

# LOKADHAMMA

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## LOKADHAMMA

## FOREWORD

This book originally written in Myanmar by the Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw is one of the popular Suttas translated and published in English version. The translation is undertaken by U On Pe (Penname Tet Toe), a well known writer and scholar in English language, who is a member of the Translation Committee of Mahāṣo Sāsana Yeiktha.

The Sutta Piṭaka consists mainly of discourses delivered by the Buddha Himself on various fitting occasions and form one of the three Baskets of the Law known as "Tīpiṭaka." It is like a book of prescriptions as the sermons embodied therein were expounded to suit the different occasions and the temperaments of various persons.

Out of a series of Suttas which the Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw has delivered expounding the Buddha's doctrine and teachings, a number of selected Suttas have been translated in English particularly for all people who are interested in Buddhist philosophy. The choice of selection was done by the Translation Committee of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha organization with the final blessing of the Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw. Other famous Suttas translated into English language are in process of publication.

## THE VENERABLE MAHĀṢO SAYĀDAW

Born in the year 1904 at Seikkhun, a well-known and prosperous village, well-known for its handloom industry in the historically renowned district of Shwebo in Upper Myanmar, Bhaddanta Sobhana, popularly known as the Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw, is regarded as a preeminent teacher of Vipassanā Meditation both in Myanmar and abroad. He ranks among the foremost for his Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā.

Through constant practice and perseverance since his first initiation into priesthood at the age of twelve, the Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw Maha-thera, Sāsana-dhaja-siri-pavara dhammācariya. Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, Chattha-sangiti-pucchaka, has risen to great heights as an illustrious teacher and guide in the field of practical vipassanā. The Venerable Sayādaw has taken pains to write in common language for easy understanding by his disciples in general the highly difficult philosophy of dhamma with particular emphasis on the practical vipassanā exercises as to how they should be and then proceed step by step for the ultimate attainment of Wisdom (paññā.)

In translating the selected Suttas into English, the Translation Committee has put its best efforts to maintain the essence contained in the sutta and the scholarly accuracy of its author and also to make it a readable translation. All those books on dhamma are couched in common linguistic style and in plain terms for the benefit of the ordinary laymen to grasp and fully understand the true concept of the profound Buddhist philosophy.

This present book "Lokadhamma" will, it is hoped, serve as a useful guide, and prescribe a way from the crushing miseries of this transitory life to real happiness. It points out an easy method of restraining all the ignorant cravings and blind urges through the medium of simple meditational practice which will provide one with requisite stability of mind. The basic truth about what we call life is made up of mind and matter (Nāma-Rūpa) brought about by the law of Kamma. It is accordingly prone to decay, old age, disease, and finally death. The life of mortals is full of sufferings, difficult and problematic. To tackle with Lokadhamma which is inevitable, and to be able to withstand misery and minimize anger, sorrows, frustrations, desires and perplexities to which men are subjected, this book of dhamma should prove to be useful.

The Venerable Mahāṣo Sayādaw has quoted a number of instances and cited therein a few relevant stories from the teaching of Buddha in a simple and interesting way so as to convince the reader that no sufferings befall the man who is not attached to Nāma-Rūpa and that the wise who control their temper and thoughts will be able to withstand the onslaughts of Lokadhamma the inevitable ups and downs of life. It clearly indicates that the uninformed man does not possess true knowledge and serenity of mind whereas the wise man guards his thoughts and purges himself of all the vices of the mind under any circumstances in the vicissitudes of life.

May you all be able to restrain yourself according to Dhamma and gain happiness.

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LOKADHAMMA  
AN ENGLISH RENDERING OF  
THE VENERABLE MAHÆSŪ SAYÆDAW'S DISCOURSE ON

LOKADHAMMA

(13TH APRIL 1965)

THE THINGYAN FESTIVAL

Today is the beginning of Thingyan Festival which marks the change of years from 1326 M.E. (Myanmar Era) to 1327 M-E. "Thingyan" is a Myanmar term which is derived from the Sanskrit *Sankranta*, meaning "change" or "transfer". The sun changes its course at the end of a twelve-month period, and the Myanmar people celebrate the change of years. This festival marks the change from the Myanmar month of *Tabaung*, the last month on the Myanmar calendar to *Tagu*, the First month of the Myanmar year.

The Thingyan Festival was "invented" by ancient *poṃṃas* or brahmins who annually issued a statement of forecast for the forthcoming year. In such statement, usually published as a bulletin, called *Thingyansa* in Myanmar, it is stated that *Thagyamin*, the King of *Devas*, would come down to the human world riding a bullock or some animal. In fact, the King of the *devas* never came down to the human abode; that is what the brahmins invented. According to traditional beliefs, however, the planet Sun changes its course on its revolution around the world. This, of course, is just a traditional assumption. According to modern science, the earth revolves around the sun and it is believed that on such a day as today every year the earth completes one round. Anyway, today is the beginning of Thingyan Festival for the Myanmar to mark the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year.

During the time of the Buddha, in middle India, the time marking the end of the year was the full moon day of Tazaungmon, the eighth month of the Myanmar calendar falling usually in early November. You all know that the year on the European calendar ends on 31st December. It is a fixed date, unlike the Myanmar date of the end of the year. In the case of the Myanmar date, astrologers have to work out to fix it. They announce the date of the beginning of the Festival of Thingyan which usually extends to three days, at the end of which the Myanmar New Year begins. Myanmar Buddhists usually observe this occasion by keeping sabbath, or if they cannot keep sabbath, and some don't, they keep their minds clean. They went to welcome the new year with a clean mind. It would be better for everyone of the Myanmar laity to keep sabbath during Thingyan Festival, and if possible on the New Year Day, too. Keeping sabbath and keeping one's mind clean is like sending off an old friend and welcoming a new visiting friend cheerfully. Not only it is advisable to keep one's mind clean but it is also desirable that one should give charity and do the meditation. That would make for a greater cleanliness, and such a frame of mind could ward off evils and disasters that the new year may bring. Praying for one's own welfare and peace and also peace and welfare for the whole world at the beginning of the year is commendable. As for us, we contribute to this auspicious occasion by delivering sermons to the people. We have been delivering sermons on every sabbath day. I have given you a discourse on the Sakka pañha Sutta. Today, however, I am going to give you a discourse on a subject which is concerned with every body, every being, which they should understand and practise. It is a discourse on "Lokadhamma".

## WHAT IS LOKADHAMMA?

The term "Lokadhamma" (in Myanmar) is a derivative of the Pāṇi "Lokadhamma". "Loka" comprises three divisions: *Sattaloka*, *Sa<sup>3</sup>khāraloka* and *Okāsaloka*. *Sattaloka* means "all *sattava* or beings": each being is indeed one *loka*. That is, each man, woman or animal is a *loka*.

*Okāsaloka* means the abodes, or place of residence or habitats of beings. So we have the human world, the world of *devas*, the world of *brahmās*, the world of denizens of the nether regions of misery: hell, animal kingdom, the abode of *petas*. The abodes of animals and *petas* are on the earth; the abodes of *devas* and *brahmās* are celestial worlds.

*Sa<sup>3</sup>khāraloka* means the continuous activities of the physical and mental elements of beings as well as the changes and movements of inanimate things such as the earth, trees, forests, mountains, abodes, water, air, fire, etc ....

In a word, *Sa<sup>3</sup>khāraloka* constitutes all evolutionary processes of *nāmarūpa*.

The discourse I am giving today relates to the *loka* of sentient beings, *sattavā*. So *loka* in this context means "beings" and *dhamma* means the "law". *Lokadhamma* or *Lokadham* means the natural consequences that every being has to receive and content with. There are two suttas for the sermon on *lokadhamma* that the Buddha had delivered: the short *sutta* and the long one. I am now quoting from the Pāṇi original of the long *sutta*.

### THE PĀṆI TEXT FROM THE LOKADHAMMA SUTTA

*Atthime bhikkhave lokadhammā lokam anupari vuttanti;  
lokosa ime attha lokadhamme anu pari vuttati.*

"Bhikkhus, the eight manifestations of *lokadham* are always following all the *sattavās* otherwise called *loka*, and all the *sattavās* or the *lokas* are also following *lokadham*."

There are eight manifestations of *lokadham*, and these are always following *loka* or the being. If a man walks in the sun, his shadow always follows him; he cannot prohibit it from following him. So, like the shadow these laws of *lokadham* are following all beings. In the same way, beings are always chasing *lokadham*.

### EIGHT LAWS OF LOKADHAM

"What are the eight? *lābho*, lucrateness; *alābho*, unlucrateness, *yāso*, having a large retinue, *ayāso*, having no helpers or servants, *nindā*, being abused and criticised, *pasamsā*, receiving praised, *sukhā*, having comfort and happiness, *dukkhā*, suffering misery."

These eight laws are in pairs; *lābho* and *alābho*; *yāso* and *ayāso*; *nindā* and *pasamsā*; *sukhā* and *dukkhā*. Of them, four are good ones and the other four bad ones. Of course, people like the good four and dislike the bad four.

Now, What is *lābho*? It is getting pleasant and desirable things, useful things; for human beings, gold, silver, diamond, gems, cattle, elephants, horse's food, dresses, vehicles, home land, etc. To get these things either by hard work, or without trying, is good; the more, the better. To be successful in business and other means of living is to be endowed with *lābho* or wealth. For monks, getting the four essential things, that is to say, meals, robes, monastery and medicine, is good.

Conversely, *alābho* means being deprived of these things or failure in business. It is to be regretted if one tries to get wealth and fails. One will probably deplore that one does not get it while

others do. More deplorable than that is to lose what one has already got. There are five enemies or destructive forces in life, and because of these enemies, one's property may be lost or destroyed.

In this pair of circumstances, getting wealth is liked by one and all. It does not matter whether one gets it by fair means or foul. Fools do not mind getting it by foul means. Well, nobody likes being denied what has been longed for or hankered after; neither does that modern man nor the ancient. Everybody dislikes being reduced to destitution.

*Yāso* means having a mate, friends and companions, followers and retinue, and a lot of people upon whom one can exert one's authority and influence.

*Ayāso* means being deprived of these favours.

In this pair, too, everybody likes having a full complement of companions and followers. First, one remains single; then marries, then gets children. One moves about in society and has friends, associates and followers upon whom one can exert one's influence. One likes such circumstances, and would welcome more people around one. If one is deprived of them one will feel dejected. When one fails to get the friendship of those one should have made friends with, or loss one's servants or follower's one will surely feel unhappy.

