

A Study of Suffering (*Dukkha*) from *Vipassanā* Perspective*

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Abstract

This thesis presents a comprehensive study of the concept of *Dukkha* (suffering) from the *Vipassanā* perspective within *Theravāda* Buddhism. It systematically investigates the existential and phenomenological nature of *Dukkha*, moving beyond its conventional understanding as mere pain to its existential characteristic as the intrinsic unsatisfactoriness of all conditioned existence. The study elucidates the classical threefold classification such as *dukkha-dukkha* (ordinary suffering), *vipariṇāma-dukkha* (suffering due to change), and *saṅkhārā-dukkha* (suffering inherent in conditioned phenomena) demonstrating how most beings only recognize the first type. Central to the analysis is the doctrinal exposition of the Second Noble Truth, identifying *taṇhā* (craving), specifically in the form of *nandī* (delightful clinging), as the root cause (*mūla*) of all suffering, encapsulated in the pivotal *Pali* phrase “*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*.” Furthermore, the thesis explicates how the *vipassanā* method, through the sustained practice of mindfulness (*sati*) and penetrative insight (*paññā*) into the impermanent, non-self-nature of the five aggregates (*khandhas*), serves as the deliverance-related path for eradicating craving and realizing the cessation of *dukkha*. This work synthesizes scriptural exegesis with the practical framework of insight meditation to argue that *dukkha* is not merely a philosophical tenet but a reality to be comprehended and transcended through direct experiential insight.

Keywords: Suffering (*Dukkha*), *Vipassanā*

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Introduction

The First Noble Truth of *Dukkha* (suffering, unsatisfactoriness) constitutes the foundational diagnosis of the human condition in the Buddha's teaching. However, a full apprehension of *Dukkha* transcends intellectual assent and requires direct, experiential understanding such as a process for which *vipassanā* meditation is prescribed as the primary means. This thesis, "A Study of Suffering (*Dukkha*) from a *Vipassanā* Perspective," aims to provide a rigorous scholarly and practical exploration of this core doctrine. It posits that the *vipassanā* lens offers the most direct method for deconstructing the phenomenon of suffering, from its manifestation in daily experience to its ultimate resolution.

The study is structured to first unravel the semantic and profound existential meaning of *dukkha*, drawing on exegetical texts like the *Visuddhimagga* to interpret it as that which is fundamentally disagreeable (*du*) and empty of substance (*kha*). It will then delineate the three levels at which suffering operates, arguing that the common human understanding is critically limited to gross physical and mental pain (*dukkha-dukkha*), while missing the suffering implicit in change (*vipariṇāma-dukkha*) and in all conditioned states (*saṅkhārā-dukkha*). The core of the inquiry focuses on the etiology of suffering, conducting a detailed analysis of the Second Noble Truth. It examines key Pali terminologies such as *taṇhā*, *nandī*, *chanda* to establish that craving, manifesting as delight and attachment, is the universal root cause. This is illustrated through doctrinal analysis of *suttas* such as the *Bhadraka Sutta*, which pragmatically demonstrates how attachment (*upādāna*) directly leads to distress.

Finally, the thesis outlines the path to cessation from the *vipassanā* viewpoint, positioning the cultivation of mindfulness, the definition of suffering, the cause of experiencing suffering, the suffering beings understand, the Buddha's clear teaching on suffering, twelve types of suffering, the attachment that causes the first Experiencing suffering, and the cause for the cessation of suffering. By integrating scriptural authority with the meditative path, this study contends that the *vipassanā* perspective is indispensable for moving from a theoretical knowledge of *dukkha* to its liberating realization.

The Definition of Suffering (*Dukkha*)

With regard to this topic, if there mentions other viewpoint, there may be controversy because there are diverse interpretations individually. Here, the definition of suffering that comes from the relevant *Pāṭi* canon will be explained by means of *vipassanā* perspective.

What is *dukkha* (suffering)? In the *Pāṭi*, suffering is called '*Dukkha*'. It should look at the meaning of *dukkha* and the formation of the word, and then visualize the meaning of each word using a method of mental representation. The *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification) gives one interpretation. It says the word *dukkha* is formed by combining the two syllables "*du*" and "*kha*." "*Du*" means disagreeable, detestable, and repulsive. For example, a wicked son is called "*duputta*," using the syllable "*du*". So, "*du*" conveys the meaning of being repulsive and hateful. "*Kha*" means empty, having nothing. "*Kha*" means space. If you reach out and touch the space, what do you feel? Someone feels nothing; there is nothing there. When these two syllables are combined, it means "something that is repulsive and hateful, yet in reality, as one imagines it to be, there is nothing there."

