

Dhamma Talk
(Dēsanā) by

The Most Venerable
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7. The Five Spiritual Capabilities

(Panca Bala)

Namo tassa Bhagavato, Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.

Homage to that Blessed one, who is an Arahant and perfectly
Self-enlightened.

Saddhā-balan bhāveti.
Viriya-balan bhāveti.
Sati-balan bhāveti.
Samādhi-balan bhāveti.
Pannā-balan bhāveti.

He develops the spiritual capability of faith.
He develops the spiritual capability of energy.
He develops the spiritual capability of mindfulness.
He develops the spiritual capability of concentration.
He develops the spiritual capability of wisdom.

Faithful Devotees, the above quotation from the Sahassasutta,¹
Ekakanipāta, of the Anguttaranikāya (A.1:407-411), spoken by the
Buddha, the Blessed one, the perfected one and supremely enlightened

¹ This `sutta' is actually the whole of the `Book of the ones' (Ekakanipāta);
`sahassa' means thousand, but sometimes it is used with the meaning of
many, as here, because really there are only 611 brief discourses in that book.

one. The Buddha having developed the perfections over a period of four incalculable (*asankheyya*) and 100,000 aeons (*mahā-kappas*) ($4 \times 10^{140} + 1 \times 10^5$ aeons) realized the four paths & fruits and nibbāna and then taught 84,000 items of Dhamma so that others could realize what he had. Through hearing the Dhamma he imparted during the forty-five years after his enlightenment about twenty-four incalculable (*asankheyya*) numbers of beings² attained nibbāna. There are thirty-seven dhammas to be developed for the attainment of enlightenment (*bodhi*), i.e. realize the four paths & fruits and nibbāna, and so they are called the dhammas that lead to enlightenment.

Today we are going to talk about the five spiritual capabilities (*panca balāni*). There are altogether nine types of spiritual capabilities, however only five are included here. Spiritual capabilities belong to both the wholesome and unwholesome sides, seven with the wholesome side and two with the unwholesome side, they are:

- *Saddhā-bala* - spiritual capability of faith
- *Viriya-bala* - spiritual capability of energy
- *Sati-bala* - spiritual capability of mindfulness
- *Samādhi-bala*- spiritual capability of concentration
- *Pannā-bala* - spiritual capability of wisdom
- *Hiri-bala*- spiritual capability of moral shame
- *Ottappa-bala* - spiritual capability of fear of blame
- *Ahirika-bala* - spiritual capability³ of the lack of moral shame
- *Anottappa-bala* - spiritual capability of the lack of fear of blame

(AS.VII:19⁴)

² Altogether there were twenty-four incalculables and ninety-six million ($24 \times 10^{140} + 96 \times 10^6$) beings; this number is obtained by adding together the various instances mentioned in the Commentaries when there were people and/or deities who attained the paths & fruits, the most common being the path and fruit of *sotāpanna*.

³ In this and the next '*bala*', though appropriate to call them 'spiritual weaknesses', because they lead to one's moral decline, are *balas* in the sense of having the capability or power to influence one [in an unwholesome way].

Among these *ahirika* and *anotappa* belong to the unwholesome side while the other seven belong to the wholesome side. Only the spiritual capabilities on the wholesome side are included in the dhammas that lead to enlightenment, most important among them are faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

Faith refers to the [spiritual] dominion of faith (*saddhindriya*), which is a beautiful mental quality (*sobhana-cetasika*) and its function (*rasa*) is to clarify the mind. The characteristic (*lakkhana*) of faith is acceptance of the virtues of the triple-gem from the bottom of one's heart, faith manifests (*paccupatthāna*) as clarification [or inspiration] (*pasanna*) of the mind and the nearest cause (*padatthāna*) for the arising of *saddhā* is the virtues of the triple gem.⁵ We have briefly discussed the term faith (*saddhā*). It is subdivided into the dominion of faith and the spiritual capability of faith. We shall now discuss the

⁴ A.7:3Ý4 for the first seven; A.5:1Ý2 has a set of five called the *pañca sekha-balāni*: *saddhā*, *hiri*, *ottappa*, *virīya*, *paññā*.

