CHAPTER IV

4. 1. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

Dukkha Nirodha Ariya Sacc̄

Nirodha Sacc̄, the truth of the cessation of suffering (Nibb̄ena) will be discussed as taught in the first sermon of the Buddha, Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta of Sañyutta Nikāya.

Idañ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodho ariyasaccañ. Yo tass̄eyeva taÓh̄eya asesavirēganirodho cÉgo paÔinissaggo mutti anÉlayo.\(^{166}\)

"Bhikkhus, what I am going to teach now is the noble truth of extinction of suffering, the real truth which Noble Ones should know. It is the complete fading away and cessation of that hunger, that craving without remainder, its forsaking up, relinquishing, letting go, release and abandoning of the same craving".

The truth of extinction of suffering is the cessation of craving (Samudaya Sacc̄) otherwise called the truth of the origin of suffering. By virtue of vipassan̄ ÉŒÓa and ariya magga ÉŒÓa, that craving gets no opportunity to arise and vanish. It is like darkness being dispelled by sunlight. When

\(^{166}\) S. N. Mahēvagga Pēli. P. 420
arahatta magga ÒÈÓa appears, the craving has no chance to arise and gets extinguished entirely. With the cessation of taÓhÈ, the aggregates of nÈma, r|pa for new life cannot make their appearance and completely cease to exist. This non-arising or cessation of taÓhÈ is termed the truth of the cessation of suffering. Cessation of taÓhÈ by virtue of arahatta magga ÒÈÓa is complete, total extinction of taÓhÈ and the noblest and highest form of extinction.

There are inferior forms of cessation. For instance, cessation by virtue of the anÈgÈmi magga which completely extinguishes only kÈma taÓhÈ (the craving for sensuous pleasure), cessation by the sakadÈgÈmi magga which eliminates only the grosser forms of kÈma taÓhÈ, cessation by virtue of sotÈpatti magga which removes the kÈma taÓhÈ that will give rise to rebirth in the nether worlds. These cessations are concerned with only partial extinction of taÓhÈ and may be regarded as inferior types of Nirodha sacÈ.\(^{167}\) Then, there is another form of cessation which comes about through meditating on the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. During the period of contemplation of them, taÓhÈ gets no opportunity to arise and, hence, there occurs temporary cessation of taÓhÈ. It may be regarded as cessation by half measures of taÓhÈ by means of partial development of vipassanÈ ÒÈÓa. Every time one is engaged in vipassanÈ meditation, it may be said that one is realizing the temporary cessation of taÓhÈ.

\(^{167}\) Abhidhammattha sa~gaha PÈli. P. 65
The PÊli texts provide the following expositions of the truth of cessation of craving by answering the question 'where may this craving be discarded, where may it be extinguished?' "Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving may be discarded, there it may be extinguished."\(^\text{168}\)

Here, delightful and pleasurable things mean, as explained previously, the six doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; six sense objects of visual sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily impression and mind; six viÒÒÈÓas of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. For further details, reference may be made to the text and translation of the MahÈ SatipaÔÔhÈna Sutta.\(^\text{169}\)

Discarding and extinguishing are somewhat alike in meaning. Similarly, cÈgo (abandoning, giving up), paÔinissaggo (giving up, forsaking, rejection), mutti (release, freedom, emancipation), anÈlayo (aversion, doing away with)... all connote the same meaning as nirodha (cessation, annihilation).\(^\text{170}\)

4. 2. How Cessation of Craving is Brought About

When anyone (the Yogi) by noting 'seeing' at the moment of sight becomes convinced of the true nature of impermanence

\(^{168}\) D. N. MahÈvagga PÊli . P. 32
\(^{169}\) Ibid. P. 288
\(^{170}\) S. N. MahÈvagga PÊli . P. 422
(anicca), suffering (dukkha) and non-self (anatta), he will not be blinded by the delusion of permanence (nicca), happiness (sukha) and self (atta) in the sense doors and sense objects such as eye, visual object, eye-consciousness, etc. He is momentarily free from ignorance or delusion (avijjÊ). Having seen reality as it is and being free from delusion, no pleasurable feeling arises towards these objects. This is then the temporary cessation or fading away of craving, through the fading away of craving, upÊdÊna (clinging), kamma and sa~khÊra which come trailing after it cannot arise. Consequently, viÒÒÈÓa, nÊma r|pa, saÄÈyatana, phassa and vedanÊ, the unwholesome resultant of kamma and sa~khÊra, cannot appear. This is how craving together with suffering are momentarily extinguished, that is called momentary cessation or momentary NibbÊna.171

In a similar manner, the yogi, by noting 'hearing', 'smelling', 'ear-consciousness', 'nose-consciousness', etc. at the moment of hearing, smelling, etc. becomes convinced of the true nature of impermanence, suffering and non-self with respect to ear, sound, nose, taste, etc. He will be free from delusion of permanence, happiness or self in connection with those objects. Thus, there will be momentary cessation of craving and suffering, otherwise called momentary NibbÊna.172

Through vipassanÊ which promotes temporary cessation as higher knowledge is developed, NibbÊna is realized by means of sotÊpatti magga ÔÉÓa extinguishes kÊma taÓhÊ

171 D. N. MahÊvagga PÊlí. P. 31
172 Visuddhi magga MahÊÔÊkÊ. Vol. 2. P. 421
which can give rise to rebirth in the states of woe. Therefore, the yogi becomes fully liberated from miseries of \textit{ap\=Eya}, the nether world and sufferings of more than seven existences in good states of the sensuous sphere (\textit{k\=ema sugati}). This is then extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving, but it must not be regarded that \textit{sot\=patti magga phala} takes the cessation of craving as its object of contemplation. It dwells merely on cessation as a result of complete extinction of suffering inherent in the aggregates of \textit{n\=ema, r\=pa}. When \textit{Nibb\=ena} is realized by means of \textit{sakad\=eg\=emi magga \=OE\=Oa}, grosser forms of sensuous craving together with sufferings of more than two existences in the sensuous planes are extinguished. When \textit{Nibb\=ena} is realized through \textit{an\=eg\=emi magga \=OE\=Oa}, subtle forms of sensuous cravings and sufferings of more than one existence in \textit{r\=pa loka} (fine material sphere) or in \textit{ar\=pa loka} (non-material sphere) are extinguished. These are also extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving. In these paths also, the mind dwells merely on cessation consequent upon the complete extinction of sufferings inherent in the aggregates of \textit{n\=ema, r\=pa}. When \textit{Nibb\=ena} is realized through \textit{arahatta magga \=OE\=Oa}, all forms of craving and all kinds of suffering are completely eradicated. This is also extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving. We can summarize: "\textbf{When craving is eradicated, suffering is extinguished}".\footnote{S. N. Sa\=Eyatana vagga p\=El. P. 267 (\textit{Nandinirodh\=E dukkha nirodho})}
Only when craving is completely eradicated, is true liberation from suffering achieved. Escape from suffering obtained through other means is not true liberation, but just temporary relief, because in due course there is recurrence of suffering. For example, take stretching the limbs to relieve stiffness due to bending. The ache is temporarily removed through stretching, only to return as tiredness. Likewise, stiffness due to prolonged sitting may be relieved by standing up or walking about only to be replaced soon by weakness. When one is assailed by hunger, the suffering may be relieved by partaking of some food, but the trouble will start again after a fall of a few hours. Illness or disease may be cured with suitable medical treatment, but other ailments are bound to arise sooner or later to start giving trouble again.

Difficult circumstances of living may be solved by engaging in suitable employment or business which may prove so successful and prosperous that one may come to occupy a very high position in one's profession or become a very rich man. Yet with the vicissitudes of life, one may fall down from the high position or become poverty-stricken. Even if the whole of life has been smooth and just plain sailing, one inevitably faces suffering at the time of death. As a result of meritorious deeds such as giving alms, observing moral precepts and one may be reborn a human being in happy prosperous circumstances or one may be born as a powerful celestial king. Yet when the wholesome effects of previous good deeds become exhausted, a return to miserable existences is inevitable. If one strives for a
happy and long existence by means of the $r|pa$ jhÈna and $ar|pa$ jhÈna of the concentration meditations, one may indeed attain the $r|pa$ BrÈhma world and $ar|pa$ BrÈhma world where one may live happily for many world cycles. The wholesome merits of the jhÈnas will become exhausted when the time comes. Then one faces the possibility of descending once again into miserable lower existences.

Thus, unless craving is completely eradicated, no form of liberation is a guaranteed, true liberation. Complete and permanent liberation from all kinds of suffering is achieved only when craving has been entirely extinguished. Thus, the Buddha taught ‘tassÈyeva taÓhÈya asesa virÈga nirodho’, that eradication, extinction of taÓhÈ is the truth of cessation of suffering (NibbÈna).

We shall discuss NibbÈna through canonical methods. There are two important canonical methods: PaÔicca SamuppÈda (Dependent origination) and Visuddhi-magga (The Way of Purification of the Mind). These canonical methods are often used in Buddhist practice to reach the goal (NibbÈna). They are systematically recorded in the PÈli canon and its commentaries.

‘No God, no Brahma can be found
No matter of this wheel of life
Just bare phenomena roll

174. S. N. MahÈvagga PÈli .P. 422
Depend on conditions all.'

'Paṭicca Samuppāda' (The Law of Dependent Origination) is one of the most important teachings of the Buddha, and it also very profound. The Buddha has often expressed his experience of enlightenment in one of two ways, either in terms of having understood the four noble truths, or in terms of having understood the nature of the dependent origination. However, more people have heard about the four noble truths and can discuss it than the law of dependent origination, which is just as important.

Although the actual insight into dependent origination arises with spiritual maturity, it is still possible for us to understand the principle involved. The basis of dependent origination is that life or the world is built on a set of relations, in which the arising and cessation of factors depend on some other factors which condition them. This principle can be given in a short formula of four lines:

When this is, that is (ImasamiṆ sati idaṆ hoti);

This arising, that arises (Immassauppādē idaṆ uppajjati);

When this is not, that is not (ImasamiṆ asati idaṆ na hoti);

This ceasing, that ceases (Imassa nirodhē idaṆ nirujjhati).

On this principle of interdependence and relativity rests the arising, continuity and cessation of existence. This principle

175 Visuddhimagga. Mm. Vol.2.P.238
176 M. N. UparipaOÊesa PEli. P. 63
is known as the Law of Dependent Origination or in PÊli, PaÔicca SamuppÈda. This law emphasizes an important principle that all phenomena in this universe are relative, conditioned states and do not arise independently of supportive conditions. A phenomenon arises because of a combination of conditions which are present to support its arising. And the phenomenon will cease when the conditions and components supporting its arising change and no longer sustain it. The presence of these supportive conditions, in turn, depends on other factors for their arising, sustenance and disappearance.\(^{177}\)

In this context, the word PaÔicca SamuppÈda is a compound of paÔicca and samuppÈda. PaÔicca here means "dependent on" and SamuppÈda means "arising" or "origination". The doctrine of PaÔicca SamuppÈda (Dependent origination) is one of the doctrines that explain in detail the significance of causal relations. The method of PaÔicca SamuppÈda is presented with reference to the specific causal efficacy of the conditions of the Dhamma or mental factors. According to canonical literature, the Buddha was able to attain his enlightenment after realizing the process of PaÔicca SamuppÈda. The expression PaÔicca SamuppÈda is fundamentally applied to the dvÈdasa~ga (twelve-term formula) and dve-m|la (two basic roots).\(^{178}\)

This method fundamentally indicates that no hetu (single cause) can produce a vipÈka (effect) nor can only one vipÈka

\(^{177}\) What Buddhists believe by K. Sri DhammÈnanda. P. 106

\(^{178}\) Abhidhammattha sa~gaha PÊli. P.53
arise from a single cause. In reality, there is always a collection of conditions that deal with a collection of effects. The brief formula of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is that when there is something that exists, and then there will be something that comes to be. If there is something that ceases, then there will be nothing that comes to be.

