Dhamma Studies

Curriculum

Elementary Level – Level 1

U.S. version 2014

Atammayatarama Buddhist Monastery

Preface

On behalf of the Council of the Thai Bhikkhus in the USA, I am happy to have witnessed much interest in the teachings of the Lord Buddha among people in America. Our Dhamma Studies Program has grown year by year.

Thailand's Dhamma Studies Program includes three levels: Elementary (Level 1), Intermediary (Level 2) and Advance (Level 3). You are encouraged to learn beyond what are in the curriculum. The standard collection of the teachings of the Buddha, The Pāli Cannon or Tipitaka, (three baskets) entail 48, 000 subsections. More importantly, practicing the Dhamma in your daily life by being mindful in all you do will help you reach the Buddha's intent for all of us: to be kind to one another, to be truly happy and at peace, and, ultimately to be free from all sufferings. Enjoy learning and practicing the Dhamma.

I would like to thank the editorial committee of the Royal Dhamma Studies Office for their work writing and assembling this curriculum, enabling us to benefit from the fruits of their efforts. We have attempted to enhance this translation in order to make it beneficial to English speaking students in America. To this end, I am grateful to a number of lay supporters who have devoted their time and kind assistance to bring the Atammayatarama Monastery version to what you are about to read. I in particular, wish to thank Ms. Pecky Baknett. Ms. Patriya Silpakit.T. Ms. Supaporn Vathanaprida and Santidhammo Bhikkhu

May the Buddha's teachings bring you much peace in your hearts, with happiness and joy in life.

Ritthi Thirajitto

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The End

Introduction

We begin the elementary Dhamma Studies Level 1 in the same order as in the Thai version first on essay writing instructions. Yet, to achieve your learning goals in earnest, students are encouraged to read the remaining parts (Parts 2, 3 and 4) prior to Part 1. Enjoy learning and practicing basics of the Buddha's teachings based on this curriculum.

There are also many good Dhamma books out there for free distribution. Please study more on your own and practice what the Buddha taught us. In the Dhamma Hall at Atammayatarama Monastery near Seattle, USA, there is this phrase written underneath the Buddha Statue,

"One who sees the Dhamma is one who sees the Buddha."

Writing essays on Dhamma Questions (Kradudhamma) is to present the student's knowledge, understanding, and reflective thoughts derived from studying the subjects related to the Buddha and his teachings, and, how well he can explain what he knows.

Different subjects in the Buddha Dhamma (such as the *Five Precepts* and the *Five Ennoblers*) can be compared to different kinds of flowers, of different colors and sizes. A capable florist selects some to put in a vase; this arrangement can be as beautiful as the arranger's ability. Writing an essay on Dhamma questions is like selecting flowers to arrange in a vase.

Any writing or speaking is useful only if the readers or listeners –

1. learn and understand
2. believe and want to follow the instruction
3. practice what he/she learns
4. enjoy that writing or that speech

To meet the above four goals, a writer or a speaker must –

1. be knowledgeable in the subject matters, i.e. remember, understand, and practice

2. be able to point out the negative consequences if not following the teaching
3. be able to point out the affirmative consequences if following the teaching
4. be able to be pleasant and enjoyable.

The Dhamma Question or ***Kradudhamma*** (or ***Kradu)*** is designed with those goals in mind. The *Kradu* questions are given by the Royal Dhamma Department, Thailand. The student is to demonstrate his/her knowledge, understanding, thoughts and feelings, and to show the ability to communicate them to others. Students should pay attention and often practice in thinking, writing and speaking, for good results. Even more valuable to you would be to apply what you learn in your life every day. Please remember and follow the Buddha's proverb,

"Danto Settho Manussesu,"
(Those who always train themselves are the best of human beings.)

Principles of writing the essay on Dhamma questions (kradu)

Thailand's Royal Dhamma Division typically formulates essay questions (*Kradudhamma*) with the expectation that the answer be clearly explained with good reasoning. At the elementary level (Level 1), the *Kradu* essay needs to be at least two pages long, and double-spaced (space between lines). The answer should entail three parts:

Begin with phrases like "Herein (or Now), the meaning of Dhamma proverb given in the question will be discussed, to guide us in future study and practice as taught by the Buddha." The key word(s) included in the proverb should be described.

Explain more fully the content of the given Dhamma proverb, incorporating with at least one more Proverb and key Dhamma teaching. Integrate them harmoni-

ously, and with correct reference to the title of the scripture and section(s) from where you source them.

End in the last part with your concise summary of your Parts 1 & 2, with a brief advice to apply in our lives, and what to practice more. Part 3 may begin with such a phrase like, “As seen in my explanation in this essay,…. (what’s the key point that you wrote?)……” Then, conclude with what lesson(s) and what to do more or less by a phrase like, "According to this Dhamma proverb, an important life lesson for us to be happy, one should be mindful in……. ..... …” You may repeat the proverb and its meaning once more to end the essay, and/or another of the Buddha’s words. Enjoy showing your good understanding and practice of the Buddha’s teachings.

There are five samples of Kradu Essays on Selected Dhamma Topics in Dhamma Studies, Level 1.

At the end of the Kradudhamma samples, there list 5 selected groups of the Buddha’s proverbs to help via illustrations of how to answer the *Kradu* questions. Understanding the meaning of these proverbs will lead the way to further study and practice of the Buddha’s teachings.

Essay 1

Bala Have Nappasamsanti Danam

"Only foolish people do not praise giving."

Dana means giving. When we try to give wholeheartedly and unconditionally, we feel happy and bright in our hearts. The Buddha taught householders three basics for good life: 1) *Dana* (giving), *2) Sila* (following precepts), and *3) Pavana* (practicing meditation to cultivate *Sati* or mindfulness, and *Samadhi* or concentration). *Dana* is essential for us to reduce greed and selfishness, moving forth away from our pre-occupation with the sense of self (*Atta*), toward *Anatta* (not-self), leading the way on the path toward freedom from suffering.

Giving in Buddhism has two types: 1) giving material items and possessions, called *Amisadana*, and 2) giving *Dhammadana*, including sharing the Buddha's words, giving loving kindness, time and assistance to others, with the most important, giving forgiveness (*Abhayadana*).

Some folks aim at helping and supporting those in need, due to natural disasters (e.g., fire, flood, tsunami, earthquakes etc.), illnesses, disabilities, old age, and orphaned situation. Others provide support and encouragement to people with good virtues following the five precepts (*Silas*), and to Buddhist monks who devote their lives in guiding us on the path to be free from suffering. Monks give us *Dhammadana* and guide us to live following the Buddha's path.

Most important of all giving according to the Buddha is forgiveness (*Abhayadana*). If one can let his or her heart free from the weight of vengeance, anger and ill will, one will be free from much suffering. Therefore, *Dana* refers to not only material items but also loving kindness, forgiveness and other good virtues along the five precepts (*Sila*). Even a simple but sincere smile can bring happiness and positive energy to people around us. *The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness* is worth recollected and chanted frequently.

Though one should not expect anything in return for one's giving to others, it's very likely for one to receive friendship, love and good will in return. As mentioned by the Buddha,

Dadam Mittani Ganthanti

"Giver can keep friendship." (Sam. S. 15/316)

Kradudhamma
Dhamma Essay

It should be noted that giving as a good virtue is not easy for unwise individuals with untrained mind to do. Another related proverb based on the Buddha's words in *Dhammapada Khuddakanikaya* states this:

Sadhu Papena Dukkaram.
"Doing good is difficult for foolish ones."

Foolish people tend to not give, nor see the value of giving and they often do harms to giving (*Dana*), such as stealing givers' belongings, cheating by taking money and things from kind-hearted and generous individuals. Their selfishness and ill will often come with not following the five *Silas*.

In conclusion, people with *Dana* as their virtue is praised and will win friendship and be happier than unwise ones. Dana is essential for people to be happy in life. One can give *Amisadana* (giving of material things), as well as *Dhammadana* (giving of Dhamma and all good virtues). To the Buddha, the most important giving is forgiveness (*Abhayadana*). One should not fall into a fool's path of selfishness by ignoring *Dana* (giving) in our lives, as stated at the start of this essay, *in Buddhabhasit* (Buddha's proverb) as:

Bala Have Nappasamsanti Danam
"Only foolish people do not praise giving."

As discussed above.

……..

Essay 2

Silam Loke Anuttaram

"*Sila* is excellent in the world."

Now we will discuss the Dhamma Proverb, "*Sila* is excellent in the world," on the basis of knowledge gained from my study, leading the way to more advance knowledge, understanding and practice of the Buddha's teachings.

Śīla is one of three sections of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is a code of conduct that embraces a commitment to harmony and self-restraint with the principal motivation being non-violence, or freedom from causing harm. Śīla has been variously translated as virtue,[1] right conduct,[2] morality,[3] moral discipline[4] and precept.

Sīla comprises three stages —right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Sila is good practice because it keeps one well and benefits one and others. It can also keep one from evil deeds and evil words.

Sila keeps one from doing evil deeds such as killing, stealing, committing adultery, and taking intoxicants. Sila keeps one from saying evil words: telling lies, setting one against the other, using rough and abusive words, indulging in unbeneficial talk.

There are two minimum silas for a lay Buddhist called *nicca silas*. Nicca means always. A Buddhist must keep either of the two silas always.

1. *Panca Sila* : the Five Precepts
2. *Ajivatthamaka Sila* (Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth) or *Atthangika Uposatha Sila* (Eight Uposatha Precepts)

To develop ourselves on the Dhamma path toward being free from suffering, the Buddha taught us to cultivate our skills in three areas: *Sila* (precepts), *Samadhi* (concentration), and *Panna* (wisdom). As we try to lead a more virtuous and mindful life, we become more calm and clear in our mind; in turn, that helps us gain concentration in our meditation practice. Meditation helps us be more mindful and more wise in seeing the truth of impermanence and not self in ourselves and the world around us, leading the way to less and less suffering.
The Buddha tirelessly advised us all to observe the *Sila*, as seen in numerous discourses by the Buddha, one of which is in *Khuddakanikaya Itivuttaka*, as follows:

Silam Rakheyya Medhavim

"Wise men should observe the precepts."

Sila or precepts are essential for Buddhists to follow, perhaps similarly to commandments for Christians. The Buddha, however did not command us to follow certain do's and don'ts; rather, he pointed out for us to gain wisdom in experiencing life with *Sila*, with better results than not following the five precepts. For some devout lay people in Buddhist countries, they may even take eight precepts (*Atthasila*) on Lunar Observance Day (*Wan Prah*) and/or during rain retreats or special occasions. In addition to the common five, the other three precepts are: no meal after noon (except beverage and some allowable items), no adornment with cosmetics and jewelry, and no sleeping on high and luxurious mattresses. Why these additional three precepts? We, from time to time, benefit from additional training to reduce our defilements (*Kilesa*) by cutting down on material life that focuses on the external world, and less on inner development with less emphasis on the sense of self (*Atta*). By the way, nuns go further to ten precepts, and monks are to follow 227 precepts!

According to the Buddha, giving (*Dana*) also means abstaining from unwholesome or bad actions, by trying more day by day, to follow the precepts wholeheartedly. He remarked along this line, "My disciples abandoned harming living beings/killing completely, abandoned taking that which was not given completely, abstained from sexual misconduct completely, abstained from false or harmful speech completely, and abstained completely from intoxicants causing carelessness; they, hereby are regarded as ones with no harm, nor hostile actions, nor molestation to all sentient beings. In return, they are likely to be safe from harms." Therefore, as praised by the Buddha,

Silam Loke Anuttaram

"Precepts are excellent in the world."

As aforementioned discussed.

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Essay 3

Sati Lokasami Jakaro

"Mindfulness produces an awakened condition in the world."

Now, the Dhamma proverb "Mindfulness is producing an awakened condition in the world." will be described for helping begin the way for those who interested in studying the Buddha's teachings (*Dhamma*). *Sati* as a verb translates as to be aware, to be fully present in the moment, to be attentive to the present, or essentially, to be mindful.

Sati helps us to see the truth about life, developing our wisdom (*Panna*, pronounced as Pan-ya). We must have *Sati* as our foundation for practice, and for gaining wisdom to know and understand the truth about all lives and things according to three universal characteristics (**Trilakana): 1) Annica (**impermanence), 2) **Dukka** (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and 3) **Anatta** (not-self). One is said to be wise to see that conditions, people and things are constantly changing, and not to be held on as 'me' or "mine' or 'myself." As such, one will be more and more free from suffering (Dukka).

Sati also reminds us to lead a virtuous life, following five or more precepts. One is likely to be safe from harms due to greed, anger, and delusions. As Somdej Kromphraya Wajirayana Waroros said,

Sati Sabbattha Patabhiya-

"Mindfulness is needed everywhere."

In daily life, having mindfulness helps one to be less forgetful, make less mistakes and less accidents. One is likely to be more aware of what goes on in the mind, and not let distracting thoughts take over his or her speeches and actions. Students who practice mindfulness via meditation tend to perform well in school because of their ability to pay attention, and with better self-discipline. Having cultivated *Sati* leads one to have a virtuous life as one can see right or wrong, good or evil

more clearly.

When *Sati* paves the way for cultivating *Samadhi* (*concentration*) and *Panna* (wisdom), one gains a deep insight about the truth about impermanence in all things and life more clearly. One can accept that truth, and not be attached to the body that is not ours, which becomes aged, old, ill and eventually dies. Prince Siddhartha, after abandoning his worldly life, he gained supreme insights and became enlightened after five years of devotion in practicing *Sati* (mindfulness) and gained full *Samadhi* (concentration), leading to reaching the ultimate *Panna* (wisdom) for seeing things as they really are.

Developing mindfulness (*Sati*) is accumulating good *Kamma*. *Sati* is beneficial for one to not be attached to all things that are not permanent, and to let go of our 'emotional baggage' more easily. One gains positive energy and optimism. We should practice mindful meditation every day, as well as live mindfully in the present moment. One is more awakened to the reality of the constantly changing world around us and inside us, as the Buddha also taught us:

Sati Lokasami Jagaro

"Mindfulness produces an awakened condition in the world."

or

"Sati is the Dhamma for one's awakening in the world."

As discussed herein.

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Essay 4

Papanam Akaranam Sukham

"Happiness would be brought to one who does not do evil."

This essay will discuss the Buddha's Proverb, "Happiness would be brought to

one who does not do evil," to provide knowledge and understanding to people interested in studying and practicing the Buddha's teachings.

The term 'evil' (*Barp*) means thoughts, speeches, actions that are unwholesome, leading to harming one's self and others, inflicting pains, grief and other negative or unvirtuous consequences. Buddhism teaches that one's heart by nature and from its origin is pure, virtuous and bright. In other words, one was born with the original goodness of human beings. Subsequent evil thoughts and deeds can be managed, reduced and totally abandoned by ourselves through cultivating mindfulness (*Sati*) to purify our mind, giving (*Dana*) and other virtuous acts. The Buddha taught 1,250 Arahants on *Maga Puja* Day, three principles called *Ovadapatimokkha:* Do Good, Stop Evil, and Purify your mind.

Barp in Buddhist teachings, may be categorized according to how light or heavy the kamma consequences may be. For instance, the most evil acts fall in a group called *Anantariyakamma,* including killing one's own mother and/or father; killing an *Arahant* one who has attained enlightenment (*Nibbana* or *Nirvana*); harming the Buddha even to have a blood clot; and, creating schism in the Sangha Order (*Sanghaphet*). It is said that one who commits such a heavy evil act will go to hell immediately upon death.

Foolish people cannot get out of the cycle of evil acts, because their hearts have already been tainted, as said by the Buddha in *Khuddakanikaya:*

Papam Papene Sukaram

"It is easy for the evil person to do evil."

Evil thoughts, speeches and deeds lead to suffering with the heart that becomes heavier, darker and agitated. So, we all should try to stop evil thoughts and deeds by adopting the right view, following the Sila and other good virtues.

From *Buddhadhamma* described above, it may be concluded that one's peace and happiness begin with abstaining from doing evil, starting to do good and

cleansing our mind. How true are the Buddha's words, as said,

Papanam Akaranam Sukham.
"Happiness rises from not doing evil."

As discussed above.

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Essay 5

Punnam Corehi Duharam
"Merit can't be stolen by any thieves."

Now the substance of Buddhist Proverb, "Merit can't be stolen by thieves," will be described, in order to pave the way for people interested in studying the Dhamma for their long lasting benefits and happiness.

Contrary to *Barp* or 'Evil', *Bun* or 'Merit' refers to wholesome conduct, virtuous deeds, and results from good *Kamm*a and from developing *Sila* (precepts), *Samadhi* (concentration) and *Panna* (wisdom). Over time, long accumulated *Bun* is said to become *Parami* (perfections). One with *Parami* is able to abandon defilements. Once one completely eliminate defilements, he becomes an *Arahant* (a perfectly enlightened one). Such an individual has no anger, ill will, delusions, greed or anxiety.

Bun, or merit is such a wholesome quality that all of us should aspire to accumulate throughout our lives. Merit making from donating our time and material possessions as *Dana* is encouraged. Yet, the bigger *Bun* comes from following all wholesome Dhamma practices (precepts, mindful meditation, forgiveness, compassion and kindness, etc.). Helping make a stranger feel at ease with your compassion in a sincere manner brings perhaps more merit than a

huge donation for gaining status and fame. Generous acts of sharing and giving should not be measured by the amount, rather how one does so with a sincere and kind intention. The Buddha encourages us to reduce our greed and selfishness by making the small merit that one can afford often, as said, “Don't look down on small merit. Small drops of water that constantly fall can fill up a big vessel. Likewise, wise people who regularly make merit will fully gain from their merit."

Such good kamma from merit making is said to bring eventual or instant happiness, prosperity and safety in life, as said by the Buddha in *Tikanipata Anguttaranikaya*:

Punnani Kayiratha Sukhavahani
"Merit making, a cause for happiness, should be made."

Bun, the personal matter, can be done by anyone in accordance with the Buddha’s Speech: Purification (goodness) or Purelessness (evil) are individual. The individuals cannot purify or unpurify each other.

The term "Bun' ' refers to all good kamma accumulated by an individual from following the Buddha’s teachings in Sila, Bhavana, and other virtuous speeches and acts. We need to do this as no one else can transfer the merit to you, and you will directly reap the benefits, which cannot be taken away, nor stolen by thieves. We all should be diligent in accumulating our merit each day that passes by. Once again, as the Buddha said:

Punnam Corehi Duharam
"Merit cannot be stolen."

As described above.

