Paticca Samuppada Sermon 7

The Law of Dependent Arising

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 189)

'*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*'

'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

Anattani attamāniṁ – passa lokaṁ sadevakaṁ

niviṭṭhaṁ nāmarūpasmiṁ – idaṁ saccanti maññati

yena yena hi maññati – tato taṁ hoti aññathā

taṁ hi tassa musā hoti – mosadhammaṁ hi ittaraṁ

amosa dhammaṁ nibbānaṁ – tadariyā saccato vidū

te ve saccābhisamayā – nicchātā parinibbutā

– Dvayatānupassanā S. Sn.

Just see a world with all its goods

Fancying a self where none exists

Entering into name and form

It builds the fancy – 'Ah! This is the truth'!

In whatever way one fancies of a thing

Thereby itself it turns otherwise

And that itself is the falsity in it

Falsifying by nature – the puny thing.

But Nibbāna unfalsifying as it is

Noble Ones knew as the truth

And they by their understanding of the truth

Are hungerless and fully appeased.

Dear Listeners,

The Fully Enlightened Buddha has revealed to us that the worldlings are bound to *Saṁsāra* due to the conceit that there is a self where there is no self. The fancying or imagining caused by

conceit is called '*maññanā*.' The release from this imagining which takes name-and-form as the truth is the release from the bondage of *Māra* – that is to say *Nibbāna* itself. Today we have taken up as the topic of our sermon three verses which declare this truth. These three verses also are found in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. In our last sermon, we introduced this discourse as one that instils an intense fervor of the Dhamma. As the word '*dvayatā*' in the title of the discourse indicates this sutta analyses sixteen topics of Dhamma in the form of dualities. Here the Buddha analyses in sixteen ways the eternal law of bondage and release in a way that reminds us of the direct and the indirect order of the law of Dependent Arising.

Today we have taken up for comment the three verses pertaining to the fifteenth mode of contemplation of dualities. As an introduction to those three verses the Buddha gives this prose description of the fifteenth mode of duality.

'*yaṁ bhikkhave sadevakassa lokassa samārakassa sabrahmakassa sassamanabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya idaṁ saccanti upanijjhāyitaṁ tadamariyānaṁ etaṁ musāti yathābhūtaṁ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṁ – ayaṁ ekānupassanā*'

"Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as 'This is true' by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as 'That is false.' This is one mode of contemplation."

And then the second mode of contemplation is introduced as follows:

'*yaṁ bhikkhave sadevakassa lokassa samārakassa sabrahmakassa sassamanabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya idaṁ musāti upanijjhāyitaṁ tadamariyānaṁ etaṁ saccanti yathābhūtaṁ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṁ – ayaṁ dutiyānupassanā*'

"Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as 'This is false' by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as 'That is true.' This is the second mode of contemplation."

Having thus presented the two modes of contemplation, the Buddha, as he did in the case of other contemplations, declares that if any monk, rightly contemplating in this way, dwells diligently, ardent and zealous, one of two fruits may be expected by him:

knowledge of arahanthood in this life itself or if there is any residual clinging, Non-returnership. The Buddha declares that this particular contemplation is so highly beneficial. It is after this declaration that the Buddha summed it up in these three verses.

Anattani attamāniṁ – passa lokaṁ sadevakaṁ

niviṭṭhaṁ nāmarūpasmiṁ – idaṁ saccanti maññati.

See the world with all its gods entertaining a conceit of self where there is no self. Having entered into or entrenched in name and form, it loves to fancy:

'This is the truth.' With that the Buddha is stating the condition of the world and then he says:

'*yena yena hi maññati – tato taṁ hoti aññathā taṁ hi tassa musā hoti – mosadhammaṁ hi ittaraṁ*' "In whatever way one fancies a thing thereby it becomes otherwise. That itself is the falsity in it – the puerile deceptive thing that it is."

Then the third verse:

'*amosa dhammaṁ nibbānaṁ – tadariyā saccato vidū te ve saccābhisamayā – nicchātā parinibbutā'* "*Nibbāna* is unfalsifying. That the wise ones knew as the truth. And they by their understanding of the truth being hungerless are fully appeased."

So from these words of the Buddha, it is clear that the entire world including gods and *Brahmas* are caught by this bondage of *Māra*, due to fancying by taking name and form to be real. This fact is borne out by the parable of Vepacitti we brought up in our last sermon. Just briefly remind yourselves of what we have related the other day. The Buddha once addressing the monks related the age-old legend of the battle between gods and demons. He said that demons lost and gods won in this particular battle and the gods bound Vepacitti, the king of demons, in a five-fold bondage (that is neck, hand and foot) and brought him before *Sakka*, the king of gods. This bondage had a peculiar mechanism about it. If Vepacitti thought:

"Demons are unrighteous, gods are righteous, I will remain in the deva world", he would find himself freed from that bondage and enjoying heavenly pleasures. But if he happened to think:

"Gods are unrighteous, demons are righteous, I will go back to the *Asura* world", then he finds himself bound again in that fivefold bondage. After stating that, the Buddha goes on to say:

"So subtle monks, is the bondage of Vepacitti but more subtle still the bondage of *Māra*."