Then comes *nindā* which means being under fire, criticised, ridiculed. And *pasamsā* which means being praised and highly esteemed. In this third pair, too, one would not like being abused, ridiculed or criticised. One may not deserve such ridicule but one would not surely like it anyway. One cannot tolerate ridicule. If one doesn't have patience and a forgiving spirit one feels hurt especially when the criticism is a deserved one. It is like letting a stick fall on a sore; it hurts very much. The criticised one feels gravely hurt at the thought that he should have been publicly ridiculed.

As for those having a good mind, if the criticism is a deserved one, they would have enough patience to receive it and ponder upon their faults with equanimity. Yet nobody likes being criticised or ridiculed. Nobody; neither the young nor the old. As to *pasamsā*, meaning getting praises, everybody likes it. Even if the praises were undeserved and mere flattery, one would accept them with a smile.

## WEALTH AND HAPPINESS IMPORTANT

The fourth pair is wealthiness and destitution. Of this, wealthiness is of two kinds, material wealthiness and mental wealthiness. In other words, prosperity and happiness. These two are important. If one were endowed with both, one would not need anything else. People are always striving to get them. So a wise man of old said. "All the people around you have been hankering after wealth, and thus are extending the sea of distress because nobody can really achieve his purpose." His remark is apt. Material wealthiness and mental wealthiness, added together as prosperity is what people hanker after and are taking great pains to get it.

To be free from physical pains and discomfort and to get the good things of life is very important indeed. So people are making endless efforts to obtain it. To be free from all sorts of unhappiness and to be happy for all the time is very important, and people are striving for it.

Let us look at the problem. What is material welfare, and what is mental wellbeing? Let's call the two things together prosperity. What is prosperity in the human world and what is prosperity in the celestial world? They are of the same kind. To be able to achieve it, one must have several supporting factors. One must have prosperity, benefits of all sorts, good food and a comfortable home, attendants, etc. If one is fully equipped with all these accessories to prosperity one will probably be wealthy and happy. If there is anything lacking; then some sort of distress might occur. But can anyone be "fully endowed" with all these things? There is no one in the world who is so

endowed. Striving to get these things, one has to undergo an assortment of troubles, and the “sea of distress” is ever widening.

Distress comprises physical discomfort and unhappiness. Physical discomfort embraces physical pains, diseases, beatings, tortures, accidents, etc., and these are like the scorching of the sun or fire. Nobody like them, of course; everybody fears them. Then there is mental unhappiness of all kinds, such as, annoyance, anxiety, dejection, sadness and other kinds of mental uneasiness. Of course, nobody like them; everybody fears them. There are also verbal abuse, ridicule, tongue lashing by others which make a person unhappy. There are occasions, too, when people are deprived of the thing or things they love and take delight in; such privation makes them unhappy. Nobody wants to have such unpleasantness; they are afraid of it. So people have to be alert to avoid such occasions.

### EVERYBODY LIKES THEM

Now I have completed the description of the eight laws of *lokadham*. As has been said before, everybody likes the good four and dislikes the bad four. But whatever is liked or disliked, everybody has to take in all the eight; nobody can get away from any of them, nobody can flee from them all.

### LOKADHAMMA

#### THE GOOD AND THE BAD GO TOGETHER

Sometimes one can have what one wants to have; one can achieve one's purpose. Sometimes, too, one may not get what one wants to have, or one may lose what one has already had. Even if some things remain with one all one's life, one has to leave them when one dies. So when one has *lābha*, one will also have *alābha* which follows it in its wake.

One may have mates, friends, companions and followers at one time; one may be deprived of them at other times. Even the Buddha who had a large following was sometimes obliged to live through the Lent alone. All the other people cannot hope to be always well attended to; at last when one dies, one has to leave all the attendants. So *yāsa* is always accompanied by *ayāsa*.

One is praised because one deserves praise. It is good to get praise but one has to work hard to deserve it. Only after one has striven hard does one get praise, real praise, not flattery, and one is obliged to go on working hard to keep up the esteem. Even then, if someone misunderstands or hates one, or if, something happens to occasion criticism or ridicule, one suffers a loss of the esteem which one has been working so hard at keeping. Even the Buddha who was so clean of faults was subjected to ridicule by some people; there is nothing to say about ordinary persons. So praise is always accompanied by *ridicule*.

*Sukha* and *dukkha*, too, go together. If circumstances are favourable one finds happiness and prosperity, and if circumstances are unfavourable, one will be in distress. It is like walking. When walking, one stands only on one foot at a time while the other foot is being lifted. So also, *sukha* and *dukkha* alternate each other.

#### ONE IS GLAD TO MEET THE GOOD

One should receive the encounters of *lokadham* with patience and understanding. Those who are incapable of patience and understanding are extremely glad and excited when they encounter the good things and are sorely dejected when they are in distress because of the visitation of bad circumstances of *lokadham*.

## ONE IS DISTRESSED TO MEET THE BAD

One is distressed to receive the encounters of bad things in the manifestations of *lokadham*. If one does not get the gifts of life or is deprived of what one has already got; if one is left alone with no retinue; if one is criticised or ridiculed; if one suffers from illness and destitution, one feels sore and sad. That is always the case.

There are instances in which people go mad or die because they are reduced to poverty. They feel gravely affected by the loss of their wealth. According to Jainism, property is part of one's life. The greatest sin is cruelty to life, and as property forms part of life, depriving one's property amounts to killing that person, and is, therefore, a grave sin. Property, according to that religion, is the chief supportive factor of life, and so if one is deprived of property, one may eventually die from lack of sustenance in life which property gives. To say that property is part of life is quite logical according to its argument. *Alābha* could kill a person.

One is unhappy, if one is deprived of company and attendants. One feels bad when one is subjected to criticism or ridicule, and the gravity of unhappiness can be gauged by the sharpness of criticism and the depth and breadth of the ridicule. Distress is great in the case of character assassination. Physical discomforts of the lighter kind can be ignored, but diseases and ill-treatment of various degrees are often intolerable, and great unhappiness prevails.

## THE BUDDHA AND ARAHATS ARE ALSO SUBJECTED TO LOKADHAM

To the ordinary man, *lokadham* is common experience. The *Arahats*, that is, those who are clear of the defilements of *kilesa*, are also subjected to *lokadham* though they can receive both the good and bad circumstances with equanimity. So in *ma<sup>3</sup>gala sutta*, the Buddha said:

*Phutthassa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati,  
asokam virajam khemam etam ma<sup>3</sup>glamuttamam.*

"The mind of the Arahāt who is attacked by the eight manifestations of *lokadham* is not ruffled. For him there is no anxiety or dejection. In him there is not a speck of defiling *kilesa*. There are no dangers for him. This is indeed the highest state of blessedness."

The Buddha and all the *Arahats* are clear of all defilements but as they are still in this world they are also unavoidably subjected to the laws of *lokadham*. They will be so subjected till they pass into the state of *Nibbāna*. When they are thus attacked by the vicissitudes of life they are not mentally affected, for they are capable of keeping their minds stable. They are not overjoyed when prosperity comes nor are they dejected when adversity visits them. Not only *Arahats*, even *anāgam* can withstand the onslaughts of *lokadham*. As for *sotāpan* and *sakadāgam*, they are affected to some extent because they have not yet fully rid themselves of sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*) or anxiety (*byāpāda*) and anger (*dosa*). That was why the rich man Anāthapindika wept when he lost his young daughter, Sumana Devi. So did Visākhā when she lost one of her young grand-daughters. Yet they knew the *dhamma*, and were capable of resisting the onslaught of fate to a certain extent. Not to say of them, even an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) could resist the onslaught if he would ponder upon the *dhamma*, of course, to some extent. There is no other way to protect oneself from the ill effects of *lokadham* than pondering upon the *dhamma* in which we all must take refuge. One should, of course, try one's very best to fight the onslaught of *lokadham* by all available practical means. But if these fail, one should take refuge in the *dhamma*.

If, however, one cannot manage to cope with *lokadham* even by means of the *dhamma* (that is, meditation). One should accept the onslaughts with as much equanimity as one can possibly manage to have. One should take them as a matter of course with patience and forbearance. We must think of the obvious fact that the manifestations of *lokadham* have to be met and accepted even by

such Noble Ones as the Buddha and *Arahat*. These Noble Ones accepted the attacks with patience and endurance, and we must follow in their steps. It is really important to cultivate this attitude.

### THE BEST MA<sup>3</sup>GALÆ

The *Arahats* who are under attack by *lokadham* are not putrefied in mind, but as they have been clear of all the defilements and are not afraid of the dangers and disasters, they accept the onslaughts with great equanimity. That is the best or noblest of the *ma<sup>3</sup>galæs* (blessing).

Of course, all *ma<sup>3</sup>galæs* are the best, as they are all blessings. But this particular *ma<sup>3</sup>galæ* is of the highest order because this is the one fully possessed by *Arahats*. These Noble Ones are never affected by the attacks of *lokadham*, they remain calm and stable in mind; for them there is always the mental stability which spells happiness. The Buddha placed this as the last of all the *ma<sup>3</sup>galæs* in His sermon on *Ma<sup>3</sup>galæ sutta* because it is the highest of all.

The *yogis* who are now practising meditation should strive for attainment of this *ma<sup>3</sup>galæ*. This *ma<sup>3</sup>galæ* is closely associated with the meditational practice because as the *yogø* makes a note of the constant happenings and destructions of the phenomena and ponders upon the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* and as the *yogø* comes to realize that there is after all no such thing as a living being or a dead one because both the living and dead are compositions of elements and under the governance of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the *yogø* is capable of patiently accepting the onslaughts of *lokadham*.

However, the person who is not in the meditational practice will think of all the phenomena as of permanent nature, as giving him pleasures; he will also think of his body as his own as his self. He is, therefore, glad and excited when good things of life come to him and dejected and depressed when bad things come in the wake of the good things. To differentiate between the one who knows the *dhamma* and the one who doesn't, the Buddha put the following question.

### THE QUESTION

"Bikkhus, let us say that an unformed worldling (*puthujjana*) is visited upon by the eight manifestations of *lokadhamma*, and that a fully informed person (*ariya*) is likewise visited upon by them. What is the difference in the reaction of the one and other? Whose efforts (to withstand the onslaught) are more distinctive?"

