

# A Manual of Nibbāna

## Nibbāna Dīpanī



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by

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Translator Unknown



Edited by Bhikkhu Pesala

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## Editor's Preface

This book was given to me over thirty years ago by James Patrick Stuart Ross, an American who travelled to Burma several times to engage the help of able translators to make the works by Ledi Sayādaw available to Buddhists outside of Burma who were unable to read them in Burmese.

As far as I know, this translation has never made it into print, and I could not find it by searching the Internet.

I have reduced the use of Pāli (the original translation contained many Pāli terms that would be unintelligible to the majority of Buddhists), and I have added numerous footnotes. I have checked the quotations against the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka and corrected spellings. I have given the cross-references to the Roman script editions of the Pāli text, rather than to the Burmese MSS as most readers will not be able to find them otherwise.

I first began work on it for publication in 2014, but put it aside as it was such a difficult and time-consuming task to edit it to my satisfaction. I resumed work on it again in October 2021, by which time only about twenty-five pages had been edited to the stage of an early draft. It has taken a month of working on it steadily to get it to its current stage.

The [edition](#) (converted from the original WordPerfect edition of 10/6/1993) that I have can be download from my website in LibreOffice format, if you wish to see the original draft translation from which I have been working. I hope that readers will understand why it took so long to get it even to this stage, and make allowances for any defects, when they realise that I had to rewrite many paragraphs, and locate and correct several quotations from the Pāli texts, relying on the [CST4 Tipiṭaka](#) published by the Vipassanā Research Institute and translations by Bhikkhu Bodhi, published by Wisdom Publications. The late Venerable Ledi Sayādaw would have been familiar with the [Fifth Buddhist Council edition](#), from Mandalay, so there are some minor differences to the later Sixth Buddhist Council Edition published on Tipitaka.org.

I hope that this first edition will go some way to making the late Sayādaw's writings more accessible. I realise that there are still many defects, but I will endeavour to fix them as time permits. If anyone has the Burmese edition, they may be able to offer me valuable insights and suggestions to make the translation more faithful to the original. Please let me know about any typos or formatting errors, which are easy to fix.

Bhikkhu Pesala

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# A Manual of Nibbāna

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa*

## Request and Undertaking

On the sixth waxing day of Tawthalin, 1261 M.E.,<sup>1</sup> Mg Kyaw San, the Inspector from Bassein, came and requested me to write the Nibbāna Dīpanī — A Manual of Nibbāna.

On the sixth waning day of the month, Maung Lugale, the Revenue Officer, Maung Htwe, the Township Officer of Monywa, and Maung Kyaw, the Higher Grade Pleader of Monywa, made another request in writing.

On the twelfth waning day of the same month, too, the above persons from Monywa and Maung Shwe, Bhutalin Subdivision Officer, Maung Pe, Panchitaik Pāli Subdivision Officer, and the Salinyi Township Officer made another request in writing.

In compliance with their wishes, while residing with my student monks at Dhammikārāma-taik Dhammanand monastery, built by the Headman of Ledi Village Tract, near Monywa, I (Ledi Tawyakyaung<sup>2</sup> Sayādaw) will write the Nibbāna Dīpanī, showing the inferences from the Pāli texts, Commentaries, and Subcommentaries.

This Manual contains three chapters:

1. The Meaning in Brief (*Saṅkhepa kaṇḍa*),
2. The Explanation in Detail (*Vitthāra kaṇḍa*), and
3. The Clarification of the Views in Various Books (*Nānāgantha nānāvāda visodhana kaṇḍa*).

In the first chapter, the meaning in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha will be explained briefly without reference to the Pāli Text. In the second chapter, only the original Pāli Text will be explained with its meaning. In the third chapter, various views of the books and teachers of later times will be clarified.

## The Meaning in Brief

The meaning of the three terms from the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha:<sup>3</sup>

1. That which is called supramundane (*lokuttara saṅkhātāṃ*),

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<sup>1</sup> September 1899.      <sup>2</sup> Tawya = forest, Kyaung = monastery.

<sup>3</sup> *Nibbānabhedo*: “*Nibbānaṃ pana lokuttarasāṅkhātāṃ catumaggañāṇena sacchikātabbaṃ maggaphalānamārammaṇabhūtaṃ vānasāṅkhātāya taṇhāya nikkhantattā nibbānanti pavuccati.*”

2. That which should be realised by the four kinds of Path knowledge (*catumaggañāṇena sacchikātabbam*).
3. That which is the dependable object of the Path and Fruition (*magga-phalānamārammaṇabhūtaṃ*).

It is called nibbāna because it has gone out of the territory of three kinds of craving (*vāna taṇhā*).

By the term, “*lokuttara saṅkhātam*,” nibbāna is not a concept (*paññatti*), it is an ultimate reality (*paramattha*).

**Lokuttaram:** Supramundane. Concepts cannot go beyond the world. They come to be only with the terms prescribed by people, they cannot go beyond the world. Hence, we should understand that the supramundane (*lokuttara*) is not a concept (*paññatti*); it is an ultimate reality. How it is an ultimate reality will be made clear later.

*This is the meaning of the first term.*

**Catumaggañāṇena sacchikātabbam:** Realising nibbāna is not the work of a foolish ordinary person (*bālaputhujjano*) who is far from path knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*); it is the work of those who have followed the Path.

How is it not the work of an ordinary person? Such talk as, “The sun, the moon, and the stars exist or do not exist,” is not the work of the blind. Although the blind cannot see them, one should not take it that the sun, the moon, and the stars do not exist. Even though the blind may say: “Such is the form of the sun, such is the form of the moon, such is the colour of sunlight, such is the colour of moonlight, it is just ridiculous. Similarly, someone who has no knowledge of the aggregates (*khandhā*), sense-organs and sense-objects (*āyatanā*), elements (*dhātu*), and dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is just an ordinary person. Nibbāna is not the work of an ordinary person.

This is how nibbāna is not the work of an ordinary person. It is shown by the term “*Catumaggañāṇena*.”

**Sacchikātabbam:** “Should be realised” shows that for the well-informed ordinary person, nibbāna can be known by inference (*anumāna*).

Only after one has known it by inference, will one make an effort to realise the Dhamma. If one has made an effort, one will realise the Dhamma. Therefore, since the Noble Ones have already realised the Dhamma, they would have known it by inference before they became Noble Ones. If they hadn’t known it by inference beforehand, why would they have made an effort to realise the Dhamma? If they did not make an effort, they could not

realised the Dhamma. Since they have realised the Dhamma, it is certain that they had already known it by inference before they became Noble Ones.

*This is the meaning of the second term.*

**Maggaphalānam ālambana bhūtaṃ:** shows that nibbāna is not only an ultimate reality, but that it also has incomparable power.

The Path (*magga*) and Fruition (*phala*) can accomplish their work because they have the powerful nibbāna as their object and depend on it.

**Example:** A village headman and a robber-chief lived in a certain village. The robber-chief, together with his cronies, robbed the villagers by force and destroyed them. The village headman had to live in fear for his own life. After he approached the king, he was appointed as the mayor. Then he killed the robber-chief together with his fellow robbers.

The village is like one's own body. The village headman is like the mental concomitant (*cetasikā*) of wisdom (*paññā*). The chief robber is like ignorance (*avijjā*) and delusion (*moha*). The fellow robbers are like the one thousand five hundred defilements (*kilesā*). The king is like the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*) great nibbāna. The village headman, before coming to the king is like the wisdom present in an ordinary person. Coming to the king, he served under him, and was appointed as the mayor; he is then like the supramundane knowledge of the Path. The killing of the robber-chief together with his fellow-robbers is like dispelling ignorance together with all defilements by Path knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*).

*This is the meaning of the third term.*

## Two Kinds of Nibbāna

In the passage from the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha; “*Tadetaṃ sabhāvato ekavidhampi sa-upādisesanibbānadhātu anupādisesanibbānadhātu ceti duvidhaṃ hoti kāraṇapariyāyena.*” Nibbāna is of one kind according to its characteristic of peace (*santi-lakkhaṇa*), but according to the way it is experienced it is twofold, namely: the element of nibbāna with remainder (*sa-upādisesa*), and the element of nibbāna without remainder (*anupādisesa*).

In the passage, “Nibbāna is of one kind according to its characteristic of peace,” the cessation of lust and the aggregates forever is the characteristic of peace, and is also called the intrinsic nature of peace (*santi-sabhāva*).

Herein, “Without remainder,” means the personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) that ceases in the Stream-winner (*śotāpanna*) ceases forever. There is no more personality-view that appears in the mind-continuum of a Stream-winner

later. Similarly, sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) ceases forever. There is no more sceptical doubt that appears in the mind-continuum of a Stream-winner later.

Thus the cessation of a certain Dhamma forever, no more to appear, is called cessation without remainder.

Cessation does not mean cessation by way of vanishing (*bhaṅga*), death (*maraṇam*), and impermanence (*anicca*) — it means the overcoming of arising (*uppāda*) or birth (*jāti*). One can differentiate the cessation by way of vanishing, death, and impermanence from the cessation of nibbāna. Cessation and peace are the same. The unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*), the noble, the peaceful nibbāna is of two kinds as with and without remainder.

**Question:** Why is the element of unconditioned peaceful nibbāna called “With remainder?”

**Answer:** For example, one thousand five hundred boils might appear on one’s body. By applying medicine once, one quarter of them are cured. By applying the medicine for a second time, another quarter are cured in the same way. By applying it a third time, a third quarter of boils is cured, and by applying the medicine a fourth time, all the remaining boils are cured, without leaving any scars. One’s skin becomes unblemished like a newborn baby’s.

In this example, as each boil has a separate form, they can be counted up to one thousand five hundred. However, the cure of the boils has no particular form to be counted, only the boils which have forms can be counted up to one thousand five hundred. The cure of one thousand five hundred boils — which has no form — is one and the same thing.

**Question:** As the boils have many forms are there not also many cures?

**Answer:** No, there are not. As the boils have marks to count there are many, but the cure does not have any mark. Can one show the mark of each cure to count them? The mark of the boil is not the mark of the cure. The terms ‘boil’ and ‘cure’ are used only in language; but they are directly opposite to each other in meaning. Since these two terms are used in combination, you may get confused. Whenever a boil remains, it is not cured, and whenever the cure comes, that boil no longer exists. In their natural sense they are poles apart and hard to discern.

A boil has a form, sign, or mark (*sanimitta*). The cure has no form or mark — it is signless (*animitta*). It means a phenomenon that has no form, sign, or mark. Therefore we should note that even though there are many boils, the

cure is only one. The cure of the boils and the body are not one and the same thing: the cure of the boils on the present body and the non-occurrence of the boils in the future are one and the same thing.

The cure of the boils that had appeared in successive past existences, the cure of the boils appearing now, and the cure of the boils that might appear in the future are also one and the same thing. The cure of the boils of one man is not only one and the same thing; the cure of the boils of one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, ten million, or any number of people are also one and the same thing.

The forms of men and those of the boils have signs, and they are countable. However, cessation is a signless phenomenon, that has no form, no sign, or marks that can be counted.

There is a wonderful medicine that is the cure of boils. Those who are stricken and suffering with boils take refuge in the medicine, and get relief. When the time comes to be cured, they will attain relief from their suffering. We should note that there is indeed a great relief or cure. Being a signless phenomenon, the cure is not countable.

Just as the forms of men stricken with boils are manifold, just like the forms of boils, you will think that the cures are also manifold. The forms of boils and the cure are quite different, and should not be confused; they are used together only in language.

In the same way, one can differentiate the danger of fire from its extinguishing, the danger of flood from its alleviation, etc. Unless one can differentiate the boil from its cure, one is far from understanding the term nibbāna.

*This is the example to show nibbāna with remainder.*

1. With the attainment of the Path of a Stream-winner the following cease forever: twenty kinds of personality-view, sixty-two kinds of wrong-view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), ten extreme wrong-views (*antaggāhikā-diṭṭhi*), three fatalistic wrong-views (*niyata-micchā-diṭṭhi*), eight sceptical doubts and sixteen sceptical doubts (*vicikicchā*).
2. With the attainment of the Path of Once-returning (*sakadāgāmi-magga*), the following cease forever: coarse lust (*kāmarāga*) and coarse hatred (*byāpāda*).
3. With the attainment of the Path of Non-returning (*anāgāmi-magga*) lust and hatred cease forever.

4. With the attainment of Arahantship (*Arahatta-magga*), attachment to the realms of form (*rūparāga*), to formless realms (*arūparāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and ignorance (*avijjā*) cease.

*This is the cessation of defilements.*

1. With the attainment of the Path of Stream-winning, future births in the lower realms (*aṭṭhāya*) cease forever. Future births in fortunate realms beyond seven births also cease forever.
2. With the attainment of the Path of Once-returning, future births in fortunate realms beyond two births cease forever.
3. With the attainment of the Path of Non-returning, all future births in fortunate realms cease forever.
4. With the attainment of the Path of Arahantship (*arahattamagga*), only the present aggregates remain; all future births in the realms of form and the formless realms cease forever.

*This is how the defilements cease in four stages with the attainment of the four Paths, and how future births of the aggregates cease.*

Compare the above cure of one thousand five hundred boils in four applications of medicine with the cessation of one thousand five hundred defilements in four stages at the attainment of the four Paths.

1. The cessation of defilements in the first stage,
2. The cessation of defilements in the second stage,
3. The cessation of defilements in the third stage,
4. The cessation of defilements in the fourth stage,
5. The cessation of future births of the aggregates in four stages.

All these cessations are one and the same unconditioned nibbāna. The defilements and the aggregates are many. As the defilements and aggregates are phenomena that have forms and signs, they may be counted, whereas their cessation is a signless phenomenon, which cannot be counted. The defilements and the aggregates are entirely opposite to their cessation.

You may still mix fire with water; yet there is no chance to mix defilements and the aggregates with their cessation. If there are still defilements and the aggregates, there will be no cessation. If those defilements and aggregates cease, they will not come to be.

Just as you differentiate the boils from their cure, just so differentiate the defilements and aggregates from their cessation.

There is the cessation of defilements and aggregates as extensive as the endless cycle of rebirths, which is indeed a great relief. With the attainment of Stream-winning, the cessation of some defilements and aggregates occurs — wrong-view (*micchā-ditṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), and rebirth in the four lower realms. Their cessation is final, as it ceases forever. The cessations at the higher paths should be understood in the same way.

The defilements and the aggregates included in the expression: “The cessation of defilements and aggregates,” will never appear in future. They are future defilements and future aggregates that will never appear. They are not defilements and aggregates that will appear by way of taking birth. As there are four stages of dispelling and cessation by the four paths, we have to say there are many defilements and many aggregates. As we are talking about the defilements and the aggregates that will never appear in future, they are not the defilements and aggregates with forms and signs in reality. It is hard to see.

The above expression is meant to clarify the meaning of: “The cessation that has already been attained with the four realisation of the four Paths, is indeed one and the same thing. That *nibbāna* and the *nibbāna* that will be attained after the final cessation of *parinibbāna*, the demise of materiality born from kamma (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*) are also one and the same thing.”

## Cessation with Remainder

There are five prominent cessations including the final cessation of the aggregates. Of these five, the first three cessations leave some defilements and some aggregates. The fourth cessation does not leave any defilements, but only the aggregates of the present existence remain. The fifth cessation leaves neither — not even the aggregates of the present existence. Considering the first four cessations: leaving the defilements, leaving the aggregates with the person; the cessation of defilements, the cessation of future aggregates of existence, is called “Cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*).”

## Cessation without Remainder

Considering the fifth cessation, not leaving any aggregates with the person; the cessation of future aggregates of existence is called “Cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).”

**Example:** A certain man happens to be born on the earth because of one cycle of resultants (*vaṭṭa-vipāka*). When the time comes to get free from the results of kamma, first his head rises above the skylight. The second time his upper body from the waist rises above the skylight. The

third time, his body above the knees rises above the skylight. The fourth time, his body above the ankles rises above the skylight. The fifth time, his whole body including his feet rises above the skylight.

Although the above example contains the term ‘skylight’ five times, the skylight is one and the same thing. Likewise, the attainment of cessation of some defilements and cessation of some aggregates of future existence at the moment of Stream-entry is the attainment of nibbāna since that time. The Stream-winner has already partly attained nibbāna since that time. At the moment of the Path, the Stream-winner attains the cessation of defilements and the cessation of aggregates. The cessation of defilements and the aggregates should be understood.

Some people think: “The cessation of wrong-views and sceptical doubt is not yet nibbāna. The cessation of rebirths in the lower realms is not yet nibbāna. The cessation of future births and future aggregates of existence is not yet nibbāna. Only the cessation of all defilements and all aggregates is nibbāna.” This is incorrect.

The cessation of the two fetters (wrong-views and sceptical doubt), and the cessation of future aggregates (beyond seven births) are stable until he or she attains final cessation (*parinibbāna*). There is no such thing as the cessation regressing, for wrong-views to reappear, or for sceptical doubts arising again, and there is no possibility to be reborn in the lower realms.

Since the attainment of Stream-winning, the defilements and aggregates that have ceased do not return — the cessation is permanent. That cessation and the cessations at the moments of the higher Paths, and the cessation at the time of final cessation, are inseparable, and are one and the same thing. The cessation of defilements and the cessation of aggregates at the moments of the Path and Fruition, in the beginningless round of rebirths, are also one and the same thing. If you say they are separate, then try to differentiate them by their forms and signs.

As the cessation of defilements and aggregates of those who attained the Paths and Fruitions during the dispensation of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara is stable and permanent, suppose you say the cessation had a beginning though it has no end, and suppose you say the cessation had already begun since the moment of cessation of defilements and aggregates in the dispensation of Dīpaṅkara Buddha. Then only the attainments have a beginning — cessation (*nibbāna*) has no beginning.

How is that? There was a kind of poisonous tree at a certain place. Only after the death of a tree, another tree grew. Each tree lived only one hundred

years. Innumerable years had passed, but the trees were also innumerable. There was a possibility for the trees to regenerate for innumerable years in the future too. A certain man, seeing the danger of the poisonous tree, drove a poisonous spear into the fifty-year-old tree to kill it. The flowers and fruits that would have grown that year did not appear. Since the flowers and fruits ceased, germinating seeds also ceased. As there were no more flowers or fruits for the remaining fifty years, the tree died and the poisonous seeds disappeared. The innumerable poisonous trees that would have regenerated for innumerable years got no opportunity to regenerate, so they ceased forever.

In this example, the cessation of the flowers and fruits that would have grown that year, and the cessation of the innumerable trees that would regenerate in the future, means there would be no more new flowers, fruits, germinating seeds, or new trees. Since they never appeared, they were not actual flowers, fruits, and trees. They were just words.

When the poisonous spear was driven into the poisonous tree, those new flowers, fruits, and trees ceased to grow altogether as the seeds that caused them to grow did not exist. The concepts such as flowers, fruits, and future trees, had already disappeared completely with the cessation of those flowers, fruits, and trees. With regard to ceased and disappeared, it is proper to mention it in the past tense.

Similarly, if one had not already attained the Path and Fruition in the dispensation of Dipaṅkara Buddha, the future defilements and future aggregates, would cease completely at the moment of attaining the Path, and they would become extinct. The concepts such as a person, a being, defilements, aggregates, ceased completely with the cessation of those defilements and aggregates.

With regard to cessation having taken place, it is proper to mention it in the past tense only. Those defilements and aggregates are a kind of element, whereas the cessation by way of no more appearing is something else. As the element of fire and the element of its cessation are directly opposed; the elements of defilements and aggregates, and the element of cessation by way of no more appearing, are poles apart. They cannot be mixed, and their states cannot overlap. There is no element of the peace of cessation in the defilements and the aggregates. Neither are the elements of defilement or the aggregates found in the state of peace, which is cessation. The concepts connected with the defilements and aggregates, also do not apply to the element of cessation.

In the beginningless round of rebirths, at the time of each Buddha, innumerable beings were emancipated. In each Buddha's dispensation, innumerable beings attained final cessation. They were emancipated and passed away together with their names from the three planes of existence — the sensual realm, the realm of form, and the formless realm. In the beginningless round of rebirths innumerable beings attained final cessation. In the beginningless rounds of rebirths, this cessation of births of those infinite numbers of beings who had been freed, the ending of the conditioned element is the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*) the ultimate element of cessation (*paramattha-nibbāna dhātu*).

There is a discourse taught by the Buddha that when the beings who are deeply immersed in ignorance and have too much craving for existence (*bhava-taṅhā*) hear about the unconditioned they find it fearful, like having fallen into a crevasse one hundred fathoms<sup>1</sup> deep.

While listening to the teaching on voidness (*suññata*) delivered by a bhikkhu in Sri Lanka, a certain brahmin who held wrong-views felt himself about to fall into a great crevasse without any foothold by which to escape. He got up suddenly from his seat, and ran away in terror. He rushed back to his house and covered his face with his hands, trembling. When his son asked him what the matter was, he related the incident and said that he had narrowly escaped falling as he ran.

The unconditioned state is a secure refuge for those who have little ignorance, having already seen the grave dangers of the beginningless round of rebirths and the lower realms of misery (*apāya*), and who have little sensual passion and craving for existence. The unconditioned state does not concern any particular being and their aggregates. When the aggregates of a Buddha or an Arahant cease, it is merely said they have attained that unconditioned. Being a signless phenomenon, the unconditioned has no beginning, nor any appearance to mark its beginning. It has no end, nor any disappearance to mark its end. It has neither a sign nor mark to show where it exists or does not exist in any one of the ten directions. It has neither a beginning nor an end to differentiate it as that of a particular Buddha. It is only an unconditioned state that exists forever throughout the beginningless round of rebirths.