And then he explains what this bondage of *Māra* is. The Buddha declares that even the basic postulate of existence, namely, the notion '(I) am' is an imagining ('*asmīti bhikkhave maññitametaṁ*'). There the Buddha mentions a ninefold imagining. The notion '(I) am' is an imagining. 'This am I' is an imagining. 'I shall be' is an imagining. 'I shall not be' is an imagining. 'I shall be one with form' is an imagining. 'I shall be formless' is an imagining. 'I shall be percipient' is an imagining. 'I shall be non-percipient' is an imagining. 'I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient' is an imagining. Thus the entire gamut of existence extending up to the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, including the Sensuous Realm, the Realm of Form and the Formless Realm is the range of imagining. Having declared that existence as a whole is bound up with imagining, he says in conclusion:

"Imagining monks, is a disease, imagining is an abscess, imagining is a barb ('*maññitaṁ bhikkhave rogo, maññitaṁ gaṇḍo, maññitaṁ sallaṁ')* and advises the monks to dwell with a mind free from imaginings ('*amaññitamanena cetasā').*

By means of the five constituents of name, that is to say, feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention, the worldlings take hold of the four great primaries, namely, earth, water, fire and air and due to self-love, enact a drama of Narcissistic affection best exemplified by the story of Narcissus itself, which we brought up several times. The handsome Greek youth Narcissus who had never seen his own face, while wandering in a forest, bent down into a pond to wash his face. Seeing the reflection of his own face he mistook it to be an angel's and tried to embrace her. Every time he tried, the ripples foiled his attempt. If we bring this story in line with the point at

issue, as soon as the worldling imagines a 'thing', it turns otherwise. To fancy a 'thing' is called 'thisness' and the 'ripples' of impermanence is its 'otherwiseness' or change. For instance now we take this clock as a 'thing'. When it goes out of order, it turns in to otherwiseness. If we had not taken it as a 'thing' but as part of a heap of rubbish, such a situation would not have arisen, because there is no fancying. That is only by way of illustration. Through all this the Buddha puts across to us the truth of impermanence. In our last sermon we presented a deeper analysis of this truth. It is a very powerful sermon. Soon after his enlightenment, the Buddha surveyed the world with his Buddhaeye and seeing how beings are afflicted with lust, hate and delusion, came out with an inspired utterance which is a wonderful blend of prose and verse. Let us quote a portion of it.

ayaṁ loko santāpajāto phassapareto

rogaṁ vadati attato

This anguished world given over to contact

Speaks of a disease in terms of a self

And then he says:

yena yenahi maññati

tato taṁ hoti aññathā

Whatever one thinks in terms of

Thereby it turns otherwise

Now comes the extraordinary statement:

'Aññathābhāvī bhavasatto loko bhavapareto

bhavamevābhinandati

yadabhinandati taṁ bhayaṁ

yassa bhāyati taṁ dukkhaṁ

bhavavippahānāya kho panidaṁ

brahmacariyaṁ vussati.'

The world attached to becoming, given over to becoming

Though becoming otherwise yet delights in becoming

What it delights in is a cause for fear

What it is afraid of is suffering itself

For abandoning this becoming

Is this holy life lived.

What is called existence has in it the nature of turning otherwise. To that existence which has the nature of turning otherwise, worldlings are attached. They are enslaved by it and they delight in it. But that delighting is dangerous and fearful. Why? Because the existence they take as a 'thisness' is turning otherwise. It is inevitable. So this is the actual situation in the world. That is why the term '*maññanā*' is of so fundamental an importance in this Dhamma.

"Well, then" one can ask "where lies freedom?" we said that in imagining or fancying one conceives of a 'thing'. We all know that there are six senses. The five external senses are eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. When the objects taken in by these five senses reach the mind, they take on a different mould. All objects of the mind are called '*dhammā*' – 'things'. So you may note first of all that the problem concerns those things that come to the mind. About this 'thing' which is the object of the mind, there is a highly significant discourse in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, namely *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*. It is probably because of its fundamental importance that those *arahants* who held the First Council placed this discourse as the very first in this discourse collection. But unfortunately nowadays teachers when they teach this book to their pupils ask them to skip the first sutta and start from the second. They say that this is so abstruse that even those who listened to it could not understand it. But we wish to point out that this discourse is like the basic alphabet to the understanding of the philosophy of this entire Dhamma. Why do we say so? Because this *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* reveals the basic pattern of all 'things' that occur to the mind (*mūlapariyāya*).

Let us now describe the way this discourse is presented. It has a very brief introduction. The Buddha seated under a *Sal* tree in the *Subhaga* forest in the *Ukkaṭṭhā*, addressing the congregation of monks preached this sermon presumably because he wanted to bring up a very important subject. He introduces the subject with this exhortation:

"Sabbadhamma mūlapariyāyaṁ vo bhikkhave desissāmi. Taṁ sunātha sādhukaṁ manasikarotha bhāsissāmi."

