

# Mahaparinibbana Sutta

Buddha's Last Exhortation



**The First Bhikkhuni – Mahapajapati Gotami Theri**

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for**

**The joy of the pious**

**A Gift of Dhamma  
Bhikkhuni Gunasari**

## FOREWARD

As Buddhist we should read again and again, this *Mahaparinibbana sutta*, our Lord Buddha last Exhortation to learn the true and unadulterated Dhamma. This discourse shows us that our Lord Buddha has left with us the four divisions of his followers (Disciples) and only with all the four divisions in existence is his dispensation (sasana) considered complete; lack of any one of the four, the Buddha sasana, is incomplete.

***Bhikkhu*** – male Monk

***Bhikkhuni*** – female Monk

***Upasaka***, - Male lay follower &

***Upasika*** - female lay follower

Myanmar Theravada	Mahayana	Remarks
Bhikkhu	Bhikkhu	Readers may evaluate whether which Buddhist Sect is a complete Buddha's Sasana
	Bhikkhuni	
Upasaka	Upasaka	
Upasika	Upasika	
<b>Note: In Myanmar Theravada Buddhism, there is no Bhikkhuni Sangha order</b>		

If any one pointing out the fact that the Theravada Buddhist Sect is incomplete based on the Theravada's *Mahaparinibbana sutta*, the mainstream Buddhist Monks will give these reasons:

**a. Buddha said** – “*due to the establishment of Bhikkhuni's Sangha order, my dispensation will be shortened by half – 500 years*”. This is one prophecy that never comes to pass. The question is, *is this a true Buddha prophecy?* Because the Buddha dispensation is now in its 2548 BE.?:

**b. Whoever brings up this issue:** “*The revival of Bhikkhuni Sasana*” will commit the sin of bringing schism to the community of Sangha, thus will further endanger the Buddha sasana – which they said is a sin punishable by a rebirth in hell, similar to one given to *Devadatta*, the Buddha's cousin.”

**c. They say, the Bhikkhuni lineage has long been extinct for the past 1,000 years** and thus the revival is impossible according to the Vinaya ordination rules. There are two methods of Bhikkhuni ordination at the time of Buddha, prior to the prescribed Vinaya rules:

1. ***By the Buddha's proclamation*** – “*Ehi Bhikkhu*” – by Buddha Supernatural Power ordination to ***Maha Pajapati Gotami Theri***.
2. ***By a group of Bhikkhu's*** – ordination received by 500 royal ladies companions (including *Yasodara Theri*), accompanying ***Maha Pajapati Gotami***.

*The latter method was used to ordain 500 royal ladies by a group of Bhikkhu's long before the Vinaya was put in writing, at the beginning of the establishment of Bhikkhuni Sasana. This method is not a new Vinaya rule; it was allowed by Buddha after Maha Pajapati Gotami had been ordained by "Ehi Bhikkhu".*

*At the time of establishment of Bhikkhuni sasana, there was only one religion, Buddhism, the Buddhist religion – there were no Theravada and Mahayana; meaning the Bhikkhuni lineage originally started as a common Bhikkhuni lineage. Since, the Bhikkhuni sasana was introduced to Sri Lanka by **Sanghamitta Theri** in 230 BC, that Bhikkhuni lineage was brought to China by the Sri Lankan's Bhikkhuni prior to the time foreigners invaded Sri Lanka, in the later part of the history. The current Bhikkhuni lineage in China was the original Sri Lanka, or Theravada Bhikkhuni lineage.*

*Thus, the revival of Bhikkhuni Sasana has two options, if the proponent wants to bring the revival of Bhikkhuni Sasana:*

- a. Ordination by the group of Sanghas, as permitted at the time of Buddha, or*
- b. To use the existing Mahayana Bhikkhuni lineage to revive the Bhikkhuni sasana.*

***Only with the revival of Bhikkhuni Sasana, will the Theravada Buddhism, could be considered as complete.*** *Those who like to see, a complete Buddha sasana, will very much want to see a complete sasana. History has proven that any Buddha prophecy is considered as absolute truth and that the Gotama Buddha sasana is going to last for 5,000 years, no matter what.*

*This sutta shows the decline of Buddha's sasana depends solely on the behavior and the attitude of the order of Sangha, today. There are ways to revive the order of Bhikkhuni sangha (sasana). Some people will accuse me as bringing up an issue with malicious intent on endangering the order of Sangha that could cause dissension; ignoring the very facts that today's Theravada is an incomplete Sasana, according to this Mahaparinibbana sutta.*

*Our historical Buddha helps to emancipate the freedom of his female followers, we can see how today's Bhikkhu's will look at this issue, the revival of the Bhikkhuni Sasana.*

*Compiled for the serene joys and the emotion of the pious*

*Bhikkhuni Gunasari  
Riverside, California*

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# Mahaparinibbana Sutta

## Buddha's Last Exhortation

“**Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa**“

### 1. The Four Divisions of Buddha Sasana:

Soon after the Venerable Ananda had left the Blessed One, the evil Mara approached the Blessed One, and standing at a certain place, thus said to the Blessed One:

