Paticca Samuppada Sermon 18
The Law of Dependent Arising

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 200)

'*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*'

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

Upādāna paccayā bhavo – bhūto dukkhaṁnigacchati

jātassa maraṇaṁ hoti – eso dukkhassa sambhavo

tasmā upādānakkhayā – sammadaññāya paṇḍito

jātikkhayaṁ abhiññāya – nāgacchanti punabbhavaṁ

– Dvayatānupassanā Sutta, Sutta Nipāta

Dear Listeners,

Religious teachers from ancient times have introduced various theories and views in an attempt to reveal the secret of continued existence. Some even attempted to hand over the responsibility of existence to gods and Brahma. The Buddha, disproving all these theories and views disclosed that grasping (*upādāna*) is the root cause of existence as clearly explained in the Law of Dependent Arising, (*Paṭicca Samuppāda Dhamma*). We have chosen as the topic of this 18th discourse on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, two verses that shed light on our subject. These two verses are also from the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta*, of the *Sutta Nipāta* which has already provided us with suitable topics for several discourses on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. I have explained its style of presentation on earlier occasions. It is a *sutta* where the Buddha makes a very impressive analysis of the duality of arising and ceasing, surveying it from different angles. This is how the Buddha introduces the two aspects – arising and ceasing – with regard to grasping – *upādāna*, which is a link in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

"Monks, if someone enquires whether there could be another mode of contemplating dualities, you must reply in the affirmative. How is it possible? Whatever pain arises, all that has grasping as condition. This is one mode of contemplation. With the total detachment and cessation of grasping, pain ceases to be. This is the second mode of contemplation. A monk who practices the dual technique of contemplation striving hard to burn out the defilements (*kilesa*) with vigilance, can expect one of these two

rewards, either Arahanthood in this very life or the attainment of Non-returnership in case a trace of grasping remains as residue."

The above two verses were uttered to clarify that point.

Upādāna paccayā bhavo – Continued existence called *bhava*, depends on grasping called

upādāna bhūto dukkhaṁnigacchati – The born, experiences suffering

jātassa maraṇaṁ hoti – Death comes to the born

eso dukkhassa sambhavo – This is the origin of suffering

tasmā upādānakkhayā – Therefore, through the destruction of grasping

sammadaññāya paṇḍito – The well informed wise men

jātikkhayaṁ abhiññāya – realizing the extinction of birth

nāgacchanti punabbhavaṁ – will not seek birth again.

That is the meaning of the two verses. Let us try to first understand the term *upādāna*. Many of you know the position of '*upādāna*' in the Law of Dependent Arising.

"*Taṇhā paccayā upādānaṁ, upādāna paccayā bhavo*".

We have mentioned on earlier occasions that when making an analytical study of any one of the links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the two links on either side have to be taken into account. Then conditioned by craving is grasping, conditioned by grasping is continuous birth. In the analysis of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Buddha explains the significance of grasping through the question-answer method.

'*Katamañca bhikkhave upādānaṁ*?', What is grasping? '*Kāmupādānaṁ*', grasping of sense pleasure, '*diṭṭhupādānaṁ*', grasping of views, '*sīlabbatupādānaṁ*', grasping rules of morality and views, '*attavādupādānaṁ*', grasping of the notion of self.

This term *upādāna* also deserves some thought. The prefix '*upa*' gives the general idea of closeness, 'coming near', sometimes explained as '*upeti upādiyati*', 'reach close and grip'. In fact the implication here is to continue to grip firmly. Gripping not with the hands but with the mind. Now, when discussing *upādāna*, you are automatically reminded of the often mentioned topic *pañca upādānakkhandha*, the five heaps of grasping – *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa* (physical form, feeling, perception, preparations and consciousness). These are the five heaps we reach and grip.

'*Etaṁ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*'

'This is mine, This am I, This is myself'.

The *Mahā Puṇṇama Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* refers to a certain moonlit night when the Buddha allowed the monks to ask him questions. A monk on this occasion asked two questions about *upādāna* and *upādānakkhandha*. What is the root cause of the five aggregates of grasping? *kiṁ mūlakā*? The Buddha replied "*Ime kho bhikkhu pañcupādānakkhandā chandamūlakā*".

Chanda or desire is the root of the five aggregates of grasping. The term *chanda* embodies the idea of *taṇhā*. *Chanda* is wish. Now comes his second question, which seems complicating at a glance.

"Venerable Sir, is *upādāna* the same as *pañca upādānakkhandhā* or are they different?"

The reply is "Monk, grasping and the five aggregates of grasping are not identical. Nor are they altogether different from each other. If there is any desire towards the five aggregates of grasping, that is called grasping."

Dear listeners, you must remember that the lustful desire towards the aggregates is the quality of grasping within it.

Now let us find out what *bhava* means in '*Upādāna paccayā bhavo*'. The general meaning is existence. But on hearing the word, many think of different worlds such as the world of sensuality, the world of form and the formless world. The connection between becoming (*bhava*) and the mind is not clear to many. That perhaps is the reason why Venerable Ānanda once asked the Buddha,"*Bhavo bhavo ti bhante vuccati. Kittāvatā nukho bhante bhavo hoti*?"