At A.4:155 the following four powers are given: power of reflection (*paññāsaikhāna-bala* Ý i.e. considering the bad results that accrue in both this life and the hereafter to one who by body, speech and mind misconducts themselves, gives that up and develops good conduct (A.2:11Ý13)), power of [spiritual] development (*bhāvanā-bala* Ý by means of this greed, hatred & delusion are given up, nothing unwholesome is done and nothing evil is associated with (A.2:11); here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*)/investigation of dhammas (*dhamma-vicaya*-)/energy (*virīya*-)/ecstasy (*pāti*-)/tranquillity (*passaddhi*-)/ concentration (*samādhi*-)/equanimity enlightenment factor (*upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*)), which is inclined to detachment (*viveka-nissita*), inclined to dispassion (*virāga-nissita*), inclined to cessation (*nirodha-nissita*) and matures in relinquishment [of the defilements] (*vossagga-pariḍāmi*) (A.2:12); entering and abiding in the four jhānas (A.2:13)), power of blamelessness (*anavajja-bala* Ý being endowed with [having ⇨ ⇨ done] blameless actions by body, speech and mind (A.9:5)) and the power of considerably treating others (*saṅgaha-bala* Ý see p.23, f.n.11 (A.9:5)), Ps.2:9 gives a list of sixty-eight *balas* together with some explanation.

⁵ At AS.II:5 *lakkhaṇa* is putting trust in, *rasa* is to clarify, *paccupaññāna* is clarity & *padaññāna* is an object to have faith in or hearing the True-teaching.

spiritual capability of faith. How does the spiritual capability of faith develop in the mind? There are six stages of faith:

- *Saddahana-lakkhana-saddhā* - faith with the characteristic of putting trust in, i.e. accepting the virtues of the triple gem from the bottom of one's heart. We say things like: *Natthi mē saranan annan Buddhō mē saranan varan*. There is no other refuge for me, the Buddha is my best refuge. The only help one has in overcoming the suffering in *sansāra* and attaining *nibbāna* is from the Buddha. One should not believe in or pay respects to anything else. Reference here is to belief in the virtues of the triple-gem and not only their material veneration (c.f. *Vism.XIV,140*).
- *Sampasādana-lakkhana-saddhā* - faith that has the characteristic (*lakkhana*) of clarifying or calming the mind; faith's function (*rasa*) is to clarify the mind, it manifests (*paccupatthāna*) itself as pleasantness in the mind and its proximate cause (*padannhāna*) is the great qualities of the triple-gem, i.e. the Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha. When sorrow, difficulty, sadness, lust, ill will, delusion, impurity, fear or anxiety arises in the mind it becomes agitated, when such agitation occurs one should not seek for divine help, other saintly individuals or occult practices and waste time, but should contemplate the virtues of the triple-gem, virtues [accumulated in] the past lives of the Buddha, virtues of his Dhamma and disciples (*Sangha*). When one contemplates the virtues of the triple-gem the disturbance will subside and calmness will prevail, just like when a particular gem (*udaka-pasādika-mani*) is put into muddy water, the water becomes clear. Such is the relief given to a disturbed mind by the contemplation of the triple-gem (*Vism.XIV,140*; *Miln.2:10*).
- *Sampakkhandana-saddhā* - aspiring faith, this is more powerful. When one wants to perform meritorious deeds such as giving alms, observing precepts and meditating, various obstacles in the form of sickness, trouble from enemies and loss of wealth, etc. are encountered. The faith that prevents one from retreating and makes one go forward

