

<http://www.ubakhin.com/welcome.html>

# THE NIYAMA-DIPANI

## The Manual of Cosmic Order

*by Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahapandita, D.Litt.*

Translated into English by Sayadaw U Nyana, Patamagyaw of  
Masoeyein Monastery Mandalay.  
Edited by The English Editorial Board

*Note to the electronic version:*

*This electronic version is reproduced directly from the printed version. The text is an English translation from the original Burmese. No attempt has been made to change any of the English phraseology. The reason for putting this book into electronic media is that the book is out of print and the text has been found **very a valuable source of inspiration to those practising Vipassana meditation**, despite using English language which is somewhat archaic.*

### I, Of the Fivefold Niyama (Cosmic Order)[1]

*Honour to the Exalted One, Arahat Buddha Supreme.  
Honour to the Norm, honour to the Order.  
Honour to the Teachers.  
And may they e'er before me stand  
And commune with me as I go.*

Him who became perfect by the cosmic order, him who taught that law, him the Refuge[2] thus honouring I shall now expound that Law.

The expression 'became perfect by the cosmic order' means that this **order includes laws of cosmic order for Buddhas**, whereby the state of Buddhahood is completely brought to pass and achieved. These laws bring about the attainment of Bodhi[3] by the great Bodhisats--namely, the ten perfections, each of three stages, the five great renunciations, the threefold duty, and at the end of the days, the

grappling, while on the Bodhi-seat, with [the law of causality](#), and the perceiving, while in jhana-concentration with controlled respiration, the genesis and evanescence of the five aggregates of individuality. [By these things the Buddhas win Buddhahood, hence such matters are called the things of the cosmic order for Buddhas.](#) Hereby we indicate that not by chance or accident do Buddhas become perfect.

'Who taught that law' means that He taught this and that way of applying the law of cosmic order, taught the one cosmic order of the five series of that order.

*The Fivefold Niyama* is as follows

1. utu-niyama: [the caloric order](#)
2. bija-niyama: [the germinal order](#)
3. kamma-niyama: [the moral order](#)
4. citta-niyama: [the psychological order](#)
5. dhamma-niyama: [natural phenomenal sequence](#).<sup>[4]</sup> Utu<sup>[5]</sup> is that which manifests, brings forth, generates what is ungenerated, develops that which is generated. But what is it? It is the specific quality we know as heat, the bare primary quality of fire. In this connection let us consider the four 'great essentials' of matter.

Each of these exhibits [three forms](#). By the first essential quality '[pathavi](#)' we understand either

- i. that constant '[extended element](#)', adaptable and pliant, which functions as [the basis of the other three](#)--fluids, fires, gases-or
- ii. [soil](#), or
- iii. [rock](#).

The second essential element has the salient mark of binding together, but there can be no binding without the wherewithal to bind. Nor in the third essential can there be heat without food, without fuel. Nor as to the fourth essential can there be mobility without some moving base. Hence, whatever material phenomena we take--liquid, fiery or gaseous, even the smallest atoms--the element called pathavi is the supporting condition of all of them by its function of serving as 'basis' to all.

By the second essential quality 'apo' we understand

- iv. that constant "cohesive element," adaptable and pliant, which functions in solids, fires, gases as that by which they cohere, or
- v. the 'viscous', the moisture that is for instance in bodies, in trees, etc., or
- vi. the more obvious fluid apo manifested in this or that liquid.

The 'viscous' form of apo denotes, as has been said, moisture in organic form, such as in an unwithered tree or an undried body. The 'fluid', such as waters and juices, is obvious. Whatever conglomerates in the least atoms, all are impossible without the function of cohesion. It has therefore been said that apo is primarily the variable internal cohesion of solids, fire and air.

By the third essential quality 'tejo' we understand

- vii. that constant element of heat, adaptable and pliant, which as 'hot' and 'cold' functions in solids, etc., as that which generates and as that which brings to maturity, or
- viii. glowing heat, or
- ix. flaming heat. It is due to the action of this element that all material things when they have reached maturity are reproduced, and make for growth or for maintenance.

By the fourth essential quality 'vayo' we understand

- x. that constant element of mobility, adaptable and pliant, which functions as fluctuation (or oscillation) in solids, etc., or
- xi. compressed or tense atmosphere, or
- xii. atmosphere in motion--for instance, air in a pair of bellows and air inhaled and exhaled. The mobile element constitutes the element of force, of resistance in coexistent essential forms. Hence all material things through this force and resisting power carry out their functions.

Furthermore, all these elements, whilst persisting under the stated conditions, increase in magnitude when there is an efficient cause for increase, and decrease in magnitude when there is an efficient cause for decrease. How may such a cause arise? **In the case of solids the cohesive element may obtain fluidity, and the solid substance begin to melt.** In the case of water, heat may grow to a flaming fire, while the cohesive element can merely exercise the property 'of cohesion. It is on account of their intensity and magnitude that they are called the 'Great Elements' (maha-bhutani). Their intensity and magnitude reach the climax on the eve of the destruction and disintegration of the world-systems.

**Heat in its primal form is the germinator of all material phenomena.** And this element or primal form of heat is just utu. Conversely, as we have said above, utu is the primal form of fire. Now to return to the "caloric order."

The caloric order is the fixed process that determines the four-fold succession of evolution, continuance, revolution (i.e. dissolution), and void of the universe. It is the process that determines the ordered succession of the three seasons-winter, summer and rains... It is again the same process that determines the specific season in which trees, creepers, shrubs and grasses bring forth flowers and bear fruit. And all this order has been made and created by no 'maker' whatever, whether human, celestial, or divine. Inasmuch as it is accomplished entirely by the fixed (or natural) order that we know as 'utu', it is called **utu-niyama**, or **caloric order**.<sup>[6]</sup> Thus we read in the Pali texts: 'There comes, Vasettha, a time, when, sooner or later, after the lapse of a long, long period the world-system passes away. **In the course of time, Vasettha, the radiance of those celestial beings vanishes. Their "self-radiance" having thus vanished, the moon, sun, planets and stars come into existence: nights, days, months, half-months, and the year with its seasons appear, etc.**<sup>[7]</sup>

6. Germinal order--Germ (**seed, bija**) is that from which trees, etc., spring and grow in varying forms. But what is that? In its common acceptance the word 'germ' denotes the five kinds of

bija--'root', etc. From the philosophical point of view it is just a form of 'caloric energy' (utu). Thus the generating and growing agency of the vegetable kingdom, embracing trees, etc., 'seedlings and plants'[8]--a form of 'caloric energy', which tends to manifest itself in plant-life--is called seed or germ.

The germinal order signifies the sprouts, shoots, trunks, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruits which spring from, say, the 'rose-apple seed' ([jambu-bija](#)) and which do not cease to be of the rose-apple species, type or family. This explanation applies to all trees, creepers, shrubs and grasses. This, too, is not made, nor created by any maker whatever. Inasmuch as it is accomplished entirely by the fixed or natural order that we know as germinal, it is called bija-niyama or germinal order. Thus we read in the Pali-texts: 'There are, bhikkhus, five classes of seeds, namely, those which are propagated from roots, from stems, from joints, from shoots,[9] and from the seed proper.'[10]

The subject is treated in detail in the Commentary on the Vinaya, in the section devoted to behaviour towards plant-life.

7. [The moral order--Kamma](#) (action) is that by which men execute, deeds, good or evil, meritorious or the opposite. What is it ? It is [volition \(cetana\)](#), [moral or immoral](#). [We are told in the Pali texts: 'By action, Bhikkhus, I mean volition](#). It is through having willed that a man does something in the form of deed, speech or thought.'[11]

Here volition (or conation) is the act of willing ([voluntary, or conative action](#)). In carrying something, good or bad, meritorious or the opposite, into effect, it deliberates and decides upon the steps to be taken, as the leader of all the mental functions involved in so doing. It provides the tension of those functions towards the desired object.

8. The expression 'as the leader of all' implies that in doing its own works, as well as the works of all the other psychic processes involved, [volition becomes the chief and supreme leader in the sense that it informs all the rest](#). Volition, as such, brings other

psychical activities to tend in one direction. This is the explanation of our statement: 'kamma is that by which men execute deeds.'

9. It should, however, be borne in mind that the conative process informs other psychical processes only in the case of one's own works, not in the case of the works of others. Accordingly, the latter cannot be brought within the definition of 'volition as the act of willing'. Hence B's actions cannot be called A's kamma, since there is as much difference between voluntary and non-voluntary actions as there is between a goat and a sheep. Voluntary action alone is entitled to the name. And therefore was it said: 'By kamma bhikkhus, I mean volition.'

In all acts the word kamma denotes 1) that which all deeds have in common, and 2) a disposition to exertion. And once well formed in the present, through either a good deed, or again through a bad deed, such a disposition serves later to call forth the coexistent aggregates (psycho-physical states) when the deed is repeated. It is due to the reawakening of those aggregates that a man is said, e.g. to be liberal, or given to violent deeds. In its persistence this disposition serves to produce the factor that leads to the concatenation of existence by way of rebirth in a life to come. *It is due to the origination of such a factor that a man, having bestowed gifts or killed living beings, is reborn into a state of bliss or of woe.* This sort of disposition is therefore described in the Mahapattana as the relation of coexistent kamma, and, again, of kamma at different points of time.

The distinctive basis in different lines of action[12] is attended with great consequences. Once made and established, in one place and at one time, it continues to be the cause of some peculiarity with regard to the body or mind or both. For this reason, perseverance in reflection upon the order of things, or, in worldly matters, perseverance in reflection upon such bases, yields great fruit and reward.

Of the various forms of such bases, two are attended with greater consequences in their adjustment and re-adjustment than in their natural order. Of these, one is the conative basis of

subjective experience and the other is the caloric basis (utu) in things external. As to subjective experience, the variety in conative tendency is accountable for the variety in consciousness. As to external life, the difference in variety of utu is accountable for the difference in inability.

By the moral order we mean the necessary, fixed, undesirable result in an evil action, the necessary, fixed, desirable result of a good action. *The course of evil action results in rebirth into a state of woe. The way of meritorious deeds belonging to the realm of 'rupa' (form sphere) leads to rebirth into a state of purity belonging to the realm of 'rupa'.* Furthermore, it is said in the Pali texts: 'The result of killing life is to make a being short-lived, and abstinence from killing leads to longevity. Jealousy begets many sorts of quarrels, while humanity begets peace. Anger robs a man of beauty, while forbearance enhances beauty. Enmity begets weakness, while amity brings strength. Theft begets poverty, while honest labour brings wealth. Pride ends in loss of honour, while modesty leads to respectability. *Association with a fool causes loss of wisdom, while knowledge is the reward of association with a wise man.*'[13] *This is the significance of the moral order.*

**Here the expression 'the act of killing life makes a being short-lived' implies that when a man has once killed a human being, or a being of a lower order, the act of killing furnishes the cause of his rebirth in various ways into a state of suffering. During the period when he returns to the state of man, the same act as 'life killing factor' makes him short-lived in many thousands of rebirths. This is the explanation of the statement 'The act of killing life makes a man short-lived'.** The explanation of the rest is analogous. In many hundreds of other suttas, various instances of fixed moral consequences are to be found. Such is the moral order.

We read in the Pali texts: *'There is no place, Bhikkhus, no room (in the conception of the moral order of things), for a bad action to produce desirable, agreeable and delightful results,* etc.'[14]

An 'action' produces two kinds of result: that which is uniform (inevitable), that which is diverse (exceptional). Here the order of moral principles is given with reference to the first kind of result. When we come to the 'diverse kind of result', we find that a man may pass his days happily with ill-gotten riches, but, after death, according to the uniform kind of result, he undergoes a doom of suffering all the more.

*Men inspired with pious thoughts and religious ideals forsake all worldly success, perform acts of merit, walk in the Norm, and undergo many kinds of privation. But according to the uniform kind of result, after death they may rejoice in heavenly bliss all the more. Such is the fixed moral order.*

10. **The psychical or psychological order**--Thought (citta) means 'one is thinking' (the act of thinking), the meaning being, one cognizes an object. It may also mean: investigates or explores an object. Further more, thought is, figuratively; called the 'varied' owing to the varying forms of thinking of objects.[15] Accordingly it is said in the Pali texts: **I see, bhikkhus, no other thing which is so very varied as thought (mind).** I see, bhikkhus, no other group (nikaya) which is so varied as beings of a lower order (beasts, birds, etc.) The beings of lower order are varied only by mind.[16] But thought is said, O bhikkhus, to be still more varied than those beings.'

Thought becomes more varied with regard to immoral things than to such as are moral. It is said 'mind delights in evil'. The beings of lower order that are made and created by mind are therefore more varied than all other beings. How is that? It is said in the Pali texts: 'I will declare, O bhikkhus, how the world originates, and how it ceases. What is the origination of the world, O bhikkhus? Conditioned by the eye and objects arises visual cognition. This triad is called "contact". Because of contact, feeling; because of feeling, craving ... Such is the origination of the entire body of ill. Conditioned by the ear and objects... by the nose... by the tongue... by the body, etc... conditioned by the sensorium and things arises mind-cognition. This triad is contact. Because of contact, feeling; because of feeling, craving... Such is the origination of the entire body of

ill. This, O bhikkhus, is what is called the origination of the world.

'What is the cessation of the world, O bhikkhus? Conditioned by the eye and objects arises visual cognition. This triad is called "contact". Because of contact, feeling; because of feeling Because of the complete cessation of that craving, grasping ceases; because of the cessation of grasping, becoming ceases Such is the cessation of the entire body of ill. So with regard to ear and other senses. This, O bhikkus, is what is called the cessation of the world.' [17]

Here the expression 'conditioned by the eye and objects arises the visual cognition, etc.', indicates that in this world the consciousness and [thought-procedure of foolish average folk vary from moment to moment and become the cause of their rebirth in different forms of future existence. Admitting this, it will be found that the different forms of their future existence are made and created by the mind in their present life. Because of the variation of consciousness, perception varies. Because of the variation of perception, their natural desire varies, and because this varies, action \(kamma\) varies. Some maintain also that because kamma varies, the rebirths in the animal kingdom vary.](#)

Now the phenomena, termed in the philosophic truth kamma and mind, become in conventional standards of truth[18] 'soul' (or 'being') and 'Person'. According to the latter, just as men by manifold thoughts make divers and manifold things, in this world, and just as gods[19] by manifold thoughts create divers and manifold things, so actions (kammani) and the results of actions, diversified by thought, are endowed with various forms of thinking, as if they were 'beings' and 'persons'. Hence, although neither action nor mind has the nature of atman,[20] who, it is asked, knows how to make? who is able to make? 'Beings', 'persons': they know, they can, make all things. But whether there is any special being or person making the infinitely varied world-picture or not it is impossible for them to say.

By psychical order we mean the fixity or law of the consequences of thoughts or consciousnesses, varying in function and in occasion. It is treated of in the Patthana in the chapter on 'the Relation of succession or sequence'.[21]

11. **Natural phenomenal sequence** (dhamma-niyama)--A dhamma is that which bears (dhareti) its own nature, e.g. its own hardness to the touch, its specific, individual mark as well as its universal characters, namely, growth, decay, dissolution, etc. The dhamma, categorised under the causal relation 'bear' the function of that relation, and those categorised under 'effect' 'bear' the function of the result or effect. This meaning applies to all dhamma as treated of in the Suttanta and the Abhidhamma Pitakas. It also embraces the things enumerated in the Vinaya Pitaka under the name 'the body of precepts' (silakkhandha). Why ? Because they are not outside the given definition of dhamma.

The principal treatment of the order of these dhamma and of all other dhamma is in the text of the **Mahapatthana**. Among the Suttanta texts, the whole of the Mahanidana-suttanta, and of the Nidana-samyutta is devoted to the dhamma-niyama; so, too, as all other suttantas which throw light on the conception of cause and effect. In one sutta this niyama is referred to as 'the establishing, the fixity of things as effects'(dhammatthitata dhammaniyamata): 'Because of ignorance comes kamma: now whether, O bhikkhus, Tathagatas arise, or whether they do not arise, this element (dhatu) stands, namely, the establishment of dhamma as effects, the fixity of dhamma as effects. Because of kamma... (and so on through all the links of the causal formula).[22] It is also referred to in the dictum: 'All conditioned things (sankhara) are impermanent, full of ills, and of the nature of "not self" ...[23]

In some passages, **this niyama is called dhammata**. 'It is dhammata-- the rule, or order-bhikkhus, that **when a Bodhisat (future Buddha) having fallen from the Tusita-group, enters into a mother's womb, a splendid radiance appears throughout the world, including the worlds of gods and brahmas... and the thousand world-systems tremble and shudder and quake...**[24]

In some passages it is alluded to under the category of possibility and the opposite: 'It is impossible, bhikkhus, and out of the question that the person endowed with sound views should consider a conditioned thing in the light of something eternal. Such a thing can nowise come to pass, etc.'[25]

But the character of the dhamma-niyama is best summarised in the formula: 'When that exists, this comes to be. From the arising of that this arises. When that does not exist, this does not come to be. When that ceases, then this ceases!'[26]

Or again: 'These, bhikkhus, are the three characteristics of a conditioned thing: perceivable is its growth, perceivable is its decay, 'perceivable is its changing whilst it lasts. These, bhikkhus, are the three characteristics of the unconditioned growth is not perceivable, decay is not perceivable, changing and duration is not perceivable.'[27]

It is the dhamma of birth that is born, the dhamma of decay that grows old, the dhamma of dying that dies. And herein is another niyama: that of birth. For it is said in the Pali texts:

Then: 'O Vasettha', said the Exalted One,  
'To both of you will I discourse upon  
The question of the breeds of living things,  
In due course, e'en as it really is.  
By breed, in sooth, they differ mutually.  
Grasses and trees ye know; albeit ye may not  
Discern it, birth-made is of each the type.  
By breed, in sooth, they differ mutually....'

and so on, in several verses, in both the Majjhima-nikaya and the Sutta-nipata.[28] Here, 'type' (linga) means 'variation in appearance.' 'Differ mutually' is different from one another.