The *Paṭicca Samuppāda* or the Cycle of Dependent Origination summarized the Buddha’s teaching on the conditionality of all physical and mental phenomena of living beings.

The cycle has 12 parts, which are:

1. *Avijjā*- ignorance or delusion
2. *Saṅkhāra*- kamma-formations
3. *Viññāna*- consciousness
4. *Nāma-rūpa*- mind and matter
5. *Saṅkaya*- six sense bases
6. *Phassa*- contact or impression
7. *Vedanā*- feeling
8. *Taṁnahā*- craving
9. *Upādāna*- clinging
10. *Bhava*- becoming
11. *Jāti*- rebirth
12. *Jarā, maraṇa*- old age and death.\(^{179}\)

\(^{179}\). Vin. Mahāvagga Pāli. P.1
The 12 parts from a cycle, in which each part is conditioned by the preceding part, and in turn, conditions the part that follows.

The formula of Paṭicca Samuppāda is as follows:

1. **Avijjā paccayā saī-khārā**: through ignorance are conditioned the **saī-khāras**, that is, the rebirth producing *kamma*-formations.
2. **Saī-khāra paccayā viōōōāna**: through the *kamma* formations is conditioned consciousness.
3. **Viōōōāna paccayā nīma ṛpạna**: through consciousness are conditioned mind and matter.
4. **Nīma-ṛpạ paccayā saī-eyatana**: through the physical and mental phenomena are conditioned the six bases.
5. **Saī-eyatana paccayā phasso**: through the six bases is conditioned (sensorial) impression.
6. **Phasso paccayā vedanā**: through impression is conditioned feeling.
7. **Vedanā paccayā taōhā**: through feeling is conditioned craving.
8. **Taōhā paccayā upēdēna**: through craving is conditioned clinging.
9. **Upēdēna paccayā bhava**: through clinging is conditioned the process of *kamma*-formations and becoming (*Kamma bhava* and *Upēdēna bhava*)
10. *Bhava paccayÈ jÈti*: through the process of *kamma* formation (*kamma bhava*) is conditioned rebirth.

11. *JÈti paccayÈ jarÈ, maranaÑ, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa, upÊyÈsÈ sambhavanti*: through rebirth are conditioned old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair.

> Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhamdassa samudayo ho ti: thus arises this whole mass of suffering.\(^\text{180}\)

The cycle of Dependent Origination can, from another point of view, be considered as consisting of four groups, being past causes, present resultants, present causes, and future resultants. The four groups are:

**Group 1. Past life** (*AtÊta Bhava*)
- *AvijjÈ* (ignorance)
- *Sa~khÈra* (*kamma* formations)
- *ViÒÒÈÓa* (consciousness)

**Group 2. Present life** (*Paccuppanna Bhava*)
- *NÈma-ripa* (mind and matter)
- *SaÄÈyatana* (six bases)
- *Phassa* (impression)
- *VedanÈ* (feeling)

**Group 3. Present life** (*Paccuppanna Bhava*)
- *TaÓhÈ* (craving)
- *UpÊdÈnÈ* (clinging)
- *Bhava* (*kamma bhava*) +(*kamma formations*)

\(^{180}\) S. N. NidÈna vagga PÊli. P.1
Group 4. Future life \((AnÈgata Bhava)\)

JÈti (rebirth)

JarÈ, maraÓa (old age, death).

Rebirth is being the passive process of becoming or \textit{upapatti bhava}.

Group one relates to a past life. Group two and three relate to this present life. Group four relates to a future life in \textit{SamsÈra}, the wheel of life and death. The doctrine of \textit{PaÔicca SamuppÈda} shows the conditionality and dependent nature of the uninterrupted flux of all the physical (mental) phenomena that make up individual existences. An understanding of the doctrine is essential if we are to really understand the Buddha’s teaching.

We will look at each group of the \textit{PaÔicca SamuppÈda} and then we will review "Life" and "Existence" as it is conditioned in the doctrine of \textit{PaÔicca SamuppÈda} and in the \textit{Abhidhamma of Buddhism}.

\textbf{Group One}

Group one of the \textit{PaÔicca SamuppÈda} is made up of \textit{avijjÈ} and \textit{sa~khÈra}. \textit{AvijjÈ} is ignorance of what really constitutes individual existence. It is delusion regarding truth and reality of existence, that in all the bodily and mental phenomena of existence, there is nothing that can ultimately be regarded as a satisfying, self-reliant, independent, abiding "self"
or "ego". Ignorance is not to understand suffering, its origin, its extinction and the path leading to its extinction. Because of ignorance or delusion regarding existence, we are constantly engaged in sa~khÈras, or kamma-formations, which are wholesome or unwholesome deeds, of body, speech and mind. Kamma-formations are deeds born of our volitions, or our wishes and desires.

Most people are, thus, engaged in all kinds of activities without an understanding of what really constitutes individual existence; they are proceeding like the blind. They are unable to think correctly and they are unable to speak correctly. They will never get to where they wish to go. It is only the Ariyas or Noble Disciples of the Buddha who have been able to penetrate into the truth of existence, into the understanding of the related nature of mind and matter, and the impersonality (lack of abiding self) of all such phenomena. In the Buddha's dispensation, there are four stages of purity or saint hood, namely the stages of SotÈpanna, SakadÈgÈmi, AnÈgÈmi and Arahanta or fully purified saint, who is no longer bound by any fetters of defilements.

Looking at Group One of the PaÔicca SamuppÈda, we can say that life or existence, for most people, is "delusion and kamma-formations or delusion and activities which are with delusion". Our delusions keep us always active, always making new kamma.

Group Two
Group two comprises of 5 components, namely viÒÒÈÓa (consciousness), nÈma-r|pa (mind and matter), saÄÈyatana (six bases), phassa (impression) and vedanÈ (feeling). We look at each component to extend our understanding of the continuous flux of life or existence.

Consciousness appears for the first time at conception in the mother's womb. Consciousness is to be aware of something. It is consciousness which brings into effect the interplay of mind and matter, which is existence. Mind and matter in turn are linked to the six bases, namely, the eye-base for sense of sight, the ear-base for sense of hearing, the nose-base for sense of smell, the tongue-base for sense of taste, the body-base for sense of touch and finally, the sixth base is the mind-base, which is the sense of knowing or being aware of sensual impression.

When a visual object comes into contact with the eye base, there is consciousness or being aware of this visual object. This, however, is a very brief look at the process of becoming conscious of a visual object. The Abhidhamma teaches that 14 sub-functions come into play in the process of becoming conscious of an object (ViÒÒÈÓa Kicca).\(^{181}\) Similarly for the other bases, because of the six bases, there is a continuous stream of consciousness; conscious of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily feelings, thoughts and fantasies.

\(^{181}\) Abhidhammattha sa–gaha PÈli. P. 43
Because of the six bases, we spend our time seeing and enjoying visual form, hearing and enjoying sounds, smelling and enjoying scents, tasting and enjoying flavors, touching and enjoying bodily feelings, thinking and fantasizing and enjoying thoughts imaginings, day-dreams. From the time we wake up, until we fall asleep again at night, because of the six bases, we spend our time looking, listening, smelling, tasting, feeling, or lost in thoughts and fantasies. There is no rest at all from these activities. We are led by the six bases into spending all our time and our energies, whether these activities are wholesome or unwholesome, whether they are of use or no use at all. From the day of our birth until the day we are put into our coffins, the six bases take up all our time.

"Life" or "existence", from two points of view, is therefore, nothing but the six bases leading us into all kinds of physical, verbal and mental activities.

**Group Three**

Group three of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* consists of *taṇhā* (craving), *upādāna* (clinging) and *kamma-bhava* (volitional acts). *Bhava* here refers to *kamma-bhava*, all the volitional activities that cause becoming into existence. (*Upapatti-bhava* is the resultant rebirth or the coming into existence or *jīti* of Group Four.)

Craving, clearly, is to desire, to want and to long for something. But not to want something, or to dislike something, is also a form of craving. If we dislike the heat, it may be
because we like cold. If we dislike the color green, it may be because we like the color red.

Clinging is strong attachment to something. It is compulsive or obsessive craving. We refuse to let go. Even if we do not actually possess something, we are mentally obsessed by it. We think of it constantly. We will do anything to get it.

Group three tells us that life is nothing but likes and dislikes. We meet with something we like and we are all smiles. We meet with something we dislike and we are all angry. So life is nothing but likes and dislikes, smiles and anger. We meet with something we like, and we become strongly attached to it. We cling to it mentally, and we react. We react if we like something, and we react if we dislike something. This is \textit{kamma-bhava}.

To summarize, Group Three constituents \textit{ta\textasciitilde{O}h\textasciitilde{E}}, \textit{up\textasciitilde{E}d\textasciitilde{E}na} and \textit{kamma-bhava}, tell us that "life" is nothing but our likes and dislikes, and resulting smiles or anger. In other words, life is nothing but our reacting to external stimuli. We like something and we react in a certain way. We dislike something and we react in another way.

\textbf{Group Four}

Group Four is concerned with future resultant period. Group Four constituents are \textit{j\textascii{"{E}ti} and \textit{jar\textascii{"{E}-mara\textascii{"{O}a}, rebirth and old age-death. Group Four tell us that "life" is to be born and
then to die. This, very briefly and very truly, is what life is. "Life" starts with birth and it ends with death.

Group Four of the Paṭicca Samuppāda tells us, "Life" has three parts; to be born, to live and then to die or jīti, jarī and maraōa.

When we look at Paṭicca Samuppāda, we see two constituents that belong to the future, namely, jīti and jarī, maraōa. If we, in our present life, are unable to rid ourselves of the causes, taṭhī, upēdēna, kamma-bhava, then unfailingly, we will reap these two results, which are jīti and jarī, maraōa.

In this world, man is faced with many kinds of troubles, problems, pains and misery. It is no wonder that people wish to be reborn as celestial beings in the Deva world or the Brahma world. But even in the Deva and Brahma worlds, where some constituents such as our gross mind-matter component may not be present as in the human world, all remain subject to jīti and jarī-maraōa, birth and death. It is the biography of humans, devas and bramhas. According to the Abhidamma of Buddhism,182 life or existence is nothing more than an unending sequence of separate phenomena, which arise and pass away. Phenomena come into being or arise (uppāda), they exist for a short moment (ôhiti) and then they pass away and disappear (bhanga) there is nothing else apart from these three phases.

