



APPAMĀDA VĀMĀDA

OVĀDĀCARIYA SAYĀDAWGYI U PAṄḌITĀBHIVAMSA

APPAMĀDA (Heedfulness)

The Elephant's Footprint of the Buddha's Teaching

“Just as the footprint of any being which moves about, falls within the confines of an elephant's footprint and the elephant's footprint is reckoned as the biggest of the footprints on account of its greatness, even so, whatsoever good qualities there are, all of them are based on heedfulness, converge in heedfulness, and heedfulness is considered to be the highest of all these qualities.”

- *Majjhima Nikāya*

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

At one time the Buddha was asked by King Kosala, “Is there any one quality which if possessed will benefit one's welfare in this life and in future lives?” Before we can understand the Buddha's simple answer, we must know what one's welfare or needs are. We need or want many things and the Buddha had concisely

enumerated them for us. It is self-evident that all beings want to have a long life with good health as well as to be able to work for one's own and others' welfare and prosperity. Good health is wealth. So too, one wishes to be beautiful or handsome, not ugly or deformed, so that one will be well-liked. Even the Buddha gave due consideration to the role of beauty. He considered that ideally one should look respectable, be venerable and properly shaped to work for the benefit of all beings. If given a choice, one would also want to have a high standard of living where one can enjoy and indulge in pleasures such as delicious food, pleasant music, luxurious clothes and homes in beautiful surroundings, in short, a material paradise. Some say life in America or Hawaii is like this! Finally, one wishes to be considered a person of high status. It can be seen from history that irrespective of their geographical locations, the ruling class and the highly educated have been held in the highest esteem. This is the classification by worldly standards and not that of the Buddha. It is the way of the world. The

Buddha would however classify as high status in one who acts, speaks and thinks in a blameless, flawless manner for the benefit of oneself and others. Other than these five desires (long life, health, beauty, high standard of living and status) of human society, what else does one need?

Fulfilment of these five things is said to be the cause for happiness and satisfaction in human life. Fulfilment would of course vary between village and city and between different societies and just as there are differences in degree of happiness and satisfaction in the worldly or mundane sphere, so too are there differences in degree within the *Dhamma* sphere. The satisfaction and happiness one gains by almsgiving (*dāna*) are different in degree than that from practising morality (*sīla*), which in turn is different in degree from the happiness and satisfaction one gets from concentration of mind (*samādhi*) and wisdom. There are also differences in degree of happiness and satisfaction gained from the various insight knowledges into the intrinsic nature of things (*vipassanā-*

ñāna) and the attainment of *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi*, *arahatta*), chief disciple (*aggasāvaka*), *Paccekabuddha* and *Sammāsambuddha*. Within either the mundane, worldly sphere or the *Dhamma* sphere, if one wants to attain or strive for a higher grade or the highest grade of happiness, one must also ask oneself the question posed by King Kosala to the Buddha, "What quality must one possess or develop?"

APPAMĀDA

If one is alert and unfailing in abstaining from what will lower one's status and unfailing in observing what will uplift one's status, one will be able to win everything one needs. Just as when eating, one must avoid taking unwholesome food to be free from discomfort and disease, so too one must abstain from unwholesome or immoral behaviour to be free from harm and danger. And just as one must consume wholesome food regularly and in sufficient quantity in order to satiate one's hunger, maintain one's health and replenish one's

energy, so too one must practise wholesome behaviour by body, speech and mind (*puññakiriyā*) in order to uplift one's status to the highest degree in the mundane and *Dhamma* spheres. Such practice should be made a habit which requires one to be unfailing, non-negligent and unforgetful in one's behaviour. Hence, one must be heedful, diligent, alert, earnest and watchful; in short, living with mindfulness. In Pali, the language of the Buddha, this is known as *APPAMĀDA* or *EKADHAMMA*. This was the Buddha's simple response to the question posed by King Kosala.

PAMĀDA : NEGLIGENCE

When one looks at how people live, one sees that the majority are unmindfully desiring and pursuing material objects and gain. Absent-minded and distracted, their minds are enshrouded with ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) as they resort to unwholesome speech and actions to get more pleasant, sensual objects and to have less unpleasantness in their lives. Except for the time one is sleeping, one is seeing,

hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and knowing a great variety of available objects and if one does not know how to be mindful, one finds that greed, desire or covetousness (*lobha*) enters the mind when one experiences a pleasant object and anger, ill-will or hatred (*dosa*) enters the mind when one experiences an unpleasant or painful object. Hence, one is living with a mind filled with defilements (*kilesas*). And since one does not know the true nature of things, one will be ignorant and deluded (*moha*) and holds wrong views (*diṭṭhi*). One will also experience or live with vanity, conceit, pride (*māna*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), moral shamelessness (*ahirika*) and moral fearlessness (*anottappa*) as one's constant companions.