The cessation during the dispensation of Dīpaṅkara Buddha and that in the time of our Gotama Buddha are not two distinct things — they are one and the same cessation. This is where many people may be mistaken, for as

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<sup>1</sup> The height of a man with his hands stretched upwards.

many cessations as there are persons who have individually attained nibbāna, and thereupon is the exposition by way of reasoning.

*Here ends the exposition of cessation with and without remainder.*

## The Void, Signless, and Desireless Nibbāna

*“Tathā suññataṃ animittaṃ appaṇihitañceti tividhaṃ hoti ākārabhedena.”*

**Akārabhedena:** according to its qualities, **tividhaṃ hoti:** nibbāna is of three kinds, namely, **suññataṃ:** void of all obstacles (*palibodha*), **animittaṃ:** formless or signless, **ca:** and **appaṇihitaṃ:** desireless, free from all longings.

Any impediment to the bliss of peace (*santi-sukha*) is called an obstacle (*palibodha*). All conditioned phenomena including the Fruition of Arahantship, have obstacles.

How is that? When an Arahant wishes to arouse the impulsion consciousness (*javana-citta*) for the Fruition of Arahantship (*arahatta-phala*), it will arise only by exerting for a suitable moment, with a suitable inclination. Since it is a changeable phenomenon (*vipariṇāma-dhamma*), fruition-consciousness (*phala-citta*) will disappear moment by moment. When an Arahant wants to attain it, he or she must exert again for another moment. To attain it a hundred times he or she has to exert a hundred times. Even though those one hundred moments of consciousness appear through exertion, they will vanish. They are not something that can exist forever according to one’s wish.

Therefore the Fruition of Arahantship is a phenomenon that gives the trouble of repeated exertion to make it appear. However, there is no obstacle in the unconditioned nibbāna. Nibbāna has no obstacle, no suffering of exertion, to make it appear. Nibbāna not being impermanent, has no obstacle, no suffering of repeated exertion to establish it.

1. The suffering of fulfilling the perfections (*pāramī*) such as charity morality, etc., for countless existences to attain nibbāna is the suffering of exertion (*palibodha-dukkha*).
2. The exertion of developing the seven stages of purification such as the purification of morality (*sīla-visuddhi*), the purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*), in one’s last existence.

The above two obstacles are not the troubles of nibbāna. They are the troubles only to abandon the defilements that are obstructing one who

wishes to attain nibbāna. Those who have glaucoma have to take medicine to see objects clearly. That obstacle is nothing but the trouble caused by glaucoma. The obstacle to attaining nibbāna should be understood in the same way.

*This is how nibbāna is void of all obstacles.*

Conditioned phenomena have prominent forms, signs, or marks. A single fruition-consciousness of Arahantship (*arahatta-phala-citta*) appearing at the present moment is one thing, that which will arise in the future is another; that arising in one person is one thing, that arising in another person is another. The number of such moments of fruition-consciousness is uncountable. There is no need to mention other kinds of conditioned phenomena.

Nibbāna, being without form, signs, or marks, cannot be differentiated as: “This nibbāna is the older one in the beginningless round of rebirths, and this nibbāna is the newer one.” Nibbāna cannot be counted according to the individuals who had already attained to *parinibbāna* and the cessation of the aggregates. There is no difference between direction to differentiate: “The nibbāna attained in the East is one thing, the nibbāna attained in the West is another thing, etc.” There is no difference between nibbāna attained by different individuals, such as: “The nibbāna attained by the Buddha is superior and the nibbāna attained by the female slave is inferior.” It is known, and rightly said, only that there is the cessation of rebirth, the ending of the aggregates, the only unconditioned element, nibbāna.

This signless (*animitta*) nature has already been explained in detail in the previous chapter of nibbāna with and without remainder.

*This is the signless nibbāna.*

Conditioned things appear only with expectation. How do they appear? The happiness of human-beings has five grades: low, medium, high, nobler, and noblest. The happiness of devas and brahmas also has five grades. If one gets the low grade of happiness, one still wants to get the medium and the high grades. When one gets the medium grade, one will want to get the higher happiness. If one gets the higher happiness, one will want to get the nobler and the ultimate happiness. Even though one has got the noblest happiness, being impermanent it comes to decay and vanishes, so one wants new happiness again.

Among humans, the wealth of kings; among devas the wealth of the Four Great Kings; Sakka of Tāvatiṃsa, and kings of higher realms; among

brahmas the happiness of Mahābrahma; are impermanent, fragile, and unstable. As long as the fruits of their good deeds persist they enjoy happiness, but when the results of their good deeds expire, they die and disappear with the dissolution of their bodies.

In the beginningless round of rebirths one has already been a king or Sakka an infinite number of times. The state of being a king does not appear even in one's dreams in the present existence. Yet one is still burning with a desire to become a king. The wealth of kings of men, devas, and brahmas are like the salty water of the ocean. If one drinks seawater, the more one drinks, the more thirsty one becomes. However much one drinks, one will still die of thirst.

Similarly, the more one enjoys happiness in the three sensual (*kāma*), form (*rūpa*) and formless (*arūpa*) realms, the more insatiable the thirst of sensual lust becomes, and the more one suffers. While it is being enjoyed, that happiness will disappear. One dies while burning with sensual lust. Even the happiness of fruition, being an impermanent phenomenon, which disappears while being enjoyed, one still wants to enjoy new happiness.

Sensual desire, whether unwholesome or wholesome, is merely the thirst of desire, which is ultimately suffering.

The worldly happiness of human-beings, devas, and brāhmas are similar to sticky molasses. The ordinary beings of human and celestial realms are like ants that like the sweet taste of happiness. Ants that come across sticky molasses die while immersing themselves in it.

Likewise, in the endless round of rebirths, human-beings, devas, and brahmas die in their successive births immersed in the happiness of human-beings, devas, and brāhmas. They die still burning with the thirst of sensual desire; all sensual desires completely cease forever without remainder at the time of final cessation (*parinibbāna*). On attaining Arahantship, sensual desire ceases forever. From that time onwards, sensual desire for happiness in the three realms ceases forever. At the time of decease consciousness sensual desire ceases forever. From that time all sensual desires completely cease forever. Therefore the unconditioned nibbāna is called desireless nibbāna.

*This is desireless nibbāna.*

These three terms, namely void (*suññata*), signless (*animitta*), and desireless (*appaṇihita*), in accordance with the expression “divisible by their attributes (*ākārabhedena*)” are of three kinds:

1. Free from all impediments (*palibodha*),

2. Free from all form, size, image and appearance,
3. Free from all sensual desires.

Depending on these three qualities, nibbāna is said to be of three kinds, but these three terms are given to one and the same nibbāna.

Out of those three qualities, some people realise that all the troubles of doing things amidst the three realms are mere suffering, and so do not like them; the quality of nibbāna, being desireless (*appaṇihita*) appears to them as most noble. Why? Because the only everlasting nibbāna is the real bliss, which is free from all impediments.

Those who realise the oppression of various kinds of dangers, enemies, accidents, old age, death, suffering to be oppressive and are disgusted, the signless (*animitta*) quality of nibbāna will appear to them as most noble. Those dangers can affect only phenomena with signs, which have big or small forms and substance. Just as the sky cannot be affected by the dangers of thunder-bolts, fires, floods, storms, weapons, old age, or death; nibbāna, being signless with no form, mark, or appearance, cannot be affected even by the dangers of old age and death.

To those who realise the suffering of living forever with the insatiable thirst of sensual craving (*kāmatanḥā*) and craving for existence (*bhavatanḥā*), as suffering and are greatly disgusted, the desireless (*appaṇihita*) quality of nibbāna appears as most noble.

The aforesaid two qualities of void and signless, appear to those who have great thirst for existence (*bhavatanḥā*) to be non-existent (*abhāva*) and useless (*tuccha*). The quality of desirelessness appears to them who have very much desire for not becoming, non-existence (*abhāva*), and useless. Those who do not realise the three qualities properly will think the cessation of appearance, the complete ending of it to be not becoming, non-existence (*abhāva*) and useless.

*Here ends the second chapter on the exposition of  
the void, signless, and desireless nibbāna.*

## Does Nibbāna Exist in the Ultimate Sense?

If the said cessation of the appearance of the defilements and the aggregates, the complete ending, is called nibbāna: 1) Does nibbāna exist in the ultimate sense? 2) How is it the incomparable noble happiness? 3) How is it full of infinite qualities such as profound (*gambhira*), hard to see (*duddasa*), tender (*saṅha*), and delicate (*sukhuma*)?

If there is neither cessation of appearing, nor ending, those defilements and aggregates will be forever becoming in the beginningless round of rebirths, and the efforts of the Buddhas, Solitary Buddhas, and disciples in cultivating the perfections (*pāramī*) to bring about the cessation of defilements and those aggregates would have been useless. However, that is not the case. Those who are fulfilling perfections for enlightenment will surely attain the non-appearance of defilements and the aggregates — the complete ending of them. If the non-appearance of the aggregates and defilements, the complete ending of them, is not actually extant, and is a mere concept (*paññatti*), there wouldn't have been real Buddhas or real Arahants in this world. There is indeed the cessation of the defilements and the aggregates. Therefore there have been real Buddhas and real Arahants who had no more defilements.

Certainly there is the appearing of disease in this world; certainly there is the cure and healing of it. If there were no cures there wouldn't be the curing of diseases, and the patients wouldn't recover from their diseases. However, that is not the case. There are indeed cures, and patients who have already recovered from their disease. Therefore it should be understood that there is healing of diseases in this world. Likewise, it should be understood that there is indeed the cessation of defilements and aggregates.

If a person says; “We do not say that there is no cessation; certainly there is,” and, “Cessation exists merely in conceptual terms (*abhāva-paññātti*) that cannot be known,” can he say: “This kind of existence is in the ultimate sense; that kind is in the conceptual sense?” A distinction between concepts and ultimate truths, and between ultimate realities with signs, and signless ultimate realities should be made.

Only in the ultimate truths (*paramattha*) there are four great works of the Buddha's dispensation that can be obtained:—

1. Discerning (*pariññā-kicca*),
2. Development (*bhāvanā-kicca*),
3. Abandoning (*pahāna-kicca*),
4. Encountering (*sacchikaraṇa-kicca*).

These four great works cannot be obtained by concepts.

Discerning (*pariññā-kicca*) means two kinds of discerning:

1. Discerning by its natural characteristic, and
2. Discerning the Dhamma by the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness.

If the natural sense (*sabhāvattha*) of a Dhamma be caught hold of firmly with knowledge its natural sense will be discerned, that Dhamma is indeed the ultimate reality. If the natural sense is not discerned in that Dhamma, that is the concept.

**Example:** In magic when a lump of earth is shown to be a lump of gold, and if you see it to be a lump of earth, you will discern the natural sense (*sabhāvattha*); if you still see it to be a lump of earth, it can only be used as earth; it cannot be used as gold. Just so, when the concept, which is wrongly taken to be a person, a being, a man, or a woman, is thoroughly examined with the knowledge of discernment (*pariññā-ñāṇa*) you will discern that there is no more a person, a being, a man, nor a woman. If you contemplate with the knowledge of discernment that in a person, being, man, or woman, there are the elements of hardness, cohesion heat and cold; the sense of hardness, cohesion, *etc.*, will become more prominent as the knowledge of discernment becomes stronger. The more prominent the sense of hardness, cohesion, *etc.* is, the more evident is it that there is no person, or being — neither male nor female.

*This is the distinction between the ultimate realities and concepts  
in the work of discerning.*

The function of development (*bhāvanā-kicca*) means developing the Dhamma to gain strength, sharpness and progress successively. If you develop concentration you will progress by stages to the six higher knowledges (*abhiññā*). If you develop wisdom (*paññā*) you will progress by stages to the path of Arahantship.

How can the concept, which is not discerned with the knowledge of discernment (*pariññā-ñāṇa*), be developed successively to gain strength and power? The concept cannot be developed; it is just like the sky, which cannot be polished, sharpened, or made powerful.

*This is the differentiation of ultimate realities and concepts  
in the work of developing.*

The function of abandoning (*pahāna-kicca*) means dispelling evils. Too much greed, hatred, and delusion in the mind of a living-being will throw him or her into the lower realms. If greed, hatred, and delusion can be dispelled for a moment, the happiness of men and deities could be obtained. If they are dispelled for a longer time by suppression (*vikkhambhaṇa*), the happiness of the realms of form and formless realms will be obtained. If they are dispelled forever, completely abandoned (*samuccheda*), the supramundane happiness of the Path, its Fruition, and nibbāna will be attained.

In the concept which cannot be obtained with the knowledge of discernment (*pariññā-ñāṇa*) there is no danger of falling into the four lower realms because of developing a certain concept, neither can the celestial abodes or nibbāna be attained because of dispelling a certain concept. Since the concept thought to be a person, a being, a man or a woman, is not something that actually exists, even though you do not dispel it, that cannot lead you to the four lower realms. Even though you dispel the concept of a man and think of the concept of a deva or brahma you will never become a deva or a brahma.

*This is the differentiation of ultimate realities and concepts  
in the work of dispelling.*

The function of encountering (*sacchikaraṇa-kicca*), means experiencing with both the body and knowledge.

*Kāyena amataṃ dhātuṃ phusayitvā nirūpadhiṃ.*<sup>1</sup>

**Phusitvā:** having been experienced, **kāyena:** with the body, **amataṃ dhātuṃ:** the nibbāna element, **nirūpadhiṃ:** which is free from four kinds of bondage (*upadhi*). Having been experienced with the body, the element of nibbāna is free from four kinds of bondage.

*“Pahitatto samāno kāyena ceva paramasaccam  
sacchikaroti paññāya ca naṃ ativijja passati.”*<sup>2</sup>

**Pahitatto samāno:** When one abandons one’s body and mind, **sacchikaroti:** one has to encounter, **paramasaccam:** the noblest truth of cessation, **kāyena ceva:** with the body of the five aggregates of existence or also with the mental body, **ativijja passati:** and one has to penetrate and see, **taṃ:** that truth of cessation, **paññāya ca:** also with the knowledge of the Path, its Fruition, and **reviewing.** When one abandons one’s body and mind, one has to encounter the noblest truth of cessation, with the body of five aggregates or also with the mental body; and one has to penetrate and see the noblest truth of cessation with the knowledge of the Path, its Fruition and reviewing.

With reference to the Pāli text the encounter (*sacchikaraṇa*) should be understood. How is the deathless nibbāna encountered with the body? In the case of fire burning on one’s head and its extinguishing, being on the part of the body it is readily felt with one’s body. The extinguishing of the fire, too, being prominent on the part of the body is readily felt with one’s body.

<sup>1</sup> Itivuttaka, Dhāṭusuttaṃ, v 51.

<sup>2</sup> M.ii.173, Caṅki Sutta.

In the case of being pierced by an arrow or spear, the piercing of one's body is readily felt with one's body; the removal of the arrow or spear, and the cure of the wound are also readily felt with one's body.

In the case of small-pox afflicting one's body and its cure the small-pox is felt with one's body, and the cure is also felt with one's body.

In the case of gastric trouble in the stomach and the cure, the gastric trouble and its cure are also readily felt with the body.

This is also the case for an impending event. For example, if a criminal is sentenced to capital punishment, and the death penalty is due to be carried out in days as decreed by the court, the criminal is burning with sorrow thinking: "I shall be hung on the tenth day." However, if on the fifth day, it happens that he gets given amnesty, he is freed from the death penalty and his sorrow is greatly appeased. The death penalty is the gravest danger that has ever befallen him. The sorrow caused by the death penalty, and the cessation of sorrow given by the amnesty are readily felt in his mind; they are his personal experience. All cessation of coming dangers of the burning grief should be understood in the same way.

*This is the personal experience of the arising and cessation of worldly dangers.*

Just so personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) is a spear that has pierced forever into the heart. Sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) is a spear that has pierced forever in the heart. The 1,500 defilements are 1,500 spears that have pierced forever into the heart. They are the very seeds of hell that are accompanying forever in the hearts of all beings in whatsoever existence; they are the frying pans of hell, the fires of hell. Those who want to be free from the 1,500 defilements have to practise the perfections for many births; in their last birth, too, they have to practise the purifications such as purification of morality, etc.

On attaining Stream-winning the two great iron spears of personality-view and sceptical doubt get extracted from the heart. Personality-view and sceptical doubt, which are the seeds of hell, the frying pans of hell, disappear from the heart. More than a hundred thousand kinds of misconduct, which are capable of causing rebirth in the four lower realms, disappear completely. The worry about suffering in the lower realms ceases forever. Since the two big iron spears are extracted from the heart it is felt with the body.

This kind of direct experience with the body is called encountering with the body (*kāya-sacchikaraṇa*). With reference to the Pāli text it is said, "Experienced with body (*kāyena amataṃ dhātuṃ phusitvā nirūpadhi*)." When one sees for oneself that one has already been freed from the two big spears it is called "experienced with knowledge."

In the above example, the one who has already been pierced by an arrow or a spear, the piercing and the pain, too, are felt with a part of the body. The extraction of that arrow or spear, the cure of the wound, being felt with the body, is also “experienced with the body.” When one sees, “The arrow or spear piercing my body has been extracted, and the wound has been cured,” then one experiences it with the mind.

The vanishing of the seeds of hell, which always accompanied one in the heart, the disappearing of the great frying-pans of hell, the extinguishing of the fires of hell, the cessation of wrong actions, which can cast beings into hell, the cessation of the future births in the four lower realms, are accomplished with the cessation of personality-view and sceptical doubt.

*Compare the above examples and understand for yourselves.*

The cessation of the potential aggregates that would take rebirth in hell in the future, is accomplished with the attainment of the Path of Stream-winning. One is assured: “All potential aggregates in hell have ceased in me; I have been free from the dangers of hell.” Then one feels great rapture and joy.

Being misled by the word “that would take rebirth in the hell” one might wrongly think that the cessation of the five aggregates in hell would be attained only in the future.

At the moment of the Path of the Stream-winning the cessation of that personality-view and sceptical doubt, *etc.*, is the unconditioned nibbāna. Because some of the defilements and some aggregates of existences remain in the Stream-winner, the nibbāna of the Stream-winner is called nibbāna with substrata remaining (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*). However, the cessation of personality-view and sceptical doubt is permanent. It is wholly connected with nibbāna without substrata remaining (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*) and is one and the same thing. Just as the extraction of the arrow or spear and the cure of the wound are experienced with the body and are called ‘encountering in the body (*kāya-sacchikaraṇa*),’ there is not a single concept that can be felt with the body and that can be called thus.

There is no woman who becomes a man by calling her a man if she has the female nature in the ultimate sense. There is no man who becomes a woman by calling him a woman if he has the male nature in the ultimate sense. There is no one who has ever become wealthy, happy, or a millionaire merely by changing their name. Merely by calling a patient oppressed by disease ‘healthy,’ he or she cannot become healthy. Thus there is no concept that can be felt with the body and that can be called encountering with the body.

However, there is indeed encountering with the body in the case of the deathless nibbāna. In this world, there may be a patient suffering from a high fever, burning with fever all over the body, unable to stop rolling about. When he or she takes potent medicine, the fever is cured at once; that cure is indeed experienced with the body; he or she feels greatly relieved, saying "I am so happy! My fever has vanished!"

The appearance of diseases in the various parts of the body and their cure are indeed experienced with the body. The cured patient feels very glad saying: "I am so happy! The disease has been cured!"

*This is how the diseases appearing in the body and their cure are experienced with the body.*

Those whose minds are burning with sorrow and grief due to the death of beloved sons or spouses get peace of mind at once on hearing the Dhamma of the wise. The cure of sorrow and grief is experienced with their mind and body. All the burning of sorrow because of the destruction of desirable things and the loss of loved ones, and their cure at an instant should be understood in the same way.

Similarly, the sorrow of a criminal on death-row who is due to be executed, thinking, "I will soon have to die," exists in his mind. As soon as he hears about the amnesty, the sorrow felt with the mind-body is appeased.

While he is seriously burning with sorrow, he gets the Amnesty Order on the second day as being saved by someone. The impending danger of death on the third day ceases on the physical body when the Amnesty Order is proclaimed. However, the sorrow in his heart ceases in his mind-body only when he hears the Amnesty Order. The peace of mind is felt vividly in his heart. Still in this world there is indeed the momentary cessation in physical body as well as in mental body that can be encountered in the body (*kāya-sacchikaraṇa*).

How can there be no cessation in physical body in the deathless nibbāna, the complete cessation of the burning phenomena of personality-view, sceptical doubt, *etc.*, that forever accompany the mind continuum in the endless round of rebirths? In fact there is cessation in physical body in the deathless nibbāna. The Stream-winner feels excessively glad for the whole life with the thought. "Now the personality-view, sceptical doubt, *etc.*, which always accompanied my mind continuum have ceased; they have been appeased and overcome; the immoral deeds (*akusala-kammaṇa*) have already ceased, have been overcome; the impending danger of hell has been dispelled and overcome."

Why doesn't nibbāna exist in the ultimate sense, which is encountered with physical body and mental body, by way of *kāya-sacchikaraṇa-kicca-ñāṇa-sacchikaraṇa-kicca*?

Here ends the answer to the first question: "If the cessation of the appearing of the defilements and the aggregates, the complete ending of it, is called nibbāna, how does nibbāna exist in the ultimate sense?"

## How is Nibbāna Incomparable Happiness?

Regarding the second question: "How is nibbāna the incomparable noble happiness?" there are in this world two kinds of happiness:—

1. The happiness of cessation (*santi-sukha*)
2. The happiness of enjoyment (*vedayita-sukha*)

## The Happiness of Cessation

1. The cessation or overcoming of undesirable things, and the destruction (*aniṭṭha-dhamma*) of things that are oppressive (*vipatti*).
2. The cessation or the overcoming of sorrow; the undesirable things and the destruction to come definitely in due course.
3. The cessation and overcoming of the sorrow regarding undesirable things, and the destruction with the thought: "Is it probable to encounter? It will be finished, it won't be easy if encountered."