"Monks, I shall preach to you the fundamental mode of all things. Listen to it. Attend to it well, I shall preach."

What is meant by 'the fundamental mode of all things' is this:

There is a certain mode according to which all phenomena occur to our mind. It is this basic mode that is found in grammar. Within this linguistic usage, all phenomena that occur to the mind present themselves according to some grammatical pattern. In regard to that grammatical pattern this *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* analyzes the respective attitudes of the average worldling uninstructed in the Dhamma, of the monk who is a learner not attained to arahanthood, of the *arahant* and of the Fully Enlightened One – the *Tathāgata*. But we can boil it down to three attitudes since the attitude of the *arahant* and of the Buddha are essentially the same. Because the *Tathāgata*, the Fully Enlightened One proclaimed this Dhamma as the teacher, he is in a category by himself. But for all practical purposes his attitude and that of the *arahant* are the same. So we are now going to analyze this discourse based on those three attitudes. We have

already mentioned that this discourse describes the attitude of the worldling towards the grammatical pattern in usage in the world, the attitude of the learner training in this Dhamma and the attitude of the arahant. To represent all objects of the mind regarded as 'things' the Buddha lists 24 dhammas. It is not a complete list of all possible dhammas, but a fair representation of them as instances. They may be summed up as follows in brief. Firstly, the four great primaries:

earth, water, fire and air, then the eight classes of beings:

namely beings, gods, *Pajāpati*, *Brahmā*, the Radiant Ones, the Lustrous Ones, the *Vehapphala Brahmas*, the Overlord. Then the four formless realms:

the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, the realm of neither perception nor non-perception. Then the sum-total of sense-experience:

the seen, the heard, the sensed and the cognized. And finally, the concepts of unity, diversity, universality and *Nibbāna* (*ekattaṁ, nānattaṁ, sabbaṁ, nibbānaṁ*).

Having thus introduced 24 mind-objects (*dhammā*) The Buddha describes the different attitudes of the above three classes towards each of them. When we give one instance you all can understand the rest of it. Out of the four primaries given first, let us take earth. This is how the attitude of the uninstructed average worldling towards it is described. He perceives earth as earth – even as the deer perceives water. Having thus perceived earth as earth ('*paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito saññatvā*') he imagines an earth ('*paṭhaviṁ maññati*'). There we find that *maññanā* coming in. Then he imagines:

'In the earth' ('*paṭhaviyā maññati*'). He imagines 'from the earth' ('*paṭhavito maññati*'). He imagines 'earth is mine' ('*paṭhaviṁ meti maññati*'). He delights in earth ('*paṭhaviṁ abhinandati*'). Then the Buddha asks:

'Why is that?' ('*taṁ kissa hetu?*') and gives this explanation:

'It is because it has not been comprehended by him' ('*apariññātaṁ tassāti vadāmi*').

Then about the learner (*sekha*) who has not attained *arahanthood* this is what comes in the discourse:

'*paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhijānāti'.* In this case it is not *sañjānāti* (perceives) but *abhijānāti* that is understands through higher knowledge. Through his attainment of the Fruit of the Path, even for a split second he had an experience of the Truth. As if by a streak of lightening in a dark night, he had a glimpse of *Nibbāna*. Thereby he got an understanding which is of a higher order than mere perception. He has understood the true state of affairs though it is short of full comprehension. About him, this is what is stated in the sutta:

'*paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhijānāti'*. He understands earth as earth. And then:

'*paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhiññāya*' – having understood earth as earth – now comes a peculiar expression:

'*paṭhaviṁ mā maññi, paṭhaviyā mā maññi, paṭhavito mā maññi, paṭhaviṁ meti mā maññi, paṭhaviṁ mā abhinandi.*' The use of *'mā'* here is a big puzzle for the commentator. But it is the prohibitive particle in *Pāli* language. You may have heard the dictum:

'*mā nivatta abhikkama*' – 'Do not turn back, go forward.' However, the commentator goes off at a tangent here. He says that this particle conveys the idea that the noble disciple neither imagines nor does he not imagine. This is not the reason for this peculiar usage. The learner (*sekha*) is that noble disciple who is still training. Though he has higher knowledge beyond mere perception, he has not yet attained full comprehension (*pariññā*).

So he has to constantly remind himself to refrain from imagining, drawing inspiration from the higher knowledge he has won.

'*paṭhaviṁ mā maññi'* etc. means

'Do not imagine earth as earth,

Do not imagine in the earth,

Do not imagine from the earth,

Do not imagine earth is mine,

Do not delight in the earth.'

Why? Because he has yet to comprehend ('*pariññeyyaṁ tassāti vadāmi'*).

This is an injunction for self-training.

