

*Bodhipakkhiyādharmāgata –*  
*Ariyatthangikamagga*

(The 37 Factors of Enlightenment)

A Sermon of the Most Venerable  
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The Great Abbot of Wat Paknam (Bangkok)

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*Katamacasabhikkhavemajjhimapatipadatathagatena  
abhisambuddha, Cakkhu-karaniñana-  
karaniupasamayaabhiññayasambodhayanibbanayas  
amvattati. Ayam-evaariyoatthagikomaggo,  
Seyyathidam, Samma-ditthisamma-sankappo,  
Samma-vacasamma-kammantosamma-ajivo,  
Samma-vayamosamma-sati samma-samadhi.*

I would like to deliver a sermon on the *Bodhipakkhiyādharmā* (thirty-seven factors of enlightenment) which leads to the enlightenment of all Lord Buddhas and *arahants*. Especially, the Buddhist doctrine to be explained today will reflect the Noble Eightfold Path which the Lord taught to the five ascetics at Issipattana Grove near Banares City.

By that time, the Lord Buddha said to the five ascetics that “Look! Monks... What are the practices which *Tathagata* knows with wisdom? [The Lord Buddha addressed himself as ‘*Tathagata*’] How to create the insight and intuition that lead to mental

calm and greater knowledge which consequently lead to understanding and cessation? There are the Noble Eightfold Path which comprises of *sammā-diṭṭhi* (right view), *sammāsankappa* (right intention), *sammā-vācā* (right speech), *sammā-kammanta* (right conduct), *sammā-ājīva* (right livelihood), *sammā-vāyāma* (right effort), *sammā-sati* (right mindfulness), *sammā-samādhi* (right concentration). The Noble Eightfold Path can lead to mental liberation as given in the Pali verse and clarified in Thai language.

From now on, I would like to clarify the Lord Buddha's saying which is the byproduct of His enlightenment. Many of us do not direct our mind toward the Lord Buddha correctly. Thus, we are unable to reach Him. If we direct our mind toward the Middle Way, it will correspond to the path of all the Lord Buddhas and enlightened *arahants*.

For such path, we need to know the meaning of the Lord Buddha's explanation that "attain

enlightenment with the profound wisdom which the Lord attained through the middle.” What is to attain through the middle? Attaining the heart or the core... we have to ponder. If we were to consider the prose, we can say that the mind reaches... but we have to know about the mind first. The Lord said ‘in the middle’... The Lord is *Tathagata* who is *Dhammakaya*. So, we have to reach the middle of *Tathagata*.

How can we enter? Where is the middle [path]? It is at the center of human’s body, around the navel level. The *Tathagata* entered such path and attained wholly from that path. To attain, one must attain wholly. It cannot be divided. One needs to attain the whole *Dhammakaya*. How can one attain the whole *Dhammakaya*? What is the size of *Dhammakaya*? His lap-width [in cross-legged posture] is 40 meters, and [his head is] topped with a lotus bud. *Dhammakaya* is that large. How can one enter? The *Tathagata* could practice walking

meditation in a cabbage seed whereas the seed was not enlarged and the *Tathagata* did not minimize himself either. He could enter such a tiny place. How could He do it? It is impossible. A Buddhist monk was doubtful about this, so the Lord Buddha ordered him to reflect a big pagoda with a mirror. Then, the picture of the whole pagoda appeared in the mirror. The mirror was not enlarged, and the pagoda did not get any smaller. Then, the monk could get rid of his doubt. Oh, well... it's the Lord Buddha's possibility.

When I said that, the *Tathagata* entered just the middle, I meant He entered the whole *Dhammakaya*. It starts from the middle of human body. When reaching the middle... when the *Dhammakaya* reaches the middle... from which direction? It's hard to explain here. If it does not appear, it is hard to enter correctly. It is peculiar. You cannot learn it by listening. Enter

into the middle... from which direction? Enter by way of stilling. His *Dhammakaya* stills within stillness, entering the deeper and deeper level of stillness. The *Dhammakaya* enters further with superior refinement, more and more. He neither comes nor goes, not from outside or inside. This is called reaching the middle. Therefore, nobody knows how to access [the middle]. When a practitioner cannot access the middle, he cannot become a child of the *Tathagata*. If he knows how to access the middle, he can become a child of the *Tathagata*. (The Lord Buddha addressed his enlightened disciple as ‘my child.’) Hence, this method is so crucial. Once one knows how to access the ‘middle,’ one becomes a child of the *Tathagata*.

