

**TOWARDS CALM  
AND INSIGHT**

(Some Practical Hints)

**Bhikkhu K. Nanānanda**

**Pothgulgala Dharmagrantha  
Dharmasravana Mādhyā Bhāraya**

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P.D.D.M.B.  
Kandy  
2013.07.07

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(Some Practical Hints)

by **Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda**

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ISBN : 978-955-1255-22-0

*Published by:*  
**Pothgulgala Dharmagrantha Dharmasravana**  
**Mādhyā Bhāraya**  
Sri Lanka

**2014**

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First Impression - 1993

Second Impression - 1998

Third Impression - 2008

Fourth Impression - 2012

Fifth Impression - 2014

**Copies of this book may be obtained from :**

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Studio 'Chāya', Hospital Junction, Polonnaruwa.  
Web Site: [www.seeingthroughthenet.net](http://www.seeingthroughthenet.net)

*Printed by*

**Quality Printers (Pvt) Ltd.**

17/2, Pangiriwatta Rd, Gangodawila, Nugegoda.

Tel : 011 4 870 333

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*by*

**Bhikkhu K. Nāṇananda**

*A Manual of  
Aphorisms and Reflections on  
Dhamma  
likely to be of help in  
bolstering up **Calm** (Samatha)  
and in triggering off  
**Insight** (Vipassanā)*

Fifth Edition  
2014

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*LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

D.N.	Dīgha Nikāya
M.N.	Majjhima Nikāya
S.N.	Saṃyutta Nikāya
K.S.	Kindred Sayings
A.N.	Anguttara Nikāya
G.S.	Gradual Sayings
Dhp.	Dhammapada
Ud.	Udāna
Sn.	Sutta Nipāta
Thag.	Theragāthā
Thig.	Therīgāthā
P.T.S.	Pali Text Society
Wh.	Wheel, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.

## **PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION**

The coupling of Samatha and Vipassanā in Buddhist meditation reveals the close relationship between CALM and CLARITY. It is only when the ripples of distraction subside that insight can reach the bottom of the pond of consciousness. A meditator well aware of both these aspects of meditation, might find something of practical use in these pages.

The first two sections on mettā and sati-sampajañña are designed to bolster up the calm a meditator builds up by his samatha practice. The third and last section which invites him to pause and ponder, provides an opportunity for the triggering-off of insight. In most of the aphorisms culled from my diary notes, brevity of expression has been preserved for the sake of effect. Where they initially misfire, the reader is requested to exercise some patience. The reflections on Dhamma presented here in essays, similes and parables could be better understood in the light of my earlier works.

I wish to thank Mr. U. Mapa, the Public Trustee of Sri Lanka, Mr. J. Alwis, Secretary to the Ministry of Coconut Industries and Mr. Samarapala Withanage, Senior Assistant Secretary, for their efforts to bring out this publication as a gift of Dhamma. Mr. Susiri De Silva, Managing Director, Vishva Lekha, who took a personal interest in seeing the book through the press, also deserves my thanks.

K. Ñāṇananda.

Nissarana Vanaya,  
Meetirigala,  
Sri Lanka  
24.3.1991

## **About the P.D.D.M.B. . . . .**

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Accordingly, P.D.D.M.B. has taken upon itself the duties of publication and distribution of books written by the venerable author as well as the recording and distribution of his sermons on C.D.s, in addition to maintaining the website, 'seeingthroughthenet.net' - Those wishing to participate in this multifaceted Dhammadana may note the Account Number of our Trust given below. Our readers are cautioned that there is no other number in the same Bank to remit their contributions.

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**1**  
**How to**  
**Quell Anger**  
**and**  
**Dwell on Mettā (Loving Kindness)**

**1. (i) Remember the Wise-old "SAW".**

“Even were bandits savagely to sever you limb from limb with a two handled saw, he who entertained hate in his heart on that account would not be one who carried out my teaching”.

-*Kakacūpama. S., M. N. Sutta No. 21*

(ii) *“Uppajjate sace kodho  
āvajja kakacūpamaṃ”*

- *Brahmadatta Thera, Thag.*

If anger arises, reflect on the simile of the “SAW”.

**2. Bear up! Like a “dumb-bell” (but with a difference).**

*“Sace neresi attānaṃ  
kaṃso upahato yathā  
esa pattosi nibbānaṃ  
Sārambho te na vijjati”*

- *Daṇḍa Vagga, Dhp.*

“If you restrain yourself like a broken bronze, you have already reached appeasement (nibbāna) and there will be no cross talk for you”.

(Note : A broken bronze vessel does not give out reverberations or echoes, when struck.)

**3. A Protective Mantra:**

“Let them abuse me, beat me, kill me - I'll have Mettā - unconditional Mettā”.

(Note: Repeat this formula non-stop in times of danger to your Mettā - Mettā = Loving kindness)

For a practical illustration, see *Puṇṇovāda S., M.N.*

**4. A reliable triumvirate:**

*Khanti - mettā - anuddayatā*

Forbearance - Loving kindness - Sympathy.

**5. “I see no error made which I could not have made Myself” \***

(i.e. given the same amount of delusion).

\* An “antiseptic” for rash itchings and irritations that may come up while handling the suffering, erring, humanity.

Symptoms: nausea, c-a-r-ping (not coughing), ‘holier than thou’ feeling, stiffness, righteous indignation.

Contra-indications: Discontinue treatment if “self-pity” sets in.

Directions for use: Just rub it in.

**6. “Large - heartedness” - the way to Deliverance of the heart through Mettā (*Mettā cetovimutti*)**

(i) *Accommodation - No problem  
(Accept them with all their weaknesses).*

(ii) *Reception - Cordial  
(Receive them with the warmth of friendship)*

(iii) *Atmosphere - Free  
(Let them ventilate their grievances)*

**7. Switch on to Mettā for a floodlit scene of a gloomy world:**

*“Subharamāham bhikkhave mettācetovimuttiṃ vadāmi”*

“Monks, I say that deliverance of the heart through loving-kindness, has beauty as the highest aim.”

- *S.N V 119*

8. "Touch" the feeble and the stable with Mettā  
 "mettāya phasse tasathāvarāni". - Sāriputta S. Sn.
9. **Veto all hateful impulses on the basis of the 5 ways of quelling malice (āghāta - paṭivinaya).**
- I. "Monks, to whatsoever person malice is arisen, towards him loving-kindness (*mettā*) should be developed."
- ii. "Monks, to whatsoever person malice is arisen, towards him compassion (*karuṇā*) should be developed."
- iii. "Monks, to whatsoever person malice is arisen, towards him equanimity (*upekkhā*) should be developed."
- iv. "Monks, to whatsoever person malice is arisen, towards him un-mindfulness and inattention (*asati amanasikāro*) should be exercised."
- v. "Monks, to whatsoever person malice is arisen, towards him the attitude of taking into account the fact that he is the owner of his own deeds (*kammasakatā*) should be adopted - "That venerable one is the owner of his own deeds, heir to his own deeds, deeds are the matrix for him, deeds are his kin, deeds are his refuge, he will become the heir of whatever deeds he does."

10. **The "bad-tempered" are good whetstones for Forbearance.**

*"Ubhinnamattham carati  
 attano ca parassa ca  
 param saṅkupitam nātvā  
 yo sato upasammati"*

-Sakka Saṃyutta S.N: 122

"He works for the weal of both his own and of the other who on seeing the other enraged mindfully calms himself down."

11. **Get rid of your worn-out skin!**

One occasion for Anger is injured self-pride. Supposing you make a blunder and your friends are poking fun at you. The best thing to do now, is to have a hearty laugh at yourself - to join with them in poking fun at yourself. Your friends will soon realize that now there is no one to poke fun at - no real object for any malicious delight - for they are now pelting stones at the discarded worn-out skin of a serpent.

*"Yo ve uppatitam vineti kodham  
 visaṭam sappavisam va osadhehi  
 so bhikkhu jahāti orapāram  
 urago jīṇṇamiva tacam purāṇam"*

Uraga S.Sn.

He who can curb his wrath  
 as soon as it arises  
 like timely antidote will check  
 snake's venom that so quickly spreads  
 such monk gives up the  
 here and beyond  
 just as a serpent sheds  
 its worn-out skin.

(Tr. Ven. Nyanaponika)  
 ("The Worn-out skin" - Wh. 241/242)

12. **Plead for your client the Accused,  
 before the prejudiced judge - "Anger N' Hate"**

Take the cue from Venerable Sāriputta's discourse on the five ways of quelling malice with regard to five types of persons. (A.N. II 186, G.S. III 137 ff. - A study of the discourse is 'advocated' for greater clarity).

The 5 types of clients:

- i. One whose ways are impure in deed but pure in word.  
 ii. One whose ways are impure in word but pure in deed



- iii. One whose ways are impure both in deed and word, yet from time to time obtains mental clarity, mental calm.
- iv. One whose ways are impure both in deed and word, and obtains no such clarity or calm.
- v. One whose ways are pure both in deed and word, and who obtains mental clarity, mental calm.

**Plead** for mitigation, mercy or innocence as the 'case' may be.

- 13. **Mettā enables you to discover uncut-diamonds where earlier you found mere chunks of charcoal.**
- 14. **How best to treat a 'patient' who is angry and hateful towards you:**
  - i. Bathe him with 'Mettā-water' - to cool him down.
  - ii. Apply fragrant 'Mettā-soap' - to remove his dirt of hate.
  - iii. Use the 'Mettā-towel' on him - that he may not catch the chill of remorse.
  - iv. Soothe him with 'Mettā-balm' - to cure his irritations and old wounds.
- 15. **Build the bund of 'Khanti' - forbearance - well above the level of the marshy wasteland of 'ill-will' and turn the river of 'Mettā' to overflow it in cascades.**
- 16. **A word of Mettā leaves pleasing overtones for others and serene undertones for oneself.**

**2**  
**Aids and Incentives to**  
**Sati Sampajañña**  
**(Mindfulness and Full-awareness)**

**(A recipe for a pudding - the proof of which is in the eating).**

- 1. 'Sati' = 'Appamāda' (A simple equation)  
(i.e. mindfulness = heedfulness)
- 2. 'Sati' is Economy' (Nothing goes waste).
- 3. In 'Sati' - there is 'SO MUCH' in 'so little'.
- 4. Attend to points of contact ('touch').
- 5. Listen - to the 'SOUND' if any, caused by your actions.
- 6. 'ONE thing - at - a - time - and - THAT done - well.'  
(a good motto - for sati sampajañña)
- 7. **Look Sharp : (a warning)**
  - i. Bowl brimful of oil on your head
  - ii. Man with uplifted sword behind you
  - iii. Spill - not - a drop!

