CHAPTER I

Introduction

It is true that nobody likes suffering and everybody seeks happiness. Every human being makes all possible efforts to prevent and alleviate suffering and to enjoy happiness. Nevertheless, their efforts are mainly directed to obtaining their physical well being through material means. Only a few persons give real thought to mental development, fewer still practice mind training in earnest.

To be clean this point, attention may be drawn to the commonplace habits of cleaning and tidying up one’s body, the endless pursuits of food, clothing and shelter, and the tremendous technological progress achieved to raise the material standard of living, to improve the means of transportation and communication, and to prevent and cure disease and ailments. All these efforts are, for the body, and it must be admitted that they are essential. However, all human efforts and achievements cannot possible alleviate or eradicate the suffering associated with old age and death, domestic problem and economic troubles, in short, with non-satisfaction of wants and desires. Suffering of this nature cannot be overcome by material means; it can be overcome only by mind-training and mental development.

Before we proceed further, it would be helpful to study the life story of the Buddha. The Buddha was not a divine being, nor divinely created. He was only a human being. On the full-moon day of May in the year 623 B.C.,¹ there was born, in the Lumbini Park at Kapilavatthu on the borders of Nepal, a noble Prince of aristocratic Sākya clan. His father was king Suddhodana, and his mother Queen Mahā Māyā. Seven days after the birth of the child, the mother died, and Mahā Pajāpati Gotami, her younger sister, 

¹ Unlike the Christian era, the Buddhist Era is reckoned from the death of the Buddha which occurred in 543 B.C.
who also was married to king Suddhodana, became his fostermother. On the fifth day after the prince’s birth, he was named Siddhattha Gotama, which means ‘wishfulfilled’. His family name was Gotama.¹ According to the custom of the time, he was married quite young, at the age of sixteen, to a beautiful and devoted, young princess named Yasodharā. Siddhattha lived in his palace with luxury and comfort.

After 13 years of luxurious living, at the age of 29, Siddhattha became weary of living all the time in three magnificent palaces; he managed to slip out of them to speed time alone in secluded royal gardens.

One day when he went out at the gardens, he saw a decrepit old man; on three other occasions he saw a sick man, a dead body and finally a holy recluse, with clean-shaven head wearing a bark-dyed robe.

These sights made a great impression on his mind. So, he began to think that there must be a way out of all these miseries. After thinking he decided to find the solution the way out of this universal suffering.

At the age of 29 soon after the birth of his only child, Rahula, he decided that the time had come now for him to abandon the worldly life; so, that very night he left the palace, leaving behind his beloved wife and the new born baby for good. He had to leave like this before his attachment for them grew stronger. When he had passed the boundary of his country, he cut off his hair, changed the royal garments and turned himself into a wandering ascetic. He took this step not because he had no love or tender kindness towards his wife and child, but because he had great compassion for them as well as for all suffering sentient beings. He wanted to seek the greatest boon,

¹ Gotama is the family name, and Sākya is the name of the clan to which the Buddha belonged. Traditions hold that the sons of Okkāka of the Mahāsāṃghika line were expelled through the plotting of their stepmother. These princes in the course of their wanderings arrived at the foothills of the Himalayas. Here they met the sage Kapila, on whose advice they founded the city of Kapilavatthu, which they named after him. Hearing of the enterprise of the princes, King Okkāka exclaimed: “Sākya vaṭṭa bho, rājākumāra- Capable indeed are the noble princes.”
to offer them the greatest gift—liberation from all sufferings. Eternal peace:
Nibbāna.

For six years Siddhattha wandered about in the valley of the Ganges,
meeting famous religious teachers, studying and following their systems and
methods, and submitting himself to rigorous practices. They did not satisfy
him. Finally he decided to abandon all their methods and went his own way.

It was thus that one evening, he practised Ānāpananussati meditation
under the Bodhi tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at Buddhagaya at
the age of 35, Siddhattha attained Enlightenment. At the very moment of
becoming the supreme omniscient, Siddhattha realized that he had at last
become the supremely enlightened Buddha complete with knowledge about
the ill oppressing all sentient beings and about the cause of arising of these
ills. He had also discovered the way to overcome all the miseries and woes
of beings and attain the peace of Nibbāna.

After getting his Enlightenment, the Buddha declared his finding as
universal truths and called them the four noble truths; he also gave a full
account of the methodology he had employed to discover them and called
them the Eightfold Noble Path. They are universal truths which are there all
the time but are discoverable only by the enlightened one like himself. His
methodology has been proclaimed by eminent scientists and philosophers of