"Venerable Sir 'Existence existence' they say. To what extent can it be called existence?"

Then the Buddha replied as follows " Ānanda, in the absence of a *kamma* (action) that could carry its results into a sensual sphere or a sensual world (*kāma dhātu*), is sensual existence possible?"

Here *kāma dhātu* refers to a world of sensuality. Venerable Ānanda replies "No Venerable Sir".

Then the Buddha explains his position using some unusual terms "*kammaṁ khettaṁ, viññāṇaṁ bījaṁ, taṇhā sineho*".

Kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving is the moisture.

The consciousness of beings who are overwhelmed by ignorance and tied down by craving, tends to seek birth in a sensual world. Now it's clear that birth in a sensual world takes place in a field called *kamma* with *viññāṇa* as the seed when the moisture of craving is available. Venerable Ānanda's second question was somewhat similar to the first, though based on a world of form. The Buddha explains 'Ānanda, in the absence of a *kamma* that could carry its results to a world of form (*rūpa dhātu*), is existence of form possible?' 'No Venerable Sir'. Here the explanation is similar to that of the earlier

question. For beings overwhelmed by ignorance, and tied down by craving who seek birth in a world of form, *kamma* provides a field with *viññāṇa* as the seed and craving as the moisture. Apply this same explanation regarding birth in a formless world (*arūpa dhātu*). Existence in a formless world is possible only if a *kamma* conducive to such a birth is present. In short, in the analysis of the Law of Dependent Arising, the Buddha refers to existence as threefold, existence in the world of sensuality, (*kāma bhava*) in the world of form (*rūpa bhava*) and in the formless world (*arūpa bhava*).

Now we have discussed "*Bhava*".

What do you think is *bhūta* in "*Bhūto dukkhaṁ nigacchati*?"

A *bhūto* is one who has come into existence.

"*Upādāna paccayā bhavo – bhūto dukkhaṁnigacchati*", One who falls into continuous existence, one who enters continuous existence – he is referred to as *bhūta* – he experiences pain, suffering. How? Herein you must remember that contained within *bhava*, both birth and decay-death are found. These two inherent features birth and decay-death (*jāti*, *jarā-maraṇa*) are thereby proved.

"*bhūto dukkhaṁnigacchati*" implies that a person who comes into existence, has birth and decay-death, which are an inseparable pair yoked together. Every religious teacher has attempted to remove decay and death from birth, to create an external birth. The Buddha has confirmed the impossibility of such a position in the *Salla Sutta*.

"*Nahi so upakkamo atthi yena jātā na mīyare*, *jarampi patvā maraṇaṁ evaṁ dhammāhi pāṇino*"

There is no devise whatsoever by which a born person can avoid death. Death is certain even after decay. This makes it clear that *upādāna* (grasping) has existence within it. Grasping is suggestive of existence. If grasping is suggestive of existence, the idea of birth, decay and death are also obvious. That is why the above verse winds up with '*Eso dukkhassa sambhavo*'. That itself is the arising of suffering. That is the positive aspect. The other verse suggests '*Tasmā*' Therefore, with the total destruction of grasping, '*sammadaññāya paṇḍitā*' the wise with right understanding '*jātikkhayaṁ abhiññāya*'. This is an unusual phrase, which we will explain now. '*jātikkhayaṁ abhiññāya*' means seeing the destruction of birth, the non-existence of birth, with wisdom par excellence, *nāgacchanti punabbhavaṁ* – do not seek rebirth again.

Due to this series of discourses on the Law of Dependent Arsing, we were compelled to talk of a direct order procedure and a reverse order procedure. Now you are familiar with it by reading and listening to it often. This is how the direct order begins:

Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṁ, *viññāṇa paccayā nāma rūpaṁ*.

It ends with "*Jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsā sambhavanti*. *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa samudayo hoti*".

Although the entire process has not been mentioned here, we can see that conditioned by birth, there arise decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering and dejection. In this manner the entire mass of suffering arises. That is the Law of Dependent Arising, in direct order, which reveals that dependent on birth, there arises the entire mass of suffering, decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair.

How do we look at this in the reverse order?

'*Avijjāyatveva asesa virāga nirodhā*'. With the total destruction, detachment and cessation of ignorance, '*saṅkhāra nirodho*' preparations cease. '*saṅkhāra nirodhā viññāṇa nirodho'*, with the cessation of preparations consciousness ceases. '*viññāṇa nirodhā nāmarūpa nirodho'*, with the cessation of consciousness, Name-and-form cease. It goes on till the last link. '*Jāti nirodhā, jarāmaraṇa soka parideva dukkha domanassa upāyāsā nirujjhanti*. *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa nirodho hoti*.' This is the reverse order.

"With the cessation of birth, it is obvious that decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering and dejection also cease. In this manner, the entire mass of suffering comes to an end."