In these verses the Master spoke of the generic order of trees, etc., and of animals. Such an 'order of birth' obtains also among men. Men are also seen to be of different birth and breed, different clans, families and descent. But in this sutta in order to eliminate the false notion that **'the brahmin is the best of all in the world'** (the brahmin, i.e. **by birth only**), he first shows the types, among the multitudes of human actions and efforts, are wrought by present

actions (not merely by birth), and finally describes the ideal brahmin. [Kamma is shown, in this sutta as the criterion of the inferiority or excellence of beings.](#) It is kamma that distinguishes beings with respect to worth. Outward appearance is due to breed-variety in the parents. Born of bovine breed, one has the bovine shape and appearance; similarly as to horses. Hence in the birth-niyama a different procedure is called for when treating of animals (pana) as distinct from higher beings (satta).

## II. Of The Standards of Truth (Dve Saccani)[29]

Our task here is to define the two categories under which all truths may be included: (1) The [conventional \(sammuti\)](#), and (2) the [philosophic \(paramattha\)](#)[30] standard.

12. **Conventional truths**--By this is meant a truth or fact, generally received as such by the common consent of mankind. What are the modes of conventional expressions? These are 'self', 'soul', 'being', 'person', woman, man, body, head, hand, leg, hair of the head, down on the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, nerves, sinews, bone, etc.; the names of such external objects as tree, creeper, shrub, house, chariot, carriage, bed, seat, etc.

None of these are names of such 'really existent' dhamma (facts, phenomena, attributes) as mind, contact, extension, cohesion, etc. They are all names which denote as well as connote only some physical appearance and its persistence as such. These names and their connotation, therefore, having but a conventional significance, are called modes of conventional expression, i.e. terms in common use.

What constitutes the achievement or predication of conventional truth? ['The self is \(exists\)', 'the living soul is', 'a being is', 'the person is'](#), etc. By adopting such words in common use a man becomes a conventional truth-speaker. And these are to be regarded as a correct mode of stating such truth. Why? Because otherwise constant disputes would result from want of a common language and common notions.

This is what is termed 'conventional truth'.

13. **Philosophic truth**--This is a fact or truth recognised from the philosophic point of view. What are the modes of philosophic expression? These are: 'mind', 'mental factor', 'matter', 'Nibbana', 'aggregates', 'elements', and so on.

These are not merely common or collective names, but imply something which really as such (sabhavato) exists. These are called the modes of 'highest', or 'ultimate matters', inasmuch as any import beyond that which they possess is inconceivable.

What constitutes the achievement or predication of philosophic truth? 'Consciousness exists', 'contact exists', 'feeling exists', 'extended quality exists', 'cohesion exists', 'Nibbana exists', and so on.

By expressing things as they exist in reality a man is a truth-speaker.[31] Such speech is also to be regarded as a correct mode of stating truth. Why? Because it helps us to avoid falling into the errors of recognition, sense-consciousness and illusory opinions.

This is what is termed 'philosophic truth'. It should be noted in this connexion that 'conventional truth' provides a safeguard against falsehood, and 'philosophic truth' guards against hallucination. Thus, when a man from the conventional point of view states 'the self, the soul, the being, the person exists', etc., he is not to be considered as uttering falsehoods, whether the import of what he affirms is really true or not, whether it rests upon valid speculation or self.[32] Why? Because, in such a case, there is no fraudulent motive. But it comes within the province of hallucinations. Why? Because in these cases the things that are of 'the nature of 'not self' are taken as of 'self', and stated as such. **From the philosophical point of view there is nothing of 'self'**. There are only dhamma. And none of these is of the nature of 'self'. They are, on the contrary, of the nature of 'not-self', etc. And when a man speaks like this his words show neither falsehood nor hallucination. So we read in the Pali texts: 'These, bhikkhus, are the four cases of hallucination. What are the four? The impermanent is taken as permanent.' This is the first point involved in hallucinations of recognition,

sense consciousness and illusory opinion. 'That which is ill is taken as weal. That which is not-self is taken as self. The ugly and offensive is taken as beautiful and beneficial.' These are the remaining three cases of the hallucinations of recognition, sense-consciousness and illusory opinion.

Here the expression 'The impermanent' implies the psychical and physical facts and conditions that are summed up in the term 'name and form',[33] and which are by nature impermanent. The expression 'that which is ill' implies the facts of common experience that are categorised under the 'truth regarding ill'. The expression 'the not self' implies all that which is of the nature of 'not-self'. And the expression 'the ugly and offensive' implies the psycho-physical condition that fall under 'the truth regarding ill' and are, therefore, a fortiori considered to be 'ugly and offensive'.

By viewing 'name-and-form' in the light of 'being', 'person', a man takes what is impermanent as permanent. Why? Because ['being' or 'person' is nothing but a concept](#). And a concept, as we know, has not the attribute of passing away or moving about.

On the other hand, when it is said that a being, on coming into form of existence, is himself born, that at the end of life he himself dies, that even before he took on to himself the present form of existence, he had come from this or that form of first existence, and that after death he would be re-born into this or that form of future existence, it shows that the being is viewed as engaged in 'going'.

It is for these reasons that, by viewing 'name-and-form' in the light of 'being', 'person', a man takes what is impermanent as permanent

By holding dear and agreeable that which is merely a mental and bodily phenomenon liable to the facts of misery, a man takes that which is ill as weal, that which is ugly and offensive as beautiful and beneficial.

'Being' is a mere 'concept'. There is no corresponding thing in nature. When such a really non-existent is regarded as really

existent, the result thereof is that mere name-and-form is made the essence of a being. And by holding that it is the self of a being, not only that, the being himself, a man takes what is not-self as self.

It is said that a man sees objects through his eyes. Here seeing means visual cognition. The gaze is fixed upon a material form as the object of that cognition. And the form is a visible and tangible phenomenon, and neither the being nor the person. A man, having seen such a form, contemplates it in his mind as a being, a woman, a head, a face, a tree, a chariot, a carriage.[43] This is the error of cognitive consciousness originating from seeing. A similar explanation can hold true of such an error as originates from hearing, etc. But the question as to the error that originates from the mind co-ordinating sensations is rather intricate, though of pressing importance.

According as an object is discerned by the mind, it is marked or fixed by recognition. Later on it may cause bewilderment and confusion. 'This is what is called the hallucination of recognition.

According as a man apprehends a thing through the understanding, he speculates upon it:--'Beings, etc., have a self.' 'It is like this and that.' 'There is a living soul.' 'It is such and such.' This is what is termed the hallucination of illusory opinion.

In the Pali texts, the hallucination of recognition as being very obvious is mentioned first. But it may follow the hallucination of opinion. And these three forms of hallucination are rooted in 'ignorance', that is to say, they originate from it. Of these, the first two forms of hallucination have a bearing upon the, immoral type of worldly consciousness. Craving, conceit, and false notions spring from them. By taking his stand upon philosophical truth, a man can discern the nature of hallucinations; and having ascertained what that is, he can give them up for ever.

*"Householder, to bring about life in the heaven-world, it is of no use for an Ariyan disciple, yearning for heaven, either to pray for it or to think much of it; the steps that lead to heaven must be stepped by the Ariyan disciple, and when those steps are stepped by him, they lead to the winning of heaven, and he becomes a winner of the heaven-world."*

*Anguttara-Nikaya, The Book of the Fives, iii (43)*

### **III, Of Great Periods of Time**

We shall now expound our system of the five time-periods called kappa. They are distinguished as

14. a great kappa, a cycle or aeon;
  15. an incalculable kappa, four going to each great kappa;
  16. an included kappa, falling within one of the preceding;
  17. a life-kappa, or one lifespan of any given being; and
  18. a cataclysm-kappa, or age of doom.
19. A **great kappa**--This is a notion of a given time historically cut off, so to speak, and divided into some periods in which many events happen (in a certain order, and which repeat themselves). It would follow from this that a 'great kappa' is but a notion of time itself. To a kappa as such is given the name 'great' on the ground of its having been conceived as the greatest in duration. How long, then, is the duration of a great kappa?

In order to form an idea of its duration, let us imagine a mountain, which is a single cube of rock, one league[35] in length, in breadth, and in height. If a person were to flick it with a piece of cloth once at the lapse of every hundred years, the time that such a mountain would require to be completely worn away would not be so long in duration as is a great kappa.[36]

How long in duration has been the succession of great kappas in the past? It is said in the text: 'Undetermined, Bhikkhus, is the beginning of this world: the past extremity (pubbakoti) as to the running on of beings in rebirths under the hindrance of ignorance and bonds of craving is not manifest.'[37]

Here the Pali word for 'undetermined' is *anama*, which is the same as *a-mata*, the syllable an being euphonic. Amata means that which is unknown, unascertained. So it was said 'The past extremity' (or beginning) is not ascertainable by calculation. Or, it may perhaps mean that which, like the 'eelwriggling' of the sophists,[38] sets itself no limit.

In turning back to the proposition 'the past extremity... is 'not manifest', it is indeed suggested that here the words 'is not manifest' mean 'does not exist' in the same way as in the passage 'If there be, Ananda, no birth, are old age and death manifested?' 'Verily they are not, Venerable Sir.'[39] The word 'manifest' means 'exist', and 'not manifest' means 'does not exist'.

Whether the one or the other be meant, we may conclude that the proposition 'the past extremity... is not manifest' means that the past extremity as to the succession of great kappas in general does not exist, while taking a kappa in particular, this may be said to have its beginning, its middle, and its end.

Those who fancy that there was actually a past extremity to the succession of all great kappas in general have certainly no other reason for it than their own fanciful thinking. Those who reject the ariyan mode of interpretation called 'the theory of causation' commit themselves to the error of the assumption of the uncaused, or to that of theism. So much as to the nature and extent of a great kappa.

20. **Incalculable epochs**--Such is the name of a kappa that is not capable of being definitively enumerated, enumerated even by taking hundreds of thousands of years as a unit. These are four kinds: the enveloping epoch, the enveloped epoch, the developing epoch, the developed epoch.

It is written in the Anguttara-Nikaya (iv., 156; or vol. ii., 142): 'These are the four incalculable epochs... (They are enumerated as above). The epoch, Bhikkhus, when there is a cosmic envelopment, is not easy to reckon as so many years, centuries, tens or hundreds of centuries.' Here 'the enveloped' is that

which relapses, is destroyed. The world-system having once relapsed, while the world-stuff remains in a state of dissolution, it is said to remain enveloped. 'The developing epoch' is a period of restoration, of evolution. Having once been reinstated, while the world-system continues to be in that state, it is said to be developed.[40]

Of these epochs, again, the first is distinguished as of three kinds:

That which is brought to pass by heat, i.e. by the action of fire;

That which is brought to pass by water, i.e. by the action of a deluge;

That which is brought to pass by wind, i.e. by raging storms that hurl away a world-system.

In the event of the first type of envelopment, fire consumes the realm of matter, both in the lower material heavens and everything that is below. In the event of the second type of envelopment, water submerges the realm of matter in the next higher material heavens, together with all that is below. And in the event of the third type of envelopment, wind unhinges the realm of matter in the highest material heavens, together with all that is below.

It should be noted now that four incalculable epochs are together equal to a great kappa. Hence when we speak of an incalculable period, we should understand thereby just one-fourth of a great kappa.

It is not for us to speculate whence come those three great destructive agencies. Suffice it for us that we live in a universe of a certain configuration, and that everywhere we discern the agency of fire, water and wind. When, for instance, fire burns one house, its flame strikes on to another, and burns that too. While the flame is yet in the second house, it causes the element of heat to grow up in yet another house and burn it. Evidently in the last case the flame of the second house does not directly burn the third one. This remark holds true of all. Thus it would follow from this that this broad earth and

universe are ever filled with those elements which are ever finding opportunity of transforming and disturbing them. And whenever they obtain adequate opportunity, they destroy the earth, just as fire can destroy this or that mountain in which it resides. There is no question of agencies passing over into the universe, but only of series of internecine counteractions.

21. **An included era**--This denotes a kappa which appears to fall within one of the incalculable epochs, called the developed. In the beginning of an incalculable epoch, men live to an exceedingly great age. This state of things exists until subsequently, as the conditions of immorality develop, their life-term decreases by degrees through a succession of many hundreds of thousands of such periods, till it reaches the minimum of ten years. From this again with the conditions of morality developing among them, their life-term goes on increasing and increasing till at last it regains the maximum of exceeding longevity. This is what is termed an included era. Of such eras sixty-four are together equal in duration to one incalculable period:- so it is said in the commentaries.

If that be so, the length of an included era can only be decided by a knowledge of the duration of an incalculable epoch. And we may add that, if a man were to count the numbers of years by grains of sand picked up one by one from one league of the Ganges, the sands would be exhausted sooner than the years of one included era were all counted.

22. **Life-spans**--When we say 'Through a succession of many hundreds of thousands of life-spans', we mean the life-span of men. **There is no definite term of life as regards brutes, 'petas', demons, infernal beings, and earthly gods. Among the higher grades of celestial beings, the life-span of the twenty brahma-worlds is different in each case.**
23. **Ages of doom or cataclysm**--In the world of men, events happen at times that affect human life and are termed disasters. These are of three kinds: **war, famine, and pestilence**. We read in our texts: 'A Brahmin said to the Blessed One: "I have heard it said, Venerable Gotama, of the Brahmins of old, of teachers, and the teachers of teachers, that in former days this world was

... pervaded by men: within 'the flight of a cock' were situated the villages, the inhabited districts, and the royal capitals. Now what is the cause, what is the reason that, at the present time, the numbers of men have dwindled, so that their paucity in numbers is apparent, and that villages appear to be no villages, towns appear to be no towns, and inhabited countries appear to be uninhabited?"

'The Blessed One said: "Now Brahmin, because men are attached to immoral passions, overpowered by lawless greed, and victims to false ideals, they with sharp weapons kill one another. This verily is the cause, this is the reason why the numbers of men have now dwindled, so that their paucity in numbers is apparent. And furthermore, Brahmin, for them who are grown morally debauched, the sky does not pour down sufficient rain, the result of which is the outbreak of famine, on account of which many people die.

*"And yet again, Brahmin, for men who are grown morally debauched the **yakkhas** let loose ferocious non-human pests, in consequence of which many people die."* [41]

Here the expression 'within the flight of a cock' signifies that villages and towns were so closely connected that cocks might leap from the boundary of one and alight near that of another. 'Victims to false ideals' means that they have given themselves up to false ideals and ceremonies, by which are meant covetousness, ill-will, as well as various sacrifices accompanied with the slaughter of animals.

'Many people die' implies that, at times, in consequence of some matter of administration, or from atrocities perpetrated by thieves, etc., a commotion arises in the country, many people lose their lives, many properties and means of sustenance are destroyed, and many villages, districts, towns and royal capitals are on that account burnt by fire. And this sort of fear arises sometimes every three years, sometimes every five or six years, sometimes every ten or twelve years. Then comes a time when war breaks out between one country and another, between one

kingdom and another, and many people die in consequence. This is called a 'doom-era' of anarchy and war.

*'The yakkhas' meant the commanding beings, placed by the four great rulers of the four cardinal points as commanders of such beings. 'The ferocious' meant wicked, savage, non-human beings, devils and goblins of terrestrial, aquatic and ethereal origins.*

'In consequence of which many people die means that the non-human pests, having got the opportunity, came upon the walks of man in many hundreds and thousands, from seas or forests. *They, having caused many diseases to prevail and to seize upon the living bodies, devoured fat and blood. Hence they are designated as 'blood-sucking' and 'blood-thirsty'. If they failed to seize upon men, they were said to devour fat and blood of cows and buffaloes, goats and sheep. When this kind of pestilence prevailed once in a country, it prevailed there even for six or seven years*, causing enormous mortality among the young in men and beasts. *The remedies used for such a pestilence were the potent formulas of spells and incantations, or offerings to the yakkhas.* In this connection might be cited the story of Sakabodhiraja of Ceylon, in the book of the Great Chronicle.[42]

**This is called the doomful period of pestilence.** Many other types of eras of doom also appear in this world. We have been taught, for instance, that in former days, through demoniac agency, the kingdoms of Dandaka, Majjha, Kalinga and Mutanga ceased to be kingdoms. Even in these days, in countries, towns and villages where destruction of life goes on on a large scale, many creatures meet with death from great earthquakes or from great tidal waves, or from hurricanes, from floods or rain, from volcanic eruptions, from shipwrecks.

When do these three eras of disaster mainly come to pass? From the time when the life-span of men is five hundred years. We read in the Cakkavatti Sutta:[43] 'Upon men who live to an age of five hundred years, Bhikkhus, three things come to full

florescence: unrighteous passions, lawless greed and false Ideals.'

