

BASED ON THE TALK

Profound Dhamma

Edited by

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Today is the first day of the new year, 2006. On this day people greet one another by saying, 'Happy New Year'. Even though people all over the world say 'Happy New Year' to one another, I sense they are not really happy. Do you agree? Why? Most people seek happiness in the sensual world. They seek happiness in the external world, but real happiness is not found in the external world. Real happiness is calm. It is peaceful and harmless. Real happiness is found within oneself. We attain real happiness through self-realization. We do not find real happiness in the external world.

On this first day of each new year, people all over the world eagerly make plans. They hope to fill their lives with happiness. What could be more natural? Unfortunately, most people think that happiness can be gained through external activities, acquisitions or relationships. The truth is, in spite of all their plans and efforts, real happiness is unfamiliar to most people. Obsessively seeking happiness in sensual objects, in the sensual world, is exhausting. This

gives birth to *Dukkha* whether it is New Year's Day or the middle of summer. People finally do exhaust themselves in their habitual pursuit for external happiness. When that happens they have to rest and refresh themselves. Unfortunately, before long they are up to their familiar old habits of seeking happiness in the sensual world. Such people are like hungry ghosts, never satisfied, always craving for more of one thing or another.

But, some people are not utterly seduced by worldly sensual pursuits. They have stopped looking for happiness outside of themselves. Seeing all of you here on this New Year's Day of 2006 is wonderful. Knowing that you are in search of real happiness and that your efforts and practice is helping, not only yourselves but many other beings as well, makes me very happy for you. So, even though it is not part of our Myanmar cultural heritage to greet one another by saying 'Happy New Year,' on this first day of 2006 I heartily say to each one of you, 'Happy New Year.' You are true seekers! You are all here in search of true happiness. Congratulations!

On the occasion of this New Year's Day, let us compare the difference between people in this monastery and people in the world.

While people in the world are seeking happiness in the sensual world, people in the monastery are seeking happiness in the peaceful world, the world of the Dhamma revealed by the Buddha.

While people in the world are seeking happiness in the external world, we all are seeking happiness in the inner world.

While people in the world are listening to music, we

are listening to the Dhamma.

While people in the world are watching TV, you are watching Venerable Revata. (Laughter!)

While people in the world are emotionally excited, dancing and singing, we are calmly practicing serenity and insight meditation.

Life is so different here. That's why I congratulate all of you!

On this remarkable day, I will give the remarkable talk that is titled '**Profound Dhamma**'. But before beginning my talk, let me ask you some questions. Why does the New Year of 2006 come into being? The answer is simple: Because the previous year, 2005, has ended. This is the action of cause and effect. Without 2005 ending, 2006 can not begin.

A second question: Why are we aging, getting older and older day-by-day? The answer is because there is no escape from the inevitability of arising and passing away that both differentiates and characterizes the various different stages of our lives. Just as days turn into nights and weeks turn into months, boyhood soon enough becomes manhood. In the same way, the old year gives way to new year, in the constant ebb and flow of endings and beginnings. Being subject to this never-ending process, we grow older. We age. This happens because of cause and effect.

A third question: 'How did we become graduates?' We attended primary school, secondary school, high school, college, or university. We passed from one level to another, and by doing so we acquired the skills needed to attend

new classes at higher and higher levels until we eventually graduated. It is impossible to earn a degree, impossible to become a graduate in any other way. Every effect has its cause. This is another example of cause and effect in action.

Now let us look at cause and effect in relation to the Dhamma, the truth.

On this remarkable day, I will give the talk 'Profound Dhamma,' the Dhamma which was realized by our Buddha.

How many years did it take the Buddha to perfect his Pāramis? We can not estimate in years. It is said that it took him four incalculable and one hundred thousand eons to fulfill his Pāramis, his Perfections. How very long that is! Does it take that long to graduate? Is it very difficult? Truly, it is not very difficult. Within this very life time we can achieve that goal, if we spend enough time and make the necessary effort. But the Dhamma which was realized by our Buddha is very profound and another matter altogether. It required an incalculable amount of time, even for the Buddha, to perfect his Paramis and penetrate the Dhamma.

It is important to be aware of the differences between an ordinary education, as taught by worldly beings, and the teachings of the Dhamma, as taught by the Buddha. Many people are heedless. They willingly spend fifteen years or more to get a degree from a university, but they don't want to spend much time practicing meditation. When it comes to meditation practice, they want success within one week, two weeks, one month or two months. Is this reasonable? No, it is not reasonable! If we want

immediate results in meditation and expect to be successful within a short time, we need to examine our motives carefully. We might very well end up ashamed of ourselves. Why? The Dhamma penetrated by our Buddha is very profound. It is much more difficult and nothing at all like a formal worldly education.