But Dear Listeners, we have come across an unusual discourse, delivered by the Buddha himself, which suggests the possibility of attaining *Nibbāna*, through the direct order alone. It is the *Upanisa Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Saṁyutta* in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya*. Most educated westerners, who dislike the negative quality in the discourses on causality, seem to prefer this *Upanisa Sutta*, which follows the direct order adding up link by link and finally ending up in *Nibbāna*. The simile used here is the same as what is found in any other discourse on Dependent Arising. This is how it goes "Just as, Monks, a shower of rain with piercing rain drops pours down on a summit of a hill and the water takes a downward course along the slopes filling rugged crevices, and small ditches, and when they overflow, the small holes and when they overflow, the large holes and when they overflow, the rivulets and large rivers and finally fills the great ocean, in the same way monks,...?"

Supported by this illustrative simile, the Buddha proceeds to explain the links of the Law of Dependent Arising. Please try to remember the links even though not familiar with the meanings.

"*Evameva kho bhikkhave, avijjūpanisā saṅkhārā*. *saṅkhārūpanisaṁ viññāṇaṁ*, *viññāṇūpanisaṁ nāmarūpaṁ*, *nāmarūpūpanisaṁ saḷāyatanaṁ, saḷāyatanūpaniso phasso*, *phassūpanisā vedanā*, *vedanūpanisā taṇhā*, *taṇhūpanisaṁ upādānaṁ*, *upādānūpaniso bhavo*, *bhavūpanisā jāti*, *jātūpanisaṁ dukkhaṁ*....."

Now follows, from there onwards, a process that even you may prefer.

"*Dukkhūpanisā saddhā*, *saddhūpanisaṁ pāmujjaṁ*, *pāmujjūpanisā pīti*, *pītūpanisā passaddhi*, *passaddhūpanisaṁ sukhaṁ*, *sukhūpaniso samādhi*, *samādhūpanisaṁ yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṁ*, *yathābhūtañāṇadassanūpanisā nibbidā*, *nibbidūpaniso virago*, *virāgūpanisā vimutti*, *vimuttupanisaṁ khaye ñāṇaṁ*."

This account is very unusual, because it follows only the direct order. The reverse order is inapplicable here. The turning point between the two processes is *Dukkha*, suffering. At this juncture, I wish to critically comment on the Sinhala translation of the *Tipitaka*, where the Pāli word *upanisā* has been conveniently replaced by *paccaya*, thereby denying Sinhala readers the full significance of this special word *upanisā*.

The *Upanisā Sutta*, when translated, would appear as follows. Even without a knowledge of Pāli, one could notice its special quality. The earlier *sutta* was worded as followed,

"Dependent on ignorance arises preparations, Dependent on preparations arise consciousness."

But this *sutta*, translated grammatically would appear as follows.

In association with ignorance (arise)	preparations
In association with preparations	consciousness
In association with consciousness	name-and-form
In association with name-and-form	six aggregates
In association with six aggregates	contact
In association with contact	feelings
In association with feelings	craving
In association with craving	grasping
In association with grasping	existence
In association with existence	birth
In association with birth	suffering

The second part follows the same pattern.

In association with suffering (arises) confidence (*saddhā*)

In association with confidence (arises) delight (*pamoda)*

In association with delight (arises) joy (*pīti*)

In association with joy (arises) serenity (*passaddhi*)

In association with serenity (arises) ease (*sukha*)

In association with ease (arises) concentration (*samādhi*)

In association with concentration (arises) knowledge of things as they are (*yathābhūta ñāṇadassana*)

In association with knowledge of things as they are (arises) disenchantment (*nibbidā*)

In association with disenchantment (arises) detachment (*virāgo*)

In association with detachment (arises) emancipation (*vimutti*)

In association with emancipation (arises) wisdom of extinction (*khaye ñāṇa*)

I hope my listeners have got at least a general idea of the grammatical problem here. The translation appears different because what is conveyed here is peculiar. Let me try to give you a general idea. You know that the term *paccayā* in this twelve links of the Law of Dependent Arising is repeated without any change. *Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṁ* etc. But the term *upanisa* is declined with the subject it qualifies keeping to case, gender and number. Those of you who know grammar, will agree that an adjective will take the case, gender and number of the noun it qualifies.

"*Avijjūpanisā saṅkhār?"*

Therefore, will have to be translated as 'Preparations exist in association with ignorance'. *Avijjā* is a feminine gender noun in Pāli.

"*Saṅkhārūpanisaṁ viññāṇaṁ*" has to be translated as 'consciousness exist in association with preparations'. *Saṅkhārā* is in the plural in Pāli.

'*Vedanūpanisā taṇhā*' has been translated in the feminine gender in grammatical Sinhala, although an identical version is not possible in English. I wish to draw your attention to an unknown aspect of the term '*upanisa*', though it is used often. You have heard of '*Upanissaya sampatti*'. *Upanisa* means 'in close association with'. Why the Buddha used the term *upanisa* instead of *paccayā* is a problem.

In order to clarify that point, I wish to quote as a brief commentary, the *Nibbedhikapariyāya Sutta* in the sixth *Nipāta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. This *sutta* holds within it several valuable facts about the Dhamma. The Buddha addresses the monks in one place as follows "*Katamo ca bhikkhave dukkhassa vipāko*?", 'What is the consequence of suffering?'. A person oppressed by suffering, overwhelmed by suffering will grieve as a consequence, will become feeble, lament and beat his chest and finally '*sammohaṁ āpajjati*' will fall into total delusion. There is another aspect. Instead of crying and lamenting overwhelmed by grief some may react in a different way.