When the mind is allowed to roam freely, filled with *lobha* and *dosa*, it remains in a confused, lowly condition. It is human nature to have such an unrestrained mind which has developed since one was a baby at mother's breast and these *kilesas* have grown as one is accustomed to always

seeking what one wants without restraint or consideration for others. One selfishly wants to satisfy oneself and would not tolerate any restrictions or constraints. The fault also lies with parents who lack wisdom and blindly yield to a child's desires instead of controlling or restraining them. The parents who lack training in mindfulness, have uncontrolled minds and thus fail to develop good behaviour in their children in body, speech and mind. Hence, one begins life with two kinds of negligence (*pamāda*): (1) failure to abstain from what should be abstained from, and (2) failure to observe what should be observed. This condition of negligence causes suffering in oneself and this suffering spreads throughout the society. Is it any wonder that there is so much sorrow, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, discontentedness, grief and rage in the world?

Pamāda is carelessness, negligence, indolence or remissness that permits one to perform unwholesome physical, verbal and mental deeds which cause harm to oneself and others. This results from a basic lack of

sympathy for others and the effects of our actions on them. All beings fear pain, punishment, death and no one wants to be harmed, lied, slandered, robbed, tormented, sexually abused and so forth. By putting ourselves in another's position, we will feel sympathy for others and we will realise that we should abstain from behaviour which would inflict physical and mental pain or suffering upon any being. Failure to do so is not befitting a human being; in fact, we could say that one has failed to become a proper human being.

"All are afraid of the stick (punishment), all fear death. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others. All are afraid of the stick, all hold their lives dear. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others. He who seeks his own happiness by oppressing others who also desire happiness, will not find happiness in his next existence. He who seeks his own happiness by not oppressing others who also desire to have happiness, will find happiness in his next existence."

- Dhammapada 129-132

Though the Buddha pointed out this above-mentioned moral precept, it is not meant to be practised by Buddhists alone, but should be recognised as a universal precept or universal law. All should conduct themselves by body and speech for the welfare of all beings, especially human beings. Failure to abstain from unbecoming behaviour is negligence (*pamāda*) that is failure to behave in a sympathetic manner, conducive for the welfare of all beings.

THE BENEFITS OF DĀNA

For one wishing to observe what should be observed, *appamāda* should be established in three areas of wholesome behaviour (*puññakiriyāvatthu*) : *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*. *Dāna* includes almsgiving, merit sharing (*pattidāna*) and rejoicing in others' merits (*pattānumodanā*) and this amounts to doing what should be done. The Buddha was once asked by Siha, "What are the immediate benefits of *dāna*?" and the Buddha gave five benefits. First, if one gives with *karuṇā* (compassion) in mind and not out of desire for gratitude, fame, reward

and so forth, one will be loved by many as *dāna* serves as a form of material to create friendship. Even a dog wags its tail when fed. A human responds with *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion) and *muditā* (sympathetic joy). Second, the virtuous who do good for the welfare of others will approach you and from them, you can receive valuable *Dhamma* with regard to *dāna*, *sīla*, *bhāvanā*, good methods for advancement and inspiration to arouse a sense of spiritual urgency (*saṃvega*), all of which can be used as a base to raise your own status. What materials you give are not so great, but what you receive is incomparably great and beneficial. Third, one who performs *dāna* cannot be notorious since giving for the welfare or benefit of the many is a blameless and dignified behaviour. Hence, one's fame and reputation are established. Fourth, one will be surrounded by friends who will welcome one whenever one enters any assembly and one can do so without fear or self-consciousness, but with undisturbed confidence. These benefits produce a unique bliss (*sukhavisesa*) in this very life.

Therefore *dāna* is a kusala (wholesome) act, worth doing since it serves as the base of meritorious action (*puññakiriyāvatthu*).

The fifth benefit is that one will be reborn in a happy, heavenly world which may not be understood because it may be out of reach of one's intelligence, but it can be accepted by faith which has arisen from understanding the first four benefits. This acceptance based on faith in the Buddha-*Dhamma* does not depend on inference or imagination which indicates lack of faith. The Buddha said:

“Monks, if beings knew, as I know, the ripening (resultant benefit) of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it. But in as much, monks, as beings do not know, as I know, the ripening of sharing gifts, therefore they enjoy their use

without sharing them, and the taint of stinginess obsesses their heart and stays there.”

THE BENEFITS OF SĪLA

Sīla amounts to abstaining from what should be abstained which includes practising moral precepts, respecting those worthy of respect (*apacāyana*) and serving or helping others in their meritorious acts (*veyyāvacca*). If actions worth doing are performed with *mettā* and *karuṇā*, one will overcome the gross forms of behaviour (*vitikkama kilesa*) by controlling one's speech, physical actions and livelihood. As this becomes habitual, one comes to value purity of conduct by avoiding uncultured, uncivilised and wicked actions. One develops a sense of moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*), thereby avoiding detestable things and establishing *sīla*.