In school, we are given increasingly difficult lessons. We have to study and work hard in order to keep up so we can advance from one level to the next. It's true that school lessons are difficult but, compared to the Dhamma, they are easy. Also, as I have mentioned, in order to graduate we have to make methodical progress. This means attending consecutive classes, one after another, step-by-step. Without the lessons of primary school, it would not be easy to learn the lessons of secondary school. Without secondary school lessons, it would be impossible for most of us to undertake high school lessons. Without high school, a university education would be out of the question. So even though a formal worldly education is not as difficult as the Dhamma, in order to be successful we need to apply ourselves in a systematic way, advancing from level-to-level, step-by-step.

The Dhamma penetrated by the Buddha is profoundly deep. It, too, requires systematic, step-by-step practice. This is the only way to penetrate the Dhamma. This systematic approach is a sure way to enlightenment. Otherwise, it is impossible. When the Buddha attained enlightenment by himself, he too practiced systematically, step-by-step. Then, after his Enlightenment, over the course of the next 45 years, he taught extensively and regularly gave talks in many different places. I am quoting here from one of His talks.

“On one occasion, the Buddha said, ‘Bhikkhus if anyone spoke, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end of suffering. It is impossible.

If someone said, after having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, after having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, after having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, after having made breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end of suffering. It would be possible.

Just as, Bhikkhus, if someone said, having built the lower story of a peak house, I will erect the upper story of a peak house. Is it possible? In the same way, if anyone said, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Way leading to

the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end of suffering. It would be possible.”

So the Buddha continued, “Bhikkhus an exertion should be made to understand the Noble Truth of Suffering, an exertion should be made to understand the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, an exertion should be made to understand the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, an exertion should be made to understand the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering.”

We all know that we must penetrate the Four Noble Truths: The Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

It is impossible to completely make an end of suffering without having made the breakthrough to the Four Noble Truths. If we want to end suffering we must know and see the Four Noble Truths. To know and see the Four Noble Truths, we must systematically practice meditation under the guidance of a qualified teacher. Otherwise, it is impossible to penetrate the Four Noble Truths. You might ask: Who is a qualified teacher? The Buddha is the qualified teacher. We are merely followers of the Buddha. We teach meditation following his doctrine.

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering? It is the five aggregates of clinging or the five clinging aggregates. In other words, ultimate mentality and materiality is the Noble Truth of Suffering.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, there is neither man or woman, neither is there deva or Brahma, there is only ultimate mentality and materiality. But we say, “I am a man. I am a woman.” How is it then that there is neither man or woman? In the conventional sense, of course, there is man and woman. But ultimately this is not true. To comprehend the Buddha’s meaning and fully understand this teaching, we must break through to the Noble Truth of Suffering. That is to say we must know and see the five aggregates of clinging. This means that we must penetrate ultimate mentality and materiality. But how can we know and see ultimate mentality and materiality? The Buddha instructed meditators to develop concentration. In the *Mahāvagga Saū yutta Nikāya*, the Buddha said:

“Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated knows and sees things as they really are.

And what does he know and see as it really is? He knows and sees as it really is: ‘This is suffering.’ He knows and sees as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering.’ He knows and sees as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering.’ He knows and sees as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’

To know and see the first, second and third Noble Truths we must practice the fourth Noble Truth, that is the Eightfold Noble Path. The Eightfold Noble Path is comprised of the three trainings: The training of morality (*Sīla*), the training of concentration (*Samādhi*), and the training of insight (*Paññā*).

Sīla	Samādhi	Paññā
Right Speech	Right Effort	Right View
Right Action	Right Mindfulness	Right Thought
Right Livelihood	Right Concentration	

We take on the training of morality (*Sīla*) to cultivate purity of bodily and verbal actions. With the training of concentration (*Samādhi*) we acquire purity of mind. And we undertake the training of insight (*Paññā*) to free us from suffering.

In order to develop concentration, we must practice Samatha Meditation. Do you know how many different kinds of Samatha Meditation Objects the Buddha taught? Forty. Among them, thirty lead to absorption concentration; and the remaining ten to access concentration only. So, we can say that the Buddha taught 40 different types of Samatha meditation objects for the cultivation of two different, but related types of concentration: absorption concentration and access concentration.