People mistake these aggregates (*khandhas*) as "I" or as "him/her." But in truth, do they exist as such? They do not. All things perceived as "mine" or "his/hers"; none of them truly exist as they are imagined to be. For persons holding wrong views (*micchādiṭṭhi*), all things that the mind perceives as solid and real are, in fact, merely thoughts and perceptions. Nothing exists in that solid, independent way. Due to its own causes, a thing merely arises by itself, and by itself, it merely ceases.

Everything ultimately just perishes, vanishes beyond recovery. Therefore, "*du*" means it is repulsive and disagreeable. "*Kha*" means nothing is as it seems; it is called Emptiness. It conveys a meaning similar to voidness (*suññatā*). It is also said to be vain or empty (*tucchā*). There is nothing substantial; the things one perceives are none of them real. Looking with this meaning, within conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhārā dhamma*), there is nothing that exists as "I" or "self." Although people talk about "*dukkha dukkha*," the suffering known to all is only bodily suffering (*kāyika dukkha*) and mental suffering (*cetasika dukkha*). This is all that people consider to be suffering. The rest, they mistake for happiness (*sukha*), desire it, delight in it, and cherish it. That very desire and

delight is precisely "*nandī dukkhassa mūlan*"; "delight is the root of suffering." The Buddha taught that this is the cause of experiencing suffering.

The Cause of Experiencing Suffering

According to Buddhist perspective, there becomes everything in the world due to some causes. Without any condition, there can arise nothing. In regard to this case "in the *Punnovāda Sutta*, it finds the *Pali* phrase '*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*'. It is also found in the *Mūla Pariyāya Sutta*. '*Nandī*' is one name for craving (*taṇhā*). The craving for the five sense objects and pleasurable sensations, the act of delighting in and clinging to them is called '*Nandī*'. The Buddha taught, 'This craving called '*Nandī, dukkhassa mūlaṃ*' is the root cause of suffering." Here may be confuse because there are many *pāli* form '*tanhā*' that refers to craving. The Buddha sometimes explained the nature of craving by varying its name, calling it '*Nandī*' at times, '*Taṇhā*' at other times, and '*Rāga*' at yet other times. In some *suttas*, the Buddha taught, '*Chando mūlaṃ dukkhassa*, desire (*chanda*), this craving, is the root of suffering.' In these *suttas*, although the names used for craving are changed, the essence of the teaching is the same: it is all about craving. Whether it is explained as '*Chanda*' or as '*Nandī*', it is one and the same."

However, the meaning of the word "*chanda*" (desire) is broad. There exists a *chanda* that is not *Taṇhā* (craving). This *chanda*, which is different from craving, is sometimes referred to simply as *chanda*. For example, in phrases like "*Chandādhīpati*" (one whose master is wholesome desire), it does not refer to *Taṇhā*. But in the *sutta* that states "*Chando mūlaṃ dukkhassa*" (desire is the root of suffering), the word *Chanda* refers to *Taṇhā*. It is clear that whether the term used is "*Nandī*" or "*Chanda*", the essential teaching is about *taṇhā* (craving). In the *Gāmaṇi Samyutta sutta*, the Buddha taught: "*Chando dukkhassa mūlaṃ*", the mental factor of desire (*Chanda*) that involves clinging is the root of suffering. In the *Punnovāda Sutta* and the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, it is stated: "*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*", "*Nandīsamudayā dukkhasamudayo*" – the arising of this craving called *Nandī* is the very cause for the arising of suffering. Therefore, the phrase "*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*" is a definitive, absolutely certain statement that

delighting in and clinging to the objects of the five senses, the craving and lust (*Taṇhā*, *Rāga*), is the root cause of suffering.

This refers to the Second Noble Truth or the Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*dukkhasamudayasaccā*) among the four Noble Truths, the sublime, precise, and true realities proclaimed by the Buddha. The Buddha's core teaching in the discourse on the Four Noble Truths is: "Suffering (*dukkha*) must be understood; its origin must be abandoned; its cessation must be realized; and the path leading to its cessation must be developed." The subject for today's teaching is this Second Noble Truth. By naming the teaching "*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*", it is also concise in *Pali*. If just one brief discourse taught by the Buddha reaches people's lips, it can be beneficial not only in this life but also in future lives. Just as with the couple *Punnaka* and *Janaka*, who, upon hearing the term "*nāmarūpa*" (mind and matter) and recognizing it as a term they had heard before, gained penetrating insight and became Non-returners (*Anāgāmi*) by the end of that discourse. So, let us remember the Buddha's words precisely: "*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*" – *Nandī*, the craving of delight and lust, is the *mūlaṃ*, the root cause, of *dukkhassa*, suffering. "Remember the phrase '*Nandī dukkhassa mūlan*.' It is not an overly difficult Pali phrase. '*Nandī*' means delight, attachment, craving; '*dukkhassa*' means of suffering; '*mūlan*' means the root. Thus: 'Delight (craving) is the root of suffering.'"