"*Bahiddhā pariyeṭṭi āpajjati, ko ekapadaṁ dvipadaṁ jānāti imassa dukkhassa nirodhāyāti.*"

He directs the searchlight outwards. 'Who knows a line or two to help me cease this suffering?' Here the Buddha summarises this situation into an amazing theory "*sammoha vepakkaṁ vāhaṁ bhikkhave dukkhaṁ vadāmi pariyeṭṭhi vepakkaṁ vā*"

" Monks, I declare two reactions to suffering, either total delusion (*sammoha*) or search

(*pariyeṭṭhi*)."

You may have now tuned in to the drama of Paṭācārā or Kisā Gotamī. Both reactions are involved here. Imagine the plight of Paṭācārā who lost her husband, her two sons and her parents, and was driven into a state of lunacy. She was humiliated and beaten on the roads. An unknown noble friend directed her to the world's greatest and noblest friend. The outcome was that she became an Arahant Therī.

Kisā Gotamī's drama was not different either. A mad woman who walked the roads, seeking for medicine for her dead child on her shoulder. She was ridiculed though not beaten up. An unknown noble friend directed her to the Buddha. The mad walk finally ended up in Arahantship. It's clear now that 'delusion and search' are both present here. Then why is the word '*vā*' (*vepakkaṁ vāhaṁ*...) used here. It gives an alternative. *Paccaya* has a specific idea.

"*Jāti paccayā bhikkhave jarāmaraṇaṁ*",

"*Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ*, *anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ ṭhitā va sā dhātu.*"

Those are examples. 'Decay and death have birth as the only condition. Whether Buddhas are born or not, this law persists unchanged. But the Buddha declared that suffering has two consequences or results. Either one would fall into delusion or one would fall into a search outside.

Dear listeners, we have often fallen into the first of these two tracks, the reason being the absence of a noble friend. The search for a person who knows 'one or two lines' to direct us will be futile, until and unless a Buddha appears. That has to be well understood. The stories of Paṭācārā and Kisā Gotamī prove that the ordinary worldling's reaction to suffering is delusion. Lying hidden underneath it one may discover an *upanissaya sampatti* a kammic force which is visible to a Buddha though hidden from us.

In this context '*upanisā*' conveys the idea of 'relying on' or 'in association with'. Two possible results are seen in association with the experience of suffering. One is delusion. The other is search. The positive results of the search have already been mentioned. It is an upward path of purification where suffering (*dukkha*) leads to confidence (*saddhā*). Confidence leads to delight (*pāmojja*). Delight leads to joy (*pīti*).

Joy leads to serenity (*passaddhi*). Serenity leads to ease (*sukha*). Ease leads to concentration (*samādhi*). Concentration leads to knowledge of things as they are (*yathābhūtañāṇa dassana*). It leads to disenchantment (*nibbidā*).

Disenchantment leads to detachment (*virāgo*). Detachment leads to emancipation (*vimutti*). Emancipation gives rise to the wisdom of extinction (*khaye ñāṇa*) or the wisdom to understand everything. Most educated westerners prefer this explanation which leads you on a positive track.

A certain erudite person of modern times named this discourse as the circular Law of Dependent Arising. It is called circular because it follows the direct order to the end instead of using the direct order and the reverse order. Even though many are familiar with the *Upanisa Sutta*, the subtle difference between '*paccaya*' and '*upanisā*' is hardly recognized, as a result of which even translations have treated both words as identical. You must understand that '*upanisā*' has an alternative implication. That is why this *sutta* says. 'In association with ignorance…' instead of 'Dependent on ignorance…', which suggests a definite result based on conditionality.

Assuming that the *Upanisa Sutta* clarifies the difference clearly, let us understand the final result of this path. What was the final attainment of those Arahant Bhikkhunis? The cessation of birth (*Jātikkhaya*). If grasping gives rise to existence, and existence gives rise to birth and decay-death, we have to eliminate birth. There is no other alternative but the elimination of birth. That is called '*Jātikkhaya*'. A great many humans who promote and love existence, dislike extinction (*Nibbāna*) for that reason. It becomes the *Nibbāna* of 'Siyadoris' (Simple Simon). You cannot bargain for birth totally free of decay-death. Elimination of birth is the only solution to the misery that follows.

How could birth be eliminated? By eliminating grasping.

It is the stage which is totally free of craving, desire and lust. You can understand the significance of this *sutta*, from whichever aspect you scrutinize it. Then let us look at it from another angle. We just now said that one comes to know through highest wisdom, the total eradication of birth (*jātikkhaya*). How is that possible? How can one know that birth has been totally wiped out? The Buddha has been able to, for some reason, declare that there will be no more rebirth for him.

"*Natthidāni punabbhavo*".