In this Paṭicca Samuppāda, the Cycle of Dependent Origination, two original causes or two original evils are avijju

182. Abhidhammattha sa-gaha Pēli. P. 40
and taÔhÈ, delusion and craving. If you can, according to Buddhism, get rid of these two causes, you can stop the cycle of existence. It is called "NibbÈna" and knowing the "Nirodha SaccÈ- the Truth of the Cessation of Craving".

This is in accordance with the doctrine of dependent origination which states that when the causative conditions such as ignorance, etc., cease, their resultant effects, sa~khÈras, etc, also cease. Thus in the Anguttara PÈli text, it is taught:

"What, Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of cessation of suffering? Through the total fading away and extinction of ignorance (which has been dealt with in connection with samudaya saccÈ) sa~khÈras kamma (formations) are extinguished; through the extinction of sa~khÈras kamma, the resultant viÒÒÈÓa for new existence is extinguished; through the extinction of viÒÒÈÓa, the mental and physical existences are extinguished; through the extinction of mental and physical existences, saÄÈyatana (the six organs of senses) are extinguished; through the extinction of six organs, phassa (sensorial impressions due to contact between sense organs and sense objects) are extinguished; through extinction of sensorial impressions, vedanÈ (feeling of sensations) is extinguished; through extinction of feeling, taÔhÈ(craving) is extinguished; through extinction of craving, upÈdÈna (clinging) is extinguished; through the extinction of clinging, bhava (process of becoming) is extinguished;
through extinction of process of becoming, j̄ti (rebirth) is extinguished; through extinction of rebirth, jarÈ, maraÓa soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa and upÉyÈsa, (decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair) are extinguished. This, Bhikkhus, is called the noble truth of extinction of this mass of mere suffering.”

In the above text, the sequence of cessation, for example, through extinction of ignorance, kamma formations are extinguished is given in a serial order to demonstrate the correlation of each cause with its effect. But the important point to note is that once the ignorance fades away, vanishes, all its resultant effects such as sa~khÈra, etc., become extinguished.

The PÈli words nirodha or nirodho in the texts connote cessation only, neither the place of cessation nor the condition of cessation. Although commentaries mention nirodha symbolically as a place of cessation or condition of cessation, it must be carefully observed that its true meaning is non-arising of inter-related conditions of cause and effect such as avijjÈ, sa~khÈra, viÒÒÈÓa, etc., their total cessation, annihilation, cutting off, in other words the noble truth of cessation of suffering or NibbÈna.

According to the doctrine of PaÔicca SamuppÈda, the whole mass of suffering, including birth and death, is due to these two essential roots, ignorance and craving (avijjÈ and taÔhÈ). They are able to make all living beings revolve into one

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existence after another. The gist of the doctrine of *Pañicca Samuppāda* is that if there is something that comes to exist, there are causes that come to exist, and there will be something that comes to be as well. Thus, past, present and future circumstances are related to one another. On the contrary, if there is something, more precisely *avijjā* (ignorance) and *tañhā* (craving), that ceases, then there will be nothing that comes to exist anymore (*nirodha*). This means that if there are no mental factors of ignorance and craving, there will be no more rebirth and death.

The other important canonical method is the *Visuddhi-magga* (the path of purification). This method is often used in Buddhist meditation practice, more precisely *Satipaṭṭhāna* (mindfulness) meditation in order to reach one's goal, that is, *Nibbāna*. In Buddhism, the emphasis of this method is to explore the advanced states of the path that show the distinctive features of great clarity of mind which involves the purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*). The gist of this method is mainly to purify the mind, using the development of mindfulness in order to realize *Nibbāna*, which is interpreted as the state of perfect liberation from suffering.

### 4.3. Commentarial Interpretations of *Nibbāna*

As has been mentioned with canonical interpretations of *Nibbāna*, the meaning of *Nibbāna* is understood with reference to what it means to the audience. *Pāli* commentators believe that the canonical interpretations are clear enough to
understand what Nibbêna is. All Buddha’s teachings are very much based on theoretical application for their practical foundation. However, it is pointed out that it is definitely not sufficient to realize the true essence of Nibbêna unless one has a practical approach. In fact, one is supposed to learn theory first, and then one must apply the theories to the practice for the sake of mental development. In this way, one can understand the significance of Nibbêna.

Pêli commentators made an important statement about realizing the nature of Nibbêna. One must have a proper approach in practice in order to understand the canonical interpretation of Nibbêna. They strongly affirm in their statements that without the practice of meditation, it is impossible to realize the true nature of Nibbêna or the experience of enlightenment. To confirm their position, the commentator, Anuruddhê Thera attempted to state his view with logical and practical sense in the Abhidhammattha Sa~gaha (Pêli Text). The statement is as follows:

Nibbênañ pana lokuttara-sa~khêtañ catumaggaÒÖêena sacchikêtabbañ magga phalêna mêrammaÓabhitatêna vêna sa~khêtêya taÓhêya nikkhantattê nibbênanti pavuccati.

Tadetañ sabhêvato ekavidhampi; saupêdisesa nibbênadhêtu, anupêdisesa nibbênadhêtu| cêti duvidhañ
hoti kÈraÓa pariyÈyena. TathÈ suÒÒataÑ, animittaÑ, appaÓihitaÑ cÈti tividhaÑ hoti ÈkÈrabhedena.\textsuperscript{184}

Padamaccuta maccamtaÑ, asa~khata manuttaraÑ

NibbÈnamiti bhÈsamti, vÈnamuttÈ mahesayo.\textsuperscript{185}

\textit{NibbÈna} is termed supra-mundane, and is to be realized by the wisdom of the four paths.\textsuperscript{186} It becomes an object to the paths and fruits, and is called \textit{NibbÈna} because it is a departure (\textit{ni}) from cord-like (\textit{vÈna}) craving, which is an entanglement. \textit{NibbÈna} is onefold according to its intrinsic nature.\textsuperscript{187}

According to the way (it is experienced) it is twofold---namely, the element of \textit{NibbÈna} with the substrata remaining and the element of \textit{NibbÈna} without the substrata remaining.

It is threefold according to its different aspects, namely, Void, Sign less and longing-free.

Great seers who are free from craving declare that \textit{NibbÈna} is an objective state which is deathless, absolutely endless, non-conditioned and incomparable.

\textsuperscript{184} Abhidhammattha sa~gaha PÈli. P.113
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid. P. 45
\textsuperscript{186} In the Abhidhammattha sa~gaha PÈli and Abhidhamma texts, there are the knowledge of the four supra-mundane Paths. They are : (1) the realization of the path of stream-winning (\textit{sotÈpatti magga}), (2) the realization of the Path of once return (\textit{sakadÈgÈmi magga}), (3) the realization of the path of non-return (\textit{anÈgÈmi magga}), and (4) the realization of the path of holiness (\textit{arahatta magga})
\textsuperscript{187} A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma by Bhikkhu Bodhi. P. 258
Nibbêna is composed of ni and vêna. Ni + Vêna = Nivêna = Nibêna = Nibbêna. Ni is a particle implying negation. Vêna means weaving or craving. It is this craving which acts as a cord to connect the series of lives of any particular individual in the course of his wanderings in Sañsêra, the cycle of birth.¹⁸⁸

As long as one is entangled by craving or attachment, one accumulates fresh kammic forces which must materialize in one form or other in the eternal cycle of birth and death. When all forms of craving are removed, kammic forces cease to operate, and one, in conventional terms, attains Nibbêna, escaping the cycle of birth and death. The Buddhist conception of deliverance is this escape from the ever-recurring cycle of birth and death, and is not merely an escape from 'sin and hell'.

Nibbêna means non-craving or non-attachment, or 'departure from craving'. Strictly speaking, Nibbêna is that Dhamma which is gained by the complete destruction of all forms of craving, and the blowing out, the extinction, or the annihilation of the flames of lust, hatred and ignorance. It should be understood that the mere destruction of passions is not Nibbêna. It is only the means to gain Nibbêna and is not an end in itself.

Nibbêna is an ultimate reality (vatthudhamma) which is supra-mundane (lokuttara), that is, beyond the world of mind and body or the five 'aggregates'.

¹⁸⁸. The Buddha and his teachings by NÈrada Thera. P. 489-510
Nibbāna is to be understood by intuitive knowledge and inferential knowledge (paccakkha or paññëvedha ÒÈÓa and anumëna or anubodha ÒÈÓa). To express both ideas it is stated that Nibbāna is to be realized by means of the wisdom pertaining to the four paths of Sainthood and that it becomes an object to the paths and fruits.

Intrinsically (sabhàvà) Nibbāna is peaceful (santi). As such it is unique (kevala). This single Nibbāna is viewed as twofold according to the way it is experienced before and after death. The text uses a simple but recondite Pèli phrase---kèraÒa pariyèyena. The Ceylon Commentary explains---the cause for naming it as such with respect to its having or not having the aggregates as the remainder (sa-upèdisëdivesàvasëna paÒÒÈpane kèraÒabhëbhàtassë upèdisësesabhëvëbhëvëvassë lesena).

Saupèdisësesa---Sa = with; upèdi = aggregates (mind and body); sesa = remaining. Upèdi means the five aggregates as they firmly grasped by craving and false views. It also signifies passions (kilesas). According to the text and the commentarial interpretations Nibbāna, experienced by sotëpannas, sakadëgëmis and anëgëmis, is saupèdisësa nibbënadheõtu as they have the body and some passions still remaining. Nibbāna of the arahantas is also saupèdisësa nibbënadheõtu as they have body still remaining. It is only the Nibbāna of the arahantas after their death that is termed anupèdisësa
nibbânadhetu because the aggregates and the passions are discarded by them.

_Itivuttaka_ (PÊli Text) refers to these two kinds of Nibbêna, but mention is made only of Nibbêna comprehended by arahantas. It states---

"These two Nibbêna-states are shown by Him

Who seeth, who is such and unattached.

One state is that in this same life possessed

With base remaining, tho' becoming's stream

Be cut off. While the state without a base

Belongeth to the future, wherein all

Becomings utterly do come to cease."\(^{189}\)

_SuÒÔdata_---Devoid of lust, hatred and ignorance, or of all conditioned things. Void here does not mean that Nibbêna is 'nothingness'.

_Animitta_---Free from the signs of lust etc., or from the signs of all conditioned things.

_AppaÓihita_---Free from the hankerings of lust etc., or because it is not longed for which any feelings of craving.

_PadaÑ_---Here the term is used in the sense of an objective reality (_Vatthudhamma_). State does not exactly

\(^{189}\) Kh. N. Itivuttaka PÊli . P.38
convey the meaning of the *Pêli* term. It may be argued whether *Nibbêna* could strictly be called either a state or a process. In *Pêli* it is designated as a 'Dhamma'.

**Asa~khata---Nibbêna** is the only Dhamma which is not conditioned by any cause. Hence it is eternal and neither a cause nor an effect.  