The Suffering Beings Understand

Generally, sufferings can be divided into three stages such as *dukkha dukkha* (superficial suffering), *vipariṇāmadukkhā* (suffering due to change) and *saṅkhāradukkhā* (conditioned suffering). Among them, former two are the family for majority. People talk about suffering all the time. But if the Buddha were to explain these sufferings one by one, they would be endless. They are the sufferings that never end. What most people know as suffering is only one type among various kinds of suffering. The suffering that people commonly understand as "suffering" is what is termed "*dukkha dukkha*" (superficial suffering). Because the word '*dukkha*' is repeated, it refers to suffering that is plainly and truly painful, as understood by everyone. In *Pali*, when a word is repeated, it intensifies the meaning. In "*dukkha dukkha*," it refers to the suffering that is genuinely painful, known to all namely, "physical suffering and mental suffering."

Everyone knows physical suffering: feeling unwell, discomfort, headache, backache, earache, stomach ache, etc. illnesses that afflict the body or pains that arise from physical injury. Everyone knows these. They groan, saying, "*dukkha, dukkha*." The other type recognized as suffering is mental suffering. It often arises due to physical suffering. Or conversely, it can become the cause for physical suffering. Physical suffering and mental suffering are interconnected. When does this connection cease? Only when one becomes an *arahat*, free from defilements, this connection will cease. For *arahats*, physical suffering may still exist, but mental suffering never arises again. One side is relieved. Suffering is alleviated. For ordinary beings (*puthujjana*), when physical suffering arises, mental suffering follows in connection. And mental suffering can also become the cause for physical suffering. The term "*dukkha dukkha*", here, refers, according to *Abhidhamma*, to the feeling (*vedanā*) present in body-consciousness (*kāyaviññāṇa citta*) associated with suffering. It is the actual physical pain, ache, or hurt that arises in the body. This felt sensation is bodily suffering (*kāyika dukkha*). That is genuine suffering. Another type is mental suffering (*cetasika dukkha*), which arises in two types of consciousness rooted in aversion (*dosamūla*), characterized by feelings of sorrow, grief, or displeasure: this is *domanassa vedanā* (unpleasant mental feeling). These two are called "*dukkha dukkha*." Everyone knows this "*dukkha dukkha*."

The next one is *vipariṇāma dukkha* (suffering due to change). The suffering that not everyone recognizes is called *vipariṇāma dukkha*. *Vipariṇāma dukkha* is suffering that manifests when pleasant states change. People generally consider this to be happiness. Feeling glad, joyful, mentally happy, physically comfortable or bodily pleasure (*kāyika sukha*) and mental pleasure (*cetasika sukha*), these are not permanent or stable things. Before long, physical comfort can be lost. Mental happiness can also be lost. The moment happiness and pleasure change, they turn into a state of suffering. Therefore, the Buddha named this "*vipariṇāma dukkha*" (suffering due to change). While it exists, it is happiness. It is called *vipariṇāma dukkha* because it becomes suffering upon change. In textual terms, this refers to pleasant mental feeling (*somanassa vedanā*) and pleasant bodily feeling (*sukha vedanā*). The Buddha included these two types of feeling such as bodily pleasure, mental pleasure, joy, and delight, which people cherish, within the category of suffering and taught them as "*vipariṇāma dukkha*."