Right Concentration is one of the paths appearing in the Buddha's comprehensive Eightfold Noble Path. But, what is 'Right Concentration?' In the *Visuddhimagga*, "The Path of Purification," it explains that 'Right Concentration' is access concentration and the Eight Attainments (*jhānas*, i.e., absorption concentration). Right Concentration is very important. Without concentration, it is impossible to penetrate things as they really are.

When we undertake the training of concentration, we must practice with any one of the meditation objects with which we can attain access concentration or absorption concentration. Here at Pa-Auk Tawya Meditation Cen-

ter, we usually teach most beginners 'Mindfulness of Breathing' (*Ānāpānasati*). When their concentration develops they attain full absorption concentration which is very profound and powerful. However, some beginning meditators are unable to develop concentration through Mindfulness of Breathing, so we alternately teach Four Elements meditation. With Four Elements meditation meditators can attain access concentration.

We must all try our best to develop either access or absorption concentration so that we can penetrate ultimate reality. Without access or absorption concentration, we will not be able to see ultimate mentality and materiality. Simply put, this means that we will not be able to break through to the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering. We will not be capable of knowing and seeing things as they really are.

There are many in this audience who have already penetrated ultimate mentality and materiality. They understand the importance of developing concentration in order to know and see ultimate reality as it really is. Those meditators have seen things as they really are. There are also many among us who have yet to penetrate ultimate mentality and materiality. Nevertheless, they continue to practice conscientiously towards that goal. According to the Buddha, this whole world is composed of very tiny particles. In order for meditators to know and see these particles directly, the Buddha taught 'Four Elements' meditation. What are the four elements? They are earth, water, fire and wind. All living and non-living things are made up of these four elements. When meditators can discern these four elements clearly in their whole body from head to foot and foot to head, again and again, they

will experience their body as a block of the four elements. When this happens the perception of ‘self’ temporarily disappears. Meditators then no longer see the body as a ‘self’, but are now able to correctly perceive the body as a group of four elements. As their concentration improves, the body gradually begins to emit a gray light which becomes brighter and brighter. Next the body turns into a block of light. If meditators continue to discern the four elements in that block of light, it finally breaks down into very small particles that are rapidly arising and passing away. It is a profound experience to see these small particles. Yet the meditator is still only seeing the most subtle concept of conventional materiality. He or she is not yet seeing ultimate materiality. In each particle there are at least eight aspects of materiality. These eight aspects are the elements of earth, water, fire and air, as well as color, odor, flavor and nutritive essence. It is only when meditators can analyze these eight different aspects of materiality, one-by-one in each particle, that they can truly know and see ultimate materiality.

As soon as meditators can discern the four elements internally, in their own bodies, up to directly knowing and seeing ultimate reality, they are then instructed to move on to discerning the four elements externally. The moment they are able to discern four elements in buildings, they see only small particles. When they discern four elements in trees or even in space, they likewise only see small particles. Everything becomes the same. At this point, men, women, trees and all other conventional forms cease to exist. Everything and everybody becomes and is seen as a group of small particles. This is the attainment of true knowledge. It is the knowledge of knowing that there are

really no men or women. There is just ultimate materiality. But when meditators open their eyes again, what do they see? They once again see men and women, and they suffer for seeing them. Why is this? It is because of their defilements. If you don’t want to see men and women, don’t open your eyes again. You must keep your eyes closed all the time (laughter!), otherwise attachment, craving and clinging will arise and you will take on new kamma.

The meditator’s next step is to analyze the different aspects of mentality up to ultimate mentality. When they are successful in this practice they directly know and see the mental process, arising in a series of mind moments, with consciousness and all the associated mental factors present in each mind moment. Meditator’s are then seeing things in the same way as the Buddha described them. They see that men and women truly do not exist, only ultimate mentality and materiality exists. At that point, they break through the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering.

Once meditators know and see ultimate mentality and materiality, they go on to practice “Dependent Origination” (*Patīccasamupāda*) in order to directly know cause and effect. When they have discerned cause and effect, they break through to the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

Meditators who have practiced Dependent Origination and have directly discerned cause and effect, then progress on to insight meditation (*Vipassanā*). They now are able to discern and examine the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and the non-self nature of ulti-

mate mentality and materiality, along with causes and their effects. When their insight matures, Path Knowledge arises. They see Nibbāna. At that point, materiality and mentality cease and they break through to the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

With the arising of Path Knowledge their defilements are eradicated step-by-step. With the achievement of the first Path, they attain the first fruit of enlightenment and become a Stream Enterer, (*Sotāpanna*). As soon as that happens, the three defilements of self-identity, doubt and attachment to rites and rituals are forever eradicated.