**Mara:** *"Venerable Sir, let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana! It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana."*

**Mara:** "Venerable Sir, (at one time) the Blessed One had in deed said (to me) these words: 'O Evil One, I shall not pass away so long as

#### 1.1. My disciples, the bhikkhus are:

- *not yet accomplished in learning,*
- *not yet well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),*
- *not yet confident,*
- *not yet endowed with wide knowledge and learning,*
- *not yet able to remember or memorize the Teaching (lit., to carry the Teaching),*
- *not yet able to practice fully according to the Teaching (by means of Vipassana, Insight Meditation leading to the attainment of Magga),*
- *not yet endowed with correctness in practice, not yet able to live (lit., walk) in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth<sup>1</sup>,*
- *not yet able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching, not yet able to refute by means of correct or proper reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and*
- *not yet able to expound, to set forth the wonderful, sublime Teaching."*

**Mara:** "Venerable Sir, the Blessed One's disciples, the bhikkhus, are now

- *accomplished in learning, are well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),*
- *are confident, are endowed with wide knowledge and learning,*
- *are able to memorize the Teaching,*



- are able to practice fully according to the Teaching, are endowed with correctness in practice,
- are able to live in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,
- are able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest of evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,
- are able to refute by means of correct reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are able to expound the wonderful, sublime Teaching.

"Venerable Sir, (therefore) let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana! It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana.

**Mara:** "Venerable Sir, (at one time, the Blessed One had in deed said (to me) these words: O Evil One, I shall not pass away so long as

### 1.2. My female disciples, the bhikkhuni's,

- *are not yet accomplished in learning,*
- *not yet well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),*
- *not yet confident,*
- *not yet endowed with wide know ledge and learning,*
- *not yet able to remember or memorize the Teaching (lit., to carry the Teaching),*
- *not yet able to practice fully according to the Teaching,*
- *not yet endowed with correctness in practice,*
- *not yet able to live (lit., walk) in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,*
- *not yet able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,*
- *not yet able to refute by means of correct or proper reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are not yet able to expound, to set forth the wonderful, sublime Teaching.*

"Venerable Sir, the Blessed One's **female disciple, the Bhikkhuni**, are now

- accomplished in learning,
- are well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),
- are confident, are endowed with wide knowledge and learning,
- are able to memorize the Teaching, are able to practice fully according to the Teaching,
- are endowed with correctness in practice,
- are able to live in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,
- are able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching, are able to refute by means of correct reasons other

doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are able to expound the wonderful, sublime Teaching.

"Venerable Sir, (therefore) let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana! It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana.

"Venerable Sir, (at one time) the Blessed One had indeed said (to me) these words: 'O Evil One, I shall not pass away so long as

### 1.3. My lay-male disciples (Upasaka) are

- *not yet accomplished in learning,*
- *not yet well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),*
- *not yet confident, not yet endowed with wide knowledge and learning,*
- *not yet able to remember or memorize the Teaching (lit., to carry the Teaching),*
- *not yet able to practice fully according to the Teaching,*
- *not yet endowed with correctness in practice,*
- *not yet able to live (lit., walk) in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,*
- *not yet able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,*
- *not yet able to refute by means of correct or proper reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are not able to expound, to set forth the wonderful, sublime Teaching."*

"Venerable Sir, the Blessed One's lay-disciples are now accomplished in learning,

- are well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),
- are confident, are endowed with wide knowledge and learning,
- are able to memorize the Teaching,
- are able to practice fully according to the Teaching,
- are endowed with correctness in practice,
- are able to live in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,
- are able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,
- are able to refute by means of correct reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are able to expound the wonderful, sublime Teaching.

"Venerable Sir, (therefore) let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana.

"Venerable Sir, (at one time) the Blessed One had indeed said (to me) these words: 'O Evil One, I shall not pass away so long as

#### 1.4. My female lay-disciples (Upasika)

are not yet accomplished in learning, not yet well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought),

- *not yet confident,*
- *not yet endowed with knowledge and learning,*
- *not yet able to remember or memorize the Teaching (lit., to carry the Teaching),*
- *not yet able to practice fully according to the Teaching,*
- *not yet endowed with correctness in practice,*
- *not yet able to live (lit., walk) in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,*
- *not yet able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,*
- *not yet able to refute by means of correct or proper reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise,*
- *and are not yet able to expound, to set forth the wonderful, sublime Teaching."*

**Mara:** ".Venerable Sir, the Blessed One's female lay-disciples :

- are now accomplished in learning,
- are well-schooled (in control of deed, word and thought), are confident,
- are endowed with wide knowledge and learning,
- are able to memorize the Teaching,
- are able to practice fully according to the Teaching,
- are endowed with correctness in practice,
- are able to live in perfect conformity with righteousness and truth,
- are able to expound, to set forth, to make known, to establish, to make clear, to analyze or explain in detail, and to make manifest or evident their Teacher's doctrine or teaching,
- are able to refute by means of correct reasons other doctrines, views or beliefs that may arise, and are able to expound the wonderful, sublime Teaching

"Venerable Sir, (therefore) let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana.