Now, there are two kinds of "being informed" or having wisdom. That is, there are two kinds of *suta*. They are: *ægama suta* and *adhigama suta*. The former relates to acquiring information about the words of the Buddha. In this reference, such information comprises the knowledge that the eight manifestations of *lokadhamma* are common to one and all and nobody can avoid them. Yet all happenings are bound, as in the case of other acts and actions, by *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* with the consciousness of *rbpa* and *næma*. This is a mere acquiring of knowledge and is called *ægama suta*, *Adhigama suta* deep realisation of the truth, the Four Noble Truths with *vipassanæ* insight. Such realisation and the mere acquisition of information are necessary for one to withstand the onslaughts of *lokadhamma*. The Buddha asked about the difference in the reaction of one who is ignorant of these two *suta* and the one who is fully equipped with them.

### BHIKKHUS' REPLY

The *Bhikkhus* replied, "Oh Lord: all *dhamma* originates with the Buddha who is the One we all take refuge in, and it is for the Buddha to make expositions of the *dhamma*. It would, therefore, be well that the Buddha give the sermon which we will listen to and cherish all our lives."

It means that the *bhikkhus* requested the Buddha to furnish the answer to his question by Himself.

## THE BUDDHA'S EXPOSITION

The Buddha said that *puthujjana*, the uninformed worldling, does not receive the gift of prosperity with the consciousness that it will undergo changes in accordance with the natural laws of *anicca* causing *dukkha* and that it does not belong to oneself, there being no such thing as self, *anatta*. He receives the gift with joy, thinking it is "mine", it belongs to "me". He does not know the realities.

Such uninformed, unconverted persons acquire wealth and estates either by earning them or by getting them without really trying hard. They take it to be success. They think all these are theirs, that these belong to them. They do not realise that these things are after all not permanent; they will be either lost or destroyed by theft or fire, or they will decline or collapse owing to unfavourable circumstances and eventually be lost. These persons do not realise that they themselves are not immortal (everlasting) because they are made up of *nāma* and *rūpa* which are perishable. They do not realise that the wealth and estates that have come into their possession are causes for their anxiety, worry and troubles of all sorts. These persons are uninformed. In places where Buddhism does not flourish people are not given such information. Even in Myanmar there are people who have not been so informed and are, therefore, uninformed of the true meaning of the vicissitudes of life.

In the case of loss of wealth and property, one who is not well informed is incapable of pondering upon impermanence of things and for that reason suffers from misery. The Buddha continued to explain that getting a gift produces, and then takes away, the clean, good state of mind of the uninformed person, and deprivation of the gift does the same. Those who are incapable of realising the truth about the gift of wealth and prosperity as impermanent feel joy when the gift is in their possession. But this sense of possession does not make for meritorious mental state, nor for chance to listen to a religious sermon or do meditational practice because they are too busy making money. Such persons cannot tolerate the loss of their wealth nor can they remain without trying to get some more. If they cannot get wealth, they will be disappointed, and if they lose what they have already had, they will feel dejected. There is no chance for their minds to be in a meritorious state. They will let their time pass mourning for the loss.

Of course, the degree of their joy and their sorrow over the gain and loss of wealth depends upon the size of the wealth. Therefore, the Buddha continued explaining that the one who has wealth will feel pleasure and sorrow when the wealth is obtained and lost to the extent of how much he placed his value on the wealth. He is pleased when he gets wealth and is angry when he loses it and continues feeling sorrow for the loss.

### NOT FREE FROM MISERY

Such *puthujjana*, the one who rejoices the gain and mourns for the loss, will not be free from getting new existences, and thus, he will not be free from the misery of old age and death, of anxiety, sorrow, mourning and all kinds of unhappiness. So said the Buddha. This is quite plain. Rejoicing the gain and mourning for the loss, a person does not have time for good deeds and a meritorious state of mind because he is all the time serving *lobha* (greed) and *dosa* (anger). He does not have time for efforts to get out of *samsāra* and so he is not free from misery of rebirth, old age and death. Anxiety, sorrow and dejection are common occurrences, and it is the loser who gets them. Then theirs is the trouble of keeping the possessions intact, guarding them against enemies and thus losing sleep and appetite for food. These are the troubles at hand, and if only one can ignore these troubles, there will be some relief.

These remarks can be applied to the case of the other three pairs of the manifestations of *lokadhamma*. However, I will touch on them briefly.

## YÆSA AND AYÆSA

*Puthujjanas* like to be surrounded by companions and aides. When one gets children after marriage, and also servants and disciples, one feels gratified. One would think that having such a full complement is a permanent state of affairs forgetting that such things, as all things, are impermanent. The sense of permanence or pleasure is after all an illusion. One often fails to realise that. There are cases of separation or death of husbands and wives, and children, and people are plunged into misery sometimes so great that it culminates in death. There is no chance for meritorious mental state because when one gains one has greed in mind and when one loses one has anger and sorrow, and these state of mind occur often, one after another, and there is no chance for gaining merit. Therefore, there occur rebirth, old age, death and anxieties and, sorrows for them.

## NINDÆ AND PASAMSÆ

When one receives praises one is overjoyed. When one is subjected to criticism and slander one feels utterly dejected. It is because one does not realise that praises and criticisms are just for a while, not at all permanent. When one is joyful from praise one is overwhelmed with *lobha*, and when one is distressed from criticism one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. There is no chance for meritorious state of mind to occur. As *kusala* (merit) is lacking, one is not free from rebirth, old age and death and all the attendant troubles and misery.

## SUKHA AND DUKKHA

When one gets what one wants and can use it, one is gratified and happy. When one is thus pleased one often fails to see that this state of being is impermanent and is conducive to misery. In fact, *sukha* or pleasures in secular affairs satisfy people because people have been moving about and doing things and making efforts simply to gain this kind of *sukha*. And it is a fascinating kind, indeed. That is why a certain *deva* once said while enjoying the pleasures of celestial festival in the celestial garden of Nandawun that one would not know the meaning of *sukha* before one got to the Nandawun garden. He said that this celestial garden was the place of real pleasures. The one who thinks too much of such pleasures will surely come to grief when one is faced with *dukkha*, the reverse of *sukha*. One would not then be able to observe that all things are impermanent and conducive to misery. Such person usually feels "I am suffering" when he is suffering and "I am enjoying" when he is enjoying. So when one has *sukha*, one is overwhelmed with *lobha* and when faced with *dukkha*, one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. Such persons will not be free from rebirth and its consequences. In a word, they will not get out of *samsæra*.

The foregoing remarks relate to the state of being for the uninformed and unconverted when faced with the eight facts of *lokadhamma* but in the case of *Ariyas* who are the disciples of the Buddha, they can tolerate the onslaughts of *lokadhamma* and have a full chance of doing merit and thus be liberated from *samsæra*. Thus said the Buddha.

## SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES OF THOSE WITH SUTA

For those who are informed and wise, the *Ariyas*, if gifts and gains come to them. they ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of them, and also upon the changing and destructive nature, and are unmoved. They have right thinking. So do they know rightly when the gifts and gains are lost or destroyed. This is the difference in reaction between a *puthujjana* and an *Ariya*. The *Ariya* is fully furnished with informational knowledge (*ægama suta*), and at the same time he has realised for himself through meditation the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of the entire phenomena. That realisation is because of his *adhigama suta*. Not to say of *Ariya*, even *kalyæka puthujjana* (the pious person) is furnished with *ægama suta* and also *adhigama suta*. In fact, *kalyæka puthujjana* is included in the group of pious and Noble Ones led by *Ariyas*. Even the one who had just listened to and accepted the Buddha's word should be called His disciple.

## PONDERING UPON GAIN AND LOSS

So the Buddha's disciple should ponder upon the impermanence of the gifts and gains when they come, and also upon the troubles that are attending upon wealth and prosperity. Here, troubles do not relate to physical discomforts and ills; they relate to the illusions resulting from enjoyment of the pleasure and the pains and sorrows caused respectively by the gain and the loss. The *dukkha* referred to here is of three kinds; *sa<sup>3</sup>khāra dukkha*, *viparināma dukkha* and *pāriyāya dukkha*. *Sa<sup>3</sup>khāra dukkha* is the result of the impermanence and unpleasantness of things that happen and also their utter helplessness. The gain made is liable to be destroyed and such perishableness is unpleasant, undesirable. And that is *dukkha*, or *sa<sup>3</sup>khāra dukkha*. The second kind, *viparināma dukkha*, is occasioned by the changes and destruction of the things one has gained. If one does not continue getting the things or if the things already got or gained are lost or destroyed, this kind of *dukkha* will happen. *pāriyāya dukkha* is, in fact, included in the second kind because it relates to the cause of *dukkha*. So the one who gets and gains things should ponder upon the impermanence and perishableness of the things so gained and also upon the perishableness of the owner of these things. That is right thinking.

If one does so, one will not be overwhelmed by joy and satisfaction the gains may have brought. "The right thinking person's feeling of joy will soon disappear; it will not remain long with him," said the Buddha. In the same manner, the sorrow that may be occasioned in the mind of the right thinking person will be short-lived. Such persons will say that gains come when they come and go when they go. Some more will probably come when circumstances are favourable. "I was born with nothing on, and now with whatever I have had, I am fully equipped," they would think. They would also ponder upon the perishable nature of all things.

Now, let us see. An earthen pot breaks when it falls but a pot made of metal doesn't. That is just natural. One should take into consideration the nature of things and accept the results with a calm mind. There are instances, however, of older people getting angry when young people break things by letting them fall. These old people often failed to recognize the nature of things. A broken thing cannot become whole and entire even if one mourns over it. So we should always ponder upon the impermanent and perishable nature of things and accept the consequences with an accommodating attitude called in *Pāṭi*: *yoniso-manasikāra*.

If one can take things as they happen, with a sense of acceptance and accommodation, one will not suffer so much from losses. For an ordinary person, *puthujjana*, the suffering diminishes, for *sotāpan* and *sakadāgam* the suffering is much less, and for *Arahat* there is no suffering at all. The person who can control his mind over the gain and the loss of wealth will have ample time to obtain a meritorious mental state. When one gets gains, one can expel the mental state of joy and possession by making a note of that mental state. In the same way, one can make a note of dejection and thus expel it when one is faced with losses. If at all such dejection occurs, it will fade away soon. And there will be peace of mind. The Buddha said that the one who is not glad of gains, and sorry for losses will not hanker after gains or feel dejected over losses. Such a person will be doing his own work, that is the meditational practice.