Because they practice the Fourth Noble Truth which is the Eightfold Noble Path or the Three Trainings, they are able to directly know and see the first, second and the third Noble Truths.

When one practices the training of morality (*Sīla*) it could be compared to attending primary school. When one develops concentration (*Samādhi*) it is like attending secondary school. Remember that one has to pass secondary school before they can proceed to high school and university lessons. The practice of insight meditation (*Paññā*) is like attending high school and university. Continuing with this example, earning a degree and graduating from a university is like attaining *Nibbāna*.

There are sixteen steps of insight knowledge that lead to Nibbāna. What are the sixteen insight-knowledges? They are:

1. The Knowledge of analyzing Mentality-Materiality (*nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*)
2. The Knowledge of discerning Cause and Ef-

fect (*paccaya-pariggaha ñāṇa*)

3. The Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana ñāṇa*)
4. The Knowledge of Arising and Passing away (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*)
5. The Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga ñāṇa*)
6. The Knowledge of Terror (*bhaya ñāṇa*)
7. The Knowledge of Danger (*ādīnava ñāṇa*)
8. The Knowledge of Disenchantment (*nibbidā ñāṇa*)
9. The Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muñcītukamyatā ñāṇa*)
10. The Knowledge of Reflection (*paṭisankhā ñāṇa*)
11. The Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formation (*saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*)
12. The Knowledge of Conformity (*anuloma ñāṇa*)
13. The Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage (*gotrabhu ñāṇa*)
14. The Knowledge of the Path (*magga ñāṇa*)
15. The Knowledge of Fruition (*phala ñāṇa*)
16. The Knowledge of Reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa ñāṇa*)

The first insight-knowledge, the Knowledge of analysing ultimate mentality and materiality is knowing and seeing the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering. The second insight-knowledge, the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and effect is knowing and seeing the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Having made the breakthrough to the first insight-

knowledge we can proceed to the second insight-knowledge. However, if we haven't made the breakthrough to the First Noble Truth, it is impossible to breakthrough to the Second Noble Truth which is very profound. That's why, after the Buddha attained full enlightenment, he declared:

“I have attained to this Dhamma which is profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in sensual pleasures, rejoices in it and engages in it. For those who so delight, rejoice and engage in sensual pleasures this matter is hard to see, that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. Equally hard to see would be the cessation of all volitional formations, the abandonment of all the substrates of rebirth, the destruction of craving, dispassion, and cessation (*Nibbāna*). And if I were to teach Dhamma to others and they did not understand me, that would be weariness and a trouble to me.”

Do you remember these words? This reflection arose in the mind of the Buddha while he was alone in seclusion, after he had become the fully Enlightened One. At that time, he was dwelling at Uruvela on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at the foot of the Goatherd's Banyan tree. You may remember now.

Shortly after that, this verse arose in the mind of the Blessed One:

“This that I've attained, why should I proclaim?
Those full of lust and hate can never grasp it.

Leading upstream this Dhamma, subtle, deep,
Hard to see, no passion-blinded folk can see it.”

For this reason, as the Buddha thought about his realization, his mind inclined to living at ease. He was not inclined to teach the Dhamma. But, the Brahma Sahampati, who knew and saw within his mind the Buddha's reasoning, thought: “Alas, this world is lost; alas, this world will be destroyed because the mind of the Truth-Finder, the Blessed One, the Arahant, the fully-enlightened Buddha is inclined to living at ease, not to teaching the Dhamma.”

“So this Great Brahma, as swiftly as a strong man might stretch his bent arm, bent it again. Whereupon he disappeared from the Brahma world and immediately reappeared before the Buddha.

Arranging his upper robe over one shoulder and kneeling on his right knee, he paid respect to the Buddha with joined palms and said: “Venerable Sir, may the Blessed One teach the Dhamma, may the Fortunate One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are perishing through not hearing Dhamma. If the Blessed One teaches the Dhamma, they will become Knowers of Dhamma!”

“Then the Brahma Sahampati, having said this, continued:

“In the past there appeared in Magadha before thee
An unclean dhamma by impure minds devised

Open this door of the deathless, let them hear
 The Dhamma awakened to by the pure one.
 As on a mountain-peak a watcher sees the folk
 below,
 So, a Man of Wisdom, seeing all, looks down from
 Dhamma's heights!
 Free from woe, look on those who are sunk in grief,
 oppressed with birth and age.
 Arise, hero, victor in battle, leader of the caravan,
 traverse the world!
 Teach, O Blessed One, the Dhamma, and they will
 understand.”