Well then, that is as far as the noble disciple who is a learner is concerned. Now as for the attitudes of the *arahant* and the *Tathāgata*, we said that they are the same. For Instance, this is what is said about the arahant:

'*paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhijānāti, paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhiññāya, paṭhaviṁ na maññati, paṭhaviyā na maññati, paṭhavito na maññati, paṭhaviṁ meti na maññati, paṭhaviṁ nābhinandati.'*

That is to say, the *arahant* as well as the Buddha has the following attitude towards the concept of earth. The *arahant* by virtue of his higher understanding of earth has seen its voidness. He does not imagine earth as earth, he does not imagine 'in the earth', does not imagine 'from the earth', does not imagine 'earth is mine', does not delight in the earth.

We said that there are 24 concepts listed. With regard to each of them the same mode of imagining is given in detail. What is said in particular about the *Tathāgata*, the Fully Enlightened One is that he is the teacher who revealed this Dhamma. In conclusion, the Buddha says:

'*nandi dukkhassa mūlanti iti viditvā bhavā jāti bhūtassa jarāmaranaṁ*' – 'Having known that delight is the root of suffering. From becoming, birth and to the one born there is decay and death.' That is why there is no delighting in any of those concepts. '*Nandi dukkhassa mūlaṁ*'. Delighting is the root of suffering. It is by delighting that an existence comes to be, and that existence is turning otherwise. That is the beginning of suffering. Birth, decay and death and all the rest follow.

By way of explanation of this discourse we may cite the simile of the deer and the mirage. We have brought up this simile quite often. The deer imagines water in the mirage and runs after it. But if a person knows that it is not water but some seasonal phenomena, even if he thinks at first sight that it is water, he tells himself:

'No, no this can't be water' and trains himself. One who has full comprehension does not have to advise himself because he has perfect knowledge. The commentator has confounded the whole issue. He cannot appreciate the fact that it is a step of training. But confusion is worst confounded when he comes to explain the last of all twenty-four concepts – namely *Nibbāna.* When it is said that one should not delight in *Nibbāna*, quite understandably the question comes up:

"If we don't delight in *Nibbāna* how can we attain it?"

That may be the reason why the commentator says that *Nibbāna* here mentioned is not our *Nibbāna* but the concept of *Nibbāna* in other religious systems. With this observation the commentator makes an attempt to vindicate our *Nibbāna* despite the fact that the Buddha has here leveled an attack on linguistic usage as a whole. But it is a vain attempt because as long as one goes on imagining in terms of *Nibbāna* as 'in *Nibbāna',* 'from *Nibbāna'* and so on and as long as one delights in the concept of *Nibbāna,* one cannot attain it. Some of you might take it as an awkward position. We all look forward to attain *Nibbāna*. So if we cannot delight in *Nibbāna*, what else can we delight in? This is the problem for commentators too. But here we have something deep concerning linguistic usage. To explicate it a little let us give an illustration from the history of this dispensation.

In an earlier sermon too we have mentioned to you in brief, some incident recorded in the annals of the history of Buddhism. After the Buddha's demise, when the time came for the holding of the First Council, Venerable Mahā Kassapa Mahā thera was faced with a problem in selecting five hundred *arahants* for the recital of Dhamma and *Vinaya*. It was Venerable Ānanda who had committed to memory the entire Dhamma. But he had not attained arahanthood yet. Therefore, 499 *arahants* were selected at first. They were in a dilemma whether to take in Venerable Ānanda or not. However, at last they decided to take him on the ground that he is incapable of being influenced by prejudices. It is said that on the day before the Council the *arahants* reminded Venerable Ānanda of his obligation saying:

"Friend, tomorrow is our Council. It does not behove you to attend it as a non-arahant. Be diligent." Those of you who have passed examinations would remember how much you have crammed when you are reminded that tomorrow is the exam. Similarly, Venerable Ānanda too made a firm determination to put forth his best efforts. It is said that he determined thorough mindfulness in regard to the body (*kāyagatāsati*) and spent the greater part of the night in the promenade pacing up and down mindfully. Probably due to tiredness, in the last watch of the night, he thought of taking some rest, and went and sat on his bed. He was going to lie down, his feet were raised from the floor and his head had not reached the pillow yet, and in the interim his mind was released from all influxes and he attained arahanthood.

Various explanations are given about this extraordinary illumination between two postures. The commentator says that Venerable Ānanda thought:

"Now I am striving too hard. Let me balance my spiritual faculties."

That can't be the reason. There is a subtle psychological norm involved here. Now for Venerable Ānanda, the concept *'Nibbāna'* appeared as a 'certificate' to enter the Council. That is to say, for him '*Nibbāna'* was something like a certificate. The word '*Nibbāna'* which stands for 'giving-up everything' became a 'thing' to be grasped.

"I must attain *Nibbāna*. It is beneath my dignity to attend the Council as a *nonarahant*."

There itself is conceit and restlessness due to overexertion. He imagined *Nibbāna* to be a 'thing' and that implies ignorance as well. That is why he could not attain *Nibbāna* after all that striving. But then, what happened at that particular moment? He had already determined on strenuous effort in all four postures. So if he had lied down on bed he would have continued to put forth strenuous effort. But there is something called 'posture-junctions'. Most probably he had reckoned without them. However, at that interim instance of bending his body to lie down, he suddenly became aware of an 'interval'. In that INTERVAL it might have occurred to him:

"Oh! I have made a 'THING' out of *Nibbāna! Isn't it a term for giving up everything? So why am I struggling?"*

In that moment of realization he realized *Nibbāna* and became an *Arahant*. That is our explanation.