## FREE FROM MISERY

"The disciple of the Buddha who has expelled joy and sorrow alike will be free from rebirth, old age and death," said the Buddha.

What the Buddha taught is that if one does not let his emotion loose on the gains and the losses that may occur to him, he will be able to devote his time to making a note of anicca, dukkha and anatta nature of all things physical and mental, and eventually such a person will be able to attain nibbāna. Once he has attained that state, there will be no new existence for him, and thus he is liberated from the misery of old age and death. If one has attained sotāpanna maggañāna, one will go through not more than seven existences before one attains the ultimate state at which there is no more new existence, that is nibbāna, the end of saṃsāra. For sakadāgam there are at most two more existences, and for anāgam just one more existence before attainment of nibbāna. If one becomes an Arahāt in the present existence, there is no more new existences for him.

The one unmoved by gains or losses is free from sorrow, dejection and misery; in fact, all kinds of misery. "That I say for sure," the Buddha said. Freedom from misery of all kinds bears fruit of mental peace even in the present existence. By pondering upon the anicca, dukkha and anatta nature of all things gained or lost, one will not be moved to sorrow, and will, thus, gain peace of mind. This can be gained even in the present existence if one is so unmoved.

## BEST METHOD OF RIDDING ANXIETY

The Buddha said, "The method of ridding anxiety, sorrow, dejection and mourning is following the path of four kinds of satipaṭṭhāna. That is the only way to eliminate misery.

So this is the best way of ridding misery because this is the only way to attaining arahatship and thus gaining complete freedom from all kinds of misery. That is the assurance the Buddha gave.

This relates so far as to the first pair of lokadhamma, that is, having gains and losses. The results of the satipaṭṭhāna practice relating to the other three pairs are the same. So I will speak briefly about them.

## HAVING OR NOT HAVING COMPANY

When the informed disciple of the Buddha has a full complement of companions and servants he ponders upon that situation with a noting of anicca, dukkha and anatta nature of all things. He knows that he will not always be so furnished, and also that there are troubles over the affairs of family, servants and retinue. They can be separated from him for one reason or another, if he ponders upon that impermanent nature of the situation, he will not suffer from dukkha when actual separation happens. He can control his mind and thus find relief. He will realise that it is better to live alone because then one is free from responsibilities and encumbrances. So if left alone, one will not feel sorry but, on the contrary, one will even feel happy; he will not be affected by the deprivation. As one is thus not overwhelmed by sorrow, one will have time to devote to the meditational practice and achieve freedom from all kinds of misery.

## COMMENDATION AND CONDEMNATION

Also, when one is showered with praises, one must ponder upon the impermanent state of the acclamation. One must consider the fact that praises are given to "me" who is after all an aggregate of rūpa and nāma, for there is no "I", and that soon enough that "I" will be spat with condemnation and contempt. One must remain unmoved, and thus find peace of mind. One must think of living a sinless life and thus acquire real benefit so that one will not lose anything from others criticism or condemnation. If one can do that, one will not be affected too much by other people's opinions and will have time to do meditational practice and thus seek one's way out of all kinds of misery.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN SUKHA AND DUKKHA

We must ponder upon the situation where prosperity and wellbeing prevail in this way: "Although I am now enjoying whatever I wish to have I won't get them always, for when unfavourable circumstances come, all these desirable things will disappear and I will be in trouble. Now I am healthy and comfortable and this sukha is, after all, subject to changes and so when sukha is change to dukkha, I will surely suffer. Even now, as I am enjoying the good things of life, I discern that all things, including myself, are in the nature of anicca, dukkha and anatta." If you are prepared thus, you will suffer little and lightly when sukha changed to dukkha under changed circumstances.

In the same manner, when dukkha comes, you must ponder upon the anicca, dukkha and anatta nature of things, and say to yourself that dukkha will not prevail all the time, and when circumstances changes, its reverse, sukha, will come. If it doesn't come during this life-time, it will surely come in the next existence because all things are subject to change viparināma. Even during this life-time, changes for the better will come by force of the good deeds you have done. If you ponder thus, the sting of misery will not be so sharp, and you will find relief. If you persistently make a note of the dukkha that is occurring to you, your samādhi will develop and the sorrow and dejection will fade out, and you will feel happiness.

### VERY EFFECTIVE REMEDY

If you suffer from ill-effects owing to someone's efforts, or to diseases, or to climatic conditions, and if you have no other remedy to alleviate the pain and suffering, the meditational practice upon the suffering of illness can give at least some relief if it cannot give you a complete cure. If the pain and suffering remain in your body, the meditational practice could render relief to your mind. But if you are either angry or irritated by the physical suffering, your mind will suffer also. The Buddha compared this dual suffering to being pierced by two thorns at the same time.

Let us say a man has a thorn in his flesh, and he tries to extract the thorn by piercing another thorn into his flesh. The second thorn breaks into the flesh without being able to extract the first thorn. Then the man suffers the pain from the two thorns at the same time. So also, the person who cannot make a note of the physical pain in a meditational manner, suffers both physical and mental pain. But if he can ponder well upon the physical pain, he will suffer only that pain and will not suffer mental pain.

This kind of suffering is only physical pain, just like that suffered by the Buddha and *Arahats* for they, too, suffer physical pain. They suffer from the ill-effects of heat and cold, fleabite and other kinds of discomfort. Though they suffer from the physical *dukkha*, their minds remain stable, so they do not suffer mental pain. So the meditational method is the best remedy for physical pain and suffering. There are instances of relief gained by this method for those suffering agony as severe as death-agony.

The informed person who is disciple of the Buddha can ponder upon the true nature of *sukha* when it occurs, and thus save himself from being overwhelmed by joy, and when *dukkha* comes, save himself from overwhelming misery, and thus maintain equanimity. Only this method can overcome the *lokadhamma* changes in life. When one's mind is calm and stable despite the onslaughts of *lokadhamma*, one will have an opportunity of maintaining a noble mental state by making constant note of the changes occurring in the six "doors" of the body, and pondering upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature. Constant meditational practice will develop one's mental state, that is, *vipassanā ñāṇa*, and gradually gain the four stages of *ariya magga*. Thus, will he be liberated from the meshes of misery. This assurance the Buddha gave.

The variables of *lokadhamma* prevail in all planes of existence and nobody, not even the Buddha, is exempt from them. the Buddha, however, can receive the onslaught with great patience

and stability of mind. We should take this example and work hard. People naturally wish for good things in life and try their best to get them, and at the same time they try to avoid the bad things and pains and sufferings but nobody can escape from their onslaughts. As has been said, even the Buddha cannot get away from them. We must, therefore, say to ourselves, "Even the Buddha cannot get away from the onslaughts of *lokadhamma*; how can such an ordinary person like me hope to do so?" Thinking upon the patience and the equanimity of the Buddha when receiving such onslaughts, we should try our best to follow His example. I will now tell you something about the ill-effects of *lokadhamma* the Buddha had suffered.

### ALÆBHA AND BUDDHA

Once the Buddha was residing near a Brahmin village called Pañcasæla. The reason for the stay was that he foresaw that 500 maidens of that village would attain the stage of *sotæpanna*. On the day for ceremonial worshiping of the planets, the young maidens were permitted to get out of the village and go to the riverside to bathe. They were returning to the village after the bath. At that time the Buddha went out into the Pañcasæla village for alms-food.

The name *Pañcasæla* means "five houses". The village was founded by only five households and later it developed, and became a larger village. Since there were five hundred maidens the population of the village must be not less than two thousand and there would naturally be many houses, as a hundred or so.

The villagers were then under the spell of Mæra, the evil god, and so they could not prepare alms-food for the Buddha. So the Buddha did not receive even one spoonful of rice. On his return, Mæra asked the Buddha, "Bhikku, did you get alms-food?" The Buddha then said, Mæra, you prevented the villagers from offering me food, didn't you? Mæra then said, "Would you please go back and walk around for food?" He meant to make the villagers jeer at the Buddha.

At that moment the five hundred maidens had arrived at the village-gate on their return from the riverside. They worshipped the Buddha and sat down at an appropriate distance. Mæra asked the Buddha, "If you don't get food, don't you feel misery?" The Buddha had come to this village to get this occasion so that he could deliver a sermon for the five hundred maidens. So the Buddha said, "Hey, Mæra! Even if I don't get anything to eat today, I will remain in *patisukha* (joyfulness) like the great Brahma of Æbhassara plane of existence." Meant especially for the five hundred maidens, the Buddha said in the following Pæ'i verse;

Susukham vata jivæma  
yesam no natthi Kiñcanam.  
Pætibhakkhæ bhavissæma  
devæ abhassaræ yathæ.

"We do not have any desire to possess nor do we have anxiety arising out of *ræga* (sexual desire) and *kilesæ* (defilement). We live happily. For today, like the Brahmæ of Æbhassaræ, we live on the food of *pati* (joy)."

People kill, rob and steal to make a living. They do business by lying and cheating. Such people think that they achieve happiness by enjoying the fruit of their misdeeds but really they are in for misery, for they are going to hell because of their misdeeds. Even if one earns one's livelihood by honest means, one cannot be said to earn one's living happily unless such pursuits are free of desires and anxiety. As for the Buddha, there was no *ræga* arising from desire and anxiety or *dosa* arising from disappointment at being denied the wants or *moha* arising from false notions of what is good. The Buddha was free of *kilesæ* and thus remained calm with mental stability despite the fact that. He did not get any alms-food on that day. This is indeed happiness from *dhamma*. So our Buddha lived happily despite hardships.

However, it may be asked whether the Buddha could live happily without food for the day. All beings in the *kāma* (sensual) planes of existence are obliged to have the four requirements (*kamma, citta, utu* and *āhāra*) to keep themselves alive, that is, to maintain their physical existence. One can possibly keep oneself alive with the first three; one surely requires to have *āhāra* or food. Man has to take food two or three times a day. Animals have to go out to get food. Of the three factors of life, namely, food, clothing and shelter, food is the most important. To go out to get food is the greatest trouble, and all beings are in constant search of food. The ants are industrious; they move about to seek food day and night. They cannot remain calm and stable without food. Then asked about food, the Buddha replied that, like the Brahmās of *Ābhassarā* region in the celestial world, *poti* was the food.

