

The Voice of Dhamma from Suan Kaew

By

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Preface

Since the Lord Gotama Buddha's lifetime until the present, the teaching of Dhamma has been timeless (akaliko) for the practitioners and believers to implement as it can be known by oneself. Most of all, the teaching of Dhamma can elevate one's mind to be better by lessening the mental defilement and preventing one's mind from being downgraded.

I myself had studied and practiced the Dhamma and meditation with the Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) or Luang Por Wat Paknam who instructed Dhammakaya Meditation which enabled me to see and understand the Dhamma with insight. Hence, I am able to teach and train my disciples accordingly to my own experience.

All the Dhamma teachings made available in this book are the collection of my teachings published in Duangkaew Newsletter and my lectures given to disciples in many occasions such as on Buddhist Holy Days, Father's Day, Mother's Day, as well as the question & answer sessions between me and my disciples. My disciples published this book as they foresaw that these teachings should be collected for further benefits to those who wish to study and practice the Dhamma and Dhammakaya meditation as well as to prolong the availability of Dhamma.

May the virtues of those who took part in publishing this book and those who managed the printing as well as the donators prosper in longevity, good health, happiness, energy, wit, and wealth. May all of your good wishes come true. Most of all, may you prosper in Buddhism and achieve human wealth and celestial wealth until you enter the ultimate Nirvana as the final destination forever.

[Signed]

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Arrive Well – Stay Well – Depart Well

We come alone and go alone, and we assume that different individuals are our father, mother, siblings, and teachers. We meet in this world and depart each other by the end of our lives. We also have to leave our belongings, wealth, gain, praise, and fame, which we rely on them only temporarily. This includes our own human body which we have to leave and end up at the crematorium or cemetery. We have to return our body to the nature when the body's cognition no longer works. Then, we die and reborn per causal factors.

Life is a journey – We are fortunate to be born in this world and learn Buddhism. The Dhamma teachings comprise of cause and effect. Everything stems from a cause, so there is an effect. Buddhism is the religion of wisdom which concerns of actions or karma. It is not about praying to request for this and that. The Buddhist teachings are truths. For example, doing good deeds, we receive good consequences and doing bad deed, we receive bad consequences. We cultivate people's faith by making them believe in the Law of Karma. Do not live our lives recklessly, and be mindful always. We have to urge ourselves to accumulate good deeds by doing it seriously so we can take it as our own refuge. This will lead us to attain Dhammakaya. Be mindful upon our own breaths. Realize what we are living for and what our duty is. Be in line to our duty and responsibility. Purify and cleanse our mind. Our past is like a dream, and we live in the world of drama with an uncertain future. So, keep up with doing good deeds in the present.

Life Map of Humans

How life come about? Who destine our life?

Decode our life and find out the come about of each life.

Ask ourselves for the answers.

What did we commit in the past? Whatever we do, think, and speak in every second of our inhaling and exhaling are recorded into the mental recorder with our "cognition

sphere.” Inside each of our cognition sphere, different stories are recorded whether they are good, fun, appreciated, bad, unpleasant, or unappreciated.

The cognition sphere is conditioned always, at all time. When it is about time to disembodied or die as the body starts to malfunction, decay, and perish, the cognition sphere is not destroyed by the nature, but the very same cognition sphere has to be relocated in search for a new body.

The cognition sphere which can also be called ‘the spirit’ or ‘*vinna dhatu*’ which has the cognitive system or ‘mind.’

The cognition sphere is a kind of element which is ‘*nama rupa*’ or immaterial. It is refined and unphysical. However, it is not beyond our capability to know and understand the mind with our insight.

In Buddhism, the mind training is called ‘meditation’ or ‘*citta sikkha*’ (the study on mind). Meditation practitioners can achieve the results by controlling the mind to be focused.

When the same mind is reborn in the new body amidst the suitable surroundings, the cultivated nature in the mind will be carried on. As such, humans and animals are differentiated by their committed deeds which are called ‘the karma.’

The Mind is Like a Mango Seed

A mango fruit has accumulated its tasty nutrients from roots to trunk and branches. The accumulation continues on until the flowers turn into mango fruits. The fruits later ripen and fall down from branches. Then, the process continues further as the mango fruits perish until there remain only the seeds.

When the mango seeds are in the suitable conditions such as surrounding, area, temperature, fertilizer, and water, their embryos grow to be other mango trees which are likely to bear fruits with similar tastes such as sweetness, sourness, and chewy.

Therefore, ten mango trees in an orchard bear fruits of various tastes depending on the seeds that carry on the distinctiveness. If we consider various fruit trees in an orchard, we can see that there are differences in taste and form which are caused by gene, temperature, land, water, fertilizer, and planting technique.

The Origination of the Human Life

Every 'human' is the incorporation of tens of thousand types of cell with the birth components as follows:

- Father & Mother who enable the birth
- The mind or spirit
- Meeting the required conditions such as the mother's menstruation, father's sperm, the engagement between father's sperm and mother's egg, and pregnancy.

In Buddhism, we call this phenomena as the 'initiation of a spirit' which is the continuation of deed (karma) or, on the other hand, the birth of another human as a result of the incorporation of the six elements namely solid, liquid, temperature, combustion, air, and spirit.

The six elements can be clarified as follows:

1. Solid Element (patthavi dhatu) means the natural solid parts of humans such as bones, hairs, skin, and flesh.
2. Liquid Element (apo dhatu) means the parts of humans which are liquid such as blood, sweat, and pus.
3. Temperature Element (tejo dhatu) means the heat which penetrates throughout a human body for various beneficial functioning such as digestion, absorption, and discretion.
4. Combustion Element (vayo dhatu) means the moving force that flows through the empty space such as our breaths and gas in our stomach.

5. Air Element (akasa dhatu) means the airy volume in our body such as oxygen.
6. The Spirit (vinna dhatu) means the mind or cognition system that allows us to know things.

The Birth Initiation of Humans

After the engagement between a sperm and an egg, while a spirit rests inside the mother's womb, the liquid forms up to be an embryo. One week later, the embryo develops to be dense liquid, buttons, and chunk, respectively. Then, the embryo develops into head, hands, feet, eyes, ears, tongue, body, mind, in the form of 32 organs. (the internal attractions or ayatana) At the same time, the cognition element starts its function meaning that the embryo turns alive in the mother's womb whereas various attractions or ayatana are nourished with nutrients via the umbilical cord which is directly connected to the mother's stomach. Normally, after seven months, the baby's body development is complete, and the mother usually gives birth after nine or ten months.

Birth of Living Beings

Birth of creatures in the Existence can be classified as follows:

- Birth from womb: such as humans, elephants, horses, cattle, cats and dogs.
- Birth from egg: such as serpents, birds, chicken, and gecko.
- Birth from damp: such as worms
- Birth with a dependent arising means those who arise as a fully matured beings and leave no remain when they die such as angels and hell creatures.

What is Life?

The components of life.

'Life' means the living of beings. 'Living' means not 'dying.'

‘Being’ means availability including breath and elements.

‘Human life’ means the living of humans.

‘Animal’s life’ means the living of animals.

So, life is the equivalent of ‘living’ whilst ‘being’ means the available breathing, eating, roaming, speaking, excreting, enjoying, suffering, laughing, crying, and etc.

‘Life’ is essential for everyone’s mind. When there is something related to birth or death, it is regarded as a big issue. So, common people importantly express their concern over such birth and death. Saving life is the top of helpfulness and sacrificing life is the top of bravery.

As we know that life is beloved and the most concerned among humans and animals, we always refer to ‘life’ when we wish to express our concern or commitment about something or someone.

Moreover, life is more important than all other belongings. It is the most precious for us. When someone wants to exchange someone else’s life with properties, most people would refuse. This is because common people and animals love and afraid of losing their lives.

The Components of Life

A human life comprises of two major components namely:

- (1) The physical body
- (2) The immaterial mind

In addition, the mind can be divided into five components or the five aggregates (five *khanda*).

The Physical Body

1. The physical body is touchable and can be seen with naked eyes. Physical body is structured with skeletons and flexed with tendons whereas it is bound by flesh and

enclosed with skin. Thus, one's body is the assembling of the aforesaid parts. If the skeletons are taken away, the body will not be able to keep balance. Then, it will collapse and become a pile of tendons, flesh, and skin. This is similar to a pile of clothes that we put off.

One's body is the assembly of the four material elements namely solid, liquid, combustion, and temperature, which form up organs like hands, feet, arms, and legs.

The factors that sustain our body which is the assembly of four material elements are as follows:

- Food which provides nutrients to nourish our life.
- Shelter which is necessary for safety when we rest and sleep.
- Cloth which prevents us from heat and chillness caused by nature.
- Medicine which cures us from illness and bodily malfunctioning.

The Mind

2. '*Vedana*' is the realization of emotions whether it is happiness, comfort, mental pleasant, suffering, bodily and mental discomfort, or equanimity which is neither happiness nor suffering.

The function of *vedana* is to reflect the mental emotion when the cognition is affected by contributing factors. Hence, the cognition needs to have the strength to sustain whatever affects it; otherwise, one's mind will fluctuate per contributing factors. As a result, the mind will be conditioned to be excited, surprised, nervous, shy, and sulky beyond the normal level. In order to immune the mind against these undesirable experiences, we have to 'train the mind.'

3. '*Sanna*' means the memorizing of sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily feeling, and mental thought as well as emotion. The main function of *Sanna* is to memorize whatever one experiences by way of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. The memorizing component differs from person to person. Some individual can memorize

better than others. The way to solve regressive memorizing is to train the mind in the part of *Sanna* as well.

4. '*Sankhara*' is the emotions that occur to the mind or the component that leads to thought. The thinking can be wholesome (*kusala*), unwholesome (*akusala*), or neither wholesome nor unwholesome (*abhaya-gata*). The main function of *Sankhara* is to think. It means that the mind thinks at all time and at any moment whether one is standing, walking, running, speaking, writing, and listening. Each person has more or less competency of thinking ability. Some can think quickly while others think slowly, and some can think more profoundly than others. The way to solve this problem is to train the mind to think.
5. '*Vinna*' means the perception through the six sensory namely sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily feeling, and thought. The main function of *Vinna* is to perceive through the aforesaid six sensories.

Who owns our lives?

Life as the Bodily Kingdom

Nobody owns our lives, and no one can force and control life. We borrow our lives from the mother-nature. What did we borrow? We borrow the four material elements namely solid, liquid, combustion, and temperature. We cannot control or force our body to stop aging or having illness.

Some people can borrow life for thirty years, sixty years, or even eighty years. Some people can borrow life for several days only, and they have to return to the nature because their lives are demanded by death. When we are demanded by nature to return our lives, we start to have blurred vision, grey hair, losing teeth, and deaf. If we wish to deal with these, we can improve them by:

Eye vision can be improved with glasses.

Poor hearing can be improved with hearing aids.

Body full of wrinkles can be improved with medical surgery or cosmetics.

Loosen teeth can be replaced with dentures.

Grey hair can be perm at a salon.

Simply speaking, we strive to replace, change, transform, or add things to our body in order to hold on to youthfulness. Humans are quite smart about these even though we finally have to return the degraded quality of our human body to the mother-nature. This means that we still cannot do the aforesaid forever.

The harden parts are borrowed from solid

The flowing parts are borrowed from liquid

The heating parts are borrowed from temperature

The moving parts are borrowed from combustion

We borrowed all of these and we have to return them all when it is about time. The importance is when the borrowed is with us. If we use them well, they will be beneficial; otherwise, they will cause harms. So, our body is borrowed for the sake of doing good deeds. If we do not use it well, we will have problems when we return it to the nature. Therefore, when 'life' is still with us, we should use it appropriately by doing only good deeds.

Life within the Bodily Kingdom

Our human body is like a kingdom with certain extents of width and height. This kingdom has nine channels of entrance and exit which are two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, one annul, and one urine channel.

The bodily kingdom is ruled by '*vinna*' or the mind as the king who is capable of emotion realization (joyful, sorrowful, or indifferent) whereas memory and thoughts are the courtiers. This bodily kingdom has to face with the enemies namely birth, aging, illness, and death who ruin the bodily kingdom until it collapses or die.

Thus, the mind-king who rules the bodily kingdom has to flee away when the kingdom is badly damaged and seek for establishing a new kingdom. However, after the new kingdom is established, the same enemies which are birth, aging, illness, and death will ruin the new kingdom again. This happens repeatedly and we question if anyone can stop it.

The mind as the ruling king has the three common characteristics which are impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) as his spiritual masters who advise over the comprehension on how to defeat the enemies (birth, aging, illness, and death) until achieving victory which is the state of Nirvana where one no longer subjects to birth, aging, illness, and death.

Life's Attire & Nature of Life

Time is like the attire of life which is subject to changes from time to time. An attire is with our body temporarily, and it will be changed. However, the attire of life is different from clothing that, once it is removed, the attire of life cannot be brought back again. On the other hand, the attire of life means the three phases of life as follows:

- (1) The early phase or childhood and teenage which an individual learns about life. During the era when human's lifespan is about 100 years, the early phase ranges from 1 to 30 year-old.
- (2) The middle phase or adulthood when an individual invests time and effort on working and having a spouse and family. The adulthood ranges from 30 to 60 year-old.
- (3) The final phase or the senior years is when an individual retires from work and seeks for spiritual guidance as a preparation for the end of one's life. Also, one takes time to rest after working throughout adulthood. This phase ranges from 60 year-old onward.

The Nature of Life

A human life can continue on with foods which can either benefit or harm. If one consumes too much, it will lead to obesity and several diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, blood

pressure, gout, and high cholesterol. If one consumes too little, it will cause diseases such as anorexia.

Foods for humans can be classified into two groups as:

(1) Foods for the human body

(2) Foods for the human mind

(1) Foods for the human body are available in different tastes and provide various nutrients which empower and sustain the human body. The sources of foods for human body are either from agriculture or food industry.

(2) Foods for the human mind is 'mental calm' which empowers the mind. The source of foods for the human mind is religion such as Buddhism.

Normally, humans give priority to foods for the body and spoil themselves too much in consuming foods, and this leads to many problems. However, foods for the mind are also very important, but they can be neglected.

To keep one's body healthy, it is necessary to exercise in various activities such as working out or playing sports.

To keep one's mind healthy, we have to practice meditation which is to focus the mind to achieve mental calm and stillness.

The mother-nature gives us the human body whilst Buddhism allows the mind within the body to be free, pure, and peaceful.

One has to foster oneself in doing good deeds more than other humans and animals if one wishes to reborn as an ethical human who is superior to them. Otherwise, one will be no different from other humans and animals in term of common instinctive activities such as eating, sleeping, securing oneself, and having sexual intercourse.

Hence, it is necessary for humans to have a 'religion' that provides answers, solutions, paths, and guideline for living which explains why we are born and why we live on for certain benefits.

The Bad Human Mind

All humans are almost similar in term of bodily components and functioning. Notwithstanding, humans are very much different in term of their mind. What makes the human mind different are the 'wholesome Dhamma sphere' and 'unwholesome Dhamma sphere' within each human.

The unwholesome Dhamma sphere within a human's mind comprises of the following sixteen causes of sorrow or uppakilesa namely (1) greed and covetousness (2) malevolence or ill-will (3) anger (4) grudge (5) detraction (6) rivalry (7) jealousy (8) stinginess (9) deceit (10) hypocrisy (11)obstinacy (12) presumption (13) conceit (14) contempt (15) vanity, and (16) negligence

The above 16 qualities, more or less, are the characteristics of 'unwholesomeness' within a human's mind. They can be referred to as contamination of the mind similar to a clean fabric which is dyed with various dark colors and dirt.

The Butcher

Once upon a time, there was a butcher family. The son of this family carried on his parents' business. He relied on his occupation to earn for his family's living. There was a Buddhist temple in his neighborhood, and Buddhist monks from the temple had their alms round every morning. However, the members of butcher's family never gave alms to the monks.

In addition to selling beef to others, the butcher had beef with his every meal; otherwise, he would lose his appetite. One day, his shop ran out of beef, but the butcher spared a chunk of beef for his own consumption. As the butcher returned home, he handed the beef chunk to his wife for cooking. After that, the butcher had a shower.

While the butcher was taking a shower, there was a neighbor coming over to the butcher's house in order to buy beef. "Do you have beef? I have to cater guests at my house." the neighbor said. "No, it is sold out" the butcher's wife replied. "Not at all?" the neighbor questioned. "Nope, but there is only one chunk left which I need to cook for my husband,

but if you have guests at home, I will sell it to you.” So, the neighbor took the last chunk of beef.

After the butcher finished taking a shower, he sat down to have his meal. But he saw no beef in his meal, so he asked his wife “where is my beef?” “There is no more.” His wife replied. “But I gave it to you before I took a shower.” “Our neighbor bought it because she had to cater guests at home.” “If there is no beef, I cannot eat my meal. Find beef for me!” The upset butcher replied. “Where can I find it? It is not a big deal to have no beef for one meal.” The wife said. “No! I cannot eat.” The butcher said and walked away to grab a knife heading to the cattle corral behind his house.

As the butcher arrived the cattle, he caught a cattle and forced to open its mouth. Then, he pulled out the cattle’s tongue and cut it with his knife. Then, the butcher went to the kitchen to grill the cattle’s tongue. Once the cattle’s tongue was well done, he placed it in his meal set preparing to eat.

By the time he picked the cattle’s tongue and put into his mouth, the butcher’s tongue torn off and dropped down onto his plate, and the wound kept bleeding badly. The butcher crawled into his bedroom crying like the cattle that he just cut its tongue before meal. Soon after that, the butcher died and reborn as a hell being receiving severe punishment.

According to the modern science, the story about the butcher is like a fiction. However, if we consider the religious teaching, it is possible because the supernatural phenomena can occur due to the followings:

- (1) Related to the Lord Buddha
- (2) Related to the supernatural ones
- (3) Related to the fruition of karma

Therefore, it is still true that good deeds bear good results, and bad deeds bring about bad results. Merit and sin are not for sale, they are available for those who cultivate them either good or bad.

The butcher rarely committed wholesome deeds. On the contrary, he mostly had only bad karma(s) that lead to sufferings. So, he received severe punishment from his karma both in his lifetime and the future. The butcher's mind comprised of the unwholesome qualities, so he thought, spoke, and acted unwholesomely. He could not take himself as his own refuge, and nobody else could take him as a refuge as well. Finally, he became the disastrous in his lifetime and onward.

"Like a brown leaf which is to fall down from a tree, the hell denizen appears in front of him. He heads toward the tragedy sparing no food for his journey."

The Good Human Mind

The good human mind has the following 18 qualities.

- Having no greed
- Having patience
- Having gratitude
- Appreciate others' success
- Having truthfulness with no pretension
- Being humble
- Positioning oneself appropriately
- Recollecting always
- Being optimistic
- Having no revenge and forgiving others
- Honoring others
- Being generous
- Having no boasting

- Being no rivalry
- Respecting others' rights
- Being mindful all over oneself

The above 16 qualities are the characteristics of a wholesome mind of humans. They are like the detergents for washing clothes to be clean and pure.

The Old Lady

Once upon a time, there was an old lady who was faithful in Buddhism. She granted her only son to become a Buddhist monk. The monk was very diligent in studying Dhamma and strict in obeying his moral conducts until he became knowledgeable in both Dhamma doctrine and Dhamma practice.

In one year, after the end of rain retreat, he bid farewell to his preceptor monk to visit his mother. So, in the morning, he left his temple to see his mom. On his way, he spent a night at a temple in the neighborhood of his mother's village.

In the morning, he walked out from the temple for an alms round. When the old lady saw her son, she was very happy. She invited her son to enter the house and offered a meal to him. After meal, she questioned the monk about his living. "Venerable, I heard that you studied until becoming knowledgeable in both Dhamma doctrine and Dhamma practice. This deserves appreciation."

"Who told you, mom?" The monk responded.

"The earth sprites told me. They rejoiced in your merit by exclaiming '*sadhu*' [very well] out loud. I heard that, so I asked them why. They told me this fact, then I had an intention to listen to your sermon when I meet you." "Venerable, I will hire people to build a sermon hall, and I will invite you to deliver a sermon." Then, the monk agreed by remaining silent.

On the date of scheduled sermon, the old lady prepared meals for offering at the new sermon hall of her village. There was only one servant left at the old lady's mansion. When it was about time, the monk started delivering his sermon.

By that time, there were 900 robbers who looked for an opportunity to rob the old lady's mansion. But they had had no opportunity because the mansion was well secured by seven layers of wall, and there are guarding dogs at every entrance and exit. The inner zone of mansion was surrounded by an iron wall and a ditch. With such protection, the robbers had had no opportunity to rob when the old lady was at home.

On the scheduled sermon date, the robbers knew that the old lady and her subordinates were out to listen to the sermon, so they dug a tunnel which reached the inner residence. The robbers agreed for the chief robber to keep an eye at the sermon hall. If the old lady and her subordinates returned home when the robbers were still there, they planned to kill the old lady and her subordinates.

Therefore, the chief robber had to listen to the sermon as well whilst the rest of the robbers were busy relocating the senior lady's properties.

The old lady's servant saw that the robbers entered the mansion, so she rushed to see the old lady at the sermon hall and informed her that "Madam, the robbers entered your house. They destroyed the money security room and took money away." The old lady replied "Let them take money away. I want to listen to my son-monk's sermon. Do not distract me! You should return to the house."

After the robbers took away all the money, they destroyed the gold security room. As the servant saw that, she rushed to see the old lady at the sermon hall again and said "My master, the robbers are taking away gold." The old lady responded "let them take away as they wish, you should return to the house."

Soon after the robbers took away all the gold, they started to take all other precious that they could take with them. Again, the servant went to see the old lady and said "Master, the robbers took all the properties from your house!"

Instead of being surprised to know that, the old lady scolded the servant that “Listen! I told you many times that the robbers can take anything as they wish. I want to listen to the sermon from my son-monk. Do not distract my sermon listening. You don’t obey my words, you returned and came back over and over. If you come back again for one more time, I will punish you. Go! Return to the house.”

The chief robber who was keeping an eye at the old lady heard the conversation between the old lady and her servant. He realized that he should not rob the properties of such an ethical old lady. So, he went to see his fellow robbers and told them to bring the properties back to their places.

The robbers: “Madam... we would like to apologize.” They said and bowed to the old lady’s feet.

Old Lady: “What’s the matter, guys?”

The robbers: “We committed misdeeds against you.” Then, they told the story.

Old Lady: “Is it so? I forgive you.”

The robbers: “Could you sponsor our ordination?”

Old Lady: “If you really wish to ordain, I will sponsor your ordination.”

The moral of the story of this old lady reflects the truth that “Dhamma protects the one who practices Dhamma. The Dhamma which one cultivates will bring peace and happiness to oneself. This is according to the karmic fruition of practicing the Dhamma as it will lead one to the good destination.”

Question yourself how the poor, the fool, the rich, and the wise are different. The answer is that they do not differ in many ways. When they are hungry, they eat until becoming full. When they are sleepy, they sleep until they have enough sleep. When they wish to release the bodily waste, they do so. Finally, they die, and they take turn to cry and bury or cremate.

Those who have bad qualities of mind are very much concerned of being poor, fool, rich, or wise as they continue their living, but people who have good qualities of mind are not

attached to them as their minds are well guarded by the ten merit trees namely (1) generosity (2) moral discipline (3) renunciation (4) wisdom (5) perseverance (6) patience (7) truthfulness (8) resolution (9) compassion and (10) equanimity.

However, there are also other sin trees which give bad fruition. The fruits from merit trees are peace and joy whilst the sin trees give fruits which are anxiety and suffering. The unwholesome people plant sin trees whereas the wholesome people plant merit trees. The butcher planted sin trees. So, he suffered from the bad fruition both in his lifetime and the future. The old lady planted merit trees. So, she enjoyed happiness both in her lifetime and the future. Let's plant the merit trees as they are auspicious. Let's uproot the sin trees as they are disastrous.

If one wishes to make merit,

One should do it frequently

And be satisfied with such merit making

As merit cultivation brings about happiness

The Moral Discipline

We are so fortunate to be born as humans because this is a rare opportunity. This statement is reaffirmed by the Lord Buddha's saying.

The human being or the birth to be a human in the human realm(s) cannot be achieved by just anyone. The human-to-be is required to have '*guru dhamma*,' the karma that leads to the birth as a human, which is '*sila samadhana*' or the observance of moral disciplines.

In addition, the celestial beings and the Nirvana beings also need to have moral discipline as their common ground all alike.

