

# 大木塊經講記<sup>1</sup>

( The Parable of the Log )

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<sup>1</sup> 此經出自《相應部》六入處相應，第 200 經。S.35.200, 201.  
Dārukhandha(漂流)木塊經(1)。請參閱《雜阿含》1174 經(大正藏第 2 冊，314 頁，下欄)，《增壹阿含 43.3 經》(T2.759.1)。





## 開示 (The Discourse)

有一天佛陀坐在憍薩彌城附近的恒河邊一顆大樹下，有五百位比丘圍繞著佛陀，聽佛陀說法。佛陀看見一塊很大的木頭被恒河的水流帶著向下流去。佛陀指著大木頭對比丘們說：「諸比丘，你們是否看見這塊大木頭被恒河水帶著向下流？」

諸比丘回答說：「是的，世尊，我們看見了。」

佛陀繼續說：「如果這塊大木頭不在此岸擱淺，它將到達大海；如果不在對岸擱淺，它將到達大海；如果大木頭不沉入水中，它將到達大海；如果大木頭不在河中的沙洲擱淺，它將到達大海；如果大木頭不被人所取，它將到達大海。如果大木頭不被天人所取，它將到達大海。如果不沉入漩渦中，它將到達大海。如果不腐爛，它將到達大海。」

在此，全知的佛陀指出如果沒有這八種障礙，這塊大木頭一定會到達(流向)大海。接著佛陀說：為什麼這塊大木頭會到達大海呢？因為河水不斷的流向大海，如果沒有這八種障礙，大木頭必然會到達大海。同理，諸比丘，假如你們沒有這八種障礙，你們一定能到達涅槃，為什麼呢？因為正見引導至涅槃，涅槃即是痛苦的止息。然而諸比丘，這只是一個譬喻。



接著有位比丘請佛陀解釋這個譬喻，於是佛陀詳細的加以解釋。此岸是指六種感官的門（六根門），即眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、意；對岸是指六種感官的對象，即可見的色、聲、香、味、可觸的東西，以及心的所緣（即色、聲、香、味、觸、法六塵）。沉入水中指執著任何有生命的眾生或無生命的事物。在河中的沙洲擱淺是指狂妄、驕傲或貢高我慢。被人所取是指比丘不適當的跟俗人混在一起。被天人所取是指修行者積德修善的目的是為了生到天界。沉到漩渦之中是指沉溺在五種感官欲樂中，腐爛是指沒有德行卻假裝很有德行的樣子。

## 解說

雖然這是佛陀對諸比丘開示，而事實上所有修行佛法的人都包括在內，無關種族與信仰。任何修行人只要沒有這八種障礙，都能到達大海，到達大海意指他解脫了生死輪迴之苦，解脫所有痛苦。在某些開示中，佛陀將大海比喻作生死輪迴的苦海，而在有些開示中，佛陀將大海喻作涅槃，也就是痛苦的止息，在這部經中，佛陀將大海喻作涅槃。

## 六根門和六塵

佛陀所說的此岸是比喻為六根門，對岸比喻為六塵。首先我必須解釋「心」在佛教心理學上的意義，佛法中的「心」，



有認知色法的作用，心非常快速的生滅，時間非常短，甚至比眨眼的時間還要短。心認知色法的時間非常短，甚至不超過百萬分之一秒。偶爾我們會用「識」字，「識」字比「心」字更貼切。

我們的心能夠認知外物，但是我們的眼睛無法認識外物，由於有六根門之一的眼睛幫助，識才能看到外物。例如，你看到一部名牌轎車勞斯萊斯，這部轎車是一個可見物。眼睛使心識看到這外物。當你看到這部勞斯萊斯轎車，你會想如果擁有這部車該多好呀！如果是你自己的車，你會從中得到很大的快樂。因為你看見了它，而且把它當作一部屬於你的轎車，於是你對它產生執著。你沒有把它視為是物質現象的自然過程，這時候你就是在對岸擱淺——即這部轎車，以及在此岸擱淺——即你的眼睛，你會產生執著是因為這部轎車與你的眼睛這兩種因。

眼睛是六根門之一，當眼睛接觸車的顏色或形狀時，就會產生能看到車的心識，但這個心識不會只停留在看的階段，它會繼續想：「是的，這車是我的，是一部非常好的車，是一部新車，我昨天買的，花了很多錢。」於是，你開始執著這部勞斯萊斯轎車，這表示你開始執著一個沒有生命的東西，因為它的顏色和外形（**可見物**），**由於你的眼睛看到這**



部車，因此你就執著這部車。

假設你將這部車子停在路邊，有人開車經過不小心擦撞你的車門，將你的車子劃出一道痕跡，你會非常生氣，因為你的車子被刮傷了。這意味著你有貪心和瞋心。貪和瞋會帶給你快樂嗎？不會的，它們只會帶給你痛苦。你為什麼會有苦？你之所以受苦，是因為你在此岸與對岸擱淺。因為這個可見物，即這部車，由於眼睛的觀看生起了貪愛，所以你感到苦，因為眼識使你在此岸擱淺了。如果你因為眼睛的觀看而執著這部車，你就到達不了大海——即涅槃。你將執著對岸與此岸，你不會到達大海。

大木頭喻為五蘊或人。五蘊就是五種的身心現象。因為你沒有將五蘊視為身心的五種現象，所以你認為五蘊是一個人、我、眾生，於是你執著這五蘊，也因此你無法到達大海。但是，如果你將五蘊視為五種身心的現象，你不會認為五蘊是一個人、我、眾生，於是你不會執著這五蘊，因此你就能到達大海。