Such concerned and caring behaviour does not cause pain or loss to oneself or others, but benefits the welfare and happiness of all. If one acts without sympathy, fear or shame, upon reflection at

a later time, one will consider oneself as wicked, bad, rude, ugly or uncivilised and will feel unhappy and repentant. This danger of self-blame (*attānuvāda bhaya*) will frighten one throughout one's life and especially at the moment of death when one will experience frightful visions of the bad actions (*kamma*), beings involved in those actions (*kamma nimitta*) or a sign of one's destiny (*gati nimitta*). The virtuous who through *appamāda* are established in *sīla*, will upon reflection experience immense pleasure, satisfaction and happiness in this life. Correspondingly, good and pleasant visions will be seen as one happily dies, smiling without confusion.

One who abstains from bad deeds will not be blamed by society, but will be praised by the wise, thus avoiding the misery and unhappiness of the danger of being blamed by others (*parānuvāda bhaya*). With self-control, one will not act unlawfully and hence, will avoid mental and physical misery and unhappiness from the danger of punishment by authorities (*danda bhaya*). Even if one is cunning and

able to avoid punishment, one cannot escape the frightful danger of a bad destiny or rebirth (*duggati bhaya*).

Diligence in abstaining from what should be abstained whether through *mettā* and *karuṇā* where one's concern for others protects oneself or through *hiri-ottappa* where concern for one's dignity protects others from being harmfully affected, will free one from these dangers. One is bound to experience the unique bliss and happiness in this very life. Hence, such purity of verbal and physical conduct (*sīla-visuddhi*) through diligent restraint is praised by the Buddha and good people. It is the cause for this unique bliss (*sukhavisesa*) to arise.

THE BENEFITS OF TRANQUILITY

Neither *dāna* nor *sīla* can stabilise the mind and if one cannot control one's mind, one will not find stability, clarity or calmness in one's life. Hence, it is necessary to practise *bhāvanā* or mental development which includes tranquility (*samatha*) meditation and insight (*vipassanā*)

meditation as well as listening, learning and reading the doctrine and scriptures (*dhammasavanā*), delivering the doctrine or scriptures without expectation of material gain or fame (*dhammadesanā*) and holding purified, clear and right views (*ditṭhijjukamma*), beginning with *kamma* and *kammavipāka* (good acts beget good results and bad acts beget bad results) up to *magga-phala-nibbāna* (path-fruition-extinction).

If one's mind is not controlled by a suitable practice of fixing it on a meditation object, it will wander around roaming to various and numerous objects every second in an unstable manner much like a restless monkey jumping from branch to branch, never remaining still. One needs to arouse *appamāda* in practising a method of mental development which is done by initially applying or aiming one's mind to the meditation object (*vitakka*) and sustaining or holding the mind on the object (*vicāra*) until the mental hindrances (*nīvaranas*) of sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*) and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) are respectively overcome by the two aforementioned *jhānic* factors

(*jhānanga*). At this point, one comes to experience great joy or rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and stability or concentration of mind (*ekaggatā* or *samādhi*) thereby respectively abandoning the three remaining hindrances of ill-will (*dosa*), restlessness and brooding (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and sensuous desire (*lobha* or *kāmacchanda*). With one's mind in such a pure and stable condition, one can experience the unique flavour of *samatha* or *jhānic* bliss which is many fold superior to ordinary bliss. Hence, it is called *sukhavisesa*.

With continued diligence, one will progress from first *jhāna* (absorption) to second *jhāna* where the first two *jhānic* factors, *vitakka* and *vicāra* subside and the happiness is even more blissful. Upon the subsiding of *pīti*, one enters the third *jhāna* with yet more subtle bliss and with the subsiding of *sukha*, one's mind dwells in the fourth *jhāna* where one-pointedness and equanimity (*upekkhā*) constitute the epitome of *sukhavisesa* of the fine material sphere (*rūpā-vacara*). In such a condition, the mind

is far removed from the heat of the *kilesas* which obstructs *kusala* deeds and pollutes the mind. This is similar to cryogenics where objects are kept stable for long periods of time by the application of extremely low temperatures. The mind being temporarily free of *kilesas* is not agitated nor moving around, but is very stable and calm. As such, *samatha* practice can be considered mental cryogenics.

Attainment of the fourth fine material *jhāna* is the base or starting point for the attainment of higher spiritual powers (*abhiññā*) such as psychic powers (*iddhi-vidha*: manifesting many forms, diving into the earth, walking on water, flying through the air, divine ear (*dibbasota*), knowing the minds of others (*parassa cetopariya-ñāma*), divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), remembering former existence (*pubbenivāsānussati*) and extinction of all cankers (*āsavakkhaya*).