If it is questioned that:

"What is moral discipline?"

"What it means to be moral discipline?"

“What are the characteristic, duty, the appearing to be, and the grounding of moral discipline?”

“What are the consequences of moral discipline?”

“What is the number of moral discipline?”

“What makes the moral discipline blemished?”

“What makes the moral discipline pure?”

According to the above questions, we can answer that:

The abstention from unwholesome deeds such as killing is the moral discipline because the action and speech are controlled to be peaceful, thus, they uphold all other wholesomeness.

The moral discipline has the characteristic of controlling bodily action and speech only. It gets rid of bad action and speech, so the purity appears whereas the shame and afraid of sin are the foundation.

The consequence of moral discipline are the prosperity in wealth and honor as one will be graceful among the assembly of people and will not die in delusion. After passing away, one will pass to the wholesome realm.

Moreover, one who observes moral discipline will be loved, respected, favored, and associated by others. In general, we can say that the observance of moral discipline is to control oneself to refrain from all unwholesomeness.

The moral discipline will be blemished when it is partially or completely violated. On the other hand, the moral discipline observance is clean when there is no violation either partially or totally.

The wise one should observe moral discipline which is the foundation for the establishment of human wealth, heavenly wealth, and the wealth of Nirvana. All the sages such as the Lord Buddha pursue their path in moral discipline until they achieve their destination in *samsara*, the cycle of birth. Any other sages who wish to pursue the same path of moral discipline will have their suffering relieved and their perfection crystallized further even though they cannot leave the *samsara* in the present lifetime.

There is a story about the heron who achieved the human wealth as well as the human being, and the story about a poor worker who achieved the celestial wealth and celestial being with the power of moral discipline observance. These stories are good examples for all of us.

Once upon a time, there was a heron whose feathers were completely shiny white. Before she reborn as a heron, she was a human who did not make any merit. But she usually spent time to make up and decorate herself to be beautiful. After the end of her lifetime, she reborn as a heron whose feathers were beautifully shiny white.

One day, Indra, the Lord of Tavatimsa Heaven, who is the king of all angels, had investigated the human world with his divine eye. He saw the heron and felt pity upon her because the heron used to be his wife when they were humans. So, Lord Indra headed to the heron's place to ask about her well being. As he learned about her living, he wished to free the heron from being an animal. Lord Indra advised the heron to observe five precepts. Especially, the first precept which is to abstain from killing, he advised the heron to eat only dead fishes. The heron agreed, then, Lord Indra returned to his heavenly palace.

Later on, Lord Indra wished to test the heron if she would keep her words about observing precepts. So, he disguised himself to be a dead fish floating along the stream. Once the heron saw the dead fish, she was glad to eat it. She rushed to pick the fish with her beak as she had no food for many days. After she picked the fish, the fish swiped its tail. When the heron saw that the fish was still alive, she opened her beak to let go of the fish.

The Lord Indra tested the heron like this for three times until he was confident that the heron kept her words honestly as agreed that she would observe the precepts by eating only dead fishes, not the living fishes. Thus, the Lord undisguised himself to tell the truth to the heron. He encouraged the heron to be patient and continue observing precepts.

As the heron rarely found dead fishes as her food, someday she had nothing to eat at all, she frequently had to starve. As a result, she got skinnier, but she did not violate her precepts which she promised to Lord Indra. The heron who was steadfast in her moral precepts observation died and reborn as a female human being again. She became a daughter of a well-to-do family having wealth and many subordinates.

Another story is about the three millionaires who were very much wealthy. They were close friends who associated in harmony. They promised to support around 500 hermits who moved from the forest to the millionaires' village temporarily during rainy season. The three millionaires provided accommodations to the hermits for four consecutive months. After rainy season, the hermits returned to live in the forest and had fruits and plants as their foods during winter and summer totaling eight months.

One year, when it was close to the rainy season, the hermits left the forest and entered the millionaires' village. As the hermits were traveling to the village, in the afternoon, they passed by a big shady banyan tree situated on the way toward the millionaires' mansions. So, the hermits took a rest by sitting under the banyan tree whereas they were still distant from the village. It would take one more day and one more night to reach the village. Thus, the hermits agreed to spend a night under the big banyan tree.

At dawn, the hermits wondered where they could find foods as the fruits were available in the distant forest. If they travel to the village, the time for having food would be over.

The chief hermit wished to find a solution for his fellow hermits, so he looked upward to the shady banyan leaves above and made a wish that "O.. the deity who dwells at this big banyan tree, you must not be the helpless deity. It seems that you are a great deity. May you, the great deity, provide foods and drinks to all of us, the hermits who strive in travelling through this uneasy trip. This will be very great of you."

Upon the end of the chief hermit's wish, the tree sprite who dwelled at the big banyan tree amazingly made foods and drinks appeared to the hermits. After the hermits had their meal, the chief hermit wished to know the karma that made the tree sprite becoming a powerful deity who dwelled at the banyan tree. So, he made a wish for the deity to appear and tell them about the karma. The hermits learned that the tree sprite reborn as a powerful deity because of moral discipline observance. The tree sprite told the hermits that:

"When I was an underprivileged person, I earned for living by becoming a worker at an ethical millionaire's mansion. In addition to working for the millionaire, I observed five precepts strictly. On the Buddhist observance day, I observed eight precepts. The

millionaire would remind his subordinates at the mansion to observe eight precepts on the Buddhist observance days without exception to infants and kids. They observed precepts like this consistently.

One day, it was a Buddhist observance day, all the members of millionaire's family observed eight precepts, but the millionaire forgot to tell myself who was the new worker. On the Buddhist observance day, the new worker left the mansion early to work outside the mansion and returned at dusk. The new worker found that the mansion was quiet, and nobody was busy cooking and having meals like the day before. There was only one set of meal that the millionaire ordered to prepare for the new worker. All the kids entered their bed room to chant before they went to bed. So, the new worker asked others and found out that it was a Buddhist observance day which everyone at the mansion observed eight precepts. The new worker was very faithful upon hearing that, so he vowed to observe precepts for the rest of the day which is over the night until dawn only. Then, in the middle of the night, the new worker had gastric problem in his stomach because he worked hard during the daytime and had no meal after that. As a result, the new worker died of stomachache in the middle of the night. After he died, he reborn as the tree sprite at the big banyan tree with the merit from observing eight precepts flawlessly for only one night."

After the deity told the hermits about his karma, he disappeared and returned to his celestial residence which was at the banyan tree.

This story reaffirms the truth that 'one earns good results from doing good deeds, and one earns bad results from doing bad deeds.' Simply speaking, we reap what we sow. As we learn this, we should not be reckless by committing more good deeds to be our own refuge, so that our lifetime will not be useless. Most of all, we should adhere to the observation of moral discipline or precepts per the Buddha's saying.

Sentient beings head toward the wholesome realms such as the human world and heaven because of moral discipline. They achieve wealth and fellows because of moral discipline, and they can ultimately achieve the Nirvana which is the state of cessation and peacefulness.

The Renunciation

Goodness is the holy power that enhances the living of those who do good deeds and enjoy calmness, brightness, and peacefulness against the heat from mental defilements such as greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

A peaceful and bright life is made possible with renunciation. It means that one renounces the world to enter ordination in search for the ultimate Dhamma that can free one from mental defilements and restlessness that bring about sufferings.

When we mention the term ‘ordination,’ most people have the stereotype that one put on robes and shave one’s head only. Indeed, the term ‘ordination’ means ‘lessening,’ ‘abandoning,’ and ‘giving up’ the causes of suffering, mental defilements, and evilness.

Ordination can be classified into 3 groups:

- (1) Temporary ordination
- (2) Partial ordination
- (3) Absolute ordination

The temporary ordination is to lessen, abandon, and give up the cause of sufferings and mental defilements for a period of time, and one will be obsessed again later on similar to the drunkard or drugs addicted who can give up drinking and using drugs temporarily only such as during the Buddhist lent or Buddhist rain retreat. After the lent, they return to drink alcohol and use drugs again.

The partial ordination means the partial lessening, abandoning, and giving up the cause of sufferings and mental defilements. In this case, the drunkard and drug addicted who strive to give up can give up only something. This is like one who can stop using opium and heroin, but one still drinks alcohol and smokes marijuana. So, one is still enslaved by some other additives and still heads toward the devastation in one’s life.

The absolute ordination means the complete lessening, abandoning, and giving up the causes of suffering and mental defilements without being obsessed to them again

forever. This is like a drunkard and drug addicted who strives to give up the addiction and able to give up completely without returning to be enslaved by alcohol and drugs again.

To be precise, there are two types of ordination:

- (1) The worldly ordination
- (2) The noble ordination

The worldly ordination means lessening, abandoning, and giving up temporarily as an occasional suspension, and one becomes obsessed to the unwholesome mental defilements again later similar to a calm bonfire which can be aflame again. Thus, one is unable to reach the true goal of life which are the calmness, brightness, and peacefulness in living. This is the case of an evil Buddhist monk called Devadatta.

Dated back to the Lord Gotama Buddha's lifetime, when Buddhism was widespread in the East-Asian subcontinent, people who wished to free themselves from suffering and have calm, bright, and peaceful living, entered ordination to become Buddhist monks. Among them, there was Prince Devadatta from Koliya Clan who acquainted five other princes from Sakya Clan and another royal page officer. Totally, there were seven of them.

When Devadatta was new to the monastic order, he was able to remain in good conduct by being strict in the monastic discipline. He persevered in meditation practice until achieving some supernatural powers. Thus, he was able to fly, vanish, and disguise himself with the power of meditative absorption.

Later on, Devadatta had a conspiracy to have himself replacing the Lord Gotama Buddha in governing the Buddhist monastic order, so he joined Prince Ajhasattrus who was still young and naïve by misleading the prince to follow his advices. Devadatta impressed the prince by disguising himself to be a young man who had snakes crowning his head and surrounding his neck, wrists, legs, and crossing from his shoulder to his waste to have an audience upon the young prince and persuaded the prince to agree with his scheme. Then, they started the plan that would make Devadatta to be the topmost leader of the Buddhist monastic community whereas the Prince Ajhasattrus would dethrone and kill his father and coronate himself.

Later on, Devadatta lost his supernatural powers when he started his scheme. However, this did not make Devadatta giving up his plan to govern the Buddhist monastic order as he was obsessed by the mental defilements, greed, ambition, and jealousy, which destroyed everyone who is enslaved by them including Devadatta.

Days after days, Devadatta's scheme was unsuccessful, and he became seriously ill. Finally, he realized in his mistakes and wished to have an audience upon the Lord Gotama Buddha to make an apology. However, the serious karma(s) that Devadatta committed prevented him from arriving the Lord Buddha's place. He ended up being punished by the nature by being sucked down by land submerging on his way.

Devadatta's life was almost totally wasteful since he did not achieve peace and calm. On the contrary, he faced with sufferings in manifold because he was directed by mental defilements which he could lessen, abandon, and give up partially and temporarily. Then, the defilements returned to enslave Devadatta again when they had opportunities.

Although Devadatta's life was almost useless in the Lord Gotama Buddha's religion, Devadatta's ordination was not completely wasteful. This is because by the end of his life, he made an apology to the Lord Buddha and took the Lord Buddha as his refuge. Devadatta changed his mind from being evil to wholesome although he was not at the Buddha's presence, and this is like a correction at the end. Thus, this final good karma will bear fruits in the future lifetime when Devadatta will attain enlightenment to become a Silent-Buddha or the Buddha who does not establish a religion.

The noble ordination means the lessening, abandoning, and giving up mental defilements absolutely. Thus, one's mind will not be obsessed to the mental defilements again, not even a little more of them, and one will have a calm, peaceful, and peaceful living. In addition, one can be a refuge for others without any harm. The surrounding people will be able to feel the calmness and peacefulness which stem from the meritorious cultivation of oneself. The cultivation is made possible through training towards holiness until attaining enlightenment and having the virtues in guiding sentient beings to overcome the cycle of birth which causes sufferings. Hence, the Lord Buddha's renunciation is an excellent example for all of us.

When the Lord Buddha was still an unenlightened prince named Siddharta, he abandoned his royal wealth and ordained himself to search for enlightenment with an intention to free himself from sufferings in the cycle of birth or *samsara*. The prince strived in many ways for six years to seek for calmness, brightness, and peacefulness in his living. His search went on until one year, in the full moon night of the sixth lunar month, the prince, as an ascetic, was steadfast toward his enlightenment. He resolute to persevere in his meditation practice with the cost of his life that “Although my blood and flesh will dry up until there remains only the skin which enclose my skeletons, I shall not rouse from my seat until I pass away if I do not attain the Buddhahood!”

Thereafter, the prince sat in meditation posture on his seat under the Bodhi tree and the clear shining full moon. The prince persevered in meditation, taking the firm ground as his moral discipline (*sila*), his hands like the wisdom (*panna*) that contemplated over the hidden truth, and mental concentration (*samadhi*) that completely removed the barriers which were the embedded cravings in his mind. The prince was like a man with strength who stood firm on the ground lifting his very sharp sword to cut off a big cluster of bamboo roots to be completely eradicated.

At dawn when the sun gleamed its golden light, the prince who was the Lord Buddha, by then, could lessen, abandon, and give up his mental defilement absolutely and detached himself from unwholesomeness. Then, the Lord uttered “Look! The workman who builds the building or craving whom I discovered, you will never be able to build more building which is the being of self, because I already broke down the ribs or all of your remaining mental defilements. The peak of building’s roof or ignorance (*avijja*) has also been dismantled by myself.”

My mind has no more conditioned factor. I already attained the nature where it is the cessation of clinging.

The Lord Buddha’s utterance is the vital evidence which shows that his renunciation is for lessening, abandoning, and giving up his mental defilements as well as searching for calmness and peacefulness for his own life without being attached to the worldly similar to

a lotus flower that emerged above the water surface without being wet by water. Thus, the Lord Buddha could carry on his work to benefit the world.

Life in the Present

Our life in the present is significant

Our life in the past was significant

Our life in the future will be significant

So, our life in the present is our priority

Whereas life in the past and future are our secondary

Nowadays, people's life is burdened by many responsibilities that make them too busy with the past and the future. This adds troubles to their life which long for solutions. What should we do with this? In general, troubles in our life will be dissolved if we live with the 'present.' This only one word can solve problems for the whole world.

How should we proceed in living with the present?

We should progress our life in the noble paths which are:

- Having right views upon the present
- Having right pondering upon the present
- Having right speech upon the present
- Having right action upon the present
- Having right livelihood upon the present
- Having right effort upon the present
- Having right prudence and mindfulness upon the present
- Having right mental concentration upon the present
- What does it mean to be 'righteous upon the present?'

This means the balanced mind that does not wander to the past or the future as one cannot change whatever already happened.

- In the present, human society is imbalanced meaning that it does not give priority to the present.

The above topic connotes that people are unable to balance their lives as they cannot accept the truth. It is so because they do not live upon the present.

- What are the truths that common people find it hard to accept?

The truth about all sentient beings who cannot solve the causes that lead to puzzlement of life which are:

1. Want something that already happened
2. Wish for something that has not yet happened
3. Remember the irritating that already happened
4. Think of the irritating in that has not yet happened
5. Deluded by something that already happened
6. Deluded by something that has not yet happened

... without realizing truths in the present.

- What are the truths that we can witness in the present?

The truths that are true to all living beings are:

1. As we have a prosperous past, continue the causes that lead to such prosperity.
2. As we have a prosperous present, continue the causes that lead to consistent prosperity in the present.
3. The future will be prosperous as well.

On the contrary, if the past was regressive, but we commit the causes that lead to prosperity in the present, our future will turn to be prosperous in the future. If our past

was prosperous, but we committed the causes that lead to recession, our present turns to be recessive. Likewise, if we commit the causes that lead to recession in the present, our future will be recessive as well.

● Should we correct our past, present, and future?

Among the three periods of time, we should correct 'the present' because the past cannot be corrected and the future is too far ahead. What should we do to correct the present? We can correct it by living upon the truths.

What should we do if people keep competing and seek for taking advantages over each other as well as lessening each others' rights. These seem to be more vital in the present. This is one of the truths that we can experience by ourselves.

Which part should be corrected first? The correction should start from ourselves, and this is quite difficult. However, if we can do it, we will be able to correct the errors of everyone else. The principles for this practice are:

- If one wishes others to be kind to oneself, one has to be kind to others first.
- If one wishes others to be merciful to oneself, one has to be merciful to others first.
- If one wishes others to appreciate one's achievement, one has to appreciate others' achievement first.
- If one wishes to live in peace, one must not harm others.

In addition, if everyone aims to correct oneself first, the consequence will affect the overall as well. Because, when the causes of difficulties are eliminated whilst the causes of happiness are committed in the present:

- Do not want something from what already happened
- Do not wish for something from what has not yet happened
- Do not remember the irritating from what already happened
- Do not think of the irritating from what has not yet happened

- Undeluded by something that already happened
- Undeluded by something that has not yet happened

Then, one keeps oneself on the righteous paths upon the present which are:

- Having the view
- Having the pondering
- Having the speech
- Having the action
- Having the livelihood
- Having the effort
- Having the mindfulness
- Having the concentration

As per the aforesaid, one will be able to live one's life upon the present which is balanced towards the righteous living.

The Merit Energy

Rush up to make merit, and do not commit any sin.

If we are not quick in merit making, our mind may turn to sinful things instead.

Buddhist teachings can be narrowed down to only one topic which is about sufferings. Sufferings occur only to the body and the mind. Body is the home of mind, and the mind experiences emotions. For example, when the mind recognizes what the eyes see, the mind responds to be either favor or disfavor according to such sight.

Whereas the body is nourished by nutrients from foods such as savory and sweet dishes as well as vegetables and fruits, the mind is nourished by merit and sin energy. A healthy person has less illness because he or she receives adequate nutrients from food

consumption according to the principle of good nutrition. If a person does not receive adequate nutrients from good nutrition, he or she is likely to be weak and unhealthy.

A person with a healthy mind usually has a happy mind which is joyous and clear, free from bad moods. On the contrary, a person with an unhealthy mind always feels sufferings and moody as his mind is nourished by sin and unwholesomeness.

The term 'merit' can be distinguished into 'merit energy' and 'wholesomeness.'

The term 'sin' can be distinguished into 'sin energy' and 'unwholesomeness.'

Merit is about mental happiness which has no revenge without being conquered by greed, love, anger, hatred, recklessness, and delusion. These good mental qualities lead to mental balance and fulfillment.

Wholesomeness is the intelligence which coexists with the meritorious mind or the fruition of happiness from merit making. Simply speaking, it is the wisdom from righteous thought, speech, and action.

Sin is about mental suffering from being revengeful, greedy, in love, angry, hatred, unmindful, and deluded which obsess the mind. These bad mental qualities always lead to 'imbalance of mind' or 'mental scarcity.'

Unwholesomeness means the foolishness which arises when the mind is sinful. Also, it is the consequence of a suffering sinful mind. The foolishness causes people to have wrongful thought, speech, and action.

The 10 Meritorious Deeds

1. Merit from generous giving
2. Merit from observing moral precepts or practicing celibacy
3. Merit from practicing meditation or training the mind
4. Merit from being humble upon others
5. Merit from being helpful to others
6. Merit from sharing one's meritorious deeds to others

7. Merit from appreciating others' meritorious deeds
8. Merit from learning the Dhamma
9. Merit from teaching the Dhamma
10. Merit from having the right view

1. Merit from Generous Giving

For this topic, we can exemplify the story of Prince Vessandara. In one of the Lord Gotama Buddha's past lifetime, the Lord was born as Prince Vessandara who donated nine things, 700 each. The donated are as follows:

- 700 elephants
- 700 horses
- 700 dairy-cows
- 700 chariots
- 700 ladies
- 700 male slaves
- 700 female slaves
- 700 outfits
- Alcohol beverages for the drunkards

Prince Vessandara earned much merit from his donation because it enabled him to attain the Nirvana in the following lifetime as Lord Gotama Buddha. The merit energy earned was not due to the quantity of the given only, but it was because of the strong meritorious intention in giving.

- (1) Before giving, the giver's mind is joyous.
- (2) During giving, the giver's mind is joyous.
- (3) After giving, the giver's mind is joyous.

As the giver has pure and meritorious mind like this throughout the three phases of giving, the much merit energy occurred to Prince Vessandara who can be the role model for all in term of generosity practice.

2. Merit from Observing Precepts and Practicing Celibacy

One can earn merit from abstention from misdeeds. The following story is a good example.

According to the Buddhist scripture, once there was a poor man who was hired by a rich man to be a worker. Early in the morning, on a Buddhist observance day, the poor worker left the rich man's mansion to work outdoor as usual. However, nobody reminded him that it was a Buddhist observance day.

In the evening, the worker returned to the rich man's mansion and found that a set of meal was prepared for him while other people in the mansion already went to bed including the kids. The poor worker asked other fellows and found that it was the day that everyone at the mansion observed eight precepts. So, the poor worker vowed to observe eight precepts like others.

In the middle of the night, the poor worker had a stomachache because he had no meal throughout the day, and he did not eat anything before observing eight precepts. This caused him to be sick, but his precepts observance was flawless.

To make merit by observing precepts, we have to be mindful and careful of our action and speech. Thus, our precepts observance will be flawless and clean like the poor man.

3. Merit from Practicing Meditation

Meditation practice is the cultivation of mind which eliminates mental evilness caused by the Mara namely:

- (1) Greed (*lobha*)
- (2) Anger (*dhosa*)
- (3) Delusion (*moha*)

People from all walk of life, no matter who they are, if they do not cultivate the mind with meditation, although they have the followings:

- (1) Properties from all over the world
- (2) Male and female subordinates who can fulfill all of one's wishes
- (3) Delicious foods and good medicines

Such individual is still obsessed by the three evilness which are:

- (1) Unsatisfied greed caused by *lobha*, the evil mara
- (2) Regular anger caused by *dhosa*, the evil mara
- (3) Delusion until death caused by *moha*, the evil mara

Therefore, the merit from mental cultivation can free one from the three evil mara(s) by:

- (1) Balancing the demand
- (2) Learning to forgive
- (3) Being mindful without delusion in one's death

4. Merit from Being Humble

The expression of humbleness of oneself is from:

- (1) Action

(2) Speech

The humbleness or respect which can be expressed physically are:

- (1) Rising to welcome
- (2) Placing one's hands in the prayer position
- (3) Bowing with hands in the prayer position
- (4) Kneeling down to bow
- (5) Other signs of respect such as removing one's hat and shoes or putting off one's umbrella at religious places such as the Buddha hall, sermon hall, and the pagoda area.

The humbleness or respect which can be expressed verbally are:

- (1) Speaking the truth with gentle voice
- (2) Speaking to encourage unity with gentle voice
- (3) Speaking politely with gentle voice
- (4) Speaking reasonably with gentle voice

Individuals who deserve respect are:

- (1) The Lord Buddha and religious founders
- (2) Preceptors
- (3) The ones who are senior-most in a family such as parents

Individuals who should show respect to others are:

- (1) Religious disciples
- (2) Students, either senior or junior
- (3) The ones who are juniors in a family such as sons and daughters.

Regarding the expression of respect and humbleness, we can consider the story of Lord Indra as an example.

According to the Buddhist scripture, once there was a village called 'Ajalakam.' There was a young man full of gratitude. His name was 'Maka.' Maka normally had seven virtuous conducts as follows:

- (1) Looking after his parents throughout his life.
- (2) Being respectful toward the senior-most of his family such as parents.
- (3) Speaking politely throughout his life.
- (4) Never speak words that disunite others throughout his life.
- (5) Making generous donation throughout his life.
- (6) Speaking only the truth throughout his life.
- (7) Having no anger throughout his life.

In addition to the above virtuous conducts, Maka also committed other charitable deeds such as building the pavilions at rest areas for travelers, making roads, and ponds. He also invited other generous people to join his good deeds for the public. Moreover, Maka established a group of people to sustain or taking care of what they built for the public benefit. These dissatisfied a group of people, led by the Chief Villager, who was jealous at Maka.

The Chief Villager attempted to get rid of Maka by making a false report to the statemen that Maka and his fellows were accumulating forces to fight against the king's ruling. The Chief Villagers urged the statemen to send their troops to arrest Maka and his fellows.