如果你把你昨天買的這部昂貴的勞斯萊斯轎車看作是勞斯萊斯轎車，你就會執著它；如果你知道它只是物質現象，是一種色蘊，你就不會執著它，因此即使它被刮傷，你



不會很難過，因為你沒有把它視為是有價值的勞斯萊斯，這時候你就不會在此岸與對岸擱淺。

### 貪愛和驕慢

「沉入水中」指貪愛，即渴望、欲望、愛染。如果你執著一切有生命的眾生或沒有生命的東西，你就無法到達大海，你就沉入水中了。「在河中的沙洲擱淺」指傲慢、驕慢。如果你因為自己的財富、地位或事業上的成就而驕傲，你就在河中的沙洲擱淺了。驕傲會妨礙你證得涅槃。當你驕傲時，你無法看到身心的本質<sup>2</sup>，因此你把你的身心現象看作是一個人、我、眾生，是一個你，於是你生起許多煩惱，如生氣、欲望、貪婪與瞋恨等，由於你在河中的沙洲擱淺了，就不能到達大海，因為你不能認識到自然現象只是自然現象，或五蘊只是自然現象，是生滅不已的。

### 不當的人際關係

如果大木頭「被人所取」，就不會流向大海，意指比丘不做分內的工作，即研究經典、修行佛法、說法、引導弟子走在正路上，並鼓勵他們修行以便達到解脫，反而不當的跟在家人混在一起。這種比丘就是被人所取，他無法到達大海，因為他執著這些不應當交往的人。他太愛攀緣俗事，所

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<sup>2</sup> 身心的本質：指無常、苦、無我。



以無法體悟身心現象的三個特徵，即無常、苦、無我。如果他不能了知生命的三個基本事實，他就不能到達大海，因為他太執著世俗之事。

### 期望較好的來世

如果大木頭「被天人所取」，就不會流向大海，意指如果你做善事，如做慈善、持戒和禪修，目的是為了來世要生到天堂或梵天，那麼你死後就會被天人帶到天上去。如果這樣，你就不能到達大海，因為你曾經做的善行可以實現你的願望，即有更好的來世，你會生為身上有光的天人，但不能到達大海。如果你成為天人，你會很執著自己的身體，因為身上有光，很漂亮，所以不能到達大海。

### 感官欲樂

如果大木頭沉入漩渦當中，就不會流向大海，意指如果你沉溺在感官欲樂，你就不能到達大海。如果你執著你所看到的、所聽到的、所嗅到的、所嚐到的、所接觸到的與所想的，那麼你被捲入一個非常大的漩渦，就不能到達大海。貪愛任何感官欲樂會導致不斷的輪迴，無法引導你到達涅槃大海。



## 不誠實

最後是大木頭腐爛了。如果大木頭腐爛了，就不會到達大海，意指修行者並無德行，卻假裝很有德行的樣子，他內心腐爛，無法流向大海，無法證得涅槃。

## 離苦之道

佛陀說：「假如沒有這八種障礙，你必然能夠順著河水的中流到達大海，這中流即是八正道。修行八正道，你就不會在此岸和對岸擱淺，不會沉入水中，不會在河中的沙洲擱淺，不會被天人所取，不會被人類所取，不會沉入漩渦中，也不會腐爛，因此你一定能夠到達涅槃大海。

你必須努力修行八正道，這樣就不會有這八種障礙。修行八正道該怎麼做呢？首先要持戒，戒是基礎，是必要條件，而「定」建立在戒的基礎上。適當的修習定就能產生智慧。八正道由戒、定、慧組成，修行八正道非常容易，觀察你自己或如實觀察你的身心現象。

按照身心生滅的現象，觀察你身心的所有動作或移動，不分析，不思維。只是單純的、如實的觀察你的身心的生滅現象。如果你在觀察身心現象的過程中，有任何知識或先入為主的見解，你就走入了歧途，你的心不專注，你就不能如實了知身心生滅的現象。





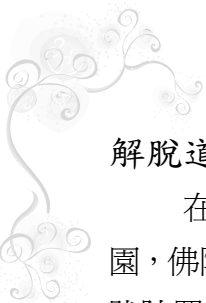
## 心清淨

當你如實的觀察身心的活動，你的心就能逐漸專注在你觀察的目標，於是你的定力越來越深，越來越強，你的心從五蓋中淨化，五蓋就是五種障礙，即貪欲、瞋恚、掉悔、昏沉和疑惑。如果你的心有五蓋中的任何一項，你的心是染污的，你的心不清淨，你的觀智尚未生起。只有當你淨化五蓋時，你的觀智才能生起，首先你能了知身心生滅現象的特相，然後了解它們的共相。

在修習觀禪的過程中，了解這兩個層次被稱為正見。當觀智到達頂點時，經由證得初果須陀洹，你就證得涅槃，即苦的止息。當你證得初果時，你了解四聖諦，你已經到達大海。然而，只有透過深的定力，當你觀察身心現象的時候，你才能以正見的三個層次來體悟。

## 正見

正見的第一個層次是了知身心現象的特相，第二個層次是了知身心的共相，第三個層次是體悟四聖諦，即苦、集、滅、道。因此，要淨化我們的心，我們必須修行八正道；要了知身心生滅過程的特相與共相，我們必須修行八正道；要體悟四聖諦，我們必須修行八正道，因為八正道是河的中流。



## 解脫道

在佛陀即將入涅槃的那天晚上，在庫西那拉( **Kusinara** )園，佛陀躺在爲他鋪好的床上。在初夜時分，有位遊方僧須跋陀羅來求見佛陀，說道：「尊敬的瞿曇佛陀，我有很多老師，他們教了我很多教義，這些老師都說他們無所不知，他們是阿羅漢。這些老師所說的是真的嗎？」