The last underlying experience is equanimity (*upekkhā*) or "neither painful nor pleasant" (*adukkhamasukha*). It is a neutral feeling, neither suffering nor happiness. A subtle type of feeling. Although this feeling arises dependent on causes and conditions, because it is something conditioned or formed, it is called "*saṅkhāra dukkha*" (the suffering inherent in all conditioned phenomena). If there look from the perspective of feeling (*vedanā*), all five types of feeling are nothing but suffering. Bodily suffering (*kāyika dukkha*) and mental suffering (*cetasika dukkha*), or the painful feeling (*dukkha vedanā*) and the unpleasant mental feeling (*domanassa vedanā*), are the types of *vipariṇāma dukkha* (suffering due to change). The feeling of equanimity (*upekkhā vedanā*) is *saṅkhāra dukkha* (conditioned suffering). All other remaining natural phenomena also entirely fall under *saṅkhāra dukkha*. Therefore, the Buddha sometimes taught that "all are suffering." Within the Four Noble Truths, apart from the first noble truth of suffering (*dukkhasaccā*), there is nothing else, so He declared it all as "suffering." Within these things called suffering, pleasures are also included. If there looks from the perspective of conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhāra*), because nothing is permanent, it is all suffering. Among these sufferings, the last one is the most experience and all beings live with this equanimity. However, majority unrecognize that they are living in their daily life with it. There, therefore, will be presented suffering so that it understands more and more.

The Buddha's Clear Teaching on Suffering

Perspective that concerns with suffering (*dukkha*) is disparity individually. Nevertheless, their viewpoint is controversy, the lack of perfect. It, here, is about to present the concept of suffering of the Buddha. Regarding what suffering is, the Buddha explained it very clearly in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (connected discourses) thus "Yo, bhikkhave, rūpassa uppādo, dukkhasseso uppādo." "The arising of material form in one's own continuum, monks, is the arising of suffering." Is it just the arising of suffering? No, it is not the arising of suffering. "It is the arising of diseases, the arising of aging, the manifestation of death." "Disease" also refers to this. The Buddha said that the five aggregates (*khandhas*); material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, that arise in one's own continuum are the arising of suffering. It means the arising of things that are disagreeable and ultimately nothing substantial.

The meditator goes out searching for external causes. He talks about external factors, about things happening due to viruses, or about why something occurs. But in truth, this very body of ours is a great disease. "Disease" does not refer to something else; this great natural phenomenon itself called material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness is the great disease. A disease is that which causes pain, that which decays. The disease afflicts; it torments; this is what happens within this body. As long as this body exists, these things will inevitably come. It is a condition that cannot be avoided in any way. Therefore, the Buddha, encompassing everything, declared the five aggregates themselves as suffering. It's a situation, a state. Therefore, the Buddha, encompassing everything, declared that the five aggregates are suffering.

He taught that. However, to make it understandable for the majority, in the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, the Buddha taught about the twelve types of suffering. In some texts, there is one more type, making thirteen types, but according to what is in the *Visuddhimagga*, in this *Sutta*, as is commonly known, the Buddha stated the twelve types of suffering. The phenomenon of birth is suffering. Why is birth said to be suffering? Because all problems arise dependent on this event called birth, coming into existence. Because we have obtained this form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, all problems and issues arise; therefore, birth is suffering. The *Visuddhimagga* explains. Why is birth said to be suffering? It is because it is the basis, the foundation, the cause for suffering. As soon as birth is obtained, suffering is obtained. However, ordinary people cannot see it as the obtaining of suffering. Because they cannot see it in this way, *nandī* (delight, affection) arises towards it. Because this arises, one will continue to repeatedly experience this suffering. In the *Visuddhimagga*, there is a description depicting how much suffering there is when a being is conceived in the mother's womb. It is not written with that level of detail just to make a point. Birth is the foundation for all suffering. Birth is truly suffering.

There is a Burmese saying: "It's like how all the leaking fish feces collect on the head of the shrimp." Just like that, all sufferings are heaped upon birth. In the world, because people are born, they get sick, they age, they experience pain, they die. These sufferings occur because they were born. If there is no birth, there is no suffering. A person possessing this body, no matter how healthy people think they are, can never

truly be called healthy. They only say they are healthy during the brief time when the four elements are in balance, allowing them to act, to hold things, to go, and to come. Therefore, in the *Nakulapitu Sutta*, the Buddha taught: "Yo imaṃ kāyaṃ pariharanto muhuttampi ārogyaṃ paṭijāneyya, kimañña trayālo." This was taught to the lay follower *Nakulapita*. "If someone, while maintaining this body full of such sufferings, were to claim even for a moment that they are healthy, they would be speaking foolishly, speaking out of ignorance." In truth, this physical body is something we must constantly maintain and look after; there is no state of 'being healthy' in an absolute sense. People only decide they are 'unhealthy' when they can no longer move, stir, eat, or drink. During the brief times they can go and come, they make changes and conceal the truth.