(See Canonical simile - S.N.V: 169, K.S.V: 150)

- 8. **Walk on the precipice of the Present:**  
Let not passing 'trains' of thought make you dizzy.
- 9. **Watching a movie, unmoved**  
"..... and what, monks, is that development of concentration, which when cultivated and made much of, conduces to mindfulness and full-awareness. Herein, monks, the **feelings** of a monk are known to him as they arise, they are known to him as they persist, they are known to him as they finally pass away. His **perceptions** are known to him as they

arise, they are known to him as they persist, they are known to him as they finally pass away. His **thoughts** are known to him as they arise, they are known to him as they persist, they are known to him as they finally pass away.....”

A.N.IV: 32 (also, S.N.V: 180)

### 10. Determination :

“24 hour long unbroken **chain-of-sati**  
(If any link breaks perchance, weld it promptly)

11. Take regular 3 hourly or 4 hourly checks of your successes and failures and **RE-DETERMINE SATISAMPAJAÑÑA**.

“..... Good is it, monks, to reflect on one’s failures from time to time ..... to reflect on one’s successes from time to time .....”

A.N.IV: 160

(N.B. Failures are the pillars of success)

12. Have a special speed limit within the precincts of your “kuṭi” (hut).

**Caution: Go-Slow**

*No hurry or flurry*  
*“Slowly - carefully - mindfully”*

(Note: ‘Haste makes waste’)

### 13. CONQUER IMPULSIVE ACTIONS:

Pay special attention to the following steps in Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta:

- (i) ‘in going towards and in coming back - he is fully aware’ (*abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakārī hoti*)
- (ii) ‘in looking at and in looking away from - he is fully aware’ (*ālokite vilokite sampajānakārī hoti*)
- (iii) ‘in bending and in stretching - he is fully aware’ (*sammiñjite pasārite sampajānakārī hoti*)

14. Keep an eye on the **stranger** in your ‘kuṭi’ (i.e. YOURSELF) - TO AVOID ACCIDENTS.

15. Make a **mental note** as to how your ‘vehicle’ (body) is disposed while it is on the ‘path ways of movements’ (i.e. *iriyāpatha* = posture)

..... ‘In whatever way his body is disposed, so he understands it’

‘*yathā - yathā - vā paṇassa kāyo paṇihito hoti tathā tathā nam pajānāti ..... Satip. S.M.N.*

16. STOP at the ‘posture - junctions’ (‘*iriyāpatha sandhi*’)

**Watch out for the green lights:**

- i. Attend to the intention before taking the turn.
- ii. Do not telescope postures (e.g. from sitting to standing and walking).

17. Walk to a slower rhythm and keep up with mental noting:

i. In 'caṅkamana' (pacing up and down):

6 stages to be progressively distinguished, together with their respective preceding intentions, except in the case of stage 5.

Thus:

- |                  |                  |                   |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 'lift' (heel) | 2. 'bend' (knee) | 3. 'send' (foot)  |
| 4. 'drop' (heel) | 5. 'put' (sole)  | 6. 'press' (foot) |

To begin with I: 'lift' - 'put'

Then II: 'lift' - 'send' - 'put'

and so on.

ii. At other times:

'lift' - 'put' or 'lift' - 'send' - 'put', plus the TOUCH

18. Dub yourself 'a patient' and be patient.

19. Whenever you are sweeping, sweep the moments away softly and carefully, leaving no 'rubbish' behind!

20. **Enlist the "WORD", to marshal 'sati sampajañña.'**

**Its advantages:**

ACTION is too gross and

THOUGHT is too subtle, **but**,

WORD stands mid-way between them.

One can be doing many things at the same time with a **semblance** of awareness.

One seems to be able to think about many things at the same time, being unaware of the **diffuseness** of thought.

**But, one cannot speak two words at the same time without being unintelligible: TRY!**

**WORD** can command awareness by narrowing down dissipation in action and diffuseness in thought.

So, crowd out stray thoughts by **repetition of the same word** and narrow down attention to the task at hand, however insignificant it be, like the trunk of an elephant reaching out for a **NEEDLE!**

21. Under the microscope of attention, every moment appears **UNIQUE** and that is, one moment is as good as any other.

22. **Nip it in the bud!**

'Whenever you notice some turmoil in your mind, know it to be an ally of Māra and dispel it'

*'Yadāvilattam manaso vijaññā.*

*Kaṇhassa pakkhoti vinodayeyya'*

*-Sāriputta S., Sn.*

23. Full-awareness (*sampajañña*) insulates against **SHOCKS**.

### 3

#### Pause and Ponder - A miscellany (‘Cud for the ruminants’)

1. A shrivelled leaf can tell you the history of the universe.
2. It is good, now and then, to attend one’s own funeral.  
(see *Vijaya S.Sn.*)’
3. Learn to dismantle and reassemble yourself.  
Parts: i. hand-bones ii. foot-bones iii. shin-bone iv. thigh-bone  
v. hip-bone vi. back-bone vii. skull  
(see *Satipaṭṭhāna S.M.N.*)
4. Every man is a **tombstone** and every face a **MASK**.
5. Accept yourself, and reject your **self**.
6. **The Prison of the Senses:**  
What we **see** so often blocks our **vision** - if we fail to ‘**see through**’.
7. **Conceit:**  
A misappropriation of public property (i.e. earth, water, fire, air),  
and a mental exploitation of one’s fellow beings.
8. If ‘**upādānas**’ are ‘**clutches**’, ‘**upadhis**’ are ‘**crutches**’  
(‘*upādāna*’ = ‘grasping’; ‘*upadhi*’ = ‘asset’)
9. When you help a person, think that you are simply repaying a debt  
incurred in the past.
10. The change of attitude underlying the reflection on the use of the **Four Requisites:**  
**Having been the proud owner of this body, you are now its  
reluctant caretaker.**

#### 11. How wonderful silence is:

and yet:

**sounds** make you aware of **silence**.

**silence** makes you aware of **sounds**.

#### 12. The relationship between sankhāra and viññāṇa:

a ‘make up’ for a ‘make-believe’ EMPTY SHOW:

(‘Sankhāra = ‘preparation’, ‘viññāṇa’ = ‘consciousness’)

#### 13. Nāma-rūpa:

‘Rūpa’ in ‘nāmarūpa’ is ‘**nominal**’ form. (= *paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* i.e. earth, water, fire, air).

‘Nāma’ in ‘nāmarūpa’ is ‘**formal**’ name (= *vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro* i.e. feeling, perception, intention, contact, attention)

For ‘form’ is such that it calls forth a ‘name’, and ‘name’ is such that it conjures up a ‘form’.

#### 14. If you are proud of your brains, just think of your brain matter.

(See *Vijaya S.Sn.*)

#### 15. The world needs us most when we need ourselves no more.

#### 16. We are worthy of all when we have given up all.

#### 17. When you get the “credit” for something, remember how much you owe to your parents and teachers.

#### 18. A Package - deal ?

What is there to see in a ‘seen’?

What is there to hear in a ‘heard’?

What is there to sense in a ‘sensed’?

What is there to cognize in a ‘cognized’?

For: *diṭṭha* (seen), *suta* (heard), *muta* (sensed), *viññata* (cognized),  
are simply **contexts for self - reference**.

(See *Bāhiya S.Ud.*)

19. Face every moment as a challenge to your equanimity.

20. 'Cattāro ariyavohārā' - The four modes of speech of noble ones:

1. Diṭṭe diṭṭhavādītā - in a seen, "just a seen"
  2. Sute sutavādītā - in a heard, "just a heard"
  3. Mute mutavādītā - in a sensed, "just a sensed"
  4. Viññāte viññātavādītā - in a cognized, "just a cognized"
- A.N.II. 246

It is, as though in the midst of a film show one throws up the cloak of delusion or ignorance and awakens to reality: "After all, this is only a seen"

21. **Suññatā - Voidness:**

**Awakening** to voidness is like becoming aware, in the midst of a film show, that only one scene flashes on the screen at a time, and that it is consciousness which connects them up into a 'story' - a story which, for each individual is a fraction of **his own** life-story (with individual biases, prejudices, tastes, predilections, prior experiences etc. thrown in, in good measure).

Furthermore, even that one scene which appears on the screen at a time is something projected from behind and the screen by itself is **BLANK! VOID!**

22. 'Supinakūpamā kāmā - Dream-like are sense pleasures'

The element of delusion, the darkness of ignorance, is a necessary ingredient in all sense-pleasures as in the case of theatrical performances. Hence, even one acquainted with 'camera - tricks', 'library - shots' etc. is carried away by his impulses in spite of himself when he 'enjoys' the film show. So powerful is the force of 'āsavas' (influxes).

True awakening, therefore, is the awakening to the nature of consciousness.

*paññā bhāvetabbā  
viññāṇam pariññeyyam*

-Mahā Vedalla S.M.N.

'Wisdom should be developed  
Consciousness should be comprehended.'

23. **Saṅkhārā - The backstage preparations for the pañcupādānakkhandhā - the Five Grasping groups.**

In a drama, saṅkhāras are the back-stage preparations ('make up' etc.) for the scenes on the stage (which are therefore 'made-up').

So it is the case with the drama of life - the conceit of existence, (asmimāna). All saṅkhāras which assert self are 'bhava saṅkhāras'.

All intentions, all aspirations, all determinations and all preparations (cf, *yā ca cetanā, yā ca patthanā yo ca pañidhi ye ca saṅkhārā*) that go to make up one's life story, take on a specific individual orientation. The succession of saṅkhāras (*sankhārasantati*) is comparable to the series of consecutive frames which make up a motion picture.

24. **Saṅkhārā - The search for an English equivalent.**

The rendering widely accepted today, is 'formations' - a term which lacks life, and unlike its original, has little significance to the 'man-in-the-street'. He might even react to the dictum: 'All formations are impermanent', with a cynical: 'So what?'

Though innocuous, the term is too **bland and passive**.

Venerable Ñāṇavīra's rendering 'determinations' though it does mean something to the former, is yet too 'cut-and-dried' a term which is not suggestive enough of the finer nuances of the original. It is too 'thin-lipped', to recognize the conditioning aspect of the term *saṅkhārā*. His rendering of 'saṅkhata' by the term 'determined', reveals this flaw, as it is rather suggestive of a determinism. ('Determinate' would be less objectionable.)

'Preparations' seems to be the nearest equivalent. While covering most of the nuances of the original Pali term, it has the added advantage of paving the way to 'nibbidāviraṅga' - (disenchantment and dispassion or detachment).