佛陀沒有回答這個問題，而對須跋陀羅說：「你的老師是不是無所不知，是不是阿羅漢這與你無關，因此我不回答你這個問題，我的時間不多了，我要教你與你的解脫有關的法，注意聽。」

## 修行的方法

佛陀說：「須跋陀羅，任何宗教如果沒有教導修行八正道，那麼在這個宗教就沒有沙門。」此處，沙門是指摧毀所有煩惱的人。如果一種宗教的教義沒有八正道，信仰該宗教的人就不能去除所有煩惱。如果該宗教的教義中有八正道，信仰該宗教的人就能去除煩惱和解脫痛苦。因此，如果你信仰的宗教沒有修行八正道，你肯定不能去除煩惱與解脫痛苦。

此處，佛陀指出了判斷正法的標準。佛陀說：「須跋陀羅，只有在我的教法中有八正道，因此只有在我的教法中有沙門。」佛陀對須跋陀羅開示的這部經正符合我們現在講的

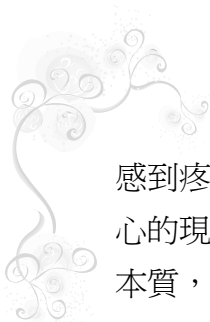
這部大木塊經，因為如果不修行八正道，就不可能到達涅槃大海。如果修行八正道，肯定能到達涅槃大海，因為不會在此岸或對岸擱淺等。佛陀教導我們修行八正道的方法，即修習念處禪的方法。

### 念處禪

佛陀在《大念處經》中教導修行念處的方法，也就是如實觀察身體、感受、心念以及心的所緣（法念處）。因此，修習四念處的原則就是如實觀察、專注、覺知在我們身心生起的任何現象，即使是不愉快的感受，如痛、僵硬以及癢等，都必須如實觀察。

當你的後背痛或膝蓋痛時，你必須如實觀察。你不要想讓疼痛離開或讓疼痛消失，因為疼痛是開啓涅槃大門的鑰匙，所以當你感覺疼痛時，你是非常幸運的！疼痛能引導你解脫痛苦，因為這是徹底了解五蘊中的一種（指受蘊中的苦受）。必須充分了解痛是受蘊，是苦諦。

如果我們了解疼痛的本質，即它的自相與共相，我們知道這只是剎那剎那生起和滅去的自然現象，疼痛的持續非常短暫，甚至沒有一秒鐘。藉著了知疼痛或受蘊，你就能覺悟，因此你可去除煩惱，解脫痛苦。這就是為什麼我說「如果你



感到疼痛，你是非常幸運的。」爲什麼呢？因爲你有一個身心的現象可以觀察，可以去認識它，你就有機會了解疼痛的本質，並引導至苦滅的境界，即涅槃。

### 自相與共相

此處需要解釋身心現象的自相與共相。每一個身心現象有它獨特的特色，這種特質與其他人的身心現象並不一樣。比如貪愛（包括貪婪、渴望、欲望和貪著執取），貪愛有其特相，這種特相與其他身心現象的性質不同。如果你對那部勞斯萊斯生起喜愛或渴望，你會感到驕傲，有很強的佔有欲或變得貪婪，你會執著這部車。因此，貪愛的特相是執著。而瞋恚則不同，它的特相是粗魯無禮。貪愛執取外物，而瞋恚是厭惡，反感。

### 六大元素

構成所謂的「人」的身心現象的六種元素 即地、水、火、風、空、識。地大的特相是堅硬和柔軟，這種特相只有地大有，其他元素沒有。水大的特相是流動和凝聚，火大的特相是冷和熱。

當禪修者獲得較深的定力時，他的心變得清淨。然後，他開始了知身心生滅現象的過程。當你觀察腹部上下，即身體的現象，當你的定力夠深時，你就能清楚的看到腹部膨脹



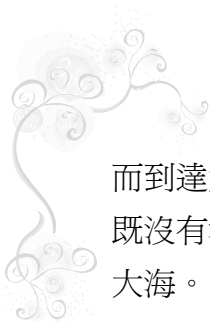
和收縮的本質。移動或振動是風大的特相。當你正確的、清楚的了知腹部上下移動的本質，你就不會覺知你的身體或腹部的形狀，那時你所觀察到的只有移動——向外和向內的移動。這樣，你就開始了解風大的特相。

身心現象的特質是無常、苦、無我。任何心理狀態、情感和身體過程都有這三種特質，它們被稱為共相，因為它們是心理狀態、情感和身體過程。之後你會經過第一、第二兩個觀智，即名色分別智和緣攝受智，你會了解這些身心現象的共相，這種觀智稱為思惟智，思惟智了知身心現象的共相。

當禪修者由於精進修行，整天保持持續穩定的正念，定力自然逐漸加深，而觀智變得更成熟時，他必定以他個人的經驗經歷所有階段的觀智。他的身心過程，即被觀察的身體現象和觀察身體現象的心將停止存在，於是他證入涅槃，即有為法（諸行）的止滅。

## 苦的止息

由於他已正確而徹底的了知苦諦，當他證入諸行的止息時，他已沒有任何貪愛——即苦的因，所以他已完全了解苦諦，在那一剎那他根除了苦因，他在修習道諦（八正道），他已經到達諸行寂滅的境界。此處，藉著了知四聖諦，他到達正見的第三層次，即覺悟。然後他順著中流——八正道，



而到達大海。他既沒有在此岸擱淺，也沒有在對岸擱淺，他既沒有沉入水中，也沒有在河中的沙洲擱淺，所以他到達了大海。

佛陀坐在恒河邊的樹下講完這部經時，有一位牧童叫作難陀，他聽了這部經的開示受到很大的激勵，也想隨著中流直到大海，於是他走向佛陀，請求出家成為比丘，他說：「世尊，我擔心在此岸或對岸擱淺，或沉入水中，我想順著中流到達大海，請讓我出家，讓我成為比丘，這樣我就能夠修行八正道。」