On an earlier occasion too in the course of our sermons, we gave various similes by way of explanation. Even if you are driving in a hurry when you come to the cross-roads junction, you have to slow down. Likewise Venerable Ānanda found a brief interval at a 'posture-junction'. That is probably how he attained *Nibbāna.* So there is nothing to take delight in '*Nibbāna',* because to do so is to perpetuate the subtle notion of "I" and "mine".

But still you may have doubts. So let us bring up an illustration from our village life. Our National New Year Day is drawing near. Isn't that so? Now among the New Year festivities, there is a game called 'Blind man cracking the pot.' Though we have no pots here we shall give a simile somewhat closer to it. You all have seen the artistically painted words on the wall at the far end of this hall. '*Nibbānaṁ paramaṁ sukhaṁ*' (*Nibbāna* is Bliss Supreme). After all isn't that our aim? *Nibbāna* is the supreme bliss and *Nibbāna* is over there on the wall. Now supposing I blindfold a young *upāsaka* in this crowd and ask you all to get to a side to make way for him and ask him to turn towards that *'Nibbāna'.* Of course he cannot see it as he is blindfolded. Then I ask him to do as I say. 'Take a step towards it. Take another step …. another step …. another step'. You all are now watching. He comes up almost against the wall, step by step. But he doesn't see it. And then I say:

'Take another step!' What happens then? When he lifts his foot he finds that he has to turn back! This is a simile for you to ponder over. '*Sankhārā*' or preparations have been associated with the simile of the pot. If you can understand this, perhaps you can crack the pot of *Sankhārā* and attain *Nibbāna.* The moral behind our simile is that *'Nibbāna'* as a term is a target not to be '<u>grasped</u>' but to be '<u>seen through</u>'. It is a question of penetration. At last you have to 'let-go' of it and free the mind of imaginings about it.

What do we mean by 'turning back' at the last step? You may recall the lesson we taught by getting you to count on your fingers, while explaining the five representatives of 'name' in name and form (*nāma rūpa*). The five fingers are feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention

(*vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phassa, manasikāra*). 'Contact' is the nearest to 'attention' even as the index finger is to the thumb. Contact as the index finger is the trouble-maker. The index finger (contact) is always fussy and busy with the THUMB (attention). So let us now pay more attention to this attention (*manasikāra*). We have analyzed it in various ways while discussing the middle-path tactic by which the Buddha discovered the magical illusion behind consciousness. There we made use of a certain simile. Sometimes in courts of law, a case of murder or theft would come up with no one to give evidence. When there are no other witnesses, there is provision for making one of the alleged culprits the crown witness to get the whole story out. We pointed out that the Buddha had to do a similar thing. Out of the five representatives of name (*nāma)* it was 'attention' (*manasikāra*) who brought us all this way in *Saṁsāra* in the guise of 'nonradical attention' (*ayoniso-manasikāra).* It is due to this wrong attention that the deer keeps running after the mirage imagining water 'over there'. Now the Buddha converted this non-radical attention to radical attention (*yoniso-manasikāra).* What does '*yoniso'* mean? '*Yoni*' is matrix or place of origin and '*yoniso*' means 'by way of the place of origin'. So '*yoniso-manasikāra'* could be rendered by the term 'radical-attention'. The Buddha asks us to turn back and pay attention to the source or origin. The deer ran after the illusion of water misled by prolific conceptualization or '*papañca*'. The worldling is in the same situation. With the change over to radical attention, the meditator lets go of '*papañca*', cuts off '*vitakka*' (thought), gives up '*saññā*' (perception), frees himself from the grip of '*vedanā'* (feeling) and finally comes back to '*phassa*' (contact).

That is the moment you are up against the wall!

If we analyze the word '*manasikāra*', '*manasi*' means 'in the mind' and '*kāra*' is 'doing'. So '*manasikāra*' is an activity within the mind. As a matter of fact, it is this 'guy' '*manasikāra*' who is responsible for the conspiracy that is *Saṁsāra.* '*Manasikāra*' is an activity going on in our mind. We do not understand it as it is. The object used for this activity 'within the mind', we put before it. But the actual state of affairs the Buddha has made known to us through the maxim in the two opening verses of the *Dhammapada*.

manopubbaṅgamā dhammā

manoseṭṭhā manomayā

'Mind-objects have mind as their forerunner,

mind is their chief.

They are mind-made.'

The worldling thinks otherwise. He argues from the other end. If he writes a *Dhammapada* he would put it the other way around. '*Dhammapubbaṅgamo mano.'* 'Mind has mind-objects as forerunners.' But the Buddha points out that the mind is the forerunner and that things are mind-made (*manomayā)*. Venerable Ānanda finally realized that the term '*Nibbāna'* is mind-made – that it is only a target symbolic of complete relinquishment. You may have heard a number of terms denoting *Nibbāna*:

'*Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho Sabbupadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṁ.'"*The stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving,

detachment, cessation, extinction.' Any one of these terms is sufficient to denote that attainment.

