

Everlasting Happiness,
as Buddha Attains 8

Presented by Venerable Da Shi

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Preface

Buddha came into this world to lead all sentient beings away from suffering and towards enlightenment. He forsook his throne and worldly possessions for the pursuit of enlightenment. It was his wish to guide all sentient beings in their understanding of the karmic cycle and the path to Nirvana. After his passing into Parinirvana, his teachings were collected and compiled by his followers.

It is Venerable Da Shi's wish to continue the Buddha's teachings, spread the seeds of compassion, and carry on his wish for all sentient beings to attain Nirvana. Since his ordination, Venerable Da Shi has been actively involved in the teaching of the Dharma in many places, including Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2004/2005, Venerable Da Shi was invited by the Life Television Station in Taiwan to present talks on various Dharma topics. This book was written based on the consolidated content of Venerable Da Shi's televised talks, in hope that his compassionate wish would be furthered through the spreading of the Dharma.

Foreword

EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS

The Buddha was born into this world out of great compassion with the aim to help all mortal beings avoid sufferings and attain endless bliss.

The world of mortal beings is full of suffering. It is a surreal world of endless desires and yet fulfillment of all desires is impossible. We have to work hard to find fulfillment but it is all transient. It is like a trap where we relentlessly pursue wealth, appearance, fame, gastronomic satisfaction, and excessive sleep without ever pondering what all these could lead to. We repeatedly go through birth, aging, sickness, and death and in this continuous cyclic existence, we suffer immeasurably.

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

There are very few fortunate beings that have the chance to hear the Buddha's teachings. The number of people who are able to hear and learn the Buddha's Dharma teachings is said to be like the amount of soil caught in one's nail if one were to use hands to dig into the ground.

Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains is translated from a Chinese compilation of Venerable Da Shi's Dharma teachings on television in Taiwan, R.O.C. He has used the Agama Sutra as the central focus of these teachings, supplemented by relevant Dharma from Mahayana Sutras, including the Prajna Sutras, the Middle Way, the Maha-prajna-paramita-Sastra, the Dasabhumika-Vibhasa-Sastra, the Saddharma-Pundarika, etc. for better understanding. Through his skillful narration and explanation, Venerable Da Shi has made the Buddha's Dharma very easy to understand and at the same time, interesting. There are also many citations of examples where one can apply in one's life and practice.

It is the wish of Venerable Da Shi that these teachings should reach out to more people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. For Buddhists who have sought refuge in the Triple Gem, these teachings serve to strengthen their understanding of the Dharma and improve practices. For non-Buddhists, may it serve as a guide to attain true bliss.

This book focuses on six topics in the following chronology: After discovering who "I" truly am in chapter 1, we are able to correctly identify the type of person each of us are and overcome our defilements using the right approach in chapter 2. In chapter 3, upon realizing the disadvantages of being a woman, we learn how to avoid the pitfalls of such a rebirth. Finally in chapters 4 to 6, as we reflect on the innumerable cycles of rebirth that we had gone through, we realize what true bliss is and this gives us the determination to practice the Four Noble Truths and seek liberation.

This book is the eighth installment of a translated series and it will also be made available on our website at **www.mypty.sg**. Other topics in the series will be published progressively in subsequent books.

The Dharma introduced in this series accords with the teachings in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, which have originally been translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnotes on the relevant pages and Glossary at the end of this book for explanation of common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics) and concepts.

@@@ This work is an effort to uphold and support Venerable Da Shi's great vow of spreading the Dharma in gratitude of the Buddha's compassion. Please help to spread the wisdom and cheers of the Dharma by passing this book on to someone else should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of the Dharma excels all gifts! May all have the chance to know the Buddha's Dharma! @@@

Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)

Who is "Me"?



Importance of clear understanding of "me"

The path to liberation from the *samsara* world is a progressive journey. It begins with the practice of giving, extends into the undertaking of precepts and further involves the learning of the conditions that are necessary for rebirths in the heavenly realms. However, the path does not stop here; it continues with the renunciation of worldly desires.

If we are wise, we will seek to abandon worldly desires. Letting go of worldly desires conduces towards the practice of the *Four Noble Truths*, namely:

- (i) the noble truth of suffering;
- (ii) the noble truth of the causes of suffering;
- (iii) the noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and
- (iv) the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

As we learn the four noble truths, it is important for us to have a clear understanding of the so-called 'self'. If we do not know the 'self', we are no different from a blind man treading towards a deep, dangerous ditch.

Suffering (duhkha) – The Unchanging Truth

If we do not truly understand the causes of our sufferings, we will not be able to end them. Why do we suffer? We suffer because of our ignorance, mental *defilements*, and unwholesome *karma*. As long as we sow these causes of suffering, we will have to reap the negative results. Hence, to realize liberation, we have to nip our problems in the bud. Only when we have nipped our problems in the bud can there be true cessation to our sufferings.

How do we cease the causes of suffering? We do so by upholding the precepts (*sila*), developing our concentration (*samadhi*), cultivating our wisdom (*prajna*), perfecting our *Six Paramitas*, walking the *Eightfold Noble Path*, and training ourselves in the *Thirty-Seven Practices to attain Enlightenment*. Collectively, these cultivations form the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Example: The right attitude for learning the *dharma*

In ancient times, court ladies were considered to be properties of the king. Upon entering the palace, they had to sever ties with the world outside and live miserable lives thereafter within the palace walls.

Once, a compassionate king invited a *bhikshu* to teach the dharma to the court ladies, giving them a rare opportunity to learn the teachings of the *Buddha*. Knowing that the court ladies would likely aspire to take rebirth in the heavenly realms, the *bhikshu* expounded the bliss of the heavenly realms to them. He also taught the methods that could lead to rebirth in the heavenly realms, namely (i) giving and (ii) upholding of precepts. The court ladies were delighted to hear these teachings.

However, after listening to several similar dharma expositions, one of the court ladies began to wonder if the teachings of Buddha were merely limited to taking rebirth in the heavenly realms. Intrigued, she risked her life and stepped out from behind the blinds where all the court ladies sat. Court ladies were forbidden to meet any males in person other than the king himself. And so her act was an unexpected surprise to the rest.

"Venerable *bhikshu*, did the Buddha bestow teachings that are more sublime?" asked the court lady.

"Yes. If you aspire for the most wondrous dharma, I will teach you so", said the *bhikshu*.

Respectfully, she bowed to the *bhikshu* and requested him to teach the sublime dharma.

~ WHO IS "ME"? ~

The bhikshu then taught the Four Noble Truths and the Law of Twelve-Links of Dependent Arising, whereupon the court lady realized fruition of the dharma.¹

When the rest expressed their fears that she would be executed for her audacious behavior, she replied:

*"Life is impermanent,
with all suffering and no joy.
Non-arising and non-ceasing-
Such is the bliss of Nirvana."*

We should develop similar earnest attitude that this court lady had in learning the dharma. Now that we have the opportunity to learn the four noble truths, all the more should we cherish and learn the dharma well.

"Me": Five Aggregates and Hundred Phenomena

The Diamond Sutra states:

*"All conditioned phenomenon are
Like illusory dreams, and
Shadows of bubbles.
Akin to the transience of dewdrops, and
Like the speed of lightning-
All conditioned phenomena should be perceived as such."*

The four noble truths allow us to have clear insight on all conditioned phenomena. Why are conditioned phenomena likened to dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows, dews and lightning? How do we perceive them?

¹There are four types of fruition: (i) strotapanna; (ii) sakradagamin; (iii) anagamin; (iv) arahat.

(1) Conditioned Phenomenon (samskrta-dharma):

Conditioned phenomenon consists of (a) 11 kinds of physical phenomena and (b) 83 kinds of mental phenomena. In total, there are 94 kinds of conditioned phenomena.

(a) 'Physical Phenomenon' (rupa-dharma) is also known as the aggregate of form. Physical phenomenon comprises of eleven phenomena, namely, the five sense bases, the five sense objects and the Incorporeal Form (dharmayatanikani rupani).

(b) 'Mental Phenomenon' (caitasika-dharma) comprise the following four aggregates² :

(i) Aggregate of Feeling (vedana);

(ii) Aggregate of Perception (samjna);

(iii) Aggregate of Mental Volition (samskara);

(a) The forty-nine mental factors corresponding with the mind (citta-samprayukta-dharma)

(b) The twenty-four mental factors not corresponding with the mind (citta-viprayukta-samskara-dharma)

(iv) Aggregate of Consciousness (vijnana); there are eight types of consciousness

(2) Unconditioned Phenomenon (asamskrta dharma) is non-arising and non-ceasing.

There are six modes through which we can understand unconditioned phenomenon, namely: (i) the boundlessness of space (akasa); (ii) cessation of mental afflictions through wisdom (pratisamkhya-nirodha); (iii) non-arising due to

² These four aggregates, together with the Aggregate of Form, are called the Five Aggregates.

absence of causal condition (apratismkhyā-nirodha); (iv) non-moving (aninjya); (v) cessation of feeling and thinking³ (samjna-vedayita-nirodha); and (vi) true and unchanging mind (tathata).

In sum, the ninety-four conditioned phenomena and the six unconditioned phenomena make up the Hundred Phenomena.

Difference between Five Aggregates (panca-skandha) and Grasping of Five Aggregates (panca-upadana-skandha)

As mentioned above, the five aggregates are form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness. The five aggregates comprise both material and mental phenomena. On the other hand, the grasping of five aggregates means that there is an attachment to them. Grasping the five aggregates is the reason why sentient beings continue to go through cycles of rebirths endlessly.

The Enlightened Noble Ones, namely Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas and Arahats are sages who have released their grasps to the five aggregates, and hence they are liberated from all kinds of suffering.

This is the difference between enlightened Noble Ones and unenlightened sentient beings.

What is the Aggregate of Form (rupa-skandha)?

The aggregate of form refers to any materiality made up of the Four Great Elements (maha-bhuta rupa). For example, the human body is made up of the Five Sense Bases (i.e. sense of

³ This is the third or fourth level of fruition, i.e. referring to an Anagamin or an Arahāt.

sight, sense of hearing, sense of smell, sense of taste, and sense of contact). Externally, there are the Five Sense Objects (i.e. form, sound, scent, flavor, and tactile object/property). There is also un-manifested form.

There are two characteristics of Form:

- (i) The characteristic of obstruction: form occupies space and hence obstructs.
- (ii) The characteristic of deterioration: The body deteriorates as it ages and falls sick, and it eventually dies.

This aggregate of form is therefore impermanent as it is a temporal aggregation of causes and conditions. It is liable to undergo a process of arising, sustaining, changing, and eventually ceasing.

The Four Great Elements – Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind

- (1) The earth element (prthivi-dhatu) is characterized by solidity, coarseness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, or lightness. For instance, the human body and the tongue are soft while our teeth are hard.
- (2) The water element (apo-dhatu) exhibits two characteristics, namely, fluidity and viscosity. The liquids found within our body are blood, urine, saliva and tears, etcetera. By viscosity, it means that water holds our body parts together, just like how it can hold soaked milk powder together in a lump.
- (3) The fire element (teja-dhatu) has characteristics of hotness and coldness. The temperature of the external environment can be warm or cold, indicating a fluctuation of the fire element. The same can be said of the temperature in our bodies.
- (4) The wind element (vayu-dhatu) is characterized by a pushing thrust and supportability. The air that we breathe in and out

while talking comes from the wind element. The wind element supports us in instances when we speak, stand, sit, move around and the like.

The aggregate of form is the composite of the four great elements. We should also note that the four elements require the space element, without which they will not be able to aggregate together.

The term "sentient being" refers to the aggregation of the four elements as well as the mental aggregates of feelings, perception, volition and consciousness.

It is important to note that each of the four great elements cannot exist independently. For instance, when we speak of the earth element, it actually comprises of the water, fire and wind elements in it, with the earth element as dominant. The same can be said of the other three great elements.

Example 1:

A sheet of paper appears to consist only of the earth element as it feels light, but does it contain any water? Yes—even though the water in the paper is not visible to the human eyes. In fact, the water adheres various parts of the paper together. Without water, the paper would have fallen apart. Does the paper also contain the fire element? Yes—because we can feel coldness on the paper surface. This is the effect of the fire element. Does it contain the wind element as well? Yes—because it can hold up as one sheet.

Example 2:

Does flowing water contain any earth element, fire element, or wind element? Yes, because apart from its fluidity and viscosity, water has a weight to it. Furthermore, we can feel the temperature of water. Additionally, we can feel the pushing motion and support of water.

Example 3:

Fire is hot because of the fire element. As a result of the wind element, fire wavers. And through the earth element, we know that fire weighs light. Without the presence of the paper object in which the earth element is dominant, there cannot be fire. Thus, there is earth element within the fire element.

Example 4:

When wind blows, we feel the dry or damp humidity (water element), coldness and hotness (fire element) and its lightness or heaviness (earth element).

These illustrations tell us that every object is a composite of the four great elements and none of the elements can exist on its own.

Example 5: Why is there a need to emphasize the interdependence of the four great elements?

In the time of the Buddha, there were four deities known as the deity of the Earth Element, the deity of the Water Element, the deity of the Fire Element and the deity of the Wind Element.

One day, arising from her wrong view, the Earth deity boldly declared that the earth element was the only one which could exist independently on its own without the other elements.

Intending to right the deity's wrong view, the Buddha ascended to the heaven and expounded the *Right View* on causes and conditions. The Buddha told the Earth deity that no element could exist on its own, and that she was known as the "Earth deity" because the earth element in her was in excess of the other three elements present.

After listening to the Buddha's teaching, the Earth deity attained the fruition of "*pure dharma eye*".

The Water deity also held similar wrong view, conceiving that the water element was the one and only one. Knowing that the Water deity's view was wrong, the Earth deity explained the Buddha's teaching to the Water deity. As a result, the Water deity attained the fruition of "pure dharma eye".

Similarly, the Fire deity had thoughts of conceitedness, but after learning the Buddha's teaching from the Earth and Water deities, the Fire deity too attained the "pure dharma eye".

Likewise, the Wind deity attained the "pure dharma eye" after hearing the other deities' explanation of the law of causes and conditions taught by the Buddha.

Five Sense Bases and Five Sense Objects

As stated above, the form aggregate includes the five sense bases and the five sense objects. The five sense bases are the internal form, while the five sense objects are the external form.

Let us now look deeper into the five sense bases, the five sense objects, as well as the relationship between each of the sense bases and the sense objects.

(i) Relationship between the Sense of Sight and Sight-Objects (External objects perceived by the sense of sight)

In Buddhism, the sense of sight refers to the optic-nerve. The optic-nerve is the primary, root cause for the ability to perceive forms. Separate from the optic-nerve is the eyeball which is merely the supporting physical organ through which the optic-nerve performs its function of perceiving.

The optic-nerve and the eye are composites of the four great elements. Even though the eye is a supporting organ, it is nonetheless important because the optic-nerve cannot perform

its function without it. Therefore, the seeing of a form is dependent on both the optic-nerve and the eye organ.