Based on the above mentioned statements, one can realize the nature of *Nibbêna* through *lokuttara-citta* (supramundane consciousness). One can attain *Nibbêna* through *lokuttara-magga* (noble path or the transcendental state of the path). Who can realize nature of *Nibbêna*? According to *Theravêda* Buddhism, only enlightened beings can truly realize *Nibbêna*. In this canonical context, it is understood that the property of *Nibbêna* belongs to only enlightened beings.

Buddhaghosa was the well-known commentator who lived in the fifth century A.D. His most prominent work is the *Visuddhi Magga* (the path of purification) and *Pêli* canonical commentaries. He was able to summarize the *Ti-piÔakas* (Three Baskets) by combining ancient commentaries and making a new commentary, as an essence. Since there is so much confusion in Buddhist doctrines concerning the concept of *Nibbêna*, he attempted to readjust the above mentioned interpretations. First, he analyzed the meaning of *Nibbêna* through practice and then clarified what *Nibbêna* meant to him. The most significant point of his work is clear and concise. He

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190. *Abhidhammattha sa-gaha Pêli*. P. 114
had the ability to make a clear outline for all teachings of the Buddha. The outline is: in order to attain *Nibbêna* or enlightenment, one must fulfill the three training exercises, *sêla* (morality or virtue), *samêdhi* (concentration) and *paôôê* (wisdom). This is the essential requirement for everyone who really wants to attain insight wisdom or enlightenment. However, he did not ignore the necessary prerequisite requirements, such as *pêramê* (perfections) and *saddhê* (faith in the Dhamma practice), and *adhiôôhêna* (resolution in the Dhamma practice). His affirmation is as follows:

\[
\text{Apica } \text{*Nibbêna*} \text{ natthê-ti vattabba}ñ. \text{ kasmê? Patipatti}ñ\text{ê vaôjabhêvêpa}jjanato. Asati hi nibbêne sammêdiôôhipurejavêya } \text{sêlêdi-khandhattayasa-gahêya}
\]
\[
sammêpaôipatti}ñ\text{êvaôjabhêvo } \text{Êpajjati na } \text{cêya}ñ \text{vaôjhê nibbênapêpanato-ti.}
\]

Again, it should not be said that *Nibbêna* does not exist. Why not? Because it then follows that the way would be useless. For if *Nibbêna* were non-existence and then it would follow that the right way, which includes the three aggregates beginning with virtue and headed by right understanding, would be useless. And it is not useless because it does reach *Nibbêna*.\[192\]

\[191\] *Visuddhi magga* PÊli. Vol. 2. P. 139
\[192\] *The Path of Purification*. Trans. by Bhikkhu Êôamoli. P. 514-515
In the *Visuddhi magga*, Buddhaghosa precisely analyzed the interpretation of *Nibbêna* and remarked that some people misunderstand the concept of *Nibbêna* as a hare's horn (*sasa-visÈÓa*) which does not really exist. He strongly rejected the concept of the non-existence of *Nibbêna*, because it is apprehendable by the way of virtue (*sÈla*), concentration (*samÈdhi*) and wisdom (*paÒÒÈ*). He attempts to readjust some former interpretations in order to get a better understanding. For instance, he deals with the Ven. SÈriputta's interpretation of *Nibbêna*, which stated that *Nibbêna* means *rÈga-kkhaya* (extinction of craving or destruction of lust). The statement reads as follows:

"Yo kho Èvuso rÈgakkhayo" ti Èdivacanato "khayo nibbÈnan" ti ce na, arahattassÈpi khayamattÈpajjanato. taÑpi hi "yo kho Èvuso rÈgakkhayo" ti ÈdinÈ nayena niddiÔÔhaÑ.\(^{193}\)

But is not *Nibbêna* destruction, because of the passage beginning "that, friend, which is the destruction of greed--- (of hate---of delusion...) is *Nibbêna*"? That is not so, because it would follow that Arahantship also was mere destruction. For that too is described in the (same) way beginning "That, friend, which is the destruction of greed ... of hate ...of delusion...is Arahantship"\(^{194}\)

\(^{193}\) *Visuddhi magga* PÊli. Vol. 2. P. 139-140

\(^{194}\) *The Path of Purification*. Trans. By Bhikkhu ©Èamoli. P. 515
Regarding the issue of destruction, he refers back to the original word *rÈgakkhaya*, which means destruction. Buddhaghosa argues that *khaya* (destruction) does not refer to *NibbÈna*, but the aggregates of the *Arahants*, enlightened beings. Enlightened beings destroy all defilements that have the *kammic* power to generate new existences. He attempts to elucidate a clear statement, providing the words of the Buddha as support. Because it is the word of the Omniscient One, *NibbÈna* is not non-existent as regards individual essence in the ultimate sense; for this is said: 'Bhikkhus, there is an unborn, an unbecoming, an unmade, an unformed'.

The conclusion of his interpretation is: "Only this (that is, *NibbÈna*) is permanent (precisely because it is uncreated); and it is immaterial because it transcends the individual essence of matter. The Buddha's goal is one and has no plurality". However, in the context of the interpretation of *NibbÈna*, the presumably contemporary commentator Arahant Upatissa briefly commented on *NibbÈna* in his own way in the *Vimutti-magga* (The Path of Freedom). His emphasis is on "the utter fading away and cessation of the very craving, leaving it, giving it up, the being delivered from, and the doing away with it. Thus should be known the Noble Truth of the Cessation of ill". For him, the state of not coming to birth, not perishing in nature, and realizing the Third Noble Truth, i.e., the cessation of suffering or the ending of ill, is called *NibbÈna*. To sum up the statement,

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195 Kh. N. Itivuttaka PÈli. P. 37
196 The Path of Purification. Trans. By Bhikkhu ©ÈÓamoli. P.516
197 The Path of freedom. (Vimutti magga). P.272
the interpretation of Nibbāṇa by the commentator is clear and concise. One can know the interpretation of Nibbāṇa from different perspectives. These perspectives tell us that Nibbāṇa is nothing but freedom from kamma-vipāka (the resultants of past and present kamma) and the bondage of saṅsāra (the cycle of birth and death or existences) generated by taṭhā (craving) or lobha (attachment) and ignorance (avijjā). Thus the significance of liberation (Nibbāṇa) can be understood in many ways.

The existence of Nibbāṇa is a critical issue from the Buddhist perspective and it is difficult to determine whether it truly exists or not. If it truly exists, then it is difficult to understand how it exists. Although the existence of Nibbāṇa is described in a definite way in the Buddhist scriptures and in Buddhist thought, there is still some uncertainty as to whether it exists in the mind or somewhere else. Yet Buddhists persist in claiming that it exists. However, they can not provide proof of its existence with empirical evidence to non-believers of Buddhism. Instead they merely cite meditative achievement. Their opinion is that no one, except Buddhas and Buddhist Saints (enlightened beings), know for sure what Nibbāṇa is and how it exists. Many people wonder whether the existence of Nibbāṇa can be known through the contact of physical phenomena or mental phenomena, or whether its existence is subject to mental and physical conditions or non-conditions.
In the canonical context, Buddhist concepts are somehow different from the concept of other religions. Buddhism has never mentioned mighty beings or God as a means for the attainment of *Nibbâna*. Buddhists emphasize that no one can realize the state of *Nibbâna* without differentiating between theory and practice. One of the aims of this study is to remove the concept of duality, that is, the concept of existence and non-existence. In this case, it is necessary to know first what the concept of existence and non-existence is. There is a general agreement among Buddhist scholars that the modes of existence involve not only the process of cause and effect, but also conditional circumstances depending on one another as a causal relationship. From the point of view of Buddhism, it is understood that to acknowledge something as being in existence, there must be causes, conditions, productions and dependence on something in a causal relationship. A being is considered to be subject to an existence with a process that contains arising and decaying; rebirth and death and so on. This criterion is applied to all living beings with conventional truth (*Samuti saccâ*), but it does not apply to absolute ultimate reality (*Paramattha saccâ*).

The absolute ultimate reality in Buddhism refers to the state of *Nibbâna*. With regard to the abovementioned state of conditions or existences, *Nibbâna* is an exception, because *Nibbâna* has nothing to do with a conditional state, but is, in fact, an unconditional state. This means that it is beyond the conditional circumstances. *Nibbâna* is often described as the
state of the "unconditioned". As a matter of fact, it is supposed that those who enter Nibbêna after death reach the state of "non-existence". However, some Buddhists reject the concept of Nibbêna as the state of "non-existence" saying that the state of Nibbêna still exists. But it has nothing to do with the conditioned thirty-one planes of existence where beings are born (jetti) and die (maraóa). For enlightened beings, Nibbêna truly exists, even if it doesn't deal with all three sub-moments: arising (uppaða), presence (ôhiti) and dissolution (bhanga). Yet Nibbêna is regarded to be existent, in spite of involving a process of no cause and no effect.

Regarding this issue, the Buddhist Pêli scholar, Shwe Kyin SayÈdaw who was the founder of Shwe Kyin sect in Myanmar, described the existence of Nibbêna as "The Existence of Dhamma-Visesa" (the transcendentual state of the Dhamma). For him, Nibbêna is an absolute reality that truly exists.198 Venerable Taungpulu-KabhÈ-Aye SayÈdaw, who was a well-known meditation teacher for dhuta~ga (ascetic or austere practices) in Myanmar also proclaims that Nibbêna exists for enlightened beings who have realized the unconditioned ultimate reality (Paramattha-Dhamma). Dhuta~ga literally means "shaking of the defilements", that is, the means of purification. Dhuta~ga consists of thirteen types of practice, often translated as ascetic or austere practices. These SayÈdaws felt that without practicing mindfulness meditation, it is impossible for worldings (puthuijana) to realize the ultimate

198. GambhÈrgambhÈra MahÈnibbuta dÈpanÈ by Shwe Kyin SayÈdaw. P. 173
reality and they could not reach the level of the transcendental state either. The complete realization is considered as seeing things as essential oneness (*eko dhammo*).\textsuperscript{199}

Ledi Saydaw, from Myanmar, was also a scholar and great spiritual teacher, who were well known for his books, Ledi *dêpanê*, and for his successful practice of meditation. He stated that after listening to the teaching of the Buddha, people begin to know that there is a kind of "transcendental element" (*dhamma-dhêtu*) which truly exists in the state of *Nibbêna*, but it is difficult to reach that state. Only those who practice meditation and who have already fulfilled perfections (*pêramês*) for many years can reach it. Ledi Saydaw emphasized that the nature of *Nibbêna* is very profound (*ati gambhêra*), and very hard to see (*ati duddasa*). It is difficult for those who do not see the nature of impermanence (*anicca*), the true suffering of the five aggregates (*dukkha*) and the insubstantiality of phenomena (*anatta*) which occur from moment to moment, to attain the absolute peace of *Nibbêna*.