When the king knew about this, he sent his armed force to arrest Maka and his fellows. Thereafter, they were questioned by the court. It was revealed that Maka and his fellows did not attempt to fight against the king, but he made numerous benefits for the public. So, Maka and his fellows were released whereas the Chief Villagers was fired and punished. Maka was appointed to be the new Chief Villager, and he was able to make decision and take action immediately upon things that he deemed appropriate without asking permission from the king.

After Maka passed away, with the merit from his wholesome deeds including the seven virtuous conducts and generous charitable deeds for the public, Maka reborn as Indra, the king of Tavatimsa heaven whereas his fellows reborn as Indra's courtiers whose lifespan last long as the angel's age.

The karmic consequence of being respectful and humble also yields results in the present lifetime per the verse that "the four prosperity namely longevity, fine complexion, happiness, and energy will occur to ones who usually show respect and humbleness upon the virtuous people."

5. The Merit from Being Helpful

Helpfulness on various errands either significant or insignificant with physical and mental effort full of sincerity upon oneself, others, and the responsibilities can be taken as 'the merit from being helpful.'

When we help others, although it is an insignificant deed with truly meritorious effort, it can benefit oneself and others both in the present and future lifetime. There is a story from a Buddhist scripture which is a good example as follows:

Once, Venerable Kassappa, a Buddhist Saint was residing at Pippli Cave. There was a lady angel who wished to prosper her celestial wealth, so she went to Pippli Cave for cleaning and preparing drinking and using water for the Saint. Venerable Kassappa was unaware of this as he thought that it was the work of his young disciple monk or novice monk.

One day, the Saint heard the sweeping noise, so he came out to take a look. He saw the lady angel who was cleaning and working in his cave area, so he expressed his appreciation over her effort and prohibited her from doing it again as he might be accused by others. The lady angel admitted, and she returned to her celestial palace.

The lady angel received benefit for her future lifetime as she was being helpful for Venerable Kassappa. Her deeds brought about merit that she would enjoy. Those who are helpful in either significant or insignificant errands of others with meritorious mind, freed from jealousy, they would enjoy the karmic fruition as well.

The benefits earn in the present lifetime are:

- (1) Gain of wealth
- (2) Fame
- (3) Being praised
- (4) Physical and mental happiness

6. The Merit from Sharing Merit to Others

Being generous in the merit means giving opportunities to others to take part in our merit. This is called 'sharing merit to others.'

There is a story as an example.

One day, the master and servant went out to do some errand. When they returned home, they found a Buddhist monk walking for an alms round at the gate of their home. The monk had not received any food, so the master told the servant "Look! Go into the house to check if the chefs finished cooking. If it is finished, offer it to the monk." The servant rushed into the house and returned, he said "It's finished, master" with the food in his hands. "Put them into the alms bowl, I allow you to take part in this merit." The Master said. "You can make any wish you want out of this." He added.

The servant relied on the merit that his master granted him to join to make wishes for future human wealth in the form of:

- (1) Consumption wealth which includes properties, the precious, and livestock.
- (2) Fellow wealth which includes siblings, kin, friends, fellows, and subordinates who are honest.

The two kinds of wealth came true for the servant in the lifetime of Lord Gotama Buddha. The servant reborn as a king of Ujjeni Kingdom because of the merit that his master shared to him.

With the merit from being generous in the merit of the master, the servant took part in the merit making and received the good karmic fruition in the form of desirable wealth. The servant became a king because of his master's generosity.

7. The Merit from Appreciating Others' Merit

The delightfulness and appreciation when witnessing others' meritorious deeds or success in term of gain, fame, praise, and happiness with the thoughts like "It is so delightful for the meritorious deeds of this person" or "It is so delightful for the success of this person," these are the expression of those who have appreciation in others' goodness.

We can compare to a person who have beloved relatives such as parents, siblings, husband, and wife who departed to live afar for a long time. When they return, we feel glad to meet them and wait to welcome them at the gate. We become enthusiastic and delightful for their return thinking "who will arrive first?" Upon the safe arrival of our relatives such as parents, siblings, and spouse, we rush to see them with gladness saying "I am so glad to meet you again." The delightfulness and appreciation from witnessing others' good deeds or success are the same as we meet with our returning relatives who return home safely.

8. The Merit from Learning Dhamma

Learning the Dhamma which benefits oneself and others such as the story about the pursuit of perfections of Lord Buddha, Silent Buddhas, Arahants or Buddhist Saints, and disciple monks, are considered to be 'Dhamma learning.'

Once, the Lord Buddha resided at Veluvana Grove, he disclosed the past lifetime of Venerable Kondanya to all disciple monks. The story was about the Venerable's karma that made him became the first disciple who attained enlightenment second to the Lord Buddha. So, Venerable Kondanya was admired by the Lord Buddha as the 'senior- most' disciple monk because he was the first Buddhist monk in the Lord Gotama Buddha's religion.

9. The Merit from Teaching Dhamma

The teaching of truths that do not harm oneself and others such as the Lord Buddha's teaching about the Four Noble Truths is considered to be 'the teaching of Dhamma.'

To make merit from teaching the Dhamma, one has to know and understand the truths about life, having the wisdom from insight, and teach the truths in order to promote wellness of others, similar to the Lord Buddha who taught people for their benefits.

10. The Merit from Having the Right View

Our view means thoughts from wisdom. So, the right view is thoughts from righteous wisdom with the truthful comprehension that 'the world is impermanent, merit and sin are true, and heaven and hell do exist in reality.' If one's views comply to the aforesaid, it means that one 'keeps one's views righteous.'

Once we keep our views to be righteous, we should have the incorporation of faith which is the four reasonable beliefs as follows:

- (1) Believing in the karma whereas the causes can bring either good or bad results.
- (2) Believing in the karmic fruition.
- (3) Living beings have their own karma which they have to bear.
- (4) Believing in the Lord Buddha's enlightenment which enables the disclosure of Dhamma taught by the Buddha.

Conclusion on the Ten Merit Makings

1. The karmic consequence from generous donation by giving material objects is the elimination of greed.
2. The karmic consequence from observing moral precepts is to eliminate the evil mara who brings about revenge and harm.

3. The karmic consequence from practicing meditation can eliminate the evil mara who causes mental darkness and blindness.
4. The karmic consequence from being humble and respectful can eliminate the evil mara which leads to arrogance.
5. The karmic consequence from being helpful can eliminate the evil mara which leads to selfishness.
6. The karmic consequence from sharing goodness to others can eliminate the evil mara which leads to self-centeredness.
7. The karmic consequence from appreciating others' goodness can eliminate the evil mara which leads to jealousy.
8. The karmic consequence from learning the Dhamma can eliminate the evil mara which leads to doubts.
9. The karmic consequence from teaching the Dhamma can eliminate the evil mara which leads to foolishness.
10. The karmic consequence from having right views can eliminate the evil mara which leads to wrong views.

The Lord Buddha once said "it is easy to commit the unwholesome deeds which are not beneficial to oneself. On the contrary, it is not easy to commit the wholesome deeds which are beneficial." "Notwithstanding, the wholesome deeds are easy for good people to do whilst the unwholesome deeds are easy for bad people." Thus, "urge yourself in doing good deeds. Do not familiarize yourself to sin. Because, as you are slow in making merit, your mind will be drawn toward sin."

What did Luang Por Sodh Teach?

"I do not run out of wisdom. Both the good and bad are clear to me. Why should I kill myself out of this? Many people do not know where-about and who-about of the term 'Dhammakaya.' Why should we let them accuse us who are the experienced practitioners,

because of their own ignorance? How could the ignorance remove the truth of Buddhism as accused? It may be possible only for temporarily, and the truth will be soon outstanding again like the crystal ball that shines out for the wisdomful to witness. The righteous must have victory over the wrongful always. So, we should not worry about this as Dhammakaya is true. Dhammakaya is not a fake or made up story. The Dhammakaya will appear to all of those who attain.”

The above statement is the saying of Luang Por Sodh or Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the former abbot of Wat Paknam in Bangkok, given when he was alive and accused of false teaching by those who disbelieved in his teaching on Dhammakaya. Luang Por Sodh confirmed the existence of Dhammakaya in Buddhism with good reasons that Dhammakaya will appear to everyone who has commitment in meditation practice.

Where is Dhammakaya?

Dhammakaya is within the mind of ones with righteous practice and conduct.

What does Dhammakaya mean?

Dhammakaya means the virtuous mind of ones with righteous practice and conduct.

Indeed, if we consider the literal meaning of the term ‘Dhammakaya,’ there may be conflicts upon the truth. Thus, it solely depends on the practitioners who have commitment in meditation practice until attaining Dhammakaya by themselves. For non-practitioners, it would be difficult to discuss about this matter.

What is Dhammakaya?

Dhammakaya is both mind (*nama*) and form (*rupa*).

What is the aforesaid mind (*nama*)?

Dhamma is the mind (*nama*).

What is the aforesaid form (*rupa*)?

Kaya or body is the form (*rupa*).

The 18 Bodies

Luang Por Sodh taught about the 18 bodies namely the physical human body, the refined human body, the unrefined celestial body, the refined celestial body, the unrefined Rupa Brahma body, the refined Rupa Brahma body, the unrefined Arupa Brahma body, the refined Arupa Brahma body, the unrefined Gotrabhu Dhammakaya, the refined Gotrabhu Dhammakaya, the unrefined Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the unrefined Sagadagami Dhammakaya, the refined Sagadagami Dhammakaya, the unrefined Anagami Dhammakaya, the refined Anagami Dhammakaya, the unrefined Arahata Dhammakaya, and the refined Arahata Dhammakaya.

- What is the physical human body?

It is the form (*rupa khanda*) mainly composed of the four material elements (solid, liquid, temperature, and combustion).

- What is the refined human body?

It is the mind (*nama khanda*) composed of the four immaterial elements (*vedana, sanna, sanghara, and vinna*) which comprise of merit [energy].

- What is the unrefined celestial body?

It is the form (*rupa khanda*) composed of merit fruition.

- What is the refined celestial body?

It is the mind (*nama khanda*) composed of refined merit energy.

- What is the unrefined Rupa Brahma body?

It is the form (*rupa khanda*) composed of refined merit fruition.

- What is the refined Rupa Brahma body?

It is the mind (*nama khanda*) composed of more refined merit fruition.

- What is the unrefined Arupa Brahma body?

It is the mind (*nama khanda*) as the result of more refined merit fruition.

- What is the refined Arupa Brahma body?

It is the mind (*nama khanda*) composed of the most sublime merit energy.

- What is the [unrefined Gotrabhu] Dhammakaya?

This is the Dhamma *khanda* [or Dhamma essence] which occurs from the most sublime merit fruition.

- What is the refined [Gotrabhu] Dhammakaya?

This is the Dhamma *khanda* [or Dhamma essence] composed of the state beyond merit and sin.

- What is the unrefined Sotapanna Dhammakaya?

This is the path (*magga*) of being Sotapanna.

- What is the refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya?

This is the fruition (*pala*) of being Sotapanna.

- What is the unrefined Sagadagami Dhammakaya?

This is the path (*magga*) of being Sagadagami.

- What is the refined Sagadagami Dhammakaya?

This is the fruition (*pala*) of being Sagadagami.

- What is the unrefined Anagami Dhammakaya?

This is the path (*magga*) of being Anagami.

- What is the refined Anagami Dhammakaya?

This is the fruition (*pala*) of being Anagami.

- What is the unrefined Arahat Dhammakaya?

This is the path (*magga*) of being Arahat.

- What is the refined Arahat Dhammakaya?

This is the fruition (*pala*) of being Arahant.

We should comprehend the terms ‘merit,’ ‘fruition of merit,’ ‘sublime merit energy,’ ‘fruition of sublime merit energy,’ ‘more sublime merit energy,’ ‘more sublime of merit energy fruition,’ the most sublime merit energy,’ and ‘the most sublime of merit energy fruition.’

Merit

‘Merit’ means the merit energy earned from the 10 meritorious activities as follows:

- (1) Giving or donating material objects
- (2) Observing moral precepts
- (3) Meditation or training one’s mind
- (4) Being humble or respectful
- (5) Being helpful toward others
- (6) Sharing goodness with others
- (7) Appreciating others’ goodness
- (8) Learning the Dhamma
- (9) Teaching the Dhamma, and
- (10) Having right views

Merit Fruition

Merit fruition means the consequence of a meritorious deed by resulting the human quality to be more prosperous and complete.

Refined Merit

The refined merit or *parami* means the 10 virtues perfection which one can pursue in three different levels. Hence, totaling, there are 30 virtue perfections as follows:

1. Generosity with regular commitment
Generosity with living commitment
Generosity with life commitment
2. Moral discipline with regular commitment
Moral Discipline with living commitment
Moral Discipline with life commitment
3. Renunciation with regular commitment
Renunciation with living commitment
Renunciation with life commitment
4. Wisdom with regular commitment
Wisdom with living commitment
Wisdom with life commitment
5. Perseverance with regular commitment
Perseverance with living commitment
Perseverance with life commitment
6. Patience with regular commitment
Patience with living commitment
Patience with life commitment
7. Truthfulness with regular commitment
Truthfulness with living commitment
Truthfulness with life commitment
8. Resolution with regular commitment
Resolution with living commitment

Resolution with life commitment

9. Compassion with regular commitment

Compassion with living commitment

Compassion with life commitment

10. Equanimity with regular commitment

Equanimity with living commitment

Equanimity with life commitment

Refined Merit Fruition

The refined merit fruition means the result of thirty perfections fulfillment which leads to achievement in human and heavenly wealth as well as the attainment of the Nirvana.

The More Refined Merit

The more refined merit means the prospering of the four meditative absorptions as follows:

- (1) The first meditative absorption (the first *jhana*)
- (2) The second meditative absorption (the second *jhana*)
- (3) The third meditative absorption (the third *jhana*)
- (4) The fourth meditative absorption (the fourth *jhana*)

The More Refined Merit Fruition

The more refined merit fruition is the result of prospering the four meditative absorptions (*jhana*) which enables one to reborn in any of the sixteen Rupa-Brahma realms.

The Most Sublime Merit

The most sublime merit is made possible by prospering the four formless meditative absorptions as follows:

- (1) The first formless meditative absorption (the first *Arupa-Jhana*)
- (2) The second formless meditative absorption (the second *Arupa-Jhana*)
- (3) The third formless meditative absorption (the third *Arupa-Jhana*)
- (4) The fourth formless meditative absorption (the fourth *Arupa-Jhana*)

The Most Sublime Merit Fruition

The most sublime merit fruition means the result of prospering the four formless meditative absorptions (*Arupa-Jhana*) which enables one to reborn as an Arupa-Brahma in any of the four Arupa-Brahma realms.

The physical human body, the unrefined celestial body, the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body, the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body, the unrefined [Gotrabhu] Dhammakaya, the unrefined Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the unrefined Sagadagami Dhammakaya, the unrefined Anagami Dhammakaya, and the unrefined Arahant Dhammakaya, are like realms for dwelling whereas the refined human body, the refined celestial body, the refined Rupa-Brahma body, the refined Arupa-Brahma body, the refined [Gotrabhu] Dhammakaya, the refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the refined Sagadagami Dhammakaya, the refined Anagami Dhammakaya, and the refined Arahant Dhammakaya, are like the dwelling minds.

Conclusion

Humans and celestial beings belong to the realm of sensual desire.

Rupa-Brahmas belong to the realm of meditative absorption.

Arupa-Brahmas belong to the realm of formless meditative absorption.

Therefore, the mind [or spirit] that reincarnates in the aforesaid realms needs to have merit energy which enables the sustaining.

The Dhamma which is *Dhamma Khanda* including Sotapanna, Sagadagami, Anagami, and Arahant, are the Noble Beings whose mind prosper in good deeds but do not cling to goodness. They do not need merit energy to enable their sustaining because their

conditions do not comprise of merit as they are beyond merit and sin. This is because their sustaining is empowered by the insightful mind.

Luang Por Sodh said “still the mind at a single mental focus. When the mind becomes still, it ceases and re-arises. Without cessation, it won’t arise. May you all ponder upon this truth. This is genuine. The connection is there. If the mind does not reach meditative mental unification, there will be no meditation achievement absolutely.”

“Our world is like a big theatre where people play like actors and actresses. People keep up with their duties which seem not to make sense and shouldn’t be taken into account seriously. Finally, everyone dies. If we think about this seriously, not a single person survives. Why? Because people in this world are reckless. This world is just like a transit, but we take it too serious that our home and country truly belong to us. We make it a too big deal out of this. So, we misunderstand it that way.”

Phramongkolthepmuni

(Sodh Candasaro)

The Superknowledge of Dhammakaya for Defeating the Evil Mara(s)

The Dhammakaya

Dhammakaya is the original mind of every living being which is pure, clean, bright, clear, and unblemished. Dhammakaya is located in the middle of the innermost refinement of element and essence. This is verified by the pali verse that (พระบาลี) “Look! Monks.. the mind is [originally] bright, pure, and clear.”

The Evil Mara(s)

The evil mara(s) mean mental defilements that enter our mind, and they are not beneficial for the mind. When they conquer the mind, the mind turns dull and blemished by mental impurities such as greed, anger, and delusion.

Dhammakaya belongs to the wholesome bright party and empowered by goodness. The evil mara belongs to the unwholesome dark party and empowered by evilness. As Dhammakaya enhances prosperity among sentient beings, the evil mara harms, worsens, and destroys the sentient beings.

The Bright Dhammakaya and the Dark Mara are Opponents

Whenever the bright Dhammakaya, who is located firmly in the middle of the innermost refinement of one's element and essence, becomes more powerful as empowered by wholesomeness and goodness, the dark mara will be limited and driven away from one's element and essence. On the other hand, whenever the evil mara gains more strength as empowered by unwholesomeness and evilness, it will be able to seize one's origin of element and essence. Thus, the bright Dhammakaya has to retreat, and one's mind will be conquered by the dark mara causing the mind to become dark and blemished as well.

Location of Dhammakaya

Dhammakaya arises in the middle of the element and essence of human body, celestial body, Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body, within the middle of Sila (moral discipline) sphere, Samadhi (mental concentration) sphere, Panna (wisdom) sphere, Vimutti (liberation) sphere, and Vimuttinadassana (insight of liberation) sphere.

Sila Sphere or the Sphere of Moral Discipline controls the element and essence of human body, celestial body, Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to stop and abstain from existing unwholesomeness and evilness.

Samadhi Sphere or the Sphere of Mental Concentration controls the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to be firmly powerful in getting rid of the existing unwholesomeness and evilness as well as preventing them from arising further.

Panna Sphere or the Sphere of Wisdom controls the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to know and understand the truth about suffering caused by birth, aging, illness, and death.

Vimutti Sphere or the Sphere of Liberation controls the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to be free from bondage and contamination which is ignorance (avijja), craving (tanha), and attachment (upadana).

Vimuttinanadassana Sphere or the Sphere of Insight of Liberation controls the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to know that the mind is already liberated from bondage and contamination which are ignorance (avijja), craving (tanha), and attachment (upadana).

Location of the Evil Mara

The evil mara intervenes into the middle of the inner element and essence of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body, at the center of Dhusila (immoral) sphere, Mijja Samadhi (wrongful mental concentration) sphere, Mijja Nana (wrongful insight) sphere, Mijja Vimutti (wrongful liberation) sphere, and Mijja Vimuttinanadassana (wrongful insight of liberation) sphere.

Dhusila Sphere or the Sphere of Immorality controls the element and essence of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to violate moral precepts and commit misdeeds and evil deeds.

Mijja Samadhi Sphere or the Sphere of Wrongful Mental Concentration controls the element and essence of the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to be wrongfully firm without unwholesomeness and evilness elimination.

Mijja Nana Sphere or the Sphere of Wrongful Insight controls the element and essence of the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body to know and understand wrongly, having no effort to correct one's conducts with the misunderstanding that the sinful and unwholesome fruitions are good.

Mijja Vimutti Sphere or the Sphere of Wrongful Liberation prevents the element and essence of the mind of human body, celestial body, Rupa-Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body from liberation which is the freedom from bondage and contamination with the

misunderstanding that enjoyment from sensual desire is liberation despite of the fact that such enjoyment is the evil mara's bondage and contamination.

How to Attain Dhammakaya

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to become still at the center of our human body which is the point for reincarnation. Once the mind becomes still and full of brightness and clarity, the first, the second, the third, and the fourth meditative absorption will occur. This means that the mind of the human body progresses into the meditative absorptions. Then, the refined human body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the refined human body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the refined human body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the physical human body. Thereafter, the celestial body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the celestial body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the celestial body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the refined human body. Thereafter, the refined celestial body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the refined celestial body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the refined celestial body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the unrefined celestial body. Thereafter, the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the refined celestial body. Thereafter, the refined Rupa-Brahma body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the refined Rupa-Brahma body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the refined Rupa-Brahma body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body. Thereafter, the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the refined Rupa-Brahma body. Thereafter, the refined Arupa-Brahma body will arise.

Settle the mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still at the center of the refined Arupa-Brahma body. When it becomes still at the right mental unification, it will turn to be bright and clear and progress into the first, second, third, and fourth meditative absorption. This means that the mind of the refined Arupa-Brahma body progresses into the meditative absorptions which rest within the 'mind at meditative absorption state' of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body. Thereafter, the Dhammakaya will arise.

The Dhammakaya rests inside the meditative absorption state of the refined Arupa-Brahma's mind.

The refined Arupa-Brahma rests inside the meditative absorption state of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma's mind.

The unrefined Arupa-Brahma rests inside the meditative absorption state of the refined Rupa-Brahma's mind.

The refined Rupa-Brahma rests inside the meditative absorption state of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma's mind.

The unrefined Rupa-Brahma rests inside the meditative absorption state of the refined celestial body's mind.

The refined celestial body rests inside the meditative absorption state of the unrefined celestial body's mind.

The unrefined celestial body rests inside the meditative absorption state of the refined human body.

The refined human body rests inside the meditative absorption state of the physical human body.

In order to attain Dhammakaya, one needs to still the mind to proceed into the middle for progressive refinement of the mind until reaching the most sublime refinement possible. This Dhammakaya is called 'the Dhammakaya that has not overcome the mundane state.'

The Noble Dhammakaya

The Dhammakaya which is in between the mundane and the nobility is called 'Gotrabhu.' This is the mind that attains Dhammakaya but still remains in the mundane state. In order to overcome the mundane state and achieve the nobility, one has to do the followings:

Settle the mind of Gotrabhu Dhammakaya to be still in the middle of the Dhammakaya and contemplate over the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and

Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within the Dhamma sphere that forms the Gotrabhu Dhammakaya. At the right mental unification, the sphere of elimination causal knowledge and the fruition from eliminating the three attachments namely (1) personality-belief (sakkaya-ditthi), (2) skeptical doubt (vicikiccha), and (3) clinging to mere rules and ritual (silabbata-paramasa) will appear. This means that the mind of Dhammakaya attains Sotapanna Sainthood.

Thus, settle the mind of Dhammakaya to be still in the middle of Sotapanna Dhammakaya and contemplate over the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within the Dhamma sphere that forms the Sotapanna Dhammakaya. At the right mental unification which brings about brightness and clarity, the sphere of the knowledge about causes that enable the lessening of two additional attachments which are (1) sensuous craving (kama-raga), and (2) ill-will (panigha) will appear. This means the mind of Dhammakaya attain Sagadagami Sainthood.

Thus, settle the mind of Dhammakaya to be still in the middle of Sagadagami Dhammakaya and contemplate over the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within the Dhamma sphere that forms the Sagadagami Dhammakaya. At the right mental unification which brings about brightness and clarity, the sphere of the knowledge about causes and fruition of the elimination of the two attachments which are (1) sensuous craving (kama-raga), and (2) ill-will (vyapada) will appear. This means the mind of Dhammakaya attain Anagami Sainthood.

Thus, settle the mind of Dhammakaya to be still in the middle of Anagami Dhammakaya and contemplate over the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within the Dhamma sphere that forms the Anagami Dhammakaya. At the right mental unification which brings about brightness and clarity, the sphere of the knowledge about causes and fruition of the elimination of the five attachments which are (1) craving for fine-material existence (rupa-raga) (2) craving for immaterial existence (arupa-raga) (3) conceit (mana) (4) restlessness (uddhacca), and (5)

ignorance (avijja) will appear. This means the mind of Dhammakaya attain Arahant Sainthood.

- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Arahant fruition rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Arahant path.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Arahant path rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Anagami fruition.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Anagami fruition rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Anagami path.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Anagami path rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Sagadagami fruition.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Sagadagami fruition rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Sagadagami path.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Sagadagami path rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Sotapanna fruition.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Sotapanna fruition rests within the mind of Dhammakaya which attained Sotapanna path.
- The mind of Dhammakaya which already attained Sotapanna path rests within the mind which attained [Gotrabhu] Dhammakaya .