Commonly, we think it is the cornea that perceives forms. However, this thinking is incorrect because it is the optic-nerve that perceives form. We would be blind if we do not have a functioning optic-nerve. Blindness cannot be cured even if a damaged cornea is replaced. Therefore, the cornea is only a supporting physical organ of sight.

The form that is perceived by the sense of sight is likewise an aggregate of the four great elements. It is very important to note that sense of sight and forms perceived are dependent on each other.

Attributes of Objects Perceived by Sense of Sight: Shape and Color

- (1) Shape: A form may be long, short, square, round, high, low, straight or crooked. For example, when the sense of sight contacts the form of a television, the shape that is perceived is square.
- (2i) Primary colors: The primary colors are blue, yellow, red, and white.
- (2ii) Variegations in colors: These colors have variations of tones due to the presence of shadow, light, brightness, darkness, cloud, smoke, dust or mist.

When light shines on an object in the dark, shadow will be projected on one part of the object. According to the law of physics, the side in contact with light is known as "brightness", while the other side is known as "darkness".

In most days, we see cotton-like clouds hanging in the sky. We can also see smoke gushing and quickly filling the air with dust when something burns. As for mist, it is often visible in the mountains or at dawn.

There are in total, twelve visual colors: four primary colors and eight types of variegated colors. To recap, the primary visual colors are categorized as blue, yellow, red and white. The variegations of colors come from shadow, light, brightness, darkness, cloud, smoke, dust and mist.

We learn to know this world through the effect of our sense of sight and the sight-sense object.

Example:

Whatever we see in this world is a result of the interaction between the sense of sight and sight-sense objects. For instance, when we look at an apple, our sense of sight perceives a round shape. Our sense of sight also detects its green color as well as its variegations. Green is not a primary color, but a composited color that comes from the combination of the primary colors.

Dependent on the interaction between the sense of sight and a sight-sense object, eye-consciousness arises.

Eye-consciousness tells us the shape and color of the sight-sense object that is perceived. Once eye-consciousness arises, mind-consciousness arises as well.

Mind-consciousness tells us that the sight-sense object perceived is round in shape, green in color and is an apple and not an orange. The mind-consciousness also tells us which country the apple is from. In other words, whereas eye-consciousness perceives, mind-consciousness differentiates. Therefore, eye-consciousness and mind-consciousness have different functions.

Some people believe that they can stop mind-consciousness from arising. However, this is not possible because as long as eye-consciousness arises, mind-consciousness will arise. Eye-consciousness and mind-consciousness cannot be annihilated.

A person who does not have the sense of sight cannot perceive any sight-sense object, and thus eye-consciousness cannot arise.

(ii) Sense of Hearing and Hearing-Sense Object (Sound)

The sense of hearing refers to the auditory-nerve. The auditory-nerve perceives sounds whereas the ear is the physical organ through which the auditory-nerve performs its function of hearing.

A person who does not have the auditory-nerve is deaf even though he has ears.

The sense of hearing can only perceive hearing-sense object and cannot perceive sight-sense object, etcetera.

Dependent on the interaction between the sense of hearing and hearing-sense object, there arises the ear-consciousness. The ear-consciousness tells us the qualities of a sound, whereas the mind-consciousness tells us the contents of the sound.

Hearing-Sense Object (Sound):

Hearing-sense object (sound) can be characterized into two major categories, namely: (a) sound from a sentient being; and (b) sound from an insentient object.

The two categories of sound can be further categorized into:

(i) Agreeable sound supported by sentience

Eg. Praise from a person (Sound from sentient being); sound of a song recording sung by a person (Sound from insentient object).

(ii) Disagreeable sound supported by sentience

Eg. Criticism or slander from a person (Sound from sentient being); sound recording of a person's shouts (Sound from insentient object).

(iii) Agreeable sound unsupported by sentience

Eg. Sound of applause (Sound from sentient being); sound of a gentle stream (Sound from insentient object).

(iv) Disagreeable sound unsupported by sentience

Eg. Loud thud of a person (Sound from sentient being); falling explosion of a volcanic eruption (Sound from insentient object).

When the sense of hearing comes into contact with a sound, ear-consciousness arises and tells us whether the sound comes from a sentient being or an insentient object, and whether or not the sound is supported by sentience.

The mind-consciousness, however, differentiates the sound heard into agreeable or disagreeable sound.

(iii) Sense of Smell and Smell-Object (Odor)

The sense of smell refers to the olfactory-nerve. The olfactory-nerve detects smell whereas the nose is the physical organ through which the olfactory-nerve performs its function of smelling.

The smell-object may either be a fragrance or a stench, and depending on its intensity, it may be either excessive, little or fitting (just right). Both the sense of smell and odor are composites of the Four Great Elements.

When the sense of smell comes into contact with its smell-object i.e. an odor, nose-consciousness arises and it tells us whether the odor is a fragrance or a stench.

The mind-consciousness tells us what is giving off the fragrance or stench. For instance, when we catch a whiff of a sweet-smelling perfume, the mind-consciousness will tell us that it comes from a certain brand of perfume.

(iv) Sense of Taste and Taste-Object (Flavor)

The sense of taste refers to the gustatory-nerve. The gustatory-nerve perceives flavor whereas the tongue is the physical organ through which the gustatory-nerve performs its function of tasting.

Flavor is either sweet, sour, salty, bland, spicy or bitter. When the sense of taste comes into contact with a soup that is spicy, tongue-consciousness arises and tells us that there are spices in the soup which make the soup spicy. Mind-consciousness, however, differentiates by telling us whether the spice is a green American chili or a red Taiwan chili.

(v) Sense of Touch and Tactile Object

The sense of touch refers to the somatosensory-nerve. The somatosensory-nerve perceives tactile objects whereas the body is the physical organ through which the somatosensory-nerve performs its function of sensing tactile object.

Tactile objects consist of the Four Great Elements, and tactile properties are smoothness, coarseness, lightness, heaviness, coldness, hunger, and thirst.

When the sense of touch comes into contact with wind, body-consciousness arises and tells us whether the wind is cold, light or heavy. Mind-consciousness, on the other hand, differentiates and tells us what kind of wind it is.

(vi) Mind-consciousness

Mind-consciousness arises when the mind sense base comes into contact with all kinds of phenomena that cannot be expressed. Mind-consciousness is able to load all types of information, knowledge, and experiences of the past, present and future i.e. all types of material and mental phenomena.

~ WHO IS "ME"? ~

We express our thoughts through bodily actions and communications. The way we speak and the words we choose to communicate with others reflect our behavior and well-being.

Our curious mind will never stop picking up new things. We learn and experience new things by seeing, hearing and touching, and our mind-consciousness will readily absorb and capture all these new experiences and knowledge. These memories will transform to bodily actions and create wholesome and unwholesome actions when the mind sense base is aroused.

A closer look at this body



The body is an aggregate of the Four Great Elements, and comprises the following 42 parts:

Element	Body Parts
Earth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hair of head 2. Hair of body 3. Nails 4. Teeth 5. Skin 6. Flesh 7. Sinews 8. Bones 9. Bone marrow 10. Kidneys 11. Heart 12. Liver 13. Spleen 14. Lungs 15. Membranes 16. Intestines 17. Membranes of the intestines 18. Food in the Stomach 19. Faeces 20. Brain
Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Bile 22. Gastric acid 23. Pus 24. Blood 25. Fats 26. Grease 27. Sweat 28. Tears 29. Mucus 30. Saliva 31. Lubricants of joints 32. Urine

Fire	33. Heat that gradually arises when the body or mind is troubled 34. Heat that grows and ages the body 35. Heat when the body is running fever 36. Heat when digesting food
Wind	37. Up-going winds 38. Down-going winds 39. Winds between the intestines and diaphragm 40. Winds in the intestines 41. Winds passing through the entire body 42. In and out breath

Contemplation on the four great elements of the body allows us to see that the body is merely a composite of causes and conditions, devoid of "ego" or any inherent entity.

Procedure for contemplation

Earth Element

1. Start by observing the hair of your head, eyebrows, eyelashes, nostril-hair, beard, armpit-hair, hair on the legs, and hair of the entire body.
2. Then observe your toenails and fingernails, and then move your awareness upward to observe the teeth.
3. Now, focus the attention on the nose. Observe upward from the philtrum (the vertical groove between the base of the nose and the border of the upper lip) to the crown of the head, and downward from the crown of the head to the skin on the back of the neck, to the waist, the hip, the thighs, the calves and the soles of the feet. Finally, observe from the inner thighs and the chest and back to the philtrum again. As we closely observe the skin of the body, we begin to see that the skin is merely an organ that is not to be grasped.

4. Continue to observe downward from the flesh of the nose to the flesh of the neck, flesh of the chest, flesh of the hands, flesh of hips, flesh of the thighs, and to the flesh of the calves.
5. From the flesh of the calves, observe the muscles of the calves. Then observing upward to the muscles of the thighs, muscles of the waist, and muscles of the hips.
6. Mentally remove the muscles and focus now on the bones. Start from the skull, to the vertebral column bones, the rib cage, the shoulder bones, the spinal bones, the hips bones, the thighbones and the calf bones.
7. Proceed deeper to observe the bone marrows of the legs, bone marrows of the waist, and bone marrows in the spinal-cord.
8. Observe the two kidneys, the heart, the liver, the spleen (located at the back-left of the body), and the lungs.
9. Now observe the membranes of the diaphragm and the membranes of the lungs. Continue observing downward to the intestines and the membranes of the intestines.
10. Then observe the food we eat going into the stomach, passing through to the small intestine, the large intestine, and lastly to the colon. By now, the food has become feces. Finally, observe the brain.

By now, we will have observed what constitutes the Earth Element of the body, namely, the hair of head, hair of body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, spleen, lungs, membranes, intestines, membranes of the intestines, food in the stomach, feces, and brain.

It is important to know that the parts of the body that we now recognize as the earth element are also a confluence of the earth, water, fire and wind elements. These body parts are named the earth element because the earth element in them is in excess of the other three elements.

Water Element

11. Moving on with our observation, we now direct our attention to the 12 parts of the body made up mainly of the water element. Observe the bile and the gastric acid in the stomach. Then observe the pus in the body. Next, observe the blood that flows from the heart to the entire body. Observe the fats and grease. Next, observe the sweat discharged from the pores of the body.
12. Move on to observe tears, mucus, saliva, lubricant between joints and lastly urine in the bladder.

Wind Element

13. Next, direct our attention to the wind element in the body by observing the wind in the intestines. It is the wind in the intestines that pushes the intestinal objects (such as feces in the bowel) along. Then observe the wind between the intestines and diaphragm, as well as the wind passing through the entire body. If the wind in the body does not flow properly, we will have difficulties breathing. If the in and out breaths do not flow well, we will experience choking. If the up-going wind is obstructed, we will burp. And if the down-going wind is disturbed, we will experience flatulence.

Fire Element

14. Finally, we direct our observation to fire element of the body, namely, the heat when the body is disturbed, the heat that grows and ages the body, the heat when the body is running fever, and the heat from digestion.

By now, we will see the body not as an inherently existing physical form. Rather, it is an aggregate of four great elements. The body experiences constant change. Sometimes the body is hot or cold; sometimes the body is heavy or light.

Once, there lived a bhikshu who practiced in solitude (aranya). One day, on his morning alms-round, the bhikshu met a lady. As the lady was giving alms, an unwholesome thought of lust arose in her.

Distracted by this thought of desire, she was unable to focus on putting the food properly into the alms bowl and the food fell onto the ground. The lady felt very silly and smiled foolishly. Just then, the bhikshu caught sight of her white teeth and was reminded of the white bones of a skeleton. He thought, "Bones! These are as much as can be in the lady's mouth. As taught by The Great Buddha, there are three hundred and twenty bones in a human body, six hundred joints, seven hundred thousand veins and nine hundred thousand pores. The effluents of the body are filthy and there is nothing for me to like!"

Having reflected on the thirty-six impurities of a female body as well as on his own body, the bhikshu realized the insubstantiality of the body, whereupon he realized the first stage of liberation.

The Buddha had laid out all these details for the sake of leading us out of ignorance. We will be humbled if we contemplate and reflect repeatedly on the many insights that we can glean from the body. We may also reflect that with the lifetime needed for us to understand just the complex body itself, why then should we continue wasting our time indulging in wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep? Therefore, wisdom tells us that we should always spend time understanding the body and the mental afflictions that we have.

What are the Aggregate of Feeling and the Aggregate of Perception?

Aggregate of Feeling refers to the receiving of emotional sensations. When the sense base, sense object and sense consciousness come in contact and are being focused upon, the aggregate of feeling arises.

There are three kinds of feeling that can arise, namely:

- (i) Distressful feeling (physical and mental) – the unpleasant feeling that arises in unfavorable situations or during times of adversity.
- (ii) Pleasurable feeling (physical and mental) – joyful feeling that arises in favorable situations.
- (iii) Neutral feeling – there is neither distress nor pleasure.

Aggregate of Perception refers to the faculty of recognition after the sense base, sense object and sense consciousness come together in contact and are being focused upon.

The aggregate of perception directly extracts a mental imagery. It also organizes mental associations and thoughts to form a concrete image.

Wholesome or unwholesome thoughts arise after the aggregate of feeling and aggregate of perception arise. Wholesome thoughts motivate us to give generously, uphold the precepts and practice meditation diligently, all of which eventually lead to the development of wisdom. These can lead us to liberation and to the attainment of Buddhahood.

On the contrary, unwholesome thoughts may lead us to kill, commit arson or robbery, leading to rebirths in the *three lower realms*.

Relationship between Five Sense Bases and Five Aggregates

How do the aggregates of feeling, perception, volition and consciousness arise?

When the sense of sight comes into contact with sight-sense objects, eye consciousness arises, followed by mind consciousness. Subsequently, the aggregates of feeling, perception and volition will also arise.

The aggregate of volition can be either wholesome or unwholesome. If unwholesome, it will lead to all kinds of afflictions and ultimately to lower rebirths.

The six types of consciousness arise upon contact between the *six sense bases* and the *six sense objects*, resulting in the arising of the four aggregates (aggregate of feeling, perception, volition and consciousness).

Example: Sense of sight

When the sense of sight perceives a statue of the Buddha, eye consciousness arises, seeing it as an upright, white statue. Thereafter, mind consciousness arises and distinguishes it as a white-jade statue of the precious, noble Buddha. The mind feels happy (aggregate of feeling) and it goes on to think about making offerings to the Buddha (aggregate of perception). With this, the mind makes the aspiration to realize Buddhahood (aggregate of volition).

Example: Sense of hearing

When the sense of hearing perceives a sound, ear-consciousness arises, knowing it as a disagreeable sound. Mind-consciousness arises and distinguishes the sound as a reprimand. Thereafter, distressful feelings arise (aggregate of feeling), and the mind recalls the past unpleasant deeds of the person and dwells on thinking negatively (aggregate of perception). Then, anger and

grievance arise and the mind intends to harm the person giving the reprimand (aggregate of volition). With this ill intention, we act and speak unwholesomely towards him, thus sowing the seed of enmity.