#### 1.5. Teaching of mine which should be termed the) Practice of Purity is:

"Venerable Sir, (at one time) the Blessed One had in deed said (to me) these words: 'O Evil One, I shall not pass away so long as this

not yet complete in effectiveness, not yet prosperous, renowned, prevalent among people, and widespread, to the extent that it can be thoroughly manifested, explained or made known by (wise) devas and men."

**Mara:** "Venerable Sir, the Blessed One's Teaching, fit to be termed the Practice of Purity,

is now complete in effectiveness, is now prosperous, renowned, prevalent among people, and widespread, to the extent that it can be thoroughly manifested, explained or made known by (wise) devas and men."

"Venerable Sir, (therefore) let the Blessed One realize parinibbana now by passing away! Let the Sugata realize parinibbana! It is time now for the Blessed One to pass away and realize parinibbana."

**Blessed One :** *"You, Evil One, do not be anxious. Before long the parinibbana of the Tathagata will take place. Three months from today, the Tathagata will realize parinibbana."*

**Blessed One:** - *"You, Evil One, do not be anxious. Before long the parinibbana of the Tathagata will take place. Three months from today, the Tathagata will realize parinibbana."*

## **2. Seven Factors of Non-Decline of Bhikkhus**

The Blessed One, soon after the Brahmin Vassakara, Chief Minister of Magadha, had left, said to the Venerable Ananda, *"Go, Ananda, and let all the bhikkhus who live around Rajagaha gather in the assembly hall."*

Ananda, saying "Very well, Venerable Sir," by way of assent, caused all the bhikkhus living around Rajagaha to gather in the assembly hall, and approaching the Blessed One and making obeisance to him stood on one side. Then Ananda said to the Blessed One:

"Venerable Sir, the community of bhikkhus is assembled. It is for the Blessed One to go as and when he wishes."

Then the Blessed One arose from where he was sitting, and going to the assembly hall and taking the seat prepared for him, addressed the bhikkhus thus:

*Bhikkhus, I shall expound to you the seven factors of Non-Decline. Listen attentively and bear it well in mind. I shall speak.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**2.1. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus meet in assembly frequently**, and have meetings many times, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**2.2. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus assemble and disperse from assembly in harmony and unity**, and attend to the affairs of the Samgha (the community of

bhikkhus) in harmony and unity, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**2.3.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not prescribe that (viz., rules) which has not been prescribed**, and *do not abolish what has been prescribed and observe well the prescribed rules (of the Discipline of Bhikkhus), conducting themselves accordingly, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.*

**2.4.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus respect, esteem, venerate and revere the bhikkhu elders** *who are of long standing (in their bhikkhuhood) who had long since become bhikkhus, who are the fathers and leaders of the Samgha, and consider that those bhikkhu elders ought to be listened to, the furtherance of the bhikkhus' (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline*

**2.5.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not fall under the power, the influence of that craving, which arises (within them)** and which leads to rebirth, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected not its decline.

**2.6.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus desire a sequestered life in remote forest dwellings**, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**2.7.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus maintain mindfulness in themselves, in order that those fellow-practitioners of the life of purity who cherish virtue** and who have not yet come might come, and those (of the same nature) who have come might live in comfort and ease, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

Bhikkhus, so long as these seven factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the, bhikkhus observe and apply these seven factors thoroughly, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

### **3. A Second Set of Seven Factors of Non-Decline**

*Bhikkhus, I shall further expound to you another set of seven factors of Non-Decline. Listen attentively to this exposition and bear it well in mind.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**3.1.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not delight in, are not given to pleasure in, and make no endeavour to derive enjoyment from (mundane) activities** or transactions, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**3.2.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not delight in, are not given to pleasure in, and make no endeavour to enjoy idle talk**, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**3.3.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not delight in, are not given to pleasure in, and make no endeavour to enjoy** (slothfulness and) sleeping, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**3.4.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not delight in, are not given to pleasure in, and make no endeavour to enjoy the company of associates,** the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**3.5.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus are without evil desires (such as the desire to boast of non-existent attainments or achievements),** and so long as they do not fall under the influence of evil desires, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected. not its decline.

**3.6.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not associate with evil friends or evil companions, and are not inclined towards evil companionship,** the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline

**3.7.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus do not stop halfway (before attainment of Arahatsip),** through achieving some small spiritual attainment, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

Bhikkhus, so long as these seven factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the bhikkhus observe and apply these seven factors thoroughly, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhu is to be expected, not its decline.

#### **4. A Third Set of Seven Factors of Non-Decline**

138. *Bhikkhus, I shall further expound to you another set<sup>1</sup> of seven factors of Non-Decline. Listen attentively to this exposition and bear it well in mind.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**4.1.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus are endowed with confidence based on conviction, saddha<sup>2</sup>,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not*

**4.2.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus have a sense of moral shame, hiri<sup>3</sup>,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.*

**4.3.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus have fear of wrong-doing, ottappa<sup>4</sup>,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.*

**4.4.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus have wide learning and knowledge,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.*

**4.5.Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus are firmly energetic and industrious,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.*

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<sup>1</sup> **Third set:** another set: the third set consists of seven good qualities (*satta saddhamma*).