When the Brahma Sahampati said this, the Buddha responded to him thusly: “Brahma, it has occurred to me: ‘I have attained to this Dhamma which is profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in sensual pleasures, rejoices in it and engages in it. For those who so delight, rejoice and engage in sensual pleasures this matter is hard to see, that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. Equally hard to see would be the cessation of all volitional formations, the abandonment of all the substrates of rebirth, the destruction of craving, dispassion, and cessation (*Nibbāna*). And if I were to teach Dhamma to others and they did not understand me, that

would be weariness and a trouble to me.”

Why did these thoughts arise in the Buddha's mind? There are several reasons. One is because of the profound Dhamma he penetrated. Another is that not only our Buddha but all previous Buddhas, too, were uninclined to teach this Dhamma after they attained full enlightenment. Another reason is that when this reflection arose in the minds of the previous Buddhas, the Great Brahma likewise had to make the same request to each of them to teach the Dhamma. In the same way, when this reflection arose in the mind of our Buddha, the Great Brahma Shampati made the same request of him to teach the Dhamma. The Buddha understood that people of that day worshipped and venerated the Great Brahma. He knew they would be open to the teachings and inclined to listen once they realized that the Great Brahma, himself, had requested that he teach the Dhamma to them.

Then once again, for a second time, the Great Brahma Shampati asked our Buddha: “Supreme Buddha, may the Blessed One teach the Dhamma, may the Fortunate One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are perishing through not hearing Dhamma: If the Blessed One teaches the Dhamma, they will become Knowers of Dhamma!”

Then the Buddha explained for a second time why he was inclined to living at ease, and why he was not inclined to teaching the Dhamma.

But the Great Brahma appealed to the Buddha for a third time to teach the Dhamma. At that point our Buddha, recognizing the Brahma's entreaty and,

out of compassion for all beings, surveyed the world with his Buddha's eye. Whereupon he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes, beings with sharp faculties and dull, beings of good and bad disposition, beings both easy and hard to teach. Few of them were living in fear of wrongdoing and the world beyond. And just as in a pool of blue, red or white lotuses *some are born in the water, grow in the water, and, not leaving the water, thrive in the water; some are born in the water and reach the surface; while some are born in the water and having reached the surface, grow out of the water and are not polluted by it.* In the same way the Buddha saw some beings with little dust in their eyes.

Three types of persons are mentioned in the simile of lotus. They are like:

1. Lotuses which are born in the water and when having reached the water's surface, grow out of the water and are not polluted by it. This is an *Uggaṭitaññū-person*.
2. Lotuses which are born in the water and that reach the water's surface. This is a *Vipacitaññū-person*.
3. Lotuses which are born in water, grow in water, and, without leaving water, thrive in the water. This is a *Neyya-person*.

However, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, a fourth type of person is also mentioned. It is like:

4. Lotuses that are born in water, grow in water, and, without leaving water, they die in the water. This is a *Padaparama-person*.

Among these four types of persons, the first three types can make an end of suffering.

The first type of person, (an *Uggaṭitaññū-person*), is one who can awaken by simply listening to condensed instruction. Venerable *Sariputta* is an example of an *Uggaṭitaññū-person*. He attained the state of Sotāpanna, after simply listening to a short stanza with only four lines. So please listen now and find out whether you, too, can attain the level of a Sotāpanna. If you can, I will be very happy.

“Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā;

Tesāi hetuī tathāgato āha,

Te saṅsa yo nirodo;

Evāi vādī mahā samaṇo.”

Venerable *Sariputta* realized the attainment of a Sotāpanna after he heard the words “*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā; Tesāi hetuī tathāgato āha*” but before the word ‘āha’.

We need to understand the reasons for such quick attainment by people who lived in the time of the Buddha. Nowadays people argue about it. Some even believe that it is not necessary to practice. They fantasize that people today can also attain deep states of realization just by listening to a Dhamma talk. To defend their opinion, they point to the many incidences of that happening in the time of the Buddha. If then, why not now? In the commentaries we find the answer. It is explained there that those first followers of the Buddha could penetrate the Dhamma so quickly for the following reasons. In their many previous lives they accumulated four causes:

- a. Mastery of the scriptures (*Pariyatti*)
They studied and became masters of the Dhamma scriptures.
- b. Hearing (*Savana*)
They listened attentively and respectfully to the Dhamma being explained over the course of many, many past lives;
- c. Inquiry (*Paripuccha*)
They scrutinized and discussed the difficult passages and explanations in the texts and commentaries.
- d. Prior effort (*Pubbayoga*)
They engaged in the practice of Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*sāṅkhārupekkhā nāṇa*) during the dispensations of the Buddhas.