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1 For “ānāpāna-sati,” “anāpāne sati”. This compound was adopted to mean “āna sati-apāne sati-
ānāpāne sati-anāpāna-sati”, where “āna” and apāna combine to make the second syllable long.
2 As the Buddha attained Enlightenment under the shade of this tree, it was named the Bodhi Tree. Its
descendants are still known by the same name.
3 Buddha is derived from the root bhu, to understand. He is called the Buddha because he understood the
four Noble Truths. Usually his disciples address their Master as Buddha, Bhagavā, etc. When the Buddha
refers to Himself He says Tathāgata—Thus who hath come.
4 The Noble Eightfold Path leading to liberation from suffering. It is divided into three trainings, namely-
Silence, and morality, purity of vocal and physical action: samādhi, Right speech, samā-samuddhi,
Right actions. Sammā-sāvī, Right livelihood; samādhi. Concentration, control of one’s own mind: sammā-
vāyāna. Right effort, samma-sati. Right awareness, samma-samādhi. Right concentration; pñā, Wisdom,
insight which totally purifies the mind: samma-satokappa. Right thought; samma-dīgha. Right
the modern world to be the precursor to scientific methods of the present day. It consists of thorough investigation into the true nature of everything animate or inanimate around him, through accurate and full observation, in a detached and unemotional way, without assumption, and without interference. After thorough analysis and systematic classification of all that he had found empirically, he propounded them first to his colleagues, Pañcavaggi, the group of five Bhikkhus, his old colleagues, in the Dear Park at Itsipatana near Benares. From that day, for 45 years, he taught all classes of men and women kings and peasants, Brahmins and outcasts, bankers and baggers, holy men and robbers without making the slightest distinction between them. He recognized no differences of caste or social groupings, and the way he preached was open to all men and women who were ready to understand and to follow it.

We need to learn more about Siddhattha's scientific investigation to find the truth about birth, old age, disease and death.

Siddhattha\(^1\) went to the Bodhi Tree and sitting cross-legged comfortable and start investigating the real nature of time, space and everything animate or inanimate occupying that space. The instrument he made use of was his mental microscope equipped with very powerful lenses thoroughly cleansed by his sila which was also highly purified.

His diligence (viriya), which he had developed to become very keen since the beginning of his renunciation remained undiminished; his mindfulness was steadfast and clear and he was physically and mentally very calm and peaceful. He started them practicing Ānāpānanussati and soon achieved and remained absorbed in the first Jhāna of Rūpāvacara.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Siddhattha. Literally, one who has accomplished his task. The personal name of the historical Buddha.
When he was absorbed in the first Jhāna, his mind was entirely free from hindrances (Nivaraṇas), namely: covetousness, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. There were present, in his mind continuum, (Vitakka) thought conception or initial formation of an abstract thought, (Vicāra) discursive thinking or rumination, (Pīti) delightful satisfaction or rapture, (Sukha) happiness and (Ekaggata) concentration of one-pointedness of mind.¹

When he remained absorbed in the second Jhāna his mind continuum was free of agitation and mental disturbance from thoughts (Vitakka and vicāra). There was internal purity and clarity; and his concentration became firmer. He remained calm with only Pīti, Sukha and Ekaggata. When he remained absorbed in the third Jhāna, there remained only Sukha and Ekaggata, having remained absorbed in the forth Jhāna he became detached even from that feeling of happiness (Sukha) which was replaced by the mental state of equanimity (Tatramajjhātā or Jhānupupekṣā). His mind continuum was completely pure, and his power of concentration greatly enhanced. His concentrated mind being purified, pellucid, and malleable he had become the basis of all kinds of supernatural power (īdāni). It was in a position to accomplish whatever was desired by the Siddhattha.²

Of the Six Abhiññās,³ supernormal knowledge, which had become available to the Siddhattha by just inclining his mind towards them, he made use of only the three that would help him to penetrate through to absolute powers.

³ Abhiññā is “higher power” or supernormal knowledge’. Those who have attained five Rūpavacara Jhāna and four Arūpavacara Jhānas may further develop five mundane (lokiya) supernormal knowledge by practicing these Jhānas in various ways based on ten Kaśāyas. (1) Īdāni-viññāna Abhiññā (2) Dibba-sota Abhiññā (3) paracita-viññāna (4) Pubbenivissamuttā (5) Dibba-cakkhu (6) Yathākammupagāhiṣṭā (7) Anāgatamsāṭīṣṭā. So we may say there are seven Loka Abhiññās. But when we count five mundane supernormal knowledge (five lokiya abhiññās), (6) and (7) are included in Dibba-cakkhu. Also Catupāparatā, which is the knowledge with regard to the dying and rebirthing of beings, is included in Dibba-cakkhu. Digha-Nikāya, Vol, III, P, 281. Digha-Nikāya, Vol, I, P, 77 Majjhima Nikāya, Vol, I, P, 34. Majjhima-Nikāya, Vol, II, P, 17.
realities of the universe, namely (Pubbenivāsa-abhiññā) supernormal knowledge of former existence, (Dibbacakkhu-abhiññā) supernormal knowledge of divine power of sight and (Āsavakkhaya-abhiññā) knowledge of extinction of moral intoxicants, taints or cankers (Āsavās).

As soon as the Siddhattha attained (Pubbenivāsa-abhiññā) supernormal knowledge of former existence, he recollected many and varied existences in the past. He recollected one past existence, two, three, a hundred, many thousand or many hundred, many thousand existences; or existences in many aeons of world destruction or in many aeons of world development, etc. “In this way, in that past existence, I was known by such a name; I was of birth into such a family; I was of such an appearance; I was nourished thus, I enjoyed such pleasures, I suffered such pains, I died in that existence and then I was born in this existence”. In this way he recollected many and varied past experiences, together with their characteristics and related facts.