<sup>2</sup> **Saddha** : usually rendered 'faith' which might, however, be confused with blind faith

<sup>3</sup> **hiri**: loathing of, or aversion to, immoral deeds, hence an inner sense of decency.

<sup>4</sup> **ottappa**: fear of committing immoral deeds, hence reflected in decent conduct.

**4.6. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus have sustained mindfulness,** *the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.*

**4.7. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus are possessed of insight and wisdom<sup>5</sup>,** *the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, and not its decline.*

*Bhikkhus, so long as these seven factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the bhikkhus observe and apply these seven factors thoroughly, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.*

## **5. A Fourth Set of Seven Factors of Non-Decline**

139. *Bhikkhus, I shall further expound to you another set<sup>6</sup> of seven factors of Non-Decline. Listen attentively to this exposition and bear it well in mind.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**5.1. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate Mindfulness,** *sati*, a factor which leads to Enlightenment, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**5.2. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate investigative knowledge of phenomena,** *dhammavicaya<sup>7</sup>*, leading to Enlightenment, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**5.3. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate effort, viriya<sup>8</sup>,** leading to Enlightenment, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**5.4. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate delightful satisfaction, piti, leading to Enlightenment,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**5.5. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate serenity, passaddhi, leading to Enlightenment,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline

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<sup>5</sup> **insight and wisdom:** *pannavanto*: The Commentary has "vipassana panna" i.e., Wisdom gained from Insight Meditation, not ordinary wisdom.

<sup>6</sup> **The fourth set** is of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, *satta bojjhanga*; *bodhi*=Enlightenment, Insight into the Four Noble Truths,+ *anga*=factor or limb.

<sup>7</sup> **dhammavicaya:** *dhamma*, (phenomena) here means mind and matter (*namarupa*).

<sup>8</sup> **viriya:** same as *samma yavama*, Right Effort.

**5.6. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate Concentration, samadhi, leading to Enlightenment,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**5.7. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate equanimity, upekkha<sup>9</sup>, leading to Enlightenment,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

Bhikkhus, so long as these seven factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the bhikkhus observe and apply these seven factors thoroughly, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

## **6. A Fifth Set of Seven Factors of Non-Decline**

*Bhikkhus, I shall further expound to you another set<sup>10</sup> of seven factors of Non-Decline. Listen attentively to this exposition and bear it well in mind.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**6.1. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of Impermanence, anicca,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**6.2. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of Non-Soul, Non-Ego, Non-Self, anatta** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**6.3. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of the corruptness, the impurity** (of the body) asubha, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**6.4. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of the danger of all formations of existence, adinava,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**6.5. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of abandonment, pahana<sup>11</sup>,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**6.6. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of detachment from desire, viraga,** the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

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<sup>9</sup> **upekkha:** Equanimity is mental equipoise, not mere indifference. It is the result of a calm concentrative mind, a quiet mind

<sup>10</sup> **The fifth set** is a set of seven perceptions

<sup>11</sup> **pahana:** abandonment or discarding (of kilesas, moral defilements).



**6.7. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus cultivate the perception of cessation, nirodha<sup>123</sup>**, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline. (7)

Bhikkhus, so long as these seven factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the bhikkhus observe and apply these seven factors thoroughly, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

## **7. Six Factors of Non-Decline of Bhikkhus**

*Bhikkhus, I shall expound to you six factors<sup>13</sup> of Non-Decline. Listen attentively to this exposition and bear it well in mind.*

The bhikkhus assenting respectfully, the Blessed One gave this discourse:

**7.1. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus minister to fellow disciples<sup>14</sup> with loving-kindness in deed and action**, both openly and in private, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**7.2. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus minister to fellow disciples with loving-kindness in speech**, both openly and in private, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**7.3. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus minister to fellow disciples with loving-kindness in thought**, both openly and in private, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**7.4. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus share with virtuous fellow-disciples such offerings and gifts as they receive** in accordance with the rules and prescriptions of the Order of Bhikkhus, including, to say the least, even the contents of their alms-bowl, without making use of them apart from the others, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

**7.5. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus, both openly and in private, together with fellow disciples in equal observance, abide by those precepts of sila<sup>15</sup>**, morality, which lead to liberation (from slavery to tanha, craving), which are praised by the wise, which are not subject to tanha and ditthi, craving and wrong views, which are conducive to concentration of mind, and which are unbroken, intact, unblemished and unspotted, (thus

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<sup>12</sup> **nirodha**: cessation (of kilesas, moral defilements).

<sup>13</sup> **six factors saraniya dhamma**, (six) conditions for happy fraternal living

<sup>14</sup> **fellow-disciples**: *sabrahmacari*: fellow practitioners of the life of purity, rendered here as fellow-disciples.