Now, we have to follow the same path as the Lord Buddha. Which way can we access if we have not attained *Dhammakaya* yet? We can use our human body, starting from the mind of our human

body. Next to the human body is the refined human body [or spirit]. Then, the next one is the celestial body which is also within the abdomen, it is a more refined spirit. When one enters the middle of the human body, it is in the middle of the origination center of the human body. The owner of human body only knows how to still the body, but he does not know how to still the mind. So, he does not see [his own spirit and the celestial body]. When the human's mind becomes still in the middle of the human body... don't move... be still like a pillar... don't move at all... we know when our body is still... but our mind can become still [when we attain the inner bodies]. If our mind does not become still, we cannot reach the Middle [Way].

What will happen next when the mind becomes still? With the right mental unification, we will see the crystal clear *Sīla* sphere [or the sphere of moral discipline]. To clarify it... *sammā-vācā*, *sammā-kammanta*, *sammā-ājīva*... these are parts of the

Noble Eightfold Path. When we see this crystal clear sphere, the human body becomes still in the middle of this... with the right mental unification further... reaching the more refined level, the crystal clear sphere will expand outward and one will see the *Samādhi* sphere [or the sphere of concentration]. The *Samādhi* sphere is the essence of *Samādhi*. To clarify it, it is *sammā-vāyāma*, *sammā-sati*, *sammā-samādhi*, according to the Noble Eightfold Path. Stilling the mind further until reaching the right mental unification, the *Samādhi* sphere will expand outward, and one will find the *Paññā* sphere [or the sphere of wisdom]. *Paññā* sphere can be clarified as *sammā-diṭṭhi* and *sammāsankappa* according to the Noble Eightfold Path. Altogether, they form the Noble Eightfold Path. Stilling the mind further into the middle of the *Paññā* sphere until reaching the right mental unification, the *Paññā* sphere will expand outward whereas the human body becomes more



refined. At the right mental unification, one will see the celestial body when one attains *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā* within the human body. With further mental unification, one sees the celestial body, and this marks the end of the human body's duty.

The next responsibility belongs to the celestial body. The celestial body needs to reach the refined celestial body by stilling the mind in the middle of the origination center of the celestial body, similar to what the human body did. At the right mental unification, it will become still and see a crystal clear sphere which is *Sīla* sphere... stilling the mind further in the middle of *Sīla* sphere, the celestial body becomes refined, and it will see the *Samādhi* sphere. Stilling the mind further in the middle of the celestial body's *Samādhi* sphere, it will see *Paññā* sphere. Stilling the mind further into the middle of the *Paññā* sphere, at the right mental unification, the *Paññā* sphere will expand outward, and one will see the *Rupa-Brahma* body.

When reaching the *Rupa-Brahma* body, still the mind further in the middle of the *Rupa-Brahma* body, at the origination center of the refined *Rupa-Brahma* body. At the right mental unification, one will see the *Sīla* sphere. Still the mind in the middle of *Sīla* sphere, one will see the *Samādhi* sphere after reaching the right mental unification. Still the mind in the middle of the *Samādhi* sphere, at the right mental unification, one will see *Paññā* sphere. Stilling the mind in the middle of the *Paññā* sphere, at the right mental unification, one will see the *Arupa-Brahma* body. Then, this is the end of *Rupa-Brahma* body's responsibility.

With the *Arupa-Brahma* body, still the mind further, one will reach the right mental unification and see the *Sīla* sphere. Still the mind in the middle of *Sīla* sphere, one will see *Samādhi* sphere. Still the mind within the *Samādhi* sphere, one will see *Paññā* sphere. Still the mind in the middle

of *Paññā* sphere, one will see the *Dhamma* body after reaching the right mental unification. The *Dhamma* body resembles a Buddha statue tipped with a lotus bud on the top of his head. [The first *Dhamma* body which is in cross-legged meditation posture] has the lap width which is smaller than 10 meters. This body is not one of the noble disciples yet. He is the *Gotrabhu* person. This is the *Dhammakaya*... the *Tathagata* himself.