The Brahmās do not eat food. They are always in a state of *jhāna* out of which comes *poti sukha*, and they live on it. They are never hungry, they are always in *poti sukha* which is highly developed when they have attained the second stage of *jhāna*. Of the Brahmās who have attained this second stage, the Brahmās of *Ābhassarā* region have the most distinctive kind of *poti sukha*. That is why the Buddha said that He could remain happy like the Brahmās of *Ābhassarā* region although He did not have food to eat for that day.

Joy can be substituted for food. That fact is borne out as clearly in the mundane world as in the spiritual world. Some persons are overjoyed at the success of something they have worked so hard to accomplish and while that great joy lasts they have no desire for food or sleep. Those who feel joy over some meritorious deeds that they have done, can remain without one or two meals. Those who are deep in meditation remain sitting for one or two days without getting up to take food or to urinate or defecate. The Buddha could remain calmly sitting for one whole week when He was in *phala samāpatti* or *niroda samāpatti*. He could remain without food quite easily for one day simply by going into *vipassanā*. So He said that *poti* was the food for Him for that day. The reply was made by the Buddha to *Māra*'s question, but the five hundred maidens heard this sermon and all of them attained the state of *sotāpanna*.

Why did these maidens become *sotāpan* merely by hearing the Buddha's simple reply to *Māra*'s question? The reason lies in the fact that these maidens had had special *pārami* (perfect virtues.) They had had an opportunity to see the Buddha in person and worship Him and also to hear His sermon. So they were overwhelmed with joy (*poti*) and also confidence in the Buddha arising from their conviction of His nobleness as evidenced in His being clean of *kilesā* and His *poti* despite deprivation of food for that day. They pondered upon the *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta* nature of the Buddha's *poti*, and thus gained insight leading to attainment of the state of *sotāpanna*.

Now the audience attending this discourse can also gain such insight and attainment if only they can clearly visualise the scene at the gate of *Pañcasāla* village and ponder upon the Buddha's reply to *Māra*'s question. They can have *poti*, too, and if they ponder upon the *poti* meditatively, they can gain attainment similar to that attained by the five hundred maidens of the village.

### MILINDA'S QUESTION

With reference to this incident at *Pañcasāla* village, King Milinda put this question to Venerable *Nāgasena*; "You all said that the Buddha had received plenty of gifts, the gifts in the form of robes, food, monastery and medicine, the four appropriate furnishings for a monk, and later you all said that the Buddha did not get even spoonful of rice on His round for alms-food at *Pañcasāla* village. These two statements are contradictory. If the Buddha had plenty of gifts, He should not have been said to have received not even a spoonful of rice. If so, it should not have been said of the Buddha that He had had plenty of gifts. Venerable *Nāgasena*, please explain this discrepancy."

## NĒGASENA'S ANSWER

"King Milinda, it is correct to say that the Buddha had plenty of gifts. It is also correct to say that the Buddha did not get even a spoonful of rice at Pañcasāla village. But the fact that He did not get alms-food at Pañcasāla village, does not prove that the Buddha was in privation, now let us say a villager came to the palace of an emperor with the gift of a honey pot or a beehive. The doorman of the royal palace said to the villager: This is not the time for His Majesty to meet visitors. Get away or you'd be taken into custody." The villager was frightened and beat a retreat, taking away with him the gift that he had meant to make to the emperor. The emperor was deprived of this gift, but does that mean that the emperor was in a state of privation?

"In the same way, the Buddha had been having plenty of gifts" but in that instance, Māra acting like the doorman of the emperor, had prevented the villagers from offering the Buddha the alms-food. Does that prove that the Buddha was in privation? You shouldn't take it that way. Except for that single day, the Buddha had for forty-five lents, that is, for over sixteen thousand four hundred days, had plenty of gifts offered. Him daily. So it is correct to say that the Buddha had had plenty of gifts." So said Venerable Nāgasena in reply to the King's question.

We must know that in view of the *dāna pārami* which the Buddha in His earlier existences for four eons and one hundred thousand worlds had fulfilled, He had had an enormous amount of gifts of all kinds. Yet for one day at least He had to suffer privation owing to the evil machinations of Māra; He had confronted the *alābha* phase of *lokadhamma* for that short time. As for us, ordinary human beings, the phases of *lokadhamma* will visit us without fail. If we can follow in the footsteps of the Buddha with great confidence in Him and cultivate patience to withstand the onslaughts of adversity, we will be relieved to a certain extent of the pangs of misery.

## BUDDHA HAD TO TAKE MAYAW RICE

Once, twelve years after having attained the Buddhahood, the Buddha went to a town called Verañjā in Western Part of India. He sat down underneath a neem tree called Naleru near that town. The tree was so named after the ogre who had taken possession of it. Just as we have in Myanmar certain trees said to have been possessed by some spirit and called by the name of that spirit. With the Buddha were five hundred bhikkhus.

At that time a certain brahmin who was a resident of that town came to the Buddha and laid charges, and the Buddha gave the accusing brahmin a sermon, and the brahmin attained the state of *sotāpanna*. So the brahmin requested the Buddha to spend the current Lent at that town. The Buddha granted that request, and He and His five hundred disciples spent the lent there.

The brahmin of Verañjā had requested the Buddha to stay for the Lent but he had not offered to build a monastery for Him, and the five hundred disciples had to seek shelter wherever available near that tree. As there was a drought in that year, the monks did not have trouble from getting wet with rain.

During that stay Māra was doing his evil work. He made the people living within a radius of one *yujana* (roughly six miles) ignorant of the Buddha, the monks and religion. Besides, there was a famine. People themselves were supplied with food under a ration system. In those times communication was so bad that distribution of goods must have been in a disastrous condition. The people were starving. There was no one in the town would offer food to the monks.

At that time five hundred horse-dealers from Kashmir in Northern India arrived at that town. As there was famine, there was no one to buy a horse, but the rains had come to their home district and they were obliged to remain in that town. These horse-dealers were willing to offer food to the Buddha and His disciples but as they were mere sojourners they had no facilities to make the offering a daily affair. They had with them a large supply of *pulaka* or a tough kind of wheat for

feeding their horses. This could be uncooked and boiled and eaten. The term *pulaka* has been often translated as *mayaw* rice. The horse-dealers fed their horses only once instead of twice daily as they used to do, and offered the horse-food to the Buddha and the monks. As they were just sojourners they could not afford to cook the wheat and offer the cooked meal. The monks had to make-do with what was offered them.

The wheat had to be boiled and the boiled wheat set in the sun to dry, and then the dried wheat had to be crushed or pounded and wetted with water and taken as meal. The work had to be done by groups of eight or ten monks each. The horse-dealers offered butter and honey also. The Venerable Ænandæ mixed wheat with butter and honey and offered the meal to the Buddha. It is said that *devas* put their celestial food in the mixture. The Buddha accepted the food and after taking it, spent the entire day sitting under the great neem tree and went into *phala samæpatti*. All the monks, with the exception of Venerable Ænandæ, were *Arahats*. Venerable Ænandæ was then only a *satæpan*. So all the other monks were also sitting under their respective neem trees and entering into *phala samæpatti* all day. In this manner the Buddha and the five hundred *Arahats* spent the entire Lent at that famineridden place. This is an instance which compels our admiration for the Buddha and His disciples.

To a person of ordinary intellect this episode is not quite a satisfactory one. He would probably ask why the Buddha who had for so many life-times done meritorious and noble deeds should have been obliged to take this mean kind of food. And His disciples who were all *Arahats* should have to take such humble meal, why? The answer is simple Both the Buddha and the *Arahats* were not exempt from the lokadhamma. That should be a short and satisfactory answer. The answer in Pæ<sup>1</sup>i version (in *Apædam Pæ<sup>1</sup>i* Text) reads:

*Phussassæham Pævacane, sævake pribhæsayim.  
Yavam khædatha bhunjatha, mæ ca bhunja tha sælayo.  
Tena kammavipakena, temæsam khæditam yavam.  
Nimantito bræhmanena, veriñjæyam vasim tadæ.*

The Buddha said, "During the time of Phussa Buddha I told His disciples to eat *mayaw* rice, not the softer and finer kind, *sælay* rice. This I said by way of a threat. In retribution for this use of abusive language I had accreted the request of Veriñja brahmin and spent the Lent at Veriñja town and was obliged to eat the rough horse-food rice of *mayaw* kind."

It may be asked if it would not be better for the Buddha to avoid this particular town which was bewitched by Mæra and go to another place to spend His lent. Retribution will follow the Buddha wherever He went, and so it makes no difference whether He stayed for the Lent at Veriñja or elsewhere. Mæra would follow Him and play his tricks upon the residents who would have offered Him and His disciples almsfood. It had been better that he stayed at Veriñja because it was there the horse dealers stopped and offered at least *mayaw* rice to Him and His disciples.

Then it may be asked why Mæra did not play his tricks upon the horse-dealers made too. Well, he was a bit late. He had bewitched the towns people, and by then the horse-dealers had already made an offer of the *mayaw* rice to the Buddha and His disciples. Anything that had been offered to the Buddha could not be tempered with by anybody. That is what *milinda paññhæ* and the *Atthakathæ* have said.

We now know why the Buddha had to pay for the abusive language He had used in an earlier existence. What about His disciples, the five hundred *bhikkhus*? We may take it that if such a personality as the would-be Buddha had made such a speech-sin, these five hundred would be *Arahats* must have committed similar-sins in one of their previous existence.

All we will have to think about is that if such a personality as the Buddha had to pay a retribution in the form of being denied the gift or gain (*alæbha*), we, ordinary persons, will surely be

faced with such an adversity one day, and all we must do is to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and endure the penury. We should ponder thus and, while being deeply respectful of the Buddha's patience and endurance, practise patience and endurance like Him. We should also take notice of the patience and endurance of the Buddha's five hundred disciples who were obliged to pound the touch rice and eat it, the kind of rice much inferior to the meanest kind that we have at present, and find admiration for them.

So the Buddha said: "Ænandæ, you the good person, have achieved success. You have conquered *lobha* (greed) and mean desires."

The Buddha's conquest of the scarcity of food lay in His infinite patience and endurance. The village of Veriñja was famine-stricken but the nearby villages were not; they were quite well-off. The Buddha's disciples did not blame the Buddha for having stayed at Veriñjæ village. They all endured with patience. That is why the Buddha said to His secretary Ænandæ, that all His disciples had achieved success.

