

ARIYAS

The Noble Persons

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**Buddha Delivers the Four Noble Truths
to**

Ascetics - Kondanna Vappa .Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji ,

Introduction –

It is essential for all practicing Buddhists to know who are the Noble Persons – Ariyas? How are they being defined according to the Pali Canon? This article by a Dhamma teacher, Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, defines the Noble persons in a layman's term. The definitions are given for academic purpose only.

Note that this article is only defining the term for literally purposes only. When one has attained the Sotapanna, it is not for certain that one will be reborn all the time in the sensual world. Take for example of our Bodhisatta:

*Our Bodhisatta, **Sumedha** for the first time, received a definite prophecy (Byardeik taw) from **Dipanakara Buddha**. At this time, Sumedha ascetic could have attained an Arahatsip, if he chooses to, but elected to aspire for Buddhahood. In the rebirths that followed, at the time of **Anomadassi Buddha** our Bodhisatta was reborn as a leader of demons.*

*This picture presents the five ascetics, the first in the human kind, who, had attained the holiness (ariya) in stages from **Sotapanna, sakadagami, anagami** , and finally to **Arahatsip***

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon defined the four stages of holiness as follow:

There are eight types of *ariyas* :=

- ? four *magattha*-persons and
- ? four *phalattha*-persons.

Definitions : -

The *maggattha*-persons, exist only for a conscious moment each, i.e., during the *magga-citta* they are experiencing.

The *phalattha*-persons - After the dissolution of the *magga-citta*, they become *phalattha*-persons.

For example, a person is called a *sotapatti maggattha* person while the *sotapatti-magga citta* is arising in him.

After the dissolution of this *citta*, *sotapatti-phala citta* arises in him and he is known as a *sotapatti-phalattha* person or *sotapanna* from this moment onwards.

Progression in Stages: -

Stage 1

If a *sotapanna* again undertakes *vipassana* meditation, he will attain *sakadagami-magga* in due course.

Stage – 2 –

During this second *magga-citta*, he is called a *sakadagami-maggattha* person. After the dissolution of this *citta*, *sakadagami-phala citta* arises in him and he is known as a *sakadagami-phalattha* person or *sakadagami* from this moment onwards.

Stage – 3

A *sakadagami* may again undertake *vipassana* meditation. When he attains the third *magga*, he is known as an *anagami-maggattha* person

while that *magga-citta* lasts. As soon as the *magga-citta* dissolves, *anagami-phala citta* arises in him and he is called an *anagami-phalattha* person or *anagami* from that moment onwards.

Stage – 4

Again an *anagami* may undertake *vipassana* meditation, and when he attains the fourth *magga*, he becomes an *arahatta-maggattha* person. But as soon as the *arahatta-magga citta* dissolves, *arahatta-phala citta* arises and he becomes an *arahatta-phalattha* person or *arahat* from that moment onwards.

Thus the four *maggattha* persons exist for so short a duration – in consciousness only. (for all purposes, we can ignore this stage). Only the four *phalattha* persons can be assigned with their respective designation.

A. *Sotapanna* or *Sotapan* (*First Stage of Noble Person*)(*Noble Person*)

A *sotapanna* is one who has attained *sotapatti magga* and *sotapatti-phala*. He (or she) can enjoy the peace of Nibbana whenever he wishes by developing the ecstatic absorption corresponding to *sotapatti-phala samapatti*.

He is called a stream-winner because he has entered the stream that leads to Nibbana. *The stream represents the noble Eightfold Path*. He is no longer a worldling (*putthujjana*), but an *ariya* (noble person).

A *sotapanna* has eradicated the two worst defilements, i.e., *ditthi* and *vicikiccha*, and three basic Fetters — namely, *sakkaya-ditthi*, *vicikiccha* and *silabbataparamasa*. He has also eliminated the coarse properties of the remaining defilements — the properties that can cast a person to the *apaya* abodes. So to him, the doors of the *apaya* abodes are closed for ever, neither will he be reverted to a worldling again.

He has unwavering faith in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. He will also steadfastly observe:

1. *The five precepts* and
2. **Abstain from committing any of the ten *akusala-kamma-pathas*, i.e., ten *ducaritas* or *unwholesome actions*.** The four *lobha-mula*

ditthigata- sampayutta cittas and the *moha-mula vicikiccha sampayutta citta* will never arise in him.

3. He may, however, enjoy the sense pleasures as an ordinary person. But he will *not be reborn more than seven times in the sense-sphere (kama-loka)*. He will become an *arahat* in due course and after that last life, he will enjoy the peace of Nibbana for ever.

There are three types of *sotapanna*:

- (1) *Sattakkhattu-parama-sotapanna* = one who enters Nibbana after seven lives,
- (2) *Kamakola-sotapanna* = one who enters Nibbana after two to six lives,
- (3) *Ekaviji-sotapanna* = one who enters Nibbana after one life.

B. Sakadagami or Sakadagam

A *Sakadagami* is one who has attained *sakadagami-magga* and *phala*. He (or she) can enjoy the peace of Nibbana whenever he wishes by developing the ecstatic absorption corresponding to *sakadagami phala-samapatti*.