Pubbenivāsa-abhiññā which enabled recollection of successive existence of the past is also known as the first Vijjañāna, penetrative insight knowledge, which could lead to the attainment of Lokuttara magga phala. Thus there arose in the mind continuum of Siddhattha’s the knowledge that there were only the phenomena of mind and body (Nāma and rūpa) through the countless round of existences, the beginning of which was not known. On all three occasions of birth, living and death, there were only two phenomena of Nāma and rūpa. Indeed in all abodes and at all times, the phenomena of Nāma and rūpa are in a continuous state of flux, like the flame of an oil lamp or like the current of a river. It is only the continuum of

1 According to the commentary, “previous existence” ‘pubbe, lit. “Former”, nivasa, lit. “Dwelling” or “living” means the five aggregates (khandhas) experienced (at “indwelt or invested”) in one’s own life-continuum in the past, beginning from the present existence. The knowledge (ñāṇa) associated with that mindfulness by which one recollects (amissarati) previous existence is called “Pubbenivāsa-anussatāñña.” Dīgha-Nikkāya, Vol. 1, p. 81.
Nama and rūpa which fulfills the various functions concerned such as seeing the sight, hearing the sound, etc, at the six doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. There is no sentient individual at all to be called 'I; 'he; 'man; etc. Indeed, there is not a single deva, māra or brahma who can create such a sentient being.

According to Buddhism man’s position is supreme, man is his own master, and sits in judgment over his destiny. One’s own refuge, who else could be the refuge? He taught his disciples to “be a refuge to themselves’, and never to seek refuge in or help from anybody else.

Therefore Siddhattha had then through Pubbenivāsānussati vijjānāṇa temporarily put away vikkhambhahanapahāṇa to a distance, the twenty wrong views of Atta (personality believe) there being four wrong views each for the five aggregates of Rūpa, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra and viññāṇa, such as Rūpa is Atta, Atta is Rūpa; Rūpa exists in Atta, Atta exists in Rūpa and similarly for other aggregates. One happy Vesākha night, as he was seated under the Boddhi tree in Gaya, with mind tranquil and purified, in the first watch of that night, Siddhattha had realized the Pubbenivāsānussati abhiññā through which he recollected many past events and existences and had temporarily put away to a distance the twenty wrong views (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) together with delusion (Moha) which had taken place in the distant past.

Then in the middle watch of the night, he developed his mind towards acquiring Dibbacakkhu abhiññā, (the second vijjā ūṇa) also called Cutūpapāta ūṇa through which he could see sentient beings on the verge of taking conception just after death; thus who were low-born or high-born by lineage, caste, etc. Those who were beautiful or not beautiful and those who attained a happy existence or a miserable existence.

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1 Dhammapada, ed. K. Nijavusa them, XII, P, 4.
2 Dīgha-Nīkāya, P, 62. (Mahaṭṭhānābhaṇa Sutta).
After getting through Dibbacakkhu abhiññā, denizens of the woeful states (Apāya) suffering misfortune, and sentient beings of the realms of human, devas and brahmas, enjoying happiness in a progressively higher and better manner, he reflected, ‘What kinds of deeds have these beings of the Apāya done to suffer such awful miseries? What kinds of deeds have these humans, devas¹ and brahmas² done to enjoy such progressively magnificent bliss in their respective realms? Then by inclining his mind towards acquiring Yathākammāpāṇa nāṇa, he developed the knowledge of analyzing and seeing the meritorious deeds and unmeritorious deeds which form the origins of various sentient beings.

Siddhattha reviewed with Dibbacakkhu abhiññā, in detail the past deeds of merit and demerit done by beings and came to know them as they really were. “Those denizens of the Apāya world, in their past existences, had committed evil by deed, word and thought; they had maligned, abused and reviled the noble individuals (Ariyas); they held wrong views, and with these wrong views they themselves committed various unmeritorious deeds. After death and dissolution of their bodies, they reappeared in miserable existences (Apāya) namely the realm of continuous suffering (Niraya),³ the realm of animals (Tiracchāna), the realm of ghosts (petas), the realm of Asuras (Asurakāya), and those beings in good existences had performed

¹ Deva means deity; god; lord. There are three kinds of deva: (1) Ruler by popular acclaim as kings and queens, Sammutideva; (2) deities reborn as grown-ups; i.e., celestial gods and brahmas, Upanatideva; (3) the pure One, i.e., the Buddha, Visuddhadeva. Celestial ear - see higher psychic power and Celestial eye - see higher psychic power.

² Brahma means one who dwells in the four noble Abiding. Those who engage in meditation for tranquility and attain Jhānas pass away to the realms of Brahmas.