Now '*Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho'* means the stilling of all preparations. To think 'I must somehow get this certificate of *Nibbāna* as a qualification to go to the Council' is a *saṁkhāra* – a 'preparation.' The thought 'I must go' is also a preparation. So then preparations are not yet stilled. '*Sabbupadhi paṭinissaggo'* (relinquishment of all assets) – The thought:

'I must take this bundle of five aggregates and get it seated at the council' shows that all assets are not relinquished as yet. Craving is also implicit in such a wish. *Nibbāna* implies a letting go of everything – an extinction. But the worldling grasps it as a term. That is why we say that the world is steeped in the delusion inherent in the linguistic medium.

The Buddha has clearly pointed out to us this deluding trait in linguistic usage. But our commentators as well as many Buddhist sects have not fully understood his enlightened vision regarding language. Due to that lack of understanding, they inclined to the same self-view. But here we highlighted the role of 'attention' (*manasikāra*). The object for the mind is '*dhamma*' (the 'thing'). In this context the mind-object is '*Nibbāna'.* What happens with the sudden realization that it is only a word? Mindconsciousness immediately goes down 'object-less'. We have already said that consciousness by definition is a discrimination between two things.

Now if the 'mind-object' is seen as something created by the mind itself (*manomaya*), how can one discriminate between two things?

Simultaneous with the realization that what had so far appeared as the object of the mind is 'mind-made', there comes a moment of non-discrimination. Mind-consciousness ceases then and there.

Try to understand this deep point. Granted that consciousness is a discrimination between two things, the moment that the deer becomes conscious of water in a mirage, it thinks:

'There is water over there and I am here'. That means there is a gap – an 'in between the two.' So now we come back to the same story of 'two ends and the middle'. Where there are two ends there is a middle. The deer thinks:

'Here I am and water is there. Once I pass through the intervening gap, I can reach that water'. That is the way the world thinks. The object is given precedence. It is projected when one thinks:

'I am here and the object is there.'

However, the Buddha points out to us quite a different way of thinking – not the imagining or fancying a 'thing' as implied by '*maññanā'.* To hark back to the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta,* the worldling makes a 'thing' out of 'earth' (*paṭhavi*). Not only earth, water, fire and air but all the 24 concepts listed there under the heading '*Sabbadhamma mūlapariyāya'* (the basic mode of all things) are not to be taken as objects for '*maññanā'* – not even gods, beings, *Pajāpati* and *Brahmā*. The Buddha tamed even *Bhramā Baka* who boasted of his permanence. Simply because of their long life-span Brahmas entertained the conceit:

'We are eternal.' The ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya went through the necessary discipline within a very short time. He was able to stop short at the 'seen' in the seen. But we do not stop there. Instead we make (for instance) a 'chair' out of the seen so that we can sit on it. Similarly, we do not stop short at the 'heard' but make a music out of it. That way we make a 'thing' out of our sensory experience. It is due to this conceiving of 'things' that we linger long in *Saṁsāra*. As soon as we imagine a 'thing', the ripples of impermanence take over. The inexorable consequence is the 'turning otherwise'. There lies the tragic end of this drama of existence.

The moment one makes a 'thing' for oneself, it starts becoming 'another thing'. As in our illustration of the love scene enacted by Narcissus, throughout *Saṁsāra* we have been grasping something or other with self-love at the last moment of our life. That is the reason for the perpetuation of mutual interdependence between name and form and consciousness inside a mother's womb. But then one can ask again:

"If I cannot take delight in *Nibbāna*, what is the use of it?"

It may even seem useless to attain *Nibbāna.* If it is not good to delight in *Nibbāna* after all the trouble we take to attain it, one can ask:

"What is the purpose in attaining it?"

A deity named Kakudha also had the same problem, according to a discourse in *Saṁyutta Nikāya*. When the Buddha was dwelling at the Deer Park in the *Añjana* forest, a deity named Kakudha approached him in the night and asked:

"Recluse, do you rejoice?"

The Buddha retorted:

"On getting what, friend?"

Then the deity asked:

"If that is so, recluse, do you grieve?"

"On losing what, friend?" asked the Buddha rhetorically.

"Well, then, recluse, you neither rejoice nor grieve?" said the deity and the Buddha affirms it saying:

"That is so friend".

The deity was also curious to know whether the Buddha is dissatisfied with the monk's life as he is sitting all alone, now that he says that he neither delights nor grieves. The Buddha responds with an instructive verse:

Aghajātassa ve nandi

nandi jātassa ve aghaṁ

anandī anigho bhikkhu

evaṁ jānāhi mārisa

Joy is for him who is stricken with grief

And grief is for him who becomes joyful

But as for a monk – friend know this as a fact

He is neither joyful nor does he grieve.