Similarly Arahants are referred to as 'eliminated birth' '*khīnā jāti vusitaṁ brahmacariyaṁ*'. The problem is, how are we to know whether birth has been eliminated? The solution to this problem will also clarify the *suttas* that deal with the profundity of *Nibbāna*. The *Ajāta Sutta* in the *Itivuttaka* provides an ideal solution to our problem. First make yourselves familiar with it in Pāli:

"*Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ – no ce taṁ bhikkhave abhavissa ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṁkhatassa nissaraṇaṁ paññāyetha*."

This declaration invites for deep contemplation. The Buddha emphasizes the existence of something, which the worldlings never ever thought of. You will understand it as we translate the statement.

"*Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ*",

'Monks, there exists a state unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared.'

"*no ce taṁ bhikkhave abhavissa ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ*",

'if such an unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared state was non-existent,

"*nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṁkhatassa nissaraṇaṁ paññāyetha*",

'it would be impossible to declare the security of a state unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared, attainable in this birth itself.

Then the Buddha declares the same statement in the positive order.

"*Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṁkhatassa nissaraṇaṁ paññāyatī ti.*"

'Monks, since there exists an unborn, unsprung, undone, unprepared state, there is a release from the born, sprung, made, prepared state.'

Now we must understand why the Buddha repeated it, emphasizing the negative and the positive points of view. The ordinary worldling is unable to imagine the existence of such a state. That is why we highlighted it in our series of discourses on *Nibbāna*. The worldling is unable to comprehend it due to his craving for existence. What is expressed here is the cessation of birth through the cessation of continuous existence which the Arahants experience with the attainment of *Phala Samāpatti*. As they transcend the world, they experience that continuous existence is dependent on the six aggregates, and their cessation leads to the cessation of continuous existence. The final mental state of the Buddha and the Arahants is the fruition of this realization.

Based on this realization, *Nibbāna* is called '*tāṇaṁ*, *lenaṁ*, *dīpaṁ*, *saraṇaṁ*, *parāyaṇaṁ*' a protection, a cave, an island, a refuge, a support. Whenever the Buddha and the Arahants are in a relaxed state of mind, they dwell on the elimination of existence (*bhavanirodha*) described as '*Bhava nirodho Nibbānaṁ*'. If existence is a fire its elimination is the extinction of the fire. The mind firmly established in this state, far removed from the excitement of the world, cannot be disturbed even by thunder. What is the nature of the mind at that time? The truth has been realized. The end of birth has been attained. The continuous existence having been eliminated, birth too is ended.

Decay and death are thereby terminated. This truth has been realized. That is the quality of the mind free from continuous existence.

The following verses in the *Itivuttaka* effectively condenses the ideas expressed above.

Jātaṁ bhūtaṁ samuppannaṁ – kataṁ saṇkhatamaddhuvaṁ

jarāmaraṇasaṇghātaṁ – roganiḍḍaṁ pabhaṇguraṁ

āhāranettippabhavaṁ – nālaṁ tadabhinandituṁ

Tassa nissaraṇaṁ santaṁ – atakkāvacaraṁ dhuvaṁ

ajātaṁ asamuppannaṁ – asokaṁ virajaṁ padaṁ

nirodho dukkhadhammānaṁ – saṅkhārūpasamo sukho

Here is its meaning. It gives a realistic description of the world.

Jātṁ bhūtaṁ samuppannaṁ – born, sprung up, dependently arisen.

kataṁ saṇkhatamaddhuvaṁ – made, prepared, short lived.

jarāmaraṇasaṇghātaṁ – bonded by decay and death.

roganiḍḍaṁ pabhaṇguraṁ – a nest for sickness, perishable.

And what is the nest made up of?

āhāranettippabhavaṁ – born of craving for food.

nālaṁ tadabhinandituṁ – not fit to take delight in.

Tassa nissaraṇaṁ santaṁ atakkāvacaraṁ dhuvaṁ – departure from this called *Nibbāna* is peaceful, beyond reasoning and enduring.

ajātaṁ asamuppannaṁ asokaṁ virajaṁ padaṁ – unborn not dependently arisen, free from grief and attachment.

nirodho dukkhadhammānaṁ – ceasing of all factors of sorrow.

saṅkhārūpasamo sukho – stilling of all preparations is bliss.

What is remarkable is that any verbal account about *Nibbāna* begins with the term *saṅkhārasamatho*, stilling of preparations.

For instance, '*Etaṁ santaṁ etaṁ paṇītaṁ yadidaṁ sabba saṅkhārāsamatho sabbūpadhi paṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virago nirodho Nibbānaṁ.*' That is clear proof that with the cessation of preparations, all that is associated with it inclusive of existence ceases, because existence is dependent on preparations. I would like to make a comment here. Unfortunately, many have misinterpreted the term *asaṁkhata*. Instead of understanding

it as a state free of preparations, it is treated as a 'thing'. The 'unprepared' has become a world. Even *Nibbāna* has been converted into a world. A transformation has taken place within the Dhamma. That is why we have tried to explain to you, the implication of *asaṁkhata*, the unprepared. That realization is called '*anidassana viññāṇa*', a state of consciousness which does not display name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*), which represents the entire world. This mental state too had been misinterpreted as a world. We have attempted to clarify in our discourses on *Nibbāna*, particularly in some of our recent discourses, that *anidassana viññāṇa* is not a world but a realization attainable through the cessation of continuous existence (*bhava*). As further clarification I would like to point out something unforgettable.