³ Niraya: beings reborn in the realms of continuous suffering, niraya, are continuously tortured by the warders and blood hounds. However much they suffer pain, they do not die, for they are born to suffer for a long time. Only when the karmic force that had led them to such a painful existence has spent itself can they get their release, to be reborn in another plane of existence.
good deeds bodily, verbally and mentally; they did not malign, abuse and revile the Ariyas; they held right views and with the right views, they performed various kinds of meritorious deeds and caused others to do so. After death they were reborn in the good world of humans, Devas and the twenty realms of the Brahmas”.

In the middle watch Siddhattha developed the clairvoyant supernormal vision dealing with the death and rebirth of beings Cutüpaññata Ñāna perception of the Disappearing and Reappearing of Beings. By virtue of this second Vijjā Ñāṇa, the mind continuum of the Siddhattha became void of the element of ignorance and delusion (Avijjā moha dhāthu) which was apt to keep hidden the passing away and arising of sentient beings. Then with Yathākammūpaga Ñāṇa he was able to review and become enlightened as to the true facts of the past deeds by sentient beings; and having done away with sixteen attained the stage of purity by the removal of doubt (Kaṅkhā vitaraṇa viśuddhi). In the last watch of the night the noble Siddhattha directed and inclined his mind to knowledge of the extinction of moral intoxicants (āsavakkhāya Ñāṇa) by which he came to truly understand āsavas as they really are; the cause of āsavas as it really is and the way leading to cessation of āsavas as it really is. He also understood dukkha, the cause of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha, and the way leading to the cessation of dukkha, as it really is. He then let his mind continuum dwell on the Doctrine of Dependent origination which is made up of twelve factors: avijjā and saṅkhāras (past factors as cause); Viṅñāṇa, nāmarūpa, salāyatana, phassa, vedanā (present factors as effects; tāpā, upādāna, and kammabhava (present factors as cause) and jātī (otherwise known as upapatti -bhava), jarā

and maraṇa (future factors as effect). Going over this doctrine of dependent origination in forward and reverse order repeatedly, he attained the Noble path complete with Sabbaṅguttañāṇa and became the supremely self-enlightened Buddha, in the three worlds of beings, just before the crack of dawn of the next day. We need to learn more about how the Buddha investigated the real nature of time, space, and things animate and inanimate.

With the Dibbacakkhu ṇāṇa, he studied human beings on the verge of death and at the moment of conception in the next existence. He saw the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the miserable. He saw the base ones who committed evil by deeds, words and thoughts, by reviling noble Ariyas,¹ by holding wrong views beings reborn in the miserable state. He saw the good individuals, by good deeds, words and thoughts, not reviling the noble Ariyas and by holding Right views beings reborn in the happy realms of Devas and Brahmas. Thus he came to know the existence of different word systems, varying ages of the worlds, and various types of beings inhabiting these worlds in separate realms.

With the Pubbenivāsa ṇāṇa, he had found out that there were only the phenomena of mind and body, Nāma and Rūpa, and that in all abodes and at all times, the phenomena of Nāma Rūpa is in a state of flux.

He had been developing Vipassanā ṇāṇa and achieved nāma- rūpa pariccheda ṇāṇa as well as Diṭṭhi visuddhi, purity of views. With Dibbacakkhu ṇāṇa, he had understood also the cause and effects of deeds done by individual beings reborn in various abodes. Now, at the beginning of the third watch of the night, he began to correlate his findings by dwelling

¹ Ariya- noble; saintly person. One who has purified his mind to the point that he has experienced the ultimate reality (nibbāna). There are four levels of ariya: sotāpanna (stream-enterer); sakadāgāmi (once-returner); anāgāmi (non-returner); and arahat (who will undergo no further rebirth after his present existence.
on the twelve factors of dependent origination, Pañicca Samuppāda,¹ and beginning with the contemplation of mind and body he realized Udayabbaya ṇaṇa by which he discerned the rising and falling of mental and material phenomena.

By repeatedly reviewing the Doctrine of Dependent origination in forward and backward manner, he developed higher and higher Vipassanā ṇaṇa one after another until he attained the magga and phala ṇaṇa of the first path, Sotāpatti magga, the mind continuum of Siddhātha was completely rid of three defilements: Sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, and silabbataparāmāsa. These defilements would never rise again in Siddhātha mind continuum.

After raising Sotāpatti magga and phalas, Siddhātha reviewed—

(1) the Sotāpatti magga,²

(2) the Sotāpatti phala,

(3) Nibbāna which was their object

(4) the defilements destroyed by means of the Sotāpatti magga and phala.

(5) The defilements that remained to be eradicated.

¹ The Path of Purification—Bhikkhu Nāgamoli, page-592. Āvijjā paccaya, bhikkhave, saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā vinnāham, vinnāha paccayā nāmerupam, nāmerupa paccayā salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā blavā, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jānamata-sokaparideva-dukkhadomanassupaya sa sambhavanti, eva me tassa kevalassa dukkhhakkhandhassa samadayo hoti. Ayam vaucati bhikkhave, pañcassa samuppādo ti³. Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa Page 440.