Example: Sense of smell

When the sense of smell perceives a smell-object (odor), nose-consciousness arises and tells whether it is a fragrant or foul odor.

- (i) Foul odor: Take for instance that someone at the workplace lets off a fart. When the sense of smell contacts this pungent smell, nose-consciousness arises and identifies it as a foul odor. Mind-consciousness arises and tells that it is a foul odor emitted by someone. Distressful feelings arise (aggregate of feeling), and the mind thinks of and speculates who the person is (aggregate of perception). Thereafter, the mind plans on chiding the person (aggregate of volition).
- (ii) Fragrance: When the sense of smell contacts perfume, nose-consciousness arises and knows it as a fragrance. Mind-consciousness recognizes the brand of the perfume, and the mind delights in this fragrance (aggregate of feeling). Thereafter, the mind thinks of the person wearing this perfume as someone of elegance (aggregate of perception). And then plans on courting her may arise (aggregate of volition).

Example: Sense of taste

When we taste food, tongue-consciousness arises and tells whether it is sour, sweet, bitter, spicy, salty, or bland. If the taste is agreeable, the mind feels happy (aggregate of feeling). Mind-consciousness recognizes the food as that cooked by a beloved person. And the mind thinks about the thoughtfulness and contributions of the person (aggregate of perception). Thereafter, the mind plans to empathize with the diligent efforts of the beloved and wholesome thoughts arise to take good care of him or her (aggregate of volition).

Example: Sense of touch

When a tactile object is pulled over the body, body-consciousness arises and informs this to be a light contact. Mind-consciousness arises and knows the object to be a blanket that has been pulled over by a beloved person. Happy feelings then arise (aggregate of feeling). And the mind recalls the past agreeable deeds that this person has done towards oneself (aggregate of perception). Thereafter the mind has gratitude and plans to repay the kindness of the person (aggregate of volition).

Example: Mind-sense base

When the mind-sense base contacts a mental phenomenon, mind-consciousness arises. There are four types of circumstances where mind-consciousness can arise independent of contacts between the five sense bases and the five sense objects:

- (i) whilst one is dreaming in sleep;
- (ii) whilst one is caught up in one's wandering thoughts;
- (iii) whilst one is meditating; and
- (iv) whilst one is in a mental state of frenzy or delirium.

When our five sense bases come into contact with the external sense objects, our five sense consciousness arise, followed by the mind-consciousness.

Feelings and thoughts in us arise as a result of being in contact and giving attention to these external sense objects. Depending on the types of feelings and thoughts that arise, either wholesome or unwholesome mind will be generated.

Once we understand this essential relationship and workings of the five aggregates, we would be able to understand how to cultivate wholesome thoughts and mind, and rid the mind of unwholesome thoughts, hence leading to our ultimate liberation.

What are the Aggregate of Volition and the Aggregate of Consciousness?

Aggregate of Volition is a function of determination that arises when the six sense bases come into contact with the six sense objects. The determination will eventually generate future consequences which can be either wholesome, unwholesome or neutral.

The aggregate of volition includes fifty-one⁴ mental factors matching with the mind, as well as twenty-four mental factors not matching with the mind.

The ability to know the fundamental traits or characteristics of an object of perception is a function of the **Aggregate of Consciousness**.

There are a total of six types of consciousness, namely,

- (i) eye-consciousness,
- (ii) ear-consciousness,
- (iii) nose-consciousness,
- (iv) tongue-consciousness,
- (v) body-consciousness, and
- (vi) mind-consciousness.

Eye-consciousness arises when the sense of sight contacts with a visible form. Likewise for the other five types of consciousness, each arises as a result of the sense base contacting with the corresponding sense object.

⁴ Fifty-one mental factors comprise the forty-nine mental factors matching with the mind, the aggregate of feeling, and the aggregate of perception.

Further, the aggregate of consciousness also includes the Seventh Manas Consciousness (第七识: 末那识) and the Eighth Consciousness of Alayavijnana (第八识: 阿赖耶识).

51 mental factors matching with the mind

Mental factors are broadly classified into 6 categories:

- (1) Mental factors common to all consciousness;
- (2) Distinctive mental factors that arise only after particular attention is exerted;
- (3) Wholesome mental factors;
- (4) Fundamental unwholesome mental factors, otherwise known as the fundamental mental defilements;
- (5) Ensuing mental defilements; and
- (6) Indeterminate mental factors.

(1) The five mental factors common to all consciousness are:

(i) contact; (ii) attention; (iii) feeling; (iv) perception; and (v) volition.

These mental factors are common to all sentient beings in the *three worlds of existence* and the nine abodes.

The three worlds of existence refer to:

- (1) the world of sensuous desires consisting of the hell realm, animal realm, hungry ghost realm, asura realm, human realm, and the heavenly realm;
- (2) the world of form; and
- (3) the formless world.

The nine abodes are the:

- (1) Sensuous abodes (these refer to abodes of the heavenly beings in the world of sensuous desires, and the respective abodes of human beings, asuras, hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals)
- (2) First dhyana heavens
- (3) Second dhyana heavens
- (4) Third dhyana heavens
- (5) Fourth dhyana heavens
- (6) Heaven of infinite emptiness
- (7) Heaven of infinite consciousness
- (8) Heaven of nothingness
- (9) Heaven of neither perception nor non-perception

The mental factors are also pervasive across time; they were present in the past, are present now, and will be present in the future.

In all abodes, when the six sense bases meet the six sense objects and give rise to the six types of consciousness, the five common mental factors will set into action first.

Then, the arising of wholesome thoughts, unwholesome thoughts or neither-wholesome-nor-unwholesome thoughts will follow.

The five mental factors common to all consciousness are:

(i) contact; (ii) attention; (iii) feeling; (iv) perception; and (v) volition.

(i) **Contact** happens when a sense base, a sense object, and sense consciousness come into interaction.

Feelings of like or dislike arise when there is contact. Therefore, contact is the result of the interaction or meeting of the six

sense bases, the six sense objects and the six types of consciousness. Conversely, the six sense bases, six sense objects and six types of consciousness are the cause of contact.

Example

When the ear perceives a pleasant sound, ear consciousness and mind consciousness arise. Upon contact of the ear, sound and consciousness, pleasurable feelings arise.

When the eye perceives a person or other visible forms, eye consciousness arises. Here again, feeling of pleasure or displeasure will arise upon contact, depending on individual preferences.

(ii) **Attention** has the function of alerting and leads the mind to be aware of the surrounding. It arises either before or after the sense base perceives the sense object.

When the ear comes into contact with words of praise, ear and mind consciousness will arise. With this contact, agreeable feeling arises and the mind pays attention to content of the speaker's speech and the tone of the speaker's voice.

When the eye perceives a person, eye consciousness and mind consciousness arises. With this contact, disagreeable feelings may arise if it is someone we loath. With this disagreeable feeling, there arises vigilance, when we might for instance, wonder if we should avoid that person.

This vigilance is a form of attention. Therefore, attention can arise before or after a contact.

(iii) **Feeling**: Emotional reception

Feelings can be happy, unhappy, neither happy-nor-unhappy (neutral), sorrow or delight.

When the ear perceives a sound of praise, the mind will direct its attention to the words said. This attention brings about a pleasurable feeling and one pays closer attention to the contents of the speech. As such, happy feelings arise naturally.

A happy, unhappy or neutral feeling arises due to interactions with the external environment when the five sense bases perceive the five sense objects and give rise to the five types of consciousness.

On the other hand, the subtler delightful or sorrowful feelings emanate from our thoughts. This happens when the mind perceives mental phenomena, mind consciousness gives rise to an agreeable feeling.

Neutral feeling refers to neither happy-nor-unhappy feeling, which have neither likes nor dislikes. For example, we experience neutral feeling when walking. Even though the ground might be hard, this does not hamper with the action of walking. Hence the feeling is simply neutral.

However, unhappy feeling arises when we need to climb up a long flight of stairs and work the weight of our bodies against gravity. The mind tends to wonder, "How many more steps do I have to climb before reaching the top?" The mind feels sorrowful when it faces such challenges.

Therefore, different feelings can arise from different interactions between the six sense bases, six sense objects and the six types of consciousness.

Example: Greed arises when happy feeling arises

When used to hearing agreeable words of praise, one will crave for more praises that reinforce the sense of one's 'ego'. When the mind begins to like this happy feeling that arises from praises, the mind will also like the person who gives the praises.

This is how the mind gets whirled and led on by being attached to happy feelings.

Similarly in the instance of anger, when the eyes perceive a disagreeable person, unhappy feelings arise immediately in the mind. The mind will not want to see the person nor even hear the person's name.

(iv) **Perception**: Associative thinking and conjuring of images

Upon contact with words of praise, agreeable feelings arise. And dependent on agreeable feelings, happy feelings arise. Dependent on happy or pleasurable feelings, the mind perceives the other person as good and wonderful. Perception latches on the characteristics of the person and reinforces the thinking that the person is real, driving the mind to continue to yearn for its own perceived happiness.

When the eyes meet a disagreeable person, non-pleasurable feelings arise. The mind dislikes seeing the disagreeable person and hearing the person's name or voice. At this moment, the mind recalls the unhappy past encounters with the person and believes that the person will continue to treat one badly again. Under such afflictive thinking, the mind will perceive what it imagines as real. It is in this way that the mind gets led on by unwholesome thoughts.

(v) **Volition** drives us to generate and create future consequences, which can either be wholesome or unwholesome.

Volition refers to the will. When the mind feels happy, it craves for this happiness to continue and wants to hold on to the happiness forever. Under the influence of volition, the mind thus continuously longs for the beloved other and indulges in one's own happy feelings.

This craving is called greed.

However, non-pleasurable feelings arise when the eyes meet with a disagreeable person. The mind might recall the past deeds of this person and imagine his possible future deeds. The mind might also begin to wonder about his or her motive of being here. And there arise – incessantly – unhappy feelings, worries, sorrows and vexations in the mind. In this moment, the mind abides in anger. The volition that arises is the will to not see the person nor hear the person's voice.

The above explains how the five mental factors common to all consciousness arise within the mind.

Be it in our human realm, hell, animals, hungry ghosts, asuras or the heavenly realms, these five mental factors common to all consciousness exist. From this understanding, we realize that knowing oneself is better than knowing the outer space. The advantages and merits of self-knowledge and self-management can even be said to surpass that of managing a country or even the world.

Both the mental factors common to all consciousness and the distinctive mental factors are dependent on attention.

These attentions can be classified into real attention and visualized attention.

An example of real attention is when we place our attention on the breath, observing its in-and-out movements. This is real attention as the attention is placed on something that actually happens.

An example of visualized attention is when we sustain the visualization of a Buddha image, deliberately bringing to mind the 32 major marks of the Buddha. This is visualized attention as the Buddha is not actually present before our eyes and its image is conjured from our imagination.

(2) The five distinctive mental factors are classified as:

(i) desire, (ii) understanding, (iii) mindfulness, (iv) concentration, and (v) insight.

(i) **Desire** is classified into wholesome, unwholesome, and neutral. When the six types of consciousness arise after the six sense bases perceive the six sense objects, the desire to act either wholesomely or unwholesomely arises in our mind.

Example:

If there arises particular attention when we see a Buddha's image or hear about the Buddha's unsurpassable excellence, the mind will have the desire to realize Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.

The basis of this wholesome desire is the faith that we have in the *Triple Gem*, faith being one of the eleven wholesome mental factors. Therefore, since this desire requires particular attention and particular effort for it to arise, we have to learn from the virtuous ones and the Triple Gem, and also listen regularly to the Dharma. This ensures that wholesome rather than unwholesome desires arise more often in our minds.

On the contrary, if we do not learn from the Triple Gem and do not know the *law of cause-and-effect*, unwholesome desires will arise in our minds when we see wealth and possessions and want to have them.

(ii) **Understanding** means comprehending phenomenon of the mind.

When the mind understands the preciousness of the Buddha's teachings, the resolution to learn the dharma and realize Buddhahood to save all sentient beings from suffering will arise. This wholesome mental factor of wanting to realize Buddhahood arises because of the understanding that attaining Buddhahood is truly delightful, as it is beneficial to oneself and others.

Besides attaining liberation, the unsurpassable qualities of the Buddha can save sentient beings. Therefore, when we make such an aspiration, we are willing to give our possessions and wealth to others, tolerate hurts from others, and be compassionate and forgiving towards others. This is a form of wholesome understanding, i.e. it leads us onto the right path leading to the end of all suffering.

On the contrary, people who do not know the Buddha's teachings may understand wealth as one's basis to command wishes and aggrandize status and social reputation. This wrong understanding in turn would give rise to many unwholesome mental factors such as greed and hatred.

For instance, when a man sees that another who is rich appears to be able to have things his way, and that seeing someone with a beautiful wife can enjoy praises and admiration from others, he will find all means to pursue a desirably beautiful partner and buy the lottery in the hopes of becoming a millionaire.

Therefore, if we do not have *right understanding*, greed and other unwholesome mental factors will arise and devour our minds, leading us to perform one unwholesome deed after another. In listening to and contemplating the dharma, we have to generate faith in the Triple Gem and the four noble truths, aspire to realize Buddhahood, and have proper understanding of the mundane world.

Equipped with this right understanding, we can think positively when being criticized or slandered. We take the perspective that others are helping us to remove our attachments to our egos, and that we should have *compassion* for others who are under the influence of mental afflictions. Understanding that unwholesome deeds will eventually bring about unwholesome results in the future, we learn to be more forgiving towards others.

(iii) **Mindfulness** is about constantly recollecting and keeping the Buddha Dharma in mind.

If we abide in the teachings of the Buddha, we will be mindful of karma, Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* in each and every day.

This helps us to stay mindful of karma in any encounters. We would realize that all things are the effect of karma: good begets good, and evil begets evil. Otherwise, our mind is preoccupied with getting richer, thinking about beauties or handsome men, craving for food, dreaming about being in the limelight or strategizing for higher profiles.

Selecting beneficial programs can help us to curb our negative and unhealthy desires. This helps us to stay mindful of the Triple Gem and be liberated from samsara.

(iv) **Concentration** refers to undivided focus of mind on an object, giving rise to zest and vigor.

When the mind is focused on its object of mindfulness, concentration will arise in the mind, generating more strength and power within.

For example, if a person perceives that obtaining a PhD would enable him to do good in society, he will put in his best to achieve this goal. With this determination, his mind will be focused, concentrated, and directed. As such, this person will surge forward with zeal, vigor, and courage to perform well in his studies. This is an example of the power of concentration.

The Buddha once said, "With concentration, nothing is unachievable." This type of concentration is wholesome.

However, some people may direct their minds on evil thoughts and scheme on unwholesome goals. For instance, when a

robber's mind is set on stealing, he will strategize to realize and complete this unwholesome act.