What the Buddha means by this, is the bliss of equanimity free from joy and grief. In fact, as you know, *Nibbāna* is even called '*avedayita sukha*' – a bliss free from feeling since all three grades of feeling are in the highest sense reckoned as suffering. Even from this brief comment you may understand that *Nibbāna* is not something to be grasped. It is only a target to reach – not to be grasped. In one's striving for it, at last one reaches a stage which is something like a going 'topsy-turvy'. The ultimate realization is a sort of turning upside down. That is why even the non-returner (*anāgāmin*) is said to have attachment and delight in the Dhamma (*dhammarāga dhammanandi*) as a residual taint to be eliminated. It is true that he has '*Nibbāna*' uppermost in his mind. But there is a subtle attachment to it that prevents him from ending *Saṁsāric* suffering here and now, and gives him rebirth in the Pure abodes (*suddhāvāsa*) by that very attachment and delight ('*teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā …')*.

That attachment and delight is the last thing to be given up since the Buddha has declared that this Dhamma is only for the purpose of crossing over and not for grasping ('*nittharanatthāya no gahaṇatthāya*') even like a raft. Similarly, the Buddha has preached that by those who fully understand, even good things (or mind-objects) have to be given up, what to say of bad things ('*Kullūpamaṁ vo bhikkhave dhammaṁ desitaṁ ājānantehi dhammāpi vo pahātabbā pageva adhammā*'). Now '*Nibbāna*' as a term is something pertaining to '*dhamma*'. Even that has to be given up at some juncture. The reason is that we use language only out of some practical necessity. It is not something to be 'grasped'. The moment we grasp it, we get into difficulties. This is the gist of what the Buddha has pointed out to us.

There is a certain depth in all what we tried to put across with the help of similes. There are some discourses which show that after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, Venerable Ānanda was highly esteemed by monks and nuns so much so that when they attained Arahanthood they went and informed it to him. There is a particular discourse which reveals this fact very clearly. Once Venerable Ānanda addressing the monks at *Ghositārāma* said that those monks and nuns who declare their attainments of Arahanthood in his presence, do so according to four normative factors. The path of practice they have followed comes under one or the other of the following four modes.

1. '*Samathapubbangamaṁ vipassanaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops insight preceded by calm (or serenity) and as one goes on practicing insight meditation like this, the supra-mundane path arises and by following it one abandons fetters and latencies thereby attaining arahanthood.

2. '*Vipassanāpubbangamaṁ samathaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops calm preceded by insight. By this method too, a monk or nun can do away with the fetters and latencies and attain arahanthood.

3. '*Samathañca vipassanañca yuganaddhaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops both calm and insight together like yoked bulls pulling together. By that method also one can accomplish the task.

4. The fourth method is very peculiar and its true significance is a problem to many scholars.

In this context, Venerable Ānanda brings up the case of a monk whose mind is in conflict due to restless thoughts ('… *bhikkhuno dhammuddhacca viggahita mānasaṁ hoti*'). But then he says:

"There comes a time when his mind becomes settled within – gets one pointed and concentrated."

It is then that the supra-mundane path arises, which he successfully follows to attain arahanthood.

It is very likely that here Venerable Ānanda is speaking out of his own experience. He had hit upon a special method (by fluke!). The usual mode of practice is classified under three headings:

1. Developing insight preceded by calm.

2. Developing calm preceded by insight.

3. Developing both calm and insight together like yoked bulls pulling together.

The fourth method which has remained a problem, most probably exemplifies Venerable Ānanda's own attainment. Because of his restless thoughts regarding the attainment as a qualification for attending the Council, he could not attain arahanthood. But there came a time when his mind got settled – at that posture-junction between sitting and lying down. This exceptional method he learnt by a happy accident, shows the depth of this Dhamma.

We are taking pains to explain all this because quite a lot of misconceptions and wrong views about *Nibbāna* are rampant in the world today due to a lack of understanding of the depth of this subject. In fact, I think the *Brahmins* of the Buddha's time knew more about what the Buddha was speaking of than many Buddhist scholars today. Those *Brahmins* knew full well that the *Nibbāna* preached by the Buddha had nothing in it to bolster up the craving for existence – that it meant the cessation of existence. Only thing, they viewed it as tantamount to annihilation. That was their mistake. According to the Buddha there is no real self or soul to be annihilated.

This is all what the Buddha proclaimed:

"Formerly as now, I make known a suffering and its cessation ("*Pubbe cāhaṁ etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññapemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṁ.*")

This much we pointed out. What remains to be abandoned last of all is the basic postulate of existence, namely that lingering notion – that conceit (I) Am. There is a significant discourse in

the *Khandha Saṁyutta* of the *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, which reveals the subtleness of the path from non-returnership to arahanthood. On a former occasion too we brought it up. It is the *Khemaka Sutta.* It records a sequence of events as follows.