to perform the wholesome acts is called *sampakkhandana-saddhā*. In Sri Lanka a group of thirty bhikkhus commenced the rainy season retreat period (*vassāna*) in a particular forest monastery. This monastery was associated with a hamlet consisting of thirty poor households. Each household prepared a small [meditation] hut (*kuti*) for each of the monks and undertook to take care of him during the rainy season. A forest fire burnt out all the houses in the village. Twenty-nine of the monks visited the hamlet to inquire about [the welfare of] their disaster befallen benefactors. One monk (*bhikkhu*), however, did not visit the laywoman (*upāosikā*) who was looking after him. The villagers who noticed this commented to her, The monk whom you look after did not even visit you, all the others came and inquired about our welfare. She replied, Children, the bhikkhu does not undertake the precepts or meditate to look after my welfare, but for himself to be released from the bonds of sansāra and attain nibbāna. I am only helping him to achieve that goal. He will visit at the right time. So saying she continued to prepare the food inside the burnt out house, using whatever was available. The monk arrived at the alms (*pindapāta*) receiving time and she offered him food without showing any signs of displeasure. Although the other monks had received the news of the fire, he had not heard about it. He realized that the houses were burnt out and the woman had prepared his meal within just the four walls of the burnt out house. This aroused [a sense] of urgency (*sanvega*) in him. He returned to his kuti and thought to himself that the alms food prepared and offered to him with such great faith should not be partaken of, if he is not an Arahant, then putting the bowl to one side he sat down to meditate with great determination. He had been meditating for a long period prior to this, but due to the strong [sense of] urgency his mind became quickly concentrated and thereafter the insight knowledges developed and before noon all the defilements (*kilesas*) were destroyed and he became an Arahant. There was very strong faith in the mind of the woman who told herself that the monk is striving to attain nibbāna and she is taking care of him so that he can liberate

himself from the suffering of *sansāra*.⁶ Such is *sampakkhandana-saddhā* (A. 7:67 Comm.; Miln.2:11).

- *Okappana-saddhā* - firm believing faith. If you plant a stick in a mound of [rice] husk it will immediately fall down, so would a stick planted in mud. However, if you dig a hole six feet deep and plant a strong post with only six feet above the ground, this is called an *inda-khīla*, the gatepost at the entrance of a village or city [in former times]. This post with six feet underground and six feet above ground cannot be shaken or uprooted even by an elephant. Deep-rooted faith in the triple-gem such as this is called *okappana-saddhā* (A.5:53 Comm.).
- *āgama-saddhā* - Unprompted faith that arises, in order to develop the perfections such as generosity (*dāna*), moral behaviour (*sīla*), renunciation (*nekkhamma*), etc. in the mind of a Bodhisatta who has received firm confirmation that he will attain full enlightenment is called *āgama-saddhā* (A.5:53 Comm.).
- *Adhigama-saddhā* - faith because of attainment. This is the faith that establishes in those who have attained the paths and fruits. If at least stream-entry has been attained even *Māra*,⁷ the tempter, cannot shake their faith. Take the case of the young man Sārambattha⁸ who became a stream-enterer while listening to a Dhamma discourse given by the Buddha. Shortly after returning home the 'Buddha' appeared at his house and told him that the discourse he had just heard regarding the impermanence, suffering and non-self of all conditioned things was wrong, there are some conditioned things which are permanent, pleasing and belonging to one's self. Sārambattha thought to himself that Buddhas never make mistakes, they do not speak without full awareness and are never confused, so this cannot be the Buddha, but must

⁶ C.f. D.22 Comm. (concerning *virīya-sambojjhaṅga*)

⁷ Māra belongs to the Paranimmitavasavattā celestial realm, which is the highest realm in the sensual sphere.

⁸ A.1:255 Ý the one foremost amongst the Buddha's disciples with unshakable trust (*aveccappasanna*) P the Comm. to this gives the following story as the lead up to the Buddha's declaration concerning Sārambattha.

be some non-human being and so he asked him who he was. The impostor then admitted that he was Vasavatti deity.⁹ Sārambattha then told him that not one, even a hundred or a thousand like him could change his understanding. Māra then disappeared, even he could not shake Sārambattha's *saddhā*; such faith or confidence is called *adhigama-saddhā*.
(A.5:53 Comm.)