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Buddhist Proverbs (*Buddhabhasita*) in 5 Groups: Dana, Sila, Sati, Papa Vagga, and Punna

I. Dana Vagga: Giving or Generosity Group

1. Dananca yuddhanca Samanamahu.
   As in a battle, generous giving figts defilements.
   Sam. S. 15/29 Khu. Ja Attaka 27/249

2. Natthi Cite Pasannamhi Appaka Nama Dakkhina.
   Generosity offered by the faithful brings them great benefit.
   Khu. Vimana 26/82

3. Viceyya Danan Sugatappasattham.
   Giving to others is a wise act.
   Sam. S. 15/30 Khu. Ja. Atthaka. 27/249

4. Bala Hare Nappasamsanti Danam.
   People who do not praise generosity are fools.
   Khu.Ja. 25/38

5. Dadam Mittani Ganthi.
   One who gives, keeps friendship.
   Sam. S. 15/316

6. Dadam Piyo Hoti Bhajanti Nam Bahu.
   One who gives is lovely. People will give him friendship.
   Am. Pancaka 22/43

7. Dadamano Piyo Hoti.
   Lovely is the one who gives.
   Am. Pancaka 22/44

8. Sukhassa Data Medhavi Sukham So Adhigacchati.
   A wise man who gives happiness will, in return be happy.
   Am. Pancaka 22/45

9. Manapadayi Labhate Manapam.
   A person who gives pleasant things will receive pleasant things.
   Am. Pancaka 22/55

10. Setthandado Setthampeti Thanam.
A person who gives holy things will receive holy things.
Am. Pancaka 22/56

11. Agassa Data Labhate Panaggam.
A person who gives excellent things will receive excellent things.
Am. Pancaka 22/56

12. Dadato Punnam Pavaddhati.
Giving increases merit.
Di. Maha 10/59 Khu. U. 25/215

13. Dadeyya Puriso Danam.
One should give what is worthy of giving.
Khu. Ja. Sattaka 27/217

II. Sila Vagga: Precepts (Morality) Group

1. Silam Yava Jara Sadhu.
Virtue will have a good effect on one to the end of old age.
Sam. S. 15/50

2. Sukham Yava Jara Silam.
Virtue will bring happiness to one to the end of old age.
Khu. Dh. 25/59

3. Silam Kireva Kalyanam.
The precepts are one's spiritual support.
Khu. Dh. 25/59

4. Silam Loke Anuttaram.
Virtue is unexcelled in the world.
Khu, Ja. Eka. 27/28

5. Samvasena Silam Veditabbam.
Through living together a person's virtue becomes apparent.
Naya Khu. U. 25/178

6. Sadhu Sabbattha Samvaro.
   Restraint in everything is good.
   Sam. S. 151/106 Khu. Dh. 25/64

7. Sannamato Veram Na Ciyati.
   If one is careful, Vera (the Five Dreads) will be avoided.
   Di. Maha. 101/106 Khu. U. 25/215

8. Silam Rakkeyya Medhavi.
   A wise man is one of virtuous conduct.
   Khu. Iti. 25/282

III. Sati Vagga: Mindfulness Group

1. Sati Lokasmi Jagaro.
   Through mindfulness one awakens in the world.
   Sam. S. 15/61

2. Sati Sabbattha Pattiya.
   Mindfulness is required everywhere.
   V.V.

3. Satimato Sada Bhaddam.
   A person who is mindful will prosper.
   Sam. S. 15/306

4. Satima Sukhamedhati.
   A mindful person will have happiness.
   Sam. S. 15/306

5. Satimato Suve Seyyo.
   A person of mindfulness is always a holy person.
   Sam. S. 15/306

IV. Papa Vagga: Evil (Immorality) Group

1. Mala Ve Papaka Dhamma Asnim Loke Pararnhi Ca.
   Immorality is a real blemish in this world and the other.
   Am. Addhaka 23/198 Khu. Dh. 25/47

2. Dukkho Papassa Uccayo.
   To accumulate evil brings suffering.
   Khu. Dh. 25/30

3. Papanam Akaranam Sukham.
   Abstaining from evil action brings happiness.
   Khu. Dh. 25/59

4. Papam Papena Sukharam.
   Doing ill comes easily to a person of no virtue.
   Vi. Maha. 5/34 Khu. U. 25/168

5. Pape Na Ramati Suci.
   Evil brings no pleasure to pure people.
   Vi. Maha. 5/34 Khu. U. 25/166

6. Sakamtlmna Hannata Papadhammo.
   A person who is inherently bad is repaid with trouble for his immoral conduct.
   M.M. 13/413 Khu. Thag. 261379

7. Tapasa Pajahanti Papakammam.
   Through austerities good people purify their minds.
   Khu. Ja. Atthaka. 27/245

8. Papani Kammani Karonti Moha.
   Habitual evil conduct is born of the deluded mind.
   M.M. 13/413 Khu. Ja. Pakinnaka 27/380

9. Natthi Patum Akubbato.
   Those who abstain from evil receive no evil in return.
   Khu. Ja. Sattaka 27/224

10. Dhammam Me Banamanassa Na Papamuplimpati.
    When the Dhamma is being taught, I will fall prey to defilements.

Khu. Ja. Sattaka 27/224

11. Natthi Akariyam Papam Musaavadissa Janyuno.
There is no one who lies habitually that does so without evil intent.
Naya. Khu. Dh. 25/38 Naya. Khu. Iti. 25/243

12. Papani Parivajjaye.
Stop doing evil.
Khu. Dh. 25/31

13. Na Ghasahetupi Kareyya Papam.
Gluttony is bad action.
Naya. Khu. Ja. Navaka. 27/262

V. Punna Vagga: Merit Group

1. Punnam Corehi Duharam.
Merit earned cannot be stolen by thieves.
Sam. S. 15/30

2. Punnam Sukham Jivitasamkhayamhi.
Merit causes happiness at the time of one's death.
Khu. Dh. 25/59

3. Sukho Punnassa Uccayo.
The accumulation of Merit brings happiness.
Khu. Dh. 25/30

4. Punnani Paralukasmin Patittha Honti Paninam.
Merit is the refuge of beings in their next life.
Sam. S. 15/26 Am. Pane aka 22/44 Khu. Ja. Dasaka 27/294

5. Punnani Kayiratha Sukhavahani.
Making merit brings happiness.
Sam. S. 15/3 Am. Tika 20/198

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Introduction

All beings wish to be happy. One may gain happiness from education, work, and the Dhamma, among others. The Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha) guides us to lead a virtuous life, accumulating good *kamma*, bringing true happiness.

Many people mistake education and work as the most important requirements for happiness, an educated person expects to get a secure job, leading to prosperity and a bright future. The Buddha does not encourage householders to abandon school and work; he indeed reminded folks to be dutiful and to take responsibility for their living and loved ones. Yet, if one seeks refuge only in work, money, possessions, and other worldly matters, one is likely to suffer time and again. That is because all things are impermanent and are not ours forever. Thus, we should continue to practice and developing the Dhamma diligently – *Sila (Precepts or morality), Samadhi (Concentration) and Panna (Wisdom; pronounced as "Panya").*

One may gain or lose in terms of jobs, money, status, a relationship and other aspects of life. We get swept up and down by the 'Worldly Wind' (*Lokadhamma*), as referred to by the Buddha. So, to have real peace and happiness, we need to practice Dhamma and apply the Buddha's teachings, with a special focus on cultivating our mindfulness (*Sati*) in our daily lives. Many respected monks, when asked, what they believe to be the most important Dhamma according to the Buddha, give the answer "mindfulness or *Sati*."

The Dhamma will surely lead us to sustainable peace and happiness, as the Buddha said:

> **"Dhamma Cari Sukham Seti Asmin Loke Paramhi Ca."**
> *"The person who continues to practice Dhamma will be happy in this world and the other world."*

We now go into selected Dhamma grouped by the number of items per each of the Buddha's teachings, starting first with those in groups of two items, or the *Duka.*

Duka: Groups of Two

1. Bahukara: Two Virtues of Great Assistance

Sati: Mindfulness
Sampajna: Clear Comprehension

With **Sati,** we are mindful in thinking something over before speaking or before acting. One can minimize regrets from wrong speeches and actions later. **Sampajanna** is to know thoroughly what you are saying or doing. These two related Dhamma will help to keep the mind from acting in an unwholesome manner, which could lead to harmful consequences. *Sati* and *Sampajanna* benefit us and others in the society. Thus, this pair of Dhamma are called Virtues of Great Assistance, or *Bahukara Dhamma.*

2. Lokapala: Two Virtues that Protect the World

Hiri: Moral Shame
Ottappa:Moral Dread

Hiri, or moral shame, is what one feels guilty when one even thinks about committing an unwholesome or bad act. It's as if a person hesitates touching dirty things.
Ottappa, or moral dread, is the fear of consequences from our immoral act. It is as if one is afraid of being burned from fire.

Good people respect and protect themselves and their loved ones by cultivating in their hearts this pair of *Hiri* and *Ottappa.* These two virtues restrain them from wrongful speeches and acts, that would otherwise bring much trouble to themselves and others in the world, are thus called *Lokapala*, or "the Virtues that protect the world". They are also called *Devadhamma*, or "Virtues for heavenly beings" because they raise the level of the mind to a higher level, like the minds of heavenly beings.

3. Sobhanakarana: Two Virtues of Grace

Khanti: Tolerance
Soracca: Modesty

Khanti describes one's ability to be tolerant, patient, and who can endure all conditions - being hot, cold, hungry, thirsty, suffering from illness, injuries, words of abuse, sarcasm and being made to look foolish. Most importantly is that one can endure against defilements (*Kilesa*) – greed, anger and delusion.

Soracca describes one's ability to be cool and to calm down our emotion when faced with people and situations that displease him/her.

Individuals who possess these two virtues maintain control of his mind. They will be calm, well composed and graceful in any situations.

4. Dulaphabubkhon: Two Rare Types of Individuals

Phubhakari – One who is first to do a favor.
Kattanyukatavedi – One who is grateful and repays the done favor.

The Buddha taught us to recognize and respect *Pubhakari* or individuals who bring up, support and nurture others, whether they are children, other loved ones, subordinates, or even strangers. Their loving kindness (*metta*) and devotion are admired even more when they do not expect anything in return. Besides the Buddha himself, dedicated parents, teachers, and rulers/kings are examples of *Pubhakaris*.

We are further taught to recognize and attempt to follow as our role model, individuals who are grateful and will return the loving kindness and fostering care given by *Phubhakari.* A person who possesses a deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness is said to have *Kattanyukatavedi.*

A *Pubbakari* is called "rare" because unlike many, he or she does not let greed get in the way of kind-heartedness and generosity in raising someone up with much sacrifice of his or her own comfort. Meanwhile, someone with *Kattanyukatavedi* is "rare" to meet because of his/her wholesome virtues in gratitude and devotion for someone who has fostered his/her upbringing.

As the Buddha said in the *Anguttara-Nikaya Sutta,*

"*There are two kinds of individuals who are rare in the world. Which two? First, one who helps others devotedly (Phubhakari), and second, one who is grateful (Kattanyu) and helps in return (Katavedi)."*

Tika: Groups of Three

1. The Triple Gem (Pali: Tiratana; Sanskrit: Triratna) – They are the three (Ti or *Tri*) precious gems (*Ratana*) that Buddhists hold in high regards:

1) **Buddha**, the enlightened one whose teachings guide us toward the end of suffering.

2) **Dhamma,** the Buddha's teachings to guide us on the path to freedom from suffering. Keys are 1) mindfulness cultivation to see the truth in impermanence in all things, and 2) not attaching to the delusion in the sense of self (me or mine).

3) **Sangha**, the community of Buddha's followers including monks, nuns, and lay people. Devoted *Sangha* members inspire us as they try to follow the Buddha's footsteps, and lead us by examples.

The above together make up the Triple Gem. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) is what Buddhists adhere to. This is considered highly precious, freeing us from ignorance and unwholesome acts, leading us on the path for freedom from suffering.

2. The Virtues of the Triple Gem

TheBuddha is self-enlightened, having realized the Noble Truths. He is the founder of Buddhism, being perfect in the threefold virtue as follows :

1) The Virtue of **Wisdom** -- He is enlightened through his own efforts.
2) The Virtue of **Purity** : His mind is absolutely purified.
3) The Virtue of **Compassion** : His compassion is of the purest nature, thereby being unilateral i.e. for the sake of the benefit and happiness of all. Convinced of how beings are helplessly caught in the ocean of sufferings, he undertook the mission of helping them out of their plight.

The Dhamma or the Buddha's teaching is open for all to try, to be understood individually by wise people. The Dhamma can keep people away from sufferings.

The Sangha, those who follow the right path, are worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality; worthy of gifts and ought to be respected; as they know how to teach others to follow the teachings of the Buddha.

3. Ovadapatimokkha: Three Principal Teachings of the Buddha

The Buddha taught his first 1,250 *Arahants* on *Maghapuja* (Sangha Day), three principles called *Ovadapatimokkha:*

1) **To avoid evil,**
2) To Do Good,
3) To Purify the mind.

In other words:

1) One should stop unwholesome acts in body, speech and mind.
2) One should do good in body, speech and mind.
3) One should purify one's mind, to clean out defilements (greed, anger, and delusion).

The above tie directly to the Buddha's *Three Fold Training – Sila, Samadhi* and *Panna.*

4. Akusala: Three Unwholesome Actions

1) **Kayaducarita** are unwholesome physical actions, particularly, included are: harming lives, taking that which is not given (stealing), and sexual misconduct (adultery and rape).

2) **Vaciducarit**a are false, harmful and impolite speeches, often with ill will.

3) **Manoducarita** are unwholesome thoughts and emotions**:** *Abhijjha* (greed), *Pyapada* (hatred), *Micchaditthi* (delusion).

A Buddhist who follows the five precepts (*Sila*) will likely inherit less fortunate results of such an unwholesome *Kamma*.

5.. **Succarita:** Three Wholesome Actions

The three *Succarita* (wholesome acts in body, speech and mind) come directly from abstaining from the three types of unwholesome acts above.

By following the five precepts (*Sila*), you are on your way to a wholesome and happy life from good *Kamma*.

1) **Kayasucarit** makes up wholesome, moral and honest bodily acts by being kind in protecting lives, being kind in not taking what is not given, and being respectful and kind in a sexual relationship.

2) **Vacisuccarita** is about a wholesome, kind and courteous speech with good will toward people whom you talk to. Abstaining from false, malicious, coarse, or frivolous speeches.

3) **Manosuccarita** is a wholesome mental act or thought that comes from a kind heart and with mindfulness. This good heart has no greed, no hatred, and no delusion.

6. Akusalamula: Three Roots (Causes) of Unwholesome Actions

Whenever one of **Akusalamula**, or the roots of unwholesome actions, occurs in our mind, we need to be mindful in putting genuine efforts in abandoning them. The three roots of unwholesome acts are:

1) **Lobha**: Greed
2) **Dosa**: Anger
3) **Moha:** Delusion

7. Kusalamula: Three Roots (Causes) of Wholesome Actions

Whenever one of the following **Kusalamula**, (the roots of good actions), occur in one's mind, one should continue to cultivate them, as they will lead to further development of many other virtues leading to happiness. The three root causes of good acts are:

1) **Alobha**: Non-greed
2) **Adosa**: Non-anger
3) **Amoha**: Non-delusion

8. Suppurisapannatti or Sappurisapanyat: Three Good Deeds for Wise Men

Suppurisa means a righteous man who maintains calmness and equanimity in body, speech and mind. **Sappurisapanyatti** refers to his recommendation of good deeds for wise men to follow. They are:

1) **Dana**: Giving or generosity in providing things to others, called *Amisadana*, as well as giving or sharing the Buddha's teachings to help others see the way to end suffering, called *Dhammadana.*

2.) **Pabbajja**: Renunciation of worldly matters, especially *Kamaguna* (sensual pleasure), which often prevents us from realizing the impermanence of all things (*Annica*) and the delusion of no-self (*Anatta*). To put in an extra effort toward renunciation, an individual can ask for a permission at a monastery, to ordain temporarily or on a more permanent basis, as a monk, a nun or an eight-preceptors (a *Pahkhao* in white clothes).

3) **Matapitu-uppatthan**: Take care of one's parents: support them to the best of one's ability, look after them when they become old or ill, assist

them in their work, keep the family's honor and reputation, particularly as when one conducts one's self virtuously.

9. Punnakiriyavatthu: Three Bases of Meritorious Actions

The Pali word "puñña," is defined by ancient scholars as: "that which purifies and cleanses the mind." It is translated into English as "merit."

Merit purifies the mind of greed, hatred, and delusion. To be a meritorious person is very valuable in walking the path to happiness. Merit, or that which purifies, cleanses the mind of evil while strengthening what is beneficial and skillful. The making of the merit ensures that a Buddhist leads a balanced and harmonious life. It is not sufficient just to read about Buddhism one must practice it to realize the truth himself.

Punna has two meanings: 1) the washer, washing or cleansing what is not good in our mind, 2) the state which is worthy of worship.

Meritorious acts help the mind to be joyful, calm and pure, leading to happiness.

There are three kinds of P*unnakiriyavatthuor :*

1) **Danamaya**: Making merit by giving (*Dana).* Generosity is an effective training of the mind for combating greed and selfishness. Giving benefits the receivers. There are three types of giving:
   a) giving one's materials to others (*Amisadana*),
   b) giving knowledge, right advice to others (*Dhammadana*),
   c) giving forgiveness, shelter, and love (*metta*) to all.

2) **Silamaya**: Making merit by observing the precepts (*Sila***)** in earnest. Leading a life which is not harmful to others is beneficial to oneself as well as to the community.

Moral conduct and keeping the Precepts pure is a meritorious act. There are three levels of keeping the precepts (silamaya):
   a) beginning: the five precepts for laymen
   b) intermediate: the eight precepts for Upasaka and Upasika
   c) highest: the 227 precepts for monks

All devout Buddhists should take hearts in adhering to the five precepts, with the eight precepts when possible, such as on Lunar Observance Day (*Wan Pra,* on Quarter Moons, Full Moon and New Moon). Nuns follow ten precepts while monks are expected to follow 227 precepts.

3) **Bhavanmaya**: The Buddha said that the most meritorious act of all is mental development. Developing one's heart to be pure by meditating with *Sati* (mindfulness), *Samadh*i (concentration) and *Panya* (wisdom). There is basically two kinds of meditation where one either develops calm first (*samatha)* and then gains insight or else, using mindfulness one proceeds to develop calm out of which also grows insight (*vipassana*).

Cattuka: Groups of Four

Vuddhi: Four Virtues Leading to Growth

Vuddhi is the Dhamma for personal growth on the path for ending suffering, via cultivating *Sila, Samadhi* and *Panna* (pronounced as Panya). There are four skills or principles:

Sappurisasamseva is to associate with highly virtuous people called *Sappurisa*.

Saddhammassavana is to listen to *Suppurisa*'s words or teaching attentively and respectfully.

Yonisomanasikara is to reflect carefully upon what's taught that maybe beneficial to us and others.

Dhammanudhammapatipatti is to practice what one has learned in earnest (*Patipatti*), upon ensuring that one has understood the Dhamma intended, and how to reach the goal (*Anudhamma*) that one has set forth.

Cakka: Four Virtues that Wheel One to Prosperity

Cakka means 'wheel.' **Caccadhamma** refers to the Dhamma that is like a wheel driving one's to worldly and spiritual prosperity. There are four Cakkad-hamma:

1) **Patirupadesavasa**: Literally this means "to live in a suitable country" but it actually refers to living in a community or society where there are virtuous people, with morality and knowledge.

2) **Sappurisupassaya**: Associating with virtuous people, which has been explained earlier in the *Vuddhidhamma*.

3. **Attasammapanidhi**: Setting yourself on the right place in conduct with good morality, appropriate with culture, law and status.

4. **Pubbekatapunnata**: Having accumulated meritorious deeds in the past that lead to happiness and prosperity now and into the future.