Their conquest of *lobha* lay in the fact that these *bhikkhus* did not go for their alms-food for a distance which did not warrant return the same day, nor did they move to another place, thus breaking their vow of the Lent. Their conquest of their desire for obtaining gifts by bases means lay in their refraining from advertising their nobleness, declaring to the people that they had attained arahathood, in order to make the people want to offer them alms.

After the Buddha had praised the five hundred *bhikkhus* for their conquest of greed and base desires, He predicted that in future times monks would become greedy. He said: "Many of the monks of the future will be too choosy about the alms offered to them. They will say that that particular rice is too touch, or too soft that particular curry is salty, or with too little salt, sour or cold" Such monks you can find today.

#### KING ASOKA AND HALF A GOOSEBERRY

Many of you know how powerful was King Siri Dhammæsoka, and how rich he was. He could spend one hundred crores of the currency of his day on charity for Buddhist religious purposes. Yet, at last, this rich and powerful King had only half a gooseberry, according to Visuddhi Magga:

*sakalam medinim bhutva, datva kotisatam sukhi  
andamalakatassa, ante issaratam gato.*

"King Asoka was extremely rich, having enjoyed enormous revenue, spent one hundred crores of currency, but at last he was reduced to possession of half a gooseberry. Thus had he been deprived of his power and affluence."

The king was old and ailing, so his ministers turned over the royal treasury to his grandson, the Crown Prince. The king was so keen on giving alms that he gave away in charity the golden cups and plates which contained his daily food. So the ministers saw to it that his food was sent to him in silver cups and plates, and he gave away the silver, too. Then copper cups and plates were furnished, and he gave them away until at last only half a gooseberry was sent him in an earthen cup. The King asked his followers, "who governs this land?" The followers said that he did. The King said, "Not so. I have fallen from the position of King. I possess only half a gooseberry. " Soon he passed away. So says *Dibyaavadæna* treatise. So does *Visuddhi Magga*. We should ponder upon the story of King Asoka and practise contentment and thus seek relief from misery.

## THE BUDDHA WITHOUT FOLLOWERS

Once the Buddha, who had usually had hundreds of followers around Him, was without any. One day as the Buddha was travelling, accompanied by his personal secretary Nagasamāla thera, the secretary requested the Buddha to accept His alms bowl and robes and said that he would leave the Buddha. The Buddha was obliged to receive His own bowl and robes and walk His way alone. But that was not for long. Nagasamāla thera was robbed of his own bowl and robes by bad men and was beaten on the head, and so he went back to the Buddha.

Then again, the Buddha went to *Jantu* village along with a *bhikkhu* by the name of Meghiya. As they were walking across a mango grove, Meghiya said to the Buddha that he would like to do meditation in that grove and asked the Buddha to take His alms bowl and robes. The Buddha found this improper and asked Meghiya to wait for another *bhikkhu* to come along, but Meghiya was insistent. So the Buddha took from him the bowl and robes, and remained alone. The Buddha's solitary state was not too long. Meghiya went into the mango garden and sat upon a rock and began his meditation. As he was doing so, he was assailed by unseemly thoughts and desires. The reason for this was that on that very rock for one hundred previous existences of his, Meghiya had enjoyed sexual pleasures with dancers and handmaids; he was a king in those existences. So vestiges of his past pleasures were stuck on this rock, as it were, and he was unwittingly aroused by them in his thoughts. He had forgotten that he was a *bhikkhu* and thought himself as the king who was enjoying pleasures on this rock. And on this rock, too, he, as the king, had sentenced a robber to death for charges of robbery, and another to prison term for similar charges.

Meghiya was surprised at the unexpected unseemly thoughts that assailed him while he was meditating. Then he came to understand the reason for the Buddha's forbidding him to go into the grove to do meditation. And so he came back to the Buddha.

Then again, at Kosambī city a dispute arose among the monks upon the incident of leaving some water in the washing bowl in a latrine. It was not an important matter but the dispute developed, and the monks were split in two groups. The Buddha tried to patch up the differences but it was in vain, so he left Ghositārāma monastery of that city and went into Palele jungle and remained there for the Lent all alone. Venerable Ānandā was to have accompanied the Buddha but he knew that the Buddha wanted to remain alone. In Palele jungle a huge elephant attended upon in Buddha's needs. The Buddha went into Palele village to receive almsfood. The villagers built a hut with a roof covered by leaves for the Buddha to live in. From secular point of view, the Buddha's condition of life for that period was unsatisfactory, but to the Buddha it was a life of real happiness, of peace of mind.

We all should ponder upon the Buddha's state of mind in such unfavourable living conditions and seek real happiness by cultivating peace of mind.

Secular-minded people would not like to be alone and would be sad to be alone and left to oneself. Who would ever want to be without companions, and who could ever avoid such a condition? Everybody will have to go through such conditions of deprivation, for it is the law of the world, *lokadhamma*. The Buddha was left alone for some time in His final year of life-just before. He passed into the state of *prinibbāna*. The Buddha was stopping at a large village called Medalupa about 24 miles from the city of Sāvutthi King Pasenadī Kosala came to worship the Buddha, Before he entered the Buddha's living chamber, the King took off the regalia and entrusted it to Digha Kārāyana, a nephew of General Bandoola, himself a high army official, and the King entered alone. He made obeisance to the Buddha and conversed with Him on matters relating to religion.

Meanwhile, Digha Kārāyana gave the regalia to the King's son Vāṭṭabha, and made him king. They left the old King at the monastery, leaving behind only a horse and a maid, and went to the capital city of Sāvutthi. When the old King came out of the Buddha's chamber, the maid reported the matter to him. The old King then decided to go to his nephew, King Ajatassattu, to seek the

latter's help in fighting usurper. The distance was 45 yujamæ (over 300 miles), so when the old King got to a rest-house on the outskirts of the city of Rajagaha, he died of illness and also from sheer exhaustion.

King Pasenadø Kosala was in those days a very powerful king in Middle India, but as ill-fate decreed, he died with no companion other than a handmaid and a horse in a rest-house outside a foreign capital city. It is a sad story, but it illustrates the workings of unfavourable circumstances according to the laws of life, *lokadhamma*. So when we ponder upon the fate of this great king we can find relief from the sufferings occasioned by the onslaughts of *lokadhamma*.

## CALUMNY AND THE BUDDHA

The Buddha had all the attributes of nobleness and sacredness as evident in the Nine Great Attributes of the Buddha, and was, therefore, clean of all kinds of defilements and free of faults of any kind. There should be no pretext for any slander or criticism; on the contrary there are many reasons and occasions for highest esteem for the Buddha. All the beings, human and celestial, had been untiring in their praises, tributes and adoration. Yet the unbelievers who were dead against the Buddha tried their best to bring about occasions and invent excuses for calumny and slander for Him. These opponents had never failed to take every available opportunity to cast slanders and abuses on the Buddha and His teachings.

## CIÑCAMÆNA'S ACCUSATIONS

The *titthis* (unbelievers) persuaded a hermitess named Ciñcamæna (Ciñcamænavika) to make accusations against the Buddha. Ciñcamæna, dressed finely and properly, went toward Jetavana monastery at night-time and slept at a clubhouse of the unbelievers near the monastery. In the early morning she hurried toward the city as if she had come out of Jetavana monastery. When passers-by asked her why she was in a hurry and where she had slept, she replied coyly in a question form: "What can you gain from knowing what I have been doing?"

Ciñcamæna had been doing like this for a month or so, and then when people enquired about her goings-on, she said by way of admission, "I went to Jetavana monastery and slept with Gotama." Three or four months later, she placed a bale of cloth on her stomach and tied it around her waist and covered it with her outer garment to make it look like a pregnancy. Then one day at a sermon meeting at Jetavana monastery Ciñcamæna walked into the audience and made accusations saying, "Oh Great Monk, it is good that you have been giving sermons but you have neglected the pregnancy you have caused in me and failed to make arrangements for my confinement." That was the meanest attempt to put the Buddha to shame, but soon, owing to the great powers of the Buddha, the false bulge of the stomach slipped down. The audience was angry and drove Ciñcamæna out of the monastery. The wicked hermitess was swallowed up by the earth when she got out of sight of the Buddha, and went directly down the deepest bowels of hell.

## SUNDARI'S ACCUSATIONS

A similar case had occurred. Sundari, a beautiful hermitess of a gang of opposing unbelievers, did exactly as Cincamana had done. She loitered near Jetavana monastery and walked as if she had come out of the monastery. When asked by people, she said, "I went to Gotama and slept with him in his chamber," Then the unbeliever-gangsters paid money and asked bad hats to kill the girl and throw the corpse in a dust-bin near the monastery. Then they raised a rumour that Sundari was missing, and reported the case to King Kosala. When the King asked them if they could think of a possible place of crime, they said. "Lately, Sundari had been living in Jetavana monastery. We don't know what has become of her." The gangsters pretended to make a search around the monastery. They then pointed to a dust-bin and exclaimed that the girl's corpse was in it. They placed the corpse on a cot and paraded in the streets for the citizens to see it. Then they reported to the King that Gotama's disciples killed the girl because they did not want her affair with their master to become known to the public. The king ordered without properly judging the case that the matter be made known to the public.

That was a good chance of the opposing unbelievers to make capital out of the incident. They went round the city and proclaimed that Gotama's disciples had killed the girl to conceal her affair with their master. Many of non-Ariyas misunderstood the disciples of the Buddha and cast slanders on them. The disciples sadly reported the matter to the Buddha. In reply to the charges, the Buddha gave the following sermon:

Abhutavædi nirayam upeti.,  
yo væpi katvæ na karomi caha.  
Ubhopi to pecca samæ bhavanti,  
nihinakamma manujæ parattha.

"He who makes false charges against another goes to hell; he who denies what he has done (that person also) goes to hell. These two wicked types of people equally get for their wicked deeds the award of falling into hell."

The *bhikkhus* repeated the Buddha's verse in Pæ'i to the people, and those who cast slander our remarks were frightened. They said among themselves, "Making false charges pushed one to hell. We did not see what had happened and would not know whether or not it happened as these persons had accused. They may have made false accusations. And then if they denied that they had done it, they would go to hell. It doesn't seem to be as these unbelievers have charged." So the people stopped saying anything damaging to the monks. The slanderous campaign died down within a week.