These three kind of happiness are not the happiness enjoyed by feeling on getting a certain object. As a matter of fact, it is the happiness of cessation (*santi-sukha*) that is free from the undesirable thing and overcoming of the destruction.

In the happiness of cessation, not only a thing is not obtained, but also one's effort has to be made to get free from dangers according to it gravity by giving some gold, silver, money, or property.

The cessation obtained by paying two annas,<sup>1</sup> four annas, eight annas, one kyat. The cessation obtained by paying ten kyats, twenty kyats, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, two, three, four, five hundred, one thousand kyats. The cessation obtained by paying two, three, four, five thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, one million. The cessation obtained by abandoning all of one's animate and inanimate property. The cessation obtained by abandoning one's city and country. The cessation obtained by abandoning one's life in the four lower realms and the manifold dangers of those existences.

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<sup>1</sup> One anna = 1/16th of a kyat.

Hence, the kind of happiness that can only be obtained by abandoning the wealth in hand according to the gravity of the dangers is called the happiness of cessation (*santi-sukha*).

In the Jātaka stories, the banker's wife from Sāketa city who had a headache for a year, obtained the cessation of that suffering by giving four hundred thousand.

The banker of Rājagaha, in order to free himself from his headache, he said he would give all his animate and inanimate objects.

When a certain king was being captured by a certain king got cessation by giving him all his city and wealth.

Hence the cessation of undesirable dangers and destruction (*anittabhaya*, *vipatti-bhaya*) without getting anything, but instead giving away things in hand is called the happiness of cessation (*santi-sukha*).

## The Happiness of Enjoyment

The enjoyment of the wealth of human-beings, devas, and brahmas is the happiness of enjoyment (*vedayita-sukha*). Thus, happiness is of two kinds, namely the happiness of cessation and the happiness of enjoyment.

Of these two kinds of happiness, the happiness of cessation is the noblest. The happiness of enjoyment is inferior.

In the aforementioned story about Jivaka, the banker obtained the happiness of release from a headache by abandoning the happiness of enjoyment with many billions of wealth.

The happiness of release from the danger of life was obtained by abandoning the happiness of enjoyment, all the wealth of a king including the city, the country, the throne, and the palace.

To one who is burning with external and internal dangers and hasn't yet obtained the happiness of cessation, even the wealth of a wheel-turning monarch (Cakkavatti) is useless. Therefore, we should understand that the happiness of cessation is nobler than the happiness of enjoyment.

That happiness of cessation is the refuge for those who encounter suffering; it is the refuge for those who are anxious about troubles to be met in the future. For those who are oppressed by a disease, medical treatment is the only refuge. That is the only the cure that can overcome the disease. Other than that, there is not anything else that can overcome it. To get cessation from disease, some medicine should be taken. Medicine is not a pure element that can overcome the disease.

*It should thus be understood that the Dhamma can appease all suffering.*

In the mind-continuum of all ordinary living beings, personality-view and sceptical doubt remain; so for them there are still opportunities for falling into the eight hells. Even if they are currently in the highest abode (*bhavagga*), they are liable to fall into the abode of Ussada hell. They are liable to fall into all kinds of realms of hungry ghosts, jealous gods, and those of animals. In the same way, they are likely to suffer from all kinds of diseases. They are likely to meet the dangers of weapons, fires, floods, tyrants, robbers, thieves, and enemies. They are likely to become thieves, robbers, matricides, patricides, the murderers of Arahants; they are likely to cause injury to a Buddha, to create a schism in the Order, in spite of being born in the highest abode.

In the same way, they are still likely to become holders of sixty-two wrong-views, to become the holders of fixed wrong-views (*niyata-micchā-diṭṭhi*), who can never free themselves from Avici hell even though this world perishes. There is no need to say more regarding the abodes of human-beings, devas, and the lower abodes of brahma.

The happiness of human, deva, and brahma realms, which still have innumerable opportunities to encounter future dangers to fall into the said hell abodes are of the same group. Only when they attain the Path of Stream-winning (*sotāpatti-magga*), will all of those opportunities cease and they will be free from those dangers.

Therefore the Buddha said in the Dhammapada:–

“*Pathabyā ekarajjena, saggassa gamanena vā,  
Sabbalokādhipaccena, sotāpattiphalaṃ varaṃ.*” (Dhp.v.178)

**Sotāpatti phalaṃ varaṃ:** the fruition of Stream-winning is more noble; **ekarajjena vā** : than the wealth of wheel-turning monarch; **pathabyā:** in the four great continents, **saggassa gamanene vā:** than the wealth of a deva that is enjoyed on reaching the six celestial abodes; **sabbalokādhi paccena vā:** than the wealth of the king of brahmas who is the chief of the universe.

The Fruition of Stream-winning is more noble than the wealth of a wheel-turning king of the four great continents, greater than the wealth of a deva that is enjoyed on reaching the six celestial abodes, or the wealth of the king of brahmas, who is the chief of the universe.

On the attainment of the Path and Fruition of Stream-winning, the complete emancipation of the aforesaid dangers, the happiness of cessation, and the unconditioned element (*asaṅkhata-dhātu*) is attained. Therefore Stream-winning is more noble than the wealth of a wheel-turning monarch,

that of the king of devas, or the king of brahmas. It should be noted that the medicine is praised to be excellent because it can cure leprosy, giving the happiness of cessation. The leper Suppabuddha who had already become a Stream-winner is many times more noble than that of a wheel-turning monarch, a king of devas, or a king of brahmas, who are enjoying their wealth, while still subject to the aforesaid dangers.

*Here ends the answer to the question:  
“How is nibbāna incomparable happiness?”*

## How is Nibbāna Full of Infinite Qualities?

If the cessation of the appearing of the defilements and the aggregates, the complete ending of it, is called nibbāna how is nibbāna full of infinite qualities such as profound (*gambhira*), hard to see (*duddasa*), tender (*saṅha*), delicate (*sukhuma*)?

In the above question, if a person, without attaining nibbāna, goes on throughout the round of rebirths, we can only imagine how great and long the domain of suffering in the round of rebirths would be! As the cessation of the cycle of suffering (*vaṭṭa-dukkha*) is nibbāna; the greater and longer the domain of the cycle of suffering, the more profound will be the quality of nibbāna. In the cycle of suffering, the beginning of which is unknown (*anamataḅga*), suffering is incalculable and innumerable, so nibbāna has the quality of infinite peace, infinite nobility, infinite happiness.

If we consider the evils of ignorance (*avijjā*) and delusion (*moha*), we will see that the cessation of ignorance and delusion has infinite splendour. The cessation of 1,500 defilements should be understood in the same way.

It is so difficult and so profound for beings to realise even the appearing of their bodies in the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*), the beginning of which is unknown. They cannot realise how they are appearing. The cessation of their bodies, the ending of them is very far from their understanding. They do not even dream that there is an element that is their cessation.

Those who, having listened to the Buddha Dhamma, understand that there is an element of cessation, find it difficult to strive for the attainment of that cessation. Only after fulfilling the perfections (*pārami*) for many existences, for many world-cycles, can they attain that cessation.

It is difficult and profound to realise even the four great elements, namely, earth, water, fire, and air that constitute their bodies by way of their characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*), and proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*), by way of impermanence (*anicca*),

unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*). Only after they have thoroughly realised the elements in their bodies to be not-self can they realise that nibbāna is very profound and very difficult to see.

*Here ends the answer to the third question.*

Here ends the meaning in brief in which the answer to nibbāna mentioned in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, and to the three questions.

## The Explanation in Detail

### Seven Kinds of Nibbāna

In the Pāli-texts there are these terms: *nibbutā*, *parinibbutā*, *nibbuto*, *parinibbuto*, *nibbuti*, *parinibbuti*, *nibbāyī*, *parinibbāyī*, *nibbāti*, *nibbāyati*, *nibbanti*, *nibbāyanti*, etc. The meaning of them is peace. Therefore, the nibbāna that is meant by those terms of all kinds will be collected and mentioned in this second chapter in detail.

In brief, nibbāna is of seven kinds namely:—

1. The cessation of wrong-view (*micchā-diṭṭhi-nibbāna*),
2. Conventional cessation (*sammuti-nibbāna*),
3. Momentary cessation (*tadaṅga-nibbāna*),
4. Cessation by suppression (*vikkhambhana-nibbāna*),
5. Cessation by cutting off (*samuccheda-nibbāna*),
6. Cessation by tranquillising (*paṭippassaddhi-nibbāna*),
7. Cessation by liberation (*nissaraṇa-nibbāna*).

Out of them, the wrong-view of cessation that is thought out and grasped by those who hold wrong-views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) from outside the Buddha's Dispensation is called "*micchā-diṭṭhi-nibbāna*." That occurs in the Pāli terms: "*Pañca diṭṭha dhammanibbānavāda*," and in the terms of the Mūlapariyāya Sutta,<sup>1</sup> "*nibbānaṃ nibbānato sañjānāti*." etc.

In the two Pāli sources there are five types of cessation here and now that the holders of wrong-views think out and grasp.

*"Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā evaṃvādi hoti evaṃdiṭṭhi: 'Yato kho, bho, ayaṃ attā pañcahi kāmagaṇehi samappito samaṅgibhūto paricāreti, ettāvata' kho, bho, ayaṃ attā paramadiṭṭhadhammanibbānaṃ patto hoti'ti. Ittheke sato sattassa paramadiṭṭhadhammanibbānaṃ paññapenti."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.i.4.

<sup>2</sup> Brahmajāla Sutta, D.i.36.

## Five Wrong-views About Cessation

1. One enjoys the sensual pleasures of the human and celestial realms as much as one wishes. The self (*atta*) enjoys that bliss here and now (*diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna*). There is no other bliss more noble than this.
2. A man attains the first absorption (*jhāna*), which is free from sensual desire. He abides in the first absorption and attains to the abode of the first absorption. His self reaches that bliss here and now. There is no other bliss visible here and now more noble than this.
3. Similarly, the attainment of the second absorption is the greatest bliss. There is no other bliss visible here and now more noble than this.
4. Similarly, the attainment of the third absorption is the greatest bliss. There is no other bliss visible here and now more noble than this.
5. Similarly, the attainment of the fourth absorption is the greatest bliss. There is no other bliss visible here and now more noble than this.

*Here ends the five wrong-views about cessation.*

Also in the Pāli text of the Mūlapariyāya Sutta there are five kinds of cessation here and now. (These are different to the former wrong-views).

*“Nibbānaṃ nibbānato sañjānāti; nibbānaṃ nibbānato saññatvā nibbānaṃ maññati, kinds of nibbānamiṃ maññati, nibbānato maññati, nibbānaṃ meti maññati, nibbānaṃ abhinandati. Taṃ kissa hetu? Apariññātaṃ tassā’ti vadāmi.”*

## Conventional Cessation

In this world, the extinguishing of fires, protection from floods, liberation from tyrants, the end of hostility from enemies, security from robbers and thieves, peace after a war, freedom from starvation, cure of a disease, the cessation of all dangers, enemies, punishments, catastrophes, evils, and misfortunes, are all conventional cessation. This conventional cessation in Pāli is referred to as “*Mano nibbāti tāvade, rogo vūpasammati, antarāyo vūpasammati*” etc.

In the three verses uttered by Kisāgotamī on seeing the glory of Siddhattha, the future Buddha,<sup>1</sup> beginning with “*nibbutā nūna sā nāri,*” the cessation meant by the term “*nibbutā*” is also conventional cessation.

The beloved wife of a good man of a respectable family, handsome, young, powerful, and wise; the mother of that good son; having been such

<sup>1</sup> Dhp.A.i.84.

a woman who is happy gets peace of mind for the whole life, the peace that overcomes physical and mental sufferings is meant by the term “*nibbutā*.”

Because of the death of beloved parents, grand-parents, sons, husband, those who have been oppressed by suffering with a burning heart, get relief instantly from it on hearing the Dhamma from a certain man.

That bliss is also conventional. That cessation comes in the Pāḷi:<sup>1</sup>

“*Svāhaṃ abbūlhasallosmi, sītibhūtosmi nibbuto;*  
*Na socāmi na rodāmi, tava sutvāna māṇavā*”*ti.*

Though that conventional cessation has only one characteristic, that of peace (*santi-lakkhaṇa*),” suffering is of many kinds. In brief, depending upon the cessation of those three types of conventional bliss, the four destructions, the avoidance of (rebirth in) the four lower realms, the security from five kinds of enemies, the freedom from ten kinds of punishments, the safety from sixteen catastrophes, the cessation of twenty-five dangers, the cessation of thirty-two kinds of fate, the cure of ninety-six kinds of diseases, *etc.*

In detail, the types of conventional cessation are as innumerable as the galaxies (*cakkavāla ananta*), as infinite as the world cycles (*kappa ananta*), and as uncountable as the number of living-beings. That conventional bliss is the refuge for all beings, the shelter to depend upon before attaining to the unconditioned nibbāna.

In the first chapter, the bliss of peace is much more noble than the happiness of enjoyment, all which need to be mentioned in this conventional bliss. The two stories about Jivaka should also be illustrated in this conventional cessation. The wife of a banker of Sāketa had to pay four hundred thousand rupees for the cure of a headache. A banker of Rājagaha who was rich with many billions of rupees said that he would give all of his wealth, animate and inanimate objects for the cure of a headache. If that banker were a king, he would have given all of the wealth of a king. If he had been the sole monarch, he would have given all his wealth of the monarch. If he were the ruler of all the four great continents, he would have given all his wealth of the four great continents. The cure of a headache may be worth as much as that.

We should understand that the cure of a disease that is oppressing someone for years without any relief even for a moment, the cure of a fatal disease, the peace overcoming the external grave dangers are also valuable and very noble in the same way.

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<sup>1</sup> Dh.p.A.i.30.

Because conventional cessation does not exist in the ultimate sense, it is said to be conventional not just because it is a concept, but when comparing it with the complete cessation forever of the unconditioned it cannot be called nibbāna; and because the people call it cessation by the terms “*nibbuta, vūpasanta,*” we call it conventional bliss. The existence of that conventional cessation is not like the other ultimate realities that have neither substance nor form, it exists in the nature of peace. If it is not the ultimate in the nature of peace, it would not have been experienced in the body (*kāya sacchikaraṇa*). If that is not so, those bankers would not have given so much treasure to get that peace. Even though they bought it, if that cessation were a concept, they would not have experienced the peace with their bodies recovering from diseases. The cure of that headache is indeed experienced with their body. Therefore it should be noted that that conventional bliss, too, is not a mere concept just for naming it; and that it has the same nature as ultimate realities.

*This is the explanation of conventional bliss.*

## Momentary Cessation

In this world, just as a medicinal plant can cure a particular illness; so too there are wholesome phenomena that can dispel unwholesome phenomena. The dispelling of an unwholesome dhamma by a wholesome dhamma is temporary abandonment (*tadaṅga-pahāna*). Because of its abandonment, there is momentary cessation (*tadaṅga-nibbāna*). This momentary cessation should be understood as in the Sallekha Sutta<sup>1</sup> of the Majjhimanikāya:—

“*Vihimsakassa purisapuggalassa avihimsā hoti parinibbānāya.*”

**Vihimsakassa purisapuggalassa:** In the man who oppresses others physically or verbally; **avihimsā:** the wholesome dhamma that does not want to oppress others physically or verbally; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of that unwholesome dhamma.

One who is oppressed by the fire of the unwholesome phenomenon of cruelty, having developed the wholesome phenomenon of compassion, and having dispelled that cruelty, that fire of cruelty will cease as long as compassion is present. Thus, the cessation of cruelty is called momentary cessation. It should be understood in the same way later in the same text:—

“*Pāṇātipātissa purisapuggalassa pāṇātipātā veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya.*”

<sup>1</sup> M.i.45.

For those who are being oppressed with the fire of the unwholesome phenomenon of killing others; the morality of refraining from killing is for the cessation of that unwholesome phenomenon. Again:–

*“Adinnādāyissa purisapuggalassa adinnādānā veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya.”*

**Adinnādāyissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who used to steal other’s property; **adinnādānā veramaṇi:** the wholesome morality of refraining from stealing; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome phenomenon of stealing.

*“Abrahmacārissa purisapuggalassa abrahmacariyā veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya.”*

**Abrahmacārissa purisapuggalassa:** For the man who indulges in sexual misconduct; **veramaṇi abrahmacariyā:** the wholesome dhamma of refraining from sexual misconduct; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome phenomenon of sexual misconduct.

*“Musāvādissa purisapuggalassa musāvādā veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya. Pisuṇāvācassa purisapuggalassa pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya. Pharusavācassa purisapuggalassa pharusāya vācāya veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya. Samphappalāpissa purisapuggalassa samphappalāpā veramaṇi hoti parinibbānāya.”*

**Musāvādissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who tells lies; **veramaṇi musāvādā:** the wholesome dhamma of refraining from telling lies; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of telling lies. **Pisuṇāvācassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who slanders; **pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇi:** the wholesome dhamma of refraining from slander; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of slander. **Pharusavācassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who uses harsh speech; the wholesome dhamma of refraining from the use of harsh language; **pharusāya vācāya veramaṇi:** the wholesome dhamma of refraining from harsh speech; **parinibbānāya pharusavācā hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of harsh speech. **Samphappalāpassa purisapuggalassa:** for the man who indulges in idle chatter; **samphappalāpā veramaṇi:** the wholesome dhamma of refraining from idle chatter; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of idle chatter.

*“Abhijjhālussa purisapuggalassa anabhijjhā hoti parinibbānāya. Vyāpannacittassa purisapuggalassa abyāpādo hoti parinibbānāya.”*

**Abhijjhālussa purisapuggalassa:** For the man who is covetous; **abhijjhālutā:** freedom from covetousness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of covetousness. **Vyāpannacittassa purisapuggalassa:** For the man who has ill-will; **avyāpādo:** freedom from ill-will; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of ill-will.

*“Micchādiṭṭhissa purisapuggalassa sammādiṭṭhi hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāsaṅkappassa purisapuggalassa sammāsaṅkappo hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāvācassa purisapuggalassa sammāvācā hoti parinibbānāya. Micchākammantassa purisapuggalassa sammākammanto hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāājīvassa purisapuggalassa sammāājīvo hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāvāyāmassa purisapuggalassa sammāvāyāmo hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāsatisa purisapuggalassa sammāsati hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāsamādhissa purisapuggalassa sammāsamādhi hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāñāṇissa purisapuggalassa sammāñāṇaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Micchāvimuttissa purisapuggalassa sammāvimutti hoti parinibbānāya.”*

**Micchādiṭṭhissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who holds wrong-views; **sammādiṭṭhi:** right view; **parinibbāyāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong-views. **Micchāsaṅkappassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has wrong thoughts; **sammāsaṅkappo:** right thought; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong thought. **Micchāvācassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who uses wrong speech; **sammāvācā:** the wholesome dhamma of right speech; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong speech. **Micchākammantassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who does wrong actions; **sammākammanto:** the wholesome dhamma of doing right actions; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong actions. **Micchāājīvassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who earns a wrong livelihood; **sammāājīvo:** the wholesome dhamma of right livelihood; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong livelihood. **Micchāvāyāmassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who makes wrong efforts; **sammāvāyāmo:** right effort; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of wrong effort. **Micchāsatisa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has wrong mindfulness; **sammāsati:** right mindfulness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong mindfulness. **Micchā-**

**samādhissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has wrong concentration; **sammāsamādhī:** right concentration; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of wrong concentration. **Micchāñāṇissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has a wrong knowledge; **sammāñāṇam:** right knowledge; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of wrong knowledge. **Micchāvimuttissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has wrong liberation; **sammāvimutti:** right liberation; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation the unwholesome dhamma of wrong liberation.