It was because of these four causes that people in those days were able to rapidly achieve profound states of attainment, in one of their last lives. And because of these four causes, this result occurred:

- e. Achievement (*adhigama*)
The attainment of the Arahant Path and Fruition, or any other Path and Fruition.

We now know that those who had perfected paramis such as mastery of scriptures (*Pariyatti*), hearing (*Savana*), inquiry (*Paripuccha*) and prior effort (*Pubbayoga*) were able to attain Path and Fruition knowledge quickly, sometimes after only listening to a very short stanza. Among the paramis, ‘prior effort’ (*Pubbayoga*) was crucial. Because of their accumulated past practice of Samatha-Vipassanā

meditation up to the Knowledge of Equanimity towards the Formations (*sāṅkhārupekkhā nāṇa*) these early disciples were already very close to Path and Fruition Knowledge. When they went for alms, they practiced meditation. When they returned, they practiced meditation. Those early disciples had already made prior effort over the course of many past lives. So in their last life, merely listening to the Dhamma was sufficient for them to see Nibbāna.

Do we now know that we are not the first type of person (an *Uggaṭṭānñū-person*) or one who can attain profound states of realization after merely listening to condensed instruction?

The second type of person (a *Vipacitaññū-person*) is one who needs detailed instructions. Do you remember the five ascetics who formerly looked after the Bodhisatta during the time that he resolutely committed six years to severe austerity practice? You now remember? When the Bodhisatta gave up that practice, they abandoned him. When the Bodhisatta became a fully enlightened Buddha, he sought out those five ascetics in order to give them a talk. This talk was the first talk given by the Buddha. Do you remember the name of that talk? Dhamma-Wheel Rolling Sutta (*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*). In this Sutta the Buddha gave detailed instructions. While listening to it, one among the five ascetics immediately attained the stage of Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*). It was Venerable Koṇḍañña. When the Buddha instructed the remaining ascetics with further dhamma-talk, the Venerable Vappa and the Venerable Bhaddiya also attained the level of Stream Enterers. After having eaten alms food brought back by those three Stream Enterers, Venerable Koṇḍañña, Venerable Vappa and Venerable Bhaddiya, the Buddha continued to instruct

the two remaining ascetics with more dhamma-talk. Before long, the Venerable Mahānāma and the Venerable Assaji also attained Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*). We now know that the Venerable Koṇḍañña, the Venerable Vappa and the Venerable Bhaddiya, the Venerable Mahānāma and the Venerable Assaji were the second type of person, a *Vipacitaññu-person*.

There are many among us who have also listened to or read the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. Have we attained Stream Entry? If not, we can safely conclude that we are not the second type of person, a *Vipacitannu-person*, who can realize Nibbāna simply after listening to detailed explanation of the Dhamma.

The third type of person (a *Neyya-person*) is one who cannot attain merely by listening to condensed or detailed instruction. But rather by practicing the training of morality (*Sīla*), the training of concentration (*Samādhi*) and the training of insight (*Paññā*) step-by-step, systematically, they can realize the Four Noble Truths and realize Nibbāna. I believe that there are many in this audience who are this third type of person. Nowadays the first and second type of persons cannot be found anywhere. However, there are many *Neyya*-persons living amongst us today. To realize Nibbāna, a *Neyya*-person needs to learn the Pāli text, discuss the difficult passages and explanations in the texts and commentaries, and keep in mind what they have studied. They should associate with a good friend or friends and, they have to practice meditation. This is mentioned in the commentary.

Association with a good friend or friends is very important. Even if we cannot gain knowledge of the Pāli

texts and commentary, if we associate with a good friend or friends who can thoroughly guide us in the three trainings, even just this much can lead us to Nibbāna. When the Buddha surveyed the world with his Buddha's eye, he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and with much dust, beings with sharp and dull faculties, beings of good and bad dispositions, and beings both easy and hard to teach. Few of them were living in fear of wrongdoing and the world beyond.

Because of seeing this, the Buddha addressed the Brahma with verses.

“Open to them the door to the Deathless!

Let those who have ears release their faith.

Foreseeing trouble, I did not preach at first,

The excellent Dhamma for men, Brahma!”