#### **IV, Of Things not Within the Range of Thought (Acinteyyani)**

These we hold to be four in number: the range of a Buddha, the range of iddhi or [supernormal power](#), the nature of the result of action (kamma), the origin and reality of the world.

As it is said in the texts: 'There are four things which are not within the range of thought, which should not be thought about, thinking upon which tends to unhinge the mind and injure the system, namely, the range of a Buddha, the jhana-range of one in jhana for mystic rapture, the result of kamma and thinking of the world.'<sup>[44]</sup>

Here 'things not within the range of thought' means 'which cannot be thought about by average folk; things that lie beyond their intellectual ability, and with which it is therefore not meet they should occupy their thoughts.' By 'thinking upon which' we mean endeavouring strenuously to grasp, with the determination: 'Whether I am far removed from, or stand near to the matters belonging to ariyans, to saintly persons, I will realize these for and by myself, solely by my own intellectual insight.' 'To unhinge the mind'--to bring about loss of mental balance. 'Injure' to cause mental misery. 'Jhana-range' we have called 'range of iddhi'.

#### **The range of a Buddha.**

These are the fourfold assurances, the six modes of super-intellect and the ten powers. The only adequate criterion of these attainments is the insight of a Buddha himself, not that of eminent followers, or of other beings, human or celestial, fit to rank beside them. As to the nature of those powers, they should be studied in the testimony of the Buddhas. In so doing a disciple can fulfill his duty, otherwise his efforts are but misdirected, and would tend to his ruin, or, as it is said, 'unhinge the system'.

This would hold true for other inquirers, intelligent yet not adherents. If this criterion be admitted, the further question arises: 'How can one who is a Buddha, i.e., "Awakened", enlightened, omniscient--be known to be such?' The reply is: 'By the vastness of his intellect: in

other words, by omniscience.' But how can omniscience be known? **By the contents of his teaching.** And by his teaching (in the case of the Buddha Gotama) we mean the eighty-four thousand dhammas constituting the body of his doctrine.[45] It is by the possession of this intellectual superiority (buddhi-mahatta) that a person becomes 'Buddha'; **it is not only by possessing supernormal gifts as such that he can attain to a state of perfection.** A Buddha of a truth becomes a trite saviour of multitudes in virtue of his greatness in merit, in morals, in power of concentration, in supernormal power, in intellectual endowment--in all of these qualities.

If it be insisted on the contrary that it is by virtue of mere supernormal faculties that a Buddha becomes a true saviour, our contention is that should a man, himself blinded by the supernormal faculty in matters which can only be illumined by intellect, right understanding, try to save many, it would do many foolish people great harm. Indeed, in the absence of genuine intellect, the supernormal faculty, whether small or great, serves as an instrument by which to practise the art of cunning, crafty talk and deception. Those who attach weight to supernormal faculty as such are as children, while those who attach weight to intellect are wise indeed. This truth is brought out in the section called 'Sila', of the Digha-nikaya, in the Kevatta-sutta.[46]

Here one might object by saying that, for that matter, superiority of intellect should be the same as superiority as to supernormal faculty. If so, our reply to him would be that should a being be capable of doing all possible good to the world by virtue of his superiority as to supernormal faculty, it would follow from this that, in his case, there is no duty to carry out in the moral kingdom, by virtue of his capacity for teaching. If so, it would further follow that in his case there is also no duty to perform by virtue of his superior intellect. If this is so, it should further be inferred that, in his religion, the functions of teaching and of intellect are far to seek.

Concerning this statement, that by virtue of his superiority in supernormal faculty a man is capable of doing all possible good to the world--'is capable' means, of course, a public, well-attested capacity, visible at any time no less than moon or sun in the sky. Otherwise the foolish person who draws conclusions from the loud-voiced professions of impostors gaining their living by such cunning and

crafty talk, will in the end find himself sprawling in empty space under the delusion that he is on broad earth. But superiority of intellect can be absolutely relied upon, and he who, in great and profound matters, does not seek is foolish both by nature and in the eyes of the world.

### **The range of iddhi.**

By iddhi we understand supernormal faculties developed by special exercises. In ancient days, when life was long, recluses and brahmins outside the pale of Buddhism reckoned five kinds--

24. supernormal willpower (Iddhividhabhinna);
25. hyperaesthesia of sight;
26. hyperaesthesia of hearing;
27. discerning the thought of another (thought-reading, telepathy);
28. hypermnesia, or reminiscence of one's own past history.

These five, together with the insight known as the conviction of one's self being free from the four 'intoxicants' (asava-kkhayabhinna), are recognised among the disciples of the Buddha as six kinds of supernormal faculties as such.

**By supernormal powers of will, *recluses and brahmins claimed to go to the worlds of gods and Brahmas above, to the infernal regions below, and even beyond the limit of the farthest zone of the world-systems.***

By supernormal powers of sight and hearing they, standing here, could see objects and hear sounds there, at distant places.

By supernormal powers of thought they could read thoughts, and by supernormal powers of hypermnesia they could recollect events that happened in the past, many hundreds of births ago, even many periods of envelopment and development of the world-system.

While going above, below or about, they thus began to observe: 'In travelling in this manner, in a single moment we have measured so many leagues.' In so doing various configurations and many leagues in the systems of the world in the course of a cosmic epoch would become visible. Having realised through this the perniciousness of

sensual desires, they renounced the world, became dwellers in the woods, practised, meanwhile, such things as meditation on the nature of material things and cultivation of the divine Brahma-life--of goodwill, compassion, appreciation and equanimity--**by which a man can attain to the Brahma-world, and mastered five supernormal powers.** From that time on they had nothing further to do for themselves. At this stage they, while living in this world, sought for many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of years to do good to the world. In so doing there would be revealed to them very many kinds of various arts and sciences.

As to these recluses and brahmins, we are told in the Brahmjalsutta[47]: 'There are some recluses and Brahmins who theorise with regard to what was before the aeons of time, and who speculate on what will be after the aeons of time, etc.'[48] From this we can see that their speculations did not come into the range of their fivefold iddhi. Hence, as to a matter within the range of their iddhi, their knowledge, and not that of average men was to be regarded as the true measure. And it was the business of the latter to learn to comprehend those points as they were given by those recluses and brahmins. As it is said in the Dasavatthuka-sammi-ditthi:[49] 'There are in the world recluses and brahmins who, being in the right path, having made progress by right methods, have discerned and realised the nature of this world as well as of the world beyond, and declare what they know.'

**Here one might say: 'I do not believe that there are recluses and brahmins who have possessed such great supernormal powers. Why? Because now for certain no such men are ever to be seen or heard of in the world.'**

You are right in saying, 'now for certain no such men are ever to be seen.' The reason is that now you are born too late, and in the closing part of a period of decadence. This is also true that you say: 'no such men are to be heard of.' The reason is that you are born rather too late in a non-Noble land, far removed from religions and texts coming down in unbroken succession from the beginning of an aeon. But you should investigate the matter thus: In former days this world was exceedingly rich in all respects; men lived to a very great age, even past reckoning was one span of life. What then might not this world of

men have been like in those days? To what can we of today liken the saints and recluses of those times?[50]

### **The nature of the result of action (kamma).**

This is of two kinds: that which takes effect in the life-experience of an individual, and that which comes about afterwards in a life beyond. Here 'result' is that which matures, that is to say, bears fruit, secures a distinct end. For instance, when a man, having earned a kahapana (old Indian coin) by some job he has done, enjoys thereby things that he desires, it is then, and then only, that his work secures a distinct end, that is, reaches the object sought by the labourer. In the same way is the point in question to be viewed. Carried once into effect, an action[51] runs its course as such, and as long as it does not mature, so long it cannot be said to have reached its distinct end. Its sequence may run through hundreds of thousands of periods. Thus does a powerful kamma of immoral nature secure its distinct end in states of woe, and thus does a powerful kamma of moral nature become effective in lives of bliss.

Again, the result of kamma is taken to be twofold: as drifting, affecting the individual, and as overflowing, affecting others. Of these the former implies prosperity, or adversity experienced by a man in this or that existence as an individual being, in consequence of his meritorious or demeritorious deeds. Under this aspect the result of kamma affects the doer of the deed only. But in his existence as an individual being, owing to the heat and power of his kamma promoting his happiness, or causing him misery, there arise conditions of prosperity, or adversely, with respect to persons other than himself. This is called the overflow of the result of kamma. Under this aspect the result of his kamma is shared by others.

The drifting course of the result of kamma may be illustrated by the prosperity of King Mahasudassana's life in the Mahasudassana-sutta.[52]

Moreover, owing to the power of the meritorious deeds of the king, various conditions of prosperity in the lives of other persons arose, some together with his own condition, some coming from this or that source. This may be taken as an illustration of the overflowing course

of the result of kamma. It may even promote the happiness of the inhabitants of other continents.[53]

As regards evil deeds, the story in which the whole kingdom was ruined in consequence of the overflowing course of King Nalikera's act, persecuting five hundred sages,[54] and such other stories may be related.

Again, it is written: *'A person, Bhikkhus, may be so born as to promote the well-being of many men, the happiness of many men, the interests of many men, the well-being and happiness of many gods and men. A person, Bhikkhus, may be so born as to increase the ill of many men, the misery of many men, the ruin of many men, the ill and misery of many gods and men.'*[55]

It not only affects beings, animals as well as men, but it also permeates the realm of space, and the whole organic world. Thus we read in our texts:

*'It is, the rule, Bhikkhus, that when the Bodhisatta, having fallen from the Tusita-heaven, enters his mother's womb, then there appears throughout this world including the celestial worlds, an infinitely splendid radiance surpassing in splendour the divine radiance of gods, and then the ten thousand world-systems tremble, shake and quake.'*[56] *Such is the overflowing result of a Bodhisatta's acts of fulfilling many perfections.*

When men become exceedingly sinful in thought and deed, all the overflowing course of their kamma rushes from this extensive earth up to the orbits of moon, sun and stars, agonising even the whole realm of space, and the whole organic world of trees, etc., undermining by degrees the cause of prosperity and strengthening that of adversity. It is then that the life-span, beauty and health of men, inhabiting and living in both of these worlds, undergo diminution.

Nowadays men and trees appear exceedingly small. But we are told, in the Buddhavamsa that, in the days of longevity, the body of a Buddha was eighty cubits in length, while according to the Sixth Book of the Anguttara the height was ninety cubits. The Dhammikavagga[57] tells us that in ancient times the King Korabya

of the Kingdom of the Kurus had a banyan tree, named Suppatittha, twelve leagues in circumference, its fruits of the size of big rice-jars....

When men become virtuous in thought and deed, it has been similarly declared how the life-span of men goes on increasing. The whole of the Agganna and Cakkavatti-suttas should be referred to in this connection.[58] Again, in the Pattakammavagga, of the Anguttara-nikaya,[59] we are told: 'At the time, Bhikkhus, when kings and their sons become unrighteous, unrighteous become also the Brahmins and house-holders, and the people who live in suburbs and countries. Then the moon, sun, stars and planets move irregularly. At the time, Bhikkhus, when kings and their sons become righteous, righteous become also the Brahmins and householders, etc. Then do moon, sun, stars and planets move regularly.' This is the overflowing consequence of the collective kamma of men. Such a consequence affects even the whole realm of space and the whole organic world.

It must be borne in mind that here by 'result of kamma' is meant something 'born of the result of kamma'--for instance, the supernormal faculties, included under the category of things not within the range of thought, became possible through the kamma of past lives. The faculties as such are of many kinds, each realm of beings having its own supernormal powers.

As regards the supernormal powers of the Brahma-gods, we are informed in the Sankharupapatti-sutta,[60] of the presence of one thousand to ten thousand Brahmas: that of these, one thousand Brahmas permeate one thousand world-systems with their radiance, two thousand Brahmas permeate two thousand world-systems, and so on. These are the Maha-brahmas living on the plane of the first stage of Jhana-rapture. Now the gods and men who live beneath this plane imagine and recognise this or that Maha-brahma to be the maker of the whole world, the lord of the whole world, omnipresent, immutable, eternal saviour of the world. It is said in the Mula-pannasa,[61] the first sutta of the Majjhima-nikaya: 'He (i e. an ordinary thinker who is not familiar with the Ariyan mode of thinking) apprehends Brahma[62] as Brahma. Having apprehended Brahma as Brahma, he fancies him to be the Brahma, conceives attributes in the Brahma, fancies that the world is from the Brahma, imagines that the Brahma is his, and extols the Brahma as such. What

is the cause of it? I say, it is because this matter is not truly understood by him.'

Here the meaning of 'apprehends Brahma as Brahma' is: he apprehends the god just as people commonly do in ordinary speech. And the phrase 'he fancies him to be the Brahma' implies that he imagines him (a) according to his unregenerate desires, thinking: 'Lo! this Great Brahma-in all his beauty!' (b) according to his fancies as to values (mana), thinking: 'He is the supreme, the most high in the world'; (c) according to his speculative opinions, thinking: 'He is the unchangeable, immutable, eternal, stable and enduring, for ever.'

The expression 'he conceives attributes in the Brahma' implies that he conceives such and such splendour, such and such supernatural powers in him. The expression 'he fancies that the world is from the Brahma' signifies that he thinks that this world is born of, i.e. emanates from, this Brahma, comes into existence only in relation to him. The expression 'imagines that the Brahma is his' implies that he considers the Brahma to be our master, lord, and refuge. 'Extols the Brahma as such' means that he praises him by saying, 'Ah! how majestic is he! Ah! how powerful is he!' The expression 'because this matter is not truly understood by him' means that it is not discerned by the threefold mode of discerning: In the first place he does not investigate it in the light of such an axiom of knowledge as the Brahma as such does not exist, the only existing things are the psychical and physical facts and conditions classed as 'name-and-form'. In the second place he does not investigate the matter by the light of higher reason, which judges the psychical and physical facts and conditions as such are by nature impermanent, involve ills, and are accordingly not of the nature of soul or deity.

And in the third place he does not investigate the matter by the light of a felt necessity of abandoning, once for all, craving, imagined values, and false speculation which are rooted in erroneous apperception. These were indicated above in connection with our explanation of the expressions 'he apprehends,' 'he fancies,' 'he extols'. This lack of knowledge, indeed, is the cause of his apprehending and imagining and praising after this sort.

As regards the remaining faculties, such as those which are peculiar to the gods, etc., they are made manifest in the Deva, Sakka, Brahma, Yakkha, Naga, Supanna, and Lakkhana Samyuttas (in the Samyutta-nikaya), as well as in the Peta-Vatthu and other texts.

These faculties are seldom found among men. But common people do not know and see them, although they are lodged in their own bodies. The recluses and Brahmins of great supernormal power in the past, or those who cultivate occult lore, alone know and see them. Those super-normal faculties, born of the result of kamma, are outside the mental range of average folks and should not be studied.

Nevertheless, these faculties are really common, speaking generally, to all beings. For all beings, during their continual journey in this endless series of lives, may travel from the nethermost purgatories to the topmost scale of existence, through all those that are intermediate. They may attain then to the state of gods, to that of Sakka, Brahmas, Maha-brahmas, and so on. Again' from this highest scale they may be reborn into the states of woe. He who is today! the king of gods, or a brahma,[63] endowed with majestic powers, may become tomorrow a dog or a hog, and so on in rotation.

Other results of kamma not within the range of thought are such as come into effect among infra-human beings. Besides, in the bodies of men and of the brute creation there are physical conditions of the sense faculties, resulting from past kamma. These, too, are of a nature not within the range of thought. For when in the case of a dead body, or a dead organ of sense, a man thinks 'I will bring it to life again!' he only runs the risk of losing his reason, or of ruining his health by his thoughts and efforts. And why? Because he is striving against the inexorable working of another's past deeds.

In the Mahavagga-Samyutta, in the section dealing with the four truths, the ten speculative views, maintaining that the world is eternal, that it is not eternal, and so forth, are called technically 'world-thought' (loka-cinta'). But here we are using the term in a more comprehensive sense for all world-lore to be found in ancient texts under various names, for cosmologies conceived by the recluses and Brahmins of supernormal powers, by their pupils and pupils of pupils, or by Atthaka, Vamaka, and such other recluses and Brahmins. The

Vedangas, for instance, are said to be derived from, and dependent upon, the contents of the three vedas of the tri-veda brahmins. The sciences mean medical science. The mantras denote spells for conquering the earth, winning wealth, etc. 'World-thought' is also applied to the Manika and Gandhari cults, mentioned in the Kevattasutta. [The Manika-cult is like the 'supernormal thought called discerning the thought of another'](#), a telepathic device. And the [Gandhari-cult is like the 'supernormal powers of will'](#), a device for executing various feats of supernormal character, such as floating through the air, etc. The latter is manifold, viz., root-cult, incantatory, numerical, and metallic. The root-cult is that which is rendered effective through medicinal roots; the incantatory cult is that which is brought into play through formulas of spells; the numerical cult is that which is brought into play through eight and nine series of numbers; and the [metallic cult is that which is brought into play by means of metals like iron and mercury](#). And in the Patisambhidamagga we read: 'What are the feats of magic? A magician having recited his spells exhibits an elephant, a horse, a chariot, infantry, and various arrays of the army in the sky, in the firmament.' In the Upali-sutta of the Majjhima-pannasa we read: 'What do you think, householder? Is a recluse or a Brahmin, who is endowed with supernormal faculty and has obtained mastery over will, able to reduce Nalanda to ashes by a single curse?' 'He is able, Venerable Sir.' [64]

Here the clause 'who is endowed with supernormal faculty' means one who is said to be gifted with synergic iddhi, applied to thought about the external world.

