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The Essence of VISUDDHI MAGGA Volume 1

The Noble Path to Eternal Bliss

The Essence of
VISUDDHI MAGGA

Volume 1

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

Professor, Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja



VISUDDHI MAGGA

Systematically describes the **Noble Eightfold Path** consisting of the **Noble Threefold Training** of **Morality, Mental Concentration** and **Wisdom**.

These Trainings represent the essence of all the Teachings of the Buddha leading to Nibbāna.

Visuddhi Magga correctly describes how to practise


Tranquillity Meditation (Samatha)

to attain the purity of the mind and to enjoy the exalted jhāna bliss which is much more superior to sensual pleasure, and

Insight Meditation (Vipassanā)

to develop the highest wisdom to enjoy eternal peace and happiness.

Learn and Practise the **Art of Noble Living** to live most happily and most beneficially now.



The Noble Path to Eternal Bliss
The Essence of Visuddhi Magga

Volume I

By

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'Visuddhi Magga' means 'the Path of Purification,'
that is, purifying the mind totally by developing morality,
mental concentration and wisdom to attain the
noblest state and to enjoy eternal bliss in this very life.

Buddha sāsanaṃ ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu.

Religious Publication Permission No. (3200730208)

Cover Design Publication No. (3201120208)

Publication	2008 March First Printing
Impression	1000 Copies
Publisher	Mehm Tay Zar Mon Yadanar Min Literature (3455) 15/19, U Wisara Housing Estate Dagon Township, Yangon
Printer (cover+contents)	U Tin Maung Win Thin Lai Win Press (05946) No. 1, Bo Yar Nyunt Street Yaw Min Gyi Qr., Dagon Township, Yangon
Distribution	Mya Mon Yadanar Literature 15/19, U Wisara Housing Estate Dagon Township, Yangon Tel : 95-1-385261

Dhamma Gift

*The gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts.
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CONTENTS

PREFACE	11
INTRODUCTION	13
The Knower of the Worlds	13
Analysis of Mind and Matter	13
The True Nature of Existence	15
The Noble Truth of Suffering	15
Distorted Wrong View	16
Craving and Attachment	17
The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering	17
The Battle against Defilements	18
The Middle Path	19
The Noble Path to Nibbāna	20
The Perfect Path, the Only Path	23
Who can Disentangle the Net of Craving	23
Review Questions	26

CHAPTER I MORALITY (*Sīlā*)

What is 'Morality' or 'Virtue'?	27
1 Volition as <i>Sīlā</i>	27
2 Mental Factor as <i>Sīlā</i>	27
3 Restraint as <i>Sīlā</i>	28
4 Non-transgression as <i>Sīlā</i>	28
In what Sense is it called Morality or virtue?	28
The Characteristic, Function, Manifestation, and Proximate Cause of Morality	29
The Benefits of Morality	29
Different Kinds of Morality	30
1 One (<i>Eka</i>)	30

CONTENTS

2 Dyads (Duka) : Different Classifications of Sīla as Two Kinds each	30
3 Triads (Tika) : Different Classifications of Sīla as Three Kinds each	32
4 Tetrads (Catukka) : Different Classifications of Sīla as Four Kinds each	34
Training of Morality and Sīlavissuddhi	37
Five Moral Precepts (<i>Pañca Sīla</i>)	39
The Benefits of Observing Pañca Sīla	42
Ājīvattṭhamaka Sīla (<i>Ādibrahmacariya sīla</i>)	43
The Identity of Pañca-sīla and Ājīvattṭhamaka Sīla	45
Sabbath Precepts (<i>Uposatha Sīla</i>)	46
The Plan to Observe Sabbath Precepts	48
The Benefits of Observing Sabbath Precepts	49
Cultivating Catupārisuddhi Sīla	51
1. Cultivating Pātimokkhasamvara Sīla	51
2. Cultivating Indriyasamvara Sīla	52
3. Cultivating Ājīvapārisuddhi Sīla	55
4. Cultivating Paccayasannissita Sīla	59
Defiling of Morality	61
Seven Types of Minor Sexuality	62
Cleansing of Morality	62
The Disadvantages of Impure Morality	63
The Advantages of Pure Morality	65
Morality as the Foundation of Meditation	66
Review Questions	68

CHAPTER II CONCENTRATION (*Samādhi*)

What is 'Concentration' or 'Samādhi' ?	70
In what Sense is it called Concentration ?	70
What are its Characteristic, Function, Manifestation, and Proximate Cause ?	70
Different Kinds of Concentration	71
1 One (<i>Eka</i>)	71

CONTENTS

2 Dyads (<i>Duka</i>) : Different Classifications of Concentration as Two Kinds each	71
3 Triads (<i>Tika</i>) : Different Classifications of Concentration as Three Kinds each	73
4 Tetrads (<i>Catukka</i>) : Different Classifications of Concentration as Four Kinds each	74
5 Pentad (<i>Pañcaka</i>) : Classification of Concentration as Five Kinds each	78
Defiling and Cleansing of Concentration	78
Why should we develop Concentration	79
The Purpose and Objective of Developing Concentration	81
Preparation for Developing Concentration	82
Preparation for Meditation in Detail	83
1. Cutting off ten Major Impediments (<i>Palibodhas</i>)	83
2. The Search for a Qualified Teacher	85
3. The search for a Suitable Place for Meditation	88
4. A Suitable Monastery	90
5. Cutting off Minor Impediments	91
6. Dedication to the Blessed One	91
7. Dedication to the Teacher	92
8. Sincere Inclination and Sincere Resolution	92
Five Hindrances or Enemies (<i>Nīvaraṇas</i>)	93
Five Powers or Friends (<i>Balas and Indriyas</i>)	94
Five Essential Qualities (<i>Padhāniyaṅgas</i>)	96
Five Jhāna Factors	96
The Subject of Meditation (<i>Kammaṭṭhāna</i>)	98
Forty Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation	99
(a) Seven Classes of Meditation Subjects	99
(b) Ten Kasinas	99
(c) Ten Kinds of Foulness (<i>Asubhas</i>)	100
(d) Ten Recollections (<i>Anussatis</i>)	101
(e) Four Divine Abidings (<i>Brahmavihāra</i>)	101
(f) Four Immaterial States (<i>Āruppas</i>)	102
(g) Perception of Repulsiveness in Nutriment	102
(h) Defining the Four Elements (<i>Catudhātu-vavatthāna</i>)	102
Six types of Temperament (<i>Caritas</i>)	103

THE NOBLE PATH TO ETERNAL BLISS

Suitability of Kammatthāna to Temperament	104
Review Questions	105

CHAPTER III THE EARTH KASINA

Special Meditation Subject (<i>Parihāriya kammatthāna</i>)	108
Preparation of an Earth Kasina	108
Reflection on the Earth Kasina	109
The Appearance of Meditation Signs	110
Three Stages of Meditation	112
Bhāvanā and Kammatthāna	114
Meditation Sign or Image	114
The Difference between the Acquired Sign and the Counter Sign	115
Practical Coupling of Meditation with the Sign	116
The Differences between Access Concentration and Jhāna Concentration	117
Suitability and Unsuitability	119
Tenfold Skill in Absorption (<i>Appanā Kosalla</i>)	121
1. Cleansing Internal and External Bases	121
2. Balancing Controlling Faculties	122
3. Skill in the Meditation Sign	124
4. Raising the Morale	124
5. Restraining the Mind at the Time when It should be Restrained	127
6. Gladdening the Mind at the Time when It should be Gladdened	129
7. Viewing the Mind with Equanimity at the Time when It should be Viewed	129
8. Avoiding Persons with no Concentration	130
9. Associating with Persons of Concentration	130
10. Being Resolute upon Concentration	130
The Simile of a Clever Bee	130
The Appearance of Absorption in Cognitive Series	131
The Cognitive Series in Jhāna Attainment	133
The First Rūpāvacara Jhāna	134

CONTENTS

Abandoning Five Factors and Attaining Five Factors	136
Mastery of the Jhāna in Five Ways	137
The Second Rūpāvacara Jhāna	139
The Third Rūpāvacara Jhāna	140
The Fourth Rūpāvacara Jhāna	141
The Fivefold Rūpāvacara Jhānas	142
Review Questions	145

CHAPTER IV MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING (*Ānāpānassati*)

The Praise of the Buddha	147
Textual Description of Ānāpānassati	148
Practical Instruction for Undertaking Ānāpānassati	148
First Step : Awareness of the In-breath and the Out-breath	149
The Counting Method to Control the Mind	151
Second Step : Awareness of the Length of Breath	152
Third Step : Awareness of the Whole Breath	153
The Comparison with a Gate-keeper and a Sawyer	154
Fourth Step : The Disappearance of the Breath	155
The Simile of a Farmer	157
The Appearance of the Meditation Signs	157
The Arising of Fourfold or Fivefold Jhānas	159
The Benefits of Ānāpānassati	160
Review Questions	161

CHAPTER V FOUR GUARDIAN MEDITATIONS (*Caturārakkha Kammatṭhānas*)

To Protect Oneself from Internal and External Dangers	163
Developing Loving-kindness (<i>Mettā Bhāvanā</i>)	166
To Whom Loving-kindness should not be Cultivated First	167
The Order of Persons to be Permeated with Loving-kindness	168
The Breaking of Barriers between Persons	173

THE NOBLE PATH TO ETERNAL BLISS

Developing 528 Modes of Loving-kindness according to Paṭisambhidā Pāli	174
The Eleven Advantages of Loving-kindness	178
Recollection of the Attributes of the Buddha (<i>Buddhānussati</i>)	178
A Quick Way of Developing Buddhānussati	181
The Benefits of Buddhānussati	182
Meditation on Foulness (<i>Asubha Bhāvanā</i>)	183
A Quick Way of Developing the Perception of Foulness (<i>Asubha Saññā</i>)	187
The Benefits of Asubha Bhāvanā	188
Mindfulness of Death (<i>Marañānussati</i>)	189
Eight Ways of Recollecting Death	190
1. As Having the Appearance of a Murderer	190
2. As the Ruin of Success	190
3. By comparing Oneself to Others	190
4. As the Sharing of the Body with Many	190
5. As to the Frailty of Life	191
6. By the Absence of the Sign	191
7. By being Limited in Time	191
8. As to the Shortness of the Life-moment	191
Development of Access Jhāna	192
A Quick Way of Developing Death-mindfulness	192
The Benefits of Developing Mindfulness of Death	193
When to Practise the Guardian Meditations	194
Review Questions	195

CHAPTER VI

MINDFULNESS OCCUPIED WITH THE BODY

(*kāyagatāsati*)

The Significance of Kāyagatāsati	196
The Sevenfold Skill in Learning	197
The Tenfold Skill in giving Attention	199
Starting the Practice	203
The Arising of Absorption	207
Development of Kāyagatāsati with the Powerful	

CONTENTS

Support of the Fourth Jhāna	209
The Benefits of Kāyagatāsati	211
Review Questions	212

CHAPTER VII DEFINING THE FOUR ELEMENTS (*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*)

The Significance of Catudhātu-vavatthāna	213
Catudhātu-vavatthāna in Brief	213
Catudhātu-vavatthāna in Detail	214
Four Primary Elements	215
Practical Instruction	216
Begin with the Easiest One	217
The Characteristic of Pushing	217
The Characteristic of Hardness	218
The Characteristic of Roughness	219
The Characteristic of Heaviness	219
The Characteristic of Supporting	220
The Characteristics of Softness, Smoothness and Lightness	220
The Characteristics of Hotness and Coldness	221
The Characteristics of Cohesiveness and Fluidity	222
Observing the Twelve Characteristics	223
Some Points to be Taken Care of	225
The Light and the Neighbourhood Concentration	227
Review Questions	228

CHAPTER VIII DEVELOPMENT OF CONCENTRATION BY NINE KASINAS

The Water Kasīna (<i>Āpokasīna</i>)	229
Reflecting on the Water Kasīna	230
The Appearance of Meditation Signs	231
Developing Rūpāvacāra Jhānas	232
The Fire Kasīna (<i>Tejo Kasīna</i>)	233
The Air Kasīna (<i>Vāyo Kasīna</i>)	235

THE NOBLE PATH TO ETERNAL BLISS

The Blue Kasina (<i>Nīla Kasina</i>)	235
The Yellow Kasina (<i>Pīta Kasina</i>)	236
The Red Kasina (<i>Lohita Kasina</i>)	236
The White Kasina (<i>Odāta Kasina</i>)	237
The Light Kasina (<i>Āloka-Kasina</i>)	237
The Limited-Space Kasina (<i>Ākāsa Kasina</i>)	238
General Description	239
Practical Reflection on Kasinas	240
Review Questions	243

CHAPTER IX

THE IMMATERIAL STATES (*Āruppas*)

Ākāsānañcāyatana Jhāna	245
Viññānañcāyatana Jhāna	247
Ākiñcaññāyatana Jhāna	248
Nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana Jhāna	248
Mixed Description	249
The Power of Concentration	250
Five Mundane Supernormal Powers	250
Development of Supernormal Powers	251
Review Questions	254

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	255
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Treasure Books written in English by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon	256
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PREFACE

In my book entitled "*The Noble Liberation and the Noble Truths*," I explain the Four Noble Truths in detail to help the readers to understand them clearly. The Blessed One has pointed out that it is through not understanding, not realizing the Four Noble Truths that living beings had to wander so long through the round of rebirths and the round of suffering.

When a person understands these profound universal truths penetratively in all aspects with direct knowledge, he will gain the Noble Liberation from the entanglements of defilements and become a noble person (*Ariyā*), enjoying the unique bliss and eternal peace of Nibbāna as much as he likes.

But in order to gain penetrative, thorough understanding of the Four Noble Truths by direct knowledge, he must undertake the Noble Threefold Training – viz., the Training of Morality, the Training of Concentration and the Training of Wisdom – that represents the Noble Eightfold Path.

The practical aspects of the Noble Threefold Training are fully described in '*Visuddhi Magga*' – '*The Path of Purification*' – compiled by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa* by systematically collecting all relevant instructions of the Buddha in the Pāli Canon.

Visuddhi Magga has been translated into English by Pe Maung Tin, a Myanmar scholar under the name of '*The Path of Purity*' and by Bhikkhu Nānamoli under the title of '*The Path of Purification*'. However, most people who are occupied with household work, business affairs or official duties will find it very difficult to read and understand these important treatises and to put the instructions into practice.

In the present book the author makes great endeavour to present the essential points of *Visuddhi Magga* in simple, plain language to

make them easily comprehensible and to render help to readers so that they can actually observe monal precepts and practise meditations correctly and successfully.

The Noble Threefold Training—that is, *Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā*, is regarded as the essence of all the Buddha's teachings, and it is the most important noble task that we all should perform in life to get the highest gain which is none other than the Noble Liberation from the entanglement of all defilements and all suffering.

As the English scholar, Professor Rhys Davids, has remarked that he is happy to shape his life according to the Noble Eightfold Path, we all should incorporate the Noble Path into our daily routine and exert great effort to undertake the Noble Threrfold Training successfully to gain the Noble Liberation in this very life.

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

Nothing to Surpass Buddhism

Buddhist or not Buddhist, I have examined every one of the great religious systems of the world, and in none of them have I found anything to surpass, in beauty and comprehansiveness, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha. I am content to shape my life according to that Path.

Professor Rhys Davids, English Scholar

Be Heedful!

Do not give way to heedlessness.

Do not indulge in sensual pleasures.

*Only the heedful and meditative attain
great happiness.*

Dhammapada Verse 27

INTRODUCTION

The Knower of the Worlds

The Buddha is truly omniscient as he clearly and exactly understands the three worlds: the world of living beings (*satta-loka*), the world of conditioned things (*sankhāra-loka*), and the world of location or the planes of existence (*okāsa-loka*).

He has penetrated and known the world in all ways as to its basic nature of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*), the cause of suffering (*samudaya*), the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*), and the path to the cessation of suffering (*magga*).

The Blessed One declared to *Rohitassa Deva* thus:

"O Rohitassa Deva, that there is a world's end where one neither is born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears; which is to be known or seen or reached by travel on foot – that I do not say. Yet I do not say that there is the end of suffering without reaching the world's end.

"Rather it is in this fathom-long body with its perceptions and its consciousness that I make known the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world." (Rohitassa Sutta)

Analysis of Mind and Matter

According to the Buddha's higher teaching known as *Abhidhamma*, mind is a combination of consciousness (*citta*) and its concomitants called mental factors (*cetasikas*). There are 13 neutral mental factors which can associate with both wholesome minds and unwholesome minds, 14 immoral mental factors which make the mind unwholesome, and 25 beautiful mental factors which make the mind wholesome.

The mind seems to change its nature from good to bad, from pleasant to unpleasant, from joyful to sorrowful, from noble to ignoble, etc., due to the different combinations of consciousness and mental factors.

The mind is not a single permanent entity. It arises and dissolves incessantly and very rapidly many billion times per second. Consciousness and mental factors are ultimate realities (*paramatthas*) which cannot be sub-divided further. They are formless and shapeless and cannot yet be detected by any scientific instrument. Nevertheless, they can be vividly seen by the concentrated mind-eye. If we can develop the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) in tranquility meditation, we can see and investigate them.

The body too is not permanent. Science knows that the body is made up of cells, cells are made up of atoms, and atoms are made up of protons, neutrons and electrons which revolve around the nuclei continuously. Science also has discovered that billions of cells are formed and then dissolve in the body every second. This impermanent nature of the body can be vividly investigated by the concentrated mind-eye.

The Buddha has stated more than 2500 years ago, much earlier than science, that the body is made up of billions of very tiny particles called *rūpakalāpas* which are comparable to protons, neutrons and electrons in size. These sub-atomic particles are not the ultimate results of analysis yet. Each of them is again made up of eight or more ultimate forms of matter (*rūpa*). These include the element of extension (*pathavī*), the element of cohesion (*āpo*), the element of heat (*tejo*), the element of motion (*vāyo*), the element of form (*vaṇṇa*), the element of odour (*gandha*), the element of taste (*rasa*); the element of nutriment (*ojā*), etc.

These ultimate forms of matter (*rūpa*) are also ultimate realities (*paramattha*) that really exist in nature. They can be seen and verified by meditators in insight meditation with their concentrated mind-eyes. So the Buddha knows the world of conditioned things which are made up of the ultimate realities - *cittas*, *cetasikas* and *rūpas*.

The True Nature of Existence

Since the mind and body are made up of ultimate realities — *cittas*, *cetasikas* and *rūpas* — and the ultimate realities are arising and dissolving very rapidly all the time, existence is just transient and fleeting. It is marked by three characteristics — impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*).

What is not permanent is not satisfactory, and what is being tortured incessantly by the continuous dissolution of the ultimate realities that make up mind and body really amounts to suffering (*dukkha*).

Again, since there is nothing in an individual that is permanent and substantial; there is no such thing as a permanent 'jīva', 'atta', 'soul', 'ego' or 'person'. This concept of 'non-self' and 'non-ego' is known as '*anatta*'.

The impermanence, suffering and non-self (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*) are described as the three characteristic marks of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*). They have to be reflected on repeatedly in insight meditation (*vipassanā*) to understand the true nature of existence.

The Noble Truth of Suffering

If we can see the true nature of existence, we can understand that all forms of existence, whatsoever, are unsatisfactory as they have the nature of impermanence, suffering and non-self.

Thus the Buddha stated the Noble Truth of Suffering in his first sermon known as '*Dhammacakka-pavattana Sutta*' as follows.

"Birth is suffering; decay or ageing is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; association with the undesirable things and unloved ones is suffering; separation from the desirable things and beloved ones is suffering; not to get what one desires is suffering; in short; the Five Aggregates of clinging are suffering." (D. 22)

The five Aggregates (*Khandhas*) of Existence should be understood as follows:

1. The aggregate of corporeality consisting of 28 types of *rūpa* (*rūpakkhandha*),
2. The aggregate of various forms of feeling representing *vedanā cetasika* (*vedanākkhandhā*),
3. The aggregate of perceptions (*saññā cetasika*), comprising perceptions of form, sound, odour, taste, bodily impression and mental impression (*saññākkhandha*),
4. The aggregate of mental formations consisting of 50 cetasikas other than *vedanā* and *saññā* (*sañkhārakkhandha*), and
5. The aggregate of consciousness consisting of 89 or 121 types of *consciousness* (*viññānakkhandha*).

In the five aggregates of clinging supramundane consciousness and mental factors are excluded.

Every living being in the whole universe is made up of these five aggregates whereas inanimate things are made up of only *rūpas* which comprise matter and energy. Since these ultimate realities have the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, we cannot deny the universal truth of the Noble Truth of Suffering.

Distorted Wrong View

Our mind is shielded and blinded by the mental factor 'moha', also known as 'avijjā' for blinding the mind, according to the teaching of the Buddha in Abhidhamma.

'Moha' is translated as 'ignorance' as it makes us ignorant of the true nature of sense objects comprising living beings and non-living things. It is also translated as 'delusion' for it renders a distorted wrong view.

When we do not see the true nature of animate and inanimate things, we get the distorted wrong view which is the opposite of the right view. When we cannot see that all living beings and inanimate things have the nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, we think they are permanent (*nicca*), blissful (*sukha*) and self or person (*atta*).

Furthermore, everything has the nature of repulsiveness (*asubha*) according to the teaching of the Buddha. We might like to refute this statement as we think that we ourselves are handsome or beau-

tiful and our beloved ones are also handsome or beautiful (*subha*).

The Buddha advised us not to judge by the superficial feature but to look at a person analytically. He advised us to analyse a person into 32 bodily parts comprising head-hair, body-hair, nails, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bonemarrow, heart, liver, lungs, bowels, intestines, blood, urine, excrement, etc., and to examine each part. We shall find every part to be disgusting and loathsome.

Because of the distorted wrong view, the mental factor *ditthi cetasika* arises, taking the combination of five aggregates as a person or I and making one very selfish. Based on the notion of I, *māna cetasika* (pride or conceit) also arises, making one very arrogant and deceitful.

Craving and Attachment

In fact, ignorance (*moha*) makes all the 14 immoral cetasikas become active. The worst one is 'lobha' also known as 'tanhā' or 'rāga'. It is usually translated as greed, craving or attachment.

Because of the distorted wrong view rendered by ignorance (*moha*), sense objects appear to be beautiful, pleasant and desirable. So greed or *tanhā* craves for sense objects and gets attached to them. It will never give up its characteristic of craving. So a man will never be satisfied however much he may possess.

The Buddha said, "Even the whole wealth on earth cannot satisfy a man's greed."

Mahatama Gandhi said, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for one man's greed."

Because of greed (*lobha*) men commit stealing, cheating, robbing, even killing and sexual misconduct, endlessly. Again, because of greed and ignorance (*moha*), wars including World Wars are fought incessantly. Thus greed and ignorance give rise to all evil actions and misery in the world.

The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering

To gratify the desires of greed (*lobha*), man has to work day and night. And if his efforts do not bring success, he becomes greatly distressed. Again if he is successful in acquiring wealth, he

gets attached to this wealth and has to worry about its safety. If the wealth is lost or he has to part with his beloved ones, he will be overwhelmed with grief and despair because of the attachment to them.

So greed (*lobha*) causes suffering in many ways. We think that enjoying sense pleasure is very pleasant. But sense pleasure is transient and fleeting. It lasts just for a short moment and then disappears, leaving behind a great thirst and hunger to enjoy some more pleasure because of the attachment *tanhā* to the sense pleasure. Thus sense enjoyment is actually a prelude to suffering.

In the Doctrine of Dependent Arising (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) the Buddha describes the continuation of existence life after life on account of ignorance (*moha*) and craving or attachment (*lobha* or *tanhā*). The round of rebirth actually means the round of suffering as birth brings along ageing, sickness, worry, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair.

Thus the Buddha states the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering in his first sermon as follows.

"What now is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering?"

It is craving (tanhā) which gives rise to fresh rebirth, and bound up with pleasure and lust, now here, now there, finds ever fresh delight.

This craving is of three kinds:

- (i) *Craving for sense pleasure (kāma-tanhā),*
- (ii) *Craving for existence or becoming (bhava-tanhā),*
- (iii) *Craving for non-existence or self-annihilation (vibhava-tanhā)."*

In the Third Noble Truth the Buddha declared that the complete fading away and extinction of craving is Nibbāna – the eternal peace and supreme happiness.

The Battle against Defilements

Though the Buddha singles out 'craving (*tanhā*)' as the main cause of suffering, craving works in unison with other defilements

(*kilesās*) which defile, debase, inflict and torture the mind. These defilements are immoral mental factors (*cetasikas*) which arise in the mind and overwhelm the mind. They are:

<i>Lobha (tanhā, rāga)</i>	– desire, craving, attachment
<i>Dōsa (paṭigha)</i>	– anger, hatred, ill-will
<i>Moha (avijjā)</i>	– ignorance, delusion
<i>Māna</i>	– pride, conceit
<i>Diṭṭhi</i>	– wrong view
<i>Vicikicchā</i>	– sceptical doubt
<i>Thina</i>	– slōth
<i>Uddhacca</i>	– restlessness
<i>Ahiraika</i>	– moral shamelessness
<i>Anattappa</i>	– moral fearlessness

These defilements are our internal enemies. It is very difficult to fight against them as they overwhelm and influence the mind most of the time. They make us drunk like liquor to be forgetful of meritorious deeds. They overwhelm us like floods to be helpless and drowned by being reborn in lower abodes. They bind us like fetters so that we cannot escape from the round of rebirth – *samsāra*. But we must exert all efforts to fight against them, dislodge them from the mind, destroy them and burn them so that they will never arise again in our minds.

A soldier may conquer the enemies a million times in battle. But a hero conquers his defilements just once. That hero who conquers his defilements is, indeed, the greatest of conquerors. (Dh. 103)

The Middle Path

"These two extremes, bhikkhus, should not be followed by one who has gone forth from worldly life."

So did the Blessed One begin his first sermon known as '*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*', meaning 'the Discourse on Turning the Wheel of the Dhamma.'

"What are the two extremes? One extreme is indulgence in desirable sense pleasure, which is low, vulgar, unprofitable, practised by worldlings but not by noble persons (ariyās). The other

extreme is self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble and unprofitable.

"O bhikkhus, avoiding both these extremes, the Tathāgata (Buddha) has realized the Middle Path. This Path produces vision, produces knowledge, leads to calm, to higher knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

"And what is that Middle Path, O bhikkhus, that the Tathāgata has realized? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration."

Indeed, by avoiding the two extremes and following the Middle Path, the Buddha gained vision and special knowledge; he could eradicate all defilements; he could penetrate into the Four Noble Truths; he attained Arahatta Fruition and Supreme Omniscience and became a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

When he expounded in his first sermon the Four Noble Truths—the greatest universal truths, the penetrative understanding of which leads to full enlightenment as a noble person — he described the Noble Eightfold Path as the Fourth Noble Truth, that is, the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering.

This Fourth Noble Truth constitutes the most important practical aspect of Buddhism. Any able, ardent person who strenuously walks along the Middle Path will surely be enlightened to the Four Noble Truths to become a noble person who can enjoy the unique bliss of Nibbāna as much as he likes without ever being reborn in lower woeful abodes. As the attainment of this state is the goal of Buddhists, the Noble Eightfold Path represents the essence of Buddhism.

The Fourth Noble Truth has been verified by the Buddha himself as well as by countless Arahants. To realize this Noble Truth should be the urgent noble aim of every Buddhist.

(Paṭisambhidāmagga, Dhammacakkapavattana Vāra)

The Noble Path to Nibbāna

The eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path can be classified as the Noble Threefold Training.

(i) Training of Wisdom (*Pañña Sikkhā*)

1. Sammāditṭhi – the right understanding,
2. Sammāsaṅkappa – the right thought. — *မှန်ကန်စွာ, စင်စစ်, Free from ill will*

(ii) Training of Morality (*Sīla Sikkhā*)

3. Sammāvācā – the right speech,
4. Sammākammanta – the right action,
5. Sammāājīva – the right livelihood.

(iii) Training of Concentration (*Samādhi Sikkhā*)

6. Sammāvāyāma – the right effort,
7. Sammāsati – the right mindfulness,
8. Sammāsamādhi – the right concentration.

Destroy completely The Noble Path or the Noble Threefold Training systematically eradicates all defilements. The ten defilements have been growing and thriving in the minds of worldlings like a big tree. They exist in the mind in three layers:

(i) Latent defilements – *anusaya kilesās*

They lie latent in the mind, ready to arise in the mind when sense objects appear in sense doors;

(ii) Moderate defilements – *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās*

They are the defilements that have arisen in the mind and kept agitating the mind;

(iii) Gross, violent defilements – *vītikāma kilesās*

They are inflated defilements which become gross and violent, ready to commit immoral actions.

Now if we want to destroy a big tree, we must cut off the branches first, then the trunk, then dig out the roots and burn them so that they can never grow again.

In the same way to eradicate all defilements, we must first undertake the Training of Morality to cleanse our minds from gross, violent defilements. These are the branches of the big kilesā-tree. If we stop the training, these gross, violent defilements will grow up anew just as the tree produces new branches.

After cutting off the branches, we must cut the trunk of the tree. Similarly, after developing the purity of morality (*Sīla-Visuddhi*)

to eliminate gross, violent defilements, we must get rid of moderate defilements by undertaking the Training of Concentration. To accomplish the Training of Concentration, we undertake tranquillity meditation (*Samatha bhāvanā*). This will calm down, subdue and suppress moderate defilements which have arisen and are agitating the mind. When the neighbourhood concentration or the higher jhāna concentration is attained, all moderate defilements are eliminated. The mind is free from all arisen defilements. Thus the purity of the mind (*Cittavisuddhi*) is attained.

Now, after cutting the trunk of the tree, the roots still remain under ground, and they will grow into a new tree again when the rain falls. Similarly, when moderate defilements are eliminated, latent defilements still remain and they will grow into a new tree again when various sense objects appear at the six sense doors. So the latent defilements must be uprooted and destroyed completely in order to eradicate all defilements once and for ever. It is like digging out the roots and burning them so as to destroy that tree once and for ever.

To eradicate latent defilements is indeed the most difficult and profound task in the world. To accomplish this task, we must undertake insight meditation very ardently, strenuously and correctly. Vipassanā bhāvanā accomplishes the training of wisdom.

The mind associated with the right concentration radiates very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light one can discern the ultimate material entities and the ultimate mental entities that make up body and mind. The material entities and mental entities also represent the five aggregates of grasping – viz., the material aggregate, the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the aggregate of mental formations and the consciousness aggregate.

Since all the ultimate mental and material entities are arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly, they have the common characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*). Thus the Buddha stated in the First Noble Truth that in brief: “The five aggregates of grasping are suffering.”

Insight meditation (*vipassanā*) is carried out by contemplat-

ing repeatedly in various ways the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self in the five aggregates of grasping. After developing ten insight knowledges and the fourfold Path Wisdom, all latent defilements are totally eradicated.

One shall then become a Perfect Noble Person called Arahant who can enjoy the supreme bliss and eternal peace of Nibbāna for ever.

The Perfect Path

- * *Free from pain and torture is this path,
Free from groaning and suffering is this path,
It is the perfect path. (Majjhima Nikāya 139)*
- * *Of all paths the Eightfold Path is the best;
Of all truths the Four Noble Truths are the best;
Of all things the passionless Nibbāna is the best;
Of all beings the Seeing Buddha is the best.
(Dhammapada 273)*

The Only Path

- * *Truly like this path there is no other path
to the purity of insight. If you follow this
path, you will put an end to suffering.
(Dhammapada 274+275)*
- * *The only path that leads to the attainment
of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and
lamentation, to the end of pain and grief,
to the entering of the right path, and to
the realization of Nibbāna is the Noble Eightfold
Path.
(Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta)*

Who can Disentangle the Net of Craving?

While the Blessed One was residing at Sāvattī, a certain deity came to him at midnight, and in order to get rid of his doubts he asked this question:

“O Venerable Gotama (family name of the Buddha), this network of craving (*taṇhā*) resembles a tangle in the sense of lacing

together, like the tangle called network of branches in bamboo thickets, etc., because it goes on arising again and again above and below among the six sense objects. It is called the inner tangle and the outer tangle because it arises for one's own requisites and another's, for one's own person and another's, and for the internal and external sense bases (*āyatana*s). This tangle of craving entangles the race of sentient beings including mankind. Who is able to disentangle this tangle ? ”

When questioned thus, the Blessed One, whose knowledge of all things is unimpeded, the Deity of Deities, excelling the Sakka (the Ruler of Gods), excelling all Brahmās, fearless as he possesses the four virtues of courage, Wielder of the Ten Powers, All-seer with unobstructed knowledge, gave the answer thus:

Stīle paṭiṭṭhāya naro sapañño,
Cittam paññañca bhāvayaṃ.
Ātāpi nipako bhikkhu,
So imam vijadaye jadanti.

“When a person with three-rooted rebirth consciousness establishes himself well in morality (*sīla*), exerts the energy which can scorch off defilements, possesses that knowledge that can impede opposing defilements, and develops the tranquillity of mind called concentration (*samādhi*) and the insight knowledge with penetrative vision (*paññā*), he will succeed in disentangling the tangle of craving.”

The essence of this statement is as follows:

- (i) A person must be endowed with wisdom born of kamma by being reborn with a resultant consciousness associated with wisdom;
- (ii) He establishes himself well in morality;
- (iii) He possesses the energy which can scorch off defilements;
- (iv) He possesses the knowledge that can impede or obstruct opposing defilements;
- (v) He develops the tranquillity of mind called the right concentration;
- (vi) He undertakes insight meditation to develop insight with penetrative vision.

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The person who is endowed with the three kinds of wisdom and the three kinds of morality, concentration and energy mentioned above will succeed in disentangling the tangle of craving.

Just as a man stands on the ground, wields a sword or axe which is well sharpened, and cuts a large bamboo grove to clear it away, so too a person, standing firmly on the ground of morality, gripping the sharp, powerful weapon of insight meditation with the might of strenuous effort and raising it with the hand of all purpose wisdom (*parihāriya paññā*), can cut off and clear away the tangle of craving from his mind.

About 1600 years ago (412 A.C.) Venerable Buddhaghosa, based on the Pāli verse mentioned above, wrote "Visuddhi Magga", meaning "the Path of Purity" or "the Path of Purification". 'Purity' or 'Purification' should be understood as 'Nibbāna' which is free from all taints and utterly pure.

"Visuddhi Magga" is considered to be an excellent compendium of the Buddha's doctrine covering the strict observation of morality (*sīla*) leading to the Purification of the body; the practice of mental concentration (*samādhi*) leading to the Purity of the mind, and the development of insight (*paññā*) leading to Perfect Wisdom.

Reference:

1. 'Visuddhimagga' by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol.1, pp. 1-7.
2. 'Visuddhimagga' by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Sobhana (Mahāsi Sayadaw), Vol.1, pp.1-19.
3. 'The Path of Purity' (Visuddhimagga) by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into English by Pe Maung Tin, PTS, 1971, pp. 1-3.
4. 'The Path of Purification' (Visuddhimagga) by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into English by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, published by Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, pp. 1-4.

Review Questions

- 1 (a) What are the two extremes that should be avoided by ascetics? Why?
(b) What is the Middle Path? What benefits can it offer?
- 2 (a) Can the Noble Eightfold Path be regarded as the essence of Buddhism? Why?
(b) Why is it urgently important to walk along the Middle Path?
- 3 (a) Classify the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path into the Noble Threefold Training.
(b) How should we undertake this Noble Threefold Training?
- 4 Describe the three stages of defilements. How can they be systematically destroyed by the Noble Threefold Training?
- 5 How does the network of craving resemble a tangle? Who can cut off and clear away this tangle of craving from his mind?
- 6 Can the Noble Threefold Training be practised in daily life? Discuss fully.
- 7 Which is the most important task that we should do in the present existence?
Give reasons for your opinion.
- 8 Can we get immediate benefits by undertaking the Noble Threefold Training?
What are these benefits?

CHAPTER I
MORALITY
(*Sīla*)

What is 'Morality' or 'Virtue'?

*Kim sīlanti cetanā sīlaṃ, cetasika sīlaṃ,
saṃvaro sīlaṃ, avitikkamo sīlanti.*

What is *sīla* (morality) ?

Volition (*cetanā*) is *sīla*, mental factor (*cetasika*) is *sīla*, restraint (*saṃvara*) is *sīla*, and non-transgression is *sīla*.

(*Paṭisambhidhāmagga, i, 44*)

(1) Volition as *Sīla*

The volition present in one who abstains from killing, stealing, etc., or in one who fulfils the duties of a teacher, a pupil, a parent, a son, etc., is called morality (*sīla*).

In other words, the seven volitions that accompany the first seven of the ten courses of wholesome actions (*kusalakammaṃpatha*) represent *sīla*.

(2) Mental Factor as *Sīla*

The three mental factors of abstinence, namely, the right speech (*sammāvācā*), the right action (*sammākammanta*) and the right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), are taken as *cetasika sīla*.

Sammāvācā is the abstinence from lying, slandering, harsh speech and vain talk.

Sammākammanta is the abstinence from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

Sammā-ājīva is the abstinence from three bodily evil actions and four evil speeches pertaining to earning one's livelihood rightly.

The three mental factors (*alobha, adosa, paññā*) which represent the last courses of wholesome actions, namely, non-covetousness, good-will and right view (*anabhijjhā, abyāpāda* and *sammāditṭhi*) are also taken as *cetasika sīla* in accordance with the

statement of the Buddha: "Abandoning covetousness, he dwells with mind free from covetousness." (*Digha Nikāya, i, 71*)

(3) Restraint as *Sīla*

Restraint as *sīla* is fivefold:

1. *Pāṭimokkhasamvara* – restraint by obeying the Rules of the Bhikkhu Community.
2. *Satisamvara* – restraint of the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, the body faculty and the mind faculty by being mindful not to allow defilements to arise in these six doors.
3. *Nānasamvara* – restraint by knowledge by preventing craving, wrong view, ignorance and evil conduct from arising and also by eradicating them. Using the four requisites with knowledge to prevent the arising of defilements is also *nānasamvara*.
4. *Khaṅṭhisamvara* – restraint by patience with the ability to endure heat and cold, etc.
5. *Vīriyasamvara* – restraint by energy by exerting an effort to drive away an evil thought such as a thought of sense - desire (*kāma vitakka*) as soon as it arises. Abandoning a wrong livelihood and leading a right livelihood (*Ājīvāparisuddhisīla*) is also included in *vīriyasamvara*.

(4) Non-transgression as *Sīla*

It is the non-transgression, by body or speech, of moral precepts that have been undertaken. It represents the wholesome consciousness and its concomitants in abstaining from ten evil actions.

In what Sense is it called Morality or Virtue?

It is called 'morality' (*sīla*) in the sense of composing (*sīlana*). What is this composing? In one sense it is keeping well, that is, keeping one's bodily and verbal actions well. A virtuous person keeps his manners well composed and his bodily and verbal actions are not in disarray but well controlled.

In another sense '*sīlana*' means upholding. It upholds wholesome states such as concentration and wisdom or it serves as the foundation for wholesome states to grow up.

Some other teachers regard *sīla* to be derived from '*sirattha*', meaning the 'head', or from '*sītala*', meaning 'coolness'.

The Characteristic, Function, Manifestation, and Proximate Cause of Morality

(1) Characteristic (*Lakkhana*)

Composing (*sīlana*) in the sense of keeping bodily and verbal actions well and also in the sense of upholding wholesome states such as concentration and wisdom is the characteristic of *sīla*.

(2) Function (*Rasa*)

Function has two aspects: function as action (*kiicca-rasa*) and function as achievement (*sampattirasa*). *Sīla* has the function of stopping misconduct (*dussīla*) as its action and has the property of blamelessness as its achievement.

A virtuous person will not perform evil actions so that his character is pure, blameless and admired by the wise.

(3) Manifestation (*Paccupaṭṭhāna*)

Sīla has, as its manifestation, purity, that is, bodily purity, verbal purity and mental purity. It manifests itself or comes to be apprehended as a pure state.

(4) Proximate Cause (*Paḍaṭṭhāna*)

Sīla has, as its proximate cause, sense of shame or moral shame (*hiri*) and moral dread (*ottappa*).

A person can keep pure morality only if he has moral shame and moral dread.

The Benefits of Morality

What are the benefits of *sīla* ?

Sīla bears many benefits beginning with the clarity of the mind and non-remorse. *Sīla* has the clarity, serenity and peace of mind as its benefits; it has the potency of clarifying and refreshing the mind.

(i) Five Benefits of *Sīla*

(*Dīgha ii, 86, Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*)

- 1 A virtuous person acquires much wealth owing to non-negligence and diligence.
- 2 His good fame spreads far and wide.

- 3 He could enter an assembly of princes or brahmans or householders or ascetics without fear or hesitation.
- 4 He dies unconfused or undeluded, that is, he dies with a clear mind taking a wholesome object.
- 5 After death, he will reappear in a happy destiny, in a heavenly world.

(ii) Ten Benefits of Sīla

(Mūlapannāsa, Akāṅkheyya Sutta)

One should accomplish the training of morality if one desires:

- 1 to enjoy the respect and adoration of co-residents,
- 2 to acquire the four requisites or wealth in abundance,
- 3 to let donors enjoy great benefits,
- 4 to let relative ghosts enjoy great benefits,
- 5 to have the ability to endure and resist idleness and sense pleasures,
- 6 to overcome dread and dreadful objects,
- 7 to attain rūpāvacara jhānas and arūpāvacara jhānas,
- 8 to escape rebirth in woeful abodes,
- 9 to become a noble person (ariyā), and
- 10 to attain supernormal powers.

** Indeed a virtuous person with pure morality will get whatever he desires, because his mind is pure and noble.*

Different Kinds of Morality

How many kinds of Sīla are there ?

1. One (*Eka*)

Firstly all sīla is of one kind by reason of its own characteristic of composing (*sīlana*) in the sense of keeping bodily and verbal actions well and also in the sense of upholding wholesome states.

2. Dyads (*Duka*): Different Classifications of Sīla
as Two Kinds each

(i) Cāritta Sīla and Vāritta Sīla

The fulfilling of the precepts such as parents' duties, a teacher's duties, a pupil's duties, etc., enacted by the Buddha thus: "This should be practised" is called *Cāritta Sīla*.

Not doing the evil actions which are prohibited by the Buddha thus: "This should not be done" is called *varitta sila*. Observing five moral precepts, eight moral precepts, etc., belong to *Varitta sila*.

Caritta sila is accomplished by faith and effort whereas *Varitta sila* is accomplished by faith.

(ii) **Abhisamācārika Sīla, Ādibrahmacariyaka Sīla**

Abhisamācārika means the noble, exalted practice. All those training precepts prescribed by the Buddha for the sake of the noble Practice or the noble Path (Magga) is called *Abhisamācārika sila*. In other words it is the name of all sīlas except *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila*.

Ādibrahmacariyaka sila is the initial stage of the life of purity consisting in the noble Path. It is the name of *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila* which is the initial stage of the Path because it has to be purified previous to the Path.

(iii) **Virati Sīla and Avirati Sīla**

Mere abstaining from killing sentient beings and so on is called *Virati sila*.

Other kinds of sīla consisting of cetaṇā, saṁvara, and avītikkama are called *Avirati sila*.

(iv) **Nissita Sīla and Anissita Sīla**

Dependence (*nissaya*) is of two kinds: dependence through craving and dependence through false view.

Herein, the morality observed by one who wishes for a fortunate kind of becoming thus: "Through this morality I shall become a great deity or some minor deity" is called '*Taṅhānissita sila*' meaning '*Morality depending on craving*'.

The morality observed through a false view about purification as "Purification is possible just by observing sīla" is called '*Ditṭhinissita sila*', meaning '*Morality depending on false view*'.

The, supramundane morality and the mundane morality, that is the pre-requisite for the supramundane morality, do not depend on craving and false view. So they are called '*Anissita sila*', meaning '*Morality free from dependence*'.

(v) *Kālapariyanta Sīla* and *Āpānakotika Sīla*

The morality which is practised within a certain time limit such as a day or half a day is called *Kālapariyanta sīla*.

The morality which is undertaken as long as life lasts is called *Āpānakotika sīla*.

(vi) *Sapariyanta Sīla* and *Apariyanta Sīla*

The morality that has gain, fame, relatives, limbs, or life as its limit is called *Sapariyanta sīla*.

The morality that does not have gain, fame, relatives, limbs or life as its limit is called *Apariyanta sīla*.

Here someone with gain as cause, with gain as condition, with gain as reason, transgresses a training precept. That morality has gain as its limit. The rest should be elaborated in the same way.

(vii) *Lokiya Sīla* and *Lokuttara Sīla*

All *sīla* which is accompanied by intoxicants (*āsavas*) or the object of intoxicants is called *Lokiya sīla* (Mundane *sīla*).

That *sīla* which is not accompanied by intoxicants is called *Lokuttara sīla* (Supramundane *sīla*).

Lokiya sīla brings about improvement in future existence and is a prerequisite for the escape from becoming.

Lokuttara sīla brings about the escape from becoming and is the plane of Reviewing Knowledge.

3. Triads (Tika): Different Classifications of *Sīla* as Three Kinds each(i) *Hīna Sīla*, *Majjhima Sīla* and *Pañita Sīla*

The morality which arises through inferior will (*chanda*), consciousness (*citta*), energy (*virīya*) and investigating wisdom (*vīmaṃsa*) is *Hīna sīla*; that which arises through moderate will, consciousness, energy and wisdom is *Majjhima sīla*; that which arises through superior will, consciousness, energy and wisdom is *Pañita sīla*.

Alternatively, the morality undertaken out of desire for praise

and fame is *hīna* (inferior); that undertaken out of desire for the fruits of merit is *majjhima* (medium); that undertaken out of desire to become a noble person as noble persons maintain pure morality is *pañña* (superior).

(ii) **Attādhīpateyya Sīla, Lokādhīpateyya Sīla,
Dhammādhīpateyya Sīla**

The morality which is practised out of self-respect, having regard for self, and from a desire to put away what is improper conduct for self, is *Attādhīpateyya sīla*, i.e., morality giving precedence to self.

The morality which is practised out of respect for the world, having regard for the world, and from a desire to avoid accusation by the world, is *Lokādhīpateyya sīla*, i.e., morality giving precedence to the world.

The morality which is practised out of respect for the Dhamma and out of a desire to honour the majesty of the Dhamma is *Dhammādhīpateyya sīla*, i.e., morality giving precedence to the Dhamma.

(iii) **Parāmatṭha Sīla, Aparāmatṭha Sīla, Paṭipassaddhi Sīla**

The morality which is adhered to through craving and false view is *Parāmatṭha sīla*.

The morality which is practised by a good worldling as a prerequisite to attain the Path wisdom and that associated with the Path consciousness of sekkha persons (stream-enterers, once-returners, and non-returners) is called *Aparāmatṭha sīla*.

The morality which associates with the Fruition consciousness of sekkha and asekkha persons is *Paṭipassaddhi sīla*.

(iv) **Visuddha Sīla, Avisuddha Sīla, Vematika Sīla**

The morality which is fulfilled without committing an offence or by atoning for an offence committed is *Visuddha sīla*, i.e., pure morality.

The morality of one who has not atoned for an offence committed is *Avisuddha sīla*, i.e., impure morality.

The morality of one who has doubts regarding the object, the offence, or the transgression is *Vematika sīla*, i.e., doubtful morality.

Herein, the meditator should purify his impure *sīla*. When there is doubt, it should be dispelled by not transgressing against the object.

(v) **Sekkhā Sīla, Asekkhā Sīla, Nevāsekkhānāsekkhā Sīla**

Sekkhā sīla is that which associates with the four Paths and with the three lower Fruitions.

Asekkhā sīla is that which associates with the Fruition of Arahantship.

Nevāsekkhānāsekkhā sīla refers to all the remaining mundane *sīlas*.

4. **Tétrads (Catukka) : Different Classifications of Sīla as Four Kinds each**

(i) **The First Tetrad:**

Hānabhāgiya Sīla – retrogressive morality

One with such morality associates with unvirtuous persons, avoids virtuous persons, sees no fault in transgression, harbours wrong thoughts, and does not control the six faculties.