佛陀說：「孩子，你是牧童，首先你必須將牛群趕回家，把牛群交給主人，只有這樣，我才能讓你出家。」

於是牧童照著佛陀的話做了，回來後，他出家成為比丘。比丘難陀進入森林，找到一個偏僻的地方，修行八正道，他以正念觀察每一瞬間生起的每個身心現象。他希望隨中流直到大海，所以他勇猛精進的修行，在很短的時間內，他就順著中流（八正道）到達了涅槃大海。他能到達涅槃大海，是因為他沒有這八種障礙，他被流向大海的八正道這個中流帶到了大海。

佛陀一再的說：「如實觀察當下發生的每個現象，或如實覺知你身心中生起的任何現象。那麼你們都能順著中流，到達涅槃大海。」



◎附錄

大木塊經<sup>3</sup>

如是我聞：一時，佛住阿毘闍恆水邊。時有比丘，來詣佛所，稽首佛足，退住一面，白佛言：「善哉！世尊！爲我說法，我聞法已，獨一靜處，專精思惟，不放逸住，所以族姓子剃除鬚髮，正信，非家，出家學道，於上增修梵行，見法，自知作證：我生已盡，梵行已立，所作已作，自知不受後有。」

爾時，世尊觀察恆水，見恆水中有一大樹，隨流而下，語彼比丘：「汝見此恒水中大樹流不？」

答言：「已見，世尊！」

佛告比丘：「此大樹不著此岸，不著彼岸，不沈水底，不闍洲渚<sup>4</sup>，不入洄洑，人亦不取，非人不取，又不腐敗<sup>5</sup>，當隨水流順趣，流注，浚輸大海不？」

比丘白佛：「如是，世尊！」

<sup>3</sup> 摘自《雜阿含》1174 經(大正藏第 2 冊，314 頁，下欄)。請參閱明法比丘注的《雜阿含經》(上)234 頁，以及《增壹阿含 43.3 經》。

<sup>4</sup> 不闍洲渚：不被河流中的洲島所障礙。闍，障礙。

<sup>5</sup> S.35.200.作：「不著此岸，不著彼岸，不沈於河中，不被拋在陸地，不爲人取，不被非人取，不被漩渦所取，內部不腐敗。」；cf.《增壹阿含 43.3 經》(T2.759.1)。



佛言：「比丘亦復如是，亦不著此岸，不著彼岸，不沈水底，不闍洲渚，不入洄洑，人亦不取，非人不取，又不腐敗，當隨水流，臨趣流注，浚輸涅槃。」

比丘白佛：「云何此岸？云何彼岸？云何沈沒？云何洲渚？云何洄洑？云何人取？云何非人取？云何腐敗？善哉！世尊！爲我廣說。我聞法已，當獨一靜處，專精思惟，不放逸住，乃至自知不受後有。」

佛告比丘：「此岸者，謂六入處。彼岸者，謂六外入處。人取者，猶如有一習近俗人及出家者，若喜若憂，若苦若樂，彼彼所作，悉與共同，始終相隨，是名人取。非人取者，猶如有人，願修梵行，我今持戒苦行，修諸梵行，當生在天上<sup>6</sup>，是非人取。洄洑者<sup>7</sup>，猶如有一還戒退轉。腐敗者，犯戒，行惡不善法，腐敗寡聞，猶莠稗、吹貝之聲。非沙門爲沙門像，非梵行爲梵行像。<sup>8</sup>如是比丘！是名不著此岸彼岸，乃至浚輸涅槃。」

時，彼比丘聞佛所說，歡喜隨喜，作禮而去。時，彼比丘獨一靜處，思惟佛所說水流大樹經教，乃至自知不受後有，得阿羅漢。

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<sup>6</sup> 修諸梵行，當生在天上：我依此戒，或依禁戒，或依熱心，或依梵行，願成爲天人或天眾之一。

<sup>7</sup> 洄洑者：S.35.200.：比丘！這是五欲的同義語。

<sup>8</sup> 本經省略兩句釋義，依 S.35.200.補釋。不沈水底，比丘！這是喜染的同義語。不闍洲渚，比丘！這是我慢的同義語。





時，有牧牛人名難屠，去佛不遠，執杖牧牛，比丘去已，詣世尊所，稽首禮足，於一面住，白佛言：「世尊！我今堪能不著此岸，不著彼岸，不沈沒，不閼洲渚，非人所取，不非人取，不入洄洑，亦不腐敗，我得於世尊正法律中，出家修梵行不？」

佛告牧牛者：「汝送牛還主不？」

牧牛者言：「諸牛中悉有犢牛，自能還歸，不須送也，但當聽我出家學道。」

佛告牧牛者：「牛雖能還家，汝今已受人衣食，要當還報家主。」時牧牛者聞佛教已，歡喜隨喜，作禮而去。

時，尊者舍利弗在此會中，牧牛者去不久，白佛言：「世尊！難屠牧牛者求欲出家，世尊何故遣還歸家？」

佛告舍利弗：「難屠牧牛者若還住家受五欲者，無有是處，牛付主人已，輒自當還，於此法律出家學道，淨修梵行，乃至自知不受後有，得阿羅漢。」

時難屠牧牛者，以牛付主人已，還至佛所，稽首禮足，退住一面，白佛言：「世尊！牛已付主，聽我於正法律出家學道！」

佛告難屠牧牛者：「汝得於此法律出家，受具足，得比丘分。」出家已，思惟，所以族姓子剃除鬚髮，著袈裟衣，正信，非家，出家學道，增修梵行，乃至自知不受後有，成阿羅漢。



## The Parable of the Log

Once the Omniscient Buddha was sitting under a tree on the bank of the river Ganga near the city of Kosanbi. Five hundred bhikkhus accompanied him. The lord Buddha saw a very big log being carried down the river by the current.