“*Thinamiddhāpariyuṭṭhitassa purisapuggalassa vigatathina-middhatā hoti parinibbānāya. Uddhatassa purisapuggalassa anuddhaccaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Vicikicchissa purisapuggalassa tiṇṇavicikicchataṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Kodhanassa purisapuggalassa akkodho hoti parinibbānāya. Upanāhissa purisapuggalassa anupanāho hoti parinibbānāya. Makkhissa purisapuggalassa amakkho hoti parinibbānāya. Paḷāsissa purisapuggalassa apaḷāso hoti parinibbānāya. Issukissa purisapuggalassa anissukitā hoti parinibbānāya. Maccharissa purisapuggalassa amacchariyaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Saṭhassa purisapuggalassa asaṭṭheyyaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Māyāvissa purisapuggalassa amāyā hoti parinibbānāya. Thaddhassa purisapuggalassa atthaddhiyaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Atimānissa purisapuggalassa anatimāno hoti parinibbānāya. Dubbacassa purisapuggalassa sovacassatā hoti parinibbānāya. Pāpamittassa purisapuggalassa kalyāṇamittatā hoti parinibbānāya. Pamattassa purisapuggalassa appamādo hoti parinibbānāya. Assaddhassa purisapuggalassa saddhā hoti parinibbānāya. Ahirikassa purisapuggalassa hiri hoti parinibbānāya. Anottāpissa purisapuggalassa ottappaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Appassutassa purisapuggalassa bāhusaccaṃ hoti parinibbānāya. Kusitassa purisapuggalassa vīriyārambho hoti parinibbānāya. Muṭṭhassatissa purisapuggalassa upaṭṭhitassatitā hoti parinibbānāya. Duppaññassa purisapuggalassa paññāsampadā hoti parinibbānāya. Sandiṭṭhiparāmāsi-ādhanaggāhi-duppaṭṭhiṇissaggissa purisapuggalassa asandiṭṭhiparāmāsi-anādhānaggāhi-suppaṭṭhiṇissaggitā hoti parinibbānāya.*”

**Thinamiddhāpariyuṭṭhitassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is overwhelmed with sloth and torpor; **vigatathinamiddhatā:** freedom from sloth and torpor; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome

dhamma of sloth and torpor. **Uddhatassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is restless; **anuddhaccaṃ:** freedom from restlessness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of restlessness. **Vicikicchassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is doubtful; **tiṇṇavicikicchātā:** the overcoming of doubt; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of doubt. **Kodhanassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is angry; **akodho:** freedom from anger; **parinibbālāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of anger. **Upanāhissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has enmity; **anupanāhitā:** freedom from enmity; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of enmity. **Makkhissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is ungrateful; **amakkho:** gratitude; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of ingratitude. **Palāsissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is spiteful; **apaḷāso:** lack of spite; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of spite. **Issukissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is envious; **anissukitā:** freedom from envy; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of envy. **Maccharassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is mean; **amacchariyaṃ:** freedom from meanness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of meanness. **Saṭhassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is hypocritical; **asāṭheyyaṃ:** freedom from hypocrisy; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of hypocrisy. **Māyāvissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is deceitful; **amāyā:** freedom from deceitfulness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of deceitfulness. **Thaddhassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is haughty; **athaddhiyaṃ:** freedom from haughtiness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of stubbornness. **Atimānissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is excessively conceited; **anatimāno:** freedom from excessive conceit; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of excessive conceit. **Dubbacassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is difficult to admonish; **sovacassatā:** being easy to admonish; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of being difficult to admonish. **Pāpamittassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has evil friends; **kalyāṇamittatā:** good friendship; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of having evil friends. **Pamattassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is heedless; **appamādo:** heedfulness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of heedlessness. **Asaddhassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who lacks confidence; **saddhā:** confidence;

**parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of lack of confidence. **Ahrikassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is shameless; **hiri:** shame; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of shamelessness. **Anottāpissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who has no fear of *saṃsāra*, **ottappaṃ:** fear of *saṃsāra*; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of having no fear in *saṃsāra*. **Appassutassa puggalassa:** For one who has little knowledge; **bāhussaccaṃ:** having much knowledge; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of having little knowledge. **Kusitassa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is lazy; **viriyārambho:** diligence; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of laziness. **Muṭṭhassatissa purisapuggalassa:** For one who is of confused mindfulness; **upaṭṭhitassatitā:** unconfused mindfulness; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of confused mindfulness. **Duppaññassa purisapuggalassa:** For the unwise; **paññāsampadā:** being endowed with wisdom; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of foolishness. **Sandiṭṭhiparāmāsi ādānagāhī duppaṭinissaggiṣṣa purisapuggalassa:** For one who clings tightly to views and relinquishes them with difficulty; **asandiṭṭhiparāmāsi anādānaggāhī suppaṭinissaggita:** not clinging tightly to views and relinquishing them easily; **parinibbānāya hoti:** is for the cessation of the unwholesome dhamma of clinging tightly to views and relinquishing them with difficulty.

*These are the forty-four types of momentary cessation mentioned in the Sallekha Sutta. They too are only discrimination (upalakkhaṇā).*

In this world, the arising of unwholesome phenomena is innumerable, and the arising of the wholesome phenomena to dispel them is also innumerable. As the unwholesome phenomena can be dispelled, the momentary cessations of them are also innumerable. As the wholesome dhamma is established, the momentary cessation of each unwholesome dhamma is precious without measure.

That momentary cessation is also a kind of ultimate phenomenon that is experienced with the body as such a wholesome dhamma is established and a fire of unwholesome dhamma is extinguished.

This momentary cessation is much more noble than the aforesaid conventional cessation; and is much praised by the wise such as the Buddha. This momentary cessation is like the real nibbāna.

*This is the explanation of momentary cessation.*

## Cessation by Suppression

The absorptions dispel some unwholesome states. The cessation of these for a long time is called cessation by suppression (*vikkhambhana-nibbāna*). The number of these cessations should be understood by reading the series of discourses beginning with the *Sandiṭṭhikadhamma Sutta*, in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*.<sup>1</sup>

“*Sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānaṃ, sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānanti āvuso vuccati. Kittāvataṃ nu kho āvuso sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānaṃ vuttaṃ Bhagavatā*”ti.

“*Idhāvuso bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ upasampajja viharati, ettāvataṃpi kho āvuso sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānaṃ vuttaṃ bhagavatā pariyāyena*”ti.

**Āvuso:** Friend; **kittāvataṃ:** by how much; **nu kho sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānaṃ:** cessation visible here and now; **Bhagavatā vuttaṃ:** did the Blessed One say?

**Iti pucchi:** Mahā-Koṭṭhika asked the Venerable Ānanda.

**Āvuso:** Friend; **idha bhikkhu:** a monk in the Buddha’s dispensation; **vivicceva kāmehi:** being devoid of sensuality; **vivicca eva akusalehi dhammehi:** quite devoid of unwholesome thoughts; **paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ:** the first absorption; **upasampajja viharati** enters upon and abides in; **savitakkaṃ:** accompanied by initial application; **savicāraṃ:** and sustained application; **vivekajaṃ:** born of detachment; **piti:** filled with rapture; and **sukhaṃ:** happiness.

**Āvuso:** friend, **kho** indeed; **ettāvataṃpi:** by the cessation of the objective and subjective sensualities, too. **Bhagavatā:** the Blessed One; **vuttaṃ:** said; **pariyāyena:** in this way; **sandiṭṭhikaṃ:** visible here and now; **nibbānaṃ:** cessation; **Iti:** thus the Venerable Ānanda replied.

1. The cessation personally experienced before the attainment of parinibbāna is cessation visible here and now. In the higher absorptions the meaning only will be shown.
2. For one who enters upon and abides in the second absorption, the cessation of initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) is cessation visible here and now.
3. For one who enters upon and abides in the third absorption, the cessation of rapture (*pīti*) is called cessation visible here and now.

<sup>1</sup> A.iv.453.

4. For one who enters upon and abides in the fourth absorption, the cessation of bliss (*sukha*) is cessation visible here and now.
5. For one who enters upon and abides in the absorption on infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*), the cessation of various perceptions is cessation visible here and now.
6. For one who enters upon and abides in the absorption on infinite consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatana*), the cessation of the perception of infinite space is cessation visible here and now.
7. For one who enters upon and abides in the absorption on nothingness (*ākīñcaññāyatana*), the cessation of the perception of infinite consciousness is cessation visible here and now.
8. For one who enters upon and abides in the absorption on neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*), the cessation of the absorption on nothingness is cessation visible here and now.

These eight types of cessation attained through these eight great attainments (*mahaggata-samāpatti*) are not complete cessation; they cease for a long time only and they are called cessation in another sense.

*“Puna ca paraṃ avuso bhikkhu nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma saññāvedayita nirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati, paññāyaca ssa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇa honti, ettāvata kho avuso sandiṭṭhikaṃ nibbānaṃ vuttaṃ bhagavatā nippariyāyenaṭi.”*

**Puna ca paraṃ āvuso:** Again, friend; **bhikkhu:** a monk; **nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ:** the absorption on neither perception nor non-perception; **samatikkamma:** having transcended; **saññāvedayita-nirodhaṃ:** the complete cessation of perception and feeling; **upasampajja:** enters upon; and **viharati:** abides in; **assa:** for that person; **disvā:** having seen; **paññāyaca:** with wisdom; **ca:** also; **āsavā:** the defilements; **parikkhīṇa:** ceased forever; **honti:** have; **āvuso:** friend; **kho:** indeed; **ettāvata:** by the cessation of these; **āsavā:** defilements; **bhagavatā:** the Blessed One; **vuttaṃ:** said; **nippariyāyena:** certainly; **sandiṭṭhikaṃ:** visible here and now; **nibbānaṃ:** cessation; **iti:** thus said the Venerable Ānanda.

In the last sentence the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling (*nirodha-samāpatti*) is one cessation; and the complete cessation of defilements without remainder on attaining Arahantship is another. Thus, though there are two, the cessation in the sense of cessation being one only, altogether there are nine types of cessation.

1. In the Nibbāna Sutta: “*Nibbānaṃ nibbāna’nti, āvuso vuccati. Kittāvatā nu kho, āvuso, nibbānaṃ vuttaṃ Bhagavatā’ti?*” etc. without the term ‘*sandiṭṭhika,*’ there are nine types of cessation just as stated in the first sutta.
2. In the Tadaṅganibbāna Sutta too: “*Tadaṅganibbānaṃ tadaṅga-nibbānan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types in terms of momentary cessation.
3. In the Diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna Sutta: “*Diṭṭhadhamma-nibbānaṃ diṭṭhadhamma-nibbānan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of cessation visible here and now.
4. In the Khema Sutta, “*Khemaṃ khema’n’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of peace.
5. In the Khemappatta Sutta “*Khemappatto khemappatto’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation especially meant for those who have already attained nibbāna.
6. In the Amata Sutta “*Amataṃ amatan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of the deathless.
7. In the Amatappatta Sutta “*Amatappatto amatappatto’ti āvuso vuccati,*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of the deathless especially meant for those who have already attained nibbāna.
8. In the Abhaya Sutta, “*Abhayaṃ abhayan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of fearlessness.
9. In the Abhayappatta Sutta, “*Abhayappatto abhayan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of fearlessness especially meant for those who have already attained nibbāna.
10. In the Passaddhi Sutta, “*Passaddhi passaddhi’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of tranquillity.
11. In the Anupubbapassaddhi Sutta, “*Anupubbapassaddhi anupubba-passaddhi’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of progressive tranquillity.
12. In the Nirodha Sutta, “*Nirodho nirodho’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of extinction.
13. In the Anupubbanirodha Sutta, “*Anupubbanirodho anupubba-nirodho’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., there are nine types of cessation in terms of progressive extinction.

In these thirteen discourses there are a hundred and seventeen types of cessation, of which a hundred and four are cessation by suppression and thirteen are cessation by cutting off.

The one hundred and four types of cessation by suppression always exist in the Brahma realms, whereas in the human and deva realms they exist only in those who have practised the absorptions.

*This is the end of cessation by suppression.*

## Cessation by Cutting off

Only human Non-returners and Arahants, deva Non-returners and Arahants, brahma Non-returners and Arahants have attained cessation by cutting off (*samuccheda-nibbāna*). It also means cessation with the aggregates remaining (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*).

The complete abandonment of defilements is the function of cutting off (*samuccheda-kicca*); the defilements that have been abandoned and cease to appear any more is cessation by cutting off (*samuccheda-nibbāna*).

As it says in the Pāli text, “*Tadaṅga nibbānaṃ tadaṅganibbānan’ti āvuso vuccati*” etc., due to the function of suppression (*vikkhambhana-kicca*), there is momentary cessation (*tadaṅga-nibbāna*). The first wholesome state of the first absorption abandons the unwholesome states of the five hindrances; the second absorption abandons initial and sustained application, and so on. Thus, depending on the abandoning and the abandoned states respectively, the function of suppression should also be called momentary cessation. This cessation by suppression is millions of times more noble than the aforesaid momentary cessation, but it should not be said that it is nobler than the eighteen momentary cessations that are due to the eighteen insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) mentioned in the Paṭisambhidāmagga. Cessation by cutting off (*samuccheda-nibbāna*) is more noble still than the eighteen momentary cessations of insight knowledge.

## Seven Kinds of Cessation by Cutting off

Cessation by cutting off means cessation with the aggregates remaining (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*) as mentioned in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha. It is also called the cessation of defilements (*kilesa-nibbāna*). The number of those cessations should be understood from the questions of the Venerable Moggallāna and the answers of Tissa Brahmā, and the words of the Buddha in the Aṅguttaranikāya. Only the essence will be shown here.

In the term ‘cessation with the aggregates remaining,’ cessation is of two kinds: cessation with defilements remaining (*kilesupādisesa*) and cessation with the aggregates remaining (*khandhupādisesa*). Of these two, those individuals who are trainers (*sekha-puggala*) who still have defilements

remaining, are called individuals with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-puggala*) due to defilements remaining. Cessation attained by that person is also cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*).

The Arahant who has no remaining defilements is called an individual without remainder (*anupādisesa-puggala*) on attaining Arahantship, the cessation attained by such an individual is also called cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

After becoming Noble Ones and before attaining the final cessation of the aggregates (*khandha-parinibbāna*), the eight types of Noble Ones who still have the five aggregates are called individuals with remainder due to having aggregates remaining (*khandhupādisesa*).

After attaining final cessation (*parinibbāna*) and passing away, that person is called an individual with no remainder (*anupādisesa-puggala*), and the cessation attained by that person is called cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

Thus the Commentary states that two kinds of individuals and nibbāna are differentiated by way of defilements and by way of aggregates.

The cessation of an Arahant who is liberated in both ways (*ubhatobhāga-vimutta*), and the cessation of an Arahant liberated by wisdom (*paññā-vimutta*), are also of two kinds each, by way of cessation with and without aggregates remaining.

The cessation of the body-witness (*kāyasakkhi*), that of one attained to view (*diṭṭhipatto*), that of one liberated through faith (*saddhā-vimutto*), and that of the faith-follower (*saddhānusāri*) are of two kinds each,<sup>1</sup> by way of cessation of defilements (*kilesupādisesa*), cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*), and cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

Thus, in the answer given by Brahma Tissa there are six individuals, six with remainder and six without remainder. The cessation of insight meditator who will attain the path and fruition in this life before becoming Arahant is an individual with aggregates remaining. On becoming an Arahant, they attain cessation without remainder.

Thus, in the answer given by the Buddha there were two persons and two cessations. Herein cessation with remainder means eighteen kinds of momentary cessation, which are attained by the eighteen kinds of great insight (*mahā-viṇṇāna-ñāṇa*). Although they are only momentary cessation, they will certainly join the higher cessation by cutting off so they have to be called cessation with remainder.

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<sup>1</sup> Before and after becoming an Arahant.

Thus, in this Pāli text there are seven kinds of cessation with remainder, and seven without remainder, altogether fourteen. Of these, the seven with remainder are called the seven kinds of cessation with cutting off.

*This is the numeration of cessations with cutting off.*

The fruition of an Arahant (*paṭippassaddhi-nibbāna*) should be understood as in the Nettippakaraṇa “**Sa-upādisesā nibbāna dhātu vijjā**” and as in the Maṅgala Sutta “**nibbāna sacchikiriyāca.**”

## Cessation as Refuge

Cessation as refuge (*nissaraṇa-nibbāna*) means the ultimate unconditioned great cessation (*paramattha asaṅkhata mahā-nibbāna*), which has two types as with remainder and without remainder.

That cessation as refuge should be understood as in the Itivuttaka Pāli, etc., “**Dvemā bhikkhave nibbāna-dhātuyo, katamā dve, sa-upādisesā ca nibbāna dhātu, anupādisesā ca nibbāna dhātu.**”

*“Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā,  
sa-upādisesā bhavanettisaṅkhayā;  
Anupādisesā pana samparāyikā,  
yamhi nirujjhanti bhavāni sabbaso.”<sup>1</sup>*

Cessation with remainder is visible here and now (*diṭṭhadhammika-nibbāna*); and cessation without remainder belongs to after death (*samparāyika-nibbāna*). In the Commentary too, it has been said:—

*“Diṭṭhadhammikā’ti imasamiṃ attabhāve bhavā vattamānā; ...  
samparāyikā’ti samparāye khandha bhedato parabhāge bhavū.”<sup>2</sup>*

**Diṭṭhadhammikā’ti:** In this very existence means; **imasamiṃ:** in this; **attabhāve:** existence; **bhavāvattamānā:** it happens. **Samparāyikā’ti:** belongs to after death means; **samparāye khandha:** aggregates in the next world. **Bhedato parabhāge bhavā vattamānā:** means it happens after the dissolution of the present body.

**Bhavā vattamānā:** consists of two terms — in **Bhavā:** ‘bhū’ means ‘satta.’ ‘Satta’ literally means exists by way of conditioned ultimate phenomena (*saṅkhata-paramattha*); phenomena also exists by way of unconditioned ultimate (*asaṅkhata-paramattha*); concept exists by way of concept (*paññatti*); this is called ‘satta.’ It is not meant for ‘newly appear.’

<sup>1</sup> Iti.38.

<sup>2</sup> Iti.A.i.167.

'Hoti bhavati,' these two terms are used for three kinds of 'phyit' = be, above. They are not two kinds of 'phyit' = be, meant for 'appear by way of *uppāda jāti*.'

'Vattati, pavattati, vattamānaṃ, pavattamānaṃ' means 'be = exist forever.' It does not mean appear by way of arising at birth (*uppāda jāti*).

'Uppajjati, nibbattati, jāyati, uppanno, nibbatto, jāto' are the terms used for the Burmese word 'phyit' = be, appear by way of arising at birth.

Thus, in the treatises, and in Burmese, there are three kinds of usage 'phyit = be.' Of the three, in the Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā, only the 'phyit' = be, exist forever' should be taken. The 'appear' should not be taken; therefore it is said 'bhavā, vattamānā;' it is not said 'uppannā, nibbatta, jātā.'

As nibbāna exists in the sense of nibbāna, it should be said as 'bhavā;' as it exists forever in the endless cycle of rebirths, it should be said existing (*vattamānā*). As it never appears by way of appearing (*uppāda-jāti*), it should not be said 'jātā, uppannā, nibbattā.'

Those who are not aware of the difference between the three kinds of 'phyit' = be,' in regard to 'bhavā vattamānā' mentioned in the Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā, there is no appearing only by way of coarse birth (*jāti*) just like any other conditioned phenomenon, apart from nibbāna. There is appearing by way of very subtle birth; *sa-upādisesa-nibbāna* begins to appear when the path and the fruition appear. Whereas *anupādisesa-nibbāna* appears beginning from the cessation of materiality born of kamma at the time of passing away (*parinibbāna-cuti*). This is what they have taken. Some teachers, too, do not wish for the new appearing of nibbāna. Also in the Commentary, it says: 'bhavā, vattamānā.'

Therefore, cessation with remainder and cessation without remainder, which come from the Itivuttaka Pāli text, are not the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna (*paramattha-asāṅkhata-mahā-nibbāna*). This Pāli means the unconditioned concept, void of defilements; *abhāvamatta* is cessation with remainder. After passing away, the decease of final cessation (*parinibbāna-cuti*) and the cessation of materiality born of kamma; the mere concept of not-become (*abhāva*), the absence of rebirth in a new existence is called cessation without remainder. Thus they have taken the meaning.

Although the two kinds of unconditioned great nibbāna, which are included in the four ultimate truths, the noble truth, they have taken that they are not expounded in this Pāli text and they have taken that the two kinds of nibbāna, not as ultimate truths, but only as concepts of not become are expounded. This view is unreasonable.

The varieties of this ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna — namely cessation with remainder and cessation without remainder, two terms, and voidness (*suññata*), signless (*animitta*), desirelessness (*appaṇihita*), three terms, that occur in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha — should be understood by reading the Abhidhamma Saccavibhaṅga.

The complete cessation of lust is nibbāna, which is the truth of cessation (*nirodha-saccā*). The complete cessation of lust, too, is reckoned as sixfold.

1. The cessation of lust grasping at the eye is one nibbāna.
2. The cessation of lust grasping at the ear is one nibbāna.
3. The cessation of lust grasping at the nose is one nibbāna.
4. The cessation of lust grasping at the tongue is one nibbāna.
5. The cessation of lust grasping at the body is one nibbāna.
6. The cessation of lust grasping at the mind is one nibbāna.

Thus at the six internal sense-bases, six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

Similarly, at the six external sense-bases, such as sight, sound, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of consciousness, such as eye-consciousness, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of contact, such as eye-contact, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of feelings such as feeling arising from eye-contact *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of perception, such as sight-perception, sound-perception, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of volition, such as volition of sight, volition of sound, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six kinds of craving, such as craving for form, craving for sound, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six types of initial application, such as initial application to sight, initial application to sound, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

At the six sustained applications of the mind such sustained application to sight, sustained application to sound, *etc.*, ... six kinds of nibbāna are attained.

Thus in the Abhidhamma, and also in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, depending on the sixty places for the cessation of lust, there are sixty kinds of truth of cessation — sixty kinds of nibbāna.

There are innumerable cessations with a remainder. Even in the person of an Arahant, there are sixty kinds of nibbāna by way of enumerating the

places where cessation takes place. Should the enumeration be made in many Arahants, the kinds of nibbāna would be infinite. So great is the number of kinds of nibbāna just in accordance with the places for the cessation of craving.

Nibbāna, which has the nature of signlessness (*animitta*) has neither form, image, nor space to count, but it has only one characteristic, that of peace, (*santi-lakkhaṇa*). Should the phenomena that have already ceased be enumerated, there would be an infinite number of momentary cessations (*tadaṅga-nibbāna*), namely the complete cessation of greed is one, the cessation of hatred is another, *etc.* This is the enumeration of cessation with remainder, cessation of defilements.

The innumerable cessations without remainder, even though not mentioned specifically in the Vibhaṅga Pāli text, by the term ‘cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha*)’ the number of types of nibbāna without remainder and final cessation of the aggregates may be infinite. The complete cessation of the eye is one nibbāna, the complete cessation of the ear is one nibbāna, *etc.* So great is the number just in accordance with the cessation of innumerable phenomena.

Nibbāna, being a signless phenomenon is only one. If the cessation of the laws of dependent origination — “*Avijjāyatveva asesaviraya nirodhā sankhāra nirodho,*” *etc.* — is read accordingly, twelve kinds of nibbāna including the types of nibbāna with and without remainder will be seen. Those twelve are indeed only one and the same thing.