Thitibhāgiya Sīla – stagnant morality

One with such *sīla* is satisfied with the morality which has been achieved; he is contented with virtue and will not strive for a higher state to attain *jhana*, *magga* and *phala*.

Visesabhāgiya Sīla – morality which leans towards distinction

One with such morality is not satisfied with mere pure morality but strives for a higher state to attain *jhāna*, *magga*, and *phala*.

Nibbedhabhāgiya Sīla – morality leading to the Path Wisdom

One with such morality is not contented with mere purity of *sīla* but strives for a higher state by undertaking intensive insight meditation in order to penetrate the greatness of defilements and realize *Nibbāna*.

(ii) The Second Tetrad :

Bhikkhu Sīla – the training precepts prescribed for the monks to observe and the training precepts out of those prescribed for bhikkhunīs which should be observed by monks.

Bhikkhuni Sīla – the morality prescribed for the bhikkhunīs to observe and the training precepts out of those prescribed for bhikkhus which should be observed by bhikkhunīs.

Anupasampanna Sīla – the ten moral precepts prescribed for male and female novices to observe.

Gahaṅṅha Sīla – five training precepts, eight, nine or ten uposatha precepts prescribed for the laity.

(iii) The Third Tetrad :

Pakati Sīla – the natural morality of Uttarakuru human beings who do not transgress pañca sīla (five moral precepts).

Ācāra Sīla – customary morality which refers to traditional rules of conduct in a clan, locality or sect.

Dhammatā Sīla – the morality pertaining to the law of nature: when the Bodhisatta has descended into his mother's womb, she has no thought connected with lust for men.

Pubbahetuka Sīla – the morality due to previous causes. It is the morality of such pure beings as Mahākāssapa and others, and of the Bodhisatta in many births.

(iv) The Fourth Tetrad :

Pātimokkhasamvara Sīla – the morality of Pātimokkha restraint.

Pātimokkha consists of 227 rules for bhikkhus and the rules for bhikkhunīs as training precepts. It is called Pātimokkha because it frees him who protects it, guards it, and it sets him free from the pains of the states of loss. Restraint (*samvara*) is a term for controlling bodily and verbal actions so that no bodily or verbal transgression arises. It prevents the arising of unwholesome things such as defilements at kāya-dvāra (body-door) and vacī-dvāra (tongue door).

The Buddha described this morality thus: "Here a bhikkhu dwells

restrained with the Pātimokkha restraint, possessed of the proper conduct and lawful resort, and seeing fault in the slightest fault, he trains himself by undertaking the precepts of training." (*Vbh.* 244)

Indriyasamvara Sīla – the morality concerning the restraint of the sense faculties to prevent unwholesome things from arising

The Buddha described this morality thus : "On seeing a visible object with the eye, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the eye-faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the eye-faculty, undertakes the restraint of the eye-faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear..... On smelling an odour with the nose On tasting a flavour with the tongue On touching a tangible object with the body On cognizing a mental object with the mind, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty." (*Majjhima Nikāya, i, 180*)

Ājīvapārisuddhi Sīla – the morality concerning the purity of livelihood

It is the abstinence from such wrong livelihood as entails transgression of the six training precepts enacted for the sake of livelihood and entails the evil states beginning with "scheming, talking, hinting, belittling, pursuing gain with gain." (*M, iii, 75*)

A bhikkhu should not obtain his livelihood by a gift of bamboos, of leaves, of flowers, of fruits, of bath-powder, of tooth-sticks, by flattery, by bean-curry talk, by nurturing children, by carrying messages on foot, or by any other means of wrong livelihood loathed by the Buddha.

Paccayasannissita Sīla – the morality concerning the use of the four requisites wisely

“Reflecting wisely, he uses the robe only for protection from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, cold, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of concealing private parts.”

“Reflecting wisely, he uses alms food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for smartening nor for the embellishment, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for the ending of discomfort, and for assisting the life of purity.”

“Reflecting wisely, he uses the resting place only for the purpose of protection from cold, from heat, from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of warding off the perils of climate and enjoying retreat.”

“Reflecting wisely, he uses the requisite of medicine as cure for the sick only, for protection from arisen hurtful feelings and for complete immunity from affliction.” (*Majjhima Nikāya, i, 10*)

Training of Morality and Sīla Visuddhi

The essence of the noble Eightfold Path has been described by the Buddha as the following statement in *Ovāda Pātimokkha*:

*“Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ,
Kusalassa upasampadā,
Sacittaṃ pariyodāpanaṃ
Etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.”*

*“Not to do evil, to do good, and
To purify one’s mind,
This is the advice of all the Buddhas.”*

This simple, logical and practical advice embraces the wisdom of all the Buddhas. It is indeed the best advice for everyone to follow in order to lead a noble and happy life.

By the passage “*sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ*” the Buddha shows that morality is the beginning of the Dispensation (*sāsana*). And this is good because it brings about the special qualities of non-remorse, and so on. One who is virtuous has nothing to be remorseful about.

By the passage “*kusalassa upasampadā*” the Buddha points out that concentration is the middle of the Dispensation. And that is

good because it brings about the special qualities of supernormal power, and so on.

By the passage "*sacittam pariyodāpanam etam Buddhāna sāsanaṃ*" the Buddha shows that overall understanding and total purity of the mind is the end of the Dispensation. And that is good because it brings about equipoise without developing joy or anger with respect to desirable or undesirable sense objects. (*Dhammapada* 183). For this is said:

*"Just as a solid massive rock
Remains unshaken by the wind,
So too, in face of blame and praise
The wise remain immovable."* (Dh. 81)

Also the Buddha made this statement:

*"Ko cādi kusalanam dhammanam
sīlaṅca suvisuddhanti"*

"And what is the beginning of profitable things?"

"Morality that is specially well purified."

This statement also shows that morality is the beginning of all profitable things. (*Samyutta Nikāya*, v, 143)

Again in *Mahāvagga Samyutta*, *Bāhiya Sutta*, the Buddha instructed a monk: "*Bāhiya, you first cleanse the beginning of profitable things. What is the beginning of profitable things? It is well purified morality together with the right view. Bāhiya, when you have established pure morality and the right view, you stand on sīla, depend on sīla, and develop the four foundations of mindfulness.*"

So we should establish pure morality first before we go on developing concentration and wisdom. Lay persons should carefully and willingly observe the five moral precepts of *Pañca sīla* to avoid all the ten unwholesome actions known as "*akusala kammāpathas*", to cultivate ten wholesome actions called "*kusala kammāpathas*" and to purify the mind from gross, violent defilements (*vitikkamaṃ kilesās*).

Then they should develop *adisīla*, i.e., the higher morality that leads to *Nibbāna* when they undertake the noble Eightfold Practice, i.e., the noble Path consisting of the noble Threefold Training. They

should observe the eight or nine moral precepts of Uposatha *sīla* and abide by Catupārisuddhi *sīla* when they practise in a suitable Meditation Centre. The Uposatha *sīla* will serve as Pātimokkhasamvara *sīla* for lay persons. For monks, they must maintain the four kinds of morality that make up Catupārisuddhi *sīla* to be pure in all respects.

Five Moral Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*)

The fundamental training to abide by the advice of all the Buddhas – to avoid all evil, to do good, and to purify the mind – is to observe the five moral precepts. *Pañca-sīla* is the basic code of moral practice for all Buddhists. Everyone should ardently and willingly observe these moral precepts as they lead to a noble way of living and to happiness and prosperity.

The procedure for undertaking *Pañca-sīla* consists of the following five steps.

(1) Asking for Permission to pay Homage

Okāsa Okāsa Okāsa. Oh Venerable Sir, may I pay obeisance to thee! So as to be free from all my offences, accumulated from evil deeds done physically, verbally and mentally, I pay homage to the Three Gems: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, once, twice, thrice, with my joined-palms on my forehead very respectfully and humbly.

Owing to my deeds of merit, may I always be free from the four nether worlds, the three catastrophes (famine, war, epidemic diseases), the eight states unfavourable for the realization of the Dhamma, the five enemies of mankind (water, fire, bad ruler, thief, wicked person), the four laws of destruction or misfortune, the five forms of ruination (loss of kin, wealth, health, morality and right view); and at the final existence may I attain the Path Wisdom (Magga), its Fruition (Phala) and Nibbāna.

(2) Asking for *Pañca-sīla* together with the Noble Threefold Refuge

One can ask for *Pañca-sīla* from the Buddha, a member of Saṅgha or a virtuous teacher.

*Ahaṃ bhante tisaranena saha pañca-sīlaṃ dhammaṃ yācāmi
anuggahaṃ katvā sīlaṃ deatha me bhante.*

Dutiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Tatiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Meaning:

Venerable sir, I wish to observe the five moral precepts together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, venerable sir - - - - -

For the third time, venerable sir - - - - -

Bhikkhu: *Ya mahāṃ vadāmi taṃ vadetha.*

Repeat the words that I say.

Devotee: *Āmabhante.*

Yes, venerable sir.

(3) Paying homage to the Buddha

Namo tassa Bhagavāto Arahato Sammā sambuddhassa.

(Recite three times)

Homage to the exalted One, the One worthy of special veneration, and the perfectly self-enlightened One.

(4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Samghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyampi Samghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatiyampi Samghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Meaning:

I take refuge in the Buddha.

I take refuge in the Dhamma.

I take refuge in the Samgha.

For the second time I take refuge in the Buddha.
 For the second time I take refuge in the Dhamma.
 For the second time I take refuge in the Saṅgha.
 For the third time I take refuge in the Buddha.
 For the third time I take refuge in the Dhamma.
 For the third time I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

Bhikkhu: *Tisaranāgamanam paripunnam.*
 The act of taking the Noble Threefold
 Refuge is completed.

Devotee: *Āmabhante.*
 Yes, venerable sir.

(5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts

1. *Pānātipātā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
 I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from killing any living being.
2. *Ādinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
 I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from stealing others' properties.
3. *Kāmesumicchācārā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
 I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.
4. *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
 I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from telling lies, slandering, speaking harshly, and talking vainly.
5. *Surāmeraya majjappamādatthānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
 I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs.

Bhikkhu: *Tisaranena saha pañcastīlam dhammam sādhu kam katvā appamādena sampādettha.*

Do observe the five precepts together with the
 Three Refuges with diligence and steadfast mindfulness.

Lay-devotee: *Āma bhante.*
 Yes, venerable sir.

● **The Benefits of Observing Pañca-sīla**

1. Since the bodily and verbal actions of a person who diligently observes pañca-sīla are blameless and praiseworthy, he possesses the best moral character.
2. Since he avoids doing harm to any living being, he brings peace and happiness to all living beings including himself.
3. Since he can prevent gross and aggressive defilements such as greed (*lobha*) and anger (*dosa*) from arising in his mind, he enjoys peace and happiness instantly.
4. Loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) bloom in a person of good morality. So his face is calm, serene and adorable. People love and respect him. So he can join any assembly of people with grace and boldness.
5. Pañca-sīla represents the most beautiful and attractive dress as well as the best perfume.

The fragrance of flowers travels not against the wind, nor does the fragrance of sandal-wood and perfumes, but the fragrance of the virtuous travels against the wind pervading every direction, (Dhammapada 54)

6. A virtuous person, because of his mindfulness and diligence, will succeed in business and in amassing riches.
7. His good fame will spread far and wide.
8. In *Asaṅkheya* sutta the Buddha advises a person to keep pure morality if he wishes to win the adoration of his companions, great wealth, fame and high position.

Ijjhati bhikkhave sīlavato cetopanidhi visuddhattā.

All the wishes of a person with pure morality will be fulfilled, because his mind is pure.

9. A person of pure morality will be free from four types of danger:-
 - (1) he is free from the danger of being blamed by himself;
 - (2) he is free from the danger of being blamed or dispraised by others;
 - (3) he is free from the danger of being punished by the law; and

- (4) he will be free from the danger of being reborn in woeful abode after death.
10. He will be free from delusion and perplexity at the time of death, remembering the meritorious deeds he has done.
11. He will be reborn in a blissful abode after death.

Everyone should willingly and diligently observe the moral precepts of *pañca-sīla* as the benefits are very great and the evil consequences are terrible if one breaks the precepts.

If everyone observes *pañca-sīla* diligently, there will be eternal peace in the whole world. Thus *pañca-sīla* is regarded as the 'Guardian of the world'.

There were records of ancient kingdoms where there were severe draught and starvation when the king, his ministers, officers and citizens did not observe *pañca-sīla*.

However, when everyone in the kingdom observed *pañca-sīla* respectfully, the climate became normal with regular rains so that farmers could grow food plants with the result that the kingdom became prosperous.

So *pañca-sīla* is also called '*Nicca sīla*', meaning 'the precepts to be observed always', or '*Garudhamma sīla*', meaning 'the precepts to be observed respectfully and heedfully.'

● *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla (Ādibrahmacariya Sīla)*.

'*Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla*' means 'the moral practice having livelihood as its eighth precept.'

This moral practice is also called '*Ādibrahmacariya Sīla*', meaning 'the moral practice which serves as the beginning of the noble practice.'

Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla consists of eight precepts which directly seek to abide by the three Noble Path constituents that constitute the Training of Morality – namely, *sammā vācā*, *sammā kammanta*, and *sammā ājīva*.

The procedure for undertaking *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla* is the same as that for undertaking *Pañca-sīla*. There is some change only in steps (2) and (5).

- (1) Asking for permission to pay homage – as in *Pañca-sīla*.
- (2) Asking for *Ājīvatthamaka Sīla* together with the Noble Threefold Refuge:

*Ahaṃ bhante tisaranēna saha ājīvatthamaka sīlaṃ dhammaṃ
yūcāmi anuggahāṃ katvā sīlaṃ detha me bhante.*

Duītyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Tatiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Meaning:-

Venerable sir, I wish to observe the eight moral precepts having right livelihood as the eighth precept together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, venerable sir - - - - -

For the third time, venerable sir - - - - -

- (3) Paying homage to the Buddha – as in *Pañca-sīla*.
- (4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge – as in *Pañca-sīla*.
- (5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts
 1. *Pānātipāṇā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from killing any living beings.
 2. *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from stealing others' properties.
 3. *Kāmesumicchācārā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct and the misuse of the senses.
 4. *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from speaking falsely.
 5. *Pisuṇavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from slandering and backbiting.

6. *Pharusavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from using harsh or abusive speech.
7. *Samphappalāpavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from gossiping and talking vainly.
8. *Micchājīvā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*
I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from wrong livelihood.

Bhikkhu : *Tisaranena saha ājīvattḥamaka sīlam dhammam
sādhukam katvā appamādena sampādettha.*

Do observe the eight moral precepts with right livelihood as the eighth precept together with the Noble Threefold Refuge with vigilance and steadfast mindfulness.

Lay-devotee: *Āmabhante.*

Yes, venerable sir.

● The Identity of Pañca-sīla and Ājīvattḥamaka Sīla

Pañca-sīla and *Ājīvattḥamaka Sīla* have the same significance. In *Pañca-sīla* abstaining from all the four immoral speeches are combined as the fourth moral precept. In the fifth precept, instead of abstaining from wrong livelihood, abstaining from consuming intoxicating drinks and drugs is emphasized.

In reality, when one abstains from three immoral bodily actions and four immoral verbal actions, one's livelihood will be automatically right and pure. Of course one has to avoid also any wrong livelihood which brings harm to oneself or to others such as trading in weapons, poison, intoxicants, narcotic drugs, live animals and human beings.

On the other hand, although abstinence from intoxicants is not specifically prescribed in *Ājīvattḥamaka-sīla*, this precept is already included in the third precept (*kāmesumicchācārāvīrati*) which really means abstinence from improper sensual enjoyments. Abstinence from intoxicants is emphasized in *pañca-sīla*, because, when one becomes intoxicated, one loses one's sense of judgement as well as the sense of moral shame and moral dread and then one may com-

mit all immoral actions.

The beginners who want to tread along the Noble Eightfold Path should first observe *Ājivaṭṭhamaka-sīla*. For those, who are observing *Pañca-sīla*, they need not particularly observe *Ājivaṭṭhamaka-sīla*. Nowadays lay-Buddhists usually observe *Pañca-sīla*.

● **Sabbath Precepts (*Uposatha-Sīla*)**

Pious Buddhists usually observe eight or nine moral precepts instead of *Pañca-sīla* on sabbath days to acquire greater merit. These special moral precepts are called sabbath-precepts (*Uposatha-sīla*). '*Uposatha*' means 'living with good conduct'.

In observing Sabbath-precepts, one observes eight or nine precepts and has to abstain from all sexual activity and from taking food after midday till dawn the next day. One must also abstain from enjoying music, songs, dances, and from using perfumes, cosmetics, high or luxurious seats and beds. The purpose of these abstinences is to control one's lust, pride, craving for and attachment to sensuous objects.

Those who undertake meditation in a meditation centre are required to observe sabbath-precepts to purify their minds from lust and other coarse defilements so that they can advance quickly in their meditation.

The procedure for undertaking to observe sabbath-precepts is the same as that for observing *Pañca-sīla* in steps (1), (3), (4); steps (2) and (5) are described in full below.

- (1) Asking for permission to pay homage to the Triple Gem:
Okāsa okāsa okāsa - - - - -
- (2) Asking for Sabbath-precepts together with the Noble
Threefold Refuge

*Ahaṃ bhante tisaraṇena sāha
aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgataṃ (navāṅga sammannāgataṃ)
uposathasīlaṃ dhammaṃ yācāmi anuggahaṃ.
katvā sīlaṃ detha me bhante.*

*Dutiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.
Tatiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.*

Meaning:

Venerable sir, I wish to observe atthaṅga-sīla (navāṅga-sīla) consisting of eight (nine) precepts together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, venerable sir, -----

For the third time, venerable sir, -----

Bhikkhu : *Ya maham vadāmi tam vadetha.*

Repeat the words that I say.

Devotee : *Āma bhante.*

Yes, venerable sir.

- (3) Paying homage to the Buddha
- (4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge
- (5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts

1. *Pāṇātipātā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from killing any living being.

2. *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from stealing others' properties.

3. *Ābrahma-cariyā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from the ignoble practice of sexual intercourse.

4. *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from telling lies, slandering, speaking harshly, and talking vainly.

5. *Surāmerayamajja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from consuming intoxicating drinks and drugs.

6. *Vikālabhojanā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from taking food after midday till dawn the next day.

7. *Nacca gīta vādita visuka dassana mālāgandha vilepana dhāraṇa maṇḍana vibūsanatthānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, which are obstacles to the Noble Practice, and also abstaining from wearing flowers, using perfumes and beautifying with any cosmetic.

8. *Uccāsayana mahāsayanā veramanisikkhā-padam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from staying on any high or luxurious seat or bed.

9. (For observing *Navāṅga-sīla*) *Yathābalaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā sabbavantam lokam phrittivā vihārāmi.*

I shall permeate all living beings with loving-kindness to the best of my ability.

Bhikkhu : *Tisaranena saha aṭṭhaṅga (navāṅga) samannāgatam uposathasīlam dhammam sādhuḥkam katvā appamādena sampādeṭha.*

Lay-devotee : *Āma bhante.*

Yes, venerable sir.

● The Plan to Observe Sabbath Precepts

1. If one intends to observe Uposatha-precepts the next day, one should perform the household work in advance as it is not appropriate to do household work while one observes the sabbath-precepts.

2. On the day one is going to observe the Uposatha-precepts, one should get up early, clean oneself, wear clean clothes and keep one's mind pure.

3. One should neither use perfume and cosmetics nor wear flowers nor beautify oneself in advance. One must restrain from any kind of beautifying oneself which contradicts the Uposatha-precepts.

4. One should undertake to observe the Uposatha-precepts as early as possible on that day.

5. After taking the precepts, one should contemplate the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Saṅgha or undertake a

suitable meditation at a quiet place.

6. One may undertake the sitting-meditation for one hour, the walking meditation for one hour, and repeat the procedure. One can also meditate in the standing or lying position. When one does not want to meditate any more, one may read Dhamma books or recite the teachings of the Buddha.

7. One should also listen to the Dhamma discourse if there is someone to expound the Dhamma, or one may listen to a discourse from a cassette. One may also discuss about the Dhamma with one's dhamma friends.

8. At nightfall one should feel delighted reflecting how one has spent the day like noble persons (ariyas) observing morality, cultivating concentration and wisdom.

9. When dawn breaks the next day, at the time when one intends to come out of the Sabbath-precepts, one's *Uposatha-sīla* automatically terminates, and only *Pañca-sīla* will remain in one.

10. One may undertake to abide by the *Uposatha* precepts either for a certain period or for the whole life. One should at least keep observing the Sabbath precepts for a day on auspicious days.

● The Benefits of Observing Sabbath Precepts

Since *Uposatha-sīla* contains all *Pañca-sīla* precepts and some more, endeavoring to purify the mind further than that achieved by *Pañca-sīla*, the benefit of observing *Uposatha-sīla* will be much greater than those of observing *Pañca-sīla*.

In observing *Uposatha*-precepts, just trying to restrain oneself not to break the precepts will not bring the benefits as much as one deserves to receive. Only when one can try to keep one's mind pure, will the benefits be great and extensive.

As a lady should wash herself and her hair before she tries to beautify herself with various cosmetics, perfumes and ornaments to look beautiful and smell sweet, so should a person, who wants to observe *Uposatha-sīla*, should purify his mind to be free from greed, anger, pride, wrong view, jealousy, and other defilements in order to receive the greatest benefits from observing *Uposatha*-precepts.

1. One who observes Uposatha-sīla will achieve great wealth and power.
2. Even a future universal monarch can become a universal monarch only if he observes Uposatha-precepts.
3. One will achieve progressive benefits of enjoying the great wealth and luxuries of celestial beings and of human beings throughout *samsāra* until one finally attains *Nibbāna*.
4. In the present existence one will be innocent, righteous and good, and thus one will receive great admiration and loving-kindness from many persons as well as from celestial beings.
5. There are many stories of female deities like *Uttarā*, *Soṇadinnā* and *Uposathā*, who received great celestial luxuries for having observed *Uposatha-sīla* in previous existences as human beings.

During the reign of King *Brahmadattha* in ancient *Bārāṇasī*, the *Bodhisatta* was a poor man named *Gaṅgamāla*. He worked for a wealthy man called *Suciparivāra*. The wealthy man and his wife observed *Uposatha-sīla* six days a month. Every servant in their house-hold also did the same.

On one Uposatha day the *Bodhisatta* went to work early in the morning without knowing that it was a sabbath-day. When he came back at sunset he found out that others were observing Uposatha-precepts. So he asked for permission from the wealthy man to allow him to observe Uposatha-sīla for the rest of the day. At night he suffered from severe stomach pain due to flatulence since he had not taken any food for the whole day.

Although the wealthy man told him to take food, he refused to take. At dawn the pain became so severe that he fainted. That morning the king happened to go round the town in great magnificence. On seeing the great splendour of the royal luxury, he longed to be a king, and passed away. Immediately he was conceived in the womb of the queen as the result of keeping the Uposatha-precepts for half a day. When he was born, he was named *Udayakumāra*. When he came of age, he became a famous king of *Bārāṇasī*.

In the ancient city of *Sāketa*, there was a female lay-devotee named *Uposathā*. She was endowed with conviction (*saddhā*) and

morality (*sīla*). She supported the Saṅgha with four main requisites. She usually observed the eight Uposatha-precepts on Uposatha days. She frequently listened to the discourses of the Buddha as well as to those of his disciples. She practised meditation and soon became a stream-enterer.

Now she had heard from some discourses that the *Nandavana Garden* in *Tāvātimsā* heaven was very pleasant and enjoyable. So she wished to be in that garden. When she passed away, she was reborn in *Tāvātimsā* as a celestial maiden, named *Uposathā*, in the *Nandavana Garden*.

The Buddha said, "A person of good morality, because he has a pure mind, will get his desire fulfilled whatever he sets his mind on". This is so because a moral person has a pure volition which, together with his strong will, will fulfil his desire whatever he wishes for.

● Cultivating Catupārisuddhi Sīla

1 Cultivating Pātimokkhasamvara Sīla

Catupārisuddhi Sīla, the morality for overall purity, consists of the four major sīlas called *Pātimokkhasamvara sīla*, *Indriyasamvara sīla*, *Ājivapārisuddhi sīla* and *Paccayasannissita sīla*. Of this four-fold sīla, *Pātimokkhasamvara sīla* should be undertaken by faith (*saddhā*), for it is accomplished by faith. The announcing of training precepts is outside the province of the disciples and the Buddha announced them seeing them to be essential for a pure moral life. So bhikkhus should undertake through faith the training precepts without exception and completely perfect them without regard for life.

For thus has it been said that as a pheasant guards her eggs, or as a yak her tail, or as a mother her only beloved son, or as a one-eyed man his remaining eye, so in the same way one should protect one's morality very prudently and scrupulously (careful to do nothing morally wrong) at all times.

And this also has been said, "So, O king, my disciples do not transgress even for the sake of life the training precepts which I have laid down for them" (*Anguttara*, iv, 201). And in this sense are

to be understood the stories told by Elders bound by thieves in a forest.

It is said that in the Himalayan forest thieves bound an Elder with black creepers and made him lie down. And the Elder, without making the effort to cut the creepers, lay there for seven days undertaking insight meditation. He attained Anāgāmi Magga and Phala, and died as a Non-returner to be reborn in the Brahmā world.

Again, on Tambapanni Isle in Sri Lanka, thieves bound an Elder with string creepers and made him lie down. When a forest fire came, the Elder did not cut the creepers but established insight and attained Nibbāna simultaneously with his death.

Thus, in order to keep the Pātimokkha pure, upright persons may yield their life instead of breaking the moral rules enacted by the World's Saviour.

2 Cultivating Indriyaśamvara Sīla

And as Pātimokkha restraint is to be fulfilled by faith, so should Indriyaśamvara sīla be undertaken with mindfulness (*sati*); for this sīla is accomplished by mindfulness. When the sense faculties are well guarded by mindfulness, they cannot be invaded by covetousness, ill-will, and other defilements.

Here one should recollect Āditta Sutta (the Fire Discourse) in which the Buddha said: "Bhikkhus, it is better to have the eye pierced and stirred by a redhot, burning, blazing, glowing iron rod rather than the apprehension of signs in detail of visible objects cognized by the eye. It is not wise and not profitable to take note of the details of the visible object for these will distinguish a person as a man or a woman and cause defilements to arise in the eye."

When the restraint of the sense faculties is not properly taken, Pātimokkha-śamvara sīla does not endure, does not last long, like a crop not fenced in properly. If the sense faculties are not well guarded, they will be raided by defilements as a village with open gates is by thieves. And lust leaks into his mind as rain does into a badly roofed house.

*"Among the visible objects, sounds, and smells,
And tastes, and tangibles, guard the faculties;
For when these doors are open and unguarded,
Then thieves will come and raid as 'twere a village."*

*"And just as with an ill-roofed house
The rain comes leaking in, so too,
will lust come leaking in for sure*

Upon an undeveloped mind." (Dhammapada 13)

When the restraint of the sense faculties is properly taken, Pātimokkhasaṃvara sīla does endure and last long, like a crop well fenced in. And it is not raided by the robber defilements, as a village with well-guarded gates is not by thieves. And lust does not leak into his mind, as rain does not into a well-roofed house.

The mind is very swift and flighty. So restraint of the faculties should be accomplished by removing arisen lust with the contemplation of foulness, as was done by Venerable Vaṅḡisa soon after he had been ordained. As he was going about for alms-food in the city, lust arose in him on seeing a very beautiful woman. Thereupon he said to venerable Ananda:

"Reverend sir, I am afire with sensual lust, and burning flames consume my mind. I pray thee to have pity on me and tell me how to extinguish it."

The Elder said, "Your mind is aflame through wrong perception. Look for no sign of beauty there, for it is that which leads to lust. Develop the meditation on foulness and concentrate your mind on the sign of foulness. See all formations as alien, as ill, as suffering as they arise and dissolve incessantly. Don't look at them as self or person; extinguish that powerful lust and don't let it burn you ever and again."

Venerable Vaṅḡisa expelled this lust and went on with his alms round. (*Samyutta Nikāya, i, 188*)

Moreover, a bhikkhu who is fulfilling restraint of the faculties should be like the Elder Cittagutta, who lived in the great Kurandaka cave, and like the Elder Mahāmitta, who lived in the great Coraka monastery.

In the Kurandaka cave, there were paintings of the Renunciation of the Seven Buddhas. A number of bhikkhus wandering about among the dwellings saw the paintings and said: "What a lovely painting, venerable sir!"

The Elder said, "For more than sixty years, friends, I have lived in this cave, and I did not know that there are lovely paintings on the walls of the cave. Now, today, I know them through those with good vision."

It is evident that the Elder had never raised his eyes and looked up at the walls of the cave. And he had never looked up either at a great ironwood tree that was at the entrance of the cave. He knew it was in flower when he saw its petals on the ground each year.

The king heard of the Elder's great virtues, and sent for him three times, desiring to pay homage to him. When the Elder did not go, the king had the breasts of all the women with infants in the town bound with cloth and sealed off, saying, "As long as the Elder does not come, let the children cry without milk."

Out of compassion for the children the Elder went to Mahāgāma. The king had him brought up into the inner palace, paid homage to him and offered food for a meal. During his stay for seven days at the palace, whether it was the king who paid homage or whether it was the queen, the Elder said, "May the king be happy."

Bhikkhus asked, "Why is it, venerable sir, that whether it is the king or the queen who pays homage, you always say 'May the king be happy?'" The Elder replied, "Friends, I do not take notice whether it is the king or the queen."

The king noticed that the Elder was not happy in the palace, so he allowed the Elder to go back to the great cave at Kurandaka. When he was back at his dwelling place, he undertook meditation the whole night, walking to and fro in the cave.

A deity who dwelt on the ironwood tree stood by with a torch of sticks. Then the Elder was glad to note that his meditation subject became very clear and plain. Immediately after the middle watch he reached Arahantship, making the whole rock resound.

The Elder Mahā Mitta's mother was sick with a poisoned

breast tumour. As she was not cured by any available medicine, she sent her daughter, who was a bhikkhunī, to her brother for some medicine. She went and told him.

The Elder said, "I do not know how to gather roots and shrubs and concoct a medicine from them. But I will tell you a medicine: since I went forth I have not broken my training precepts for restraining the sense faculties by looking at the bodily form of the opposite sex with lust. By this declaration of truth may my mother get well. Go and tell mother this and rub her body."

She went to her mother and repeated the declaration of truth as she rubbed her mother's breast. At that very moment, the breast tumour vanished, shrinking away like a lump of froth. The mother got up and uttered a cry of joy: "If the Buddha were still alive, why should he not stroke with his hand the head of a bhikkhu like my son?"

3 Cultivating Ājīvapārisuddhi Sīla

Ājīvapārisuddhi Sīla, the purification of livelihood, should be undertaken by means of energy (*vīriya*) for this sīla is accomplished by energy, because the abandoning of wrong livelihood is effected in one who has rightly applied energy. With energy one abandons improper wrong search and pursues the right kind of search by going on alms round, etc., avoiding what is of impure origin as though it were a poisonous snake, and acquiring requisites of pure origin.

He must not transgress the six training precepts prescribed by the Buddha with respect to livelihood. So he must strictly observe the following precepts.

(i) With livelihood as cause and reason, one with evil wishes, a prey to evil wishes, lays claim to a higher property of noble persons, by saying that he attains jhāna, magga and phala though he does not possess them.

(ii) With livelihood as cause and reason, he acts as go-between or matchmaker.

(iii) With livelihood as cause and reason, he falsely states that 'a

bhikkhu who lives in your monastery is an Arahant.'

(iv) With livelihood as cause and reason, he eats superior food that he has ordered for his own use though he is not sick.

(v) With livelihood as cause and reason, a bhikkhuni who is not sick eats superior food that she has ordered for her own use.

(vi) With livelihood as cause and reason, one who is not sick eats curry or cooked rice that he has ordered for his own use.

Moreover, a bhikkhu must avoid the improper search by scheming, talking, hinting, belittling, pursuing gain with gain with evil wishes to receive greater gain, honour and renown.

Scheming is rejecting requisites with the evil intention of getting more and better requisites. Here householders invite bhikkhus to accept robes, alms food, resting place and medicine. One with evil wishes says, "What has an ascetic to do with expensive robes, expensive alms food, expensive resting place and expensive medicine? It is proper for an ascetic to gather rags from a charnel ground and make them into a patch-work cloak to wear. It is proper for an ascetic to go on alms round daily and to live under a tree."

Accordingly he wears a coarse robe, eats coarse alms food, uses a coarse resting place and coarse medicine. Householders think "This ascetic has few wishes, is content, is secluded and strenuous." So they offer him expensive robes, good alms food, good resting places and expensive medicine.

Talking is talking round, persuading, suggesting, flattery and bean-soupery with evil wishes to get requisites. Flattery is speaking humbly, always maintaining an attitude of inferiority. Bean-soupery is resemblance to bean soup; for just as when beans are cooked, only a few do not get coked and the rest get cooked, so too talking with a little truth and much false is called bean-soupery.

Hinting is giving a sign or making an indirect talk or round-about talk with the evil intention of getting requisites. Once a bhikkhu who was supported by a family went into the house wanting to eat and sat down. The hostess was unwilling to give. Saying that there was no rice, she went to a neighbour's house as though to get rice.

The bhikkhu went into the store-room. Looking round, he saw sugarcane in a corner, sugar in a bowl, a string of salt fish in a basket, rice in a jar and ghee in a pot. He came out and sat down. When the housewife came back, she said, "I did not get any rice."

The bhikkhu said, "Lay follower, I saw a sign just now that alms will not be easy to get today ... I saw a snake that was like a sugarcane in a corner, and looking for something to hit it with, I saw a stone like a lump of sugar in a bowl. When the snake was hit by the stone, it spread out a hood like a string of salt fish in a basket, and its teeth were like rice grains in a jar. Then the saliva mixed with poison that came out to its mouth in its fury was like ghee put in a pot."

The housewife had to offer him the sugarcane, cooked the rice and gave it all to him with the ghee, the sugar and the fish.

Belittling means abusing, reproaching, ridiculing, and backbiting with the evil intention of receiving gain, honour and renown.

Pursuing gain with gain is seeking for, seeking out, going in search of material goods by means of material goods, such as carrying to there goods that have been received from here, or carrying here goods that have been got from there with the evil intention of receiving gain, honour and renown.

In connection with observing *Ājivapārisuddhi sīla*, the story of Venerable Sāriputta should be told. He was once cultivating seclusion in a certain forest with the Elder Mahā Moggallāna. One day an affliction of colic or severe flatulence arose in him, causing him great pain. In the evening Mahā Moggallāna went to attend upon him. Seeing him lying down, he asked what the reason was. On knowing the reason he asked, "What used to make you better formerly, friend?"

Sāriputta said, "When I was a layman, my mother used to give me rice gruel prepared from pure milk, ghee, honey and sugar. That used to make me better."

"So be it, friend. If either you or I have merit, perhaps tomorrow we shall get some," said the other.

Now a deity who dwelt on a tree at the end of the walk over-

heard their conversation. He went to the family who was supporting the Elder Sāriputta, and entered the body of the eldest son, causing him discomfort. Relatives gathered around the son and asked for the reason.

"It you prepare rice gruel from pure milk, ghee, honey and sugar tomorrow for the Elder, I will set the boy free," said the deity.

"Well, even without being told by you, we regularly supply the Elder's needs," said the boy's parents. On the following day they prepared rice gruel of the kind needed.

Reverend Moggallāna came in the morning and said, "Stay here, friend, till I came back from the alms round." Then he went into the village. Those people met him, took his bowl and filled it with the rice gruel specially prepared. When the Elder made as though to go, they said, "Please eat here, we shall give you more."

When he had eaten, they gave him another bowlful. He left taking the alms food to Venerable Sāriputta. He handed the bowl to the latter, saying "Here, friend, eat."

Venerable Sāriputta looked at the rice gruel and thought, "The gruel is very nice. How was it obtained?" And pondering and seeing how it had been obtained through the persuasion of the deity, he said, "Friend, the alms food cannot be used."

Instead of thinking "He does not eat the alms food brought by the likes of me," Mahā Moggallāna at once took the bowl by the rim and turned it over on one side. As the rice gruel fell on the ground Sāriputta's affliction vanished. From then on it did not appear again during forty five years.

Venerable Sāriputta said to his friend, "Friend, even if my hungry bowels came out and trail on the ground, it was not fit to eat gruel got by verbal intimation.

And here too should be told the story of the Elder Mahā Tissa, the Mango-eater, who lived in Ciragumba. He was going on a journey during a famine. Being tired in body and weak through lack of food and travel weariness, he lay down at the root of a mango tree covered with fruit. There were many fallen mangoes

here and there. Though ownerless mangoes were lying on the ground near him, he would not eat them in the absence of someone to accept them from.

Then a lay man, who was older than he, came by and ate the mangoes. When the man came to know about his exhaustion, he gave him mango juice to drink. Then he mounted him on his back and took him to the village nearby.

Meanwhile the Elder admonished himself thus: "Neither your mother nor your father nor your relatives and kin had done as much as this for you because of your pure morality. You must return his gratitude with meditation."

So, stirred with urgency, he undertook meditation, and, comprehending the three characteristics of existence, developed insight. Then, while he was still mounted on the man's back, he attained Arahantship.

4 Cultivating Paccayasannissita Sīla

Paccayasannissita sīla is to be undertaken by means of understanding (*paññā*). For this sīla is accomplished by understanding, because one who possesses understanding is able to see the advantages and the dangers in requisites. So one should accomplish this morality by using requisites obtained lawfully and properly, after reviewing them with understanding in the way aforesaid.

Herein, reviewing is of two kinds: at the time of receiving requisites and at the time of using them. For use is blameless in one who at the time of receiving robes, alms food, etc., reviews them either as elements or as repulsive, and in one who reviews them thus at the time of using them.

Besides there are four kinds of use of requisites: use as theft, use as debt, use as an inheritance, use as a master. Herein, use by one who is unvirtuous is called 'use as theft'. Use without reviewing by one who is virtuous is 'use as debt'. Use of the requisites by the seven kinds of *sekkha* persons is called 'use as an inheritance' for they are the Buddha's sons. Use by Arahants is called 'use as a master'; because they have escaped the slavery of craving. One

should use requisites as a master or as an inheritance.

The way to review requisites as elements is this: "This robe, food, etc., consists merely of the four elements. It is formed when conditions are favourable and dissolves soon after it has been formed. The same thing is true with the person who uses it."

One reviews requisites as repulsive in this way: "This robe, food, etc., which is not in itself disgusting, becomes utterly disgusting on reaching this filthy body."

In connection with fulfilling Paccayasaniṣṣita Sīla, the story of the novice Saṅgharakkhita the Nephew should be told. On seeing him eating a dish of rice, quite cold, his preceptor reminded him: "Novice, if you are not reviewing what you eat, you will burn your tongue."

On hearing the preceptor's words, the novice felt urged to act. So he reviewed the food and carried on his meditation. And, sitting in a single session, he reached the goal of Arahantship.

And so should any other man

Aspiring to end suffering

Make use of all the requisites

Wisely after reviewing them.

When an upright ordinary worldling can maintain the fourfold Parisuddhi sīla perfectly pure without even the stain of a wrong thought because of its extreme purity, this pure morality known as 'sīlavisuddhi' becomes the proximate cause for Arahantship itself.

Here the story of the Elder Saṅgharakkhita should be cited. The Elder, aged over eighty, was lying on his death-bed. The Order of Bhikkhus questioned him about his attainment of the supramundane state. The Elder said, "I have no supramundane state."

Then the young bhikkhu who was attending on him said, "Venerable sir, people have come from as much as twelve leagues away, thinking that you have reached Nibbāna. It will be a disappointment for many if you die as an ordinary man."

The Elder said, "Friend, intending to see the Blessed One Metteyya, I did not try for insight. So help me to sit up and give me

the chance.”

The attendant helped the Elder to sit up and went out. As he went out the Elder reached Arahantship and he gave a sign by snapping his fingers. The Order assembled and said to him, “Venerable sir, you have done a marvellous thing in achieving the supramundane state in a short instant in the hour of death.”

The Elder said, “That was not difficult, friends. But rather I will tell you what is more difficult. Friends, I see no action done by me without mindfulness and unknowingly since the time I went forth.”

● Defiling of Morality

What is the defiling of morality ?

When the moral precepts are broken, torn, pierced, blotched or mottled, the morality is said to be defiled. The breaking, tearing, etc., of the moral precepts occur on account of gain, fame, relatives, life, etc., or due to the sevenfold association with sexual feeling.

When a man has broken his training precepts at the beginning or at the end in any instance of the seven classes of offences, his *sīla* is torn, like a cloth that is cut at the edge. (The seven classes of offences are *pārajikā*, *saṅghadisesā*, *pācittiya*, *pātidēsaniyā*, *dukkatā*, *thullaccayā*, and *dubbhāsita*.)

But When he has broken the moral precepts in the middle, it is called pierced, like a cloth that is pierced in the middle. When two or three moral precepts are broken in succession, the *sīla* is called blotched, like a cow having black or red blotches on the back or the belly. When alternate moral precepts are broken all over the training course or if the moral training is broken at intervals, the *sīla* is said to be mottled, like a cow with spots or areas of different colours without a regular pattern.

These show how the morality is broken or defiled on account of gain, fame, relatives, bodily organs, one's own life, etc.

The morality is also defiled by association with seven types of minor sexuality.

● **Seven Types of Minor Sexuality**

1. A person claims to lead a life of moral purity for he does not enter into actual sexual intercourse with women. Yet he agrees to massage, manipulation, bathing and rubbing down by women. He enjoys it, desires it, and takes satisfaction in it.
2. Although he does not agree to these things, yet he jokes, plays and amuses himself with women.
3. He gazes and stares at women eye to eye.
4. He listens to the voice of women through a wall or through a fence as they laugh or talk or sing or weep.
5. He recalls laughs and talks and games that he formerly had enjoyed with women.
6. He sees and appreciates a wealthy man or the son of a wealthy man surrounded with five kinds of senses and indulging in sensual pleasure.
7. He leads the life of purity longing for the luxuries of deities, thinking "Through this morality or this moral training I shall become a great deity or some lesser deity.

In each of the above cases, he enjoys it, desires it, and takes satisfaction in it. On account of this, the morality of one who leads the life of purity is torn, pierced, blotched, mottled and defiled.

He is said to lead a life of purity that is unclean. As he is bound by the bond of minor sexuality, he will not be released from birth, ageing, death, worry, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. So he will not emancipate from suffering.

● **Cleansing of Morality**

What is the cleansing of morality?

When the moral precepts are not broken, not torn, not pierced, not blotched, and not mottled, the morality is said to be clean and pure.

Cleansing of morality is accomplished :

- (i) By the complete non-breaking of the training precepts for the purpose of gain, fame, relatives, bodily organs or one's own life;

- (ii) By making amends for those broken by the faults of negligence, etc.;
- (iii) By the absence of the seven bonds of minor sexuality;
- (iv) By the non-arising of such evil things as anger, enmity, ungratefulness, domineering, envy, avarice, deceit, treachery, obstinacy, arrogance, pride, haughtiness, conceit and heedlessness;
- (v) By the arising of such good qualities as fewness of desires, contentment and austerity. (*M.Sutta* 24)

Such morality, not broken for the purpose of gain, fame, etc., and rectified by making amends for those broken, and not damaged by the bonds of minor sexuality and by such evil things as anger, enmity, etc., is called entirely unbroken, not pierced, unblemished, and unmottled.

This unbroken and pure morality is called '*bhujissa sīla*' as it revolts against craving and liberates one from the enslavement by craving. It is called '*viññūpasatṭha sīla*' as it is praised by the wise and '*aparāmatṭha sīla*' as it is not destroyed by craving and wrong views. It is conducive to concentration as it conduces to either access concentration or ecstatic (*jhāna*) concentration.

The cleaning of morality comes about in two ways: through seeing the dangers of impure morality, and through seeing the benefits of pure morality.

● The Disadvantages of Impure Morality

The disadvantages of broken and impure morality should be understood from the discourses beginning "O bhikkhus, there are these five dangers for the unvirtuous who fail to keep pure morality."

(*A. iii, 252*)

Moreover, on account of impure morality,

1. An unvirtuous person is displeasing to deities and human beings.
2. He is not admonished by his co-residents to lead the life of purity.
3. He suffers when unvirtuousness is censured and feels remorseful when the virtuous are praised.

4. He is as dull and ugly as hemp cloth owing to his unvirtuousness.
5. Contact with him is painful because those who fall in with his views are brought to long-lasting suffering in woeful abodes.
6. He is worthless because he causes no great fruit to arise in those who offer him requisites.
7. He is hard to purify as a cesspit many years old.
8. He is like a log from a pyre for he is outside both recluseship and the lay state. Though he claims to be a bhikkhu, he is no bhikkhu, so he is like a donkey following a herd of cattle.
9. He is always nervous and scared like a man who is everyone's enemy.
10. He is as unfit to live with as a dead carcass.
11. Though he may have the qualities of learning, he is unfit for the homage of his fellows as a charnel ground fire is unfit for the homage of brahmans.
12. He is as incapable of reaching the distinction of attaining jhāna, magga and phala as a blind man is of seeing a visible object.
13. He is hopeless for treading along the Noble Eightfold Path and reaching its goal as a beggar-boy is of a kingdom.
14. Although he fancies he is happy, yet he suffers because he reaps suffering as mentioned in the Discourse of the Mass of Fire (*Aggikkhandhopama Sutta, A:iv, 128-134*).

What pleasure has a bhikkhu of broken sīla for not forsaking sense pleasures, which bear fruit of pain more violent than the pain in the embracing of a great mass of fire burning, blazing and glowing?

What pleasure has he in accepting homage if he, having failed in moral training, has to suffer pain that will excel in agony the crushing of his legs with horse-hair ropes?

What pleasure has a bhikkhu, devoid of virtue, in accepting salutations of his devotees, which will result in pain more severe than the pain produced by stabbing with a spear?

What is the pleasure in the use of garments for one without restraint, whereby he will be for long forced to wear a blazing iron sheet in hell?

Although to him his alms food may seem tasty, it is direct poison because of which he surely will have to swallow for long burning iron balls.

And when the virtueless make use of couches and chairs, though reckoned to be pleasing, it is pain because they will be tortured long indeed on red-hot blazing iron beds and chairs.

Then what delight is there for one unvirtuous in occupying a dwelling given in faith, since for that reason he will have to dwell shut up inside a blazing iron pan?

The Teacher of the whole world described an unvirtuous person in terms of 'a person of suspect habits, full of corruption', 'a worthless person like rubbish', 'a lustful person drenched with defilements,' 'a wicked and evil person rotten within.'

What is the life he leads, since virtuous persons avoid him as those who like to decorate themselves with ornaments keep far away from dung or from a corpse?

● The Advantages of Pure Morality

1. Having seen the disadvantages or dangers of impure morality, one should see the benefits of perfected pure morality in the opposite sense.
2. A bhikkhu of pure morality wears his robes and uses his bowl gracefully. His manner gives pleasure and inspires respect towards him. His going forth will bear its fruit.
3. Self-reproach cannot enter the heart of a bhikkhu of pure morality as no darkness can enter sun-light.
4. As the moon endowed with bright light shines gracefully in the sky, so does the bhikkhu with pure morality shine forth in the Ascetics' wood. (*M. Suttas 31 and 32*)
5. Now if the bodily perfume of virtuous bhikkhus can please even deities, what will be the perfume of his virtue? The perfume of morality surpasses all other perfumes. It diffuses

through all directions up to celestial abodes.

6. The meritorious deeds such as offering the four requisites to a virtuous bhikkhu, though they may be few, will bear much fruit. So he becomes the centre of honour and devotional offering.
7. There are no cankers at all here and now to plague (inflict) the virtuous bhikkhu; he digs out the roots of suffering in the lives to come.
8. If he wishes for human luxuries or celestial luxuries, he can easily attain them. But his mind seeks no other thing than the happiness of Nibbāna, the state where utter peace prevails.
9. Such is the blessed fruit of pure morality, materializing in many varied forms. So let a wise man know all the benefits of pure morality, which is the root of all worldly and supramundane happiness.