Among the four matters not within the range of thought, the powers of a Buddha stand highest in rank, iddhi proper comes next and the [supernormal faculties born of the result of kamma come last](#). This being the case, those who are in the higher worlds gifted with supernormal faculties born of the result of kamma, whether they are kings of gods or Maha-brahmas recognised as the supreme rulers of the world, become in the world of men attendants to Buddhas or their disciples, possessing majestic powers of intellect and will. And the same is the case with those recluses and Brahmins who are outside our religion, but have reached the climax of the supernormal faculties of gods in the higher world. Why ? Because those faculties which result from kamma obtain among the beings of lower order. And secondly,

because they are equipped with the moral, reflective, and intellectual qualities that are extant amongst us.

Among witchcrafts concerned with mundane thoughts, those who attained to success were called Vijjandharas. [The gods of lower orders and all demons and goblins served as messengers to Vijjandharas.](#) There were formulas of incantation and spells which were very powerful. They served to crush those gods, demons, goblins, etc.

[Men who have supernormal gifts are seen sometimes in our own country \(Burma\). They repair to a forest, and having handled regularly the occult formulas and prepared themselves for days and nights, and achieved success, many begin to tour in villages and districts. Wherever they go, they provide instantaneous relief to those who are ill and come to them for help. They also exhibit many other feats of wonderful magic, and account for this or that fateful event in the life of men. But the rulers prohibit these occult practices, lest they might give rise to violent commotions in the country.](#)

## **V, Of The Three Worlds**

Here we expound our system of the world under three headings: physical universe, things, and being (i.e. person).

29. By physical universe is meant the world conceived in spatial relation ([okasaloka](#)), as something in which things and beings have their existence. Thus heaven is the physical universe as regards celestial beings, earth is the physical universe as regards men, brutes, and things in general, and purgatory is the physical universe as regards infernal beings. It comprises the great earth, the great ocean, the circumjacent mountains,[65] [Mount Sineru in the centre](#), round which seven successive ranges of mountains intervened by the seven successive oceans of intense cold, the four great islands, many other smaller ones, and the [six abodes of devas](#), and the [twenty abodes of Brahmas in vertical positions](#). Such is termed one spatial universe or a circular world-system (*cakkavala*). There are many other smaller world-systems innumerable in number in all the eight directions of the present one.

We also find in the Tika-Anguttara at the Ananda-vagga, the three kinds of world-systems, namely:

- small-thousand-world-system (dulasahassi) which comprises one thousand cakkavalas,
- medium-thousand-world-system (majjhumasahassi) which comprises one million cakkavalas,
- great-thousand-world-system (mahasahassi) which comprises one billion cakkavalas.

There are also three other kinds of world-systems:

- ten-thousand-world system which is called the realm of existence (jatikhetta) and it means the realm in which the Buddhas appear and all the devas and Brahmas therein form the audience of the Buddhas,
- great-thousand-world-system which is called the realm of influence (anakhetta) and it means the realm where the influence of the parittas[66] and the Buddhas pervade, and all the devas and Brahmas therein accept it,
- infinite world-system which is called the realm of object (visayakhetta) and it means the one which serves as the object of the knowledge of the Buddhas.

There are three others also:

- sensual plane (kamadhātu),
- material plane (rupadhātu),
- immaterial plane (arupadhātu). The first comprises eleven realms of kama, the second sixteen of rupa, and the third four of arupa.

Four stages are also expounded:

- sensual stage (kama-bhūmi),
- material-stage (rupa-bhūmi),
- immaterial-stage (arupa-bhūmi),
- transcendental-stage (lokuttara-bhūmi). The first three respectively comprise the realms of kama, rupa, and arupa, and the last comprises the four noble paths, the four noble fruits and Nibbana, the unconditioned.

30. The term 'thing' is used in the sense of conditioned things in general (sankharaloka). Things in this sense include plants, trees, creepers, bushes, shrubs, etc.; metals, such as gold, silver, etc.; in short, all the natural sources we draw from and enjoy, the objects fashioned therefrom by men, such as houses, chariots, carriages, etc., and lastly, the things of intellectual creation, e.g. categories such as aggregates, senses, objects, etc.
31. beings (satta) or persons (puggala) we understand creatures generally:--infernals, animals, spirits, demons, men, gods and Brahmas; there are beings terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial, oviparous, viviparous, moisture-sprung, and beings reborn without earthly parentage; beings without feet, bipeds, quadrupeds, and beings with many feet, beings with form and beings without form, beings having perception and beings having no perception and beings having neither-perception-nor-nonperception. The world of space and the world of creatures are both included among the world of things. But the things when classified distinctly and separately under the names of realm and creature have special names assigned to them, such as the 'world of space', and the 'world of creatures'.

We shall now explain the mode of existence (santhiti) in the physical universe. According to our theory, earth rests on water beneath it, water rests on air, and air rests on open space (ajatakasa). This open space is infinite below and on all sides. It is filled with air without motion, which supports the great volume of air (atmosphere) above it; this supports in its turn the great volume of water; and that supports this great earth. It is said in the text: 'This great earth, Ananda, is established on water, water is established on air, air on space. A time comes, Ananda, when a mighty wind blows. This blowing causes commotion in the waters, and the waters being in commotion cause the earth to quake'. (Digha-nikaya ii., 107; Dialogues ii., 114)

Next we deal with coming into being and the ceasing to be of the physical universe. The co-inherent quality of heat is the cause of birth, decay, and death of the physical universe--the cause of its origination and cessation. As it is said in the Pali: 'What is the element of heat? It is that which heats, that which causes things to decay, that which consumes, and that through which things reach an entire change.' (Majjhima-nikaya i., 188, 422). Accordingly it is the co-inherent heat

which is ever causing coexistent things to burn, to decay, consuming them, changing them, and making them pass from one condition into another. The cold-therm (sita-tejo) also determines the same effects in these matters. And it is now not necessary to say anything of the hot-therm (unha-tejo). It is quite clear.

As it is said in the Dhammasangani in the chapter of matter: 'That which is the growth of sense spheres is the development of matter, and that which is the development of matter is the continuum of the same.' Birth may be classified into four divisions: birth, growth, development and continuum. Of these, birth means the first appearance of the conditioned things. Growth means the first start of development of appearing things. Development means the gradual extension of the developing things. Continuum[67] means the continuance of the developed and accumulated things. That is to say, things continue in such quantity as they have developed and they neither increase nor decrease. After that, these matters, together with the element of fermenting heat (jirantejo) which causes the coexistent things to decay, gradually diminish at the stage of decay and disappear away at the final stage of death.

The world is considered by us a system or order in which everything happens according to the laws of causality.[68] Because the great earth is being all the time heated, burnt, decayed, and matured by the twofold coexistent heat [I have elsewhere rendered it as cold-therm (sita-tejo) and hot-therm (unha-tejo),] it cannot overcome the six stages, i.e. birth, growth, development, continuum, decay, and death. So with the Mount Sineru, the circumjacent mountains, etc. Therefore in the developed epoch, all the earth, mountains, etc., that come into being and appearance pass gradually from the beginning through the four stages: birth, growth, development and continuum. That is to say, they rise, grow, develop and continue for a long time till at last they arrive at the stage of decay in which the influence of all the heat will overrule all others. From that time onwards all the unessential things among them will at first be destroyed and the essential ones alone will remain. Then even the essentials will be consumed in the long run of process and only the more essential will remain. Thus continuing for an indefinite time, everything will at last arrive at the most extreme point of degree at which combustion may easily take place like gun powder, the munitions of the king's army, which is apt to combust at

the sudden contact with a spark of fire. Then this developed epoch will be destroyed by the action of fire in the manner said in the Satta Suriya Suttanta. There it is said: 'Just as, bhikkhus, there is no trace of ash nor of carbon perceptible after the butter or the oil is burnt up, so also there, bhikkhus, will no trace of ash nor of carbon be discernible after the earth and Sineru, the king of mountains, have been burnt up. Thus, bhikkhus, all the conditioned things are inconsistent and unstable. It is advisable, bhikkhus, to be disgusted with all the conditioned things, it is expedient to detach them, and it is suitable to break free of them. Here, who would know, who would believe that this great earth and Sineru, the king of mountains will be burnt up, will be destroyed, will relapse into void, except those who have realised Nibbana?'

It is said that the flames of the burning fire reach as far as the realms of Brahma. This world-destructive fire burns up everything that exists between the mass of water below and the first realm of jhana above, without leaving a single atom of things behind. When the rock-earth (sela-pathavi) is burnt up, there in its place only remain the caloric energies (utu-dhatuyo) which will again become the germinal status of the rock-earth. Similarly, when the dust-earth (pamsu-pathavi) is burnt up, there also remain the caloric energies which will again become the germinal status of the dust-earth. So the caloric energies which are the remaining dynamics of fire fill up the whole sphere. And the fire itself is entirely extinguished away. It is the enveloping epoch. And the one that continues in an enveloping state, as has been just explained, is called the enveloped epoch. The duration of each of these epochs is equal to that of sixty-four included eras (antarakappa). What has been now said is the exposition of the twofold enveloping epochs.

In the second epoch, these caloric energies are carried about by the excessively cold atmosphere and they remain in such condition as they have been. But when they arrive at the matured, proficient, and adaptable state for reaction, that is to say, become hot, then they transform into rolling clouds laying in great heaps and volumes. After that they transform again into great epoch-reinstating rains and pour down all over the places where fire had burnt up in the enveloping epoch. The raindrops coming into contact with very cool air generally form into masses. And the water thus conglomerated slides into the infinite space as long as the air which is going to support the universe

is not strong enough to do so. But as soon as the air below is capable to do so, it at once checks the fall of water and supports it. All the rain-water becomes implemental in the establishment of the new epoch. That is to say, they form into constituents of the universe, such as rock, dust, water, etc. All these things occur according to the laws of caloric process (utu-niyama) and are not created by any world-lord. During the establishment of the constituents of the universe, the natural phenomenal process (dhamma-niyama) plays an important part. By natural phenomenal process we mean the proportionate and disproportionate procedures (sama-dharana) and (visama-dharana) of the elements of extension, etc. And again, proportionate procedure should be understood as the natural process and disproportionate procedure as the unnatural process. Hence when the natural process goes on, the proportionate procedure takes place, and if the unnatural cause happens, the procedure becomes disproportional. Among the forms also, roundness is the natural form. Therefore through the proportionate procedure of elements, all the constituents of the universe are established in the round-about shape as if they were manufactured from machines. The great earth, the great ocean, the circumjacent mountains, Sineru, the central mountain, the glacial oceans (sita-samudda) and sitantarika (glaciers in the hollows of mountains) and the circular ranges (paribhanda-pabbata) all are established in the round-about shapes. It is the contribution of natural phenomenal process.

Here indeed something should be said of the proportionate and disproportionate procedures of elements. Of the forms, the height of a person is said to be proportional when it is equal to his own span just as a proportionate banyan tree whose height is equal to the diameter of its circumference. Otherwise it is said to be disproportional. In short, the repletion of 32 marks of an eminent person (maha-purisa-lakkhana) is proportional and their deficiency is disproportional. Good-mindedness is proportional while evil-mindedness is disproportional. Of the forms other than those of living beings as trees, etc., the symmetry of some of the banyan trees is proportional and the reverse should be understood in the other way. It is also the same way with all the trees, stems, branches, sprouts, leaves and fruits. In fact, all the infinite varieties of forms, etc., which appear in the world owe their causes entirely to the variation of elements. To have a full understanding of these procedures is within the province of the

knowledge of infinite and various elements, of the omniscient ones. Those who do not know the various functions of elements look for the world-lords. In fact, there are no other world-lords but elements and the word 'world-lord' is merely the outcome of their fancy.

Now to return to our subject. Among the caloric germs, some densely accumulated ones become rolls of cloud, other finely accumulated ones become volumes of water in their respective places. **And through the influence of kamma of all creatures, there at the inception of the universe appear uninhabited abodes and celestial mansions 'for both men and devas, and also lunar mansions, such as the mansions of the moon and sun. In the higher abodes of devas and in the first jhana planes there also appear uninhabited abodes and mansions for devas and Brahmas.**

Here, the word 'sunnani' means having no owners, and the owners only come down from the higher planes of Brahmas after they have spent their life-terms there, and they occupy abodes earned by their past deeds. It is said in the text: 'In such period, bhikkhus, and for such immeasurable lengths of time, the world develops. And while it is developing, uninhabited mansions for Brahmas are established.'

Here also one should not display wonder at how all these abodes and mansions come into existence from the caloric germs through the influence of kamma of the creatures. Among the three worlds, the world, of beings is predominant and superior to the other two which are merely subservient to the former. **This great earth forms itself for the sake of the creatures, so also Mount Sineru, etc., and therefore it is not necessary to expound why and how those mansions are established.** Mind and its qualities (citta-cetasika) known as noma which belongs only to the world of beings, are termed mental elements. They are very powerful, 'luminous and thrilling' and the fourfold unknowables spring out from them.

And at the time when men's life-span falls to a decade the influences of the good deeds done by the people who are frightened at the outbreak of the world-destroying wars, pervade the whole world and raise the lifespan again to the innumerable age.

In the passage 'Through the influence of kamma of all the creatures', by 'kamma' it includes all the good deeds performed during the whole enveloping epoch in order to reach the higher planes by all the creatures who are frightened at the destruction of the world, and also all those good deeds performed during the two innumerable kappas by those who are reborn in the Brahma planes. Therefore one should not think as to how the formation and establishment of those abodes and mansions are brought about.[69]

These celestial mansions are made of, and decorated with, all kinds of gems, but they are as light as the bodies of the celestial beings (opapatika-satta) and situated on the motionless air like the heaps of cloud in the sky. Some other lunar mansions, however, move about. How? There are two currents of wind in the sky. The one from Mount Sineru and its surrounding mountains blows out and the other from the circumjacent mountains blows in. These two currents of wind, coming into contact, form a great whirlwind and turn incessantly round Mount Sineru very swiftly, keeping it on the right. The lunar mansions are seen moving about as they are carried away by these encircling winds.[70] Some of them are light and some are lighter. Therefore, slowness and swiftness of their movements are observed. The force of the two currents are proportional at one time and disproportional at another, and so we observe the different courses in which the mansions are carried away backward and forward by the encircling winds. Some of the planets and mansions of the celestial devas situated below the course of the wind do not move. What has been spoken of is the developing epoch.

From the appearance of the sun and moon to the beginning of the enveloping epoch is the fourth incalculable developed epoch, and its duration may be calculated as equal to that of the sixty-four included eras. So much for the exposition on the two constructive epochs.

In this fourth developed epoch of the four incalculable ones, the greater is the vastness of the world-stuffs, the more will be the violence of the world-destructive-fire in the first enveloping epoch. And the greater is the violence of the world-destructive-fire, the more will be the immensity of caloric-stuffs in the second enveloped epoch. And the more is the immensity of the caloric-stuffs, the greater will be the voluminousness of rainwater in the third developing epoch. Again

the more is the voluminousness of rainwater, the greater will be the vastness of the worldstuffs in the fourth developed epoch. Indeed it goes on for ever in the the same manner.

Without a known beginning, and without end, the world or physical universe continues the same whether world-lords appear or not. Not made, not created by any such, not even a hundred, not even a thousand, not even a hundred thousand world-lords would be able to remove it. [By the law of heat, by the law of natural causation, the order of the physical universe is maintained.](#)

The organic world of things--By this are implied trees, etc. The vegetable life is broadly distinguished into seedlings and growing plants. Here 'bijagama' is the collective term of all the trees which are in the stage of seedlings, and 'bhutagama' is the collective term of all the trees which have passed the stage of seedlings and arrived at the fully grown stage. Just as we have said in the exposition of psychological order that, on account of the diversity of thoughts of the creatures, perception is diverse; on account of the diversity of perception, kamma is diverse; on account of the diversity of kamma, the genus of the animal kingdom is diverse; and so it may also be maintained here that, on account of the diversities of thoughts, perceptions and kamma of the creatures, the species of the seedlings are diverse; and on account of the diversity of the species of the seedlings, the species of all the plants and trees are diverse. In the case of animals, the actual result (mukhya-phala) is predominant, but here in the case of seedlings and plants the complementary result (nisanda-phala) is predominant.

The term seed or germ (bija), in its ordinary popular sense, implies various seeds--roots, and the rest--as described before. In the high sense, however, seed or germ is to be regarded as a form of heat caloric energy (utu). If this is so, a mango-stone, which, in the form sense, is called a seed-proper, cannot, in the latter sense, constitute the whole seed. For in that one mango-stone there are these eight component elements (qualities primary and secondary): extension, cohesion, heat, motion, colour, odour, taste, and nutrition. Of these, heat carries out the germinating function. Hence it alone is radically entitled to the name of seed or germ. The remaining seven elements

are complementary heat; they do not directly perform the germinating function.