A group of Elder monks were dwelling at *Ghositārāma* in *Kosambi*. A monk named Khemaka who was sick, was dwelling at *Badarikārāma* in *Kosambi* itself. Those Elders asked a monk named Dāsaka to go and inquire about the health of that sick monk. When Dāsaka went and inquired, Venerable Khemaka told him that he is seriously ill and that pains are increasing. When Venerable Dāsaka brought that news, the Elder monks asked him to go there again and ask Venerable Khemaka whether he regards any of the five aggregates of grasping – form, feeling, perception, preparations and consciousness – as "This is mine, This am I and this is my self". Venerable Dāsaka did as he was instructed and Venerable Khemaka answered:

"Friend, in regard to these five aggregates of grasping I do not look upon any one of them as mine or myself, but I am not an influx free *arahant*. I have the notion 'I am' in regard to these five but I do not look upon any of them as "This am I".

When Venerable Dāsaka went and reported Venerable Khemaka's explanation to the Elders, they were still puzzled and sent back Venerable Dāsaka to get further clarification. This time, on hearing Venerable Dāsaka's request for clarification Venerable Khemaka said:

"Enough friend, Dāsaka, what is the use of running up and down, get me my walking stick. I will myself go and see those Elders."

So he went with his walking stick to the Elders and explained:

"What I said is true, I am not an *arahant*. But this is my position. I do not see any of the aggregates as mine. But I have a residual subtle conceit (I) am, a subtle desire as (I) am.

Then he gives a simile:

"Just as, friends, there is smell in a blue or red or white lotus, whoever says that the smell comes from the petal or from the colour or from the filament, is he speaking rightly?"

"No friend"

"Then how can one explain it rightly?"

"One has to say that it is the smell of the flower. That is all one can say about it."

"Even so, friend, I do not see any of the aggregates as myself. However there is in me a subtle conceit as (I) am."

Though there is that conceit, he illustrates the subtleness of the five higher fetters of a monk who has cut off the five lower fetters by the above simile of the smell of the flower. Then he says as that monk who is a non-returner goes on attending to the rise and fall of the five aggregates, there comes a time when even that residual conceit gets worn out. Then he gives a simile for it.

Someone has a dirty cloth. He gives it to the washerman to clean. They clean it with some soap-like substance and return it to the owner. Though the cloth is now clean, it has the odour of the substance used to clean it. The owner puts it away in his wardrobe for the time being. But after

some time even that odour is gone. In the same way, by constant contemplation of the five aggregates with insight even that residual conceit is eradicated and one attains arahanthood. The extraordinary thing about this reasoned explanation by Venerable Khemaka is that on hearing it, all the sixty monks who listened to him became *arahants* and he himself attained arahanthood by intuiting into his own insightful explanation.

There is such a subtle aspect in this question of language in the context of *Nibbāna*. We do make use of the linguistic medium like that cleaning agent. We often use the couple of words relative and pragmatic to describe the Middle Path principle involved. In the Buddha's Middle Path, there is neither an absolute negation nor an absolute affirmation. Instead there is a systematic procedure of choosing and using with an awareness of relative validity. Sometimes the Buddha would sum up a discourse with this grand finale epitomizing the basic principle underlying his extraordinary middle path technique.

"*Iti kho bhikkhave dhammāva dhamme abhisandenti*

dhammāva dhamme paripūrenti apārā pāraṁ gamanāya."

Though we say:

"I am going from this shore to the farther shore" in the end, there is no talk about an "I".

According to the Buddha, what we have in this dispensation is just this:

"Thus, O' monks, mere phenomena flow into other phenomena, mere phenomena fulfil other phenomena for the purpose of passing from the not-beyond to the beyond."

So we have now given you some deep points to ponder – all relevant to the Law of Dependent Arising. Just think about the depth of the constituents of name and form – what we told about '*manasikāra*' or attention. It is a doing within the mind (*manasikāra*). What the Buddha has presented in the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* is a list of those 'things' pertaining to that attention. If you don't adjust your viewpoint in accordance with Right View, you are setting off on a path not towards *Nibbāna* but opposite to it. Therefore, I hope you all will make use of this sermon for adjusting your viewpoint. We shall be presenting more facts on Dependent Arising in this series from various sources. We happened to quote several times the dictum:

"He who sees Dependent Arising sees the Dhamma."

You had better remember it and take heart to tread this path of Dhamma. To clarify these points for yourselves, you should constantly dwell on the impermanence of the five aggregates. As you go on doing it, you can proceed on the path of insight provided you have a clear understanding of name and form. Mere listening is not enough. You should apply these teachings to your own lives. The five aggregates are there with you. Not somewhere else. With radical attention you should always attend to your 'ins' and 'outs' seeing their rise and fall (*udayabbaya*) as keenly as possible. You should understand the aggregates for what they are. That is what is known as 'knowledge of things as they are' (*yatābhūtañāna*).

I hope you will find this sermon too helpful to your meditation. May you all be able to develop both calm and insight drawing inspiration from this sermon backed by the precepts observed and the meditation done today, and attain the goal of your endeavours in this very life.

Whatever beings there are from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world, may they rejoice in our sermon! May the merits acquired thereby conduce to the fulfilment of their higher aims!