King Kosala sent out spies and detectives to find out the truth in this case. The assassins who had killed Sundari were having a drinking party with the money they had received from the gangsters who had asked them to kill the girl. As they were getting drunk, one of them said to another. "Hey fellow, didn't you strike just one blow with the stick and kill Sundari? So you are now having a drinking party with the money you got for killing the girl, aren't you? All right! All right! So be it." The police officers who had heard this pounced upon the assassins and took them to the presence of the King. The King tried the case, and both the assassins and the unbelieving gangsters confessed. Then the King ordered them to go round the city and make public confessions. They were ordered to declare publicly that it was they who killed Sundari and that Gotama and his disciples were innocent. This public confession made the case clear and proved the innocence of the Buddha and His disciples, and people rid themselves of their misunderstanding.

## THE STORY OF MÆGANDØ

Once the Buddha and the *bhikkhus* went to the city of Kosambhø. One of the reigning King Utena's wives, Queen Mægandø, bribed bad hats and ordered them to go out and rail at the Buddha and His disciples as they entered the city. The reason for this action on Mægandø's part was that Mægandø bore a grudge against the Buddha. She was a very beautiful young lady and so her father, a brahmin, turned down all offers of marriage from the sons of high-class people. He used to tell them that they were not worth his daughter's hand. He was searching for a suitable bridegroom. The Buddha fore-saw that the brahmin and his wife would become *anægam*, and so he went near the place the brahmin was holding a lighting festival.

Seeing the Buddha, brahmin Mægandø said to himself "This man is cut above others. There won't be any equal of him in this world. This man, or this monk, is worthy of my daughter." So he accosted the Buddha saying. "Sir, I have a beautiful daughter, and I wish to offer her to you. Will you please wait at this place?" and hurried back home. When he arrived at his home he said to his wife, "Wife, I have just found a man suitable to be our daughter's husband. Follow me with your daughter, properly dressed." When the three of them came to the spot where the Buddha had been requested to wait, they found only the Buddha's footprint, which was purposely left for them to see.

It was only when the Buddha willed that His footprint was impressed upon the earth. The footprint could not be erased during the period set by His will. And also it could be seen only by those whom he had willed to see it. The Brahmin's wife turned to her husband and asked: "Where is your bridegroom?" The brahmin said, "It is here that I have requested him to wait. Where is he gone now?" and looked around, and pointing to the footprint said, "Ah, here's his footprint!"

The Brahmin's wife was versed in the art of fortune-telling. She looked at the footprint and said, "The owner of this footprint is not the one who enjoys sex." The brahmin silenced her saying that her knowledge of *veda* (fortune-telling art) was just little, and hurried after the Buddha. The brahmin said to the Buddha when he found Him, "Lord Bhikkhu, I do hereby offer you my daughter to be at your service."

The Buddha did not reply to the brahmin directly. He Said, "Brahmin Mægandø, I will tell you something." Then He told the brahmin the story of His renunciation and His attainment of the Light and His stay for fifty days in seven places till hw came to sit under the Ajapæla banyan tree, and also Mæra's campaign against Him, Mæra's daughters enticements which failed and disappointed Mæra. This the Buddha told the brahmin couple to let them understand that He was free of sexual desires. He also wanted the brahmin couple to gain an insight of the *dhamma*, and so He gave the following reply:

Disvæna tanham, aratim, ragañca,  
 næhosi chando api methunasmin.  
 Kimevidam muttakarisapunnan,  
 pædæpi nam samphusitum na icche.

"Although I had seen Tæhæ, Arati and Ræga, the three daughters of Mæra, sexual desire did not occur. It need not be said that seeing this girl, Mægandø whose body is virtually stuffed with urine and excrement, did not arouse sexual desire. I have no desire even to touch her body with my foot."

The brahmin and his wife who heard this reply became *anægana*. They entrusted their daughter to the care of her uncle, Cpla Mægandø, and entered the Holy Order, soon becoming *Arahats*.

Mægandø was angry when she heard the Buddha's reply. She was offended that the Buddha said that her body was a storehouse of urine and excrement. She said to herself "Well, if he didn't want me, he should say so. Why did he say that I am full of excrement (faces) and urine? That's

downright derogatory." Then she continued saying to herself, "Well, let it be. I can get a good husband. Then I will show Gotama what I can do to him."

Her uncle presented her to King Utena, of Kosambi Kingdom. The King was pleased with Mægandø's beauty and made her a queen. There were two other queens already. They were Vasuladattæ, daughter of King Chandrapejjota, and Sæmævatø, adopted daughter of a rich man named Ghosaka. There were five hundred hand-maids for each of the three queens.

The King gave eight kyats daily for Sæmævatø to buy flowers. The money was handed to her slave Khujjuttræ who had to go out daily to buy flowers. One day at the house of Suma¼a, the flower-seller, there was a feeding ceremony for the Buddha and the Sanghas. The flower seller asked Khujjuttræ to stay longer than usual to hear the Buddha's sermon after the meal. Khujjuttræ attended the sermon and became a *sotæpan* after the sermon.

As a *sotæpan*, one strictly observes the five precepts. So Khujjuttræ who had been pinching four kyats from the daily eight kyats, stopped doing it, and bought eight kyats' worth of flowers. When the queen saw more flowers than usual, she asked the slave woman. "Why, sister Khujjuttræ?" Did the King give you twice the usual allowance? Khujjuttræ said no. Then the queen asked her why there were so many flowers. A *sotæpan* never tells a lie and is always strict in the observance of the five precepts. Khujjuttræ who had then become a *sotæpan* said that she had been stealing four kyats out of eight, and buying only four kyats' worth of flowers everyday, but that day she had stopped stealing. When asked why, Khujjuttræ said she had had an opportunity of hearing the Buddha's sermon at the house of the flower-seller and come to realize the *dhamma*, and so she had stopped her practice of pinching some money from the daily allowance given to buy flowers.

Here, if the queen were an evil-minded woman she would probably scold the slave-woman and ask her to surrender the stolen money. But Queen Sæmævatø was good-natured and had a mind of a person of *pæramø* (virtue). So, she was considerate. She pondered upon the change of Khujjuttræ's attitude and character. The queen reflected that the slave-woman who said she had realized *dhamma*, stopped stealing and told the truth without fear. So the *dhamma* Khujjuttræ had realized must be a sacred one, and it would be good to know that *dhamma*, Queen Sæmævatø thought to herself so she said to Khujjuttræ: "Elder sister, please let us drink of the *dhamma* that you have imbibed." The slave-woman said that if she had to recount the sermon, she must first make herself neat and tidy. So she requested permission to take a bath and dress herself properly. She would do that in deference to the sacred *dhamma* that she was asked to recount.

After having taken a bath and dressed herself properly, Khujjuttræ sat on the place where a preacher usually sat and recounted the Buddha's sermon properly and completely. Queen Sæmævatø and her five hundred maids became *sotæpan* after hearing the sermon.

From that day on, Khujjuttræ was elevated to the position of a mother or a mentor and permitted to go to attend the Buddha's sermons, Khujjuttræ came back to recount the sermons she had heard. In this way, Khujjuttræ became the most informed of three *pi¼akas* and was later bestowed upon by the Buddha with the credit of being the most informed of the *dhamma* among the lay-women.

Having heard so often the sermons of the Buddha as recounted by Khujjuttræ, Queen Sæmævatø and her maids had a strong desire to see and worship the Buddha. So she asked Khujjuttræ to take them to the Buddha. Khujjuttræ said, "Ladies, it is nearly impossible for you all to go out of the palace (without the King's permission) because it is the King's house, as you may say so. So please bore small holes in the wall opposite the road so that you all may be able to look at and adore the Buddha and His disciples on their way to some rich man's house on invitation to a feast." The queen and the maids bored holes in the wall and peeped through and worshipped the Buddha and the Sangha. One day Mægandø visited Sæmævatø's chamber and saw the holes in the wall. She asked about them. Not knowing that Mægandø had a grudge against the Buddha, Sæmævatø told her that the

Buddha was then in Kosambhi City and that they saw the Buddha and His disciples and worshipped them from inside the palace chamber. Mægandø was enraged and said to herself, "Now the Buddha is in the city; I will do what I have wanted to do to him. These woman are Gotama's disciples; I will do something to them, too." So she went to the King and maligned Sæmævatø but her efforts were of no avail. Well, that's by the way. This is just a part of the story of the two queens.

Mæhændø gave money to her slaves and servants and asked them to go out and abuse the Buddha and drive Him out of the city. Those who did not believe in the Buddha's *dhamma* did as the evil queen had asked them. When the Buddha and His followers walked into the city, these unbelievers followed them on the roadside and shouted abuses of all kinds. For instance they uttered, "You are a thief, a bad man. a camel, a bull, an ass, an animal, one who will go to hell." For you there is no heaven; there is only hell. That is terrible. Once one deviates from the right path, evil deeds multiply. These people were buying evil awards for their evil deeds; in fact, they gained nothing. After so many occasions of abuses, Venerable Ænandæ said to the Buddha, "Lord, this city is full of uncivilized persons. They have been abusing us for no apparent reasons. Let us go to another city." The Buddha asked, "What would you do when you went to another city where people there also abused us? Where would you go then?" Ænandæ replied, "Then, Sir, we would go on to another city."

The Buddha said, Ænandæ, it is not advisable to move on to another place whenever we are abused. Any problem of riotous misbehaviour should be solved at the place where it occurs. Then only should we move on to another place. The Buddha said He had the courage to endure the abuses of evil persons. Thus he said:

Aham nægova sangæme,  
cæpato patitam saram.  
Ativækyam titikkhissam,  
dussilo hi bahujjano.

"Just as the great elephant on the war front endures the arrows coming from all sides, I, the Buddha, will endure all the abusive words without a murmur. Many of the people are evil in their action and speech and are rough and rude."

Many people are unable to restrain their action and speech, and most of them are rude. One can live in the midst of such people only if one can tolerate their misbehaviour. So, the Buddha, said, "Just as the great elephant on the war front endures the arrows coming from all sides, I will endure the abuses." Continuing, He said to Ænandæ, "Ænandæ, do not worry. They will be able to abuse just for seven days. They will stop on the eighth day, and the situation will be calm and peaceful." It was so, as He has said. It was always the case with the mud-slinging campaign against the Buddha. That is why there is a Myanmar saying to the effect that "Slander lasts seven days, so does praise."