With continued *appamāda*, one can advance beyond the *rūpa jhānas* and enter the four absorptions of the immaterial sphere (*arūpāvcarajjhāna*) where one experiences a unique exquisite bliss with a

very condensed, calm and extremely subtle mind. On the breakup of the body if one is absorbed in *jhāna*, one will be reborn in the Brahma world with a calm, cool, condensed mind where one will live for aeons. Such *jhāna* practice requires *appamāda* and is worth doing since it conduces to unique bliss. Hence, it is called *samatha bhāvanā puññakiriyāvatthu* and as such, it is praised by the Buddha and the wise.

THREE GRADES OF APPAMĀDA

Here it should be mentioned that there are three grades of *appamāda* : coarse, medium and refined. Not failing to abstain from the ten forms of misconduct (*duccarita*) which cause harm to oneself and others is a coarse type of *appamāda*. This *duccarita* includes three forms of bodily misconduct (*kāyaduccarita*) : killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; four forms of verbal misconduct (*vācīduccarita*) : lying, malicious talk, frivolous speech and harsh speech; and three forms of mental misconduct (*mano-duccarita*) : covetousness, ill-will and perverted view (not having the view of

good acts beget good results and bad acts beget bad results). One will experience contentment with oneself upon reflection that one is abstaining from performing these three forms of misconduct.

Since it is not possible to totally avoid sense objects, one should be alert to restrain the mind and not indulge in excess sensual pleasures. Not failing to control one's mind regarding sensual objects, especially things one does not possess, is the medium form of *appamāda*. Those who are neither satisfied nor contented with what they have or can legally acquire will find it very difficult to fulfil this medium form of *appamāda*. If there is no limit or the mind is uncontrolled, it is like swimming up the river current rather than across it which is a waste of time, tiring and one will sink in the multitude of sensual objects (*kāmaguṇa*). Just as flies or ants will get stuck in a plate of honey they are eating, so too those without limit in pursuing sensual objects will get stuck and sink in them. With restraint, the flies and ants could eat from a safe distance just as one with restraint

could enjoy sensual objects within limit. Pain, unpleasantness, trouble and suffering (*dukkha*) have their source in *taṇhā* or attachment which in turn has its source in the mind uncontrolled. The medium form of *appamāda* will keep one from experiencing *dukkha*.

Those who arouse the coarse and medium forms of *appamāda* to avoid the *duccarita* and restrain the mind, will gain beneficial self-control and efficient self-management which are necessary for making good use of their human existence as a springboard or scaffolding to raise their status. By performing *dāna*, one overcomes belittlement, thus dignifying one's life. *Sīla* prevents the loss of happiness and *samatha bhāvanā* stabilises and calms the mind, resulting in the happiness of *sukhavisesa*.

However the force of *jhāna* only temporarily keeps the *kilesas* from agitating oneself and when one stops and the *jhāna* dissipates, the *kilesas* will start agitating, moving around and destabilising the mind. The root cause lies in the latent tendencies

of *kilesas* which have not yet been abandoned. Hence, one recognises the need to cut off the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesas*) in order to develop a strong, fully matured mind which is able to resist all worldly conditions.

For this, one must arouse refined *appamāda* in the practice of *vipassanā bhāvanā* in order to develop knowledge (*ñāṇa*). If due to one's past good deeds has the present opportunity to aspire of attaining greater bliss, one should exert oneself without reluctance to forego insubstantial happiness for a far greater happiness.

“If by giving up small pleasures, great happiness is to be found, the wise should give up small pleasures seeing (the prospect of) great happiness.”

- Dhammapada 290

VIPASSANĀ BHĀVANĀ

First and foremost, one must learn the correct practice and know to what extent this practice will ensure benefit. One must overcome delusion due to ignorance of the

correct practice by approaching a teacher, listening to instructions and asking questions or reading books to clarify one's understanding of the practice and benefits to be gained. When this is accomplished, one's faith (*saddhā*) will be awakened as one will realise that this is no small matter. But this is theoretical knowledge only and it is necessary to actually put it into practice to verify one's faith through one's own personal experience. This verified faith is knowable only through the development of refined *appamāda* in the practice of *vipassanā bhāvanā*.

REFINED APPAMĀDA

Refined *appamāda* is found in those who respectfully practises mindfulness meditation (*satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*). *Sati*: mindfulness, heedfulness, unforgetfulness; *Pa*: vigorously, forcefully or extensively; *Thāna*: constantly penetrating; or *Paṭṭhāna*: rushing suddenly with force, to close in and rest on the object; *Bhāvanā*: development, progress, building momentum without stagnation. Hence, this practice consists of actively fixing one's attention on objects

presently arising at the six sense-doors in a concurrent, continuous and penetrating manner.

Mindfulness such as this rushes to the object at the moment of arising and plunges into it without hesitation or thinking. With this unique *sati*, there can be no stream of *lobha*, that is *kāma-rāga* (desire for lust), no stream of *bhava-rāga* (desire for existence) and no stream of *avijjā* (ignorance). Since one's vision is clear, one sees things as they really are. With actual practice, one gains purity of mind which gives rise to faith which must be developed before effort (*virīya*) can be aroused.