'*Sakadagami*' literally means **once returner**'. A *sakadagami* will be reborn only once in the sense sphere. He will then become an *arahat* and, after that last life, will be in Nibbana for ever. The *cittas* that arise in a *sakadagami* are the same as those which arise in a *sotapanna* with the only exception that a *sakadagami* enjoy *sakadagami-phala-samapatti* instead of *sotapatti-phala-samapatti*

Compared to a *sotapatti*, a *sakadagami* has less *raga*, (**lust, greed**), *dosa* (ill will, hatred) and *moha* (delusion). Thus he is nobler than a *sotapanna*.

There are six kinds of *sakadagamis*, namely:

- (1) Those who attain *sakadagami* in the **human world** and attain *parinibbana in the human world*,
- (2) Those who attain *sakadagami* in the human world and **attain *parinibbana in a heavenly realm***,

(3) Those who attain *sakadagami* in a heavenly realm and **attain *parinibbana* in the heavenly world.**

(4) Those who attain *sakadagami* in a heavenly realm and **attain *parinibbana* in the human world,**

(5) Those who attain *sakadagami* in the human plane, and after being born once in a heavenly realm, **attain *parinibbana* in the human plane,**

(6) Those who attain *sakadagami* in a heavenly realm, and after being born once in the human plane, **attain *parinibbana* in a heavenly realm.**

C. Anagami or Anagam

An *anagami* is one who has attained *anagami magga* and *phala*. He (or she) can enjoy the peace of Nibbana whenever he wishes by developing the ecstatic absorption corresponding to *anagami-phala samapatti*.

Anagami literally means 'no returner'. An *anagami* will not be reborn in the sensual sphere. If he does not attain the *arahatship* in the present life yet, he will be **reborn in a Brahma realm** or Pure Abode (*Suddhavasa*), where he will attain *arahatship* and pass to Nibbana.

Since the *anagami-magga* eliminates the *kilesa dosa* (hatred) and the two Fetters—namely, *kamaraga* (sensual desire) and *patigha* (hatred or illwill), an *anagami* will **no longer experience anger, hatred, worry, despair, fright, and any unpleasant mental feeling, neither will he enjoy sensual pleasures.**

His mind will always be in peace and he will enjoy the ecstatic peace of Nibbana whenever he wishes by developing *anagami-phala-samapatti*. If he attains all the eight *jhanas*, he can also enjoy *Nirodha samapatti* during which all consciousness and mental activity are temporarily suspended.

There are five types of *anagamis*:

(1) Those who attain *arahatship* within the first half of the life of the Pure Abode where they are reborn,

- (2) Those who attain *arahatship* within the second half of the life of the Pure Abode where they are reborn,
- (3) Those who attain *kilesa-parinibbana* (i.e., arahatship) without having to struggle very hard,
- (4) Those who attain *kilesa-parinibbana* after struggling very hard,
- (5) Those who do not attain *arahatship* in the four lower abodes of the five Pure Abodes, but attain *arahatship* in the highest Pure Abode (i.e., *Akanittha*).

C. Arahāt

An *arahāt* is one who has attained *arahatta magga* and *phala*. He (or she) can enjoy the peace of Nibbana whenever he wishes by developing the ecstatic absorption corresponding to arahatta-phala-samapatti. He can enjoy *Nirodha-samapatti* if he attains the eight *jhanas*.

Since *arahatta magga* eliminates all the defilements (*kilesa*) an *arahāt* has no greed, ill will, delusion, conceit, personality belief and other bad mental factors. He has no attachment to anything; so he is free from all entanglements. He does not regard anything as his own; thus he has no reason to feel sad because something is taken or stolen from him.

Because he has uprooted all *dosa* (anger, hatred or ill-will) from his mind, he will never experience unpleasant mental feeling which accompanies *dosa mula cittas*. All the twelve *akusala-cittas* (immoral consciousness) will never arise in him.

As his mind is always free from all defilements, it is at the purest state, making him the noblest one.

He is a true Saint worthy of respect by men and *devas* and worthy of receiving alms which are offered to him with the intention of enjoying the benefits in the present life as well as in future lives.

An *arahāt*, literally meaning a worthy one, does not accomplish fresh *kamma* activities, and he is not subject to rebirth because the conditions for his reproduction in matter have been destroyed.

Sotapannas, sakadagamis and anagamis are called *sekhas* because they have **yet to undergo training**. *Arahats* are called *asekhas* because they no longer need to undergo any training.

The *arahat* realizes that what is to be accomplished has been done. A heavy burden of misery has finally been thrown away, and all forms of craving and all shades of delusion have been annihilated. He now stands on heights higher than celestial, far removed from uncontrolled passions and the defilements of the world.

There are five types of *arahats*:

(1) *Pannavimutta-arahat* = one who is emancipated through *panna*(wisdom),

(2) *Ubhatobhagavimutta-arahat* =one who is emancipated in two ways, namely by *arupajjhana* and by *ariyamagga*.

(3) *Tevijja-arahat* = one who possesses the three *vijjas*.

(4) *Chalabhinna-arahat* = one who possesses the six *abhinnas* (supernormal powers),

(5) *Patisambhidhapatta-arahat* = one who possesses the four *samhhidhas*, i.e., the knowledge of the meaning of each word, the knowledge of the text (*pali*), the knowledge of the origin of the words, and the determinate knowledge together with the accurate discrimination of the first three.

Reference - *ARIYAS* The Noble Persons Dr. Mehm Tin Mon