The Dhammakaya in the mundane state can achieve the nobility this way.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) in the Mundane State

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) within the Human Body

The evil mara(s) are mental defilements which intervene themselves into the very middle of human body. There are three chief evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) *Lobha Mara* which is greed

(2) *Dhosa Mara* which is anger

(3) *Moha Mara* which is delusion

There are five additional categories of courtier evil mara(s) who support the chief mara(s) as follows:

(1) Courtier Mara as the killer

(2) Courtier Mara as the stealer and robber

(3) Courtier Mara as the sexual violator

(4) Courtier Mara as the liar

(5) Courtier Mara as the drunkard

The evil mara(s) have five tools as their human traps as follows:

(1) The trap via sight

(2) The trap via sound

(3) The trap via smell

(4) The trap via taste

(5) The trap via bodily feeling

Once the evil mara(s) place their traps, they and their courtier mara(s) wait for the foolish humans to be entrapped and enslaved by them similar to the hunters who are hiding and waiting for animals to be entrapped and killed for foods.

How to Defeat the Evil Mara(s), Courtier Mara(s), and Mara(s)' Tools

Defeating the Evil Mara(s), Courtier Mara(s), and Mara(s)' Tools with the Dhamma

Allow the Dhammakaya who is comprised of the sphere of perception, memory, thought, and cognition to be still and purified until becoming clear and bright. This means that the Dhammakaya is progressing into meditative absorption in the middle of the Sila sphere,

Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the center of human body. As such, there are three Dhamma spheres which are the Dhamma weapons as follows:

- (1) *Alobha* is the Dhamma that defeats *lobha* or greed
- (2) *Adhosa* is the Dhamma that defeats *dhosa* or anger
- (3) *Amoha* is the Dhamma that defeats *moha* or delusion

Under such state of mind, there are five additional Dhamma weapons for defeating the courtier mara(s) who support the chief evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) Compassion is the Dhamma that defeats mara, the killer
- (2) Right livelihood is the Dhamma that defeats mara, the stealer and cheater
- (3) Contentment is the Dhamma that defeats mara, the sexual violator
- (4) Verbal truthfulness is the Dhamma that defeats mara, the liar
- (5) Recklessness is the Dhamma that defeats mara, the drunkard

In addition, we have four Dhamma spheres which are tools for removing the evil mara(s)' traps as follows:

- (1) Impermanence of form is the Dhamma that removes sight entrapment
- (2) Impermanence of sound is the Dhamma that removes sound entrapment
- (3) Impermanence of smell is the Dhamma that removes smell entrapment
- (4) Impermanence of taste is the Dhamma that removes taste entrapment
- (5) Impermanence of bodily feeling is the Dhamma that removes bodily feeling entrapment

Defeating the Evil Mara within the Refined Human Body

After we defeat the chief and courtier evil mara(s) within the human body, they hide themselves into the middle of the refined human body. They refine themselves to fit into

the condition of the refined human body and monitor the mind of refined human body similar to a wise hunter who hides or camouflages himself waiting for an animal to be caught and killed.

There are the total of sixteen chief evil mara(s) and courtier(s) mara as follows:

- (1) Covetousness
- (2) Malevolence
- (3) Anger
- (4) Being revengeful
- (5) Detraction
- (6) Being comparative upon others
- (7) Jealousy
- (8) Selfishness
- (9) Being tricky or deceitful
- (10) Boasting
- (11) Obstinacy
- (12) Rivalry
- (13) Arrogance
- (14) Disdain
- (15) Indulgence
- (16) Negligence

The Dhammakaya brings up the Dhamma weapons by stilling the mind which comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere at the center of one's body until becoming clear and bright. This is to proceed into the meditative absorption in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and

Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rests within each other at the middle of the refined human body. There are sixteen Dhamma spheres which can be used as the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) The non-covetousness is the Dhamma that defeats covetousness, the evil mara.
- (2) The non-malevolence is the Dhamma that defeats malevolence, the evil mara.
- (3) The non-anger is the Dhamma that defeats anger, the evil mara.
- (4) The non-revengeful is the Dhamma that defeats revengeful, the evil mara.
- (5) The non-detraction is the Dhamma that defeats detraction, the evil mara.
- (6) The non-comparativeness upon others is the Dhamma that defeats comparativeness, the evil mara.
- (7) The non-jealousy is the Dhamma that defeats jealousy, the evil mara.
- (8) The non-selfishness is the Dhamma that defeats selfishness, the evil mara.
- (9) The non-tricky or non-deceitful is the Dhamma that defeats the tricky and the deceitful, the evil mara.
- (10) The non-boasting is the Dhamma that defeats the boasting, the evil mara.
- (11) The non-obstinacy is the Dhamma that defeats the obstinacy, the evil mara.
- (12) The non-rivalry is the Dhamma that defeats the rivalry, the evil mara.
- (13) The non-arrogance is the Dhamma that defeats the arrogance, the evil mara.
- (14) The non-disdain is the Dhamma that defeats the disdain, the evil mara.
- (15) The non-indulgence is the Dhamma that defeats the indulgence, the evil mara.
- (16) The non-negligence is the Dhamma that defeats the negligence, the evil mara.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Celestial Body

The chief evil mara(s) and courtier mara(s) who obstruct good deeds are defeated inside the refined human body. Thus, they fled into the unrefined celestial body by conditioning themselves to be equivalent to the state of the unrefined celestial body and conquer the unrefined celestial body as their residence with a aim to use as their base for encountering the Dhammakaya. They form the ten dark spheres in the middle of the unrefined celestial body as follows:

- (1) Sensual desire is the evil mara
- (2) Mental irritation is the evil mara
- (3) Foolishness is the evil mara
- (4) Arrogance is the evil mara
- (5) Wrong view is the evil mara
- (6) Hesitation is the evil mara
- (7) Disheartening is the evil mara
- (8) Wandering thought is the evil mara
- (9) Unshame of sin is the evil mara
- (10) Unafraid of sin is the evil mara

The Dhammakaya who rests in the middle of the unrefined celestial body incorporates the Dhamma weapons to encounter the evil mara immediately by stilling the mind which comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere until becoming clear and bright. This is to proceed into the meditative absorption in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, which rests within each other at the middle of the unrefined celestial body. Thus, the dark mara(s)' spheres are defeated by the bright holy spheres as follows:

- (1) Realization in the harm of sensual indulgence is the Dhamma that defeats sensual indulgence, the evil mara.
- (2) Pitiful or sympathy is the Dhamma that defeats mental irritation, the evil mara.
- (3) Courage is the Dhamma that defeats discouraging foolishness, the evil mara.
- (4) Non-self is the Dhamma that defeats self-centeredness, the evil mara.
- (5) Right view is the Dhamma that defeats wrong view, the evil mara.
- (6) Confidence is the Dhamma that defeats spiritual doubt, the evil mara.
- (7) Joy is the Dhamma that defeats disheartening, the evil mara.
- (8) Steadfastness is the Dhamma that defeats mental wandering, the evil mara.
- (9) Shame of sin is the Dhamma that defeats unshame of sin, the evil mara.
- (10) Afraid of sin is the Dhamma that defeats unafraid of sin, the evil mara.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Refined Celestial Body

Once defeated by the Dhammakaya, the evil mara(s) within the unrefined celestial body escape into the refined celestial body by refining themselves until being able to penetrate into the refined celestial body and obstruct the goodness further by forming up the dark spheres located in the middle of the refined celestial body disallowing other wholesome spheres to arise. The evil mara(s) are as follows:

- (1) Favor of sensual desire, the evil mara
- (2) Preference of socializing, the evil mara
- (3) Selfishness, the evil mara
- (4) Frequent anger, the evil mara
- (5) Frequent delusion, the evil mara
- (6) Frequent attachment, the evil mara

The Dhammakaya incorporates the Dhamma weapons within the center of the refined celestial body by stilling the mind which comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere until becoming clear and bright. Then, the Dhammakaya proceeds into the meditative absorption in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the refined celestial body in order to defeat the evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) The preference for ordination is the Dhamma that defeats favor of sensual desire, the evil mara.
- (2) The preference for contentment is the Dhamma that defeats preference of socializing, the evil mara.
- (3) The preference for sharing is the Dhamma that defeats selfishness, the evil mara.
- (4) The preference of forgiving is the Dhamma that defeats frequent anger, the evil mara.
- (5) Mindfulness is the Dhamma that defeats frequent delusion, the evil mara.
- (6) Detachment is the Dhamma that defeats frequent attachment, the evil mara.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Rupa-Brahma Body

In the middle of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body, the evil mara(s) intervene and embed themselves within. The evil mara(s) refine themselves to match the refinement level of the Rupa-Brahma body which is further than the celestial body. They form up the dense dark spheres located in the middle of the Rupa-Brahma body and spread out the dark ray covering the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body. This reflects the very slight bonding condition of being a Rupa-Brahma body as follows:

- (1) The bonding to the lightness of form, the evil mara.
- (2) The bonding to the delicacy of form, the evil mara.

- (3) The bonding to the practicable of form, the evil mara.
- (4) The bonding to the formation of form, the evil mara.
- (5) The bonding to the continuation of form, the evil mara.
- (6) The bonding to the worsening of form, the evil mara.
- (7) The bonding to the changing of form, the evil mara.

The Dhammakaya which comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding into the meditative absorption in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body in order to defeat the evil mara(s) who create bondage within the unrefined Rupa-Brahma body with the Dhamma weapons as follows:

- (1) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the lightness of form, the evil mara.
- (2) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the delicacy of form, the evil mara.
- (3) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the practicability of form, the evil mara.
- (4) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the formation of form, the evil mara.
- (5) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the continuation of form, the evil mara.
- (6) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the worsening of form, the evil mara.
- (7) The releasing of bonding defeats the bonding to the changing of form, the evil mara.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Refined Rupa-Brahma Body

The evil mara(s) who dwell inside the refined Rupa-Brahma body is powerful because they refine themselves until matching the condition of refined Rupa-Brahma body. The evil mara(s) are dark and glossy. They enable themselves to grow further to become

mighty within the refined Rupa-Brahma body extending throughout the Rupa Realm by transforming themselves to be self attachment in being the refined Rupa-Brahma body as follows:

- (1) The adherence to the lightness of form, the evil mara.
- (2) The adherence to the delicacy of form, the evil mara.
- (3) The adherence to the practicable of form, the evil mara.
- (4) The adherence to the formation of form, the evil mara.
- (5) The adherence to the continuation of form, the evil mara.
- (6) The adherence to the worsening of form, the evil mara.
- (7) The adherence to the changing of form, the evil mara.

The Dhammakaya, who is the direct opponent of the evil mara(s), comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding calmly into the meditative absorption in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the refined Rupa-Brahma body are the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s) within the refined Rupa-Brahma body as follows:

- (1) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the lightness of form, the evil mara.
- (2) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the delicacy of form, the evil mara.
- (3) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the practicable of form, the evil mara.
- (4) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the formation of form, the evil mara.

- (5) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the continuation of form, the evil mara.
- (6) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the worsening of form, the evil mara.
- (7) The releasing of adherence is the Dhamma that defeats adherence to the changing of form, the evil mara.

Defeating the Evil Mara Within the Unrefined Arupa-Brahma Body

The unrefined Arupa-Brahma body is the state of mind which is very sublime. It is formless and exists as the status for two mental experiences as follows:

- (1) The state of consciousness over spaciousness is infinite.
- (2) The state of consciousness over cognition or *vinna* is infinite.

The evil mara(s) refine themselves to match the state of being formless and intervene and embed themselves into the Arupa-Realm with an attempt to obstruct and cause misunderstanding to the mind, extending their might and power throughout the Arupa-Realm by clinging the mind of meditators to the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body with the power of slight bondages as follows:

- (1) The interest in the state of consciousness over spaciousness of Arupa-Brahma body.
- (2) The interest in the state of consciousness over cognition or *vinna* of Arupa-Brahma body.

Thus, the Dhammakaya, who rests inside the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body, comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere, stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding into the first formless meditative absorption (The First *Arupa-Jhana*) calmly in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body are the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s).

Moreover, the Dhammakaya, who rests inside the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body, comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere, stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding into the second formless meditative absorption (The Second *Arupa-Jhana*) calmly in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the unrefined Arupa-Brahma body, are the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) Disinterest which arises during the first formless meditative absorption is the Dhamma that defeats the evil mara(s) which is interest in the state of consciousness over the spaciousness of Arupa-Brahma body.
- (2) Disinterest which arises during the second formless meditative absorption is the Dhamma that defeats the evil mara(s) which is interest in the state of consciousness over cognition of *vinna* of Arupa-Brahma body.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Refined Arupa-Brahma Body

The refined Arupa-Brahma body is the state which is more sublime. This is the state of being formless, infinite spaciousness, and infinite mind. There exists the status for two mental experiences as follows:

- (1) The state of consciousness over no remaining of cognition or *vinna*
- (2) The state of consciousness over the slight remaining of sublime remembrance or *sanna*

The evil mara(s) within the refined Arupa-Brahma body also achieve the state of being formless, infinite spaciousness, and infinite mind. These conditions cling one's mind to adhere to the state of being a refined Arupa-Brahma with the power of slight bondages as follows:

- (1) The evil mara in the form of minding the state of consciousness over no remaining of cognition or *vinna*

- (2) The evil mara in the form of minding the state of consciousness over the slight remaining of sublime remembrance or *sanna*

Thus, the Dhammakaya, who rests inside the refined Arupa-Brahma body, comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere, stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding into the third formless meditative absorption (The Third *Arupa-Jhana*) calmly in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the refined Arupa-Brahma body, are the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s).

In addition, the Dhammakaya, who rests inside the refined Arupa-Brahma body, comprises of perception sphere, memory sphere, thought sphere, and cognition sphere, stilling the mind further until becoming clear and bright and proceeding into the fourth formless meditative absorption (The Fourth *Arupa-Jhana*) calmly in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinanadassana sphere, which rest within each other at the middle of the refined Arupa-Brahma body, are the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) The disinterest which exists in the third meditative absorption defeats the interest in the state of consciousness over no remaining of cognition or *vinna*
- (2) The disinterest which exists in the fourth meditative absorption defeats the interest in the state of consciousness over the slight remaining of sublime remembrance or *sanna*

Note: The Dhammakaya in this state is the mundane Dhammakaya which can get rid of the evil mara(s) in the form of mental impurities or defilements with the power of one's meditative absorptions as long as one does not regress in the meditative absorptions or still be progressive in the meditative absorption. This is because the power of meditative absorptions can get rid or suspend the evil mara(s) from alteration temporarily.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) at the Noble Level

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Sotapanna Dhammakaya (Sotapattimagga)

The Dhammakaya contemplates on the vipassana which is incorporated with the Perception sphere, Memory sphere, Thought sphere, and Cognition sphere which are the Dhamma(s) that enable five sustaining powers as the followings:

- (1) The consistent faith
- (2) The consistent perseverance
- (3) The consistent mindfulness
- (4) The consistent mental concentration
- (5) The consistent wisdom

At the right mental stillness which leads to unification of mind, in the middle of the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, there will arise respectively of the followings:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the mind and form
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the reason of mind and form
- (3) The sphere of consciousness over the impermanence, suffering, and non-self
- (4) The sphere of consciousness over the arising and ceasing of mind and form
- (5) The sphere of consciousness over the dissolvent of mind and form
- (6) The sphere of consciousness over the mind and form as to be afraid of
- (7) The sphere of consciousness over the harm of mind and form
- (8) The sphere of consciousness over the tiresomeness of mind and form
- (9) The sphere of consciousness over the wish to be liberated from mind and form
- (10) The sphere of consciousness over the Trilaksana of mind and form

(11) The sphere of consciousness over the equanimity towards all Sanghara

(12) The sphere of consciousness which is in-line towards the enlightenment over the Four Noble Truth

(13) The sphere of consciousness to absolutely uproot the state of being mundane

From this point onward, the insight which rises in the noble magga or path appears in the form of *magganana*sphere (the sphere of insight from path achievement) will arise, and the Dhammakaya has attained Sotapanna Magga which allows him to consider and see the three obstructive attachments. Thereafter, the Dhammakaya can incorporate the sphere of primary insight from path achievement to be his Dhamma weapon in defeating the evil mara(s) which are the three attachments as follows:

- (1) The sphere of primary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara which is the misunderstanding in mind and form (sakkāya-ditthi).
- (2) The sphere of primary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara which is the doubt or hesitation in the Triple Gem namely the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha (vicikicchā).
- (3) The sphere of primary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara which is the adherence to the wrongful conducts (sīlabbata-parāmāsa).

The Evil Mara(s) Calm Down in the Refined Sotapanna Dhammakaya

(The Fruition of Sotapanna)

After the Dhammakaya attains the path of being Sotapanna and completely defeat the evil mara(s) which are the three attachments with the insight from path [achievement], the two Dhamma spheres will arise as follows:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the achievement from absolutely defeating the evil mara(s) which are the three attachments with the primary insight from path [achievement].

- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on the eliminated and the remained attachments which are the evil mara(s).

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Sagadagami Dhammakaya

(The Path of Sagadagami Dhammakaya)

The Dhammakaya which already attained Sotapanna Sainthood can contemplate on Vipassana further by incorporating the Perception sphere, Memory sphere, Thought sphere, and Cognition sphere to empower the five virtuous qualities for sustainment as follows:

- (1) The consistent faith
- (2) The consistent perseverance
- (3) The consistent mindfulness
- (4) The consistent mental concentration
- (5) The consistent wisdom

By way of stilling the mind further in the middle of the Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere, then, the following spheres of Vipassana Nana (insight power) will arise as follows:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the arising and ceasing of mind and form
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the dissolvent of mind and form
- (3) The sphere of consciousness over the mind and form as to be afraid of
- (4) The sphere of consciousness over the harm of mind and form
- (5) The sphere of consciousness over the tiresomeness of mind and form
- (6) The sphere of consciousness over the wish to be liberated from mind and form

- (7) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on Trilaksana or the three worldly natures of mind and form
- (8) The sphere of consciousness over the equanimity towards mind and form
- (9) The sphere of consciousness over the inclination towards enlightenment on the Four Noble Truth
- (10) The sphere of purity which arises to replace the sphere of consciousness in order to uproot the state of being mundane

From now on, the sphere of insight [from path achievement] or magganana will arise. The Sotapanna Dhammakaya has attained the Sagadagami path. Then, one is able to contemplate and see the evil mara(s) or the three attachments which were eliminated with the primary insight [from path achievement] of the Sotapanna Dhammakaya. Thereafter, the magganana (the secondary insight from path achievement) of Sagadagami is incorporated to be the Dhamma weapons for defeating the evil mara(s) as follows:

- (1) The sphere of secondary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara by lessening the sensual desire over the mind and form.
- (2) The sphere of secondary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara by lessening the mental irritation over the mind and form.
- (3) The sphere of primary insight from path [achievement] defeats the evil mara by lessening the sensual indulgence over the mind and form.

The Evil Mara(s) Within the Refined Sagadagami Dhammakaya Calms Down

(The Fruition of Sagadagami Dhammakaya)

The Dhammakaya which already attained the path of Sagadagami Sainthood can lessen the evil mara(s) which are the sensual desire, mental irritation, and sensual indulgence towards the mind and form with the secondary insight from Sagadagami path

achievement. The two Dhamma spheres which arise for the Sotapanna body will also arise for the Sagadagami body as follows:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the achievement in lessening the evil mara(s) which are sensual desire, mental irritation, and sensual indulgence towards the mind and form with the secondary insight from path achievement or 'dutiya magganana.'
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on the eliminated and remained attachments.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Anagami Dhammakaya

(The Path of Anagami Dhammakaya)

The Dhammakaya who already attained Sagadagami Sainthood will contemplate the Vipassana further incorporation with the Perception sphere, Memory sphere, Thought sphere, and Cognition sphere and empowered by the five Dhamma(s) which occur consistently as follows:

- (1) Faith
- (2) Perseverance
- (3) Mindfulness
- (4) Mental concentration
- (5) Wisdom

Hence, the Dhammakaya stills the mind further at the right mental unification, in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere. Then, the following Vipassana spheres of insight will arise:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the arising and ceasing of mind and form
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the dissolvent of mind and form

- (3) The sphere of consciousness over the mind and form as to be afraid of
- (4) The sphere of consciousness over the harm of mind and form
- (5) The sphere of consciousness over the tiresomeness of mind and form
- (6) The sphere of consciousness over the wish to be liberated from mind and form
- (7) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on Trilaksana or the three worldly quality of mind and form
- (8) The sphere of consciousness over the equanimity towards mind and form
- (9) The sphere of consciousness over the inclination towards enlightenment on the Four Noble Truth
- (10) The sphere of purity which arises to replace the sphere of consciousness in order to uproot the state of being mundane

From now on, the insight sphere of path achievement will arise as the Sagadagami Dhammakaya attains the path of Anagami Sainthood or Anagami Magga. Then, consider the evil mara(s) which are the absolutely eliminated attachments and incorporate the insight sphere or Magganana of Anagami Dhammakaya to be used as the Dhamma weapon to defeat the evil mara(s) which are the two additional attachments that are the evil obstruction as follows:

- (1) The sphere of third insight from path [achievement] or 'tatiyamagganana' defeats the evil mara(s) which are adherence to all sensuous craving (kāma-rāga).
- (2) The sphere of third insight from path [achievement] or 'tatiyamagganana' defeats the evil mara(s) which are the mental counteract within all of the sensuous craving (kāma-rāga).

The Evil Mara(s) Calms Down Within the Refined Anagami Dhammakaya

(The Fruition of Anagami Dhammakaya)

After the Dhammakaya attained the path of Anagami Sainthood, one is able to defeat the evil mara(s) by absolutely eliminating the two attachments with tatiyamagganana or the third insight from path [achievement], one attains the fruition of Anagami Sainthood, and the two Dhamma spheres will arise to oneself similar to the Sotapanna Dhammakaya and Sagadagami Dhammakaya as follows:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the achievement in absolutely defeating the evil mara(s) which are the two attachments with tatiyamagganana or the third insight from path [achievement].
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on the eliminated and remained attachments.

Defeating the Evil Mara(s) Within the Unrefined Arahata Dhammakaya

(The Fruition of Arahata Dhammakaya)

The Dhammakaya who already attained Anagami Sainthood can contemplate the Vipassana further with the incorporation of the Perception sphere, Memory sphere, Thought sphere, and Cognition sphere and empowered by the five Dhamma(s) which occur consistently as follows:

- (1) Faith
- (2) Perseverance
- (3) Mindfulness
- (4) Mental concentration
- (5) Wisdom

Hence, the Dhammakaya stills the mind further at the right mental unification, in the middle of Sila sphere, Samadhi sphere, Panna sphere, Vimutti sphere, and Vimuttinadassana sphere. Then, the following Vipassana spheres of insight will arise:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the arising and ceasing of mind and form
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the dissolvent of mind and form
- (3) The sphere of consciousness over the mind and form as to be afraid of
- (4) The sphere of consciousness over the harm of mind and form
- (5) The sphere of consciousness over the tiresomeness of mind and form
- (6) The sphere of consciousness over the wish to be liberated from mind and form
- (7) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on Trilaksana or the three worldly quality of mind and form
- (8) The sphere of consciousness over the equanimity towards mind and form
- (9) The sphere of consciousness over the inclination towards enlightenment on the Four Noble Truth
- (10) The sphere of purity which arises to replace the sphere of consciousness in order to uproot the state of being mundane

Thereafter, the magganana sphere or the sphere of insight from path achievement will arise, and the Anagami Dhammakaya attains the path of Arahant Sainthood. One is able to contemplate on the evil mara(s) which are the absolutely eliminated attachments with the primary magganana or the insight from path achievement. This will lead to the incorporation of the Arahant Dhammakaya's sphere of insight from path achievement to be used as the Dhamma weapon for defeating the evil mara(s) which are the remaining five attachments as follows:

- (1) The sphere of fourth insight from path [achievement] or 'catutthamagganana' defeats the evil mara which is adherence to the realm of form (rūpa-rāga).
- (2) The sphere of fourth insight from path [achievement] or 'catutthamagganana' defeats the evil mara which is adherence to the realm of formless (arūpa-rāga).