² Sotāpanna means one who enters the stream of the Ariya Path. In meditating for tranquility and insight, the meditator who has just gained stream-entry knowledge is called at that very instant, a Sotāpattimagga puggala. At the immediately following instant after that enlightening thought-moment there follows the fruition knowledge. Then he is called a sotāpanna, a stream-enterer or a stream-winner. A stream-enterer is endowed with the following five attributes (1) He has an unshakable conviction in the Buddha; (2) He has an unshakable conviction in the Three Gems; (3) He observes the five precepts even at the risk of his life; (4) He becomes absolutely free from the fetters (samyojana) of the illusion of self (the mistaken idea about the existence of a personal entity); doubts, wrong belief in rites and rituals outside the Ariya Path, jealousy and stinginess; (5) He totally extinguishes five out of the ten modes of evil conduct that lead to the four miserable states of Apāya, namely, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct (i.e., adultery), lying and wrong views. A Dictionary of Buddhist terms Ministry of Religious Affairs Yangon, Myanmar, (2000), P, 247.
This five-fold reflective knowledge is known as Five-Fold Paccavekkhaṇa Ǹāṇa.

Having reviewed the five-fold objects stated above, he again cultivated and developed the series of Vipassañā Ǹāṇa (insight knowledge), such as Udayabbaya Ǹāṇa, etc. Soon he realized the second path of Sakadāgāmī magga and sakadāgāmi phala. By Sakadāgāmī magga, he had uprooted the grosser defilements, namely, sense desires (kāmarāga) and ill-will (vyāpāda or dosa). Hence forth, the mind continuum of Siddhāttha had become completely rid of the grosser defilements of kāmarāga and vyāpāda. Having realized the Sakadāgāmī magga and phala, he developed the fivefold paccavekkhaṇa Ǹāṇa again to review the sakadāgāmī magga, the sakadāgāmī phala, their object Nibbāna, defilements already destroyed and the remaining defilements. Then, he again developed the series of Vipassañā Ǹāṇa such as the udayabbaya Ǹāṇa, etc. Soon he realized the third path of anāgāmī magga and anāgāmī phala. When he attained anāgāmī magga, he had completely uprooted the subtle defilements of kāmarāga kilesa and vyāpāda (dosa). Then, having contemplated through fivefold reflective knowledge, anāgāmī magga and anāgāmī phala, their object Nibbāna, defilements already destroyed and the remaining defilements, he repeated developments, of the series of Vipassañā Ǹāṇa such as udayabbaya Ǹāṇa up to the stage of Mahāvajira Vipassañā. In this manner, he developed asavakkhaya Ǹāṇa by which he removed all the remaining defilements never to reappear again.

Then with the simultaneous realization of the Sabbaññuta Ǹāṇa, he had finally attained the state of a perfectly self-enlightened one, Sammāsambuddha, complete with the knowledge of the four noble truths, the four analytical knowledge (Paṭīsambhida Ǹāṇa) the six fold unique wisdom (Asādhāraṇa Ǹāṇa) making up the fourteen-fold wisdom of a Buddha. At the same time he realized also the eighteen special qualities.
(Āveñika dhamma) and the four fold valorous wisdom (Vesarajja nāṇa) of a Buddha. After achieving Buddhood, the following two verses are of intensive joy:

(1) Anekajatisamsāram, sandhāvissamanibbisam;
    Gahakāram gavesanto, dukkāh jātī puṇappunam.
(2) Gahakāraka diṭṭhosi, puna geham na kāhasi;
    SABBā te phāsukā bhagga, gahakūṭam visaṁkhhatam;
    VISAṁkhāragatam cittam, taṁhānam khayamajjhaga.2

Through many a birth in existence wandered I, Seeking, but not finding, the builder of the house. Sorrowful is repeated birth. O housebuilder, thou art seen. Thou shall build no house again. All thy rafters are broken. Thy ridge-pole is shattered. Mind attains the unconditioned. Achieved is the end of craving.

Buddha said, mentally, that he had to wander round and round the samsāra in search of the builder of the house, this Khandhā and suffered greatly as a consequence because he had not discovered the carpenter of this house, the body, and the five aggregates.

Now, he declared, he had discovered, after a relentless search, with his own intuitive wisdom, the creator of the five khandhas. It was found to be none other than the craving (taṁhā),3 residing not outside, but within the recesses of his own heart.

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1 Jāti means the coming into existence of physical and mental phenomena, the conception, the arising in new form, the appearance of the aggregates (Khandha). Birth arises due to past action (Kamma). A Dictionary of Buddhist terms Ministry of religions affair Yangon, Myanmar, P, 21.
2 Dhammapada, P, 153.
3 There are three kinds of craving (taṁhā) (1) hankering after and becoming attached to pleasures of the senses, kāma taṁhā; (2) hankering after and becoming attached to continued existence, either the current sensual existence or a better, higher existence in the rūpa (fine material) or arūpa (non-material) brahma realms, bhava taṁhā; and (3) hankering after and becoming attached to the belief that there is no kamma for rebirth, and hence no future existence, vibhāva taṁhā. This is based on belief in annihilations.
The rafters of this self-created house are the defilements such as lobha, dosa, moha, māna, diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, thīna, uddhacca, ahirika (moral shamelessness) and anottappa (moral fearlessness).