To reach the self of *Tathagata*, one has to follow the Noble Eightfold Path which are *sammā-diṭṭhi*, *sammāsankappa*, *sammā-vācā*, *sammā-kammanta*, *sammā-ājīva*, *sammā-vāyāma*, *sammā-sati*, and *sammā-samādhi*. To do so, it complies to the same path of the *Tathagata*. If one does not access the Middle [Way], one cannot see the *Tathagata*. If one goes this way, one will see the *Dhamma* body. The *Tathagata* reaffirmed by himself, as a witness, that ‘*cakkukarani*’ or

‘regularly sees’ [with the insight], ‘*ñānakarāṇi*’ or ‘regularly knows’ [with the intuition]. He said so because the human body, normally, cannot see [with insight] and know [with intuition] because [the human body] it does not possess such qualities. The human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body do not have insight and intuition, but the *Dhammakaya* has. Talking about his insight, He can regularly see [with the insight].

The human body cannot normally see with the insight. When the human body sees, [sometimes] it perceives the right to be wrong, the wrong to be right, the false to be true, the true to be false, the unbeautiful to be beautiful, and the beautiful to be unbeautiful. It is such a mistaken. The celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body are about the same. But the *Dhamma* body does not see mistakenly like that. The *Dhamma* body can see things as the way they are. He knows [the way things normally are] as well. Whatever He sees, He

knows. But the human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, *Arupa-Brahma* body can see and know mistakenly.

The *Dhamma* body can normally see and know. He can see thoroughly all over, and He knows all over with his intuition. His knowing corresponds to his seeing. There is no difference. His seeing is correct according to His knowing, and vice versa. Whatever is happiness, He sees it as happiness. When one attains the *Dhamma* body, one will be calm. As a human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, or *Arupa-Brahma* body, one is still uncalm. So, we cannot use the term ‘*upasamaya*’ with them. Also, the human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body do not deserve the term ‘*abhiññaya*’ or ‘sublime knowing.’ But the *Dhamma* body can have a sublime knowing. The reason why I said that the human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body cannot have a sublime

knowing is because their ‘knowing’ is still unclear. It is like a lightening which is not clear like the intuition. When having an intuition, the knowing is clear like being in a midday. This is called ‘*abhiññaya*’ or ‘sublime knowing.’ It is superior to the human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body. Also, it has ‘*sambodhaya*’ or ‘knowing altogether.’ The *Dhamma* body knows things altogether according to the truth... knowing everything altogether... there is nothing that He does not know... when having such kind of knowing, it is called the *Dhammakaya*’s intuition. So, it is stated to be ‘*sambodhaya*’ or ‘knowing altogether’ and... ‘*nibbanaya*’ or ‘for the sake of Nirvana’ or in order to attain Nirvana. When attaining *Dhammakaya*, one does not want to go nowhere except the Nirvana... there is nowhere else.

This is said to comply to the objective of the Lord Buddha and enlightened *arahants*. This is the path of the *Tathagata*. There is no involvement with the two [extremity] namely *kamasukhallikanuyoga* or sensual indulgence and *attakilamathanuyoga* or self-mortification as the [Middle Way] practice is truly in the middle. As we know the real thing like this, we know that *Dhammakaya* is the *Tathagata* himself. As we know this, we have to reach the *Tathagata* by resting our mind still always... keep up with the right mental unification which will enable us to see a crystal clear sphere. Then, it is said that we remain in the Triple Gem and take refuge in the Buddha Gem, *Dhamma* Gem, and *Sangha* Gem.