3. Agati: Four Prejudices

Agati, or prejudices or biases, means literally "reaching what should not be reached." This unwholesome Dhamma refers to not being in a balanced, just and impartial position. An employer may show favors or hatred toward his or her sub-ordinates, due to *Agati*.

1) **Chandagati**: This type of biases leads one on the wrong path with poor outcome due to love, like, attraction and sensual desire. For example, even though one's special friend is not qualified or is corrupt, he or she may be hired or promoted.

2) **Dosagati**: This prejudice is born of hatred, leading one to dislike some-one, to find fault, to act toward that person with hatred and ill will.

3) **Mohagati**: This is a bias caused by delusion and foolishness, mistakenly punish or praise someone or make a wrong decision, without basing on accurate facts and situation.

4) **Bhayagati**: The wrong path of this prejudice is out of fear or feeling of powerlessness. You may hope that a powerful person will help you if you behave in a compromising way. For instance, if you cover up for your boss out of fear for his power, violating the *Sila*, you may expect to gain a favor.

The Buddha said the honor is lost from those who violate the Dhamma because of love, hatred, delusion and fear. He compared the loss of this honor to the waning moon.

4. Padhana: Four Right Kinds of Effort

Padhana (pronounced as Pa-tan) are the four kinds of effort that lead one toward the Dhamma path toward ending suffering. As the Buddha said, "Although my dried-out body be reduced to skin, tendons, and bones, I will not abandon my efforts." The four efforts of *Padhana* are:

1) **Samvara Padhana**: The effort to restrain not-yet-arisen unwholesome qualities from arising in oneself.

2) **Pahana Padhana**: The effort to abandon evil thoughts, acts, and words in oneself that have occurred.

3) **Bhavana Padhana**: The effort to mindfully develop inherently wholesome qualities in oneself.

4) **Anurakkhana Padhana**: The effort to maintain and protect wholesome qualities that have been well developed in oneself.

5. Adhitthanadhamma: Four Virtues of the Mind

Adhitthanadhamma are four virtues of the mind. The resolution to practice and train in Dhamma must be firmly established in the mind. It is important to

keep all four kinds of Dhamma in mind because it benefits other people and brings happiness to oneself. The four kinds of virtues are:

1) **Panna**: The wisdom to realize the truth about all lives and things according to three universal characteristics called **Trilakana: Annica (**impermanence), **Dukka** (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and **Anatta** (not-self). One is said to be wise to see that conditions, people and things are constantly changing, and not to be held on as 'me' or "mine' or 'myself." As such, one will be free from suffering (Dukka).

2) **Sacca**: The virtue of the truth, or to be truthful and committed in doing good and beneficial while abandoning evil. As the Buddha said, **"***Samanabrahmana***,** those who abandon worldly lives, to devote in earnest to the Dhamma, do not suffer in old age and death, because they understand the true nature of things."

3) **Caga**: The virtue of renouncing that which is the enemy of the mind, renouncing what disturbs the mind. Having *Caga* helps strengthen our Sacca, without being wavered by the four types of prejudices caused by desire, hatred, delusion and fear.

4) **Upasama**: The virtue of tranquility, to have peace of mind. One can work on eliminating five hindrances to inner peace: desire, anger, sloth, worry, and doubt.

6. Iddhipada : Four Bases of Success

Iddhi means success and **Pada** (or *Pad*) means base. **Iddhipada** translates as "the basis of success," which includes:

1) **Chanda**: wholesome aspiration and wish for success.

2) **Viriya**: an effort and endurance to succeed in our task at hand, including the task of understanding the Dhamma.

3) **Citta**: a total attentiveness on the task at hand.

4) **Vimamsa**: to think over and consider with mindfulness and wisdom how best to do the job and how to finish it properly.

In other words, the four base mental qualities leading to power and success are: concentration on intention; concentration on effort; concentration on consciousness; and, concentration on investigation.

7. Sati: Four Parts of Mindfulness

Sati is considered to be the cornerstone or the main building block for the rest of Dhamma development for devout Buddhists. *Sati* as a verb translates as to be aware, to be fully present in the moment, to be attentive to the present, or essentially, to be mindful in -

1) bodily conduct,
2) speeches,
3) thoughts, and
4) opinions and emotions.

Sati helps us to see the truth about life, developing our wisdom (*Panna*, pronounced as Pan-ya). We must have *Sati* as our foundation for practice, and for gaining wisdom to know and understand the truth about all lives and things according to three universal characteristics (**Trilakana): 1) Annica (**impermanence), 2) **Dukka** (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and 3) **Anatta** (not-self). One is said to be wise to see that conditions, people and things are constantly changing, and not to be held on as 'me' or "mine' or 'myself." As such, one will be more and freer from suffering (*Dukka*).

Sati also reminds us to lead a virtuous life, following five or more precepts. One is likely to be safe from harms due to greed, anger, and delusions. As Somdej Kromphraya Wajirayana Waroros said, "**Sati Sabbattha Patabhiya -** Mindfulness is needed everywhere."

In one's daily life, having mindfulness helps one to be less forgetful, make less mistakes and less accidents. One is likely to be more aware of what goes on in the mind, and not let distracting thoughts take over his or her speeches and ac-

tions. Students who practice mindfulness via meditation tend to perform well in school because of their ability to pay attention, and with better self-discipline. Having cultivated *Sati* leads one to have a virtuous life as one can see right or wrong, good or evil more clearly.

When *Sati* paves the way for cultivation Samadhi (c*oncentratio*n) and *Panna* (wisdom), one gains a deep insight about the truth about impermanence in all things and life more clearly. One can accept and not be attached to the body that is not ours, rather be changing according various elements to become aged, old, ill and dead. Prince Siddhartha, after abandoning his worldly life, he gained supreme insights and became enlightened after five years of devotion in practicing *Sati* (mindfulness) and gained full *Samadhi* (concentration).

Developing mindfulness (*Sati*) is accumulating good *Kamma*. *Sati* is beneficial for one to not be attached to all things that are not permanent, and to let go of our 'emotional baggage' more easily. One gains positive energy and optimism. We should practice mindful meditation every day, as well as live mindfully in the present moment. One is more awakened to and be peacefully secure in the reality of the constantly changing world around us and inside us, as the Buddha also taught us:

Sati Lokasami Jagaro
"Sati is the Dhamma for one's awakening in the world."

8. Brahmavihara: Four Noble Sentiments (Four Divine Abodes)

The term **Brahma** means sublime, divine or great. It refers to quality of highly virtuous, with a truly wholesome heart. *Brahma Vihara* is the abode or home for the four sublime or divine states that the Brahma possesses – loving kindness, compassion, sympathy, and equanimity.

1) **Metta**: Loving kindness. Wishing sincerely for others to be happy.

2) **Karuna**: Compassion. Taking care of those in need without expecting anything in return.

3) **Mudita**: Sympathetic joy. Being joyful for other people's happiness and success with no jealousy nor ill will.

4) **Upekkha**: Equanimity. Being balanced, emotionally calm and neutral, letting go of our own attachment to people and situations, if we cannot help others from their misery. Often, one needs to let things be according to the law of kamma.

9. Four Ariyasacca: Four Noble Truths

Ariyasacca is The Four Noble Truths, central and ultimate to the Buddha's teachings, after five years of his search for how to end suffering. The Buddha has been compared with a medical doctor who first has to diagnose the symptom (suffering), finding the root cause (Samudaya), searching for the cure of the suffering (Nirodha), and then prescribing how to end suffering (Magga). These four elements of the Noble Truths are briefly described here:

1) **Dukka**: Suffering or unsatisfactoriness. All living beings suffer from the cycle of birth, death, ageing, illness, as well as sorrow, lamentation, pains, association with dislikes, and separation from likes. This is the reality and not pessimism. If one can end suffering, one will truly have peace and happiness.

2) **Samudaya**: Craving, clinging, attaching to 1) pleasures from what one sees, feels, hears, touches, tastes and thinks about; 2) to the condition that we desire and not wishing for it to end; and, 3) to the condition that we don't like and wishing for it to end. There are three cravings or **Tanha**:

Kamatanha: Craving for sensual pleasures
Bhavatanha: Craving for existence, for what we like to continue on.
Vibhavatanha: Craving for non-existence, for what we don't like to end.

3) **Nirodha**: The cessation of suffering. Suffering can end once one realizes three characteristics of the ultimate truth (*Trilakana*): Impermanence of all things (*Annica*), which if we hold on to, and one suffers (*Dukka*), and one should see that one is not the permanent "I" (*Anatta*).

4) **Magga**: The Noble Eightfold Path is the Buddha's prescription for no more suffering. With one's understanding of the Trilakana above, one starts with the right view. Combined with the other seven elements (below), one is on the way toward ending suffering.

1. Right view
2. Right intention
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

Pancaka: Groups of Five

Anantariyakamma: Five Deeds of Immediate and Heaviest Results

The following five deeds result in the heaviest consequence immediately upon death. The person will go to the lowest level of the hell realm. This is considered the worst of all *kamma*, with the result immediately as soon as one dies. If you do not wish to touch upon the subject of the heaven and hell realms in the cycle of reincarnation, you can instead think about the heavenly or hellish state of mind. Having committed one of such violent and immoral crimes (below), a Buddhist can certainly feel like fire burning in his/her heart.

Matughata: Matricide
Pitaghata: Patricide
Arahantaghata: Killing an *Arahant*, an enlightened one.
Lohituppada: Causing a Buddha to bleed, or even a blood clot.

Sanghabheda: Causing a schism in the *Sangha* order

2. Abhinhapaccavekkhana: Five Truths for Frequent Contemplation

Abhina means always, often, or "again and again." **Paccavekkhana** means contemplation in order to understand the Truth or reality about our lives. Therefore, *Abhinhapaccavekkhana* means contemplating or considering again and again in order to understanding the Truth. There are five truths that the Buddha instructed us to contemplate again and again:

1) "I am subject to ageing and I cannot escape it."
2) "I am subject to become ill and I cannot escape it."
3) "I am subject to die and I cannot escape it."
4) "All that is mine, beloved and pleasing will become otherwise, and will become separated from me."
5) "I am the owner of my kamma, born of my kamma, related to my kamma. Whatever kamma I do for good or for ill, to that I will be the heir."

The above reminds us to be mindful and to be kind to ourselves and to one another, as we are fellow human beings who all are subject to ageing, illness, death, and separation from good fortune or possessions, in accordance with the law of kamma. It is not meant to be sad, rather to be fully present in this moment, with peace and happiness now.

3. Dhammassavananisamsa: Five Benefits of Listening to the Dhamma

1) The listener hears what he has never heard before.
2) He understands clearly what has been heard.
3) He dispels his doubts.
4) He now has the right view.
5) His heart becomes bright.

Listening to the Dhamma is an important way to help people to stop acting Badly, and encourages them to have good conduct. It helps one to possibly gain the highest attainment in life.

The Buddha taught that there are three kinds of people in the world:

1. There are those who, whether they have heard the Dhamma or not, will never stop acting badly.

2. There are those who, whether they have heard the Dhamma or not, will leave behind bad actions, and always act in a good way.

3. There are those who have to hear the Dhamma first, and only then will they stop acting badly and act in a good way.

   Thus, listening to the Dhamma gives a direct benefit to the person as well as people whom he or she interacts with, as well as accumulation of wholesome or unwholesome Dhamma.

4. Bala: Five States of Dhamma Power

First, let's get the list of five power sources, also called, "Five Indriyas:"

1) **Saddha**: confidence, conviction, faith
2) **Viriya**: effort, persistence
3) **Sati**: mindfulness
4) **Samadhi**: concentration
5) **Panna**: wisdom, discernment

They provide faith and firm commitment in one's spiritual practice. Relatedly, **Bala** are five spiritual states giving Dhamma power, to fight against certain unwholesome states, as follows:

1) **Saddhabala**: Confidence, to not be shaken by lack of confidence (*Asaddhiya*)
2) **Viriyabala**: Effort, to not be shaken by laziness (*Kosiajja*)
3) **Satibala**: Mindfulness, to not be shaken by forgetfulness (*Sativipallasa*)
4) **Samadhi**: Concentration, to not be shaken by distractedness *(Samadhibala)*
5) **Panna**: Wisdom and discernment, to not be shaken by ignorance (*Avijja)*

5. Khanda: Five Aggregates

The body and mind are divided into aggregates that are called the "Five **Khandas)**. **Khanda** can be translated as "groups of existence" and "groups of Clinging. They are:

1) **Rupa**: the corporeality group
2) **Vedana**: the feeling group
3) **Sanna**: the perception group (pronounce as *Sanya*).
4) **Sankhara**: the mental-formation group
5) **Vinnana**: the consciousness group

Rupa is matter, form, and body. The four elements: fire, water, air, and earth, and when put together, form *Rupa*.

Vedana is sensations and feelings. Happiness, unhappiness, suffering, not suffering, neither pleasure nor pain (neutral feelings) are *Vedana*.

Sanna is perception, whether it be of form, taste, sight, or sound, as tangible objects or mind objects.

Sankhara is mental formation. The *Cetasika* are the 52 mental components of the mind. They can be wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral.

Vinnana is consciousness. Taking note of data and ideas as they occur leads to consciousness that knows something. *Vinnana* is when your eye sees a color and the mind recognizes that color.

The Buddha taught that what is called "individual existence" or "I" is in reality, delusion, or, nothing but a mere process of those mental and physical phenomena.

Chakka: Groups of Six

1. Karava: Six Kinds of Reverence

1. Karava, reverence, means giving honor to the people, places or things that are worthy of honor, support, and preservation. Buddhists are encouraged to respect:

1) Buddha (*Buddhakaravata*),
2) Dhamma (*Dhammakaravata*),
3) Sangha (*Sanghakaravata*),
4) The value of spiritual training (*Sikhakaravata*),
5) Heedfulness in leading a mindful life (*Abpamakarvata*), and
6) Generous acts of hospitality towards guests (*Patisantarakarava*).

In showing reverence and respect, one does so by speaking courteously and kindly, saluting, bowing, rising up to receive a reverent person, making way, providing a seat in a higher position, etc.

To show respect for the Buddha is to study and practice diligently his words, to move forward on the Dhamma path. One should regularly pay homage to the Triple Gem to continue one's faith and commitment for what the Buddha taught as the virtuous way of life by adhering to the precepts (*Sila*), continually developing mindful concentration (*Samadhi*), and aiming at gaining wisdom (*Panna*).

As one visits a temple or a monastery, one should be respectful in body, speech and mind to Buddha statues and to the Sangha (virtuous monks, nuns and lay supporters who are examples of ones who have gone forth on the path toward enlightenment).

2. Saraniyadhamma: Six Virtues of Amiable Living Together

Saraniyadhamma, the six kinds of virtues for living together in peace and harmony, instilling true friendship and loving kindness for one another. With mindfulness, one follows the five types listed below by applying to all relationships, with the Sangha, one's parents, children, co-workers, subordinates, friends and others.

Physical acts of loving kindness (*Metta*)
Verbal acts of loving kindness (*Metta*)
Mental acts of loving kindness (*Metta*)
Sharing what you have honestly earned with others
Adhering to the precepts

Referring to the Dhamma in providing opinions so as to avoid invalid conflicts

Sattaka: Groups of Seven

1. Ariyasab: The Seven Noble Treasures

1) **Saddha:** faith, conviction in wholesome Dhamma, including the law of kamma
2) **Sila:** good conduct from wholesome body, speech and mind, based on the precepts
3) **Hiri:** moral shame
4) **Ottappa:** moral dread
5) **Pahusacca:** great learning and memorizing of the Dhamma which one has heard
6) **Caga**: sacrificing by sharing one's possessions with others when/where appropriate
7) **Panna:** wisdom, gaining insights as to what's wholesome and beneficial.

No matter how much material wealth and treasures one possesses, there's no guarantee for lasting happiness. *Ariyasab*, the collection of Dhamma called *Noble Treasures* that we accumulate within our hearts, ensure our peace and happiness.

2. Sappurisadhamma: The Seven Virtues of a Good Person

A **Suppurisa** is a virtuous man (or woman), who has deep insights in the *Arisacca* (the four great truths about suffering), and is wise in worldly living. This person has the following seven virtues:

Dhammanyuta: knowing what causes suffering and happiness
Atthanyuta: knowing the consequences of delusion which leads to suffering.

Attanyuta: acting appropriately with ones' knowledge of one's own background (such as nationality and culture, family, rank, income etc.)
Mattanyuta: knowing how to be moderate in living within one's means, along the line of the self-sufficiency philosophy in Thailand
Kalanyuta: knowing how to manage one's time wisely
Parisanyuta: knowing how to relate with one's community
Puggalaparoparanyuta: knowing how to associate oneself with virtuous people as true friends (*Kalyanamitta*), who can help each other progress on the Dhamma path.

Atthaka: Groups of Eight

Lokadhamma: Eight Worldly Dhamma or Worldly Conditions

Lokadhamma makes up eight conditions which arise in the worldly life every day. It's important to be mindful of the truth of the impermanence of all things (*Annica*). Without mindfulness, one is likely to get 'blown up and down, left and right' by such Worldly Dhamma, or also called 'Worldly Winds.' The Buddha identified four desirable states and four undesirable states as listed next.

A. **Ittharamana** are desirable wordly conditions:
Labha: Gain
Yasa: Fame
Pasamsa: Praise
Sukha: Happiness

B.. **Annittharamana** are undesirable wordly conditions:
Alabha: Loss
Ayasa: Obscurity
Ninda: Blame
Dukka: Misery

These worldly conditions overwhelm human beings. When we experience a desirable condition, we are joyful. We suffer when we face an undesirable condition,

such as having lost income or a job, becoming ill, being criticized by our boss etc. The Buddha reminds us to stay on course with developing *Sila, Samadhi,* and *Panna,* keeping in mind of the impermanence of all things. We can be happy with good fortune, or sad when we lose someone we love; yet, we should be mindful in not going off into the extreme emotionally.

Dasaka: Groups of Ten

Punnakiriyavatthu: Ten Basic Meritorious Acts or Ways of Making Merit

The meaning of *Punna* (merit) is explained earlier under the topic of *Punna* (in the *Groups of Three* section.) *Bun* is the result of merit that we make leading the mind to be pure and at ease. **Punnakiriyavatthu** are ten basic ways to gain merit, as listed below.

1) **Danamaya**: by giving
2) **Silamaya**: by adhering to the precepts, conditioning oneself to behave ethically
3) **Bhavanamaya**: by meditating to develop *Sati*, *Samadhi* and *Panna*
4) **Apacayamaya**: merit from modesty, humility and respect to elders and teachers
5) **Veyyavaccamaya**: merit from providing help to people when appropriate
6) **Pattidanamaya**: merit from sharing one's own merit with others
7) **Pattanumodhanamaya**: merit from rejoicing in other people's merit making acts
8) **Dhammassavanamaya**: merit from listening to the Dhamma
9) **Dhammadesanamaya**: merit from teaching the Dhamma
10) **Ditthujukamma**: merit from holding the Right View (S*ammadhiti*), which is the most important practice in the Noble Eight Fold Path.