This powerful faith is called the spiritual capability of faith. There are three ways to develop it:

- *Assaddhā-puggala-parivajjanatā* - Avoiding people who are without faith. What is referred to here as people with no faith are those who have no concern for the triple gem, never pay respects or offer flowers to the Buddha, are not virtuous, do not meditate, do not listen to or discuss dhamma, and do not act or think according to the dhamma. There is no faith in such a person's mind; it is not soft but harsh like the dust on the back of a donkey (*gadrabha*).¹⁰ When one considers with wise attention that the association with such people will not be beneficial and avoids them faith becomes stronger.
- *Saddhā-puggala-sevanatā* - associating with people who have faith. There are noble people (*kalyāna-mitta*) with unshakeable faith in the triple gem and often engage in religious activities. The association and discussion with, seeking advice from and following such noble friends the faith in one's mind will become very powerful.

⁹ I.e. Māra, see Avidārenidānakathā (J. Comm.) and J.40 Comm. where this name is used. Usually, however, this name refers to the king of the Paranimitavasavattā deities, the deities who 'wield power over others creations,' the highest realm in the sensual sphere (*kāmāvacara*) and he is said to surpass all the other deities there in divine life-span, beauty, pleasure, fame, royal power and [experience of] sights/sounds/smells/tastes/physical contacts through having been very generous and well behaved morally (A.8:36). At M.1 Comm. Māra is said to rule over his assembly like an unruly prince in one part at the frontier of King Vasavattā's kingdom.

¹⁰ This simile is given at D.22 Comm.

- *Pasādanīya-suttanta-paccavekkhanatā* - wisely reflecting on Dhamma discourses that establish gladness in the mind. There are discourses by the Buddha that gladden the mind. There are many Jātaka ([previous] birth) stories of the Bodhisatta that are pleasant to listen to, e.g. Mahā-ummagga Jātaka (J.546) and Vessantara Jātaka (J.547) are two of them. Likewise, there are discourses (*suttas*) that highlight the virtues of the Buddha. Frequent reading, discussion and contemplation of these makes faith powerful. The powerful gladness/inspiration (*pasāda*) here that cannot be suppressed by the lack of faith is the spiritual capability of faith. When this spiritual capability of faith develops as a *bodhi-pākkhiya dhamma* in one's mind, one day it will become powerful enough to help realize the four paths & fruits and nibbāna.

Viriya Bala-Spiritual capability of energy. Energy is the state of making effort (*ussāha*).

- *Vārassa bhāvo viriya-* - the nature of a heroic person is [to have] energy.
- *Ussāha-lakkhano viriya-* - energy has the characteristic of making effort.

(Bv.6:6)

Its function is to initiate and support the performing of wholesome actions. Likewise it manifests as non-discouragement. There are eight bases for arousing energy. With the contemplation of these factors energy arises. Strengthening of this energy is called the spiritual capability of energy. That is one would never be overcome by laziness, never say: it is too cold, too hot, too early, too late, I am hungry, I have just eaten, I am tired after a journey or I have to embark on a journey. Without concern for any of the above obstacles, when an opportunity arises to perform a generous, virtuous or meritorious act or meditate one would without any delay, with great willingness, enthusiasm and perseverance engage in such an activity. Such enthusiastic energy becomes the spiritual capability of energy. There are three factors required to develop this:

- *Kusīta-puggala-parivajjanatā* - avoiding lazy people. Those who always postpone and neglect the performance of meritorious deeds citing excuses such as it is too cold, too hot, too early, too late, I am hungry, I have just eaten, I am tired after a journey or I have to embark on a journey are identified here as lazy. They even neglect their normal day-to-day activities. If one associates with lazy people even one's own energy will weaken. Avoiding such lazy people with wise attention, energy will become powerful.
- *āraddha-viriya-puggala-sevanatā* - associating with people who arouse energy, i.e. always like a king of lions (c.f. Th.83). A lion is energetic in all four postures. Similarly, wise people will always arouse energy to perform meritorious & virtuous actions and meditate, they are never lazy, no matter however much they are hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, far, late, or early they will engage themselves in wholesome acts. People like this are called noble friends (*kalyāna-mittas*), and associating with such noble friends, one's energy becomes powerful.
- *Viriya-ārambha-vatthu-paccavekkanatā* ¹¹ [listening to and] contemplating the [eight] bases for arousing energy, for example, when returning from a journey one would not neglect to perform wholesome actions. Likewise, before embarking on a journey he would consider the difficulties he may encounter, in activities like meditation and other duties, during the journey and will put forth extra energy to do these before the journey. Applying one's wise attention one would, without allowing any deficiencies to arise, make every energy to engage in observation of precepts, listening to dhamma and engage in meditation, even at times when one is hungry, eaten a full stomach, was sick or may be falling ill. These are the objects that arouse energy. There are the eight bases for [arousing a sense of] urgency (*attha sanvēgavattāni*¹¹), which are as follows: the suffering of birth, ageing, sickness, death, birth in hell, the suffering experienced in past lives, to be experienced in future lives

¹¹ Vism.IV,63.

and that experienced now in this life. When one considers these with wise attention powerful energy arises. When one considers the suffering associated with repeated births in *sansāra* one would persevere with energy to perform wholesome actions. We repeatedly age, fall ill, die and are born in woeful states. We have undergone limitless suffering. We will have to undergo similar suffering in the future. We undergo much suffering just to make a living and get by in this world. One should consider all these with wise attention and encourage the mind to do wholesome deeds. Consideration of the objects that arouse energy and also the bases [for arousing a sense] of urgency in this manner makes energy become powerful. Energy that cannot be suppressed by laziness is the spiritual capability of energy. The development of this spiritual capability of energy in one's mind will help one right up to the realization of the four paths & fruits and *nibbāna*.

Next is the spiritual capability of mindfulness(*Sati Bala*). In an earlier talk we discussed the dominion of mindfulness. Taking leadership in directing the mind towards wholesome acts is the [spiritual] dominion of mindfulness. When this becomes so strong that it is not suppressed by forgetfulness it becomes the spiritual capability of mindfulness. The development of this is also helped by three factors:

- *Mutthassati-puggala-parivajjanatā* - There are people who always neglect to perform meritorious deeds. Forgetting them they live heedlessly. One should avoid their association. Consider with wise attention the deterioration that would ensue by the association with lazy, forgetful and heedless individuals and avoid them.
- *Upatthitassati-puggala-sevanatā* - There are people who always intend to do and engage in wholesome activities, i.e. give alms, observe precepts, listen to Dhamma discourses, discuss Dhamma, attempt to improve their Dhamma knowledge and live according to the Dhamma. With wise attention the moment we see them we must acknowledge

their virtues by uttering: *sādhu!* (good!) *sādhu!* and realize that we, too, have that potential and associate with such noble friends. This will develop the spiritual capability of mindfulness.

- *Satipatthāna-paccavekkhanatā* - wise reflection on [the methods of] *Satipatthāna* meditation. Frequent listening to, discussing and practicing the four presences of mindfulness will develop the dominion of mindfulness and the spiritual capability of mindfulness.

The development of mindfulness by means of these three factors to a level that it cannot be suppressed by forgetfulness is the power of mindfulness. As it assists us up to the attainment of the *jhānas* and the four paths & fruits, it is called a *bodhi-pākkhiya dhamma*.

The spiritual capability of concentration (*Samādhi Bala*): concentration (*samādhi*) is the one-pointedness and calmness of the mind. There is no concentration in a mind that is subject to the hindrances. The one-pointedness achieved by overcoming the hindrances is referred to as concentration. It is also called right concentration. There are five hindrances (*panca nīvaranāni*) that cover and darken the mind, they are: desire for sense pleasures (*kāmacchanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth & torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness & worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*). The powerful one-pointedness that cannot be suppressed by the above hindrances is called the spiritual capability of concentration. There are three factors required for the development of this power of concentration:

- *Asamāhita-puggala-parivajjanatā* - Avoiding the association with individuals who never think of or have no knowledge of meditation.
- *Samāhita-puggala-sevanatā* - Associating with noble friends who are developing or have developed concentration in meditation.