Twelve Types of Suffering

In the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, among the twelve types of suffering, it is stated: aging is suffering. Young people often don't fully grasp this. When they look at elderly people, they see them living quietly and peacefully. They think the elderly don't have to do anything, and they even envy the elderly grandparents. However, when one's own age advances, it's not that sitting is pleasant and that's why they sit; it's because they have to. When it comes to lying down, they realize even more that it's not comfortable, right? It's not like when they were young. They don't lie down because it feels good; it's because none of the four bodily postures are truly comfortable. The suffering of aging – aging individuals know it better.

Those who are not yet old are filled with the pride and conceit of youth, called "*yobbanamada*," so they think they are not aging. When old age arrives, all the beauty of youth collapses. Day by day, it takes away all the youthfulness of the body. The passing of each day doesn't mean time simply leaves on its own; it takes away the youthfulness within one's own continuum. Today's youthfulness is taken away so it won't be there tomorrow. It's gone. Tomorrow, one won't be as youthful as today. The day after tomorrow's youthfulness will be taken away the following day. Hour after hour, youthfulness is taken away. In this way, it is taken and taken away, until in the end, only wrinkled skin and broken teeth remain.

"The passing of time is not time merely being wasted idly. '*kālo ghāṣati bhūtāni, sabbāneva sahattanā*.' Time devours all beings. Everything one has is taken away. Time itself also consumes itself, so time passes away." Therefore, day after day, time destroys all youthfulness and leads one towards old age. Thus, aging is indeed a suffering phenomenon. If he says that he has become a victim of old age, he says, "Even his feet and hands do not listen to him." That's right, in the past, his own he can use his hands as he pleases. He thinks his feet are his own. Even if he steps this way, he will always sway to that side. He can only lift his hands. So, it is very clear that he does not own his hands and feet. Someone thinks his or her own legs belong to him or her. He intends to step this way, but they may lean or sway the other way, he sees. He only gets to move them if they allow it. Therefore, He does not truly own his own hands and feet; hands and feet are not under one's full control. It's also very obvious that the arms won't lift if they lack strength. The hands...

Furthermore, is that all in the phenomenon of aging? There is more. As that great lay devotee said, "when one's strength has faded away, how can a person whose strength is gone practice the *Dhamma*?" A person whose strength has been taken away by aging, so that none remains, cannot do so. Even if a strong person says, "Let's lift him up," and people gather to lift him, it's extremely difficult. Therefore, the Buddha said aging is like this: it destroys all youthfulness and also exhausts all strength. That is why aging is called suffering, you see. The suffering of the death phenomenon is obvious. Every single person must face death. The suffering involved is extremely great.

There is another suffering called "*soka*" (sorrow, grief). In the interval before death, people are anxious every single day. They say, "A person has ten million anxieties." It might even be more than that, you know. Sometimes they worry even when there's no reason, searching for things to fret about. They worry about things that haven't happened yet. They also worry about things that have already happened. *Soka* means anxiety whether something is about to be lost or harmed, or anxiety after it has happened. It causes all kinds of distress. This too is suffering. When the anxiety becomes unbearable and one verbalizes it, leading to lamentation and crying, it is called "*parideva*" (lamentation). This too is suffering. Next, the physical suffering in the body, as mentioned before, "*dukkha*" (pain), is suffering. Mental unhappiness, "*domanassa*,"

dissatisfaction in the mind, grief, these are also suffering. "*Upāyāsa*" refers to when one suffers so much from these sufferings that the mind becomes agitated, irritable; it speaks of anger. "When the mind is intensely afflicted, the person experiencing this suffering feeling becomes angry". Sometimes, when anger arises, people hit themselves, or unable to bear the suffering, they harm themselves or attempt suicide. These are the intense angers called "*upāyāsa*." These are also sufferings and are included among the twelve types of suffering.

Another point is thus "People do not always meet or encounter only what they like or are fond of. Even if they do not wish to see something with their own eyes, they still see it. Even if they do not want to hear something, they still hear it. They will see things they dislike, and hear things they dislike. They may also meet people they hate, even if they do not want to. This is called "*Appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*." "*Appiya*" refers to things one dislikes in one's mind; it can be a person, or it can be objects or material things. Because it is unavoidable, people often encounter and have to associate with things they do not approve of in life. And that suffering is not a small suffering. Also, even with things one likes, approves of, and cherishes, one has to part from them unwillingly. "*Piyehi vippayogo dukkho*" means that this too is a clearly evident suffering.