Therefore, concentration can be either wholesome or unwholesome. As followers of the Buddha's teachings, we should focus our minds on the wholesome so as to realize goals that are wholesome. Otherwise, our lives will be put to tragic waste.

(v) **Insight** refers either to tainted and mundane insight or perfect and pure supramundane insight. Tainted mundane insight does not correspond with pure insight.

For instance, there are astute people in the mundane world who are intelligent and capable. However, their intelligence and capability are used to pursue fame and wealth, or to scheme and hurt others.

A perfect and pure insight can lead us to liberation. This is achieved through the practice of the *Four Foundations of Mindfulness*, the *Four Right Efforts*, the *Four Ways of Attaining Samadhi*, the *Five Wholesome Faculties*, the *Five Powers*, and the *Seven Factors of Enlightenment*.

The perfect and pure insight can also lead to the realization of Buddhahood through the practice of the six paramitas and is necessary for complete attainment of the *Ten Bhumis*.

If we understand the operation of the mental factors, we would pay more attention to our mind and ensure that our thoughts respond wholesomely whenever the six sense bases contact with the six sense objects.

For instance, how do we help others who commit unwholesome deeds?

To help others, we must first be equipped with the right knowledge and abilities in order to safeguard ourselves from partaking in unwholesome deeds. Though we might not have the sufficient means presently to help others, we can always make an aspiration to do so in the future.

There is a type of compassion known as 'afflictive compassion', i.e. compassion that is tainted by attachment and wrong views. For instance, some people may have empathy for beings who would be descending to hell and wish to join them, thinking that the latter are lonely and unsupported. This is foolish thinking as we need to be equipped with the merits equivalent to that of non-regressing Bodhisattvas in order to save sentient beings in the hell realm.

Arahats are also compassionate and possess abilities to save sentient beings in hell realms. The only difference is that Arahats do not have the means equal to that of Bodhisattvas (who vow to stay in the hell realms) to guide and save them. When Venerable Maha-Maudgalyayana saw Devadatta and Gokali suffering in hell, he entered the hell realm to guide and save them. However, they refused to heed Venerable Maha-Maudgalyayana's advice and thus continued to suffer in hell realms for a very long time.

If we hear someone say, "I want to save sentient beings who are suffering in hell", the most appropriate response would be to encourage him to practice the dharma so that he can realize the state of non-regressing Bodhisattvahood. With this realization, he will then have the merits to fulfil his wish to save all sentient beings. Otherwise, he may fall into the wrong path and end up suffering.

To tread our path on to Buddhahood, our mind should abide in wholesome desire, right understanding, *right mindfulness*, *right concentration* and right insight.

(3) The eleven wholesome mental factors are:

(i) faith; (ii) diligence; (iii) inner shame; (iv) abashed-ness; (v) absence of greed; (vi) absence of anger; (vii) absence of delusion; (viii) non-harming; (ix) tranquility and ease; (x) heedfulness; and (xi) equanimity.

(i) **Faith** is undoubting belief in all wholesomeness. Faith is classified into three types:

(a) Faith that Truth (*bhutatathata*) exists.

(b) Faith in the Virtuous, i.e. firmly believing that the Triple Gem is pure and virtuous.

(c) Faith in the Reachable, i.e. firmly believing that whatever goodness and wholesomeness there are in the mundane and supramundane world is reachable, achievable, and realizable.

Faith therefore means faith in the Triple Gem; the Buddha, the Dharma, the *Sangha*, the Four Noble Truths, the Six Paramitas, and faith that the complete training of the Ten Bhumis leads to the realization of Buddhahood. Faith also means believing that there were indeed Buddhas, Arahats, and Bodhisattvas in the past, and that they truly accomplished their fruitions through cultivating their minds. And faith includes having faith in ourselves that we too are able to achieve what the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arahats had realized, and that we definitely can do so with diligent training and practice.

The development and deepening of our faith in the teachings of the Buddha is built upon seeing, listening, and contemplating the Triple Gem and the teachings of the Buddha. Therefore, we aspire to stay close to the Triple Gem and strive to be like the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and Arahats.

Listening to the dharma teachings of the sangha helps to deepen our faith in the Triple Gem, in the virtuous ones, and in ourselves.

Through this, our wholesome desires will gradually increase and assist us in developing proper understanding of our lives.

Example:

The Agama Sutra records the encounter between a brahmin laywoman named Susima and Venerable Mahakausthila.

On one occasion, Susima visited Venerable Mahakausthila for the purpose of seeking the Dharma.

"Venerable, I would like to ask a question."

"Please do", replied Venerable Mahakausthila.

"Before the Buddha realized Buddhahood, the Blessed One met two dhyana practitioners. After realizing Buddhahood, the Buddha told us that one of the dhyana practitioners had taken rebirth in the realm of nothingness and that the other had taken rebirth in the realm of neither perception nor non-perception.

One of the dhyana practitioners, upon his expiration in the heavenly realm, took rebirth as a king of a kingdom without Buddhism, eventually killing many people and ended up in the hells. The other dhyana practitioner, after his death in the heavenly realm, took rebirth as a flying fox that preys on other animals and eventually also ended up in the hells.

The Buddha had compassionately explained to us the outcomes of these two dhyana practitioners. However, the Buddha did not tell us when the two dhyana practitioners would realize complete Buddhahood."

Venerable Mahakausthila answered, "The reason why the Buddha did not elaborate further was because no one had raised this question to the Buddha. The dharma had to be sought before the Buddha would explain, just like how Brahma

Sahampati requested the Buddha to proclaim the dharma that the Buddha had realized. And since no one had asked when the two dhyana practitioners would realize Buddhahood, the Buddha spoke only about their rebirths in the hells. If the Buddha were still around and if you asked the Blessed One, he would tell you."

"May I know where the Buddha is now? I would like to ask the Blessed One this question", asked Susima.

"The Buddha had entered into *Parinirvana* and you would not be able to ask him anymore", said Venerable Mahakausthila.

"Venerable, do you know when the two dhyana practitioners would realize Buddhahood?"

"I do not know either. Arahats do not know. Only Buddha knows", replied Venerable Mahakausthila.

At that moment, Susima's faith in the Buddha deepened, as she firmly believed that only Buddha has answers to all questions. She also gained deep confidence that she would one day realize Buddhahood. Therefore, she made an aspiration before the Arahat Venerable Mahakausthila that she would want to be like the Buddha, and thereafter practiced diligently to end all suffering.

Susima is a role model for us as she had deep faith in the Triple Gem, in herself, in the law of cause-and-effect, and she was diligent in her practice to reach her goal.

- (ii) **Diligence** in cultivating all good and abandoning all evil means continuously cleaning the mind of what is unwholesome and cultivating that which is wholesome. Continual diligence ensures that one progresses steadily on the path and prevents one from regressing.

Diligence is not the same as heedfulness. One is heedful because one has given up greed, anger, and delusion, and is diligent in the practice of the Four Right Efforts.

The Buddha constantly reminds us not to be heedless and to continuously keep ourselves on the Eightfold Noble Path. The Four Right Efforts are related to the Right Diligence in the Eightfold Noble Path.

The Wholesome Faculty of Diligence, Power of Diligence and the Factor of Diligence are the same as the Paramita of Diligence mentioned in the Six Paramitas.

Example:

Venerable Srotravimsatikoti was a man full of merits. He was born into a wealthy family and had very fine hairs on his feet. He was a diligent practitioner – so diligent was he that the soles of his feet became all wounded from his walking meditations. However, he still had not realized liberation.

This made him reflect, "I am already so diligent. But why have I not realized the fruits of my practice? Should I disrobe and return to the lay life instead?"

When the Buddha knew that Venerable Srotravimsatikoti harbored such thoughts, the Blessed One came to counsel him. "Good Srotravimsatikoti, what do you do when you tune the strings of your musical instrument too tightly?"

"I would tune the strings of my instrument less tightly, Blessed One", replied Venerable Srotravimsatikoti.

"And what do you do when you tune the strings of your instrument too loosely?" asked the Buddha.

"I would tune the strings of my instrument tighter, Blessed One", Venerable Srotravimsatikoti answered humbly.

"Now good Srotravimsatikoti, if your instrument is tuned neither too tightly nor too loosely, is the sound that comes from your instrument pleasant to the ears?"

"Yes, it is."

"Good Srotravimsatikoti, likewise for your practice. Do not be too hard-pressured but at the same time, do not be lazy. Just practice according to what I have taught – that is, diligently cultivate the wholesome and abandon the unwholesome."

Thereafter, Venerable Srotravimsatikoti practiced as taught by the Buddha and realized *Arahatship* very soon after.

(iii) **Inner shame:** In Buddhism, inner shame is different from abashed-ness. Inner shame is feeling ashamed of own misdeeds after reflection and knowing one's imperfections thereafter, know to respect and learn from others who are more virtuous.

Abashed-ness means to acknowledge our unwholesome habits of thoughts and to diligently correct our weaknesses.

To seek improvement in our daily lives, we have to constantly reflect on these two key points. If we do not possess the slightest tinge of inner shame and abashed-ness regarding our misdeeds, we are definitely heading down the wrong path.

The Buddha said in the Agama Sutra, "Two purities reign in the mundane world: one being inner shame and the other being abashed-ness."

As part of the mundane world, we should perform good deeds, abandon evils, and practice the Buddha's teachings.

If we do not take any shame in our wrongs, we are liable to suffer in the hells in future. The importance of inner shame and abashed-ness are thus evident.

Example:

In the time of the Buddha, there was a king who wanted to make offerings to the Arahats. The king requested of the Buddha, "Blessed One, please allow the Arahats bhikshus to accept my offerings tomorrow."

The Buddha, having known the king's wish, said to the bhikshus, "Whoever amongst this sangha community has attained Arahatship, please raise up a bamboo chip as a sign of your attainment. And you would represent the sangha to accept the king's offerings tomorrow."

In the sangha community there was a *Srotapanna* who had attained to the first level of fruition but not yet attained Arahatship.

Just then, the *Srotapanna* bhikshu thought, "My juniors who entered the sangha later than me had already attained Arahatship. However, I am still a *Srotapanna*, yet to completely eradicate all mental defilements. I should not disappoint myself, the Buddhas, and the sangha. Even though I have yet to attain, I will still continue to surge forward with unflinching diligence to complete my holy path."

Therefore, the *Srotapanna* bhikshu seized the day's opportunity to further his practice, ultimately attaining Arahatship at the end of the day. Having realized Arahatship, the bhikshu joined the other Arahats in accepting the king's offerings.

Why was the *Srotapanna* so diligent? It is because he had inner shame and felt that he had not sufficiently respected the dharma and Arahats. Therefore, this inner shame drove him to

deepen his practice and eventually led him to realize the final fruition of the holy life.

Therefore, whether we are lay people or renunciants, we should always feel inner shame and be abashed of the wrongs that we have done or the imperfections that we have.

(iv) **Abashed-ness**: feeling shameful before others after acknowledging one's own faults and wrongdoings.

Someone who feels ashamed for the wrongs that one has committed towards society would likewise feel shameful for not having put the Buddha's teachings into practice.

We should avoid wrongdoings so as to prevent being criticized or slandered by others.

Example:

Once, a bhikshu was travelling on the roads for his alms round. When he saw a beautiful lady, his mind became engulfed in desires. But he knew that if he were to give in to the desires, he would be disappointing the Triple Gem.

Hence, the bhikshu humbly sought guidance from Venerable Ananda on how to extinguish the desires burning in his heart.

The compassionate Venerable Ananda then taught the bhikshu to meditate on the loathsomeness of the body and contemplate on whether there is, in ultimate reality, a 'beautiful woman'.

So the bhikshu went to a quiet spot, settled in solitude, followed the instructions of Venerable Ananda diligently and attained Arahathship after deep contemplation.

From this anecdote, we can see that inner shame and abashed-ness are two very powerful mental factors that can give us the drive and zeal to strive hard on the holy path.

(v) **Absence of greed**: feeling dispassion towards the five objects of desires.

The three wholesome roots refer to the absence of greed, absence of anger, and absence of delusion. These three wholesome roots are very important.

We refer to them as "roots" for their ability to extend and grow, as well as for their associations with the primary cause. It is just like a tree that is dependent on its roots for the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits to flourish and grow, and for the tree to withstand against collapse due to external factors such as strong winds. The three wholesome roots have the same purpose to entrench and grow in our cultivation towards the path of liberation.

Absence of greed means being able to let go and give others the wealth, possessions, merits, and status that we had already acquired. If we have yet to acquire these and have no desire to pursue them, only then may we be considered as someone who is not greedy.

Example 1:

In the Analects, Confucius asked his two students Zi Lu and Yan Hui, "Tell us your aspirations."

Zi Lu said, "I aspire to share my carriages, horses, and clothing with my friends. I would not have any regrets, even if they then become worn out by use."

This is a good example of absence of greed that we should learn from Zi Lu.

To aspire to realize Buddhahood is a wholesome desire, which is different from pursuing transient worldly happiness in the saha world. Therefore, with this wholesome root of non-greed, we

may extend the offering of our external possessions such as money, to gradually being comfortable with offering our internal properties such as our organs and even lives, to help eradicate our greed.

Through this progressive development, we would eventually be like the Buddha, being able to give to all sentient beings generously without reservations, fulfilling their wishes with unparalleled ease and happiness.

The other of Confucius' student, Yan Hui, answered, "I aspire to do all good and would never boast about my good deeds." This is another example of non-greed. And indeed, Yan Hui was one of the best students of Confucius in terms of his virtues and self-cultivation.

While Confucius was a sage in the mundane world, the Buddha was a sage in both the mundane and supramundane worlds. Therefore, we should learn from the Buddha and at the same time, also respect Confucius for his virtues and cultivation.

Example 2:

How should we respond when someone comes to us for alms?

When someone approaches us for alms, we should be happy to have this opportunity to give. However, if we do not have enough monies to offer, we can always give according to our means gladly. This is to train us to let go of greed in whatever circumstances we might find ourselves in, and gradually develop a wholesome mind.

(vi) **Absence of anger**: not getting angry in face of disagreeable situations.

To benefit sentient beings, we have to cultivate *great compassion* which can be nurtured by checking and holding back

our anger. Anger is triggered by non-pleasurable feelings when the six types of consciousness arise upon the six sense bases and the six sense objects coming into contact.

Example 1:

The Buddha was a king named Dhigiti in one of his past lives. At that time, his kingdom was constantly waging war with another kingdom. One day, King Dhigiti thought, "Fighting with the other kingdom brings about great loss of lives and damage. I should just relinquish my kingship and surrender my kingdom to the other king." Therefore, King Dhigiti together with the queen, left to inhabit within the deep mountains. But it was not too long before King Dhigiti was held captive by the other king.

Before King Dhigiti was killed, he told his prince, "Never judge others based on their strengths or shortcomings. Do not seek revenge just because I have lost my life and this body. Since time immemorial, all of us have been seeking revenge against one another, thinking that this would redress vengeance for the loss of our loved ones. However, hatred is not conquered by hatred. Hatred is conquered by compassion and forgiveness – this is the timeless truth. Please bear this in mind, my good son."