Gihipatipati: Dhamma Practices for Lay People

Groups of Four

1. Ditthadhammakatthapayojana: Four virtues for immediate benefits

Utthanasampada: To be endowed with alertness in earning a living, in studying, and in fulfilling one's duties

Arakkhasampada: To be endowed with watchfulness to protect his wealth and property, not wasting or damaging it.

Kalayanamittata: Have good friends who are faithful, learned, virtuous, liberal and intelligent, who will help him along the right path away from evil.

Samajivita: Live a balanced life within one's means

2. Samparayikatthapayojana: Four virtues for future benefits

Saddhasampada: To be endowed with faith. Have faith and confidence in moral, spiritual and intellectual values, and in the Buddha's teachings.

Silasampada: To be endowed with morality. Live a life according to the *Sila* - abstain from destroying and harming life, from stealing and cheating, from adultery, from falsehood, and from intoxicating drinks.

Cagasampada: To be endowed with generosity. Sharing with others. Practise charity, generosity, without attachment and craving for the wealth.

Pannasampada: To be endowed with wisdom. Develop wisdom which leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

3. Mittapapatirupaka: Four Kinds of False Friends to Avoid

The out-and -out robber.
The man who pays lip-service.
The flatterer.
The man who leads you to destruction.

1) The out-and-out robber or a thief has four characteristics:
   He appropriates his friends' possessions.\
   He gives little while expecting a lot in return.
   He gives a helping hand only when he himself is in danger.
   He makes friends with others only for his own interests.

2) The man who pays lip-service has four characteristics:
   He always says good things about the past.
   He always says good things about the future.
   He tries to gain your trust with empty talks.
   When he needs help, he always points to his own misfortune.

3) The flatterer or a man who is an insincere talker has four characteristics:
   He encourages you to do wrong.
   He encourages you to do right.
   He sings you praises to your face.
   He puts you down behind your back.

4) The man who leads you to destruction has four characteristics:
   He is your companion when you drink
   He is your companion when you roam the streets at night
   He is your companion when you seek bad entertainment
   He is your companion when you indulge in gambling

4. Suhadamitta: Four Kinds of True Friends to Associate With

1) The helping friend.

2) The friend who is the same in good times and bad times.
3) The good counselor or a mentor
4) The loving friend

These are true friends with whom you should be associated.

1) The helping friend has four characteristics:

When you are not alert, he looks out for you.
When your property needs protection, he guards it.
In times of danger, he is your shelter.
When you need a loan, he offers an extra amount.

2) The friend who is the same in good times and bad times has four characteristics:

He confides in you.
He keeps your secrets safe.
He does not desert you when you are in danger.
He will even sacrifice his life for you.

3) The good counselor has four characteristics:

He restrains you from doing evil.
He encourages you to do good.
He warns you when other people don't.
He points out the way to happiness.

4) The loving friend has four characteristics:

When you are unhappy, he commiserates with you.
When you are happy, he is happy for you.
When others criticize you wrongly, he comes to your defense.
When others praise you, he joys in that praise.

5. Sanghavatthu: Four Sympathetic Virtues that Make Friends

1) **Dana**: Generosity - Giving one's possessions to other deserving people, giving, by (practicing) virtue and by meditation.

2) **Piyavaca**: Kindly speech - Speaking with metta to others

3) **Atthacariya**: Beneficial actions - Useful conduct that helps others

4) **Samanattata**: impartiality - Equal treatment of others

These four virtues can be used for holding the mind of others. If more people practice these virtues our social relation will be more peaceful.

6. Gharavasa-dhamma: Four Virtues for a Good Domestic Life

1) **Sacca**: Truth and honesty

2) **Dama**: Training oneself to control the senses; self- development

3) **Khanti**: Tolerance, forbearance

4) **Caga**: Sacrifice, giving away one's possessions as appropriate.

Pancaka: Groups of Five

1. Micchavanijja: Five Kinds of Unwholesome Trade

1) trading weapons
2) trading human beings
3) trading animals to be slaughter
4) trading intoxicants and harmful drugs
5) trading poisons.

2. Upasakadhamma : The Five Virtues of a Lay Disciple

Upāsaka (masculine) and Upāsikā (feminine) were the titles given to followers of the Buddha who undertook certain vows, but were not monks, nuns, or novice monastics. These titles are from the Pāli words meaning "to sit close" (upāsati) and "to attend to" (upāsana), and are sometimes translated as "one who serves." Over time, the terms have come to mean "dedicated lay practitioner," and to connote a lay person who has made a total commitment to the study and practice of the Buddhadhamma. These devout lay disciples have these qualities:

1) Saddhā – To be endowed with faith
2) Sīla - To have good conduct
3) Not to be superstitious, believing in deeds, not luck
4) Not to seek for the gift-worthy outside of the Buddha's teaching
5) To do his first service in a Buddhist cause

Chakka: Groups of Six

1. Disas: The Six Directions

The Disas are North, South, East, West, Lower and Upper directions. These six directions represent the six types of individuals who relate to us in some way over our lifetime.

1. **Puratthimadisa**: East, or front direction, represents parents
2. **Dakkhinadisa**: South, or direction to the right, represents teachers
3. **Paccimadisa**: West, or behind direction, refers to spouse and children
4. **Uttaradisa:** North, or direction to the left, is for friends
5. **Hettimadisa**: Below, the nadir, is for subordinates
6. **Uparimadisa**: Above, the zenith, are monastics.

These six directions also represent the six types of relationships: those between (1) parents and children, (2) teachers and students, (3) spouses or partners, (4) friends and colleagues, (5) employers and employees or boss and subordinates, and (6) holy men and laymen. In each case, particular duties and responsibilities are described for both parties in the relationship.

The Dhamma to keep in mind would be mindfulness and loving kindness in our interactions with different categories of people above, in accordance with traditions and conventions.

Parents and children [East]

In five ways a child should show his respect to his parents by:

1. Support them because they have supported him.
2. Do their work.
3. Maintain the family lineage and tradition.
4. Be worthy of his inheritance.
5. Make donations and dedicating merit to them after their death.

In five ways parents should show their love for their child by:

1. Keep him back from wrongdoing.
2. Guide him towards good actions.
3. Give him education so he can have a profession.
4. Support the choice of a suitable spouse.
5. Give him inheritance in due time.

Teachers and students [South]

In five ways, a student should pay respect to his teachers by:

1. Rising to receive them.
2. Regularly attending lessons.
3. Eagerly desiring to learn.
4. Duly serving them.
5. Attentively receiving instruction.

In five ways a teacher should show the love for her student by:

1. Train him in self-discipline.
2. Teach him till he understands. Make sure he succeeds in his studies.
3. Thoroughly share what she knows.
4. Introduce him to her friends and colleagues.
5. Provide for his safety and security in every direction.

Spouses/partners [West]

In five ways a husband should show his love for his wife by:

1. Honor her.
2. Be courteous to her.
3. Be faithful to her.
4. Share authority with her.
5. Give her gifts.

In five ways a wife should show her love for her husband by:

1. Manage household affairs.
2. Be hospitable to friends and relatives of both his and hers.
3. Be faithful to him.
4. Take care of the goods he brings home.
5. Be skillful and industrious in all her duties.

Friends and colleagues [North]

In five ways a man should show his love to his friends and colleagues by:

1. Generosity.
2. Kind words.
3. Acting for their welfare.
4. Putting them on equal terms. Treat people evenhandedly (not showing undue favoritism)
5. Honesty.

In five ways friends and colleagues show their love by:

1. Protect him when he is vulnerable.
2. Guard his wealth and property when he is vulnerable.
3. Be a refuge for him when he is in danger. Provide comfort.
4. Not abandon him in his troubles. Stand by him when circumstances are difficult.
5. Show respect to other members of his family.

Employers and employees or Boss and Subordinates (Lower Direction)

In five ways a master or an employer should show his compassion for his servant or employees by:

1. Assign work according to their aptitude.
2. Give them due food and wages.
3. Care for them in sickness.
4. Share with them special treats.

5. Give them reasonable time off work.

In five ways a subordinate or an employee should show his love for his boss or employer by:

1. Get up to work before him.
2. Go to rest after him.
3. Take only what is given by him.
4. Do the work well.
5. Praise him and make his good name known to others.

Holy men and Laymen (Upper Directions)

In five ways a layman should honor and revere monks, wise elders and holy men by:

1. Kind acts.
2. Kind words.
3. Kind thoughts.
4. Hold the door open for them.
5. Provide them with their material needs.

In six ways monks and holy men show their love for the lay people by:

1. Prevent him from doing evil.
2. Encourage him to do good.
3. Have kind thoughts for him.
4. Teach him what he has not heard before.
5. Clarify what he already knows.
6. Show him the way to heaven (happiness).

2. Apayamukha : The Six Roads to Ruins

These are specifically the six forms of behavior which lead to the loss of our wealth as well as undermine the whole economic infrastructure of a country or a society. The Buddha described six different roads to ruin, each with six examples of the harm that they bring in all a total of thirty-six forms of harm brought by them. The Six Roads to Ruin are:

1. Addiction to drink and drugs.
2. Always reveling in nightlife.

3. Addiction to entertainment.
4. Addiction to gambling.
5. Habitually associate with evil friends.
6. Being chronically lazy.

Harm brought by the Six Roads to Ruin

1. Being addicted to drink and drugs is harmful because it:

Causes the loss of wealth
Causes increase of quarrels
Causes liability to disease
Causes damage to one's reputation
Undermines one's sense of decency
Undermines one's intelligence

2. Always reveling in nightlife or roaming the streets at unseemly hours is harmful because:

It leaves you vulnerable
It leaves your wife and children vulnerable
It leaves your property vulnerable
It makes you liable to be suspected of crimes
It makes you liable to false rumors
It is the source of subsequent troubles.

3. Addiction to entertainment. That is allowing your mind to become enslaved by entertainment to the point it becomes a financial burden and a distraction to your earning your livelihood. The possible harm brought by addiction to entertainment is sixfold. You find yourself always obsessed with:

Dancing
Singing
Choral music
Storytelling
Cymbal playing
Drumming

"These are the six dangers inherent in habitual partying: You constantly seek, 'Where's the dancing? Where's the singing? Where's the music? Where are the stories? Where's the applause? Where's the drumming?'

4. Gambling is harmful because:

As a winner you beget hatred;
As a loser you regret money lost;
You fritter away your wealth;
No-one trusts your word;
You are scorned by your friends and companions;
You are never considered as a marriage prospect because you are seen as incapable of taking responsibility for a spouse.

5. Habitually associating with evil friends or consorting with bad company is harmful because they encourage you to be:

A gambler
A womanizer
A drunkard
A cheat
A swindler
An aggressor

6. Being chronically lazy means finding ways to avoid earning an honest living. You waste your time and your money. You will not be able to fulfill your many duties because you are full of excuses such as:

It is too cold to work
It is too hot to work
It is too late to work
It is too early to work
I am too hungry to work
My stomach is to too full to work

Life of The Buddha

Introduction

Buddhists should study the biography of the Buddha, to learn about his background (his life, family, education and social status as a prince), leading to renouncing his luxurious, worldly life to become a *Samana* (a renunciant with an ascetic life on his spiritual quest to end suffering). Such knowledge helps Buddhists gain more faith, confidence and appreciation for the "what, when, where, how and why" of the Buddha's teachings that can indeed lead us on the path for freedom from suffering. The Buddha, as simply 'a teacher or master' often told all disciples that it's within our human potential and ability to reach the ultimate ending of suffering. In other words, if a human being like him was able to reach enlightenment, we can too, by training ourselves along the Noble Eightfold Path.

We will begin first with geography and diverse peoples in ancient India, when and where the Buddha lived and taught.

Ancient Jambudipa, Its Geography and Peoples

Jambudipa was the name of a massive geographic area covering today's India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. There were originally two groups of people living there around the Buddha's time more than 2,500 years ago: the original people called the *Milakkha* and those who had migrated from the north called the *Ariyaka*.

Jambudipa was divided into two provinces: 1. the inner area called *Majjhima-janapada,* where the *Ariyaka* lived, and 2. the outer area called *Paccantajanjpada* where the *Milakka* lived.

Jambudipa had sixteen states (provinces): *Anga, Magadha, Kasi, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, Jeti, Vamsa, Kuru, Pancaka, Maccha, Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara,* and *Kamboja.* However, some other ancient texts also added more states, altogether to twenty one states, including *Sakka, Koliya, Bhagga, Vidheha*, and *Anguttarapa.*

People were divided into four classes, or castes called *Vanna*, which includes:

1. **Kshatriya**: the warrior caste. They would become rulers.

2. **Brahmana**: the priestly caste. They were educated in religious rites and academic subjects.
3. **Vessa**: the trading and agricultural caste of merchants and farmers.
4. **Sudda**: the lowest caste who were servants and manual laborers.

In addition, there were many outcast individuals called *Candhan,* born to parents of mixed castes. They were the 'untouchables,' shunned by people of higher castes.

The above social and economic classification was influenced by the dominant religion at the time, *Brahmanism*. People believed in rebirth after death (reincarnation), heaven and hell. As a theistic religion, adherents worshipped various gods. *Kamma* was well understood.

Sakkajanapada and the Sakkaya Clan

Sakkajanapada was a small state, located furthest north of *Jambudipa*. It got its name from being in the *Sakka* Forest in *Himabana* (present day's Himalaya Mountains). The capital was named *Kapilavastu (Pāli: Kapilavatthu*. The Sakkaya clan ruled the area successively until King Jayasena who had a son named Prince Sihahanu and a daughter named Princess Yasodhara. When King Jayasena passed away, Prince Sihahanu became king, with his queen (Queen Kancana). Together they had five sons: *Suddhodana, Sukkodana, Amitodana,Dhotodana*, and *Ghanitodana,* and two daughters: *Pamita* and *Amita*. The Buddha, formerly Prince Siddhartha Gautama, came from this Sakkayan lineage.

His Birth and Life Prior to Becoming Buddha

The Buddha lived around 486 B.C.E. and 411 B.C.E. He was born into the *Kshatriyas* caste. He was the son of King Suddhodana of Kapilavastu, and Queen Maha Maya, a *Koliyan* princess. Queen Maya followed the tradition of returning home to give birth. Instead, Prince Siddhartha was born en route in *Lumbinivana* (now in the south of Nepal, right near the northern border of India), under a *Sala* tree on Friday of the Year of the Dog, 80 years prior to the beginning of Buddhist Era (80 B.B.E), on the full moon of the fifth month of *Visakha* or *Visak*. His name, *Siddhartha* means "One who achieves his aim."

Right after birth, a highly respected ascetic, *Asitatapasa* paid a visit to the new-born prince to give his blessings. As he touched the prince's feet, he also predicted that Siddhartha would become either a great king if he keeps his lay life or a great enlightened one if he becomes an ascetic or a renunciant. Five days after birth, during a royal celebration, the same prediction about the prince's future was given by 8 highly regarded *Brahmins*, with one exception by the youngest Brahmin, *Kondanna*. The young Brahmin was confident in predicting that the prince would become the greatest enlightened one, or a Buddha. Later on, *Kondanna* became first Arahant other than the Buddha. Seven days after his birth, his mother passed away, and the young Siddhartha was raised by his mother's younger sister, *Princess Pajapattigotami.*

When Siddhartha was seven years old his father had three lotus ponds dug just for him and showered him with all the worldly pleasures. The king, wishing for his son to grow up to be a great ruler, shielded him from all religious teachings and from the reality of human suffering. Siddhartha with his noble relatives was sent to study with the famous teacher named *Visamita*. He was reported as outstanding in all subject matters.

At sixteen, the right age in those days, he was married to *Princess Yasodhara* (also known as *Bimba*). His father built him three palaces, one for summer, one for winter and one for the rainy season. Yasodhara gave birth to their son, *Rahula*, when *Prince Siddhartha Gautama* was twenty nine years old.

The prince's highly luxurious and comfortable life was about to taking the sharpest turn soon after *Rahula*'s birth.

Becoming Samana (Renunciant)

At twenty nine, Siddhartha Gautama had the occasions to leave the palace four separate times. On each trip, he encountered up close for the first time in his life an old man, a sick man, and then a dead person with a decaying corpse. Finally, on his fourth trip, he saw a *Samana* (a renunciant, ascetic or monk). His father put in extra efforts for so long to shield him from this truth about human suffering.

Siddhartha was severely affected by such human conditions that he had never experienced in the palace. He asked his charioteer, *Channa* upon each encounter, to affirm whether all people do grow old, become ill and then die. Channa responded

honestly to him that even Channa and Siddhartha were no exception in escaping those conditions. The prince was distraught, but was then inspired later on when he saw a *Samana* who abandoned the worldly life in search of the best way to end human suffering. Siddhartha decided to follow the *Samana*'s way.

Accompanied by *Channa***,** riding his horse named *Kanthaka*, he left behind the palace and the royal way of life. When they arrived at the bank of *Anoma River*, he cut his hair, then accepted robes, a bowl and a few essential requisites from *Gatikarabrahma.* Channa was asked to return to the palace with his horse. Siddhartha made an unwavering commitment to dedicate his life to find the way to end suffering He began by living a life as a homeless *Samana*.

Toward Enlightenment

After becoming a homeless monk, Siddhartha went to stay in a mango grove in *Anupia Ubavana* for seven days. He then journeyed on to *Rajagaha* and lived on alms food offered by people in the streets. *King Bimbisara* of Magadha recognized him and offered him a position of high rank but Siddhartha declined the offer and told him of his quest for ways to end suffering. He promised the King that he would return to teach him upon attaining enlightenment.

The Five Ascetics (Panjavakki)

Siddhartha left *Rajagaha* and practiced under two hermit teachers who were both masters of yogic meditation, *Alara Kalama* and *Uddaka Ramaputta***.** Upon completion of yogic meditation by those teachers, he left and wandered on until he met five Brahmins named *Kondanna, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama*, and *Assaji.* The group was led by Kondanna, who predicted, when Siddhartha was born, that he will become the enlightened Buddha. These Brahmins became renunciants and practiced austere asceticism (such as, extreme starvation, bodily mortification and various self-tortures.).

Six years of his extreme austerity had gone by, at age thirty five, Siddhartha was coming close to death. He heard the sound of a harp with three strings; one was too tight and another was too loose, neither of which gave a good musical sound. The string that was set just right gave the best sound and did not break. He reflected on that and saw that extreme starvation was not the right practice, and decided to return to normal eating. The *Panjavakki* (the five ascetics) lost faith and respect in Siddhartha and left him.

Three Metaphors on Body and Mind Efforts

Alone in his solitude, Siddhartha realized via three metaphors that a Samana could not develop further toward enlightenment unless he not only abstains from bodily pleasures, but also from mental pleasures. Being able to eliminate sensual pleasures, a Samana can reach deep inner peace and wisdom toward enlightenment. The three metaphors are:

> Fresh wood, wet with resin that remained in water for a long time could not be used to make fire by rubbing against it. In the same way, ones who indulged in sensuality of the body could not attain enlightenment.
>
> Fresh wood wet with resin, even if it did not remain in water for a long time, could not be used to make fire by rubbing against it. In the same way, ones who indulged in sensuality of the mind could not attain enlightenment.
>
> Dried wood, placed on land far away from water could be used to make fire by rubbing against it. In the same way, ones who escaped sensual pleasures of the body and mind, who tried to have inner peace, could reach enlightenment.