Moreover, the form of heat (or caloric energy-utu) which is specified above as seed or germ, is the same heat or energy in kind as that which is considered to be the germinating factor of the universe of a given period of time--an aeon. The germinal energy of seed could not bring its germinating function into play at the enveloping and enveloped epoch as it does not get any stimulus, but at the developed epoch it gets stimulus from earth and water and brings forth its germinating function. Therefore, just as there are only asexual people of apparitional rebirth so long as there is no sex distinction among the world of men, so also there are no species of seedlings and plants so long as the five kinds of seeds do not appear, but they remain latent in the state of mere germs in the earth and water. And afterwards jambu-trees germinate from jambu-germs, mango-trees from mango-germs, and so on. But first of all there appears flavorsome earth (rasapathavi) spreading all over the surface of water. At that the volumes of rain which fall down from the realm of Brahma, first of all form themselves into rock-earth, Mount Sineru, surrounding mountains, circumjacent mountains, and Himalaya mountains, the other places are covered with water. And then, after lapse of very long time, the flavorsome earth becomes hard, coarse and in-esculent. Then over this there forms a layer of earth (bhumi-papatika).

So it is said, 'when the flavorsome earth deposits itself'. This is the inception of earth. Ere long this layer of earth becomes hard and coarse and unsuitable for eating. Then from among the germs of seedlings and plants, sweet creepers (padalata), rice, and paddy plants germinate. After that many different species of grass, trees, creepers, and shrubs are propagated from the germs. Later, when time passes on and evil thoughts and bad behaviour increase, the essence, the sap, the taste and the nutritive properties in the trees dry up and vanish one after another. At that time the elements of germs conglomerate in their respective species. Thus the root-germs conglomerate in roots, and so on. From that time onwards, those trees which germinate from roots grow only from roots, and so with the rest. The functioning of the caloric order, germinal order, and natural phenomenal order by way of proportional and disproportional, upon the trees, etc., have been

already mentioned in the foregoing pages. Here ends the exposition on the world of things.

The world of beings (satta-loka)--To understand the nature of life[71] of a satta--a being, person, individual--is an exceedingly deep and difficult task. It lies at the basis, at the bottom of all philosophical speculations. We shall approach it from the two standards of truth: the conventional (sammuti) and the philosophic (paramattha).[72]

By 'a being' conventional usage understands a nama-rupa--a compound organism--mental (nama) and physical (rupa). By this it means a certain appearance (santhana) and a certain continuum (santana), which it terms a being or person or individual.[73] Philosophic usage sees in 'a being' a mental and material phenomenon or datum (nama-rupa-dhamma). For it the appearance and continuum are just a mental construction and its verbal expression.[74] But the phenomena of mind and matter, out of which beings are constructed, are the data or subject matter (dhamma) of philosophy. As if man having dug out clay should reduce it to powder, and by kneading that with water should make a jar, jar, in that case, is the name given to the physical structure of the thing in question, while the powder or clay is the material or substance. This physical structure called jar appears only at the time when the potter shapes it in this particular fashion. When the jar is smashed to pieces, the structure to which the name 'jar', was given disappears, while the powder or clay as material remains. Here the physical structure of the jar is comparable to the organic form of a being, the name 'jar' to the name 'beings' or person', the powdered clay to the phenomena of mind, matter.

By 'continuum' or continuity in time is generally understood the continued life of a being passing from one form of existence into another. But since being is a mere concept of our mind, we cannot ascribe to the mental fiction the modes of physical origination and cessation. On the other hand, mind and matter, as real facts, can be conceived as springing into existence and undergoing dissolution.

A being is said, from the conventional standpoint, to be born, to decay, to die, to fall from one state of existence and to be reborn into another. Taken in this sense, a being is born, during his whole life-term, just once at the time of birth and dies once for all at the time of

death. Mind and matter, on the contrary, come to birth, undergo decay, die and break down many hundreds of thousands of times, even in one day. Thus it should be explained. And it should also be clearly explained in the same manner according to the intellect and observation of others with regard to their own birth, decay and fall.

And just as conventional usage affirms that there is infinite space in the universe, so does philosophy maintain that space has no real existence. But this 'exists' of the one standard, 'does not exist' of the other, present no genuine mutual antagonism. How is this? Because each statement is from a different standpoint.

Similarly by 'a being' is implied some sort of individual consciousness and intelligence. That this exists and persists in transmigrating: this is admitted as a truth from the conventional point of view. In Abhidhamma knowledge, or philosophical truth, however, such a being is not recognized, does not exist. Only mental and material phenomena exist. And they do not persist in a series of transmigrations. They are perpetually dissolving, now here, now there. Yet here again between the 'exist' and the 'does not exist' there is no real antagonism. How is this? Because of the distinction drawn between a being (conventional view) and a phenomenal compound of mind and matter (philosophical view).

If, by adhering to the belief that a being persists in transmigration, we hold that mind and matter do the same, then this is eternalist error (sassataditthi). And if by adhering to the belief that mind and matter do not persist in transmigration, but break up and dissolve, now here, now there, we come to hold that a being does the same, this is the annihilationist error (ucchedaditthi).[75] To maintain the eternalist view is to shut the gate of Nibbana. How so? Because if mind and matter transmigrate, then it is to be inferred that transmigration itself is eternal. And to maintain the annihilationist view is to shut the gate of heaven. How so? Because the working out of kamma is thereby suspended. Moreover, both of those views maintain that the living personality is a soul. And since the soul-theory is at the root of all false opinions, we shall find ourselves lodged at that root. Wherefore, avoiding those two extreme views, and adopting the distinction in standpoints described above, let us stand holding open every gateway to heaven and to the final release.

Of these two truths, the coming into being of all beings should be spoken of by way of conventional truth. While the universe is developing, and after the empty mansions in the world of Brahma (i.e. the first realm of Brahma) and in the six abodes of devas are established, beings generally from the realm of abhassara come down to be reborn in these places. Here someone would say, 'Why are they generally reborn in the lower stages? As they have been there in the Abhassara Brahma-loka for so long, is it not convenient for them to cultivate higher jhanas and ascend generally the higher realms of Brahma.?' Thus it should be replied: In the Samacitta-sutta, Anguttara-Nikaya, vol. II, it is said that there are two kinds of beings, namely, a being with internal fetters, and a being with external fetters. Here the internal fetters are five in number: delusion of self (sakkaya-ditthi), doubt (vicikiccha), adhesion to the efficacy of rites and ceremonies (silabbataparamasa), sensual desire (kamacchanda), and ill feeling (vyapada). They are also called downward-tending-fetters (orambhagiya). The external fetters are also five in number: desire to be reborn in the rupaloka (ruparaga), desire to be reborn in the arupaloka (aruparaga), pride (mana), quivering of thought (uddhacca), and nescience (avijja). These are also called upward-tending-fetters (uddham-bhagiya). Here 'internal' means the kamaloka, and 'external' means the Brahmhaloka. Why are they so called? It is because nearly all the beings are reborn in the kamaloka and very seldom do beings take rebirth in the Brahmhaloka. And where there rebirth is most there lust for various objects is in great swarms. Therefore kamaloka is called 'internal' of all the ordinary folks. Brahmhaloka should be understood in the opposite way. In fact, all these beings are pleased with, gratified upon, and delighted in, the pleasurable things which are full to the brim in the kamaloka, while there are none at all in the Brahmhaloka. Why do they all get to the Brahmhaloka? Because there is no abode at all below that when the world is destroyed. However, through the agitation of the downward-tending-fetters which have not yet been shattered, the beings in the Brahmhaloka are always inclining to be back to kamaloka. For instance, when a town is disturbed and attacked, the people of the town take refuge in a big forest and stay there till peace is restored. Now the big forest is a very pleasant place, without any danger, and full of shade and water. But the people are always inclining to return to their town and they are not one moment happy however pleasant be the forest. Thus should it be understood here also. Therefore the beings in the brahmhaloka descend generally

to the kamaloka when the world re-establishes. When they are reborn as men in the kamaloka, their rebirth is at first apparitional. They are like the Brahmas. Everything is fulfilled at the instance of their wishes. They live at first upon jhanic interest (jhanapiti). Their bodies are luminous and brilliant. They live and walk in the sky. Their lifespan is an incalculable one. And the rest, such as the decreasing and increasing of their life-span, etc., should be understood as is said in the [Agganna](#) and [Cakkavatti Suttas](#).

## **VI, Of Causal Genesis**

From the standpoint of ultimate or philosophic truth, the order (or procedure, pavatti) in the world of rational individuals (satta) is by way of causal genesis. Hence we state the law of that order in terms of the formula called causal genesis (literally 'happening-because-of': paticcasamuppada):--Because of ignorance, actions; because of actions, consciousness; because of consciousness, mind-and-body; because of mind-and-body, the six sense-spheres, (senses and objects); because of the six sense-spheres, contact; because of contact, feeling; because of feeling, craving; because of craving, clinging; because of clinging, becoming; because of becoming, birth; because of birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, misery, and despair. This is the genetic process of the entire body of ill.

### **32. Ignorance, nescience (a-vijja).**

Let us here take the positive form, knowledge, first. Knowledge is cognising, knowing. Knowing what? The knowable. What is the knowable? Facts (called truth). What is truth, or fact? That which holds good at all times, and is a fact (lit., has come to be), which is 'thus', which is not 'not-thus', is not otherwise and not self-contradictory, is called truth. How many aspects (vidha) of truth are there ? There are four:--the fact itself, its cause, its cessation, the means to its cessation. For example, in the [Four Noble Truths concerning suffering or ill](#):--[The noble fact of ill, the noble fact of the cause \(or genesis\) of ill, of the cessation of ill, of the means \(or path\) leading to the cessation of ill.](#) 'Noble' truth here is equivalent to immoveable (achala) truth.[76]

Now, [what is the fact of ill](#)? In the Pali we are told that the five aggregates, or the six organs of sense are synonymous with the fact of ill.[77] But why should the matter-group be comprised under the noble fact of ill? Well, are not the factors of the body, even though the body be an angel's or a god's, subject eventually to birth, decay, death, sorrow, mourning, pain, misery, and despair? Now this quality '[subject to birth](#)' includes liability to (re-) birth in purgatory, or as a beast, or in such evil planes of life as those of petas or asuras. It includes the being involved again and again in passions, in wrong-doing, in diseases and infirmities. Hence rebirth in any material shape is a state of perpetual peril and liability to suffering.

The [Second Noble Truth is described as the cause or origin of ill](#). Here by the word origin (samudaya) is implied that which gives rise to or develops ill. What is that? Craving (tanha, or unregenerate desire). Whoso does not put away such desires begets and fosters all the ills characterising the life of a mental and bodily organism.

[The fact of the cessation of ill is known as the Third Noble Truth](#). We conceive cessation is twofold, namely, the cessation of what has already arisen, and the cessation of what has not yet arisen. When we include under cessation the cessation of cravings not yet actual, we are really referring to ills that are not yet felt, since cravings are their cause or root. Hence the task of making to cease is immediately concerned with cravings, not with suffering. And by cessation we mean not temporary removal, but final non-reappearance. Of two men who each cut down a poisonous tree, only he who cuts away the root ensures the impossibility of regrowth.

[In the Fourth Noble Truth, again, the means or course referred to is in reality the Path leading to the cessation of craving, and thus of ill; of those ills, namely, associated, as we have seen, with mental and bodily organic life](#). Doctrinally, the Path generally denotes the Noble Eight-fold Path which consists of right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right contemplation, and right concentration. These fall into three groups; insight,

concentrative practice, and moral conduct. Under insight come right view and right resolve; in the moral group are right speech, right action, and right livelihood; and in the concentration-group are right effort, right contemplation and right concentration.

It is worthy of note that by the path we understand, from another point of view, the carrying out of the act of comprehension (parinna). The work of comprehension is three-fold, namely, penetrating insight into the nature of reality and laws of things; investigating comprehension of the three characteristic marks of phenomena; and the comprehension which abandons hallucinations attaching to things of temporal sequence thus inquired into. More strictly, the term Path is taken to signify the fullest exercise of the last-named work of comprehension. For it is through the work of comprehension that we get rid, first, of belief in a soul; secondly, of inherent craving for sensuous pleasures; and thirdly, of inherent craving for rebirth.

Here it should be noted that, instead of a negative name, such as cessation of ill, we might give a positive name, such as attainment of happiness, to the Third Noble Truth. Happiness is of two kinds: pleasure as experienced by the gods and average men, and the blissful tranquillity reached only by those who follow the Noble Path. Pleasure is the experience of those who are victims of craving while the experience of blissful tranquillity is only for those who are masters of knowledge. This realm of bliss we call Nibbana, where the nutriment for craving is wanting.

To sum up: knowledge is the act of knowing, the knowing what ought to be known, i.e., the Four Noble Truths. If this be so, and if ignorance be rightly understood as the opposite of knowledge, then it necessarily follows that ignorance is the act of not knowing what ought to be known, i.e., the Four Immutable Noble Truths.

### **33.Actions (sankhara).**

These are the plannings, the activities, 'puttings-together', in virtue of which living beings accomplish something: that of which the moral consequence is either good or evil, meritorious or the contrary, attaches to this life or has bearing upon the life that is to follow upon the present one. In our phraseology, we take sankhara to signify all those actions by way of deed, speech, and thought, which determine the modes of our existence now or in time to come or both at present and in future. Actions so conceived fall into three grades (or kinds): the demeritorious, the meritorious, and those of an unoscillating nature (ananja). Of these, demeritorious actions are bad deeds, words and thoughts; meritorious actions are good deeds, words and thoughts belonging to the kama planes of life;[78] the third kind are acts of the mind, involving merit, done in the rupa planes of life[79] and good acts of the mind done in the arupa planes of life.[80] But how is it that because of ignorance actions come to pass? They who do not understand, do not know the Four Noble Truths; for them the three types of hallucinations as to their mind and body, thus conditioned by ignorance, come into existence. The hallucinations in their development form what we call craving-materials, and these materials in their development form the modes of our existence now or in time to come. It is thus that because of ignorance actions come to pass.[81]

### **34. Consciousness (vinnana).**

**This is our term for knowing (i.e. coming to know) in a variety of ways. It includes awareness of cognition through sense and cognition through work of mind. For example, we cognise objects by way of sight; sounds by way of smell; sapids by way of taste; the tangibles by way of touch, and the cognisables by way of thought. Accordingly, we distinguish**

**cognition into six modes--visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mind-cognition.**

**Visual cognition is the mode in which the process of consciousness takes place in (connection with) the eye, etc. By mind-cognition we understand the mode in which the process of consciousness takes place in connection with thoughts (as distinguished from sense-perception). Again, cognition is distinguished into two kinds, according as it leads to moral or immoral results.**

**Our main question is, how is it that because of actions consciousness comes to be? It is worth noting that in this case, actions are but a name for the element of volition (cetana-dhatu) given in a process of consciousness. The term consciousness, too, is used in a limited sense for what is called resultant rebirth-consciousness (i.e, consciousness in a newly-conceived embryo). Hence the expression 'because of actions, consciousness' signifies that the rebirth-consciousness results or emerges**

from the volitional effort in the previous birth.

It may be asked, how is it possible that, the action done in the previous birth ceasing to be, the rebirth-consciousness should now emerge from it ? Here we ought to clear up the ambiguity that is attached to the expression 'ceasing to be.' In accordance with our conception, cessation implies the completion of an act. There are three stages--the will to act (kamma-cetana), the impulse and *vim* of the act (kamma-vega, kamma-nubhava), and the resultant state (vipaka-bhava). Let us take an illustration. **Suppose a man were to sow a mango-seed. He does so with a view to obtain mango fruits. Obviously, then, his action is purposive. The seed thus sown engenders a mango-tree.** But nobody can say until the tree bears fruit whether the seed was sound or not. In the course of time the tree bears fruit. It is then, and only then, we judge that what was so far merely potential in the seed is now actualised in the fruit. Between the potential and the actual or resultant there is the intermediate

**process, the stimulation and development of the potential into a living force, represented in this illustration by the growth of the mango-tree. On this we are entitled to say that the seed contained in some mysterious way both the end to be realised and the active process that is essential to it. Thus if we say that the seed ceases to be in engendering the tree, we mean thereby only that it has developed into a living force, so as to reach its end.**

**Now we conceive volition to be the germ of rebirth, a motive force in our conscious activity which brings rebirth-consciousness into play. Our underlying postulate is that fruition marks the cessation or completion of an act of volition. The Omniscient One, too, declared to the effect: 'I declare, bhikkhus, that no voluntary actions reach a termination without making the accumulated fruits and results to be felt.' (Anguttara-nikaya, v., 292).**

### **35. Name-and-form (nama-rupa).**

**Name is that which bends towards (namati) objects**

**and form is that which undergoes change (ruppati), is transformed as conditions vary.**

**Under name are grouped sensations, perceptions and mental properties.**

**Form includes matter and material qualities.[82] 'Because of consciousness, name-and-form':--by this we mean that rebirth-consciousness is the seed or principle of change as to name-and-form.**

**In the series of causal genesis, name-and-form denote no more than mind and body in a developing man. We must note that **rupa** (rendered here loosely as form) denotes also a living body, an organism capable of development from a seed or germ into a living, thinking individual.**

**36. The six sense-spheres (salayatanani).**

**The term ayatana ('going to') is applied to the six organs of sense, because they serve as places (thanani) in a living body, where six external objects, coming from this or that source, strike (produce stimulus), and thereby set up or occasion (i.e. bring into play), presentative functions**

**(arammana-kiccani), and mental properties, with their six inward-turning doors, coming from this or that seat or base, set up receptive, or 'object-seizing' functions (drammana-gahana-kiccani). The six sense-spheres are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. Here the sphere of the eye denotes the sensitive material quality of the organ of sight, ear denotes the sensitive material quality of the organ of hearing, nose that of the organ of smell, tongue that of the organ of taste, body that of the organ of touch, and mind denotes the organic consciousness (bhavanga-cittam).**

**The six sense-spheres are termed also the six sense-doors, or gates, because they serve as so many sensitive media through which the six external sense-objects and the six internal thought-processes (vithi-cittani), entering and leaving the six doors, mix as objects and subjects (visaya-visayi-bhavana), 'door' meaning sensitive medium, and not physical aperture.**

**Of these, the organic consciousness, being radiant as a pure diamond, is not merely a sensitive medium. As it was said: 'Radiant, indeed, is consciousness (cittam), O bhikkhus.'**[83]

**In the case of moisture-sprung and congenital beings, the sense-spheres are rather dull, but in the case of beings of 'apparitional birth', they are of a divine nature: shining and burning..**

**But how is it that 'because of name-and-form the six sense-spheres' come to be? **The answer is to be found in the laws of embryological growth.** In viviparous beings the senses and sense-organs develop as the embryo develops in the womb. The specific senses and sense-organs develop at various stages through which the embryo passes.[84]**

### **37. **Contact** (phassa).**

**Contact is the act of touching. Consciousness cognises each several object. But contact must be distinguished from such a sense-cognition. For contact implies that 'concussion' which alone**

**brings the functional activity of the senses into play. As commonly understood, contact may be a mere physical collision or juxtaposition of two things. But in Abhidhamma (or philosophy) touching denotes only stimulus (sanhata). Otherwise, all material things would be called tangible objects. But the force of the term 'stimulus' is that there must be union, meeting, acting together of all things connected with the stimulation. It is by reason of this acting together that various sense-operations take place. In the Pali we are told: 'Due to contact, and conditioned by contact, feeling, perception, and active complexes are manifested. (Samyutta-Nikaya, iii, 101 f.)**

**Contact is regarded also as one among the four kinds of nutrition. Taken in this sense, contact is of six kinds: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental.**

**But how is it that because of the six sense-spheres contact comes to be? In the Pali we read: 'Because of the eye (organ of vision), visual cognition arises with**

regard to visual objects. The conjuncture of these three is contact. The same holds true of the other special senses.' This means that based upon the sense-organ, and depending on the sense-impression (nimittam), sense-apprehension comes to pass. This being so, the intensity of impression, in the case of each special sense, varies with the stimulus.