By establishing one's faith in one's teacher and the correctness of this practice, one must earnestly and ardently focus the mind on whatever object is arising. With ambition and enthusiasm, one must conscientiously, meticulously and obediently follow instructions to maintain profound Noble Silence, eat and sleep moderately and move about as if blind, deaf, dumb and in a weak physical condition which thereby enable one to

observe every physical movement and all objects at the sense doors. This must be done without rest or procrastination for 20 hours per day in all four postures of sitting, standing, walking and lying down.

The more uninterrupted one maintains one's noting mind, the more one's energy gets replenished and strengthened, unlike ordinary activity where one gets tired from exertion of energy. Such continuous effort will develop penetrating mindfulness (*sati*) from whence the mind becomes clear, pure and free of defiling, unwholesome thoughts (*kilesas*). The longer one can maintain a high degree of vigilant mindfulness, the closer one's observation of the object becomes and the greater one's understanding of its true nature. Recognising this benefit bolsters one's *saddhā* (confidence) in the practice and one experiences increased desire (*chanda*) to the point where one considers it essential or one is duty-bound to continue so as to gain insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāna*).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WISDOM

To this end, one makes greater effort

resulting in strengthened mindfulness. Sustaining the continuity of *sati* develops concentration (*samādhi*) so that the mind becomes collected, calm and tranquil, enabling the natural unfolding of wisdom (*paññā*). When this occurs, one gradually penetrates the true nature of reality and observes that the noting mind or mentality (*nāma*) and the physical phenomena or materiality (*rūpa*) are all that exist and there is no 'I', 'person', 'man' or 'woman'.

Without this knowledge of *nāma-rūpa*, one will hold the view of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), resulting in manifold impurities connected to "I", "you" and so on which are bound to give rise to *lobha*, *dosa* and especially heretical views.

With the gaining of this analytical knowledge of mind and body (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*) from personal experience, not from the texts, teacher or thinking, one's opinions and attitudes will have to change because one experiences the benefit of actually doing the work of being a meticulous, respectful meditator and one's *saddhā* progresses in a unique manner. This

strengthening of *saddhā* encourages the *yogī* to increase his *virīya* again, resulting in strengthened *sati* which develops *samādhi*, permitting the unfolding of higher *paññā*: the knowledge of discerning conditionality or the cause-effect relationship between *nāma* and *rūpa* (*paccayapariggaha-ñāna*).

If one is unable to discern the causal relationship of *nāma-rūpa*, one will have sceptical doubts and false views (*micchā-ditṭhi*) such as all events are causeless (*aHetuka-ditṭhi*); there is a creator which is a false-cause view (*visamaHetuka-ditṭhi*) and so on.

With this knowledge, the *yogī* sees that all mental and physical phenomena have their respective causes and produce respective results. One knows this is how it has always been in the past and how it will be in the future for all beings, thereby, temporarily dispelling sceptical doubt and wrong views such as belief in a supreme being or creator, causelessness and so forth.

This *ñāna* too strengthens *saddhā* and by continuing to develop this refined form of

appamāda or respectful practice of *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, the *yogī* will acquire greater *paññā* including the knowledge of comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*) where one's perception of the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and selfless (*anatta*) characteristics of every object arising at the six-sense doors becomes stronger and deeper, enabling one to withstand any hardship or to achieve success in one's life.

If one cannot discern the impermanent characteristics of all objects, one will believe that they are permanent, thus giving rise to pride. If one is unable to discern the suffering nature of all phenomena, one will hold the view of pleasure which is sure to give rise to lust. If one is unable to discern the true nature of things, that is selflessness, one will hold the view of self (*atta*) which is bound to give rise to wrong views. If one discerns the selflessness of things occurring on their own (*anatta*), one's view is purified and one's mind is clarified, resulting in a unique satisfaction with one's bright, fresh, clear mind.

This is followed by the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-nāṇa*) at which point, one's effort is balanced by concentration, enabling accurate noting of whatever arises and though one has very strong faith in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Saṅgha*, meditation teachers and fellow *yogīs*, it is balanced by wisdom leading to the development of a neutral point of view. This strengthened *saddhā* based on one's personal experience, leads one to exclaim "This is it, this is the real *Dhamma*!" and steadfast resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) to gain further knowledge arises as the *yogī* becomes heroic and is willing to make any sacrifice without regard for life or limb in overcoming unbearable painful sensations. With the gaining of this knowledge, one comprehends the arising of *nāma-rūpa*, thereby overcoming annihilation belief (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*) and one comprehends the passing away of *nāma-rūpa*, thereby overcoming eternity belief (*sassata-diṭṭhi*) on a temporary basis.