*Here ends the seven kinds of cessation by cutting off.*

## The Attainment of Cessation as Refuge

How the ultimate unconditioned nibbāna, that cessation as refuge, is attained should be understood through reading the Pāli texts in which it has been expounded with many similes.

There are ten suttas in the Saṃyuttanikāya, Nidānavaggo, Dukkhavaggo, about the development of the round of suffering, the cessation of it together with many examples. The essence of those ten suttas will be shown in order.

### Parivīmaṣṣana Suttaṃ – A Thorough Investigation

A potter makes an oven and bakes many pots, takes out one of the very hot pots, and keeps it on level ground away from the fire. The heat on that pot ceases and only the empty pot remains. As long as the attachment to the

internal sense-bases such as the eye, the ear, etc., as “mine,” “my eye,” etc., develops throughout the cycle of rebirth, the cycle of suffering will develop. If the pot is left standing on the ground, the heat dissipates and disappears, and only the pot remains. Eventually, the pot will be broken and only potsherds will remain. Similarly, when the torrent of craving that repeatedly enjoys those internal and external sense-bases is cut off, the latent craving that has been enjoying is also uprooted. Then the cycle of suffering will cease forever.

In this discourse the cooling of the pot means the dissipation without remainder of any heat; only the pot remains; and in due course, the pot will also be broken and only potsherds would remain.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly when an Arahant attains the final cessation of the aggregates, all the five internal aggregates, will cease forever. It is not a being, but only a corpse, devoid of essence, like a banana trunk is devoid of heartwood. Just a group of temperature-born material phenomena, together with the relics will remain. The corpse and relics will also disappear before long.

“*Kāyassa bhedaṃ uddham jīvitapariyādānā idheva sabbavedayitāni anabhinanditāni sītībhavissanti, sarīrāni avasissantīti.*”<sup>2</sup>

**Kāyassa bhedaṃ** = As the body perishes; **uddham jīvitapariyādāna** = from the time of death onward; **idheva** = here and now; **sabbavedayitāni** = all the agreeable and disagreeable feelings; **anabhinanditāni** = being free from delight [in them]; **sītī bhavissanti** = will be tranquillised; **sarīrāni avasissantī** = the only corpse and the bone-relics will remain.

As the body perishes from the time of death onward, here and now, all the agreeable and disagreeable feelings, being free from delight in them, will be tranquillised forever; the only corpse and the bone-relics will remain.

With reference to the example of the above discourse, for the Arahant from the time of death onward, with the cessation of materiality born from kamma (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*), only the relics born from temperature (*utuja-aṭṭha-kalāpa*) will remain. It should be understood that there is no trace of anything that leaves the body of an Arahant to go to nibbāna. If the Arahant were a deva or a brahma, even the relics will not remain; all will cease and disappear forever on death, the cessation of materiality born from kamma (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*).

<sup>1</sup> The original used the simile from the Upādāna Sutta, but it does not apply here. The Arahant’s living body is like the pot, and his relics are like the potsherds (ed.)

<sup>2</sup> S.ii.83.

## Upādāna Suttaṃ – Attachment

A great heap of firewood is collected and a great fire is made. As long as firewood is added to the fire, the fire will keep on burning for a long time. Similarly, for worldly beings, as long as the craving that delights in the six internal bases, which conduces to attachment to parts of one's body, and the six external bases, and the wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate (*abyākata*) phenomena — twelve in all — as “my body or the parts of my body or I,” is prominent, the cycle of repeated births throughout *saṃsāra* will continue.

If no new firewood is put on the fire, and the old firewood is soaked in water, that fire will be extinguished and disappear. Only ash and charcoal will remain; that ash and charcoal, too, will disappear before long.

Similarly, by contemplating impermanence, suffering, and not-self in the twelve sense-bases, the craving that enjoys the twelve sense-bases is also dispelled; the latent craving that has been enjoying them forever is also uprooted. Since then all will disappear accordingly. As soon as the materiality born from kamma (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*) ceases, the internal materiality and mentality, will cease forever; only the external relics will remain; those external relics, too, will disappear before long.

## Samyojana Suttaṃ – Fetters

A simile of an oil-lamp is used. The flame of a lamp will not be extinguished as long as the oil and the wick are continuously renewed. When the supply of the oil or wick are cut off, the flame will be extinguished and it will disappear. The cessation of aggregates, too, should be understood as in the Upādāna Sutta, just like the simile of the lamp.

## Dutiya Samyojana Suttaṃ – Fetters

This sutta also uses the simile of an oil-lamp, but instead of the phrase “Which conduces to clinging.” In there is the phrase “Which conduces to fetters.” That is the only difference, It should be understood in the following suttas, too, in just the same way.

## Mahārukkha Suttaṃ – The Big Tree

This sutta uses the simile of a big tree. As long as the main root and the rootlets of a tree are free from diseases, and as long as the nutritive essence of the soil, the water keep supplying the top of the tree, it will develop for a

long time. When all the roots, big or small, are uprooted, dried and burnt with fire, that tree will dry up, decay, and disappear.

In this simile, this body, the twelve sense-bases that were developing in successive births throughout the beginningless round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*) are like a big tree. Ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are like the main root, and the remaining defilements are like the rootlets.

In another way the defilements are similar to the main root. Wholesome and unwholesome kammās are like the rootlets. Insight knowledge, that sees the twelve sense-bases as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self is like a mattock or an axe cutting the roots. The noble path and the fruition are like the fire that burns the dry roots to ashes.

### Dutiya Mahārukkha Suttaṃ – The Big Tree

Here too, the same simile of a big tree is used.

### Taruṇa Rukkha Suttaṃ – The Sapling

In this sutta, a simile of a sapling is used. If the sapling was well-planted, the roots protected and watered regularly, it will keep on growing. If the roots were dug up and burnt, it would perish and die.

### Nāmarūpa Suttaṃ – Mind and Matter

The same example of a sapling is used.

### Viññāṇa Suttaṃ – Consciousness

In this sutta, the simile of a big tree is used. For those who are regard their bodies, which conduce to clinging, as pleasant, consciousness will come to be after death. If the consciousness comes to be, mind and matter will come to be. For those who do not regard their bodies as pleasant, consciousness will not come to be after their death.

### Nidāna Suttaṃ – Causation

In this sutta, the only difference is “Their bodies, which conduce to fetters.”

With reference to the examples expounded above by the Buddha, it should be understood that for the Arahant in the human realm, only relics born from temperature (*utuja-rūpa-kalāpa*) will remain. There is no trace of any other thing that enters nibbāna. For devas and brahmas who become Arahants, there are not even any relics remaining.

## Aggivaccha Suttam

The Aggivaccha Sutta<sup>1</sup> of the Majjhimapaṇṇāsa will be examined here. The wanderer (*paribbājaka*) Vacchagotta asked the Buddha what happens to an Arahant after death. The Buddha answered his questions.

Q: “Where does the Arahant reappear [after death]?”

A: “The term ‘reappear’ does not apply.”

Q: “Does he not reappear?”

A: “The term ‘does not reappear’ does not apply.”

Q: “Does he both reappear and not reappear?”

A: “The term ‘both reappears and does not reappear’ does not apply.”

Q: “Does he neither reappear nor not reappear?”

A: “The term ‘neither reappears nor does not reappear’ does not apply.”

Vaccha was not satisfied with the above answers and said that he was confused, and had lost faith in the Buddha. The Buddha then told him the simile of a big fire to satisfy him.<sup>2</sup>

Q: “Vaccha, if there is a big fire in front of you, will you know that there is a big fire, a big flame in front of you?”

A: “Yes, friend Gotama!”

Q: “If you were asked, ‘On what does this fire depend to burn?’

A: “I would answer, ‘This fire burns dependent on grass and sticks’.”

Q: “If that fire in front of you were extinguished, would you know?”

A: “Yes, friend Gotama, I would know.”

Q: “If you are asked to which direction has that extinguished fire gone, to the east, west, north, or south, how would you answer?”

A: “Friend Gotama, I would answer: ‘That does not apply. The fire burned in dependence on grass and sticks. As the old fuel is consumed, and new fuel is no longer being supplied, the fire is extinguished at that very place.

*“Anāhāro nibbuto tveva saṅkhyam gacchati’ti”*

“As there is no more fuel to depend on, it is only said to have been extinguished.”

<sup>1</sup> M.i.486-487.

<sup>2</sup> I have filled in the details missing from the original (ed.)

It has to be said in the past tense as ended (*khīṇā*); ceased (*niruddhā*); appeased (*nibbuta*). As it is no more at present, it is not to be said in the present tense as appears (*upapajjati*), does not appear (*niṭṭapajjati*).”

Then the Buddha explained the four points with reasons.

“*Evameva kho, vaccha, yena rūpeṇa Tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya taṃ rūpaṃ Tathāgatassa pahīnaṃ ucchinnamūlaṃ tālāvatthukataṃ anabhāvaṃkataṃ āyatiṃ anuṭṭādadhamaṃ. Rūpasāṅkhayavimutto kho, vaccha, Tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho — seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti.*”

“So too, Vaccha, the Tathāgata has abandoned that material form by which one describing the Tathāgata might describe him, he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, done away with it so that it is no longer subject to future arising. The Tathāgata is liberated from reckoning in terms of material form. Vaccha, he is profound, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean. The term ‘reappears’ does not apply, the term ‘does not reappear’ does not apply, the term ‘both reappears and does not reappear’ does not apply, the term ‘neither reappears nor does not reappear’ does not apply.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Concept of an Arahant

Depending on the five aggregates (*nāma-rūpa*), the concept of an Arahant is given. After the cessation of materiality born from kamma, those five aggregates (*nāma-rūpa*) cease forever without remainder, the concept of an individual Arahant also disappears.

1. The concept that depends on the material group (*rūpakkhandaḥ*) disappears with the cessation of its series.
2. The concept that depends on the feeling group (*vedanakkhandhā*) disappears with the cessation of its series.
3. The concept that depends on the perception group (*saññakkhandhā*) disappears with the cessation of its series.
4. The concept that depends on the formations group (*saṅkhārakkhandhā*) disappears with the cessation of its series.

<sup>1</sup> M.ii.477-478, I have inserted Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation of this paragraph (ed.)

5. The concept that depends on the consciousness group (*viññāṇak-khandhā*) disappears with the cessation of its series.

It is just like the fire that depends on the fuel ends with the disappearance of the fuel. Thus at the time of death, the cessation of materiality born from kamma, the five aggregates, cease and he is free from them, and from the concepts of a Buddha, an Arahant, or a being, which depend on those five aggregates. That Arahant is profound like the ocean. There is no example to compare with it. It is very difficult to realise with reasoning. It is not within the scope of the terms 'appears,' 'does not appear,' *etc.*, which worldlings use.

Counting back from this aeon, during the four aeons and a hundred thousand world-cycles there appeared on earth the Buddhas whose concepts alone remain: Taṇhāṅkara, Medhāṅkara, Saraṅkara, Dīpaṅkara, *etc.* The concepts depending on the aggregates of the former Buddhas in the round of rebirths are no longer heard. They will neither appear amongst the world of man nor the world of devas nor the world of brahmas. They have never yet been spoken of, even as existing in the past.

At the time of each Buddha, the innumerable aggregates of the Arahants, their concepts disappeared altogether; they will neither appear among the world of men, nor in the celestial realms.

The successive aggregates of the beings who have taken rebirth in *samsāra*, and their respective concepts, however, are still appearing among the six realms of existence. Only by comparing with the aggregates of those beings with the infinite number of Buddhas who have already appeared and those beings who attained *parinibbāna* long ago, how much they are innumerable, incomparable, and hard to understand, can be seen.

The Omniscient Buddhas alone can fathom the innumerable aggregates of those who had already attained *parinibbāna* long ago in *samsāra*, and their respective names. Apart from Omniscient Buddhas, no Solitary Buddha, Arahant, brahmā, deva, or human-being can know them.

In this discourse there have been shown, together with the example of fire, the complete cessation of the ultimate realities such as materiality, feeling, *etc.*, and the concept without the remainder, after the cessation of materiality born from kamma at *parinibbāna*, there is no trace of ultimate realities that leave the Arahant and enter nibbāna; and there is no concept either. Thus it should be understood. Why is there no trace of phenomena that leave the body of an Arahant and enter nibbāna?

The complete cessation of birth from the appearing of the aggregates of beings who have already attained Arahantship, and the ultimate realities

are called nibbāna. The complete cessation of ultimate realities from reappearing after the attainment of final cessation is called the attainment of nibbāna. Therefore even the terms: ‘Enter nibbāna,’ ‘Attain nibbāna,’ ‘Gone to nibbāna’ have no trace of phenomena that go to nibbāna are included. Thus it should be understood.

In the Majjhimapaṇṇāsa and Diṭṭhi Saṃyutta, too, in the question of King Kosala and the answers by Bhikkhuni Khemā and the Buddha, too; “*Hoti Tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā,*” they are all the same as in the Aggivaṇṇa Sutta. Therein: exists (*hoti*) = appears (*uṇeti*); does not exist (*na hoti*) = does not appear (*na uṇeti*); both exists and does not exist (*hoti ca, na ca hoti*) = both appears and does not appear (*na ca uṇeti neva hoti*); neither exists nor does not exist (*neva hoti, na ca hoti*) = both appears, and does not appear (*uṇeti ca, na ca uṇeti*).

### Upasīva-māṇava-Pucchā

The essence of the questions by the Brahmin youth Upasīva in verse,<sup>1</sup> will be reproduced and explained here:–

Upasīva was an attainer of absorption (*jhānalābhi*) who had already attained the absorption of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana-jhāna*). Therefore, he asked the Buddha a way based on that to gain release from the cycle of suffering. The Buddha answered his questions.

There are four questions and four answers in verse; of them, only the last two pairs of questions and answers in verses will be reproduced:–

“*Tiṭṭhe ce so tattha anānuyāyi, pūgampi vassānaṃ samantacakkhu.  
Tattheva so sītisiyā vimutto, cavetha viññānaṃ tathāvidhassa.*”

“All-seeing one! (**samantacakkhu**); if he who has attained to nothingness (**so**), continuously reappears in that abode (**tattha anānuyāyi**); and stays there for many years (**pūgampi vassānaṃ ce tiṭṭha**); does he free himself (**so tattheva vimutto**); from the suffering of death (*cuti maraṇa dukkha*) and becomes appeased forever (**siti siyā**); or does his consciousness pass away and take rebirth (**tathāvidhassa viññānaṃ ca vetha**)?”

“*Acci yathā vātavegena khittā, (Upasīvāti Bhagavā)  
Atthaṃ paleti na uṇeti saṅkhaṃ.  
Evaṃ munī nāmakāyā vimutto, atthaṃ paleti na uṇeti saṅkhaṃ.*”

“Just as the flame blown away by the wind (**acci yathā vātavegena khittā**); said the Blessed One to Upasīva (**Upasīvāti Bhagavā**); disappears from

<sup>1</sup> Sn. Pārāyanavaggo, Upasivamāṇavapucchā, verses 1079-1082.

existence (**atthaṃ paleti**); and cannot be pointed out (**saṅkhaṃ na upeti**); thus (**evam**); the sage who is liberated from the mental group (**nāmakāyā vimutto muni**); disappears from existence (**atthaṃ paleti**); and cannot be pointed out (**saṅkhaṃ na upeti**).

The brahmin youth Upasīva had been freed from the physical form by attaining the absorption of nothingness, yet he needed to get free from mentality (*arūpa*). Therefore, the Buddha, wishing to show him how to free himself from craving for mentality, taught: ‘Liberated from the mental group (*nāmakāyā vimutto*).’ If he was unable to dispel craving for formlessness (*arūpa-taṅhā*) and mentality he would remain in that brahma abode, and after death would continue suffering in *saṃsāra*. If the craving for formlessness was dispelled and he was freed from craving for mentality, the mental aggregates would cease at that very abode, just as a flame blown away by the wind would disappear. He would take no more rebirth.

Herein, the term ‘disappears from existence (*atthaṃ paleti*)’ means attained to nibbāna. In the expression ‘disappear from the human realm and take rebirth in the deva realm,’ just as there are three factors:–

1. The deva abode that is attained to.
2. The one who attains it.
3. Disappearing from the human realm, and appearing in the deva realm.

Just so, some think that there are three factors here too:–

1. The abode of nibbāna that is attained to.
2. The one who attains nibbāna.
3. Disappearing from the state of a being with five aggregates, and appearing in the supramundane abode (*lokuttarā bhummīṭhāna*).

However, the exposition of that phrase in the Cūḷaniddesa is “**Atthaṃ paletiti atthaṃ paleti, atthaṃ gameti, atthaṃ gacchati, nirujjhati, vūpasamati, paṭipassambhati.**”

**Atthaṃ paleti’ti** means; attained to nibbāna (**atthaṃ paleti**); sent to nibbāna (**atthaṃ gameti**); gone to nibbāna (**atthaṃ gacchati**); ceases (**nirujjhati**); appeased (**vūpasamati**); become tranquil (**paṭipassambhati**).

Of these six words, the meaning of the first three is clarified. By the last three words, “*nirujjhati etc.*,” the essential meaning of “*atthaṃ paleti*” is summarised. Though two words and two sounds are made as “*atthaṃ paleti*,” just to show that the essential meaning is ‘the aggregates cease,’ it is explained with one word ‘*nirujjhati*.’

The aggregates are merely the burning fire of suffering. To show that the cessation of suffering is indeed peace, the word “*nirujjhati*” is again commented on as “*vūpasamati, paṭipassambhati*.” Therefore the cessation of the aggregate of defilements should be noted as “*atthaṃ paleti*.”

In ‘Attain to nibbāna (*atthaṃ paleti*),’ nibbāna is the cessation of the burning phenomena. Therefore to nibbāna (*atthaṃ*) is the same as disappearing, cessation, just as in the world, come to death (*maranaṃ nigacchati*) and die (*marati*) are the same. Goes to destruction (*bhedanaṃ gacchati*) is the same as perishes (*bhijjati*). Reaches old age (*jaraṃ gacchati*), is the same as ages (*jiyyati*). Gets well-cooked (*pākaṃ gacchati*) is the same as well-cooked (*paccati*). In such expressions, two words and one word have the same meaning.

“*Atthaṅgato so uda vā so natthi, udāhu ve sassatiyā arogo.*  
*Taṃ me munī sādhu viyākarohi, tathā hi te vidito esa dhammo.*”

If it is said ‘That person disappears (**so atthaṅgato**),’ or does not exist (**uda natthi vā**), indeed (**ve**), always exists without perishing (**sassatiyā arogo**), please tell me the answer (**taṃ me sādhu viyākarohi**), oh sage (**munī**), indeed (**hi**), you know this truth (**te vidito esa dhammo**).

In the world, the prominent view is that ‘The five aggregates is one thing, the self (*atta*), the owner of the aggregates is another. A person or being essentially means that self.

The belief that the owner of those aggregates, which is a person or being, are also cut off at death is nihilism (*natthika-diṭṭhi*), or the annihilation-view (*uccheda diṭṭhi*). It is the same as the view of the Bhikkhu Yamaka at the time of the Buddha. The view: “*Na hoti Tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*,” is also the annihilation-view.

The view: ‘Only the five aggregates cease, whereas the self, person, or being does not cease,’ is eternity-view (*atthi-diṭṭhi*). It is the view: “*Hoti Tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*.”

The cessation of the five aggregates was taught to Upasiva in the former verse using the Pāli term “*Atthaṃ paleti*,” as the brahmin youth was doubtful whether the owner of the aggregates, a person was cut off and disappeared with the cessation of those aggregates or was he freed from the aggregates, but always existed in some way, he continued to ask the question.

The Buddha also rejected those two views in the Kaccānagotta Sutta:–

“*Sabbaṃ atthi’ ti kho, kaccāna, ayameko anto.*  
*‘Sabbaṃ natthi’ ti ayaṃ dutiyo anto.*”

“All exists,’ Kaccāna, this is one extreme.

‘All does not exist,’ this is a second extreme.<sup>1</sup>

In the discourses of the Buddha, there is indeed no person, no being, no self, no soul — there is only mind and matter. That mind and matter does not cease, as long as its causes remain — ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) etc. If the causes are dispelled, it will cease, and it exists (*atthi*) no more. To the questions asked by Upasīva regarding existing and not existing, the Buddha answered in a way free from affirming existence or non-existence.

*“Atthaṅgatassa na pamāṇamatthi, (Upasīvāti Bhagavā)*

*Yena naṃ vajjuṃ taṃ tassa natthi.*

*Sabbesu dhammesu samohatesu,*

*Samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe”ti.*

For the Arahant whose aggregates have ceased (**Atthaṅgatassa**), there is no way to measure (**pamāṇam**) that exists (**atthi**), or does not exist (**natthi**). Said the Blessed One to Upasīva (**Upasīvāti Bhagavā**). That person may be spoken of in conceptual terms (**Yena naṃ vajjuṃ**); for him there is no such thing (**tassa taṃ natthi**), when all of the ultimate realities have been cut off and ceased (**sabbe dhammesu samohatesu**), all means by which he can be spoken off will also have been cut off, and totally ceased (**sabbe vādapathāpi samūhatā**).

In this verse, the meaning of first line is commented on by the second line. The meaning of second line is explained with the third and fourth lines thus: “*sabbesu dhammesu samohatesu, samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe.*”

The full meaning in detail is the same as the Buddha replied to Vaccha.

## Summary of the Upasiva-māṇava-Pucchā

Only when the five aggregates are present, can there be concepts with regard to a being. Wherever the five aggregates do not exist, there can be no concepts with regard to a being. At the final cessation of an Arahant, those five aggregates cease forever without anything remaining. If those phenomena cease, the concept connected with the body will also disappear. After the cessation of materiality born from kamma at the final thought moment (*parinibbāna-cuti*), there is no trace of ultimate phenomena and concepts that reach the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata-nibbāna*).