**38.    **Sensation, feeling** (vedana).**

Vedana means experiencing the enjoying of the essential property (lit: taste, rasa) manifested in the object by the contact-stimulus. That essential property is either pleasant and agreeable, or unpleasant and disagreeable. Further, regarded in this aspect, vedana is distinguished into six kinds, corresponding to the six-fold contact, namely, sensation born of visual contact, that born of auditory contact, etc.

**Vedana is also applied to feeling, distinguished into three types: joy, grief and hedonic indifference. According to yet another classification, vedana is five-fold: pleasure, pain, joy, depression, and indifference. We hear also of these three**

**kinds of experience: infernal (or infra-human), human and celestial or divine (superhuman). The lowest form of infra-human experience (such as that of hellish beings) is one of unmitigated misery. The average human experience is of a mixed character, while the highest form of divine experience is one of absolute bliss. But the difference is that of degree. We have now seen that the phrase 'because of contact, feeling' means contact or stimulus is the necessary antecedent of feeling.**

### **39. Craving (tanha)**

**This implies hankering, thirsting always after things one does not possess.**

**Craving, so regarded, involves naturally worrying and pondering over things. For instance, a man thus broods over the past: 'The things I had before I now, alas! have not!' He calculates thus about the future: 'Should this happen in time to come, it would be for my welfare!' He may worry as well over the present: 'The things I have now, I shall not afterwards obtain!'**

**Craving is six-fold: for sight, for sound, for smell, for taste, for touch, and for things cognisable or intellectual (dhamma). In the Satipatthana Sutta we read: 'Sight is (looked upon) in this world as pleasant and agreeable. If craving arises, it arises in seeing and settles there. And so, too, with regard to sound, smell, taste, touch, and cognisable objects.'**[85]

**Because of feeling, craving comes to be. This means that feeling (or sense-experience) is the necessary antecedent of craving.**

#### **40. Grasping (upadana).**

**This means adopting, laying a firm hold on. Negatively, it implies the inability to shake off a thing, even after experiencing great pain due to it, and perceiving its many evil consequences. Grasping, so conceived, is said to be fourfold: sensuality (kama), dogmatism (or, orthodoxy, ditthi), belief in works and rites (silabbata), and the belief in soul (attavada). Of these, sensuality denotes an intensified form of craving for all pleasant, agreeable, and sensuous things.**

**By dogmatism is to be understood that orthodoxy which leads a person to think: 'This alone is true, and everything else is false.'**

**By belief in works and rites is meant the fixed view, that the man is able to purify himself, to free himself from pain by means of external, outward rules, or by means of self-mortification, self-torture, instead of religious meditation and philosophic contemplation.**

**The belief in soul is described as the theory of animism, as the doctrine of a permanent ego, or the postulate of being (sakkayaditthi). He who is in the grip of this view considers this ever-changing world in the light of a permanent substratum or unchangeable essence (sara).**

**Now 'because of craving, grasping comes to be' means that in our system craving is regarded as the necessary antecedent of sensuality, dogmatism, belief in works and rites, and belief in soul.**

#### **41. [Existence](#) (bhava).**

**By this we understand becoming, or the attainment of individuality (lit: self-ness, attabhava). Existence is conceived by us under two aspects--(a) action, (b) result. (a) The active side of existence is for us the life of action (kammabava), the present life in which a man performs various actions by way of thought, speech and deed, moral and immoral, pious, spiritual and intellectual, determining thereby his character (sankhara), or shaping the nature of his future existence (upapattibhava). Thus the term action (kamma) includes, first, ten immoral actions: the killing of living beings, the taking of what is not given (i.e., not one's own), unchastity, falsehood, slander, harsh language, idle talk, greed, hate, and erroneous views; secondly, the ten moral actions: abstinence from killing, from thieving, from unchastity, lying, calumny, harsh language, and idle talk, absence of greed, absence of hate, and right views; and thirdly, the points of pious duty (punnakiriya vatthuni): liberality (dana), conduct (sila), contemplation (bhavana), civility, hospitality, the giving of what has been won (distribution of merit),**

**appreciation (anumodana), and correction of erroneous views of others.**

**In judging each immoral action, we consider these four 'fields of kamma'**

- as one's own act,**
- as instigating another,**
- as consenting to another's instigation, and**
- as commanding the act.**

**In like manner, we judge each moral action according as**

- it is one's own act, or as**
- one inspires another to do it, or as**
- one consents to another's instigation, or**
- one commends the act.**

**Again, moral actions are distinguished as 1) worldly (vattanissita),<sup>[86]</sup> and 2) unworldly (vivattanissita). Worldly moral actions are those which are done with the object of bringing fame and reputation in this life, and of securing high rank and fortune in the life beyond.**

**And those which are unworldly denote those moral actions which are done with the desire that they may lead to the extinction of craving in future, and not with the object of bringing fame and reputation in this life, or of securing high rank and fortune in the life beyond. This last mentioned type of moral actions is further distinguished as 1) those which are preliminary (paramipakkhiyo), and 2) those which are perfective (bodhipakkhiyo).**

**Existence as (resultant) rebirths (upapatti-bhava) are said to be ninefold (including two[87] systems of classification). According to the first system of classification, the lowest in the scale are rebirths in the worlds of sentience (kama-bhavo); the next higher are rebirths in the heavens of form (rupa-bhava); those higher still are rebirths in the formless heavens (arupa-bhava); yet above these are placed the heavens called conscious (sanni), the unconscious (asanni), and the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious (nevasanni-nasanni). According to the second system of**

**classification, these six grades of existence are divided into three: those endowed with one 'mode' (ekavokara), those endowed with four modes (catuvokara), and those with five (panca-vokara). Here those with five modes include the sentient and corporeal beings endowed with five aggregates; those with four denote those unconscious beings who are endowed with four aggregates; and those with one denote the unconscious beings who are endowed with one aggregate.**

**But how does existence (rebirth) come to be 'because of grasping'? Those average or worldly persons, who have not put away the four forms of grasping or clinging, by the right means of Path, indulge in each of the four forms in their deeds, words and thoughts. All their activities are in one way or another prompted by their clinging to sensuous desires, to opinions, to the efficacy of habits and rites, to their belief in a soul. Activities thus accompanied by clinging inevitably bring about, at death, some form of rebirth, some reinstatement of khandhas, or constituent aggregates.**

## 42. **Birth (jati).**

**This expression is applied to the generation of beings, to the manifestation of sankhara, that is to say, the appearance as individuals of what the nine above-named modes of existence are potentially. Sentient existence is divided into these four types of beings:**

- the oviparous,**
- the viviparous,**
- the moisture-sprung, and**
- opapatika birth (apparitional, without physical generation).**

**All the gods of the six kama-planes, and all the infernal beings are said to be of the last kind. In the developing period,[88] men were thus born, and so, too, were animals, spirits, and earthly gods.**

**Subsequently men appear to have been[89] viviparous, and even oviparous and moisture-sprung. The same holds true of animals in general. All corporeal and incorporeal Brahmas are of apparitional birth.**

**But how does birth come to be 'because of becoming'? In this way: the life of action determines the type of future existence, and that type of existence becomes manifest by way of birth.**

**43. [Decay and death](#) (jara-marana).**

**Corresponding to the nine grades of existence, referred to above, decay is said to be ninefold. But it is considered also under these two heads--mental (nama-jara) and physical (rupa-jara). Each of these two kinds of decay is further distinguished into that which is momentary (khanika) and latent (apakata), and, that which is prolonged (santati) and patent (pakata). The latent is to be known (inferred) from the patent, for were there no momentary change, there would be, a fortiori, no change of a more prolonged duration.**

**'But how does the fact of prolonged mental decay (i.e., change), (parivattana) become evident (or intelligible)? It becomes evident through the occasion of sensations in the body, pleasing or painful; through feelings of joy or grief in**

**the mind; through the perception of sight, sound etc., through such higher functions of the mind as reflection, discursive judgment, etc., or through such functions of the understanding as (cognitive or intuitive) insight, hearing, etc. Here the meaning of the expression sankamati ('pass on') is that the old stream (of consciousness) disappears, and a new stream makes its appearance. But without a priori admitting decay (parihani), it is impossible to conceive such a disappearance. Besides, one must admit, the mind changes very quickly. The master said: 'I do not see, bhikkhus, a single thing so quickly changeable as mind. And it is not easy to find an analogy for this quickly changing mind.'[90] Obviously, by the expression 'quickly changeable' in the quoted passage is meant the passing on of the flow of consciousness. Thus the quick change of the mind being realised, we are the better able to conceive its decay and death.**

**But how does the fact of continuous physical change become intelligible? It**

**becomes intelligible through bodily movements. For instance, in the time of walking, when the first step has been taken, then we can take the second step. And it becomes evident from all natural changes, such as the seasons of the year, the months, the fortnights, the nights and days, and the great periods.**

**Corresponding to the nine grades of existence, this is also said to be ninefold. Death is distinguished again into these four kinds: that which is due to expiration of the term of life, that which results from the extinction of kamma, that which results from both of these two causes, and premature death. Premature death may be due either to the action of past life, or to that of present life, either to the drifting result of action, or to the overflowing result of action.[91]**

**It may be asked why these three--birth, decay and death-are included among the factors of the causal genesis. They are none other than the three characteristics of compound things. Are they not, therefore, of slight importance, of slight**

consequence ? No, we must not speak thus, for of all phenomena of life, these three are of the greatest importance, for these supply the necessity for the advent of Buddhas. In the words, of our master: **'If these three factors did not exist in the world, no Buddha would have been born. But because these exist, Buddhas are born.'** That is to say, it is in understanding, penetrating into the root-causes **of birth, decay and death** that the knowledge and mission of the Buddha consist.

The Master himself declared: 'Those recluses and Brahmins who do not know the causal genesis of decay and death, do not know what the cessation of decay and death is. It is impossible that they, overcoming decay and death, will remain (for ever the same).'[92]

Thus it is evident that our whole conception of the causal genesis (paticcasamuppada), or the causal order (dhammaniyamo)[93] has this end in view: to understand, to penetrate the cause of birth, decay and death. The

**knowledge of a learned, Noble Disciple (who has gained an insight into the law of causal genesis) is self-evident (apara-paccaya): 'There being ignorance, there is kamma; there being kamma, there is rebirth-consciousness; there being birth, there are decay and death. Where ignorance is not, there kamma is not; where kamma is not, there rebirth-consciousness is not, where birth is not; there decay and death are not.'**

**In conclusion, this causal genesis, this causal order, is the basis, the fundamental conception of our system, the penetrating wisdom of the Noble Ones. It is the norm which serves as the door of Nibbana, the gate of 'the ambrosial'. That is to say, it is the path which leads to abandonment of all views of individuality, all theories of soul, all forms of dogmatism and kinds of craving.**

**Dhamma-Niyama, a discussion**

*(The following extracts from letters of U Nyana, Patamagyaw, and Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, M.A., are here inserted as they introduce some comments on the dhamma-niyama and are worth while to be recorded for the benefit of the interested readers.)*

**From Mrs. Rhys Davids to U Nyana.**

...I especially wish to raise the question as to the exposition of the term **dhamma-niyama**, both as to the translation of that section and indeed as to the exposition itself-but this with all reverence.

Cordially yours,  
C.A.F. Rhys Davids

**From U Nyana to Mrs. Rhys Davids.**

...Now, dear upasaka, I wish to say a few words on the exposition of the term dhamma-niyama. First of all, if I were to render into English the terms of the fivefold niyama, I would do so as follows:

44. **Utu-niyama: the order of things in relation to climatic conditions**
45. **Bija-niyama: the order of things in relation to germinal conditions**
46. **Kamma-niyama: the order of things in relation to moral conditions**
47. **Citta-niyama: the order of psychogenesis**
48. **Dhamma-niyama: the natural order of things (other than the above mentioned.)**

'Mr. S.Z. Aung's rendering as "Natural phenomenal sequence" is a good one but it does not, I think, cover the wide meaning of the term dhamma. Here **dhamma is used to mean the whole cosmos or universe** (the 31 stages of bhumiyo, the Buddhist point of view) with its inhabitants, both animate and inanimate. Hence the **dhamma-niyama is the whole ordered system of the cosmos**. And the first four niyama are only the specific orders specialised from it, as each of them is universally predominant among many other orders. So whatever order remains unspecified or unspecialised, it comes under the heading of the dhamma-niyama. The dhamma-niyama may be expounded in many

aspects. The revelations of all the branches of science may be cited for the treatment of the cosmic order if one is capable of doing so. But Ledi Sayadaw as a philosopher is obliged to expound it from the philosophical point. There are also, as you know, two methods in our Buddhist philosophy in expounding the dhamma in the light of their causes and effects, namely, Suttanta-nayo[94] and Abhidhamma-nayo.[95] The former is more adaptable to all classes of mind than the latter, which is only suitable to those who have a preliminary knowledge of Abhidhamma. So the Mahathera chooses the Suttanta-nayo to expound with. And he, after treating the cosmic order pretty well, takes the paticcasamuppada for his context. The whole of the expositions is meant to reveal the following facts:

'There is no world-lord, no creator who makes or creates the universe, but the fivefold order of law. All is the sum total of causes and effects which are rising and ceasing every moment. Nothing is abiding in this world of transience, wherefore no eternal peace can be found, but on the other hand, it can only be found beyond this world of changes where no

**jati or becoming is found through lack of cause. And to reach that place where eternal peace abides we must walk along the **Eightfold Noble Path which, though it pertains to this world, leads to the way out,** and when we get to the end close to the outer-world, (let me say so) or to Nibbana and as soon as we draw away the last foot set on this world, we at once ascend the lokuttara-bhumi, the Nibbana peace. So much for the expositions . . . .**

**With best wishes,  
I remain,  
Yours in the Order,  
U Nyana**

**From Mrs. Rhys Davids to U Nyana.**

**...Thank you for your note on the niyama. Personally, I find either of the definitions of dhamma-niyama unsatisfactory. Any division must seem so to our Western minds which is co-ordinated with other divisions and yet claims to include them. It shocks our sense of proper classification. It would pass muster with us if it was a sesa-niyama only, for any orders not included in one to four. But then it should be so called, and not dhamma-niyama. According to the Burmese traditional interpretation, the whole five ought to be called the pancaka-dhamma-niyana and the fifth the sesa-(or pakinnaka?) niyama. Or there should be a sixth, the Buddha-niyama.**

**'Not knowing this traditional interpretation, I, when I introduced the subject to Western readers, in my Buddhism (1912) p. 117 foll., judged that the fifth niyama was not dhamma, but dhamma-niyama. I noted Buddhaghosa's illustration of it on dhammata in the rebirth and appearance of a Sambuddha on earth-- and it seemed to me a wonderful concept, and one necessary to the Buddhist idea of the cosmos that among the laws of that cosmos**

**should be the uppatti (upapatti you say) from time to time of a Sabbannu Buddha. You Buddhists must call this a law. How otherwise do you explain the recurrence of Buddhas?**

**'And to place this wonderful law at the end with just any other niyama that have not been specified in one to four seems most, unsatisfactory. How I wish I could discuss this in Burmese with the Mahathera, Western fashion....**