Even though King Dhigiti was faced with people who harbored deep hatred and vengeance toward him, he nevertheless responded to them with forgiveness and compassion.

After the demise of his father, the prince sought many opportunities to get close to the evil king who had killed his father. As the prince picked up many skills and capabilities, he eventually won the trust of the evil king. One day, the prince was alone with the evil king. The king was sleeping soundly and the prince had three opportunities to kill the evil king. But he did not do so, upon recalling the last words of his deceased father. Just then, the prince dropped the knife that he was holding in his hands.

The dropping of the knife awakened the evil king from his sleep. He probed the prince and upon finding out that the prince was the son of King Dhigiti, he not only returned the prince the kingdom belonging to his deceased father but also bequeathed his daughter to the prince. The relationship between the two hence transformed from enmity to that of familial. Why was the prince able to let go of seeking revenge for his father?

It was because he had the wholesome root of the absence of anger.

The king was the Buddha in his past life, while the prince was Venerable Ananda.

The Buddha is truly very compassionate to tell us about his past lives so that we can be reminded of how to be a good person in the mundane and supramundane worlds. Through relating accounts of his past lives, we also become clear of how to tread on the right path toward liberation.

Therefore, we should spend more time reading the sutras. There is an old Chinese saying that goes, "Three days without books makes one's demeanor detestable." Should we not be reading the Buddhist sutras which teach us virtues and fill our minds with wholesome thoughts, we would easily flow along with the worldly currents of the *five desires*, increasing the greed, anger, and delusion that are already poisoning our minds.

On the contrary, if we could surround ourselves with the wholesome dharma, reading a little of the Buddha's teachings consistently every day, we would strengthen the wholesome roots of non-greed, non-anger and non-delusion. With these wholesome thoughts strengthened, we will not be afraid to meet with difficult situations in life.

So in our everyday lives, let us take heed to associate ourselves with good influences, diligently strive to listen to the dharma and have right, wholesome thoughts. As we take a leaf out of the relationships between the two kings and the prince in our dealings with adversaries, let us learn to let go of all unhappy thoughts and vengeance in our hearts. When we forgive others, we are in actual fact forgiving ourselves. Likewise, being compassionate to others is actually bestowing compassion towards oneself.

Example 2:

Once, the asuras lost a battle to King *Sakra*. The asuras, being terribly upset, scolded and slandered King *Sakra* continuously. However, King *Sakra* was not angered.

The attendants of King *Sakra*, however, were furious and felt that it was unfair for the King.

Knowing this, King *Sakra* said, "Do not get embroiled in the affairs of the unwholesome beings. When they try to provoke us, we should take this as an opportunity to practice patience and goodwill.

"How might we do so?" asked the attendants.

"We bear in mind that if the opponent is stronger than me, he can kill me easily. Therefore, I will practice forbearance.

"It is because of this fear of death that I practice forbearance. So this patience is called forbearance that arises from fear.

"If the opponent is my equal, I should also practice forbearance and not wage a war with him. Why? Because both sides will suffer losses in this war of equals. This forbearance is called forbearance that arises from appeasement.

"And if the opponent is weaker than me, I can easily defeat him. But I will still practice forbearance. Why? Because a victory is already gained and a winner already made from not resorting to fights.

"Even if we gain victory from entering into a fight with the weaker opponent, there is nothing that would command respect from others. Further, it is unhealthy to bear a wrathful heart. Stirring up disputes is also not advantageous to others. Hence, we should be compassionate towards ourselves and others. This is called the unparalleled forbearance."

After listening to the teachings of King Sakra, the attendants understood the benefits of practicing forbearance and thus no longer respond to the asuras with wrath.

This story can uplift us and assist our practice of cultivating the wholesome root of non-hatred.

In our lives, when our six sense bases come into contact with the six sense objects, giving rise to the six consciousness and the common mental factors of feelings, perception and volition, we can then be mindful of the five distinctive mental factors which subsequently arise, to mindfully cultivate non-hatred.

(vii) **Absence of delusion**: true insight and wisdom of all dharma.

When we contemplate that all phenomena arise because of causes and conditions, that there exist the four noble truths, and that there are sages who have followed the path and attained liberation, we would feel deep gratitude for all the causes and conditions that occur in our lives.

Example 1:

The formation of a family unit requires a wife and a husband. Married couples should feel grateful and be understanding towards each other.

When we begin to see the interconnectivity of causes and conditions, our minds will gradually develop a sense of gratitude towards all things in life. It is in this way that the wholesome root of wisdom develops.

Example 2:

In a workplace, the success of a company depends on the hard work of the subordinates. Therefore, a company should be thankful for the efforts of the subordinates.

A superior once said, "The prosperity of a company is dependent on the prosperity of its employees."

This superior recognizes the inter-dependent relationship that exists between a company and its subordinates. The company should not take advantage of its employees to benefit the company. If the company reaps benefits, it should share them with its employers as this will ultimately benefit everyone.

We would feel grateful for everything in life once we understand that all things arise dependent on causes and conditions. With this, our wholesome roots of wisdom will gradually grow and develop.

(viii) **Non-harming:** not harming the lives of others, not damaging the possessions, wealth, and repute of others, but benefiting others in various ways.

The mental factor of non-harming refers to not retaliating to others with harm despite being in the face of anger, ill will, or harm.

When the body is harmed by others, or when negatively confronted by sense objects, we should not respond with harm but instead benefit and find ways to help the provocateur, if possible.

The Buddha once said that he was a heavenly being who had practiced forbearance. When an evil king saw that he was teaching the dharma to the palace maidens, the king grew jealous of him and used knives and whips to torture him. However, not only did the Buddha in his past life not retaliate with harm, he even made the aspiration to save the evil king upon attaining Buddhahood in the future.

It is because the Buddha had cultivated the wholesome root of non-harm in his past lives that he was able to respond without any harm to people who had hurt him.

When others scold us, our ear sense base comes into contact with the sounds of their angry words leading to the arising of the ear consciousness. The mind consciousness discern the meaning of these words and lead us to experience a disagreeable feeling. We might initially feel anger rise inside us, but if we mindfully call up our wholesome mental factor of non-harm, we can extinguish all negative afflictions, and even generate the aspiration and goodwill to help the perpetrator. At this point, under the influence of wholesome thoughts, we can respond with a calm attitude and think of how to help him let go of his anger.

Therefore, by virtue of the transformation of one thought, the world that follows can be transformed.

(ix) **Tranquility and ease**: the ease of mind that overcomes lethargy, which relieves burdens off the mind and brings about inner peace.

Meditation brings about three mental factors: tranquil ease, heedfulness, and equanimity.

Tranquil ease arises in the body and mind when the mind settles down in meditation. The body gradually feels lighter and lighter, and the mind feels increasingly at peace. With this tranquil ease, lethargy and sluggishness do not arise. Meditating in this

tranquil state with focused attention on a meditative object, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.

- (x) **Heedfulness** is absence of greed, absence of anger, absence of delusion, and also diligence in accomplishing all wholesome deeds.

In the Agama Sutra, the Buddha said that heedfulness in practicing the Eightfold Noble Path is the way to Nirvana.

We recall that heedfulness entails the absence of greed. The practice of *Right Speech*, *Right Action*, and *Right Livelihood* on the Eightfold Noble Path helps to cultivate non-greed. Heedfulness also entails the absence of anger. The practice of Right Concentration on the Eightfold Noble Path cultivates the mental factor of compassion and hence non-anger. In addition, heedfulness comprises the absence of delusion—which the factor of Right View in the Eightfold Noble Path addresses with non-ignorance. Lastly, diligence being the fourth constituent of heedfulness, is itself manifested by the very practice of the Eightfold Noble Path.

Therefore, the Eightfold Noble Path is the only way to attain different levels of samadhi and ultimately towards Nirvana.

- (xi) **Equanimity** is the letting go of sloth in practice and also of any successes gained from practice.

The Buddha said, "Even the dharma has to be let go of, what more the unwholesome?"

The practice of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment culminates in the perfection of equanimity where we release attachment to any results and merits that are gained from our practice. This is because whatever we cling on to, even good results from our practice, would still be a burden to the mind. And this burden of the mind will eventually give rise to future mental defilements.

To complete the stage of perfection of samadhi, the final wholesome mental factor to cultivate is equanimity. From this, we can see that our practice has to be done progressively in successions.

Since we know it is possible to generate any of the eleven wholesome mental factors in both the common and distinctive mental factors, we will be at ease no matter what comes our way. If we master these eleven wholesome mental factors, we can cultivate ourselves into wholesome people.

(4) The six fundamental mental defilements are:

(i) greed; (ii) anger; (iii) delusion; (iv) conceit; (v) doubt; and (vi) wrong view.

Example:

During the Jin Dynasty of ancient China, there lived a formidable ruffian named Zhou Chu who was extremely overbearing in his village and much feared by the villagers. At that time, the villagers spoke of three harms endangering the entire village:

- (i) a *naga* of the northern sea,
- (ii) a tiger in the southern mountains, and
- (iii) Zhou Chu himself.

On one occasion, having been inspired to do some good, Zhou Chu told the villagers that he would set out to remove the three harms from the village to alleviate the villagers' fears. Hence with much effort, Zhou Chu managed to exterminate the naga and the tiger. The villagers were very happy as the two fearful harms have been removed.

However, Zhou Chu continued to sense that the villagers were still living uneasily in fright. And so he asked them what were they still fearful of? One of the compassionate villagers reminded him that while the naga and the tiger only constituted

danger to the villagers when they appeared once in a while, there was another harm that would frequently appear at any time, and hence the villagers were constantly living in fear. And this harm was Zhou Chu himself.

Extremely puzzled, Zhou Chu could not understand what was not good about him.

The person said, "The ruffian roams around in the village however he likes. When met with things that are disagreeable, he will curse and beat people up, causing others to suffer. When someone angers him, he would even resort to killing this antagonist. Isn't he more fearsome than the beasts?"

Taking all this in, Zhou Chu pondered over and reflected on his own deeds thoroughly, with a mind without anger. He knew that his acts were wrong and felt deep shame, which prompted the arising of all eleven wholesome mental factors. At this juncture, Zhou Chu set down his determination to be a good person. Henceforth, he recognized himself and his own faults clearly and worked hard not to let unwholesome mental afflictions arise in his mind. He practiced to develop his wholesome qualities and abandoned his unwholesome qualities. The former Zhou Chu whom the villagers used to be afraid of, had turned over a new leaf and became a compassionate Zhou Chu. From then on, the village transformed to become very harmonious and peaceful. Hence, Zhou Chu had indeed fulfilled his promise to remove the three harms from the village.

In a similar vein, are we also the same as the former Zhou Chu, one who resorts to anger and violence very often whenever our six sense bases interact with disagreeable sense objects and give rise to all sorts of negative perceptions, thoughts, and feelings?

Therefore, we have to cultivate the eleven wholesome mental factors and let our minds abide in a state that is free of greed, anger, and delusion.

With firm resolve, we strive to improve ourselves and be a better person every day. If we do so, our lives and the people around us will be happier. Ultimately, happiness in the family all starts with the self who is willing to transform in the likes of the new Zhou Chu.

There are six fundamental mental defilements, namely: greed, anger, delusion, conceit, doubt, and wrong view.

Wrong view can even be further sub-divided into five kinds of wrong views, which are: the view that body is self, extreme view, perverse view (thinking that there is no cause-and-effect), the view that mortification practice is a means to liberation, and perverse belief (treating what is not Nirvana as Nirvana).

If we want to liberate ourselves from these mental defilements, we have to first understand what mental defilements are in order to know how to remove these poisons from our hearts.

(i) **Greed** is excessive wanting of something.

Example 1:

Liu Bang was an official who lived during the Chu-Han contention in ancient China. When Liu Bang saw the huge armies that Emperor Qin commanded, he thought that a great man should be as such. Here, it is evident that Liu Bang was desirous of the fame and status of an emperor.

As Buddhists, we would want to be like the Buddha. However, this wanting is different from the greed that Liu Bang had, as unlike our wholesome motivations, Liu Bang's greed was driven by desires for worldly fame and power.

Another warlord called Xiang Yu, who also lived during the times of the Chu-Han contention, was greedier than Liu Bang. For when Xiang Yu saw Emperor Qin, his thoughts were that of defeating Emperor Qin and reigning the Qin kingdom by himself. So from this, we can see that the greed of Xiang Yu was stronger than Liu Bang.

Example 2:

Competing with others in our workplaces for status and titles rather than contemplating how to sow our own seeds of good fortunes by our own sincere efforts is also the manifestation of greed.

Example 3:

When doing grocery shopping in the market, some people may ask the vendors to throw in some extra groceries for free, such as onion roots. This is greed because it is not the vendors who have initiated the offer.

Example 4:

There are some people who deliberately drive past some shops just to catch a glimpse of the good-looking sales promoters. This is a more subtle kind of greed. If we are able to observe this mental factor, we should endeavor to practice diligently and rid the mind of this greed.

(ii) **Anger** refers to soreness, displeasure or enmity towards disagreeable people, incidents or things.

Quite often, we get angry at someone else when our kindness is not reciprocated.

Example 1:

As students, we tend to feel angry when we are being admonished or chastised by our teachers. If we notice this, we

should quickly mend our ways. Otherwise, not respecting our teachers and elders will result in lowly births or the lack of wisdom. We will also fall into the hell realms if we hurl rude words at them. The Precious Jeweled Repentance of Emperor Liang records that those who disrespect the elders and teachers are committing an immeasurable sin.

Example 2:

Nowadays, many people use social media platforms to publish their thoughts, views and criticisms. When the discourse is inappropriate, the author often has to suffer lambasts from the public or worse, to have to make a public apology under social media pressure. And the cause of all these is usually due to some words. These words come into contact with the sense bases and stirred up the hatred feelings and anger in many, including the self, which is not good.

Example 3:

When reprimanded, some women would vent their anger on others such as their children, helpers or even at animals such as dogs. Thus, the examples aforementioned demonstrate that it is very important to recognize and eliminate anger from our minds.

(iii) **Delusion**, simply put, is not knowing or not understanding the law of cause-and-effect. It refers to lack of right view, mistaking the good for the bad and vice versa.

It also means not knowing the four noble truths, not knowing that there is a path to liberation, not knowing that one has been traversing in the cycle of births and deaths since beginning-less time, and not knowing the difference between good and bad.

Example 1:

One instance of delusion is thinking that having beads blessed from Venerables would keep dangers away from our lives.

Example 2:

When illnesses strike, people hurry around looking for sorcerers to cure their ailments. They do not know that illnesses are the results of one's past deeds and actions. Furthermore, they do not know that like all other conditioned phenomena, illnesses and the body are also impermanent and would eventually deteriorate. If we understand karma and the four noble truths, we would not be fooled by our incorrect views.

