

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, the Author of this Sutta, since his arrival at the Sāsana Yeikthā Meditation Centre from his native place Seikkhun, Shwebo District, in November 1949, has been inducting numerous batches of *yogis* into the practice of *vipassanā* meditation. He has also trained members of the Saṃgha as meditation teachers up till now. While performing this noble work as a true disciple of the Buddha, the Sayadaw has given discourses on a regular basis. Never does he fail to rely authoritatively on the relevant teachings of the Buddha in all his discourses. Every Sutta so imparted is unique in itself and typically in tune with the present times.

The present Discourse bearing the name of 'Bhāra' resembles a graceful flower in an ornamental string of dhammas. The usage and choice of words and the pattern of composition is classically modern. The literary style of Mahāsi will, it is hoped, continue to remain distinctive for years to come.

This Sutta, originally written in Burmese, is translated into English language by U Htin Fatt (Pen-name : Maung Htin), who is one of the prominent writers among the galaxy of journalists in Burma.

ABOUT THE BOOK

It is therein stated that on one occasion to a question of what attributes of qualities a monk should fully possess to be really deserving of being regarded as a Dhammakahtika, Buddha's answer was that a monk deserves to be called a Dhammakahtika if he could well convince others, nay, his audience, to become morally repugnant to his own 'self'-the physical body, and give guidance to them to be able to get rid of the sensuous feelings, *taṇhā* or cravings. According to Buddha, a worldly person who assiduously practises so as to be able to free himself from sensuous cravings may be termed as *Rahan* (an ordained monk).

The Bhāra Sutta like other suttas has its own objective lesson. The Buddha opened the subject of his discourse to an assembly of monks and laymen while residing at Jetavana Monastery in Sāvatti City, mentioning the Five Aggregates of grasping or attachment as a heavy "Burden". He then reiterated the components of 'khandhā' which means a group or an aggregate. Buddha has called the man as the sum-total of five khandhās. In the course of his Discourse, the Buddha elaborates on the dhamma as briefly explained below.

That all men all animals are composed of interrelated mind and matter (*Nāma and Rūpa*). *Nāma* and *Rūpa* is

constantly changing with whirling motion not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. *Rūpa* by itself is devoid of any sensation or feeling. *Nāma* is so called because of its tendency to incline towards an object of sense. *Rūpa*, the physical body is subject to perpetual change and is characteristic of impermanence. The term 'Nāma' comprises consciousness (*viññāṇa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and Volitional tendencies or activities (*saṅkhāra*).

Of the Five Aggregates, the first is *Rūpa*, form, shape or matter-the physical body including the organs of sense. The second is *Vedanā* which includes the feelings or sensations, pleasant or unpleasant or neutral. The third is *Saññā* which comprises all perception or recognition, whether sensuous or mental. It is reaction to sense stimuli which may be described as "awareness with recognition". The fourth bundle, the *Saṅkhāras* signifies and includes all tendencies, mental and physical-the elements or factors in consciousness, all moral and immoral volitional activities or characteristics that have been put in motion by past *kamma*. None of them is Self. They are incessantly changing-coming into being followed by dissolution. Thus all component things are impermanent. The fifth of the khandhās, *Viññāṇa* is as perishable and fleeting as others. This is best explained as Consciousness. It is also in a state of flux,

(D) According to Buddha, *viññāṇakkhandā*, the aggregate of consciousness is without Self or Substantiality. This *Viññāṇa* is consisted of the six groups, namely, sight or sense of seeing, sense of hearing, sense of smell, sense of taste, sense of touch and mental (mind consciousness).

All five aggregates are *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (non-self) within the law of cause and effect. There is nothing such as Ego. When such consciousness becomes full and perfect, the one who achieves moves from mundane to super-mundane state.

In the second part of this Bhāra Sutta, it has been elucidated in what manner the Burden of Aggregates is accepted and as to how this Burden should be thrown down or entirely discarded.

The intangible force of *kamma* generated in the past, works through the processes of the physical universe to produce living beings. Birth is preceded by death and death, on the other hand, is preceded by birth. This succession of birth and death in connection with one individual life-flux constitutes what is known in Buddhism as *saṃsāra*: rounds of rebirth and existences. In all this incessant rounds of birth and existences, formation of Five Aggregates invariably takes place. The *Upādānakkhandhā* naturally brings forth passions of greed, anger and delusion. To

(E) root out those passions and to eliminate the feeling of *taṇhā* and cravings, there is a way out. In other words, to get rid of the Burden which causes all kinds of suffering, Buddha has taught the Four Noble Truths and revealed to us the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to an end of sufferings.

In essence, the six senses are the inevitable consequences of mind and body. The life existence brings all sorts of trouble, misery and sufferings. The Burden is heavy indeed from the time of birth till death. In order, therefore, to remove and be relieved of the Burden thereby bringing about the cessation of the entire aggregate of sufferings, it is most gratifying that the dhamma has shown us the way to take up the practice of insight meditation and in the least achieve the status of *Sotāpanna* which would eventually lead to the highest stage of final liberation from *saṃsāra*.

May all beings be happy.

MIN SWE
SECRETARY

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization

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