Life is a series of endless preparations - whether it is for the pauper or for the millionaire. 'All preparations are impermanent' is a fact which could be recognized even by the 'man in the street' as a stark **reality**.

For the house-wife burdened with her household chores, the dictum as it stands is full of significance as also for her husband struggling to keep up with the Joneses, and they will exclaim "Oh! what is not a preparation in this life?"

## 25. Saṅkhārā - Saṅkhata - Asankhata

There is some 'kinship' between 'Saṅkhārā' and 'preparations'; as far as their 'social-background' is concerned.

Unlike the term '*Paṭicca Samuppāda*', '*Saṅkhārā*' was a word already in usage (like *dukkha*, *kamma*, etc), when the Buddha came on the scene, though he gave it a new dimension.

Some of the popular meanings of the term were:

### (1) Culinary preparations

- i. e.g. '*sakuntamaṃsehi susankhatehi.*' - Āmagandha S., Sn. (With well-prepared bird's meat).
- ii. '*sankhatiyō*' - Laṭukikopama S.M.N. (delicacies as special preparations for the table.)

### (2) Back-stage preparations or personal make-up

### (3) A state of stress, tension, or activity; the momentum.

- i. *Yo ahosi pabbhajjābhisamkharo so paṭippassambhi*

*Soṇa Vagga Ud.V.*

(whatever eagerness there was for going-forth, that subsided)

- ii. '..... *gamikābhisamkhāro* ..... *patippassambhi*'

*A.N.IV: 180*

(that eagerness or tension for making the journey, subsided)

- iii. '..... *cakkaṃ* - *yāvaticā abhisankhārassa gati*  
*tāvaticāṃ* - *gantvā ciṅgulāyitvā bhūmiyaṃ papati;*'

*A.N.I.112*

(the wheel ..... rolled as far as the momentum applied on it allowed it to go and then twirled around and fell flat on the ground.)

### (4) Repairing, reconditioning

*'paṭi* - *sankharoti*'

In the formula of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, '*saṅkhārā*' play the 'make-up' role as preparations for the vortical interplay between *viññāṇa* (consciousness) and *nāma-rūpa* (name and form). *Avijjā* (ignorance) provides the darkness of background. The end-product of this interplay is '*pañcupādānakkhandhā*' - the Five Groups of Grasping which therefore, are the Prepared (*saṅkhata*), and each of which is 'a prepared'.

*"Kiñca bhikkhave sankhāre vadetha, Sankhatam  
abhisankharontīti bhikkhave tasmā sankhārāti  
vuccanti. Kiñca sankhatam abhisankharonti.*

*Rūpaṃ rūpattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti  
Vedanam vedanattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti  
Saññam saññattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti  
Sankhāre sankhārattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti  
Viññāṇam viññāṇattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti*

*Sankhatam abhisankharontīti kho bhikkhave tasmā  
Sankhārāti vuccanti .....*

S.N. III 87

“And what, monks, would you say are ‘preparations’? They prepare the ‘prepared’. That, monks, is why they are called preparations’. And what is the ‘prepared’ that they prepare?”

They prepare as ‘a prepared’, **form** into the state of form.

They prepare as ‘a prepared’, **feeling** into the state of feeling.

They prepare as ‘a prepared’, **perception** into the state of perception.

They prepare as ‘a prepared’, **preparations** into the state of preparations.

They prepare as ‘a prepared’ **consciousness** into the state of consciousness.

They prepare the ‘prepared’. So, that is why, monks, they are called preparations.”

It may be noted that ‘*sankhārā*’ as one of the Five Groups of Grasping are defined as *rūpasañcetanā saddasañcetanā* etc. (i.e deliberations on forms, sounds, etc.) These deliberations on sense-objects as ‘**prepared preparations**’ seem so **essential** (that is, seem pithy and substantial), that they are compared to the trunk of a plantain tree (S.N.III.142). The connection between *sañcetanā* and *sankhārā* is something like gathering and constructing.

Consciousness as a ‘**prepared** (*sankhata*) consciousness’ is compared to a conjuror’s trick or ‘*māyā*’ (ibid). Consciousness when freed from these illusory preparations, is referred to as ‘*visankhāragatam cittam*’ (Dhp.v:154) or *Viññāṇam anabhisankhacca vimuttam*’ (S.N.III 5)

This is the ‘Asankhata’ - The Non-prepared state or the Un-prepared.

## 26. Kāyasankhāro, Vacīsankhāro, Cittasankhāro

The dialogue between Dhammadinnā Therī and Visākha Upāsaka.

‘*Kati panayye sankhārāti*’

‘*Tayo me āvuso Visākha sankhārā, kāyasankhāro vacīsankhāro cittasankhāroti,*’

‘*Katamo panayye kāyasankhāro, katamo vacīsankhāro katamo cittasankhāroti.*’

‘*Assāsapassāsā kho āvuso Visākha kāyasankhāro. vitakkavicārā vacīsankhāro, sañña ca vedanā ca cittasankhāroti*’

‘*Kasmā panayye assāsapassāsā kāyasankhāro, kasmā vittakkavicārā vacīsankhāro kasmā sañña ca vedanā ca cittasankhāroti.*’

‘*Assāsapassāsā kho āvuso Visākha, kāyikā, ete dhammā kāyapaṭibaddhā. Tasmā assāsapassāsā kāyasankhāro. Pubbe kho āvuso Visākha, vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācam bhindati. Tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsankhāro. Sañña ca vedanā ca cetasikā. Ete dhammā cittapaṭibaddhā. Tasmā sañña ca vedanā ca cittasankhāroti.*’

CūlaVedalla S.M.N.

‘But, lady, how many preparations are there?’

‘There are these three preparations, friend Visākha, body-preparation, speech-preparation, mind-preparation’.

‘But which, lady, is body-preparation, which is speech-preparation, which is mind-preparation?’

‘The in-breaths and out-breaths, friend Visākha, are body preparation, thinking and pondering are speech preparation, perception and feeling are mind-preparation’.

‘But why are in-breaths and out-breaths a body preparation, lady, why are thinking and pondering a speech-preparation, why are perception and feeling a mind-preparation?’

Friend Visākha, in-breaths and out-breaths are **bodily**, these things are **bound up with the body**, that is why in-breaths and out-breaths are a body-preparation. **First**, friend Visākha, **having thought and pondered, afterwards one breaks into speech**; that is why thinking and pondering are a speech preparation. Perception and feeling are mental; these things are bound up with the mind. That is why perception and feeling are mind-preparation´.

Here the term ´preparation´ seems more ´at-home´ than ´formation´, ´determination´ or ´process´ as a rendering for ´sankhāro´. **(Note the singular)**

To begin with, the in-breaths and out-breaths are a body-preparation not because they ´form´ or ´determine´ the body, but because they prepare the body for more gross forms of activity which assert self. This is the most elementary ´warming-up´ - the springing up into ´life´ - of this ´machine´ - the body. One knows how much the ´rhythm´ of breathing is connected with all forms of strenuous physical exercise. This basic ´Heaving´ and ´Sighing´ which an asthma-patient will tell you is so painful a process, puts you on a see-saw of preparation. Visākha´s question, ´But why are in-breaths and out-breaths body preparation?´ is not out of place, as very often respiration is taken as a matter-of-course. This backstage preparation for more gross forms of activity is generally underestimated or taken for granted. Hence the emphasis that they are ´bodily´, and are ´bound up with the body´.

Thinking and pondering is the basic preparation for what comes out as ´speech´. Here too, Visākha´s counter-question is apposite. **Vitakka-vicārā** is sub-vocal speech - so to say, i.e. a **back-stage preparation** for the **social-function** of ´breaking-out´ into speech. The specific explanation of Dhammadinnā Therī that ´first´ having thought and pondered **afterwards** one breaks into speech, clearly indicates that it is a ´preparation´. This point has been overlooked by Venerable Ñāṇavīra Thera who rhetorically poses the question ´Is thinking and pondering verbal action?´ For him, the emphasis on the words ´pubbe´ (first) and ´pacchā´ (afterwards) signifies a relationship of ´determination´ (See - Notes on Dhamma p.5. Private edition, Sept: 1963)

Perception and feeling are, likewise, an incipient stage in mental activity (or thought activity). With ´saññā´ (perception) and ´vedanā´ (feeling) the ´thinking apparatus´ is already ´buzzing´. ´Saññā´ strikes the **cognitive** note and ´vedanā´ the **affective** note, which prepare (or pave the way for) ´cetanā´ (intention) the **conative**. The fact that ´saññā´ and ´vedanā´ are ´cetasika´ and ´cittapaṭibaddha´ of course needs emphasis (and perhaps re-emphasis too, for Venerable Ñāṇavīra misses this point as well).

Visākha´s questioning on these subliminal levels of bodily, verbal and mental preparation is a preamble to his next question regarding the cessation of perception and feeling. Hence the above discussion is a spotlight on the infrastructure of ´Preparations´ - *Sankhārā*.

## 27. Kāyasankhārā - Vacīsankhārā - Manosankhārā

Bodily, verbal and mental preparations that are ethically significant, and come under the purview of ´kamma´ are referred to as ´Kāyasankhārā, Vacīsankhārā´ and ´Manosankhārā´ - ´mano´ signifying ideational activity. These ´preparations´ which, unlike those discussed above (26) are grosser, more articulate, and more deliberate, are ´puññābhisankhārā´, ´apuññābhisankhārā´ and ´āneñjābhisankhārā´ (i.e. meritorious, demeritorious and imperturbable **specific** preparations).

As a rule, the prefix ´abhi´ is added either to the noun (*abhisankhārā*) or to the verb (*abhisankharoti*) to signify these special categories of preparations. If, for instance, in breathing and out breathing are the ´warming-up´ of the ´machine´, with *puññābhisankhārā* and *apuññābhisankhārā* an **ethical preparation** is made for progress and regress in the saṃsāric context. These preparations go a long way and are the inheritance, as it were, of beings (´..... *kammadāyādā sattā* - *Kukkuravatiya* S.M.N.I 389). ´*Āneñjābhisankhārā*´ which pertain to jhānic realms, are more or less like the rotation of a top which keeps it upright and (apparently) ´imperturbable´.

´*Kamma*´ has been defined in terms of ´*cetanā*´ or intention.



‘Cetanāham bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā’ - A.N.III 415.

“Intention, monks, I say, is action. Intending one does action by body, by speech, by mind.”