Example 3:

Nowadays, there are a considerable number of people who choose to go for abortion, viewing it as a liberal choice. However, seeking abortions or performing abortions on others are foolish acts, as they constitute as killing.

Example 4:

Foolishness is also evidenced if we do not know the potential consequences of our actions. Once, there was a very resilient and magnanimous minister. He was not easily provoked, even if others speak ill of him. The minister was a man who would carefully consider cause-and-effect relationships in anything he did. As such, he would reject anyone's requests if they were deemed as inappropriate. Therefore, scheming people would turn to his wife for requests, attempting to influence the minister through his wife to advance their personal benefits.

One day, the minister reproached his wife for lacking acumen of foresight when she tried to persuade him into assisting someone.

The minister chided, "If you do not think before you act, you would make wrong decisions without even knowing."

Therefore, as followers of the Buddha, we have to learn from the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arahats to be mindful of the consequences of our actions.

Example 5:

Laities should never accept gifts from monks or nuns, as this would cause the gradual erosion of respect for the sangha.

(iv) **Conceit:** There are seven types of conceit:

- (1)(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are inferior to them (mana);
(b) Conceit in regarding oneself to be of equal standing to someone who is comparable to them (mana).
- (2)(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are actually comparable to them (atimana);
(b) Conceit in regarding oneself as comparable to others who are actually superior (atimana).
- (3) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are actually relatively superior (manati-mana).
- (4) Conceit in regarding oneself as having an enduring 'ego' from grasping to the five aggregates (asmimana).
- (5) Conceit in over-estimating oneself as having attained Nirvana (adhimana).
- (6)(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as inferior, as not capable of realizing Buddhahood (avamana).
(b) Conceit in regarding oneself as slightly inferior than another (avamana).
- (7) Conceit in posturing oneself as virtuous when in fact one lacks virtues (mithyamana).

1(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are inferior to them (mana): this type of conceit makes one look down on others who are not as good as oneself. This type of person tends to harbor thoughts like –

"My knowledge in Buddhism is better than his.

My appearance is better than his.

My clan is richer than his.

I am more youthful than him.

I am healthier than he is.

I am more virtuous and I uphold the precepts better than he does."

One who harbors such thoughts will not gain ultimate liberation but gradually become more and more conceited.

Example:

After the Buddha realized enlightenment, many of the Buddha's princely kinsmen from his Sakya clan wanted to join the sangha. Also keen on joining the sangha was a lowly servant called Upali. But thinking that he was ineligible because of his lowly birth and status, Upali only cowered in sadness in one corner.

Eventually due to certain causes and conditions, the Buddha ordained Upali before many princely kinsmen, and he would later become known as one of Buddha's foremost disciples, who was the foremost in keeping to the precepts. According to the Vinaya, a bhikshu who receives precepts later than another has to pay obeisance to the bhikshu who had received the precepts earlier; thus seniority is neither based on age nor societal class status. Furthermore, *bhikshunis* cannot be lined together with bhikshus. And a one-hundred-year-old bhikshuni has to pay obeisance to a bhikshu who has just received the precepts.

At that moment when the Buddha's kinsmen wanted to ordain, they realized that Upali had already ordained before them. The

Buddha compassionately instructed his kinsmen to pay obeisance to Venerable Upali. However, the princely kinsmen refused to do so because they still took Venerable Upali as one from a lowly birth and status. The Buddha continued to teach and remind the bhikshus to let go of their past princely identities, that they bow to Venerable Upali, so as to remove their pride and conceit. Through the Buddha's counseling and their own practice, the bhikshus eventually realized Arahatsip.

When a teacher realizes that his disciple is conceited or has grown conceited, the teacher should never allow the disciple to hold any special title because doing so will only further reinforce the disciple's conceit. Therefore, a wise teacher would model Buddha's teaching to guide his students.

1(b) Conceit in regarding oneself to be of equal standing to someone who is comparable to them (mana):

One with such attitude tends to ignore someone who is equally knowledgeable and capable in terms of practice and upholding the precepts. As the old saying goes, "the learned looks down on another learned".

2(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are actually comparable to them (atimana):

This form of conceit makes someone think that he or she is better than another equal. The annals of Chinese history record a story of Lian Bo and Lin Xiang Ru, a general and a court official respectively. Even though Lian Bo and Lin Xiang Ru were equals, Lian Bo became angry of Lin Xiang Ru when he, upon his return from the battle grounds where he had been based for a long time, discovered that the emperor had become very trusting of Lin Xiang Ru. This is conceit in regarding oneself as superior to equals.

2(b) Conceit in regarding oneself as comparable to others who are actually superior (atimana): one thinks that one is equal to another who is actually more superior in terms of knowledge and keeping the precepts. Some people would not admit defeat to another and this is common amongst women. When others do not listen to their instructions or commands, women often get angry. This is actually conceit in regarding oneself as comparable to others who are actually superior.

(3) Conceit in regarding oneself as superior to others who are actually relatively superior (manati-mana): such conceit makes the person think that he or she is more superior to others who are in fact better. This type of conceit is more serious than conceit in regarding oneself as superior to equals or regarding oneself as equal to superiors.

Such conceit is seen in women who have the habit of assuming superiority, going around ordering men to run errands.

The story about Ye Lang who claimed that his kingdom was larger than another kingdom when in fact his kingdom was much smaller, is an example of such conceit.

In the Buddha's teachings, bhikhunis have to respect bhikshus and should not compare themselves with the bhikshus, thinking that they are superior to the latter. We are fortunate, as the compassionate Buddha had pointed out these subtleties to rid our minds of all kinds of conceit.

(4) Conceit in regarding oneself as having an enduring 'ego' from grasping to the five aggregates (asmimana). One grasps on to the five aggregates and think, "This self is real. I am the best." Women do not like to be taught but expect others to listen to her; those who turn a deaf ear to her would be deemed as her nemesis. This is an example of such conceit.

(5) Conceit in over-estimating oneself as having attained Nirvana (adhimana):

Buddhists or non-Buddhists may suffer from such conceit, thinking that they have realized Nirvana when they have in fact only attained the fourth dhyana.

Example 1:

Once, a bhikshu who had attained the fourth dhyana, conceitedly thought that he had realized the final fruition of the path. At the moment of his death, he entered into the stage of bardo and the bhikshu at that moment thought that the Buddha had not been truthful in his teachings. The bhikshu descended into the hell realms as he harbored this unwholesome thought. From this, we learn to be humble and know of the need to always consult our teachers if we have doubts so that we would be clear about our stage of practice.

Example 2:

There are people who teach Buddhism in schools and mistook that they had already realized the Nirvana. So long as people who are propagating the dharma have yet to realize Arahatsip, these erroneous thoughts must be corrected.

6(a) Conceit in regarding oneself as inferior, as not capable of realizing Buddhahood (avamana): Many people do not have confidence in themselves. They suffer from inferiority complex and fall into depression easily. When met with disagreeable criticisms or situations such as retrenchment, they would feel useless and want to commit suicide. We should not allow the poison of inferiority to devour our minds.

6(b) Conceit in regarding oneself as slightly inferior than another (avamana).

(7) Conceit in posturing oneself as virtuous when in fact one lacks virtues (mithyamana): this form of conceit occurs when one puts on the pretense of having virtues for the sake of hearing praises or getting recognition from others. Similarly, this type of conceit makes one disrespectful of the Triple Gem, the teachings of the Buddha, and the virtuous.

Example:

The Agama Sutra records an encounter between a laity known as Agnivesyayana and the Buddha. One day, Agnivesyayana saw Venerable Assaji walking by peacefully and feeling captivated by Venerable Assaji's composure, he asked, "Who is your teacher? What has he taught you?"

Venerable Assaji replied, "My teacher is the World Honored One, the Tathagatha, the Blessed One Worthy of Offering, the All-Knower. He taught us that all conditioned phenomena are devoid of ego. There is no 'I', no 'me' in all the five aggregates."

"You must have either said or heard wrongly! The Buddha shouldn't be teaching this. I shall debate with the Buddha tomorrow", Agnivesyayana retorted.

Agnivesyayana said to his own students, "I will be debating with the Buddha tomorrow. I will pull down all the Buddha's teachings, just like how the sickle slashes the weeds." Agnivesyayana's behavior was a manifestation of conceit in posturing himself as virtuous when in fact he lacked virtues.

The following day, he went to see the Buddha and questioned if the Buddha had indeed taught that there is no 'ego', no 'I', no 'me' to be found in all the five aggregates.

The Buddha replied, "Yes. Indeed, that is what I have taught my disciples."

"Why do you say so?"

"Agnivesyayana, you have to state your position before we can talk further on the Dharma."

Agnivesyayana said, "Whatever phenomena in this world are like the great earth, which is grown from the earth. And all phenomena come from the ego, the 'I'. Therefore, 'I' am within the five aggregates."

"If this is what you mean, is it not right that the 'ego' can control and will as he wishes?" the Buddha probed. "If there is an ego, the ego should be like a king who is capable of locking up his countrymen who have flouted the kingdom's rules or capable of rewarding those who have done well. It is as such that we say a king can control and will as he wishes."

The Buddha continued, "Can your body control, make decisions or will as it wishes? If it cannot do so, then it is not the ego."

At this juncture, Agnivesyayana knew that his views were incorrect but remained silent as he was reluctant to admit defeat. Only when the Vajra god warned that he would smash Agnivesyayana's head into seven pieces should he refuse to answer did Agnivesyayana admit his defeat.

Before his encounter with the Buddha, Agnivesyayana was conceited and thought that he was wiser than the Buddha. However, the debate made him realize that the Buddha was the one with the right views, and Agnivesyayana thus became a disciple of the Buddha. He would realize Arhatship when the next Buddha, i.e. Maitreiya Buddha arises in this world.

Therefore, we should not be conceited or pretend that we have virtues and wisdom when we do not. We must learn and begin our practice in order to eradicate this conceit.

- (v) **Doubt** is when we do not believe in the Triple Gem, the four noble truths and the law of cause-and-effect, engaging in wild speculations about them.

Doubt is an impediment to our practice and it leads us to harbor wrong views. We have to address our doubts and remove them from our minds so that we can engage in the practice of the four noble truths to reach our final goal of liberation from cyclic existence.

- (vi) **Wrong views** are incorrect perceptions and are not in accordance with the dharma.

Wrong views are the incorrect perceptions of the five aggregates as:

- (a) eternal when they are in fact impermanent;
- (b) pleasant when they are in fact suffering;
- (c) the 'ego' when they are in fact 'ego-less' or 'entity-less';
- (d) clean and pure when they are in fact tainted and impure.

These are collectively known as the four kinds of misconception.

Wrong perception causes the arising of wrong views which include:

- (1) view that the body is self or ego,
- (2) extreme views,
- (3) perverse views,
- (4) the view that self-mortification can lead to liberation,
- (5) perverse belief.

(1) **the view that body is self or ego:** i.e. sakkaya-ditthi, grasping the five aggregates as the eternally unchanging ego.

Sakkaya-ditthi means treating form as the 'ego', just as how Agnivesyayana took form, feelings, happiness, suffering, neutral feeling, thoughts, love and attachment as the 'me', the 'I'. Sentient beings grasp on to the five aggregates and perceive that the 'ego' is within the five aggregates.

As a result, people fight and kill each other for their countries. They get angry when they hear disagreeable sounds. Such views can cause one to be antagonistic towards others.



Example:

It is easy for people holding on to a strong sense of self to find themselves locked in binary opposite views with others. During political elections, people become divided on their views about which political party to support. As followers of the Buddha, we should have the correct view and be mindful of the dharma instead of on political issues. The removal of all mental defilements begins by setting our views correctly, coming to an understanding that the body is devoid of an "ego".

(2) **Extreme view:** there are two kinds of extreme views, namely, nihilism and eternalism.

(a) Nihilism: The truth is that the five aggregates arise and cease according to causes and conditions. In other words, the five aggregates are impermanent and they lack any substantial 'ego'. However, nihilism takes the view that the body in this life constitutes the whole of life, and life ends as soon as the body dies. Nihilists seldom perform good deeds when alive, often

immersing their lives in sensual enjoyment, enjoying life while they can. As a result of the unwholesome actions they perform when alive, nihilists would have to endure suffering in the hells in future. People with nihilist views should observe that everything that occurs is due to karma, which would bring about consequences.

(b) Eternalism: Eternalists believe that when this body dies, there is a 'soul' that still remains, which continues into the next life as "me". Someone said, "Even if I am now sentenced to death for killing others, I will still be a proper person twenty years later!" This wrong view supposes that there is human life after death and regardless of the rounds of cyclic existence, the same 'I' remains. People holding extreme views usually do not do much good as they do not know that good begets good, evil begets evil.

In the Brahmajala Sutra, the Buddha taught that people hold on to seven types of nihilistic views, namely that:

- (i) when a person dies, everything is annihilated;
- (ii) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heavens of sensuous desires;
- (iii) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heavens of form;
- (iv) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heaven of infinite space;
- (v) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heaven of infinite consciousness;
- (vi) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heaven of nothingness; and
- (vii) a person's final annihilation is upon death in the heaven of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

These are seven variant views on nihilism.

(3) **Perverse view:** making slanderous remarks on the law of cause-and-effect.

Some people think that there is no life, or no father and mother, or no bardo, or no past, present, and future lives. They think that there is simply no cause-and-effect, which is the biggest sin.

In the Buddhist teaching, Devadatta was someone who held on to perverse view, believing that there was no cause-and-effect. As he wanted to become the Buddha, he deployed many tactics to harm the Buddha and even instigated Prince Ajasataru to kill his own father. From this, we would see that someone who does not have correct view and does not know the law of cause-and-effect is liable to commit many wrongdoings in this life.

(4) **Having the erroneous view that self-mortification can lead to liberation.**

Example 1:

Prevalent in India is the belief that washing oneself in the Ganges River is a means to cleanse oneself from the wrongdoings that one has committed. But this is not the right way of liberation. If this were so, wouldn't all the fishes in the waters of the Ganges River have realized Nirvana? Likewise, practices of exposing oneself to the sun and walking over fire to remove karmic afflictions are examples of the erroneous view that self-mortification is the cause for liberation.

Example 2:

In ancient India, some heretics practiced to be like water buffaloes, horses, or they would practice extreme asceticism by living on a meagre grain and seed a day. All these are wrong. The Buddha had once said that asceticism would only cause more foolishness, delusion and suffering, give rise to more afflictions and eventually still descend into the hells after death.

Example 3:

Some people would bring prayer beads for the Venerables to bless, thinking that having these blessed prayer beads would secure their well-being. This is an erroneous view. If we want to safeguard our well-being, we should live by the precepts set out by the Buddha and cultivate our minds and wisdom instead of believing that blessed beads can help keep us away from all kinds of danger in life. Only after realizing Arahathship can the past karmic afflictions be dissolved with minimal suffering, just like how the snow would melt quickly when encountered with the sun.

Example 4:

Some laities believe that their bad karma can be wiped out by going through a back-slapping rite performed by Venerables. This is another example of an erroneous view.