- *Jhāna-vimokkha-paccavekkhanatā* - reflecting on the jhānas and deliverances.¹² This is learning the forty techniques of tranquillity meditation, acquiring knowledge regarding the counterpart sign (*patibhāga-nimitta*), attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*) and how to develop the four jhānas these can be learnt by reading books on Dhamma, listening to Dhamma discourses and by discussing Dhamma (*dhamma-sākacchā*). Due to this learning a concentration that so far has not yet arisen in one's mind will arise.

In line with these three factors, when the concentration develops to a level where it cannot be overcome by restlessness [or any of the other hindrances] it becomes the spiritual capability of concentration. As this spiritual capability of concentration helps us to attain the jhānas and the four paths & fruits it becomes a *bodhi-pākkhiya dhamma*.

Next comes the spiritual capability of wisdom. Wisdom referred to here is the [spiritual] dominion of wisdom (*paññindriya*¹³) and the absence of delusion (*amoha*). This wisdom possesses the nature of being able to see deeply, penetratingly. The spiritual capability of wisdom is the powerful wisdom that is not overpowered by ignorance (*avijjā*) or delusion (*moha*). Three factors help in the development of the spiritual capability of wisdom:

- *Duppanna-puggala-parivajjanatā* - It is necessary to not associate with individuals who have no understanding about this world & other worlds, kamma & kamma result, wholesome & unwholesome, cause & effect, mentality &

¹² At D.15Y16, 33 & A.8:66 the eight deliverances (*añña vimokkhā*) are given, these are: possessing form sees form, not perceiving form internally sees forms externally, intent only on the 'beautiful' [aspect], base of infinite space, base of infinite consciousness, base of nothingness, base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and the cessation of perception & feeling. See also Ps.1:5 (*Vimokkhakathā*) for more details; altogether there are sixty-eight deliverances given, first in brief and then explained.

¹³ See the Introduction (p.XX) concerning this point.

corporeality, five aggregates, twelve bases, eighteen elements, four noble truths and dependent origination.

- *Pannavanta-puggala-sevanatā* - Similarly, searching for and associating with wise noble friends.¹⁴ There are noble people who are knowledgeable in, have comprehended and often discuss about this world & other worlds, kamma & result, cause & effect, wholesome & unwholesome, the five aggregates, bases, elements and four noble truths associating with such people, the wisdom will become powerful.
- *Gambhīra-nāna-cariya-paccavekkhanatā*- The last factor is the contemplation of the conduct of the Buddha-to-be in his past lives, such as ādāsamukha-pandita Jātaka (J.257), Senakapandita Jātaka (J.402), Vidhura-pandita Jātaka and (J.545) Mahosadha-pandita Jātaka (J.546), when the perfection of wisdom was developed. Similarly, frequent reading, discussion and contemplation of the deep dhammas which the Buddha taught after his enlightenment, such as the aggregates, mentality & corporeality, bases, elements, dominions, truths, dependent origination, four ultimate realities¹⁵ consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasikas*), materiality (*rūpa*) and nibbāna. Contemplation of such deep dhammas causes the unarisen wisdom arise and the wisdom that has already arisen develops further.

On the basis of these three factors it becomes a powerful wisdom that can never be overpowered by delusion and ignorance and will

¹⁴ M. 135 Ÿ approaching ascetics (*samaḍas*) and priests (*brāhmaḍas*) asking: ßWhat, Venerable Sir, is wholesome (*kusala*)? What is unwholesome (*akusala*)? What is blameworthy (*sāvajja*)? What is blameless (*anavajja*)? What is to be pursued? What is not to be pursued? What, being done by me, would be for [my] long-lasting detriment and suffering? What, being done by me, would be for [my] long-lasting benefit and happiness?û By that (action) thus accomplished, thus undertaken he appears in a good destination after death, in a celestial world, but if he comes back [here] as a human being then wherever he is reborn he has great wisdom (*mahā-paḍā*) Þ this practice leads to great wisdom.