The term ‘sankhārā’, however, has its own points of emphasis. If, by ‘cetanā’ one is gathering or ‘piling up’ the kamma heritage, by ‘sankhārā’ one is making preparations to reap the specific good or bad results of his actions. A clear illustration of these points of emphasis in the context of Kamma and its results, is provided by the following reference:

“Micchādiṭṭhikassa purisapuggalassa micchāsankappasa,  
micchāvācassa micchākammantassa micchā ājīvassa  
micchāvāyāmassa micchāsatisa micchāsamādhissa  
micchāñāṇassa micchāvimuttissa yañceva kāyakammaṃ  
yathādiṭṭhi samattaṃ samādinnam, yañca vacikammaṃ  
yathādiṭṭhi samattaṃ samādinnam yañca manokammaṃ  
yathādiṭṭhi samattaṃ samādinnam yā ca cetanā yā ca  
patthanā yo ca paṇidhi ye ca sankhārā sabbe te dhammā  
aniṭṭhāya akantāya amanāpāya ahitaya dukkhāya  
saṃvattanti. Tam kissa hetu. Diṭṭhihi bhikkhave pāpikā”

A.N.V.212

Monks, for a man, a person, who has wrong view, wrong thinking, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration, wrong knowledge, wrong release, whatsoever bodily action is undertaken and carried out in accordance with that view, whatsoever verbal action is undertaken and carried out in accordance with that view, whatsoever mental action is undertaken and carried out in accordance with that view, **whatsoever intention, whatsoever aspiration, whatsoever determination and whatsoever preparations there may be - all those states** conduce to what is unpleasant, not delightful, not agreeable not beneficial - to what is painful. What is the cause of that? Monks, the view is bad’.

The sequence of mental states mentioned here, is also noteworthy. While ‘cetanā’ (intention) imparts the ethical significance to the whole trend, ‘patthanā’ (aspiration) and ‘paṇidhi’ (determination) decide its direction and aim, and ‘sankhārā’ (preparation) - as it were - gives it the stream-line’.

In respect of these ethically significant ‘sankhāras’ which are in some way or other prefixed with ‘abhi’, the term ‘formations’ is not strong enough as a rendering, due to its shade of passivity. Even the words ‘cetanā’ and ‘sañcetanā’ are sometimes coupled with words meaning fabrication, construction or preparation, (‘ceteti’ ‘pakappeti’ ‘abhisankhataṃ abhisañcetaṃ’). As such the dynamic significance of the word ‘sankhāra’ must never be ignored.

## 28. Saṅkhārā and Dhammā

sabbe saṅkhārā aniccāti  
yadā paññāya passati  
atha nibbindatī dukkhe  
esa maggo visuddhiyā

sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhāti  
yadā paññāya passati  
atha nibbindatī dukkhe  
esa maggo visuddhiyā

sabbe **dhammā anattāti**  
yadā paññāya passati  
atha nibbindatī dukkhe  
esa maggo visuddhiyā

Dhp. Vv 277-279

‘All preparations are impermanent’. When one sees this with wisdom, then one becomes disgusted with suffering. This is the path to Purity.

‘All preparations are suffering’. When one sees this with wisdom, then one becomes disgusted with suffering. This is the path to Purity.

**‘All things are not-self’.** When one sees this with wisdom, then one becomes disgusted with suffering. This is the path to Purity.

These three verses touching upon the “*Tilakkhana*” (the three characteristics of existence), have posed a question to many. “Why” - it is often asked, “is it that ‘*sankhārā*’ is used only with reference to ‘*anicca*’ and ‘*dukkha*’ and the word ‘*dhamma*’ is introduced with reference to ‘*anattā*’? What is the ‘logic’ behind this?”

True enough, to many, it is simply a question of ‘logic’, but the value of these three verses lies in the fact that they state a psychological necessity, in the interests of ‘*nibbidā*’ (‘disgust’ or ‘disenchantment’)

Even to the average man or woman conscious of the grosser aspects of ‘*sankhārā*’ (‘preparations’) it may appear that life is an endless series of preparations. But the pity of it is that to them these preparations seem so ‘essence-tial’, and ‘pithy’ like the plantain trunk which simulates something substantial. So all the routine ‘make-ups’ ‘concoctions’ and ‘preparations’ are recognized as part and parcel of life. ‘Variety is the spice of life’, they say. For them, the ‘rat-race’ promises so much ‘pep’, that sans preparations, life seems dull. On the debris of one shattered ‘Castle-of Hope’ they will readily build another. And for every castle built on this earth, a thousand or more are built ‘in-the-AIR’.

But there comes a time, at least to some of them - to take stock of the situation they are in. Either it is a case of ‘*yonisomanasikāra*’ (radical reflection) aroused in the clarity of ‘*saddhā*’ on hearing the Dhamma, or it is some rude shock in life, like loss of the beloved as in the cases of Pātācārā and Kisā Gotamī. Bereavement gives such a powerful object lesson in impermanence and suffering that one is either driven to near insanity or to the search for deliverance (‘*sammohavepakkāham bhikkhave dukkham vadāmi pariyeṭṭhivappakkam vā*’ A.N.III 416). ‘Monks, suffering, I say, has either delusion or search as its result .....’). If one is fortunate enough to come across the Dhamma at this juncture, one stands a better chance to make a good start.

The important point, however, is to see that all preparations are impermanent, and it calls for clarity and wisdom to see this. It is said that ‘preparations’ are the most subtle form of suffering, even as hunger is the subtlest of diseases.

*Jighacchāparamā rogā  
sankhāraparamā dukkhā  
etaṃ ñatvā yathābhūtam  
nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*

*Dhp. V. 203*

‘Hunger is the farthest of disease. Preparations are the farthest in the case of sufferings. Knowing this as it really is, Nibbāna is the highest bliss.’

Just as much as ‘hunger’ is taken for granted as part and parcel of life and is even prided on with the euphemism ‘appetite’, so are ‘*sankhāras*’ or ‘preparations’ particularly those subliminal levels discussed above (26). If ever the question is raised why the word ‘*dhamma*’ is not introduced into the first or the second verse quoted above, one has only to point out that the range of suffering extends only up to ‘*sankhāra*’ as Dhp. V 203 specifically states. (Note that the word ‘*parama*’ as expressing the ‘upper limit’ can mean either ‘highest’ or ‘worst’ according to the context.) It is, as though, ‘*Dukkha*’ as ‘distress’ has coincided with the element of ‘stress’ in ‘*sankhāra*’.

‘Then what is the provocation for looking upon all dhammas as ‘*anattā*’? it may be asked. Now, it is said that even pre - Buddhist sages and as a matter of fact, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta had reached the higher Jhanic levels of *ākiñcaññāyatana* (sphere of Nothingness) and ‘*nevasaññā nāsaññāyatana*’ (sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception). The Buddha, soon after his Enlightenment even thought of them as the fittest persons to be taught the Dhamma first, (see *Ariyapariyesana S.M.N.*) because they had already become acquainted with the sublime levels of

‘*sankhārā*’. Blinded with self-bias, those sages, however, were unable to distinguish ‘*sankhārās*’ as such and hence they clung to those mental phenomena as states of some permanent ‘soul’. These, therefore, become the ‘wherewithal’ for fresh ‘preparations’. Unless one ‘lets go’ of these ‘*dhammas*’, there is no escape from ‘*sankhāras*’ - from preparations, stress and distress. Like a cancer, *sankhāras* have so blighted this existence that they thrive on the minutest trace of a thing viewed as self. Ignorance and craving regarding ‘things’ presented to consciousness have to be done away with, in order that the seemingly unending process of ‘preparations’ (‘*sankhārasantati*’) and with it ‘*Dukkha*’ - may cease. To see all *dhammas* as ‘not self’, is therefore a necessity. Without that insight, whether one likes it or not, *sankhāras* will go on, true to the simile of the man forcibly and unwillingly dragged towards a pit of embers, given as an illustration of the nature of ‘*manosañcetanā*’ (see S.N.II 11). So powerfully insatiable is craving that the Samsāric individual is for ever ‘inclined’ (‘*nati*’) like the ‘Leaning Tower-of-Pisa’.

In Venerable Ñānavira’s explanation of the relevance of these three verses to the problem of ‘*sankhāras*’, a reversal of the order is evident. The important word ‘*sankhāras*’ is defined as ‘something upon - which- something else- depends’ - a determinant or a determination (‘Notes on Dhamma’ p.10) and the word ‘*dhamma*’ as all things dependent upon other things.

With this definition, the seeing of the impermanent and suffering nature of *sankhāras* becomes a manoeuvre of levering out the notion of self - an indirect method to see ‘*dhammas*’ as impermanent. As he puts it - “he must first see that this thing is dependent upon or is determined by, some other thing, and he must then see that this other thing, this determination or *sankhāra* is impermanent. When he sees that the other thing, the *sankhāra*, on which this thing depends, is impermanent, he sees that this thing too, must be impermanent, and he no longer regards it as ‘self’” (ibid).

The Path to Purity is not that circuitous. The giving up of ‘*dhammas*’ by seeing them as ‘not self’ is a question of calming

down *sankhāra*, thereby ending all suffering, as the expressions ‘*sankhārūpasama*’ and ‘*dukkhūpasama*’ suggest. (Note that the word ‘*upasama*’ is suggestive of something more dynamic than a ‘determinant’), The ‘giving - up’, the ‘letting - go’ thus becomes a matter of necessity. Hence, instead of resorting to a legerdemain, the Buddha plainly asks us to face the problem of ‘*anattā*’ fairly and squarely and to assiduously develop ‘*anattasaññā*’ (‘perception of not self’) from the very outset in as comprehensive a manner as possible. ‘*Sammādiṭṭhi*’ has always to be in the vanguard (‘*sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti - Mahācattārisaka S.M.N.*’) and not inveigled from behind. One of the most effective formulas recommended by the Buddha for constant reflection on the ‘*anattā*’ characteristic, not only dispenses with the need for ‘a lever’ but on the contrary goes so far as to exhaust the latencies to the conceit of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. It occurs in a number of suttas in the Canon. The *Mahā Puṇṇama Sutta*, for instance, introduces it as follows:

*“Kathaṃ pana bhante jānato kathaṃ passato imasmiṃca saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu ahaṃkāra - mamaṃkāra mānānusayā na hontīti.”*

*“Yaṃ kiñci, bhikkhu, rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ rūpaṃ netarī mama nesohamasmi na meso attāti, evametarī yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passati.*

*yā kāci vedanā .....  
yā kāci saññā .....  
ye keci saṅkhārā .....  
yaṃ kiñci viññāṇaṃ .....na meso attāti.*

*Evaṃ kho bhikkhu jānato evaṃ passato imasmiṃca saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu ahaṃkāra mamaṃkāra mānānusayā na hontīti.”*

*M.N.III 18f*

‘But lord, in what manner should one know and see so that there come to be in him no underlying tendencies to conceive this body with its consciousness and all its external signs in terms of ‘I’ and ‘mine’?