● Morality as the Foundation of Meditation

Sīla has the characteristic of composing (*stīlana*) in the sense of keeping bodily and verbal actions well and also in the sense of upholding wholesome states such as concentration and wisdom.

In undertaking moral training we indirectly control our mind not to transgress moral precepts by keeping our bodily and verbal actions well. By doing so we also suppress gross, violent defilements (*vitikkama kilesās*) not to arise in the mind. So we are purifying our mind from aggressive defilements to reach the state of 'sīlavisuddhi', i.e., moral purity.

A person who clearly sees the disadvantages and dangers of impure morality and the benefits of pure morality will cultivate pure morality. When he attains pure morality, he no longer wishes for human luxuries or celestial luxuries. His mind seeks no other thing than the happiness of Nibbāna. So the state of pure morality called 'Sīla-visuddhi' is conducive to concentration and wisdom.

After taming and culturing the mind to be free from gross, violent defilements, it is proper to proceed to the next step for taming the mind further by undertaking mental training called 'Tran-

quillity Meditation' (*Samatha bhāvanā*) in order to purify the mind from moderate defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās*) which have arisen in the mind and kept agitating the mind.

The Buddha had pointed out that well purified morality is the beginning of all profitable things (*S.v,143*). He also advised the monk Bāhiya to cleanse first the beginning of profitable things which consist of well purified morality together with the right view. "Bāhiya, when you have established pure morality and right view, you stand on *sīla*, rely on *sīla*, and develop the four foundations of mindfulness." (*Mahāvagga Samyutta, Bāhiya Sutta*)

Also according to the seven stages of purifying the mind, one must first cultivate moral purity (*sīla visuddhi*) and then mental purity (*citta visuddhi*) which is the mind tree from all defilements. To cultivate mental purity, one must undertake tranquillity meditation. Thus moral purity is truly the foundation of meditation.

When an upright ordinary person can maintain the fourfold Pārisuddhi *sīla* perfectly pure without even the stain of a wrong thought, that pure morality known as 'sīlavisuddhi' becomes the proximate cause for Arahantship itself as it has been demonstrated by the Elder Saṅgharakkhita and the Elder Cittagutta.

So we should ardently develop perfectly pure morality to lay down the strong foundation of tranquillity and insight meditation.

Referenses :

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5. *Digha Nikāya, ii, 86, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta.*
6. *Mahāvagga Samyutta, Bāhiya Sutta.*
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8. *Samatha (Basic level) by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, pp.28-46.*
9. *Samatha (Higher level), vol. I, pp.32-78.*

Review Questions

1. What is *sīla*? In what sense is it called *sīla*?
2. Describe the fivefold restraint which represents *sīla*.
3. What are the characteristic, the function, the manifestation and the proximate cause of *sīla*?
4. Describe the different classifications of *sīla* as two kinds each.
5. Explain briefly (i) *cāritta sīla* and *vāritta sīla*, (ii) *Abhisamācārika sīla* and *Ādibrahmacārika sīla*, (iii) *Nissita sīla* and *Anissita sīla*, (iv) *Kālapariyanta sīla* and *Āpānakotika sīla*.
6. Describe the different classifications of *sīla* as three kinds each.
7. Differentiate the following : (i) *Hīna sīla*, *Majjhima sīla*, and *Pañita sīla*, (ii) *Attāhipateyya sīla*, *Lokāhipateyya sīla* and *Dhammāhipateyya sīla*.
8. Describe the following *sīlas* briefly to show their differences: (i) *Hānabhāgiya sīla*, *Thūtibhāgiya sīla*, and *Visesabhāgiya sīla*, *Nibbedhabhāgiya sīla*; (ii) *Pakati sīla*, *Ācāra sīla*, *Dhammatā sīla* and *Pubbahetuka sīla*.
9. What is *Pātimokkhasamvara sīla*? How should it be fulfilled?
10. What is *Indriyasamvara sīla*? How should it be undertaken?
11. How should a bhikkhu accomplish *Ājivapārisuddhi sīla*?
12. Should lay devotees practise *Paccayasaniissita sīla*? How should it be practised?
13. What is morality (*sīla*)? What is the objective of moral training? What is meant by *sīlavissuddhi*?
14. Describe the full procedure for undertaking to observe 'Pañca sīla'.

15. Can we avoid all evil actions by observing *Pañca stla*? What are the benefits of observing this *sīla*?
16. Should we observe *Upasatha stla* on sabbath days? How should we plan to observe it?
17. Describe the full procedure for undertaking to observe '*Aṭṭhaṅga Stla*'.
18. How should a person undertake moral training to attain *sīlavisuddhi*?
19. Describe the fourfold morality called *Catupārisuddhi sīla*.
20. What is *sīlavisuddhi*? How should one cultivate *catuparisuddhi sīla* to attain *sīlavisuddhi*?
21. In what ways is morality defiled? What are the dangers of impure morality?
22. How is morality cleansed? What are the benefits of pure morality?
23. Why is well-purified morality regarded as the foundation of meditation?

CHAPTER II CONCENTRATION

(*Samādhi*)

What is 'Concentration' or 'Samādhi' ?

Concentration (*samādhi*) is the profitable unification of the mind on a sense object, or the harmony of consciousness and its concomitants in focusing on a single sense object.

Concentration stands for *ekaggatā cetasika*, a mental factor, present in wholesome consciousness (*kusala citta*). *Ekaggatā* unites the consciousness and its concomitants to be at the state of one pointedness on a sense object.

In What Sense is it called Concentration ?

It is called concentration in the sense of placing well (*samādhāna*). What is this placing well? It is the placing and centering of consciousness and its concomitants harmoniously, evenly and rightly on a single object without letting the mind disperse and scatter towards various objects.

In other words, concentration is the state of mind, by virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants remain harmoniously and rightly on a single object undistracted and unscattered.

What are its Characteristic, Function, Manifestation and Proximate Cause?

(i) Characteristic (*Lakkhana*)

Concentration has the characteristic of non-distraction (*avikkhepa*), that is, it unites its concomitants and places them well on a sense object, without letting them scatter to various sense objects.

(ii) Function (*Rasa*)

The function of concentration is to destroy restlessness (*uddhacca*). It is endowed with the property of destroying *uddhacca*.

(iii) Manifestation (*Paccupaṭṭhāna*)

Concentration is manifested as non-wavering. It appears to the mind of meditators as unshakability.

(iv) Proximate Cause (*Paḍaṭṭhāna*)

The proximate cause of concentration is bliss (*sukha*) in accordance with the statement: "Being blissful, his mind becomes concentrated." (*D.i, 73*)

● Different Kinds of Concentration

How many kinds of concentration are there?

1. One (*Eka*)

Firstly all concentration is of one kind by virtue of the characteristic of non-distraction.

2. Dyads (*Duka*): Different Classifications of Concentration as Two Kinds each(i) *Upacāra Samādhi*, *Appanā Samādhi*

The concentration is of two kinds as access or neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and absorption or *jhāna* concentration (*appanā samādhi*).

The highest concentration attainable in undertaking *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Samghānussati*, *Sīlānussati*, *Cāgānussati*, *Devatānussati*, *Marāṇānussati*, *Upasāmañussati*, *Añarepatikūlasaññā*, and *Catudhātuvavatthāna* is the access concentration. It is also the concentration that precedes absorption concentration.

The absorption concentration (*jhāna-samādhi*) is the concentration which follows immediately upon the preparatory work (*Gotrabhu*) in accordance with the statement: "The first-*jhāna* preparatory work is a proximity condition for the first *jhāna* itself."

At the state of access concentration, the *jhāna* factors—*vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*—are quite strong, but not fully developed. At the state of absorption concentration, however, the *jhāna* factors are very strong and fully developed. So they can keep the mind well united and focussed on the meditation subject for a long time, allowing the meditator to experience ecstatic joy (*pīti*) and great bliss (*sukha*) which he has never experienced before.

After attaining the absorption, the meditator can enjoy the calmness, serenity, joy and bliss of the *jhāna* again and again as much as he wishes. If he practises well, he can remain in absorption for an hour, two hours, a day, two days or up to seven days. During this absorption, there is a complete, though temporary, suspension of fivefold sense-activity and of the five hindrances (*nivaraṇas*); the state of consciousness is, however, fully alert and lucid.

(ii) *Lokiya Samādhi* and *Lokuttara Samādhi*

The concentration is also of two kinds as mundane concentration (*lokiya samādhi*) and supramundane concentration (*lokuttara samādhi*).

Lokiya samādhi is the *ekaggatā cetasika* which associates with the moral minds (*kusala cittas*) of the sense sphere (*kāma-loka*), the fine material sphere (*rūpa-loka*) and the immaterial sphere (*arūpa-loka*).

The *ekaggatā* or concentration which associates with the noble paths or *ariyamagga cittas* is called supramundane concentration.

(iii) *Sappītika Samādhi* and *Nippītika Samādhi*

The concentration (*ekaggatā*) which associates together with joy (*pīti*) with the first two *rūpāvacara cittas* in the fourfold system or with the first three *rūpāvacara cittas* in the fivefold system is called the concentration with joy (*sappītika samādhi*).

The concentration which associates with the two remaining *rūpāvacara cittas* containing no joy (*pīti*) is called the concentration without joy (*nippītika samādhi*).

(iv) *Sukhasahagatā Samādhi*, *Upekkhāsahagatā Samādhi*

The concentration (*ekaggatā*) which associates with the first three *rūpāvacara cittas* in the fourfold system or with the first four *rūpāvacara cittas* in the fivefold system is called the concentration accompanied by bliss (*Sukhasahagatā samādhi*).

The concentration which associates with the remaining *rūpāvacara citta* is called the concentration accompanied by equanimity (*upekkhāsahagatā samādhi*). The access concentration may be either *sukhasahagatā* or *upekkhāsahagatā*.

3. Triads (*Tika*): Different Classifications of Concentration as Three Kinds each

(i) Hīna Samādhi, Majjhima Samādhi, Pañita Samādhi

The concentration is of three kinds as inferior concentration (*hīna samādhi*), medium concentration (*majjhima samādhi*) and superior concentration (*pañita samādhi*).

The concentration which has only just been acquired is inferior concentration. What is not very well developed is medium concentration. What is well developed and has reached mastery is superior concentration.

(ii) Savitakka Savicāra Samādhi, Avitakka Vicāramatta Samādhi, Avitakka Avicāra Samādhi

The concentration with vitakka and vicāra (*savitakka savicāra samādhi*) is the concentration of the first rūpavacara jhāna together with access concentration.

The concentration without vitakka but with only vicāra and the higher jhāna factors (*Avitakka vicāramatta samādhi*) is the concentration of the second rūpavacara jhāna in the fivefold system. For when a man sees danger only in vitakka and not in vicāra, he aspires to abandon only vitakka when he tries to develop the second rūpavacara jhāna, and so he attains concentration without vitakka and with vicāra only.

The concentration without vitakka and without vicāra (*Avitakka avicāra samādhi*) is the concentration of the three rūpavacara jhānas beginning with the second jhāna in the fourfold system and with the third jhāna in the fivefold system.

(iii) Pīṭisahagata Samādhi, Sukhasahagata Samādhi, Upekkhāsahagata Samādhi

The concentration of the first two rūpavacara jhānas in the fourfold system and that of the first three rūpavacara jhānas in the fivefold system are the concentration with joy (*pīṭisahagata samādhi*).

The concentration of those same jhānas as well as of the third and the fourth respectively in the two systems is the concentration with bliss (*sukhasahagata samādhi*).

The concentration of the fourth and the fifth rūpāvacara jhānas in the two systems is called the concentration with equanimity (*upekkhāsahagata samādhi*).

The access concentration may be accompanied by joy and bliss or by equanimity.

(iv) Paritta Samādhi, Mahaggata Samādhi and Appamāna Samādhi

The access concentration which associates with kāmāvacara kusala citta is the limited concentration (*paritta samādhi*).

The concentration which associates with rūpāvacara kusala cittas as well as with arūpāvacara kusala cittas is the exalted concentration (*mahaggata samādhi*).

The concentration which associated with the noble paths (ariya magga cittas) is the measureless concentration (*appamāna samādhi*).

4. Tetrads (Catukka): Different Classifications of Concentration as Four Kinds each

(i) The first Tetrad:

Dukkhaṭṭipadā dandhābiññā samādhi – the concentration of painful progress and sluggish direct-knowledge;

Dukkhaṭṭipadā khippābhiññā samādhi – the concentration of painful progress and swift direct-knowledge;

Sukhaṭṭipadā dandhābiññā samādhi – the concentration of blissful progress and sluggish direct-knowledge;

Sukhaṭṭipadā khippābhiññā samādhi – the concentration of blissful progress and swift direct-knowledge.

Herein, the development of concentration from the time the meditator starts reflecting on the meditation to the time he attains the sense-sphere access concentration (*kāmāvacara upacārā samādhi*) of the respective jhāna is called 'progress' (*ṭṭipadā*).

And the understanding that arises from the time of access jhāna to the time absorption occurs is called 'direct knowledge' (*abhiññā*).

The progress for some meditators is difficult and painful due to the continuous and abundant arising of opposing forces such as the

hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*). It is easy and blissful for others if those opposing forces are not in abundance. Also the direct-knowledge is slow and sluggish in some whereas it occurs swiftly and rapidly in others.

Herein, we shall have to take into consideration the suitability and unsuitability, the preparatory tasks of severing impediments, etc., and the skill in absorption:

When a man cultivates what is unsuitable, his progress is difficult and painful, and his direct knowledge sluggish. When he cultivates what is suitable, his progress is easy and blissful, and his direct knowledge swift.

On the other hand, if he cultivates the unsuitable in the earlier stage and the suitable in the later stage, or if he cultivates the suitable in the earlier stage and the unsuitable in the later stage, then it should be understood as mixed in this case.

Likewise if he devotes himself to development without carrying out the preparatory tasks of severing impediments, etc., his progress will be difficult. It will be easy in the opposite case. And if he is not accomplished in the skill of absorption, his direct knowledge will be sluggish. It will be swift if he is accomplished in the skill of absorption.

Furthermore, the progress and the direct knowledge will also depend on the influence of craving and ignorance as well as on the earlier experience in tranquillity and insight meditation. For if a man is overwhelmed by craving, his progress will be difficult. If not, the progress will be easy. And if he is overwhelmed by ignorance, his direct knowledge will be sluggish. If not, it will be swift. And if he has not undertaken tranquillity meditation very strenuously, his progress will be difficult. If he has, it will be easy. And if he has not undertaken vipassanā very strenuously, his direct knowledge will be sluggish. If he has, it will be swift.

Also the progress and the direct knowledge will depend on defilements such as sense pleasure (*kāmacchanda*) and on faculties (*indriyas*) such as faith and confidence (*saddhā*). For if a man's defilements are strong and his faculties dull, then his progress will be difficult and his direct knowledge sluggish; but if his faculties

are keen, his direct knowledge will be swift. And if his defilements are weak and his faculties dull, then his progress will be easy and his direct knowledge sluggish; but if his faculties are keen, his direct knowledge will be swift.

Thus with regard to the progress (*paṭipadā*) and the direct knowledge (*abhiññā*), when a person can develop concentration with pain and difficulty and his direct knowledge is sluggish, his concentration is called the concentration of painful progress and sluggish direct knowledge. Similarly in the cases of the remaining three types of concentration.

(ii) The Second Tetrad:

Paritta parittārammaṇa samādhi – limited concentration with a limited sense object;

Paritta appamānārammaṇa samādhi – limited concentration with an infinite sense object;

Appamāṇa parittārammaṇa samādhi – infinite concentration with a limited sense object;

Appamāṇa appamānārammaṇa samādhi – infinite concentration with an infinite sense object.

Herein, the concentration which is not well developed, not skilfully practised, and incapable of a condition for a higher jhāna is limited. If it occurs with an unextended object, it is with a limited object. If it occurs with an extended object, it is with an infinite object.

Moreover, the concentration which is well developed, skilfully practised, and capable of a condition for a higher jhāna is infinite. If it occurs with an unextended object, it is with a limited object. If it occurs with an extended object, it is with an infinite object.

(iii) The Third Tetrad:

It refers to the four rūpāvacara jhānas according to the four-fold system.

First rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā as jhāna factors. It arises by the suppression of the hindrances.

Second rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with pīti, sukha,

ekaggatā as jhāna factors. It arises by the suppression of vitakka and vicāra.

Third rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with sukha and ekaggatā as jhāna factors. It arises by the suppression of pīti.

Fourth rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with upekkhā and ekaggatā as jhāna factors. It arises by the suppression of sukha.

(iv) The Fourth Tetrad:

Hānabhāgiya samādhi – retrogressive concentration due to the frequent arising of the opposing states.

Thitibhāgiya samādhi – stagnant concentration due to the persistence of mindfulness which is in conformity with concentration;

Visesabhāgiya samādhi – concentration which leans towards distinction due to the attainment of higher distinction;

Nibbedhabhāgiya samādhi – the concentration leading to penetration due to the promptings of perception (*saññā*) and attention (*manasikāra*) associated with disgust.

(v) The Fifth Tetrad:

Kāmāvacara samādhi – sense-sphere concentration comprising all access concentration;

Rūpāvacara samādhi – fine-material-sphere concentration comprising all rūpāvacara jhāna concentration;

Arūpāvacara samādhi – immaterial-sphere concentration comprising all arūpāvacara jhāna concentration;

Apariyāpanna samādhi – unincorporated or Path concentration which associates with the Path consciousness.

(vi) The Sixth Tetrad:

Chanda samādhi – wish concentration, that is, the concentration attained by making *chanda* predominant;

Vīriya samādhi – energy concentration, that is, the concentration attained by making *vīriya* predominant;

Citta samādhi – consciousness concentration, that is, the concentration attained by making *citta* predominant;

Vīmaṃsa samādhi – investigation concentration, that is, the concentration attained by making investigation wisdom (*vīmaṃsa*) predominant.

02-05-08
5. Pentad (Pañcaka): Classification of Concentration as Five Kinds

It refers to the five rūpāvacara jhānas according to the fivefold system.

First rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as jhāna factors; it arises by the suppression of the hindrances;

Second rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with vicāra, pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as jhāna factors; it arises by the suppression of vitakka.

Third rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as jhāna factors; it arises by the suppression of vicāra.

Fourth rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with sukha and ekaggatā as jhāna factors; it arises by the suppression of pīti.

Fifth rūpāvacara jhāna concentration associated with upekkhā and ekaggatā as jhāna factors; it arises by the suppression of sukha.

02/05/08
Defiling and Cleansing of Concentration

In Vibhaṅga Pāli the answer is given thus: defilement is the state of diminution or diminishing; and cleansing is the state of distinction or progressing.

Here the state of diminution should be understood in this way: "If a man, who has attained the first rūpāvacara jhāna, is overwhelmed with perception and reflection accompanied by sense desire, then his wisdom is in the state of diminution." ↳ getting down

And the state of distinction should be understood in this way: "If a man, who has attained the first rūpāvacara jhāna, is overwhelmed with perception and reflection accompanied by the jhāna

without initial application (*vitakka*), then his wisdom is in the state of distinction." (*Vbh.330,343*)

● Why Should We Develop Concentration?

Normally the mind is not tranquil and peaceful. It is constantly agitated and inflicted by hindrances (*niivaranas*) and other defilements (*kilesas*)-such as lust, craving, anger, hatred, selfishness, conceit, envy, jealousy and remorse.

So the mind is always distracted, restless, wavering and wandering from one sense-object to another. It is weak, powerless and inflicted with pain. It cannot discern the truth and the true nature of things. It cannot clearly discern one's own benefit, nor that of others, nor that of both.

On the other hand, a trained and cultured mind becomes tranquil, peaceful, blissful and powerful. It can discern the truth and the true nature of things. It can clearly discern one's own benefit, that of others and that of both. So we can ward off danger and woeful suffering and build up great benefits by training and culturing the mind.

In Dhammapada the Buddha gave his advice thus:

* *The mind is very swift and very hard to check, it falls on what it wants.*

*The training of the mind is good,
for a mind so tamed brings happiness.*

* *The mind is very subtle and very hard to see; it falls on wherever it likes.*

*Let the wise man guard his mind,
for a guarded mind brings happiness.*

* *One who has an unsteady mind,*

Who does not know True Dhamma,

Who is of wavering confidence,

does not perfect his wisdom. (Dhammapada Verses 35,36,38)

The Buddha urged his disciples to develop concentration in two Samādhi Suttas as follows.

"Samādhim bhikkave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhave

"hikkhu yathahūtam pajānāti."

"O monks, try to develop concentration. The monk who attains concentration will distinctly and correctly understand the ultimate realities as they really are.

"What are the realities that he will understand distinctly and correctly? He will understand distinctly and correctly that 'this is the Noble Truth of Suffering', that 'this is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering', that 'this is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering', that 'this is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering.'" (Samyutta, 3, 363)

"O monks, try to develop concentration. The monk who attains concentration will distinctly and correctly understand the ultimate realities as they really are.

"What are the realities that he will understand distinctly and correctly? He will understand distinctly and correctly –

1. *The nature of the cause for the arising of corporeality as well as the nature of the arising of corporeality and the nature of the cause for the cessation of corporeality as well as the nature of the cessation of corporeality.*

2. *The nature of the cause for the arising of sensation as well as the nature of the arising of sensation and the nature of the cause for the cessation of sensation as well as the nature of the cessation of sensation.*

3. *The nature of the cause for the arising of perception as well as the nature of the arising of perception and the nature of the cause for the cessation of perception as well as the nature of the cessation of perception.*

4. *The nature of the cause for the arising of mental formations as well as the nature of the arising of mental formations and the nature of the cause for the cessation of mental formations as well as the nature of the cessation of mental formations.*

5. *The nature of the cause for the arising of consciousness as well as the nature of the arising of consciousness and the nature of the cause for the cessation of consciousness as well as the nature of the cessation of consciousness." (Samyutta 2, 12)*

Just as sun rays, when concentrated by a convex lens, become so hot that it can burn paper and wood, so in the same way the mind becomes very powerful when concentrated. A well-concentrated mind radiates bright penetrative light which enables the meditator to look into his body and mind and observe all the ultimate realities that make up body and mind. So he can proceed with insight meditation to develop insight and the Path wisdom.

Thus whoever wants to be liberated from suffering and enjoy the eternal bliss of Nibbāna for ever must train his mind and develop concentration.

02/05/02

The Purpose and Objective of Developing Concentration

The purpose of developing concentration is:

1. To train, culture and develop the mind;
2. To suppress and drive away the hindrances and other defilements from the mind, thus purifying the mind;
3. To develop and strengthen the jhāna factors, thus building up concentration;
4. To accomplish the training of concentration (*samādhi sikkhā*) as part of the Noble Threefold Training;
5. To perform great meritorious deeds and accumulate great moral kammās;
6. To enjoy the physical well-being and the mental well-being;
7. To make the mind totally calm, peaceful and very powerful to enable the meditator to see penetratively into the body and mind.

The objective of developing concentration is to attain the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) and the purity of the mind (*citta visuddhi*).

The right concentration is equivalent to the concentration associated with the fourfold or the fivefold rūpāvacara jhāna according to *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta*.

According to *Visuddhi Magga*, however, the right concentration can be taken as the access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or the concentration associated with any of the four/five rūpāvacara jhānas or any of the four arūpāvacara jhānas. The higher the con-

centration, the more powerful the mind, and so the better.

At the right concentration the mind is totally free from the hindrances and other defilements. So the mind is perfectly pure giving rise to the state of purity of the mind called '*citta visuddhi*.' The purity of the mind with the right concentration is the foundation for undertaking insight meditation.

The best concentration to be used as the foundation of vipassanā would be the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna concentration for the Buddha himself used it in his insight meditation leading to his full enlightenment. So we should strive to attain the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna of the fourfold system in undertaking the Training of Concentration.

Preparation for Developing Concentration

Although there are two types of concentration, namely lokiya samādhi and lokuttara samādhi, we need to develop only the mundane concentration for the method of developing supramundane concentration is included in the method of developing wisdom.

We should follow the following procedure for developing concentration.

1. First of all we must establish ourselves in pure morality by observing the Fourfold Morality called *Caṭuparisuddhi Sīla* very diligently. Moral purity, that is *śīlavissuddhi*, is the foundation of meditation.

2. We must sever the ten major impediments called *Palibodha* that we might have for they will hinder and obstruct our meditation if they are not cut off.

3. We must then approach a good, competent teacher who is also a good friend (*kalyāṇa mitra*) to learn a meditation subject which is suitable to our temperament as well as the four Guardian Meditations called *Caṭurāraṅkha Kammaṅghānas*.

4. After learning the meditation subjects, we should search for a suitable place for meditation, avoiding a monastery unfavourable to the development of concentration and going to live in one that is favourable.

5. Then we must sever all the minor impediments that we may still have. We should keep our mind totally free from worry, attach-

3/5/08 → 2/5/08 →

ment and any obligation.

6. We should pay homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, and then dedicate ourselves to the Blessed One and to the teacher just before we undertake meditation.

7. We should first undertake for a few minutes 'the *Sabbatthaka Kammaṭṭhānas*,' that is, the four Guardian Meditations, to protect ourselves from all dangers.

8. Then we should strenuously undertake the special meditation subject called '*parihāriya kammaṭṭhāna*,' that is the meditation subject which is given to us to suit our temperament. We should always carry it along with us, persistently reflecting on it according to the detailed directions we learn from the teacher.

● Preparation for Meditation in Detail

1. Cutting off ten Major Impediments (*Palibodha*)

There are ten major impediments (*Palibodha*) which can obstruct the development of concentration. They must be cut off before one undertakes meditation.

(1) Dwelling (*Āvāsa*)

A single inner room or a single hut or a whole monastery is called a dwelling. It is an impediment only for someone whose mind is occupied with the activities going on in the building or who has many belongings stored up there.

(2) Family (*Kula*)

It means a family consisting of relatives or supporters. It is an impediment to one who is attached to the family members and lives in close association with them. If one minds only one's business without unnecessary dealings with others, even one's parents are no impediment for one.

(3) Gain (*Lābha*)

It means the four requisites. How are they an impediment? Wherever a well-known bhikkhu goes, people give him a large supply of requisites. With giving blessings to them and teaching them the Dhamma, he gets no chance to exercise meditation. From

sunrise till the first watch of the night he never breaks his association with people.

Thus these requisites are an impediment for him. He should leave his group and wander by himself where he is not known. This is the way this impediment is severed.

(4) Class (*Gaṇa*)

Class is a group of students of Suttas or Abhidhamma. If one occupies oneself with teaching and instructing them, then one has no chance to attend to meditation. Thus that group is an impediment for that person. He should sever that impediment thus: if little remains to be taught, he should finish teaching that off and go to the forest.

If much still remains to be taught, he should request another teacher to finish the teaching. If he cannot find any teacher, he should take leave of the class, saying "I have a task to see to, friends; go where it suits you", and he should do his own work.

(5) Business (*Kamma*)

It means a new business matter such as a new building work (*navakamma*). One who is engaged in this matter must know what has been done, what has not been done, what material has or has not been acquired, who is going to do what, etc. So it is always an impediment. It should be severed in the following way.

If little work remains, it should be completed. If much remains, it should be handed over to the community of bhikkhus or to bhikkhus who are entrusted with the community's affairs. If it is for himself, it should be handed over to those whom he entrusts with his own affairs. But if these are not available, he should relinquish it to the community of bhikkhus and depart. give away

(6) Travel (*Journey*)

It means going on a journey. If one has to go somewhere to attend to some duty or to get some requisite available there and he cannot rest content without getting it, that will be an impediment. Even if he undertakes meditation without taking the travel, he will find it hard to get rid of the thoughts about the journey. So he

3/5/07

should take the travel first and finish the business before he undertakes meditation.

(7) Kinsfolk (*Nāti*) ^{နာတိ} နာတိ

In a community of bhikkhus kinsfolk means teacher, preceptor, pupil, coresident and those with the same teacher or preceptor as oneself. In a household family kinsfolk means mother, father, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and so on.

When they are sick, one must attend to them; so they become an impediment. That impediment should be severed by nursing them till they are cured.

(8) Illness (*Affliction*) ^{pain ball}

It means any kind of illness. When it actually inflicts or tortures one, it becomes an impediment. It should be cured by taking medicine and proper treatment. But if it is not cured in a few days, one must admonish oneself thus, "I am not a slave or hireling of this body of mine; I have gone through endless agony for carrying this body through the beginningless round of rebirths", and attend to meditation.

(9) Books (*Scripture*)

It means responsibility for studying or teaching the scriptures (*pariyatti*). It is an impediment only for one who is constantly busy with reading, studying, and reciting the scriptures, but not for others. One should keep away the books while one undertakes meditation.

(10) Supernormal Powers (*Abhiññā*)

The supernormal powers of an ordinary person are hard to maintain, and the slightest thing breaks them. However, they are an impediment for insight but not for concentration, since they are obtained through concentration. So the supernormal powers are an impediment that should be severed by one who seeks insight.

2 The Search for a Qualified Teacher

A qualified teacher here means a good friend who can give suitable meditation subjects.

Meditation subjects are of two kinds:

- (1) *Sabbatthaka Kammaṭṭhāna* – meditation subjects desirable in all matters, and
- (2) *Parihāriya Kammaṭṭhāna* – meditation subject to be meditated always.

A qualified teacher should know how to direct both these two kinds of meditation subjects.

Sabbatthaka Kammaṭṭhāna includes:-

- (i) development of loving-kindness (*metta-bhāvanā*),
- (ii) recollection of the Buddha's attributes (*Buddhānussati*),
- (iii) recollection of the sign of foulness (*asubha-bhāvanā*).
- (iv) recollection of death (*maraṇānussati*).

These four subjects of meditation are also known as the four Guardian Meditations. They should be undertaken first to protect oneself from all dangers.

Parihāriya Kammaṭṭhā is one of the forty meditation subjects that is suitable to a man's own temperament. It is 'special' (*parihāriya*) because it is chosen to develop the right concentration and it must be carried constantly about with him, that is, he must always meditate on it and because it is the approximate cause for each higher stage of development.

A good teacher and friend (*kalyānamitta*) should be able to teach the above two kinds of meditation. In addition to that he must possess special qualities such as these:

"He is adorable, respectful and praise-worthy; he knows how to admonish others and he is ready to accept the admonishment of others; he utters profound speech and he does not urge without a reason".

(A.iv, 32)

Because of the words beginning "*Ananda*, it is owing to my being a good friend to them that living beings subject to birth are freed from birth" (S.i, 88), it is only the Buddha who possesses all the qualities of the good friend. Since that is so, it is best to take a meditation subject from him while he is alive.

But after his final attainment of *Nibbāna*, it is proper to take

3/5/08
on Chap. 9

it from any one of the eighty great disciples still living. When they are no longer available, a person who wants to practise a particular meditation subject, should take it from an Arahant, who has, by means of that meditation subject, attained fourfold or fivefold *jhāna*, and has reached the destruction of cankers by undertaking insight meditation on the basis of *jhāna*-concentration.

But will an Arahant declare himself to be an Arahant? Why not? He will declare himself when he knows that his instructions will be carried out. Did not the Elder *Assagutta* spread out his leather mat in the air and sitting cross-legged on it explain a meditation subject to a bhikkhu who was starting his meditation subject because he knew that the bhikkhu would carry out his instructions.

Now if someone with cankers destroyed is not available, then one should take a meditation subject from a Non-returner, a Once-returner, a Stream-enterer, an ordinary man who has obtained *jhāna*, one who knows three *piṭakas*, one who knows two *piṭakas*, one who knows one *piṭaka*, in descending order according to availability. if even one who knows one *piṭaka* is not available, then it should be taken from one who is familiar with one collection (*Nikāya*) together with its commentary and one who is himself conscientious.

* *Yathābhūtam nānāya satthā pariyehi tabbo.* —

Find a teacher who can guide you to discern the ultimate realities as they really are.

Nowadays there are many meditation centres and many meditation teachers, usually teaching in the way they have learned from their immediate teachers. Whether these teachings are in accord with the Buddha's instructions or not can be checked with *Tipiṭaka* scriptures or with *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification) which is an authentic compilation of the Buddha's instructions on Three-fold Noble Training written by *Venerable Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa*,

It is most convenient to learn meditation under the direct guidance of a qualified teacher who is a Good Friend as well as the giver of a meditation subject. The choice of a meditation subject to suit one's temperament has been described earlier.

3/5/08

3 The Search for a Suitable Place for Meditation

A monastery which has any one of the following eighteen faults is unfavourable to the development of concentration.

(1) Large Monastery

Many people with varying aims gather in a large monastery. They conflict with one another and neglect their duties such as sweeping the floors and setting out water for drinking and washing. If one does not attend to these duties, one would commit a wrong doing in the breach of duty. If one does it, one loses time. Also when one sits for meditation, one is distracted by the loud noises of novices and young bhikkhus.

However, one can live in a large monastery where everyone does his duties and there are no disturbances.

(2) New Monastery

Here there is much new building activity. If one does not take part in it, one will be criticized. If, however, one is allowed to do ascetic's duties as much as one likes, one can live there.

(3) Dilapidated Monastery

Here there is much that needs repair. If one does not repair even one's lodging, one will be criticized. If one sees to the repairs, one's meditation will suffer.

(4) Monastery near the Main Road

Visitors keep arriving night and day. One has to give up one's lodging to those who come late. So there is no opportunity to practise one's meditation. But one can live in such a monastery if there are no disturbances from visitors.

(5) Monastery with a Pond

People come to fetch drinking water making much noise. The noise is a serious disturbance to meditation. If there is no noise, one may live there.

(6) Monastery with Edible Leaves

If one sits to meditate at a place where there are many sorts of edible leaves, then women vegetable-gatherers will sing as they

pick leaves nearby, disturbing one with sounds of the opposite-sex.

(7) A place with Flowering Shrubs

The same kind of danger exists at a place where there are many sorts of flowering shrubs in bloom.

(8) Monastery with Fruit Trees

If there are many sorts of fruits such as mangoes, rose-apples and jack-fruits, people will ask for them. If one does not give them any, they get angry and abuse one. If one tries to stop them by force, when one sees them taking fruits, they may quarrel with one.

(9) Famous Monastery

If one lives in a monastery that is famous, people will come to pay homage to the bhikkhus living there, thinking they are Arahants. This will cause inconveniences. But if it suits one, one can live there by night and go elsewhere by day.

(10) Monastery near a Town or Village

Here objects of the opposite sex come into focus. Government servants may come and stay in the middle of the monastery.

(11) Monastery with nearby Timber Trees

People come to gather firewood, making a lot of noises. Some cut trees in the monastery to build houses with. If one tries to stop them, they will abuse and even try to evict one.

(12) Monastery surrounded by Fields

Farmers make a threshing floor in the middle of the monastery itself. They thresh corn and dry it there. They also sleep there causing great inconvenience.

(13) Monastery with incompatible Persons

Incompatible bhikkhus are mutually hostile and they often clash with one another. It is very difficult to live among them.

(14) Monastery near a Water-port or Land-port

People constantly arrive either by ship or by caravan. They crowd around in the monastery, asking for space and drinking water, thus causing great inconvenience.

3/5/08

(15) Monastery near Border Countries

People living in border areas usually have no trust in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Samgha*. So it is hard to get the requisites.

(16) Monastery near the Frontier of a Kingdom

That place may be attacked by one king and then by the other king, thinking 'It does not submit to my rule.' A *bhikkhu* living there may be suspected for spying and consequently brought to ruin.

(17) Unsuitable Monastery

A monastery frequented by the opposite sex or haunted by non-human beings is unsuitable for practising meditation.

(18) Lack of Good Friends

Where it is impossible to find a good friend as a teacher to teach and guide one how to carry out meditation, the lack of good friends there is a serious fault.

4 A Suitable Monastery

A monastery endowed with the following five qualities is suitable for meditation:

(1) It is not too far, not too near, and has a path for going to and coming from the village of alms resort.

(2) It is little frequented by people with little sound by day, and at night it is quiet with no human voices.

(3) It is free from insect-bites, and there is no contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, burning sun, and creeping animals.

4. For one who lives there robes, alms-food, lodging and medicines are easily available.

5. In that monastery there are elder *bhikkhus* who are learned, well-versed in scriptures, observers of the *Dhamma*, observers of the *Vinaya*, and observers of the codes of moral principles and practice. When, from time to time one asks them questions, they reveal the unrevealed, explain the unexplained, and re-

3/5/08

3/5/08

move doubts about the many things that raise doubts.

A *bhikkhu-yogī* (meditator) should avoid a monastery unfavourable to the development of concentration and go to live in one that is favourable.

A lay-yogī should also choose a secluded quiet place where he is not disturbed by people for any reason, where food, lodging, and medical treatment are conveniently available, and where it is favourable to develop concentration under the guidance of a qualified teacher who is a Good Friend as well as a giver of meditation subject.

5 Cutting off Minor Impediments

A *bhikkhu*, living in a favourable monastery, should sever any minor impediments that he may still have.

1. Long head-hair, nails, and beard should be cut.
2. Mending and patching of old clothes should be done.
3. Those old robes that are soiled should be dyed.
4. If there is a stain on the bowl, the bowl should be baked.
5. The room, the bed, the chair, etc., should be cleaned up.

One's bedding and living places should be neatly kept.

A lay-yogī should also sever similar minor impediments.

6 Dedication to the Blessed One

A meditator should dedicate himself to the Blessed One in this way: "Blessed One, I relinquish this my person (or my body and mind) to you".

There are many benefits for doing so, for without having thus dedicated himself when living in a remote abode, he might be unable to stand fast if a frightening object makes its appearance, and he might return to a village abode, become associated with laymen, take up improper search and come to ruin.

But when he has dedicated himself to the *Buddha*, no fear arises in him if a frightening object makes its appearance; in fact only joy arises in him as he reflects: "Have you not wisely already dedicated yourself to the Enlightened One?"

Also when he encounters severe bodily pain, hard-ship, slow mental development, some disturbances and inconveniences, one can endure better by reasoning thus: "I have already relinquished this body and mind to the Buddha; they do not belong to me any more; so why should I worry about them?"

7 Dedication to the Teacher

A yogī should dedicate himself to the teacher in this way: "Venerable sir, I relinquish this my person (or my body and mind) to you."

For one who has not dedicated himself thus becomes unresponsive to correction, hard to speak to, and unamenable to advice. He may go where he likes without asking the teacher. Consequently the teacher does not help him with either material things such as robes or the Dhamma such as giving advice and training him in meditation books. Failing to get these two kinds of help (*āmiṣa* and *dhamma*), he finds no footing in the Dispensation, and he soon comes down to misconducting himself or to the lay state.

But if he has dedicated himself to the teacher, the teacher has the right to admonish him, and he is not unresponsive to correction, he does not go about as he likes, he is easy to speak to, and he lives in association with the teacher. He gets the twofold help from the teacher and attains growth, development and fulfilment in the Dispensation.

8 Sincere Inclination and Sincere Resolution

A meditator should be endowed with six types of sincere, good inclination for it is one who is so inclined will arrive at one of the three kinds of enlightenment, that is, the path-wisdom of an *Arahant* (*Sāvaka-bodhi*), the path-wisdom of a Silent Buddha (*Pacceka-bhodi*), and the path-wisdom of a fully-enlightened *Buddha* (*Sammāsambhodhi*).

The six types of inclination are stated thus: "six kinds of inclination lead to the maturing of the enlightenment of those who are to be enlightened. With the inclination to non-greed, those who are to be enlightened see the fault in greed. With the inclination to

non-hate, they see the fault in hate. With the inclination to non-delusion, they see the fault in delusion. With the inclination to renunciation, they see the fault in household life. With the inclination to seclusion, they see the fault in association with companions. With the inclination to emancipation from the round of rebirths (*samsāra*) they see the fault in all kinds of becoming and future existences."

A yogī should have sincerity of inclination in these six modes, because Stream-enterers, Once-returners, Non-returners, *Arahants*, *Pacceka Buddhas*, and Fully-enlightened Ones, whether past, future or present, all arrive at the distinction peculiar to each by means of these same six types of inclination.

Moreover, a meditator should be whole-heartedly resolved on concentration, he should respect concentration, and incline to concentration. He should be resolved on Nibbāna, he should respect Nibbāna, and incline to Nibbāna.

When the meditator has such sincere inclination and whole-hearted resolution, the teacher who can penetrate his mind will know his temperament and give him a suitable meditation subject. If the teacher cannot penetrate his mind, he will ask the yogī relevant questions to find out his temperament and give a suitable meditation subject.

● Five Hindrances or Enemies (*Nīvaraṇas*)

The five hindrances known as *nīvaraṇas*, defile, debase, inflict and agitate the mind to be restless, wavering and wandering from one sense object to another. They make us heedless and forgetful to carry out meritorious deeds. They hinder and prevent the arising of wholesome thoughts, good deeds, *jhānas* and *maggas*. So they are our greatest enemies. We must wrestle with them all the time in order to suppress them and drive them away from the mind. They represent the following immoral mental factors (*akusala cetasikas*).

- 1 *Kāmacchanda* – sense desire or greed (*lobha*); it influences the mind most of the time to crave for sensuous pleasure and to wander from one sense object to another.

2. *Vyāpāda* – ill-will, anger or hatred (*dosa*); it overwhelms and burns the mind when the mind harbours anger, hatred, grief, sorrow, worry, dissatisfaction, etc.
3. *Thina-middha* – sloth and torpor; they make the mind dull, morbid, inactive, lazy and drowsy.
4. *Uddhacca-kukkucca* – restlessness and remorse; they make the mind restless, fluttering and remorseful for one's wrong doing.
5. *Vicikicchā* – sceptical doubt or perplexity; it makes the mind wavering, undecisive, and perplexed obstructing wholesome thoughts and meritorious deeds.

In the beautiful similes given by the Buddha in *Āṅguttara Nikāya* and also in *Mahāvagga Saṃyutta*, *Saṅgārava Sutta*, sense-desire is compared with water mixed with manifold colours, ill-will with boiling water, sloth and torpor with water covered with mosses, restlessness and remorse with agitated water whipped by the wind, and sceptical doubt with turbid and muddy water.

Just as in such water one cannot perceive one's own reflection, so also in the presence of any one of these five mental hindrances, one cannot clearly discern one's own benefit, nor that of others, nor that of both.

● Five Powers or Friends (*Balas and Indriyas*)

There are five mental factors which are included among the thirty-seven components of enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya*) and which can act both as spiritual powers or strengths (*balas*) and as spiritual faculties (*indriyas*).

As spiritual faculties they have the ability to control their concomitants and the mind, and as powers or strengths they can stand firm and unshakeable against the opposing force. So if we cultivate and develop these powers, which are our innate qualities, we can successfully combat the enemies called the hindrances (*nīvaranas*).

1. *Saddhā* – faith or confidence in the Triple Gem, the law of kamma, and the Noble practice.

2. *Vīriya* – effort or energy which is identical with the right effort (*sammāvāyāma*).
3. *Sati* – mindfulness which is identical with the right mindfulness (*sammāsati*).
4. *Samādhi* – concentration or one-pointedness of the mind; it is the same as the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).
5. *Paññā* – knowledge or wisdom which is identical with the right understanding (*sammādit̥ṭhi*).

We can see that *vīriya*, *sati*, and *samādhi* are the three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path that constitute the training of concentration (*samādhi-sikkhā*). It is vital to develop them in order to attain the right concentration. But in this noble task, one needs the help and guidance of wisdom or the right understanding which is the most important factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. Again the right understanding must be supplemented and incorporated with the right thought which is *sammāsaṅkappa* or *vitakka*. 80206

Saddhā is well-established confidence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma including the Noble Practice, the Saṅgha and kamma. It is not blind faith; rather, it is rooted and associated with wisdom. It has the ability to cool down and purify the mind by driving away the hindrances. It also has the ability to lead the way in performing meritorious deeds.

When *saddhā* is strong, *vīriya* also becomes strong and steadfast. It can be developed to the level of the unfaltering concentrated effort of one who vows:

*“Let me be reduced to skin and bone;
let my blood and flesh dry up;
let my life come to an end;
but I will not stop till I succeed!”*

When the effort is strong, then mindfulness of the meditation-subject is strong, and this in turn will lead to the development of concentration. When one attains the right concentration, one can observe the ultimate realities as they really are, and so one can develop insight knowledge and finally the Path-wisdom.

In fighting against the enemies the five powers must work in unison to be effective.

Saddhā (faith) and *Paññā* (wisdom) should balance each other, because too much faith leads to unreasonable belief, and too much inquiry and criticism with wisdom leads to no concentration.

Similarly *vtriya* (effort) and *samādhi* (concentration) should balance each other, because too much effort and weak concentration will lead to the restlessness of the mind whereas weak effort and excessive concentration will lead to drowsiness.

Sati (mindfulness) need not be balanced with any power; the greater the mindfulness, the better it is.

● Five Essential Qualities (*Padhāniyaṅgas*)

A meditator should be endowed with the following essential main qualities according to the statement of the Buddha in *Sutta Pātheya, 57, and Aṅguttara-nikāya, Pañcaka Nipāta, padhāniyaṅga Sutta.*

1. *Saddhā* – faith and confidence in the Triple Gem and the Noble Practice;
2. *Appabādhatā* – good health with the ability to digest food well;
3. *Asatṭhatā* – righteousness and truthfulness, without crookedness towards co-residents and the teacher;
4. *Āraddavīriyatā* – strenuous and steadfast effort to discard evils and develop good qualities fully;
5. *Udayatthagāmini-paññā* – the noble wisdom that can discern the arising and dissolving of the five aggregates of existence, and break the mass of defilements to arrive at the end of suffering (*Nibbāna*).

Five Jhāna Factors

Jhāna, the state of meditative absorption, is a combination of five jhāna factors. These factors are mental concomitants (*cetasikās*) which associate with both moral and immoral minds.

In meditation moral minds are developed repeatedly and

they contain *jhāna* factors. At first these factors are not strong, but they become stronger with the progress of meditation. When they are fully developed, they become very strong and keep the mind focused at a point on the meditation subject. Thus the state of one-pointedness of the mind, that is *jhāna*, is established.

The five *jhāna*-factors are as follows.

1. *Vitakka* – initial application that applies the mind onto the sense object; it is also translated as applied thought; it inhibits sloth and torpor from arising.
2. *Vicāra* – sustained application that keeps on applying the mind onto the sense object again and again so that one observes the object discursively; it is also translated as discursive thought; it inhibits sceptical doubt from arising.
3. *Pīti* – joy, rapture or pleasurable interest in the sense object; it inhibits ill-will from arising.
4. *Vedanā* – feeling or sensation which occurs in five types. The two types that occur in *jhāna* are:
 - (a) *Sukha* – pleasant or agreeable feeling, bliss or happiness,
 - (b) *Upekkhā* – neutral feeling, that is, neither pleasant nor painful feeling. *Sukha* inhibits restlessness and remorse from arising.
5. *Ekaggatā* – *samādhi* or concentration or one-pointedness of the mind. It inhibits desire from arising.

In the meditation on *pathavī kasiṇa* or any other meditation object, *vitakka* applies the mind onto the meditation subject and temporarily inhibits sloth and torpor from arising.

Vicāra applies the mind onto the meditation object again and again, observing the object discursively; it temporarily inhibits sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) from arising.

Pīti develops joy and pleasurable interest in the meditation-object; it temporarily inhibits ill-will (*dosa*) from arising.

Pīti is also a precursor of *sukha* (pleasant feeling). *Pīti* creates an interest in the object while *sukha* enables one to enjoy the object. *Sukha* holds the mind to stay longer on the object by its bliss; it temporarily drives away restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca* and

kuḅkkucca).

Ekaggatā unites the citta and its concomitants and fixes them on the sense object to reach the state of one-pointedness. It temporarily inhibits sense desire (*kāmacchanda*) from agitating the mind.