Example 5:

There are pilgrims who choose to prostrate on pathways filled with small broken rocks, believing that this method helps to cleanse them of their karmic misdeeds. However, such a self-mortification act does not help to end our suffering.

(5) **Perverse belief** means treating what is not Nirvana as Nirvana, e.g. believing that the human or heavenly realm is Nirvana.

(i) Some people believe that the five sensuous desires of this human realm are the source of true happiness; they take the enjoyment of these desires as Nirvana. This is a form of grasping on to sensuous experience and treating this as the happiest state.

(ii) Some think that the first dhyana is the happiest abiding.

(iii) Others think that the happiest abiding is in the second dhyana.

(iv) There are also people who believe the third dhyana to be the happiest abiding.

(v) And some think that the happiest abiding can be found in the fourth dhyana.

These five variants of perverse beliefs are recorded in the Brahmajala Sutra. Many people believe that they are able to find happiness in singing, dancing, drinking, sex, fame, and status. As a result of this wrong belief, they indulge in these unwholesome activities and correspondingly have to suffer in the unwholesome hell realms.

The Buddha is indeed very compassionate to awaken us from our perverse beliefs so that we need not suffer repeatedly. Therefore, we are deeply grateful to the Buddha for teaching the Dharma to the world.

(5) Twenty ensuing mental defilements

With the arising of the six fundamental mental defilements, twenty ensuing mental defilements arise:

(i) The first ten minor mental defilements are: outrage; hatred; vexation; ill-will; veiling one's wrongdoings; lying; fawning; greed and miserliness; jealousy and envy; and arrogance.

(ii) The two intermediate mental defilements refer to lack of inner shame and unabashed-ness.

(iii) The eight immense mental defilements are: lack of faith; sloth and torpor, heedlessness or lack of vigilance; drowsiness; restlessness; lack of mindfulness; lack of right view; and scattered-ness.

To eradicate these twenty mental defilements, we begin by practicing to abandon the six fundamental mental defilements. Thereafter, we can remove the twenty ensuing mental defilements and the four indeterminate mental factors of regret, sleep, unrefined thinking, and refined thinking.

This would help us to attain Arahantship and ultimately *Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi*.

(1) What are the ten minor ensuing mental defilements?

- (i) **Outrage** is blowing up in fury in the face of disagreeable situations. To eliminate this defilement, we need to pursue the goodness of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, harmony, and peace.
- (ii) **Hatred** arises from the inability to let go of anger and unhappiness.
- (iii) We go around **vexing** others because of anger and hatred.
- (iv) One is bound to do harm to others when one harbors prolonged **ill intentions**.

Example:

Life is short, but we constantly feel angry with our superiors if they favor others whom we think are incompetent. If we manifest this anger in action, we will generate immense unwholesome karmic consequences. So, practicing *loving-kindness* to eradicate ill intentions is important.

- (v) **Veiling one's wrongdoings** means covering up one's misdeeds from others.

If we have done something wrong, we should acknowledge our wrongs and repent right away. To acknowledge our wrongdoings may seem small and unimportant, but is in fact imperative to our practice.

Oftentimes if we hide our wrongdoings because we are attached to the 'ego', our minds become burdened with the past unhappy memories and we are liable to commit the same wrongdoings again.

Some of us hide our wrongdoings even though we believe in cause-and-effect because we are attached to our ego. And some of us hide our wrongdoings because we are ignorant and do not know the law of cause-and-effect.

If we understand the law of cause-and-effect, we should brave ourselves to accept our wrongdoings and repent. This helps to discontinue our misdeeds and understand that it is all about the 'ego'.

- (vi) Posturing to be virtuous for the sake of gaining fame, status, and benefits is **lying**. This is cheating which arises from greed.
- (vii) **Fawning** on others for personal benefits when one has no virtues or is not learned. Such behavior stems from the misguided belief that fawning helps to gain popularity and recognition from others.
- (viii) **Greed and miserliness**: miserly over possessions and sharing of the Dharma. Miserliness is an unwillingness to give or to let go. Miserliness will eventually lead us to suffer from poverty.
- (ix) **Jealousy** arising because one does not rejoice in others' achievements.

A person who is miserly and full of jealousy will suffer both unwholesome results of rebirth in less privileged family.

Example 1:

In crowded mass chanting sessions, other people may unknowingly knock into us, which lead us to feel annoyed and react negatively with anger. Even though we may be chanting

the Buddha's name and prostrating to the Buddha, our minds do not actually have any bit of compassion. This is a form of miserliness, where we are not willing to let others intrude on us.

In such situations, we should reflect whether we are practicing in line with the Buddha's teachings. We should also aspire to be like the Buddha, capable of generous giving and endowed with great wisdom and compassion. Just as the stated vows of Amitabha Buddha, whoever hears the name of the Buddha will have the merits to be reborn into respectable families; whoever encounters the Buddha's light, sees an image of the Buddha or chant the Buddha's name will be born into his Pure World with great rejoice.

Hence, we should not be miserly and feel anger towards others. Miserliness is like a venomous snake which should be quickly abandoned. It arises as a result of greed, while jealousy arises from anger. Greed and anger are the temperaments of beings in the sensuous realm. If we are able to eradicate miserliness and jealousy, this also means that we would have eradicated greed and anger, realizing the stage of *Anagamin*.

Example 2:

Feeling begrudged that our cars are scratched is a manifestation of miserliness. Some people have money but are not willing to donate, while some have dharma knowledge but are not willing to share. These are all examples of miserliness which we should eradicate.

Example 3:

When we have perverse views and think that our views are the best, and when there is a clash of views or ideas, we feel angry as well as outrage, hatred, and ill-will. For example, when a third party appears in a relationship, one party will feel outraged, hatred, ill-will and will want to do harm to the third party. If one

takes harmful actions against the other person, they may get into heated arguments or even worse, get into fights with each other.

Example 4:

Ensuing the fundamental unwholesome factor of anger can also be the mental factor of jealousy. We often feel jealous of someone who is better than us, be it in terms of virtues, cultivation, looks, wealth, or achievements. This jealousy will drive one to harm others and eventually lead one to suffer. Therefore, we have to practice to rid our minds of this unwholesome mental factor.

- (x) **Arrogance:** pride over one's virtues, abilities, intelligence, power, appearance, wealth, or life.

Arrogance consists of seven kinds of conceits associated with:

- (a) Good health
- (b) Youth
- (c) Longevity
- (d) Clan and status
- (e) Looks and power
- (f) Knowledge
- (g) Wealth and fortune

As the old saying goes, "arrogance invites disasters, humility begets benefits." We are bound to suffer if we are arrogant.

(2) The next two intermediate ensuing mental defilements are:

- (i) **Lack of inner shame** (无惭): shamelessness and being disrespectful towards people who are better in terms of keeping the precepts, meditation practice, wisdom, or virtues.

(ii) **Unabashed-ness** (无愧): unapologetic for one's own misdeeds and unafraid of falling into the three lower realms.

We are unabashed and shameless if any unwholesome mental defilement arises. This mental defilement of lacking inner shame is associated with greed. We do not feel inner shame because we think that we possess very good abilities and virtues.

As such, we neither respect others who are more able and have more virtues nor respect the dharma.

Unabashed-ness is associated with delusion. This is because one who does not know the law of cause-and-effect feels that there is nothing wrong with this unwholesome act.

The Buddha said that everyone in this world would suffer if no one feels inner shame or abashed-ness.

Often, people are not afraid of doing wrong deeds because they have yet to see their resultant suffering in the hells. Some people, even at the final moment before being sentenced to death for killing others, still do not feel shame of their misdeeds. Such people who suffer from great perverse views are liable to suffer immeasurably in the hells.

Therefore, we should learn from the wise and virtuous, spend more time listening to the dharma, respect the Triple Gem, and constantly reflect and acknowledge our mistakes and wrongdoings.

(3) And the eight immense ensuing mental defilements are namely:

(i) **Lack of faith**, i.e. not believing in the law of cause-and-effect, slandering the wise and virtuous.

(ii) **Sloth and torpor** is idleness and unwholesome. This means not putting effort in the practice and wasting one's life away.

For instance, someone who sleeps through the day and night is constantly in the state of drowsiness and lethargy. Vigor and diligence keeps one on the path of practice whereas sloth and torpor is an unwholesome mental factor and compounds more unwholesomeness.

- (iii) **Heedlessness and lack of vigilance**: inattentiveness in guarding the mind, letting the mind run wild.

An example of heedlessness and lack of vigilance is when one indulges in movies, shopping or engages in gossips.



- (iv) **Drowsiness** hinders the practice of mindfulness, as the drowsy and unclear mind causes one not to have the ability to focus on meditation.

- (v) **Restlessness** refers to the mental state of an unsettled mind.

Sometimes, restlessness causes the mind to be convoluted. For example, we might end up driving southwards instead of northwards without realizing that unsettledness is causing confusion to our minds.

- (vi) **Lack of mindfulness** causes us to lose our meditative equipoise and hinders wisdom. Furthermore, lack of mindfulness causes the mind to fall into perverse meditative equipoise, liable to commit unwholesomeness.

(vii) **Lack of right view** is not believing in the dharma. People who do not believe in the dharma are oblivious to karma. As such, they do not even know why they end up suffering in the hells.

(viii) **A scattered mind** means that the mind is not in unison, obstructing meditative equipoise. To attain meditative equipoise, one has to focus the mind on a meditative object in order to reduce scattered-ness of the mind.

These eight immense ensuing mental defilements will likewise drive us to performing unwholesome deeds. It is thus important to safeguard our wandering minds.

(6) There are four indeterminate mental factors:

(i) **Regret**

The two kinds of regret are wholesome regret and unwholesome regret. Wholesome regret is when we are regretful for not performing the good deeds, or feeling remorseful for the misdeeds. This remorsefulness gives rise to the willingness to cultivate wholesome deeds and cease misdeeds.

Unwholesome regret is when we regret not carrying out the wrong acts. Example of such regret is when we think, "Why didn't I get even with him?!"

At times it can be regrets about the wholesome deeds that we had performed. For instance, following others in giving, taking the precepts, or other wholesome deeds, but regretting performing these deeds thereafter.

Hence, regret is a form of indeterminate mental factor as it can be wholesome or unwholesome.

- (ii) Excessive sleep is unwholesome, as **sleep** is an indeterminate mental factor. However, beings in the world of sensuous desires need sleep to replenish energy so as to practice on the path.
- (iii) **Unrefined thinking** refers to shallowness.
- (iv) **Refined thinking** is a kind of intricate thinking of all phenomena.

The unsettled mind is constantly searching but is of no spiritual benefit if the unrefined and refined thinking are directed towards the five desires and six sense objects, instead of the Triple Gem.

Mental factors not matching with the mind

There are 24 mental factors not matching with the mind, namely:

1. "Gain" is a convenient terminology to describe a resultant through cause and conditions.
2. The basis of life exists only when the three factors: lifespan, heat, and consciousness come together.
3. Common characteristics of sentient beings is merely to explain that different sentient beings with similar characteristics will be categorized together.

For instance, humans are collectively categorized in the human realm whereas animals are in the animal realm. Among humans, those with male characteristics are named men while those with female characteristics are named women.

4. Differences in sentient beings explain their rebirth in different realms. For instance, humans and animals are in different realms. An example is that dogs and pigs are different in the animal realm.
5. Non-thinking meditative equipoise: A practitioner is considered to have attained the meditative state of non-perception when his thoughts cease. This is a temporal cessation of one's consciousness.
6. Cessation meditative equipoise: A practitioner is able to attain liberation from rebirths if he ceases the arising of feelings and perception, the arising of the mind consciousness and the seventh consciousness (manas). This is the concentration attained by the enlightened ones – Buddhas, *Pratyeka Buddhas*, and Arahats.
7. Practicing non-thinking meditation gives rise to rebirth in the heavens of non-perception with a lifespan of 500 great *kalpas*. During this period, thoughts do not arise.
8. Names are singular words but can be formed into terms. For instance, "round" and "incense" are singular names but when linked together, this term is known as "round incense".
9. Subject and a predicate form a sentence. For instance, in the sentence of "Sound is impermanent," sound is the subject and predicate describes the sound as impermanence.
10. Words are formed by alphabets which will construct into sentences, paragraphs and finally an article.
11. Birth and Arising from non-existent to existent is due to cause and conditions.

12. Staying: Due to the continuity of cause and conditions after arising, it is said to "exist" or "stay".
13. Ageing: The deterioration of the body begins from the time of birth.
14. Impermanence can be regarded as emptiness, death and cessation. Impermanence can be observed through the four stages in the following examples:
 - (i) World – formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence (emptiness).
 - (ii) Sentient beings – birth, aging, illness, and death.
 - (iii) Thoughts – arising, sustaining, changing, and ceasing.
15. All conditioned phenomena in the saha world are impermanent as they arise and cease continuously.
16. Distinction between wholesomeness and unwholesomeness: The law behind the cause-and-effect of good begetting good and evil begetting evil is distinct and not to be confused.
17. Concomitant: wholesome corresponds with wholesome, unwholesome corresponds with unwholesome; physical form corresponds with physical form, mind corresponds with mental factors.
18. The arising and cessation of all conditioned phenomena is instantaneous.
19. All conditioned phenomena do not occur at the same time as they arise and cease chronologically.
20. Time: The past, the present, and the future.

21. There are a total of ten directions of space – north, south, east, west, northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest, zenith, and nadir.
22. Numbers: a tool of measurement.
23. Unison: All phenomena exist dependent on cause and conditions coming together.
24. Phenomena are non-unison because of repelling cause and conditions.

The Unconditioned

There are six modes to establish the understanding of the Unconditioned Phenomenon:

- (i) Akin to the boundlessness of space (akasa): Space is unconditioned as it is non-arising and non-ceasing.
- (ii) Non-arising due to absence of causal conditions (apratisamkhya-nirodha): Without appropriate causes and conditions, all conditioned phenomena will not arise.

For example, a person tends to develop unwholesome thoughts and commit misdeeds when he befriends bad company. However, in the absence of bad company, he will not do so as there are no causes and conditions to constitute arising and hence, non-ceasing.
- (iii) Cessation of mental afflictions through wisdom (pratisamkhya-nirodha): Upholding precepts, practicing meditation, and cultivating wisdom ceases the arising of defilements, leading to non-arising and non-ceasing.

- (iv) Cessation of feeling and thinking⁵ (samjna-vedayita-nirodha): Thoughts do not arise during meditation where one has ceased perception and feeling.
- (v) Non-moving (aninjya): The mind is focused in the Fourth Dhyana Heavens and thoughts do not arise.
- (vi) True and unchanging mind (tathata): When one transcends attachment to the views that (i) there exists an inherent self, an "I" or ego, and (ii) that phenomena exists, one realizes that the true unchanging nature is non-arising and non-ceasing.