<sup>15</sup> **sila**: in the Pali text, in plural form. Forms of right conduct

complete, perfect and pure), the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

**7.6. Bhikkhus, so long as the bhikkhus, both openly and in private, together with fellow-disciples in equal insight**, abide in that faultless and pure insight<sup>16</sup> which leads to Nibbana, and which truly leads him who acts upon it to the utter destruction of dukkha, the furtherance of the (spiritual) progress of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not its decline.

Bhikkhus, so long as these six factors of Non-Decline endure among the bhikkhus, and so long as the bhikkhus observe and apply these six factors thoroughly, the furtherance of their (spiritual) progress is to be expected, not its decline.

## **8. Discourse on Sila-Samadhi-Panna**

While the Blessed One was sojourning there at the Gijjhakuta hill in Rajagaha, he repeatedly expounded this discourse:

- *Such is **sila**, morality;*
- *such is **samadhi**, concentration of mind;*
- *such is **panna**, wisdom.*

**8.1. Samadhi, when based upon sila, rich in result and of great effect.**

**8.2. Panna, when based upon samadhi, is rich in result and of great effect.**

*The mind, when developed through<sup>18</sup> panna, is thoroughly liberated from the asavas, taints, moral intoxicants, namely, kamasava, the taint of sensuous desire, bhavasava, the taint of hankering after repeated existence, and avijjasava, the taint of ignorance of the true nature of existence as set out in the Four Noble Truths."*

## **9. Discourse on Samadhi and Panna.**

143. Then the Blessed One, after staying at Rajagaha as long as he wished, said to the Venerable Ananda, *"Come, Ananda, let us go to the Ambalathika garden."*

The Venerable Ananda assented, saying "Very well, Venerable Sir".

Then the Blessed One, accompanied by many bhikkhus, went to the *Ambalathika* garden and stayed at the king's rest house. While there also the Blessed One repeatedly expounded this very discourse:

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<sup>16</sup> **insight: ditthi ariya**: rendered by the Burmese version, as ariya panna, faultless or pure knowledge, wisdom, insight

<sup>17</sup> **ditthi**=sammaditthi, right view

<sup>18</sup> **panna**=maggapanna, Magga-Insight

- *"Such is sila, morality:*
- *such is samadhi, concentration of mind:*
- *such is panna, wisdom.*

### **9.1.Samadhi, when based upon sila, is rich in result and of great effect.**

### **9.2 Panna, when based upon samadhi, is rich in result and of great effect.**

*The mind, when developed through panna, is thoroughly liberated from the asavas, taints, namely, kamasava, bhavasava, and avijjasava."*

Then the Blessed One, after staying at the Ambalattika garden as long as he wished, said to the Venerable Ananda, "Come, Ananda, let us go to the town of Nalanda".

The Venerable Ananda assented, saying "Very well, Venerable Sir",

Then the Blessed One, accompanied by many bhikkhus, went to the town of Nalanda and stayed at the mango orchard of (the rich man) Pavarika.

## **10. The Venerable Sariputta's Brave Utterance<sup>19</sup>**

At that time, the Venerable Sariputta approached the Blessed One, and having made obeisance, seated himself on one side. He said to the Blessed One thus:

"Venerable Sir, I have this faith in the Blessed One that there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be, any samana (recluse) or brahmana (one leading a religious life) who can excel the Blessed One in Enlightenment."

Indeed, Sariputta, you proclaim in lofty, majestic, precise words, sounding bravely like a lion's roar, that you have this faith in the Blessed One that there never has been, nor there is, nor there will be any samana or brahmana who can excel the Blessed One in Enlightenment.

How is it, Sariputta; do you know definitely in your mind the minds of those Homage-Worthy, Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed Ones of the past, to be able to say <sup>20</sup> "Such was their Sila, practice of morality, such was their mental discipline<sup>21</sup>, such was their panna, wisdom, such was their way of living<sup>4</sup>, and such was their emancipation"?

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<sup>19</sup> **Brave Utterance:** *Sihanada:* The lion's roar

<sup>20</sup> **to be able to joy:** a free rendering of *itipi* "thus (it was)."

<sup>21</sup> **mental discipline:** the Pali text has *dhamma*, which is explained by the Commentary as here referring to concentration and to the mental qualities, such as energy, mindfulness, pertaining to concentration (*samadhipakkhiya dhamma*).

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir."

How is it, Sariputta; do you know definitely in your mind the minds of those Homage-Worthy, Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed One is of the future, to be able to say

"Such will be their sila, practice of morality,

such will be their mental discipline,

such will be their panna, wisdom,

such will be their way of living, and such will be their emancipation"?

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir."

How is it, Sariputta; do you by means of your mind know definitely the mind of myself, the present Buddha, the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened, to be able to say

**"Such is the Blessed One's sila, such is his mental discipline, such is his panna, such is his way of living, and such is his emancipation"?**

"I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir."