When the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) subside temporarily, the mind does not wander away from the meditation subject as frequently as before. As the jhāna factors grow in strength, one can control one's mind better and better. He will notice pīti to be growing up in strength in five stages:

- (i) *Khuddaka-pīti* – the thrill of joy that causes the flesh to creep;
- (ii) *Khaṇika pīti* – instantaneous joy that flows from head to toe like a flash of lightning;
- (iii) *Okkantika pīti* – the flood of joy like the breakers on a sea-shore;
- (iv) *Ubbegā pīti* – uplifting joy which may lift one to float in the air;
- (v) *Phāraṇā pīti* – suffusing joy which pervades the whole body like oil diffusing into a lump of cotton or like a flood overflowing creeks and ponds.

When the meditator has developed some degree of mental concentration, he experiences the thrill of joy and then instantaneous joy from head to toe frequently. When the concentration rises higher, he enjoys the flood of joy as if he were riding waves at the sea-shore. When *ubbegā pīti* develops, he has the feeling that his body is lifted up to the sky by the up-lifting joy. Then he will experience suffusing joy pervading throughout his body when *phāraṇā pīti* arises.

When joy (pīti) arises, tranquility (passaddhi) also arises; and when tranquility arises, pleasant sensation and happiness (sukha) also arises. When sukha arises, samādhi (concentration) also arises.

● The Subject of Meditation (*Kammaṭṭhāna*)

To undertake tranquillity meditation or insight meditation we need a suitable object to focus our attention on as consciousness cannot arise without a sense object striking a sense-organ.

A meditation subject serves as the 'place or base' as well as the 'subject of meditation' for carrying out the act of meditation. It also serves as the 'working ground' or 'training ground' for training the mind in order to develop and culture it. In developing and culturing the mind, the meditation subject must not provoke lust or aversion.

The subject of tranquillity-meditation should be one of the forty subjects prescribed by the Buddha himself.

The subject of insight-meditation is the three characteristic marks of existence – viz., impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*).

● Forty Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation
(*Samatha Kammaṭṭhāna*)

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(a) Seven Classes of Meditation Subjects

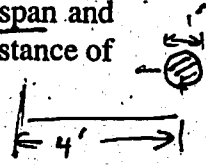
- 1 *Kasīna* – 10 kasīna subjects or devices
- 2 *Asubha* – 10 loathsome subjects
- 3 *Anussati* – 10 recollection subjects
- 4 *Brahma-vihāra* – 4 subjects of divine abidings
- 5 *Āruppa* – 4 subjects of immaterial states
- 6 *Āhārepatikūla-saññā* – 1 subject of perception of repulsiveness in nutriments
- 7 *Catudhātuvavatthāna* – 1 subject of defining the four primary elements

(b) Ten Kasīnas

'*Kasīna*' means 'whole' or 'complete'. It is so called because it should be observed wholly or completely in meditation, and also because the light issuing from the conceptualized sign or image is extended to all directions without limitation.

Because it should be observed wholly, the shape of a *kasīna* should be circular with its diameter equal to one span and four fingers, i.e. about one foot, if it is observed from a distance of two and a half cubits or 3 feet 9 inches.

- 1 *Pathavī-kasīna* – earth kasīna
- 2 *Āpo-kasīna* – water kasīna
- 3 *Tejo-kasīna* – fire kasīna



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|----|----------------------|---|---------------|
| 4 | <i>Vāyo-kasīna</i> | — | air kasīna |
| 5 | <i>Nīla-kasīna</i> | — | blue kasīna |
| 6 | <i>Pīta-kasīna</i> | — | yellow kasīna |
| 7 | <i>Lohita-kasīna</i> | — | red kasīna |
| 8 | <i>Odāta-kasīna</i> | — | white kasīna |
| 9 | <i>Āloka-kasīna</i> | — | light kasīna |
| 10 | <i>Ākāsa-kasīna</i> | — | space kasīna |

By meditation on a *kasīna* one can develop the five *rūpāvacara jhānas* and then proceed to develop the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*. After attaining all these *jhānas* in all the *kasīnas*, one can practise further to develop five mundane supernormal powers (*lokiya-abhiññās*).

(c) Ten Kinds of Foulness (*Asubhas*)

They refer to the ten signs of foulness or the ten kinds of corpses which may be found in some cemeteries or charnel grounds or battle fields where dead bodies are not buried or cremated and where flesh-eating animals such as dogs, jackals, wolves and vultures frequent.

In modern days any kind of corpse which shows the repulsive nature of the body is a suitable subject for meditation.

Worldlings are, as a rule, very strongly attached to their bodies as well as to others' bodies by lust (*rāgā*). The best way to suppress this lust and the best remedy to cure the *rāga*-disease is *asubha bhāvanā*. So it was made a compulsory meditation subject at the time of the Buddha.

The ten signs of foulness or the ten kinds of corpses are as follows.

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | <i>Uddhumātaka</i> | — | the rotten, bloated corpse |
| 2. | <i>Vintlaka</i> | — | the blue, black corpse with patchy discolouration |
| 3. | <i>Vipubbaka</i> | — | the festering corpse with pus oozing out |
| 4. | <i>Vicchiddaka</i> | — | a corpse cut in the middle |
| 5. | <i>Vikhāyitaka</i> | — | a gnawed corpse |
| 6. | <i>Vikkhattaka</i> | — | a scattered corpse |
| 7. | <i>Hatavikkhattaka</i> | — | a cracked and scattered corpse |

- 8 *Lohitaka* ^{රුධිරය} - a blood-smearred corpse
 9 *Puḷuvaka* ^{වැද්ද} - worm-infested corpse
 10 *Atthika* ^{කැබලි} - a skeleton

In *asubha bhāvanā* the highest concentration attainable is the first *rūpāvacara jhāna-samādhi*. This meditation develops the perception of foulness which can drive away lust (*rāga*).

(d) Ten Recollections (*Anussatis*) ^{හදිසි}

'*Anussati*' means repeated reflection or recollection or constant mindfulness.

In Aṅguttaranikāya Ekadhamma Pāḷi the Buddha said, "Oh bhikkhu, if one of the ten anussatis is practised and developed repeatedly, making it a habit, then it will lead to the disgust of the endless round of rebirth; to the abandonment of attachment, to the cessation and pacification of lust and other mental defilements, to the insight of the three characteristic marks of existence, to the enlightenment of the four Noble Truths, and to the realization of Nibbāna." The ten anussatis are:

- 1 *Buddhānussati* - recollection of the Buddha
 2 *Dhammānussati* - recollection of the Dhamma
 3 *Saṅghānussati* - recollection of the Saṅgha
 4 *Silānussati* - recollection of morality (*sīla*)
 5 *Cāgānussati* - recollection of generosity (*cāga*) ^{දානය}
 6 *Devātānussati* - recollection of deities ^{දේව}
 7 *Marānussati* - recollection of death
 8 *Kāyagātāsati* - mindfulness of the thirty-two parts of the body
 9 *Ānāpānassati* - mindfulness of breathing
 10 *Upasamānussati* - recollection of peace

The eight anussatis (Nos. 1-7+10) will develop the mind to the state of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*), *kāyagātāsati* to the first *rūpāvacara-jhāna*, and *ānāpānassati* to the five *rūpāvacara-jhānas*.

(e) Four Divine Abidings (*Brahmavihāra*)

'*Brahmavihāra*' means 'noble living' or 'sublime living'

or 'divine abiding'. Anyone who is in the engrossing state of *jhāna* while practising one of the four *brahmavihāras* is said to be living nobly and sublimely like *brahmas*, or he is in the sublime or divine state of living.

- 9/5/08
1. *Metā* – loving-kindness
 2. *Karuṇā* – compassion
 3. *Muditā* – sympathetic and appreciative joy
 4. *Upekkhā* – equanimity *well balance state of the mind.*

Systematic meditation on *mettā*, *karuṇā* or *muditā* can develop the four *Rūpāvacara jhānas* in the fivefold method whereas *upekkhābhāvanā* can lead to the fifth *rūpāvacara-jhāna*.

(f) Four Immaterial States (*Āruppas*)

The following four immaterial states or bases are used as meditation subjects to develop the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*.

1. *Ākāsa* – boundless space
2. *Viññāna* *mind* – boundless consciousness
3. *Ākincañña* *nothingness* – nothingness
4. *N'evasaññā-nāsaññā* – neither perception nor non-perception

In practice one has to develop the five *rūpāvacara-jhānas* first by meditating on one of the *kasinas*, and then making the *fifth jhāna* as the base, one climbs higher to four *arūpāvacara jhānas* by meditating on the *āruppas* in the order described above.

(g) Perception of Repulsiveness in Nutriment

(*Āhārepaṭikūla-saññā*)

'*Āhāre*' means 'nutriment or food', '*paṭikūla*', 'repulsiveness', and '*saññā*', 'perception'.

So '*āhārepaṭikūla-saññā*' is the meditation intended to develop the perception of repulsiveness on food. This perception will subdue the craving for good food (*rasa-taṇhā*).

(h) Defining of the Four Elements (*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*)

'*Catudhātu*' means the four primary elements—viz., *pathavi*, *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo*.

9/5/08

'*Vavatthāna*' means the knowledge of characterizing (the elements):

The four primary elements form the basis of all corporeal phenomena. They are present in every part and particle of our body. So they must be characterized by their distinct properties.

The Meditation on *āhārepaṭikūla-saññā* and *catudhātu-vavatthāna* lead to the neighbourhood concentration.

● Six Types of Temperament (*Carita*) ୦୫୦୨

Different persons have different temperament or personal nature. Six types of temperament are to be noted,

1. *Rāga-carita* – greedy temperament
2. *Dosa-carita* – hating temperament
3. *Moha-carita* – deluded temperament
4. *Saddhā-carita* – faithful temperament
5. *Buddhi-carita* – intelligent temperament
6. *Vitakka-carita* – speculative temperament

In accordance with six types of temperament six types of persons are to be noted.

The greedy-natured person, who has greedy temperament, used to dress smartly, likes perfumes and ornaments, and indulges in sense pleasure.

The hate-natured person, who has hating temperament, is generally short-tempered and gets angry easily even over trivial things.

The dull-natured person, who has deluded temperament, is generally perplexed, distracted and wavering with sceptical doubt.

The faithful-natured person, who has faithful temperament, is generally very pious and venerates the sacred Triple Gem frequently.

The intelligent-natured person, who has intelligent temperament, relies on reasons and would not believe easily.

The ruminating-natured person, who has speculative temperament, thinks over this and that without accomplishing much.

4/5/08

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● Suitability of Kammatṭhāna to Temperament

The right coupling of temperament with meditation- subject is beneficial for quick development of mental concentration (*samādhi*).

1 The greedy-natured person with greedy temperament should exercise one of the ten signs of foulness (*asubha-kammatṭhānas*) or *kāyagatāsati kammatṭhāna* as these meditation- subjects can subdue lust and passion effectively.

2 The hate-natured person with hating temperament should practise the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra-kammatṭhānas*) or one of the four colour *kasīnas*. These meditation subjects are pure and serene and can delight persons who practise them.

3 The dull-natured person with deluded temperament as well as the ruminating-natured person with speculative temperament should practise *ānāpānassati*. The minds of these persons are restless and distracted because of restlessness (*uddhacca*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and applied thought (*vitakka*). In *ānāpānassati*, the in-going breath and the out-going breath have to be noted mindfully. As the in-breath and the out-breath occur rhythmically, *ānāpānassati* can arrest the mind and calm down a restless mind quickly.

4 The faithful-natured person with faithful temperament should practise *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Samghānussati*, *Silānussati*, *Cāgānussati* and *Devatānussati*. The faith (*saddhā*) in this person is already strong, and it will be further-strengthened to great benefits by undertaking these *anussatis*.

5 The intelligent-natured person with intelligent temperament should exercise *marañānussati*, *upasamānussati*, *dhārepatikūlasaññā*, or *catudhātu-vavatthāna*. These meditation subjects are deep and subtle, and thus they can stimulate and strengthen the wisdom of the intelligent-natured person: For primary classes

6 The meditation subjects which are suitable to all types of persons are the earth *kasīna*, the water *kasīna*, the fire *kasīna*, the air *kasīna*, the light *kasīna*, the space *kasīna* and the four immaterial states (*ārūpas*).

The above coupling is made in the form of direct opposition and complete suitability. But actually there is no meditation subject nor profitable development that does not suppress greed, hatred, and delusion, and promote faith, mindfulness, mental concentration, wisdom, etc.

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5. Samyutta Nikāya, Khandhāvagga, Samādhi Sutta.
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Review Questions

1. What is concentration? In what sense is it called concentration?
2. What are the characteristic, the function, the manifestation and the proximate cause of concentration?
3. Describe the different classifications of concentration as two kinds each.
4. Explain briefly: (i) upacāra samādhi and appanā samādhi, (ii) lokiya samādhi and lokuttara samādhi, (iii) sappītika samādhi and nippītika samādhi.
5. Describe the different classifications of concentration as three kinds each.
6. Differentiate the following: (i) hīna samādhi, majjhima samādhi, and pañita samādhi, (ii) paritta samādhi, mahaggata samādhi and appamāṇa samādhi.

7. In what ways do the following concentration differ from one another? (i) dukkhapaṭipadā dandhābhiññā samādhi (ii) dukkhapaṭipadā khippabhiññā samādhi (iii) sukhapaṭipadā dandhābhiññā samādhi, and (iv) sukhapaṭipadā khippabhiññā samādhi.
8. Explain briefly: (i) hānabhāgiya samādhi (ii) t̥itibhāgiya samādhi, (iii) visesabhāgiya samādhi (iv) nibbedhabhāgiya samādhi.
9. How do the following concentrations differ from one another? (i) chanda samādhi (ii) vīriya samādhi (iii) citta samādhi, and (iv) vīmaṃsa samādhi.
10. How is concentration classified as five kinds?
11. How is concentration defiled and how is it cleansed?
12. Why should we develop concentration?
13. What are the purpose and the objective of developing concentration?
14. Describe the necessary preparation for developing concentration briefly.
15. What are the major impediments that obstruct meditation? How can they be cut off?
16. What are *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas*? How can one find a qualified teacher to teach them to one?
17. How can one find a suitable place for meditation?
18. Which type of monastery is unsuitable and which suitable for meditation?
19. How and why should one dedicate oneself (i) to the Blessed One, and (ii) to the teacher before one undertakes meditation?
20. In what way should a meditator be endowed with (i) sincere inclination, and (ii) sincere resolution?
21. What are the qualities of a good teacher? How can one find such a teacher?
22. What will happen if we undertake meditation without first cutting off impediments?

23. What are the benefits of dedicating oneself (i) to the Buddha, and (ii) to the teacher before one undertakes meditation?
24. Comment on the statement: "Six kinds of inclination lead to the maturing of the enlightenment of those who are to be enlightened?"
25. What is the subject of meditation? Describe the forty subjects of tranquility-meditation briefly.
26. Describe the six types of temperament and the meditation subjects that suit each type of temperament.
27. Describe the ten kasīnas. What can we attain from kasīna meditation?
28. What are the ten signs of foulness? Why did the Buddha advise newly ordained bhikkhus to practise the meditation on foulness?
29. Describe the ten Anussatis. How did the Buddha comment on the practice of anussatis?

4/5/08

CHAPTER III THE EARTH KASIṆA

Special Meditation Subject (*Parihāriya Kammaṭṭhāna*)

For the purpose of developing concentration any one of the forty meditation subjects that is suitable to one's temperament can be used. But the process of developing concentration with an earth kasina will be described here first as it is most convenient to describe three stages of meditation, three types of meditation sign, and three types of concentration with this meditation subject.

The earth kasina (*pathavi kasina*) is the first of the ten kasinas which are important devices for developing four or five rūpāvacara jhānas as well as four arūpāvacara jhānas. They also form the basis for the development of mundane supernormal power.

Preparation of an Earth Kasina

For a person, who in a previous existence has gone forth into the homeless life in the Dispensation of a Buddha or outside it as an ascetic or hermit and has already attained meditative absorption (*jhāna*) on an earth-kasina, he has a strong support of the past practice of jhāna and merit. So he can develop the acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*) of the earth kasina by looking at a plot of earth, not made up, such as a ploughed area or a threshing floor.

For example, while the Elder Mallaka was looking at a ploughed area, the sign arose in him of the size of that area. He extended the sign, focused on it and attained the jhāna pentad, that is, five rūpāvacara jhānas. Then by establishing insight with the jhāna as the basis for it, he reached Arahātship.

But for a person who has no such previous experience, he should make an earth kasina according to the instructions he has learnt from a teacher. He should avoid the four faults of the earth kasina that are due to the intrusion of blue, yellow, red or white colour. So instead of using the clay of such colours, he should make the kasina of clay with the colour of the dawn.

He should make the kasina not in the middle of the monastery where novices or passers-by are about, but at a screened place within the confines of the monastery, either under an overhanging rock or in a leaf-hut. He can make it either as a fixture or as a portable one.

A fixture should be made by knocking stakes into the ground in the form of a lotus petal, lacing them over with creepers. Some suitable earth is spread on the confined ground, and a disk a span and four fingers across (about one foot) is made on top of that with quite pure dawn-coloured clay, which is picked clean of grass, rods, gravel and sand, and well kneaded.

To make a portable earth kasina a piece of cloth, leather or matting is smeared with the quite pure and clean dawn-coloured clay in the form of a disk of the size already mentioned. At the time of preliminary work it should be laid on the ground and looked at.

The disk of dawn-coloured clay should be scraped down with a stone trowel to make it as even as a drum. A wooden trowel should not be used for scraping for it turns the clay into a bad colour. The earth kasina is now ready for use.

Reflection on the Earth Kasina

A meditator should sit on a seat a span and four fingers high and two and a half cubits (about four feet) [one cubit = elbow to finger tip] from the kasina disk. For the kasina does not appear vividly to him if he sits further off than that; and if he sits nearer than that, faults in the kasina appear. If he sits higher up, he has to look at the kasina with his neck bent; and if he sits lower down, his knees ache.

Then he should review the danger of sense desires in the way beginning "Sense objects give little enjoyment" (*M.i, 91*). He should arouse an ardent wish to attain jhāna for it is the cause for the escape from sense desires as well as the cause for the emancipation from all suffering.

He should next arouse joy (*pīti*) by recollecting the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. He also develops respect in the training by thinking "Now this is the training under-

taken by all Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and Noble Disciples." He should then arouse strenuous effort by thinking "I shall surely come to know the taste of the bliss of seclusion (*viveka sukha*)."

After that he should open his eyes moderately, apprehend with the mind the sign apprehended by the eye in the earth kasina and proceed to develop it. If he opens his eyes too wide, they get fatigued and the kasina disk becomes too obvious, which prevents the arising of the meditation image (*bhāvanā nimitta*).

If he opens his eyes too little, the kasina disk is not distinct, his mind becomes retard, which also prevents the meditation sign (*nimitta*) from arising. So he should apprehend the sign and develop it with his eyes moderately open as if he were seeing the reflection of his face in a looking glass.

The dawn colour of the kasina should not be thought about, though it cannot be denied that it is apprehended by eye consciousness. If one pays attention to colour, one's meditation will be mingled with the meditation on colour kasina.

Also the characteristic of hardness of the earth element should not be given attention for distinguishing the meditation on earth kasina from the meditation on elements.

But rather, while not ignoring the colour, the meditator should focus his attention on the kasina disk as earth, continuously reflecting on it by one of the names for earth such as 'pathavī, pathavī' or 'earth, earth'. He should go on reflecting in this way with open eyes a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that.

The Appearance of Meditation Signs

As the meditator keeps his mind focused on the earth disk, wholesome consciousness (*mahākusala citta*) will be arising, accompanied by five jhāna factors. These jhāna factors will be gradually developed as he keeps on meditating, and they will suppress the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) from arising in the mind. The hindrances make the mind restless and distracted.

As the jhāna factors grow stronger and the hindrances get weaker, the mind gets more and more concentrated on the medita-

4/5/08

tion subject. From the time the mind has become quite calm and steady, the meditator should close his eyes intermitently to see whether he attains the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*). If he does not see any sign, he should keep on reflecting 'pathavī, pathavī' or 'earth, earth' with open eyes, focusing his attention on the earth disk.

When he can see the earth kasina in his mind with closed eyes as vividly as he has seen it with open eyes, he is said to attain the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*). He should reflect on the acquired sign as 'pathavī, pathavī' or 'earth, earth' with closed eyes until the sign becomes stable and steady.

Now he need not stay there any more. He should return to his own quarters and go on developing the acquired sign sitting in his quarters. If the new unstable concentration vanishes through some unsuitable encounter, he will lose his acquired sign. If this happens, he should go back to the place where the earth kasina is kept and develop the acquired sign again.

After returning to his quarters he should sit comfortably and reflect on the acquired sign with closed eyes as 'pathavī, pathavī' or 'earth, earth' with strenuous effort as if striking it repeatedly with the right thought. He tries to prevent his mind from wandering away, recalling it back whenever it goes astray. If pain or discomfort arises in his body, he should tolerate it as much as possible, ignoring it and focusing his attention on the acquired sign. When the pain becomes unbearable, he can mindfully change his posture to ease the pain.

As he keeps on reflecting on the sign, the hindrances eventually become suppressed, the defilements subside, the mind becomes concentrated with access concentration, and the counter sign (*patibhāga nimitta*) arises. *uḍḍhāna nimitta*

The acquired sign appears in the mind of the meditator when he has developed his preparatory concentration (*parikamma samādhi*) to a certain degree. This sign or image is identical with the initial meditation subject such as the earth kasina, and it appears in the mind as one has seen the initial meditation subject with open eyes. All the faults like scratches and finger marks in the earth kasina are apparent in the acquired sign.

4/5/06

The acquired sign changes to the counter sign when the meditator attains the access or neighbourhood concentration. The counter sign appears as if breaking out from the acquired sign, and a hundred times, a thousand times more purified, like a looking glass drawn out from its leather case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well polished, like the moon's disk coming out from behind a cloud, like cranes against a thunder cloud.

But the counter sign has neither colour nor shape; for if it had, it would be cognizable by the eye, it would be gross and contemplated by insight in accordance with the three characteristics of existence. It is born only of perception in one who has attained the access concentration. It is much more stable than the acquired sign. As soon as it arises in the mind, the hindrances are well suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration.

By reflecting on the counter sign intently and steadfastly, the meditator can develop the fourfold or fivefold rūpāvacara jhāna on earth kasiṇa.

● Three Stages of Meditation

In developing a meditation subject, the meditation normally develops in three stages. The progress of meditation can be judged by the appearance of appropriate signs or images (*nimittas*)

1. Parikamma-bhāvaṇā – the preparatory stage of meditation

When one undertakes a meditation, the initial meditation subject which one observes with open eyes is called the preparatory sign (*parikamma nimitta*). In undertaking meditation on pathavī kasiṇa, for example, the earth-disk which one looks at with open eyes is called the preparatory sign or image.

Focusing one's attention on the earth disk by looking at it with open eyes, one meditates "*pathavī, pathavī*" or "earth, earth" until one attains the acquired sign (*uggaha-nimitta*). This sign is the perception of the initial image that appears in the mind, and the meditator can see it with closed eyes as he has seen the earth disk

with open eyes. It is identical with the preparatory sign in appearance.

He now continues his meditation with closed eyes focusing his attention on the acquired sign and reflects "*pathavī, pathavī*" or "earth, earth" repeatedly until the acquired sign changes into the counter-sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). This sign is a thousand times more purified than the acquired sign. It is faultless and smooth like a mirror whereas the acquired sign contains faults like scratches and finger marks as in the initial sign.

The counter sign is also clear and bright. The change from the acquired sign to the counter sign is very distinct; it is like pulling out a looking glass from its leather case or like the moon's disk coming out from behind dark clouds.

Now the meditation from the beginning to the time just before the counter sign appears is called the preparatory stage of meditation (*parikamma bhāvanā*). The mental concentration associated throughout with this meditation is called the preparatory concentration (*parikamma samādhi*). In other words the mental concentration from the beginning of meditation to the time just before the counter sign appears is called *parikamma samādhi*.

Parikamma bhāvanā means the meditation which prepares or paves the way for the arising of higher *bhāvanās*.

2. *Upacāra bhāvanā*—the neighbourhood stage of meditation

"*Upacāra*" means "neighbourhood" or "moment of access". *Upacāra bhāvanā* is the meditation which has come to the neighbourhood of *jhāna, magga, and phala*. It may also be regarded as the meditation which is about to enter the absorption stage of meditation called *appanā bhāvanā*.

Parikamma bhāvanā itself is developed into the *upacāra bhāvanā*. The object of *upacāra bhāvanā* is no longer the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*); it is the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*).

The concentration associated with *upacāra bhāvanā* is called '*upacāra samādhi*' which is translated as 'neighbourhood concentration' or 'access concentration'. This concentration is just below

the concentration of the meditative absorption.

3. *Appanā bhāvanā* – the stage of meditative absorption

The meditation which has developed to *jhāna*, *magga*, or *phala* is called *appanā-bhāvanā*. The *jhāna*, *magga* or *phala* remains absorbed or fixed in their respective objects. The object of *jhāna* is the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) whereas the object of *magga* or *phala* is *Nibbāna*.

The concentration associated with the *appanā bhāvanā* is the '*appanā samādhi*', that is, the *jhāna* concentration or the *magga* or *phala* concentration.

● *Bhāvanā* and *Kammaṭṭhāna*

1. *Parikamma-bhāvanā* is attainable in all the forty subjects of meditation.
2. *Parikamma-bhāvanā* and *upācāra-bhāvanā* occur in eight *anussatis* as well as in *āhārepaṭikūlasaññā* and *catudhātuvavatthāna*, totalling to ten *kammaṭṭhānas*.
3. All the three types of *bhāvanā* occur in the remaining 30 *kammaṭṭhānas* – viz., 10 *kāṣiṇas*, 10 *asūbhas*, 4 *brāhmvihāras*, 4 *ārūppas*, *kāyagatāsati* and *ānāpānassati*.

● Meditation Sign or Image (*Bhāvanā Nimitta*)

The meditation sign or image is the 'mental image' obtained in meditation. Three types of meditation images are to be noted.

1. *Parikamma nimitta* – the preparatory sign

It is the initial meditation sign which one perceives in the mind when one looks at the meditation subject such as the earth *kaṣiṇ* with open eyes. It is the subject of the preparatory meditation.

2. *Uggaha nimitta* – the acquired sign or image

As the meditation proceeds, the meditator finds that he can observe the meditation subject, earth *kaṣiṇa* for example, without looking at it directly. This sign or image is identical to the initial preparatory sign or image, containing all the faults such as scratches and finger marks. He has acquired the sign in his mind, and he can

see it with eyes closed.

The acquired sign is still unsteady and unclear. It arises when the mind has reached a certain degree of concentration. It is also the subject of the preparatory meditation.

3. *Paṭibhāga-nimitta* – the counter sign or image

As the meditation proceeds on, at the point when the concentration reaches the neighbourhood concentration, the acquired sign suddenly changes into a bright, clear and steady sign. It is many times brighter and clearer than the acquired sign. It is entirely free from faults such as unevenness, graininess, etc., that may be present in the original subject. It is immovable as if it remains fixed in the eye.

As soon as this counter sign arises, the stage of *upacāra bhāvanā* and neighbourhood concentration is reached. It is the subject of *upacāra bhāvanā* as well as *appanā bhāvanā*.

The Difference between the Acquired Sign and the Counter Sign

The acquired sign (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears in the mind of the meditator when he has developed his concentration to a certain degree. The sign or image is identical with the initial meditation subject when the subject is a *kasiṇa* or a human corpse, and it appears in the mind as one has seen the initial meditation subject with open eyes. All the faults like scratches and finger marks in the earth *kasiṇa* are apparent in the acquired sign.

The acquired sign changes to the counter sign when the meditator attains the access concentration or neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The counter sign appears as if breaking out from the acquired sign, and though it appears similar to the acquired sign, it is a hundred times, a thousand times more purified, like a looking glass drawn out from its leather case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well polished, like the moon's disk coming out from behind a cloud. In *Ānāpānassati* and some other meditation subjects, the acquired sign and the counter sign may appear in any form depending upon the perception of the meditator.

The counter sign is born only of perception in one who has

4/5/08

obtained the neighbourhood concentration. It is much more stable than the acquired sign. As soon as it arises in the mind, the hindrances are well suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration.

● Practical Coupling of Meditation with the Sign

The coupling of *bhāvanā* with *nimitta* will be illustrated by the meditation on *pathavī-kasīṇa*.

1. Parikamma-bhāvanā and Parikamma-nimitta

The meditator attentively looks at the earth disk with open eyes, reflecting mentally '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'. From this time onwards, the earth circle that he is looking at is called '*parikamma-nimitta*' (the preparatory sign), and the meditation that is being carried out is called '*parikamma-bhāvanā*' (the preparatory meditation).

2. Parikamma-bhāvanā and Uggaha-nimitta

After meditating for some time, perhaps weeks or months, the meditator will be able to close his eyes and visualize the meditation subject in his mind. This means that he can see the earth-disk vividly in his mind as he has seen it with open eyes even though the eyes are closed. This visualized subject or acquired sign is called '*uggaha-nimitta*'.

Although the meditation sign has changed, his *bhāvanā* does not change yet. At this stage he is meditating on *uggaha-nimitta* with *parikamma-bhāvanā*.

3. Upacāra-bhāvanā and Paṭibhāga-nimitta

From the time the acquired sign appears, it is no longer necessary to look at the original earth-disk unless his concentration disappears. By concentrating on the acquired sign, he keeps on meditating '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'.

When his mental concentration reaches the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), the acquired sign changes to the counter sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). This change is very distinct and is easily noticed as the counter sign is very different from the ac-

7/5/08

quired sign. The change is as distinct as taking out a looking glass from its leather case, or as a flock of cranes flying out of dark clouds.

The *parikamma-bhāvanā* is now raised to the level of *upacāra-bhāvanā*, the neighbourhood stage of meditation, with the counter sign as its object. The meditation is now at the stage of *upacāra bhāvanā* and *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.

At this stage all the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) are suppressed, and the five *jhāna*-factors become quite strong and function their duties efficiently. Therefore the mind is well fixed on the counter sign. For this reason, *upacāra-bhāvanā* is also called '*upacāra-jhāna*'.

4. Appanā-bhāvanā and Paṭibhāga-nimitta

7/5/08
Concentrating his mind on the counter sign, the meditator carries on his meditation, reflecting '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'. When the counter sign is firm and immovable, it is made to expand by his will-power inch by inch until it fills every space in all directions.

Concentrating his mind on this new abstract image of *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, he keeps on meditating '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth' as before. If he is an intelligent, quick-witted person, he soon reaches *appanā-bhāvanā*, that is, meditative absorption, when the first *jhāna* arises. If he is a slow-witted person, he must try hard to maintain the counter sign with great care, and if he keeps on meditating vigilantly, he too will attain the first rūpāvacara *jhāna* sooner or later.

He is now at the stage of *appanā-bhāvanā* and *paṭibhāga-nimitta*. This means that the meditation subject of *appanā-bhāvanā* is also the counter sign of the earth-kasiṇa.

● The Differences between Access Concentration and Jhāna Concentration

Upacāra-samādhi, the neighbourhood or access concentration, is the mental concentration associated with *upacāra-bhāvanā*. This *bhāvanā* is the meditation which has come to the neighbourhood of *jhānas*, *magga* or *phala*. In other words, *upacāra-bhāvanā* is the

meditation which is about to enter the absorption-stage of meditation called *appanā-bhāvanā*.

Appanā-samādhi, the concentration at the meditative absorption, is the mental concentration associated with *appanā-bhāvanā* which is the stage of meditative absorption called *jhāna*, *magga* or *phala*.

The differences between *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi* will now be described.

1. In *upacāra-samādhi* the *jhāna*-factors are not yet fully developed whereas in *appanā-samādhi* the *jhāna*-factors are fully developed. Thus *appanā-samādhi* is stronger than *upacāra-samādhi*.

2. At the stage of *upacāra-samādhi*, *bhavaṅga citta*s (life-continuum) can still occur, and the meditator (*yogī*) can fall into the unconscious state. If this occurs, the *yogī* may think that everything has ceased as he is not conscious of anything and that he has attained *Nibbāna*. On the other hand, the *yogī* does not fall into the unconscious state at the stage of *appanā-bhāvanā*.

3. *Upacāra-samādhi* is unstable, and it may be compared to a child who has just learnt to walk. As the child may often fall down as he walks and has to struggle to get up again and again, so in the same way, when *upacāra-samādhi* is used as the basis of insight meditation, it often falls down to *parikamma samādhi*, and the *yogī* has to undertake *samatha-bhāvanā* again and again to raise the concentration to *upacāra-samādhi*.

On the other hand, the *appanā-samādhi* is stable, and it is compared to a man who can walk for hours without falling. When a *yogī* uses *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of insight-meditation, he can meditate for hours without any danger of losing his concentration.

4. As the *jhāna*-factors are more developed in *appanā-samādhi* than in *upacāra-samādhi*, *appanā-samādhi* is associated with greater joy (*pīti*) and stronger bliss (*sukha*).

5. At both the stages of *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi*, the mind is free from all defilements (*pariyutthāna kilesās* and *vītiikkama kilesās*). So the meditator is said to attain the purity of mind (*cittavisuddhi*). Here again the defilements are subdued.

4/5/08

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and suppressed with greater force in appanā-samādhi than in upacāra-samādhi, and the former is much more stable than the latter.

6. The mind associated with greater samādhi is more powerful and it radiates brighter, stronger and more penetrative light. Consequently it is more effective in undertaking insight-meditation.

A yogī can undertake insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) using either *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of his meditation. If he uses *upacāra-samādhi* as the basis, his path to Nibbāna is called *vipassanāyānika way*, that is, using *vipassanā* as the carriage. If he uses *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of insight-meditation, his path to Nibbāna is called *samathayānika way*, that is, using *samatha* as the carriage. It is evident that *samathayānika* is more effective than *vipassanāyānika*.

Suitability and Unsuitability (*Sappāya and Asappāya*)

(1) Abode, (2) resort, (3) speech, (4) person, (5) food, (6) climate, and (7) posture -

Eschew these seven different kinds whenever found unsuitable.

But cultivate the suitable;

For one perchance so doing finds

He need not wait too long until

Absorption shall his wish fulfil.

It has been mentioned that the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) arises when the meditator attains the neighbourhood concentration. Now it is very difficult to get this sign and to attain this concentration.

So the meditator should exert all-out effort to extend the sign in all directions and to raise his concentration to the first jhāna. If he cannot achieve this objective quickly, he must guard the sign diligently as if it were the embryo of a universal monarch.

In doing so, he must abide by seven suitable conditions and avoid seven unsuitable conditions with respect to (1) abode, (2) resort, (3) speech, (4) person, (5) food, (6) climate, and (7) posture.

1. Abode (*Āvāsa*) Living place.

An abode is unsuitable if, while he lives in it, the unarisen sign

does not arise in him or the arisen sign is lost, and where unestablished mindfulness fails to become established and the unconcentrated mind fails to become concentrated. In other words the five faculties cannot be developed in an unsuitable abode.

An abode is suitable in which the unarisen sign arises and the arisen sign becomes confirmed, and in which mindfulness becomes established and the mind concentrated.

So if a monastery has many abodes, he can try them one by one, living in each for three days, and stay on where his mind becomes concentrated.

The advantage of living in a suitable abode is that five hundred bhikkhus reached Arahantship while they dwell in the lesser Nāga Cave (Cūlanāga Lena) in Sri Lanka after apprehending the meditation sign there.

2. Alms-resort Village (*Gocara Gāma*)

The village resort where alms are sought is suitable if it is not too far, being within the distance of a kosa and a half (2000 yards) either to the north or to the south so that one may not face the sun in going to the village, and is full of devotees offering food. So it is easy to get food there. The contrary is not suitable.

3. Speech (*Bhassa*)

That speech is unsuitable which is classed among the thirty-two kinds of worldly or 'animal' talk such as speaking about food or drinks, clothes and fashions, flowers and perfumes, men and women, towns and villages, roads and vehicles, forests and mountains, rivers and oceans, rulers and battles, trades and business affairs.

That speech is suitable which is concerned with ungreediness, contentment, secluded living, the right effort, morality, concentration, wisdom, the four Noble Truths and emancipation from suffering. Even that one should talk in moderation.

4. Person (*Puggala*)

That person who does not indulge in worldly talk, who speaks moderately about the Noble Practice, who is endowed with morality, concentration and wisdom, in whose company the unconcentrated mind is concentrated, or the concentrated mind becomes more steady

fast, is suitable. But one who is devoted to the nourishment of his body and indulges in worldly talk is unsuitable; for he corrupts others as muddy water pollutes clean water.

5. Food (*Bhojana*) and

6. Climate (*Utu*)

For some, sweet food, for others sour food is suitable. Similarly for some, a cool climate, for others a warm climate is suitable.

So when a meditator finds that by taking certain food or by living in a certain climate he is comfortable, and his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes firmer, then that food and that climate are suitable. Any other food or climate is unsuitable.

7. Posture (*Iriyapatha*)

Walking suits one; standing or sitting or lying down another. So a meditator should try the postures, like the abode, for three days each. That posture is suitable to him in which his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated or his concentrated mind becomes more so. Any other posture should be regarded as unsuitable.

Thus he should avoid the seven unsuitable things and follow the seven suitable ones. For when he practises in this way, carefully guarding the sign, meditative absorption arises in a short time.

● Tenfold Skill in Absorption (*Appanā Kosalla*)

In spite of practising as above, if meditative absorption does not arise, the meditator should develop the tenfold skill in absorption. The skill in absorption should be developed in ten ways as follows.

1. Cleansing Internal and External Bases

When head-hair, beard, nails and body-hair are long, or his body is foul with sweat, then the internal physical bases are not clean and pure. And when his robe is old, dirty and foul smelling, or his dwelling full of rubbish, then the external physical bases are unclean and impure.

When the internal and the external bases are unclean, then the

7/5/08

knowledge associated with the consciousness and its concomitants which arise by taking unclean bases as their object is unclean. It is like the light of a lamp's flame that is produced from a dirty lamp, wick and oil. And when he observes the formations (*saṅkhāra*) with unclean knowledge, the formations do not become vivid and evident to him. So when he devotes himself to his meditation subject, it does not come to growth, increase and fulfilment.

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But when the internal and the external bases are clean, then the knowledge associated with the consciousness and its concomitants which arise by taking clean bases as their object is clean. It is like the light of a lamp's flame that is produced from a clean lamp, wick and oil. And when he observes the formations with clean knowledge, the formations become vivid and evident to him. So when he devotes himself to his meditation subject, it comes to growth, increase and fulfilment.

2. Balancing Controlling Faculties

The five controlling faculties (*Indriyas*) should balance one another so that they can perform their functions well in unison.

(a) Faith should be balanced with the rest

First faith (^{śā}*saddhā*) should be balanced with the remaining controlling faculties. For if faith is strong and the others are weak, then it is not possible for the energy faculty (*vīriya*) to do its function of upholding, the mindfulness faculty (*sati*) the function of establishing, the concentration faculty (*samādhi*) the function of not scattering, the understanding faculty (*paññā*) the function of seeing, because the strong faith is overpowering and suppressing them.

Therefore that overstrong faculty of faith should be decreased by reflecting on the true nature of the realities, or by not giving it the attention which would make it strong.

This is illustrated by the story of the *Elder Vakkali*. The faith-faculty of him was so strong that he could not undertake insight meditation. The Buddha instructed him how to equalize the five controlling faculties.

When he followed the Buddha's instruction, he could under-

take insight meditation and before long attained Arahantship.

(S. iii, 119)

(b) If *Vīriyindriya* is too strong ⁸⁸88ω.

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Again if the energy faculty is too strong, the faith-faculty cannot perform its function of resolving, nor can the rest of the faculties perform their respective functions. So in this case energy should be decreased by developing tranquillity, and so on. This should be illustrated by the story of the *Elder Sona*.

(Vin. I, 179-85; A. iii, 374-6)

So too with the rest; for it should be understood that when anyone of them is too strong, the others cannot perform their respective functions.

(c) **Balancing Faith with Understanding**

However, what is particularly recommended is balancing faith (*saddhā*) with understanding (*paññā*), and concentration (*samādhi*) with energy (*vīriya*). For a person who is strong in faith, weak in understanding, will generally place his faith in good-for-nothing people and believe in the wrong object of worship. He who is strong in understanding, weak in faith, leans towards dishonesty and cunningness, and is difficult to cure like a disease caused by medicine. One in whom both are equal believe in the right object.

(d) **Balancing Concentration with Energy**

A person, who is strong in concentration and weak in energy, is overcome by idleness since concentration favours idleness. He, who is strong in energy and weak in concentration, is overcome by distraction (*uddhacca*) since energy favours distraction. But concentration coupled with energy cannot fall into idleness, nor can energy when yoked to concentration fall into distraction. So these too should be balanced; for absorption comes with the balancing of the two.

(e) **Balancing Concentration with Faith**

Furthermore, concentration and faith should be balanced. One working on concentration needs strong faith, since it is with such faith and confidence that he reaches absorption.

(f) **Balancing Concentration with Understanding**

Then concentration and understanding should be balanced. One working on concentration needs strong unification (*ekaggatā*), since that is how he attains absorption. And one working on insight meditation needs strong understanding, since that is how he reaches penetration of characteristics. But with the balance of the two he attains absorption as well.

(g) **Strong Mindfulness is essential in all Cases**

Strong mindfulness, however, is needed in all instances. It need not be balanced with any faculty; the stronger it is, the better. For mindfulness keeps the mind away from distraction, into which it might fall since faith, energy and understanding favour agitation and distraction; and away from idleness into which it might fall since concentration favours idleness.

So mindfulness is as desirable in all instances as a seasoning of salt in all curries, as a prime minister in all the King's business. Hence it is said in the Commentary:-

"The Blessed One has declared mindfulness to be useful everywhere. And what is the reason? The mind indeed takes refuge in mindfulness, which has protecting function as its manifestation. Without mindfulness the mind cannot be upheld or restrained."

3 Skill in the Meditation Sign

The skill in the meditation sign is threefold:-

(1) It is the skill in producing the as yet unproduced counter sign of an earth kasīna, etc., which is the true cause of unification of mind on a single object.

(2) It is the skill in developing the counter sign such as enlarging it indefinitely in all directions when the counter sign is produced.

(3) It is the skill in guarding that sign which has been obtained through development.

4 Raising the Morale

The meditator should also balance enlightenment factors

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 (Bojjhaṅgas). He should uphold the mind when it should be upheld. When the mind slackens through overslackness of energy, rapture and so forth, then instead of developing the three factors of enlightenment (Bojjhaṅgas) comprising tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*), he develops the three factors comprising investigating wisdom (*dhammavicaya*); energy (*vīriya*) and rapture (*pīti*).
the right understanding

For this has been said by the Blessed One: "O monks, suppose a man wanted to make a small fire burn up. He put wet grass on it, put wet cow-dung on it, put wet sticks on it, sprinkled water on it, and scattered dust on it. Would that man be able to make the small fire burn up?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

"So too, monks, when the mind is slack, that is not the time to develop the enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. Why is that? It is difficult, monks, to uplift the slack mind with these factors."

"When the mind is slack, that is the time to develop the enlightenment factors of investigating wisdom, energy and rapture. Why is that? It is easy, monks, to uplift the slack mind with these factors. It is as though a man should wish to cause a small fire to blaze up, and were to throw into it dry grass, dry cow-dung, dry sticks, and were to blow it with his mouth, but not to sprinkle it with water or dust. Would it be possible, monks, for that man to cause the small fire to blaze up?"

"It would, Sir."

(a) Seven Ways to uplift Dhammavicaya-sambojjhaṅga

Further, seven things lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of investigating wisdom, i.e. investigation into the doctrine:-

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- (1) frequent questionings,
 - (2) cleansing of the physical bases, *internal, external & active*
 - (3) balancing the five controlling faculties,
 - (4) avoiding persons without understanding,
 - (5) associating with persons with understanding,
 - (6) reflecting on the field for the exercise of profound

knowledge.

- (7) being resolute to cultivate wisdom.

(b) Eleven Ways to Cultivate Viriya-sambojjhāṅga

Besides there are eleven things which lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of energy:-

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- (1) reflecting on the fearfulness of the state of the woeful abodes, etc.,
 - (2) seeing the benefit in attaining the mundane and the supramundane distinctions dependent on energy,
 - (3) reflecting on the path to be taken: "I shall tread on the path taken by the Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and the great disciples, and that cannot be taken by an idler",
 - (4) being a credit to the alms food by producing great benefit for the givers,
 - (5) reflecting on the greatness of the Teacher thus:

|| "My Teacher praises the energetic, and this unsurpassable Dispensation that is so helpful to us is honoured by my strenuous effort,"

- (6) reflecting on the greatness of the heritage thus:

|| "This great heritage^{of} called the Good Dhamma must be acquired by me, and it cannot be acquired by an idler,"

- (7) dispelling sloth and torpor by attention to the perception of light, by changing the postures, by frequenting the open air, etc.,
- (8) avoiding idle persons,
- (9) associating with energetic persons,
- (10) reflecting on the right effort,
- (11) being resolute to cultivate the enlightenment factor of energy.

right effort

(c) Eleven Ways to cultivate Pīti-sambojjhāṅga

Moreover, there are also eleven ways that help to cultivate the enlightenment factor of rapture:-

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- (1) reflecting the attributes of the Buddha,

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- (2) recollecting the attributes of the Dhamma,
 - (3) recollecting the attributes of the Saṅgha,
 - (4) recollecting the attributes of one's morality (*Sīlānussati*),
 - (5) recollecting the attributes of one's generosity in giving alms (*cāgānussati*),
 - (6) recollecting one's own virtues such as faith, morality, clarity, knowledge, wisdom, moral shame and moral dread with a consideration on deities as witnesses,
 - (7) recollecting the peacefulness of Nibbāna,
 - (8) avoiding persons with coarse nature,
 - (9) associating with persons having gentle nature,
 - (10) reflecting on respectable discourses of the Buddha,
 - (11) being resolute to cultivate the enlightenment factor of rapture (*pīti*).

Thus by cultivating these things properly, he develops the enlightenment factor of investigating wisdom, the enlightenment factor of energy, and the enlightenment factor of rapture. In this way "he upholds the mind at the time when it should be upheld."

5 Restraining the Mind at the Time when It should be restrained

5/5/08

When the mind is distracted by excess of strenuous energy and so forth, then instead of developing the enlightenment factors of investigating wisdom, energy and rapture, he should develop the enlightenment factors of tranquility (*passaddhī*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). For this has been said by the Blessed One: "Bhikkhus, suppose a man wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire, and he put dry grass on it, put dry cow-dung on it, put dry sticks on it, but did not sprinkle water or dust on it. Would that man be able to extinguish that great mass of fire?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

"So too, bhikkhus, when the mind is agitated and distracted, that is not the time to develop the enlightenment factors of wisdom, energy and rapture. Why is that? Because an agitated mind cannot be calmed down by these states. When the mind is agitated and distracted, that is the time to develop the enlightenment factors of

tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. Why is that? Because the agitated mind can be calmed down by these states.

“Bikkhus, suppose a man wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire, and he put wet grass on it, put wet cow-dung on it, and scattered dust on it. Would that man be able to extinguish that great mass of fire? ”

“Yes, Venerable Sir.”

(d) Seven Ways to cultivate Passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga

Further, there are seven things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of tranquillity:-

- (1) partaking of excellent food,
- (2) living in a good climate,
- (3) maintaining a pleasant posture,
- (4) exercising equanimity, *bodhi*
- (5) avoiding persons of violent temper,
- (6) associating with persons having cool temper,
- (7) being resolute to cultivate the enlightenment factor of tranquillity.