Since the experience of *Nibbêna* is prominent in the Buddha as well as *arahantas* (enlightened beings), Buddhists recognize *Nibbêna* as their final goal for liberation, and that it is beyond human intellect. However, it doesn't mean that no one can obtain it. In reality, without spiritual achievement, that is, enlightenment, it is impossible to realize that state of peace. It is also impossible to realize that state solely with the intellect. The

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid.
state of *Nibbāna* is out of the thirty-one planes of existence. As a matter of fact, what the state of absolute *Nibbāna* is linked an enlightened being that has entered the state of *Nirodha Samāpatti* (the attainment of cessation) in the *Aruppavacara* plane (the formless existence).\(^{200}\)

*Nirodha Samāpatti* is a state of spiritual achievement that is the non-occurrence of consciousness and its concomitants owing to their progressive cessation. In that state of *Nirodha Samāpatti*, there is no perception, no feeling, and the non-occurrence of the process of physical and mental phenomena. One can enter the state of *Nirodha Samāpatti* for a maximum of seven days. According to the *Visuddhi magga* (the path of purification), not everyone can get into the state of *Nirodha Samāpatti* due to lack of the spiritual ability. Only those enlightened beings capable of entering the eight stages of *jhāna*, known as *aṭṭha samāpatti* can enter *Nirodha Samāpatti*. *Samāpatti* here means the attainment of *jhāna*, that is, the name for the eight absorptions, the four stages of the "Fine-material" (*rūpa jhāna*) and the four stages of the "Immaterial sphere" (*arūpa jhāna*).\(^{201}\) Regarding this fact, the *Visuddhi magga* provides the following statement:

No ordinary men, no Stream-enters or Once-returners, and no Non-returners and *Arahantas* who are bare-insight workers attain it. But both Non-returners

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\(^{200}\) *Visuddhi magga* Mahāvīra. Vol. 2. P.525. (*Yadi aripe nirodhañ samāpajjeyya. Citta cetasikānañ aṭṭha ca kassaci abhāvato apaṭṭiko bhaveyya anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbutasadiso.*)

\(^{201}\) The Path of Purification. Trans.by Bhikkhu ©Êamoli. P. 731-735
(AnÈgÈmis) and those with cankers destroyed (Arahantas) who are obtainers of the eight attainments attain it. For it is said: "Understanding that is master, owing to possession of two powers, to the tranquilization of three formations, to sixteen kinds of exercise of knowledge, and to nine kinds of exercise of concentration, is knowledge of the attainment of cessation". And these qualifications are not to be found together in any persons other than Non-returners and those whose cankers are destroyed, who are obtainers of the eight attainments. That is why only they and no others attain it.\(^{202}\)

In terms of the above statement, Buddhaghosa clearly points out that there are only two kinds of individuals that reach this attainment. Those individuals are AnÈgÈmis (noble beings who have attained the third stage of path and fruition knowledge) and Arahantas (enlightened beings who have attained the highest stage of path and fruition knowledge). They are able to enter the stage of Nirodha samÈpatti (the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling) through their spiritual ability of mastering the eight levels of jhÈna. In this regard, one who enters the state of Nirodha samÈpatti is not much different from one who is dead. What is the difference between one who has attained the goal and one who is dead? There is a statement recorded in the Visuddhi magga as follows:

\(^{202}\) The Path of Purification. Trans. By Bhikkhu ÊÓamoli. P. 731
When a Bhikkhu (one) is dead, friend, has completed his term, his bodily formations have ceased and are quite still, his verbal formations have ceased and are quite still, his mental formations have ceased and are quite still, his life is exhausted, his heat has subsided, and his faculties are broken up. When a Bhikkhu (one) has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling, his bodily formations have ceased and are quite still, his verbal formations have ceased and are quite still, his mental formations have ceased and are quite still, his life is unexhausted, his heat has not subsided, his faculties are quite whole.203

Buddhists assume that since the nature of Nibbëna is similar to the state of Nirodha Samêpatti, the absolute state of Nibbëna is so subtle and so profound that it leads non-Buddhists to become more confused philosophically. This becomes a critical issue from the analytical perspective.

What is Nibbëna?

Indeed, to respond to such a simple question, one would have to write volumes of books in reply. Since the concept of Nibbëna is philosophically critical and theoretically argumentative, no one can write a reasonable answer to that simple question. Possibly, the more one explains, the more people will be confused. Walpola Rahula shares his view of that issue. "The only reasonable reply to give to the question is that it can never be answered completely and satisfactorily in words,

203. The Path of Purification. Trans. By Bhikkhu ©Óamoli. P. 739
because human language is too poor to express the real nature of the Absolute Truth or Ultimate Reality which is *Nibbāna*”.  

Therefore, before analyzing what *Nibbāna* is, one should know what the character (*lakkhaṇa*) of *Nibbāna* is, and what is functions (*rasa*) its manifestation (*paccupāññhāna*) are in order to understand more clearly the state of *Nibbāna*.

In the Buddhist text named *Sammoha Vinodanāha* (Vibha-ṭa-aṭṭhaṅkaṭṭha), the character of *Nibbāna* has been described: *santi lakkhaṇa Nibbānaṅ* (absolute peace is the character of *Nibbāna*). *Santi* (peace) here means ultimate tranquility which is free from ten kinds of defilements (*kilesā*), and free from the eleven types of fires (*aggi*). That it to say, that worldings (*puthujjana*) have desires and rejoice in the inner and outer sense-bases and cleave to them. Consequently, the stream of defilements carries away all these ordinary beings; they are utterly enslaved by birth, death, pain and despair. On the contrary, the noble disciples (*ariyas*) do not rejoice in the inner and outer sense-bases and do not cleave to them or are not attached to them. Thus they are

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204. What the Buddha Taught. by Walpola Ṛhula. P.35
205. Vibhanga aṭṭhaṅkaṭṭha. P. 79
206. Defilements (Kilesas), are mind- defiling, unwholesome qualities. There are ten "Defilements", thus called because they are themselves defiled, and because they defile the mental factors associated with mind. They are (1) Greed (*lobha*), (2) Hate (*dosa*), (3) Delusion (*moha*), (4) Conceit (*māna*), (5) Speculative View (*dīhi*), (6) Skeptical Doubt (*vicīkicchā*), (7) Mental Torpor (*thīna*), (8) Restlessness (*uddhacca*), (9) Shamelessness (*ahirika*), and (10) Lack of Dread or Unconscientiousness (*anottappa*). Buddhist Dictionary, by Ēṭūtiṅka Thera.p. 86-87
207. There are eleven types of "Fires" (*aggi*); they are called as "Fire" because their power causes beings to burn as to get great sufferings. They are: (1) Lust (*rīga*), (2) Anger (*dosa*), (3) Delusion (*moha*), (4) Rebirth (*jīti*), (5) Aging (*jarā*), (6) Death (*maraṇa*), (7) Sorrow (*soka*), (8) Lamentation (*parīdosa*), (9) Physical Pain (*dukkha*), (10) Mental Pain or Grief (*domanassa*), and (11) Despair (*upāsīna*). S. N. Sīḷāṅkaṭṭhaṅkaṭṭha. P. 85
counted as beings free from desire, illusion and craving for worldly pleasure and are at peace. Regarding cessation of desire, Ven. Nēgasena addressed the subject in the following way:

For him (them), not rejoicing in them (the inner and outer sense-bases), not approving of them or cleaving to them, craving ceases; from the cessation of craving is the cessation of clinging; from the cessation of clinging is the cessation of becoming; from the cessation of becoming is the cessation of birth; from the cessation of birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease. Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. In this way, sire, cessation is Nibbēna.\(^{208}\)

Referring to the above statement, it is understood that cessation doesn't mean absolute cessation for everything, but cessation of defilements that cause one to be in round of rebirth and death. It is said that there is no longer rebirth so there is no death. Thus Nibbēna is described as "Sa~ti lakkhaŌa" (the ultimate peace). In this regard, it is theoretically clear that the original message of Nibbēna has nothing to do with the concept of nothingness or absolute cessation. It is absolute peace and ultimate truth brought about by the ceasing of all the fires of the defilements and the ceasing of all kinds of suffering. For this reason, the meaning of Nibbēna is not annihilation.

\(^{208}\) Kh. N. Milinda PaØôhê. P. 57
The function of Nibbâna is described in Vibhangâ-ahakathê 209 as accutirasañ (the state of deathlessness or everlasting peace). This means that since the enlightened beings have entered the state of absolute peace, they will definitely no longer return to the existence of sañsâra (round of rebirth). And it is understood that proclaiming the state of absolute peace has nothing to do with the natural process of the three sub-moments: arising (uppa), presence ( Ôhiti) and dissolution (bhanga). In the state of Nibbâna, the nature of absolute peace involves no dissolution. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate between absolute peace (Nibbâna) and eternalism (Supreme Soul) in this context. The concept of eternalism is directly related to the concept of soul theory. According to that theory the soul is eternal and everlasting and that soul is linked in union with God or Brahma. As a matter of fact, soul theory deal with a universal God or Brahma; however, Buddhists confirm that Nibbâna has nothing to do with such a concept of the eternal soul or an eternal God or Brahma.

The manifestation of Nibbâna is animitta-paccupaÔÔhêna (signlessness by way of manifestation). This means that it consists of no signs, no size, no shape, no formation and no dissolution in the realization of enlightened beings. The nature of Nibbâna has arising from the nature of sa~khêra (mental formations) and sa~khata (conditional existence); however, there is no sign, no size, and no shape in

209. Vibhanga aÔÔhakathê. P. 85
the state of absolute Nibbāna. Moreover, there is no similar thing that can be compared to the nature of Nibbāna. "It is not possible by simile or argument or cause or method to point out the shape or configuration or age or size of Nibbāna". In terms of this Nibbāna, the Buddha precisely addressed a statement to help the followers know what it is. The statement is as follows.

\[ Vi\ddot{O}\ddot{O}\ddot{O}\ddot{O}a\ddot{N} anidassana\ddot{N}, ananta\ddot{N} sabbatopabha\ddot{N}. \]
\[ Ettha Èpo ca pathavÈ, tejo vÈyo na gÈdhati. \]
\[ Ettha dÈgha\ddot{N} ca rassa\ddot{N} ca, a\ddot{O}u\ddot{N} th\ddot{I}la\ddot{N} subh\ddot{E}subha\ddot{N}. \]
\[ Ettha nÈma\ddot{N} ca r\ddot{I}pa\ddot{N} ca, asesa\ddot{N} uparujjhati. \]
\[ Vi\ddot{O}\ddot{O}\ddot{O}\ddot{O}assa nirodhena, ettheta\ddot{N} uparujjhati. \]

Where consciousness is signless, boundless, all-luminous.

That's where earth, water, fire and air find no footing, There long and short, small and great, fair and foul, There "name-and form" are wholly destroyed. With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed.