Commenting on the two lines of this verse: “*Sabbesu dhammesu samohatesu, samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe,*” the Venerable Sāriputta<sup>2</sup> said:—

<sup>1</sup> S.ii.17ff.

<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, the *Niddesa* is ascribed to Venerable Sāriputta (ed.)

“*Sabbesu dhammesu samūhatesūti sabbesu khandhesu, sabbesu āyatanesu, sabbāsu dhātūsu...*”

Therefore, on the cessation of materiality born from kamma at the final thought moment, whatsoever aggregates, sense-bases, elements, etc., exist, cease completely; there is no trace of them. Thus, this meaning is evident.

For the Venerable Sāriputta commented thus:—

“*Samūhatāvādapathāpi sabbeti vādapathā vuccanti kilesā ca khandhā ca abhisankhārā ca. Tassa vādā ca vādapathā ca adhivacanāni ca adhivacanapathā ca nirutti ca niruttipathā ca paññatti ca paññattipathā ca ūhatā samūhatā uddhatā samuddhatā uppāṭitā samuppāṭitā pahinā samucchinnā vūpasantā paṭippassaddhā abhabbuppattikā ñāṇagginā daḍḍhāti — samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe.*”

The concept of an Arahant, an individual who is completely calmed (*parinibbūta puggala*), is used only for the five aggregates before the cessation of materiality born from kamma, in terms of the past.

It is not used because there is a trace in nibbāna of the concept connected with the aggregates of that individual. Therefore, the Buddha expounded: “**na upeti saṅkham**” or “**attham paleti na upeti saṅkham**” or “**samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe.**”

1. Thus, the example of the blowing out of a flame in the air has been given in the *Upasīva-māṇava-pucchā*, and
2. it has been expounded as: “**samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe.**”

Based on these facts, it should be understood that all ultimate realities and concepts connected with that individual have ceased and disappeared forever without anything remaining. If the Arahant were a human-being, only relics will remain, and in the case of a deva or brahma, even the relics will not remain.

In this *Upasīva-māṇava-pucchā*, as the attainment of *parinibbāna* from the formless realm of Nothingness (*ākāṅkhaññāyatana*) was expounded, the example of the flame blown out in the air was shown to suit that case.

*This is the end of the Upasīva-māṇava-pucchā.*

## The Meaning from the Vedanā Saṃyutta

In the Vedanā Saṃyutta of the Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta it states:—

“So vedanā pariññāya, diṭṭhe dhamme anāsavo.  
Kāyassa bheda dhammaṭṭho, saṅkhyam nopeti vedagū”ti.<sup>1</sup>

The phrase “**saṅkhyam nopeti**” should be understood as “*atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkhyam.*” In that verse:

The person (**so**) who contemplates feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), discerns the three kinds of feeling (**vedanā pariññāya**) and in the present life (**diṭṭhe dhamme**), can become an Arahant who is free from the outflows (**anāsavo hoti**). On the break-up of the body after death (**Kāyassa bheda**), the Arahant who has already attained nibbāna (**dhammaṭṭho so vedagū**) cannot be pointed out (**saṅkhyam nopeti**).

The Itivuttaka Commentary<sup>2</sup> says: “**Dhammaṭṭhoti asekhadhammesu nibbānadhamme eva vā ṭhito.**”

**Dhammaṭṭho** means established in the training of the Arahants (**asekhadhammesu**), or established in nibbāna (**vā**). *Asekhadhamma* means the fruition of Arahantship, i.e. established in *arahatta-phala*. The fruition of Arahantship is not gained after the break-up of the body at death, it is established even before death. Therefore it is said: “On the break-up of the body after death (**Kāyassa bheda param**); cannot be pointed out (**saṅkhyam nopeti**).” The terms “**dhammaṭṭho, vedagū**” are used only to revere the qualities of the Arahant before *parinibbāna*.

Whereas established in nibbāna (**dhammaṭṭho**) means on the break-up of the body after death (**kāyassa bheda param**), which means after the cessation of materiality born from kamma (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*). It can also be said that **dhammaṭṭho** means established in nibbāna, i.e. established in cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

Established in nibbāna without remainder is the same as established in the cessation of the aggregates. Some diseases, which have been cured, do not result in immunity, and so may reappear. However, the suffering, wounds, and diseases of the aggregates, which have ceased forever in nibbāna, do result in immunity and never reappear. Cessation of suffering persists forever as it is included in complete cessation. That individual also comes to that complete cessation. There is no possibility of returning from cessation. That is what is meant.

*This is the meaning from the Vedanā Saṃyutta.*

*Here ends the attainment of nibbāna as refuge.*

<sup>1</sup> S.iv.207, 218.

<sup>2</sup> ItiA.ii.33.

## How Happy is Nibbāna?

Here, the meaning from the Pāli texts that show how happy nibbāna is will be reproduced in brief. “*Pañcime, Ānanda, kāmagaṇā. Katame pañca? Cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā...*” etc.<sup>1</sup>

### Ten Kinds of Happiness

1. Sensual happiness,
2. Happiness of the first absorption,
3. Happiness of the second absorption,
4. Happiness of the third absorption,
5. Happiness of the fourth absorption,
6. ... the absorption on infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*),
7. ... on infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*),
8. ... on nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*),
9. ... on neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*),
10. Happiness of the absorption on cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*).

Sensual happiness means the wealth of a billionaire, a ruler, or a Wheel-turning Monarch in the human realm; the power of a king of the devas in the celestial realm. Sensual happiness is the lowest. The happiness of a forest monk who has establishing the first absorption is much greater (**abhikkantatarāṃ**), far superior (**pañitataraṃ**), than sensual happiness. The remaining grades of happiness should be stated serially in the same way, culminating in the cessation of perception and feeling (**saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ**). When mind, mental factors, and mind-made form cease entirely, and one abides with only materiality born from kamma, materiality born from climate, and materiality born from nutriment, it is called the happiness of the absorption on cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*). That happiness is the ultimate nibbāna to be experienced here and now (*parama-diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna*).

At the end of the religious discourse on the happiness of *nirodha-samāpatti*, the Buddha said:—

“*Tḥānaṃ kho panetaṃ, Ānanda, vijjati yaṃ aññatitthiyā paribbājakā evaṃ vadeyyuṃ — ‘Saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samaṇo Gotamo āha, tañca sukhasmiṃ paññapeti. Tayidaṃ kiṃsu, tayidaṃ kathaṃsū’ti? Evaṃvādino, Ānanda, aññatitthiyā*

<sup>1</sup> S.iv.225. Vedanā Saṃyutta, Rahogatavaggo, Pañcakaṅga Sutta.

*paribbājakā evamassu vacanīyā — ‘Na kho, āvuso, Bhagavā sukhaññeva vedanaṃ sandhāya sukhasmiṃ paññāpeti. Yattha yattha, āvuso, sukhaṃ upalabbhati, yaḥiṃ yaḥiṃ, taṃ taṃ Tathāgato sukhasmiṃ paññāpeti’ ti.”*

“If, Ānanda, the wanderers of other sects say: ‘The recluse Gotama has expounded the happiness of the cessation of perception and feeling. That is called the ultimate happiness. How is that? If there is no perception or feeling how can pleasure be felt? If the pleasure cannot be felt how can it be happiness?’ If the wanderers of other sects should speak thus, Ānanda, you should say: ‘Friends, the Blessed One has not taught that only pleasant feelings are happiness. Friends, however happiness is obtained, he also teaches that that is happiness’.”

In the discourse the Buddha said that sensual pleasure is the lowest happiness, it is not the noblest happiness. The cessation of internal phenomena, which are gross, changeable, and coarse, is indeed the noblest peace, the ultimate happiness.

## Nibbānasukha Suttaṃ – The Bliss of Nibbāna

Once the Venerable Sāriputta said to the monks:<sup>1</sup> Happiness here, friends, means nibbāna (**Sukhamidaṃ, āvuso, nibbānaṃ**.)” Then the Venerable Udāyī<sup>2</sup> said: “Friend Sāriputta, how can there be happiness here if there is no feeling?” (**Kim panettha, āvuso Sāriputta, sukhaṃ yadettha natthi vedayita’nti?**)

Then the Venerable Sāriputta said: “Just this, friend, is the happiness here, that nothing is felt. (**Etadeva khvettha, āvuso, sukhaṃ yadettha natthi vedayitaṃ**).

How nibbāna is happiness is expounded. There is sensual happiness, which is enjoyed together with greed. That sensual happiness can severely oppress one who strives to develop the first absorption.

## The Simile of a Leper

If a man is infected with leprosy, when the itching becomes severe, if he basks in the red-hot embers of a fire during the heat of summer, the itching

<sup>1</sup> A.iv.414.

<sup>2</sup> The original has ‘Mahā-Koṭṭhika’ here, but in the Nibbānasukha Suttaṃ the monk asking the question is Udāyī. The Koṭṭhika Suttaṃ at A.iv.382 is found in the book of nines, but it deals with the reasons for living the holy life. Udāyī is probably Lāḷudāyī Thera (ed.)

will subside and very pleasurable feelings will be felt. If he moves away from the fire, he will be oppressed severely by itching, and will not be able to bear it any longer. Those who are not infected with leprosy will suffer from the heat of the fire in the hot summer — they do not even wish to see it.

In this simile, the red-hot embers of the fire — undesirable objects, which cause severe suffering for uninfected people in the heat of summer, become very pleasant and desirable for a leper who is very itchy and unable to bear it any longer.

Just so, the happiness of sensual desire for human-beings and the happiness of celestial pleasures of the six celestial realms, which are afflicted by various kinds of worries and troubles, become very pleasant and desirable for beings who are infected by, and defiled with, the leprosy of sensual desire, very itchy and unable to bear it any longer.

Just as the red-hot embers of fire are undesirable for those who are free from leprosy; just so the sensual desires of human and celestial beings are undesirable for those who have attained the first absorption and have overcome the leprosy of sensual desire. This simile of a leper was also expounded in the Māgaṇḍiya Sutta,<sup>1</sup> of the Majjhima-piṭaka.

Thus the sensual desire of human and celestial beings appear to them to be pleasant and desirable things, which are liked only by the infected and defiled leprosy of sensual desire. In fact, they are mere suffering, which burn and torture them.

The state of being free from the infection of sensual desire on the attainment of the first absorption, is a very peaceful cessation of suffering to be experienced here and now.

*This is the meaning of the first paragraph.*

There is the happiness of the first absorption, which is accompanied by initial application (*vitakka*), and sustained application (*vicāra*). Those mental states are the afflictions for those meditators who are developing the second absorption. They cause worries and troubles for developing the second absorption.

Leprosy is like the longing and craving for absorption (*jhāna-nikanti-taṇhā*) that enjoys the happiness of the first absorption, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application. The red-hot embers are like the happiness of first absorption. One who is free from leprosy is like the meditator who is free from the longing and craving for the first absorption (*paṭhama-jhāna-nikanti-taṇhā*). The state of being free from

<sup>1</sup> M.i.506.

longing and craving for the first absorption in that person is a very peaceful cessation experienced here and now (*sandiṭṭhika-nibbāna*).

The same simile of leprosy should be applied to all successive absorptions up to the absorption on neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana-jhāna*). However, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*) does not oppress the meditator; it is the absolute bliss of cessation to be experienced here and now (*diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna*).

## The Essential Meaning of the Discourse

The aforesaid sensual happiness, first absorption happiness, *etc.*, appear to be true happiness only when the disease of desire enjoy it. However, for those who wish to attain the next stage, various phenomena will become suffering. The cessation of those phenomena is true happiness.

Since the cessation of various phenomena means overcoming suffering and enjoyment, the freeing of those suffering and enjoyment of joy (*pīti*), happiness (*somanassa*), and pleasurable feelings (*sukha-vedanā*), it is evident that the overcoming of suffering and enjoyment, its cessation, the nature of peace (*santi*), is indeed true happiness. It should be noted that nibbāna is absolute happiness without any suffering, but not without any enjoyment.

## The Meaning from the Kindred Sayings on Feeling

A certain monk thought to himself: “The Buddha has spoken of three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, and indifferent feeling. Whatever feelings there are, all are suffering. Why does the Buddha say this?” When the monk asked the Buddha, the Blessed One said:—

“*Sādhu sādhu, bhikkhu! tisso imā, bhikkhu, vedanā vuttā mayā: sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkhamasukhā vedanā — imā tisso vedanā vuttā mayā. Vuttaṃ kho panetaṃ, bhikkhu, mayā — ‘Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ, taṃ dukkhasmi’nti. Taṃ kho panetaṃ, bhikkhu, mayā sañkhārānaṃyeva aniccataṃ sandhāya bhāsitaṃ — ‘Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ taṃ dukkhasmi’nti.’*”<sup>1</sup>

“Well said, bhikkhu, well said. It is true that I have spoken of three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, and indifferent feeling. I have also said that whatever feelings there are, all are suffering.”

<sup>1</sup> S.iv.216, Rahogata Sutta.

“I have said that with regard to conditioned things (*saṅkhārā*) being impermanent (*anicca*), subject to destruction (*khaya*), subject to vanishing (*vaya*), subject to fading away (*virāga*), subject to cessation (*nirodha*), and subject to change (*vipariṇāma*).”

In the expression, “Pleasant, unpleasant, and indifferent feelings,” not only the unpleasant feeling is included, but the pleasant and indifferent feelings are included to show various kinds of feelings. Why are pleasant and indifferent feelings taught as suffering? Because those pleasant and indifferent feelings are all conditioned things, and are all impermanent. Impermanence is not pleasant, it is merely suffering. Regarding this unpleasantness the Buddha taught that there is no true happiness in feeling and enjoyment, all are suffering.

In the four noble truths, which are absolute realities, there are no such things as pleasant and indifferent feelings; whatever feelings there are, they are all suffering. There is no trace of suffering and enjoyment, no feeling in the unconditioned great cessation (*asaṅkhata mahā-nibbāna*), so it is called ultimate happiness. If there were any feelings of suffering and enjoyment, it would not be the ultimate happiness, it will be merely suffering.

Those who say that nibbāna has enjoyment and suffering when talking about nibbāna, are degrading nibbāna as not true happiness, that it is only suffering. Seeing the discourses of the Venerable Sāriputta and the Buddha — “**Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ taṃ dukkhasmiṃ,**” of the two kinds of happiness, whatever happiness is felt (*vedayita sukha*), which has been mentioned in the first chapter, is not true happiness, it is merely suffering. Only the happiness of cessation (*santi-sukha*) is the true, absolute happiness. Thus it should be noted with confidence.

*This is the meaning from the Kindred Sayings on feeling.*

*Here ends how nibbāna is absolute happiness.*

## Ultimate Happiness

Now, to make nibbāna obvious, which has neither feeling nor enjoyment, the meaning of forty attributes will be shown in brief.<sup>1</sup>

The five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhe*) are impermanent (*aniccato*), suffering (*dukkhato*), a disease (*rogato*), an abscess (*gaṇḍato*), a poisoned arrow (*sallato*), a misfortune (*aghato*), an affliction (*ābādhato*), a misadventure (*paretato*), a dissolution (*palokato*), a calamity (*itito*). [10]

<sup>1</sup> The original has “Forty developments (*bhāvanā*).” In the Paṭisambhidāmagga, Pts.ii.238, forty attributes (*cattārisāya ākārehi*) of the five aggregates are referred to (ed.)

Oppressive (*upaddavato*), fearful (*bhayato*), dangerous (*upasaggato*), transient (*calato*), fragile (*paḥaṅguto*), unstable (*adhuvato*), without protection (*atāṇato*), without shelter (*aleṇato*), without refuge (*asaraṇato*), empty (*rittato*). [20]

Deserted (*tucchato*), void (*suñṇato*), not-self (*anattato*), miserable (*ādinavato*), changeable (*vipariṇāma-dhammato*), without substance (*asārakato*), the root of pain (*aghamūlato*), murderous (*vadhakato*), non-existent (*vibhavato*), defiled (*sāsavato*). [30]

Conditioned (*saṅkhātato*), the bait of Māra (*mārāmisato*), subject to birth (*jāti-dhammato*), subject to aging (*jarā-dhammato*), subject to disease (*byādhi-dhammato*), subject to death (*maraṇa-dhammato*), subject to grief (*soka-dhammato*), subject to lamentation (*parideva-dhammato*), subject to despair (*upāyāsa-dhammato*), and defiled (*saṃkilesika-dhammato*). [40]

## The Five Aggregates

Materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are the five aggregates. Of them:—

1. Materiality means the four great elements (earth, water, wind, fire) and the derived materiality — eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, visual object, sound, odour, taste, *etc.* — which constitute the bodies of beings from Avīci up to the highest formless abode of Akaniṭṭhā.
2. Feeling means various kinds of agreeable and disagreeable feelings.
3. Perception means the act of perceiving: “This is my mother,” “This is my father,” *etc.* since the time of birth.
4. Mental formations means all kinds of thought, speech, and action.
5. Consciousness means the conscious mind.

The limit of the first four aggregates is from Avīci up to Akaniṭṭhā.

## Fear Caused by Impermanence

As death, the danger of impermanence, accompanies the five aggregates, the aggregates of human-beings are impermanent, as are those of devas and brahmas. Being a human-being, a deva, or even a brahma also lasts just a moment, when compared to the beginningless round of rebirths, the aggregates of the brahmas in the Akaniṭṭhā formless realm, which live for eight-four thousand aeons are just a moment.

One may become a human being for a time, and one may become hell beings for a hundred or a thousand existences. One may become a deva for

a time, and hell beings for ten thousand or a hundred thousand existences. One may become a brahma for a time, and hell beings for one hundred thousand or a million existences. Being impermanent, living-beings are scattered up and down. Being impermanent, even though born as a human being, one is tending towards hell. Even though born as a deva or a brahma, one is tending towards hell. Even though born as a human being, a deva, or a brahma, one still fears the danger of hell.

If the danger of impermanence can be contemplated, the enjoyment or happiness of a human body and life, a deva's body and life, or a brahma's body and life, will be seen as a fearful, terrifying, boring, and real suffering.

Only when the desire for a human or a deva's life and body are appeased, will the danger of hell be appeased. Only when personality-view and the desire of a brahma's body are appeased, the danger of hell will be appeased.

Therefore the great unconditioned nibbāna, which is the cessation of all sensual desire and wrong-views together with five aggregates of human-beings and devas, or the five, four, or one aggregates of brahmas can be understood as the ultimate happiness. That cessation is the only refuge for those who fear the grave danger of Avīci hell, to get free from it.

## Associates of Hell

The body and happiness of human-beings, devas, and brahmas are merely associates of the great Avīci hell. How is that?

1. If one enjoys the eye with sensual desire and wrong-view as 'my eye,' or 'I see,' Avīci will accompany that enjoyment.
2. Similarly, if one enjoys the ear with sensual desire and wrong-view, as 'my ear' or 'I hear,' Avīci will accompany that enjoyment.
3. If one enjoys the nose with sensual desire and wrong-view, as 'my nose,' or 'I smell,' Avīci will accompany that enjoyment.
4. If one enjoys the tongue with sensual desire and wrong-view, as 'my tongue or 'I know the taste,' Avīci will accompany that enjoyment.
5. If one enjoys the body with sensual desire and wrong-view, as 'my body' 'my limbs,' or 'I know the touch,' when conscious of heat, cold, gross, subtle, etc., Avīci will accompany that enjoyment.

Thus, if he enjoys the constituent group of materiality with sensual desire and wrong-view, the danger of hell will always accompany that enjoyment. Why? Because if there are sensual desire and wrong-view one will never be free from the danger of hell.

In the group of feelings, when enjoying the sight, visible object, good or bad, if he enjoys as 'I am pleased,' or 'I am delighted,' that is grasping for feeling caused by eye-contact. That grasping of enjoyment always contains the grave danger of hell. Sound, odour, taste, and touch should be understood in the same way.

In the group of perception, the enjoyment and grasping as 'I know what it is,' 'I remember,' is the grasping of enjoyment in the perception aggregate.

In the group of mental formations, the objects are numerous, so only a few prominent things will be mentioned here.

1. "I touch" = enjoyment of contact (*phassa*),
2. "I intend," "I do not intend" = enjoyment of volition (*cetanā*),
3. "My mind is calm" = enjoyment of one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*),
4. "I am aware" = enjoyment of attention (*manasikāra*),
5. "I apply my mind" = enjoyment of initial application (*vitakka*),
6. "I am applying my mind" = enjoyment of sustained application (*vicāra*),
7. "I enjoy," "I am delighted" = enjoyment of joy (*pīti*),
8. "I strive," "I make an effort" = enjoyment of effort (*viriya*),
9. "I want to do," "I want to speak," "I want to see," "I want to hear," "I want to go" etc. = enjoyment of will (*chanda*),
10. "I like," "I love," "I long for," etc. = enjoyment of greed (*lobha*),
11. "I am angry" = enjoyment of hatred or anger (*dosa*),
12. "I cannot understand," "I cannot see" = enjoyment of delusion (*moha*),
13. "I have confidence" = enjoyment of confidence (*saddhā*),
14. "I remember," "I recollect" = enjoyment of mindfulness (*sati*),
15. "I am ashamed," "I am disgusted" = enjoyment of shame (*hiri*),
16. "I fear," "I do not dare" = enjoyment in fear or dread (*ottappa*),
17. "I offer" = enjoyment of almsgiving and generosity (*dāna*),
18. "I observe the precepts" = enjoyment of morality (*sīla*),
19. "I know," "I understand," "I am wise" = enjoying of wisdom (*paññā*),

All of that grasping contains the danger of hell. In the group of consciousness — grasping as 'I think,' 'I know,' 'my consciousness,' 'my mind' — all of this grasping contains the dangers of the hell.