The root of all kilesas is ignorance (avijja). The shattering of the ridge-pole of ignorance by various successive ṇāṇas, and ultimately arahatta-magga and phala ṇāṇa with the crown of the sabbāṇṇuta-ṇāṇa, results in the complete demolition of the house, the mind attains the unconditioned state, Nibbāna, the supreme peace, the final liberation.

The Buddha had made a mental note of his discovery of the truth of existence (bhava) in these two meaningful verses. After the attainment of Buddhahood with the realization of āsavakkhaya ṇāṇa together with Sabbāṇṇuta ṇāṇa, the Buddha did not immediately leave from the Bodhi Tree. He remained seated on the Throne of victory having annihilated the five opposing forces obstructing his path to deliverance, the five fold Māras.

After the Enlightenment for seven weeks the Buddha fasted, and spent his time under the Bodhi tree and staying one week each at six different places surrounding it.

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1 (1) Devaputta Māra, who attempted to dislodge the Bodhisatta from his seat under the Bodhi Tree, the invincible throne, which he surrounded with his immeasurable hordes. (2) Kilesa Māra, the ten defilements (lobha, dosa, moha, māna, diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, thīna, uddhacca, ahirika, anottappa). (3) Abhisākākāra Māra, kammic activities (physical, vocal, and mental) which condition the formation of new existences. (4) Kandha Māra, the five aggregates which condition the formation of new existences. Kandha Māra, the five aggregates which reappear repeatedly as a consequence of one’s past deeds. (5) Maccu Māra, the unavoidable phenomena of death. Having overcome all these forces of opposition, he had indeed become the incomparable Buddha, earning the title of Anantajina, the Infinite conqueror. Dīgha-Nikāya, Vo, II, P, 110.

2 (1) Enlightenment of the four ariya Truths; (2) The Bodhi or Bo Tree where the Buddha attained full Enlightenment of the four Ariya Truths; (3) perfect Wisdom, Sabbāṇṇuta ṇāṇa. There are three kinds of
The whole of the first day after the full moon day, he spent enjoying the bliss of emancipation (vimutti) he had so deservedly earned for himself, by entering into the Arahattaphala samāpatti. The whole of that night, throughout the three watches, the Buddha repeatedly contemplated on the doctrine of Paṭiccasamuppāda, in both forward and backward orders, to understand more and more, clearer and clearer, the rise of Samsāric suffering in forward order; likewise understand the process of cessation of samsāric suffering in backward order.

After the end of the second and third week, which he spent reflecting on the Dhamma and meditating on the fruition attainment, the Buddha was able to formulate the four Noble Truths which satisfactorily explain the phenomena of nāma and rūpa pertaining to all grades of sentient beings: men, devas, brahmas, and denizens of apāya. All sentient beings are composed of five aggregates, one of rūpa and four of nāma: They are all subjected to the law of anicca (impermanence), with the corollaries of dukkha (suffering, unsatisfactoriness) and anatta, (non-ego, insubstantiality).

The fourth week be spent in a golden house (ratana ghara), which was created by devas and brahmas. The Buddha contemplated on the Abhidhamma which is composed of Sīla samādhi and paññā. When he was contemplating the sīla aspect of the path, he was reflecting on the Dhamma he taught as vinaya piṭaka; likewise when he was contemplating the samādhi step of the path, he was reflecting on the Dhamma which was later taught as Sutta Piṭaka. And finally, when he contemplated on the Dhamma which relates to the Saṅkhāra loka, he was reflecting on both the animate and

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1 Samapatti, as a technical term used in the doctrine of meditation, is applied to the enjoyment of spiritual quiescence for an indefinite period. There are two series of attainments: the eight, and the nine attainments. The eight consist of the four Jhanas and the four formless attainments, the last four being expressly termed "samāpatti". Patissambhidāmagga, Vol, I, P, 20; Majjhīna-Nikaya, Vol, I, P, 40.
inanimate phenomena, on the Dhamma which deals with conditioning of all phenomena, concerning the Satta loka and okāsa loka, their arising and passing away, their formation and dissolution, the processes of their aging, ailing and dying, all conditioned events and changes happening in this Saṅkhāra loka. This Dhamma constituted Abhidhamma Piṭaka which was first taught by the Buddha in seven treatises. The last treatise, paṭṭhāna, gives a comprehensive treatment of all phenomena, mental and physical, different categories of nāma and rūpa, the unlimited number of methods, anantanaya samanta of combinations and permutations between citta, cetasika and rūpa, and the complicated conditional relationship between each of the various categories of nāma and rūpa. The comprehensive picture of the animate and inanimate world, showing complex relationship between its constituent part, citta, cetasika and rūpa is made fully complete by the inclusion of Nibbāna, an achievement.

After Enlightenment during the fourth week the Buddha reviewed all forms and conditions of existences, how they are constituted of the five aggregates of nāma and rūpa, how each aggregate arise due to certain cause and when these causes end, how the aggregate also ceases. He brought out a comprehensive picture of the universe that describes and explains everything pertaining to it, animate and inanimate. What he later taught as Abhidhamma was thought out, annotated, systematized, classified into a well organized form of Dhamma here at the Golden House (ratana gharā). Concisely, the Buddha stated that there are only four paramatthas, ultimate or absolute realities: rūpa, citta, cetasika and Nibbāna.