The Buddha has opened the door to the Deathless. We must entrust our faith to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. If lack of faith persists it is impossible to open the door to the Deathless. Because of lacking faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, we may sometimes think, ‘Is it really possible to attain *jhāna* concentration simply by focusing on the breath? Or, is it really possible to see light just by focusing on the in and out breath? These thoughts can be troubling and fill our minds with doubts. If this happens, those without faith often cease applying themselves to practice. Their minds become filled with doubts and they soon are lost in thoughts and complaints about this and that. Such pervasive doubting inhibits benefits from arising in their lives. Because of this, the Buddha said:

“Let those who have ears release faith;
Foreseeing trouble, I did not preach at first;
The excellent Dhamma for men, Brahma!”

We have known that after the Buddha had attained enlightenment, he was not inclined to teach the Dhamma. Finally, after being asked for a third time, our Buddha agreed to the request of the Great Brahma. Out of oceanic compassion for all beings, he surveyed the world with his Buddha’s eye. He then saw the first, second and third type of person. I have already given you an explanation of them. Let me now explain the fourth type of person.

The fourth type of person (a *Padaparama-person*) is one whose highest attainment is an intellectual comprehension of the Dhamma texts. Even though such persons practice the training of morality (*Sīla*), the training of concentration (*Samādhi*) and the training of insight (*Paññā*) step-by-step, systematically, and even after hearing condensed instruction or detailed instruction, they nevertheless are not able to realize the Four Noble Truths and to see Nibbāna in this very life. All their effort is for their future realization and attainment. What they have accumulated in this present life is the treasure that they will carry with them, as provisions on their journey to *Nibbāna*. Because of this, they will know and see the Dhamma as it really is in future lives.

What should we do if we fall into that fourth kind of person (a *Padaparama*)? If we are the fourth type of person, meditation is indispensable. In this case, it is especially important for us to practice as much meditation as we can in this life. It is for our future realization and attain-

ment.

We now know the four categories of persons mentioned in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and how each type can realize Nibbāna. People in this age, however, are either exclusively the third type of person, a *Neyya-person*, or the fourth type of person, a *Padaparama-person*. (The first two types of persons are not present in our age.) Even though the third type of person, a *Neyya-person*, can realize Nibbāna through practicing the three trainings, the fourth type of person, a *Padaparama-person*, cannot.

Please do not feel sad if you have not yet fully developed the practice of *Samatha-Vipassanā*. The Bodhisatta had been perfecting his *Pāramis* for four incalculable and one hundred thousand eons in order to attain full enlightenment. It took all that time to break through the Four Noble Truths for the realization of Nibbāna. This Dhamma is really profound. We must all be patient. Please take time to practice diligently and patiently.

Why are meditators here at Pa-Auk Tawya Monastery instructed to develop concentration? Consider that the Buddha himself, before attaining full enlightenment under the Bodhi tree on the full moon day during the first watch of the night, practiced *Ānāpānasati* Meditation up to fourth *jhāna* concentration. When he attained that state he inclined and directed his mind to the Knowledge of Recollection of Past Life (*pubbenivāsānusati nāṇa*). He recollected his innumerable past lives, that is to say, he brought to mind and clearly saw one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, spanning many

aeons of world contraction and world expansion. The Buddha recalled detailed specifics of his past life, *i.e.*, there he was so named, of such a race, with such an appearance, such was his food, such his experience of pleasure and pain, such the ending of his life span, his death. Passing away from there, he saw that he reappeared elsewhere. Thus with its aspects and particulars the Buddha recollected his innumerable past lives. He saw uncountable times when he had been born and died. During that first watch on the night of his full enlightenment he penetrated mentality and materiality. He attained the Knowledge of Discerning Mentality and Materiality (*nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*).

In the second watch of the night, he inclined and directed his mind to the Knowledge of the Passing Away and Reappearance of Beings (*dibbacakku ñāṇa*). With his divine eye (which is purified and surpasses the human eye), he saw countless beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior beings, fair and ugly beings, happy or unhappy in their destiny. He understood that beings reaped according to their deeds. Unworthy beings who were ill-behaved in body, speech and mind, beings who were revilers of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, who acquired kamma due to wrong views, suffer, on the break up of the body after death, and appear in a state of loss, in an unhappy destiny, in perdition, in hell. But worthy beings who are well-behaved in body, speech and mind, who are not revilers of Noble Ones, who are right in their views, who acquire kamma due to right view, do not suffer on the break up of the body after death. These beings appear in a happy destiny, in the heavenly worlds. Thus with his divine eye, the Buddha saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior beings, fair and ugly be-

ings, happy or unhappy in their destiny. He understood that beings reaped according to their deeds. He perceived with his divine eye the knowledge of how beings are born and die. The Pāḷi word for this is *cutupapāta ñāṇa*, the Knowledge of Birth and Death. When the Buddha focused on exactly how beings are born in happy or woeful states, he attained the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Effect (*paccaya-pariggaha ñāṇa*).