These three metaphors reminded him to pay attention to the mind, not just the physical effort, in order to achieve enlightenment.

With a special rice pudding and milk offered to him by a village woman named *Sujata* (pronounced as Su-cha-da), Siddhartha regained mental and physical energy. He floated the tray on the nearby *Neranjara River*. Facing east, he sat under a *Bodhi* tree on a stack of straws offered to him by a man named *Sotthiya*. He vowed never to get up until he had found the Truth. That was in *Bodh Gaya*, in Northeast India.

Victory over the Devil (Mara)

It is said that the *To-be-Buddha* sat for 49 days, tormented by numerous terrifying, supernatural phenomena and temptations created by the Devil (*Mara*) and his cronies. The Devil feared that Siddhartha would no longer be subjugated to his evil power or the dark side any more. One may easily see that such battles with the Devil are really from our mind. Once the mind has been 'mastered,' the *About-to-*

be-Buddha won, it is said that the Mother Earth came to witness his ultimate victory over *Mara* upon Siddhartha's deep contemplation on the Dhamma called The Ten Perfections *(Paramita)* or ten qualities leading on to attain enlightenment.

Throughout that night, on the first Full Moon of the sixth month, 45 years prior to the commencement of the Buddhist Era (45 B.B.E), the *About-to-become-Buddha* gained insights into his past lives (*Pubbenivasanusatunana*) during the first watch. During the second watch, he attained insights into the workings of *Kamma* leading to rebirth of all beings (*Cutupapatanana)*. Before dawn in the third watch, he attained *Paticcasamuppada*, or insights into of how and why beings continue in the endless cycle of births and deaths. He finally gained his final stage of insights called *Asavakkhayanana*, and became enlightened, with a full awakening or *Nibbana* (also called *Nirvana*).

Some Special Names for The Buddha

Upon his enlightenment, *Siddhartha Gautama* became the Buddha (the Awakened One). He is also referred to as, *Sammasambuddho* (One who has fully awakened on his own), *Tatatha* (One who sees things as they truly are), *Arahang* (One who is so far from defilements), among others.

Pathamabodhikala: The First Period after Enlightenment

Seven Days in Vimuttisukha under the Bodhi Tree

The Buddha remained under the *Bodhi* tree delighting in the bliss of Nibbana for seven more days after enlightenment, reviewing the truth of *Paticca-samuppada*, "dependent origination,": how all phenomena arise together in an interdependent web of cause and effect. It is also known as "conditioned genesis," "dependent co -arising", and interdependent arising." It explains in detail the second and third Noble Truths.

Seven Days under the Ajapalanigrodha Tree

From the *Bodhi* Tree the Buddha went to sit under a type of Banyan Tree named *Ajapalanigrodha.* There he remained in the blissful state of Nibbana for seven days. A Brahmin came to visit him and asked a question, "What was the true Brahmin?" The Buddha tried to explain to him that it was a person who aban-

doned evil and defilement, but the man kept saying "Hu! Hu!" So the Buddha made absolutely no impression on him because he was a haughty and wrathful person. Everyone called him "*Huhunka*".

Seven Days under the Muccarinda Tree

From the *Ajapalanigrodha* Tree, the Buddha went to sit under a *Muccarinda* Tree for seven days in the blissful state of *Nibbana*. Then he declared that tranquility is the ultimate happiness for ones who study the Dhamma. He added that no hatred, caring for others, and abandoning passion will bring happiness in the world. One must rid oneself of *Asmimana*, or the conceit of "self."

Seven Days under the Rajayatana Tree

From the *Muccarinda* Tree the Buddha went to sit under a tree called Rajayatana for seven days in the blissful state of Nibbana. Two merchants named *Tapussa* and *Bhallika* brought him some fine food (*Sattukon* and *Sattuphong*) as an offering and formally requested taking refuge in the Buddha. They hereby became the first two Buddhist lay followers in the history of Buddhism.

The Decision to Spread the Buddha's Enlightened Knowing

From the *Rajayatana* Tree the Buddha went back to the *Ajapalanigrodha* Tree again. He was considering how deep and difficult it was for people that had sensual passions to become enlightened. The Buddha couldn not decide whether or not he should teach the Dhamma to others. But then he thought that people were similar to the three parts of the lotus flower:

1. The first part of the lotuses was above the water. As the sun rises, it would open right away. Those individuals with little clinging to passion and sensuality, and possess good qualities of *Panna, Saddha, Viriya, Samadhi*, and *Sati,* would be able to accept the Dhamma immediately and then attain enlightenment.

2. The second part of the lotuses was on the surface of the water. When sunshine came, it would open on the second day. Individuals with a moderate degree of innate character could be taught Dhamma until they became strong. These people too could attain enlightenment.

3. The third part of the lotus was in the mud and would become food for fish and tortoises. These people with a weaker character should study basic Dhamma in order to just strengthen their character but were not capable of awaking in this life.

Teaching of the Middle Path & the Four Noble Truths to Five Former Friends

The Buddha then traveled to the Deer Park near *Varanasi (Benares)* to give his first sermon to his former five companions *(Panjavakki)*. The Buddha told them that he had attained enlightenment. At first they doubted him and were disrespectful. They said to him "*Avuso Gautama*! Although you did some intense self-mortification, you could not have attained enlightenment!" They repeated the message several times. The Buddha reminded them that they had never heard such a claim from him before, and should hear it. Thus, they agreed to let him speak.

So in the morning of the full moon day of *Asalha* the Buddha gave his first sermon of *Majjhima Patipada, or* The Middle Path. The Buddha taught them not to practice *The Two Extremes* of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. He encouraged practicing *The Middle Path*, also known as the *Noble Eightfold Path*, which consists of:

1. Right Understanding
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Then, he taught the Four Noble Truths or *Ariyasatta*, which includes:

1. **Dukka**: the truth of suffering (old age, disease, death, separation from likes, etc.)
2. **Samudaya**: the truth of the origin of suffering
3. **Nirodha**: the truth of the cessation of suffering
4. **Magga**: the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering

Kondanna awoke to the first stage of enlightenment, *Sotapanna*. The Buddha saw this and said: "Annasi, Kondanna! Annasi, Kodanna!" which means "Kondanna knows, Kondanna knows!" From then on, *Kondanna* was often called *Annakondanna.* (pronounced as *Anya Gontanya*). He requested to be a Bhikkhu (a monk), so the Buddha ordained him as the first monk. The other four ascetics were ordained in the same way. Shortly thereafter, the Buddha gave them a special sermon on the law of impermanence and no self, not to be attached to, called *Anattalakana Sutta.* Upon hearing and understanding this sutta, all five ascetics (*Panjavakki*) attained their full enlightenment.

Teaching Anupubbikatha to Yasa

So there were now six *Arahants* in the world: the Buddha and his five disciples (the above mentioned *Panjavakki*). The next disciple was *Yasakulaputta* who came to the forest to meet the Buddha. He was in a state of total confusion. The Buddha gave a sermon called *Anupubbikatha*, or the Gradual Discourse, which includes the following elements:

1. **Dana**: Giving
2. **Sila**: Morality
3. **Sagga**: Heavenly pleasures
4. **Kamadinava**: Disadvantages of heavenly pleasures
5. **Nekkhammanisama**: Benefits of renouncing sensual pleasures and becoming a monk.

Then, the Buddha taught him the Four Noble Truths. *Yasa* became an *Arahant* and the seventh Bhikkhu with the Buddha as the great master. Y*asa*'s wealthy father went in search for his son who did not return home. Once found, Yasa refused to return, causing the father to have to send for the Buddha. Upon meeting each other, the Buddha taught Yasa's father about *The Middle Path*, as well as *The Four Noble Truths*. The father asked to become a lay follower. In addition, Y*asa*'s mother and wife became the first female Buddhist followers, who took refuge in *The Triple Gems* from then on.

The Ordination of Fifty-four of Yasa's Friends

Yasa had four friends whom he told about *Dhamma Vinaya* (or the Monastic codes of conduct for monks). They came to the Buddha and requested to be ordained. They eventually became *Arahants.* Soon after, fifty more of their friends follow the footsteps and also reached their *Arahantship.* Thus, there were sixty-one *Arahants*, whom the Buddha asked to go in their separate ways alone into the world to spread his words on how to end human suffering. The Buddha himself travelled on to the *Uruvela* District, in *Senanigama*.

The Buddha Taught the Ordination Procedure to His Disciples

Before the disciples journeyed independently to spread the Dhamma, the Buddha taught them a simple, standard procedure for ordaining those who wished to become monks. Specifically, the men seeking to ordain had to cut their hair and beard, wear only cloth of natural colors, sit on their heels pressing their palms together against their chest, and bow to the monks while saying, **"***Buddham Saranam Gacchami, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami, Sangham Saranam Gacchami; Dutiyampi, Buddham.....; Tutiyampi, Buddham…….***"** This simple, yet special, ordination ritual called *Tisaranagama-nupasampada,* continues today -- more than 2,550 years later.

The Buddha Taught Bhatthavaggiya and Thirty Friends

In *Uruvela,* the Buddha stayed on a cotton farm, met *Bhatthavaggiya* and 30 of his friends. He taught them *Anupubbikatha* and the Four Noble Truths. They shortly became enlightened and ordained as Bhikkhus, who then moved on to help spread the Buddha's words.

The Three Jatila Brothers

In *Uruvela,* lived a guru worshipping fire named *Uruvelkassapa,* with two brothers, *Nadikassapa* and *Gayakassapa*, with 500, 300, and 200 followers consecutively in three locations downstream from each other on the same river. It took the Buddha's extra efforts to persuade *Uruvelkassapa* that his fire worship practice had not led him to achieve enlightenment. When finally, Uruvelkassapa and his followers living upstream ordained first, and discarded their *Jatila* doctrine down the river, the other two brother's groups came checking on whether they were in danger. All of them decided to ordain as Bhikkhus with the Buddha as their Master. At that time, the number of Bhikkhus reached 1,003.

The Adittapariyaya Sutta (Fire Sermon)

After a considerable stay with the *Jatila* disciples in *Uruvel*a, the Buddha led all those Bhikkhus to the *Gayasisa* District. There, as the Buddha sat on a flat stone near the *Gaya* River, he gave his disciples the sermon called *Adittapariyaya Sutta* (the Fire Sermon). In brief, this sermon states that the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, body, and mind are like fire. These are like doors for entry of our 'burning' defilements of greed, lust, hatred, and delusion. They lead to the never-ending suffering or *Dukka* (sorrow, pains, lamentation, losses, grief and despair.) By the time the sermon ended, all of the *Bhikkhus* understood clearly and were free from defilements and craving, with their liberated hearts, and became *Arahants*.

King Bimbisara and His Five Wishes

King Bimbisara of Magadha, learned of the Buddha's temporary stay at one of his royal parks. He was very pleased and went to pay homage, together with 120,000 members of the royal family and palace staff. The Buddha taught the *Anupubbikatha Sutta* and the Four Noble Truths. It was said that of 120,000 people, 110,000 became stream enterers, beginning their path of not return toward enlightenment (*Sotapanna*), with the remaining 10,000 members taking refuge in the Triple Gems.

Before he became ruler of the Magadha state, King Bimbisara had made five wishes, which were all realized from the Buddha's aforementioned visit, as follows:

1. To be crowned King of the Magadha State.
2. To be visited during his reign by one who has been fully self-awakened.
3. To be presided near that Great Awakened One.
4. To be taught the Dhamma by him.
5. To realize that Great Master's teachings.

The First Residential Area Offered By King Bimbisara

Upon hearing the Buddha's teachings, the king took a vow to become a devout lay supporter to the Buddha and all Bhikkhus. He invited the Buddha and his disciples to come to his palace for a meal offering on the next morning. He poured water on the Buddha's hands, and offered *Veruvana* (a bamboo forest) to be the area dedicated for the Buddha and his disciples to reside together. The Buddha

accepted it and went to stay there with the Bhikkhus. This was the Sangha's first residence, located in the City of Rajagaha, Magadha Region.

Two Chief Disciples - Moggallana and Sariputta

One day, one of the Buddha's five initial senior disciples, *Assaji*, was in *Rajagaha City* to receive alms. He met a young Brahmin on his spiritual quest named *Sariputta*. *Sariputta (a.k.a. Uppatissa)* was impressed by *Assaji* and asked who his teacher was. *Assaji* said that it was the Great Patient One or the Buddha, a former *Sakkaya* Prince and the Buddha teaches that causes of all conditions (i.e., suffering) can only cease by going to the root cause(s). *Sariputta* gained wisdom from *Assaji*, and asked where to find the Buddha. He then went to tell his close friend, *Moggallana (a.k.a, Golita)*, since the two friends promised each other that if one found a wise teacher first, he would tell the other right away. They went to bid farewell to their master, Sanchai, and then, on to see the Buddha at the monastery in *Veruvana.* The two young Brahmins asked to be ordained and the Buddha agreed to do so.

After having been a monk for seven days, *Moggallana Bhikkhu* went for intensive meditation *in Kallavanamuttakam*, *Magada Region.* He experienced serious sleepiness and torpor. When the Buddha kindly visited him, he taught eight ways for dealing with those symptoms: 1) to contemplate and memorize the Dhamma that one has heard often, 2) to stick something gently in one's ears, 3) to wipe one's body with water, 4) to look around in different directions and upward to the sky, 5) to pay attention to daylight, 6) to do a well-composed walking meditation, 7) to pay attention to perceptions (*Sanna*) that arise, and 8) to lie down on the right side if one does need to nap, and get up immediately upon waking up.

As well, the Buddha taught him, "*Moggallana*, remember, we are not to have pride in our family. We will not be quarrelsome in our speeches. We, as *Samana*s will be contented in our solitude, and not mingle so much with people." *Moggallana* understood the Buddha's words, followed his guidance, and attained Arahantship later on that day.

As for *Sariputta*, after having ordained as a Bhikkhu for fifteen days, the Buddha went to stay in *Sukarakhata Cave, Kitchakud* Mountain. He was visited by a man named *Dighanakha Aggivesana,* a quarrelsome and opinionated person, who said, "If wise men say that having different points of view leads to nothing but

quarrels, why not just have no point of view at all?" The Buddha replied, "*O Aggivesana*! The noble disciple understands that the body, which is made up of the four elements (fire, earth, wind, and water), and is born of and nurtured by natural parents, is impermanent. He sees that which is impermanent is unsatisfactory and devoid of self. He sees that the three feelings that are pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral, should be experienced with equanimity. The noble disciple who understands these would have no passion for arguments. There would be no desire to quarrel." *Sariputta,* who had been sitting in the back and listening, suddenly attained Arahantship. *Dighanakha Aggivesana* became a lay follower and took refuge in the Triple Gems for the rest of his life. *Sariputta* and *Moggallana* later became the Buddha's two chief disciples (literally presiding by his right and left in Sangha assemblies). They were influential and dedicated in further expansion of the Buddha's teachings and the Buddhist Sangha (Community of monastics and lay followers).

After the monastic institution in Magadha was well established, the Buddha wandered through various rural areas, teaching people to follow the Dhamma, and to have faith in moving forward on the path for freedom from suffering by becoming Bhikkhus or Bhikkunis (female monks), or leading a virtuous and happy life as lay people.

The Middle Period of the Buddha's Life

The Ordination of Mahakassapa

Later in Magadha, while the Buddha was teaching the Dhamma, under the *Bahuputtakanigrodha* Tree, he was visited by *Pipphalimanava Kassapagota,* who had left his wealthy family on a spiritual quest (so did his virtuous wife who mutually agreed to follow the same goal independently). He asked, and the Buddha accepted him to ordain as a Bhikkhu in his Sangha. Then, the Buddha kindly gave him the following admonition:

"O Kassapa! Abandon association with those holding wrong views.
Develop the Dhamma you know to be wholesome through your own investigation.
At all times, remain ardently aware and mindful of body, speech, and mind."

When *Mahakassapa* heard the Buddha's words, he understood immediately and became enlightened on the eighth day after his ordination.

An Unplanned Gathering of Disciples on Maghapuja

While the Buddha lived in Rajagaha, an assembly of disciples occurred without any advance planning and communication, on the Full Moon of the third lunar month.

In some Buddhist countries today, Buddhists now regard *Magha Puja* as the Sangha Day, one of the three annual religious holidays in recognition of the third element of the Triple Gems. *Visakha Puja (Visak Day*, now a World Holiday observed by the United Nations) is the most important Buddhist holiday, regarded as the Buddha Day, and *Asalha Puja* being the third most important holiday, in recognition of the precious Dhamma taught by the Buddha, referred to as the Dhamma Day.

The above mentioned largest Sangha assembly at the time is called *Caturangasannipata*, and it had four special features:

1. All of the attending disciples were Arahants.
2. All of the Arahants were ordained personally by the Buddha.
3. Those 1, 250 disciples gathered without prior communication with one another.
4. The sermon that the Buddha gave on that day became known as the *Ovadapatimokkha.*

The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings: The Ovadapatimokkha Principles

As mentioned earlier in this book, *Ovadapatimokkha* in three short phrases, is considered the heart of the Buddha's teachings: **"Do Good, Stop Evil, and Purify Your Mind."**
In the ancient Sanskrit language, *Ovada* means "Morality" and *Patimokkha* means "One who watches over his own conducts).

The Buddha's disciples often remember to teach *Ovadapatimokkha* principles when they wander to teach others, in addition to other Dhamma topics that they felt appropriate. The Buddha left it up to his disciples what to teach. At the Ma-

gapuja gathering, the Buddha taught the *Ovadapatimokkha* every two weeks, until when the monks began the monastic practice of reciting or chanting all of the monastic codes of conduct introduced by the Sangha, called *the Patimokkha*. Today, in many devout monastic communities, monks need to be able to recite periodically to the Sangha assembly, all of the 227 codes of conduct or the *Vinaya*.

Jetavana Monastery Offered by Anabhintaka

In *Rajagaha*, the Buddha and his monastic followers lived in the bamboo forest in *Veluvana* that *King Bimbisara* had given them. However, as described in *Senasanakhandaka***,** that they lived a very simple life, in the outdoor, under trees, on flat or hilly grounds, in caves, graveyards, bushes, and often on piles of straw. That was acceptable, or rather preferred for those homeless renunciants.

Later, came a wealthy young merchant from *Savatthi* in the *Kosol* region, named *Anabhintaka (a.k.a. Suttatha)*. He met the Buddha in *Rajagaha* and felt inspired by the Samana way of life in accordance to the Buddha's guidance. He requested to hear the Dhamma, and the Buddha taught him and his relatives *Anupubbikatha* and the Four Noble Truths. He gained deep insights, attaining the *Sothapanna* stage, or the stream enterer's level of moving forward on the path toward enlightenment. He dedicated himself to be a lay supporter to the Buddha's monastic community, and has been mentioned time and again as exemplary in his generosity or giving. Before departing, he invited the Buddha to journey to his hometown, *Savatthi*. He further inquired about whether and what may be appropriate for building as a more permanent structure or monastery. The Buddha then specified five kinds of monastic dwellings considered suitable from then on:

1. **Vihara**: a monastery
2. **Addhayaga**: a dwelling with a sloping roof on one side
3. **Prasada**: a plain basic two-story building
4. **Hammiya**: a dwelling made of bricks or clay with a roof made of a different material
5. **Guba**: a cave

Prior to the Buddha's arrival to *Savatthi*, Anabhintaka returned ahead and purchased land from Crown Prince Jeta. He commissioned construction of the first *Vihara*, later with the name *Jetavana* as a part of the land purchase agreement with Prince Jeta. *Jetavana* Monastery was then dedicated to the Buddha and Bhikkhus as a set of several permanent structures with small buildings (*Kutis*) for

monastic residents, as well as a larger Dhamma hall for receiving a large number of visitors, teaching and meditation for many Savatthi residents. The Buddha spent a considerable, remaining time in his aging life at Jetavana, which may be regarded today as quite like "The Buddha's corporate headquarters!"