**Believe me,  
Sincerely yours,  
C.A.F. Rhys Davids**

---

*(This letter was translated into Burmese and sent to Ledi Sayadaw who in return wrote a long note on dhamma-niyama which is also printed in this book at the end).*

**From U Nyana to Mrs. Rhys Davids.**

**'... With regard to our classification and definition of niyama, I agree with you in your modification of the word "dhamma" as "sesa" or "pakinnaka" for the fifth order only in sense, but not in word-expression. For we should not only look into the import of the word, but we should respect the moral importance of the word-expression as well. If we use the word "sesa" for the last order, there should probably be a more definite number of niyama for it to refer to and it should not have been stated as that there are only five kinds of niyama. The orders which the dhamma-niyama comprise are so numerous in quantity and so variant in quality that even an analyst of intellect and extraordinary gift like Buddhaghosa is sure to fail in his bold attempt to get all into detail. And the Buddha even warns his disciples not to contemplate too much upon the laws and forces of the natural constitution of the universe and of life reigning therein in these words: "Lokacinta, bhikkhave, acinteyya na cintetabba. Yam cinto ummadassa**

**vighatassa bhagi assa", as they give rise to insanity and fatigue to the vigorous pursuer after research and as he can never reach, I dare say, the triumphant goal of his profound research, however far advanced his observation, experiment, analysis and classification of phenomena may be. It is the Buddhavisayo,[96] and the entire revelation can only be safely entrusted to one who is possessed of sabbannutanana.[97] When aspiration for research after phenomenal occurrence eventually arises in his disciples' minds, the Buddha usually calms it with these words: "Dhammata esa, bhikkhave"[98] or "Dhammata, 'yam, bhikkhave", etc.,[99] lest they should waste away their valuable time in unfruitful research. From such passages and from such data, Buddhaghosa, after careful observation and speculation, infers that there are five niyama.**

**'Now, to turn to our discussion of sesa it is required for reference or summing up, but not in formal classification. I have never come across, as far as my reading is concerned, the word "sesa", "the rest" used even by the Western analyst in enumerating his formal classification. As regards to the other word**

**"pakinnaka", it is preferable to the word "sesa" as it may mean miscellaneous order of heterogeneous types, or order of things not arranged under any distinct class. But it is doubtful whether it has a wide and comprehensive sense as the word "dhamma". Its proper use only in a particular case as we find in the Compendium of Philosophy as "pakinnakacetasika", which is used quite differently from what Buddhaghosa wishes to explain in his classification. In Pali language no suitable word can be found other than the word "dhamma", which is a philosophic expression applied to things in general. It is neither an introduction of a new expression nor his own invention that Buddhagosa has used the term "dhamma" for the last division of niyama so as to include all that has not been said in the previous ones. It is but an adoption. Let me invite your reference to the classification of ayatana and dhatu. Of the twelve kinds of ayatana and eighteen kinds of dhatu, the last of each is called dhammayatana and dhammadhatu, and each claims to include anything not included in the previous ones. According to the definition "sabhavam-dharetī ti dhammo", every kind of ayatana and dhatu is a dhamma and yet**

each kind stands in co-ordinate rank with the last one. And the dhammayatana[100] cannot include them as they have got their special name (laddha-nama-visesa). Here the conotation of the dhamma is limited and in Pali such a term is known as "pasiddha-ruthi" and it has no right to extend its sphere of nomenclature over other terms of laddha-nama-visesa. You may as well see that in classification of six vinnanani (see Abhidhammattha-sangaha, ch. IV.) the last division is called mano-vinnanam, and mano, though it is a common term for all classes of consciousness or thought (citta), cannot claim to include the five kinds of consciousness previously enumerated, such as cakhuvinnaṃ, etc., for each of which has its special name, but it is applicable only to any other citta not included in the previous classes. So also is the same in our case. The dhamma-niyama cannot claim to include the above four niyama though each is really a dhamma or a thing within the legitimate sphere of its definition, but it is limited to include only what are not included in one to four. And the first four have a right to stand co-ordinately in rank with the last, and hence

**you need not also call them the pancaka-dhamma-niyamo.**

**Allow me to give you an instance of Western classification. The English grammarians classify an adverb into the following distinct classes: as adverb of time, place, number, quantity and quality. As each class is coordinate with the other divisions, the adverb of quality, though it may legitimately claim to include all the other classes in the sense of its being a qualifying word must be maintained without any prejudice and contention as the proper classification. Hence the adverb of quality may mean any adverb not included in the previous classes. Now we see that it is on all fours with our method. With regard to your suggestion to include a sixth, i.e. Buddha-niyama, I think it is not necessary. It may come under the head of dhamma-niyama. It is not a universal order applicable to many others but itself. It should be borne in mind that the appearance of a Buddha is not a regular recurrent one. Some universe has one or more and others have none at all, and even in the former case it is not synchronous. Therefore, it seems to Buddhaghosa that the Buddha-niyama does not deserve a special**

**treatment in his elucidation of the general laws. It is the dhammata that a Buddha appears only when a Bodhisatta has fully reached the perfection of the paramita's and Buddha-dhamma....**

**I remain,  
Cordially yours,  
U Nyana**

## **Note on Dhamma-Niyama**

*by Ledi Sayadaw* (Translated by U Nyana)

**The aim of the scholiast in expounding the fivefold cosmic order should at first be noted. There are both in this world of men and of gods two kinds of conceptions, namely, issara-kutta, and brahma-kutta. The conception by which some people believe that there is a supreme ruler of the three worlds who ever lives in heaven and by whom everything is created, is the issara[101]-kutta. It is also called issara-nimmana (created by issara or isvara or supreme ruler or god). And the conception by which some people believe that there is a Brahma who ever lives in heaven, who is the great father and great-grandfather of all beings, who creates everything and supremely rules over the three worlds, is the Brahma-kutta (created by Brahma). Here issara and Brahma differ only in expressions but each is the designation of the same deity, the world-lord, the creating god. Of the two, **Brahma is the name assigned to the supposed supreme being by the brahmins and Hindus** and it has become a general notion in the**

**three worlds of men, gods and Brahmas since the world begins. As to the name issara, it is not a universal notion but a later imaginative adoption by those who fail to acquire the knowledge of origin of the world and primary causes of things in existence. In order to cast away these two imminent conceptions the scholiasts have expounded the fivefold cosmic order.**

**The fivefold cosmic order is as follows.,**

- 49. Utu-niyama,**
- 50. bija-niyama,**
- 51. kamma-niyama,**
- 52. citta-niyama, and**
- 53. dhamma-niyama.**

**Of these five, the meaning of 'dhamma' in the last order should be first shown. We will quote a few lines from the Nidanavagga-Samyutta, Ahara-vagga, X Sutta, page 162, which run: 'jatipaccaya, bhikkhave, jaramaranam. uppada va tathagatanam anuppada va tathagatanam, thita va sa dhatu, dhammatthitata, dhammaniyamata, idapaccayata, bhavapaccaya, bhikkhave, jati. Uppada va tathagatanam... pe... ida-**

**paccayata... pe avijjapaccaya, bhikkhave,  
sankhara. Uppada va tathagatanam... pe...  
ida-paccayata. Ayam vuccati  
paticcasamuppado.'**[102]

**In this text the natural things or phenomena (sabhava-dhamma) are first shown with the words 'avijja, etc.' and then the meaning of the word 'niyama' is expressed in the following sentence: 'uppada va tathagatanam, etc.' Therefore, the word 'dhamma' denotes both the things which mutually stand in relation to one another as cause and effect, for a dhamma always depends for its appearance upon some other dhamma which again in its turn requires some other antecedent for its arising. Hence any dhamma may be both cause and effect. And the word 'niyama' expresses the fixity of sequence of cause and effect.**

**Here is our interpretation of the sentence 'thita va sa dhatu, dhammatthitata, dhammaniyamata, idapaccayata.' There, indeed, ever exist in this universe that natural order of elements, that establishment of sequence of causes and effects, that fixity of mutual relation of causes and effects, and that**

**causal nexus of individual things or phenomena, such as avijja, etc. In this text, the word 'dhammatthitata' is synonymous with 'dhammata', and the word 'dhamma-niyammata' with 'dhamma-niyamo.' The renderings made by Maung Shwe Zan Aung and U Nyana on the word 'dhamma-niyama' seem to be in conformity with the above quoted text.**

**Just as the method of word-description (padasodhananayo) is expounded at the very outset in the expositions of the Ten Books of Yamaka, so also here we should apply that method first in the classification of the fivefold niyama. In the expression 'dhamma-niyama, the word 'dhamma' denotes all mental and material things. Therefore, bija, kamma and citta are all dhamma, and it comprises all of them. Hence 'utu' gets two names: 1) 'dhamma', a general or common name, and 2) 'titu', an individual or distinct name. In like manner, bija, kamma, and citta get two names each. But in the classification of niyama, the individual names are used for the first four so as to particularize and make distinction from the rest of things, mentals and materials, which are conveniently treated**

**under one common name of 'dhamma'. For this reason the term 'dhamma-niyama' should not be taken in its full application, but must be restricted within bounded limits to denote only the things which are not included in the first four. When it is required to treat 'utu' as niyama, one should not call it a 'dhamma-niyama' though it (utu) is really a dhamma, but must use the appropriate and individual name and call it an utu-niyama. The same rule holds good with bija, kamma, and citta-niyama.**

**For instance, we presume that there are five classes of workers on board a ship: the captain, the engineer, the pilot, the officer, and the sailors. Now, the owner of the ship, being very much pleased with the works of the crew, and wishing to give them a bonus, sends a man with some money to distribute among them according to his instruction that so much should be paid to so and so. When distribution is made, the captain and the other three are not entitled to receive shares from those of the sailors though they are working on board the ship under one common name as sailors, for they have already received special gratuity under the individual names of**

**captain, engineer, pilot, and officer. Thus it should be understood here also. So much for the word-description.**

**Moreover, among the six kinds of objects, the dhamma-rammana stands last. So also dhammayatana and dhammadhatu stand last in the categories of twelve ayatana and eighteen dhatu respectively. Here also the denotation of each should be understood according to the method of word description just as in the fivefold niyama. We will reproduce here a few lines from the books of Yamaka which will serve as a means to obtain a clear knowledge of the method of word-description.**

*Dhammo dhammayatanam? ti.  
Dhammayatanam thapetva, avaseso dhammo  
dhammo, na dhammayatanam:  
dhammayatanam dhammo-c'eva  
dhammayatanan ca. Dhammdyatanam  
hammo? ti. Amanta. Ayatana-Yamaka.  
Dhammo dhamma-dhatu? ti. Dhamma-dhatum  
thapetva, avaseso dhammo dhammo, an  
dhammadhatu; dhammadhatu dhammo-c'eva  
dhamma-dhatu ca. Dhamma-dhatu dhammo?  
ti. Amanta. Dhatu-Yamaka.*

**Is dhammo a dhammayatana? Excluding the dhammayatana, the remaining dhammo is dhammo and not dhammayatanam; but dhammayatanam is both dhammo and dhammayatanam. Is dhammayatanam a dhammo? Ay. Is dhammo a dhamma-dhatu? Excluding the dhamma-dhatu, the remaining dhammo is dhammo, and not dhamma-dhatu; but dhamma-dhatu is both dhammo and dhammadhatu. Is dhamma-dhatu a dhammo? Ay.**

**Now I have dealt enough with, to respond to the critical observation: 'Any division must seem to our Western minds which is coordinated with other divisions and yet claims to include them. It shocks our sense of proper classification.'--made by Mrs. Rhys Davids, in her letter to U Nyana.**

**With regard to her sound suggestion, 'It would pass muster with us if it was a sesa-niyama only, for any orders not included in one to four. But then it should be so called, and not dhamma-niyama. ... And the fifth the sesa--or pakinnaka-niyama',--we would say thus:**

**If the fifth order is called the sesa-niyama, it would only mean that the above four orders did not involve in it. But if it is called the pakinnaka-niyama, it would not only mean that it did not mix up with the above four orders, but it would also allow various kinds of order, such as the Buddha-Niyama, etc., to be included. However, in our Buddhist Philosophy, the word 'dhamma' and its scope of meaning are very important and extensive. How? It is an ample work for the word 'dhamma' to uproot and destroy all the false notions, such as issara-kuttaditthi, Brahma-kutta-ditthi, sakkaya-ditthi, etc. The whole of the seven books of the abhidhamma is composed with the expressed purpose of disclosing the meaning of 'dhamma'. Particularly, the exposition of the fivefold niyama by the scholiast is the attempt to eliminate the unfounded notions of issara-kutta and Brahma-kutta. It will be clearly shown later how it eliminates.**

**Here the difference between the power of the great Brahma or the so-called supreme ruler and the influence of the cosmic laws should be shown. The great Brahma can shed lustre over many thousands of world systems with**

**his radiant beauty. He can see everything in those worlds, can hear sounds, get to any place and return to his own at the instance of his will, and read the minds of men and gods. As to his supernormal power (iddhi) concerning creation and transformation, he can create or transform either his own body or any external object into many and any forms. But these are only shadow-like shows and exhibitions which when he withdraws his power are sure to disappear away. In fact, he cannot create a real creature or thing, in the least louse or its egg, which will not disappear away when the creative power is discontinued. In exhibiting gardens and trees through his creative power, he can create and exhibit only temporal, unsubstantial, unreal, and counterfeit shapes of, and resemblances to, the desired things. A tree, a real substantial tree, even a blade of grass, he can never create. Because the appearance of a phenomenon, the coming into being of a creature, or the growing of a plant, is not within the range of super-normal or creative power, but it is within the domain of the cosmic orders, such as dhamma-niyama, kamma-niyama and bija-niyama. The things created only last while the iddhi is acting**

behind them, and they are liable to disappear as soon as the iddhi is withdrawn. The occurrence of hot, rainy and cold seasons are the natural process of climatic order and not the operation of iddhi. As regards dhamma-niyama, the great Brahma can transport thousands of men in their present life to heaven if he wishes, but there he cannot make them neither to become old nor to die, and even when they die he cannot debar and save them from falling into or being reborn in the abodes of torture. For the mental and material aggregates constituting the persons of men are under the sway of natural laws (dhamma-niyama) of birth, old-age and death. He cannot also make men or any creatures to be born in heaven after they die because the inception of new life in new abodes after death is not within the sphere of the operation of iddhi but it is within the domain of kamma-niyama. In this world, any one who kills and eats daily fowls, etc., and always drinks intoxicating liquor, must fall, in spite of his daily prayers and attendance to church, into the planes of misery after death. The great Brahma or the supreme god cannot save him in any way, because it is within the domain of kamma-niyama and not within that

**of iddhi. On the other hand, any one who disbelieves in the notions of issara-kutta and Brahma-kutta, who is a strong believer in the laws of kamma, and who shuns evil actions and always cultivates good deeds, is sure to ascend the higher abodes of gods and Brahmas after death. And the great Brahma cannot prohibit him from coming up to heaven, because the influence of iddhi can never overrule that of moral laws. The great Brahma, were he to encounter the cosmic laws, cannot defend and save even himself from falling into their clutches, let alone others. So much for the differentiation of iddhi and niyama in respect of their influences.**

**Now to show how the notions of issara and Brahma-kutta are refuted. There are some people who think that there is only one world, and who do not believe that there have been many cycles of worlds in the past and that an unlimited number of worlds will follow this present one in future. But they do believe that this present world has both its beginning and its end. And in looking for the primary cause of its beginning they utterly fail. However, reflecting upon the houses and buildings and**

**their designers and builders, they come to the conclusion that this world must have its originator and he must be the creator or the supreme ruler, or the great Brahma, or the god. On the other hand, Buddhism teaches that many cycles of worlds have been formed in the past and many others will follow the present one in succession. It also teaches that the world has its beginning and its end, and there are causes, called natural laws, for the formation and destruction of every world, and these natural laws exist for ever and go rolling on in the infinite space of time. Therefore the followers of Buddhism have no notion whatever of issara and Brahma-kutta. So much for the refutation of the two notions. It has also been sufficiently dealt with in my expositions.**

**Among the fivefold niyama, the dhamma-niyama is most important. Cakkavatti and Agganna Suttas of the Digha-Nikaya are the fields for dhamma-niyama. In those suttas we find the order of life-span, or, under the common name, the dhamma-niyama, which reveals the facts that the incessant rise and fall of human life-span from a decade to a myriad (asankhyeyya) and vice versa are due**

**to kusala and akusala dhamma. Besides those suttas, such kinds of order may be found in many places in the text. In the Dhamma-Hadaya-Vibhanga of the Abhidhamma Pitaka and in the Uposatha Sutta of the Eighth Book of Anguttara-Nikaya, the six abodes of devas and twenty abodes of Brahmas and their life-spans are definitely expounded. It is also a kind of dhamma-niyama which in other religions is never heard of. It may be called the order of life-span (ayukappa-niyama) if one would like to particularize. Or it would not be wrong to enter it under the heading kamma-niyama.**

**'Or there should be a sixth, the Buddha-niyama'--with this suggestion, we are quite in concordance. Because in specifying it separately, the great wonders of the Buddha would be more conspicuous. I have also written in my exposition that there should be a sixth, the order of birth (jati-niyama) which we find in Vasettha Sutta (Sutta Nipata, Maha-Vagga), because it seems to be a distinct class of order from bija and kamma. With regard to the Buddha-niyama, we cannot say that the appearance of a Buddha occurs in every world. Very few are the**