On the front cover of the book *Paṭicca Samuppāda* just out from the press, you see two bundles of bambo, one leaning against the other, so dependently that if one is pulled out the other falls. This demonstrates the mutual dependency (*aññamaññapaccayatā*) between consciousness and name-and-form, as explained by Venerable Sāriputta. With reference to this we have brought out as an analytical explanation, a very deep and valuable *sutta* called *Mahā Nidāna Sutta*.

The Buddha's declaration of mutual dependency (*aññamaññapaccayatā*) between consciousness and name-and-form based on dependent arising, is condensed in the *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* as follows.

"*Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā upapajjetha vā. Ettāvatā adhivacanapatho, ettāvatā niruttipatho, ettāvatā paññattipatho, ettāvatā paññāvacaraṁ, ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati itthattaṁ paññāpanāya yadidaṁ nāmarūpaṁ saha viññāṇena*."

This is its translation, 'Ānanda, to this extent does a person's birth or decay or death or departure or rebirth takes place'. Next he deals with another aspect. 'To this extent is a path of attribute (*adhivacana*) a path of etymology (*nirutti*) a path of manifestation (*paññati*) displayed'. Concealed within these three words is the secret of language and logic. Only to this extent is it possible to express a path of attributes, a path of etymology and a path of manifestation. Furthermore, the Buddha says '*ettāvatā paññāvacaraṁ*' 'To this extent does wisdom reach'. This means that wisdom can reach in between name-and-form and consciousness but not beyond.

Next comes an explanation as to why the simile of the vortex was used. *Ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati itthattaṁ paññāpanāya yadidaṁ nāmarūpaṁ saha viññāṇena*'. 'Ānanda, to this extent does the vortex whirl, for the continuity of existence, that is as long as name-and-form together with consciousness.' We too have referred to the simile of *vaṭṭa*, the vortex to clarify this point. It is not our own creation but a simile hidden among the *suttas*. The vortex whirls only as long as name-and-form goes with consciousness. One can take birth, go through decay-death, pass away and seek birth again only as long as

name-and-form twirls with consciousness. Only to that extent can language and logic hold sway over beings. Only to that extent can wisdom penetrate. It cannot go beyond. Only to that extent does the entire vortex (or whirlpool) of existence (*saṁsāra*) whirl.

The two words referred to above are the most significant, that is name-and-form and consciousness. '*nāmarūpaṁ saha viññāṇena*'. We have attempted to emphasize the significance of this duality by using similes such as Narcissus and that of the dog on the bridge. Inability to understand this mutual dependency *aññamaññpaccayatā* is at the very root of delusion. In popular games such as cricket or draughts you see a clear division into two sides without understanding the mutual dependency of one on the other. This inability to understand it, leads to a process of preparations (*saṅkhāra*) between name-and-form and consciousness that results in the six sense spheres. Here too the presence of duality is significant such as the eye and physical form, ear and sound. We have discussed this on earlier occasions. This process goes through contact, feeling, craving and ends up in suffering.

This is the secret hidden behind the statement 'Ānanda, to that extent does the undercurrent spin, for the continuity of existence, that is as long as name-and-form spins with consciousness'. Whenever one realizes this relationship and break them apart, suffering ends. I am sure you remember how the Bodhisatta Vipassi contemplated on the Law of Dependent Arising in the reverse order "*Kiṁ paccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ*?"

'Dependent on what is decay-death?' 'Birth', '*Jāti*'. In this manner he proceeded until he saw that name-and-form, *nāmarūpa* is dependent on consciousness, *viññāṇa* and consciousness is dependent on name-and-form. He couldn't proceed further because the secret key to the solution lay there. Due to the ignorance of the mutual dependency between these two, the view of self (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) or the view of 'I' arises. Ignorance paves the way for a division into two camps, two teams. An ideal example is the game of chess between two good friends Ajith and Sumith, who challenged each other over a game. What takes place in this world is similar. Narcissus assumed his own shadow to be a goddess. That explains the notion of self, *sakkāya diṭṭi*. Now you can understand this delusion arises between these two, name-and-form and consciousness. It is absolutely essential to realize with wisdom that name-and-form is substanceless. It is a mere shadow. That is why we did an etymological study of these terms. 'Form' in 'name-and-form' is a 'nominal form', it is a form only in name. 'Name' in 'name-and-form' is a formal name. It is an apparent name. Here, name does not refer to the accepted names used in this world, but the five qualities of name called feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*) and attention (*manasikāra*). It is a formal name given to name. Let us understand it as only a fomal name. Form (*rūpa*) here refers to the created notion of form in association with the four great primaries (*mahābhūta*). That's why we call form 'nominal form'. This game takes place within the illusion of

consciousness due to the inability to identify the two. Two camps have been formed in *saṁsāra* as 'self and others', as 'myself and the world'. The root cause lies hidden there. The *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* has been named so because it reveals these underlying facts regarding the primaries.