(e) Eleven Ways to cultivate Samādhī-sambojjhaṅga 3.51

Besides, there are eleven things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of concentration:-

- (1) cleaning the physical bases,
- (2) having skill in the meditation sign,
- (3) balancing the controlling faculties,
- (4) restraining the mind occasionally,
- (5) upholding the mind occasionally,
- (6) gladdening the listless mind by means of faith and a sense of urgency,
- (7) looking on with equanimity at what is occurring rightly,
- (8) avoiding persons with no concentration,
- (9) associating with persons having good concentration,
- (10) reflecting on jhānas and emancipation,
- (11) being resolute to cultivate the enlightenment factor of concentration.

(f) Five Ways for developing Upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga.

Moreover, there are five things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of equanimity:-

- (1) maintaining neutrality towards living beings,
- (2) maintaining neutrality towards formations,
- (3) avoiding persons who show favouritism towards beings and formations,
- (4) associating with persons who maintain neutrality towards beings and formations,
- (5) being resolute to cultivate the enlightenment factor of equanimity.

So by arousing these things in these ways he develops the enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. This is how he restrains the mind at the time when it should be restrained.

6 Gladdening the Mind at the Time when It should be gladdened

When his mind is listless owing to the sluggishness in the exercise of understanding or due to not getting the bliss of calm, then he should stimulate it by reviewing the objects for a sense of urgency.

These objects are birth, ageing, sickness, death, misery of the states of woe, misery which has its roots in the round of births in the past, misery which has its roots in the round of births in the future, misery which has its roots in the search for food in the present.

He creates confidence and rapture by recollecting the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. Thus he gladdens the mind at the time when it should be gladdened.

7 Viewing the Mind with Equanimity at the Time when It should be viewed

When he is practising in this way and his mind does not slack, is not agitated, not listless, conducts itself well on the object, has proceeded along the path of calm, then he has no concern

about upholding, restraining and gladdening the mind; he is like a charioteer when the horses are running at equal pace. This is how he views the mind with equanimity at the time when it should be so viewed.

8 Avoiding Persons with no Concentration

Avoiding persons with no concentration means keeping far away from persons who have never stepped on the Path of Emancipation, who are busy with many affairs and whose hearts are distracted.

9 Associating with Persons of Concentration

Associating with persons of concentration means going from time to time to persons who have trodden the Path of Emancipation and who have attained concentration.

10 Being Resolute upon Concentration

Being resolute upon concentration means having reverence towards concentration, tending, leaning and inclining towards concentration.

This is how the Tenfold Skill in Concentration should be fulfilled.

● The Simile of a Clever Bee

When a too clever bee learns that flowers are blooming in a certain tree, it sets out hurriedly, passes the tree, turns back and arrives when the pollen and nectar are finished.

Another stupid bee also learns about the flowers; it sets out with a slow speed and reaches the tree when the pollen and nectar are finished.

A clever bee, on the other hand, sets out with even speed, arrives with ease at the cluster of flowers, takes as much pollen and nectar as it pleases, turns them into honey and enjoys its taste.

Similarly when the meditation sign appears, one bhikkhu forces his energy, thinking "I shall soon reach absorption"; his mind becomes agitated and distracted through excessive strenuousness, and he is not able to attain absorption.

Another bhikkhu who sees the defect in overexertion slacks off his energy, thinking "What is the use of absorption to me now?" His mind, through over-slackness of energy, becomes idle. So he is also not able to attain absorption.

Yet another frees his mind from idleness even when it is only slightly idle and from agitation when only slightly agitated, confronts the counter sign with balanced effort, and soon attains absorption.

One should act like the last bhikkhu.

● The Appearance of Absorption in Cognitive Series

When the meditator is reflecting repeatedly on the acquired sign and then on the counter sign of the earth kasina as "pathavī, pathayī" or "earth, earth", the following cognitive series will arise and dissolve.

"Na -Da-Ma-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja"-Bh-Bh-

Na = bhavaṅga calana (vibrating life continuum)

Da= bhavaṅgu paccheda (arresting life continuum)

Ma= manodvārāvajjana (mind-door-adverting consciousness)

Ja = javana = impulsive consciousness

enjoying the taste of the sense object

Bh = bhavaṅga stream or life continuum

When the counter sign appears at the mind door, the life continuum known as bhavaṅga calana (Na) and bhavaṅgupaccheda (Da) vibrates twice and becomes arrested or cut off. Then manodvārāvajjana (Ma) adverts or directs the consciousness stream towards the sense object (counter sign), observes the object and decides whether it is good or bad.

In accordance with this decision, one of the four *nānasampayutta mahākusala citta*s performs the javana function for seven consciousness moments enjoying the taste of the sense object. After that bhavaṅga citta (Bh) sink into life continuum.

When meditative absorption (*jhāna*) arises, the cognitive series (*vīthi*) takes the following form:

(Manda-paññā) Na-Da- "Ma-Pa-U-Nu-Go-Jhā"-Bh-Bh-

(Tikkha-paññā) Na-Da- "Ma-U-Nu-Go-Jhā"-Bh-Bh-

When the counter sign of the earth kasina appears at the mind door, the life continuum known as Bhavaṅga calana (Na) and Bhavaṅgupaccheda (Da) vibrates twice and becomes arrested or cut off. Then manodvārāvajjana (Ma) adverts or directs the consciousness stream towards the counter sign, observes and decides the sense object whether it is good or bad.

Then one of the two somanassa-sahagatam ñāṇasampayutta mahākusala cittas performs the upacāra-samādhi-javana function four times in the person of slow or dull wisdom (*manda paññā*) under the names of:

Pa = Parikamma = preparation of jhāna,

U = Upacāra = proximity of jhāna,.

Nu = Anuloma = adaptation or connection between parikamma and jhāna; it acts as a bridge harmonizing the lower cittas with the higher cittas,

Go = Gotrabhu = the citta that cuts the kāma lineage to form the exalted or mahaggata lineage.

These four types of consciousness are known as upacāra samādhi javanas as they are impulsive consciousnesses that arise close to the absorption consciousness (*jhāna*). In the case of a person of quick or bright wisdom (*tikkha-paññā*), parikamma (*Pa*) is omitted.

Immediately after gotrabhu, rūpāvacara kusala first jhāna citta arises just once as appanā javana. After the dissolution of this first jhāna citta, bhavaṅga citta or life continuum flows on as usual.

In developing the higher jhānas the cognitive series arises as above. Instead of rūpāvacara kusala first jhāna citta, rūpāvacara kusala second jhāna citta or rūpāvacara kusala third jhāna citta or rūpāvacara kusala fourth jhāna citta will arise once to function as appanā javana.

When one enters the meditative absorption, the upacāra samādhi javanas and the jhāna javana must agree in feeling (*vedanā*). In the fourfold method of counting rūpāvacara jhānas the first three jhānas are accompanied by sukha (pleasant feeling) so they are somanassa cittas. Therefore in these cases, the upacāra samādhi javanas must

be somānassa-sahagatāṃ nāṇasampayutta mahākusala cīttas. In the case of the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna, it is accompanied by neutral feeling, so the upacāra samādhi javanas must be upekkhāsahagatāṃ nāṇasampayutta mahākusala cīttas.

● The Cognitive Series in Jhāna Attainment

'Samāpatti' means 'attainment'. A person, who has attained the rūpāvacara first kusala jhāna, can enter the meditative absorption state corresponding to that jhāna whenever he wishes. If he practises well, he may enter the ecstatic absorption state instantly, and remain in the absorption state for one hour, two hours, and so on up to seven days at a time.

During the ecstatic absorption state, the jhāna citta occurs repeatedly and spontaneously focusing the mind on the counter sign of the meditation subject like earth kasīṇa. The bhavaṅga citta or life continuum is well suppressed; so other cognitive series to be aware of other sense objects will not arise. The activity of other sense doors except the mind door is completely suspended. Thus the meditator will not hear any sound, nor does he know any other sense object except the counter sign.

Therefore, he remains motionless and will not perform any other activity. The ecstatic absorption state is trance like, but it is neither a trance nor a hypnotic state. During the ecstatic state the mind remains clear, calm, lucid and fully alert, enjoying the unique jhāna bliss and rapture.

A person, who attains all rūpāvacara jhānas and arūpāvacāra jhānas, may enter the ecstatic absorption corresponding to any jhāna. But he must enter the first jhāna first, then, by eliminating vitakka and vicāra, he enters the second jhāna, then by eliminating pīti, he enters the third jhāna, and so on.

The cognitive series of the jhāna samāpatti runs as follows:

(Manda-paññā) Na-Da- "Ma-Pa-U-Nu-Go-Jhā-Jhā-many times"- Bh-
(Tikkha-paññā) Na-Da- "Ma-U-Nu-Go-Jhā-Jhā-many times"- Bh-

To develop the concentration to the jhāna level, the meditator recalls and observes the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa that he has

attained before. Focusing his mind on the counter sign, he reflects repeatedly as "pathavī, pathavī" or "earth, earth." When the concentration reaches the jhāna state, the above cognitive series arises. It is similar to the jhāna cognitive series, but the jhāna citta arises many times without break throughout the period of the ecstatic absorption.

The counter sign of the earth kasīna appears at the mind door causing the life continuum to vibrate twice and become arrested (Na-Da). Then mano-dvārāvajjana (Ma) observes the sign and decides whether it is good or bad.

Then one of two somanassa sahatagatā nānasampayutta mahākusāla citta (take upekkhāsahagatā to enter the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna or arūpāvacara jhānas) functions as parikamma (omit for tikkhapaññā person), upacāra, anuloma and gotrabhu. Then rūpāvacara kusāla first jhāna (or second, third, fourth or arūpāvacara jhāna) citta functions many times as appanā javana. When the meditative absorption is over, bhavaṅga citta sink into life continuum.

● The First Rūpāvacara Jhāna

When the meditator enters upon and dwells in the first rūpāvacara jhāna, he is quite secluded from sense desires and also secluded from unprofitable things. Sense desires are certainly incompatible with the jhāna; when they exist, the jhāna does not occur, just as when there is darkness, there is no lamplight; and it is only by letting them go that the jhāna is reached just as the further bank is reached by letting go off the near bank.

When the yogī (meditator) dwells in the jhāna, he is also secluded from other hindrances. Seclusion here means bodily seclusion, mental seclusion and seclusion by suppression of the hindrances which are the contrary opposites of the jhāna factors.

The first rūpāvacara jhāna is a combination of five jhāna factors: vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā. Initial application (*vitakka*) is incompatible with sloth and torpor, sustained application (*vicāra*) with sceptical doubt, rapture (*pīti*) with ill-will, bliss (*sukha*) with agitation and worry, and concentration (*samādhi*) with sense de-

sires.

In the first rūpāvacara jhāna, the five jhāna factors are fully developed; so they can keep the mind^o fixed on the counter sign. Besides as pīti and sukha are very strong, the yogī will enjoy great rapture and bliss superior to that derived from the enjoyment of sense pleasure. Moreover, the mind becomes very powerful just like the sun rays, when focused by a convex lens, become very powerful. The mind will radiate very bright and penetrative light which enables the yogī to see far and near penetratively with closed eyes.

Pīti (joy) has the characteristic of refreshing and endearing. Its function is to refresh the body and the mind or to pervade them with rapture. It is manifested as elation. But it is of five kinds: minor joy, instantaneous joy, showering joy, up-lifting joy and suffusing joy.

Minor joy (*khuddakā pīti*) is only able to raise the hairs on the body. Instantaneous joy (*khanikā pīti*) is like flashes of lightning at different moments.

Showering joy (*okkantikā pīti*) breaks over the body again and again like waves on the sea shore. Uplifting joy (*ubbegā pīti*) can be powerful enough to levitate the body and make it spring up into the air.

But when suffusing joy (*phāranā pīti*) arises, the whole body is completely pervaded, like a filled bladder, like a rock cavern invaded by a huge inundation. This suffusing joy is the root of absorption; it goes on growing and reaches association with concentration.

Now this fivefold joy, when conceived and matured, perfects the twofold tranquillity (kāyapassaddhi + citta passaddhi), that is, bodily and mental tranquillity. When tranquillity is conceived and matured, it perfects the twofold bliss (sukha), that is, bodily and mental bliss. When bliss is conceived and matured, it perfects the threefold concentration (samādhi), that is, the preparatory concentration (parikamma samādhi), the access concentration (upacāra samādhi) and the absorption concentration (appanā samādhi).

◦ Now bliss (*sukha*) devours and consumes bodily and mental affliction. It has the characteristic of being pleasant. Its function is to intensify the associated mental factors. It is manifested as showing favour to the intensification of the mental factors.

Whenever joy and bliss are associated, joy is delight at getting a desirable object, and bliss is the enjoyment of the taste of what is obtained. Where there is joy, there is bliss, but where there is bliss, there is not necessarily joy.

Joy is included in the aggregate of formations (*sankharakhandha*) whereas bliss is included in the feeling aggregate (*vedanakkhandha*). When a weary traveller hears or sees water or a shady wood, he will be delighted with joy; when he drinks the water or goes into the shady wood, he will have bliss.

● Abandoning Five Factors and Attaining Five Factors

On attaining the first rūpāvacara jhāna, the yogī abandons five factors and becomes endowed with five factors. Herein, the abandoning of five factors means the abandoning of five hindrances: sense desires, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and sceptical doubt. For no jhāna arises until these hindrances have been abandoned.

There are other immoral mental factors that are eliminated at the jhāna moment, but only the five hindrances are especially harmful to the jhāna. For the mind that lusts after many things through sense desire is not concentrated on one object; or, being overcome by sense desire, it does not enter upon the progress of jhāna in order to put away the sensuous element. When pestered by ill-will towards a sense object, the mind does not occur uninterruptedly.

When overcome by sloth and torpor, the mind is unwieldy. When seized by restlessness and remorse, the mind is not calm and it flits about. When stricken by uncertainty or sceptical doubt, it does not go to the path that leads to the attainment of jhāna. So it is these only that are called abandoning factors because they are specially obstructive to jhāna.

But *vitakka* directs or applies the mind onto the object; *vicāra*,

the sustained application, keeps the mind anchored at the object; *pīti* or joy, produced by the success of the effort, refreshes the mind whose effort has succeeded through not being distracted by those hindrances; and bliss or *sukha* intensifies the mind for the same reason.

Then *ekaggatā* or unification, aided by this directing onto, this anchoring, this refreshing and this intensifying, evenly and rightly centres the mind with its remaining associated mental factors on the object. Consequently the five factors that the yogī becomes endowed with, should be understood as the arising of the five jhāna factors.

And while these five factors are present also at the moment of access and are stronger in access than in normal consciousness; they are still stronger in absorption than in access and acquire the characteristic of the fine material sphere.

For *vitakka*, initial application, arises here directing the mind onto the object in a very clear manner; *vicāra*, sustained application, arises pressing the object very hard, and *pīti*(joy) and *sukha* (bliss) pervade the whole body. Hence it was said, "And there is nothing of his whole body not permeated by the rapture and bliss born of seclusion."

● Mastery of the Jhāna in Five Ways

When a beginner has reached the first jhāna, he should enter upon it often without reviewing it much. For the first jhāna factors occur crudely and weakly in one who reviews it much. Consequently they do not become conditions for higher endeavour, that is, trying to develop higher jhānas. While he is endeavouring for the unfamiliar higher jhāna, he falls from the first jhāna and fails to reach the second jhāna.

Here the Blessed One gave the simile (example) of a foolish, stupid mountain cow with no knowledge of pasture-fields and no skill in walking on craggy mountains. It might occur to her thus, "How if I were to go to a place I have never to, eat grass I have never yet eaten, drink water I have never yet drunk?"

And she were to lift the hind leg without planting her fore leg firmly. She would fall away and would not get to the place she had intended to go, neither would she easily get back to her original place.

Therefore he should acquire mastery in five ways first of all with respect to all first jhāna.

- (1) *Avajjana vasitā* – mastery in adverting; it is the ability to discern the five jhāna factors wherever, whenever and for as long as he wishes.
- (2) *Samāpajjana vasitā* – mastery in attaining; it is the ability to enter the jhāna quickly wherever and whenever he wishes.
- (3) *Adiṭṭhāna vasitā* – mastery in resolving; it is the ability to remain in jhāna for as long a time as he has resolved to stay.
- (4) *Vuṭṭhāna vasitā* – mastery in emerging; it is the ability to emerge from the jhāna at the time he has determined to emerge.
- (5) *Paccavekkhāna vasitā* – mastery in reviewing; it is the ability to review the jhāna factors quickly by reducing the number of bhavaṅga cittas between cognitive series (vīthis).

When he emerges from the first rūpāvacara jhāna, he adverts his mental stream towards vitakka, the initial application. Then, next to the adverting consciousness that arose interrupting the life continuum, either four or five impulsive cittas arise with vitakka as their object. Then two bhavaṅga cittas arise as life continuum. After that, there is adverting with vicāra as its object and followed by impulses in the way just stated. When he is able to prolong his consciousness process uninterruptedly in this way with the five jhāna factors, then his mastery of adverting is successful.

This mastery in adverting is found at its summit (highest point) of perfection in the Blessed One's Twin Miracle. There is no quicker mastery in adverting than this.

The mastery in attaining jhāna quickly was demonstrated by Venerable Mahāmoggallāna by his ability to enter upon jhāna quickly in the taming of Nandopānanda, the dragon-king.

The ability to remain in jhāna for a moment consisting of exactly a finger-snap or exactly ten fingersnaps is called the mastery in resolving the duration of absorption.

The ability to emerge from the jhāna quickly in the same way or at the time one has resolved earlier to emerge from absorption is called the mastery in emerging.

The last two types of mastery may be illustrated by the story of the Elder Buddhārakkhita. Eight years after his ordination, this Elder was sitting in the midst of thirty thousand bhikkhus who possessed supernormal powers, and had come to attend upon the sick Elder Mahārohanagutta at Therambattala, the cave where the Elder Mahinda first stopped.

He saw the king of the Supanna birds swooping down from the sky intending to seize the king of dragons who was offering rice-gruel to the sick Elder. He immediately created a huge rock, and seizing the Royal Nāga by the arm, he pushed him inside it. The Royal supanna struck the rock and flew away.

The senior Elder remarked, "Friends, if Buddha Rakkhita had not been here, all of us would have deserved blame."

● The Second Rūpāvacāra Jhāna

When the yogī has acquired mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna, he can consider the faults in this now familiar jhāna after emerging from it. As he views the jhāna factors with mindfulness and full awareness, he finds vitakka and vicāra to be gross and weak while pīti, sukha and ekaggatā appear to be fine and calm.

So he reflects that the first jhāna is close to the enemies (*nivaraṇas*) due to vitakka and vicāra, and it is less calm and less blissful than the second jhāna which has only pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as its jhāna factors.

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the first jhāna, brings to mind the counter sign of the earth kasiṇa and reflects "pathavī, pathavī" or "earth, earth." repeatedly without allowing vitakka and vicāra to arise in the mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross jhāna factors and developing the peaceful factors,

knowing that "now the second rūpāvacara jhāna will arise". He tries to develop the three stages of meditation (*bhāvanā*) in the normal order of parikamma, upacāra and appanā bhāvanā. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the second rūpāvacara jhāna.

When his mind remains fixed on the counter sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the second jhāna. When he examines the jhāna factors, he finds vitakka and vicāra to be absent and only pīti, sukha and ekaggatā to be present. The second jhāna is more tranquil and more blissful than the first jhāna.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the second jhāna.

● The Third Rūpāvacara Jhāna

When he has acquired mastery in five ways, then on emerging from the now familiar second jhāna he can consider the flaws in it thus: "This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of vitakka and vicāra. Besides rapture (*pīti*) is a form of mental excitement, so it appears to be gross and weak whereas bliss (*sukha*) and one-pointedness or unification (*ekaggatā*) appear calm and blissful. Because of rapture, the second jhāna is gross and weak, and less calm and less blissful than the third jhāna."

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the second jhāna and reflects on the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa 'pathavī', pathavī' as before, suppressing pīti from arising in the mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross jhāna factor and developing the peaceful factors, knowing that "now the third rūpāvacara jhāna will arise." He tries to develop the three stages of meditation.

The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the third jhāna. When his mind remains focused on the counter sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the third jhāna. On examining the jhāna factors, he finds only *sukha* and *ekaggatā* to be present.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the third jhāna. With the stilling or surmounting of vitakka, vicāra and pīti, he dwells in bliss with equanimity and is mindful. He is

worthy of praise since he has equanimity towards the third jhāna and has reached the perfection of bliss. Equanimity of jhāna is a name for equanimity producing impartiality towards even the highest bliss described thus: 'He dwells in equanimity' (*Vbh* . 245).

The bliss associated with the third rūpāvacara jhāna is regarded as the highest mundane bliss.

● The Fourth Rūpāvacara Jhāna

When he has acquired mastery in five ways, then on emerging from the now familiar third jhāna he can consider the flaws in it thus: "This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of rapture (*pīti*), and the mental concern about bliss (*sukha*) makes it gross and weak whereas the equanimity as feeling (*upekkhā*) and one pointedness or unification (*ekaggatā*) appear calm and peaceful. Because of *sukha*, the third jhāna is gross and weak and less calm and tranquil than the fourth jhāna."

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the third jhāna and reflects on the counter sign of the earth kasina 'pāthavī, pathavī' as before, suppressing *sukka* from arising in the mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross jhāna factor and developing the peaceful factors; knowing that "now the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna will arise." He tries to develop the three stages of meditation. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the fourth jhāna.

When his mind remains focused on the counter sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the fourth jhāna. On examining the jhāna factors, he finds only *upekkhā* and *ekaggatā* to be present. With the abandoning of bodily pleasure and bodily pain and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief he enters upon and dwells in the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna. With the stilling of gross jhāna factors the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna is so subtle that the breathing of a person dwelling in the fourth jhāna is no longer noticeable.

The fourth rūpāvacara jhāna has neither pain nor pleasure and possesses the purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. The mind-

fulness, as well as other associated mental factors, is cleared, purified, and clarified by equanimity. This purity of mindfulness and the associated strong concentration make the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna the best basis for undertaking insight meditation.

● The Fivefold Rūpāvacara Jhānas

There are two ways of developing rūpāvacara jhānas: the fourfold method and the fivefold method. The fourfold method, which is the more common one, has been described above.

The difference in the two methods is in abandoning vitakka and vicāra together or one after another after attaining the first jhāna. For persons of quick wisdom, they eliminate vitakka and vicāra together in going up to the second jhāna. For persons of slow wisdom, however, they cannot eliminate vitakka and vicāra simultaneously; they have to eliminate the jhāna factors one by one in going up to higher jhānas. Thus for persons of slow wisdom, there are five rūpāvacara jhānas.

A person of slow wisdom first develops the first rūpāvacara jhāna and practises it to acquire mastery in five ways as described above. He emerges from the now familiar first jhāna, and considers the flaws in it in this way: "This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of the hindrances, and its jhāna factors are weakened by the grossness of initial application (*vitakka*). Consequently the first jhāna is less calm and less blissful than the second jhāna which has vicāra, pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as its jhāna factors."

Thus he cuts his attachment to the first jhāna, brings to mind the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa and reflects 'pathavī, pathavī' repeatedly, without allowing vitakka to arise in the mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor (*vitakka*) and developing the remaining peaceful jhāna factors, knowing that 'now the second rūpāvacara jhāna will arise.' He tries to develop the three stages of meditation. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the second jhāna.

When his mind remains fixed on the counter sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the second rūpāvacara jhāna with

Table (1). Dual Method of Counting
Rūpāvacara Jhānas

Jhāna factors	Fivefold Method	Fourfold Method	Rūpa plane of rebirth
Vitak, Vicāra, Pīti Sukha, Ekaggatā Vicāra, Pīti, Sukha	first jhāna	first jhāna	first jhāna plane
Ekaggatā Pīti, Sukha, Ekaggatā	second jhāna third jhāna	second jhāna	second jhāna plane
Sukha Ekaggatā	fourth jhāna	third jhāna	third jhāna plane
Upekkha, Ekaggatā	fifth jhāna	fourth jhāna	fourth jhāna plane

vicāra, pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as its jhāna factors. He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

On emerging from the now familiar second jhāna, he can consider the flaws in it this way: "This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of vitakka, and its factors are weakened by the grossness of sustained application (*vicāra*). Consequently the second jhāna is less calm and less blissful than the third jhāna which does not have vicāra among its jhāna factors."

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the second jhāna, brings to mind the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa, and reflects 'pathavī, pathavī' repeatedly without allowing vitakka and vicāra to arise in the mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor (*vicāra*) and developing the remaining peaceful jhāna factors, knowing that 'now the third rūpāvacara jhāna will arise.' He tries to develop the three stages of meditation, the culmination of which is the attainment of the third jhāna.

When his mind remains well focused on the counter sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the third rūpāvacara jhāna with pīti, sukha and ekaggatā as its jhāna factors. He then practises

to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

The fivefold third jhāna is identical with the fourfold second jhāna. Therefore, the development of the fivefold fourth jhāna and fifth jhāna is identical with the development of the fourfold third jhāna and fourth jhāna.

The comparison of the two methods is described in table (1). In this table the rūpāvacara plane of rebirth to which each type of jhāna can give rise to is also described. It will be noticed that the rūpāvacara planes of existence are named in accordance with the fourfold method, which is the more common one.

According to the investigation conducted at the International Pā-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres in Myanmar, all meditators who attained the first rūpāvacara jhāna could eliminate vitakka and vicāra simultaneously in developing the second rūpāvacara jhāna. So the fourfold method of counting rūpāvacara jhānas applies to almost all meditators whereas the fivefold method is needed only in a few exceptional cases. Consequently the rūpāvacara planes, where the meditators are reborn after they have developed and maintained the respective jhānas till their death, are named in accordance with the fourfold method.

References:

1. *'Visuddhimagga'* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Venerable Naṇdamālā, Vol.1, pp. 228-323.
2. *'Visuddhimagga'* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Venerable Sobhana (Mahāsi Sayadaw), Vol.1, pp.362-528.
3. *'The Path of Purification'* (Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, published by Singapore Buddhist Meditaton Centre, pp.126-176.
4. *'The Path of Purity'* (Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantā-cariya Buddhaghosa), translated by Pe Maung Tin, Pāli Text Society, pp.138-195.

Review Questions

1. How is the earth kasina made? How can it be used to develop the first rūpāvacara jhāna?
2. Describe the three stages of meditation together with the corresponding meditation signs in reflecting on an earth kasina.
3. Describe the three types of meditation signs (*nimittas*). What are the differences between the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) and the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*)?
4. Describe the three types of concentration (*samādhi*) that associate with the three stages of meditation.
5. What are the differences between access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and jhāna concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Which is better to be used in insight meditation?
6. Describe the successive stages of development in the meditation on an earth kasina by coupling *bhāvanā* with *nimitta*.
7. Describe the seven types of suitability (*Sappāya*) and the seven types of unsuitability (*Asappāya*) for developing meditative absorption (*jhāna*).
8. What is the tentold skill in absorption (*Appanākosalla*)?
9. How should the controlling faculties (*Indriyas*) be balanced in order to progress to absorption?
10. How should a meditator uphold his mind when it should be upheld?
11. How should a meditator restrain his mind when it should be restrained?
12. What are the things which lead to the arising of the enlightenment factors of investigating wisdom, energy and rapture?
13. In what ways can the enlightenment factors of tranquility, concentration and equanimity be cultivated?
14. (a) How should the mind be gladdened when it should be gladdened?
(b) How should the mind be viewed with equanimity when it should be done so?
15. In reflecting on the counter sign of kasina how does the cognitive series of consciousness (*vīthi*) occur (a) before the arising of jhāna, and (b) at the time the jhāna arises?

16. After attaining the first rūpāvacara jhāna how can one develop this jhāna attainment (*samāpatti*)?

Explain the cognitive series of this process.

17. Describe the qualities of the first rūpāvacara jhāna.

18. Why should a beginner, after attaining the first rūpāvacara jhāna, enter upon it often without reviewing it much?

19. Describe the five factors abandoned and the five factors attained when a person acquires the first rūpāvacara jhāna.

20. How should a meditator practise to gain mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna that he has attained?

21. After attaining the first rūpāvacara jhāna in kasīna meditation, how should one develop the second and the third rūpāvacara jhānas?

22. How can one develop the fourfold fourth rūpāvacara jhāna by kasīna meditation? What is the significance of this jhāna?

23. Why are there two ways of counting rūpāvacara jhānas? Give a comparison of the two methods.

CHAPTER VI
MINDFULNESS OCCUPIED
WITH THE BODY
(*Kāyagatāsati*)

● The Significance of *Kāyagatāsati*

'*Kāyagatāsati*' is a meditation subject which was never before practised except when the Buddha appeared, and is outside the province of any of the founders of sects. It has been praised by the Blessed One in various ways in different Suttas thus:

"Bhikkhus, when one thing is developed and repeatedly practised, it leads to a supreme sense of urgency, to supreme benefit, to supreme liberation from bondage, to supreme mindfulness and comprehension, to the attainment of insight and vision, to a happy life here and now, to the realization of wisdom, emancipation and fruition. What is that one thing? It is mindfulness occupied with the body." (A. i, 43).

"O bhikkhus, they who savour mindfulness occupied with the body savour the deathless; they who do not savour mindfulness occupied with the body do not savour the deathless. They who have made the effort in mindfulness occupied with the body have savoured or enjoyed the deathless, have not neglected, have not missed it. Those who have made no endeavour in mindfulness occupied with the body have not savoured the deathless, have neglected and missed it." (A. i, 45)

"How, bhikkhus, is mindfulness occupied with the body developed? How, being repeatedly practised, is it of great fruit, of great benefit?"

"A bhikkhu, with keen confidence who wants to practise *kāyagatāsati*, should go into solitary retreat in a favourable place and review his body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair and contained in the skin as full of many kinds of filth thus:

"In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, intestines, stomach, excrement, brain, bile,

● Textual Description of Ānāpānassati

“O bhikkhus, in this dispensation, a bhikkhu who undertakes meditation goes to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to a quiet place, sits down, folds his legs crosswise, sets his body erect and establishes mindfulness on the in-going breath and the out-going breath which represent the meditation subject of the mindfulness of breathing. Ever mindfully he breathes in, and ever mindfully he breathes out.

“(i) Breathing in long, he knows ‘I breathe in long’; or breathing out long, he knows ‘I breathe out long.’

“(ii) Breathing in short, he knows ‘I breathe in short’; or breathing out short, he knows ‘I breathe out short.’

“(iii) He strives on thus ‘I shall breathe in to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly’; he strives on thus ‘I shall breathe out to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly.’

“(iv) He strives on thus ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation of the in-going breath’; he strives on thus ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation of the out-going breath.’
(S.v, 321-2)

● Practical Instruction for Undertaking Ānāpānassati

The meditator should learn the subject of meditation from a competent teacher. Then he should find a secluded, quiet place suitable for meditation, taking notice that any noise is a serious disturbance to the mindfulness of breathing. In a group meditation each meditator should maintain complete silence.

The meditator should sit comfortably either cross-legged or in any preferable posture on a mat or seat. He should keep his body and head erect while relaxing all his muscles. He should not move any part of his body during meditation, although he is allowed to change his posture to relieve any unbearable pain in his body. Even then he must tolerate any bodily pain or discomfort as much as possible and change his posture gently with half awareness if he has to, still mindful of breathing while he does so.

Duxing
Cantimony

28

He should place his hands on his thighs or legs, preferably with the right hand on the left hand with palms turning upward. He closes his eyes and breathes normally. He should take note where the breath touches. For a person of long nose it may touch under the tip of the nose. If the nose is of normal length, the breath may touch at the two nostrils when he is breathing with both nostrils or at one nostril when he is breathing only with that nostril. For a person of short nose, the touch may be distinct at the upper lip.

Wherever is the touch most distinct, he keeps his mind or attention at the point of contact, and try to be aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by their gentle brushing at the touch point.

First Step: Awareness of the In-breath and the Out-breath

The first important step in mindfulness of breathing is to be constantly aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by their gentle brushing either at the nostrils or at the upper lip.

Only if the meditator practises ānāpānassati by establishing his mindfulness on the breath at the point of distinct contact with the in-breath and the out-breath, will the ānāpānassati concentration and meditation be fully accomplished in him. (Visuddhi. i, 271)

If the in-going breath and the out-going breath are not distinct, the meditator may breathe a little harder or deeper to make them distinct. Once he is aware of them, he should breathe on normally.

Now an important question arises – should one concentrate on the breath or on the touch? The answer is: one must always concentrate on the breath. *Ānāpānassati* means mindfulness of the in-breath and the out-breath. If one concentrates on the touch, he is no longer doing *ānāpānassati*, but another *kammaṭṭhāna*.

Moreover, he should not pay attention to natural characteristics (*sabhāva lakkhaṇas*) and common characteristics (*sāmañña lakkhaṇas*). 279

Sabhāva lakkhaṇas – natural characteristics of *pathavī, āpo, tejo* and *vāyo* such as hardness, cohesiveness, hotness, pushing and supporting characteristics.

Sāmañña lakkhaṇas – common characteristics of *nāma-rūpa*, viz., impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*).

Thus he should not take note as 'in, out, touching', or 'in, out, pushing' or 'in, out, *anicca*' or 'in, out, *dukkha*', etc.

Also one need not label the breath as 'in-breath, out-breath' or 'in, out'. All that is required is to be mindfully aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath all the time. If he cannot concentrate his mind without labelling, then he may note 'in-breath, out-breath' at the beginning stage.

Another important requirement is to focus the mind on the breath at the point of contact only, and not to follow the breath as it goes into the nostrils or as it goes out of the nostrils. If he follows the breath, his mind will not be at the state of one-pointedness, and consequently his progress in developing concentration will be delayed.

For the same reason he should not take note of any bodily sensation such as pain, itch, or numbness that arises during meditation. Since the mind can be aware of only one thing at a time, the meditator will not be aware of anything else if he can focus his mind well on the meditation subject. The awareness of any other thing shows that the mind has been distracted towards that thing.

Any bodily pain or discomfort should not be a bother to the meditator. He should tolerate it, and neglect it. It should be a warning to him to increase his mindfulness of the meditation subject. When he can concentrate his mind well on the meditation subject, he will no longer notice the pain. Even if the pain becomes unbearable, he can change his posture to relieve the pain.

He must keep his mind constantly focused on the in-breath and the out-breath without allowing the mind to wander out to other sense objects. In case it has wandered out, he must bring it back to the meditation subject as soon as he notices it.

The Buddha has warned us that it is very difficult to control the mind for it is very subtle and very fast, and the hindrances (*nīvarāhas*) are out there to agitate and distract it. But we should exert all our effort to control and culture it, because, once cultured, it will bring about human happiness, celestial happiness and even Nibbanic happiness.

So he is culturing and developing his mind while he keeps it focused on the in-breath and the out-breath at the point of contact with either the nostrils or the upper lip. He strives to keep his meditating mind fixed calmly on the breath for half an hour, one hour, etc. If the meditating mind always remains fixed at the in-breath and the out-breath for about an hour at every sitting for meditation, he can proceed to the second step, that is, noting the length of breath as long or short.

In case the meditating mind does not remain fixed calmly on the object of the in-breath and the out-breath and is very restless, the Counting Method should be used as directed in Great Commentaries.

● The Counting Method to Control the Mind

The meditator should count his breath as follows.

1. 'In-breath, out-breath' – one,
2. 'In-breath, out-breath' – two,
3. 'In-breath, out-breath' – three,
4. 'In-breath, out-breath' – four,
5. 'In-breath, out-breath' – five,
6. 'In-breath, out-breath' – six,
7. 'In-breath, out-breath' – seven,
8. 'In-breath, out-breath' – eight.

He may count not less than five and not more than ten. But he is advised to count up to eight in reverence to the Noble Eight-fold Path which he is trying to develop. He should make a determination to keep his mind calmly fixed on the in-breath and the out-breath while counting from one to eight without letting the mind to wander away towards various external objects.

As he reflects on the breath by counting, his meditative

mind will gradually remain fixed calmly on the object of the in-breath and the out-breath by the power of the counting method. When the mind remains calmly fixed on the meditation subject for about half an hour to one hour at every sitting, he can stop counting and continue to be aware of the breath. He should also make the resolution: "May my mind remain calmly fixed on the meditation subject for half an hour or one hour," and meditate. If he is successful at every sitting, he can change the meditation method to the observation of the length of breath.

Second Step : Awareness of the Length of Breath

'Breathing in long', he knows distinctly, 'I breathe in long';
'breathing out long', he knows distinctly, 'I breathe out long.'

'Breathing in short', he knows distinctly, 'I breathe in short';
'breathing out short', he knows distinctly, 'I breathe out short'.

So did the Buddha give the instruction. What is meant by a long and short breath here? It means the duration of time taken by the breath. If it takes a long time to breathe in or out, then the breath is taken to be long. If it takes a short time to breathe in or out, then the breath is taken to be short. So the length of breath is arbitrarily determined by the meditator himself.

The meditator should always breathe normally. He should not intentionally make the breath either long or short. Neither should he investigate how long or how short the breath is. If he does so, he will jeopardize or upset his concentration.

Sometimes the length of breath remains long for the whole sitting or short for the whole sitting. But generally the length of breath changes from time to time during the meditation. Whatever the length of breath may be, the in-breath and the out-breath should be equal in length. This will greatly help the development of mental concentration.

If the in-going breath is long and the out-going breath is short for a long time, the meditator may fall backward. If, on the other hand, the in-going breath is short and the out-going breath is long for some time, his body will bend forward. So the in-breath and the out-breath should equal in length. But the meditator should

always breathe calmly and normally.

The meditator should not label the breath as long or short. He should go on concentrating his mind on the in-breath and the out-breath either by the counting method or without counting. When the mind remains calmly focused on the breath, he just takes note of the breath as long or short while he is mindfully conscious of the in-breath and the out-breath.

The meditator should strive on so that he can focus the mind calmly on the long or short breath for one hour, two hours, and so on. At this stage the meditation sign (nimitta) should appear. Whether it appears or not, the meditator should proceed to the next step.

Third Step : Awareness of the Whole Breath

He trains thus "I shall breathe in to know clearly the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole in-breath."

He trains thus "I shall breathe out to know clearly the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole out-breath." (*Ma. i, 70*)

When the meditator is calmly and firmly conscious of the length of the breath as long or short for one hour or two hours at every sitting, then he should proceed to the next step as instructed above by the Buddha. He should strive on to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly.

First, he should mindfully focus on the in-breath and the out-breath. Next, he ardently tries to be aware of the length of the breath as long or short. When he can steadfastly focus his attention on the length of the breath, he strives on to be mindfully aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

While he does so, he should not try to note thus: 'This is the beginning, this is the middle, this is the end.' Neither should he label 'beginning, middle, end.' If he tries to do so, he may jeopardize his concentration. If he cannot meditate without labelling, then he should just label as 'in-breath, out-breath' or 'breathing in, breathing out.'

All he need to do is to be mindfully aware of the whole breath from the beginning to the end by its touch at the tip of the nose or at the nostrils or on the upper lip.

He should not follow the breath as it goes into the body or out of the body. He should not take the breath that touches the nostrils as the beginning, the breath that reaches the chest as the middle, and that which arrives at the navel as the end when he breathes in.

Similarly, when he breathes out, he should not regard the navel, the chest and the nostrils as the points to mark the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath. He must focus his mind only on the breath that is touching or brushing the tip of the nose, the nostrils or the upper lip, thus keeping his mind at one point, that is, the point of contact.

- The Comparison with a Gate-keeper and a Sawyer

The meditator should note the simile of a gate-keeper. A gate-keeper does not examine people inside and outside the town for they are not his concern. But he does examine each man as he arrives at the gate.

Similarly the meditator pays no attention to the in-going breath that has gone inside the nose and to the out-going breath that has gone outside the nose, because they are not his concern. But they are his concern each time they arrive at the nostril gate.

He should also act like a sawyer in the simile of the saw. Suppose a man is cutting a log with a saw. The man's mindfulness is established at the saw's teeth where they cut the log, without his giving attention to the saw's teeth as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so. In other words, he focuses his attention only on the teeth of the saw that cut the log; his eyes do not follow the saw as it moves forward and backward.

Yet he knows from the teeth of the saw that cut the log whether the saw is moving forward or backward and whether it moves through a long distance or a short distance. Moreover he also knows the beginning, the middle, and the end of the saw-teeth that have cut through the log.

Similarly the meditator establishes mindfulness at the nose tip or the upper lip, without giving attention to the in-breaths and the out-breaths as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown

to him as they do so. By focusing his attention on the breath at the point of contact, he is aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the in-going breath as well as the out-going breath.

When the meditator can calmly and mindfully focus his mind on the beginning, the middle, and the end of the in-breath and the out-breath for one hour, two hours or more at every sitting, the meditation sign (*nimitta*) may appear. Whether it appears or not, he should proceed to the next stage.

The Fourth Step : the Disappearance of the Breath

Whenever the meditator sits for meditation, he should first establish mindfulness on the in-going breath and the out-going breath. When his mindfulness is well established, he should try to be aware of the length of the breath and take notice whether it is long or short by noting whether the breathing is fast or slow. When he can calmly and mindfully concentrate his mind on the length of breath, he should strive on to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

As he mindfully watches the in-going breath and the out-going breath to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath, his breathing becomes more and more gentle and subtle. The gross in-breaths and out-breaths gradually cease, and his consciousness arises with the subtle in-breath and out-breath as its object. And when that has ceased, it goes on arising with the successively subtler breaths as its object. How?

Suppose a man strikes a bronze bell with a big iron bar. Immediately a loud sound arises, and his consciousness will arise with the gross sound as its object. Then when the gross sound has ceased, his consciousness will arise with the subtle sound as its object. And when that has ceased, his consciousness will go on arising with the successively subtler sound as its object. This is how it should be understood. For while other meditation subjects become clearer at each higher stage, *anāpānassati* does not. In fact, as he goes on developing it, it becomes more subtle for him at higher stage, and it even comes to the point at which it is no longer manifest or distinct.

However, when it becomes unmanifest in this way, the meditator should not get up from his seat, shake out his leather mat, and go away. What should be done? He should not get up with the idea 'Shall I ask the teacher?' or 'Is my meditation subject lost?' If he goes away, and so disturbs his posture, the meditation subject has to be started anew. So he should go on sitting as he was and temporarily substitutes the place where the breaths normally touched for the actual breaths as the object of contemplation.

If the breaths do not become subtle even when he concentrates his mind on the whole breath clearly being aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath for one hour or more at every sitting, he should make a mental wish "May my gross breath be calm", and strive on to be mindfully aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

Gradually the breath will become smooth, subtle and calm by itself. He should not purposely make the breath calm and subtle, he will slowly gasp for air and become tired. He will jeopardize his concentration.

If the breath becomes subtle by itself and the mind is calm on it, most meditators, by the power of meditation, are no longer aware of the head, the nose and the body; there exist only the breath and the mind which is conscious of the breath. At that moment "I" or "he" cannot be found.

The meditator should strive on to be calmly and mindfully aware of the breath with the intention "May my breath be calm and subtle." When his concentration rises, his breath usually becomes calm and subtle.

Then he will need more powerful mindfulness to concentrate his mind on that subtle breath very attentively. At this stage very powerful mindfulness that fixes the mind on the meditation subject and very powerful wisdom that clearly apprehends the subtle breath are very essential.

While he is striving so, sometimes the in-breaths and the out-breaths are no longer distinct. He can no longer find the breath which seems to disappear. In that case, he should fix his mind at the place where he has apprehended the breath, bearing in mind that he

05/5/08

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is breathing.

● The Simile of a Farmer

A farmer, after doing some ploughing, sent his oxen free to graze and he sat down to rest in the shade. Then his oxen would soon go to the forest. After some time when he wants to catch them and yoke them again, he does not wander through the forest following their tracks, but rather he takes his rope and goad and goes straight to the drinking place where they usually met. He just sat and lied there.

After the oxen had wandered about for a part of the day, they came to the drinking place. They drank and bathed, and when they came out and were standing about, he secured them with the rope, brought them back by prodding them with the goad, yoked them and went on with his ploughing.

So too, the meditator should not look for the in-breaths and the out-breaths anywhere else than the place normally touched by them. He should take the rope of mindfulness and the goad of understanding, and fixing his mind on the place normally touched by them he should go on giving his attention to that.

As he gives his attention in this way the breaths reappear after no long time, as the oxen did at the drinking place. So he can secure them with the rope of mindfulness, and yoking them in that same place and prodding them with the goad of understanding, he can keep on applying himself to the meditation object.

● The Appearance of the Meditation Signs

(*Bhāvanā Nimitta*)

In mindfulness of breathing, all the three types of meditation image or sign — viz., preparatory image (*parikamma nimitta*),^{or} acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*) and counter image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) are attainable.

The natural in-going breath and out-going breath are taken as the preparatory image. The grey dirty image that appears at a certain degree of mental concentration is also regarded as the preparatory image.

3/5/08

A white image like cotton or silk cotton that appears at a higher degree of concentration is called the acquired image. This is a general description. The image of other colours or shapes may also appear. Different images may appear to different people.

As the concentration rises, the image or sign may become very clear and bright like the evening star. This image is taken to be the counter sign. Again this is a general description.

It is described in *Visuddhi Magga* that the meditation image is not the same for all. It appears to some producing a soft touch like cotton wool, silk cotton or a breeze. To some the image appears like a star, a ball of ruby or a ball of pearl; to some it has a harsh touch like a cotton seed, or a pin made of heartwood; to some it is like a long string, or a wreath of flowers, or a crest of smoke; to others it is like a spread out cobweb, a film of cloud, a lotus flower, a chariot-wheel, the disc of the moon or the disc of the sun.

In fact that resembles an occasion when a number of *bhikkhus* are sitting together and reciting a *Suttanta*. One of them asks, "Like what does the *Suttanta* appear to you?" and one answers, "To me it appears like a great mountain torrent." Another "To me it is like a row of forest trees", and still another, "To me it is like a fruit-bearing tree, complete with foliage, giving cool shade."

So, as one *Sutta* appears differently to them, owing to the difference in perception, this one subject of meditation appears differently due to the difference in perception, for it is born of perception, originated by perception, sprung from perception. Therefore it should be understood that when it appears differently it is because of the difference in perception.

For a person who had experience in *Ānāpānassati* in a previous life, the meditation image starts to appear while he is meditating to be aware of the length of breath or while he is focusing on the whole breath or while he is meditating on very subtle breath. But this initial image is not stable and firm yet. So the meditator should ignore it and keep on focusing on the in-going breath and the out-going breath. By doing so the image will become more stable.

3/5/08

3/5/08
p. 201

For most people the image appears while the meditator is focusing on the mild subtle breath which reappears after it has gone to be no longer distinct. Again this image is usually not stable yet. The meditator should not pay attention to it; he should strive on to be mindful of the breath. When the image and the breath become identical and indivisible, he is aware of the image while he is trying to be aware of the breath and vice versa. This is the right form.

However, for some meditators the image does not appear at the place where the breath touches the nostrils or the upper lip. It appears a little further apart or about one foot from the tip of the nose. It may also appear on the forehead or in other places.

In this case the meditator should not pay attention to the image or sign. He should focus his attention on the breath at the point of contact. When his concentration attains full strength, the image will appear at the point of contact and become indivisible from the breath.

And here, the consciousness that has the in-breath as its object is one, the consciousness that has the out-breath as its object is another, and the consciousness that has the image as its object is still another. For the meditation subject reaches neither absorption nor even access in one who has not got these three things clear. But it reaches access and also absorption in one who has got them clear.

● The Arising of Fourfold or Fivefold Jhānas

And when the image appears in this way, the meditator should inform the teacher, who in turn should encourage the yogī and give proper guidance.

After this the meditator should fix his mind on the image; and so from now on his development proceeds by way of fixing. He should put away extraneous aspects, and anchor his mind upon the in-going breath and the out-going breath.

From the time the counter image appears, his hindrances are suppressed, his defilements subside, his mindfulness is established and his mind is concentrated in access concentration.

He should not give attention to the image for its colour, nor reflect upon it for its characteristics. He should guard it as carefully as a king's chief queen guards the embryo of a universal monarch, or as a farmer guards the ripening crops.

He should avoid the seven unsuitable things and cultivate the seven suitable things. Then, guarding it thus, he should make it grow and improve with repeated attention. He should also practise the tenfold skill in absorption and bring about evenness of energy with concentration.