Another one is "*Yam pi iccham na labhati tam pi dukkham*". If one desires something that is impossible, that which is impossible will never come to be. According to the scriptures, what will never come to be means, for example, some people want to ride in a car but cannot; want to build a house but cannot; that is not what is meant here. Those things are still possible. One cannot say they are impossible. They are just not yet attained. That is why some people say, isn't it, in the world, "Nothing is impossible, only some things are not yet achieved." This is not referring to that kind of situation. After being born, can one wish not to grow old? Or wish not to fall ill? Or wish not to die? No, it is not possible. It is referring to that kind of thing. "*Yam piccham na labhati tampi dukkham*" means things that one desires very much but can absolutely never obtain, things that are impossible. This too is a suffering.

If one goes on enumerating the aspects of suffering, it will never end, and so the Buddha finally concluded by saying "*Samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*" in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering. When summarized, suffering

becomes of 12 kinds. Here, however, are eleven types of suffering because first one is mentioned in the above. The Buddha expounded on the twelve kinds of suffering in the Noble Truth of Suffering. Now there knows about suffering, but why does this suffering arise? As the teaching's name indicates, it is that the source of all that suffering comes from craving (*taṇhā*). As long as one delights in and clings to the five sense objects and sensual pleasures, this suffering will continue to arise.

The Attachment that Causes the First Experiencing Suffering

In regard to the origin of suffering, there wants to present the discourse as the example. During the time of the Buddha, in the *Mallā* country, there was a large village named *Uruvelakappa*. Near that village, while the Buddha was residing, the headman of *Uruvelakappa* village, the village elder or leader was a man named *Bhadraka*. One day, this village headman *Bhadraka* came to the Buddha and asked: "Venerable Sir, I understand suffering to a reasonable extent. But what are the causes of suffering? and what are the ways to cease suffering? Why do beings like us experience suffering? And how can this suffering be ended?" The Buddha replied, "If I were to tell you about past sufferings why they arose and how they ceased, you might have doubts. The past is already gone. If I were to tell you about future sufferings how they will arise and how they will cease, you might also have doubts. Therefore, right here as you are seated, I will show you practically." Then, to illustrate suffering directly, the Buddha asked him four questions. "Now, in this large village of *Uruvelakappa* with its many inhabitants, are there people whom you would grieve for if some misfortune befell them? And are there also people of the kind who, even if misfortune befell them, you could remain undisturbed?"

The Buddha asked, "Well then, regarding some people in *Uruvelakappa*, you feel distressed, and regarding other people, you do not feel distressed, is that not so?" "Think for yourself. Why is it that you feel distressed concerning some people, and why do you not feel distressed concerning other people?" He replied, "Venerable Sir, concerning some people, there is no affection or familiarity with them, so there is no reason for distress. If a person whom I do not know and with whom I have no connection meets with any amount of misfortune, distress does not arise in me. As for why I feel distressed concerning other people, Venerable Sir, it is because those people are individuals dear

to me. They are people with whom I have a bond of affection. If something happens to them, I am afflicted with sorrow." Based on his answer, the Buddha said, "Well then, is it not evident that affection brings suffering, and where there is no affection, there is no suffering?" The Buddha was thus expounding the practical cause of suffering. The Buddha, then, said: "All suffering that arises, all suffering that occurs, has its root in desire, in craving (*taṇhā*), in affection, and attachment. It is based on craving and attachment. If there is craving and attachment, suffering will arise. Where there is attachment, suffering comes." That is why we monks often say: "Where there is attachment, there is worry." Worry comes where there is attachment. It does not come where there is no attachment. If it concerns an object connected to oneself, one worries it might be destroyed. If it is destroyed, one grieves. However, no one grieves over an object unrelated to oneself, no matter how valuable it is—simply because there is no attachment. The Buddha taught that suffering arises for no other reason than because of this attachment. The cause of suffering is attachment. If one wishes suffering to cease, one must remove this attachment. The moment attachment is removed, suffering ceases.