Sariputta, if you do not have the *cetopariya nana*<sup>22</sup>, the faculty by which you can know definitely the minds of the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed Ones of the past, the future and the present, how can you proclaim in lofty, majestic, precise words, sounding like a lion's roar, to the effect that you have this faith in the Blessed One, that there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be any samana or brahmana who can excel the Blessed One in Enlightenment?

*"Venerable Sir, I do not have the cetopariya nana<sup>23</sup>, the faculty by which I can know definitely the minds of the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed Ones of the past, the future and the present. But I do have the dhammanvaya nana, knowledge by inference from personal experience.*

*"Venerable Sir, if I may give an example, let us say that far away from the royal city there is a border town with firm foundations, solid walls, and a single arched gateway, and that there is a gate-keeper, wise, prudent and intelligent, who would keep out strangers and would admit only known persons.*

*"When that gate-keeper on his rounds along the roadway circling the town sees no breaks, no holes in the walls, not even a hole by which a cat can get through, he will*

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<sup>22</sup> **way of living:** the Commentary says this means 'the abiding in the sustained attainment of Cessation (*nirodhasamapattivihara*)

<sup>23</sup> **cetopariya nana:** knowledge of the working of another person's mind.

*come to the conclusion that all big living things who or which enter or leave the town do so only by that single gateway."*

"In the same way, Venerable Sir, I am in possession of the *dhammanvaya nana*, knowledge by inference from personal experience."

"Venerable Sir, (thus I know that) all the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed Ones who had arisen in the past had abandoned the five Hindrances, *nivarana*<sup>24</sup> which defile the mind and weaken the intellect; had well established their minds in the practice of the four Methods of Steadfast Mindfulness, *satipatthana*<sup>25</sup>; had correctly cultivated the seven Factors of Enlightenment, *bojjhanga*<sup>26</sup> and had fully attained unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

"Venerable Sir, (thus I know that) all the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed Ones who will arise in the future, will abandon the five Hindrances *nivarana*, which defile the mind and weaken the intellect; will well-establish their minds in the four Methods of Steadfast Mindfulness, *satipatthana*; will correctly cultivate the seven Factors of Enlightenment, *bojjhanga*; and will fully attain unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

"Venerable Sir, (thus I know that) the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Blessed One also, who has now arisen in this world, has abandoned the five Hindrances which defile the mind and weaken the intellect; has well-established the Blessed One's mind in the four Methods of Steadfast Mindfulness; has correctly cultivated the seven Factors of Enlightenment; and has fully attained unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment."

While the Blessed One was staying at the mango orchard of (the rich man) *Pavarika* in the town of Nalanda, there, too, he gave this very discourse repeatedly, thus:

*"Such is sila, morality;*

*such is samadhi, concentration of mind;*

*such is panna, wisdom.*

*Samadhi, when based upon sila, is rich in result and of great effect.*

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<sup>24</sup> **The five Hindrances**, *nivarana*, which obstruct or hinder the way to liberation are (1) *kamacchanda*, sensual desires; (2) *byapada*, ill will, hatred or anger; (3) *thina middha*, torpor and languor, sloth, drowsiness, stolidity, (also translated as obduracy of mind and mental factors); (4) *uddhacca, kukkuccha*, restlessness and worry; and (5) *vicikiccha*, doubt, wavering.

<sup>25</sup> **Method of Steadfast Mindfulness. *satipatthana***, (the setting up of Mindfulness). This means the cultivation of mindfulness or awareness of (1) the body, *kaya*; (2) sensations and feelings, *vedana*; (3) mind or consciousness, *citta*, and (4) *dhamma*; this last involves various moral and intellectual subjects, such as the five Hindrances, the five Aggregates of Clinging, the twelve sense-bases, the seven Factors of Enlightenment and the Four Noble Truths

<sup>26</sup> **Seven Factors of Enlightenment, *satta bojjhanga***: (1) mindfulness; (2) investigative knowledge of phenomena; (3) effort; (4) delightful satisfaction; (5) serenity; (6) concentration, and (7) equanimity

*Panna, when based upon samadhi, is rich in result and of great effect.*

*The mind, when developed through panna, is thoroughly liberated from the asavas, taints, namely, kamasava, bhavasava, and avijjasava."*

## **11. The Disadvantages to an Immoral Man**

Then the Blessed One after staying at the town of *Nalanda* as long as he wished, said to the Venerable Ananda, "*Come, Ananda, let us go to Patali village.*"

The Venerable Ananda assented, saying "Very well, Venerable Sir."

Then the Blessed One, accompanied by many bhikkhus, went to Patali village.

When the lay devotees of *Patali* village heard that the Blessed One had arrived at their village, they approached the Blessed One, made obeisance to him, and seated themselves on one side. They said to him, "May it please the Blessed One to consent to stopover in our guest-house." And by his silence the Blessed One consented.

The lay devotees of Patali village, on receiving the Blessed One's consent, rose from their seats, made obeisance to him and respectfully departed (by keeping their right side to him) and went to their guest-house. They prepared the guest-house by covering the floor all over with floor-coverings, arranging seats, placing big, water-filled pots, and setting up oil-lamps in their holders. Then they approached the Blessed One, made obeisance to him, and standing on one side, said to him:

"Venerable Sir, at the guest-house, the floor has been fully covered with floor-coverings, the seats have been arranged, the big water-filled pots have been placed, and the oil-lamps have been set up in their holders. It is for the Blessed One to proceed there when he wishes. (lit., The Exalted One knows the time to proceed there.)