It should be understood that the devas' grasping of their body with sensual desire and wrong-view, the brahmas' grasping of their body with sensual desire and wrong-view, also always contains the dangers of hell and the round of rebirths.

*This is the exposition of associates of hell.*

Thus he who fears the danger of the round of rebirths, cannot find any refuge in the realms of human-beings, devas, or brahmas. Only the cessation of becoming human-beings, devas, and brahmas is a true refuge.

*This is the chapter dealing with ultimate happiness.*

## The Suffering of the Five Aggregates

The five aggregates torture living-beings with bodily and mental suffering, the suffering of physical pain (*dukkha-dukkha*), the suffering of change (*vipariṇāma-dukkha*), and the suffering of mental formations (*saṅkhāra-dukkha*).

For example, those who want to harvest paddy, maize, beans, peas, or sesame this year had to do much work such as sowing seeds last year.

Next year they have to take much trouble, ploughing with buffalos and oxen. When the rain falls, they have to irrigate the fields, planting, weeding, and guarding the crop, then reaping and collecting the paddy when it is ripe, threshing the grain, and storing it in granaries.

All kinds of troubles, beginning with sowing the seeds last year until storing the grain this year, are merely formations of rice, maize, peas, beans, and sesame that have been kept in the granaries.

Moreover, the troubles of taking them out from the granaries and drying them in the sun, pounding, grinding, and cooking, and putting them into the mouth, chewing, and digesting them, are also the suffering of formations.

Each rice grain becomes cooked rice for putting into the mouth, only after taking the trouble of keeping the paddy in granaries, and thousands of other troubles. Hence, each cooked grain of rice tortures living-beings, who cannot live without rice, with the suffering of formations.

*This is the suffering of formations in cooked rice.*

Beginning from the seeds kept from the previous year, and all the work to get rice, maize, peas, beans, or sesame, all are perishable.

Before the rice can reach the mouth, there are thousands of ways for the paddy to perish. If it meets with the dangers of fire, flood, theft, floods, and storms, many physical and mental sufferings will be incurred by the owner.

On seeing the perishable nature of the grains, which are liable to damage, theft, etc., the trouble of protecting the paddy due to its perishable nature is an inevitable result.

That rice perishes when it is chewed. On reaching the stomach, if it cannot be digested, one may suffer from different diseases. Even if it is

digested normally, different kinds of suffering connected with excreta, urine, phlegm, etc., are inevitable.

*This is the suffering of change.*

Intrinsic suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*) means the sufferings in cooked rice, beginning with putting the morsel of rice into the mouth and the three kinds of aforementioned suffering from change.

Rice tortures living-beings, who cannot live without it, with intrinsic suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of formations. So long as they cannot live without rice, those three kinds of suffering will follow them in successive births. As soon as they can live without rice they can overcome those three kinds of suffering.

1. Ordinary persons (*puthujjana*), who are still wandering endlessly in *saṃsāra*, are compared to the farmer.
2. Each rebirth into a body is compared to the annual crop of paddy, maize, peas, beans, sesame, and cooked rice.
3. The suffering of formations such as performing charity, observing morality, and developing the mind, in previous births wishing for a new existence, is compared to the suffering of ploughing, growing, threshing, and storing the grains.
4. The wealth obtained at present is compared to harvesting the crop.
5. The pleasurable and happy feelings in this existence is compared to the delicious taste of the rice and curry.
6. The suffering of change in this existence is compared to eating the rice, getting stomach diseases, etc.
7. The suffering of death is compared to excrement and urine.

After rebirth, the suffering of change, which can occur at any time whenever conditions are ripe, always accompanies living-beings.

Just as one who enjoys rice is tortured by the three kinds of suffering, one who enjoys the body of a human-being, deva, or brahma is tortured by the aggregates of that body, with the three kinds of suffering.

One who fears these three kinds of suffering, who wishes to be free from them, can find no refuge in human or celestial existences. The only true refuge is the unconditioned nibbāna.

*This is the exposition of ultimate happiness.*

The suffering of disease should be understood in the same way.

As there is always suffering from old age and death, the five aggregates of a human-being, a deva, or a brahma are just bad diseases. Therefore, the cessation of those five aggregates is the ultimate happiness.

In the story of Jivaka, who treated a banker of Rājagaha suffering from a bad disease, the banker had to abandon his enjoyment of his wealth to obtain the cure, the cessation of that bad disease. Therefore the Buddha said: “Whatever is felt, all of it is suffering (*yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ, sabbaṃ taṃ dukkhasamiṃ*).<sup>1</sup>

The meaning is that the absence of even a trace of suffering or enjoyment is ultimate happiness. In the remaining thirty-seven terms you should understand this in the same way. As this talk about nibbāna will become too long, the remaining terms are not explained in detail.

If you want to know something about the infinite qualities of nibbāna, the cessation of the five aggregates, you should try to discern clearly the meaning of the forty attributes of nibbāna in detail.

In this world, there are two kinds of happiness: the achievement of what is desired (*iṭṭha-sampatti*), and the destruction of what is not desired (*aniṭṭha-vipatti*). The achievement of the desirable and the destruction of the undesirable are happiness. The decrease and disappearance of the desirable is suffering. The decrease and disappearance of the undesirable is happiness. Its arising and increase is suffering.

As the rebirths of a human being, deva, or brahma have forty defects in brief in accordance with the forty attributes of nibbāna, and infinite defects in detail, they are the achievement of the undesirable. Therefore their presence is merely suffering. Only their absence is the noble happiness. There is nothing better than their absence.

One who is suffering from leprosy or asthma without relief even for an hour, which is just a moment in the infinite round of rebirths, groans impatiently. If rebirth is destroyed, that leprosy or asthma are completely cured, there will be no more becoming, and suffering will be cut off.

1. A person living with the incessant torture of leprosy or asthma living for days, months, years, throughout many rebirths for aeons.
2. With the destruction of rebirth, leprosy or asthma, are cut off forever.

**Q:** Of these two, which will be the greater happiness? Which will be suffering? Which will he or she wish to get? Which will he or she wish to abandon? Which is to be praised as the ultimate happiness?

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<sup>1</sup> Siv.216

**A:** If rebirth is cut off, there is no trace of suffering; there is no enjoyment either. Therefore the cutting off of leprosy or asthma are the only refuge for happiness. He or she wishes only for the disappearance and cutting off of rebirth; only that is praiseworthy.

As stated in the Paṭisambhidāmagga there are **forty dreadful defects** of the five aggregates. The man who is living with leprosy or asthma has to suffer due to the five aggregates, which, being impermanent, one cannot live forever as a brahma, but has to fall into hell repeatedly. They never find any relief even for a breath, but have to suffer in the fires of hell for a hundred thousand years, *etc.* Living with leprosy in the human abode for a hundred years is preferable to living in the fires of hell even for one hour.

In the Temiya Jātaka, it says that because the Bodhisatta ruled the city of Bārāṇasī for twenty years he had to suffer in the Ussada hell for eighty-thousand years, not to mention the fate of ordinary beings. Why is it so? Because of impermanence.

Of those forty defects, even regarding impermanence alone, those five aggregates of human-beings, devas, and brahmas are much more dreadful. The great unconditioned nibbāna, the cessation of those five dreadful aggregates, should not be debased as non-existence or nothingness, which is not to be praised; it should not be debased as in vain. It should not be debased as undeserving of its qualities of deep (*gambhīra*), hard to see (*duddasa*), difficult to understand (*duranubodha*), peaceful (*santa*), sublime (*pañita*), and the highest happiness (*paramasukha*), as stated in the text.

In the eternal round of rebirths (*anamatagga saṃsāra*), as great the defects of the five aggregates are, so great are the glories of cessation.

This is the chapter showing the exposition with regard to forty attributes of the five aggregates to understand clearly the value of cessation, the noble happiness of peace (*santi*), the ultimate happiness (*parama sukha*), which has neither suffering nor enjoyment.

*Here ends the explanation of ultimate happiness.*

## Clarification of the Views in Various Books

### Different Views on the Itivuttaka

Now the third chapter on different books, different views, and clarification will be shown. The teachers hold different views on some Pāli texts and have written their own views. Those texts will be reproduced here

and their views will be shown. My view will also be shown; you may take whichever you like.

“Dvemā, bhikkhave, nibbānadhātuyo. Katame dve? Saupādisesā ca nibbānadhātu, anupādisesā ca nibbānadhātu.”<sup>1</sup>

“Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sa-upādisesā nibbānadhātu? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arahaṃ hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anupattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano sammadaññā vimutto. Tassa tiṭṭhanteva pañcendriyāni yesaṃ avighātattā manāpāmanāpaṃ paccaṇubhoti, sukhadukkhaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti. Tassa yo rāgakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo — ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sa-upādisesā nibbānadhātu.”

“Katamā ca, bhikkhave, anupādisesā nibbānadhātu? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arahaṃ hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anupattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano sammadaññā vimutto. Tassa idheva, bhikkhave, sabbavedayitāni anabhinanditāni sīti bhavissanti. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anupādisesā nibbānadhātu.”

“Duve imā cakkhumatā pakāsītā, nibbānadhātū anissitena tādinā. Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā, sa-upādisesā bhavanettisaṅkhayā. Anupādisesā paṇa samparāyikā, yamhi nirujjhanti bhavāni sabbaso.”

## The Key Words from the Commentary

**Yo rāgakkhayoti** rāgassa khayo khīṇākāro abhāvo accantamanuppādo.

**Sitibhavissantīti** accantavūpasamena saṅkhāradarathapaṭippasaddhiyā sitali bhavissanti, appaṭisaṇḍhikanirodhena nirujjhissantīti attho.

**Samparāyikāti** samparāye khandhabhedato parabhāge bhavā.

## The View of Some Teachers

With reference to the Pāli passage: “Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā, saupādisesā bhavanettisaṅkhayā ... anupādisesā. samparāyikā” and the Commentary; “Yo rāgakkhayoti rāgassa khayo, khīṇākāro,” imasamiṃ attabhāve bhavā vattamānā, samparāyikāti samparāye khandhabhedato parabhāge bhavā vattamānā.

The two kinds of nibbāna that come from this Pāli text are the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*), only the concept of non-existence (*abhāvapaññatti*). No more appearing of the defilements is called cessation

<sup>1</sup> Iti.38.

with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*), no more appearing of the five aggregates is called cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

They are not the two kinds of unconditioned nibbāna (*asaṅkhata*), the noble truth of the cessation of suffering (*nirodha-saccā*), mentioned in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha. As that unconditioned cessation, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, is the only dhamma existing forever, it should not be called visible here and now (*diṭṭha-dhammika*), or belonging to the next world (*samparāyikā*). As it exists in the ultimate sense (*bhāva-dhamma*), neither should it be called the destruction of passion (*rāgassa khayō*), with attributes destroyed (*khīṇākāro abhāvo*).

### The View of Other Teachers

Of the two-kinds of nibbāna that come from this Pāḷi, cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*), is the destruction of defilements, and merely the concept of absence of defilements (*abhāvapaññatti*). Therefore, in the Commentary it is said “*rāgassa khayō khīṇākāro abhāvo*.”

Whereas cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*) is the great unconditioned cessation (*mahā-asaṅkhata-nibbāna*). That cessation is expounded as belonging to the next world (*samparāyikā*). In the Commentary, too, it is stated as: “**Samparāyikā**ti samparāye khandhabhedato parabhāge bhavā.” **Samparāyikā**ti = belonging to the next world (*samparāyikā*) means existing (*bhavā vattamānā*) = the nibbāna that becomes (*samparāye parabhāge*) = soon after the breaking up of the body (*khandhabhedato*).

Referring to this Pāḷi and its Commentary, nibbāna is not the only one that exists forever since the former round of rebirths. Each nibbāna appears separately in the very state only after the cessation of decess-consciousness (*cuti-citta*) of each Buddha, Solitary Buddha, or Arahant when attaining final cessation (*parinibbāna*). Soon after appearing, as these kinds of nibbāna exist forever, they are called permanent (*nicca*), stable (*dhuva*), and eternal (*sassata*).

### My View

In this Pāḷi for cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*), there is the passage “*tassa yo rāgakkhayō*.” For cessation without remainder (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*) the passage “*tassa yo rāgakkhayō*,” is missing.<sup>1</sup> In the Commentary, the former passage is commented on as “**Yo rāgakkhayoti**

<sup>1</sup> The original states that the phrase occurs in the second passage, but it is not in CST4. The Ledi Sayādaw would have been using the texts of the [Fifth Buddhist Council](#) (ed.)

rāgassa khayō, khinākāro, abhāvo, accantamanuppādo,” whereas the latter passage is not commented on in any way.

1. Should there be a special meaning in the latter passage quite different from the former, the latter passage would have been commented specifically; but the latter passage had not been commented in any way. This is a fact.
2. In the passage “*rāgassa khayō, khinākāro, abhāvo, accantamanuppādo*” is the name of great unconditioned nibbāna. This is another fact.
3. That great nibbāna is still present and does exist when the five aggregates of an Arahant are present and exist. And also after the breaking up of the body the great nibbāna deserves to be called visible here and now (*diṭṭha-dhammika*), belonging to the next world (*samparāyikā*). This is another fact.
4. In the Commentary, too, the great nibbāna is commented on only with the terms “*abhava, vattamāna,*” which convey the meaning “presence and existence.” It is not commented on with the terms arisen (*uppanna*), born (*jāta*). This is another fact.

On account of the facts stated above, I take the two kinds of nibbāna in this Pāli text, the Sammohavinodanī Commentary, the Visuddhimagga Commentary, and the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha as one and the same thing, the ultimate unconditioned cessation (*paramattha-asāṅkhata-nibbāna*).

### The Views of the Teachers

The teachers accept the becoming of ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna only after the cessation of the material aggregates born from kamma (*kammaja-rūpa*) — the material aggregates of an Arahant.

In their view, even though reaching the stage of an Arahant as there is not yet nibbāna before this cessation of the material aggregates born from kamma — it should not be said “reached nibbāna, attained to nibbāna, one who has attained nibbāna.” One merely foresees that nibbāna will arise in the future immediately after the cessation of the kamma produced materiality (*cuti-kammaja-rūpa*). This is what they mean.

Of the two cessations, namely: the cessation of defilements and the cessation of the aggregates, at the moment of the noble path its fruition, the defilements cease. At that moment the ultimate unconditioned great cessation is not yet present; that Arahant is not yet free from the suffering of rebirth (*jāti-dukkha*), namely, the arising of some diseases, various kinds

of undesirable, physical suffering; he or she is not yet free the suffering of death (*maraṇa dukkha*); he or she is not yet free from the suffering of maintaining the body, from the dangers of fire, flood, tyranny, thieves, etc.

There is not any fear of suffering in the great nibbāna. The Arahant still lives among the infinite danger of suffering; only when materiality born from kamma ceases, and the body disappears, those dangers cease altogether. Only then should it be said: “he or she has attained nibbāna,” or “one who has attained nibbāna.”

*This is the view of the teachers.*

*Here ends different views on the Itivuttaka Pāḷi.*

## The Cessation of Defilements Is the Main Thing

Of the two cessations, namely: the cessation of defilements and the cessation of the aggregates; the cessation of defilements is the main thing, whereas the cessation of the aggregates is always just the consequence.

If a man wishes to kill a poisonous tree, but only cuts its trunk, branches, and twigs, without digging and cutting its roots, he should not be called the killer of the poisonous tree. Without cutting the trunk, branches, or any twigs, one who uproots its roots, burns them to ashes, and throws them away, is rightly called the killer of the poisonous tree. The destruction of the roots is the main thing. The destruction of the trunk, the branches, and twigs is only the consequence of destroying the roots.

The Dhamma expounded with the examples such as a tree, a fire, and an oil lamp in the ten suttas from the Saṃyuttanikāya, Nidānāvagga, showing that the destruction of the roots of defilements is the main thing as shown clearly in the second chapter of this Manual of Nibbāna.

Moreover, in the Saccavibhaṅga, Nirodhasaccaṃ,<sup>1</sup> it says “*Cakkhuṃ loke piyarūpaṃ satarūpaṃ. Etthesā taṇhā pahiyamānā pahiyati, ettha nirujjhamānā nirujjhati,*” etc., which shows mainly the cessation of defilements. In the same way, the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīghanikāya, the Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta, the Majjhimanikāya, etc., are concerned mainly with the cessation of defilements. In the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, too: “*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ — yo tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo,*” is concerned with the cessation of defilements. It is the same, throughout the Suttanta Piṭaka, there are so many cases concerned mainly with the cessation of defilements.

<sup>1</sup> Vbh. 103.

Therefore, the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna should be obtained not only at the cessation of the material aggregates of Arahants, but also at the cessation of defilements. It should be obtained also at the cessation of the defilements on attaining the path of Stream-winning, the complete cessation of personality-view, *etc.* For the Stream-winner, the cessation of aggregates in the four lower realms, and the cessation of endless aggregates after seven births at the most, are included in the cessation of personality-view. This is also the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna.

**Question:** In whom do the two cessations occur at the same time?

**Answer:** In the Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*).

**Question:** Who gets those two cessations?

**Answer:** The Stream-winner gets them.

**Question:** Who has attained these two cessations?

**Answer:** The Stream-winner has attained them.

*Here ends the cessation of defilements is the main thing.*

## Suffering Remaining Compared to Suffering Removed

The comparison of the suffering that remains to be encountered by a Stream-winner in the cycle of rebirth, with the suffering that has ceased and will no longer be encountered, will now be expounded.

There are eleven discourses from the Saṃyuttanikāya, Nidānavaggo, Abhisamayasaṃyuttaṃ.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Nakhasikhā Suttaṃ – The Fingernail

The Buddha, having put some dust on the tip of his finger-nail, asked the monks: “Monks, which is greater, the dust on the tip of my finger-nail, or the dust on the great Earth (*mahā-paṭhavi*)?”

“Venerable sir, compared to the dust on the great Earth, the dust on the tip of your finger-nail is insignificant, it cannot be compared.”

“Monks, in the same way, the suffering remaining for the noble disciple who has attained to right-view (*diṭṭhi-saṃpannassa-puggalassa*), when compared to the suffering in future births, which have already ceased, the suffering in the remaining seven births will be insignificant, and cannot be compared.”

*“Evaṃ mahatthiyo kho, bhikkhave, dhammābhisamayo;  
evaṃ mahatthiyo dhammacakkhu-paññābho”ti.*

<sup>1</sup> S.ii.133.

**Bhikkhave** = monks, **dhammābhisamayo** = the penetration of the truth, **evaṃ mahatthiyo** = is of great benefit, **dhammacakkhu-paññā** = the attainment of the eye of truth,<sup>1</sup> **evaṃ mahatthiyo** = is of great benefit.

Thus, the consequence of Stream-winning, the cessation of endless future suffering has been expounded by the Buddha. That consequence, the cessation of suffering, is the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna.

One who has already cultivated the perfections (*pāramī*) for many births, for many world cycles, only attains the cessation of some defilements such as personality-view, but also attains the cessation of endless future suffering. He or she dwells in the incomparable great joy and happiness with the thought: “I have attained the cessation of these defilements. I have already attained to the cessation of so much suffering.”

### Prisoners Receiving Amnesty

A judge sentenced a criminal to life in prison. After four or five days, he got an amnesty order that he would be released after only seven days with effect from sunrise. The imprisonment for life that he would have had to endure is appeased at the same time as getting the amnesty order. The cessation of suffering was attained not only after seven days. He felt very delighted with the thought, “I have only seven more days of suffering. I am already free from that future suffering of a life in prison.”

A man was sentenced to seven days in prison for the theft of one kyat.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, on the same day, being accused by another man of a theft of a hundred kyats, he was sentenced to seven months, and on being accused by another man of a theft of one thousand kyats, he was sentenced to seven years. On that day, he was sent to prison. Later that day, he received an amnesty order for the seven years and seven months of imprisonment; only seven days of imprisonment remained for him. The suffering of seven years and seven months of imprisonment ceased completely with the amnesty order. He got that amnesty, and attained to the cessation of that suffering.

A man owed one hundred thousand kyats. Somehow he repaid most of it, so only seven kyats of debt remained. He had to worry about only seven kyats of debt. He no longer had to worry about the ninety-three thousand, nine hundred and ninety-three kyats of debt. He becomes greatly relieved. He got that relief from debt, and attained to the cessation of that suffering.

<sup>1</sup> The original has **mahiddhiko** = of great power (ed.)

<sup>2</sup> The Burmese unit of currency. In 1899, when this book was written, one kyat might have been a day's wages. Currently (in 2021) it is about £0.40 (ed.)

A man was afflicted by one thousand boils all over his body. Having got good medicine, nine hundred and ninety-three boils were cured; he had to suffer only due to the remaining seven boils on his feet.

Just as in these examples, the Stream-winner gets a great benefit, the complete cessation of suffering in the lower realms, and the complete cessation of the infinite cycle of suffering after seven more births. He or she is so delighted with great joy and happiness.

## 2. Pokkharāṇi Suttaṃ – The Lake

In the second sutta, there is the simile of a lake, which is fifty leagues (*yojana*) in length, breadth, and depth, full of water, compared with a tiny drop of water taken up with the tip of a blade of grass.

## 3. Sambhejja Udaka Suttaṃ – The Confluence

In the third sutta, there is the simile of the confluence of five great rivers, and two or three tiny drops of water taken from it.

## 4. Dutiya Sambhejja Udaka Suttaṃ – The Confluence

In the fourth sutta, there is the simile of the confluence of five great rivers dried up except for two or three drops. The remaining drops of water are compared with the water that has already dried up.

## 5. Pathavi Suttaṃ – The Earth

In the fifth sutta, there is the simile of the great Earth, on which are placed seven small balls of earth about the size of a [jujube](#) seed. These are compared with the great Earth.

