissarana	Getting rid of. In Buddhist terms this means stopping the chase of Assāda
Oḷārika	Gross, Coarse, Ample
Pāli	Pāli is a phonetic language that does not have an alphabet.
Pāli Canon	Tripitaka
Paticca (patichcha)	Means bonding or attachment
Patichcha Samuppāda	Dependent origination. A fundamental concept of Buddhism describing the causes of suffering (dukkha) and the course of events that lead a being through rebirth.

Prajñā (Sanskrit) or paññā (Pāli)	Prajñā (Sanskrit) or paññā (Pāli), is a Buddhist term often translated as "wisdom", "intelligence", or "understanding". It is described in Buddhist commentaries as the understanding of the true nature of phenomena. In the context of Buddhist meditation, it is the ability to understand the three characteristics of all things: anichcha, dukkha, and anattā. Ariyā dukkha is comprehended by Prajñā (wisdom).
Prabhāsvara mind	Radiant mind, luminous mind. This means uncorrupted mind that we have at the beginning of a thought before getting polluted by Raga, Dvesha or Mōha. Maintaining this status of mind is the core of Buddhist teaching. It needs to be done by understanding of the fruitlessness of polluting the Prabhāsvara mind with Raga, Dvesha and Mōha and not by rule or fear.
Preethi	Happiness or satisfaction
Raga	Means bonded with a liking, lust, love, greed, craving, attachment, attraction
Sadachari	Someone who is righteous is morally good, especially according to the rules of a religion
Sakkāya diṭṭhi	Sakkāya diṭṭhi is wrongly described as a belief that a self or I exist. Sakkāya is pancha-upādāna-skandha and the process leading to the generation of Klesha. Ditti is believing assādaas nichcha, sukha, atta. That is Sakkāya diṭṭhi.
Salāyatana	The six faculties
Saṅkhāra	Is a word derived from the prefix sam, meaning "together," joined to the noun kara, "doing, making." Saṅkhāras are thus "co-doings," things that act in concert with other things, or things that are made by a combination of other things.
Samādhi	The term 'Samādhi' derives from the root sam-adhi, mean 'to collect' or 'bring together'. Thus, it is often translated as 'concentration' or 'unification of mind'. In other words, Samādhi is mastery concentration of mind with the base of purity.
Samma Samādhi	The eighth factor of the path is 'right concentration'. This is termed in Pāli as Samma Samādhi.
Samma Vimukthi and Samma Gnana	These are higher statuses of mental achievement that has to be conquered themselves individually to achieve arahat status. Samma Vimukthi: The escape from 'gratification' by cessation of Raga, Dvesha, Mōha Samma Gnana: The 'wisdom' of tranquillity by cessation of 'gratification'

Sam̐sāra	This is a Sanskrit word that means "wandering" or "world", with the connotation of cyclic, circuitous change. It also refers to the concept of rebirth and "cyclicality of all life, matter, existence", a fundamental assumption.
Samudaya	Happiness or satisfaction
Sangha	Today, 'Sangha' refers to robed monks. In Ariyā terms 'Sangha' refers to any Ariyā Śrāvaka (Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni, Upasaka/Upasika) who has achieved at least Sōtapaññā state. 'Sangha-bedha' means mainly distorting Dhamma.
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Samudaya	The beginning of
Sangha	Today, 'Sangha' refers to robed monks. In Ariyā terms 'Sangha' refers to any Ariyā Śrāvaka (Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni, Upasaka/Upasika) who has achieved at least Sōtapaññā state. 'Sangha-bedha' means mainly distorting Dhamma.
Saṅkhāra	This refers to mental formations and dispositions (sanchetana).
Saṅkhāra	Is a word derived from the prefix sam, meaning "together," joined to the noun kara, "doing, making." Saṅkhāras are thus "co-doings," things that act in concert with other things, or things that are made by a combination of other things.
Sarvitarka -Savichara	This is basically what you learnt from listening to the Sath Dhamma (beneficial dhamma) preached by a Dhamma Sadachari (A Noble Friend who has reached at least the state of Dhyāna 1). These are thoughts of loving kindness (metta), empathy (mudita), equanimity (upekkha) also termed 'nekkhamma, viyapada, avihimsā' sankalpana in Pāli. Sarvitarkais chanting such slogans, Savichara is its understanding.
Sathara Apāyā	Four lower worlds. (1) the animal world, (2) ghost world, (3) demon-world and (4) hell.
Satipaṭṭhāna	Mindfulness foundation
'Season 8'	This constitutes over 60 hrs of basic teaching available at Nirapekshathwaye Maga website compiled by Venerable Abhaya Thero and considered discourses to generate essential understanding needed for most to engage in a successful meditation practice