*Dhammakaya* is the Buddha Gem. Now we know the Buddha Gem. Gem means what? Gem means something crystal. The *Dhammakaya* is clear like a crystal. As we know the Buddha Gem, we have to know the *Dhamma* Gem too. The *Dhamma* Gem is

the *Dhamma* [or essential quality] that forms *Dhammakaya*. Resting the mind still in the middle of the human body, the celestial body will appear. The mind of celestial body will rest in the middle of the celestial body. The mind of *Rupa-Brahma* body will rest in the middle of the *Rupa-Brahma* body. The mind of the *Arupa-Brahma* body will rest in the middle of the *Arupa-Brahma* body. The *Dhamma* that forms the *Dhammakaya* is about the same. It is like looking at ourselves in the mirror. It is identical. The lap-width of the *Dhammakaya* [in cross-legged meditation posture] is 40 meters, covered by a rounded *Dhamma* sphere. The *Dhamma* that forms the human body, celestial body, *Rupa-Brahma* body, and *Arupa-Brahma* body are called the *Dhamma* Gem all alike. The Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, and He did not pay respect to anyone except



the *Dhamma* sphere. The *Dhamma* that forms a *Dhammakaya* is called the *Dhamma* Gem. If we do not attain the *Dhamma* sphere yet, we cannot become a *Dhammakaya* or a child of the *Tathagata*. Without the *Dhamma* sphere, we cannot reach the celestial body, the *Rupa-Brahma* body, the *Arupa-Brahma* body, and the *Dhamma* body.

Some people do not know what to pay respect to. They keep paying respect to this and that. In a worse case, some people pay respect to a big tree, a big mountain, and a big shrine. Normally, when someone has suffering, he needs to acquire a refuge to free himself from suffering. Some people take a big mountain as their refuge. Some people choose the big forest. Some people choose a big shrine. Some people take a pagoda or even a tree as their refuge, believing that the deities will secure and prevent them from dangers.

The Lord Buddha said that the trees, the mountains and some other are not the refuge as they cannot free us from suffering. But the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha* can be taken as a reliable refuge. So, the mountain and shrine are unreliable. But the Buddha or Buddha Gem is truly reliable. This is the same to the *Dhamma* Gem and *Sangha* Gem.

The Lord Buddha discovered *Dhammakaya* first, and the enlightened *arahants* also attained *Dhammakaya*, similar to the Lord Buddha, ranging from Venerable Kondañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanāma, and Assaji. All of them attained *Dhammakaya* which was similar to Venerable Yasa and his fifty friends. They all attained *Dhammakaya*. They are the *Sangha* Gem, meaning the crystal disciple monk of the Lord Buddha. The *Sangha* Gem is *Dhammakaya* which appears in the religion of the Lord Gotama Buddha.

As we know the Buddha Gem, *Dhamma* Gem, and *Sangha* Gem like this, we have to make ourselves attain the Buddha Gem, *Dhamma* Gem, and *Sangha* Gem. If we do not attain, no matter how many lifetime we practice Buddhism, we will never truly experience the religion. It is like a cow boy who raises the cows for others but never tries the five flavors of cow milk by himself. He raises the cows from morning until the evening and returns them to the owner. He takes his wage without ever tasting the cow milk because the owner takes it all.

The five flavors of cow milk means the five flavors obtained from leaving the milk until it turns sour. This is called the drinking yogurt. When the drinking yoghurt is heated and condensed, it is called condensed milk which has a different flavor. When it is heated further until turning solid, it becomes a butter which has another flavor. When the butter is fried into liquid, its flavor changes again. So, the flavors of milk, sour milk, heated

condensed milk (like grape sugar), butter, and fried butter, are altogether called the five flavors of cow milk. These are the five flavors that a cow boy never tastes before, but the owner has opportunities to taste them. Likewise, a religious practitioner who does not make himself attain the [inner] Triple Gem means he does not know the religion at all. This is similar to a cow boy who raises cows for wage. He does his duty, and that is it.

So, for anyone who has not experienced the *Dhamma* flavor yet, you better make yourself attain the Triple Gem. The one who knows will know it in his heart. Many other still haven't taste the flavor of Buddhism. He knows clearly in mind like this. Therefore, everyone should pay attention by making one's mind still in order to attain the Triple Gem. If one does not determinedly pay attention, one will be like a cow boy who never tastes the *Dhamma* flavor and know how it tastes like.

So, for what I have delivered to you about the Middle Way practice which complies to the Noble Eightfold Path in Pali language and clarified into the language of Siam, I have explained them for an appropriate period of time. Due to the honesty in delivering the *Dhamma*, from the beginning toward the end, may happiness and well being occur to all of you who assembly here together. I have taught appropriately until this very moment which I would like to end my sermon now.