‘Any kind of **form**, monk, whatever, whether past, future or present, in oneself or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, he sees all of it with right wisdom as it is, thus: “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my **self**”

‘Any kind of **feeling** whatever .....

‘Any kind of **perception** whatever .....

‘Any kind of **preparations** whatever .....

‘Any kind of **consciousness** whatever .....

..... this is not my **self**.

‘It is when a man knows and sees thus, monk, that there come to be no underlying tendencies in him to conceive this body with its consciousness and all external signs in terms of “I” and “mine”.’

One who effectively wields this formula in combating the notion of self, is compared at A.N.II 202 to a skilled archer (i) who shoots afar (‘*dūre pātī*’) (ii) by the flash of lightning (‘*akkhaṇavedhī*’) and (iii) rends asunder even a huge body (‘*mahato kāyassa padāletā*’). That is to say (i) he attains Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*), (ii) becomes one of the Right View (*sammādiṭṭhi*) and (iii) attains to Right Freedom (*sammāvimutti*), with which the huge mass of ignorance is rent asunder.

This kind of reflection which sweeps the entire range of ‘dhammas’ including possible future ones, and puts the imprint, ‘This is not mine’, ‘This am I not’, ‘This is not my self’ in such a way as to prevent breeding fresh preparations (‘*sankhāras*’) reveals the immense importance of the line ‘*sabbe dhammā anattāti*’. It is as if the ‘raw material’ for ‘preparations’ is condemned well in advance to stem the gushing currents of craving. **The insight into ‘not self’ dispels the darkness of ignorance which sustains the ‘make-up’ activities of ‘sankhāras’.** Whereas earlier ‘preparations’ were

looked upon with the conceit ‘am’ (‘*asmimāna*’) as so many ‘I-do’s and ‘my-doings’ (‘*ahaṅkāra mamaṅkāra*’ - lit. ‘I-ing and mine-ing’), the insight into ‘not self’, as it deepens, reveals that ‘preparations’ are simply conditioned by or are dependent upon Ignorance (*avijjā*). Hence it is that with right understanding of the nature of this conceit, one puts an end to suffering (‘*sammā mānābhisamayā antamakāsi dukkhassa*’ .....

*suddhaṃ dhammasamuppādaṃ  
suddhaṃ sankhāra santatiṃ  
passantassa yathābhūtaṃ  
na bhayaṃ hoti gāmaṇī.*

*Adhimutta Thera-Thag*

“To one who sees as-it-is, the arising of pure phenomena, and the succession of pure preparations, there is no fear, O headman.”

## 29. Heave! - and - sigh!

Supposing we ‘sit’ after doing some strenuous work. We want calm and repose. We are tired of activity - of endless preparations. But it seems we cannot help breathing. As if to ‘have done’ with even this laborious activity of our lungs, we take one d-e-e-p breath - like packing up into a bundle so many possible tiny breaths. That is, we ‘heave’ to grab a moment of calm and repose even from this tedious ‘work’ of breathing. But do we really get what we want? No. We have to ‘let go’ of the hard-won stock of air now choking our lungs. Hoping to get the longed-for repose at the other end of the ‘see-saw’, we release the breath and empty out our lungs. But do we find calm and repose here - in this ‘sigh’ of relief? No. We have to breathe again, and again. How convulsively we grasped (or gasped) for breath! But how we have to give it up perforce!

And so-

we go on and on

in and out.

## We "HEAVE" and "SIGH"

*aniccā vata sankhārā  
uppādavayadhammino  
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti  
tesaṃ vūpasamo sukho*

Transient indeed are preparations  
To rise, to fall, their nature is  
They arise only to pass away  
Bliss it is to calm them down.

*Vayadhammā sankhārā  
Appamādena sampādettha*

Preparations are subject to decay.  
Accomplish your TASK without delay,

*-Mahā Parinibbāna S.,D.N.*

### 30. The 'Shuttle - free Mind'

**'There seems to be a seam, but there is no seam'**

*Yo ubhante viditvāna  
majjhe mantā na lippati  
taṃ brūmi mahāpurisoti  
So 'dha sibbanimaccagā*

*-Tissametteya S.Sn.*

"He who having known both ends, with wisdom does not get attached to the middle, him I call a Great Man. He has gone beyond the seamstress in this world."

This verse which was uttered by the Buddha in reply to a question that occurred to the Brahmin ascetic Tissametteya, gets an interesting Canonical commentary at Anguttara Nikaya. III. 399. It was the topic of discussion in an assembly of monks at Deer Park in

Isipatana. Quoting the verse in question, those Elder monks raised the point:

"What, friends, is 'one end' what is the 'second end', what is the 'middle' and who is the 'seamstress'?"

As many as six interpretations were offered by individual monks, each of which, they claimed, is sufficient admonition for one to make and end of suffering here and now. Then at the suggestion of another monk, they all approached the Buddha and presented him with the 'report' of this 'symposium' to get his ratification.

The Buddha ratified them all as 'well-said' each in its own way, but explained what exactly he meant when he uttered that verse to Metteyya. His explanation happened to coincide with the first interpretation that came up at the symposium. Conveniently tabulated, the six different interpretations are as follows:

One-end	Second-end	Middle	Seamstress
1. Contact	Arising of contact	Cessation of contact	Craving
2. Past	Future	Present	Craving
3. Pleasant feeling	Unpleasant feeling	Neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling	Craving
4. 'Name'	'Form'	Consciousness	Craving
5. Six internal sense bases	Six external sense bases	Consciousness	Craving
6. Personality	Arising of Personality	Cessation of Personality	Craving

A sewing-machine illustrates the seamstress at work. As the needle pierces through one fold making the contact on the second fold, the shuttle hastens to make a stitch (‘in time’), lest there be a cessation of contact in between. And so the needle comes up with the same thread to go down again and again - stitch after stitch. The shuttle works unseen, connecting up the stitches as long as its own load of cotton lasts.

Supposing some ‘fine day’ the shuttle runs out of its load of cotton and is not replenished in time. What will happen as the machine goes into action? The needle will pierce through one fold, giving a ‘semblance’ of contact to the second fold, but as it comes up, there is a cessation in the middle-which may pass unnoticed for a while by one unacquainted with the mechanism. The needle seems to work alright for him - as before - and apparently, there are the stitches too to connect up. But those who ‘KNOW’, know what has happened.

**There seems to be a seam, but there is no seam.**

Now, as for the ‘seamstress’ - ‘craving’, she has the following ‘qualifications’, according to the Buddha.

*‘yāyāṃ taṅhā ponobhavikā nandirāgasahagatā  
tatratatrābhinandinī .....’ (Saccavibhanga S.M.N. etc)*

‘And that craving which is the perpetrator of re-becoming which is allied to delight and lust, and which rejoices now-here now-there’.

In this particular context too, ‘craving’ is defined in all the six interpretations with the words ‘.... *taṅhā hi naṃ sibbati tassa tesseva bhavassa abhinibbattiyā ...*’ (‘..... for it is craving that ‘stitches’ him so that he is born into this and that state of existence ...’) In the formula of Paṭicca samuppāda, ‘craving’ is the condition for ‘grasping’ (*upādāna*) which in its turn conditions ‘becoming’ or ‘existence’ (*bhava*).

So the ‘seamstress’ is fully qualified for her job. Whether it is a case of ‘contact’ or any of the other dualities mentioned in the five subsequent explanations, the ‘seamstress’ sees to it that a recurrence is maintained (*‘ponobhavikā’*) by linking up the two and

introducing delight and lust (*‘nandirāgasahagatā’*). Notoriously licentious (*‘tatratatrābhinandinī’*) she reaches out (*‘upādāna’*) and even outreaches - to bring about ever new states of existence.

The “middle” represents the domain of the ‘s-l-u-r’ where “Ignorance” lurks to give a ‘spur’ - hence, *‘avijjā paccayā sankhārā.’* Whether it is a cessation of a specific contact or any of the other members in the middle (i.e. present, neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling, consciousness, cessation-of-personality), the usual tendency is to ‘ignore’ - to ‘slur-over’. When this habit of ‘slurring-over’ is carried on for aeons and aeons, a latency or an underlying tendency (*‘anusaya’*) is built up, which is difficult to root out. But, luckily it is in this very domain that the secret of emancipation lies. Perhaps the best illustration of this principle is found in the *Cūla Vedalla Sutta*. (M.N.) in the form of a dialogue between Dhammadinnā Therī and Visākha Upāsaka. It concerns the inter-relation between the three grades of feeling - ‘pleasant’ ‘unpleasant’, ‘neither unpleasant nor pleasant’.

## I

*‘Sukhā panayye vedanā kiṃ sukhā kiṃ dukkhā dukkhā  
vedanā kiṃ dukkhā kiṃ sukhā adukkhamasukhā vedanā  
kiṃ sukhā kiṃ dukkhāti’*

*‘Sukhā kho āvuso Visākha vedanā ṭhitisukhā  
vipariṇamadukkhā dukkhāvedanā ṭhitidukkhā  
vipariṇāmasukhā adukkhamasukhā vedanā  
ñāṇasukhā aññāṇadukkhāti’.*

‘But, lady, in what respect is pleasant feeling pleasant and in what respect is it unpleasant? In what respect is unpleasant feeling unpleasant, and in what respect is it pleasant? In what respect is neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling pleasant and in what respect is it unpleasant?’

‘Friend Visākha, pleasant feeling is pleasant in respect of presence and unpleasant in respect of change. Unpleasant feeling is

unpleasant in respect of presence and pleasant in respect of change. Neither unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling is pleasant in respect of knowledge and unpleasant in respect of ignorance.

## II

*‘Sukhāya panayye vedanāya kimanusayo anuseti, dukkhāya vedanāya kimanusayo anuseti adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya kimanusayo anusetīti.’*

*‘Sukhāya kho āvuso Visākha vedanāya rāgānusayo anuseti, dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo anuseti adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo anusetīti.’*

‘But, lady, underlying tendency to what underlies in the case of pleasant feelings? Underlying tendency to what underlies in the case of the unpleasant feeling? Underlying tendency to what underlies in the case of the neither-unpleasant nor pleasant feeling?’