- (3) The sphere of fourth insight from path [achievement] or 'catutthamagganana' defeats the evil mara(s) which are arrogance and egoism towards the mind and form (māna).
- (4) The sphere of fourth insight from path [achievement] or 'catutthamagganana' defeats the evil mara(s) which are mental wandering into the mind and form (uddhacca).
- (5) The sphere of fourth insight from path [achievement] or 'catutthamagganana' defeats the evil mara(s) which are the dark delusion towards mind and form (avijjā).

The Evil Mara(s) Calm Down Within the Refined Arahāt Body

(The Fruition of Arahāt Dhammakaya)

The Dhammakaya who already attained the path of Arahāt Sainthood after absolutely defeating the evil mara(s) in the form of five attachments with the catutthamagganana or the fourth insight from path [achievement], is able to achieve the fruition of Arahāt Sainthood. Then, the two Dhamma spheres will arise to such Arahāt Dhammakaya as follows:

- (1) The sphere of consciousness over the achievement in absolutely defeating the evil mara(s) by eliminating the final five attachments with catutthamagganana or the fourth insight from path [achievement].
- (2) The sphere of consciousness over the reconsideration on the completely eliminated attachments with no remain.

Note: The Dhammakaya in the aforesaid state is the Noble Dhammakaya which can arise within the noble Buddhist disciples or Buddhist Saints who are able to defeat the evil mara(s) by absolutely eliminating the mental defilements or impurities with their basic to advanced insight power whereas the evil mara(s) can never arise within them again.

Q&A with The Master Nun

1. Life with a Principle

Q: Master Nun, I had listened to a Buddhist monk's sermon. He said our lives need to have principles. What does it mean?

A: According to the sermon, the meaning can be differentiated into two perspectives as follows:

- (1) Studying the Dhamma principles
- (2) Practicing the Dhamma principles we learned

Q: Master Nun, is it the same as your teaching that "create the principles for our life?"

A: The meanings are similar with some difference. My teaching was according to the results of the aforesaid two perspectives of principles which is the achievement of truth from both correct study and practice. Simply speaking..

- (1) The theoretical studying
- (2) The practice per theories
- (3) The achievement from practicing according to the theories

Q: Master Nun, I still do not see how they can become the principles for our life. Also, I don't see how our life can be carried on by taking them as the principles.

A: You should not be misfortunate from meeting with Buddhism. Don't you know that the Buddha's Dhamma is the topmost principle and refuge for our life?

Q: How can we make them the principles of life which is the topmost refuge?

A: We have to make the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha come into existence.

Q: Where should they exist?

A: Within ourselves by harmonizing them to become one with us.

Q: How can we do this?

A: The method is easy, but it is quite difficult in practice. Anyway, we can do it by:

- (1) Cherish the Dhamma in our action
- (2) Cherish the Dhamma in our speech
- (3) Cherish the Dhamma in our thought

When we can do these completely, it means that the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, come into existence within ourselves.

Q: How can we know that the Dhamma already existed within ourselves because the Dhamma is immaterial?

A: We can know it, dear! The one who pursues it will witness its existence by oneself. It will appear to oneself while doing duties.

Q: I still don't understand. May Master Nun kindly explain and exemplify further?

A: I will give you an example. Look at a father, mother, and child. I will explain the duties of parents first, and the duties of parents is to look after the child. It sounds simple, but the term 'look after' means not the simple meaning as the way we utter or write down.

"Look" means looking at

- (1) Good conducts must be encouraged
- (2) Bad conducts must be discouraged

"After" means caring after

- (1) The body of a child to be healthy.
- (2) The mind of a child to be warmhearted
- (3) The brain of a child to be well learned and educated

As the parents practice the above, they deserve the title 'parents' who provide 'parenting' to their children. This is the direct duties of parents. For the child or children, their duty is to pay back the gratitude they owe to their parents. To pay back, they have to 'look after' their parents in return when their parents get old. This is to 'pay back.'

‘Pay’ means

- (1) Paying an effort to keep the parents’ bodies healthy
- (2) Paying an effort to keep the parents’ minds healthy

‘Back’ means

- (1) Back up the continuation of the family tree
- (2) Back up the good practices passed down from the parents

As the children put the aforesaid into practice, they pay back the gratitude they owe to the parents. This is possible by knowing the goodness that the parents have upon them and express such goodness to be known by others. Then, the Dhamma which already exists within oneself will arise for one to experience upon fulfillment of this duty.

Q: Thank you so much. I quite understand now. Master Nun, nowadays the world has gone through a quick change. It is now the age of globalization where science prospers but people are more selfish. What are the causes for all of these?

A: It is because people give priority to materialism instead of the wholesome humanity. In addition, the development of material objects has been advanced, and this draws people into it. Thus, they don’t realize in the truth of life.

Q: Master Nun, sometimes I treat others well, but they mistreat me. Why is it so?

A: It is because they lack gratitude and do not realize of goodness and badness. Although we offer properties in the whole world to these people, they won’t be satisfied because they lack awareness of humanity.

Q: What should we do when we have to associate with this kind of people?

A: We have to forgive them. When it is necessary to associate with them, we have to take into account of the last virtue of the Four Divine Abodes of Brahma which is ‘equanimity.’

Q: How can we practice the Four Divine Abodes of Brahma?

A: We have to practice the virtues respectively as follows:

- (1) Loving-kindness which is to wish others happiness and success
- (2) Sympathy which is the wish to help and support others
- (3) Appreciation upon others' happiness and success
- (4) Equanimity towards others

Q: I quite understand the first three virtues, but I still don't understand the last one. How can we practice equanimity?

A: Please listen carefully. I will clarify this to you. The literal meaning of equanimity is being indifferent. We have to remain indifferent to comply to this virtue. We remain indifferent when an individual faces with the two ruins as follows:

- (1) The ruin over material wealth which includes money, belongings, and the precious.
- (2) The ruin over one's goodness such as morality.

Q: So we have to remain indifferent while witnessing such person facing with ruins?

A: That's correct!

Q: Wouldn't it be selfish or against the Dhamma?

A: No. Please listen carefully. The equanimity which is the last virtue of the Fourfold Abode of Brahma can work well only after we use the first three virtues respectively and continually until reaching the fourth. On the contrary, the one who is selfish is the one whom we practice the Fourfold Abode of Brahma for. Such person relies on our virtues and causes us troubles. Then, we have to remain indifferent toward him or her, and this won't be against the virtuous Dhamma.

Q: Thank you so much, Master Nun. I would like to ask one more question. In this age of globalization, how should we treat our children?

A: "We have to do good deeds as examples for them, and we have to be teachers for them to respect." This needs further clarification; otherwise, it won't be clear. Doing good deeds as examples for them means the basic good deeds necessary for daily living such as

- Diligence

- Thrifty
- Honesty
- Gratitude

These goodness or virtues must start from ourselves, and they will learn from us automatically without wasting time to teach them verbally. This is learning from doing. So, they can take us as their role models. For being teachers for them to respect, it means that we have to show them our steadfastness such as:

- Being able to endure the suffering
- Being able to withhold the emotional impact

Do not show our weakness, false speech, immoral action, and meanness. These virtues are the quality of a teacher who can gain respect from the children.

At last, I would like to bless all of you to be happy, prosperous, and attain the Lord Buddha's Dhamma, as well as having all of your wishes come true!

2. Craving or Tanha

Q: Must Nun, are the sensual desire, sensual hunger, craving, the tasty, the distasty, the satisfied, and the dissatisfied, regarded as craving all alike? Could you kindly clarify?

A: Please pay attention to my answer. Being mindful promptly to eliminate the attachment over the five aggregates and the craving will not arise. Know what craving is as we still rely on craving. The sensual hunger, the tasty, the distasty, the satisfied, and the dissatisfied, are by products of the craving or *tanha*.

To explain the Dhamma, we cannot refuse that it is necessary to use the idioms and proverbs for the reason of smoothness, preciseness, and the clarity of the topics. Sometimes, the repetition of idioms, especially in Thai language, can cause doubts such as sensual hunger, craving, the satisfied, the dissatisfied, and *tanha*. We question how they are similar or dissimilar.

If we make a simple consideration on our familiarity with the language, we find that they differ in meanings such as the hungriness is normally used with foods whereas the desirous can be used with the spiritual sense. So, we understand and know the meanings in common.

The sensuous craving (*kāma-rāga*) is hunger, desirous, the satisfied, and emotional indulgence towards sight, sound smell, taste, and bodily feeling. If one is attached to even any of the aforesaid, one will suffer like lighting fire into oneself. The suffer is caused by struggling from searching, keeping, losing, or departing. One who likes what one sees is attached to a sight and satisfied with the beautiful sight. Thus, one is subject to suffering from changing of such sight. Likewise, one who is attached to a smell will suffer from the changing smell. When one is attached to taste, one will suffer from the taste like those who over-consume foods with craving. One is satisfied with the tasty and dissatisfied with the distasty. So, when one has a delicious meal, one consumes excessively until causing problems to one's body and health. This is eating with craving. As the matter of fact, our human body needs foods, so we earn for living and consuming in order to sustain our life and good health. Thus, we have to eat or consume foods moderately in order to make it righteous and in-line to the Dhamma. Frankly speaking, we eat in order to live on and continue doing good deeds. We do not live in order to enjoy eating or entertaining with indulgence, being trendy, or luxury, until causing problems to our own health, causing us to harm each other, or increasing additional mental impurity. The Lord Buddha taught his disciple monks to seek for foods and consume them earnestly and virtuously according to the principle of being moderate towards one's consumption.

For the term 'craving' or '*tanha*,' the common understanding is the negative desire which cannot be truly fulfilled or satisfied. For example, the five sensual desire which makes us 'want' this and that or 'want to be' this and that including satisfaction, dissatisfaction, wishing to have, and wishing not to have. In the Dhamma perspective, the sensual hunger, craving, and desire are all '*tanha*' which can be defined as the anxious and unrest worldly demand which can never be truly fulfilled or satisfied. As we consider the nature of craving, we find that craving causes sufferings to those who are not aware of it until

becoming emotionally enslaved. Thus, the sensual hunger, desirous, and craving are similar in this aspect.

When the sensual hunger, desirous, and craving arise in one's mind, the mind is like being corroded. So, they can be deemed as the causes of problems to one's life as well as the whole human society. They lead to fear, suspiciousness, furiousness, hatred, sensual indulgence, delusion, troubles, and numerous sufferings.

Theoretically, craving or *tanha* which is the root of sufferings can be divided into three categories as follows:

- (1) Sensual Desire or *kamatanha* which occurs from sight, sound, smell, taste, and bodily feeling.
- (2) Wishing for Achievement or *bhavatanha* which results one to endlessly wish for more power and superior status.
- (3) Dissatisfaction over various things or *vibhavatanha* which makes one rejects or refuses whatever one dislikes or dissatisfies of.

Craving causes only sufferings, and it can never be truly fulfilled. A vast river can be brimmed with water, but an individual who is enslaved by craving will feel desirous from time to time, so it can never be completely fulfilled. Thus, it is necessary for us to create the immunity against craving. The immunity in this place means the mindfulness over right view.

The Mindfulness of Right View means the awareness and realization of righteous thoughts which do not harm oneself and others. This means that one knows what to do righteously. For our daily living, we must not lack the mindfulness because it can help us solving problems in time of difficulty or confrontation with problems. For example, when we drive on a road at a high speed and one of the tires blowout, we must know what to do promptly. Some people are shocked by the accident and lost control by pushing the brake pedal which causes the car to spin and turnover, and they are badly injured or even passed away. Some people drive on a road as normal, but a big lorry heads against them on the lane. What should we do with this situation after we do the honking but it does not

help? Some may say that the lorry is on our lane, so it is the fault of the lorry's driver. So, we have to see who will be fortunate or misfortunate out of this situation. These are the situations that can occur in our daily living.

Thus, we have to be mindful at every moment because mindfulness secures our mind from wandering and degrading. Mindfulness cautions our mind not to over-enjoy or indulge into the sensual pleasure until becoming attached to the five aggregates which comprises of form (rupa), perception (vedana), remembrance (sanna), thought (sangara), and cognition (vinna). So, one misunderstands that things truly belong to us, and everything lasts forever. These are the sources of mental impurity that continues the infinite cycle of birth and death.

To conclude, we have to train ourselves to be mindful. In addition, we must be able to use mindfulness at every moment of our life whether we are taking action, speaking, or thinking. They must always be secured by mindfulness, so we can make achievements in our works completely and safely. Indeed, the mindfulness itself is the 'recklessness' which the Lord Buddha emphasized its significance to his disciples that all of the Lord Buddha's teachings can be concluded into the recklessness.

3. Making Merit & Making Donation

Q: Master Nun, I have heard about 'making merit & making donation' which is commonly known to Thai Buddhists. Are the two different or similar? Is it necessary that when we make merit, we have to make donation?

A: Alright, the literal meaning of merit or '*punja*' is the factor that leads to happiness while '*dhana*' or donation means giving such as giving a material object.

The common stereotype of Buddhists is that 'merit making' is to offer material objects to a virtuous person such as an ascetic or a monk whilst donation making is understood to be giving material objects to commoners including the beggar and vagabond.

The two terms are similar that they are the actions of giving. However, the difference is that merit making can be made in several ways whereas 'donation making' is limited to

giving material objects or money. So, it is necessary that when we make merit, we should also make donation from time to time.

Q: What are the other ways of merit making?

A: There are ten ways to earn merit as follows: (1) Making donation (2) Observing precepts (3) Practicing meditation (4) Being humble (5) Being helpful (6) Sharing goodness to others (7) Appreciating others' goodness (8) Learning the Dhamma (9) Teaching the Dhamma and (10) Keeping up with right views. All of these are the ways to earn merit in Buddhism.

Q: Master Nun, for the part that merit making and making donation are different, please kindly clarify your saying that we have to make merit and donation as well from time to time.

A: We do not live alone on earth, and we have to rely on each other. I mentioned that it is a necessity because merit can be the true refuge for humans in the afterworld. We make merit, so that the merit can be our refuge. The donation making is to be a refuge for others who cannot rely on themselves since they did not accumulate enough merit.

4. Doctrine – Practicality - Achievement

Q: In Buddhism, there are three significant terms, 'doctrine – practicality – achievement.' These three can be regarded as the dogma of Buddhism. I would like to ask Master Nun about the meaning extent of the Buddhist doctrine or *Pariyatti*.

A: Buddhist doctrine or *Pariyatti* is the primary level of Buddhism. It is like a geography map which is necessary for travelers; likewise, Buddhist doctrine is necessary for Buddhist practitioners. The extent of Buddhist doctrine is the right & wrong of practice.

Q: What is the definition extent of Dhamma practicality?

A: Dhamma practice is the intermediate level of Buddhism. We can compare to a traveler who relies on a map which he studied well when travelling. If one studies the Dhamma doctrine but does not put into practice, one will not gain benefit from the knowledge. So,

the knowledge is useless. This is similar to a geographer who studies maps well, but never travel by himself.

Q: What is the definition of Dhamma achievement?

A: Dhamma achievement is the advanced level of Buddhism. It is the result of practicing and studying Dhamma. We can compare to a person who studies a map well and complete the travelling with the knowledge gained from such map until arriving one's destination.

Q: Master Nun, if we practice the Dhamma only, can we make achievement?

A: That is not possible. It would be like a traveler who does not know the route. One may go to the wrong way and waste one's time.

Q: Why is it so? There are many meditation masters who do not pass the Dhamma study or pali language examination, but they can practice correctly without violating against the teaching & discipline (*Dhamma & Vinaya*).

A: According to your question, it is a misunderstanding about Dhamma doctrine, Dhamma practice, and Dhamma achievement. The examination of Dhamma and pali language study does not mean that those meditation masters neglect the study of Dhamma doctrine as they acquire knowledge from competent Buddhist teachers and masters who teach them Dhamma and Vinaya correctly. Their teachers and masters provide them guidelines like this as if they were certified for knowledge in the Dhamma doctrines.

Q: Master Nun, so we need all of the three which are Dhamma doctrine, Dhamma practice, and Dhamma achievement in order to gain benefit and fulfill the objective of our religion, isn't it?

A: That is correct. The religion we are referring to has Dhamma doctrine as the primary level, the Dhamma practice as the intermediate level, and Dhamma achievement as the advanced level. If we can fulfill all of the three levels, it means that we fulfill the objective of our religion without mismatching.

5. Happiness

Q: It is usual that everyone in this world wish for happiness. So, how can we find happiness?

A: Do you wish to seek for internal or external happiness?

Happiness cannot be found from the external. It is normally claimed that one is happy, but it is untrue because there is no happiness from the external. The true happiness can be gained from the internal only.

Q: What is all the external happiness about, Master Nun?

A: The external happiness needs to rely on the materials. This misleads people that it is happiness. Only the internal happiness is true happiness, and it can occur by relying on the Dhamma.

Q: What are the materials which you mean?

A: The materials are from

- (1) Sight which people think of it as pleasurable
- (2) Sound which people think of it as pleasurable
- (3) Smell which people think of it as pleasurable
- (4) Taste which people think of it as pleasurable
- (5) Bodily feeling which people think of it as pleasurable
- (6) Thought which people think of it as pleasurable

Q: As they are commonly accepted by people as pleasurable, they should be regarded as happiness, isn't it?

A: The aforesaid are not happiness, but we can regard them as 'less suffering' because they are misunderstood to be happiness. In fact, they are suffering. There is no material thing which exists in this world can be regarded as happiness since they are subject to change and continual transformation. So, they are not the source of happiness although the

material objects which we can pleasurablely perceive from sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily feeling, and thought, are subject to change at all time.

Q: I quite understand now with some remaining doubts. From my understanding, the happiness from the material objects is the 'worldly happiness' or 'happiness of people in the world.' Isn't it?

A: It's not wrong to say that.

Q: What about the happiness which relies on the internal Dhamma, Master Nun? How is it about?

A: Before I explain further, I have to clarify first that the happiness from Dhamma does not occur to commoners, but it occurs only to the wise ones who have cultivated virtue perfections which enable them to attain such internal happiness like the Lord Buddha and the enlightened Buddhist saints. In this case, the internal happiness occurs to their 'mind.'

Q: How is the mental state of Lord Buddha and the enlightened Buddhist saints?

A: I would like to give you a story as an example. There is an underprivileged person who never experiences tasty foods, soft mattress, air-conditioned mansion, and other good accommodation to provide convenience in his life. So, he wishes to know it and asks a wealthy millionaire about these experiences. The millionaire kindly explains the experience of tasty food, soft mattress, cozy air-conditioned mansion, and convenience from other good accommodations. However, the underprivileged can never know what they really mean because he never experiences by himself. On the contrary, the millionaire knows well of such pleasure as he is the one who experiences them.

If you understand this story, it means that you can understand the answers for your questions.

6. Living Beings are Destined by Their Karma

Q: Master Nun, is it true and believable according to the Buddhist teaching that 'living beings are destined by their karma,' and 'karma distinguishes living beings to be well or unwell?'

A: It is true and believable. Please understand that Buddhism teaches the truth and true stories which are not deceiving fictions. The term 'Buddha' alone has the meaning that people can trust. One who studies the Lord Buddha's teachings can see and know the truth accordingly.

Q: You mean that it is true and believable, but how can we see it in reality. Can it be seen by us?

A: Yes, it can be seen everywhere. Please ponder the following. The poor, the beggar, the vagabond, the millionaire, the wealthy businessmen, and the monarchs are all destined by karma, and none of them can escape from the karmic ruling.

Q: I do consider your words. People are poor because they are lazy in doing their jobs. The wealthy and millionaire become rich because they are diligent in doing their works and smart in earning for living. Isn't this true? I don't see how it is related to the karma, Master Nun.

A: Your claim is correct. But you see just only the karmic fruition or results of the causes. The overall is still unclear to your understanding. You have to consider the causes, so you can see the overall process.

Q: Now I don't understand your words. Please kindly explain further.

A: According to your opinion and understanding, laziness makes people become poor whereas diligence makes people rich. But we have to see how laziness and diligence occur on the first hand. They occur at the mind of people, then turn into actions. As actions are committed, they become karma.

Q: I quite understand your explanation now. So, it means that the laziness and diligence occur at the mind first. But what do they rely on when they occur?

A: Well, this is a good question that reflects your intelligence. The laziness relies on unwholesomeness which is the root of sinfulness embedded in the mind whereas diligence relies on wholesomeness which is the root of merit embedded in the mind as well. Don't you see now how they originated?

Q: Master Nun, as it is so, this means that poverty originates from unwholesomeness while wealth originates from wholesomeness. How many category of karma are there? What are the principles of karmic fruition for each category of karma?

A: That's correct. The issue about poverty and wealth which I exemplified to you aims to show you the condition of karma when giving effects to the one who commits karma. In general, there are 12 main categories of karma with 3 principles of karmic fruition as follows:

- (1) Timely fruition of karma
- (2) Fruition of karma based on functions
- (3) Respective fruition based on the power of karma

Q: Master nun, what are the twelve categories of karma?

A: The twelve categories of karma are:

- (1) The karma that bears fruits in the present lifetime.
- (2) The karma that bears fruits in the next lifetime.
- (3) The karma that bears fruits in the future lifetimes.
- (4) The karma that no longer bears fruits.
- (5) The karma that leads to rebirth.
- (6) The karma that supports the rebirth.
- (7) The karma that troubles the karma that leads to and supports rebirth.
- (8) The karma that lessens other karma(s).
- (9) The powerful karma that bears fruits soonest.

(10) The regular but frequently committed karma(s).

(11) The karma which is close to one's death.

(12) The karma committed with weak or no intention.

Q: What is the timely fruition of karma?

A: The karma that bears timely fruitions can be classified into three groups.

(1) The karma that bears fruit in the present lifetime.

(2) The karma that bears fruit in the next lifetime.

(3) The karma that bears fruit in the following future lifetimes.

Q: Master nun, I still don't understand why karma can be differentiated like that?

A: Listen carefully. I would like to give you an example. Normally, commoners have three meals which are breakfast, lunch, and dinner, right? Among the three meals, we start from breakfast. It is not common that people start their first meal of the day with lunch or dinner.

- The karma that bears fruit in the present lifetime is like breakfast.
- The karma that bears fruit in the next lifetime is like lunch.
- The karma that bears fruit in the following future lifetimes is like dinner.

Among the three meals which we do our best to prepare them, we enjoy the delicious taste. If we don't prepare them well, and they become rotten in one meal or all of the three meals, we can enjoy only one or no meal at all.

- The delicious meal which is well prepared is like merit fruition that causes happiness.
- The rotten meal which is not well prepared is like sin fruition that causes suffering.

Q: Master nun, could you please explain the karma that bears fruit according to its functionality?

A: The karma bears fruits according to its category as follows:

- (1) The karma that leads one to reborn in either good or bad realm.
- (2) The karma that supports or adds the burden to the karmic consequences. For the supportive karma, one will have better experience in the good realm. For the burden karma, one will have worse experience in the bad realm.
- (3) The karma that causes lessening or elevating. For the good karma, one's sufferings will be lessened. For the bad karma, one's happiness will be lessened.
- (4) The karma that directly intervenes the overall karmic fruition. In case of the good karma, it gets rid of one's suffering immediately. In case of the bad karma, it gets rid of one's happiness immediately.

Q: I see how it works now, Master Nun. What about the karma that bears fruits according to the level of its power? How does it work?

A: This kind of karma bears fruits from 'more' to 'less.'

- The strong karma which bears strong results will occur first.
- After experiencing the strong results of strong karma, the frequent karma will bear fruits in the next phase.
- Once the strong and frequent karmas are completely experienced, one will experience the near-death karma when one is about to die.
- Finally, the karma committed by chance or unintentionally will bear fruits.

Q: Thank you for your answers. Anyway, I forgot one question.

A: What is it?

Q: How is the karmic consequence of the forgiven karma, Master Nun?

A: Okay, the forgiven karma is the karma that no longer bears fruit. This is the karma that one committed and cannot cause karmic results to one while he or she is still in the cycle of birth since the karmic force is too weak or there are other powerful karmas that are bearing fruit. Thus, the weak karma has no opportunity to give fruition, and it becomes totally depleted and given up.

Q: Thank you so much.

7. **Suffering**

Q: Master Nun, it seems that people in the present have more sufferings. Do I misunderstand? How would you explain this?

A: You don't misunderstand because the truth is that there is only suffering in this world. The suffering arises and ceases as usual. All other things are just the material symbols of sufferings.

Q: What do you mean for the material symbols of sufferings? Why do they arise? Can we prevent them from arising?