Then the Blessed One, at evening time, re-arranged his robes, took his alms-bowl and great robe, and proceeded to the guest-house accompanied by the bhikkhus. He entered the guest-house after washing his feet, and sat against the middle post, facing east.

The bhikkhus also washed their feet and entered the guest-house, and sat against the west wall, facing east, with the Blessed One in front of them. The lay devotees of Patali village also washed their feet and entered the guest-house, and sat against the east wall facing west, with the Blessed One in front of them.

Then Blessed One addressed the devotees of Patali village thus:

**Householders, the immoral man lacking moral virtue faces five disadvantages<sup>27</sup>. What are these five (disadvantages)?**

### **11.1. Loss of wealth**

**Householders, in this world the immoral man lacking moral virtue encounters through heedlessness great loss of wealth.** This is the first disadvantage befalling the immoral man who lacks moral virtue.

### **11.2. Ill Repute spread far and wide**

Householders, in addition, the ill repute of an immoral man lacking moral virtue spreads far and wide. This is the second disadvantage befalling the immoral man who lacks moral virtue.

### **11.3. He has troubled demeanor**

Householders, in addition, when the immoral man lacking moral virtue goes into any kind of society, whether it be the society of the ruling class, or of brahmins, or of well-to-do people, or of recluses, he does so with timidity and troubled demeanor. This is the third disadvantage befalling the immoral man who lacks moral virtue.

### **11.4. He dies in bewilderment**

Householders, in addition, the immoral man lacking moral virtue dies in bewilderment.<sup>28</sup> This is the fourth disadvantage befalling the immoral man who lacks moral virtue.

### **11.5. He is reborn in infrahuman realm**

Householders, in addition, the immoral man, after death and dissolution of the body, reaches (i.e., is reborn in) one of four undesirable, **infrahuman realms**, a miserable destination, a ruinous existence, (such as) the realm of continuous intense suffering, through lacking moral virtue. This is the fifth disadvantage befalling the immoral man who lacks moral virtue.

Householders, these are the five disadvantages befalling the immoral man, through lacking moral virtue.

## **12. Advantages Accruing to a Man of Virtue**

Householders, five advantages accrue to the man of moral virtue, through his ethical conduct. What are these five (advantages)?

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<sup>27</sup> **Disadvantages:** *adinava*; sometimes translated as dancer, fault.

<sup>28</sup> **bewilderment:** *sammulha*. The Commentary explains this as delirium.

**12.1. Householders, in this world, the man of moral virtue, through his ethical conduct, by being heedful, gains a great mass of wealth.** This is the first advantage accruing to the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct.

**12.2. Householders, in addition, the good reputation of a man of virtue, through his ethical conduct, spreads far and wide.** This is the second advantage accruing to the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct.

**12.3. Householders, in addition, the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct, can go into any kind of society,** whether it be the society of the ruling class, or of Brahmins, or of well-to-do people, or of recluses, with confidence and untroubled demeanor. This is the third advantage accruing to the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct.

**12.4. Householders, in addition, the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct, dies without any bewilderment.** This is the fourth advantage accruing to the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct.

**12.5. Householders, in addition, the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct, after death and dissolution of the body, reaches (i.e., is reborn in) the realms of the devas,** (celestial beings), a happy destination. This is the fifth advantage accruing to the man of virtue, through his ethical conduct.

And the Blessed One spent the greater part of the night instructing the devotees of *Patali* village in the Teaching, causing them to realize (the benefits of) the Dhamma, to become established in (the observance of) the Teaching, and to be filled with gladness and enthusiasm for (the practice of) the Teaching. Then he sent them away, saying "The night is far advanced, householders; it is for you to leave when you wish."

The devotees of *Patali* village assented, saying "Very well, Venerable Sir", and arising from their seats, made obeisance to the Blessed One and departed respectfully. Then the Blessed One, not long after the departure of the devotees of *Patali* village, retired in seclusion

### **13. Founding of the (fortified) City of Pataliputta**

At that time, (the brahmins) *Sunidha* and *Vassakara*, chief ministers of *Magadha* Kingdom, were building a (fortified) city at the (site of) *Patali* village to keep out the *Vajji* princes.

During that period, many devas, in groups of a thousand each, were taking possession of plots of land at the *Patali* village.

In the locations where the devas of great power had taken possession of plots of land, there princes and king's ministers of great power were inclined to build (lit., their minds were bent towards building) houses. And where the devas of medium power had taken



possession of plots of land, there princes and king's ministers of medium power were inclined to build houses. And where the devas of lesser power had taken possession of plots of land, there princes and king's ministers of lesser power were inclined to build houses.