Then the lay devotee *Bhadraka* understood. "Venerable Sir, what you have taught is so true. I have a young son named '*Ciravāsī*'. He lives in a farmhouse outside the village. At the break of dawn every day, I have to send someone from the house to ask, 'Is the child well?'" Even among this audience, there may be such persons, those who constantly have to ask if their child is well. If the child is unwell, he becomes anxious and worried about his little son. At the break of dawn, he would have someone go to the farmhouse to check and ask if he is well. Why? Because he dearly loves his son named '*Ciravāsī*'. "Venerable Sir, Venerable Sir, your teaching is absolutely correct. That affection and attachment are the root cause of suffering is so true." The Buddha asked, "Well, if something undesirable were to happen to your son named '*Ciravāsī*,' how would you be?" He replied, "Alas, Venerable Sir, I think I would die." You had come to understand the cause of suffering, you see. The Buddha explained, "I have not spoken to you in scholarly terms, but in a timeless manner, in a single sitting without delay, you have immediately understood the cause of present suffering. Just as you have understood this present suffering, past sufferings were exactly the same. "Whether the

suffering was from the time of any Buddha or from any past life, it is always "Delight/attachment is the root of suffering". All sufferings that will arise in future worlds are also rooted in "*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*." He advised to deduce and conclude based on this principle.

As long as the attachment of craving, this clinging through affection and delight, remains, suffering will inevitably arise in any era, in any time; this is unchanging. Why is it unchanging? Because it is the Law of Nature. The Law of Nature cannot be altered. The Buddha continued, "You are attached to the mother of the child *Ciravāsī*, aren't you? If something were to happen to the mother of your son *Ciravāsī*, how would you be?" "Alas, Venerable Sir, I would be stricken with sorrow and heartache," he replied. Just observe this. All sorrows and sufferings come from attachment, as the Buddha taught in the *Bhadraka Sutta*.

The Cause for the Cessation of Suffering

In this *sutta* that mentioned above topic, devotee's question included two parts: the cause of suffering and the cause for the cessation of suffering. However, in this *sutta*, the Buddha only explained the cause of suffering in detail and did not explain the cause for its cessation. Someone wonders if this part was left out in the texts or remains unexplained.

It is alright then, if the researcher are to elaborate on the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and explain it by citing another *sutta*, it would be: "The abandoning of craving or attachment called '*chandarāga*'; if the delighting craving (*nandī*) is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, then the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is precisely the removal of that attachment, that entanglement, that craving called '*nandī*' or '*chandarāga*'." The removal of craving is indeed one cause for the cessation of suffering. And how is it removed? Only by the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. What is the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path? They are:

- 1.Right understanding - *sammādiṭṭhi*,
- 2.Right thought - *sammāsankappa*,
- 3.Right speech – *sammāvācā*,
- 4.Right action – *sammākammanta*,
- 5.Right livelihood – *sammāājīva*,

- 6. Right effort – *sammā^āvāyāma*,
- 7. Right mindfulness – *sammā^āsati*, and
- 8. Right concentration – *sammā^ā-samā^ādhi*.

These factors can also be divided into three trainings such as morality training (*sīla-sikkhā*), concentration training (*samā^ādhi-sikkhā*), and wisdom training (*paññā-sikkhā*). Morality training includes right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Concentration training encompasses right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Wisdom training involves right understanding and right thought. Among these three groups, wisdom and concentration group work together during insight meditation. That is why, they are active factors and the rest group is called unactive factors. Strive for and cultivate *Sammā^ādiṭṭhi* (Right View). Because the meditator still lacks Right View, he cannot yet see suffering as suffering; because he cannot yet see the danger in suffering, attachment arises. As long as attachment persists, that attachment will continue to produce suffering.

In other words, to develop wisdom, the meditator should cultivate mindfulness until the power of mindfulness is at peak of other factors. After that, the rest factors should be commenced. The Buddha also encourages to develop mindfulness through seven ways in their daily life. Those seven areas are:

- 1/ When going forward or stepping backward, be mindful. Do not go forward or backward absentmindedly, without attention or awareness.
- 2. When looking ahead or glancing sideways, be mindful.
- 3. When bending or stretching your limbs, be mindful.
- 4. When wearing and using their clothing, be mindful.
- 5. When eating, drinking, sitting, or lying down, be mindful.
- 6. When using the restroom and cleansing the body, be mindful.
- 7. When walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, lying down awake, waking up, be mindful.

By practicing steadfast mindfulness in these seven areas, the powers of mindfulness will increase in the practitioner. Where mindfulness arises, wisdom will also arise. Therefore, to develop wisdom, one must cultivate and strengthen the power of mindfulness. Based on this mindfulness, the wisdom being able to remove suffering

gradually arises in the meditator. And then, he can remove attachment that produces suffering one by one through three stages. (1) remove the craving toward possessions his own; (2) remove the attachment toward dear persons close to him. Finally, what must be removed is the attachment toward oneself. In the end, the knowledge being able to eradicate attachment totally appears in him. Such knowledge is known ‘the path knowledge’. There follow the fruition knowledges and all these attachments will wither away. Once the attachments wither away, the sufferings he does not desire will gradually fall away, and in the end, the meditator will be completely liberated from all suffering. Once one can successfully remove them through those three stages, one no longer clings even to oneself. When all attachments are completely severed, that is the end of suffering.