A: People, animals, and objects which appear in this world and can be seen with naked eyes, heard with ears, smelled with nose, tasted with tongue, felt with body, and thought of with mind, are altogether the material symbol of sufferings. They arise due to their causes. To prevent them from arising, we have to eliminate their causes.

Q: What are their causes? How can we find them?

A: Their causes are the infinite desires which is called 'craving' in Buddhism. It can be found in the material symbols of sufferings which are people, animals, and objects.

Q: Master Nun, you mentioned the term 'craving,' it is commonly known, but how does it appear to be?

A: The appearance of craving are:

- Unmindful misbehaving
- Downgrading
- Going along the worldly stream

 Their functions are:

- Entangling the living beings

- Entrapping the living beings
- Binding the living beings

Craving is like an excellent trap. It is hard for any trapped living being to be released or flee away except the Holy Ones.

Q: Master Nun, are there the Holy Ones in this world? If there are the Holy Ones, which type of people who can be released from the trap or craving do you mean?

A: There are the Holy Ones in the world, and they are:

- The Lord Buddha
- The Silent Buddha
- The Fully Enlightened Saints or Arahant

The trap or craving cannot entrap these Holy Ones. Although they are trapped, they will be able to release themselves from the trap. This is called 'liberation' from freeing oneself from all sufferings and entering the state of eternal happiness without further sufferings.

Q: Master Nun, the individuals you mentioned may be people in the daydreaming. I think we cannot find them in reality. Isn't it true?

A: Your words are incorrect. The Lord Buddha, the Silent Buddha, and the Fully Enlightened Saints are not people in our daydreaming. They do exist in reality, and this can be proven, but those who disbelieve in them will not be able to attain.

Q: Master Nun, if the Holy Ones do exist and people believe in them, how can we find them?

A: Within oneself! The Lord Buddha, the Silent Buddha, and the Enlightened Saints can be made possible within oneself. I think you don't understand what I mean.

Q: Yes, I don't quite understand what you said. Could you kindly clarify?

A: Listen to my explanation. Common people usually build Buddha images, but they don't create the Buddha within. The way to build the Buddha within is to realize in the virtues of the Lord Buddha, the Silent Buddha, and the Enlightened Saints, to prosper within one's

mind by way of following the Holy Ones' teachings or Dhamma. The Lord Buddha and such would arise in their mind of ones who have Dhamma or virtues prospering in their mind.

Q: Master Nun, what do you think about people in the present days?

A: People in the present society mostly live independently, and they don't take the Dhamma as their refuge. They seek for unrighteous self-satisfaction in their living. So, they are enslaved by craving and wrongful desire. Their livings seem to be happy, but, in fact, they always encounter with sufferings.

Q: Master Nun, how is the true happiness which is in-line to the Buddhist teachings?

A: True happiness is not the happiness from material indulgence, but it is the happiness from Dhamma indulgence which is true happiness according to the Buddhist teachings.

Q: How can we make people in the society truly happy?

A: Principally, it is not possible that people can make each other truly happy or one makes one another truly happy. The happiness that we make for each other in this world is merely the mundane happiness which goes along the worldly stream. If one wishes to have true happiness, one has to know how to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and think correctly.

Q: What do you mean by saying that knowing how to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and think correctly? Could you please explain further?

A: Craving stems from sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily feeling, and emotional thinking.

✧ Seeing without being deluded by sight is the correct seeing

✧ Hearing without being deluded by sound is the correct hearing

✧ Smelling without being deluded by smell is the correct smelling

✧ Tasting without being deluded by taste is the correct tasting

✧ Feeling without being deluded by bodily touch is the correct feeling

✧ Thinking without being deluded by emotional thought is the correct thinking

This is because one is not enslaved or entangled by the trap which is craving. So, one is free from bondages and being able to live one's life along the wholesome nature and meet with eternal true happiness.

Q: Master Nun, are the statements "living independently" and "living by relying on oneself" similar or different?

A: They are not similar, and they are completely different. Living independently is the living of people who have no religion. For those who live by relying on themselves, it is the living of religious men.

Q: Could you explain?

A: Simply speaking, one who has no religion is one who doesn't have Dhamma as the principle of one's living. So, one doesn't have hospitality toward others and become selfish and greedy as well as lacking generosity and don't realize and appreciate others' goodness.

The religious men are those who apply Dhamma to their livings. They have hospitality towards those surrounding them, and they share what they have to others when they have enough. In time of scarcity, they fulfill their own needs first. These people are diligent, thrifty, honest, and patient. These are their basic virtues that one needs when dealing with difficulties. The religious men also appreciate others' success. They are kind to others and rely on one another which promote unity of their community or society.

Q: Master Nun, between the religious men and non-religious men, who would have more suffering?

A: All of them face with suffering all alike. But the differences are:

- (1) The Non-religious men don't know suffering, its causes, the state of no suffering, and how to cease suffering. They are like the blind cattle who roam into a forest unable to find food.
- (2) The religious men attempt to know suffering, its causes, the state of no suffering, and how to cease suffering. They are like the cattle with good eyes roaming into a forest and finding good foods to eat.

Q: Thank you so much, Master Nun.

A: Religions are the noble refuge for people. The religious men will be able to secure themselves against harms because there is no other refuge in this world which is better than religions, especially Buddhism which comprises of the Triple Gem as follows:

- (1) The Buddha Gem or the Lord Buddha who attained the righteous enlightenment by himself, and he taught the knowledge from enlightenment to others.
- (2) The Dhamma Gem or the Lord Buddha's teachings which secure the Dhamma practitioners against recession.
- (3) The Sangha Gem or the Buddhist monks who follow the Lord Buddha's teachings and teach others as well.

8. The Crystal Dhamma City

Q: Revered Master Nun, what is life about?

A: Life is the being of people, and life of animals is the being of animals. So, life is the being of the living who is not dead yet. The living being still have motions such as standing, walking, sitting, and sleeping as well as other functioning such as eating, drinking, excreting, sexual intercourses, doing, speaking, and thinking. The living beings have love, hatred, and other emotions, and they may be accounted as good or bad ones.

Regarding living beings other than humans and animals, I will not explain about them, but I will explain about the human beings only. Humans' life comprises of five components or the five aggregates namely form, perception, remembrance, thought, and cognition. These are immaterial.

- (1) Form (rupa) means the figure or shape which can be seen with naked eyes.
- (2) Perception (vedana) means the feelings such as happiness, suffering, or neutrality.
- (3) Sanna (remembrance) means memory upon sight, sound, smell, taste, and bodily feeling.
- (4) Sankhara (thought) means mental conditioning to be wholesome, unwholesome, or neither wholesome nor unwholesome.

(5) Vinna (cognition) means perception, memory, and thought which are conditioned to give rise to cognition. For example, the eyes see, the ears hear, the nose smells, the tongue tastes, the body feels, and the mind thinks emotionally. Then, one has happiness, suffering, and neither happiness nor suffering. Our lives are borrowed from the four elements which are the solid, the liquid, the combustion, and the temperature. The solid is the hard parts. The heat and warm parts are from temperature or fire. The flowing of air from above to below and from below to above are borrowed from the combustion. The cooling and fluid parts are borrowed from liquid. We have to take good care of what we borrowed. If we use them well, we will gain benefits; otherwise, we will face with harms or problems.

Q: Master Nun, you named your meditation center's magazine as 'The Crystal Dhamma City,' what does it mean?

A: The 'City' means our human body which extends over the height, width, and thickness. The bodily city is governed by the King which is our own mind that comprises of form, perception, remembrance, thought, and cognition.

Q: So, what does the Dhamma City mean?

A: The Dhamma is nature. Then, the Dhamma City means the city built with nature. The nature builds up humans to be male and female, father and mother, and nature also builds so many various things both living beings and non-living beings. All of what I said, both humans and things, were built to live in the nature under the same system which is called karma in Buddhism.

Q: What are the karma(s)?

A: Mainly, karma is the action of humans which can be differentiated into physical action, speech, and thought. There are both good karma, bad karma, and neither good nor bad karma. All of them share one thing in common that their particles move at all time whether they are living beings or non-living beings.

Q: What are the Vinna?

A: Vinna is the natural element of cognition. It can be of a 'transcendroid' nature.

Q: What is the meaning of spirituality?

A: It is our mind whose functions are to perceive, memorize, thought, and cognize. When there is sensual experiencing via sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental feeling, these are processed and conditioned to give rise to cognition within the mind.

Q: What is the original condition of mind?

A: Originally, the mind is pure, clear, and radiant. When it is contaminated by mental defilements which is the dirty nature or the unwholesome dark nature according to Luang Por Wat Paknam, then, the mind becomes gloomy.

Q: What is craving?

A: *Tanha* or craving is a nature that makes one wishes to continue indulging into emotions. It is like a sticky glue-rubber that makes it easy for other things to cling to and develop into dirt further. Our mind is like a plant seed, *tanha* or craving is like the moisture contained inside the seed. So, the moisture enables the seed to sprout and grow further endlessly.

Q: As our mind is pure and radiant, can' it stay liberated?

A: This is possible for the mind of the enlightened ones which is pure and tough like a diamond that cannot be dissolved in liquid. Its quality is supernormal. However, the mind of commoners is like clear water. When it is contaminated by dirty water, it becomes unclear. This is the natural quality.

Q: How is the Crystal City?

A: The Crystal City is developed from the Dhamma City. We already have a Dhamma City, and this can be developed into the Crystal City. To do this, we develop ourselves to have the Buddha Gem, Dhamma Gem, and Sangha Gem, as well as mindfulness, righteousness, awakening and joyfulness, having righteous conducts, and these will make our own body pure like the Crystal City.

Q: How can we turn the Dhamma City into the Crystal City?

A: Heading along the Noble Eightfold Path, and this will lead to the Crystal City.

Q: What is the meaning of “Dhamma Body seeing the Dhammakaya?”

A: As we were born humans, we have to be diligent by working and doing our duties to earn for livings. In order to survive, we need to have the four basic necessities which are foods, clothes, shelter, and medicine. The Dhamma Body means that our body has to do the duties. First of all, we do things for ourselves. Next, we help others and the society. Lastly, we have to search for the truth of life and true happiness by putting an end to suffering completely.

Seeing the Dhammakaya means comprehending the truth of nature or Dhamma condition that everything exists, stays for a period of time, and decomposes. This is normal according to the Three Nature namely impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anatta). We should not be attached to the state of being humans, animals, and self. As we are bound to these attachments, it will create the mirage that deceives our mind to have both happiness and suffering. Who else will be able to know this as the answer is within humans themselves?

As we observe things that occur naturally, stay over a period of time per natural contributing factors, and cease later on, these can be distinguished into the material and immaterial. So, we explain this phenomena as “the Dhamma body sees the Dhammakaya.”

9. The Superknowledge of Dhammakaya (Vijja Dhammakaya)

Q: What is the superknowledge of Dhammakaya?

A: Vijja or superknowledge means the bright insight wisdom that gets rid of avijja or the dark ignorance that causes unknowing or misunderstanding.

Q: Does the superknowledge of Dhammakaya belong to the Lord Buddha?

A: Yes, the superknowledge of Dhammakaya is the principles of Lord Buddha's teachings which Luang Por Wat Paknam rediscovered and taught to his disciples.

Q: How can superknowledge of Dhammakaya defeat the evil mara?

A: Mara is the defilement. It is the nature of the dark side. Mara is the root of unwholesomeness. For the neutral party, we call them '*abhaya-gata*.' We have to create and promote the wholesome elements and essences within ourselves as well as cultivating goodness to root deeper into our mind further. Then, we will gain the strength to uproot unwholesomeness that always attempts to seize our mind which comprises of perception, memory, thought, and cognition. The unwholesomeness normally misleads us to be attached to 'self' altogether with ignorance, craving, attachment, and clinging, resulting us to continue the cycle of rebirth and suffering endlessly.

Q: How can we make merit?

A: To make merit, we have to believe in the Lord Buddha's teachings, the law of karma, merit and sin. Next, we should learn to do giving, observing moral precepts, learning the Dhamma, practicing meditation, and pursuing the Noble Eightfold Path. We have to be committed in doing these things in order to build the weapons to defeat the evil mara absolutely.

Q: How can the superknowledge of Dhammakaya cure disease?

A: The superknowledge of Dhammakaya can cure disease as it empowers the practitioners to decompose elements within humans such as solid, liquid, combustion, temperature, air, and cognition, and create balance among them. However, if the patient has strong karma, it will be difficult to heal. The patient who has enough merit energy or can reconnect to the given energy, or sense the Dhammakaya Master will be able to purify the patient's elements and essences in order to extend the lifespan. So, merit energy is also very important as it energizes one's life. In case that the patient's body is much degraded due to the natural process which makes it impossible to cure or heal, the elements and essences have to be returned to the nature.

Q: The decomposition of elements and essences is not death, isn't it?

A: Yes, the human does not die when his elements and essences are decomposed and purified because his physical body still works as usual according to the mother nature that things exist, stay for a period of time, and decompose. There are both the material and the immaterial as we live in this assumed world. We rely on the nature which creates both living beings and non-living beings. The elements and essences function throughout the cycle of rebirth. When the body is decomposed, our spirit has to seek for a new body.

Q: As the old home or our body decomposes, where would the spirit head to?

A: The spirit will continue on according to the karmic power which is the consequence of our actions when we are alive. If we do good deeds, we will reborn to a good realm to enjoy happiness. On the contrary, if we do bad deeds, we will reborn to a bad realm for punishment.

Q: How can Dhammakaya Meditation help the people who already passed away?

A: Dhammakaya Meditation can help, but one has to believe in the Dhammakaya with one's wisdom when one is still alive. This is because the Dhammakaya's mind is very powerful. If one hold on to the Dhammakaya and follow the path of Dhammakaya, the Dhammakaya can guide you both in the present lifetime and the afterlife. In the present lifetime, you will live with mindfulness and without recklessness.

Q: What types of Dhammakaya are there?

A: The Dhammakaya can be classified into three parties namely the Holy Dhammakaya, the Neutral Dhammakaya, and the Evil Dhammakaya (mara). All of them are inside everyone's mind.

The Holy Dhammakaya belongs to the wholesome party. They have bright wholesome mind full of virtues. In addition, they are shame of sin, diligent, truthful, and in-line to the pure Dhamma. They cultivate merit to end the cycle of birth and foresee the truth of life. Those who get close to one who attains the Holy Dhammakaya will feel refreshed,

and their sufferings will be solved. So, the one who attains the Holy Dhammakaya does the duty of the wholesome party.

The Neutral Dhammakaya neither does good nor bad deed. They don't believe in merit and sin, and they live their lives based on past accumulated merit with over-pride.

The Evil Dhammakaya or mara belongs to the unwholesome dark party. Their mind is sinful. They are lazy and selfish while causing troubles to themselves and others. They believe in being self (atta). These people are hypocrites or pretenders, and they are tricky. They misbehave and do not observe moral precepts and have no virtue. They don't believe in heaven and hell, merit and sin, as well as having no gratitude. Thus, they attempt to continue on the cycle of rebirth. Those surrounding them would have suffering and troubles. These are the characteristics of people who do the duties of the Evil Dhammakaya.

All of the three parties of Dhammakaya compete each other in everyone's mind. Humans have different thoughts based on the accumulated karma, and they have their own reasons which they believe to be correct. So, they have different opinions. We have to study and decide which party we want to belong to.

Our mind is the cognitive element which is immaterial. It is capable of accumulating wholesomeness and unwholesomeness as well as stories similar to the hard drive of a computer. Humans can reconnect to the immaterial and reflect to be the material in the form of being good or bad person.

Q: Can the Superknowledge of Dhammakaya help in every aspect?

A: Yes, it can help. However, one has to have faith and wisdom believing in the Dhammakaya and has accumulated enough merit energy. The belief and the power from the Superknowledge of Dhammakaya, altogether, can solve every problem. If an individual has so much sin energy, it may not be able to solve or reconnect. We can compare this to the rechargeable battery, if it is not wired or connected, we cannot recharge the electricity.

10. Meditation Practice

Q: I would like to ask Master Nun about the meditation practice. If we do not practice the Dhammakaya meditation method, can we attain Dhammakaya?

A: Yes, any meditation practitioner who follows the Lord Buddha's teachings will be able to attain the Dhammakaya, all alike. There are numerous meditation methods, and the Dhammakaya rests within the pure mind irrespective of the method. So, it depends on our commitment if we will be able to reach the Dhammakaya or not. If we are truly committed, we will be able to attain Dhammakaya.

Q: Those who practice meditation until attaining Dhammakaya will be able to see hell and heaven, but why some of them are still selfish?

A: There are different parties of Dhammakaya.

The Evil Dhammakaya can also see hell and heaven, but they don't see the real thing. The Evil Dhammakaya is selfish and lacks moral discipline and virtue. They have no shame and fear upon sin. They are tricky and boast themselves to be the supernatural person. They are the pretenders who commit the causes that continue on the cycle of rebirth endlessly. Those who get close to them would feel troublesome, sufferings, and darkness.

The Holy Dhammakaya can see the real hell and heaven. After seeing the hell and heaven, they are shameful and fear of sin. These urge them to accumulate more merit and pursue virtue perfections in order to discontinue the cycle of rebirth as they foresee the suffering and harm in the cycle. Those surrounding the one who attained Holy Dhammakaya would feel comfortable, refreshed, calm, peaceful, and bright. In addition, the Holy Dhammakaya makes one realizes in oneself, having sympathy upon oneself and others.

Both the Holy Dhammakaya and the Evil Dhammakaya rest inside ourselves. They have to rely on each other. We have to rely on the Lord Buddha's teachings only to be our guide light that leads us the way to defeat and overcome the evil mara. The most venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) or Luang Por Wat Paknam

researched the Lord Buddha's teaching in meditation until he rediscovered Dhammakaya Meditation, he taught his disciples and the knowledge has been passed on until the presents.

Q: I would like to ask Master Nun about meditation practice. Some people can see the crystal sphere with insight, but some people has practiced for a long time but they still don't see the crystal sphere. What is the reason behind this?

A: In meditation practice, some people are able to see a crystal sphere with insight while others who have practiced for a long time still do not see, this is because their minds have not calmed down yet. Their minds still wander around, if their minds calm down, they will see the crystal sphere all alike because the crystal sphere which represents the Dhamma sphere rests inside everyone.

Q: Master Nun, do you have any special technique for us to be able to see the crystal sphere with insight?

A: The recommendation for seeing a crystal sphere with insight is to observe precepts flawlessly and be mindful at all time so you become aware of whatever you do at every moment.

Q: Those who cannot see the crystal sphere with their insight is because the meditation method does not fit their mental cultivation, isn't it?

A: Yes! The reason for being unable to see the crystal sphere with insight could be the mismatching with mental cultivation. There are many causes for this. Some people had practiced various meditation methods before and had many meditation masters. They don't know exactly which method to use. This is similar to planting a tree, when a tree is growing up, it is relocated. Some people have doubt whether it is real or not or some people have excessive attempt to see the crystal sphere. However, if everyone is really committed to the practice, they will see the crystal sphere all alike because the crystal sphere or the Dhamma sphere exists within everyone.

Q: For those who cannot see the crystal sphere, what should they do?

A: Those who cannot see the crystal sphere should keep their mind indifferent which is neither glad nor sad, having no anger, hatred, or love. Keeping their mind still and focused only.

Q: Is there any involvement with the cultivated merit?

A: Absolutely! This is because everything stems from a cause. Thus, there are causes and effects which involve past and present.

Q: Can those who have accumulated less merit see the crystal sphere with insight?

A: Those who have accumulated less merit can see the crystal sphere with insight. This depends on the causes and effects. They have to make merit by giving alms and observing precepts because precepts or moral discipline is the quality of humans. Meditation practice is based on moral discipline. Comparing this to planting, we have to prepare the ground well, so the tree can grow further to bear flowers and fruits.

Q: What would happen if one practices meditation without observing moral precepts?

A: Without moral precepts, the meditation practice will be wrongful. This is called 'micca-samadhi' which belongs to the dark evil party.

Q: Some people can see the Dhamma sphere with their insight. What does the 'Dhamma Sphere' mean?

A: The Dhamma sphere is the mind or the sphere of spirit. It is a kind of nature.

Q: What is the characteristic of Dhamma sphere?

A: The Dhamma sphere is immaterial. It is pure and crystal clear. The Dhamma sphere is the cognition element. When we have a good mind, the Dhamma sphere is clear. When we have a gloomy mind, it turns grey. When our mind is sinful, it turns dark. The characteristics are outcome that we can destine. It is all up to us to think and turn it to be. For example, a person with good immaterial mind is expressed to be a materially good person. On the contrary, if a person is selfish, harmful, and tricky, having gloomy mind, then he or she expresses himself or herself to be a physically bad person.

Q: Does the Dhamma sphere have color and brightness?

A: The Dhamma sphere has no color and brightness, it is immaterial. But some people create the imagination of its material characteristic. So, one can take the material as their meditation object for visualization. This is because the mind normally thinks and conditions infinitely. So, we can make our mind thinking of the Dhamma sphere as the image with color and brightness that we can hold our mind to in order to enable mental unity or mental calm (*Samadhi*).

Q: How is the Sphere of Moral Discipline?

A: The *Sila* Sphere or the Sphere of Moral Discipline is a kind of nature that allows the action and speech of an individual to be normal. Thus one does not harm oneself and others with any action, speech, and thought. As a result, one continues one's duty as usual without alteration.

Q: What is the difference between Moral Discipline with and without *Magga* (path)?

A: The moral discipline with *magga* means the supra-mundane moral discipline according to the Noble Eightfold Path. The moral discipline without *magga* means the mundane moral precepts.

Q: How is the Sphere of Concentration or *Samadhi* Sphere?

A: The Sphere of Concentration is a kind of nature of mind that calms down and stops still or focused. So, one is mindful and awoken.

Q: Does it have power?

A: Yes, the focused and still mind is powerful.

Q: How is the Sphere of Wisdom or *Panna* Sphere?

A: The Sphere of Wisdom is the cognition element that enables one to know the beginning, the middle, and the advanced. If one accumulates good deeds with wisdom until it becomes perfection or *parami*, there will be the *Vimutti* Sphere and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere arising in the middle and unify to become one. Then, one will have insight and intuition to know and understand various phenomena.

In conclusion, if we practice meditation according to the Lord Buddha's teaching until attaining the Holy Dhammakaya, we will have insight and intuition to discover and understand the truth as well as the nature that created humans and various things, both material and immaterial, which function systematically and belong to the same nature system. Nonetheless, humans are capable of reconnecting their mind to experience all of these.

Humans have created rules and regulations to organize the human society whereas the Law of Karma organizes the actions of humans and animals to be either happy or unhappy. Everything stems from a cause, and they exist to stay for a period of time before being decomposed. This is the Dhammic condition according to the law of nature.

As we were born humans and be fortunate to meet with Buddhism which has the Lord Buddha's teachings as the truth that enlightens humankind, anyone who follows the Lord Buddha's teachings will be able to discover the truth. Then, we will have gratitude upon the nature, and we will not destroy it. If we practice meditation and cultivate good deeds until reaching the advanced level, we will be beyond nature and able to put an end to sufferings.

11. Religion

Q: Revered Master Nun, there are many severe problems in the present human society such as a son killing his father and mother as well as parents killing their children. Why is it so?

A: This is because people have no religion. They know religion, but they don't practice the religious teachings. So, it is useless as they have no refuge.

Q: Is it due to past karma?

A: It could be the past karma and/or the present karma which made that happen.

Q: How can religion help to prevent this?

A: If people obey the religious teachings, they will be able to prevent and solve problems absolutely.

Q: What are the Buddhist principles in term of practice?

A: Buddhism teaches people to abstain from misdeeds, promote good deeds by way of giving, observing precepts, and practicing meditation. In another word, it is to cherish moral discipline, mental concentration, and wisdom. Buddhism is the religion of wisdom where cause and effect are taken into account. Also, Buddhism emphasizes on karma, especially the good karma via action, speech, and thought which are in-line to the wholesome Dhamma.

Q: Some people committed misdeeds in the past, how can we solve this?

A: As we study the Lord Buddha's teaching, we have to accept the karmic fruitions and stop doing bad deeds. Then, we do only good deeds and continue our duty as usual. The past karma will be relieved. However, if the past karma is still very strong, it may intervene the karmic fruition directly causing us to die or recess from wholesomeness.

Q: How many types of karma are there?