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210. Kh.N. Milindapa\ddot{O}hÈ. P. 48
211. Ibid. P. 130-131
212. D. N. SÈlakkhandha vagga PÈli. P. 213
In fact, since the nature of Nibbëna is so profound and abyssal, it is impossible for worldlings to see it or realize it. Worldlings (puthujjanas) can not see the ultimate truth of Nibbëna due to the lack of supra-mundane wisdom. For this reason, the Buddhist text, named Abhidhammattha sa-gaha, precisely states: Nibbënañ pana lokuttarasa-khëtañ catumaggaÖëÖena sacchikëtabbañ (Nibbëna is termed supra-mundane, and is to be realized by the knowledge of the four paths).\textsuperscript{214}

According to Theravëda Buddhism, the transcendental state of Nibbëna can be everywhere. However, it is excluded from the thirty-one planes of existence. It is said that it exists in any direction for enlightened individuals after their death.\textsuperscript{215} This is a critical point about the state of Nibbëna, because it doesn't exist as a pre-existent quality in each individual enlightened being, but Nibbëna comes to exist only after enlightened beings enter the state of Nibbëna after death. And the state of Nibbëna is different from the state of the thirty-one planes of existence that already exist before one comes to exist in reality, Nibbëna has not existed beforehand. This means that Nibbëna hasn't occurred before enlightened beings attain enlightenment. Nibbëna doesn't exist as an empirical state, but as a transcendental state. Therefore, according to the Theravëda Buddhist view, it is difficult to point out the specific place of Nibbëna as here or there. It is only possible to say that Nibbëna

\textsuperscript{214} A comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma, by Bhikkhu Bodhi. P. 258
\textsuperscript{215} Gambhërëgambhëra Mahënibbutadëpanë, by Shwe Kyin Sayëdaw. P. 144
can be everywhere for the enlightened beings after their death.\textsuperscript{216}

Once, it is told, a tortoise left the water and walked on land, and then it went to back into the sea. There it met a fish. The tortoise told the fish that it had been walking on land, and the fish said, "Oh, you must have been swimming". The tortoise said, "No, I was walking on land". The fish could not understand that there was such a thing as land, because it had never experienced it. It thought land must be another liquid in which it could swim.\textsuperscript{217}

In the same way, \textit{Nibb\v{E}na} is different from what you are used to and what you have experienced in this world. It is very difficult to understand and also very difficult to describe. Since \textit{Nibb\v{E}na} is opposite to the conditions in this world, it is often described in negative terms, such as the extinction of suffering, non-becoming, having no sign, not being born, not getting old and not dying. It is described in negative terms, because it cannot be adequately described in positive terms.\textsuperscript{218}

Though \textit{Nibb\v{E}na} is described mostly in negative terms, this does not mean that \textit{Nibb\v{E}na} is negative. It is neither negative nor positive because it is non-existent. Only something that exists can be either negative or positive. It is neither a state nor a frame of mind nor a position. You simply cannot describe

\textsuperscript{216} Gambh\v{E}rgambh\v{E}r Mah\v{E}nibbutad\v{E}pan\v{E}, by Shwe Kyin Say\v{E}daw. P. 55
\textsuperscript{217} The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, by U SE\v{E}nanda. P. 152
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
it. *Nibbêna* just means the destruction of defilements and the cessation of suffering.\(^{219}\)

Many people ask whether there is happiness in *Nibbêna*. This question is also inappropriate. It presupposes that *Nibbêna* is some place or existence or state of mind. Since *Nibbêna* is neither a place nor a state of mind, you cannot say, there is suffering or there is happiness in *Nibbêna*. It is the absence of suffering and the absence of mental defilements.\(^{220}\)

Regarding this kind of issue, once King Milinda asked NÊgasena, "Is there a spot to the east or the south or the west or the north, above or below or across, where *Nibbêna* is stored up?" NÊgasena answered the King, "There is no spot, sir, to the east or the south or the west or the north, above or below or across, where *Nibbêna* is stored up".\(^{221}\) Then the King Milinda argues that if there is no place for the storing up of *Nibbêna*, then there is no *Nibbêna* and that it is a false realization for those who have experienced *Nibbêna*. Furthermore, King Milinda argued that if there are on the earth fields producing crops, trees producing fruits, and mines producing gems, then there must be a place for producing things. Similarly, if there is *Nibbêna*, there must be a place for producing *Nibbêna*, but there is no place for producing *Nibbêna*, and so there is no

\(^{219}\) Ibid.
\(^{220}\) Ibid.
\(^{221}\) Kh. N. Milinda paÔOhÊ PÊli. P. 126
Nibbāṇa, which is realized. To King Milinda's argument, Nēgasena responded as follows:

There is no place for storing up of Nibbāṇa, sire; but there is this Nibbāṇa, and one practicing rightly realizes Nibbāṇa by means of proper attention. It is, sire, as there is fire, though there is no place for storing it up, and a man rubbing two sticks together obtains fire. Even so, sire, there is Nibbāṇa, though there is no place for storing it up, and one practicing rightly realizes Nibbāṇa by means of proper attention.

It is said, according to Theravāda Buddhist perspective, that Nibbāṇa has nothing to do with the concept of time and space. This is because time does not exist in the ultimate truth, but a mere concept. Nibbāṇa is regarded as essentially of beginningless and endless duration. However, in the conditioned world there is time, that is, past, present, and future in daily life. For this issue, Theravādins may argue that these are only spoken of by means of conventional usage or conventional truth in order to communicate, but Nibbāṇa has nothing to do with time; it is always regarded as the present. As mentioned previously, it is claimed of Nibbāṇa that it consists of no space or locality. In this regard, what Buddhists believe is that the concept of time and space can be indicated by mind, since mind counts time and duration and space as locality. These are merely relative to mind. According to

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222 Milinda paññāhī Pīli. P. 136-137
223 Ibid. P. 137
the concept of time implies a close connection between time and consciousness. Yet the concept of time and consciousness are described as a mutual relationship. The following statement has been recorded in *Dhammasa~ganÊ-aÔÔhakathÊ* of *Abhidhamma PiÔaka*.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Samaye niddisi cittaÑ, cittena samayaÑ muni.} \\
\text{NiyametvÊna dÊpetuÑ, dhamme tattha pabhedato.}^{224}
\end{align*}
\]

By time the Sage described the mind,
And by the mind described the time.
In order to show, by such definition,
The phenomena there arranged in classes.\(^{225}\)

Since there is no mind in the state of *NibbÈna*, there is nothing much to say of time. And if there is no mind and no body after death of enlightened beings, then nothing is necessary to count time and space. In the *GambhÊrÈgambhÊra MahÈnibbuta DÊpanÊ*, *NibbÈna* is said to involve no past and no future, but always exists in the present.

The significance of *NibbÈna* has been mentioned in *ParivÈra PÈli* of Vinaya PiÔaka: *NibbÈnaÑ arahato gati* (*NibbÈna* is the place where enlightened beings have gone after their death).\(^{226}\) The word *gati* literally means "going",

\[^{224}\] *Dhamma sa~gaÔÊ aÔÔhakathÊ*. P. 99
\[^{225}\] Abhidhamma Studies, Trans. By ©ÈÓapuÓÓika Thera. P. 93
\[^{226}\] Vin. ParivÈra PÈli. P. 263
"course of existence" or "secure place". However, here it means the transcendental place of enlightened beings after their death.

To clarify the above Pëli statement, its commentary (Parivëra-aÔOhakathÈ) states: Sucirampi ÔhatvÈ pana nibbÈnaÑarahato gati khÊÓÊsavassa arahato anupÈdisesa-nibbÈnadhÈtu ekaÑsena gatÈti attho [because NibbÈna eternally exists as the transcendental state, it is confirmed as a transcendental place or deathless place for former enlightened beings, and it is also considered to be the transcendental element with the full extinction of existence (anupÈdisesa nibbÈnadhÈtu).]²²⁷ The transcendental place here means the place where danger and death no longer exist and a place that is not subject to the conditioned circumstances (sa~khata) for all beings.

According to the perspective of Shwe Kyin Sayadaw, since those former enlightened beings exist in the state of NibbÈna, the element of NibbÈna (NibbÈna dhÈtu) goes beyond the categories of humans (Manussa), celestial beings (Devä), and heavenly beings (Brahma). This is because they are no longer under the category of conventional humans, celestial beings, and heavenly beings. And they are also no longer counted as beings, since they are no more counted under the categories of signs or forms of empirical beings. Yet the existence of NibbÈna is not considered to be emptiness (tuccha) and nothingness (abhÈva), although their physical and

²²⁷. Vin. Parivëra aÔOhakathÈ. P. 163
mental phenomena absolutely cease. In this context, Theravāda Buddhism doesn't mention the view of the "Buddha Field" where the Buddhas or enlightened beings always live.

However, King Milinda was keen to know where the Buddha was, after his Mahā parinibbāna (Passed away). Therefore, he asked Nēgasena, "Is there the Buddha?" "Yes, sire, there is the Buddha" Nēgasena replied. "If you say so, is it possible to point to the Buddha and say that he is either here or there?" To this question, Nēgasena responded as follows:

Sire, the Blessed one (the Buddha) has attained final nibbāna in the element of nibbāna that has no substrata remaining for future birth. It is not possible to point to the Buddha and say that he is either here or there. What do you think about this, sire? When the flame of a great mass of fire has gone out, is it possible to point to that flame and say that it is either here or there?" (Indeed) it is not possible to point to the Buddha who has come to end and say that he is either here or there. But, sire, it is possible to point to the Buddha by means of the Body of the Dhamma, for Dhamma, sire, was taught by the Buddha.

The issue of the Buddha who entered Mahā Parinibbāna (the Great nibbāna) is critical for Buddhism. Where is the Buddha after his death? It is practically said that he is nowhere

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228 Gambhērāgambhērā Mahānibbutadēpanē, by Shwe Kyin Sayēdaw. P.48-55
229 Milinda paOOhē Pēli. P. 60-61
230 Ibid. P. 60
as a being or an individual, but it is philosophically said that he is somewhere as an absolute peace. However, Theravādins do not hold that the Buddhas reside in the Buddha realm after their final Nibbāna, representing the Essence of Buddha or True body (Dhamma kēya), but they emphasize it in a different way. This means the mere essence of the Dhamma. Moreover, Nibbāna has been described as Dhamma dhētu (the element of Dhamma) that can exist everywhere or in every direction. But Theravādins refuse to say that the true body of the Buddhas (Dhamma kēya) exists in the thirty-one planes of existences.231

There is a philosophical argument of King Milinda about the blissful state of Nibbāna recorded in Milinda-paṭṭhena Pēli of Khuddaka Nikāya. The main issue of Nibbāna is whether it is entirely blissful or mixed with suffering. As a matter of fact, his argumentative position is that Nibbāna cannot be entirely blissful, but must be mixed with suffering. Why he holds this position is due to the fact that there is some evidence of suffering in those who are seeking Nibbāna. It is obvious that when the meditator attempts to obtain the state of Nibbāna, they have to struggle in the field of the senses to conquer and overcome the domain of the sense fields. They attempt to destroy all kinds of sensual happiness and to get rid of the five stands of sense pleasure that worldlings (puthujjana) obviously cling to. For the attainment of Nibbāna, the yogis are so much pain by themselves that their bodies encounter many sufferings and their minds suffer intensely painful feelings as well.

231 Gambhērāgambhēra Mahānibbutadēpana, by Shwe Kyin Saydaw. P. 144
Therefore, *Nibbëna* cannot be entirely blissful, but must be mixed with suffering.