Dedicating Merit to Ancestors

King Bimbisara wished to perform a merit making act dedicated to his ancestors, called in those days, *Pubbapetabli*. As a devout Buddhist, he invited the Buddha and some Bhikkhus to his palace for a meal, followed by robes for monks. The Buddha's words at the ceremony include:

> *All of us remember the support you gave us in the past. We give these gifts to those who died. We will not cry, nor be sad because that will not help the dead, though many cannot help it. These offerings dedicated to the Sangha will have an immediate good effect on those who have just passed away, and reflect well on us.*

Doing *Pubbapetabli* gives support to the living and shows respect and loving kindness towards one's ancestors. Gratitude is a good virtue with good results. So the **Buddha** allowed it.

Delegation of the Ordination Power –To be revised further - Patriya

Once, when the Buddha was living at *Jetavana Vihara*, in Savatthi, a newly faithful Brahman came to ask for ordination. *Sariputta* was assigned to perform an ordination ceremony. In the rural areas, ten monks had to be assembled; but in the countryside only five monks were required. One monk had to be the Preceptor monk to certify the person to be a monk, and the second monk had to inform the Sangha. Nowadays, only these two monks are necessary; they are called *Kammavacacariya* and *Anusavanacariya*, or *Gusuat* (ordination teachers). They announce the ordination three times. If no Bhikkhus object, that candidate becomes a monk. If anyone objects, then he is not ordained. This kind of ordination is called *Natticatutthammauppasampada*, or ordination by the fourth announcement. When the Buddha began to allow this type of ordination he cancelled the *Tisaranagamana* ordination that was earlier allowed.

The Buddha's teaching to Singalamanava

One day the Buddha went to receive alms in Rajagaha and saw a young man named *Singalamanava* who was bowing in four different directions. The Buddha questioned him and was told, "I am paying respect in four directions because my father asked me to do it before he died. I am following his request." The Buddha told him that after purifying oneself, the proper way to pay respect should be in six directions as follows:

1. **Purimadisa**: the East for parents
2. **Dakkhinadisa**: the South for teachers
3. **Pacchimadisa**: the West for wives and children
4. **Uttaradisa**: the North for friends
5. **Hetthimadisa**: the Below direction for subordinates
5. **Uparimadisa**: the Above for virtuous Samanas

Paying a Visit to his Father in Kapilavastu

The Buddha's father, King Suddhodana of Kapilavastu learned that his son, former Prince Siddhartha achieved enlightenment and became the Fully Awakened One, or the Buddha. He dispatched Honorable Garutayi's delegation to Veruvana (Bamboo Forest Residence) in Magadha. Upon having paid homage to the Buddha and having heard his Dhamma, all of them became enlightened and asked for ordination. Not until spring that Garutayi invited and arranged for the Great Master to travel with 20,000 Bhikkhus from Magadha to Kapilavastu for about 1,000 Kilometers, and arrived there after two months.

Many of the older relatives did not give a warm welcome, nor show any respect to the Buddha. It is said that only when some supernatural phenomena took place upon the Buddha's arrival that they bowed down to pay homage to him. The next morning, the Buddha and the monks went on their alms round for food only to be stopped by the King. The Buddha remarked along this line, "*Taking alms offering has long been a virtuous practice by renunciants, to be contented with what's received, to follow wholesome Dhamma, and to avoid unwholesome Dhamma. Such ones who follow the same path will be truly happy in this lifetime and future lifetime."* His father, upon hearing this remark, gained wisdom and became enlightened, and invited the Buddha and his monks into the palace.

The Last Period of Buddha's Life

Buddha Announces his Coming Death after his Enlightenment the Buddha traveled and taught people in houses, settlements, rural areas, and large cities for forty -four years. In the forty-fifth year he spent the rainy season retreat at *Veruvana* Village where he stayed until *Maghamasa*, the third month of the cold season. On the full moon day of *Maghamasa* he announced at *Pavala Cetiya* that he would die in three months.

The Buddha Taught Abhinnadesitadhamma

Afterward the Buddha stayed at *Kutagarasala Mahavana***.** He gave the sermon about the *Abhinnadesitadhamma* (Great Wisdom). He taught that the Dhammas that had his greatest wisdom were the four *Asatipatthanas,* four *Sammappadanas,* four *Iddhipadas*, five *Indriyas,* five *Palas,* seven *Boijjamga,* and the Eightfold Path. Together they are the "*Abhinnadesitadhamma."* He told them to learn them well, enjoy them, practice them and make them better.

The Buddha Taught the Four Noble Dhamma

After that the Buddha went to stay in *Bhandugama Village.* He told the monks that before they learned the four kinds of Noble Dhamma, which were *Sila, Samadhi, Panna,* and *Vimutti* (Precepts, Concentration, Wisdom, Deliverance), they were reborn and died over and over. For those who were fully enlightened, there would be no more rebirths.

The Buddha Taught the Four Mahapadesa about Suttas

After that the Buddha went to stay at *Anandacetiya* in *Bhoganagara.* He gave the *Mahapadesa* or The Great Reference Discourse about the great standards for Suttas. He said that if anyone were to ask a Bhikkhu if something is truthful, they should always examine it by referring to the Suttas and Vinaya. If they were not identical, then they were not the Buddha's teachings. If they were, then they were the Buddha's **authentic** teaching.

The Buddha was growing tired**.** When he arrived at *Pava* City, he and all his followers stayed at *Umbavana*, the mango garden of a man named *Cunda*, who was the son of a goldsmith. *Cunda* came to listen to Dhamma and then invited the

Buddha to come eat on the morning of the next day. The Buddha accepted the invitation. It was only one day before his death. Cunda offered him mushrooms. The Buddha ate the mushrooms but told Cunda to give the Bhikkhus different food. He then told Cunda to bury the leftover mushrooms. Later he had dysentery and began to suffer greatly. The Buddha told Ananda to tell Cunda that his illness had nothing to do with the meal he had just eaten. He then told Ananda to take him to *Kusinara*.

The Buddha's Brightened Face

On the way to *Kusinara*, a man named *Pukkusa*, offered two pieces of cloth. The Buddha told him to give them to Ananda. After Pukkusa left, Ananda offered the cloth to the Buddha. The Buddha wore one piece of the cloth and covered himself with the other as a blanket. His face was shining brightly as he said: *"O Ananda! The Tathagata's body is pure and his face shines brightly twice: once at his Enlightenment and again on the night of his passing away."*

Two Equally Important Offerings

Later on the Buddha said to Ananda, *"O Ananda! There were two food offerings to the Buddha that were the most important: the food offered to him before his Enlightenment and the food offered to him before his passing away."*

The Buddha's Last Remarks before Passing Away

After that the Buddha and the monks crossed the *Hirannavati* River and arrived in *Kusinara* City, into *Salavana.* He then asked Ananda, *"O Ananda! Make my bed. Place the head pointing to the north and put it between two Sala trees. I want to lie down."* The Buddha lied down on his right side with his feet crossed. Ananda, who had served the master and taken care of him for 20 years, was deeply upset and sorrowed. The Buddha consoled him:

> *"O Ananda! Don't grieve. The nature of things dictates that we must leave those dear to us. Everything born contains its own cessation. I too, Ananda, have grown old, and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close, I am reaching eighty years of age, and am just as a worn-out cart which must get much additional maintenance, to be made to move along. Ananda, you might think that after your teacher has passed away*

you will have a teacher no more. Ananda, do not think that way. The Dhamma and Vinaya will be your teacher after I am gone."

When the third quarter of the night approached, the Buddha asked his disciples three times if there were any doubts about the Dhamma Vinaya. The Bhikkhus all stood silent.
"O Ananda! Not one has misgivings. All will eventually reach Enlightenment."

In the last quarter of the night the Buddha said his final words,

"O Listen, Bhikkhus! I say this: all conditioned things are subject to decay. With heedfulness, strive tirelessly for liberation."

This was when the Buddha lied down into his *Pradomanutthanseyya,* the "Last Lying Down to Rest." There was to be no more *Sannamanasikara,* or Rising Up." by the Great Master.

On the first full moon day of the month of *Visakha,* after six years of his quest for ending suffering and forty five years of tirelessly teaching how to end suffering. The Buddha entered into meditational absorptions and entered *Mahaparinirvana* (the Great Passing Away). His body was cremated seven days after his death under the auspices of old *Mahakapassa*.

THE FOUR MOST SACRED PLACES TO VISIT

The Buddha had told Ananda the four most sacred places to visit associated with his life and his teachings, one now in Nepal and three in northeastern India.

1. ***Lumbini,*** in Nepal, is the Buddha's birthplace.
2. ***Bodh Gaya*** was the Buddha's place of enlightenment.
3. **Saranart** was the place of his first teachings, with first enlightened disciples, essentially where he first turned The Wheel of Dhamma.
4. ***Kusinara*** was where the Buddha passed away, his *Parinanibbana.*

All devout Buddhists are encouraged to devote their time and effort for a pilgrimage to these places at least once in your lifetime.

Distribution of the Buddha's Relics

The relics of the Buddha were distributed to the kings and Brahmins of eight kingdoms so that they could be placed in a stupa, or a shrine. The eight cities in northern India which originally received a share of such precious and sacred relics were:

1. Kapilavasthu
2. Allakappanagara
3. Ramagama
4. Rajagaha
5. Vesali
6. Vetthadipaka
7. Pava
8. Kusinara

These relics were further divided up later after King Asoka decided to build 84,000 stupas. The Buddha's relics are now distributed throughout Asia and elsewhere in America, Europe and other continents.

The Period after the Buddha's passing: Validating His Teachings

After the Buddha's Mahaparinibbana, the Sangha community started to forget or members were in disagreement in exactly what the Buddha taught, including what of and how to adhere to the codes of monastic conduct (Vinaya). Efforts were initiated by his key disciples to create Dhamma Councils made up Arahants who had mastered and practiced the Dhamma during the Buddha time. The Council recited all of the Buddha's teachings, in the process clarifying and agreeing upon "The Path of the Sangha" or *Sanghayana.* Thus, the authentic teachings of Gautama Buddha have been preserved and handed down to us and are to be found in the **Tipitaka**, which means in the Pali language, 'the three baskets.' The Buddha's teachings were divided into three parts:

1. The Vinaya Piṭaka contains all of monastic codes of conduct which Buddha laid down.
2. The Suttanta Pitaka contains the Buddha's discourses.
3. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka comprises the higher level of psycho-ethical teachings of the Buddha.

The First Sangayana

The Buddha had told *Ananda* before his passing away this:

> *"O Ananda! The Dhamma Vinaya I have given to you will be your teacher after my passing away. It will be necessary to hold an assembly to do a Sangayana (literally: the path of the Sangha) in order to collect all the Dhamma and Vinaya that I have given you in the last forty-five years. It must be organized into a complete set of rules for behavior and practice."*

After the Buddha's cremation, *Mahakassapa* made a reference to an old monk, *Subhadda* who took the liberty in saying, "Now that the Buddha is dead we can do whatever we want to do." He said he could do as he wished and did not have to follow the *Dhamma Vinaya*. *Mahakassapa* cited this monk as an example to illustrate potential harms to the Buddha's teachings**.** He persuaded enlightened Bhikkhus, or *Arahants*, to convene a *Sangayana,* a convention to codify the *Dhamma Vinaya*. Five hundred *Arahants* were invited to attend. The first convention was held three months after the Buddha passed away and it lasted seven months.

The Second Sangayana

One hundred years after the Buddha's Passing, the Bhikkhus of *Vajjiputta Vesali* listed ten codes of conduct that differed from the *Dhamma Vinaya.* Many monks agreed with them. Thus, seven hundred Arahants presided over by *Yasakakantaputt*a met at *Vesali* City, in
Valikaram, to consider these ten conflicting interpretations of the codes of conduct. The *Dhamma Vinaya* was verified and agreed upon by the Sangha. This convention lasted eight months.

The Third Sangayana

Two hundred and eighteen years after the Buddha's Passing, in the reign of King *Asoka, of Pataliputta*, there were a considerable number of adherents of another religion who regarded themselves as Buddhist Monks. Their conduct was clearly not in accord with the Dhamma Vinaya. Elder *Moggallanatissathera*, with the

support of King *Asoka,* banished them from the order. Then, he assembled one thousand Arahants to convene the third *Sangayana* which lasted for nine months.

Historical records indicate that there were at least three more conventions held for ensuring that the Buddha's original teachings remain pure and clearly understood by his subsequent Sangha members over time. Students of Dhamma Studies may find it worthwhile checking up what the other three conventions were all about, when, where and by whom.

Revision Materials for Dhamma Studies (Elementary Level)
Chapter 1: Introduction to Buddhist ceremonies (*sasanabidhi*)

Religious ceremonies are traditional procedures that are practiced in the context of various religions, especially in Buddhism where Thai people refer to them as '*sāsana-bidhi*'. Usually, ceremonies are invented later after the founding of any religion.

Origin of Buddhist ceremonies
Ceremonies probably first occurred in Buddhism with the assembly of 1,250 monks on the occasion of Magha Puja Day – to honour the teaching of the Ovadapatimokkha's heart of the Buddhist teaching, namely:

1. Abstaining from all evil behavior
2. Cultivating good deeds
3. Purifying the mind

When Buddhists cultivate various sorts of good deeds, they have the objective to generate merit according to the three meritorious actions [*puññakiriyavatthu*] of:

1. Generosity [*dāna*]
2. Self-discipline of physical and verbal actions [*sila*]
3. Meditational practices to make the mind radiant [*bhāvanā*]

These three meritorious actions are elaborated into ceremonies and rites, that structure regular opportunities to cultivate merits in Buddhists' lives.

Benefits brought by Buddhist ceremonies
1. Gives participants the opportunity to cultivate merits such as generosity
2. Encourages Buddhist unity
3. Maintains time-worn traditions
4. Fosters humility in participants and inspiration in onlookers
5. Facilitates enlightenment

Four categories of Buddhist ceremonies
The four categories of Buddhist ceremonies covered in this examination are:
1. Wholesomeness ceremonies [*kusala-bidhi*]
2. Merit Ceremonies [*puñña-bidhi* or *boon-bidhi*]
3. Alms-offering ceremonies [*dāna-bidhi*]
4. Miscellaneous Ceremonies [*pakinaka-bidhi*]

Chapter 2: Wholesomeness Ceremonies [*kusala-bidhi*]

Wholesome ceremonies that help people instill themselves with goodness, and are of three types:

1. Ceremony to declare oneself a Buddhist
2. Requesting Uposathasila or Eight Precepts
3. Circumambulating with candles on a festival day

Ceremony to declare oneself a Buddhist [*buddha-māmaka*]

The *buddha-māmaka* ceremony is a way in which a person can confirm themselves as a Buddhist. It is a ceremony that started in the time of the Buddha. The first people to participate in this rite were Tapussa and Bhallika who went for refuge in the Buddha and Dhamma for the rest of their lives.

Thai *buddha-māmaka* tradition

Thailand's King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) once expressed his concern that his own children who went abroad to study would lose their Buddhist religion. He therefore had his students undergo the *buddha-māmaka* ceremony beforehand. The crown prince at the time [later Rama IV (Vajiravudh)] was first to participate in the ceremony in 1898, and has been a royal tradition since then.

Suitable occasions for the *buddha-māmaka* ceremony

1. Children reaching 12-15 years, who can then perpetuate Buddhism within their family
2. Before children go away to study or will be separated extendedly from their family
3. To instil Buddhist confidence in young people, possibly as part of the school curriculum
4. For those converting from another religion

Preparation for declaring oneself a *buddha-māmaka*

1. Those intending to take refuge should inform a temple in advance, to find out the date and time of the ceremony and have the chance to invite four monks to witness the ceremony
2. To prepare the ceremony area, there should be a shrine table with flowers, candles and incense
3. The participant should dress smartly and modestly in white, in school uniform or in professional uniform
4. Prepare flowers, candles and incense and/or requisites to offer to the monks

Procedure for the *buddha-māmaka* ceremony

The candidate enters the ceremony area and invites the four monks to sit. The candles and incense are lit. Homage is paid to the Triple Gem with the words:

Imina sakkarena buddham pujemi (I pay homage to the Buddha with these offerings), bow once
Imina sakkarena dhammam pujemi (I pay homage to the Dhamma with these offerings), bow once
Imina sakkarena sangham pujemi (I pay homage to the Buddha with these offerings), bow once

The candidate goes toward the seated monks, offers requisites and bows three times. Then with hands in a gesture of prayer chants *Namo* etc. three times as follows:

Namo tassa bhagavato arahanto sammā sambuddhassa (three times)

Verses of Buddhist Confirmation

Esahaṃ bhante, suciraparinibutampi, taṃ bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma, dhammañca sanghañca, buddhamāmakoti[1] maṃ saṅgho dhāretu. Venerable Sirs, we go for refuge to that Blessed One, who though long ago has passed away, as well as his Teaching and the Holy Order of the Saṅgha. May the Saṅgha graciously recognize us as followers of the Buddha, for the rest of our lives.

Dutiyampi esahaṃ bhante, suciraparinibutampi, taṃ bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma, dhammañca sanghañca, buddhamāmakoti[1] maṃ saṅgho dhāretu. Venerable Sirs, we go for refuge to that Blessed One, who though long ago has passed away, as well as his Teaching and the Holy Order of the Saṅgha. May the Saṅgha graciously recognize us as followers of the Buddha, for the rest of our lives.

Tatiyampi esahaṃ bhante, suciraparinibutampi, taṃ bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma, dhammañca sanghañca, buddhamāmakoti[1] maṃ saṅgho dhāretu. Venerable Sirs, we go for refuge to that Blessed One, who though long ago has passed away, as well as his Teaching and the Holy Order of the Saṅgha. May the Saṅgha graciously recognize us as followers of the Buddha, for the rest of our lives.

1. for ladies: change *buddhamāmakoti* to *buddhamāmakāti*

Requesting the Five Precepts

{Mayaṃ bhante visuṃ visuṃ rakkhaṇatthāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāma, dutiyaṃ pi mayaṃ bhante visuṃ visuṃ rakkhaṇatthāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāma, tatiyaṃ pi mayaṃ bhante visuṃ visuṃ rakkhaṇatthāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāma}

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa (three times)

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyaṃ pi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Dutiyaṃ pi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Dutiyaṃ pi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyaṃ pi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Tatiyaṃ pi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Tatiyaṃ pi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

bhikkhu: Tisaraṇagamaṇaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ
laity respond: āma bhante

Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
Adinnādānā veramaṇī, sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī, sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
Musāvādā veramaṇī, sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī, sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi

The presiding monk finishes by declaring "Imani panca sikkhapadani (samadiyami), silena sugatim yanti, silena bhogasampada, silena nibbutim yanti, tasma silam visodhaye"

The candidate says 'Sadhu' and bows three times.
The candidate may offer requisites to the monks at this time
If the monks give a blessing at this time, the candidate can pour water to dedicate merit at this time.