‘Friend, Visakha, the underlying tendency to lust underlies in the case of pleasant feeling. The underlying tendency to resistance underlies in the case of the unpleasant feeling. The underlying tendency to ignorance underlies in the case of neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling’

## III

*‘Sukhāya panayye vedanāya kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Sukhāya kho āvuso Visākha vedanāya dukkhā vedanā paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Dukkhāya panayye vedanāya kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Dukkhāya kho āvuso Visākha vedanāya sukhā vedanā paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Adukkhamasukhāya panayye vedanāya kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Adukkhamasukhāya kho āvuso Visākha vedanāya avijjā paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Avijjāya panayye kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Avijjāya kho āvuso Visākha, vijjā paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Vijjāya panayye kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Vijjāya kho āvuso Visākha vimutti paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Vimuttiyā panayye kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Vimuttiyā kho āvuso Visākha nibbānaṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Nibbānassa panayye kiṃ paṭibhāgoti’*

*‘Accasarāvuso Visākha pañham nāsakki pañhānaṃ pariyantaṃ gahetuṃ. Nibbānogadham hi āvuso Visākha brahmacariyaṃ nibbānaparāyaṇaṃ nibbāna pariyosānaṃ.’*

‘What is the counterpart of pleasant feeling, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, unpleasant feeling is the counterpart of pleasant feeling’.

‘What is the counterpart of unpleasant feeling, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, pleasant feeling is the counterpart of unpleasant feeling’.

‘What is the counterpart of neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, **ignorance** is the counterpart of neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling’

‘What is the counterpart of ignorance, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, **knowledge** is the counterpart of ignorance’

‘What is the counterpart of knowledge, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, **deliverance** is the counterpart of knowledge’

‘What is the counterpart of deliverance, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, **Nibbāna** is the counterpart of deliverance’

‘What is the counterpart of Nibbāna, lady?’

‘Friend Visākha, you have pushed this line of questioning too far. You were not able to grasp the limit of questions. For, friend Visākha, the Holy Life merges in Nibbāna, leads to Nibbāna, reaches its consummation in Nibbāna.’

As this dialogue reveals, the neutrality, indifference and ignorance associated with the Middle in the context of feeling are transformed into knowledge, detachment and deliverance. The second line of the verse, ‘*majjhe mantā na lippati*’ (with **wisdom**, does not get attached to the middle) is to the same effect. The Middle Path runs right through this domain of the S-L-U-R, transcending its limitations.

This ‘anguished world swayed by **contact**’ (‘*ayam loko santāpajāto phassapareto*’ – Ud. Nanda Vagga) slurs over each specific cessation of contact, which is conditionally arisen. For the worldling, the ‘see-saw’ alternation is between pain and pleasure (see S.N.IV.208), and this makes him too busy to probe into the ‘cessation of contact’ as such. The fact that it is just at this point that insight unfolds itself is best illustrated by the Nandakovāda Sutta (M.N.)<sup>2</sup>.

A similar slurring over is found in the case of the second interpretation where ‘Past’ is ‘One-end’, ‘Future’ the ‘Second-end’ and ‘Present’ is in ‘the Middle’. The Present is something elusive for the worldling hankering after the Past and yearning for the Future (see Bhaddekaratta S. M.N.). But here too it is the task of insight to discern the impermanence of the present phenomena without resort to a self-bias.

In the fourth and the fifth interpretations, consciousness occurs in the middle, as its conditionally arisen nature is often overlooked. Its role is taken for granted by the worldling engrossed in ‘name-and form’ (*nāmarūpa*) and in the six internal and external sense-bases (i.e the six senses and their respective objects). The magical illusion (*māyā*) of consciousness is to be comprehended.

In the sixth interpretation, the ‘cessation of personality’ (*sakkāyanirodha*) stands in the middle. The worldling who finds himself leashed to a ‘self’ like a dog to a post, does not realize that the ambit of his ‘personality’ (*sakkāyo*) is confined to just the five Grasping-Groups. Nor does he realize that the cause of ‘arising of his personality’ (*sakkāyasamudayo*) is ‘desire’ (‘*chanda*’). Hence the ‘cessation of personality’ is for him tantamount to annihilation.

That is perhaps why the Brahmins steeped in Eternalism (*sassatadiṭṭhi*) mistook the Buddha for a Nihilist pure and simple, and disparaged him. (See Alagaddūpama S. M.N.). A ‘cessation of personality’ (‘*sakkāyanirodho*’) which is not tantamount to annihilation will appear as a possibility only when one gets an insight into ‘impermanence’, ‘suffering’, and ‘not-self’.

If, then, by any one of the six methods outlined above, one ‘dismisses’ the ‘Seamstress’ - abandons craving - how will his mind function? As some seem to think nowadays, will he be reduced to a VEGETABLE? If all this time his mind had been ‘Prepared’ (‘*sankhata*’) what will be the ‘Un-prepared mind’ like?

The ‘Released mind’ (*vimuttam cittaṃ*) or Influx-free mind (*anāsavaṃ cittaṃ*) is sometimes referred to as ‘the mind gone to the state of non-preparation’ (*visankhāragataṃ cittaṃ* - DhP v: 154). In at least one context it is called ‘consciousness-not-having- been-prepared, set free’. (*Viññāṇāṃ anabhisankhacca vimuttam* S.N. III: 153). ‘Consciousness which is non-manifestative’ (*Viññāṇāṃ anidassanam* - D.N.I 213 M. N.I 329) is yet another way of referring to it.

This is the ‘SHUTTLE-FREE MIND’. The ‘machine’ appears to ‘work’ as before. There are the apparent ‘preparations’. But there is no ‘end-product’ as ‘a prepared’ (*sankhata*). The Perfect One is released from the “reckoning” of preparations. Though his six senses come in ‘contact’ with objects, there is no “SHUTTLE” to complete the stitch. In other words: **There seems to be a seam but there is no seam .....**



- i. *Na kappayanti na purekkharonti  
accantasuddhīti nate vadanti  
ādānagantham gathitam visajja  
āsam na kubbanti kuhiñci loke*

*Suddhaṭṭhaka S. Sn.,*

‘They **fabricate not**, they proffer not, nor do they hold on to a ‘highest purity’, as a view. Letting go of the **knotty tangle of grasping**, they form no desire anywhere in this world’.

- ii. *Na me hoti ahosinti  
bhavissanti na hoti me  
sankhārā vibhavissanti  
tatha kā paridevanā*

*Adhimutta Thera-Thag.*

‘It does not occur to me ‘I was’  
Nor does it occur to me ‘I will be’  
Preparations will perish,  
What is there to lament?’

- iii. *Suddham dhammasamuppādam  
suddham sankhārasantatim  
passantassa yathābhūtam  
na bhayaṃ hoti gāmaṇi*

*-ibid.*

‘To one who sees as-it-is, the arising of pure phenomena and the succession of pure preparations, there is no fear, O! headman’.

### 31. Attend to your ‘Ins’ and ‘Outs’ - until the In-lines fade away into Out-lines.

- i. *Tiṇakaṭṭhasamaṃ lokam  
yadā paññāya passati  
mamattam so asamvindam  
natthi meti na socati*

*Adhimutta Thera-Thag.*

‘When one sees with wisdom, the world as comparable to grass and twigs, experiencing no ‘mine-ness’, one does not lament: O! I have nothing!’

- ii. *Kadā nu kaṭṭhe ca tiṇe latā ca  
khandhe ime haṃ amite ca dhamme  
ajjhakkāneva ca bāhirānica  
samaṃ tuleyyam tadidam kadā me*

*Tālapuṭa Thera-Thag.*

‘When shall I weigh, as equal, twigs, grass and creepers - these aggregates and countless things internal as well as external – O! When will that be of me?’

(For the ‘mode-of-approach’, see *Mahā Hatthipadopama Sutta* and *Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya)

### 32. I. Dancing on a frying-pan.

As one of the four ‘vipallāsas’ (perversions) ‘anicce niccasaññā’ (perception of permanence in the impermanent) is to be systematically counteracted with ‘aniccasaññā’ (perception of impermanence). The perversion prevails at three levels - ‘saññā’ (sense-perception), ‘citta’ (thought) and ‘diṭṭhi’ (view).

Ignorance or ignoring of the disintegrating nature of the ‘sankhata’, leads to chronic delusion (‘moha’) with its twin feelers attachment (‘rāga’) and aversion (‘patigha’). Thus curiosity, love and hate obsess the groping worldlings.

The ‘Sankhata-facade’ has to be **penetrated through** with the Ariyan penetrative wisdom which sees the rise and fall (‘..... udayatthagāminiyā paññāya ariyāya nibbedhikāya’). ‘Bhavanirodho sacchikātabbo’ ‘Cessation of becoming is something to be **realized**.’ What prevents its realization is ‘tanhā ponobhavikā’ - craving which makes for re-becoming. With delight

and lust it connects up and obscures the fact of cessation by delighting now-here now-there, **like dancing on a frying pan**. Hence it is the *'nibbidā virāga'* (disenchantment and dispassion) regarding the 'present' that automatically lays bare the cessation of *sāṅkhāras* which make up the facade.

*'Rūpaṃ kho Ānanda, aniccaṃ sankhataṃ  
paṭicca samuppannaṃ khayadhammaṃ  
vayadhammaṃ virāgadhammaṃ nirodhadhammaṃ.  
Tassa nirodhā nirodhoti vuccati ..... Vedanā  
..... saññā ..... saṅkhārā.....  
vinñāṇam kho Ānanda, aniccaṃ .....*

S.N.III. 24

'Form, Ānanda, is impermanent, prepared, dependently arisen, of a nature to waste away, pass-away, fade away and cease. By such ceasing, is there said to be cessation. Feeling ..... Perception ..... Preparations..... Consciousness, Ānanda, is impermanent .....

II. Take a peep into your private museum where the relics of yesterday's treasured possessions and status symbols lie.

### 33. Phantasmagoria

Yesterday	=	last night's dream
Tomorrow	=	tonight's dream
Today	=	a day-dream

### 34. "Old-age" - a caricature of Youth

### 35. Bale out! No 'S.O.S'.

I *siñca bhikkhu imaṃ nāvam  
sittā te lahumessatī  
hītvā rāgañca dosañca  
tato nibbāna mehi*

'Bale out this ship, O! monk. Emptied it will sail lightly for you. Giving up lust and hate, you will then arrive at Nibbāna.'

### II. From EI Dorado - (A parable)

A steamer is returning from EI Dorado with a heavy cargo of gold nuggets in its hold. Adorning its cabin is a vast array of exquisite wood carvings worth a fortune.

Still in mid-ocean, it runs out of coal, Not a breath of wind to unfurl the sails. When every available piece of wood had become firewood, the wood carvings too follow suit to go up in smoke.

The ship is now moving and the sailors heave a sigh of relief. But then comes a Titanic disaster. Just when land hove in sight, the ship runs on rocks.

Water seeps in fast. No way to seal the damaged keel. Only the fate of the sailors looks sealed.