## 6. Dutiya Pathavi Suttaṃ – The Earth

In the sixth sutta, there is the simile of the great Earth, which has already perished, except for seven small balls of earth about the size of a jujube seed. The remaining seven small balls of earth are compared with the great Earth which has already perished.

## 7. Samudda Suttaṃ – The Ocean

In the seventh sutta, there is the simile of the water of the four great oceans compared to two or three tiny drops of water taken from it.

## 8. Dutiya Samudda Suttaṃ – The Ocean

In the eighth sutta, there is the simile of the water of the four oceans, all dried up except for two or three tiny drops of water.

## 9. Pabbata Suttaṃ – The Mountain

In the ninth sutta, there is the simile of seven small pebbles about the size of a mustard seed compared to the Himalayan mountain range.

## 10. Dutiya Pabbata Suttaṃ – The Mountain

In the tenth sutta, there is the simile of seven small pebbles about the size of a mustard seed remaining, compared to the Himalayan mountain range that has completely perished.

## 11. Tatiya Pabbata Suttaṃ – The Mountain

In the eleventh sutta, there is the simile of seven small pebbles about the size of mung beans compared to mount Sineru. The achievements of the recluses and priests of other sects are like the seven small pebbles when compared to the achievement of a Stream-winner.<sup>1</sup>

These discourses mainly expounded the cessation of the infinite suffering of future round of rebirths, on the attainment of Stream-winning.

*Here ends the comparison of the remaining suffering  
with the suffering that has ceased.*

## The Cessation of the Aggregates Is Not the Main Thing

In the Cūḷaniddeśa, the cessation of defilements is mainly expounded. Whereas, in the ten suttas of the Saṃyuttanikāya, the cessation of the resultant aggregates is mainly expounded. Of these two, only the cessation of defilements is expounded in the Cūḷaniddeśa. Whereas, the cessation of the aggregates is also included in the cessation of defilements. Therefore in the Abhidhamma, only defilements are expounded as things that should be abandoned. Therefore, it should not be said that the cessation of defilements with remainder is not the noble truth of cessation, the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna.

The defilements that have already ceased at the moment of attaining the path of a Stream-winner, will never lie latent again and will never arise again;

<sup>1</sup> This discourse, number five, and number eight are missing from the original. Mount [Sineru](#) is a mythical mountain. Modern readers may compare it to the mass of the entire [Milky Way](#) galaxy (ed.)

they have completely ceased and been appeased forever. That cessation is readily connected with the cessation without remainder, as one and the same thing. It exists forever as it has already ceased in the infinite round of rebirths, *saṃsāra*. Personality-view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) will never arise again, and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) will never arise again. In the same way, the suffering in the lower realms, which ceased at the moment of attaining Stream-winning, will never arise again.

To get the advantages of such cessation, to attain to it, one has to practise the perfections for many births, throughout many world-cycles. One cannot get it within one birth, within two births, one cannot attain it. After so many births, only when one attains the noble path of a Stream-winner, one can attain that cessation. Therefore when one becomes a Stream-winner, one attains, in part, the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna.

If one is being burnt with fire all over the body, if one enters a big river or lake, full of very cold water, when one reaches the shore, dipping into the water from one fingerbreadth until the whole body is immersed; the heat of the fire ceases and is appeased beginning with a fingerbreadth. That cessation of heat is connected with the cessation of heat all over the body, and becomes one and the same cessation. Thus, it should be noted.

This is cessation with remainder, which is also the ultimate unconditioned great nibbāna that is attained by all noble ones beginning with a Stream-winner. This is my view. You may take whichever you like.

*Here ends how the cessation of the aggregates is not the main thing.*

## With Regard to the Itivuttaka Text

According to the Itivuttaka text: “*Dvemā, bhikkhave, nibbānadhātuyo. Katame dve? Sa-upādisesā ca nibbānadhātu, anupādisesā ca nibbānadhātu,*” there are two kinds of individuals (*parinibbuta puggala*), who have realised cessation and attained peace: 1) the individual who has attained cessation with remainder, 2) the individual who has attained cessation of the aggregates.

Of the two, the Arahant who has already attained the path of Arahantship and attained to the final cessation of defilements, with the aggregates remaining (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*), is also called a *parinibbuta puggala* in the text. On becoming a noble one, he or she attains nibbāna. On becoming an Arahant, he or she abides in nibbāna.

*This is the explanation with reasons that on becoming a noble one, one is called one who has attained to nibbāna.*

## The Usual Meaning in the Texts

The meaning prominent in the Pāli texts will be produced in brief here:—

“*Anukampakassa kusalassa, ovādamhi ahaṃ thitā;  
Ajjhagā amataṃ santiṃ, nibbānaṃ padamaccutaṃ.*”<sup>1</sup>

**Ajjhagā** = experienced, attained (*adhigañchi*) in the Vimānavatthu Commentary, **thitā patitṭhitā anukampakassa kusalassa ovādamhi** = having become established in the teachings of the compassionate Buddha, **ahaṃ nibbānaṃ ajjhagā** = I have attained nibbāna, **accutaṃ** = immovable, **amataṃ** = deathless, **santiṃ** = peace, **padam** = path.

This verse was spoken to Mahā-Moggallāna by a Stream-winning deity, meaning she had already attained nibbāna.

Which nibbāna had she attained? As she had personally experienced by her own wisdom the cessation of personality-view and sceptical doubt, she has attained the cessation of defilements, cessation with remainder.

As the cessation of the four lower realms cessation of the aggregates of the infinite births beyond seven births, the cessation of these aggregates are not different from the cessation of the defilements — they are one and the same thing. Because of that cessation of the aggregates is also attained.

*This reference shows the attainment to nibbāna of a Stream-winner.*

What more is there to say of the Once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*) and Non-returner (*anāgāmi*). One who becomes an Arahant at the moment of the path of Arahantship is usually called the person who attains final cessation (*parinibbāna*), on attaining the fruition of Arahantship he or she is usually called one who has already attained final cessation (*parinibbuta puggala*).

“*Santi kho, devānaminda, cakkhuvīñṇeyyā rūpā, iṭṭhā kantā  
manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasamhitā rajaniyā. Tañce bhikkhu  
nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati. Tassa taṃ  
anabhinandato anabhivadato anajjhosāya tiṭṭhato na tannisitaṃ  
viññāṇaṃ hoti, na tadupādānaṃ. Anupādāno devānamindo  
bhikkhu parinibbāyati.*”<sup>2</sup>

One who enjoys with lust and clings to desirable visual objects, does not attain to *parinibbāna*. One who does not enjoy with lust and does not cling to desirable objects, attains *parinibbāna* in the present life.

<sup>1</sup> Vv.78.

<sup>2</sup> S.iv.102, Sakkapañha Suttaṃ.

There are two paragraphs each for visible objects, audible objects, olfactory objects, gustatory objects, tangible objects, and mental objects; twelve paragraphs in all, or six pairs for one who enjoys sense objects with lust and clinging, and for one who does not.

Sakka, the king of devas, asked the Buddha: “In the present life, some teachers have already attained cessation; whereas some teachers have not. What is the cause? The deva Pañcasikha asked the Buddha the same question.<sup>1</sup> In the Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta, the Buddha replied to these questions, whereas in the Aṅguttaranikāya, the Venerable Ānanda replied.<sup>2</sup> In this text, one who attains the path of Arahantship and overcomes clinging (*upādāna*) is referred to as having extinguished the fire of defilements (*parinibbāyati*), or attains the cessation of defilements.

This reference shows that the path of Arahantship refers to one who attains *parinibbāna*.

## The Person Who Abides in Nibbāna

There are many references showing that the Arahant is referred to as the person who abides in nibbāna (*parinibbuta puggala*), one who has already attained *parinibbāna* by way of the cessation of defilements.

*“Kathañca puggalo ummujjitvā tiṇṇo hoti pāraṅgato thale tiṭṭhati brāhmaṇo? ... So āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati. Evaṃ puggalo ummujjitvā tiṇṇo hoti pāraṅgato thale tiṭṭhati brāhmaṇo.”*<sup>3</sup>

**Kathañca puggalo hoti brāhmaṇo** = How is the the person called a noble person, **ummujjitvā** = who has arisen from the round of suffering, **tiṇṇo** = already crossed over it, **pāraṅgato** = already gone to the far shore of nibbāna, **thale tiṭṭhati** = and stands on the dry land of nibbāna? **So** = that person, **āsavānaṃ khayā**, as the outflows are destroyed, **diṭṭheva dhamme** = here and now, **sayaṃ abhiññā** = personally realises, **anāsavaṃ** = freedom from the outflows, **cetovimuttiṃ** = emancipation of mind, **paññāvimuttiṃ** = emancipation by knowledge, **sacchikatvā** = having realised, **upasampajja viharati** = and abides in it. **Evaṃ** = thus, **puggalo** = that individual, **ummujjitvā** = having arisen (from the cycle of suffering), **tiṇṇo** = having crossed over it, **pāraṅgato** = to the far shore of nibbāna, **thale tiṭṭhati** = stands on the dry land of nibbāna, **brāhmaṇo hoti** = is the noble person.

<sup>1</sup> S.iv.102, Pañcasikha Suttaṃ.

<sup>2</sup> Not found (ed.)

<sup>3</sup> Pug.72.

“Thale tiṭṭhati dīpe tiṭṭhati tāṇe tiṭṭhati leṇe tiṭṭhati saraṇe tiṭṭhati abhaye tiṭṭhati accute tiṭṭhati amate tiṭṭhati nibbāne tiṭṭhatiti — thale tiṭṭhati brāhmaṇo.”<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the Aṅguttaranikāya and Puggalapaññatti, an Arahant who has already attained to the fruition of Arahantship is called a person who has already attained to the other shore of nibbāna, who abides in cessation with remainder as usually stated in the Pāli texts — thus should be referred to as a “*parinibbuta puggala*.” There are many instances shown in the Pāli texts that even that Arahant who has attained the cessation of defilements with the aggregates remaining is called “*parinibbuta puggala*.”

“Dabbo so parinibbuto ṭhitatto.”<sup>2</sup>

**Dabbo** = By the name of Dabba the wise, **so parinibbuto** = I have extinguished the fire of defilements, or have attained *parinibbāna*, **ṭhitatto** = standing firm. This is the meaning of Dabba Thera’s saying to himself.

In this Theragāthā, the Arahant is referred to as “*parinibbuta puggala*.”

“Danto so parinibbuto ṭhitatto.”<sup>3</sup>

“Vīro so parinibbuto ṭhittatto.”<sup>4</sup>

“Siti bhūtosmi nibbuto.”<sup>5</sup>

“Sesakenamhi nibbuto.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus there are many instances shown clearly in the Pāli texts that as the Arahant has already attained to the cessation of defilements with the aggregates remaining, he or she is usually called “*parinibbuta puggala*.” Moreover, in the Aṅguttaranikāya, Navakanipāta:—

“Khemappatto khemappattoti āvuso vuccati, Kittāvatānukho āvuso khemappatto vutto bhagavatā’ti. Idhāvuso vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ upasampajja viharati, ettāvatā kho āvuso khemappatto vutto bhagavatā pariyāyenāti...”<sup>7</sup>

There are nine repetitions, ten individuals who have attained safety (*khemappatta puggala*), counting from the attainer of the first absorption, up to the Arahant who has attained cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*).

<sup>1</sup> Nd1.ii.430.

<sup>2</sup> Thag.2, Dabbattheragāthā.

<sup>3</sup> Bhalliyattheragāthā.

<sup>4</sup> Virattheragāthā.

<sup>5</sup> Thag.12, Rakkhitattheragāthā.

<sup>6</sup> Khaṇḍasumanatheragāthā.

<sup>7</sup> A.iv.455.

Of the ten, the former eight, having attained to cessation by suppression (*vikkhambhana-nibbāna*), the Buddha spoke of attained to safety in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*). Whereas for the remaining two individuals, the Non-returner and the Arahant, the attainment to the cessation of perception and feeling (*nirodha-samāpatti*), and cessation with the aggregates remaining (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*) is called attained to safety (*khemappatta*). Therefore, in the remaining paragraphs the Buddha spoke chiefly of attained to safety in a non-provisional sense (*nippariyāyena*).

In the same way, there are nine repetitions, ten individuals who have attained the deathless (*amatappatta puggala*), beginning with “*Amatappatto amatappattoti āvuso vuccati.*”

Then there are nine repetitions, ten individuals who have attained fearlessness (*abhayappatta puggala*), beginning with “*Abhayappatto abhayappattoti āvuso vuccati.*”

Thus in this text, there are thirty individuals who have attained nibbāna. It means that of those thirty, twenty-four have attained to cessation by suppression.

Since the attainment to cessation by suppression is usually referred to as attaining nibbāna, why shouldn't the Stream-winner and Once-returner who have already attained to cessation by cutting of (*samuccheda-nibbāna*) also be called those who have attained nibbāna?

This is my view showing that there is adequate evidence in the Pāli texts usually saying that:—

1. Cessation with remainder (*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*) is also the ultimate unconditioned nibbāna.
2. The noble ones who have attained to cessation with remainder are also called those who have attained nibbāna.
3. The Arahant should also be referred to as the “*parinibbuta puggala.*”

Please take whichever you like.

*Here ends the explanation with regard to the Itivuttaka text.*

## Different Views with Regard to the Udāna

Now, some passages from the Udāna will be produced here:—

*“Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ. No cetāṃ, bhikkhave, abhaviṣṣa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhataṃ nissaraṇaṃ*

*paññāyetha. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyati'ti."*<sup>1</sup>

**Bhikkhave** = monks, **atthi ajātaṃ** = there is the unborn, **atthi abhūtaṃ** = there is the unbecome, **atthi akataṃ** = there is the uncreated, **atthi asaṅkhatam** = there is the unconditioned. **No cetam abhaviṣsa** = If these were not, bhikkhave = monks, **etaṃ ajātaṃ** = this unborn, **etaṃ abhūtaṃ** = this become, **etaṃ akataṃ** = this unborn, **etaṃ abhūtaṃ** = this unbecome, **etaṃ asaṅkhatam** = this unconditioned, **idha** = in this world, **na paññāyetha** = there would not be evident, **nissaraṇam** = any escape, **jātassa** = from birth, **bhūtassa** = from becoming, **katassa** = from the created, **saṅkhatassa** = from the conditioned. **Yasmā ca kho ajātaṃ atthi** = But because there is the unborn, **abhūtaṃ atthi** = there is the unbecome, **akataṃ atthi** = there is the uncreated, **asaṅkhatam atthi** = there is the unconditioned, **tasmā** = therefore, **nissaraṇam**, an escape, **paññāyati** = is evident, **jātassa** = from the born, **bhūtassa** = from the become, **katassa** = from the created, **sankhatassa** = from the conditioned.

### My View of This Text

First, my view of this Pāli text will be shown. In accordance with the teaching of dependent origination in direct order (*anuloma paṭiccasamuppāda desanā*): “*Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇam...*” etc., if there is the cause of ignorance (*avijjā*), mental formations will surely appear. If there are mental formations, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will surely appear. If there is consciousness, mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) will surely appear. Thus, so long as there are causes that conduce to the cycles in the three planes of existence, living beings will surely appear in the endless round of rebirths.

*This is the nature of the born, become, made, and conditioned.*

### The Nature of the Born and Unborn

If there is a cause that can establish existence in the three planes, there is also the nature of birth or appearance. If there is no cause that can establish existence, there is also the nature of the unborn or non-appearance.

To show that there is not only the nature of the born, but also the nature of the unborn, the Buddha taught: “*Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam,*” and “*atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam.*”

<sup>1</sup> Ud.80.

For the remaining terms please refer to the meanings as before.

If there was not the nature of non-appearance, greed always appear in living beings, and there would be even a moment of non-appearance. Hatred would have no moment of non-appearance; delusion would have no moment of non-appearance; ignorance would have no moment of non-appearance, and would be appearing incessantly in living beings throughout the endless round of rebirths, and there would never have been a moment of its non-appearance. If ignorance had been appearing incessantly, then mental formations of wholesome and unwholesome volitions would also be appearing incessantly. If the mental formations had been appearing incessantly, consciousness would have been appearing incessantly in the round of rebirths. As a result, there could never be the cessation and escape from the three planes of existence in *saṃsāra*.

In another way: if there was not the nature of non-appearance, but only the nature of appearance, evil deeds would appear incessantly in all living beings, which would always appear only in the four lower realms; and there would never have been the removal of unwholesome phenomena, freedom from them, or emancipation from the suffering of the lower realms. To show such meaning the Buddha taught: “*No cetam, bhikkhave, abhaviṣṣa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam, nayidha jātassa bhūtaṣṣa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇam paññāyetha.*”

There is indeed the nature of the unborn, non-appearance in the three planes of living beings. In living beings, ignorance (*avijjā*) always appears; only when knowledge (*vijjā*) is attained, then ignorance ceases and disappears; when mental formations do not appear; they cease and disappear, and living beings are free. To show this meaning the Buddha taught: “*Yasmā kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam, tasmā jātassa bhūtaṣṣa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇam paññāyati.*”

The term unbecome (*abhūtaṃ*) has the same meaning as unborn (*ajātaṃ*).

There is also the freedom from doing or the uncreated (*akataṃ atthi*) suffering in the three planes of living beings, and unconditioned (*asaṅkhatam atthi*). All terms refer to the great nibbāna.

This is the meaning that I prefer for “There is, monks, the unborn.”

## The View of Teachers

The teachers who prefer the arising of nibbāna as very subtle appearance do not take the meaning in that text; they take it that the Buddha said:

“*Ajataṃ abhūtaṃ*” referring to nibbāna as being absent of any coarse appearance as in the three planes of conditioned phenomena.

Also in the Commentary:—

“*Atha vā vedanādayo viya hetupaccayasamavāyasaṅkhātāya kāraṇa-sāmaggiyā na jātaṃ na nibbattanti ajātaṃ*. As it is not a phenomenon caused by favourable conditions, it is called unborn, non-appearance.”

“*Kāraṇena vinā, sayameva vā na bhūtaṃ na pātubhūtaṃ na uppannanti abhūtaṃ*. As it is not a phenomenon arising without any cause, it is called unbecome, non-appearance.”

Of these two, as commented: “It is not a phenomenon arising without any cause,” they take the meaning of nibbāna as “Merely an arising phenomenon with any cause.”

### My View

According to the Buddha, whatever kind of appearance it is, it is not without a cause. Hence, appearing due to a cause is one kind.

According to the wish of the holders of wrong-view of causelessness (*ahetuka-diṭṭhi*), blind chance (*adhicca-samuppannika-diṭṭhi*), whatever kind of appearing it is, it is not with any cause; hence the appearing not due to any cause is another kind. Thus, there are two kinds of appearing.

Of these two, in nibbāna there is neither any appearing caused by favourable conditions, nor any other appearing without any cause. Thus, to reject all kinds of appearing the Buddha said: “*Ajataṃ, abhūtaṃ*.”

This is the meaning of the passage from the Commentary.

Still in accordance with this Commentary, nibbāna is completely free from any kind of appearing; there is neither coarse appearing, nor very subtle appearing; thus the commentator has shown the meaning.

This is my view. You may take whichever you like.

In the Udāna text beginning with “*Atthi bhikkhave tadāyatanam*,” the teacher commentator has said: “*tadāyatananti taṃ kāraṇam*” which means being the object of the path and the fruition, it is called “that faculty (*tadāyatana*).”

## Editor's Note

The original text ends abruptly at the previous paragraph. Usually, there is a [colophon](#) at the end of the Ledi Sayādaw's manuals, so I assume that the translation is incomplete.

The passage: "*tadāyatananti taṃ kāraṇaṃ,*" is from the commentary on the passage in the first discourse connected with nibbāna, the Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisaṃyutta Sutta, which describes nibbāna thus:–

*“Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatakaṃ, yathā neva paṭhavī na āpo na tejo na vāyo na ākāśānañcāyatakaṃ na viññāṇañcāyatakaṃ na ākiñcaññāyatakaṃ na nevasaññānāsaññāyatakaṃ nāyaṃ loka na paro loka na ca ubho candimasūriyā, tatrāpāhaṃ, bhikkhave, neva āgatiṃ vadāmi na gatiṃ na ṭhitiṃ na cutiṃ na upapattiṃ, appatitṭhaṃ appavattaṃ anārammaṇamevetaṃ, esevanto dukkhassā'ti”*

“There is, monks, that faculty where there is neither solidity, nor fluidity, nor temperature, nor pressure, nor the faculty of space, nor the faculty of consciousness, nor the faculty of nothingness, nor the faculty of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Where there is neither this world, nor the other world, no sun and moon. There, monks, I declare there is neither coming nor going, nor standing still, no passing away nor arising, no establishment nor evolving nor any supporting object. This is the end of suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

If I can find the missing portion, I will try to add it later.

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<sup>1</sup> Ud.80.

## Abbreviations

A.	Aṅguttaranikāya
CST4	Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka version 4
D.	Dīghanikāya
Dhp.	Dhammapada
Dhp.A.	Dhammapada Commentary
Dhs.	Dhammasaṅgaṇi
ed.	Editor
i.	Volume One
ii.	Volume Two
iii.	Volume Three
iv.	Volume Four
v.	Volume Five
Iti.	Itivuttaka
Iti.A.	Itivuttaka Commentary
M.	Majjhimanikāya
Miln.	Milindapaṇha
Nd1.	Mahāniddeśa
Nd2.	Cūḷaniddeśa
Netti.	Nettipakaraṇa
PTS	Pali Text Society
Pts.	Paṭisambhidāmagga
Pug.	Puggalapaññatti
S.	Saṃyuttanikāya
Sn.	Suttanipāta
Thag.	Theragāthā
Ud.	Udāna
v	verse
vv	verses
Vbh.	Vibhaṅga
Vism.	Visuddhimagga
Vv.	Vimānavatthu

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