The Blessed One saw by means of *dibba-cakkhu*, (the extremely clear and divine power of vision, comparable to the vision-faculty of the devas and surpassing the seeing ability of men), those devas who were gathered in groups of a thousand each and who were taking possession of plots of land in the Patali village. Then the Blessed One arose at dawn and asked the Venerable Ananda, "*Ananda, who are building a (fortified) city at the (site of) Patali village ?*"

"Venerable Sir, (the brahmins) *Sunidha* and *Vassakara*, chief ministers of Magadha Kingdom, are building a (fortified) city at the (site of) Patali village, to hold back the Vajji princes."

*Ananda, it is as if they are building the fortified city in consultation with the devas of the Tavatimsa realm.*

*Ananda, I have seen by means of dibba-cakkhu many devas who are gathered in groups of a thousand each and who are taking possession of plots of land in the Patali village.*

*Ananda, in the locations where devas of great power have taken possession of plots of land, princes and king's ministers of great power are inclined to build (their) houses. And where devas of medium power have taken possession of plots of land, princes and king's ministers of medium power are inclined to build (their) houses. And where devas of lesser power have taken possession of plots of land, princes and king's ministers of lesser power are inclined to build (their) houses.*

*Ananda, among the towns and cities which are centers of congregation and commerce of people of the Aryan race, this new town will become the greatest city, called Pataliputta, a place where goods are unpacked and sold and distributed.*

*Ananda, three misfortunes will befall the city of Pataliputta, through fire, through flood, through internal dissension.*

Then, the chief ministers of Magadha, (the brahmins) *Sunidha* and *Vassakara*, went to the Blessed One. After offering courteous greetings to the Blessed One and having said memorable words of felicitation, the chief ministers stood on one side, and said,

**Ministers:** "Venerable Sir, may it please the Venerable Gotama to accept our offering of food for today, together with the company of bhikkhus." The Blessed One, by silence, signified acceptance.

Then, the Magadha chief ministers, *Sunidha* and *Vassakara*, knowing that the Blessed One had accepted their request, went to their house and having prepared at their house

choice food and eatables, both hard and soft kinds, they informed the Blessed One that it was time, by the message, "Venerable Gotama, it is time (to proceed), the food-offering is ready."

Then in the morning time the Blessed One re-arranged his robes, and taking alms-bowl and great robe, went to the house of the Magadha chief ministers, Sunidha and Vassakara, in the, company of the bhikkhus, and took the seat prepared for him.

And the Magadha chief ministers, Sunidha and Vassakara, personally attended on the Blessed One and the bhikkhus, offering the choice food and eatables with their own hands till the Blessed One and the bhikkhus caused them to stop, signifying they had had enough.

When the Blessed One had finished his meal and had removed his hand from his alms-bowl, the Magadha chief ministers, Sunidha and Vassakara, took low seats and sat down on one side.

To the Magadha chief ministers, *Sunidha* and *Vassakara*, who were thus seated, the Blessed One signified his pleasure and appreciation by these verses (rendered below in prose):

*"Brahmins, when the wise man offers food to those endowed with moral conduct, self-control, and purity of life, at the place where he has made his home, he should share the merit of the alms-giving with the devas of that place.*

*(When merit is thus shared with them), the devas being honoured, honour him (the sharer of merit) in return; being revered, revere him in return.*

*Therefore, just as a mother safeguards her own son, the devas safeguard the sharer of merit. And the person who is under the protection of the devas meets with only good fortune at all times."*

After signifying his pleasure and appreciation by these verses to the Magadha chief ministers, Sunidha and Vassakara, the Blessed One arose from his seat and left.

Then, the Magadha chief ministers, Sunidha and Vassakara, thinking "We shall call the gateway by which the Venerable Gotama leaves today, the Gotama Gateway, and the landing place by which the Venerable Gotama crosses the river Ganges, the Gotama Landing Place," followed the Blessed One all along the route.

The gateway by which the Blessed One then left came to be known as the Gotama Gateway. When the Blessed One approached the river Ganges, the river was full to the brim so that a crow on the bank might easily drink from it.

Some people, who wanted to cross from one shore to the other, looked for boats. Others looked for log rafts. Still others built bamboo rafts.

*Then, as instantaneously as a strong man stretches his bent arm or bends his outstretched arm, even so the Blessed One vanished from this side of the Ganges and reappeared on the other shore together with the company of bhikkhus.*

The Blessed One saw the people who wanted to cross from one shore to the other looking for boats, for log rafts, or making bamboo rafts. Then, the Blessed One, seeing them thus, uttered these exultant words:

*"The (ariya) persons have crossed the deep and wide river of tanha, craving, by building the bridge of ariyamagganana, Noble Magga Insight, leaving behind the marshy grounds of moral defilements. As for the (non-ariya) persons, they have to build rafts (to cross the river). However, the wise ariya persons, who have crossed (the river of craving), have no more need to make rafts."*

**"They who have bridged the ocean vast,  
Leaving the lowlands far behind,  
While others still their frail rafts bind,  
Are saved by wisdom unsurpassed."**

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**Sadhu ! Sadhu! Sadhu!**