He pointed to the log and said, “Oh Bhikkhus, do you see that big log which is being carried along by the current of the river? The Bhikkhus replied, “Yes Venerable sir, we see it”.

The lord Buddha continued,  
“If that log is not caught on the near bank, it will reach the ocean.

If it is not caught on the far bank, it will reach the ocean.

If it is not submerged under water, it will reach the ocean.

If it does not land on a small island in the middle of the river, it will reach the ocean.

If it is not taken away by a human being, it will reach the ocean.

If it is not taken away by a deity, it will reach the ocean.

If it does not sink into a whirlpool, it will reach the ocean.

If it does not become rotten, it will reach the ocean.”

Here, the Omniscient Buddha points out that if there is not



any of these eight faults, the log will reach the ocean. Then, the Buddha said, “Why will this log reach the ocean? It’s because the current of the river inclines towards the ocean. It will therefore, reach the ocean if it has none of these eight faults.”

“In the same way, Bhikkhus, you will reach Nibanna if you have none of these eight faults. Why? Because *Sammaditthi* (Right Understanding) inclines towards Nibbana, the cessation of dukkha. However, Bhikkhus, this is just a simile.”

Then, one of the monks requested the Lord Buddha to explain the simile, which the Buddha did it in this way.

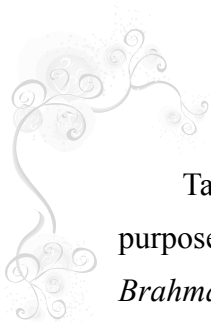
The words near bank refer to the six sense doors – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

The words far bank refer to the six sense objects – visible object, sound or voice, smell or scents, taste, tangible things, and mind objects.

Submerged under the water means being attached to any sentient being or inanimate thing.

Landing on a small island in the middle of the river means conceit, pride or haughtiness.

Taken away by a human being means that a Bhikkhu lives, mingling improperly with laity.



Taken away by a deity means doing good deeds for the purpose of being reborn in heaven – the realm of *Devas* or *Brahmas*.

Sinking into a whirlpool means indulgence in five kinds of sensual pleasures.

Becoming rotten means pretending to be virtuous when one is not actually virtuous.

## The Exposition

Although the Omniscient Buddha addressed this discourse to Bhikkhus, it is for all irrespective of race and religion.

Anyone who has none of the eight faults can reach the ocean.

When he has reached the ocean he has got free from the round of existence and got rid of suffering (*Dukkha*).

In some discourse of the Omniscient Buddha the ocean refers to the cycle of rebirths (*Samsara*) and in the others to *Nibbana*, the cessation of suffering. In this discourse what the Buddha refers to with the word “ocean” is *Nibbana*.

## Sense-doors and sense-objects

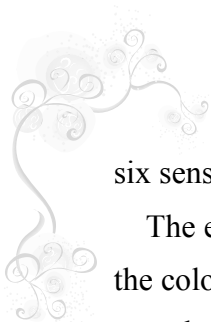
Then, what does the Buddha mean when he compares the near bank with six sense-doors and the far bank with six



sense-objects?

Here I would like to say a few words about the word “mind”. In the psychology of Buddhism, “*Citta*” which knows the object, does not last even for the blinking of an eye. Herein the word “mind” is used in the sense of *citta* which knows the object and very instantly passes away. Cognition of the object does not last for even one millionth of a second. Occasionally we use the word “consciousness” which may be better than the word “mind”.

Consciousness or mind knows the object, but the eye does not know it. With the help of the eye, one of the six sense-doors, consciousness sees the object. For example, you see a brand new Rolls Royce car. In this case there is a visible object and there is the eye that makes the mind or consciousness see the object. If you see that Rolls Royce, you may feel how good it would be to own one. If it is your own car it will give you much pleasure. You are attached to it because you see it and take it to be a very nice car of yours. You do not regard it as just a natural process of material phenomenon. Then, you are caught on the far bank, the car, and the near bank, the eye, because your attachment arises dependent on the car, the visible object and the eye, one of the



six sense-doors.

The eye is one of the six sense-doors. When the eye contacts the color or the form of the car, there arises consciousness that sees the car, but consciousness of seeing does not stop there. It goes further. It thinks, “Yes, it is my car, a very good car, a new car, I bought it yesterday, it cost a lot of money.” In this way, you become attached to that Rolls Royce. That means that you are attached to a non-living thing because of its color and form – a visible object – and because of the eye. So you are attached to the car.

Supposes you park it on the side of the road and a person carelessly drives his car past yours and scratches the door of your car. Then you feel angry because it is your car that is scratched. It means that you have attachment, *Lobha* and anger, *Dosa*. Do *Lobha* and *Dosa* bring you happiness? No, they bring you unhappiness, *Dukkha*. And why do you have this *Dukkha*? Your suffering and unhappiness arise because you yourself are stuck on the near bank as well as on the far bank. That attachment arises dependent on the visible object, the car, with the help of the eye, so you have that suffering because the eye consciousness keeps you stranded on the near bank. If you are attached to the car with the help of your eyes, you will not

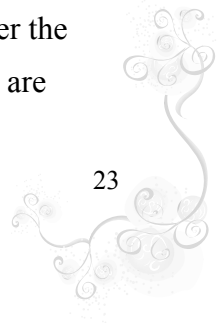


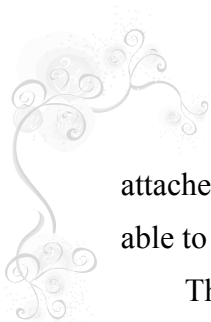
reach the ocean, *Nibbana*. You will be clinging to the far bank as well as the near bank; you won't reach the ocean.