**worlds, in which a Buddha or Buddhas appear. We must then assign the Buddha-niyama to the occasional occurrences of certain wonderful and mysterious presages, such as the quaking of ten thousand worlds, etc., during the infinite space of time while a Bodhisat is fulfilling the Buddha-dhamma, that is, from the time a Bodhisat receives the ultimate prediction from a Buddha that he would certainly become a saviour like himself, till he attains to Buddhahood and enters into the final goal, the Nibbana-dhatu. The marvellous occurrences of such wonderful and mysterious presages are recorded in Buddhavamsa in the chapter known as 'Sumedha's Reception of Dipankara's Prediction.' They occur also when the Bodhisat in his last life enters the mother's womb, the world, when he becomes the Buddha, when he sets rolling the wheel of law, when he appoints the time of his death, and lastly when he enters into Nibbana. Such occurrences are called 'dhammata' by the commentators. There is also a kind of dhamma-niyama which comes under the name of dhammata in the Mahapadana Sutta, in the Digha-Nikaya. In the Majjhima-Nikaya, it comes under the name of**

**acchariya-abbhuta-dhamma. See Upari-Pannasa, third chapter, third sutta. In the commentaries, these wonderful and mysterious things are classed under dhamma-niyama.**

**If the Buddha-niyama be specialized, the savaka-niyama should not be overlooked. It should also be treated distinctly. And what then is savaka-niyama? It is the order of precepts, etc., of the disciples, comprising the laymen, devas and Brahmas who have received deliverance from any one of the many Buddhas, surpassing in number the sands of the river Ganges, who have appeared in the cycles of aeons that have no knowable beginning.**

**Before we proceed any further, we should here first show the puthujjana-bhumi and puthujjana-gati. Of the two, puthujjana-bhumi or the stage of worldlings means the potentiality of kilesa, the immensity of evil deeds, and the open door of the four planes of misery, on account of the strong hold of the soul theory. The potentiality of kilesa means the capability of committing the five great sins, i.e. matricide, patricide, etc., and the**

**possibility of holding strongly the three fixed views (niyata-ditthi), i.e. natthika-ditthi: nihilism; ahetuka-ditthi: anti-causationism; and akriya-ditthi. anti-moralism. The immensity of evil deeds means that the innumerable evil deeds committed in the past are always following the personality of the worldling wherever he goes, and that the immense number of new evil deeds are also surrounding him to fall in at every moment. How? Bearing in mind the difficulty of attaining a manhood life (manussattabhavo) we are to understand that a worldling has spent many myriads of existences in the abodes of misery before he had a chance of being reborn in the world of men. Similarly, millions of miserable lives precede the fortunate life of a deva, and many ten millions (kotis) of lives in miserable abodes are followed by a life of Brahma only if circumstance favours. So the more are the evil existences, the greater is the immensity of evil deeds. There are evil deeds which have given effects and which are to give effects if they get favourable circumstances in one's own personality. There are also many evil deeds which will arise in the worldling as long as he clings to self. However, he has also good**

deeds, but they are as few as a handful of sand while the evil deeds are as much as the sands of the river Ganges. Such is the immensity of evil deeds in an individual who clings to self. What is meant by 'the open door of the four planes of misery' ? A puthujjana, though he be fortunate enough to become a human being, is always inclining to the miserable existences on account of the immensity of evil deeds and clinging to self. Generally speaking, many are those who are reborn in the four miserable abodes after their death. It is also the same with the devas and Brahmas when they gradually fall into the tortured states. These facts are expounded in the Nakhasikha Sutta of the Samyutta-Nikaya, in the fifth chapter, Amakadhannapeyyala of Mahavagga Samyutta. If one once falls into the abodes of miserable ones, it is very difficult for him to be reborn again in the abodes of men. This fact is also expounded in Bala-Pandita Sutta, in the Sunnata-Vagga of Uparipannasaka, Majjhima-Nikaya. So much for the puthujjana-gati.

**Rev. U Nyana,  
Dear Sir,**

**I have been deeply touched by the goodness and great kindness of the Maha Thera in condescending to answer himself, and to answer so fully, the points I raise in my letter to you concerning your traditional teaching of the fivefold niyama. He has certainly made it very clear that, under 'dhamma-niyama', we have to understand a cosmic law relating to **causally-ordered dhamma** or phenomena, and not a cosmic law of the saddhamma, the second of the ratanattaya-dhamma which are in Buddhaghosa's list 'hetu' rather than 'pariyatti.' Will you be so good as to convey my respects to him and my sincere thanks for this kind message, my great satisfaction at hearing that his health is restored and my best wishes for the recovery of his sight and for his continuance in good health....**

**Yours Sincerely,  
C.A.F. Rhys Davids.**

## FOOTNOTES:

- [1] On Niyama. or Niyama--'that which fixes', 'fixity', see my Buddhism (London, 1912, and pp, 378f. in Points of Controversy (the Kathavatthu), by S.Z, Aung and myself, P.T.S. 1915.--Ed.
- [2] Natho
- [3] Enlightenment: Buddha-Wisdom. Mr. Barua prefers 'Philosophic order, causal order'.
- [4] We have no word to fit 'dhamma'. The rendering used is Mr. S.Z. Aung's.
- [5] Cf. Compendium of Philosophy, 161n4.
- [6] 'It is not change but the changing, and the changing is fire:... this order (kosmos) which is the same in all things, no one of gods or men has made but it was, is now, and ever shall be an ever-living fire kindled and extinguished in due measure--Heraclitus.
- [7] Digha Nikaya iii. 84, 86.
- [8] An ancient Pitaka phrase.
- [9] Lit. 'from the top' (agga).
- [10] Samyutta-Nikaya, iii. p. 54.
- [11] Anguttara-Nikaya, iii 415 (VI. 6, "Mahavagga Nibbedhika".)
- [12] Dhatuvikatinam dhatuvikaro nama. On vikara; cf. Compendium; Pali Index.
- [13] Cf. Majjhima-Nikaya, Cula-Kamma-Vibhanga-Sutta, iii. 202f.
- [14] Anguttara-Nikaya, i, 28 'Atthana-vagga.'
- [15] The word citta (pronounced chit-ta) means both consciousness, cognition and also variegated manifold. Hence the author plays on the word. 'Thought' should here be understood in the widest sense as 'being-aware of', 'conscious of'--Ed.
- [16] Citten'eva cittikata. Samyutta-Nikaya, iii. 152.
- [17] Samyutta-Nikaya, iv 87.
- [18] Cf. Exposition II.
- [19] Deva, it must be remembered, includes all 'spirits' (all of them impermanent) inhabiting either the heavens as 'God', angels, gods, or this earth as 'fairies', etc.'
- [20] Atta, or self, implies superphenomenal nature. Cf. Anattalakkhana-Sutta, Vinaya Texts, i. 100f--Ed.
- [21] This is included in the Tika Patthana.

- [22] Samyutta-Nikaya, ii. 25; Cf. Points of Controversy, 87, 383f.
- [23] Theragatha (Psalms of the Brethren) ver, 676-678.
- [24] Digha-Nikaya, ii. 12 (Dialogues, ii. 9). Dhammata is the abstract noun formed from the concrete 'dhamma' as if we should say 'normness'. Cf. Pss. of the Brethren, p. 29, n2, 190 etc.
- [25] Anguttara-Nikaya, i. 26.
- [26] In the Vasettha Sutta common to both works, ii 196 and verse 600f, respectively.
- [27] Anguttara-Nikaya, i 152 (Culavagga, 47).
- [28] Majjhima-Nikaya, ii. 32 (79tb Sutta); Samyutta-Nikaya, ii 28, etc.: Anguttara-Nikaya, v. 184.
- [29] This is placed in the author's Ms. as No. 4. but I have translated it before the others, because the two standards are referred to in Exposition I--Tr.
- [30] Literally, having the supreme or ultimate matter--Ed.
- [31] Saccavadi, applied par excellence to the Buddha. Cf. Pss. of the Sisters, 121 n I, and elsewhere.
- [32] Atta, Sanskrit atman. On the implications in this term, see Exposition I.
- [33] Approximately equal in sense to mind-and-body--Ed.
- [34] "They (i.e. the surface view of sense perception) do not bring us to understand the true underlying principle or law; they rather disguise that from us. It is perhaps not too much to say that the senses tend to give us the notion of the fixity of things, and therefore to hide the truth that the law of all things is change: there is no permanence in things save only--the law of all change."-- Heraclitus.
- [35] A yojana, a classical division of length, a distance of about seven miles.
- [36] 'Just as if, brother, there were a mighty mountain crag, four leagues in length, breadth, and height, without a crack or cranny, not hollowed out, one solid mass of rock, and a man should come at the end of every century, and with a fine cloth of Banaras should once on each occasion stroke that rock; sooner, brother, would that mighty mountain crag be worn away by this method, sooner be used up, than the aeon. 'Thus long, brother, is the aeon; of aeons thus long many an aeon has passed away, many a hundred aeons, many a thousand aeons, many a hundred thousand aeons.' S.N. ii. 178 ff.
- [37] Samyutta-Nikaya, ii, 178.

- [38] Dialogues of the Buddha, i, 39 f.
- [39] OP. cit.. ii., 52.
- [40] The translator had selected 're-absorbed', and 'persisting as such'. The Pali is literally 'rolling together' and 'unrolling';-- Sam-vatta. vi-vatta, the Indo-Aryan root being war, wart. Cf. our 'vert' ad-, in-vert &c.). I have substituted Leibnitz's 'envelopments, developments' as being an interesting approximate coincidence in Eastern or Western terminology. The 'rolling together' is a lurid idea that has also shaped itself in the Christian poetic fancy, namely, in the verse of the Dies ira.
- When shrivelling like a parched scroll,  
The flaming heavens together roll . . . .
- Mrs. Rhys Davids.
- [41] Anguttara-Nikaya, iii, 56, or vol. i., 159 f.
- [42] The Mahavamsa, P.T.S. translation, p. 260 f.
- [43] Digha-Nikaya, iii., 70.
- [44] Anguttara-Nikaya, iv., 'Apannakavagga' (vol. ii., p. 80).
- [45] See Psalms of the Brethren, Ananda's verses, verse 1024.
- [46] Dialogues of the Buddha, i., 276 f.
- [47] Dialogues of the Buddha, i , No. 1.
- [48] Ibid., p. 52.
- [49] A tenfold exposition of Sammaditthi 'right view', in the "Mahacattarisaka Sutta", Majjhima-Nikaya, No. 117.
- [50] This is not to say that such men do not exist in the world today. They can and do exist. Not only that, the possibility exists for you to reach the Spheres of Attainment; and realisation for yourself is, after all, the only valid thing.
- [51] Readers should note that kamma means literally action, act, deed.
- Thus 'job' is literally hattha-kamma, hand-action, manual-labour.
- [52] Dialogues of the Buddha, ii. No. xvii., Buddhist Suttas (Sacred Books of the East).
- [53] Dipa. This may conceivably mean 'world'.
- [54] Jataka (trans.) v., pp. 72, 76.
- [55] Anguttara, i., p. 33.
- [56] Dialogues, ii., 9.
- [57] Anguttara. iii., 369.
- [58] Digha-Nikaya, iii., Nos. xxvii.
- [59] Vol. ii, p. 74. f.
- [60] Majjhima-Nikaya, vol. iii., No. 120.

- [61] Majjhima-Nikaya, first Sutta, called 'Mula-pariyaya', in the first fifty suttas called collectively Mulapannasa, or 'Root-fifty'.
- [62] That long-lived being worshipped under many names as 'The creator', 'Lord god Almighty', etc.
- [63] 'God Almighty'.
- [64] Majjhima-Nikaya, i., 377.
- [65] Cakkavala pabbata which forms the boundary of this world-system,  
is situated circumlittorally in the extreme part of this universe, and it is said that the height is 82000 leagues.
- [66] Parittas are the verses especially compiled for the promotion of protection and general prosperity, such as Ratana-Sutta-Paritta, Metta-Sutta-Paritta, etc.
- [67] It is better known as 'inertia' in Physics.
- [68] Dhammata, i.e., dhamma-niyamo. The Manoratha-purani (Buddhghosa's Commentary on the Anguttara-Nikaya) explains the latter term.
- [69] Ledi Sayadaw here intends to indicate the reinstatement of the developing Epoch or the reorganization of the new world with abodes of men and marvellous mansions for devas, by two causes, i.e., material cause and efficient cause. By the former he means the material or stuff out of which the world or the world of things is organised. That is the primitive matter known as caloric germs or utu. And by the latter he means the force or agent through which the material phenomena are put together in various and marvellous shapes, forms, and sizes. That is the mental force known as action or kamma. For instance, in the case of a house, the wood, iron and bricks of which it is built up are the material cause; and the carpenter who designs and builds it is the efficient cause. Now the wood, etc., are comparable to utu, the material cause of which it is constituted; and the carpenter is comparable to the mental force, the efficient cause by which it is designed. Tr.
- [70] The expanding Universe.
- [71] 'Nature and life', in the author's original Pali 'pavatti'; a staple term in the dynamic philosophy of Buddhism, meaning on-rolling, or procedure.
- [72] See Section II., 'Of the two Standards of Truth', p. 6 of vol.IV, No. 1.
- [73] Satta, etymologically, is 'being'. When animals are included, the

more usual term is pana or bhuta.

- [74] Pannatti means both concept and term. See U Shwe Zan Aung in Compendium of Philosophy.
- [75] See 'Brahmajala-Sutta' translated by the English Editorial Department, vo. III, No2 of the Light of the Dhamma.
- [76] No etymology is here intended. It is simply a method of ancient edifying exegesis.--Ed.
- [77] E.g. Samyutta, iii., p. 23 f.; iv., 2, etc. etc.  
(NOTE: Editorial footnotes are, unless otherwise stated, those of the original editor.)
- [78] i.e. Life from purgatory up to the lower heavens.
- [79] Life in the higher material heavens (Brahma-world. etc.)
- [80] Life in purely mental heavens. See Compendium of Philosophy. Ed.
- [81] 'Come to pass' is not in the text here or above. The reader will have noted that the formula of Causal Genesis at the head of this section is a series not of pro-positions but of correlated terms: 'because of ignorance, actions,' etc.--Ed.
- [82] Hence mind-and-body is the better rendering for most purposes--Ed.
- [83] Pali: "Bhikkhave cittam pabhasara midam"--Ainguttara-Nikaya i,  
p 10. Acchards-anhata-Vagga. (Eds.--The Light of the Dhamma)
- [84] The translator has cut this section short, for the reasons given previously. The author enlarges on the account of embryological growth given in the Comy. On Kathavatthu, xiv, 2  
(See Points of Controversy, 283 f.)--Ed.
- [85] Digha-Nikaya, ii. 308 (cf. Dialogues, ii., 340.)
- [86] Lit: dependent on the Round (i.e. of rebirth, of lives)--Ed.
- [87] The ninefold existence is classified under three systems and not under two as I remarked by the translator. The first three are classified according to planes, the second three according to perception or consciousness, and the last three according to constituent aggregates. U Nyana.
- [88] See Exposition, II
- [89] That is, passed through the evolutionary stage of.
- [90] Samyutta-Nikaya, ii, 95
- [91] See Expositions, II.
- [92] Samyutta-Nikaya, ii, 46

- [93] On Dhamma as meaning 'effect,' cf. Points of Controversy, p. 387.
- [94] Suttanta-nayo: According to the methods shown in the Suttas.
- [95] Abhidhamma-nayo: According to the methods shown in the Abhidhamma.
- [96] The power of the Buddha.
- [97] Omniscience.
- [98] 'That is the Law of Cosmic Order, O Monks.'
- [99] 'This is the Law of Cosmic Order, O Monks.'
- [100] Mental object as base.
- [101] Jahweh or Jehovah.
- [102] English translation: 'What, O monks, is Dependent Origination? Through Rebirth are conditioned Old Age and Death'--whether, O monks, there be an arising of Tathagatas, whether there be no such arising, this natural order of elements exists, this establishment of sequence of causes and effects, this fixity of mutual relation of causes and effects. Concerning that the Tathagata is fully enlightened, that he fully understands. Fully enlightened, fully understanding, he declares it, teaches it, reveals it, sets it forth, manifests, explains, makes it plain, saying, "Behold. Through rebirth are conditioned old age and death.

"Through the process of becoming, rebirth is conditioned;  
 "Through Clinging, the Process of Becoming is conditioned;  
 "Through Craving, Clinging is conditioned;  
 "Through Sensation (feeling), Craving is conditioned;  
 "Through Contact (impression) Sensation is conditioned;  
 "Through the Six Bases, Contact is conditioned;  
 "Through Mental and Physical Phenomena, the Six Bases are conditioned;  
 "Through Consciousness, Mental and Physical Phenomena are conditioned;  
 "Through Kamma-formations (rebirth-producing volitions), Consciousness is conditioned;  
 "Through Ignorance, Kamma-formations are conditioned.

Whether, O monks, there be an arising of Tathagatas, whether there be no such arising, this natural order of elements exists, this establishment of sequence of causes and effects, this fixity of mutual relation of causes and effects. Concerning that, the

Tathagata is fully enlightened, that he fully understands. Fully enlightened, fully understanding he declares it, reveals it, sets it forth, manifests, explains, makes it plain, saying "Behold, Through Rebirth are conditioned Old Age and Death. This, O monks, is called Dependent Origination."

(Note.--The Six Bases: The five physical sense-organs with mind as the sixth.)(Eds.--The Light of the Dhamma.)