Ceremony to request Uposatha / Eight Precepts
The word '*uposatha*' literally means 'taking training upon oneself' it is a skilful means by which gross defilements can be reduced. It is a way by which Buddhists can train themselves, especially on full, new or quarter moon days (*wan phra*) or 'sabbath' days designated for keeping Eight Precepts.

Two sorts of 'Uposatha'
1. Regular Uposatha [*pakati-uposatha*] which refers to Eight Precepts being kept for 24 hours, on regular occasions as dictated by the moon phases
2. Special Uposatha [*patijāga-uposatha*] which refers to Eight Precepts being kept for 72 hours, on special occasions where a person keeps eight precepts for one day before the target day and for one day afterwards.

Requesting Eight Precepts
Keeping Eight Precepts is exactly the same as keeping *uposatha-sila* in content. The difference is only between the length of time the precepts are supposed to be kept. For *uposatha-sila*, the length of time is for one day or three days. For eight precepts, the length of time is unspecified. If the eight precepts are to be requested from a monk, the following words can be used:

{Mayaṃ bhante tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāma, dutiyaṃ pi mayaṃ bhante tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāma, tatiyaṃ pi mayaṃ bhante tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāma}

Vowing to keep Uposatha-sila
On the day when a person intends to uphold uposatha-sila, they should wake up early in the morning, take a shower, then go before their home shrine in order to make the resolve to uphold uposatha-sila, with the words:

Imam atthanga-samannagatam, Buddha-paññattam uposatham, Imañca rattim imañca divas am, sammadeva abhirakkhitum samadiyami (I undertake to maintain, perfect and pure for today and tonight, this uposatha observance formulated by the Buddha and composed of eight factors.)

Having taken the uposatha observance, after taking a meal, food can be prepared to offer as alms at a nearby temple. At the temple, the taking of uposatha-sila can be requested again from a monk, using the following words:

Mayam bhante ti-saranena saha atthanga-samannagatam uposatham yacami Venerable sir, I request the eight-factored *uposatha* observance together with the Three Refuges.

Dutiyampi mayam bhante... yacami A second time...
Tatiyampi mayam bhante... yacami A third time...

The content of the Eight precepts or uposatha-sila is as follows:

1. *Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures)
2. *Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.)
3. *Abrahma-cariya veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual activity.)
4. *Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.)
5. *Sura-meraya-majja-pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness)
6. *Vikala-bhojana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from eating at the forbidden time [i.e., after noon])
7. *Nacca-gita-vadita-visuka-dassana mala-gandha-vilepana-dharana-mandana-vibhusanatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments, wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics)
8. *Uccasayana-mahasayana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami* (I undertake the precept to refrain from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place)

Relinquishing Uposatha-sila

Having kept observed the uposatha at the temple all day, before returning home, the Buddhist should take leave of their precepts by uttering the words before a member of the monastic community as follows:

Handatani mayam bhante, apucchami, bahukicca mayam bahukaraniya

The member of the monastic community should respond:

Yassadani tumhe kalam maññatha

The Buddhist should reply:

Sadhu, bhante

And then bow three times, to complete the procedure.

Candlelit circumambulation on important Buddhist festivals

Candlelit circumambulation (in Thai, *wian-tian*) means that Buddhist monks, novices, laymen and laywomen put their hands together in a gesture of prayer and, with a candle, incense or flowers will proceed in an orderly fashion three times clockwise around an important Buddhist location such a chapel, pavilion or pagoda – in order to recollect the virtues of the Triple Gem. Important festivals in the Buddhist calendar when this might take place are:

1. Magha Puja Day
2. Visakha Puja Day
3. Atthami Puja Day
4. Asalha Puja Day

Magha Puja Day

Magha Puja Day takes place on the full moon day of the third lunar month (or on the same day of the fourth lunar month for *athikamas*[1] years). It commemorates the event nine months into the dispensation of the Buddha when he gathered his disciples to hear the Ovadapatimokkha teaching and was marked by four notable features [in Thai *jaturonga-sannipata*]:

1. 1,250 monks attended, all of whom were arahants.
2. Those monks were personally ordained by the Buddha.
3. The monks came to the meeting spontaneously without needing an appointment
4. It was the full-moon day of the third lunar month

Magha Puja Day is sometimes known as 'Dhamma Day'.

Visakha Puja Day

Visakha Puja Day (a.k.a Vesak Day) is held on the full moon day of the sixth[2] lunar month. It commemorates the anniversary of the day on which the Buddha was born, attained enlightenment, and passed away. It has been internationally recognized by the United Nations since 15 December 1999. It is sometimes known as 'Buddha Day'.

Atthami Puja Day

Atthami Puja Day commemorates on the eighth night following Visakha Puja Day. It commemorates the day the Buddha was cremated.

Asalha Puja Day

Asalha Puja Day is held on the full moon day of the eighth lunar month, one day before the start of Buddhist Lent. It commemorates the anniversary of the day the Buddha gave his first teaching – namely that of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta. Because it was the first time a monk could reach a transcendental attainment, completing the Triple Gem, it is sometimes known as 'Sangha Day'.

Procedure for candlelit circumambulation

On the festival day, Buddhists generally bring food to offer at the temple during the day – taking the opportunity to practice generosity, keep the precepts and cultivate meditation. In the evening, they would prepare for candlelit circumambulation as follows:

1. Arrive in good time at the ceremony area.
2. Perform evening chanting, meditate, and hear a Dhamma talk.
3. At the appropriate time, the monks form an orderly procession in front of the line of lay supporters
4. Candles are lit for circling around the pagoda, Buddha statue or chapel
5. Everyone maintains mindfulness as they make a sedate clockwise circumambulation, with hands in a gesture of prayer, while carrying a bunch of flowers and with candles and incense.
6. While walking, they may chant 'Iti pi so…' in homage to the Triple Gem.
7. Having made three circuits, the candles, incense and flowers may be placed on a shrine, marking the end of the ceremony.

[1] Years for which the Thai calendar deems there to be 13 lunar months

[2] Seventh lunar month for *athikamas* years

Chapter 3. Merit Ceremonies (puñña-pidhi)

Merit ceremonies are tradition ways in which Thai Buddhists integrate auspiciousness and prosperity into their everyday lives. They may include ceremonies such as housewarming blessings, a birthday celebration, or a memorial. Merit ceremonies can be divided into:

1. Celebratory Merit ceremonies [*ngan mongkol*]
2. Funerary Merit ceremonies [*ngan avamongkol*]

There are two types of participants in merit ceremonies:

1. members of the monastic community, the recipients of merit-making gifts [*patigahaka*]
2. members of the lay community, those who offer merit-making gifts [*dayaka*]

Celebratory Merit-making ceremonies

As an example of a celebratory merit-making ceremony, a good example is a 'house-warming' blessing for the blessing of a new house, where a number of monks is invited to chant a blessing at the house of a lay supporter. The same procedure might take place on a birthday or another auspicious rite of passage. For such a category of ceremony, the members of the lay community need to make sure they make certain preparations in advance:

1. Inviting the monks who will perform the chanting. For celebratory merit ceremonies doing chanting is referred to in Thai as '*charoen phra-puttha-mon*'. For memorial merit ceremonies, doing chanting is referred to in Thai as '*suat phra-puttha-mon*'. It is traditional to invite an odd number of monks, usually of five or more.
2. Prepare the Buddha statue and offerings. The shrine table should be made up of 5, 7 or 9 tables.
3. The ceremony should be made clean and orderly and decorated
4. A sacred thread (white, made up of nine strands) should be put up around the ceremony area
5. Lay sitting mats [*asana*] equal to the number of monks invited
6. Prepare refreshments to receive the monks
7. Prepare a container to receive holy water [*nam mon*]
8. Prepare a midday meal and requisites to offer the invited monks

Procedure for a celebratory merit-making ceremony

1. Invite the monks to sit at the places prepared
2. Offer refreshments – which might include tea, warm water, iced water (but not betel nut or cigarettes)
3. When it is time to start the ceremony, lighting the candles and incense on the shrine
4. Request and take the five precepts
5. Request the protection [*paritta*] chanting
6. Sit down to listen to the chanting
7. Say the verses for offering a meal to the monastic community [*sanghadana*], offer food to the monks
8. One of the lay community should attend the monks as they are eating to ask if there is anything else required
9. Once the monks have finished the meal, the lay community should prepare requisites for offering
10. The monks chant a blessing, while a representative of the lay community pours water to dedicate merit when they hear the Pali chanting of the words '*Yatha varivaha…*' bringing the ceremony to an end.

Procedure for a funerary merit-making ceremonies

Funeral merit-making ceremonies include funerals and memorial ceremonies. There are two broad categories of funeral ceremonies:

1. A funeral ceremony takes place before the deceased is cremated or interred [*tam boon nah sop*].[3] According to Buddhist tradition, this category of ceremony can take place seven days [*sattama-vāra*], fifty days [*paññāsama-vāra*] or 100 days [*satama-vāra*] after death.
2. A memorial ceremony takes place after the deceased is cremated or interred [*tam boon atthi*] A memorial is held on the anniversary of the death

Funeral ceremony

Sometimes the ceremony takes place in a home or a funeral parlor (if the casket is displayed) or can take place separately at a temple pavilion. Preparations the host of the ceremony needs to make are as follows:

1. Invitation of an even number of monks, usually of four or more.
2. No need for holy water container or sacred thread
3. A 'tether cloth' [*sai-yoang* or *phussa-yoang*][4] is used to connect between the casket (or a picture of the deceased) and the place where the offering of 'picked up robes' [*pah bangsakul*] is going to be made

The etiquette for hospitality for monks is the same as for the celebratory merit-making ceremonies. In the old days the stick of incense would be lit in front of the casket (or picture of the deceased) before the candles and incense are lit on the main shrine (to make sure the spirit of the deceased is alert to paying homage to the Triple Gem, requesting the precepts, hearing the chanting, hearing the sermon and offering of 'picked-up' robes). However, in the present day, normally the incense for the deceased is lit after the candles and incense on the main shrine have been lit. Traditional chanting chosen for funerals would be as follows:[5]

- 7 day chanting uses the Anattalakkhana Sutta
- 50 day chanting uses the Adittapariyaya Sutta
- 100 day chanting uses the Dhammaniyama Sutta

Although this is at the discretion of the monk leading the chanting or the preferences of the funeral sponsor

Memorial ceremony

A memorial ceremony is one held after the deceased is cremated or interred [*tam boon atthi*] on the anniversary of their death. The lay hosts for the memorial ceremony should prepare in the same way as for a funeral ceremony – except for replacing the casket with a picture of the deceased or an urn of their ashes. This should not be placed on the main shrine, but placed apart but connected to the place for offering robes by a 'tether cloth' or sacred thread. Monks should chant the Anattalakkhana, Adittapariyaya or Dhammaniyama Suttas (see footnote 5).

[3] For most people except royalty, the cremation takes place after seven days and the 50 and 100-day ceremonies are technically memorials

[4] A strip of cloth 2 or 3 inches across, but several yards long

[5] More generally temples use Abhidhamma (first 7 days), Mattika (50 days and 100 days), Dhammaniyama Sutta (anniversaries)

Chapter 4. Alms ceremonies [*dāna-pidhi*]

This section includes the various sorts of ceremonies in the category of almsgiving [*dāna-pidhi*] – ceremonies that involve presentation of material gifts of various sorts. Buddhism lists 10 forms of gifts appropriate for presentation to the monastic community:

1. Almsfood [*bhattāhāra*]
2. Water or drinks permissable for monastic consumption.
3. Cloth or robes
4. Vehicles, a ride or fares for public transportation [*yāna-pāhana*]
5. Flowers or adornments for a shrine
6. Fragrant items – specifically incense
7. Soap or toiletries
8. Bedclothes permissible for monastic use
9. Accommodation or the use of accommodation
10. Lanterns, lights, candles or lighting products

Alms-giving
There are two types of alms-giving in Buddhism:

1. *Pātipuggalika-dāna* is alms given as a personal gift to a certain monk or a particular person.
2. *Sangha-dāna* means giving alms to the monks or the public for shared use.

Of the two, giving for the community is said to yield greater merit to the giver, because it means that the giver is more broad-minded.

Timing of Offering
There are two categories of timing for almsgiving:

1. *Kāla-dāna* means giving alms that (for whatever reason) can only be accepted at a particular time – such as the offering of Kathina robes
2. *Akāla-dāna* means giving alms that can be accepted at any time the giver feels like it

Ceremony procedure for offering alms to the monastic community
1. The giver is inspired to offer alms
2. They prepare the gift to be offered as alms
3. The person makes it known to the monks [*padiang-song*] that alms are to be offered and makes an appointment with the monks to do so.
4. When the monks and the almsgivers are ready in the same place, they should do the following:
   a. The almsgiver lights candles and incense on the shrine and pays homage to the Triple Gem
   b. The almsgiver requests and receives the five precepts
   c. The almsgiver says the verses for offering alms to the monastic community
   d. If the alms are not too big, they can be presented to the monks. If the alms are too big (e.g. a vehicle, a piece of land), a token of the gift may be offered (e.g. the keys, water poured symbolically over the monk's hands onto the property)
   e. The monks give a blessing in the Pali language
5. The almsgiver pours water to dedicate merit while listening to the Pali blessing, then puts hands in a gesture of prayer for the remainder of the blessing. The almsgiver then bows to the monks, concluding the ceremony

Verses for making an Offering to the Sangha

Imāni mayaṃ bhante, bhattāni/saṅghadānāni, saparivārāni, bhikkhusaṅghassa, oṇojayāma, sādhu no bhante, bhikkhusaṅgho, imāni, bhattāni/saṅghadānāni, saparivārāni, paṭiggaṇhātu, amhākaṃ, dīgharattaṃ, hitāya, sukhāya, nibbānāya ca.

On this occasion, venerable monks, we seek your permission, to offer this meal to the monastic community, together with its associated gifts. May the monastic community receive this meal and these gifts from us, for our everlasting benefit, happiness and attainment of Nirvana.

Note for othe offering of other things swap out the words bhattani/sanghadanani and meal respectively with the following terms:

1. *Mataka-bhattani* …….. meal offered in honour of parents
2. *Salaka bhattani*…….. for a gift offered by drawing lots
3. *Tandulani*…….. for rice
4. *Vassikasadikani*……..for rainy season bathing cloth
5. *Vassikasika-civarani*……..for rainy season robes
6. *Pamsakula-civarani*……..for ‘picked-up’ robes

Verses for the offering of Kathina Robes

Imaṃ mayaṃ bhante, saparivāraṃ, kaṭhinacīvaradussaṃ, saṅghassa, oṇojayāma, sādhu no bhante, bhikkhusaṅgho, imaṃ saparivāraṃ, kaṭhinadussaṃ, paṭiggaṇhātu, paṭiggahetvā ca, iminā dussena, kaṭhinaṃ, attharatu, amhākaṃ dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāya nibbānāya ca.

All of us gathered here today would like to humbly offer this Kathina robe, as well as the associated gifts to the monastic community. May the venerable monks please accept this Kathina robe, as well as the associated gifts, and having received it, subject the robe to the proper procedure for allocation, for our wellbeing, happiness and attainment of Nirvana.

Chapter 5. Miscellaneous Ceremonies [*pakinaka-bidhi*]

The remainder of Buddhist ceremonies not already considered in the previous chapters are brought together in the catch-all category of 'miscellaneous ceremonies' and include five ceremonies:

1. Paying homage to monks
2. Presenting an offering to a monk
3. Written format to invite monks or pledge a donation
4. Requesting the Precepts, Protection Chanting & a Teaching
5. Pouring water in dedication

Paying homage to monks
Expressing respect by bowing in practiced by Buddhists toward:

1. A Buddha statue, a pagoda [*stūpa*]
2. A Buddhist monk or novice

Paying homage is of three styles: putting one's hands in a gesture of prayer, saluting with hands in a gesture of prayer and bowing.

Putting one's hands in a gesture of prayer
The hands are joined in a gesture of prayer (fingers straight) in the form of a lotus bud and positioned at 45 degrees to the centre of the chest. Such a gesture can be used when chanting or listening to a monk's advice. It is applied the same by male and female alike and in Pali language is known as '*añjalī*'.

Saluting with hands in a gesture of prayer
Saluting with hands in a gesture of prayer starts the same as 'putting one's hands in a gesture of prayer' (see previous) but involves raising the tips of one's thumbs to the brow (tips of index fingers touching the forehead) while bowing one's head slightly forward. It can be used to express respect while sitting on a chair or standing. It is applied the same by male and female alike and in Pali language is known as '*vandanā*' or '*namasakāra*'.

Bowing
Bowing is the highest expression of respect which involves bringing five parts of the body in contact with the ground at the same time (two palms, two knees and the forehead, i.e. a five-point bow) known in Thai as *pañca-anga-pradit*. In the diagrams below, note that males are females traditional have slightly differences in the correct bowing postures. Bowing consists of going through the sequence of steps in the diagrams below, three times.

1. Starting posture

Figure 1.
The gentlemens' kneeling position in readiness for paying respect.

Figure 2.
The ladies' kneeling position in readiness for paying respect.

2. Putting hands in a gesture of prayer [*añjalī*]

Figure 3. First step: Gentlemen kneel, taking their weight on their knees and sitting back on their raised heels. The palms are brought together loosely, at an angle of about 45° to the middle of the chest. The back and head are erect.

Figure 4. First step: Ladies kneel, resting on their shins with their feet flat to the ground. The palms are brought together loosely, at an angle of about 45° to the middle of the chest. The back and head are erect.

3. Saluting with hands in a gesture of prayer [*vandanā* or *namasakāra*]

Figure 5. Second step: With the head still erect, gentlemen raise the joined palms to touch the central point between the eyebrows with both thumbs.

Figure 6. Second step: While still seated on flattened uppers, ladies should incline their head slightly forward, raising the thumbs of the joined hands to touch the central point between their eyebrows.

4. Bowing [*abhivāda*]

Figure 7. Third step: Gentlemen should bend forward, gradually moving the hands apart the distance of about one palms-width. The palms are turned face down until the elbows meet the knees and the forehead touches the floor between the hands.

Figure 8. Third step: Ladies should bend forwards, gradually moving the hands apart the distance of about one palms-width. The palms are turned face down until the elbows meet the ground just outside the knees and the forehead touches the floor between the hands.

Presenting an offering to a monk

The act of intentionally offering something to a monk in Thai is known as '*prakaen*'. There are five considerations when correctly offering something to a monk:

1. The items to be offered must not be too large or heavy to be lifted.
2. The person making the offering must be within arms-reach of the monk, but not too close
3. When making the offering, the gift must be lifted briefly off the ground
4. The gift must be offered with an attitude of respect.