With respect to King Milinda’s view, Nëgasena confirms that *Nibbëna* is entirely blissful and is not mixed with suffering. His position is that the quest for *Nibbëna* is a kind of suffering, because it involves removing all kinds of pleasant things from meditator, such as pleasant visual objects, pleasant sounds, pleasant smells, pleasant tastes, and pleasant touches. However, he argues that this suffering is not called *Nibbëna*. Indeed, this is just a preliminary stage for the realization of *Nibbëna*. As a matter of fact, *Nibbëna* itself is entirely blissful, because the blissful stage of *Nibbëna* has nothing to do with suffering due to desires.\(^{232}\)

Moreover, there is one more issue that is particularly debatable with regard to the state of *Nibbëna*. For instance, if the state of *Nibbëna* has nothing to do with the six senses, then *Nibbëna* does not deal with any kind of happiness. In this world, people think that the state of happiness is directly related to the senses or the desires of the senses, such as happiness that is linked to a visible object or a beautiful sound and so on. Without the feeling or desire for sensual objects, there is no possibility to say that there is happiness under any circumstances. For that reason, the state of *Nibbëna* cannot be considered to deal with happiness, since feeling and perception exist not longer in the state of *Nibbëna*.

\(^{232}\) Kh.N. Milinda paOOhë Pëli. P. 129-130
With regard to the state of *Nibbāna*, there is only one way to know how the state of *Nibbāna* involves no feeling that is related to pleasurable sense objects. The reason, which supports that *Nibbāna* may be blissful without the presence of pleasurable sense objects, is the attainment of cessation (*Nirodha samāpatti*). During that attainment, which may last for seven days, the meditator continues to meditate without eating any food and without drinking any juice. They are very peaceful in that transcendental state and satisfied with their peaceful circumstance. The true state of *Nibbāna* is so deep, so profound that it is difficult to explain what kind of peace is involved in *Nibbāna*. This is because the state of absolute *Nibbāna* is a transcendental state that is beyond human language and the means of description.\(^{233}\)

Moreover, if one is able to distinguish the differences between happiness with feeling (*Vedayita-sukha*) and happiness without feeling (*Sati-sukha*), then one can compare the differences between the two and will understand which one will be more excellent than the other. Out of these two kinds of happiness, *Vedayita sukha* is illustrated as one which has a wonderful feeling due to great satisfaction with worldly possessions, such as wealth, success, power, all accompanied with great enjoyment and with pleasant happy feelings. This kind of feeling is directly known as desirable feeling. This means that if there is no feeling, then there is no happiness at all. In reality, *Vedayita-sukha* is a kind of mundane happiness,

\(^{233}\) *Visuddhi magga*. Vol.2. P. 735
which deals with pleasant feelings. And it is subject to conditional circumstances.\(^{234}\)

To the contrary, \textit{Sa\textasciitilde{s}ti-sukha} is elucidated as a kind of happiness that is directly related to the cessation of all feelings. From the practical point of view, it is said that there exists no feeling, but the absolute peace in the state of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a}. This state of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a} is named \textit{Sa\textasciitilde{t}i-sukha} (happiness without feeling), also known as \textit{Vimutti-sukha} (happiness of liberation). In Buddhism, the text often refer to the state of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a} as \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a-dh\textasciitilde{t}u}, that is, the element of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a}, which is characterized as supra-mundane happiness and unconditional peace. This kind of absolute peace in the state of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a} emerge due to liberation, that is, the liberation from mental and physical disturbances initially and eventually the liberation from ageing, sickness, and death. It is understood that \textit{Sa\textasciitilde{t}i-sukha} is a kind of supra-mundane happiness, which has nothing to do with pleasant feeling or any kind of sensual feeling, but it is a transcendental state of peace and happiness. In reality, only enlightened beings can understand the transcendental state of peace and happiness through their enlightened wisdom.\(^ {235}\)

The subject of \textit{Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a} is somehow attractive to Buddhist scholars, such as Shwe Kyin Say\textasciitilde{d}aw, Ledi Say\textasciitilde{d}aw, and Mah\textasciitilde{e}s\textasciitilde{d} Say\textasciitilde{d}aw in Myanmar. In Buddhism, doctrines and interpretations of the doctrines are related to a technical and logical basis. They are also linked in the theoretical and

\(^{234}\) Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a d\textasciitilde{E}pan\textasciitilde{E}, by Ledi Say\textasciitilde{d}aw. P. 706-708
\(^{235}\) Nibb\textasciitilde{n}a d\textasciitilde{E}pan\textasciitilde{E}, by Ledi Say\textasciitilde{d}aw. P.706-707
practical sense. Some interpretations of doctrines may be controversial for western thought, like the concept of nothingness and absolute cessation of Nibbèna. In this regard, some Western scholars, such as Frichrich Max Muller, attempt to define the concept of Nibbèna as "utter annihilation". For this reason, to clarify what is Nibbèna theoretically and to analyze what it means to Buddhism, several points about Nibbèna have been discussed in much detail. Yet it is indeed still necessary to discuss how to attain Nibbèna from a practical perspective, but that will be discussed later in Chapter V.

As a matter of fact, the information in Buddhism is very systematic, consistent and logical. For example, Nibbèna is included in the element of Dhamma (Dhamma dhÈtu). In this case, the element is called dhÈtu, because it bears its own intrinsic nature (dhÈretÈti dhÈtu). This kind of information, although it is technical, is clear for Buddhists and non-Buddhists, even if they use different languages. Yet, some statements seem to be controversial within the same tradition of Buddhism. For instance, in the Abhidhammattha sa~gaha, Nibbèna is excluded from the category of five aggregates (khandha vimutta or khandha sa~gaha nissaÔha). This means that Nibbèna is included in neither the aggregates of consciousness and mental factors nor the aggregate of matter.236 Yet in the commentary of Yamaka (that is, Abhidhamma piÔaka AÔÔhakathÈ), Nibbèna is included in the category of nÈma, but it is not under the category of

236. Abhidhammattha sa~gaha PÈli. P. 128
consciousness (citta) and mental states (cetasika). However, Nibbāna is included in the category of nīma because it is considered to be a type of nīma, since Nibbāna causes the supra mundane cittas (consciousness) and cetasikas (mental factors) to bend towards it by acting as an objective predominance condition. Thus it is described as nīma in the commentary of Yamaka: Nēmadhammēti nēmasa-khatē dhammē. Te athāto cattēro arīpino khandhē, Nibbāna-ca (Nēma dhamma means mind or mentality). They contain the four aggregates (arīpa khandhas): feeling (vedanē), perception (saṇā), mental formation (saṅkhēra) and consciousness (viṭṭā), and Nibbāna.237 In reality, these statements are complementary to Pēli commentaries. The following is the statement of the Abhidhammattha saṅgaha: Tattha rīpadhammē rīpakkhandhova; cittacetasikasankhētē cattēro arīpino khandhē, nibbānancēti pa-cavidhampi arīpantica nēmanti ca pavuccati (Therein, the material phenomena are just the aggregate of matter. Consciousness and mental factors, which comprise the four immaterial aggregates, and Nibbāna, are the five kinds that are immaterial. They are called "nīma").238

The position of this statement is also consistent with the statement that appears in kathēvatthu Pēli, Abhidhamma-Piṭaka. That statement is: Aōōe khandhē, aōōañ Nibbānañ, aōōo puggaloti na hevañ vattabbe (it is not supposed to say

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237 Pa-capakaraōa aōōhakhathē. P. 291
238 Abhidhammattha saṅgaha Pēli. P. 325
that the aggregates, Nibbëna, that is the individuality of an enlightened being, are totally different from one another).\(^{239}\)

This is because Nibbëna arises depending on the aggregates. Therefore, Nibbëna and aggregates are not considered to be different from one another.\(^{240}\) However, the five aggregates are not directly Nibbëna either. This means that as soon as an enlightened being enters Nibbëna, the absolute state of Nibbëna spontaneously takes place in Pari-nibbuta for the individual, or more precisely the element of Nibbëna entity. The position of enlightened beings is considered to be a transcendental state as the element of Nibbëna entity, but there are no longer conceptual names for them as there were in their Arahant identity, since he or she has entered the state of complete Nibbëna.

This transitional state of Nibbëna in the individuality of enlightened beings before entering the state of complete Nibbëna and the absence of that identity after entering the state of complete Nibbëna is very confusing in a theoretical sense. However, those who have some Abhidhamma knowledge may understand how the mental process takes place in the state of Nibbëna. There are two remarkable PÉli scholars who have discussed the state of Nibbëna. Out of these two, Shwe Kyin SayÉdaw strongly holds to his position with a reference to the statements: AÒÔe khandhÈ, aÒÔaÑ nibbënaÑti na hevaÑ vattabbe (it is not said that the aggregates, Nibbëna, the

\(^{239}\) KathÈvatthu PÉli. P. 53
\(^{240}\) GambhÉrÈgambhéra MahÈnibbutadÈpanÈ, by Shwe Kyin SayÉdaw. P.220
individuality of an enlightened being, are totally different from one another). In fact, soon after the death of enlightened beings, Nibbāna takes place almost at the same time.\textsuperscript{241}

Shwe Kyin Saydaw points out that there is no Nibbāna-vēthi (the process of absolute peace of Nibbāna) from within the Buddhist traditional texts before now, because the state of Nibbāna does not directly include the process of five aggregates so that former teachers (porōcariya) ignore mentioning the process of Nibbāna-vēthi. Yet since the process of Nibbāna takes place in enlightened individual, right after their death, it is possible to describe the process of Nibbāna, as in this possibility mentioned above. However, it is said that his statement based on the canonical statement: Nibbānampi khandhapatibaddhameva (the process of Nibbāna links the cessation of the five aggregates)\textsuperscript{242} and pa~cannaÑkhandhānañ nirodho nibbānañ (the cessation of the five aggregates is called Nibbāna).\textsuperscript{243}

With regard to where Nibbāna exists, Shwe Kyin Saydaw believes that Nibbāna relatively exists in the five aggregates, but the five aggregates are not Nibbāna. The reason why he emphasizes this is that since loka-nirodha (the cessation of the world) is considered to be Nibbāna, Nibbāna cannot arise out of nothing, but it arises from the five aggregates. This means that while an enlightened being is still

\textsuperscript{241} Kathavatthu PÉli. P. 53
\textsuperscript{242} Visuddhi magga ÓékÊ. P. 70
\textsuperscript{243} D. N. MahÉvÈ aOOhakathÊ. P. 147
alive, the state of loka-nirodha takes place in his or her individual form of the five aggregates. In reality, the state of Nibbāna doesn't come to exist in the enlightened individual from somewhere else.²⁴⁴

Another Buddhist scholar, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa describes the position of Nibbāna from a different standpoint. To get a clear picture of Nibbāna, he points out that Nibbāna exists in saṁsāra.²⁴⁵ His position is that Nibbāna exists in saṁsāra, but he rejects the view that Nibbāna is saṁsāra, saṁsāra is Nibbāna. The reason why he describes Nibbāna in this way is that unenlightened beings continually wander in saṁsāra, until they reach Nibbāna. He said, "I maintain that Nibbāna exists in saṁsāra, that the foolish (andha-putthujjana) will never find it and that the wise (kalayēḷa-putthujjana) will find it without having to look outside themselves".²⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, both these eminent scholars proclaim their views, quoting the same Pēli source in the Rohitassa Sutta, Sañyutta Nikāya. The source is the following.