¹⁵ This is the way of categorization that is used in the Abhidhamma.

help in the realization of the four paths & fruits and nibbāna, and hence becomes a *bodhi-pākkhiya dhamma*.

We need now consider how these five arise in our minds when we perform acts of generosity, live morally and practise meditation. We have now performed a great meritorious act. During this action all five spiritual capabilities developed in our minds. How did this happen? When we consider with faith that we should perform this wholesome act, the non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion wholesome roots establish in our minds. There was a strong trust and acceptance of it, so it becomes a powerful faith. The effort made in this connection is the spiritual capability of energy. The focussed attention towards this is the spiritual capability of mindfulness. The collectedness of mind regarding the same is the spiritual capability of concentration. The understanding involved therein is the spiritual capability of wisdom. Therefore, what we have done here is not for birth in the divine realms, birth in the brahma realms or wealth, they are inevitable silent results the important result is establishment and strength-ening of the spiritual capabilities of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom in our minds. Consequently we will have the good fortune of possessing extraordinary (*adhika*) faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom in this life and lives hereafter. Life after life we shall be endowed with unshakeable faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, so then, where do we go after leaving these worlds? Nowhere else but the unconditioned state of nibbāna. We should be glad that today we have developed [to some degree] those five spiritual capabilities that will help us realize nibbāna. We should reflect on the fact that the thirty-seven *bodhi-pākkhiya dhammas* develop due to that wholesome activity.

The Buddha during his period of developing the perfections, while aspiring Buddhahood in his mind, verbally expressing the aspiration for Buddhahood and after receiving firm confirmation completely developed the dhammas that lead to enlightenment, and ultimately this noble person was able to conquer the evil one, Māra, and reach the omniscient state of Sammāsambuddhahood. This achievement, due to the fact that these *bodhi-pākkhiya dhammas* were developed to the highest possible level, was made without the advice of anyone. Having completely developed the dhammas that lead to enlightenment and

gaining enlightenment, the Buddha caused Dhamma to rain (*dhamma-vassa*) for a period of forty-five years. Twenty-four asankheyya and ninety-six million ($24 \times 10^{140} + 96 \times 10^6$) beings, who had developed the dhammas that lead to enlightenment, on understanding the Dhamma attained nibbāna. At the end of this period (forty-five years) after teaching 84,000 items of Dhamma, at the end of his lifespan, the Buddha¹⁶ reached nibbāna without any substratum of existence (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*¹⁷), the Arahants have attained parinibbāna, the other noble (*ariya*) disciples have gone to higher planes of existence and all the other people passed away and were reborn according to their actions (*kamma*). The temples that existed then, the republics, kingdoms, parks, ponds and palaces went to ruin. Similarly, all conditioned things, such as: sun, moon, stars, rocks, houses, land, vehicles, garments, jewellery, money, food, drink, medicines, all other items of use, etc., i.e. everything whether animate or inanimate is impermanent (*anicca*). Because of constantly being oppressed by coming into being and then disappearing it is unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and as they cannot be maintained according to our wishes they are not-self (*anattā*).

All conditioned things are subject to the three characteristics [of existence] (*ti-lakkhana*), this is the truth of dukkha. The craving that causes dukkha is the truth of the cause of dukkha. Nibbāna, which is peaceful, without dukkha and the cause of dukkha, is the truth of the cessation of dukkha. The noble eight-fold path, which leads to nibbāna, is the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of dukkha.

Let us pay our respects to the innumerable number of Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas and Arahants, who by the power of having developed the perfections (*pāramīs*), after long periods of time, extinguished the fires of the defilements, crossed the [ocean of] sansāra, realised the four noble truths and attained Nibbāna, which is [truly] peaceful and comforting. May all our wholesome actions that we perform become perfections and enable us to, without difficulty, realise the four noble truths.

¹⁶ See D.16, where He had relinquished the life-force (*āyu-saikhāra*) three months beforehand.

¹⁷ I.e. the five aggregates cease without remainder and no new birth is taken up.