With continuous penetrating *sati*, one will progress through a series of insights up

to the knowledge of equanimity about formations (*sankhārupekkha-nāna*) where one's mind becomes cool, calm, clear, well-developed, very balanced and free from *kilesas* which enable accurate seeing without *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

THE BENEFITS OF EQUANIMITY

"Just as rain penetrates a badly-roofed house, so also, passion (*rāga*) penetrates a mind not cultivated in Tranquility and Insight Development (*Samatha* and *Vipassanā*).

- *Dhammapada* 13

The mind by nature is tender and small, unable to handle rough, coarse things and will react quickly to *rāga-dosa* because it cannot withstand nor overcome them. This consciousness or mind undeveloped and without cultivation of tranquility and insight is known as *abhāvita citta*. But the correct practice of *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* develops one's strength, energy, maturity and fully guarantees that one can withstand all worldly conditions like a well-roofed house:

“Just as rain cannot penetrate a well-roofed house, so also, passion (*rāga*) cannot penetrate a mind well-cultivated in Tranquility and Insight Development (*Samatha and Vipassanā*).”

- *Dhammapada 14*

Purity and stability of mind as well as the development of knowledge through tranquility and insight, constitute the cultivated mind (*bhāvita citta*). With the training of *samatha*, one can withstand attacks of *rāga-dosa* and one can fully overcome them through knowledge gained by *vipassanā* training. Such knowledge develops one's resistance power where one is unswayed, unmoved and unaffected by views contrary to one's empirically, verified faith and wisdom and one's mind matures until it comes to equilibrium (*tādi-bhāva*). Here one can view with neutrality all desirable and undesirable things from the middle, that is a balanced point of view. This quality of *tādi-bhāva* is very evident at *sankhārupekkhā-ñāna* where one remains unshaken by any object at the six-sense doors. Such a mind is similar to an

araḥatta's which remains unmoved by any situation resulting in this unique happiness (*sukhavisesa*). At this point, one might well ask, "What else does one need?"

THE FIVE CONTROLLING FACULTIES

This progression of practice is dependent on fulfilling refined *appamāda*, that is accurate noting of objects at the six-sense doors which tame and purify the mind. Application of continuous, diligent mindfulness allows for the conception and step-by-step increase of *saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā* with each accurate noting by specifically trying to develop them. Similar to climbing a ladder, this is a gradual raising of one's mental status towards maturity, away from *kilesas* which enables the *yogī* to verify by his own, personal experience the rewards and benefits of this path of practice culminating in an unshakeable, verified faith which permits no doubts to arise. Such strengthened and fulfilled faith becomes a controlling faculty of the mind (*saddhindriya*). Effort develops to a controlling faculty (*viriyindriya*) when the

mind is never retractive and one takes delight in facing any situation without indolence or wasting of time. Just as one cannot have too much fresh air, so too, one can never have too much mindfulness which when developed to a controlling faculty (*satindriya*) enables one to know many things with a single noting. With concurrent, undistracted focusing on the object, the mind is collected in one place without wandering and remains perfectly still and steady as a candle in a windless place. This is the quality of concentration developed to a controlling faculty (*samādhindriya*). When wisdom becomes a controlling faculty (*paññindriya*), knowledge arises in a distinct manner with clear-cut, non-hazy vision, free of delusion.

A DHAMMA REVOLUTION – THE BENEFIT OF WISDOM

This maturing of one's practice is unique and is reflected in the mature mind which is controlled in every situation, experiencing peace which spreads to one's family, community and society, thereby contributing to world peace. Cool, calm,

with no extremes of happiness due to success nor disheartenment due to failure, one remains unshaken in any situation in life without reacting rashly or roughly and with steadfast confidence, one considers the advantages before doing or saying anything. Such reasoning power or wisdom permits one to speak and act only beneficially for oneself and others. Furthermore, even if beneficial, one would say or do something only when appropriate. The knowledge to abstain from what is neither beneficial nor appropriate and to do and say only what is beneficial and appropriate (*parihāriyapaññā*) is invaluable in one's everyday life, as it protects one from problems and troubles. Cultivation and development of one's mind to such a state of purity through *sīla* which cleans the impurities already arisen in one's speech and physical behaviour (transgressive: *vitikkama kilesas*), through *samādhi* which prevents impurities from arising (obsessive: *pariyutthāna kilesas*) and through *paññā* which eradicates all impurities (latent: *anusaya kilesas*) require a tremendous commitment of energy, but is not without permanent benefits.

“The mind is difficult to control; swiftly and lightly it moves and lands wherever it pleases. It is good to tame the mind, for a well-tamed mind brings happiness.”

- *Dhammapad 35*

The happiness, confidence in one's self, maturity of mind, growth of wisdom and the dispelling of grief (*soka*), sorrow, anger, sadness, physical and mental pain and sufferings of all kinds while living with a clear, pure, bright mind are some of the innumerable rewards of fulfilling refined *appamāda*, heralding a significant change in one's life – a true *Dhamma* revolution!