During the third watch of the night, he attained the first Path and Fruition Knowledge, the second Path and Fruition Knowledge, the third Path and Fruition Knowledge, and the fourth Path and Fruition Knowledge – one after another. Path knowledge eradicated his defilements step-by-step without remainder. He finally attained the Knowledge of the Process of Eradicating Defilements (*āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*). He became a Buddha, an Arahant.

These are the words of the Buddha:

“Bhikkhus, before my enlightenment, while I was still a Bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, it occurred to me: ‘Alas, this world has fallen into trouble, there is birth and decay and there is death and falling into other states and being reborn. And no one knows any way of escape from this suffering, this aging and death. When will deliverance be found from this suffering, this aging and death?’

Then, Bhikkhus, it occurred to me: ‘With what being present, does aging and death come to be? What conditions aging and death?’ And then, bhikkhus, through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Birth being present, aging and death comes to be. Birth conditions aging and death.’

Then it occurred to me: ‘What conditions birth?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Becoming conditions birth.’

‘What conditions becoming?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Clinging conditions becoming.’

‘What conditions clinging?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Craving conditions clinging.’

‘What conditions craving?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Feeling conditions craving.’

‘What conditions feeling?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Contact conditions feeling.’

‘What conditions contact?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘The six-sense-bases condition contact.’ “

‘What conditions the six sense-bases?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Mentality and materiality conditions the six sense-bases.’

‘What conditions mentality and materiality?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Consciousness conditions mentality and materiality.’

‘What conditions consciousness?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Volitional formations condition consciousness.’

‘What conditions volitional formations?’ Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘Ignorance conditions volitional formations.’

‘Origination, origination’ - thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light.”

Then our Bodhisatta directed careful attention to cessation.

“Then, bhikkhus, it occurred to me: ‘When what does not exist, does aging and death not come to be? With the cessation of what, comes the cessation of aging and death?’

Through careful attention the realization dawned on me: ‘When there is no birth, aging and death does not come to be; with the cessation of birth comes cessation of aging and death.’

‘With the cessation of becoming comes cessation of birth.’

‘With the cessation of clinging comes cessation of becoming.’

‘With the cessation of craving comes cessation of clinging.’

‘With the cessation of feeling comes cessation of craving.’

‘With the cessation of contact comes cessation of feeling.’

‘With the cessation of the six-sense-bases comes

cessation of contact.’

‘With the cessation of mentality and materiality comes cessation of the six-sense-bases.’

‘With the cessation of consciousness comes cessation of mentality and materiality.’

‘With the cessation of volitional formations comes cessation of consciousness.’

‘With the cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations.’

‘With the cessation of volitional formations comes cessation of consciousness. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’

‘Cessation, cessation - thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.’

It was in the third watch of the night, after reflecting on the causal relationship between the twelve factors of dependent origination, that our Bodhisatta again developed *Ānāpānasati* Concentration up to the fourth jhāna. He then contemplated the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) nature of mentality and materiality, with its causes and their effects. He developed the Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-away (*udayabbaya nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Terror (*bhaya nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Danger (*ādīnava nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Disenchantment (*nibbidā nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Reflection (*paṭisankhā nāṇa*), the Knowl-

edge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*sāṅkhārupekkhā nāṇa*), the Knowledge of Conformity (*anuloma nāṇa*) and the Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage (*gotrabhu nāṇa*). Then the Four Paths and Four Fruition Knowledges (*magga and phala nāṇa*) arose in him quickly, one after another. The Path knowledges eradicated his defilements step-by-step without remainder. Our Bodhisatta then became a Buddha, an Arahant. Then the Knowledge of Reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa nāṇa*) arose in him.

We now know that even our Bodhisatta had developed all sixteen insight-knowledges.

Developing the sixteen insight-knowledges is essential for the realization of Nibbāna.

Here at Pa-Auk Tawya Monastery, meditators are being instructed to develop all sixteen-insight-knowledges step-by-step, systematically.

To get a specific degree, we all have attended primary school, secondary school, high school, college and university, one after another.

To realize Nibbāna, let us attend the schools of insight-knowledge one after another.

May you all attain insight-knowledge. May you all practice step-by-step, systematically, for the realization of Nibbāna, the peace.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

The talk given on Sunday,

1st January 2006 at Pa-Auk Tawya in Myanmar.