The log is compared with *Khandhas* or human being. *Khandhas* mean the five aggregates of mental and physical phenomena. Because you do not see the five aggregates as five aggregates of mentality and physicality, you take them to be a person, a being, a self or a soul, and as a result you are attached to them; so you won't reach the ocean. If, however, you see the five aggregates as the five aggregates of mentality and physicality, you won't take them for a person etc. Then you will not be attached to them, and so you will reach the ocean. That Rolls Royce you bought yesterday, which was so expensive, if you see it as a Rolls Royce, then you are attached to it; but if you see it as a material process of *rupakkhandha* – aggregate of materiality, you won't be attached to it. Then you won't be unhappy when it is scratched because you don't take it as a valuable Rolls Royce of yours. You are caught on neither of the two banks.

## Attachment and Conceit

What the Lord Buddha means by submerged under the water is attachment – desire, craving, lust, love. If you are





attached to any living being or inanimate object, you won't be able to reach the ocean.

Then, Landing on a small island means conceit, pride or haughtiness. If you are proud of or conceited about your wealth, your rank or your success in your business, you are landing on a small island. That conceit delays you in your attainment of *Nibbana*. If you are conceited, you are unable to realize the mental and physical process in their true nature and your will take your bodily and mental process to be a person, a being, an *Atta* or a you. Then, there will arise many others defilement such as anger, lust, greed, hatred and so on. So, you, landing on a small island, won't be able to reach the ocean because you are not able to realize natural process as natural process, or five aggregates as just a natural process.

### Improper Association

If the log is taken away by a human being it won't reach the ocean. This refers to Bhikkus. Supposing a Bhikkhu does not do his work of learning scriptures, practicing meditation, delivering sermons, leading his disciples on the right path and encouraging them to meditate for their emancipation; instead, he mixes with the laity in an improper way. Such a Bhikkhu is



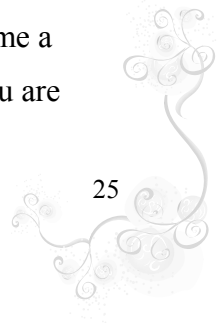


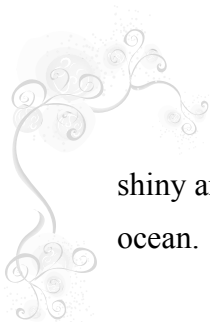
taken away by human beings. He will be unable to reach the ocean. He will be attached to these people whom he is improperly associating with. He will be so attached to worldly affairs that he won't be able to realize the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, that is *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta* – impermanence, suffering and no-soul, no-self or non-ego. If he is unable to realize these three basic facts of existence, he will be so strongly attached to worldly things that he won't want to reach the ocean.

### Desire for Better Existence

If the log is taken away by a *deva*, it won't reach the ocean. This means that if you perform any wholesome or meritorious deeds such as giving or charity (*dana*), observing moral precepts (*sila*) and meditation (*bhavana*) with a view to rebirth in the realm of *Devas* or *Brahmas*, then you will be taken away by them to their realm. If this happens you won't reach the ocean. You may achieve your aim of a better rebirth because of the good you have done. You will be reborn as shining one, *deva* but you won't be able to reach the ocean.

*Deva* means a deity, one who shines. If you become a *deva*, you will be very attached to yourself because you are





shiny and very beautiful. Then, you won't be able to reach the ocean.

## Sensual Pleasure

If the log sinks into a whirlpool, it won't reach the ocean. This means, if you are indulging in sensual pleasure, you won't reach the ocean. This is attachment. If you are attached to what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste, what you touch, and what you think about, then you become caught in a very big whirlpool. You won't be able to reach the ocean. Because the doctrine of the Buddha is so very rational, logical and natural, I am sure that you agree with him on this point.

The attachment to any sensual pleasure leads you to repeated rebirth in the cycle of existence; it does not lead you to *Nibbana*, the ocean.

## Dishonesty

Then the last one, becoming rotten. If the log becomes rotten, it won't reach the ocean. That means that if you pretend to be a very virtuous person when you are actually not, you become rotten and will not reach the ocean. You won't reach *Nibbana*.

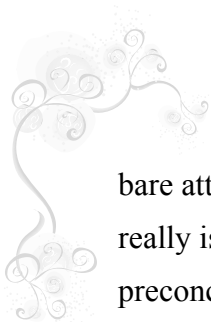


## The Way out of Suffering

The Omniscient Buddha said, “If you have none of these eight kinds of faults, you are certain to reach the ocean because you will be carried there by the Middle Current of the river.” The Middle Current is the Noble Eightfold Path. If you develop the Noble Eightfold Path, you are not kept on the near bank or the far bank, you are not submerged under the water, you won’t land on a small island, you won’t be taken away by humans or *devas*, you won’t be caught in a whirlpool, you won’t become rotten. Then you are certain to reach the ocean of *Nibbana*.

You must strive to develop the Noble Eightfold Path so that you do not have any of these eightfold faults. What you should do to develop this Noble Eightfold Path? *Sila* (morality) is the foundation, the basic requirement. *Samadhi* (concentration) is built on the foundation of *Sila*. *Pañña* (insight and enlightenment) comes with the proper application of concentration. It is very easy to develop this Noble Eightfold Path which consists of *Sila*, *Samadhi* and *Pañña*. Observe yourself or just observe your bodily and mental processes as they really are. That is all.