The rūpakkhandhā is explained in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka as being made up of four essential material qualities solidity, cohesion, temperature and vibration along with the derivative types of matter coexisting with them in the very minute material grouping called kalāpas, rising and passing away
millions of times present. Each aggregate arises due to end, the aggregate also ceases. Causes or conditions are connected with effects in the law of dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda). This law of Dependent origination had been at the centre of the Buddha’s Enlightenment in the evening of the full moon day. Later, it was reformulated as the most general exposition of that law as: when there is this that comes to be with the arising of this that arises. When this is absent, that does not come to be with the cessation of this that ceases.

The Buddha reflected again and again on the law of dependent originations; at the ratana ghara, he contemplated on the law of conditional relations (paṭṭhāna). The law of Dependent origination, the Paṭiccasamuppāda, is a very important doctrine, describing eleven causal relations which explain the conditionality and dependent nature of incessant phenomena of existence. It describes the cause and effect without mentioning how the cause conditions the effect to arise. Paṭṭhāna describes the 24 modes of conditionality which correlate all the physical and mental phenomena by cause and effect with specific illustrations occurring in real life.

We find the Buddha’s teaching the practice of Śīla, Samādhi and Paññā, it is in Abhidhamma that the Buddha finalized the complete exposition of the basis materials of the Buddha’s teaching.

The Buddha’s unique discoveries are the truth of Dukkha, the origin of Dukkha, The cessation of Dukkha and the mechanics of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha. In the Abhidhamma Pīṭaka, we find the Buddha

1 Paṭicca- samuppāda. The Chain of Conditioned Arising; causal genesis. The process, beginning with ignorance, by which one keeps making life after life of suffering for oneself.
2 Śīla means morality abstaining from physical and vocal actions that cause harm to others and oneself. The first of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practiced.
teaching the development of Paññā, the knowledge of absolute truths (paramatthasacca) and the Four Noble Truths, the knowledge of the Phenomena.

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths are the essence of the Buddha’s teaching. In the Anguttara-Nikāya the Buddha said, “To one who experiences sensations, meditators, I teach the truth of suffering, I teach the truth of the arising of suffering, I teach the truth of the cessation of suffering and I teach the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

In this passage the Buddha states unequivocally that the Four Noble Truths can be understood, realized and practiced only through the experience of vedana (sensation).

He further analysed the Noble Truths in the light of vedana by saying: whatever sensations one experiences, all are suffering.

Not only is Dukkha vedana (unpleasant sensation) suffering, but sukha vedana (pleasant sensation) and adukkhamasukha vedana (neutral sensation) are also suffering, because of their impermanent nature. Arising and passing away, anicca (impermanence), is the characteristic of vedana.

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1 Paññā means wisdom the third of the three training by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practiced. There are three kinds of wisdom: Suta-ñayà paññà—literally, “wisdom gained from listening to others,” i.e., received wisdom; Cintā-ñayà paññà—wisdom gained by intellectual analysis; and bhavana-ñayà paññà—wisdom developing from direct, personal experience. Of these, only the last can totally purify the mind; it is cultivated by the practice of Vipassana-bhavana.


3 Vedana means feeling, sensation. One of the five aggregates (khandha). Described by the Buddha as having both mental and physical aspects; therefore vedana offers a means to examine the totality of the mental-physical phenomenon. In the Chain of Conditioned Arising (pānca samuppāda), the Buddha explained that taṇhā, the cause of suffering, arises as a reaction to vedana. By learning to observe vedana objectively one can avoid any new reactions, and can experience directly within oneself the reality of impermanence (anicca). This experience is essential for the development of detachment, leading to liberation of the mind.

Every pleasant sensation has a seed of dukkha in it because it is bound to pass away. We are so bound by ignorance that when a pleasant sensation arises, without knowing its real nature of impermanence, we react to it by developing craving and clinging towards it. This leads to suffering: taṇhā dukkhassā sambhavam – craving is the origin of suffering.¹

In fact, craving is not only the origin of suffering but suffering itself. As craving arises, suffering arises. The Buddha elucidated the second of the Four Noble Truths not as taṇhā-paccayā dukkha² but instead as dukkha-samudaya. In other words, craving is not merely the precondition of suffering; it is itself inseparable from suffering. The same emphasis is apparent in the statement taṇhā dukkhassā sambhavām. Verily taṇhā and dukkha are sahajāta (conascent). As soon as taṇhā arises, one loses the balance of the mind, becoming agitated and tense. In other words, one experiences dukkha.

Similarly, when vedana arises and results in taṇhā, it is dukkha. Thus whenever the term vedana is used in relation to the practice of Vipassana, it conveys the sense of dukkha. Even a neutral sensation is dukkha if its impermanent nature is ignored. Therefore, not only for dukkha vedana but for sukha vedana and adukkhamasukha vedana as well, the Buddha correctly used the word vedana as a synonym for dukkha.