As he strives thus the first *rūpāvacara kusala jhāna* will arise in due course. Then after acquiring mastery in five ways with respect to the first *jhāna*, he can go on developing the fourfold or fivefold higher *jhānas* on that same counter image in the same way as described under the earth-kasīna. ^{at} ^{Jaṇṇu} ③

● The Benefits of Ānāpānassati

The mindfulness of breathing is of great fruit, of great benefit. The great fruit is the attainment of the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna*. The great benefit should be understood here as peacefulness both because of the words 'And, *bhikkhus*, this concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and much practised, is both peaceful and sublime' (*S.v. 321*), and because of its ability to cut off the initial application (*vitakka*).

Because it is peaceful and sublime and an unadulterated blissful abiding, it cuts off the mind's running hither and thither with the initial application obstructive to concentration, and keeps the mind only on the breaths as its object. Hence it is said, 'Mindfulness of breathing should be developed in order to cut off the initial application.' (*A.iv, 353*)

Also the great benefit of mindfulness of breathing should be understood as the root condition for perfecting clear vision and deliverance for this has been said by the Blessed One:

“*Bhikkhus, the mindfulness of breathing, when developed and much practised, perfects the four foundations of mindfulness. The four foundations of mindful-*

ness, when developed and much practised, perfect the seven enlightenment factors. The seven enlightenment factors, when developed and much practised, perfect clear vision and deliverance." (M. iii, 82)

References:

- 1 "Visuddhi Magga" by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol.I, pp. 552-585.
- 2 "The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)" by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Bhikkhu Nānamoli, pp. 285-317.
- 3 "The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)." by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Pe Maung Tin, pp. 305-337.

Review Questions

- 1 How should we exercise mindfulness of breathing according to the instructions of the Buddha?
- 2 Describe the four steps in the practice of mindfulness of breathing. What should we do when the breath disappears?
- 3 How should we conduct ānāpānassati properly to reach the first rūpāvacara jhāna?
- 4 How does the meditation sign (bhāvanā nimitta) appear normally in ānāpānassati? What is the difference between the acquired sign and the counter sign?
- 5 In practising ānāpānassati how do we know that we have reached the first absorption? How can we go on to attain the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna?
- 6 Why is ānāpānassati practised in many meditation centres? What are the benefits of ānāpānassati?
- 7 What will happen if we do not follow the instructions of the Buddha in practising 'Ānāpānassati'?
- 8 Have you practised 'Ānāpānassati'? What are the difficulties that you have encountered?

- 9 Describe the three stages of meditation in Ānāpānassati and the meditation signs that indicate these stages.
- 10 How did the Buddha praise Ānāpānassati? Why is it the staple meditation subject for Bodhisattas?

CHAPTER V
FOUR GUARDIAN MEDITATIONS
(*Caturārakkha Kammaṭṭhānas*)

To Protect Oneself from Internal and External Dangers

'*Caturārakkha kammaṭṭhānas*' means 'four guardian meditation subjects.' They are used to protect oneself from internal and external dangers.

The internal dangers are the five hindrances (*nīvaranas*) and other defilements (*kilesās*) that arise together with the mind, and defile and taint the mind to be unwholesome and uncultured. The five hindrances are our closest enemies which prevent us from performing meritorious deeds, and obstruct the arising of moral consciousness, *jhāna* and *magga* in our meditation.

The external dangers come from wicked persons, dangerous animals like tigers, wolves, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and ghosts, ogres, ogresses, etc. One may encounter these dangers especially when one meditates alone in the forest.

To ward off these dangers, one should first undertake the guardian meditations at least for a few minutes before one practises the special meditation subject (*parihāriya kammaṭṭhāna*) for developing concentration.

The four guardian meditation subjects are:

- 1 *Mettā bhāvanā* – radiating loving-kindness,
- 2 *Buddhānussati* – reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha,
- 3 *Asubha bhāvanā* – reflecting on the repulsiveness of a corpse,
- 4 *Māraṇānussati* – reflecting on the nature of death.

These four meditation subjects serve as '*sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas*', that is, meditation subjects generally desirable in all matters.

Before a bhikkhu residing in a monastery takes up his special meditation subject, he should first develop loving-kindness towards all bhikkhus in the monastery and then to the community of bhikkhus.

He should sincerely radiate loving kindness thus:

'May all be free from danger;
 May they be free from mental suffering;
 May they be free from bodily pain;
 May they be healthy and happy always.'

Then he should radiate loving-kindness to all deities, to the rulers of the village of his alms resort, to all human beings in the village, and to all living beings in general.

By radiating loving-kindness in this way he produces kindness in his co-residents; so they are easy for him to live with. Kindly deities will protect him, and the village-rulers will protect his requisites. He is loved by men and deities alike. So he can go among the villagers without incurring their dislike since they trust him. With loving-kindness to all living beings he can wander unhindered everywhere.

Besides his mind is calm, tranquil, and joyful while his countenance is clear, serene, and pleasant. Since he wins the love of everybody, no one will try to cause him harm.

Then he should reflect on the attributes of the Buddha very respectfully. By doing so he is permeating his mind and body with the noble attributes. Thus his body will become as sacred as the special fragrance chamber of the Buddha. So his enemies, wild animals and ghosts will not do harm to him. Moreover, *Buddhānussati* will strengthen his faith and confidence in the Buddha as well as his mindfulness and wisdom.

Furthermore, he should also practise *asubha bhāvanā* by reflecting on the repulsiveness of a corpse. This will subdue his lust and sever his attachment to his body as well as to other people's bodies. When he is well established in the perception of loathsomeness, even divine objects cannot tempt his mind to greed.

Finally but not last, he should practise *maranānussati* by reflecting on the nature of death. He should reflect in this way: 'My being alive is uncertain, but my death is certain'. The perception of death will subdue his pride, greed and anger. It will help him to give up improper search and to live without attachment with a growing

sense of urgency.

Moreover, a meditator or yogī should always practise the four guardian meditations while he is performing his daily duties. As soon as he wakes up in the morning, he should reflect '*araham*, *araham*', contemplating the noble attribute of the Buddha.

When he washes his face, and the face is in contact with cool water, he should contemplate: 'May all beings be cool, calm, and pleasant as this cool, clear water.'

While he brushes his teeth, washes his mouth, takes a bath, defecates and urinates, he should contemplate on the repulsiveness of the body.

When he goes to bed, he contemplates thus: 'A day has passed by, I am coming closer to death by one more day. My being alive is uncertain, and my death is certain'.

If he always practises the four guardian meditations daily at appropriate times, he will ward off all dangers, materialize his good wishes, and develop his five powers or controlling faculties – viz., faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration or one-pointedness of the mind, and wisdom. This will enhance his ability to undertake his special meditation effectively.

Now *Buddhānussati* and *Maraṇānussati*, if undertaken correctly, will lead to the access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) whereas *asubha bhāvanā* will lead to the first jhāna.

Mettā bhāvanā, again if practised correctly, will lead to the third rūpāvacara jhāna in the fourfold jhāna method, or to the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in the fivefold jhāna method. All these mental concentrations can be used as the basis for proceeding to insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*).

Thus the four guardian meditations, when developed fully, will be very beneficial and very effective for warding off all dangers, for protecting oneself and for developing the sterling qualities in oneself. So the essential instruction will be given for developing each guardian meditation to the fullest extent.

Developing Loving-kindness (*Mettā Bhāvanā*)

Loving-kindness is included in the four divine abidings (*Brahma Vihāra*). A meditator who wants to develop loving-kindness, if he is a beginner, should sever the major and minor impediments and learn the meditation subject from a qualified teacher.

Then, when he has done the work connected with the meal and got rid of any drowsiness due to eating, he should seat himself comfortably on a well-prepared seat in a secluded place.

To start with, he should review the evils of hate and the advantages of forbearance. Why? Because hate has to be abandoned and forbearance acquired in the development of this meditation subject.

But he is not able to put away any unseen evil or to acquire any unknown advantage; therefore the evils of hate should be considered through such Suttas as:

*"No higher rule, the Buddhas say, than patience,
And no Nibbāna higher than forbearance. (D. ii, 49; Dh. 184)*

*"Him I call a brahman who is strong in
forbearance, who makes an army of it." (Dh. 399)*

*"Angerless does he endure abuse,
beating and imprisonment,
patience his power and armed might –
that one I call a Brahmana." (Dh. 399)*

"No greater thing exists than forbearance." (S. i, 222)

Hate, hatred or anger stands for the immoral mental factor 'dosa', which is the most destructive element in the world. Before it destroys others, it will destroy one first. As soon as hate arises in the mind, anger-rooted consciousness occurs in association with ignorance, moral shamelessness, moral fearlessness and restlessness of the mind. So one becomes distracted, loses one's sense of judgement, being ready to perform immoral actions at any time.

Anger-rooted consciousness is also accompanied with painful mental feeling which agitates the mind. Anger or hate will also give rise to sorrow, grief, lamentation and despair. It is the direct

enemy of loving-kindness. If anger or hate is present in the mind, loving-kindness cannot arise. So if we want to develop loving-kindness, hate must be driven away.

Loving-kindness and forbearance are the two qualities of the same beautiful mental factor called '*adosa*', which is the direct opposite of '*dosa*'. So by cultivating forbearance, anger or hate can be suppressed and loving-kindness can be developed. So the Buddha admired forbearance as the most noble austere practice.

To Whom Loving-kindness should not be Cultivated first

Loving-kindness should not be developed first towards the following persons.

- 1 Persons one does not hold dear,
- 2 Very dear friends,
- 3 Neutral persons,
- 4 Enemies,
- 5 Persons of the opposite sex,
- 6 Dead persons.

The persons one does not hold dear are the ones who do not act for one's welfare but act for the welfare of one's enemies. To develop loving-kindness towards such a person means to put an unloved person in the place of a dear one. So this will make one tired.

Again to develop loving-kindness towards a very dear friend means to put him in the place of a neutral person, and should he experience the slightest pain, one feels disposed to weep. So this will also make one tired.

A neutral person is one whom one neither loves nor hates. To develop loving-kindness towards a neutral person means to put him in the place of a respected person or a dear person. So this will also make one tired.

When one thinks of one's enemy, anger arises, and so one cannot develop loving-kindness towards him.

Thus one should not develop loving-kindness first towards the above four types of persons.

Also one should not specifically develop loving-kindness towards persons of the opposite sex, for if one does, lust will arise in him. So a male yogī should not develop loving-kindness specifically to a woman, and vice versa.

However, after one attains *mettā-jhāna* and has broken the barriers between persons (*sīmāsambheda*), one can radiate loving-kindness to persons of the opposite sex in general such as *sabbā itthiyo* (all female persons) and *sabbe purisā* (all male persons).

One should never develop loving-kindness towards dead persons, for if one does so, one reaches neither absorption nor access.

(*Visuddhi, Myanmar, i, 287-8*)

The Order of Persons to be Permeated with Loving-kindness

One should first develop loving-kindness towards four persons in the order given below:

- 1 Atta – oneself,
- 2 Piya – a dear person including a respectable or adorable person,
- 3 Majjatta – a neutral person whom one neither loves nor hates,
- 4 Veri – enemy.

The initial development of loving-kindness towards oneself refers to making oneself an example. For even one develops loving-kindness for a hundred or a thousand years in this way '*aham sukhito homi*: may I be happy', absorption will not arise.

But if one develops loving-kindness in this way 'May I be happy. Just as I want to be happy and dread pain, as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings too,' making oneself the example, then a desire for other beings' welfare and happiness arises in him. And this method is indicated by the *Buddha* himself by his words:

*"I visited all quarters with my mind
Nor found I any dearer than myself;
Self is likewise to every other dear;
Who loves himself will never harm another."* (*S. i, 75; Ud. 47*)

In accordance with these instructions, in order to make one's mind tender and malleable, to make oneself an example and develop sympathy and consideration for others, one should first pervade

oneself with loving-kindness for some time as follows.

1 *Ahaṃ avero homi*

2 *Avyāpajjho homi*

3 *Aniḅho homi*

4 *Sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi.*

1 *May I be free from enmity.*

2 *May I be free from mental suffering.*

3 *May I be free from bodily pain.*

4 *May I be well and happy.*

After pervading oneself with loving-kindness, in order to proceed easily, one should develop loving-kindness towards one's teacher or a person like him, one's preceptor or a person like him, whom one adores and respects.

One should call to mind that person's generosity, affectionate words, etc., to inspire love and endearment, and also that person's morality, learning, etc., to inspire respect and reverence. Then one should develop loving-kindness towards that person in the following manner. With such a person, of course, one attains jhāna absorption.

Ayaṃ saṃpuriso 1 Avero hotu.

2 *Avyāpajjho hotu*

3 *Aniḅho hotu*

4 *Sukhī attānaṃ pariharātu.*

May this good man be

1 *free from enmity,*

2 *free from mental suffering,*

3 *from from bodily pain,*

4 *well and happy.*

If the meditator has already attained the fourth jhāna by his practice of *Ānāpānassati*, or better by his meditation on white kasīna, then making this jhāna-concentration as the foundation of his meditation, he can quickly attain *mettā-jhāna* in developing loving-kindness.

In this case the meditator first develops the fourth jhāna by practising *Ānāpānassati* or better by meditation on the counter image of the white kasīna. The concentration based on white kasīna is

better, because it is accompanied with more brilliant light. When the meditation light becomes very brilliant and dazzling, he emerges from the fourth jhāna and focuses his mind on his teacher or a person of the same sex whom he loves and respects very much. The person will easily appear in the brilliant light.

Among the various postures of the person the yogī should choose the posture that he likes best. He should also visualize the happiest smiling appearance of the person that he has ever seen. He should visualize the person to be about six feet in front of him. Then focusing his attention on that person, he develops loving-kindness towards that person in the way mentioned earlier.

This development of loving-kindness will progress smoothly and quickly as it has the powerful support of the fourth-jhāna samādhi developed by either Ānāpānassati or white-kasīṇa meditation. That jhāna samādhi acts as powerful dependent condition. Because of that jhāna samādhi, the meditator's mind is calm and concentrated, free from all defilements, tender and malleable, and ready to undertake meditation.

After developing loving-kindness in four ways towards that respectable person, the meditator chooses one way which he likes best. Suppose he chooses the way 'May this good man be free from mental suffering'. Then, visualizing the happiest form of that person with his face smiling, the yogī reflects repeatedly 'May this good man be free from mental suffering'. This meditation on loving-kindness takes concept (*paññatti*) as its object; so the mind should be fixed on '*satta paññatti*', the concept of living beings.

When the meditator's mind is calm, quiet, tranquil, and well concentrated on the form of the respectable person who is smiling and free from mental suffering for one hour or more, he should reflect on the jhāna factors. If the jhāna factors—*vitakka*, *vicāra*, *piṭi*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*—appear clearly in his wisdom-eye, then it can be assumed that he has attained the first jhāna.

After practising to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna, he eliminates *vitakka* and *vicāra* to attain the second jhāna. Then again after practising to acquire mastery in five

ways with respect to the second jhāna, he eliminates *pīti* to attain the third jhāna. He cannot go higher to the fourth jhāna, because loving-kindness cannot associate together with equanimity (*upekkhā*) in the mind.

Then he develops loving-kindness by reflecting in the remaining three ways, one after another, going up to the third jhāna in each case. When he is reflecting 'May this good man be free from enmity', he should visualize the man to be free from enmity. Again when he is reflecting 'May this good man be free from bodily pain', he should visualize the person to be free from bodily pain. And when he is reflecting 'May this good man be well and happy', again he should visualize the person to be well and happy. He should also develop loving-kindness to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to each of these jhānas.

According to the instructions given in *Visuddhi Magga* (i, 289) and *Mahāṭīkā* (i, 354), one should develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna towards each person. As there are four ways for developing loving-kindness, one should attain the third jhāna in each way.

As the attitude wishing the respectable and adorable person to be free from enmity; to be free from mental suffering, to be free from bodily pain, and to be well and happy are not the qualities of equanimity, the fourth jhāna which is associated with equanimity cannot be attained.

When the meditator attains success in the manner described above, he should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards another respectable and adorable person. He should develop loving-kindness successfully towards at least ten such persons.

Then he should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards very dear persons including parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, one after another. The persons should be of the same sex as the yogī, and the third jhāna should be attained in each of the four ways of developing loving-kindness.

Then the yogī should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards at least ten neutral persons of the same sex one after another. He should visualize each one clearly in his brilliant medita-

tion light, and develop loving-kindness in four ways towards the person. He should reach the third jhāna in each way and acquire mastery in five ways with respect to all jhānas.

Then he should develop loving-kindness in the same way to his enemies or persons he hates. All the persons towards whom loving-kindness is being radiated must be of the same sex as one and must be living. If one does not have any enemy or hated person, then one does not develop loving-kindness towards enemies.

Before one develops mettā towards an enemy, one should develop it first on respectable and adorable persons, then towards dear persons, and then towards neutral persons until one attains the third jhāna in each case. When the mind is tender, malleable, and well-developed, and the meditation light is very intense and bright, then one visualizes the enemy in the meditation light and develops loving-kindness in four ways towards him: "May he be free from enmity, free from mental suffering, free from bodily pain, and may he be well and happy."

After radiating mettā in this way a few times, one chooses the way one likes most, and develops loving-kindness towards the enemy in this way till one attains the third jhāna.

If one cannot attain jhāna due to the resentment towards the enemy, one must drive away the resentment by reflecting in many ways as described in Visuddhi Magga. For example, one may reflect on the good qualities of the enemy while neglecting his bad qualities just as one removes the bones from the meat and eats only the meat.

If one cannot still make one's resentment or anger subside, one should reflect *Anamatakkā Samyutta* in which the Buddha described that in the long chain of one's uncountable existences in the round of rebirths (*samsāra*), there is no being who has not been related to one as father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister, etc.

If one's anger or resentment does not subside yet, then one should develop compassion towards him by reflecting that all worldlings are subjected to old age, sickness, death and woeful suffering. Or he may reflect on the great benefits of developing loving-kind-

ness. When one's anger or hatred towards the enemy has subsided, one can develop loving-kindness towards that person up to the third *jhāna*.

One should cultivate loving-kindness in this way towards all one's enemies one after another. One should also practise to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to all these *jhānas*.

● The Breaking of Barriers between Persons (*Simāsambheda*)

When one can develop lovingkindness equally towards the four types of persons:

- 1 *Atta* – oneself,
- 2 *Piya* – dear person including adorable and respectable persons and very dear friends,
- 3 *Majjhatta* – neutral person whom one neither loves nor hates,
- 4 *Veri* – enemy or a person one hates,

and when one can eliminate the demarcations differentiating them as 'This is I, this is a dear person, this is a neutral person, this is an enemy', having no preference to any one to let him enjoy bliss or suffer pain, then one is said to have broken the barriers between persons or attained '*Simāsambheda*'.

We should develop loving-kindness to be boundless and limitless like this to make it fully bloom. To achieve this goal one must develop equal *jhāna-mettā* towards dear persons, towards neutral persons, and towards enemies after cultivating *mettā* in oneself for some time.

First one should develop the fourth *jhāna* of *Ānāpānassati* or better of white *kasina* that one has already attained. When the meditation light becomes intense and bright, one should develop loving-kindness towards oneself for a few minutes. One cannot attain absorption by pervading oneself with *mettā*.

Then one should visualize a dear person to appear in the meditation light and develop loving-kindness in the way described above to attain the third *jhāna*. Next one visualizes an enemy to appear in the meditation light and develop loving-kindness to the third *jhāna* again.

Next one cultivates loving-kindness towards oneself for a few minutes, and then to another dear person, another neutral person, and another enemy, one after another up till the third jhāna. Next again one develops loving-kindness towards oneself, towards another dear person, another neutral person, and another enemy up till the third jhāna as before.

Thus changing the dear person, the neutral person, and the enemy each time, one develops loving-kindness towards *atta, piya, majjhata, verī, atta, piya, majjhata, verī*, and so on for many times. One cultivates loving-kindness up to the third jhāna every time one develops metta towards the dear person, the neutral person and the enemy, thus maintaining equal love towards all of them.

When one can maintain equal love towards oneself, the dear person, the neutral person, and the enemy, one attains *simāsambhedha*, that is one has broken the barriers between various persons. This means that one can truly love all persons as oneself.

This method of developing loving-kindness is successfully practised in International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Centres, Myanmar.

● **Developing 528 Modes of Loving-Kindness according to Paṭisambhidā Pāḷi**

According to *Visuddhimagga* (i, 302) the attainment of *simāsambhedha* is successful only in one whose mind has reached jhāna in developing loving-kindness. Again the development of 528 modes of mettā can be fully successful only in one whose mind has reached absorption and who has attained *simāsambhedha* in developing loving-kindness.

In developing 528 modes of mettā:

- 1 The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness (*mettā cetovimutti*) is practised with unspecified pervasion in five ways;
- 2 The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with specified pervasion in seven ways; and
- 3 The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with directional pervasion in ten ways. (Ps. ii, 130)

(1) *Anodhiso Phāraṇā Mettā Cetovimutti*

The Mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with unspecified pervasion in 5 ways:

- 1 *Sabbe sattā* — all living beings,
- 2 *Sabbe pānā* — all breathing beings,
- 3 *Sabbe bhūtā* — all creatures with distinct bodies,
- 4 *Sabbe puggalā* — all persons,
- 5 *Sabbe attabhāva pariyāpannā* — all those who have a personality.

These five kinds of unspecified beings are pervaded with loving-kindness in four ways each:

- 1 *Sabbe sattā* (i) *averā hontu*,
(ii) *avyāpajjhā hontu*,
(iii) *anighā hontu*,
(iv) *sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu*.

1 May all living beings be

- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna),

Repeat with the remaining four types of persons.

(1) Total modes of mettā = 5 x 4 = 20

(2) *Odhiso Phāraṇā Mettā Cetovimutti*

The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with specified pervasion in 7 ways:

- 1 *Sabbā itthiyo* — all female beings,
- 2 *Sabbe purisā* — all male beings,
- 3 *Sabbe ariyā* — all noble persons,
- 4 *Sabbe anariyā* — all not noble persons or worldlings,
- 5 *Sabbe devā* — all deities or gods,
- 6 *Sabbe manussā* — all human beings,
- 7 *Sabbe vinipātikā* — all woeful beings in four lower abodes,

These seven kinds of specified beings are pervaded with loving-kindness in four ways each:

- 1 *Sabbā itthiyo* (i) *averā hontu*,
(ii) *avyāpajjhā hontu*,

(iii) *anighā hontu,*

(iv) *sukhī attānam pariharantu.*

1. May all female beings be

- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna).

Repeat with the remaining six kinds of beings.

(2) Total modes of mettā = $7 \times 4 = 28$

(1)+(2) Total modes of mettā = $20 + 28 = 48$

(3) *Disā Phāranā Mettā Cétovimutti*

The mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with directional pervasion in ten ways:

- 1 *Purathimāya disāya* – the eastern direction,
- 2 *Pacchimāya disāya* – the western direction,
- 3 *Uttarāya disāya* – the northern direction,
- 4 *Dakkhināya disāya* – the southern direction,
- 5 *Purathimāya anudisāya* – south-east direction,
- 6 *Pacchimāya anudisāya* – north-west direction,
- 7 *Uttarāya anudisāya* – north-east direction,
- 8 *Dakkhināya anudisāya* – south-east direction,
- 9 *Heṭṭhimāya disāya* – in the downward direction,
- 10 *Uparimāya disāya* – in the upward direction.

Sabbe sātta, sabbe pāna, sabbe bhūtā, sabbe puggalā, sabbe attabhāva pariyāpannā, sabbā itthiyo, sabbe purisā, sabbe ariyā, sabbe anariyā, sabbe devā, sabbe manussā, sabbe vinipātikā averā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, anighā hontu, sukhī attānam pariharantu.

1. May all living beings in the eastern direction be

- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna).

Repeat with the remaining eleven kinds of beings.

Total modes of mettā = 12 kinds of beings x 4 ways = 48

2. May all living beings in the western direction be
 (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
 (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
 (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),
 (iv) well and happy (cultivate up to third jhāna).

Repeat with the remaining eleven kinds of beings.

Total modes of mettā = 12 kinds of persons x 4 ways
 = 48

3 to 10 Repeat as above for the remaining eight directions.

(3) Total modes of mettā for ten directions = 48 x 10 = 480

(1)+(2) Total modes of mettā without specifying directions = 48

(1)+(2)+(3) Total modes of mettā = 528

So altogether there are 528 modes of mettā absorptions. If one lives with any one of these absorptions, pervading all beings with loving-kindness, then one is truly living in the divine abiding.

It is described in *Dīghanikāya* (D. i, 250; Vbh. 272) as follows:

“ Mettāsahagatena cetasā ekam disam pharittvā viharati, tathā dutiyam, tathā tatiyam, tathā catuttham, iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbavantam lokam mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamaṇena averena avyāpajjhena pharittvā viharati.”

“ He dwells pervading one direction with his heart endued with loving-kindness, likewise the second direction, likewise the third direction, likewise the fourth direction and so above, below, and around; everywhere and equally without any discrimination between various types of beings he dwells pervading the entire world with his heart endued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, measureless, free from enmity, and free from affliction.”

This versatility of radiating loving-kindness at will comes about only in one whose consciousness has reached absorption in the first jhāna and the rest.

● The Eleven Advantages of Loving-kindness

The meditator who develops the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness through any one of these kinds of absorption obtains the following advantages.

- 1 He sleeps comfortably and happily.
- 2 He wakes comfortably and happily.
- 3 He dreams no evil dreams.
- 4 He is dear to and beloved by human beings.
- 5 He is dear to and beloved by non-human beings including deities.
- 6 Deities guard him as a mother and father guard their child.
- 7 Fire, poison and weapons do not affect him.
- 8 His mind is easily concentrated.
- 9 The expression of his face is serene.
- 10 He dies unconfused. He passes away undeluded as if falling asleep.
- 11 If he penetrates no higher than the attainment of loving-kindness to attain arahantship, then when he dies he will be reborn as a brahmā.

● Recollection of the Attributes of the Buddha
(*Buddhānussati*)

Buddhānussati is the first of the ten Recollections (*Anussatis*). It is the repeated recollections of the attributes of the Buddha.

Development of *Buddhānussati* comes to success in him who has absolute confidence (*aveccappasāda*), not in any other. The absolute confidence is one of the first three 'factors of stream entry' (*S.v, 196*). It is the unshakeable confidence accompanied with clarity of mind brought about by the correct understanding of the Noble Path. It is not moved and shaken by the wind of wrong belief. However, the confidence which is similar to the Noble Path confidence (*Ariya-magga saddhā*) may also be taken as the absolute confidence.

Now a meditator with absolute confidence who wants to practise *Buddhānussati* should go into solitary retreat in a favourable

abode and recollect the special attributes of the Enlightened One as follows:

- “Itipi so Bhagavā – Araham
 – Sammāsambuddho
 – Vijjācaraṇasampanno
 – Sugato
 – Lokavidū
 – Anuttaropurisadamma-sārathi
 – Satthā devamanussānam
 – Buddho
 – Bhagavā.”

He should recollect repeatedly with the correct understanding of the attributes as follows.

1 *So Bhagavā itipi Araham*

The Blessed One is known as *Araham* because he has destroyed all defilements and become noble, worthy of special veneration by all men, *devas* and *brahmās*.

2 *So bhagavā itipi Sammāsambuddho*

The Blessed One is known as *Sammāsambuddho* because he is fully self-enlightened understanding all that should be understood by himself.

3 *So Bhagavā itipi Vijjācaraṇasampanno*

The Blessed One is known as *Vijjācaraṇasampanno* because he is endowed with supreme wisdom and virtuous conduct.

4 *So Bhagavā itipi Sugato*

The Blessed One is known as *Sugato* because of being gone to an excellent place (*Nibbāna*) and because he speaks only what is true and beneficial.

5 *So Bhagavā itipi Lokavidū*

The Blessed One is known as *Lokavidū* because he knows three worlds: the world of beings (*satta-loka*), the world of formations (*sāṅkhāraloka*) and the world of location (*okāsa-loka*).

6 *So Bhagavā itipi Anuttaropurisadammasārathi*

The Blessed One is known as *Anuttaro purisa dammasārathi*

because he is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed.

7 *So Bhagavā itipi Satthā devamanussānam*

The Blessed One is known as *Satthā devamanussānam* because he is the guiding teacher of gods (*devas* and *brahmās*) and men.

8 *So Bhagavā itipi Buddhō*

The Blessed One is known as *Buddhō* because he himself is enlightened and he can enlighten others to know the four Noble Truths and become noble persons (*Ariyās*).

9 *So Bhagavā itipi Bhagavā*

The Blessed One is known as *Bhagavā* because he is the most exalted and blessed One. He is blessed with special qualities such as six kinds of glory – *Issariya*, *Dhamma*, *Yasa*, *Sīri*, *Kāma*, *Payatta*.

Issariya – the ability to control one's mind skilfully as one wishes;

Dhamma – the ability to realize very skilfully the four Path-wisdoms (*Magga-ñānas*), the four Fruition-wisdoms (*Phala-ñānas*), and *Nibbāna*, known as the nine *Lokuttara-dhammas*;

Yasa – the ability to have one's fame spread out truly in all directions throughout the human world, the *deva* world, and the *brahmā* world;

Sīri – the ability to have a well proportioned and fully developed body with comely, sublime, and adorable appearance, having thirty-two major distinctive features and eighty minor characteristic signs on the person of the Buddha;

Kāma – the ability to accomplish supernormal performances immediately as one wishes;

Payatta – the supreme effort which supports one to reach the summit.

When the meditator is recollecting the Buddha's attributes as above repeatedly, his mind is not obsessed or distressed by greed, by hate or by delusion; but it is quite upright with the Buddha's attributes as its object.

When his mind is not obsessed by greed, hate and delusion,

he has suppressed all the hindrances, and his mind faces the meditation subject with rectitude. Then his initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) occur with an inclination towards the Buddha's special qualities. By reflecting on the *Buddha's* attributes, he continues to exercise *vitakka* and *vicāra*; and soon joy (*piṭi*) arises in him.

With his mind joyful, with joy as proximate cause, his bodily and mental disturbances are tranquillized by tranquillity (*passaddhi*). When the disturbances have been tranquillized, bodily and mental bliss (*sukha*) arises in him. When he is blissful, his mind becomes concentrated with the Blessed One's attributes as its object. And so the *jhāna* factors eventually arises in a single moment.

However, as the attributes of the Buddha are profound, and the meditator is being occupied by recollecting the special qualities of many sorts, the *jhāna* is only access and does not reach absorption. In other words, the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) is the highest concentration one can attain in practising *Buddhānussati*. And this access *jhāna* itself is also called '*Buddhānussati*', because it arises with the recollection of the Buddha's special qualities as the means.

● A quick Way of Developing '*Buddhānussati*'

For a meditator who has already attained the fourth *jhāna* by practising *Ānāpānassati* or white *kaṣiṇa*, he should first develop the fourth *jhāna* which is accompanied with very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light he recalls or visualizes a Buddha statue which he adores and respects. When he sees the statue clearly in the light, he should pay homage to it, assuming it to be the real living Buddha. If he has seen a real Buddha in one of his past existences, that Buddha's image may appear in his vision.

He should then change his attention from the Buddha's image to the Buddha's attribute and reflect on it again and again. If the Buddha's image does not appear, he should regard the Buddha statue that appears in his meditation light as the real Buddha and reflect on the Buddha's attribute repeatedly.

He should reflect on all the nine attributes of the Buddha one after another, and then choose the one attribute which he likes best and reflect on it repeatedly – for example, '*araham, araham*'. When his concentration grows in strength, the Buddha's image will disappear while his mind remains focused on the special attribute. If it is so, he should not try to recall or search for the Buddha's image; he should just focus his mind on the attribute.

With the strong support of the fourth jhāna concentration, he will soon attain the access jhāna in *Buddhānussati*. When his mind remains calmly focused on the attribute for one hour or more without any distraction, he should view the jhāna factors. He will realize that he has reached the access jhāna as he can see the jhāna factors to be well developed.

He should then reflect on the remaining attributes of the Buddha one after another until he attains access jhāna in each case. He should also practise to acquire mastery with respect to this access jhāna.

● The Benefits of *Buddhānussati*

A meditator who attains access jhāna in recollecting the attributes of the Buddha will gain the following benefits.

- 1 He reveres his Teacher, the Buddha, with great respect.
- 2 He attains fullness of faith or confidence in the Buddha.
- 3 He attains good mindfulness.
- 4 He develops wisdom and understanding.
- 5 He gains a lot of merit.
- 6 He has much joy and happiness (bliss).
- 7 He overcomes fear and dread.
- 8 He is able to endure pain.
- 9 He comes to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence.
- 10 His body, permeated and inhibited by the Buddha's attributes, becomes as worthy of veneration as a chamber of relics.
- 11 His mind bends towards the sphere of the Buddha.
- 12 When he encounters an opportunity to commit an immoral action, he feels ashamed and frightened to commit it as though he

were in front of the Teacher.

13 Even if he does not attain Path-consciousness and its Fruition in the present existence, he is at least headed for a happy destiny.

● **Meditation on Foulness (*Asubha Bhāvanā*)**

The meditation on foulness is a very beneficial meditation subject. It is much praised by the Buddha for it is the most effective meditation subject for subduing lust (*rāga*). Indeed the *rāga*-ogre is most afraid of this meditation subject for it is conquered by the perception of foulness (*asubha-saññā*).

The meditation on foulness was made a compulsory meditation subject for new bhikkhus at the time of the *Buddha*. A bhikkhu, who has successfully meditated on foulness, can easily subdue his lust by the perception of foulness and thus behave calmly and serenely like an Arahant.

Ten kinds of corpses suitable for meditation on foulness are described in *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification).

- 1 *Uddhumātaka* – rotten, bloated corpse;
- 2 *Vintlaka* – blue-black corpse with patchy discolouration;
- 3 *Vipūbbaka* – festering corpse with pus oozing out;
- 4 *Vicchiddaka* – a corpse cut in the middle;
- 5 *Vikhāyitaka* – a gnawed corpse;
- 6 *Vikkhittaka* – scattered corpse, i.e. the limbs, the head, etc., are scattered here and there;
- 7 *Hatavikkhittaka* – the hacked and scattered corpse;
- 8 *Lohitaka* – blood-smearred corpse;
- 9 *Puḷuvaka* – worm-infested corpse;
- 10 *Atthika* – a skeleton.

The meditator who wants to undertake *asubha bhāvanā* should first learn the meditation subject from a qualified teacher. The teacher should explain it all, that is, the directions for going to the corpse with the aim of acquiring the sign of foulness, for characterizing the surrounding signs, for apprehending the sign of foulness in the corpse in eleven ways, for reviewing the path of going and coming, and for attaining the *jhāna* in the meditation subject.

When the meditator has learnt it all well, he should go to a suitable abode or monastery and live there while seeking a suitable corpse. He should make the acquaintance of the man who looks after a cemetery and seek his help for finding the kind of corpse which he wants to use for the meditation on foulness. The corpse must be of the same sex as the meditator.

The meditator should go alone to the corpse at a quiet time without renouncing his basic meditation subject and keeping it always in mind. He should approach the corpse down wind and stand where the corpse appears clearly, and his mind is earnest, energetic and under control. He should stand not too far off or too near, or too much towards the feet or the head.

Then he should characterize the surrounding signs, that is, he notes carefully the features of the things around the corpse such as a stone or anthill or tree or bush.

Then he should apprehend the sign of the corpse in the following six ways:

- 1 By its colour – note whether it is the body of one who is black, brown or white.
- 2 By its mark – note whether it is the body of one who is young, middle-aged or old.
- 3 By its shape – note the shape of its head, neck, hand, chest, belly, hips, thigh, calf, foot, one after another.
- 4 By its direction – note that from the navel downwards is the lower direction, and that from the navel upwards is the upper direction.
- 5 By its location – note the location of the head, the hand, the foot, the middle of the body.
- 6 By its delimitation – he can define thus: “This body is delimited below by the soles of the feet, above by the tips of the hair; all round by the skin; the space so delimited is filled with thirty-two pieces of corpse.”

If he could not develop the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) with such notations, he should apprehend the corpse again in five more ways:

- 7 By its joints – note three joints in the right arm, three in the left arm, three in the right leg, three in the left leg, one neck joint and one waist joint which make up fourteen major joints. All together there are one hundred and eighty joints.
- 8 By its openings – note the opening or the hollow between the arm and the side, the opening between the legs, the opening of the ear. Also note the opened or closed state of the eyes as well as of the mouth.
- 9 By its concavities – note the concavities of the eye-sockets, of the mouth, of the neck, or of any concave place on the body.
- 10 By its convexities – note any raised place on the body such as the knees, the chest, the nose, the forehead, etc.
- 11 By its surrounding – the whole body of the corpse should be defined all round and with respect to its surrounding.

After noting the whole body in detail with meditation knowledge, he should focus his mind on the corpse and contemplate: “*asubha, asubha*” or “foulness, foulness.”

He should apprehend the sign thoroughly in the corpse in the way already described. He should advert his mind to it with well-established mindfulness. He should see that it is properly remembered, properly defined, by doing that again and again. He should open his eyes, look and apprehend the sign a hundred times, a thousand times, contemplating: “*asubha, asubha*” or “foulness, foulness”.

He should also occasionally close his eyes and advert his mind to it. As he does so again and again, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) becomes properly apprehended by him. When is it properly apprehended? When he can see the corpse with his mind-eye (i.e., with closed eyes) as clearly as he sees it with open eyes, then the acquired sign is properly apprehended.

He should then try to develop the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimittā*) and the first jhāna on the spot. If he is unable to do so, he should return to his lodging, keeping that same meditation in mind, with mindfulness well established, and with his faculties being turned

inwards.

Now just as a pauper who acquired a treasure of gems would guard and love it with great affection, feeling reverence for it as one who appreciates the value of it, so too the meditator should guard the sign, loving it and feeling reverence for it as one who appreciates the value of it.

In his night quarters or in his day quarters he should keep his mind anchored there thus: "*asubha, asubha*" or "foulness, foulness". And he should advert his mind to the sign, bring it to mind and strike it with thought and applied thought over and over again.

As he does so, the counter sign arises. Here is the difference between the two signs. The acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) appears as an ugly, hideous, dreadful and frightening sight whereas the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears like a prosperous man with plump limbs lying down after eating his fill.

Simultaneously with his acquiring the counter sign his lust is abandoned by suppression owing to his giving no attention to sense objects. And owing to his abandoning of sense desires and keeping it far away, ill-will is abandoned too.

Likewise sloth-and-torpor is abandoned through exertion of energy; agitation-and-worry through devotion to peaceful things that cause no remorse; and uncertainty or doubt about the Teacher, about the way, about the fruit of the way, is abandoned through the actual experience of the blissful upacāra-jhāna which he has now attained. So the five hindrances are abandoned.

Also at that moment the applied thought or *vitakka* with the characteristic of directing the mind onto the counter sign, and the sustained thought or *vicāra* with the characteristic of pondering and joy (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), bliss (*sukha*), and the unification of citta and cetasikas on the counter sign, that is *ekaggatā*, all become distinct. So all the jhāna factors become manifest.

From the time the counter sign appears, he has reached the access jhāna. Now he anchors his mind on the counter sign and repeatedly reflects: "*asubha, asubha*" or "foulness, foulness". His concentration will rise gradually, and sooner or later he will reach

the first rūpāvacara jhāna. He should practise on to gain mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

Due to the repulsive nature of the meditation subject and the fact that the mind could not be anchored on the counter sign without the applied thought (*vitakka*), only the first jhāna can be attained in asubha bhāvanā.

● **A Quick Way of Developing the Perception of Foulness (*Asubha Saññā*)**

Again for a meditator, who has already attained the ānāpāna-fourth jhāna or the white-kasīna-fourth jhāna, he can easily and quickly develop the first jhāna in asubha bhāvanā. He first redevelops the fourth jhāna that he has attained.

When the meditation wisdom associated with the fourth-jhāna samādhi radiates very bright glittering light in all directions illuminating the surroundings, the meditator recalls the sign of the most repulsive corpse having the same sex as he does that he has seen formerly. He strives to observe that corpse under his bright wisdom light.

With the help of this bright, penetrative light, he tries to reobserve the corpse as he has seen it before. When he can see the corpse clearly under the bright wisdom light, he focuses his meditating mind calmly on the corpse in its most repulsive position, and reflects repeatedly: "*paṭikūla, paṭikulā*" or "repulsive, repulsive".

When his meditating mind remains calmly fixed on the sign of the corpse for one hour, two hours, or more, the sign of the corpse will change from the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) to the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). The sign of the corpse which the meditator sees vividly as if he is looking at the corpse with open eyes is the acquired image or sign. (Visuddhi, i, 180)

Because the bhāvanā-mānasikāra which is reflecting on the sign of the corpse is not yet well developed and exalted, and also because the sign of the corpse is not yet very calm, the acquired sign appears as a hideous, ugly, dreadful and frightening sight. When the counter sign arises, the bhāvanā-mānasikāra is well developed

and exalted, and the sign of the corpse becomes calm and steady. So the counter sign appears like a prosperous man with plump limbs lying down after eating his fill. (*Visuddhi.i, 183-4; Mahātt.i, 210*)

Observing that counter sign the yogī reflects many times as “*paṭikūla, paṭikūla*” or “repulsive, repulsive” until his meditating mind remains established calmly on that sign for one hour, two hours or more. Then he reviews the jhāna factors to find them clearly evident. The meditator now attains the first jhāna. He should practise well to gain mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna. With the attainment of the first jhāna he also attains the perception of foulness.

● The Benefits of Asubha Bhāvanā

A meditator who has reached jhāna in any one of the ten kinds of corpses attains the perception of foulness (*asubha saññā*) and can well suppress his greed (*lobha*). So he is free from lust, passions, and frivolity, and he resembles an Arahant.

The young bhikkhu, *Vangīsa*, was on his alms-round when he met an exceptionally beautiful woman who offered him food. Immediately strong lust was aroused in his heart, and he had to call for help from his teacher, Venerable Ānanda. The latter reminded him to recall the sign of foulness. As soon as he could recall the sign of foulness that he had developed formerly, his lust died down and he could move on freely.

Although this meditation subject appears to be foul and repulsive, still it arouses joy and happiness (*pīti* and *sukha*) in him by his seeing its advantages thus: “Surely in this way I shall be liberated from ageing and death.” It is just as a huge garbage heap does to a flower-scavenger who sees the advantages thus: “Now I shall get a high wage.”

This foulness, while of ten kinds, has only one characteristic, which is its impure, stinking, disgusting and repulsive nature. And foulness appears with this characteristic not only in a dead body but also in a living body.

The *Elder Mahā Tissa* who lived in *Cetṭyapabbata* saw

foulness in a woman's body which appeared only as a skeleton to him, and the same phenomenon happened to the novice attendant on the *Elder Saṃgha-rakkhita* while he was watching the king riding an elephant. For a living body is just as foul as a dead one, only the characteristic of foulness is not evident in a living body because it is hidden by temporary adornments.

So a capable person should apprehend the sign wherever the aspect of foulness is manifest, whether in a living body or in a dead one, and should make use of the meditation subject to reach absorption.

● Mindfulness of Death (*Marañānussati*)

One who wishes to develop mindfulness of death should learn this meditation subject from a qualified teacher, go into solitary retreat, and exercise attention wisely in this way:

“*Marāṇaṃ bhavissati* – death will take place”; or

“*Jīvitindriyaṃ upacchijjati* – the life-faculty will be cut off”; or simply

“*Marāṇaṃ marāṇaṃ* – death, death”.

If he exercises attention unwisely, sorrow arises in him in recalling the death of beloved ones, joy arises in recalling the death of enemies, no sense of urgency arises in recollecting the death of neutral persons, and fear arises in recollecting one's death. All these sorrow, joy, fear, and so on, arise in one who lacks mindfulness, sense of urgency, and knowledge.

So he should look here and there at beings who have been killed or have died normally, and recall the death of persons who were formerly seen enjoying good things. He should do thus mindfully with a sense of urgency and with knowledge. Then he can exercise his attention in the way beginning “Death will take place.” By doing so, he is exercising his attention wisely.

Some meditators, by just exercising their attention in this way, can suppress the hindrances, establish their mindfulness on death, and reach access in their mindfulness of death.

● Eight Ways of Recollecting Death

But if one does not reach access by merely exercising his attention as above, he should recollect death in eight ways.

1 As having the appearance of a murderer

He should see death as a murderer who appears with a sword, applies it to his neck, ready to cut off his head. Why? Because death comes with birth and it takes away life.

2 As the ruin of success

Here, in this world, prosperity shines so long as it is not overpowered by adversity, and success shines as long as failure does not overcome it. Furthermore, all health ends in sickness, all youthfulness in old age, all life in death.

Besides all worldly existence is procured by birth, haunted by ageing, oppressed by sickness, and struck down by death. This is how death should be recollected as the final ruining of life's success.

3 By comparing oneself to others

The meditator should be aware of death by comparing himself with others in seven ways, that is to say: with those of great fame, with those of great merit, with those of great strength, with those of great supernormal power, with those of great wisdom, with Pacceka Buddhas, with fully Enlightened Buddhas.

As all these people are subject to death and cannot escape death, they have all passed away. So why shouldn't I be subject to death, and sooner or later taken away by death?

When he does his recollection in this way by comparing himself with others of such great fame, etc., in the light of the universality of death, thinking "Death will come to me as it even did to those distinguished beings", then his meditation subject reaches access.

4 As the sharing of the body with many

One has to share one's body with many. Firstly, this body is shared with eighty families of worms. Secondly, it is shared with

several hundred internal diseases. Thirdly, it can be brought to death by external causes such as snakes, scorpions, accidents, etc. On account of these causes one may die or meet with danger at any time. So death should be recollected as to sharing the body with many.

5 As to the frailty of life

This life is impotent and frail. For the life of beings is bound up with breathing, with the postures, with cold and heat, with the four primary elements, and with nutriment. If any of these conditions is upset, the life process is interrupted and life can be terminated.

6 By the absence of the sign

The span of life, the sickness which causes death, the time of death, the place where the body will be laid, and the destiny after death are unpredictable and can never be known by the living world as there are no signs which foretell them.

Though there are no signs to foretell them, death may come at any time at any place by any sickness or cause of death. This is how death should be recollected as signless.

7 By being Limited in Time

The extent of the human life is short. So short in fact is the extent of life that it is not certain even for as long as it takes to chew or swallow four or five mouthfuls. So one should develop mindfulness of death thus, 'Oh let me live for as long as it takes to chew and swallow a single mouthful that I may attend to the Blessed One's teaching, surely much could be done by me' or one should develop mindfulness of death thus, 'Oh let me live as long as it takes to breathe out and breathe in that I may attend to the Blessed One's teaching, surely much could be done by me.'

This is how death should be recollected as being limited in time.

8 As to the shortness of the life-moment

In the ultimate sense the life-moment of living beings is extremely short, being only as long as a single consciousness moment. Just as a chariot wheel, when it is rolling, rolls or touches the

ground only on one point of the circumference of its wheel, so too, the life of living beings lasts only for a consciousness moment. When that consciousness ceases, the being is said to cease.

● Development of Access Jhāna

When one thus recalls death in one of these eight ways, the mind owing to repeated attention gets the support of repetition, and mindfulness is established with death as object. Then the hindrances are discarded, and the jhāna-factors are manifested. But because the meditation subject is the dreadful nature of death and it awakes a sense of urgency, the jhāna does not reach absorption and is only access. This jhāna gets the name of death mindfulness (*māraṇānussati*) since it arises by the strength of death-mindfulness.

● A Quick Way of Developing Death-mindfulness

According to the instructions given in *Visuddhi Magga* (i, 222-3) and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (*Ma.i, 73*) a meditator, who has successfully developed the first jhāna by reflecting on the foulness of a corpse (*asubha bhāvanā*), can easily change his meditation to mindfulness of death.

The meditator first recalls the acquired sign or the counter sign of a corpse which he has developed before. He then reflects on its foulness to develop the first jhāna in *asubha-bhāvanā*.