A: There are three major types of karma namely the wholesome, the unwholesome, and the neutral.

Q: Some people have committed good deeds for a long time, but why they turn to commit misdeeds again?

A: Because they are not steadfast in the Buddhist teaching and teachings of Buddhist masters. Their truthfulness is weakened or their past karma bears fruit powerfully, so they recess from wholesomeness.

Q: It is said that 'Doing good deeds, earning no good results. Doing bad deeds, enjoying good results.'

A: We earn good results when we do good deeds, if it is in-line to the Dhamma. This means that we do good deeds and feel happy. Those who do bad deeds will earn bad results as they feel unpleasant or unhappy. We have to look at the mind, not just the

external. Sometimes, people look nice outside, but they are gloomy inside. Some people do bad deeds and gain good results because of their past good karma supports them. For those who do good deeds but still do not gain good results, it is because their past good karma has not bear fruits in time. In some case, they gain bad results because their past bad karma causes the effects. This is similar to planting a tree today, we will receive fruits in the future. Please be confident in doing good deeds. If we plant mango trees and keep watering and adding fertilizer, we will absolutely receive the mango fruits. This is the law of nature. It is the truth of life. Those who enjoy their past good karma are like ones who already have the mango trees planted years ago, so they can enjoy the mango fruits today. However, if they don't keep up with watering and adding fertilizer, the trees may die soon.

Q: How can we convince people to do more good deeds?

A: It is difficult to reborn as a human. So we are fortunate to be humans. This is possible because of our past merit. If we develop ourselves further, we will be humans with humanity; otherwise, we are just people without or with less humanity. We have to cultivate virtues to people since their childhood similar to our forefathers who brought their children and grandchildren to Buddhist temples for merit making. Our forefathers' merit making is a good example for us, and we can take them as our role models.

Q: Why do people in the present days are so selfish?

A: Because people have become more materialist. They give priority to money. So, they neglect the spiritual development. Hence, they lack virtues and compassion, unlike our past generations when people admired virtues and morality, so they live peacefully with less selfishness.

12. India

Q: Master Nun, how was your experience from travelling to the Buddhist pilgrimage places in India from 20 to 27 February 1994.

A: I felt like the Lord Buddha was still alive. In addition, I felt overwhelmed and encouraged to further my meditation practice. I felt like the Lord Buddha reminded me to speed up my merit cultivation and never be reckless. This eliminated my doubt and enhanced my faith.

Q: Why does Buddhism in India is in recession?

A: Because there are numerous beliefs in India, and later on, there are fragmenting of ideas without true commitment in meditation practice.

Q: Is the lineage of the Lord Buddha still there?

A: Yes, there is still Sakya clan in Nepal.

Q: Master Nun, do you think that Buddhism will prosper in India again?

A: I think Buddhism will not prosper in India like in the past, but it will prosper elsewhere.

Q: Do the Indians in the present time still believe in Buddhism?

A: From my experience during the pilgrimage, I saw only Tibetans and Buddhists from other countries who built their temples in India such as the Japanese, Burmese, and Thai.

Q: Will you visit India again?

A: Yes, I will because I had only seven days for my previous trip. I think it's too short.

Q: According to your trip to Australia from 6 to 13 September 1995, I would like to ask how Buddhism in Australia is now.

A: From my visit, there are numerous Buddhist temples. They share something in common as the temples are indeed the residential homes. Some temple has a pagoda instead of the Buddha hall or *uposatha*. There is Buddharangsi Forest Monastery which is a big monastery in Sydney where the Most Venerable Viboon Silabhorn is the abbot.

Q: Are there many monks in each temple?

A: Some temples have only one Buddhist monk, and some have two.

Q: Do the Australian believe in Buddhism?

A: Yes, some of them are Buddhists. But mostly, lay devotees are Thai Buddhists who live in Australia, and they recommend Buddhism to Australians.

Q: What are the nationality of Buddhists who build temples in Australia?

A: From my experience, there are Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Taiwanese, and more which I didn't have a chance to visit yet due to a tight schedule.

Q: How are cities in Australia?

A: They are clean and peaceful. People compete to plant flowers at homes. Australians have good discipline and respect the governing laws. Their homes have no fence to prevent robbery. People live together peacefully. Shops are closed at 5 p.m. except restaurants which are closed no later than midnight. In the evening, Australians take their family members out for dining at beaches amidst beautiful scenes and seagulls.

Q: Is Australia populous?

A: Yes. One thing which is not common in Thailand is the mobile homes which are tugged by vehicles. Another thing is that there is a ringing to welcome people who enter shops, and most of the shops have only one shopkeeper.

Q: Are there thieves and robbers in Australia?

A: I asked people there, and they told me that there is no thief or robber. This shows that people have good morality.

Q: What are other interesting things about Australia?

A: There are parks, playgrounds, clean public restrooms or toilets, maple trees, and many penguins. (Master Nun's laughter)

Q: How is the traffic there?

A: Transportation is very convenient. There is no traffic jam. Each bus has no fare keeper because passengers can insert coins to pay fare, and they have to fasten seat belts; otherwise, the driver will be fined. The drivers also have to go through alcohol drinking check up.

13. Meditation Retreat

Q: What are the benefits from joining meditation retreat at Suan Kaew Meditation Centre?

A: The meditation retreat at Suan Kaew Meditation Centre allows the participants to gain several benefits. Normally, our Centre organizes retreats for the period of three days, seven days, or nine days. Participants will have chances to learn Buddhist teachings and know why one was born and what the life goal is. In general, one comes to reborn by oneself, and when one passes away, one has to depart by oneself as well. Our centre will also educate meditation retreat participants on merit and sin, the gratitude upon parents, teachers, and religious masters, the existence of ghosts, spirits, demons, ogre and ogress, the evil *mara*, animals, humans, angels, Brahmas, monks, hell, heaven, and the Nirvana. We will teach where they are. Once we come to realize in the truth of Buddhism, we will know, love, and have sympathy upon ourselves. All of what I said are within our mind as they are immaterial. There are also the material which can be seen with naked eyes and heard with physical ears in the aspect of being a good or bad person.

Q: What are the activities during retreat?

A: In each retreat, participants will have opportunities to do Buddhist chanting, practicing meditation, giving alms, observing precepts, listening to Dhamma lectures, and more. These activities are aimed to cultivate virtues and good habits for participants. So, they can have their own guide light that leads their living as well as having a refuge for their own. The refuge is something they can hold on to as well as securing and protecting them. So, their own life and their family will be happy, and this will promote a better society in general.

Q: That's true.

A: When we are at home, we put on our clothes, make up our face so we look more attractive and beautiful. Ladies have to use cosmetics to add beauty to their face in the worldly way. Likewise, precepts observance is to add beauty in the spiritual or Dhamma way. To do so, we have to be mindful and careful of our action and speech. When someone is mindful always, he or she is elegant, isn't it?

Q: That's right, Master Nun.

A: If an individual has a calm action and speech without provoking, challenging, or hurting others, such individual can keep one's mind normal. Will this bring happiness or suffering?

Q: Happiness, Master Nun.

A: This is how observing precepts can bring about happiness without causing troubles to oneself and allowing one to maintain one's properties and necessities for consumption.

Q: How does precept observation enable us to have properties for consumption?

A: It is karmic fruition in the present lifetime. When people observe precepts during a retreat program, they are provided food, beverage, and other accommodation for free at our meditation centre. These accommodations are made possible with generous donations from our lay devotees. They make donation to support the retreat because they are faithful upon the participants who observe precepts during the program. This is the present consequences. The participants are required to observe eight precepts which yield much merit if they can observe the precepts flawlessly, and they will have enough meals for their retreat.

When an individual who has moral discipline and honesty works to earn for living, they will not become poor because of their virtues. The ethical persons are diligent in working and they are well disciplined by the moral precepts which secure their bodies whereas the virtues secure their minds. So, they can do their worldly duties very well in order to earn for living appropriately.

Lastly, moral discipline (*Sila*) is the foundation of mental concentration (*Samadhi*) and wisdom (*Panna*). Once the action, speech, and thought are disciplined, this will bring about right concentration (*Samma Samadhi*) where our mind is correctly, powerfully, and firmly focused. We will also have right view (*Samma Ditthi*) which allows us to think reasonably. Thus, our mind will be clean, bright, calm, and peaceful.

Q: Can moral precepts observance helps to extend our lifespan or eliminate our misfortune?

A: People who have both healthy body and mind will live longer. But those who have so much stress, aggressiveness, harm upon oneself, false speech, and mistreating others, will die earlier. Stress alone is the cause of many diseases. So, the moral precepts observation can help one to have a good living, and this is called 'a fortunate lifestyle.'

Q: What are the benefits of giving and meditation?

A: I already mentioned about the benefits of giving in the past chapter on giving perfection which I exemplified the story Prince Vessandara. To conclude, if one wishes to get rich, one has to do generous giving. If one wishes to be freed from sufferings, one has to observe moral precepts and practice meditation.

Everyone who joins the meditation retreat at Suan Kaew Meditation Centre will gain benefits from merit and virtue cultivation to prepare good foundation for their mind. The frequent participants will have opportunities to further this cultivation to reach the advanced level which is called 'perfection' or '*parami*.' This can be used as the Dhamma weapon for defeating the evil *mara*. Both the Holy and the Evil are within our mind, and they rely on each other. The evil *mara* has the duty to darken our life and causes us to face with trouble, obstacle, and suffering while continuing the cycle of rebirth endlessly. Therefore, we must not be reckless, and we must not lack mindfulness. We have to urge ourselves in creating the contributing factors that will further our perfections or merit accumulation. As we follow the path of the Holy, we will have triumph over the evil *mara*. Then, our life will be bright, calm, clean, and attain the Holy Dhammakaya.

14. The Gold Replica of Lord Buddha's Footprint

Q: I would like to ask why you built the gold replica of Lord Buddha's footprint.

A: It is due to my insight which I saw a pavilion where a big Buddha statue in standing posture was enshrined, and there was the Lord Buddha's footprint in the pavilion. So, I asked an artisan to draw a picture according to my insight.

Q: Why is it made of gold?

A: Gold is a valuable precious metal. It glows by itself without turning gloomy. To build the Lord Buddha's footprint replica with gold is to express our strong faith and to value Buddhism. This is a great material veneration upon the Lord Buddha.

Q: What is your objective in building the gold footprint?

A: The goal is to pay homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. There are two different kinds of homage in Buddhism, the homage with material offering and the homage with practice. I made this homage to eliminate greed which is the defilement embedded in my mind. This kind of defilement causes us to live in darkness and suffering.

Q: How does the creation of gold Buddha's footprint relate to homage with practice?

A: As we sacrifice our properties such as rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, gold, and money, we partially eliminate greed (*lobha*) which is a kind of defilement. Dhamma practice in Buddhism aims to get rid of mental impurities or defilements such as greed (*lobha*), anger (*dhosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

Q: What does it mean to follow the footprint or the path of the Lord Buddha?

A: To follow the footprint or the path of the Lord Buddha, we practice the Noble Eightfold Path. This means that we have the mindful wisdom upon the Right View or having the Right View, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Mental Concentration which are complete. If we do the opposite way, it is to follow the evil mara's path.

Q: What will be the result from following the Lord Buddha's path?

A: We will have a refuge that secures our life to be happy, bright, calm, and peaceful. When we are still in this world, we will be sensible enough. After we depart this world, we will head to heaven in the afterlife.

Q: Why are there so many problems at the present days?

A: Because people do not follow the Lord Buddha's path, on the contrary, they follow the evil *marā*. As we live with the evil *marā*, we are not sensible enough upon the *marā*'s tricks. So, we cannot solve our problems, and our life turns chaotic. We have to face with

suffering. There will be problems and disorders in both social and national level. So, I built the Lord Buddha's footprint to raise the awareness among people to think, speak, and act reasonably by following the Lord Buddha's footprint. Practically, to practice generous giving, observing moral precepts, learning Dhamma, and practicing meditation, in order to achieve self-realization.

Q: The gold footprint has sunken patterns and images. What do they mean?

A: They are the 108 auspicious symbols which represent prosperity such as turtle, fish, elephant, horse, cattle, and sailing ship. Also, there are the symbols of longevity, beauty, happiness, and strength such as the image of Brahmas, gold tree, and silver tree. The symbol of governing power is the sword. All of them are the Dhamma clues.

Q: Why do you place the gold footprint in holy water basin?

A: In order to imitate the original one. When Mr. Boon, the hunter, discovered the Lord Buddha's footprint in Saraburi Province, the footprint was flooded by water. The animals which were shot and attacked with weapons can be healed by drinking water inside the footprint. So, I brought Lord Buddha's shower water from Savatthi City in India altogether with holy water from 108 Buddhist temples in Thailand and pour down into the footprint basin at my meditation center. The Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) who discovered the Lord Buddha's Superknowledge of Dhammakaya, also transferred his power from Dhammakaya meditation into the basin. So, it is very sacred, and lay devotees can drink the water as they wish.

Q: Can common people see and pay respect to the gold footprint?

A: Yes. Everyday from 9.00 am. to 3.00 pm.

15. What is life?

Q: I would like to ask what life is all about?

A: Life is 'living.' One is living when one is not dead or 'unliving' yet. For 'being,' it means 'remaining.' One's elements are still being. Thus, humans' life means the living and being

of humans while animals' life means the living and being of animals. Life is very much important for both humans and animals who are living beings. So, we can conclude that life is more valuable than properties, and they are more precious than any other precious. If someone were to give us much money in exchange for our life, we will absolutely deny. This is because we love our own life. Therefore, humans and animals are afraid of losing their life.

Q: As humans and animals love their life, why do some of them commit suicide?

A: We cannot prohibit illness, aging, death, departure, and recession in our life. And some people commit suicide because of 'karma.' The Lord Buddha said that "Living beings are under the Law of Karma." So, humans' life is predestined by karma which they committed themselves. We can say that they reap what they sow.

Q: So, who do people wish to commit suicide?

A: Because they do not have a safe refuge, so they cannot be freed from suffering.

Q: What is the safe refuge which you mean?

A: The safe refuge comprises of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. Whoever takes refuge upon them will foresee the Four Noble Truth with their righteous wisdom. This means that they understand suffering, the cause of suffering, practice that leads to cessation of suffering, and enlightenment. These made the refuge safe and superlative. People can be liberated from suffering if they rely on the refuge. Without them, we don't know what to hold on to, so we may take refuge in the sinful instead. One is regarded as being sinful because his mind is sinful. When one has sinful mind, one commits sinful deeds. Thus, the mind turns gloomy, and one has only sufferings. It is like burning a big stone and place it into one's mind. This makes one feels anxious and over tempered. One feels like one is in darkness with no exit. So, one keeps thinking with the wandering mind, and some becomes stressful and turns insane. These can cause one to have psychotic problems and become a psychotic patient. When this happens, some people cannot stop thinking as they are unable to solve problems. So, they wish to commit suicide in various ways. This is because they lack Dhamma in their heart. The Lord Buddha's Dhamma or teaching is an excellent

medicine that can heal and calm people's heart. But people are not interested in religion although they have Dhamma books at home. Dhamma can heal suffering. People disinterest in the Dhamma when they are well, so they have no refuge when they have suffering. This makes them get lost in darkness.

Q: Some people think that they will be freed from suffering after they die.

A: Living beings including humans and animals have mind or spirit. When they die, their mind or spirit is not destroyed. The mind has to search for a new body. This is like moving to a new home from one place to another. If one does good deeds, the new home will be beautiful. On the contrary, if one does bad deeds, the new home will be horrible, and it makes one feel even more suffering to live in.

It is sinful to commit suicide. We can escape from trouble in this world, but we will have to suffer from the karma in the following lifetimes. The right way is to accept the truth about suffering that it is due to our past karma committed in the past lifetimes. We need to have mindfulness and patience to continue doing good deeds as we are still alive. Once we can accept this truth, our mind will be joyous and not sorrowful. We will feel refreshed and have no suffering. Then our wisdom will arise, and the thought of committing suicide will disappear.

16. The Triple Gem

Q: Master Nun, it is said that the Lord Buddha is superbly helpful as he can be our refuge in getting rid of suffering. What does this mean?

A: We were born with our own karma, and we have to face with our karmic fruition. This is the same to everyone. We will receive the fruit of karma whether it is good or bad karma. This is the cause that makes us strive against suffering since we were born in order to survive. Then, we face with suffering from aging, illness, and death. We have the bodily and mental discomfort, resentment, sorrow from departing our beloved, experiencing what we dislike, and various dissatisfaction. All of the aforesaid are suffering. Don't you see now that since our first breath until the last in our life, we have to experience with much

suffering. Thus, the Lord Buddha kindly pointed out the way to get rid of suffering by living our life with the Dhamma.

Dhamma is the truth and the righteousness. It means that the Lord Buddha's teachings are completely truthful. Whatever that the Lord Buddha recommended us to do, we will enjoy the result if we do so. Whatever that the Lord Buddha recommended us to undo, we will suffer from the result if we do it. Thus, all of us should apply the Dhamma which is the Lord Buddha's teachings into our daily living.

Dhamma can work as medicine that cures or heals our mental suffering. We cannot find any other medicine to heal the mind. So, we have to accept the truth that all of us have karma that leads to birth, and karma is in our 'gene.' We cannot choose where we want to reborn or to be alive, once we can accept the fruition of karma, our mind will calm down and have no temper. We will have wisdom choosing to do only good deeds, and the good deeds will make us happy according to the law of karma. This is to use Dhamma as medicine for curing and healing our mind against suffering. This is the reason why the Lord Buddha can help to get rid of our suffering.

Q: What does it mean that the Dhamma can prevent one against harms.

A: After we were born, we have to face with different problems surrounding us. They are like storms or robbers that threaten our life. This is the 'harm' that everyone has to encounter. If we always have Dhamma in the form of 'moral discipline,' it will protect us against such harm at all times.

In addition to its function as teachings, Dhamma can also be regarded as the instruction. This is in the form of '*Vinaya*' that helps to organize our living to be in good order. Thus, people respect and do not harm each other.

For moral precepts or '*Sila*,' there are different levels such as the five precepts, the moral discipline within the *magga*, and the moral discipline outside the *magga*. There is also the superior level of moral precepts which is the eight precepts. It is all up to us to choose based on our convenience. The goal of observing precepts is to get rid of anger and violence and rudeness of our action, speech, and thought, as these can lead us to do bad

deeds easily. The moral discipline promotes our awareness not to commit misdeeds and being able to distinguish between goodness and badness. Thus, moral discipline is like fences that surround ourselves to prevent us against harmful sin and unwholesomeness.

Our living in the present is more difficult, but five precepts can secure our life as it controls us not to kill, harm each other, steal others' belongings, commit sexual misconduct, lie, speak sarcastically, and drink alcohol. All of the aforesaid secure our living by reducing suffering both in the present lifetime and in the afterlife. The frequent violation of five precepts will causes one to receive punishment in the unwholesome realm like hell. But if one observes moral precepts, one will have clean action, speech, and thought. In addition, one will not have much impurity, free from harm and revenge. One will be more disciplined and ready to prosper further in life. This is how the Dhamma can get rid of harm.

Q: One more thing, Master Nun. It is said that the Sangha or Buddhist monks can get rid of illness. What does it mean?

A: Our present world is full of various diseases. The physical diseases require medication as treatment, but the mental diseases cannot be cured with medicines. We cannot produce medicines to cure mental illness, but we need experts who know well about mental diseases. They are the Buddhist monks or Sangha. They can heal and cure mental diseases which stem from hatred, anger, delusion, and jealousy. The Buddhist monks are specialists on this matter. They will use the Dhamma which is the Lord Buddha's teachings as medicines for the mind. In addition, the Buddhist monks suggest us what we should do and undo. For example, "if we do this, we will be mentally ill of that." "This mental illness can be cured this way." "Doing this and that can cure the illness." There is also the Superknowledge of Dhammakaya rediscovered by Luang Por Wat Paknam which can cure diseases. This is why it is said that the Sangha can cure illness. There is no other comparable medicine because the medicine for the mind is produced by the Lord Buddha. Luang Por Wat Paknam knew this, so he taught us to use this medicine to cure illness. Significantly, we need to have faith and confidence in the Dhamma doctor and the Dhamma medicines. Thus, our disease can be cured. We have to learn and put into

practice as our habits. If we learn without applying into practice, it won't yield good results since the Dhamma medicine cannot work. And the illness will cause more problems and sufferings for us endlessly. Without the Buddhist monks who continue the religion and religious teachings as well as telling us about the teachings to be applied into our life, we will die badly of the mental diseases until there is no one who is mentally healthy left. This is how the Buddhist monks or Sangha can get rid of illness.

According to my explanation, it is just the primary step of Dhamma practice. The Lord Buddha's teaching is much more profound. We must be truly committed in meditation practice, and we will discover the true thing which can be known by oneself only on how the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha can get rid of suffering, harm, and illness.

17. The Four Factors Leading to Achievement

Q: On the occasion of coming New Year, I would like to ask Master Nun which Buddhist teaching we should implement in order to strengthen our mind, so we can encounter with suffering and difficulty.

A: The most suitable Buddhist teaching is 'The Four *Itthipada*' or the Four Factors Leading to Achievement which comprise of:

- (1) Pleasure (*chanda*) which is the satisfaction of one's being. So, one is satisfied to continue working on one's righteous job. As one has less money, one spends less and knows how to be thrifty. This complies to the Lord Buddha's teaching on appropriation over oneself, one's earning, income, and spending without overspending and overconsumption.
- (2) Perseverance (*viriya*) which means the striving to do one's work the best with persistence whether the work is hard or easy. With perseverance, one can be successful if one has strong commitment.
- (3) Attention (*citta*) means after we have satisfaction and perseverance toward one's work, we have to love the work we do. So, one does one's work happily and attentively. For example, if we like bakery, we enjoy making bakery for sales. We will be happy to do it as it is what we like. Thus, we don't have to force ourselves to do it.

(4) Pondering (*vimamsa*) is the consideration over causes and effects of one's work with wisdom. It is to check if what one has done is correct and righteous as well as possible for any improvement. One has to ponder over these factors prudently.

If one applies all of the four Dhammas into regular practices, one can bring success to one's life even though one has to encounter with difficulties and problems while the four Dhammas support and secure oneself.

Q: Nowadays, people worry so much about changes in life. People who used to have good jobs get laid off, and those who have fame get disdained and criticized by others. Which Dhamma should we apply to empower our mind, so we don't feel disheartened and discouraged?

A: At this time, everyone has to turn to the truth that all living beings are always under the 'Worldly Conditions' or '*Lokadhamma*.' This means that people enjoy gains, fame, and praise, but according to the Lord Buddha's teachings, there are also the opposite qualities which are lose, defame, and criticism which can occur to one's life. So, we have to comprehend that everything is impermanent, subject to suffering, and keeps changing. We should know this very truth and prevent our mind not to be colonized by them, and we will be happy everywhere because the mind is joyous.

Q: When people are in difficulty, they start to be selfish and neglect good deeds. This leads them to experience suffering endlessly. According to this fact, what Dhamma should we apply to cleanse the mind?

A: For this happening, we should apply 'the three meritorious deeds' namely generous giving, precepts observance, and meditation practice. These three can purify our mind to be clean and freed from greed or selfishness because we learn to give. In addition, we think, speak, and act only in the wholesome ways due to the observance of precepts which controls us to abstain from misdeeds. Finally, our mind can be trained with meditation. This promotes mental calm and peacefulness, and all of these are the fruition of merit from the top of merit making which are generous giving, precepts observance, and meditation practice.

Q: According to what I asked you, the Dhamma we talked about may not last forever, so which Dhamma we should use in order to prevent all other Dhamma from regression or disappearance.

A: The Lord Buddha's Dhamma which can sustain all other Dhamma(s) is '*Saddha*' or faith and confidence. This kind of faith must stem from the righteous belief only which encourages one's confidence especially the '*kamma-saddha*' or belief in the existing of karma. Then, one proceeds to believe in '*vipaka-saddha*' or belief in the existing of karmic fruition, so everyone reaps what one sows. Next, there is '*kammasagata-saddha*' which is the belief that everyone has one's own karma. Lastly, there is '*tathagata-bodhi-saddha*' or belief and confidence in the Lord Buddha's enlightenment. This is because the Lord Buddha taught us to do good deeds and abstain from bad deeds. As we are confident in our teacher, we will believe in his teaching. Thereafter, we will have the wisdom to understand that we were born to experience with sufferings, and we have to encounter problems and difficulties due to our own karma which we committed in the past lifetimes. So, we should continue doing good deeds with patience. Thus, this is the Dhamma that can sustain all other Dhamma(s) since faith can bind oneself to the teachings.