Watch any action or movement of your body and mind as it occurs without analyzing it, without thinking about it. Just pay



bare attention to what is happening to your body and mind as it really is. That is all. If you use any intellectual knowledge or preconceptions in this awareness of your bodily and mental processes, then you go astray and your mind is not well concentrated, you will not be able to realize bodily and mental phenomena as they really are.

## Purification of Mind

When you observe any activity of body and mind as it really occurs, then gradually your mind becomes concentrated on any process that is observed. Then the concentration becomes deeper and stronger. Your mind is purified from *Nivarana* (hindrances) such as *Kamacchanda*, *Vyapada*, *Thina-Middha*, *Uddhacca-Kukkucca* and *Vicikiccha*.

*Kamacchanda* means sensual desire. *Vyapada* means ill-will. *Thina-Middha* means sloth and torpor. *Uddhacca-Kukkucca* means restless and worry or remorse. *Vicikiccha* means skeptical doubt.

If you have one of these five hindrances in your mind, your mind is defiled. It is not pure. When your mind is not pure, your insight is not penetrating. Only when the mind is purified of these five hindrances, can your insight knowledge become



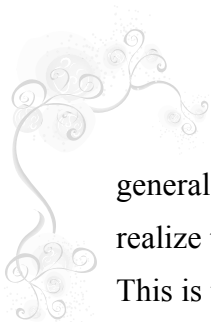
penetrating. When it is penetrating, you will be able to realize bodily and mental processes first in their specific characteristics and second in their general or common characteristics.

Realization at these two levels is called Right Understanding (*Sammaditthi*) in the course of Vipassana meditation. When it has reached its climax you attain to Nibbana, the cessation of suffering, through the first Enlightenment (*Sotapattinana*) which realizes the Four Noble Truths. You have reached the ocean. However, it is only through deep concentration, when you are mindful of bodily and mental phenomena, that you are able to realize them with the three levels of Right Understanding.

## Right Understanding

The first level of Right Understanding is realization of the specific characteristics of materiality and mentality. The second is realization of general or common characteristics of materiality and mentality. The third is realization of the four Noble Truths – *Dukkha*, the origin of *Dukkha*, the cessation of *Dukkha*, and the way leading to the cessation of *Dukkha*.

So, to purify the mind we need the Noble Eightfold Path. To realize mental and physical processes in their specific and



general characteristics, we need the Noble Eightfold Path. To realize the Four Noble Truth we need the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the middle current of the river.

## The Way to Freedom

On the night when the Omniscient Buddha was about to pass away, he was reclining on a bed prepared for him in *Kusinara* Park. In the first watch of the night *Subhadda*, a mendicant, came to him and said, “Venerable Gotama Buddha, I followed various doctrines taught to me by various teachers. They all say that they know all and that they are *Arahants*. Is what they say true?”

The Omniscient Buddha left the questions unanswered and admonished *Subhadda*; “*Subhadda*, whether they know all or not does not matter; it is not concerned with your deliverance; so I won’t answer this question. My time is approaching. I will teach you what is important for your emancipation. Listen to me attentively.”

## The Criterion

Then the Buddha said, “*Subhadda*, in any doctrine in which the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, there will not be



any *Samana*.” Here *Samana* means one who has calmed and destroyed all defilements. It means that if there is no Noble Eightfold Path in a doctrine, then there is no one who has destroyed all defilement by following it.

If there is Noble Eightfold Path in a doctrine, there will be someone who has destroyed the defilement by following it and got rid of suffering. So, if you follow any doctrine in which you do not have to develop the Noble Eightfold Path you are certain not to destroy defilement and get rid of suffering.

Here, the Omniscient Buddha points out the criterion of the true *Dhamma*.

The Lord Buddha said, “*Subhadda*, only in my doctrine or in my *sasana* is there the Noble Eightfold Path to develop. Therefore, there is *samana* only in my doctrine.” This Discourse expounded by the Omniscient Buddha to *Subhadda* fits in with “The Parable of the Log” because a person who does not develop the Noble Eightfold Path is sure not reach the ocean of *Nibbana*. If he develops the Noble Eightfold Path, he is certain to reach the ocean of *Nibbana* as he will not be kept on the far bank or the near bank etc. The Omniscient Buddha taught us the way to develop this Noble Eightfold Path. That is the technique of Mindfulness meditation.



## Mindfulness Meditation

The Omniscient Buddha taught us the way of mindfulness when he expounded the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Mahasatipatthana Sutta*). He teaches us to be mindful of bodily process, sensation, consciousness and mind-object as they really occur. So, the principle of mindfulness meditation is to observe, to be mindful, to be aware of whatever arises in our body and mind as it really occurs. Even unpleasant sensation of pain, aching, stiffening, itching and the like must be mindful of as they really are.

When you feel pain in your back or in your knee, you must observe it as it really is. You must not try to make it go away. You must not make it disappear because the pain will help you attain *Nibbana*. In other words, pain is the key to the door of *Nibbana*. So, if you feel a painful sensation you are very lucky. It will lead you to the cessation of suffering because it is one of the five aggregates to be thoroughly realized.

It is an aggregate of sensation, which is the truth of suffering and must be thoroughly understood. If we realize this painful sensation in its true nature – in its specific as well as in its general characteristics – we see it as just a natural process



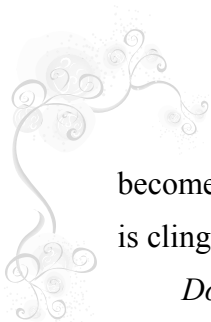


arising and passing away from moment to moment. It does not last for even a second. And through the realization of this pain or aggregate of sensation, you can attain to the Enlightenment by which you can destroy defilement and get rid of suffering. That is why I say that if you feel a painful sensation, then you are very lucky. Why? Because of you have a mental process together with the physical process to watch, to observe and to realize. That pain gives you a very good opportunity to realize its true nature and so lead you to the cessation of *Dukkha*, *Nibbana*.