He then emerges from this first jhāna and reflects on the nature of his death thus, 'This body of mine has the nature to disintegrate; I will surely die; I cannot escape from death.'

He should constantly focus his attention on the nature of his death, establishing mindfulness on death and developing a sense of urgency together with the knowledge of death. Soon he will observe with his mind-eye the disgusting corpse of his dead body in place of the external corpse. Then he discerns with his wisdom the nature of the cutting-off of life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*) in his dead body.

And focusing his meditative mind on the object of the cutting-off of life-faculty, he reflects repeatedly in one of the following ways that he likes best:

1. *Marañam me dhuvam, jvītam me adhuvam.*
My death is certain, my being alive is uncertain.
2. *Marañam me bhavissati*
My death will certainly occur.
3. *Marañapariyosānam me jvītam*
My being alive has only death as its end.
4. *Marañam marañam*
Death, death.

He should ardently strive to concentrate his meditative mind on the object of the cutting-off of life-faculty in his dead body for one hour, two hours or more. If he is successful, he will find that the *jhāna* factors become distinct.

As the object of meditation is the nature of death and frightening, awaking the sense of urgency, only *access jhāna (upacāra jhāna)* arises.

● The Benefits of Developing Mindfulness of Death

1. A meditator devoted to mindfulness of death is constantly diligent.
2. He acquires the perception of disgust and disenchantment with all kinds of existences.
3. He cuts off attachment to life.
4. He censures evil doing.
5. He avoids much storing. He has no stain of attachment to and avarice for requisites or properties.
6. The perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*) grows in him; consequently the perception of suffering (*dukkha-saññā*) and the perception of not-self (*anatta-saññā*) also appear in him.
7. While beings who have not developed mindfulness of death fall victims to fear, horror and confusion at the time of death as though suddenly seized by wild beasts, ogres, snakes, robbers or murderers, he dies undeluded and fearless without falling into any such state.
8. If he does not attain the deathless in the present existence, he is at least headed for a happy destiny on the breakup of his body.

● When to Practise the Guardian Meditations

The four subjects of guardian meditation are generally desirable meditation subjects (*sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas*). They should be practised whenever and wherever possible, especially at places where there is danger of being attacked by wicked persons, wild beasts, and ghosts. They should be practised before one undertakes one's special meditation subject (*Parihāriya kammaṭṭhāna*) and before one undertakes insight meditation (*vipassanā*).

Loving-kindness is the best weapon to defeat anger, hatred, and resentment. *Bhuddhānussati* is the best means to develop clarity of mind, and faith and confidence in the Blessed One.

Asubha bhāvanā is the most effective weapon to subdue lust, craving, and attachment. *Marañānussati* is very effective to develop the sense of urgency, and to restrain oneself from improper search for excessive wealth and sensual pleasure.

Therefore, when one gets angry or develops resentment against anyone, one should cultivate lovingkindness. When one lacks faith and confidence, one feels muddled up, one should practise *Buddhānussati*. When lust arises in one and agitates one, one should recollect the sign of foulness.

When one lacks the sense of urgency and feels idle to practise meditation, one should reflect on the nature of death.

When one is bombarded with various kinds of thoughts and feels restless, one should undertake mindfulness of breathing for *ānāpānassati* is most effective to suppress various thoughts and vitakka.

References:

1. "Visuddhi Magga" by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol.I, pp. 380-418, 339-377, 450-476.
2. "The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)" by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli*, pp. 321-340, 206-230, 185-203, 247-259.

- 3 "The Path of Purity (*Visuddhi Magga*)" by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Pe Maung Tin, pp. 340-361, 226-245, 205-225, 264-275.

Review Questions

- 1 What are the four guardian meditations? Why and how should we practise them every day?
- 2 To whom loving-kindness should not be cultivated first? To whom and in what order should it be developed? How should it be developed?
- 3 How should we develop loving-kindness to attain metta jhāna?
- 4 How should we cultivate loving-kindness to attain *sīmāsambheda*?
- 5 How should we develop 528 modes of metta according to *Paṭisambhidā pāḷi*?
- 6 Why is *mettā-bhāvanā* regarded as a *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhāna*? What are its benefits?
- 7 How should we perform Buddhānussati to gain its full benefits?
- 8 How should we undertake Buddhānussati to reach access jhāna?
- 9 Describe a quick and effective way of practising *Buddhānussati* to reach *upacāra jhāna*?
- 10 Why is *Buddhānussati* regarded as a *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhāna*? What are its benefits?
- 11 Why did the Buddha prescribe *asubha-bhāvanā* for new bhikkhus? How should one practise it to gain its full benefits?
- 12 Why is *asubha-bhāvanā* included in the four guardian meditations? Describe an effective method for developing *asubha saññā* quickly.
- 13 Should a meditator practise *asubha-bhāvanā* nowadays? Why? Describe the benefits of practising it?
- 14 What is 'maranānussati'? How should it be undertaken to reach access known as 'maranānussati'?
- 15 Describe the eight ways of recollecting death.
- 16 Why should we practise *maranānussati*? How should it be practised to get its full benefits?

Exchange this page with P. 147.

CHAPTER IV MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING (*Ānāpānassati*)

● The Praise of the Buddha

Ānāpānassati is included in the ten Recollections (*Anussatis*). It is not at all an insignificant subject of meditation. It is indeed a very important subject of meditation which is constantly used by noble men (*mahāpurisas*) like the Buddhas, the Paccekabuddhas and the disciples of the Buddha known as the Buddha's sons. If it is practised properly it is both peaceful and sublime. It demands strong mindfulness and wisdom. (*Visuddhi.i, 276*)

It has been praised and recommended by the Blessed One thus: "And bhikkhus, this concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practised much, is both peaceful and sublime. Nothing need be added to it. It is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise.

*"O bhikkhus, just as dust particles which have arisen in the last summer month are immediately pacified and calmed down by unseasonal torrential rain, so in the same way a restless mind is immediately calmed down by the practice of *Ānāpānassati*. This concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practised much, is both peaceful and sublime. Nothing need be added to it. It is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise."*

(*S.iii, 279-280*)

Ānāpānassati is one of the most effective meditation-subjects for developing concentration quickly. It is suitable to many meditators and used in many meditation centres as the basic *parihāriya-kammaṭṭhāna*, that is, the special meditation subject for developing concentration. If properly practised, it can develop the mind up to the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna* in fourfold method.

phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, lubricant (in bone joints) and urine." (M, iii, 90)

A beginner who wants to undertake kāyayatāsati should approach a good friend and qualified teacher to learn this meditation. The teacher should tell him the sevenfold skill in learning and the tenfold skill in giving attention.

● The Sevenfold Skill in Learning
(Uggahakosalla)

1. Verbal recitation -

Kāyagatāsati consists in giving attention to repulsiveness. Even if one is master of the Tipitaka, the verbal recitation should still be done at the time of first giving attention to it. For the meditation subject becomes evident to some through recitation, as it did to the two elders who learned the meditation subject from Mahā Deva, the Elder residing at Malaya.

It is said that the Elder on being asked by them for a meditation subject gave them the Pāli of the thirty-two parts, saying, 'Recite this for four months.' Although they were versed in two and three Nikāyas, they obeyed the teachers respectfully and became Stream Enterers at the end of four months recitation of the meditation subject.

So the teacher who expounds the meditation subject should tell the pupil to do the recitation verbally first.

Now when the meditator does the recitation, he should divide it up into the 'skin pentad' (*tacapañcaka*), etc., and do it forwards and backwards.

After saying, "head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin," he should again say in reverse order, "skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

Next to that, with the 'kidney pentad,' he should say, "flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys," and again in reverse order, "kidneys, bone marrow, bones, sinews, flesh, skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

Next, with the 'lungs pentad', he should say, "heart, liver,

diaphragm, spleen, lungs," and repeat it backwards, "lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart; kidneys, bone marrow, bones, sinews, flesh; skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

Next, with the 'brain pentad', he should say, "bowels, intestines, stomach; excrement, brain," and repeat it backwards, "brain, excrement, stomach, intestines, bowels; lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart; kidneys, bone marrow, bones, sinews; flesh; skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

Next, with the 'fat sestad', he should say, "bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat," and repeat it backwards, "fat, sweat, blood, pus, phlegm, bile; brain, excrement, stomach, intestines, bowels; lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart; kidneys, bone marrow, bones, sinews, flesh; skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

Next, with the 'urine sestad', he should say, "tears, grease, spittle, snot, lubricant (in bone joints), urine", and repeat it backwards, "urine, lubricant, snot, spittle, grease, tears; fat, sweat, blood, pus, phlegm, bile; brain, excrement, stomach, intestines; bowels; lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart; kidneys, bone marrow, bones, sinews, flesh; skin, teeth, nails, body hairs, head hairs."

The recitation should be done in this way a hundred times, a thousand times, even a hundred thousand times. For it is through verbal recitation that the meditation subject becomes familiar; the mind is prevented from running here and there; and the parts of the body become evident and appear like the series of the fingers, or like a row of fence posts.

2 Mental recitation

The mental recitation should be done just as the verbal recitation. For the verbal recitation is a condition for the mental recitation, and the mental recitation is a condition for the penetration of the characteristics of foulness.

3 The colour

The colour of the head hairs, etc., should be defined.

4 The shape

The shape of the head hairs, etc., should also be defined.

5 The direction

In this body, upwards from the navel is the upward direction, and downwards from it is the downward direction. So the direction should be defined thus: "This part is in this direction, etc."

6 The location

The location of this or that part should be defined thus: "This part is established in this location, and so on."

7 The delimitation

There are two kinds of delimitation: delimitation by parts which are alike in nature, and delimitation by dissimilar parts.

Herein, delimitation by similar parts should be understood in this way: This part is delimited above and below and around by this. Delimitation by dissimilar parts should be understood in this way: Head hairs are not body hairs, nor are body hairs head hairs.

● The Tenfold Skill in giving Attention (*Manasikāra-kosalla*)

1 Following the order

From the time the recitation begins attention should be given to follow the serial order of the 32 bodily parts without skipping. For just as when someone who has no skill climbs a staircase of 32 steps using every other step, his body gets exhausted and he falls without completing the climb, so too, one who attends to the thirty-two parts leaving out every alternate part becomes exhausted in his mind and does not complete the development since he fails to get the enjoyment that ought to be got with successful development.

2 Not too quickly

And when he gives attention to follow the serial order, he should do so not too quickly. As a man who undertakes a journey of three yojanas, without noting the path to take and the path to

avoid, goes back and forth a hundred times and, though he comes to the end of the journey, it is only with frequent questionings. So, he who attends too quickly may accomplish the meditation, but it is not clear and consequently carries no distinction, that is, he cannot attain jhāna. Therefore he should not attend too swiftly.

3 Not too slowly

And as 'not too quickly', so also 'not too slowly'. As a man, who wants to do a three league journey in one day, if he loiters on the way among trees, rocks, pools, etc., does not finish the journey in a day and needs two or three to complete it, so too, if a meditator gives his attention to the meditation subject too slowly, he does not get to the end, nor does he attain jhāna.

4 Warding off distraction

He must ward off temptation to drop the meditation subject and to let his mind get distracted among the variety of external objects. For if not, just as when a man has entered on a one foot wide cliff path, if he looks about here and there without watching his step, he may miss his footing and fall down the toweringly high cliff, so too when there is outward distraction, the meditation subject gets neglected and deteriorates. So he should be mindful of it, warding off distraction.

5 Surmounting the concept

The name-concept beginning with 'head hairs, body hairs' must be surmounted and consciousness established on the repulsive nature of the bodily parts. For just as when men find a water hole in a forest in a time of drought, they hang up some kind of signal such as a palm leaf there, and people, guided by the signal, come to bathe and drink, but when the path has become plain with their continual traffic, there is no further need of the signal for the people to bathe and drink there whenever they want, so too, when repulsiveness becomes evident to him as he is giving his attention to the meditation subject through the name-concept 'head hairs, body hairs', he must surmount the concept 'head hairs, body hairs', and establish consciousness on the actual repulsiveness.

6. Dismissing any parts which do not appear

In giving his attention to the bodily parts he should eventually leave out any parts which do not appear to him. For when a meditator gives his attention to head hairs, his attention then carries on till it reaches the last part, i.e., urine; and stops there; and when he gives his attention to urine, his attention then carries on till it arrives back at the head hairs and stops there. As he persists in giving his attention thus, some parts appear to him and others do not. He should work on those that have appeared till only two remains and one appears clearer. He should arouse absorption by again and again giving attention to the one that has appeared thus.

Here is a simile. Suppose a hunter wanted to catch a monkey that lived in a grove of thirty-two palms. First he shot an arrow through a leaf of the palm that stood at the beginning and gave a shout. The monkey went leaping successively from palm to palm till it reached the last palm. The hunter went there and shot an arrow as before. The monkey came back in like manner to the first palm. Being followed thus again and again, after leaping from each place where a shout was given, it eventually jumped onto a tree in the midst of whose branches it would hold firmly to a budding sprout of palm, and not rise even when shot. Thus should the completed simile be regarded.

The application of the simile is this. The 32 parts of the body are like the 32 palms in the grove. The monkey is like the mind. The meditator is like the hunter. The range of the meditator's mind in the body with its 32 parts as object is like the monkey's inhabiting the palm grove. In the end the meditator's attention remains fixed on the final body part that appears clearly to him until he reaches absorption. This is like the monkey's eventually stopping in one palm, firmly seizing a budding sprout in the middle and not leaping up even when shot.

7. As to absorption

It should be understood that absorption is brought about in each one of the body parts.

8 Adhicitta Sutta

“ Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is intent on higher consciousness should attend from time to time to three signs. He should attend from time to time to the sign of concentration, from time to time to the sign of effort or exertion, from time to time to the sign of indifference. Verily monks, if a monk intent upon higher consciousness were to attend only to the sign of concentration, his mind might possibly tend towards idleness. If he were to attend only to the sign of effort or exertion, his mind might possibly tend towards wandering. If he were to attend only to the sign of indifference; his mind might possibly not be well concentrated for the destruction of cankers.

“ But, bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu intent on higher concentration gives attention from time to time to the sign of concentration, from time to time to the sign of exertion, from time to time to the sign of indifference, then his mind becomes malleable, wieldy and bright; it is not brittle and becomes rightly concentrated for the destruction of cankers.

“ Bhikkhus, just as a skilled goldsmith or his apprentice prepares his furnace, turns on the flame, and puts gold into a crucible with tongs; and he blows on it from time to time, sprinkles water on it from time to time and remains indifferent from time to time; and if he only blew on the crude gold, it would burn; if he only sprinkled water on it, it would cool down, and if he only remained indifferent, it would not get rightly refined; but when he blows on the crude gold from time to time, sprinkles water on it from time to time, and remains indifferent from time to time; then it becomes malleable, wieldy and bright; it is not brittle and is quite fit to be worked; whatever kind of ornament he wants to work it into, whether a chain or a ring or a necklace, it serves his purpose; so too, bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu intent on higher consciousness gives attention from time to time to the sign of concentration, from time to time to the sign of exertion, from time to time to the sign of indifference, then his mind becomes malleable, wieldy and bright; it is not brittle and becomes rightly concentrated for the destruction of cankers.”

(A. i, 256-8)

9 Sītibhāva Sutta

This Sutta deals with coolness.

“ Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu possesses six things, he is able to realize the supreme coolness (Nibbāna). What are the six? Here, bhikkhus, when consciousness should be restrained, he restrains it; when consciousness should be upheld, he upholds it; when consciousness should be gladdened, he gladdens it; when consciousness should be treated with indifference, he treats it with indifference. He is bent on noble things and delights in Nibbāna. Possessing these six things a bhikkhu is able to realize the supreme coolness.”

(A. iii, 435)

10 Bojjhaṅgakoṣalla

The skill in the Enlightenment Factors has already been dealt with in the explanation of skill in absorption (jhāna) in the passage beginning: “ Bhikkhus, when the mind is slack, that is not the time for developing the tranquility enlightenment factors,-----” (S.v, 113)

So the meditator should make sure that he has understood the sevenfold skill in learning well and has properly defined this tenfold skill in giving attention, thus learning the meditation subject properly with both kinds of skill.

● Starting the Practice

To undertake kāyagatāsati, the meditator should first apprehend or grasp the learning sign in head hairs. How? He should define the colour first by looking at head hairs in the hair-cutting place, or in a bowl of water. If the ones he sees are black, they should be brought to mind as ‘ black’; if white, as ‘white’; if mixed, they should be noted in accordance with the predominating colour. And as with head hairs, so with the whole of the ‘skin pentad’ should the sign be apprehended visually.

Having apprehended the sign thus in each part of the body,

- (a) he should define all parts of the body by colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation, and
- (b) he should define repulsiveness in five ways, that is, by

colour, shape, odour, habitat (natural environment) and location.

Here is the explanation of the parts given in successive order.

1 Head hairs

(a) They are black in natural colour, round and long in shape. As to direction, they lie in the upper direction.

As to location, they grow on the wet inner skin which envelops the skull. They are bounded on both sides by the roots of the ears, in front by forehead, and behind by the nape of the neck.

As to delimitation, they are bounded below by the surface of their own roots, which are fixed by entering to the amount of the tip of a rice grain into the inner skin that envelops the head. They are bounded above by space, and all round by each other. There are no two hairs together. This is their delimitation by similar parts (*sabhāgapariccheda*).

Head hairs are not body hairs, and body hairs are not head hairs. Likewise head hairs are not intermixed with the remaining thirty-one parts; they are a separate part. This is their delimitation by dissimilar parts (*visabhāgapariccheda*).

(b) The definition of head hairs as to *repulsiveness* in five ways is as follows.

Head hairs are repulsive in colour as well as in shape, odour, habitat and location. For on seeing the colour of a head hair in a bowl of rice gruel or cooked rice people are disgusted. Also when people are eating at night, they are likewise disgusted by the mere feeling of a hair-shaped vegetable fibre. So they are repulsive in shape.

And the odour of head hairs, unless smeared or dressed with scented oil or scented flowers, etc., is most offensive. It is still worse when they are put into the fire. Even if head hairs are not directly repulsive in colour and shape, their odour is directly repulsive.

As to habitat, head hairs are disgusting since they grow on the sewage of pus, blood, urine, dung, bile, phlegm, and the like. This is similar to curry leaves and herbs that grow on village sew-

age in a filthy place. They are disgusting to civilized people and unusable.

As to location, head hairs grow on the heap of the other thirty-one parts as mushrooms do on a dung hill. And owing to the filthy place they grow in they are very repulsive just like vegetables growing on a charnel ground or a rubbish heap.

2 Body hairs

They are blackish brown in natural colour. They have the shape of palm roots with the tips bent down.

As to direction, they lie in the two directions.

As to location, they grow in most of the inner skin which envelops the body except the site where head hairs grow and the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet.

As to delimitation, they are bounded below by the surface of their own roots, which are fixed by entering to the extent of a louse's head into the inner skin that envelops the body, above by space, and all round by each other. There are no two body hairs together. This is the delimitation by similar parts. Their delimitation by dissimilar parts is like that for head hairs.

Note: (b) The repulsiveness of all parts of the body should be defined as in the case of head hairs by colour, shape, odour, habitat and location.

(a) All, however, must be defined individually by colour, shape, direction, location, and delimitation.

3 Nails

The twenty-nail plates are white in colour. As to shape, they have the shape of fish scales.

As to direction, the toe-nails are in the lower direction and the finger-nails are in the upper direction.

As to location, they are fixed on the tips of the backs of the fingers and toes.

As to delimitation, they are bounded in the two directions by the flesh of the ends of the fingers and toes, and inside by the flesh

of the backs of the fingers and toes, and externally and at the tips by space, and across by one another. There are no two nails together.

4 Teeth

There are thirty-two tooth bones in one whose teeth are complete. They are white in colour.

As to shape, they are of various shapes. Firstly in the lower row, the four middle teeth are of the shape of pumpkin seeds set in a row in a lump of clay. The tooth on either side of these has one root, one point, and in shape like a jasmine bud. The tooth next to either of these has two roots, two points, and in shape is like a waggon-prop. The two teeth next to either of these have three roots, three points. The two further teeth on either side have four roots, four points. And the same with the upper set.

As to direction, they lie in the upper direction.

As to location, they are fixed in the jaw bones.

As to delimitation, they are bounded by the surface of their own roots which are fixed in the jaw bones, above by space, and across by each other. There are no two teeth together.

5 Skin

The inner thick skin envelops the whole body.

The outer thin skin is black, brown or yellow in colour. When the outer skin from the whole of the body is compressed together, it amounts to only as much as a jujube-fruit kernel.

The inner thick skin is white in colour, which becomes evident when the outer skin is damaged by the impact of flames and blows. Its shape is that of the body. This is a brief account.

The meditator who is discerning the skin should first define the inner skin that covers the face, working his knowledge over the face beginning with the upper lip. Next, the inner skin of the forehead. Next, he should define the inner skin of the head, separating the inner skin with the bone by inserting his knowledge in between the cranium bone and the inner skin of the head, as he might insert his hand between the bag and the bowl put in the bag.

Next, the inner skin of the shoulders. Next, the inner skin of the right arm forwards and backwards; and in the same way the inner skin of the left arm. Next, the inner skin of the back; the inner skin of the right leg forwards and backwards; then the inner skin of the left leg in the same way. Next the inner skin of the groin (bladder), the paunch (belly), the bosom and the neck. Then after defining the inner skin of the neck and the inner skin of the lower jaw, he should finish on arriving at the lower lip.

When he discerns the skin in gross in this way, it becomes evident to him more subtly too. As to direction, it lies in both direction. As to location, it covers the whole body. As to delimitation, it is bounded below by its fixed surface, and above by space.

6 Flesh

There are nine hundred pieces of flesh. It is all red in colour. As to shape, the shape of the breast is the shape of a lump of clay. The flesh of the back is the shape of a slab of palm sugar---

As to direction, it lies in both directions.

As to location, it is plastered over the three hundred and odd bones.

As to delimitation, it is bounded below by its surface, which is fixed onto the collection of bones, and above by the skin, and all round by its own kind.

Note: All the remaining parts of the body should be defined individually by colour, shape, direction, location, and delimitation in a similar way.

● The Arising of Absorption

When the meditator has defined the parts beginning with head hairs by colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation, and he gives his attention in the ways beginning with 'following the order, not too quickly' to their repulsiveness in the five aspects of colour, shape, smell, habitat, and location, then he finally surmounts the concept.

Then just as when a man with good sight is observing a garland of flowers of thirty-two colours knotted on a single string

and all the flowers become evident to him simultaneously, so too, when the meditator observes his body thus: 'there are in this body head hairs', all the parts become evident to him simultaneously.

Hence it was said above in the explanation of skill in giving attention: "For when a beginner gives his attention to head hairs, his attention carries on till it arrives at the last part, that is, urine, and stops there."

After all the parts have become evident in this way, if he applies his attention externally as well, then human beings, animals, etc., as they go about are devoid of their aspect of beings and appear just as assemblages of body parts.

Then, as he gives his attention to them again and again as 'repulsive, repulsive', employing the process of 'successive leaving', etc., eventually absorption arises in him. Herein, the appearance of head hairs, etc., as to colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation, is the *learning sign (uggaha-nimitta)*; their appearance as repulsive in all aspects is the *counter sign (paṭibhāga nimitta)*.

As he cultivates and develops the counter sign, absorption arises in him, but only of the first jhāna. As in *Asubha bhāvanā*, the highest concentration attainable here is the first jhāna because of the repulsive nature of the meditation subject.

The first jhāna arises singly in one to whom only one part has become evident, or who has reached absorption in one part and makes no further effort about another. But several first jhānas, according to the number of parts, are produced in one to whom several parts have become evident, or who has reached jhāna in one and also makes further effort about another.

For example, the *Elder Mallaka* was an obtainer of thirty-two jhānas in the thirty-two parts. If he entered upon one by night and one by day, he went on entering upon them for over a fortnight; but if he entered upon one each day, he went on entering upon them for over a month.

Although this meditation is successful in this way with the first jhāna, it is nevertheless called 'mindfulness occupied with the body' (*Kāyagatāsati*) because it is successful through the influence

of the mindfulness of the colour, shape, and so on.

Development of Kāyagatāsati with the Powerful Support of the Fourth Jhāna

For those who have already developed the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna by ānāpānassati, they can develop mindfulness occupied with the body very easily.

They should first develop the fourth jhāna by mindfulness of breathing. When the light associated with the fourth jhāna becomes very bright, they can look at the thirty-two parts of the body with their samādhi eye. They should define each part from head hairs to urine following the serial order without skipping and again review them in the reverse order.

They should repeat this process again and again until they could observe all the thirty-two parts simultaneously. For when they give their attention to head hairs, their attention then carries on till it arrives at the last part, that is, urine, and stops there; and when they give their attention to urine, their attention then carries on till it arrives back at the first part, that is, head hairs, and stops there. Now they have thoroughly and skilfully studied the parts internally, that is, in themselves.

Then with the help of the bright light associated with the fourth jhāna, they should look at a person or being near them, especially in front of them, and try to discern the thirty-two body parts in that person from head hairs to urine and vice versa. When they could see all the parts simultaneously, they should observe these parts internally and externally in turn many times. Their meditation power will become strong.

Then they should look further and further in all directions with the help of the bright light associated with the fourth jhāna and discern the thirty-two body parts in every being who comes under the light, always discerning the parts internally and externally as before. Wherever and whenever they look at, if they could see only heaps of the thirty-two parts without seeing them as men, women, cows, oxen, dogs, etc., then they have practised thoroughly and skilfully in both internal and external aspects.

A person who has so practised can undertake *paṭikūla-manasikāra kammaṭṭhāna* by observing each body part or all the body parts as a repulsive object. (*Visuddhi*, i, 257)

Here only the meditation method for bones or skeleton will be described. The meditation for other body parts can be practised similarly.

The meditator should again develop the fourth jhāna samādhi by means of *ānāpānassati*. When his meditation light becomes glittering and bright, he discerns the thirty-two parts in his body. He then discerns the thirty-two parts in a person or being near him with the help of his bright meditation light. He should discern the thirty-two parts internally and then externally for at least a couple of times.

Then, observing the internal skeleton clearly with his wisdom eye or samādhi eye, and giving his attention to its repulsive nature, he should reflect 'repulsive, repulsive' or 'repulsive skeleton, repulsive skeleton' again and again. He should focus his meditative mind on the repulsive skeleton firmly and calmly for one hour, two hours, and so on. With the powerful support of the *ānāpāna*-fourth jhāna, his meditative mind is naturally very strong and powerful.

During the meditation the disgusting and repulsive nature of the skeleton must be clearly evident by way of colour, shape, smell, habitat and location. The skeleton which becomes evident by means of five aspects, that is, colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation, is the *learning sign (uggaha nimitta)*. The appearance of the skeleton as repulsive in all aspects with regard to its colour, shape, smell, habitat and location is the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*).

As he cultivates and develops that counter sign, absorption arises in him, but only of the first jhāna. He should meditate in the same way taking an external skeleton as his meditation subject. Only the neighbourhood jhāna (*upacāra jhāna*) can be attained with an external subject. If he wishes, he can also carry on the repulsive meditation (*paṭikūlamanasikāra*) with other body parts.

● The Benefits of Kāyagatāsati

The meditator who is devoted to this mindfulness occupied with the body is a 'conqueror of boredom and delight; the boredom in meditation and the delight in sense pleasure cannot conquer him. He lives, subduing boredom as it arises.

He is a conqueror of fear and dread, and fear and dread do not conquer him. He lives, putting down fear and dread as they come up.

He can bear major and minor pain, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, insect bites and scorpion sting, blames and abuses. He can endure rough and severe pain, undesirable and unbearable pain, arisen bodily feelings that are menacing to life.

He can develop four rūpāvacara jhānas based on the colour aspect of head hairs, bones, blood, urine, etc. He can also attain supernormal powers.

As he attains the perception of loathsomeness on the living body, he can well suppress his sense desire to live happily and to progress quickly in insight meditation.

So let a man, if he is wise,
Untiringly devote his days
To mindfulness of body which
Rewrads him in so many ways.

References

- 1 'Visuddhimagga' by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol. I, pp. 477-525.
- 2 'Visuddhimagga' by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Sobhana, Vol. II, pp. 250-329.
- 3 'The Path of Purification' (Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated into English by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, pp. 259-285.
- 4 'The Path of Purity' (Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated into English by Pe Maung Tin, PTS, pp. 275-305.

Review Questions:

1. Comment the words of the Buddha: "O blikkhus, they who savour mindfulness occupied with the body savour the deathless."
2. Describe the sevenfold skill in learning (uggaha-kosalla) in undertaking kāyagatāsati.
3. Describe the tenfold skill in giving attention (manasikāra-kosalla) in carrying out kāyagatāsati.
4. How should we practise kāyagatāsati to get its full benefits?
5. Describe a method for attaining absorption (jhāna)-quickly in practising kāyagatāsati.
6. How does the Buddha praise kāyagatāsati?
What is the significance of this meditation subject?
7. Should we practise kāyagatāsati nowadays?
How should we practise it?
8. How can we convince people that every part of a living body is as disgusting as the corresponding parts of a corpse?
9. Describe the formal procedure for undertaking 'kāyagatāsati' to reach the first jhāna.
10. Why should we practise kāyagatāsati? What are the benefits of kāyagatāsati?
11. What are the similarities as well as the differences between asubha bhāvanā and kāyagatāsati?
12. What is meant by 'the perception of foulness' (asubha saññā)?
How can we attain it and what are its benefits?

CHAPTER VII
DEFINING THE FOUR ELEMENTS
(*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*)

The Significance of *Catudhātu-vavatthāna*

'*Catudhātu*' means the four primary elements – *Pathavī*, *Āpo*, *Tejo*, *Vāyo*.

'*Vavatthāna*' means defining or determining by characterizing individual characteristics, that is, by making certain of the specific characteristics of hardness, and so on.

'*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*' (defining the four elements) is, synonymous with '*Dhātumanasikāra*' (reflection on elements) and with '*Dhātukammaṭṭhāna*' (the meditation subject consisting of elements).

This meditation subject does not consist in the observing of a mere concept, as in the case of the earth *kaṣiṇa* as a meditation subject, neither does it consist in the observing of the blue colour, etc., as in the case of the blue *kaṣiṇa* as a meditation object, nor as the observing of the general characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), etc., in formations (*saṅkhāra*), as in the case of insight as a meditation subject; but rather it consists in the observing of the individual characteristics of the element of extension (*pathavī*), and so on.

The 'defining of the four elements' is taught by the Buddha in two ways: in brief and in detail. It is given in brief in the *Mahāsaṭṭipatthāna Sutta* (D.ii, 294) and in detail in the *Mahāhatthipadūpama Sutta* (M.i, 185), the *Rāhulovāda Sutta* (M.i, 421) and the *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* (M.iii, 240).

● ***Catudhātu-vavatthāna* in Brief**

In The *Mahāsaṭṭipatthāna Sutta* the defining of the four essential elements is described briefly as follows for those of quick understanding whose meditation subject is the elements:

"Bhikkhus, just as though a skilful butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow, cut it up into pieces, and sat at the cross-roads

with the pieces of meat for sale, so too a bhikkhu reviews this body, however it may be placed or disposed, as consisting of the four primary elements: - In this body there are the element of extension (pathavi), the element of cohesiveness (āpo), the element of heat (tejo) and the element of motion (vāyo)." (D.ii, 294).

The meaning is this:-Just as a skilful butcher or his apprentice killed a cow, divided it up into pieces and sat at the cross-roads called the meeting place of main roads from the four directions, displaying the meat piecemeal, so too a bhikkhu reviews the body, however it be placed according to any of the postures or disposed according as it has been placed, thus:-In this body there are the element of extension, the element of cohesiveness, the element of heat, the element of motion.

What does this amount to? When the butcher is rearing the cow, is taking it to the slaughter-house, is fastening it there, slaughtering it and looking at it when it is dead; until then the concept 'cow' does not disappear so long as he does not cut it up and display it piecemeal; but when he has cut it up and sat down at the cross-roads, the concept 'cow' disappears and the concept 'flesh' arises. So he no longer thinks 'I am selling the cow' or 'They are carrying the cow away', but rather he thinks 'I am selling meat' or 'They are carrying meat away.'

Similarly while the bhikkhu was a foolish ordinary person, a householder, or has just been ordained, the concept 'being', 'man', or 'person' does not disappear so long as he does not reflect upon his body, however it be placed or disposed, as elements. But when he reflects on it as elements, the concept 'being' disappears and his mind is established on the elements. That is why the Blessed One said: "Bhikkhus, just as though a skilful butcher--- the element of motion."

● Catudhātuvavatthāna in Detail

In *Mahāhatthipadūpama Sutta*, *Rāhulovāda Sutta* and *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* the defining of the primary elements is said at length for those who are not too sharp in intellect and who meditated on the elements as follows:

“Friends, what is the internal element of extension? Whatever there is internally in oneself that is hard, rough, and clung to by lust, that is to say, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidney, heart, liver, membrane, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, undigested food in the stomach, excrement, brain, or whatever else there is internally in oneself that is hard, rough, and clung to by lust – this is called the internal element of extension (*pathavī*).

“Friends, what is the internal element of cohesion? Whatever there is internally in oneself that is liquid, watery, and clung to by lust, that is to say, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, urine, or whatever else there is internally in oneself that is liquid, watery, or derived from water, and clung to by lust – this is called the internal element of cohesion (*āpo*).

“Friends, what is the internal element of heat? Whatever there is internally in oneself that is heat, included in heat, and clung to by lust, that is to say, that whereby one is warmed, aged, and burnt up, and whereby what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else there is internally in oneself that is heat, included in heat, and clung to by lust – this is called the internal element of heat (*tejo*).

“Friends, what is the internal element of motion? Whatever there is internally in oneself that is air, airy, and clung to by lust, that is to say, up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the belly, winds in the bowels, winds that course through all the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else there is internally in oneself that is air, airy, and clung to by lust – this is called the internal element of motion (*vāyo*).” (*M.i. 188*)

● Four Primary Elements (*Mahābhūta*)

1. The Element of Extension (*Pathavī dhātu*)

3 kinds of Garupathavī

1 hardness

2 roughness

3 heaviness

3 kinds of Lahupathavī

4 softness

5 smoothness

6 lightness

characteristics in the same way. If not successful, try to observe the pushing characteristic of vāyo first. This pushing characteristic will aid the meditator to observe the remaining characteristics with his wisdom.

● **Begin with the easiest One**

In teaching a child how to write the alphabets, we should begin with the easiest one to write. Though the alphabets begin with A, B, C, ---, we may teach the child to write 'O' first, because it is the easiest one to write.

In the same way, for most meditators, it is found that the pushing characteristic of vāyo is the easiest characteristic to observe. Therefore, if a meditator is not successful to observe the characteristic of hardness first, he should try to observe the pushing characteristic first.

● **The Characteristic of Pushing**

He should focus his meditating mind at about the middle of his head. While he breathes in and breathes out normally, he should try to observe the pushing nature at that place with his wisdom. He should observe intently with his wisdom the nature of pushing which arises whenever he breathes in and he breathes out. He should not watch the breath. The pushing nature is similar to that which arises at the cheeks when one chews a mouthful of food. When he notices the pushing nature, he should focus his meditating mind calmly and firmly at the pushing characteristic.

If he still does not succeed by trying this method, he should develop the ānāpāna fourth jhāna or the white-kasina fourth jhāna again. When the power of concentration is fully developed, he should again try to observe the pushing nature as above.

The ānāpāna fourth jhāna concentration or the white-kasina fourth jhāna concentration is the basic concentration and foundation for undertaking insight meditation (vipassanā) for a meditator who attains it. He should develop this concentration to its full strength until the concentrated mind radiates very strong and bright light. This is a rule to be observed by a meditator whenever he sits for meditation and whenever he finds difficulty in meditation.

When he can observe the nature of pushing clearly inside his head, he should fix his meditating mind calmly on the pushing characteristic. When the meditating mind remains calmly fixed on the nature of pushing, that pushing nature will become very distinct. When it is very distinct, he should try to observe with his wisdom the nature of pushing from inside the head to the outside part of the head slowly. He should observe the nature of pushing between the bones, between the sinews, between the flesh and between the skin by inserting his wisdom hand at these places.

When he can observe the nature of pushing clearly in the whole head, he should extend the area of observation to the neck, the chest, the belly and gradually to the whole body using his wisdom and inserting his wisdom hand between the bones, between the sinews, between the flesh and between the skin to see the pushing characteristic of vāyo. When he observes clearly the pushing nature in every part of the whole body from head to toe, he is successful in defining the characteristic of one element.

If he cannot see the pushing character of the inbreath and the out-breath vividly even though he concentrates his mind on the nature of pushing, or if he is very earnest to start observing at the belly, then he should focus his meditating mind on the part of the belly where the pushing character is distinct, and then gradually extend the area of observation so that he is aware of the nature of pushing in the whole body.

● The Characteristic of Hardness

When he can observe the nature of pushing vividly all over the body, he should strive in the same way to observe the nature of hardness vividly all over the body starting from a place where hardness is distinct, especially at the point of contact between the upper teeth and the lower teeth. When hardness becomes distinct all over the body, he should observe the nature of pushing and the nature of hardness together repeatedly for many times. He should also strive to observe these two characteristics in all the four postures as well as in all bodily movements such as bending and stretching the hands.

● The Characteristic of Roughness

After observing the two characteristics of pushing and hardness repeatedly, the meditator may observe the nature of roughness with his wisdom. He can notice the nature of roughness as the feeling of rubbing sand over his body. If he doesn't notice it, he should try to observe the nature of hardness from a place where it is distinct. He should rub the back of his hand with his clothes and notice the feeling of roughness. He should also rub the tip of his upper molar (tooth) with his tongue. He can observe the nature of roughness vividly. Starting from that place where roughness is distinct, he should strive on to observe the nature of roughness all over his body.

In case he is not successful, he should observe the nature of pushing, hardness roughness together at the place where roughness is distinct. Just as one lures a wild elephant with a tame elephant and catches it, so in the same way the meditator couples the indistinct characteristic with the distinct characteristic and observes them together in order to make the indistinct nature known. He may succeed in this way. If not, he need to develop the jhāna concentration that he has attained.

"Samāhito yathābhūtam jānāti passati." (A.iii, 259)

"A person with mental concentration sees and knows correctly as it really is."

As the Buddha said so, the meditator should develop his concentration to its full strength. When the concentration gains its full strength, he should again observe the natures of pushing, hardness, and roughness.

● The Characteristic of Heaviness

If successful, he should continue to observe the nature of heaviness all over his body starting from the place where the nature of heaviness is distinct. If it is not distinct, he should press slightly the floor he is sitting on with his hip. Or he may press his thigh. He may be successful. If successful, he should observe the natures of pushing, hardness, roughness, and heaviness repeatedly many times. Even though he focuses his attention on one characteristic of an

element, it will be nice if he can observe all the characteristics almost simultaneously.

● The Characteristic of Supporting

Then he should continue to observe the nature of supporting of vāyo. How should we know the nature of supporting? Just as a leaning old house about to collapse remains steady without falling when it is supported by a strong pole, so too in this body, when it goes to maintain it in the going posture without collapsing, when it stands to maintain it in the standing posture without collapsing, when it sits to maintain it in the sitting position without collapsing, when it lies to maintain it in the lying position without collapsing, there must be something which keeps supporting it. That is the supporting property of vāyo. That supporting nature of vāyo can be understood more easily if it is not distinct, try to move the body slightly. Try to see with wisdom the force which supports the body not to fall, not to collapse, but to remain stationary in the position it is placed. The nature of supporting will become distinct. If successful, one should proceed to observe the nature of supporting all over the body.

As it is easier and quicker to understand the nature of supporting which keeps the body erect as if the body is propped up by inserting a stick through the body or which holds the body to remain as it is placed without collapsing, when the nature of supporting is observed in association with the nature of hardness, it is advised to observe first the natures of hardness, roughness and heaviness that represent gru-pathavī. The idea is to proceed from the easier to the more difficult.

When successful, try to observe the five characteristics, that is, the characteristics of pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, and supporting again and again many times. This means sharpening the knife of wisdom on the noble stone slab of concentration. When satisfied, proceed to observe the nature of softness.

The Characteristics of Softness, Smoothness and Lightness

To learn the nature of softness, try to feel the inside flesh of

the lower lip with the tip of the tongue. Try to feel the nature of softness. The softness of *pathavī* can be made distinct in this way. If it is distinct, focus the meditation mind calmly on the nature of softness.

When the nature of softness is observed satisfactorily, proceed to observe the nature of smoothness. Try to rub gently the soft inner flesh of the lower lip with the tip of the tongue which is well wetted with saliva. One can observe the nature of softness. Try to fix the meditation mind at the nature of softness. When the nature of softness is distinct, try to observe it in every part of the whole body. Try to see it clearly as if the whole body is rubbed with oil and feeling smooth.

Then try to observe the nature of lightness. After observing the natures of softness and smoothness repeatedly many times, the nature of lightness can also become distinct in one's wisdom. If it is not distinct, raise gently the fore finger of the hand placed on the knee. The nature of lightness can become distinct. If it is not still distinct, try to discern the nature of heaviness clearly throughout the whole body, one should again raise the forefinger of the hand placed on the knee gently. Try to observe the nature of lightness intently. One can observe the nature of lightness vividly as a piece of cotton floating in the air.

Hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, and lightness represent the element of extension (*pathavī*), supporting and pushing represent the element of motion (*vāyo*). Thus one has discerned two primary elements. Try to discern them repeatedly many times.

● The Characteristics of Hotness and Coldness

When one is satisfied with discerning the two primary elements, one should observe the hotness character of *tejo* – the element of heat. When one places the right hand on the left hand palm, one can feel the hotness of *tejo* on the back of the right hand that touches the left hand palm. Observe the nature of hotness intently. One can discern the nature of hotness at any part of the body where hotness is distinct. When the nature of hotness appears distinctly in one's

wisdom, try to observe vividly the nature of hotness in every part of the whole body by inserting the wisdom hand between the bones, between the sinews, between the flesh and between the skin.

When successful, proceed to discern the nature of coldness. One can focus one's meditating mind at any part of the body where coldness is distinct. If one cannot find the place where coldness is distinct easily, one can observe the nature of coldness at the nostrils as one breathes in. Just try to concentrate the attention on the nature of coldness only. When it gradually becomes distinct, proceed to observe the nature of coldness throughout the whole body.

When one can discern the nature of coldness throughout the whole body from head to toe, one is successful in discerning the element of heat (*tejo*). One now understands ten characteristics of three primary elements. These characteristics are hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, and lightness that represent *pathavī*, hotness and coldness that represent *tejo*, and supporting and pushing that represent *vāyo*.

● The Characteristics of Cohesiveness and Fluidity

When one observes the above ten characteristics in the whole body repeatedly and practises on them many times, the nature of cohesiveness of *āpo* may become distinct in one's wisdom. Even though one strives hard in this way, if the nature of cohesiveness does not become distinct, try to observe only the two characteristics of pushing and hardness repeatedly. The characteristics of cohesiveness will become distinct. The nature of cohesiveness is like the feeling one experiences when one's body is tied tightly with a rope.

When one can discern the nature of cohesiveness vividly in one's wisdom, proceed to discern the nature of fluidity from a place in the body where fluidity is distinct. If one does not understand the nature of fluidity, one should observe it at the bottom of the tongue where saliva is oozing out. Starting from that place where saliva is seeping and flowing out, one proceeds to discern the nature of fluidity throughout the whole body.

For a person who has already learnt to observe the thirty-two parts of the body (*koṭṭhāsa*) skilfully, he also knows how to observe the twelve parts of the body in which āpo is predominant. So if he tries to discern the nature of fluidity in association with one part of the body in which āpo is predominant, then he will understand fluidity more easily.

When the nature of fluidity becomes distinct, try to observe and understand this characteristic throughout the body flowing upward and downward. If successful, the meditator now has discerned successfully the two characteristics of the element of cohesion (*āpo*).

● Observing the Twelve Characteristics

Then he should practise on observing the twelve characteristics of the four primary elements in the order: pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, hotness, coldness, cohesiveness and fluidity, many times, repeatedly. In practising thus, whichever characteristic he is concentrating his attention on, he should observe it vividly throughout his body from head to toe. Next, he should practise on to discern the twelve characteristics rapidly one after another. In striving to do so, he accomplishes one round whenever he completes discerning the twelve characteristics in the said order. He should strive to accomplish two or three rounds per minute.

When he is successful in practising as above, he is said to pass the O-level class. Then he should rearrange the order of the characteristics to be in conformity with the order given in the discourse, that is in the order: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness and lightness (for *pathavī*), cohesiveness and fluidity (for *āpo*), hotness and coldness (for *tejo*), and supporting and pushing (for *vāyo*). It is like learning to write A, B, C --- after one has learnt to write O skilfully.

In that order he should discern each characteristic, one at a time, throughout his body, from head to toe. As he practises on, he will develop the ability to discern the twelve characteristics very quickly. He should strive on until he is able to discern the characteristics at about three rounds per minute.

That task of discerning analytically with wisdom the natural characteristics of the four primary elements, one after another, by inserting the wisdom hand between the bones, between the sinews, between the flesh and between the skin is now successful.

However, the road has not come to an end yet. There are some meditators who, while discerning the characteristics of the elements, observe the tiny material groups called rūpa-kalāpas which make up the whole body. There are also some meditators who do not observe the tiny material groups. These meditators should proceed as follows.

As advised by the Visuddhimagga Commentary the meditator should observe the characteristics penetratively in the whole body, reflecting with his wisdom.

A good method is to take an overview of the whole body by looking at it from above the shoulders discerning the twelve elements in the order: hardness-roughness-heaviness-softness-smoothness-lightness, cohesiveness-fluidity, hotness-coldness, supporting-pushing. He should be able to discern them quickly in the whole body.

If he is taking an overall view by looking down from above the head, he may soon suffer from severe headache as hardness becomes distinct and unbearable. So it is better to take the overview as if he were looking from behind the shoulders, giving equal attention to the upper part of the body and to the lower part of the body. In order to keep the mind calm and concentrated, he should not move the awareness from one part of the body to another as before.

He should take an overall view of the twelve characteristics of the four primary elements. If he has the ability, he should focus his attention only on the twelve characteristics and not on the body. When he can discern the twelve characteristics quickly and almost simultaneously with his wisdom, he should take note of hardness-roughness-heaviness-softness-smoothness-lightness as pathavi, cohesiveness-fluidity as āpo, hotness-coldness as tejo, and supporting-pushing as vāyo, respectively.

He should not note 'pathavi' without seeing hardness-roughness-heaviness-softness-smoothness-lightness, neither should he note 'āpo' without seeing cohesiveness-fluidity, 'tejo' without seeing hotness-

coldness, and 'vāyo' without seeing supporting-pushing. He should not take note without really observing the characteristics with his wisdom eye. If he cannot observe the characteristics vividly, he should practise to observe them first. Only when he can observe the individual characteristics clearly and vividly with his wisdom as if he were looking at a ruby on his hand, should he take note of pahavī, āpo, tejo and vāyo for more than a thousand times, a million times. Keep the mind fixed on the object of the four elements calmly. Develop mental concentration.

● Some Points to be taken Care of

(a) Keep the elements balanced

In observing each of the twelve characteristics of the four primary elements to make them distinct in one's wisdom, or in taking note of the four elements as pathavī dhātu, āpo dhātu, tejo dhātu, vāyo dhātu, one should not focus one's attention only on one characteristic or one element for many days. If he keeps on reflecting on a single characteristic or element for a long time, that characteristic or element will become predominant or will be in excess. If it is so, he will not be able to bear it, especially if hardness, pushing and hotness become predominant. Similarly if hardness, heaviness and cohesiveness are in excess, it becomes unbearable. Every time he sits for meditation, he will be disturbed by that excessive element or characteristic. He will not be able to develop concentration.

Thus don't concentrate your attention on a single element for many days. Keep all the four elements balanced with one another.