'S.O.S' 'Save-our-souls' they signal in vain. Save our (Golden) Souls!

"Bale out. Dump the gold into the sea"! Some one suggests. "What? Dump all this precious gold into the sea?" the others retort. "We would rather die".

Water gushes in. 'Now-or-never'. As a last resort they agree to 'let go' of the gold. And so the precious gold safely reached the bottom of the sea, and the sailors, eventually, the safety of dry land.....

Where were the sailors born?  
Where will they die?  
Where was that gold born?  
Where will it die?  
Where were the carvings born?  
Where will they die?  
Where were the **cravings** born  
There they all die.

36. If everything happens the way we want, then this is not 'Samsāra'
37. When things look too 'rosy' there is a danger of a 'red' coming in.
38. Make an appointment with disappointment - then you will never meet with it.
39. When 'Past' and 'Future' crowd out the 'passage' of the present, thoughts cannot move in single file.
40. 'Sankhāras' are life-situations measured out in thought.
41. See the four elements in the 'melting-pot'.
42. Your biography is being filmed for you - even before it is written.
43. When one fully understands that one is 'acting', one is no longer acting.
44. When one becomes fully aware that one is reacting, one is no longer reacting.
45. 'Life' looks such a formidable 'sum' we are set to work out for ourselves, with all its numerous 'additions' and 'subtractions', 'divisions' and 'multiplications', until we come to the last step: 'multiply by **NOUGHT**'

*Suññato lokam avekkhassu  
mogharāja sadā sato  
attānudiṭṭhim ūhacca  
evam maccutaro siyā  
evam lokam avekkhantam  
maccurājā na passati*

-Sn. V. 1119

Look upon the world as void, Mogharāja,  
And mindful ever, uproot  
The lingering view of self  
Thus will you cross the realm of Death,  
For, the king of Death sees him not  
Who thus looks upon the World (as void)

#### 46. I. The Elusive Gem

(A moral from Ummagga Jataka)

King Vedeha was informed that there is a gem in the pond by the city-gate. He consulted one of his advisers, Senaka, as to the means of getting it. As suggested by the latter the pond was emptied of its water and when they failed to find the gem, Senaka got the men to take even the mud out. Still, the gem could not be found. But once the pond got filled again, the elusive gem was visible there.

Then the king sought the help of his youngest adviser Bodhisatta Mahosadha, who agreed to solve the problem. He came to the pond and had a look, and understood that the gem is not in the pond but on the palm tree by the bank. He got one of the men to immerse a bowl into the water and showed that the gem is visible there too. "Where then, is the gem?" asked the King. "It is in the crow's nest on the palm tree" said Mahosadha, "Send someone up and get it down". And so it was got down and given to the king. It was only the reflection that they had sighted in the pond. They had failed to reflect wisely on the REFLECTION!

*'Anattani attamānim  
passa lokam sedevakam  
niviṭṭham nāmarūpasmim  
idam saccanti maññati*

-Sn. V 756 Dvyatānupassanā S.

Just see a world! with all its gods  
Fancying a self, where naught, exists  
Entrenched in name and form it holds  
The conceit that this is the truth.

So it is the case with the 'self-image', 'nāma-rūpa', reflected on consciousness. Many were the philosophers who traced it (metaphysically) to the bottom of the 'pond' of consciousness. But they could not 'fathom' it, for their perspective was wrong ('ayoniso manasikāra'). They, too had failed to reflect wisely on the reflection.

Those who 'craved' for the gem 'ignored' the nest as external because the precious gem shined so internal though both were external, as a matter of fact. Only the Bodhisatta adjusted his perspective so as to see the gem and the nest 'as-they-are' i.e mere reflections of the external.

Likewise, only the Buddha, of all religious teachers adjusted his perspective in such way as not to get entangled in the reflection - 'Nāma rūpa'. As he put it: '*tadapi phassapaccayā*' - 'that too is due to contact' (*Brahmajāla S. D.N.*). With his keen insight which was not blocked by any 'precious' object ('*anārammaṇaṃ*') he discovered that the 'pond' of consciousness has the same crystal clear, lucid limpid nature it always had - **for the keen sighted.**

## II. Some 'reflections' on seeing the REFLECTION

- i. *Paññā bhāvetabbā  
viññāṇaṃ pariññeyyaṃ*

-Mahā Vedalla S. M.N.

Wisdom should be developed, consciousness should be comprehended.

- ii. *Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ  
anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ  
ettha āpo ca paṭhavī  
tejo vāyo na gādhati  
ettha dīghaṅca rassaṅca  
aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ  
ettha nāmaṅca rūpaṅca  
asesaṃ uparujjhati  
viññāṇassa nirodhena  
etthetaṃ uparujjhati*

-Kevaḍḍha S. D.N.I. 213

'Consciousness which is non-manifestative  
Endless, lustrous on all sides  
Here it is that earth and water  
Fire and air no footing find  
Here again are long and short,  
Fine and coarse, pleasant, unpleasant  
And name and form, all these are here  
Cut off without exceptions  
When consciousness does come to cease  
All these are held in check herein.'

- iii. *Yā ceva kho pana ajjhattikā paṭhavidhātu, yā ca bāhirā  
paṭhavidhātu, paṭhavidhātūrevesā ....*

-Mahā Hatthipadopama S. M.N.

'And whatever earth element that is in oneself and whatever earth-element that is external to oneself - it is just earth element itself.'

- iv. *Passaṃ nara dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ  
disvāna vā ñassati tāni meva  
kāmaṃ bahuṃ passatu appakaṃ vā  
na tena suddhiṃ kusalā vadanti*

Mahā Viyūha S S.N. - 908.

'A seeing-man will see name and form, and having seen, he will know those alone. Verily, let him see much or less. Yet experts do not speak of purity thereby.'

- v. *Kadā nu kaṭṭhe ca.....*

-(See above p 38.)

- vi. *Kodhaṃ jahe vipphaheyya mānaṃ  
saññojanaṃ sabbamatikkameyya  
taṃ nāmarūpasmiṃ asajjamānaṃ  
akiñcanaṃ nānupatanti dukkhā.*

-Dhp v. 211

‘Let one put wrath away, conceit abandon  
And get well beyond all fetters as well.  
That one by name and form untrammelled  
And possessionless - no pains befall

vii. *‘Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañca kho  
āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭham.....’*

-A. N. I. 10

‘This mind, monks, is luminous, only, that it is defiled by  
extraneous defilements .....

47. *Saññā* tries to put the ‘two-and-two’ together, but ‘*Sankhārā*’ see to it that the total is not four but five.
48. ‘*phassa*’ is the apex of the *sankhata*-triangle.
49. ‘*Saṅkhata*’: The element of artificiality in the word suggests **simulation, pretension, and verisimilitude** as illustrated by the five Canonical similes, mass of foam (form), water bubble (feeling), mirage (perception), plantain tree (preparations) and magical-illusion (consciousness).
50. ‘*Sankhārā*’: The vibrant forces that **impel, propel and compel** the samsāric individual, may be put down to the **tension** created by an **imagined** relationship between an internal and an external sense base. It is like a rope strung up between two pegs. Hence *saḷāyatananirodha* (cessation of the six sense-bases) brings about ‘*sabbasamkhārasamatha*’ (stilling of all preparations). When the eye ceases, forms fade away (..... *cakkhuñca nirujjhati rūpā ca virajjanti*).

(S.N. IV 98)<sup>3</sup>

Knock off the ‘eye’, from the **scene** (or the seen) and ‘**forms**’ will shrink into insignificance at the other end for lack of perspective.

51. ‘**Nāma-rūpa**’: The delusion created by *nāma-rūpa* as ‘self image’ is like my imagining that ‘the fellow’ appearing in the mirror. (i.e. my own reflection) is looking at me even when I turn my back on him.

To understand *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is to become aware that ‘the fellow’ looks at me, only when I care to look at the fellow.

‘..... *kiṃ paṭicca? Phassaṃ paṭicca*’.

‘Dependent on what? ‘Dependent on contact’.

All speculative attempts to ‘catch-the-fellow-napping’ are misguided. Hence the Buddha bundled out all the 62 views in *Brahmajāla Sutta* (D.N.) with ‘*tadapi phassapaccayā*’ - ‘**That too is due to contact**’

The advice to *Bāhiya* (Ud.) strikes at the root of this fundamental delusion. “.... in the seen, just the seen, .....” (“..... *diṭṭhe diṭṭhamatṭam bhavissati* .....”)

- i. ‘*Passaṃ naro dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ* .....

(See above p.44)

- ii. ‘*Avijjānīvaraṇassa bhikkhave bālassa taṇhāsampayuttassa evaṃ ayaṃ kāyo samudāgato. Iti ayañceva kāyo bahiddhā ca nāmarūpaṃ itthetaṃ dvayaṃ. Dvayaṃ paṭicca phasso saḷevāyatanāni yehi phuṭṭho bālo sukhadukkhaṃ paṭisaṃvediyati etesaṃ vā aññatarena*’.

-S.N.II 23f

‘For the fool monks, cloaked by ignorance and tied to craving, this body is wrought in this way. Thus there is this body, and name and form outside - thus this pair. Because of the pair, there is contact and just six spheres of sense. Touched by these or by one of them, the fool experiences pleasure and pain.’

## 52. The Witch’s Cauldron

Every little bit of experience becomes ‘**concocted**’ in the ‘**Witch’s cauldron**’ of one’s mind, due to ‘**mindng**’ (*maññanā*). So you are nearer ‘*Asankhata*’ (‘Non-prepared’, Non-concocted) - **if you don’t mind!**

*Maññamāno kho bhikkhave baddho Mārassa,  
amaññamāno mutto pāpimato...*

S. N. IV. 2

‘Minding monks, one is bound by Māra, minding not, he is freed from the Evil One.’

(*maññanā* = imagining in terms of ‘I’, and ‘mine’)

### 53. The Power-House

You are being shown round a hydro-electric scheme, for the first time.

The guide takes you first to the vast reservoir overlooking the dam (Stage I). You wonder how this sleepy reservoir can give you something like electricity, but the guide explains to you that these calm and placid waters are channelled almost unseen into a tunnel through the hills, at some point in the reservoir (Stage II). Then you are taken further down and shown the four big pipe-lines which run towards the power-house at the other end of the tunnel (Stage III). You can also see now that last small pipe line which conveys all that vast stock of water into the power-house (Stage IV). Lastly, you are taken into the power house itself where you can see how that gushing current of water turns the huge turbine at a terrific speed to give you electricity (Stage V).