May everyone make wishes for this coming New Year that we will cultivate our firm faith in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha furthermore with the belief that the Lord Buddha is wisdomful, helpful, and pureful. Then, our mind can have a refuge to rely on, and the mind will not fluctuate according to the worldly stream of defilement or impurity. Our mind will be able to withstand the changes without being misled into the unwholesome ways according to the Lord Buddha's saying tha

18. Samadhi

Q: I would like to ask Master Nun about meditation practice. How can we practice meditation, and what is the objective?

A: Meditation is a simple term which is easy to understand. In Buddhism, we call this '*kammathana*.' '*Kamma*' means 'work' and '*thana*' means 'base.' So, this means the mental work or the work which prospers the mind. Another term for meditation is '*bhavana*' which means mental training or development in order to calm down the defilements or mental impurities as well as cherishing wisdom.

Q: How many types of *kammathana* are there?

A: There are two major types of *kammathana*.

(1) *Samatha Kammathana* or mental calm

(2) *Vipassana Kammathana* or insight contemplation

Q: What are the differences?

A: Mental calm helps to calm down our mind against the mental hindrances while the insight contemplation helps to promote wisdom in order to get rid of ignorance or *avijja* which is the origin of defilements or mental impurities.

Q: What is the purpose of doing *kammathana*?

A: According to the Lord Buddha, we do *kammathana* to:

(1) Practicing mental calm to train the mind

(2) Training the mind to eliminate lust or *raga*

(3) Practicing insight contemplation to train wisdom or *panna*

(4) Training wisdom to eliminate ignorance or *avijja*

Q: What is the meaning of meditation or *Samadhi*?

A: *Samadhi* means the firm settlement and mental concentration which is steadfast without fluctuation.

Q: How many types of meditation are there?

A: In one aspect, there are three major types of meditation or *Samadhi*.

- Khanika samadhi which is temporary mental concentration
- Upacara Samadhi which is unfirm mental concentration. This almost reaches mental absorption or *jhana*, but not yet.
- Appana Samadhi which is firm mental concentration without fluctuation. The mind is focused and unified until achieving the mental absorption or *jhana* by being able to eliminate mental hindrances and gain the five factors of mental absorption namely directed attention, examination, rapture, pleasure, and one-pointedness of mind.

Q: What is the beholden of mental calm meditation or *Samatha Kammathana*?

A: Something that the mind holds on to in order to calm down. This is called 'the experience of mental calm meditation' which is indeed 'the method to calm down the mind.'

Q: What is the beholden of insight contemplation or meditation methods of *Vipassana Kammathana*?

A: Totally, there are forty methods classified into seven groups as follows:

1. Ten Kasina
2. Ten Asubha
3. Ten Anussati
4. Four Brahma Vihara
5. One Aharepatikulasanna
6. One Catudhatu-vavatthana
7. Four Arupa

Q: What is the meditation image or *Nimitta*?

A: *Nimitta* means the appearing image or meditation object which is the image one sees within one's mind as the beholden of meditation practice. Also, it is the symbol or meditation object primarily used for mental focus during meditation. The meditation

image or *Nimitta* is a material object that can be seen with naked eyes such as in the case of the ten *Kasina*.

Q: What are the *Nimitta*?

A: There are three types of *Nimitta* as follows:

- (1) Parikamma nimitta which is to stare at an object for visualization in meditation such as in the case of the ten *kasina*. Also, practitioners can also use mantra repetition in his or her mind such as 'Samma Arahant' or 'Buddho.'
- (2) Ukkaha nimitta means the parikamma nimitta that practitioner can master meditation object visualization well and being able to see the image clearly either when opening or closing the physical eyes.
- (3) Panibhaga nimitta means the image of meditation object which practitioner masters visualization similar to ukkaha nimitta. However, panibhaga nimitta is like the memory of the clear and pure image in one's mind that one can think of enlarging or downsizing as one wishes to. Whoever has panibhaga nimitta, this means that the practitioner already attains appana Samadhi where one's mind is calm enough until achieving mental absorption or *jhana*.

Q: How can we practice *kammathana* according to Dhammakaya Meditation?

A: The Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni or Luang Por Wat Paknam taught his followers that, in the first step, one has to calm down the mind by stop thinking of things other than the beholden of mind in meditation. The, one pictures the parikamma nimitta crystal sphere image in one's mind. The crystal sphere image should be crystal clear like a diamond without any flaw. Its size should be about one's eye pupil. Then, repeat the mantra 'Samma Arahant' and relocate the image pictured in one's mind from the first base, respectively, until reaching the seventh base. The details can be found in 'The Principles of Samatha & Vipassana Kammathana of Phramongkolethepmuni (Luang Por Sodh of Wat Paknam).'

Q: What will happen if we can picture the meditation object in our mind until reaching the level of *panibhaga nimitta*?

A: The crystal clear sphere will arise at the seventh base of mind. Its size varies from the size of a sesame seed to the size of full moon. This sphere is called the *pathamamagga* Sphere or *Dhammanupassanakammathana* Sphere or the Sphere of Primary Path of the human body. All humans have this sphere nourishing their life. If this sphere ceases, their life will discontinue as well.

As one focuses one's mind at the seventh base, one will see the Primary Path Sphere. Focusing one's mind further in the middle of the Primary Path Sphere, one will see *Sila* Sphere. Focusing one's mind in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Focusing one's mind in the middle of *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Focusing one's mind in the middle of *Panna* Sphere, one will see *Vimutti* Sphere. Focusing one's mind in the middle of *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Focusing one's mind in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined human body, celestial body seated in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Then, continue focusing one's mind in the middle furthermore. The *kammathana* meditation practice ranges from the level of human body, celestial body, Rupa Brahma body, and Arupa-Brahma body. These steps are *samatha kammathana* or mental calm meditation.

Q: How can we do *Vipassana* level?

A: When one meditates until attaining the Dhammakaya, focus one's mind at the Dhammakaya which is still small. Thus, the Dhammakaya will enlarge to be equal to one's human body. This Dhammakaya is crystal clear throughout the body, seated in meditation posture, and topped with a lotus bud, this Dhammakaya is called '*Gotrabhu* Dhammakaya.' Then, allow the *Gotrabhu* Dhammakaya to meditate in contemplation of the Four Noble Truth namely suffering or *Dukkha*, cause of suffering or *Samudaya*, cessation of suffering or *Nirodha*, and the path towards cessation of suffering or *Magga* within the human body as well as contemplating on birth, aging, illness, and death, which are impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). These

contemplations are *Vipassana* which one can prosper further, and there are much more in details.

Q: Can we prove them?

A: The Lord Buddha's teachings can be proven or *ehipassiko* and always timeless or *akaliko*.

Q: Can those who do not practice understand these?

A: If they do not practice, it would be difficult to understand because the verbal and written language are just humans' presumption. The results of one's practice can be known by oneself or *paccattam* only. It is difficult to explain. For example, when someone tastes salt in one's mouth, he will feel the saltiness. If he is questioned how saltiness is, it is difficult to explain.

Q: What does Dhammakaya mean? How can Dhammakaya defeat the evil mara?

A: Dhammakaya is the original spirit of living beings. This original spirit is pure, clean, elegance, cheerful, and radiant.

The evil *marā* is the defilements or mental impurities that enter one's mind such as greed, anger, and delusion. They do not benefit the mind. When they conquer one's mind, the mind turns gloomy.

The [Holy] Dhammakaya belongs to the white wholesome party. They are empowered by merit, wholesomeness, and goodness. The evil *marā* belongs to the dark unwholesome party, they are empowered by sin, unwholesomeness, and evilness.

The White Wholesome Dhammakaya and the dark unwholesome evil *marā* are opponents upon each other. For more details about how Dhammakaya defeating *marā*, please read the previous chapters of this book.

19. The Solution

Q: With my utmost respect to Master Nun! Why do people have to encounter with many problems that pressure their minds. As they cannot find out solutions, they think of committing suicide. Why is it so?

A: As people were born and have to encounter with many problems in life, the cause is due to karma which destines our life to be this and that way, more or less. Nobody can escape from the karmic fruition. So, we have to study the Lord Buddha's teaching. Therefore, as we cannot avoid problems, we have to study and comprehend how to solve problems.

Q: What is the solution?

A: If we wish to solve problems, first of all, we need to seek for a refuge for ourselves. The refuge is 'Dhamma' or teaching of the Lord Buddha. The teaching is deemed to be a safe refuge for us. People who have no refuge are usually unable to solve problems for themselves. Even worse, they cause troubles to themselves and others as they do not know how to intake and learn correctly. So, they are deluded by sensual desires and enslaved by materialism. These cause them to lose the opportunity to reborn as humans. Moreover, some of them meet with Buddhism but disinterest in studying the Lord Buddha's teachings.

Q: How can Dhamma solve problems for us?

A: First of all, we have to understand the term 'Dhamma.' In one aspect, Dhamma is 'the duty.' For example, the duty of legs is walking, eyes for seeing, ears for listening, brain for thinking, and hands for working. Every organ is created and destined to do its duty correctly without interrupting each other. This is one example regarding our physical body.

Ourselves also have duty of being reborn as humans. As Buddhists, we need to have 'awareness' which means that we have to study the Buddhist teaching until we understand, then, put into practice. Thereafter, we will receive the answers on the causation of all problems and sufferings we encounter in life. We will realize that all of them are subject to impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). The way to solve the very cause of sufferings is to avoid the bad cause, thus the undesirable result will not

occur. Then, we have to commit only good cause in order to achieve the desirable result. This is the solution to life problems that the Lord Buddha taught us to follow in the journey of life.

Q: How can we commit the good cause?

A: The aforesaid 'good cause' means to commit good contributing factors which start from moral precepts because it is the foundation that naturally gives rise to shame and fear of sin or *hiri* and *ottappa*. We will have the awareness by ourselves. Therefore, we have to be mindful of our action, speech, and thought and keep them righteous. This is the foundation of all humans. Once we commit a cause, there will be effect(s). We need to have good principles and refuge. This will make people trust and believe in us, and we will be able to make achievements properly. In addition, we will be able to appropriate our speech, thought, and action whether we are walking, sitting, or consuming. We will realize in the gratitude we owe to others without being a person with ingratitude. These are teachings of the Lord Buddha.

Q: Some people may object that they do good deeds, but they still have to encounter problems. So, why should they continue doing good deeds?

A: At the present days, most people do good deeds because of 'craving.' They don't do it because it should be done. So, they feel discouraged in doing good deeds which is to create the contributing factors. Everyone who is born has to die all alike. So, we should learn from each other as we are still alive. This means that we have to practice until we know that an effect is due to a cause. Then, we will be able to choose when we reborn. Please observe the surroundings, we will find people who are even more suffering than us. Don't look at people who are better than us. We should make ourselves 'moderate' and do our duty correctly. Keep our mind pure and live with the present. Our past is like a dream, and let go of the future somehow. Do our best in the present. Don't be disheartened! Everything goes on according to the nature. Things exist, remain for a period of time, and decompose. We live in the world of presumption. Humans are the ones who assume day, night, suffering, and happiness. Above all of these, the Lord Buddha's teaching is the truth for all that everything exists, remains for a period of time, and decomposes according to the

impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). When it is about time, we have to depart this world all alike. We have to abandon our money, precious belongings, gain, dignity, fame, properties, as well as our own body. Only our virtues and goodness will remain in this world.

20. Doing Good Deeds

Q: I would like to question Master Nun about doing good deeds. Nowadays, people doubt why they do good deeds but receive no good result. If it is so, why should they continue doing good deeds?

A: First of all, we have to consider what kind of good deeds we do. Are they good deeds according to Buddhism or the worldly? For good deeds according to Buddhism, we need to have awareness of humanity and observe the five moral precepts. This can exist within ourselves. The moral precepts according to the *magga* or path means following the Lord Buddha's path. The Lord Buddha is the owner of Buddhism which teaches the righteous way of living with wisdom and right view. This means that everything complies to righteousness without harming oneself and others. Next, there is the right livelihood. For moral precepts outside the *magga* or path, it is the regular moral precepts which deal with worldly happiness and suffering. In this case, it means common living of humans who pursue their career as usual. For example, people who work with livestock do not consider that killing is harming. The animals love their own life which is similar to humans, but that is the way humans do their worldly duty. Another example is gambling. We wish to earn money from others, and others wish to earn money from us, so the duty continues on with the power of karma or action that causes either happiness or suffering or having both together. However, if we observe moral precepts, we will have awareness and better consideration. We will know how to intake and learn. The virtuous and knowledgeable ones who can secure and rely on themselves can also help us. So, we should ask them about cause and effect, so we become knowledgeable and understand well until we can apply to our life. Finally, we can have the refuge of our own.

Q: What is the difference between merit making and committing good deeds.

A: The term 'merit' is the result. We have to commit the cause which is to train our action, speech, and thought to be virtuous and ethical. We have to do our duty righteously. For example, the child, the mother, the father, the teacher, and the master have to do their duty correctly. One has to be diligent, honest, and responsible in doing one's job. For example, if we are employees, we have to do the duty of employees. This is how we can gain the internal Noble Wealth. Thereafter, the external Noble Wealth will occur to us. We will become good people who have merit. The level of dignity as humans in ourselves will progress. If we invest so much effort in doing good deeds, we will be promoted from humans to be angels, Brahmas, and the Holy. Then, we will enjoy only happiness in both the present and future lifetimes. Human society always needs people like this. As we are born humans, we have the right to develop our mind to be better. This is to be the 'meritorious person.'

Q: If we do good deeds according to Buddhism, but why do we sometimes have problems?

A: We must have faith in the Lord Buddha's teaching. We must believe in the Law of Karma. Since we still cannot make a choice when we reborn. Every living being, either human or animal, loves happiness and dislikes suffering. By the end of their lifetime, they all have to decompose according to the Law of Nature. But we are fortunate to be born and meet with Buddhism. The Buddhist teaching is truthful as Buddhism is the religion of wisdom, thus Buddhism can be the guiding light for humankind. Buddhism teaches people to be rational. People will earn good results from doing good deeds and bad results from doing bad deeds. These are the matter of cause and effect. Otherwise, we would have had being unable to make a choice when we reborn. But in the present, we are able to make a choice to reborn in the future. This means that we have faith believing in the Law of Karma. Hence, we can choose to stop doing bad deeds and pursue the ten, twenty, and thirty virtues perfection namely generosity, moral discipline, renunciation, wisdom, patience, perseverance, truthfulness, resolution, compassion, and equanimity. So, the bad karma will not have an opportunity to bear fruits. For example, in the present generation, humans are very wise in doing research and discovery of things for their own convenience and happiness. This leads to the age of globalization. But it causes people to compete endlessly in their society. They do not realize in Buddhism, and they have no refuge since

they rely heavily on materialism. The materials can be relied on temporarily, but suffering is still there. To get rid of suffering, we have to follow the path of the Lord Buddha. This will make us realize, love, feel sympathy, and rely on ourselves. So, the reason why we do good deeds and receive no good results yet is probably that we have the past karma called the supporting karma that will bear fruits later on. We cannot avoid our karma or actions because it is the nature of cycle of rebirth.

Q: What does the cycle of rebirth mean?

A: Simply speaking, the cycle of rebirth is like the boundless sea with its depth that cannot be reached. Then, our life is like windsurfing in the sea by existing, remaining for a period of time, and decomposing. It goes on like this as long as we still have mental impurities or defilements. We have to be destined by the karmic force which we cannot avoid. Whatever we do is recorded into our mind, and we can know this by ourselves. Our mind is like a computer that can store data, but it can store data for uncountable lifetimes over the period of billions or trillions years or more. As we have been reborn for numerous lifetimes, we store data in the mental format in manifold volume while there is no error like the computer. If we have righteous refuge for our mind, we will be wise and wisdomful, being able to rely on ourselves and help others. In the present, most people are very smart, but they cannot survive because they are enslaved by materialism. Those who cannot solve problems choose to commit suicide. People like this should be embarrassed upon other animals like cattle, pig, duck, and chicken who do not commit suicide despite of the fact that some humans attempt to kill them for food.

21. The Triple Gem

Q: The Triple Gem is deemed to be the most revered in Buddhism. I would like to ask Master Nun what the Triple Gem is?

A: That's correct. The Triple Gem is the most revered in Buddhism. The Triple Gem comprises of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. We can call them the Three Gem which are the Buddha Gem, Dhamma Gem, and Sangha Gem. These three are the most revered.

Q: Why are they called the Three Gem?

A: Because the Buddha can get rid of suffering, the Dhamma can get rid of harm, and the Sangha can get rid of illness for faithful Buddhists. To clarify the Three Gem, the Lord Buddha is the one who taught people to have righteous action, speech, and thought according to the Dhamma and *Vinaya* or teaching and discipline which form Buddhism. The Dhamma is the Lord Buddha's teaching, and the Sangha means those who learn the Lord Buddha's teachings or instructions and put into practice accordingly.

Q: It is said that the Lord Buddha is virtuous. What does it mean?

A: The Lord Buddha's virtues include the enlightenment which he attained by himself, and he taught to others to attain enlightenment and have knowledge like him.

Q: How did the Lord Buddha know well, know righteously, and teach others to know accordingly? What did others know?

A: The Lord Buddha attained enlightenment and knew well and righteously by himself. This means:

- (1) The Lord Buddha is an Arahant or the fully enlightened one.
- (2) The Lord Buddha is a Buddha.
- (3) The Lord Buddha is competent of superknowledge (*vijja*) and good conduct (*carana*).
- (4) The Lord Buddha reaches his destination safely as he has no defilements.
- (5) The Lord Buddha has omniscience over the world
- (6) The Lord Buddha is an excellent trainer who trained qualified trainees
- (7) The Lord Buddha is the religious leader for deities and humans.
- (8) The Lord Buddha is always awaken and joyous without delusive attachment.
- (9) The Lord Buddha is fortunate as well as being able to clarify the Dhamma successfully.

The Lord Buddha taught others to know like him as follows:

- (1) Knowing suffering

- (2) Knowing the cause of suffering
- (3) Knowing the cessation of suffering
- (4) Knowing the method to cease suffering

Q: What does it mean that the Dhamma is virtuous?

A: The virtue of Dhamma is that it secures those who practice Dhamma against recession. The Dhamma practitioners can be safe against harms because the wholesome deeds committed virtuously do not cause suffering as consequence.

Q: How can we know that the Dhamma is virtuous and yield happiness as the result?

A: We have to be committed in practicing the Dhamma. In addition, we have to practice it righteously, then, we will know that the Dhamma's virtues are:

- (1) The Dhamma that the Lord Buddha delivered well and taught truthfully is well delivered in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, with complete principle and content for one's good and pure livelihood.
- (2) The practitioners can realize by themselves. Only one can do for oneself. The one who practices can attain, and the one who attains can see.
- (3) It is timeless, meaning that one can do it whenever one is ready. One will see the result upon attainment. And this fact remains true forever.
- (4) All others are invited to prove this as it is true and good.
- (5) It should be taken into account or practice until it occurs to one's mind.
- (6) The wise one can know this by oneself, and the one who practices Dhamma will remain happy according to the *pali* that '*Dhammacari Sukham Seti*' or 'the one who practices Dhamma will remain joyous.'

Q: After I asked you about the Lord Buddha and the Dhamma... what about the Sangha?

A: The Sangha, who is indeed, the Noble Disciple Monks are the Lord Buddha's disciples who have good and righteous conducts according to the Lord Buddha's teachings, then, they teach other people. The virtues of the Sangha are as follows:

- (1) They have good conducts.
- (2) They have honest conducts.
- (3) They have correct conducts.
- (4) They have appropriate conducts.
- (5) They deserve material offerings and homage.
- (6) They deserve welcoming.
- (7) They deserve donation.
- (8) They deserve respect.
- (9) They are the source for the world's excellent ethics cultivation.

Q: Master Nun, as you already explained about the Noble Disciple Monks, what about the common Disciple Monks? What are their virtues?

A: They have virtues according to their practice. The common Disciple Monks are still 'trainees' who have to study the *Trisikha* which are moral discipline, mental concentration or meditation, and wisdom. Then, their virtues will occur according to their practice. If they don't have good practice appropriately to their monastic conducts, they are no different from the lay devotees.

Q: Master Nun, what did the Lord Buddha teach so people believed and confident in the Lord Buddha as well as his teaching and the disciple monks.

A: The Lord Buddha taught the three aspects to the believers as follows:

- (1) Teaching the believers to know even more and understand the Dhamma that they ought to know and see.
- (2) Teaching reasonably, so believers can consider accordingly until they can see likewise.
- (3) Teaching wonderfully, so believers can practice and benefit from it correspondingly.

Q: How is the teaching to make believers know and see the truth?

A: The Lord Buddha taught that it is common for everyone to have suffering, and his words are true as people have suffering from the three harms as follows:

- (1) Suffering from birth
- (2) Suffering from aging
- (3) Suffering from illness
- (4) Suffering from death

Simply speaking, people suffer from the four harms namely birth, aging, illness, and death.

Q: Yes, that's true. What about the reasonable teaching?

A: What are the cause(s) of suffering in life? The Lord Buddha mentioned the causes of sufferings as sufferings are the result of their cause. The cause is 'craving' or *tanha* which can be classified into three categories as follows:

- (1) *Kama Tanha*
- (2) *Bhava Tanha*
- (3) *Vibhava Tanha*

This is the reasonable teaching of the Lord Buddha.

Q: Master Nun, what about the 'wonderful teaching?'

A: The Lord Buddha's teaching emphasizes on practicing. As learners believe and put into practice, they will receive the wonderful results out of their practice. According to the Lord Buddha's saying that "to cease suffering, it is necessary to cease the cause of suffering first." So, how can we do this? We have to cease craving or *tanha*. After ceasing craving, there will be no rebirth. When there is no rebirth, there is no aging, illness, and death, respectively. This is how the teaching is wonderful. Therefore, Buddhists should show respect, pay homage, believe, admire, and revere the Triple Gem always.

Q: Thank you, Master Nun.

About the Author

Reverend Wanjai Chookorn (Acariya Maechee Wanjai Chookorn) was born on Saturday, 15 October 1934 in Samutsongkram Province, Thailand. When she was twelve year old, she had an opportunity to practice meditation with the Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) for the first time. Then, in 1952, she was ordained to be a Buddhist nun at Wat Paknam and practiced advanced Dhammakaya meditation with Luang Por at the meditation workshop of Wat Paknam until Luang Por passed away. Later on, Reverend Wanjai Chookorn established a nunnery center for Dhamma study and meditation practice in Rajaburi province where she runs many religious services and activities to promote peace and the cultivation of virtuous perfections among people from all walks of life.

1944 - Finished Grade 4 at Wat Suan Kaew School in Samutsongkram Province

1945 – Started practicing meditation with Phramongkolthepmuni, the great master of Dhammakaya meditation

1952 - Ordained to be a Buddhist nun at Wat Paknam when she was 18 year old

1958 – Taught Dhamma at Wat Khlong Bho in Rajaburi

1993 – Received an honorary doctorate degree in education from Rajabhat University, Jombueng Campus

1993 – Received the Dhamma wheel trophy from Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn in recognition for her works which benefit Buddhism in term of promoting meditation practice

1994 - Received a certificate and an honorific pin from the Teacher Training Division, Ministry of Education, in recognition for her contribution for building a Buddha shrine for Rajabhat University, Jombueng Campus

1996 - Reverend Wanjai Chookorn Foundation received an honorific plaque from the National Foundation League of Thailand for its running many activities which benefit Buddhism and the public in a broader context

2002 - Received an honorific certificate from the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) in recognition for her dedication as a Buddhist nun who propagates Buddhism

2008 - The Suan Kaew Dhamma Center was selected by the Office of Cultural Affairs of Rajaburi Province to be a leading Dhamma center which is capable of joining the virtues and morality promotion projects. Its information was publicized in the government's religious services website at www.dra.go.th

2008 – Reverend Wanjai Chookorn Foundation was selected by the Division of Religion, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and Rajaburi Province, according to the 'Thailand Has Good People Project,' to be an organization that benefits the local community, sub-district, district, and the province of Rajaburi.

2008 – The Suan Kaew Sunday Dhamma Study Center was selected by the Religious Division, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and the Sangha of area 15, to be their model Dhamma study center.

For more information, please access <http://www.suankaew.net>