Now, of the three cases of slander, accusation and abuse, the reason for the accusation of Cincamæna originated far in the past. In the remote past, the would-be Buddha Gotama committed the sin of making false accusation of an *Arahat* named Nanda, a disciples of the Buddha Abhibhu. So says the *Apædan Pæ'i* text. Regarding the accusation in relation with Sundari, the would-be Buddha Gotama levelled unwarranted accusations against Pacceka Buddha names Surabhi. The reason for the accusation against the five hundred monks in the case of Sundarø is that these five hundred joined with their master, the would-be Buddha Gotama, in the latter's false accusations against a holy hermit named Bhima who had attained *jhæna*. There is no mention of the reason for being abused by Mægandø. Anyway, the Buddha had to endure Mægandø's abusive campaign because of a past sin of abusing a person against whom he should not have any grudge.

Sin is terrible; retribution for any sin could and did follow one, even if he was to be a Buddha, to the very end of the *samsæra*. So we should be extremely careful in avoiding sins of any kind. And when one has to face slander accusation and abuse one should recall that even the Buddha

had been obliged to face similar calumny and had endured it, and try to practice patience to be able to endure it.

## PHYSICAL MISERY AND THE BUDDHA

Misery is of two kinds, physical and mental. As for mental misery, the Buddha was completely clean of it. When confronted by disappointments, dejections, sorrows, even the danger of death, the Buddha was free of mental misery. His mind was always clear. The same with an *Arahat*: even an *anāgam* who has rid himself of *dosa* (anger) and mental defilements has no mental misery. But in an *anāgam* there linger some vestiges of *avijjā bhava taḥhā* and *māna* constituting *kilesā*, and so we cannot say that he is completely rid of mental misery. As for an *Arahat*, he is clean of *kilesā*, and is, therefore, free from mental misery. But as for physical misery, no one is exempt.

The Buddha was obliged to bear physical misery quite often. This is proved by what the Buddha sometimes said about His back-ache. According to the *Apādam* Pā'i text, the Buddha had to suffer from this physical misery because in one of His earlier existences He was a pugilist, and had caused pain to an opponent. Then again, when He was a son of a fisherman, He was delighted to see fish being beaten on the head. So it is said that the Buddha often had a head-ache.

Once, as the Buddha was taking a stroll on a terrace of the Mountain of Gijjhakuta, Devadatta rolled down a huge stone on Him. The stone struck the ridge jutting over the Buddha, and a shrapnel struck His leg, causing immense pain. The reason for that Misery was that in one existence the would-be Buddha killed a cousin of his with a rock in a dispute over inheritance, and also that when he was a king he had had culprits speared to death. Then again, the reason for His suffering from diarrhea was that when he was a physician, he gave a rich man's son a medicine which caused looseness of bowels and blood motions.

And then, according to *Samyutta* Pā'i text, once Venerable Kassapa and Venerable Mahā Moggalāna suffered from an acute disease; so did the Buddha. But the disease disappeared after they had listened to Bojjha<sup>3</sup>ga Dhamma.

Then again, the Buddha spent His 45th, and last Lent at Veluva village near Vesāli city. At that time He suffered from a grave illness which would have caused His passing away had He not gone into *vipassanā bhāvanā*. He averted the eventuality because He saw that it was not an appropriate time for passing into *nibbāna*. He said so, and according to *Atthakathā* Pā'i text, the Buddha went into *vipassanā bhāvanā* just as vigorously as He had done on the eve of His attainment of Buddhahood. Today there are several instances in which a yogi practising meditation could stave off dire consequences from grave illness. We may say that these instances are of the same kind as the instance of overcoming diseases by Venerable Mahā Kassapa and other *Arahats* and the Buddha by hearing recitation of Bojjha<sup>3</sup>ga sutta and *vipassanā bhāvanā* practice.

We can find relief and solace in the fact that even the Buddha had to face the *lokadam* of physical misery. Especially in case of severe illness and long drawn-out diseases hard to cure, the sufferer should ponder thus "Even the Buddha cannot avoid such kind of *lokadam*. What can be said for me then? However, the Buddha suffered from physical misery but never from mental misery. So also I will endure so as to obviate mental misery." If you can afford to do meditation, you should ponder upon *dukkha vedanā* (feeling of misery) by making a note of the feelings as they are as these feelings occur, without letting *dosa* and the other ill deeds creep in. To an experienced practitioner of Meditation, suffering can be endured and relief can be found.

The important thing that is to reject the feelings of great sorrow by means of *vipassanā* at the time when the sufferer comes to know that his end is very near or that even if he recovers he will probably be incapacitated for life and that his life will be useless. Dhamma is the best medicine for curing oneself of such anguish.

Supposing, one suffers from headache for a long time and suffers much from it because there is no effective medicine for the disease, If, however, the medicine is available, the headache will go soon after taking the medicine. In the same way, if you don't have the medicine of meditation you will suffer much and long from mental misery. The Buddha pondered thus: "This misery which occurs now is not permanent; it will disappear in due course. What I called "I" is after all a conglomeration of *rūpa* and *nāma*, and is not permanent; there is an incessant change, and this conglomeration is not attractive and cannot be depended upon: it is all miserly. As there is a constant change of phenomena in this conglomerate, it is of the nature of *anatta*." Or the Buddha's disciple makes a note of the happening and disappearance of the phenomena in *nāma-rūpa* and ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of them, and thus knows the truth as it is. As he is doing so, there is no occasion for mental misery, and even if it occurs it will not last long. With the disappearance of mental misery, physical misery also disappears or can be said to disappear. If it does not, it will possibly be quite tolerable.

One does not feel elated by the good things of *lokadham* nor does he feel sorrow for the bad things; thus one is free from *anurodha* or delight, or from *virodha* or disappointment and sorrow. So the Buddha said: "Thus delight or sorrow for the *lokadhamma* excepted, the informed disciple of the Buddha is free from rebirth, old age and death."

When in this manner of meditation one gains *vipassanā* insight and attains the four *ariya magga* *nāṇa*; when one becomes an *Arahat* on reaching the stage of *arahatta magga phala* and in due course enters the state of *nibbāna*, then there is no new existence, nor old age, nor death. Besides, as the Buddha said, "One is free from anxiety, sorrow and mourning, from physical misery and mental misery and deep distress."

#### FREE FROM ALL MISERY

The freedom from misery of all kinds that has been dealt with in the foregoing statements is for the present existence. When one becomes an *Arahat* and passes into the state of *nibbāna*, all kinds of misery will disappear and peace will ensure. The Buddha made this assurance in conclusion.

The uninformed person, the *puthujjana*, does not realise the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of all the phrases of *lokadham*, so he becomes elated when he comes by the good parts of *Lokadham* and feels dejected when the bad parts come up to him. At such a time of adversity he is overwhelmed with *lobha* and *dosa*, committing sins (*akusala*), and thus cannot escape from misery. As for the informed person, however, he perceives the vicissitudes of life in accordance with *Lokadham*, with a correct view and makes a note of them in the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. He is not overjoyed at the good turns in life nor is he dejected over the bad turns, nor overwhelmed by *lobha* and *dosa*. He has a good chance of doing good deeds and thus gaining merit, especially merit from meditational practice. So in the current life, he is free from mental misery, and when he attains *arahatship* and the state of *nibbāna*, he will be completely free from misery of all kinds. The informed person has such qualities.

## ACCORDING TO MA<sup>3</sup>GALÆ SUTTA

According to Ma<sup>3</sup>galæ Sutta, the informed person is not moved by the onslaughts of Lokadhamma, but, on the other hand, the uninformed is greatly agitated. That is the significant difference. So the Buddha said:

Phutthassa lokadhammehi,  
cittam yassa na kampati.  
Asokam virajam khemam,  
etam ma<sup>3</sup>galæmuttaman.

“Although attacked by the vicissitudes of life in accordance with Lokadhamma, the mind of the *Arahat*, or the informed person, who is a disciple of the Buddha is not shaken. There is no sorrow; there is no mist of *kilesæ* (defilements); there is no danger or horror, that mind which is free from sorrow, *kilesæ* or danger, is endowed with scared auspiciousness of ma<sup>3</sup>galæ.”

We all should meet the onslaughts of Lokadham with the stable mind of an *arahat*. If one has to endure like an *Arahat*, one must work to become an *Arahat*. If one cannot come up to the stage, one should strive for the stage of *anægam* or *sakadægam* or *sotæpan*. In these three stages, one cannot be entirely unmoved nor can one be stable in mind because one is not yet completely free from *loba* and *dosa*. Yet when one has come up to the stage of *sotæpan* one is sufficiently informed in the *dhamma* so that one can practise *vipassanæ*, ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of things fairly well and can thus endure the onslaughts of *Lokadham*.

Even if a *yogø* has not reached the stage of *sotæpan*, he or she can tolerate the onslaughts to a certain extent by the practice of meditation. If the *yogø* has developed his or her concentration (*samædhi*) further and become aware of the distinctive nature of the phenomenon of *rþpa* and of *næma* and is convinced that there is nothing attractive in these phenomena, then that *yogø* will be able to endure the onslaughts of *lokadham* all the better. If the *yogø* has developed his or her *samædhi* still further and perceived the different phenomenon seperately and in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the endurance will be further strengthened, and relief will be greater.

If still further development of *samadhinæna* can be achieved, and the *yogø* can perceive the incessant changes in the chain of action in the physical and mental parts of existence with equanimity, he or she will have attained *sa<sup>3</sup>khærupekkhanæna*. The *yogø* will then have acquired serenity and remained unmoved by rewards and punishments of *Lokadham*. There is no occasion for him or her for joy or sorrow. The *yogø* will be able to endure the onslaughts of either the good parts or the bad parts of *lokadham*, with an unshaken mind. Then the *yogø* will have the peace and serenity of an *Arahat*, if not as full as an *Arahat*, at least to some extent, If the *yogø* strives further to develop his or her meditational insight, *vipassanæ næ¼a*, he or she will reach the ultimate stage of *arahatta mæggæ næ¼a* and become an *Arahat*, and will then be endowed with the scared auspiciousness of ma<sup>3</sup>galæ. We all should strive to reach that ultimate stage of mental stability.

Now we have come to the end of the discourse *lokadhamma* which was given to you all as a mark of celebration of the New Year. May the audience of this meeting who have respectfully listened to this discourse be able to practice patience and endure the onslaughts of *lokadhamma* so that they are totally eradicated and the serene happiness of *nibbæna* prevails!

(SÆDHU! SÆDHU! SÆDHU!)

END OF DISCOURSE ON LOKADHAMMA. (29-5-1970)