These five stages of the scheme are somewhat comparable to the five groups of grasping as ‘sankhasankhārā’ or ‘prepared-preparations,’ i.e. **the pent-up vibrant forces that impel, propel and compel.**

Stage I	-	The Grasping Group of Form
Stage II	-	The Grasping Group of Feeling
Stage III	-	The Grasping Group of Perception
Stage IV	-	The Grasping Group of Preparations
Stage V	-	The Grasping Group of Consciousness

### 54. Watch the scenes on the eye-screen and listen to the beat of the ear-drum.

55. Many a battle is fought and won at the **weakest** point in your fortress.

56. Breathe - as if every breath were our last - then you will never be ‘breathless’.

### 57. From the ‘complex’ to the ‘compound’

The resolution of the ‘perception-of-the-compact’ (*ghanasaññā*) by developing the ‘perception of the heap’ (*rāsisaññā*) is a step in the passage from the complex to the compound. Every slight shift of focus is understood as a separate instance of perception - however minute.

### 58. The ‘Element-ary’

‘This and that’ = Paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo.  
(earth, water, fire, air)

‘So and So’ = Paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa, viññāṇa.  
(earth, water, fire, air, space, consciousness)

### 59. Sankhārā - ‘Ever-new’, but ‘Never-lasting’

In this ‘drama’ of ‘LIFE’ you can never ask for a ‘repeat performance’. When once a ‘scene’ is gone - it is gone, gone, gone forever.

‘..... yāvañcidam bhikkhave alameva  
sabbasaṃkhāresu nibbinitum alam  
virajjitum alam vimuccitum.’

A.N.IV 102

‘So much so, monks, it is enough to get disgusted of all preparations, enough to get detached, enough to get released from them.’

60. 'Sankhāre parato disvā hetujāte palokine'

Having seen the preparations as alien, causally arisen and brittle  
.... (Sakulā Therī, Thig)

Life expends itself through sankhārā - a pre-occupation with short-lived identifications (*tammayatā*) courting after-images.

61. Sankhārā

No 'preparation' is 'final' and complete.

'..... *aniccā bhikkhave sankhārā addhuvā  
bhikkhave sankhārā anassāsikā bhikkhave  
sankhārā.....*'

'..... impermanent, monks, are preparations, unstable, monks,  
are preparations, unsatisfying, monks are preparations .....

A.N.IV. 102

62. 'Let-go-ism':

To see sankhāras as 'circum - stantial', not as 'substantial'.

63. Non-identification (*atammayatā*)

To be like a brick in any wall.

64. A strip-tease for 'nibbidā-virāga' (disenchantment - dispassion)

Undress upto the skeleton!

(Stages: 1. head-hairs 2. body-hairs 3. nails 4. teeth 5. skin  
6. flesh 7. sinews)

65. How to be 'measure-less':

Strike off the bottom and be free from reckoning.

.... *yaṃ kho bhikkhu anuseti taṃ anumīyati, yaṃ  
anumīyati, tena saṃkham gacchati'*

'That which lies latent, monks, by that is one measured and that by which one is measured, by that is one reckoned'.

66. 'T-w-a-n-g'

The world is in a whirl, but the winding comes only with  
'*upādāna*' - grasping!

Suppose two persons are trying to wind up some strands into a long long rope, and some mischief maker is keeping a tight hold at the middle, unseen by them. Somehow, the winding itself - queer enough - has started **in the same direction** from both ends, but to all appearance, a rope is being steadily made up owing to the tight hold at the middle. The two at either end are ignorant of the fact that their **winding** is at the same time an **unwinding**. The 'Rope', however, gets more and more tensed, taut and vibrant,

'T-w-a-n-g'

The mischief-maker suddenly 'lets go' of his hold at the middle.  
**Now, where is the 'Rope'?**

**Was there a 'Rope' in truth and fact?**

Find the answer in the following quotes:

1. *muñca pure muñca pacchato  
majjhe muñca bhavassa pārāgū  
sabbattha vimuttamānaso  
na puna jātijaram upehisi*

-Dhp. v. 348

Let go what has gone before  
 Let go that which comes after  
 Let go of the hold at the middle as well  
 And get well beyond all existence  
 Thus with mind released in every way  
 Thou comest never more to birth and decay.

2. *Yassa pure ca pacchā ca  
 Majjhe ca natthi kiñcanaṃ  
 akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ  
 tamahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*

-Dhp. v. 421

Who has naught before or behind him  
 And naught in the middle to call his own  
 Who owns naught and to naught will cling  
 Him do I call a Brahmin".

### 67. 'One' or 'Two'?

Existence involves a duality which has to be transcended. The problem cannot be solved by grasping it as ONE, because by the very grasping, it becomes TWO. (See T-w-a-n-g above)

The moment you grasp the 'rope' that is being whirled round with only a semblance of winding, it becomes a 'REAL' rope with two ends. The result is stress and tension (Dukkha).

*Upādāna paccayā bhavo'*  
 'dependent on grasping, existence'

This 'winding' is a deviation caused by ignorance. All this is **not-SUCH** ('*sabbaṃ vitathaṃ idaṃ*' - *Uruga S. Sn*)

The 'whirl' of the world is the Norm ('Tathatā' - Suchness), where every winding is, at the same time, an 'un-winding'.

*Yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ  
 sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*

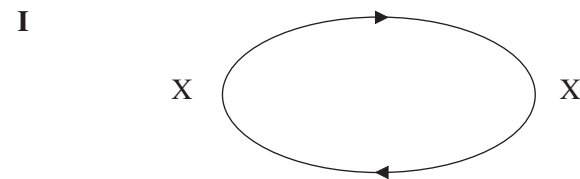
'Whatever is of a nature to arise, all that is of a nature to cease'.

'Let-go' - and you return to Suchness. This is the end of all stress and tension.

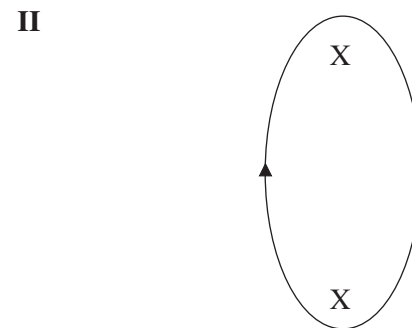
### 68. Ānāpānasati

'The long and the short of it'

When one is able to be mindful of the entire process of in-breathing and out-breathing thus:-



More details of the phenomenon of breathing will become apparent. At this point, a breakthrough in 'vipassanā' may occur, as the 'rise' and 'fall' of breath is now clear. If the understanding of breath as 'long' and 'short' (I) is 'horizontal', its understanding as 'rise' and 'fall' is rather vertical (II).





The very uniformity of attention which negotiates the hitherto unseen 'bends' (X) in the process, ensures greater calm, hence the next step - ('calming down bodily preparations' ....)

It is a RHYTHM that makes for CALM. One that goes DEEP as well.

#### 69. 'SATI' - 'memory' or 'mindfulness' or both?

The relation between 'memory' and 'mindfulness' is sometimes a point of controversy. While the Pali word 'sati' denotes both, there is reluctance in some quarters to grant any connection between 'memory' and 'mindfulness'.

Suppose, instead of the term 'mindfulness' we use a term like 'collectedness' as the English equivalent for 'sati'. Then there would not be such a wide gulf between the two meanings so well expressed by the Pali original. 'Memory', then, could be represented by 'recollectedness' (cf. 'anussati' - recollection), if verbal similarity is needed.

To be mindful is to be **collected (i.e. 'not-distracted' see Oxford English Dictionary)**, and this has strict relevance to the present moment as required by the finer nuance of the term in its Buddhist usage. But the net result of this diligent practice of living with a 'collected-mind' in the present moment is the ability to recall - '**to recollect' - things done and said long ago** ('*cirakatampi cirabhāsītampi saritā anussaritā*') in accordance with the standard definition of the Pali term in its generic sense.

So, after all, it is only the conceit behind the English term 'mindfulness', that obscured the whole issue.

#### 70. Satipaṭṭhāna:

An **objective** approach to understand the **subjective** in one's experience.

#### 71. 'Asankhata' - 'The Un-prepared'

To be 'unprepared' is to be prepared for anything.

#### 72. 'Upādāna paccayā bhavo'

**(dependent on grasping, existence)**

'WHAT' you grasp-  
'THAT' you are'.

#### The Purpose of Life

A misuse of the word? 'Excuse' would be a better substitute, because there is no purpose that does not itself presuppose some form of life. All so-called 'purposes' foisted on life by the worldling to brighten it up, are but mere 'excuses'.

Buddhism faces squarely the utter hollowness of life when it equates it with 'Dukkha' - the bitter truth (of suffering). According to its analysis, if one can speak of **the** purpose of life, it is none other than the endeavour to bring about the cessation of saṃsāric existence - the vicious circle. **This is the only excuse that is justifiable.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Appendix

1. *Athassa susiram sīsam  
matthaluṅgassa pūritam  
subhato nam maññatī bālo  
avijjāya purakkhato*

*Vijaya S., Sn., v. 196*

‘And the cavity of his skull is filled with brain-matter. The fool led by ignorance, thinks of it as beautiful.’

2. ‘*Evameva kho bhaginiyo yo nu kho evaṃ vadeyya:  
cha hi khome ajjhattikā āyatanā aniccā, yañca kho  
cha ajjhattike āyatane paṭicca paṭisaṃvedeti  
sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā taṃ  
niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ aviparināmadhammanti  
sammā nu kho so bhaginiyo vadamāno vadeyyāti.*’

*‘No hetam bhante.’*

*‘Tam kissa hetu?’*

*‘Tajjam tajjam bhante paccayaṃ paṭicca tadjā tadjā  
vedanā uppajjanti, tadjassa tadjassa paccayassa  
nirodhā tadjā tadjā vedanā nirujjhanāti.’*

*Nandakovāda S., M.N.*

‘So too, sisters, would anyone speak rightly who spoke thus:  
“These six internal spheres are impermanent, but that feeling,  
dependent on the six internal spheres, which I feel as pleasant,  
unpleasant or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, is permanent,  
everlasting, eternal and not liable to change’?’

‘No, Venerable Sir’

‘Why is that?’

‘Because Venerable Sir, specific feelings arise dependent on a specific condition, and with the cessation of the specific condition, specific feelings cease.’

3. ‘Therefore, monks, that sphere should be known wherein the eye ceases and the perception of forms fades away; the ear ceases and the perception of sounds fades away, the nose ceases and the perception of smells fades away, the tongue ceases and the perception of tastes fades away, the body ceases and the perception of tangibles fades away, the mind ceases and the perception of ideas fades away - that sphere should be known, that sphere should be known’

*S.N.IV. 98*

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