### Specific and General Characteristics

It is here needed to explain the specific characteristics of mentality and physicality and their general or common characteristics.

Every mental or physical process has its own distinctive features which have nothing in common with any other mental or physical process. You know *lobha* (greed, craving, desire, lust and attachment are all encompassed). *Lobha* has its own characteristics which do not belong to any other mental or physical process. If you have love or desire for that Rolls Royce you will become proud, possessive or covetous. You



become attached to it. So the specific characteristics of *Lobha* is clinging.

*Dosa* (anger) is different. It has the characteristics of rudeness. Whereas *Lobha* draws things towards it, *Dosa* is aversion; it repels.

## The Six Elements

Physical and mental processes which constitute a so-called “person” are *pathavidhatu*, *apodhatu*, *tejodhatu*, *vayodhatu*, *akasadhatu*, and *vinnanadhatu*. These six elements are those of earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness.

*Pathavidhatu*, the element of earth, has hardness and softness as its characteristics. This characteristics belongs only to the earth element and to no other elements; it is, therefore, the specific characteristics of the earth element, while *apodhatu*, water element, has fluidity and cohesion as its specific characteristics, heat and cold are the specific characteristics of *tejodhatu*, fire element, or temperature.

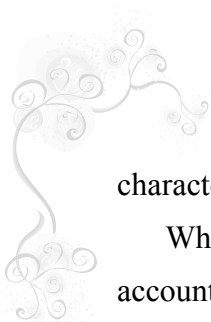
When a meditator has gained deep concentration of mind, his mind is purified. Then he begins to realize the specific characteristics of mental and physical processes. When you observe your abdomen rise and fall, a physical process, and



your concentration becomes deep enough, you begin to realize the rising and falling movements very clearly in their true nature. Movement or motion is the specific characteristics of the wind or air element. When you rightly understand the true nature of the rising or falling movement very clearly, you are not aware of the form of your body or abdomen. What you are realizing at that moment, is just the movement – outward movement and inward movement. Then you begin to realize the specific characteristics of the air element.

The general characteristics of material and mental phenomena are *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta* – impermanence, suffering and no-soul, no-self nature. Every mental state, emotional state and physical process has these three characteristics in common. They are called common characteristics because they belong to every mental and emotional state and physical process.

After you have passed two stages of insight knowledge – knowledge of differentiating between materiality and mentality and that knowledge of cause and effect – you come to realize these three general characteristics of psychophysical phenomena. This insight knowledge is known as knowledge of comprehension, which comprehends all these general



characteristics of material and mental phenomena.

When a meditator's insight knowledge becomes mature on account of diligent practice with continuous and constant mindfulness for the whole day and deeper concentration growing naturally, he is certain to pass through all the stages of insight within his personal experience of them. His bodily and mental processes – the bodily process which is noted and the mental process which notes it – cease to exist. Then, he attains to Nibbana, the cessation of compounded things (*Sankhara*).

## An End of Suffering

Therefore, at the moment he gets into the state of the cessation of all *Sankhara* (compounded things) he has abandoned attachment, the cause of suffering, because he has rightly and perfectly understood *Dukkha*. So, the Truth of Suffering has been perfectly understood. The cause of Suffering is abandoned at that moment. The Truth of the way leading to the cessation of Suffering (The Noble Eightfold Path) has been developed. You have reached the cessation of compounded things (*Sankhara*). Here he has attained the third level of right understanding, that is, the Enlightenment, by realizing the Four Noble Truths. Then he reaches the ocean

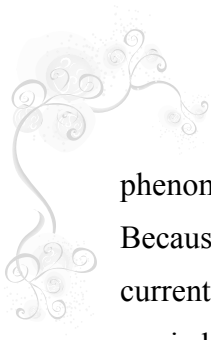


because he has been carried away by the middle current, the Noble Eightfold Path. He is not kept on the near bank or the far bank. He is not submerged under the water. He is not stranded on the island. So, he has reached the ocean.

The Lord Buddha, sitting under a tree on the bank of the river Ganga, delivered this discourse. A cowherd named Nanda, who listened to the discourse, was so much inspired by it that he wanted to be carried away by middle current. So he approached the Lord Buddha and requested ordination as a Bhikkhu. “Venerable sir, I am afraid of being caught on the near bank or the far bank or submerged into the river. I want to be carried away by the middle current and reach the ocean. Please ordain me a Bhikkhu so that I can develop the Noble Eightfold Path.”

The Omniscient Buddha said, “Boy, you are a cowherd. First you have a duty to drive your cows back home. You should entrust them to their owner. Unless you do that, I cannot ordain you.”

So the cowherd did as the Omniscient Buddha urged. Then he returned to be ordained a bhikkhu. Bhikkhu Nanda went into the forest to a secluded place and developed the Noble Eightfold Path by being aware of all mental and physical



phenomena that were arising from moment to moment. Because he was willing to be carried away by the middle current, he meditated diligently. In a very short time, he was carried away by the middle current and reached the ocean of *Nibbana* because he had none of those eightfold faults and was carried away by the middle current of the Noble Eightfold Path that runs towards the ocean.

The Lord Buddha repeatedly said: “Be mindful of what is happening at this moment as it really is, or be aware of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really is.” Then all of you will be carried away by the middle current and attain *Nibbana*, the ocean.



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