Emphasizing this fact again in relation to the Four Noble truths, the Buddha said in the Dyayātana-sutta of the Suttaṅīpaṭṭa: Whatever suffering arises, it is because of sensation-this is the first anupassanā (constant

¹ Suttanīpaṭṭa, P, 140.
² According to the commentary dukkha as a Noble Truth is left untranslated. Suffering and ill are inadequate renderings. Dukkha is inherent in existence. The five Aggregates which are the objects of Clinging therefore embody dukkha. Dukkha has connotations of impermanence, insubstantiality, unsatisfactoriness, emptiness, imperfection, insecurity, besides the obvious ones of suffering, physical pain and mental affliction.

Mahāsangīṭṭhāna Sutta (Great Discourse on Steadfast Mindfulness) published by The Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāṃgha Yangon, Myanmar, (1997), P, 46
observation). With the complete cessation of sensation there is no further arising of suffering this is the second anupassanā.¹

The first anupassanā is the constant observation of vedanā as dukkha. The second anupassanā consists of the reality which is beyond the field of vedanā as well as beyond the field of phassa (contact) and of salāyatana (the six sense doors). This is the stage of nirodha-samāpatti of an arahant (fully liberated one), the experience of the state of Nibbāna. By this second anupassanā, the meditator realizes the truth that in the field of nirodha samāpatti there is no dukkha, because there is no samāpatti there is no dukkha, because there is no vedanā. It is the field beyond the sphere of vedanā.

Therefore, to experience and understand dukkha sacca (suffering), samudaya-sacca (its arising), nirodha sacca (its cessation) and dukkha-nirodha-gāmini-paññā-sacca (the path leading to the cessation of suffering), one has to work with sensations and realize the truth of vedanā (vedanā-sacca), the arising of vedanā (vedanā-nirodha-sacca), the cessation of vedanā (vedanā-nirodha-gāmini-paññā-sacca) and the path leading to the cessation of vedanā (vedanā-nirodha-gāmini-paññā-sacca).

This process is clearly described in the Samadhi sutta of the Vedanā samyutta: A follower of the Buddha, with concentration, awareness and constant thorough understanding of impermanence, knows with wisdom the sensations, their arising, their cessation and the path leading to their end. A meditator who has reached the end of sensations is freed from craving fully liberated.²

¹ Yam kici dukkhā samabhoto sabham vedanāpaccayā ti ayzmetkānupassanā. Vedanānām tveva anāsavirāga nirodha natthi dukkhasa sambhavo ti anyam duṭṭhaṁ anupassanā. Ibid, 139.
The Buddha further says very emphatically that the practice of the ariyo atthaṅgiko maggo (the Noble Eightfold Path) has the purpose of understanding vedanā and reaching the state of vedanā nirodha (cessation of sensations):

There are these three types of bodily sensations. What are the three? Pleasant sensation Unpleasant sensation and sensation which is neutral

meditation, the Noble Eightfold Path should be practiced for the complete knowledge, the full realization, the gradual eradication and the abandonment of these three bodily sensations.\(^1\)

Sensations (vedanā) are the tools by which we can practise the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path; and by realizing the characteristic of anicca\(^2\) (impermanence) we free ourselves from the bonds of avijjā and taphā and penetrate to the ultimate truth: Nibbāna, freedom from suffering, a state which is beyond the field of vedanā, beyond the field of nāma rūpa (mind and matter).

The purpose of Vipassanā meditation is to purify the mind, to free the mind from suffering and its cause. Usually we don’t know what is really happening. We are wandering in the past or the future, blinded by our desires or aversions; and we are always agitated, full of tension.

But by meditating we learn to face the reality of this moment, without wanting or hating it. We observe it with a smile- with equanimity, a balanced mind.

This awareness and equanimity are very useful for us in ordinary life. Instead of being ignorant of what is really happening blindly following our


\(^2\) Anicca means impermanent, ephemeral, changing. One of the three basic characteristics of phenomena, along with anattā and dukkha.
unconscious desires, fears, and hatred now we can see the reality in any situation. Then instead of reacting blindly and making more tensions, it is possible for us to take real, free, creative action which will be helpful for ourselves and for other people.

Every person faces the same problems in life: things happen that aren’t wanted; things don’t happen that we want. In all these situations, if we react blindly, we make ourselves and others unhappy. If we keep a balanced mind, then we remain happy and we can help others to be happy.

When a sick man recovers health, naturally he feels happy. When a blind man can see again, naturally he feels happy. Similarly when we earn the way from suffering to liberation, naturally we feel happy. Previously we forced others to share our unhappiness; now we want others to share our peace and joy.

A real meditator tries to change the world, after having changed himself. Perhaps his action is no more than a smile instead of a frown—but that smile may have far reverberations if it is a real smile from the heart. On the other hand, a smile is useless if it merely hides the tensions inside.

Certainly we have a moral duty to change the world for better and we must begin with the material nearest to hand: ourselves. Having done that, we will be capable of achieving everything.