Now let us discuss how to attain its realization. Instructive verses are found here and there for this purpose. The *Muni Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta* is one such example although it has not drawn much attention.

Saṅkhāya vatthūni pamāya bījaṁ

sinehamassa nānuppavecche

sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī

takkaṁ pahāya na upeti saṁkhaṁ

This verse is extremely deep in meaning. It discusses the qualities of a *muni*, an Arahant. This jewel of a verse uttered by the Buddha, extremely deep in meaning, describes a sage (*muni*) an Arahant. *Saṅkhāya vatthūni*, here *vatthūni* means land or a field. Try to recall what helped the *viññāṇa* to establish itself. '*Kammaṁ khettaṁ, viññāṇaṁ bījaṁ, taṇhā sineho*' ' if beings blinded by ignorance, tied by craving seek birth in a world of sensuality or a world of form or a formless world, *kamma* serves as the field, consciousness as the seed and craving as moisture.

This idea is condensed in '*saṅkhāya vatthūni pamāya bījaṁ*', correctly identifies the field and the seed of consciousness. '*sinehamassa nānuppavecche*'. He refrains from watering it. He identified the field correctly and he identified the seed correctly. So he waters it no more. Then what is the result?

'*sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī*'. He indeed is the sage who has seen the cessation of birth.

'*takkaṁ pahāya na upeti saṁkhaṁ*'. The term *takka* reminds us of *atakkāvacara*. '*takkaṁ pahāya*' given up reasoning. '*na upeti saṁkhaṁ*' seeks no recognition.

Here a special comment is necessary to clarify this phrase.

The worldlings do not recognize Arahants. What is the reason? Worldlings recognize people with assets (*upadhi sampatti*) such as the possession of land, houses, designations or vehicles. The Buddha and the Arahants have given up the five assets called the aggregates of grasping (which they had been carrying all the way through *saṁsara*) and as a result they are not reckoned (or taken seriously) by the worldlings.

'*takkaṁ pahāya*' too suggests a deep meaning.

The '*avyākata vatthu*' or the 'undeclared topics' seem to baffle many. We have earlier discussed four points out of the ten undeclared topics. They deal with the position of a

Tathāgata after death. Not only the religious philosophers of that time but even the educated class today are baffled by the Buddha's silence regarding such popular topics. Educated westerners say that it revealed the Buddha's ignorance. But the true position was, Dear listeners, that the Buddha and the Arahants were beyond all limitations of logic. Language and logic restricted by dilemma and quadrilemma are incapable of penetrating the after-death position of the Buddha and Arahants. The four questions are mitigated by the misconception of a 'personality or a soul' after death.

This is how the Buddha rejects them. 'It cannot be said that a *Tathāgata* is' after death, or is not. Nor can it be said that he is both, 'is' and 'is not' or he is 'neither is' nor 'is not'. Please try to understand this subtle point. It is not possible to say 'yes' or 'no' to these four positions. Neither can you confirm the four positions wholesale or reject them altogether. As such '*saṁkhaṁ na upeti*', 'comes not within reckoning' is the best description of this post-*parinibbāna* position.

References made regarding the deep qualities of the Buddha in certain *suttas* are amazing. They are not empty sayings imposed on him. Here is an impressive one,

"*Rūpasaṅkhā vimutto kho tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāho seyyatāpi mahāsamuddo.*"The *Tathāgata* is beyond reckoning by form. He is free from the qualities of form, having given them up. He carries a form which he has not grasped. For this reason, the world finds it too deep a concept to realize. *Gambhīro*, deep. *Appameyyo*, immeasurable. *Duppariyogāho*, difficult to penetrate. *Seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo*, like unto the great ocean. The reason for comparing it to the ocean is that it is beyond understanding, beyond grasping through logic. We know that logic functions within the limitations of consciousness and Name-and-form. A break-through reveals the sphere unattainable through logic. *Atakkāvacaraṁ dhuvaṁ* means beyond reasoning and stable. Logic is unstable but the worldlings dwell within the framework of logic. Since the Buddha has surpassed the worldly characteristics of form he is called '*rūpa saṅkhā vimutto*'. Although it sounds amazing I can't help remarking here that the Arahants are the least recognized – ignored in the world due to the absence of expected qualifications. The world is reluctant to find out what *Nibbāna* is. Because of their craving for continuous existence they lean on logical reasoning. This problem is most serious among the educated westerners. The statement '*rūpa saṅkhā vimutto kho Tathāgato*' explains the reason. He is beyond reckoning by form. '*saṁkhaṁ nopeti vedagu*' the knowing of the *veda* (wisdom) does not yield to reckonings. Now you can understand the depth of the simile in the verse. '*saṅkhāya vatthūni*', An Arahant understands the true nature of the field, '*pamāya bījaṁ*' he understands the deceptive nature of the seed of consciousness. '*sinehamassa nānuppavecche*' and he prevents the rain of craving supplying moisture, '*sa ve muni jātikhayantadassī*' he is the sage who sees the cessation of birth. This idea is found in several places in the *Sutta Nipāta*.

Here is another statement about the sage in the *Sutta Nipāta*.