Through these six forms of unconditioned phenomena, we can cultivate to cease all defilements. To do so, we begin by understanding every mental factor that arises, thereby having a clear understanding of the 'I', the 'me'. May we all, through learning and reflecting on the teachings of the Four Noble Truths and Dependent Arising, realize true cessation.

The key to cessation of all defilements lies with eradicating the six fundamental mental defilements. It is vital to have a clear understanding of these fundamental mental defilements as numerous mental defilements can arise from them.

The six fundamental mental defilements have four characteristics, the first of which is an underlying "hounding" characteristic. This means that the six defilements follow us from our past lives through to our current lives. If we do not abandon them, they will continue with us to our future lives.

⁵ This is the third or fourth level of fruition, i.e. referring to an Anagamin or an Arahat.

Secondly, when sentient beings are engulfed by greed, anger, delusion, conceit, doubt, and wrong views, we do not easily notice these fundamental defilements. For instance, when we take notice of attractive people or listen to their voices, we are unaware that greed has already arisen in our minds. When we see advertisements on the roads, our eyes turn to them reflexively without us even noticing. This is a manifestation of greed. Hence, these six fundamental defilements are difficult to be observed.

The third characteristic is that they intensify over time:

- (i) First, when the six types of contact arise, the six fundamental defilements will arise, followed by the corresponding ensuing defilements. As a result, the extent of the defilements increases as well.

This can be observed when a sumptuous dish is placed before us. Greed has arisen from the first moment we set our eyes on that dish. After taking one bite, we continue to eat more. This is greed intensifying. After greed (fundamental defilement) has arisen, miserliness (corresponding defilement) then arises and we crave to eat more, refusing to share our food with others.

- (ii) The corresponding ensuing defilements also intensify the six fundamental defilements.

When someone hits us, we feel very angry. If we do not abandon the anger, we will feel outrage or hatred the next time we hear his voice or see a picture of him. Outrage and hatred are the corresponding ensuing defilements of anger. The extent of our anger will also intensify as we spread our anger towards anything or anyone associated with him.

The fourth characteristic is entanglement. Since beginning-less time, we have always been burdened by the six fundamental defilements, entangling us in endless cycles of birth and death.

Bodhisattva Jue Lin composed two stanzas (commonly found in the prelude to the Sutra of the Great Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva) that describe the mind:

*The mind is like an artist,
able to paint all worlds,
giving rise to the five aggregates,
and creating all phenomena.*

Our mind 'creates' the world we live in. The world of form or the world of formlessness is 'created' through the meditative concentration of the practitioners' minds. For those without meditative concentration, the world of sensuous desires is 'created' through their minds and the five sense bases, giving rise to the five aggregates. In turn, every kind of wholesome, unwholesome or neutral phenomena arises.

Every sentient being is different from each other in terms of physical appearances *etc.* Whether one takes rebirth in a lower or upper realm is dependent on the karmic actions of each individual.

Hence, it is crucial that we understand our minds and constantly guard the minds against all defilements. Through the observation of the arising of the five aggregates, we can understand our complicated minds. We can also better appreciate the eight types of consciousness as mentioned in the Yogacara.

Glossary

Anagamin: One who has attained the third stage of Liberation. Such a person has abandoned sensuous desires. Upon passing from the human realm, he will take rebirth in one of the five special worlds in the World of Form, called the Suddhavasa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatsip and will never return to the human realm. Hence, he is also known as a Non Returner. An Anagamin has abandoned the five lower fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi: The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

Arahat: One who has traversed the Eightfold Noble Path to reach the fourth and final stage of Liberation, called Arahatsip. An Arahat has abandoned all ten fetters that bind beings to the cycle of existence. Also known as the Perfect One. See also Arahatsip.

Arahatsip: The fourth and final stage of Liberation, in which one is fully liberated from Samsara and is no longer subject to death and rebirth. The four stages of Liberation are: The First stage known as Srotapanna; the Second stage known as Sakradagamin; the Third stage known as Anagamin; and the Fourth stage known as Arahat.

Atman: The essence of things that does not depend on others; it is an intrinsic nature. The non-existence of atman is selflessness.

Bhikshu: A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing two hundred and fifty Precepts.

Bhikshuni: A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist Sangha or nun observing five hundred Precepts.

Bhutatahata: The true character of reality. The inherent or true nature of phenomena or true suchness. (诸法实相)

Bodhicitta: Also known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhi-heart, in which "Bodhi" means "enlightened". It is the aspiration to attain supreme Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattva: A being who has developed Bodhicitta and is striving for enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Brahma King: The King of the Brahma World.

Brahma World: In the widest sense, this is the name of the World of Form; in a narrower sense, it is the collective name of the first three heavens of the World of Form. See also Three worlds of existence.

Buddha: The Fully Enlightened One, who possesses perfect wisdom and compassion.

Compassion: Also known as Karuna. See also Four Divine States of Mind and Great Compassion.

Cycle of existence: See Samsara.

Dana: Charity; benevolence; generosity.

Defilements: The mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion which temporarily cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. These defilements are seen as the very roots of Samsaric existence and are known as the three poisons.

Deva: A heavenly being.

Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha.

Dharma-kaya: The Dharma body, the truth body, the reality body.

Eight sufferings: (1) Birth; (2) Old age; (3) Sickness; (4) Death; (5) Separation from the persons and things we love; (6) Contacting with what we dislike; (7) Not getting what we desire; and (8) Fiery agonies from the five aggregates.

Eight Precepts: Observed by lay Buddhists during certain retreats: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual activities; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not take intoxicants; (6) Do not wear bodily adornments, use perfumes, engage in singing and dancing, and watching dances or plays; (7) Do not sleep in a raised bed; and (8) Do not eat after noon.

Eightfold Noble Path: The fundamental teaching of the Buddha that shows the path that leads to the cessation of suffering: (1) Right View or Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Diligence; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

First Stage of Fruition: Also known as the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained the first stage of fruition is known as a Srotapanna or Stream Enterer.

Five aggregates: Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness.

Five Desires: Wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep.

Five Higher Fetters: These five fetters bind beings to the higher worlds of existence, namely the World of Form and Formless World. (1) Attachment to the physical body (rupa-raga); (2) Clinging on to consciousness (arupa-raga); (3) Restlessness; (4) Conceit; (5) Ignorance. See Ten fetters.

Five lower fetters: These five fetters bind beings to the lower world of existence, also known as the World of Sensuous Desires: (1) Thinking that the body is self or ego; (2) View that self-mortification can lead to liberation; (3) Doubt; (4) Sensuous Desires; (5) Anger. One who has abandoned the five lower fetters has attained the third stage of fruition and is known as an Anagamin. See Ten fetters.

Five Powers: Obtained through the practice of the Five Wholesome Faculties: (1) Power of Faith; (2) Power of Diligence; (3) Power of Mindfulness; (4) Power of Concentration; (5) Power of Wisdom.

Five Precepts: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; and (5) Do not take intoxicants.

Five sensual pleasures: Pleasurable feelings derived from the contact between the five sense bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and the five sense objects of form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactile object.

Five Wholesome Faculties: (1) Faculty of Faith; (2) Faculty of Diligence; (3) Faculty of Mindfulness; (4) Faculty of Concentration; (5) Faculty of Wisdom.

Four Divine States of Mind: (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Altruistic Joy; and (4) Upeksha or Equanimity.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness: (1) Contemplation of the body; (2) Contemplation of feelings; (3) Contemplation of the state of mind; and (4) Contemplation of phenomena. See also Right Effort.

Four Noble Truths: (1) The noble truth of suffering; (2) The noble truth of the causes of suffering; (3) The noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) The noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners: This refers to Sravaka practitioners who practice the Srotapanna path and those who have attained Srotapannaship; the ones who practice the Sakradagamin path and those who have attained Sakradagaminship; the ones who practice the Anagamin path and those who have attained Anagaminship; the ones who practice the Arahata path and those who have attained Arahataship.

Four Right Efforts: (1) the effort to get rid of unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind, such as the desire to take

another's property; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts; (3) the effort to develop wholesome thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion; and (4) the effort to maintain and develop further wholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind.

Four Ways of Attaining Samadhi: The basis to attain Samadhi: (1) Desire to practice Concentration; (2) Diligence; (3) Mindfulness; (4) Contemplation.

Great Compassion: The aspiration to remove the sufferings and causes of sufferings of all sentient beings.

Heavens of the Four Deva Kings: Also known as the Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens. This is the first of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Kalpa: Also known as Eon. It is often used to denote a very long period of time. There are small, medium, great, and incalculable kalpas. A great kalpa indicates the length of time between the creation and recreation of a universe, spanning the period of the universe's formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence.

Karma: The deeds carried out by a person and their effects on the person's future, especially in relation to their succeeding rebirths. Karma can be classified as actions of the body, speech, and mind, each of which can have the moral quality of wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminate.

Law of cause-and-effect: This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

Loving-kindness: Also known as Maitri. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Mara: The Demon King who resides in the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven.

Naga: Dragon or serpent. A beneficent divine being who governs the various water bodies, such as seas, lakes, rivers, and springs.

Nirmanarati Heaven: This is the fifth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Nirvana: The perfect state of mind that is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, and hence all suffering. See also Parinirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven: This is the sixth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Mara, the Demon King, resides in this heaven. See also Three worlds of existence.

Parinirvana: Also known as the Great Nirvana; it indicates the Buddha's entering into the state of residue-less Nirvana. See also Nirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Pratyeka Buddha: Also known as the Silent Buddha, or Self-enlightened One. The Pratyeka Buddha appears in an era when there is no Buddha or the Buddha's teachings. He lives apart from others and achieves enlightenment through self-contemplation and realization of dependent arising.

Pure Dharma Eye: The pure vision of the true Dharma.

Residue-less Nirvana: Also known as Nirvana without residue. It refers to the state of total liberation from all physical and mental conditions. This is in contrast with Nirvana with residue, where the body still exists. See also Nirvana and Parinirvana.

Right Action: To conduct oneself in moral, peaceful, and honorable ways, that is in keeping with the precepts of not killing, not stealing, and not committing sexual misconduct. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Concentration: To develop one's meditation according to the four Dhyanas. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Effort: To develop the Four Right Efforts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Livelihood: To live honorably in a profession which is in no way harmful to sentient beings, and in keeping with the precepts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness: To practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. See also Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Speech: To abstain from telling lies, slandering, frivolous speech, and harsh speech. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Thought: To have only thoughts which are in line with Buddhist teachings. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Understanding: See Right View.

Right View: To develop the understanding or view that complies with the Buddhist teaching of the law of cause-and-effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

Sakra: The King of Trayastrimsat Heaven.

Sakradagamin: One who has attained the second stage of Liberation. Such a person, upon passing from the human realm, will take rebirth in the heavenly realms, after which he will be reborn in the human realm one last time to attain Arahatsip. Hence he is also known as a Once Returner. A Once Returner has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. He is distinguished from the Stream Enterer by the fact that the Once Returner has weakened greed, hatred, and delusion to a greater degree. Therefore, he has fewer than seven rebirths. See also Arahatsip.

Samadhi: Meditative concentration. Often used to denote the deepest state of pure concentration, in which the mind is free from distraction and totally absorbed in the object of concentration. There are many levels and types of Samadhi, such as the Samadhi of Loving-kindness and Compassion.

Samsara: Also known as the Cycle of existence or cyclic existence. This refers to the endless cycle of suffering caused by birth, death, and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order or community.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment: (1) Mindfulness; (2) Discriminative investigation of the Dharma; (3) Diligence; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

Sila: The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

Six Paramitas: The Sanskrit word Paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six Paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (Samsara) to the shore of happiness and awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. The six Paramitas refer to:

- The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita),
- The Perfection of Patience (Ksanti Paramita)
- The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita),
- The Perfection of Concentration (Dhyana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

Six realms: The realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and heavenly beings.

Six sense bases: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six sense objects: Form, sound, odor, flavor, tactile object, and phenomena.

Sramanera: A male novice monk observing Ten Precepts.

Sramanerika: A female novice nun observing Ten Precepts.

Srotapanna: One who has attained the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained this stage is said to have entered the Stream that leads to Liberation, hence he is also known as a Stream Enterer. Due to the fact that the Stream Enterer has attained an intuitive grasp of Buddhist teachings ("Right View") and has complete confidence in the Triple Gem, he will not be reborn in the three lower realms again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Supernatural powers: The six supernatural powers are: (1) Divine eye or clairvoyance; (2) Divine ear or clairaudience; (3) mental telepathy or ability to read the thoughts of others; (4) psychic travel or telekinesis; (5) knowledge of the past and future; and (6) ending contamination. The first five supernatural powers can be acquired by one who practices deep concentration, but the sixth supernatural power is only attainable when one has attained Arahatsip.

Ten bhumis: The ten bhumis are the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. A Bodhisattva has to complete all ten stages before he can become a Buddha.

Ten fetters: The ten fetters bind beings to the cycle of existence in the three worlds. One who has abandoned the ten fetters has attained the fourth stage of fruition and is known as an Arahatsip. The ten fetters consist of the five lower fetters and the five higher fetters: (1) Thinking that the body is self or ego; (2) View that self-mortification can lead to liberation; (3) Doubt; (4) Sensuous Desires; (5) Anger; (6) Attachment

to the physical body (rupa-raga); (7) Clinging on to consciousness (arupa-raga); (8) Restlessness; (9) Conceit; (10) Ignorance.

Tenfold meritorious cause of action: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not slander; (6) Do not engage in frivolous speech; (7) Do not engage in harsh speech; (8) Do not bear greed; (9) Do not bear hatred; and (10) Do not stay deluded.

Thirty-Seven Practices to attain Enlightenment: The thirty-seven practices refer to Four Foundations of Mindfulness, Four Right Efforts, Four Ways of Attaining Samadhi, Five Wholesome Faculties, Five Powers, Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and Eightfold Noble Path.

Three lower realms: The three lower realms refer to hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the three upper realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Three obstacles: The three obstacles refer to afflictions (klesavarana), karmic deeds (karmavarana), and karmic retribution (vipakavarana). These obstruct our learning of the Dharma.

Three periods: The past, present, and future.

Three poisons: See Defilements.

Three worlds of existence: The World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World. All beings in the six realms of cyclic existence can be found in the World of Sensuous Desires as these beings are plagued by various sensuous desires. Beings in the World of Form have abandoned sensuous desires but still cling on to physical forms, while beings in the Formless World have even relinquished the physical forms and exist only in mental states.

Trayastrimsat Heaven: Also known as the Thirty-Three Heavens. It is the second of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tusita Heaven: This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the cause and conditions to ripen for him to descend to the human realm and become the next Buddha to save and liberate all sentient beings. See also Three worlds of existence.

Wheel-Turning Monarch: Also known as Chakravartin. A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. It is a term used for an ideal universal ruler, who rules ethically and benevolently over the entire world. Wheel turning literally means whose chariot is rolling or whose Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Dharma) is turning everywhere without obstruction.

Yama Heaven: This is the third of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

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