THE BLISS OF LIBERATION – ATTAINING THE END OF THE BUDDHA'S DISPENSATION

“Not to do evil, to cultivate merit, to purify one's mind – this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.”

- *Dhammapada 183*

One can see that *sīla* and *samādhi* alone will not free one from defilements. Hence,

one must practise *paññā bhāvanā* to reach the climax or epitome of the Buddha *Sāsana*.

Its (the Buddha's dispensation) goodness in the end is shown by understanding and because understanding is its culmination, understanding is the end of the dispensation. And that is good because it brings about equipoise with respect to the desired and the undesired. For this, it is said:

“Just as a solid massive rock
Remains unshaken by the wind,
So too, in face of blame and praise
The wise remain immovable.”

(*Dhammapada* 81)

- Visuddhi Magga, Nanamoli, pg5

Only with this understanding or wisdom can one arrive at the end of the Buddha *Sāsana* as *paññā* causes complete purification of one's mind and therefore, it excels the other trainings of *sīla* and *samādhi*. The mind is made durable by the unfolding of *paññā* and it is further purified and tempered by continued practice of

refined *appamāda* which results in the attainment of *Nibbāna*, that is the complete cessation of all *nāma-rūpa* when one arrives at *Sotapātti magga-phala-ñāna* (knowledge of the first path and fruition of Sainthood). At this time, one's life truly becomes noble and one is forever freed of certain *kilesas* including personality belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*). With the elimination of these *kilesas*, one is forever freed of all wrong views, forever freed of rebirth in *apāya* (four lower worlds) and one has unshakeable, unrelinquishable faith which can withstand any test.

A *Sotāpanna* is one with a good foundation in equipoise, but for equilibrium (*tādi-bhāva*) to reach fulfilment, one must continue with refined *appamāda*, diligently noting each arising object at the six-sense doors with penetrating mindfulness in order to further purify and temper the mind by attaining the second path and fruition of Sainthood (*Sakadāgāmi magga-phala-ñāna*) when one significantly reduces the fourth and fifth fetters (*saṃyojana*):

sensuous craving (*kāma-rāga* or *lobha*) and ill-will (*vyāpāda* or *dosa*). Upon attainment of the third path and fruition (*Anāgāmi magga-phala-ñāna*), one is forever and completely freed from the fourth and fifth fetters.

It is only when one attains the fourth and final path and fruition (*Arahatta magga-phala-ñāna*) where one is forever freed from the remaining five fetters: craving for fine material existence (*rūpa-rāga*), craving for immaterial existence (*arūpa-rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and ignorance (*avijjā*) that one's mind is totally and permanently purified and tempered and can be controlled without fragility when encountering any object which arouses *lobha-dosa*. It is here that *tādi-bhāva* becomes fulfilled and the *arahatta* becomes as solid as a rock unshaken by the winds of worldly conditions. Such a one has attained the end of the Buddha's dispensation and hence lives in the complete, peaceful bliss of *santi sukha* or *Nibbāna*.

PROSPERITY

Appamāda overcomes and abandons

debasing verbal, physical and mental behaviour in one who practises it and this conduces to one's prosperity. This is an auspicious blessing in worldly matters such as education, economics, health as well as in the field of *Dhamma* for those who are not indolent, but are alert, unforgetful, awake, full of life and hence prosperous.

“Mindfulness is the way to the Deathless (*Nibbāna*); unmindfulness is the way to Death. Those who are mindful do not die; those who are not mindful are as if already dead.”

- *Dhammapada 21*

“Mindful amongst the negligent, highly vigilant amongst the drowsy, the man of wisdom advances like a race-horse, leaving the jade (negligent ones) behind.”

- *Dhammapada 29*

THE KEY TO THE DHAMMA

The Buddha *Sāsana* is a storehouse of wholesome or valuable things: *kāmāvacara kusala*, *rūpāvacara kusala*, *arūpāvacara kusala*

and *lokuttara kusala*, all of which are rooted in *appamāda*. *Appamāda* is the cause without which *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā kusala* will not materialise and one who brings *appamāda* to fulfilment will live a balanced life by abstaining from what should be abstained and observing what should be observed for the benefit and welfare of oneself and one's society in this life and future lives.

“Just as, monks, of all creatures, whether footless or having two, four, or many feet; whether having forms or formless; whether conscious or unconscious, or neither conscious nor unconscious, of these the *Tathāgata*, the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One, is reckoned chief; - even so, monks, of all profitable conditions which are rooted in earnestness, which join together in earnestness, - of those conditions earnestness is reckoned chief.”