"*Yo jātamucchijja na ropaye – jāyantamassa nānuppavecche.*"

'*jātaṁ ucchijja*' – uprooting what is born. '*na ropayeyya*' – refrains from planting. '*jāyantamassa nānuppavecche*' – abstains from supplying water to what is growing. Arahants live but do not nourish life. They do not accumulate any *kamma*. This explains the "state of release", described in several *suttas*. To put it in brief the Arahant with correct understanding prevents the seed of consciousness growing in the field of *kamma*, nourished by the moisture of craving, thereby putting an end to existence.

Let us condense this idea further.

"*Upādāna paccayā bhavo – anupādā parinibbānaṁ*", 'existence is dependent on grasping. Detachment brings extinction'. Many get caught up here because *Parinibbāna* reminds them of the *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*. *Parinibbāna* does not refer to the 'death' of the Buddha or an Arahant. It refers to the moment the Buddha or an Arahant attains fruition of Arahanthood experiencing the cessation of existence, and the cessation of birth. Those who have a confused notion regarding this, have distorted even very clear *suttas*. Let me give you an instance of a clear *sutta*. This is an occasion the Buddha talks of himself.

Tiṇṇo so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṁ deseti

santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammaṁ deseti

danto so bhagavā damathāya dhammaṁ deseti

parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṁ desetī

If we attempt translating verbally it will cause confusion. Let us proceed carefully.

'*Tiṇṇo so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṁ deseti*',

Having crossed over, the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for others to cross over (the ocean of *saṁsāra*)

'*santo so bhagavā samathāya dhammaṁ deseti*',

Having attained peace the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for others to attain peace.

'*danto so bhagavā damathāya dhammaṁ deseti*',

Having restrained himself the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma to restrain others.

The last sentence goes as

'*parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṁ desetī*',

If *parinibbuto* means passing away, how could he teach the Dhamma? '*parinibbuto bhagavā*' means 'free from the world' 'free from everything worldly'.

Then the line reads ‘Having released himself from the world, the Fortunate One teaches the Dhamma for the release of others’.

Please remember that *parinibbuto* means the total isolation of the Buddha or the Arahants from the world by entering the mental state of *Arahat phala samāpatti*. In that state they do not even hear the thundering. If one is unable to realize in this very life that one’s existence has been totally eliminated, doubt will remain. Doubt is ignorance. That means ignorance has not been totally eliminated.

The most precious word in the Buddha’s teaching crops up here. ‘*Diṭṭheva dhamme*’, In this very birth. Many people try to evade this word. In this very birth, one can attain the cessation of existence following the Buddha’s teaching. No other religious teacher has been able to show the path to cease existence, in this very birth.

The Buddha has shown the way to cessation of birth, cessation of decay-death, cessation of suffering. Which explains the ‘*jātikhayantadassī*’, ‘*khīnā jāti*’, ‘*natthi dāni punabbhavo*’. They testify to the fact that the Buddha had no more births. He had reached the highest stage, *Phalasamāpatti*. So had the Arahants. The ordinary worldlings are unable to understand this discontinuity of the relationship between consciousness and name-and-form. They can only see the continuity of the physical form and the natural functioning of the five senses. The Buddha and the Arahants live their lives, they partake of food but the release they attained (*vimutti*) continues, though not visible. It is the release *vimutti*, that becomes their refuge at the last moment.

Today we were compelled to speak in a forceful tone. The reason is, many have distorted the Dhamma, due to lack of penetrative understanding. Dhamma has been converted into a path that promotes continuity of existence. The educated class here as well as abroad are responsible for it. We have done our best in clarifying misconceptions. I am sorry I have to state facts.

Dear Listeners, this is enough for today. I wish to remind you to adopt yourselves to the Buddha word,

“*Sammoha vepakkāhaṁ bhikkhave dukkhaṁ vadāmi pariyeṭṭhi vepakkaṁ ?”*

I declare that the outcome of misery is twofold, either delusion or search. The search can be fulfilled only during a period the

Buddha’s message survives. Suffering causes delusion endlessly in *saṁsāra*. Kisā Gotamī, Paṭācārā and many others overwhelmed by misery found the doors of *Nibbāna* open to them because the supreme friend (*kalyāna mitta*) the Buddha, showed the way. His path began with ‘*dukkhupanisā saddhā saddhūpanisaṁ pāmojjaṁ*’ Misery gives rise to confidence, confidence leads to delight and proceeded on the positive track.

I want you to realize the value of this present moment and put it into practical use. This discourse may have appealed to some but irritative to some. Anyway I hope you will understand the Dhamma, realize the importance of *Diṭṭhevadhamme* (in this life itself) clarify any doubts and make the determination to tread the path of positivity even though you may be immersed in misery. We wish you would realize the four paths and fruits of purity through the perfection of your meditation, inspired by the precepts followed, meditation practiced and the discourses you have listened to, before the lamp of the Dhamma is extinguished. Whatever beings there be from the lowest hell *Avīci* to the highest Brahma world *Akaniṭṭa*, may they rejoice in this discourse and may they attain the peace of *Nibbāna*.