- 1 When hardness is in excess, pay more attention to softness; when softness is in excess, pay more attention to hardness in order to balance the elements.
- 2 When roughness is predominant, pay more attention to smoothness, and vice versa.
- 3 When heaviness is predominant, pay more attention to lightness, and vice versa.
- 4 When fluidity is predominant, pay more attention to cohesiveness, and vice versa.

- 5 When the nature of hotness is predominant, pay more attention to the nature of coldness, and vice versa.
- 6 When the nature of supporting is predominant, pay more attention to the nature of pushing, and vice versa in order to balance the elements.

(b) Iriyapatha-- Sampajañña Meditation

Iriyapatha concerns with the arising of the four postures, and '*Sampajañña*' means 'well understanding in various ways' such as the purpose and the benefit of bodily movement.

If the meditator is reflecting on a single element in his endeavour to define the four elements, he should keep on reflecting only that element in all the four postures of going, standing, sitting and lying. Also in *Sampajañña* meditation, in all bodily and verbal movements such as stretching or bending the hands, he should focus his attention on that element which he is reflecting on.

When he has learnt how to discern two elements, then he should keep on reflecting on these two elements in all postures and bodily behaviour. Again when he knows how to discern all the four elements, he should keep on reflecting all the four elements in every bodily posture, in every bodily as well as verbal movement. He should practise till he can discern the elements continuously from preceding postures to subsequent postures.

(c) If the Meditator is not a Samathayānika Person

If the meditator has not practised mindfulness of breathing, white kasina meditation, or any other tranquillity meditation (*samathakammaṭṭhāna*), this element meditation (*dhātu-kammaṭṭhāna*) will serve him as 'catudhātu-vavatthāna kammaṭṭhāna' which is included in 40 subjects of tranquillity meditation. This meditation can develop the access or neighbourhood concentration which, by analogy, is known as '*upacāra samādhi*'. So it is an *upacāra kammaṭṭhāna*.

When he attains the neighbourhood concentration in the element meditation, very bright and penetrative light is radiated from his mind which is associated with *upacāra samādhi* (*sadisūpacāra-upacārasamādhi*). With the help of this meditation light, he can

easily observe the 32 parts of the body in himself as well as in others. Then from the colours of these parts of the body such as the whiteness of the skull bone or the red colour of the blood, he can proceed to practise the colour-kaṣiṇa meditation and develop the concentration up to the fourth rūpavacara jhāna samādhi. Then he also becomes a samatha-yānika person.

● The Light and the Neighbourhood Concentration

The meditator should balance the five Faculties and the seven Enlightenment factors as described in Chapter III.

Thus, keeping faith and wisdom, effort and concentration balanced, the meditator continues his meditation task by reflecting on the respective natural characteristics of the four primary elements. As the five faculties are well balanced in the meditator's mind they become very pure, keen and sharp. Then disbelief – *assaddhiya*, slackening from the meditation object – *līna*, unmindfulness and forgetfulness of the object of the four primary elements – *pamāda*, not understanding correctly the respective natural characteristics of the four primary elements – *moha*, and other defilements are kept far away. So the seven noble enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅgas*) become fully developed with extremely great energy. With the strong support of these noble enlightenment factors, the five jhāna factors become firmly established.

1. *Vitakka* – initial application of the mind towards the object of the natural characteristics of the four primary elements;
2. *Vicāra* – repeated reflection of the object of the natural characteristics of the four primary elements;
3. *Pīti* – fondness of the above-sense objects;
4. *Sukha* – enjoying the above-sense object happily;
5. *Ekaggatā* – establishing the mind calmly on the single object of the natural characteristics of the four primary elements.

These five jhāna factors become specially strong and distinct. The five hindrances (*nīvaraṇās*), which are the direct opposites of the jhāna factors, are driven away together with other defilements.

The meditator, who has exerted the effort to complete fully the

procedure of undertaking the meditation on elements (*dhātu kammaṭṭhāna*) as described up till now, has well attained the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) taking the object of the natural characteristics of the four primary elements.

One can then undertake kāyagatāsati meditation easily as one can see all the thirty-two parts of the body in oneself as well as in others with the help of the bright, penetrative light radiated from one's mind accompanied by the neighbourhood concentration. One can develop the first rūpāvacara jhāna by reflecting on the repulsiveness of one's skeleton. Then one can develop four rūpāvacara jhānas by reflecting on the whiteness of the skull of a meditator sitting in front as white kaṣiṇa.

References

1. "Visuddhi Magga" by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol. II, pp 124-184.
2. "The Path of Purification" (Visuddhi Magga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, pp. 380-408.
3. "Nibbānagāmini Paṭipaddā" (in brief) Vol. II, Rūpa Kammaṭṭhāna by Ven. Āciṇṇa (in Myanmar), pp. 1-41.

Review Question

1. How does the Buddha teach "Dhātumanasikāra" in brief in Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta? Explain that teaching.
2. How does the Buddha teach the "Defining of the four primary Elements" in Mahāhatthipaduma Sutta, etc.?
3. Describe the practical method for undertaking the meditation on "Defining the four primary elements" successfully.
4. Describe the significance of the meditation subject on "defining the four primary elements".
5. After attaining the neighbourhood concentration in defining the four primary elements, how can the meditator proceed to develop the four rūpāvacara jhānas?

CHAPTER VIII
DEVELOPMENT OF CONCENTRATION
BY NINE KASĪNAS

The Water Kasīna (*Āpo Kasīna*)

Having described the development of five rūpāvacara jhānas by reflecting on the earth kasīna, it is now proper to describe the development of concentration by reflecting on the remaining nine kasīnas. The procedures for developing these kasīnas are similar to that for developing the earth kasīna.

A person who wants to develop the water kasīna should learn the meditation subject from a competent teacher, seat himself comfortably and apprehend the sign in water 'that is either made up or not made up'. For someone who has had practice in previous existences, the sign arises in him in water that is not made up, such as a pool, a lake, a lagoon, or the ocean as in the case of the Elder Cūla Siva.

Venerable Cūla Siva thought of abandoning gain and honour and living a secluded life. He boarded a ship at the sea port called Mahātītha and sailed to Jambūdīpa (India). He gazed at the ocean on the way and the Āpo kasīna sign, the counter part of the ocean that he was looking at, arose in him.

For someone with no such previous practice, he should prepare a suitable water kasīna for meditation. He should fill a bowl or an alms-bowl cover or a cup of about one foot in diameter with clean water, uncontaminated by soil, taken in the open through a clean cloth strainer, or with any other similar clear unturbid water. He should guard against the four faults of kasīna by preventing the four colours – blue, yellow, red and white—from intruding into the water. He should put the bowl of water at a screened place within the confines of the monastery, either under an overhanging rock or in a leaf-hut.

● Reflecting on the Water Kasina

The meditator should sit comfortably on a seat a span and four fingers high and two and a half cubits (about four feet) from the water kasina. For the kasina does not appear vividly to him if he sits further off than that; and if he sits nearer than that, faults in the kasina appear. If he sits higher up, he has to look at the kasina with his neck bent; and if he sits lower down, his knees ache.

Then he should review the dangers of sense desires in the way beginning "Sense objects give little enjoyment" (*M:i, 91*). He should arouse an ardent wish to attain jhāna for it is the cause for the escape from sense desires as well as the cause for the emancipation from all suffering.

He should next arouse joy (*piṭṭi*) by recollecting the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. He also develops respect in the training by thinking "Now this is the training undertaken by all Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and Noble Disciples". He should then arouse strenuous effort by thinking "I shall surely come to know the taste of the bliss of seclusion (*viveka sukha*)".

After that he should open his eyes moderately, apprehend with the mind the sign apprehended by the eye in the water kasina and proceed to develop it. If he opens his eyes too wide, they get fatigued and the kasina disk becomes too obvious, which prevents the arising of the meditation sign (*bhāvanā nimitta*).

If he opens his eyes too little, the kasina disk is not distinct, his mind becomes retard, which also prevents the meditation sign (*nimitta*) from arising. So he should apprehend the sign and develop it with his eyes moderately open as if he were seeing the reflection of his face in a looking glass.

He should not review the colour of water or its characteristic of cohesiveness or fluidity for distinguishing the meditation on water kasina from the meditation on elements.

But rather, while not ignoring the colour, the meditator should focus his attention on the kasina disk as water or āpo, continuously reflecting on it by any one of the names for water such as 'āpo, āpo' or 'ambu (rain)' or 'udaka (liquid)' or 'vāri (dew)' or 'salila

(fluid)' or just 'water, water.' He should go on reflecting in this way with open eyes a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that.

● The Appearance of Meditation Signs

As the meditator keeps his mind focussed on the water kasina, wholesome consciousness (*mahā kusala citta*) will be arising, accompanied by five jhāna factors. These jhāna factors will be gradually developed as he keeps on meditating, and they will suppress the hindrances (*nivaraṇas*) from arising in the mind. The hindrances make the mind restless and distracted.

As the jhāna factors grow stronger and the hindrances get weaker, the mind gets more and more concentrated on the meditation subject. From the time the mind has become quite calm and steady, the meditator should close his eyes intermittenly to see whether he attains the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*). If he does not see any sign, he should keep on reflecting 'āpo, āpo' or 'water, water' with open eyes, focusing his attention on the water kasina.

When he can see the water kasina in his mind eyes, he is said to attain the acquired sign. He should reflect on the acquired sign as 'āpo, āpo' or 'water, water' with closed eyes until the sign becomes stable and steady.

Now he need not stay there any more. He should return to his own quarters and go on developing the acquired sign sitting in his quarters. If the new unstable concentration vanishes through some unsuitable encounter, he will lose his acquired sign. If this happens, he should go back to the place where the water kasina is kept and develop the acquired sign again.

After returning to his quarters, he should sit comfortably and reflect on the acquired sign with closed eyes as 'āpo, āpo' or 'water, water' with strenuous effort as if striking it repeatedly with the right thought. He tries to prevent his mind from wandering away, recalling it back whenever it goes astray. If pain or discomfort arises in his body, he should tolerate it as much as possible, ignoring it and focusing his attention on the acquired sign. When the pain

becomes unbearable, he can mindfully change his posture to ease the pain.

As he keeps on reflecting on the sign, the hindrances eventually become suppressed, the defilements subside, the mind becomes concentrated with access concentration, and the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) arises.

The acquired sign appears in the mind of the meditator when he has developed his preparatory concentration (*parikamma samādhi*) to a certain degree. Here, the acquired sign has the appearance of moving. If the water has bubbles of froth mixed with it, the acquired sign has the same appearance, and it is evident as a fault in the *kaṣiṇa*.

But the counter sign appears inactive and motionless, like an emerald fan set in space, like the disk of a looking glass made of emerald. With the appearance of that sign he reaches access *jhāna*.

● Developing *Rūpāvacara Jhānas*

The counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) arises only when the hindrances are well suppressed not to arise in the mind, the defilements have subsided and the mind has become pure. Now it is very difficult to get this sign and to attain the neighbourhood concentration.

So the meditator should exert all-out effort to extend the sign in all directions and to raise his concentration to the first *jhāna*. If he cannot achieve this objective quickly, he must guard the sign diligently as if it were the embryo of a universal monarch.

In doing so, he must abide by seven suitable conditions and avoid seven unsuitable conditions with respect to (1) abode, (2) resort, (3) speech, (4) person, (5) food, (6) climate, and (7) posture as described with respect to the development of the earth *kaṣiṇa*.

In spite of practising in this way, if meditative absorption does not arise, the meditator should develop the tenfold skill in absorption (*Appanā Kosalla*). The skill in absorption should be developed with respect to

- (1) cleansing internal and external bases;
- (2) balancing controlling faculties (*indriyas*);

- (3) developing the skill in the meditation sign;
- (4) raising the morale;
- (5) restraining the mind at the time when it should be restrained;
- (6) gladdening the mind at the time when it should be gladdened;
- (7) viewing the mind with equanimity at the time when it should be viewed;
- (8) avoiding persons without concentration;
- (9) associating with persons with concentration;
- (10) being resolute upon concentration.

The procedure for developing the skill in absorption has been described in detail in the development of the earth *kaṣiṇa*.

The meditator should free his mind from idleness even when it is only slightly idle and from agitation when slightly agitated. He should confront the counter sign with balanced effort. He will soon attain the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*.

After developing mastery in five ways with respect to the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*, he can develop the second *rūpāvacara jhāna* by eliminating *vitakka* and *vicāra*, the third *rūpāvacara jhāna* by eliminating *piti*, the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna* by eliminating *sukha* according to the procedures described in the development of the earth *kaṣiṇa*.

● The Fire *Kaṣiṇa* (*Tejo Kaṣiṇa*)

One who wants to develop the fire *kaṣiṇa* should, as in the case of the earth *kaṣiṇa* and the water *kaṣiṇa*, learn the meditation subject from a competent teacher, seat himself comfortably and apprehend the sign in fire 'that is either made up or not made up'.

Herein, when someone with merit, having had previous practice, is apprehending the sign, it arises in him in any sort of fire, not made up, as he looks at the fiery combustion in a lamp's flame or in a furnace or in a place for baking bowls or in a forest fire, as in the case of the Elder *Cittagutta*.

The sign arose in that Elder as he was looking at a lamp's flame while he was in the *Uposatha* house on the day of preaching the *Dhamma*:

A person without merit, having had no previous practice, should make one up. Here are the directions for making a fire *kaṣiṇa*. He should split up some damp heartwood, dry it, and break it up into short lengths. He should go to a suitable tree root or to a shed and there make a pile in the way done for baking bowls, and make a fire.

He should make a hole a span and four fingers wide in a mat or a piece of leather or a cloth, and after hanging it in front of the fire, he should sit down in the way already described. He should not give attention to the grass and sticks below the fire or to the smoke above. But rather, he should apprehend the sign in the dense combustion in the middle of the fire.

He should not review the colour of the fire as brown or yellow, etc., or give attention to its characteristic of hotness, etc. But rather, taking the colour as belonging to its physical support, he should focus his attention on the *kaṣiṇa* disk as fire or *tejo*, continuously reflecting on it by any one of the names for fire such as 'tejo, tejo' or 'the Bright One (*pāvaka*)' or 'the Knower of Creatures (*jātaveda*)' or 'the Alter of Sacrifice (*hutāsana*)' or just 'fire, fire'.

He should go on reflecting in this way with open eyes a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that. As he develops it in this way the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) and the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) eventually arise in due course as already described.

Herein, the acquired sign appears like the flame that is detached and cut off. But when someone apprehends it in a *kaṣiṇa* that is not made up, any fault in the *kaṣiṇa* is evident in the acquired sign, and any piece of ember or pile of embers or ashes or smoke appears in it. The counter sign appears motionless like a round piece of red cloth set in space, or like a gold fan or a gold column. With the appearance of the counter sign the meditator reaches access *jhāna*.

The meditator should exert all-out effort to extend the counter sign in all directions and to raise his concentration to the first *jhāna*. If he has difficulty, he must abide by seven suitable conditions and avoid seven unsuitable conditions. He should also develop the ten-

fold skill in absorption. After attaining the first rūpāvacara jhāna, he can go on developing the fourfold or fivefold rūpāvacara jhānas in the way described in the development of the earth kaṣiṇa.

● **The Air Kaṣiṇa (*Vāyo Kaṣiṇa*)**

One who wants to develop the air kaṣiṇa should learn the meditation subject from a competent teacher, seat himself comfortably in the open air and apprehend the sign in air. He can do this either by sight or by touch. For this is said in the Commentaries: "One who is learning the air kaṣiṇa apprehends the sign in air. He notices the tops of sugar-cane or the tops of bamboos or the tops of trees or the ends of his hair moving to and fro in the breeze; or he notices the touch of the breeze on his body."

Thus when he sees sugar-canes with dense foliage or bamboos or trees or the hair four fingers long on a man's head, being struck by the wind, he should establish mindfulness in this way: "This wind is striking on this place." Or he can establish mindfulness where the wind strikes a part of his body after passing through a window opening or a crack or a hole in the wall.

He should focus his attention on the air at the point of contact, continuously reflecting on it by any one of the names for air such as 'vāyo, vāyo' or 'wind (*vāta*)' or 'breeze (*māluta*)' or 'blowing (*anila*)' or preferably 'air, air'.

Here the acquired sign appears to move like the swirl of hot steam on rice gruel just withdrawn from an oven. The counter sign is quiet and motionless. The rest should be understood in the way already described.

● **The Blue Kaṣiṇa (*Nīla Kaṣiṇa*)**

The Pāli word 'nīla' is translated as 'blue', 'brown', and sometimes 'black'. It is said in the Commentaries: "One who is learning the blue kaṣiṇa apprehends the sign in blue, whether in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element (*vaṇṇa dhātu*)."

A person with merit, having had previous practice, can apprehend the sign when he sees a bush with blue flowers, or such flowers spread out at a place of offering, or any blue cloth or gem.

A person with merit should take flowers such as blue lotuses, or morning glory flowers, etc., and spread them out to fill a tray or a flat basket completely so that no stalk shows, or he may use only their petals. Or he can fill the tray or basket with blue cloth bunched up together; or he can fasten the cloth over the rim of the tray or basket like the covering of a drum.

Or he can make a *kaṣiṇa* disk, either portable as described under the earth *kaṣiṇa* or on a wall, with one of the colour elements such as bronze-brown, leaf-green, eye-ointment black, surrounding it with a different colour. After that, he should bring it to mind as 'blue, blue' in the way already described under the earth *kaṣiṇa*.

And here too any fault in the *kaṣiṇa* is evident in the acquired sign; the stalks and the gaps between the petals, etc., are apparent. The counter sign appears like a ruby fan in space, free from the *kaṣiṇa* disk. The rest should be understood as already described.

● The Yellow *Kaṣiṇa* (*Pīta Kaṣiṇa*)

Likewise with the yellow *kaṣiṇa*; for this is said: "One who is learning the yellow *kaṣiṇa* apprehends the sign in yellow, either in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element."

Therefore, here too, when the meditator has merit, having had previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees a bush of yellow flowers, or such flowers spread out at a place of offering, or yellow cloth or colour element, as in the case of the Elder *Cittagutta*.

That venerable one, it seems, saw an offering being made on the flower altar, with *pattaṅga* flowers at *Cittalapabbata*, and as soon as he saw it the sign arose in him the size of the flower altar.

Anyone else should make a *pīta kaṣiṇa*, in the way described for the blue *kaṣiṇa*, with yellow flowers, etc., or with yellow cloth or with a colour element. He should bring it to mind as '*pīta, pīta*' or 'yellow, yellow'. The rest is as before.

● The Red *Kaṣiṇa* (*Lohita Kaṣiṇa*)

Likewise with the red *kaṣiṇa*, for this is said in the Commentaries: "One who is learning the red *kaṣiṇa* apprehends the sign in

red, either in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element."

Therefore, here too, when the meditator has merit, having had previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees a bush of red flowers, or such flowers spread out at a place of offering, or a red cloth or gem or colour element.

But anyone else without merit, having had no previous practice, should make a lohita kasina, in the way already described for the blue kasina, with red flowers, etc., or with red cloth or with a colour element. He should bring it to mind as 'lohita, lohita' or 'red, red'. The rest is as before.

● The White Kasina (*Odāta Kasina*)

Likewise with the white kasina; for this is said: "One who is learning the white kasina apprehends the sign in white, either in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element".

So here too when the meditator has merit, having had previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees a bush of white (jasamine) flowers, etc., or such flowers spread out at a place of offering, or a heap of white lotuses or lilies, or white cloth or colour element. The sign also arises in a tin disk, a silver disk, or the moon's disk.

But anyone else without merit, having had no previous practice, should make an odāta kasina, in the way already described for the blue kasina, with the white flowers already mentioned, or with cloth or colour element. He should bring it to mind as 'odāta, odāta' or 'white, white'. The rest is as before.

● The Light Kasina (*Āloka Kasina*)

Of the light kasina it is said in the Commentaries: "One who is learning the light kasina apprehends the sign in light which passes through a hole in the wall, or through a keyhole, or through a window opening and falls on earth or on the floor or on the wall.

So when the meditator has merit, having had previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees a circle of light thrown on a wall or on a floor by sunlight or moonlight coming through a hole in a wall, etc., or when he sees a circle of light thrown on the

ground by sunlight or moonlight coming through a gap in the branches of a dense-leaved tree or through a gap in a hut made of closely packed branches.

Anyone else without merit, having had no previous practice, should make use of that same kind of circle of light just described, developing it as 'āloka, āloka' or 'light, light'. If the meditation sign does not arise in him by reflecting in this way, he can light a lamp inside a pot, close the pot's mouth, make a hole in it and place it with the hole facing a wall. The lamplight coming out of the hole throws a circle on the wall. This lasts longer.

He should focus his attention on that light circle, reflecting on it again and again as 'āloka, āloka' or 'light, light.' Here the acquired sign is like the light-circle thrown on the wall or on the ground. The counter sign is like a clear and compact bright cluster of lights. The rest is as before.

● The Limited-Space Kasīṇa (*Ākāsa Kasīṇa*)

Of the limited-space kasīṇa (*paricchinnākāsa*) it is said in the Commentaries: "One who is learning the space kasīṇa apprehends the sign in space which is in the form of a hole in a wall, or a keyhole, or a window opening."

So when a meditator has merit, having had previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees any space in the form of a hole in a wall, etc.

Anyone else without merit, having had no previous practice, should make a hole a span and four fingers broad in a well-thatched hut, or in a piece of leather, or in a rush mat, and so on.

He should focus his attention on that hole or a hole in a wall, reflecting on it again and again as 'ākāsa, ākāsa' or 'space, space'. Here the acquired sign resembles the hole together with parts of the wall which surrounds and delimits the hole. If the meditator wants to extend it, he will fail as it cannot be extended.

The counter sign appears only as a circle of space. This sign can be extended in all directions. The rest should be understood as described under the earth kasīṇa.

● General Description

He with Ten Powers, who all-things did see,
 Tells ten kasinas, each of which can be
 The cause of fourfold and fivefold jhāna,
 The fine-material sphere's own master key.
 Now knowing their descriptions and the way
 To tackle each and how they are developed,
 There are some further points that will repay
 Study, each with its special part to play.

The Blessed one is endowed with Ten Unique Powers. He did see all things vividly in their true perspective. He describes the ten kasinās which serve as powerful meditation subjects for developing fourfold and fivefold rūpāvacara jhānas. The exalted wholesome kammās derived from these rūpāvacara jhānas condition rebirths in the fine-material sphere.

Moreover, each kasina has its own characteristic and a special part to play. Since the method for developing each kasina has been described, any interested person can make use of it to develop fourfold or fivefold rūpāvacara jhānas. Then he can go on developing the four arūpāvacara jhānas.

When one is successful in developing all rūpāvacara jhānas and all arūpāvacara jhānas in all kasinās, he can go on practising in fourteen special ways as instructed by the Buddha to make his mind very skilful and powerful. Then he will be able to develop five worldly supernormal knowledges called *Abhiññā* by means of which he can display various supernormal powers. Here also each kasina has a special part to play.

The earth kasina is the basis for such powers as 'having been one, he becomes many' (*D.i, 78*) etc., and walking or standing or sitting in space or on water by creating earth, and so on.

The water kasina is the basis for such powers as diving into the earth and emerging out of the earth (*D.i, 78*), causing rain to fall, creating rivers and seas, making the earth, rocks and palaces quake (*M i, 253*).

The fire kasina is the basis for such powers as causing smokes

and flames to arise, causing showers of embers, destroying others' powers by one's power, causing to burn only what one wants to burn (*S.iv,290*), causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with divine eye, burning up the body by means of the fire element at the time of attaining Nibbāna (*MA.iv,196*).

The air kasīna is the basis for such powers as going with the speed of the wind, causing wind storms, etc.

The blue kasīna is the basis for such powers as creating black forms, causing darkness, attainment of jhāna by observing very pure colour kasīnas such as nīla kasīna, etc.

The yellow kasīna is the basis for such powers as creating yellow forms, making resolution (*adittthāna*) that something shall be gold (just as Ven. Pilindavaccha made the resolution to turn a grass circular frame for keeping round-bottomed pots in place and King Bimbisāra's many-tiered, spire-like roof into gold, (*S.i, 166*), attainment of jhāna by observing very pure colour kasīnas, etc.

The red kasīna is the basis for such powers as creating red forms, acquisition of the bases of mastery (*abhibhā-yatana*), attainment of jhāna by observing very pure colour kasīnas, etc.

The white kasīna is the basis for such powers as creating white forms, banishing sloth and torpor, dispelling darkness, causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with the divine eye.

The light kasīna is the basis for such powers as creating luminous forms, banishing sloth and torpor, dispelling darkness, causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with the divine eye.

The space kasīna is the basis for such powers as revealing the hidden, maintaining postures inside the earth and rocks by creating space inside them, travelling unobstructed through walls, and so on.

● Practical Reflection on Kasīnas

Nowadays the practical reflection on kasīnas is being demonstrated at the International Buddha Sāsana Centres, also known as Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres, in Myanmar.

Kasinas are, however, not the first choice for developing concentration for persons without merit, that is without practice in kasina meditation in past existences. It would normally take a relatively long time to develop jhāna concentration based on a kasina. So Ānāpānassati (mindfulness of breathing) is usually the first choice in many meditation centres to develop concentration.

In Pa-uk Forest Meditation Centres also, Ānāpānassati is taught first to develop concentration up to the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna. Then the meditators are taught how to undertake the four guardian meditations (*Caturārakkha kammaṭṭhānas*) correctly to attain all the benefits of these meditation subjects. Then they are guided to undertake insight meditation (*vipassanā*). Only when they have satisfactorily completed the insight meditations, are they taught how to develop all the ten kasinas, one after another, to reach the four rūpāvacara jhānas by the fourfold (*catukka*) method. With the powerful support of the Ānāpānassati fourth jhāna, meditators can usually develop each kasina fully in a day.

Besides, it is not necessary to prepare the kasinas specifically. For developing the pathavī kasina, the teacher draws a big circle, about four feet in diameter, on a patch of earth which is cleared from pieces of wood, grass, pebbles, etc. The meditator is asked to develop the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in Ānāpānassati that he had already attained, emerge from the jhāna, and look at the earth circle from a suitable distance, reflecting 'pathavī, pathavī' repeatedly.

Now a person with high concentration has excellent memory, something like photographic memory. So he has to focus his attention on the earth circle just for a few minutes to attain the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) of the pathavī kasina. He can then go to the meditation hall, develop the acquired sign to the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), enlarge it indefinitely in all directions, and develop the first, second, third and fourth rūpāvacara jhānas as described earlier. He can usually complete this meditation in a day.

Next, for developing the āpo kasina, the meditator, after emerging from the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna of Ānāpānassati, is asked to look at the water in a well, reflecting 'āpo, āpo' repeatedly. Again

after reflecting for a few minutes, he attains the acquired sign of āpo kasīna. He can go to the meditation hall and calmly develop the counter sign and the four rūpāvacara jhānas as before.

To develop the tejo kasīna, the meditator is asked to look at the middle part of a wood fire in the kitchen through a hole in a pot. He can see a circle of fire and reflects on it 'tejo, tejo' repeatedly. Soon he attains the acquired sign. He goes to the meditation hall and calmly develops the counter sign and the four rūpāvacara jhānas as before.

Now, for developing the vāyo kasīna, the meditator sits or stands in the open air, focusing his attention on the breeze that touches his cheek, reflecting 'vāyo, vāyo' repeatedly. After attaining the acquired sign in the wind (vāyo), he can develop it to the counter sign and then go on developing the four rūpāvacara jhānas as before.

To develop the nīla kasīna, the meditator, after emerging from the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna of ānāpānassati, looks at the head hair of a meditator sitting in front of him in the meditation hall with closed eyes. A person with high concentration can see external objects as well as the internal organs of a person with closed eyes, that is, with his concentrated mind eye, with the help of the bright, penetrative light radiated from the mind. He should focus his attention on the black colour of the hair, reflecting 'nīla, nīla' repeatedly. After attaining the acquired sign, he can develop it to the counter sign and continue developing the four rūpāvacara jhānas as before.

To develop the acquired sign in pīta kasīna, the meditator, after emerging from the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna, should focus his attention on the yellow colour of the fat or urine of the person in front of him in the meditation hall. To develop the acquired sign of lohita kasīna, he should focus his attention on the red colour of the blood of the person in front of him. To develop odāta kasīna, he should reflect on the white colour of the skull of that person.

To develop the acquired sign of ākāsa kasīna, he should focus his attention on the limited space, that is seen on looking out to the sky through a hole in a wall. For developing the acquired sign of

āloka kasina, he should look at the rising or setting sun at the height of a palm tree, concentrating his attention on the light radiated from the sun.

After attaining the acquired sign of each kasina, he can go to the meditation hall and develop the counter sign and the four rūpāvacara jhānas as before.

After the meditator has successfully developed the four rūpāvacara jhānas in all the ten kasinas, he is taught to develop the four arūpāvacara jhānas as well, based on each kasina. He is then guided to practise in fourteen ways, developing the jhānas in various ways based on the ten kasinas as described in the Buddhist Canon in order to develop supernatural powers (*abhiññās*).

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Review Questions

1. How can one prepare and develop 'āpo kasina' to attain all the rūpāvacara jhānas?
2. Describe the three stages of tranquillity meditation, using āpo kasina as an example.
3. How can one reflect on tejo kasina or vāyo kasina to attain all the four rūpāvacara jhānas?

- 4 What are the colour kasīnas? How can they be used to develop rūpāvacara jhānas?
- 5 What objects can be used as odāta kasīna? How should this kasīna be practised to reach meditative absorption?
- 6 How should one practise 'āloka kasīna'? How does the meditation sign arise? What are the particular benefits of this kasīna meditation?
- 7 How should one undertake 'ākāsa kasīna' meditation?
- 8 What are the special benefits of each kasīna meditation?
- 9 Describe how each kasīna has its special part to play?
- 10 How can a person, who has already attained the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in ānāpānassati, practise pathavī kasīna or āpo kasīna to attain its full benefits?
- 11 With the powerful support of the fourth jhāna concentration of ānāpānassati, how can one practise nīla kāsīna or odāta kāsīna to reach meditative absorption quickly?
- 12 Should we undertake kasīna meditations nowadays? What benefits shall we attain from such meditations?
- 13 Why should we develop the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in white kasīna meditation after attaining the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in Ānāpānassati? How should we do it?
- 14 How should we practise to attain supernormal powers called 'Abhiññās'?

CHAPTER IX
THE IMMATERIAL STATES
(*Āruppas*)

1 *Ākāsānañcāyatana* Jhāna

One who wants to develop the first arūpa-jhāna called *ākāsānañcāyatana* jhāna first sees in gross physical matter danger through the wielding of sticks, etc., because of the words; "It is on account of matter that wielding of sticks, wielding of knives, quarrels, brawls, and disputes take place; but these do not exist at all in the immaterial plane." He also sees danger in physical matter too through the thousand afflictions beginning with eye disease, ear disease, etc.

So he enters upon the way to develop dispassion and disgust for material things and to bring about the fading away and cessation of physical matter (*M.i, 410*). In order to surmount that physical matter, he enters upon the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in any one of the nine *kaṣiṇas* beginning with the earth *kaṣiṇa* and omitting the limited-space *kaṣiṇa*, that is, *ākāsa kaṣiṇa*.

Now although he has already surmounted gross physical matter by means of the fourth jhāna of the fine-material sphere, nevertheless he still wants also to surmount the *kaṣiṇa* materiality, that is, the counter sign of *kaṣiṇa*, since it is the counter part of the gross physical matter of *kaṣiṇa*. Why is it so?

Suppose a timid man is pursued by a snake in a forest. He flees from the snake as fast as he can. Then he sees in the place he has fled to a palm leaf with black and yellow stripes or creeper or a rope or a crack in the ground that resembles the snake. He is fearful, anxious and will not even look at it. So frightened and terrified is he!

Suppose again a man is dwelling in a village together with an enemy who oppresses him and does him harm. Being threatened by the enemy with a flogging and the burning down of his house,

he goes away to live in another village. Then if he meets another man there of similar appearance, voice, and manner, he is frightened and terrified, and he will not even look at him.

Here is the application of the similes. The time when the meditator has the gross physical matter as his object is like the time when the men were respectively threatened by the snake and by the enemy. The time when the yogī surmounts the gross physical matter by developing the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna is like the first man's fleeing as fast as he can and the other man's going away to another village. The yogī's observing the counter sign of kasīna as the counter part of that gross physical matter and his wanting to surmount that also is like the first man's seeing the palm leaf with black and yellow stripes, etc., and the second man's seeing the man who resembled his enemy, and their unwillingness to look owing to fear and anxiety.

So when he has thus become disgusted with the kasīna materiality and wants to get away from it, he achieves mastery in five ways with respect to the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna.

Then on emerging from the now familiar fourth jhāna, he sees the danger in it in this way: "This jhāna has as its object the materiality with which I have become disgusted, and it has bliss (*somanassa*) as its near enemy. This jhāna is grosser than arūpāvacara jhāna which is known as 'peaceful liberation'.

The fourth rūpāvacara jhāna cannot be said to be grosser than arūpāvacara jhāna because of jhāna factors since they possess the same jhāna factors – upekkhā and ekaggatā.

When he sees the disadvantages in the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna as described earlier, he cuts off his attachment to it. He gives his attention to the sphere of infinite space as calm and infinite. He extends the counter sign to the limits of the world-system as much as he desires, and removes the sign by giving his attention to the space touched by the counter sign as "space, space; infinite space."

When he is removing the counter sign, he neither folds it up like a mat nor withdraws it like a cake from a tin. It is simply that he does not advert his mind to it or give attention to it or review it but

gives his attention exclusively to the space touched by the sign as 'space, space, infinite space.' This is conceptualized as the mere space, left by the removal of the *kaṣiṇa nimitta*. When his mild attachment to the counter sign disappears, the *nimitta* also disappears unfolding infinite space.

He adverts again and again to the sign of space left by the removal of *kaṣiṇa nimitta* as 'space, space' and strikes it with applied thought and special thought. As he strives so again and again, the hindrances are suppressed, mindfulness is established, and his mind becomes concentrated in access.

He cultivates that sign of space again and again, develops and repeatedly practises it. As he again and again adverts to it and gives attention to it in this way, *ākāsānañcāyatana kusala citta* (*kiriya citta* for Arahants) arises in absorption with the infinite space as its object.

2. Viññānañcāyatana Jhāna

If the meditator wants to develop the second *arūpāvacara kusala citta* called *viññānañcāyatana kusala jhāna*, he must first achieve mastery in five ways with respect to *ākāsānañcāyatana kusala jhāna*. Then he should see the danger in this *jhāna* thus: "This *ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna* attainment has *rūpāvacara jhāna* as its near enemy, and it is not as peaceful as *viññānañcāyatana jhāna*."

So he cuts off his attachment to *ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna*, and gives his attention to *viññānañcāyatana jhāna* as peaceful. He then adverts again and again to the consciousness (*ākāsānañcāyatana kusala citta*) that occurred pervading the infinite space as its object. He gives his attention to it and reflects upon it as '*viññānam, viññānam*' or 'consciousness, consciousness.' He should strike at it repeatedly with applied thought, sustained thought, and special thought. He should not, however, give attention as '*anantam, anantam*' or 'infinite, infinite.'

As he directs his mind again and again onto that sign of *ākāsānañcāyatana kusala citta* in this way, the hindrances are suppressed, mindfulness is established, and his mind becomes concentrated in access.

He cultivates that sign of *viññāna* again and again, develops it, and repeatedly practises it. As he again and again adverts to it and gives attention to it in this way, *viññānañcāyatana kusala citta* arises in absorption with the past consciousness that pervaded the space as its object.

3. *Ākiñcaññāyatana Jhāna*

Then, if the meditator wants to develop the third *arūpāvacara kusala citta* called *Ākiñcaññāyatana kusala jhāna*, he must first achieve mastery in five ways with respect to *viññānañcāyatana kusala jhāna*. He should next see the danger in this *jhāna* thus: "This *viññānañcāyatana jhāna* attainment has *ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna* as its near enemy, and it is not as peaceful as *ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna*."

Having seen the fault thus, he cuts off his attachment to *viññānañcāyatana jhāna*, and gives his attention to *ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna* as peaceful. He should give attention to the present non-existence, voidness, secluded aspect, of that same past consciousness (*ākāsānañcāyatana kusala citta*) which became the object of *viññānañcāyatana kusala citta*. How does he do this?

Without giving attention to that consciousness, he should now advert again and again to 'nothingness' in this way: 'There is nothing, there is nothing' or 'void, void' or 'secluded, secluded.' He attends to it, reflects on it, and strikes it with applied thought and special thought.

As he directs his mind to that sign thus, the hindrances are suppressed, mindfulness is established, and his mind becomes concentrated in access. He cultivates that sign of nothingness again and again, develops it, and repeatedly practises it. As he does so, *ākiñcaññāyatana kusala citta* arises in absorption, making its object the void, secluded, non-existent state of *ākāsānañcāyatana kusala citta* which occurred in pervading infinite space.

4. *N'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana Jhāna*

Then, if the meditator wants to develop the fourth *arūpāvacara kusala citta* called *N'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana kusala jhāna*, he must first achieve mastery in five ways with respect to *ākiñcaññāyatana*

kusala jhāna. He should next see the danger in this jhāna thus: "This ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna attainment has viññānañcāyatana jhāna as its near enemy, and it is not as peaceful as n'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna" or in this way: "Perception is a disease, perception is a boil, perception is a dart, --- this is peaceful, this is sublime, that is to say, neither perception nor non-perception." (*M.ii, 231*).

Having seen the fault thus, he cuts off his attachment to ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna, and gives his attention to n'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna as peaceful. He should advert again and again to the attainment of ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna that has occurred making the perception of nothingness its object, adverting to it as 'peaceful, peaceful.' He should give his attention to it, reflect on it, and strike it with applied thought and special thought.

As he directs his mind again and again to that sign of the past ākiñcaññāyatana kusala citta in this way, the hindrances are suppressed, mindfulness is established, and his mind becomes concentrated in access.

He cultivates that sign again and again, develops it, and repeatedly practises it. As he does so, n'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana kusala citta arises in absorption, making its object the four mental aggregates of ākiñcaññāyatana kusala jhāna. He practises on to achieve mastery in five ways with respect to this n'evasaññā-nāsaññāyatana kusala jhāna.

The fourth immaterial attainment has reached a state of extreme subtlety. The word meaning here is this: that jhāna with its associated states neither has perception nor has no perception because of the absence of gross perception and presence of subtle perception, thus it is 'neither-perception-nor-non-perception (n'evasaññā-nāsaññānān).

Mixed Description

The four arūpāvacara attainments arise by surmounting sense objects. The first arūpāvacara jhāna arises by surmounting signs of materiality, the second by surmounting space, the third by surmounting the consciousness which occurred with that space as its object, and the fourth by surmounting the non-existence of the consciousness

which occurred with that space as its object.

The wise do not admit any surmounting of jhāna factors; for there is no surmounting of factors in them as there is in the case of fine-material sphere attainment, i.e. rūpāvacara jhānas.

● The Power of Concentration

When the mind is well concentrated, it is associated with intense joy and bliss and it becomes very powerful. It radiated very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light, the mediator is able to see objects far away as well as the internal organs of his body and other people's bodies.

If he can develop the eight absorption attainments in all the ten kasinās, he can also practise in fourteen ways as described below to develop five mundane supernormal powers. If he can exert the effort rightly, that concentration meditation (*samādhi bhāvanā*) will give rise to supernormal powers as its benefit and will become very firm, stable and more advanced. He can then more easily perfect the development of understanding.

● Five Mundane Supernormal Powers

In order to show the benefits of developing concentration and to teach progressively refined Dhamma, the Exalted One describes the five kinds of mundane supernormal power or direct knowledge.

1. *Iddhividha Abhiññāna* – powers of creating forms, flying through the air, walking on water, diving into the earth, etc.
2. *Dibbasota Abhiññāna* – Divine ear or clairaudience which enables one to hear subtle or coarse sounds far or near,
3. *Cetopariya Abhiññāna* – Power of penetrating the mind of others to discern their thoughts,
4. *Pubbenivāsānussati Abhiññāna* – Knowledge of recollecting past existences,
5. *Dibbacakkhu Abhiññāna* – Divine Eye or clairvoyance, which sees subtle, coarse or hidden things,

far or near in all 31 planes of existence.

“*Dibbacakkhu Abhiññāna*” is also known as “*Cutūpapāta-nāna*”, that is, the knowledge of seeing the passing away of beings and the reappearance of beings.

Dibbacakkhu Abhiññāna can be extended to include the following two supernormal powers:

- (1) *Yathākammūpaga-nāna* – the power of knowing the kamma which gives rise to each living being,
- (2) *Anāgatamsañāna* – the power of knowing future existences and future worlds.

Development of Supernormal Powers

The meditator who wants to develop supernormal powers must achieve the eight absorption attainments in each of the eight kasīnas ending with the white kasīna. He must also practise to have complete control of the mind in the following fourteen ways.

1. *Kasiṇānuloma* – in the order of the kasīnas

The meditator develops any one of the four rūpāvacara jhānas in the earth kasīna, after that in the water kasīna, and so on progressing through the eight kasīnas, doing so a hundred times, or even a thousand times.

2. *Kasiṇa paṭiloma* – in the reverse order of the kasīnas

He develops any one of the four rūpāvacara jhānas in the white kasīna, after that in the red kasīna, and so on progressing through the eight kasīnas in the reverse order, doing so a hundred times, or even a thousand times.

3. *Kasiṇānuloma paṭiloma* – in the forward order and reverse order of the kasīnas

He develops any one of the four rūpāvacara jhānas in the earth kasīna through the white kasīna, and then in the white kasīna through the earth kasīna in forward and reverse order again and again.

4. *Jhānānuloma* – in the order of the jhānas

He develops the first rūpāvacāra jhāna, after that the second rūpāvacāra jhāna, and so on progressing through the eight jhānas up to the jhānas of neither perception nor non-perception in each kaṣiṇa, doing so a hundred times, or even a thousand times.

5. *Jhāna paṭiloma* – in the reverse order of the jhānas

He develops nevaṣaṇṇā nāsaṇṇāyatana jhāna, after that ākiṇcaṇṇāyatana jhāna, and so on progressing in the reverse order up to the first rūpāvacāra jhāna in each kaṣiṇa, doing so a hundred times, or even a thousand times.

6. *Jhānānuloma paṭiloma* – in the forward and reverse order of the jhānas

He develops the jhānas in forward and reverse order, from the first rūpāvacāra jhāna up to nevaṣaṇṇā-nāsaṇṇāyatana jhāna and from nevaṣaṇṇā-nāsaṇṇāyatana jhāna back to the first rūpāvacāra jhāna in each kaṣiṇa again and again.

7. *Jhānukkāntika* – Skipping the jhānas

He skips alternate jhānas without skipping the kaṣiṇas in the following way: having first attained the first rūpāvacāra jhāna in the earth kaṣiṇa, he attains the third rūpāvacāra jhāna in the earth kaṣiṇa, he attains the third rūpāvacāra jhāna in the same kaṣiṇa, and then, having removed the kaṣiṇa, he attains ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna, after that ākiṇcaṇṇāyatana jhāna. He repeats with the water kaṣiṇa and the remaining kaṣiṇas in the same way.

8. *Kaṣiṇukkāntika* – Skipping the kaṣiṇas

He skips alternate kaṣiṇas without skipping jhānas in the following way: having attained the first jhāna in the earth kaṣiṇa, he again attains that same jhāna in the fire kaṣiṇa and then in the blue kaṣiṇa and then in the red kaṣiṇa. He repeats with the second jhāna, the third jhāna, etc.

9. *Jhāna-kaṣiṇukkāntika* – Skipping jhānas and kaṣiṇas

He skips both jhānas and kaṣiṇas in the following way: having developed the first rūpāvacāra jhāna in the earth kaṣiṇa, he next developed the third rūpāvacāra jhāna in the fire kaṣiṇa, next,

ākāsānañcaññāyatana jhāna after removing the blue kasīna. He repeats in the same way skipping the alternate jhānas as well as the alternate kasīnas.

10. *Āngasañkantika* – transcending the jhāna factors

He develops the first jhāna in the earth kasīna, and then develops the other jhānas in the same earth kasīna, transcending the jhāna factors.

11. *Ārammaṇa sañkantika* – transcending sense objects

He develops the first rūpāvacara jhāna in the earth kasīna, and then the same first jhāna in other kasīnas, i.e. in the water kasīna up to the white kasīna. He repeats by developing the second rūpāvacara jhāna and other jhānas in turn in the same way.

12. *Āngārammaṇa sañkantika* – transcending both jhāna factors and sense objects

He attains the first rūpāvacara jhāna in the earth kasīna, the second jhāna in the water kasīna, the third jhāna in the fire kasīna, the fourth jhāna in the air kasīna, ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna by removing the blue kasīna, viññānañcāyatana jhāna from the red kasīna, and nevasaññānāsaññāyatana jhāna from the white kasīna.

13. *Āngāvavathāpana* – defining jhāna factors

He defines the first rūpāvacara jhāna as five-factored, the second jhāna as three-factored, the third jhāna as two-factored, and likewise the fourth jhāna, ākāsānañcāyatana jhāna, viññānañcāyatana jhāna, ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna, and nevasaññānāsaññāyatana jhāna as two-factored.

14. *Ārammaṇa vavathāpana* – defining the sense objects

He defines only the objects as “This object is the earth kasīna;” “This object is the water kasīna;” — “This object is the white kasīna”.

Then if he wishes to become a hundred, he does the preliminary work after emerging from the basic fourth rūpāvacara jhāna, with the intention ‘Let me become a hundred, let me become a hundred’. After that he again develops the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna, as basis for direct knowledge, emerges from the jhāna, and resolves, ‘Let me be a hundred’. He become a hundred simultaneously

with the resolving consciousness. The same method applies for developing other supernormal powers.

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2. *"Visudhimagga"* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Mahāsi Sayādaw, Vol.II, pp.507-550.
3. *"The Path of Purification"* (Visuddhimagga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated into English by Bhikkhu Nānamoli, pp. 354-371.

Review Questions

1. After attaining the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in pathavī-kasina meditation, how should a meditator proceed to attain the first arūpāvacara jhāna?
2. After attaining ākāśānañcāyatana kusala jhāna how should a meditator proceed to attain viññānañcāyatana kusala jhāna?
3. How should a meditator, who has attained the second arūpāvacara jhāna, meditate in order to develop the third arūpāvacara jhāna?
4. Suppose you have attained ākiñcaññāyatana kusala jhāna. How will you strive on to attain nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana kusala jhāna?
5. What is the significance of nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana jhāna attainment? How can one acquire this jhāna attainment?
6. Describe the five mundane supernormal powers briefly.
7. After developing the eight jhāna attainments in ten kāsina, how should one practise to develop supernormal power?
8. Describe the seven mundane supernormal powers. How can a meditator develop these supernormal powers?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A.** Aṅguttara Nikāya
AA. Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
D. Dīgha Nikāya
DA. Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
Dh. Dhammapada
DhA. Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
Dhs. Dhammasaṅgaṇī
Iti. Itivuttaka
Jā. Jātaka
M. Majjhima Nikāya
MA. Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Nd1. Mahā Niddeśa
Nd2. Cūḷa Niddeśa
Ps. Paṭisambhidāmagga
PsA. Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā
S. Sāmyutta Nikāya
SA. Sāmyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Sn. Sutta-nipāta
SnA. Sutta-nipāta Aṭṭhakathā
Ud. Udāna
Vbh. Vibhaṅga
VbhA. Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā
Vin.i. Vinaya Piṭaka (3) - Mahāvagga
Vin.ii Vinaya Piṭaka (4) - Cūlavagga
Vin.iii. Vinaya Piṭaka (1) - Suttavibhaṅga 1
Vin.iv. Vinaya Piṭaka (2) - Suttavibhaṅga 2
Vin.v. Vinaya Piṭaka (5) - Parivāra
Vis. Visuddhimagga

● **Treasure Books written in English**
by **Dr. Mehm Tin Mon**

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