Sīlabbata parāmāsa	This describes the wrong view that Nibbāna can be attained by following specific precepts/rituals.
Śraddhā	Buddhist faith. Śraddhā (faith) starts from Prajñā and not by conducting rituals
Sukha	This means happiness, pleasure, ease, or bliss, in Sanskrit and Pāli.
Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāna	Udayavaya describes how anything (kleshas) in one's world (panchaskanda) arises due to abhisaiṅkhāra. Whatever arises (udaya), matures with time while changing in unexpected ways, and then inevitably gets destroyed (vaya). This is attangama. When one understands this process is Anichcha, that means one now has Udayavaya Ñāna (wisdom).
Vedanā	Vedanā is a Buddhist term traditionally translated as either "feeling" or "sensation." In general, vedanā refers to the pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensations that occur when our internal sense organs come into contact with external sense objects and the associated consciousness.
Vicikiccā	Suspicion, jealousy, sceptical Buddhi Suspicion
Vipaka	Vipāka refers to ripening or maturation of karma or intentional actions. In short it is the kamma Vipāka or the result of kamma.
Vitarka-vichara	Vitarka refers to Kāma (desire, wish or longing), viyapada (ill will), and himsa (injurious) sankalapana (thoughts or concepts). Vitarka and vichara refers to wondering thoughts away from the focus of meditation during Dhyāna level 1. This will become total Savitarka-Savichara (thoughts devoid of raga, dvesha, mōha) at higher Dhyāna levels.
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Vijñāna	This is the sense-base derivative. The six sense bases refer to the five physical sense organs (cf. receptive field) (belonging to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body), the mind (referred to as the sixth sense base) and their associated objects (visual forms, sounds, odours, flavours, touch and mental perception).

Upekṣā	Upekṣā, is the Buddhist concept of equanimity. It is a pure mental state cultivated on the Buddhist path to Nirvāna. It is a tranquil state of mind which is neither happy nor sad nor anything in between. Upekṣā refers to 'sensation of indifference' or a 'neutral' status.
Yoniso manasikāra	These are thought processes on "appropriate attention" or "wise reflection". In other words, thinking of Anichcha, Dukkha, Anattā nature of our activities.

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### Clarifications for words and spelling

- ☞ <https://suttacentral.net/search?query=anicca>
- ☞ <https://puredhamma.net/historical-background/tipitaka-english-convention-part-1/>
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## FEEDBACK

We have learnt the basics of Buddhist Practice from the information available to us via Tripitaka and thousands of other books and what is taught to us by our clergy, fellows and colleagues. Buddhist Philosophy reflects our attempt to explore the fundamental principles of Lord Buddha's original dhamma casted 2600 years ago. Considering the amount of translation errors, interpretations errors and divisions that exist between clergy and even between the books, it is understandable that most us will develop doubt due to existing discrepancies and mismatch and corruption. Do not give up, Do not despair. Even this book has a lot of information that links or tries to explain Dhamma based on current scientific knowledge. It is also possible that human wisdom was not in sufficient capability to correctly understand original dhamma in full. In other words, Lords Buddha's original teachings are like the 'core' in a snowball covered by a large amount of rust and pollute rolling down the centuries. The best we can do is to learn from all resources we have, research and experiment to clean out the rubbish using our own 'wisdom' making Dhamma alone our teacher. That was the purpose of this book. This cannot be done by rule (imposed precepts) or fear (of bad consequences if not followed). Our lack of agreement may also be a reflection of our own lack of understanding.

The author and contributors therefore cordially welcome any comments, suggestions, criticisms from anyone who feel the content in this book can be further improved to highlight core Buddhist principles. All such comments will be used to correct ourselves, and this text and leave an 'open' text for the future to be further improved. Please send your comments to [gcoonase@gmail.com](mailto:gcoonase@gmail.com) preferably in English, Sinhalese or Pāli.

*Raga-khayo Nibbāna, Dvesha-khayo Nibbāna, Mōha-khayo Nibbāna.*

THEERUWAN SARANAI



ISBN 978-1-5272-7324-5



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# REFLECTIONS OF A BEGINNER ON THE NOBLE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

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**Publisher:**

**Ariya Dhamma Meditation Group UK**

UK Registered Charity: 1185126

London

1<sup>st</sup> Published 2020

Book available at

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**Nirapekshamaga UK**

ISBN 978-1-5272-7324-5



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