However, if attachments still remain, suffering cannot yet come to an end. Therefore, to all noble devotees who love the *dhamma*: this great truth of suffering, which he receives as the five aggregates (*khandhas*), exists because of the craving of attachment. As the discourse states, “The delight, satisfaction, affection, and clinging called ‘*nandī*’ (craving) is the cause of suffering. Therefore, the meditator must strive to gradually remove, one by one, all attachments he has to the five aggregates. To remove them, he must see the faults of these five aggregates and perceive their true, natural characteristics. Only through observing and contemplating can attachment be uprooted. Thus, by diligently practicing and striving to develop the insight wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) that allows him to observe and contemplate the true nature of phenomena, may each of us shed all attachments and directly realize *Nibbāna*, the true cessation of all suffering.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has undertaken a systematic examination of *dukkha* through the framework of *vipassanā*, establishing it as a profound and multi-layered reality central to the Buddhist path. The analysis confirmed that suffering is not monolithic but operates on three ascending levels of subtlety, with only the most obvious form being readily recognized by ordinary beings. The investigation into its origin unequivocally identified *taṇhā* and particularly in its aspect of *nandī* or delight as the

generative root of all suffering, a truth encapsulated in the definitive teaching “*Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*.” The practical demonstration in the *Bhadraka Sutta* reinforced that attachment, born of this craving, is the immediate and experiential cause of distress.

More critically, this study has elucidated that the theoretical understanding of these truths is insufficient for liberation. The *vipassanā* method is presented as the essential, practical counterpart to the Fourth Noble Truth such as the path to cessation. By methodically cultivating mindfulness and practicing insight meditation, a practitioner develops the wisdom (*paññā*) to see the five aggregates as they truly are impermanent, painful or fraught with suffering, and non-self or devoid of a self. This direct seeing (*yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana*) progressively dismantles the delusion and craving that fuel the cycle of *dukkha*. Therefore, the *vipassanā* perspective does not merely offer a description of suffering but provides the way being able to overcome it. It is through this insight meditation that one can fully comprehend suffering, abandon its cause, realize its cessation, and ultimately attain the liberating goal of *Nibbāna*, the cessation of all *dukkha*.

Abbreviation

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| Abhs. | <i>Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha</i> |
| D. I. | <i>Sīlakkhandavagga Pāḷi</i> |
| D. II. | <i>Mahāvagga Pāḷi (Dīgha Nikāya)</i> |
| D. III. | <i>Pāṭhikavagga pāḷi</i> |
| M. III. | <i>Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i> |
| M. I. | <i>Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i> |
| S. I. | <i>Sagāthāvagga Nidhāvagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi</i> |
| S. II. | <i>Khandhavagga Saḷāyatanavagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi</i> |
| Abh-a. II. | <i>Sammohavinodaṇī Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā</i> |
| D-a. I. | <i>Sīlakkhandavagga Aṭṭhakathā</i> |
| D-a. II. | <i>Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā</i> |
| D-a. III. | <i>Pāṭhikavagga Aṭṭhakathā</i> |
| Dhp-a. I, II. | <i>Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā Vol. I, II</i> |

- It-a. *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*
 J-a. II. *Jātaṭṭhakathā*
 M-a. I, II. *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhakathā* Vol. I, II
 S-ṭ. I. *Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta ṭīkā*
 Vsm. II. *Visuddhimagga*. Vol. II

References:

- D. II. *Jarā pi dukkhā* 243.
 Dhp-a. II. *Yassa so viha tatthāmo, kathaṃ dhammaṃ carissati*, 47. 295.
 M-a. II. *Chandarāgapahānaṃ*. 133.
 M-a. I. *eseyanto dukkhassa*, 90.
 M. II. *Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ*, 8, 133.
 S-ṭ. I. *Cetaso dukkhaṃ pabhāvito*, 135.
 S. II. *Appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*,
 S. II. *Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti, yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ uppajjamānaṃ uppajjati, sabbe taṃ chandamūlakaṃ*. "Chandanidānaṃ, chando hi mūlaṃ dukkhassa", 512.
 S. II. *Chando mūlaṃ dukkhassa* or "Nandī dukkhassa mūlaṃ", 512.
 Vsm. II. *dukkhavatthuto*, 132,134.