5. The monk must receive the gift by his hand or (in case of a female making the offering) by an offering cloth held in his hand

Written invitations or pledges to monks

An invitation to the monastic community to attend a function is known in Thai as '*ārādhanā*'. Although in former days, such invitations would have been verbal, in the present day they can be made in writing. An invitation to invite monks should stipulate the number of monks required, the purpose of the invitation, the sort of ceremony, the address of the ceremony location, the date and the contact details of the host. A sample written invitation might look like this:

> **RE: Invitation to the monastic community**
> I would like to invite…monks in order to …….., in conducting a …….. ceremony, at the following address ……, on the following date and time …….. If you have any further queries, please contact me on at the following phone number …….

If someone decides to invite monks to a ceremony, it is tradition to remunerate the monks by offering requisites and some sort of financial donation. Although these days, most monks are able to receive a financial donation in an envelope, in some traditional Dhammayuttika denomination temples (favoured by the Dhamma Studies examiners), money must be pledged in writing, and the actual envelope given to a temple attendant who looks after the monks' or temple finances. In such a case the written donation pledge might look like this:

> **RE: Donation Pledge Note**
> I hereby pledge to offer a donation to the monastic community in the amount $…….. If a member of the monastic community wishes to use this donation (for something appropriate for monastic consumption), please notify your attendant who is holding over this money for you.

The attendant is officially known in Thai language as a '*veyyāvacakorn*'. If they are a disciple of the monk they are sometimes known in Thai as a '*kappiyakāraka*'

Verses of Request

Requesting five precepts

For the Pali words for requesting Five Precepts see Chapter 2 above after the verses of Buddhist Confirmation.

Requesting protection chanting [paritta]

Vipattipaṭibāhāya
Sabbasampattisiddhiyā
Sabbadukkhavināsāya
Parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ
Vipattipaṭibāhāya
Sabbasampattisiddhiyā
Sabbabhayavināsāya
Parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ
Vipattipaṭibāhāya
Sabbasampattisiddhiyā
Sabbarogavināsāya
Parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ

Requesting a Dhamma Teaching

When a monk is to be formally invited to give a Dhamma sermon, the following Pali formula should be used (for example at a funeral ceremony):

Brahmā ca lokādhipatī sahampati
Katañjalī andhivaraṃ ayācatha
Santīdha sattāpparajakkhajātikā
Desetu dhammaṃ anukampimaṃ pajaṃ

Pouring water to dedicate merit

Pouring water from a bottle or jug into a bowl is a symbolic way by which Buddhists can dedicate merit for loved ones who have passed away. The ceremony of pouring water has three main objectives:

1. To transfer merit to relatives who have passed away – those to whom we have a debt of gratitude, such as our late parents – as a way to repay that debt of gratitude
2. It is a way to channel merits that we have already accrued in other ways, toward wholesome outcomes such as better health or attainment of Nirvana
3. It may be used a way to donate a large or heavy offering to a recipient by pouring onto the recipient's hand

Procedure for pouring water to dedicate merit

1. Fill a bottle or jug with clean water and a bowl or glass as a receptacle
2. When the monks giving the blessing start to chant the words "*Yathā vārivahā…*" start to slowly pour the water (two handedly) while thinking of the late relatives you wish to receive the merit
3. When the monks giving the blessing reach the part of chanting with '*sabbītiyo*…' the remainder of the water should be poured out
4. After the ceremony is finished, the water can be taken outside to pour at the root of a tree
5. If you wish to dedicate merit and there is no water available, sit for meditation and dedicate merit simply by making the intention and thinking of the names or faces of loved ones you wish to receive merit

Abbreviated verses for dedicating merit

Idaṃ no ñātinaṃ hotu sukhitā hontu ñātayo
May this merit accrue to all my (deceased) relatives.
May all my (deceased) relatives be happy.

Vinaya Subject

Introduction

In Buddhist teachings, **Vinaya** tends to refer more strictly to disciplinary rules or codes of conduct for *Samana* or monastics (monks and nuns who have chosen to leave the worldly life to become renunciants). We tend to refer to rules or codes of ethical or moral conduct for lay people or householders as precepts or **Sila**.

Siladhamma translates as Moral Teaching, and Buddhist adherents follow five precepts (*Benjasila* or *Panjasila*, or *Sila* in short). Compared to lay people, *Samanas* are expected to lead a more disciplined yet simpler life, to accelerate their Dhamma training and to lead by example of their renunciation in accordance to the Buddha's way. Nuns observe to ten precepts and monks are to follow 227 precepts strictly according to the Vinaya. In this ensuing section, we will cover more specifics of the *Sila* relevant to lay people, not the *Vinaya* or monastic codes of conduct.

Sila

As Buddhists, to develop ourselves well on the Dhamma path toward being free from suffering, the Buddha taught us to cultivate our skills in three areas: *Sila* (precepts), *Samadhi* (concentration), and *Panna* (wisdom). As we try to lead a more virtuous and mindful life, we become more calm and clear in our mind; in turn, that helps us gain concentration in our meditation practice. Meditation helps us be more mindful and more wise in seeing the truth of impermanence and not self in ourselves and the world around us, leading the way to less and less suffering.

The Buddha tirelessly advised us all to observe the *Sila*, as seen in numerous discourses by the Buddha, one of which is in *Khuddakanikaya Itivuttaka*, as follows:

> **Silam Rakheyya Medhavim**
> "Wise men should observe the precepts."

Sila or precepts are essential for Buddhists to follow, perhaps similarly to commandments for Christians. The Buddha, however did not command us to follow

certain do's and don'ts, rather, he pointed out for us to gain wisdom in experiencing life with *Sila*, with better results than not following them.

The Five Precepts

The Five Precepts are sometimes referred to as *The Path to Happiness* or *Sikkhapada.* If we choose to adhere to the above moral codes of conduct, we are more likely to sustain a happy life.

1. To abstain from taking life (killing)
2. To abstain from taking what is not given (stealing)
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct
4. To abstain from false and harmful speeches
5. To abstain from intoxicants that cause carelessness

Some devout lay people in Buddhist countries may even take the Eight Precepts *(Attha Sila*) on Lunar Observance Day (*Wan Prah*) and/or during rain retreats and/or special occasions. In addition to the common five, the other three precepts are: no meal after noon (except beverage and a few allowable items), no adornment with cosmetics and jewelry, and no sleeping on high and luxurious mattresses. Why these additional three precepts? We from time to time benefit from additional training to reduce our defilements (*Kilesa*) by cutting down on material life that enhances focuses on the external world, and less on inner development with less emphasis on the sense of self (*Atta*).

The S*ila* and *Kalaynanadhamma* (the Enobling Virtues) go together. *Kalaynanadhamma* include:

1. Kindness
2. Wholesome living
3. Proper sexual conduct
4. Honesty
5. Clear Mind

The First Precept

Panatipata Veramani: Abstaining from harming or killing living creatures.
By doing so, one gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression to countless sentient beings, including one's self. Buddhists are taught to try to preserve lives of all creatures, human or otherwise. The most heinous crime and its subsequent bad *Kamma* has been described in the "Group of Five" section called *Anantariyakamma*: Five Deeds with Immediate Consequences.

The Second Precept

Adinnadana Veramani: Abstaining from stealing or taking that which not given to you.
Trading of stolen goods, bribery and corruption may fall in violation of this precept. Intentional destruction or use without a permission of other people's property is also not allowed under this precept. These unwholesome acts lead to agitation, guilt, fear, misery, and lack of peace of mind, leading toward a degenerating life, not to mention imprisonment, fines and other negative consequences or bad *Kamma*.

The Third Precept

Kamesumicchacara Veramani: Abstaining from sexual misconduct.
Sexual misconduct refers to inappropriate sexual relationships with inappropriate individuals. Rape is the worst of all because such a violent crime hurts the victim physically and psychologically. There three kinds of sexual misconducts are based on with whom:

with someone else's spouse or partner
with a child or a minor under guardianship
with a nun, or a monk or an eight-preceptor, or someone who has taken a vow of celibacy

The Fourth Precept

Musavada Veramani: Abstaining from false, harmful and trivial speeches
These include a wide range of unwholesome verbal conducts and other communications, including by speaking, writing, signaling or gestures. Specific examples of *Musa* are:

malicious or intimidating speech
deceptive speech with an intention to mislead
insincere praise or flattery
talking at an appropriate time (e.g., during a Dhamma talk)
straight and white lies
rude, disrespectful and swearing speeches
giving out false or misleading information
breaking a promise
intentionally hurt someone through unkind words
10. unmindful in chatting away on trivial conversations

Musavada, or unwholesome speeches that can lead to bad consequences to one's self and the community. It wastes a lot of time while agitating our mind. It is a frequent cause for breaking up a relationship and friendship. One should also be mindful in talking to people who deserve to be respected and honored, such as to one's parents, teachers, Bhikkhus, officials etc. One should also listen attentively to someone's words as well.

The Fifth Precept

Surameragamaijapamadatthana Veramani: Abstaining from intoxicants (drugs and alcohol) that cause carelessness. Intoxicants can dull the mind, causing the loss of clarity, not exercising a good judgment, driving one to take a violent act and conflicts. In fact, a drunken individual is more likely to violate all of the above four precepts. A drunk person may harm someone, or rape someone, or steal something and may lie without any guilt or shame. An alcoholic person ruins his or her life and that of the loved ones. Children of alcoholic parents grow up in misery, potentially with more behavioral, psychological and mental problems. A drunken cannot keep a job responsibly, may be highly insecure in financial issues, and more prone to accidents and injuries.

KALAYANADHAMMA

Individuals who obey the Five Precepts are also said to more likely possess *Kalayanadhamma*, or "The Ennobling Virtues." These include:

Loving kindness (*Metta*) is the ennobling virtue of the first precept.

Right livelihood (*Samma Ajiva*) is the ennobling virtue of the second precept.
Modesty is the ennobling virtue of the third precept.
Truthfulness is the ennobling virtue of the fourth precept.
Mindfulness is the ennobling virtue of the fifth precept.

In order for one to lead a happy, peaceful and secure life, the ennobling virtue to develop every day is mindfulness or *Sati.* We practice being aware in the "here and now" of what we do (work, eat, play, rest etc.), whom we are with, and when is appropriate, and how to do it appropriately, and in a wholesome manner.

Sati helps us to see the truth about life, developing our wisdom (*Panna*, pronounced as Pan-ya). We must have *Sati* as our foundation for practice, and for gaining wisdom to know and understand the truth about all lives and things according to three universal characteristics (**Trilakana): 1) Annica (**impermanence), 2) **Dukka** (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and 3) **Anatta** (not-self). One is said to be wise to see that conditions, people and things are constantly changing, and not to be held on as 'me' or "mine' or 'myself." As such, one will be freer from suffering (Dukka).

Sati also reminds us to lead a virtuous life, following five or more precepts. One is likely to be safe from harms due to greed, anger, and delusions. As Somdej Kromphraya Wajirayana Waroros said, "**Sati Sabbattha Patabhiya-** Mindfulness is needed everywhere."

In daily life, having mindfulness helps one to be less forgetful, make less mistakes and less accidents. One is likely to be more aware of what goes on in the mind, and not let distracting thoughts take over his or her speeches and actions. Students who practice mindfulness via meditation tend to perform well in school because of their ability to pay attention, and with better self-discipline. Having cultivated *Sati* leads one to have a virtuous life as one can see right or wrong, good or evil more clearly.

When *Sati* paves the way for cultivation Samadhi (c*oncentratio*n) and *Panna* (wisdom), one gains a deep insight about the truth about impermanence in all things and life more clearly. One can accept and not be attached to the body that

is not ours, rather be changing according various elements to become aged, old, ill and dead. Prince Siddhartha, after abandoning his worldly life, he gained supreme insights and became enlightened after five years of devotion in practicing *Sati* (mindfulness) and gained full *Samadhi* (concentration).

Developing mindfulness (*Sati*) is accumulating good *Kamma*. *Sati* is beneficial for one to not be attached to all things that are not permanent, and to let go of our 'emotional baggage' more easily. One gains positive energy and optimism. We should practice mindful meditation every day, as well as live mindfully in the present moment. Shall we say that one is more awakened to the reality of the constantly changing world around us and inside us, as the Buddha also taught us:

Sati Lokasami Jagaro
"Sati is the Dhamma for one's awakening in the world."

In conclusion, mindfulness (*Sati*) is the most precious Dhamma to know and practice, making it a part of our daily lives. Our way of life will be more peaceful, happier, healthier, safer, and perhaps more prosperous. There will be more harmony and good friendship with people around us at home, at school, at work, at the monastery, in the community, and in this ever smaller world of ours.

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Appendix: Examples of Previous Tests

The Thai Buddhist Sangha Order
Office of the Dhamma Studies Management and Examination
Under the Royal Patronage

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The Questions of the General Examination No. 4/2554 (C.E. 2012)
Place: The U.S.A. Date: Sunday 18 March 2555 (C.E. 2012)
Class: Elementary Level Subject: The Dhamma (The Buddha's Teachings)
Full Points: 70 Time Allowed: 1.30 hours

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Instructions: Write an answer to each of the following questions that bears equal

points of 10. You are required to attempt all 7 (seven) questions.

1) What kinds of virtues are neglected by someone who always enjoys doing bad
both in secret and open places?

2) Which kind of the wholesome roots give rise to a social charity?

3) What is the Base of Meritorious Action (Punnakiriya-Vatthu) to prevent a
person from bodily and and verbal bad actions?

4) "A desultory person always fails in leading one's life and cannot get success of
work. To question, what kind of virtue does this kind of person lack?

5) "To keep one's mind in equinmity, when one has seen others facing some difficulties and is unable to help them, thus pondering that all beings are the owners of their actions (Kammas), whatever actions they have done, either good or bad, they will be the heirs." To question, to which of the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara) is this person's practical way applied?

6. "A friend does not forsake his friend in his hard time; and can even die for the
sake of hid friend." Is this kind of the mentioned friend called a friend being the same in weal and woe, or a friend giving good counsel?

7. Buddhism guides the lay disciples not to believe in superstition. In what does
Buddhism guide them to believe?

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The Thai Buddhist Sangha Order
Office of the Dhamma - Studies Management and Examination
Under the Royal Patronage

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The Questions of the General Examination No. 4/2554 (C.E. 2012)
Place: The U.S.A. Date: Sunday 18 March B.E. 2555 (C.E. 2012)

Class: Elementary Level Subject: 5 Precepts and 5 Ennobling Virtues
Full Points: 70 Time Allowed: 1.30 hours

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Instructions: Write an answer to each of the following questions that bears equal points of 10. You are required to attempt all 7 (seven) questions.

1) What is the moral principle to control human behavior in Buddhism?

2) What does it mean to kill?

3) Please give the meaning of the word "Kama" mentioned in the third precept of the five precepts?

4) For what purpose is the Fourth Precept formulated?

5) What is it "Kalyanadhamma" signified as?

6) How are the virtues of loving-kindness and compassion (Metta-karuna) helpful to the First of the 5 precepts?

7) What damages will a person commiting sexual misconduct undergo?

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The Thai Buddhist Sangha Order
Office of the Dhamma - Studies Management and Examination Controller Under the Royal Patronage

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The Questions of the General Examination No. 4/2554 (C.E. 2012)
Place: The U.S.A. Date: Sunday 18 March B.E. 2555 (C.E. 2012)
Class: Elementary Level Subject: Buddhist History
Full Points: 70 Time Allowed: 1.30 hours

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Instructions: Write an answer to each of the following questions that bears equal points of 10. You are required to attempt all 7 (seven) questions.
1) How many castes (Vanna) or classes of people in Jambudipa, India were divided

into? And what were their duties?

2) Who were the divine messengers being seen by the prince Siddhattha (Siddhartha)?

3) What are the four holy places of Buddhism?

4) On what day did the Buddha pass away?

5)Who did offer the last meal to the Buddha?

Buddhist Rites

6) What does the Merit Rite (Punnabidhi) talk about?

7) What does Danabidhi refer to?

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Abbreviations and Symbols in reference to Annotated Scriptures

An. Atthaka. Anguttaranikaya Atthakanipata
An. Catukka. Anguttaranikaya Catukanipata
An. Chakka. Anguttaranikaya Chakkanipata
An. Tikka. Anguttaranikaya Tikkanipata
An. Dasaka. Anguttaranikaya Dasakanipata
An. Pancake. Anguttaranikaya Pancakanipata
An. Sattaka. Anguttaranikaya Sattakanipata
Khu. Iti. Khuddakanikaya Itivuttaka
Khu. U. Khuddakanikaya Udan
Khu. Khu. Khuddakanikaya Khudakapatha
Khu. Cariya. Khuddakanikaya Cariyapitaka
Khu. Cu. Khuddakanikaya Culaniddesa
Khu. Attaka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Attakanipata
Khu. Ja Asiti. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Asitinipata
Khu. Ja Eka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Ekanipata

Khu. Ja Cattalisa. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Cattalisanipata
Khu. Ja Cattukka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Cattukanipata
Khu. Ja Chakka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Chakkanipata
Khu. Ja Tinsa. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Tinsanipata
Khu. Ja Tika. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Tikanipata
Khu. Ja Terasa. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Terasanipata
Khu. Ja Davadasa. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Davadasanipata
Khu. Ja Dasaka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Dasakanipata
Khu. Ja Duka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Dukanipata
Khu. Ja Navaka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Navakanipata
Khu. Ja Pakinnaka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Pakinnakanipata
Khu. Ja Pancaka. Khuddanikaya Jataka Pancakanipata Jataka
Khu. Ja Pannasa. Khuddanikaya Jataka Pannsanipata
Khu. Ja Maha. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Mahanipata
Khu. Ja Visa. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Visatinipata
Khu. Ja Satthi. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Satthinipata
Khu. Ja Sattaka. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Sattakanipata
Khu. Ja Sattati. Khuddakanikaya Jataka Sattatinipata
Khu. Thera. Khuddakanikaya Theragatha
Khu. Their. Khuddakanikaya Therigatha
Khu. Dha. Khuddakanikaya Dhammapadagatha
Khu. Pati. Khuddakanikaya Patisambhidamagga
Khu. Bu. Khuddakanikaya Buddhavansa
Khu. Maha. Khuddakanikaya Mahaniddesa
Khu. Su. Khuddakanikaya Suttanipata
Di. Pati. Dighanikaya Patikavagga
Di. Maha. Dighanikaya Mahavagga
Ma. Upa. Majjihimanikaya Uparipannasaka
Ma. Ma. Majjihimanikaya Majjihimapannasaka
Sam. Ni. Samyuttanikaya Nidanavagga
Sam. Maha. Samyuttanikaya Mahavagga
Sam. Sa. Samyuttanikaya Sagathavagga
Sam. Sala. Samyuttanikaya Salayatanavagga
Sa. Ma. Royal Mantra Book (the 5th Edition)
- / - First number indicates the volume; Second number indicates the page

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Students of Dhamma Studies may benefit from learning more about the Buddha, his Teachings and Buddhism from many websites, some of which are:

http://www.wisdomlib.org/index.html
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/
http://www.palikanon.com/english/wtb/dic_idx.html
https://archive.org/stream/buddhistproverbs00saphiala/buddhistproverbs00saphiala_djvu.txt
http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/
http://what-buddha-said.net/index.htm
http://www.dhammawiki.com/index.php?title=Main_Page
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism
http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/ele_pali.pdf

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