- *Samyutta Nikaya*

When the Buddha replied to King Kosala's question regarding which quality would conduce to happiness in this life and

future lives, he was referring to causative *appamāda* (*kārāpaka appamāda*), the awakening, planning, organising and making arrangements and so on, necessary for actual performing or implementing (*kāraka appamāda*) of *dāna*, *sīla*, *bhāvanā*. Why is this *kārāpaka appamāda*, that is making arrangements for performing *dāna*, considered the chief or most important?

If *appamāda* is not awakened, one cannot practise the eightfold path to develop *lokiya kusala*, therefore one could never attain *lokuttara kusala*. (*Loku*: 5 aggregates + *tara*: above; *lokuttara* = supramundane). Because *lokuttara* gives security to one's existence, it is the best *Dhamma* to attain, but it is based on development of mundane (*lokiya*) states – the awakening diligence of *kārāpaka appamāda* which is the highest of all qualities.

Just as a key is needed to get possession of locked-up valuables, earnestness is the golden key to the valuable Buddha *Sāsana* (*paṭilābha-katthena*: the cause for getting possession). Earnestness, heedfulness, diligence, in short, *sati* or mindfulness is

never in excess, and without it nothing is accomplished. The Buddha said:

*Satiṃ Ca Khvāhaṃ Bhikkhave
Sabbatthikaṃ Vādāmi*

“*Bhikkhus, sati*, I say, is required everywhere.”

The texts say that just as the elephant's foot print is the largest and all others can fit within it, so too *appamāda* is the essence of the Buddha's teaching and contains all other *kusala Dhamma* within it. The entire wealth of the Buddha *Sāsana* is gained by the joining of these two forces, namely *kārāpaka appamāda* and *kāraka appamāda*. Happiness, contentment, dignity and distinctive bliss – *sukhavisesa* – are immediately available to one who develops *dāna* and *sīla*. One who practises *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* will gain a strengthened and pure mind which develops one's thinking and outlook, making for ease of comprehension in the gaining of insight knowledge. With insight knowledge and wisdom, one can resist the worldly conditions, thus giving one to experience this unique, distinctive mental

and physical bliss – *sukhavisesa* – including the epitome of the Buddha's dispensation – total and permanent liberation from all defilements – *santisukha* or *Nibbāna*.

THE BUDDHA'S WAY

Kārāpaka appamāda was the driving force which enabled the *Bodhisatta* to fulfil *pāramīs* and to attain omniscient knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāna*). Fulfilling the *pāramīs* [10 perfections: *dāna* (giving), *sīla* (morality), *nekkhamma* (renunciation), *paññā* (wisdom), *virīya* (effort), *khanti* (patience), *sacca* (truthfulness), *adhiṭṭhāna* (resolution), *mettā* (loving-kindness), *upekkhā* (equanimity)] during his *samsāric* wanderings (round of rebirths), gaining *Arahatta magga-phala* and omniscient knowledge, thereby attaining Buddhahood is *kāraka appamāda*. By sacrificing himself to become a Buddha, he could offer personal testimony to the pricelessness of *appamāda* which conduces to the liberation of all beings. *Appamāda* is the cause for the realisation of this cause for the realisation of this unique *Dhamma*, hence it is praised by the wise as the best

Dhamma.

It is said, the *Dhamma* will protect one who is devoted to it or one who is diligent in meticulous practice of the *Dhamma* will be protected by it. Which *Dhamma*? Not book *Dhamma*, but self-*Dhamma*, that is not just having mere book knowledge, but actually practising the *Dhamma*. The Buddha was always emphasising *appamāda*. Even his last and memorable words before his *Mahāparinibbāna* were to exhort us to exercise *appamada* by being diligent in discharging our duties of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

**“Vayadhamma saṅkhārā
Appamādena sampadetha.”**

“All conditioned things are subject to change.

Work out your salvation with diligence.”

That was the Buddha's first and last instruction to us.

(Compiled from a series of *Dhamma* talks given by *Ovādācariya Sayādawgyi U*

Paṇḍitābbhivaṃsa in June and November 1988, to the foreign meditators at Mahāsī Meditation Centre in Yangon, Myanmar.)

May the merits accrued from the gift of *Dhamma* be dedicated to the well-being of all generous donors. May all heedful *yogīs* tread along the Noble Eightfold Path and finally attain the *Nibbānic* bliss.



Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti

The gift of *Dhamma* excels all gifts.



This gift of *Dhamma*
is munificently sponsored by
Mahindarama & MBMC *Yogīs*, Penang
in conjunction with the 25th Anniversary
of the founding of Paṇḍitārāma
Shwe Taung Gon Sāsana Yeiktha, Myanmar.

May the Buddha *Sāsana* prolong under the rare tutelage of *Ovādācariya Sayādawgyi U Paṇḍitābbhivaṃsa!*

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!



The Buddha's Last Words

**Vayadhammā saṅkhārā
Appamādena sampādeṭha**

**Transient are all conditioned things.
Strive on with heedfulness.**