Na kho panēyaṁ ēvuso appattvē lokassa antaṁ dukkhaṁ antakirīyaṁ vadēmi. Api ca khvēhaṁ ēvuso imasamimyeva vyēmamatte kaĀevare sasaŌōimhi samanake lokaŌca paŌōapemi lokasamudayaṁ ca lokanirodhaṁ ca lokanirodhagēminim ca paōipadanti.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Gambhērēgambhēra Mahēnibbutadēpanē, by Shwe Kyin Sayēdaw. P. 53
²⁴⁵ Nibbāna Exist in Saṁsāra, in Me and Mine, by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. P. 141
²⁴⁶ Nibbāna Exist in Saṁsāra, in Me and Mine, by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. P. 141
²⁴⁷ S. N. Sagēthēvagga pēli. P. 61
However, friend, I say that without having reached the end of the world (the five aggregates), there is no making an end to suffering. It is, friend, in just this fathom-high carcass (body) endowed with perception, and mind that I make known the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world (Nibbêna), and the way leading to the cessation of the world.

In terms of the above statement, it is understood that the cessation of the world (dukkha-nirodha) means the cessation of craving. Craving of existence is theoretically considered to be the opposite of Nibbêna. There is a statement that is recorded in the Netti Pêli, Khuddaka Nikêya. The statement reads: TaÓhakkhayÈ dukkhakkhayo, dukkhakkhayÈ nibbÈnaÑ (Dependent on the cessation of craving, the cessation of suffering takes place; dependent on the cessation of suffering, Nibbêna arises).\(^\text{248}\) In this regard, Shwe Kyin Sayêdaw emphasizes that because of the cessation of suffering (dukkha), Nibbêna arises, but it is not because of Nibbêna, that suffering has gone.

Moreover, in the issue raised in the above statement, Bhikkhu Buddhadêsa attempts to rephrase his original claim, Nibbêna and sañsêra exist together in this fathom-long body of ours. If we have not yet attained perfect Nibbêna, we continually switch back and forth, sometimes in Nibbêna, sometimes in sañsêra. Whenever

\(^{248}\) Kh. N. Netti Pêli. P. 172
we take our sensory perceptions and create the sense of me and mine, we are in saÑsÈra. When we overcome our addiction to ignorance (avijjÈ), we will experience a NibbÈna that is infinite, changeless and eternal.249

For him, the statement: "NibbÈna is permanent (nicca) and eternal (sassata)" means that after uprooting all defilement, one can reach NibbÈna which always exists. This kind of absolute peace of NibbÈna can never revert to saÑsÈra. Therefore, NibbÈna is considered to be permanent and eternal, absolutely peaceful.

According to TheravÈda Buddhism, NibbÈna is nothing but ultimate reality that doesn't go beyond absolute peace. Absolute peace (NibbÈna) is often named as ultimate peace and unconditional happiness. This kind of peace and happiness is immeasurable in the conceptual sense, because it has no empirical quality. In this regard, some kinds of happiness and peace are subject to empiricism in this universe. Even then the happiness of the celestial beings is beyond the empirical experience for humans, for only celestial beings can obtain the celestial happiness. Similarly, only enlightened beings can realize what supra-mundane happiness is.

The concept of NibbÈna is philosophically very complicated in Buddhism, but practically it can be understood and realized. There is no universal agreement about the concept of NibbÈna among Buddhist traditions either. However,

249. NibbÈna Exist in SaÑsÈra, in Me and Mine, by Bhikkhu BuddhadÈsa. P.144
to clarify the view of Nibbāna from a Theravāda perspective, one cannot ignore the original sources of the Pāli text and Pāli literature that Theravāda Buddhist countries highly acknowledge.

The Theravāda Buddhist countries are Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. Out of these five major countries, Myanmar is the one where the traditional Theravāda Buddhism has been maintained with Pāli canonical texts. Likewise, Sri Lanka and Thailand have maintained this tradition of the Pāli texts and Pāli literature. Myanmar has also sustained its precious Buddhist values and cultures for over one thousand years. The tradition tirelessly provides Buddhist monks, nuns and lay people with religious training in very possible way. The training includes theoretical and practical aspects for the sake of Buddha-sāsana (the Buddha’s dispensation). In Theravāda Buddhist countries, Buddhist monks are very careful to interpret the existence of Nibbāna in order to avoid falling into two extreme views: annihilationism (Uccheda diū̄hi) and eternalism (Sassata diū̄hi).

Among the Buddhist scholarly monks in Myanmar Buddhism, Shwe Kyin Saydaw was a well known Pāli scholar, especially well known for his book, Gambhīrāgamabhēra Mahānibbutadēpanē and his view of Nibbāna. His view is that Nibbāna is not absolute extinction nor is it annihilationism either, because Nibbāna has nothing to do with absolute extinction, but it has to do with absolute peace and happiness.
The existence of *Nibbāna* is absolutely present. In the state of *Nibbāna*, the existence of the five aggregates comes to an end. In this regard, it is said that *Nibbāna* is like non-existence. Yet there remains absolute peace and the deathless element (*Nibbāna-dhātu*). In reality, *Nibbāna* exists for enlightened beings.

Seeing the abovementioned views of *Nibbāna*, from the point of view of theoretical aspects, it seems that it is so profound that there is no way to cover everything, that is, every aspect of *Nibbāna*. In Buddhism, practice and theory are equally important to understand the essence of the *Dhamma*. Buddhists emphasize that theories or studying theories (*Pariyatti*) are for knowledge, but value practice of meditation (*Paṭipatti*) more than theories because it provides liberation through spiritual wisdom (*Paṭivedha*).

Spiritual wisdom involves insight wisdom (*Vipassanā-Ṭhāna*) and path and fruition knowledge, also known as "enlightenment" (*Magga-phala Ṭhāna*). Insight wisdom here means the intuitive understanding flashing forth and exposing the truth of the impermanency (*anicca*), the suffering or unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and the impersonal and unsubstantial nature of all corporeal and mental phenomena of existence (*anatta*). Wisdom (*paṭṭha*) has to be developed along with the two other trainings: morality (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*). Insight wisdom is not the result of a mere intellectual understanding, but it is obtained through direct meditative
observation of one's own phenomena that contain physical and mental processes. The culmination of insight meditation, known as mindfulness meditation leads one directly to the stages of path and fruition knowledge.250 According to Buddhist perspectives, it is understood that study of theories is not wisdom. However, wisdom can be obtained through study of theories together with individual practice of meditation. Buddhists postulate that without practice, no one is able to attain the absolute peace of Nibbâna.

4. 4. Saccê ÒÈÓa, kicca ÒÈÓa, and kata ÒÈÓa with regard to Nirodha saccê.

_idaÑ dukkhanirodho ariyasaccamti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuÑ udapÈdi, ÒÈÓaÑ udapÈdi, paÒÒÈ udapÈdi, vijjÈ udapÈdi, Êloko udapÈdi._251

"This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. Thus, Oh! Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light."

"This" in the above passage of the text refers to 'the complete cessation of taÓhÈ, otherwise called samudaya saccê', which had already explained. When taÓhÈ is abolished,
all sufferings of the nÈma, r|pa, sa~khÈras cease. The Buddha said that the saccÈ ÒÈÓa, which knows that this cessation (Nirodha saccÈ) is the truth of the cessation of suffering, had arisen in him, this saccÈ ÒÈÓa arises before and after ariya magga and is realized at the moment of the path.

As to how this knowledge arises before the path, the disciples acquire this taÓhÈ through learning from others, that is, on hearsay. The Buddha, however, had gained this knowledge by his own intuition even prior to attainment of sotÈpatti magga. Thus, he said: "Concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, etc." At the moment of ariya magga, this saccÈ ÒÈÓa is the same as ariya magga ÒÈÓa which cognizes NibbÈna by realization. This is becoming of saccÈ ÒÈÓa with regard to Nirodha SaccÈ to the Buddha. Now, we shall go on to the becoming of kicca ÒÈÓa concerning with Nirodha saccÈ.

TaÑ kho panidaÑ dukkhanirodho ariya saccaÑ sacchikÈtabbanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuÑ udapÈdi, ÒÈÓaÑ udapÈdi, paÒÒÈ udapÈdi, vijjÈ udapÈdi, Èloko udapÈdi.252

"This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering which should be realized. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light."

252 .S. N. MahÈvagga PÈli. P.422
This ÒÈÓa (knowledge) which knows that *Nirodha saccÈ*, namely the *NibbÈnaÑ*, the cessation of *taÓhÈ*, is that which should be realized. It is known as *kicca ÒÈÓa* since it is the knowledge that knows what function is to be performed with respect to *Nirodha saccÈ*.

This is how realization takes place: at the moment of full and firm establishment of *sa~khÈrupekkhÈ ÒÈÓa* (Equanimity-knowledge with regard to the Formations of existence), while observing one of the phenomena of origination and dissolution, the pace of cognition gets faster and faster until the *sa~khÈra* objects under contemplation as well as the knowing consciousness throw into a state of cessation where all *sa~khÈra* sufferings come to an end. At the time of realizing the cessation of all conditioned things, *taÓhÈ* also come to a cessation. Thus, cessation of *taÓhÈ* is termed *Nirodha saccÈ*, which is cognized by *ariya magga* through realization. Such cognition is known as *sacchikiriya paÔivedha* (penetrative insight by realization). *Nirodha saccÈ* is the truth to be realized. Such realization is known as *sacchikiriya paÔivedha*.

The purpose of taking note of every instance of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing is to accomplish the task of *sacchikiriya paÔivedha* through realizing *Nirodha saccÈ*. The Buddha had accomplished the function of *sacchikiriya paÔivedha* by realization of *NibbÈna* through *arahatta magga phala* on the 'unconquered throne' at the foot of the Bo tree. He
continued to recount how he had developed the kata ÒÈÓa which retrospect on the completion of the task, as follows.

TaÑ kho panidaÑ dukkhanirodho ariya saccaÑ sacchikatanti me Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuÑ udapÈdi, ÒÈÓaÑ udapÈdi, paÒÒÈ udapÈdi, vijjÈ udapÈdi, ÒÈÓaÑ udapÈdi, Èloko udapÈdi.253

"This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering which has been realized. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light."

This is an account of how retrospection on the completion of the task took place after he had realized Nirodha saccÈ by means of arahatta magga phala ÒÈÓa (kata ÒÈÓa).

In brief, the realization of Nirodha saccÈ means, according to TheravÈda Buddhism, the attaining to NibbÈna. If anyone wants to realize Nirodha saccÈ, he should meditate carefully. The study of the methods of meditation is necessary to fulfill the aims of realization Nirodha-saccÈ.

253. S. N. MahÈvagga PÈli. P.422