



Beautifying the
MIND

The Buddha's Teachings on Effort

Sayādaw U Paṇḍita

With the observance of morality and the purification of the mind, one gains three forms of culture: one's physical behaviour will be beautiful, one's verbal behaviour will be beautiful, and one's mental behaviour will be beautiful. This is beautifying oneself. Out of the effort exerted in the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, mindfulness and concentration arise, and with concentration the mind will be purified of mental impurities. With every noting, one's mind will be purified of the obsessive defilements, and as a result the mind becomes cultured, refined, no longer wild. This is loveable. With the observance of morality (*sīla*), one's physical and verbal behaviour will also be free from fault, clean, pure and cultured. Body, speech and mind thus become cultured and one gains three forms of culture. This is beautifying oneself. With one noting, one beautifies oneself once, with two notings, one beautifies oneself twice. If one notes and observes continuously, body, speech and mind will be continuously beautiful. People very much like beauty. The *satipaṭṭhāna* practice very much suits people who like beauty. So, make effort in beautifying yourselves.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sayādaw U Paṇḍita entered a monastery in a remote village in Burma at the age of seven, and progressed to become renowned as one of the outstanding teachers in the tradition of Mahāsi Sayādaw, famed for reviving and developing a rigorous meditation technique found in ancient texts.

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MIND

The Buddha's Teachings on Effort

Sayādaw U Paṇḍita

transcription by

Sayālay Daw Bhadda Manika

translated and edited by

Bhikkhu Vivekānanda

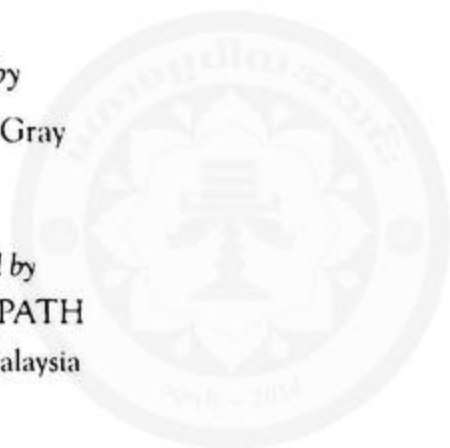
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THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS ON EFFORT



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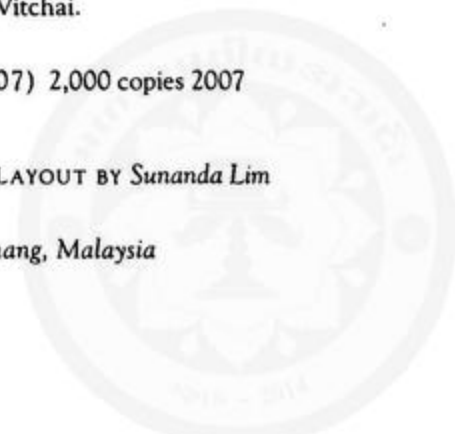
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FOREWORD

Effort is a vital theme in the Buddha's teachings on mental development. Many passages from the TĪPIṬAKA account for this. In a masterly manner the Venerable Sayādaw U Paṇḍitabhivaṃsa of Myanmar has knit the relevant teachings into an inspiring presentation drawn from the Buddhist canon. The Venerable Sayādaw is an exemplary manifestation of someone who consistently applies heroic effort. Even at the age of eighty he is still travelling far and wide throughout the year to teach insight meditation and spread the Dhamma. This book is based on a series of talks given during an insight meditation retreat conducted at the Paṇḍitārāma Vipassanā Meditation Centre, Lumbini, Nepal, in February 2000. The talks were delivered to a mixed audience of Western meditators and a larger group of Newari Buddhists from the Kathmandu valley, some

of whom would be direct descendants of the Sakyamuni clan of the Buddha.

The talks contain reference to both groups as the Venerable Sayādaw endeavours to encourage the individual meditators in their practice.

May the power of effort propel you towards the peace of nibbāna.

Bhikkhu Vivekānanda
Lumbini, Nepal



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Grateful thanks to Sayālay Daw Bhadda Manika for her help with the transcription of the Burmese language tapes.

Thanks also to the Venerable Dr Lam and Mr Huynh Ang Dung for generously allowing us to use the computer facilities at the Vietnamese Temple, Lumbini in preparing the early drafts of this manuscript.

We would also like to acknowledge with deep gratitude all those who selflessly donated their time and energies to organizing and running the meditation retreat in Lumbini at which the talks presented in this book were first given.



EDITOR'S NOTE

As anyone who has attended a retreat led by Sayādaw U Paṇḍita will know, the discourses he delivers are very thorough, solid, and based closely on the scriptures, particularly on the sutta texts. The talks are also sprinkled liberally with Pāḷi words and phrases, used by the Venerable Sayādaw in his zeal to convey the accurate meaning of the texts. We have tried to retain as many of the most commonly used Pāḷi terms as possible to the same purpose. Except where these are necessary to the understanding of the text, they are generally given in parentheses to avoid interrupting the flow. Frequently, the Pāḷi term is repeated along with its English translation to capture the spirit of Sayādaw's talks. For ease of readability, we have used the English forms for pluralisation.

To cater to the widest readership, we have assumed only a basic knowledge of the Dhamma

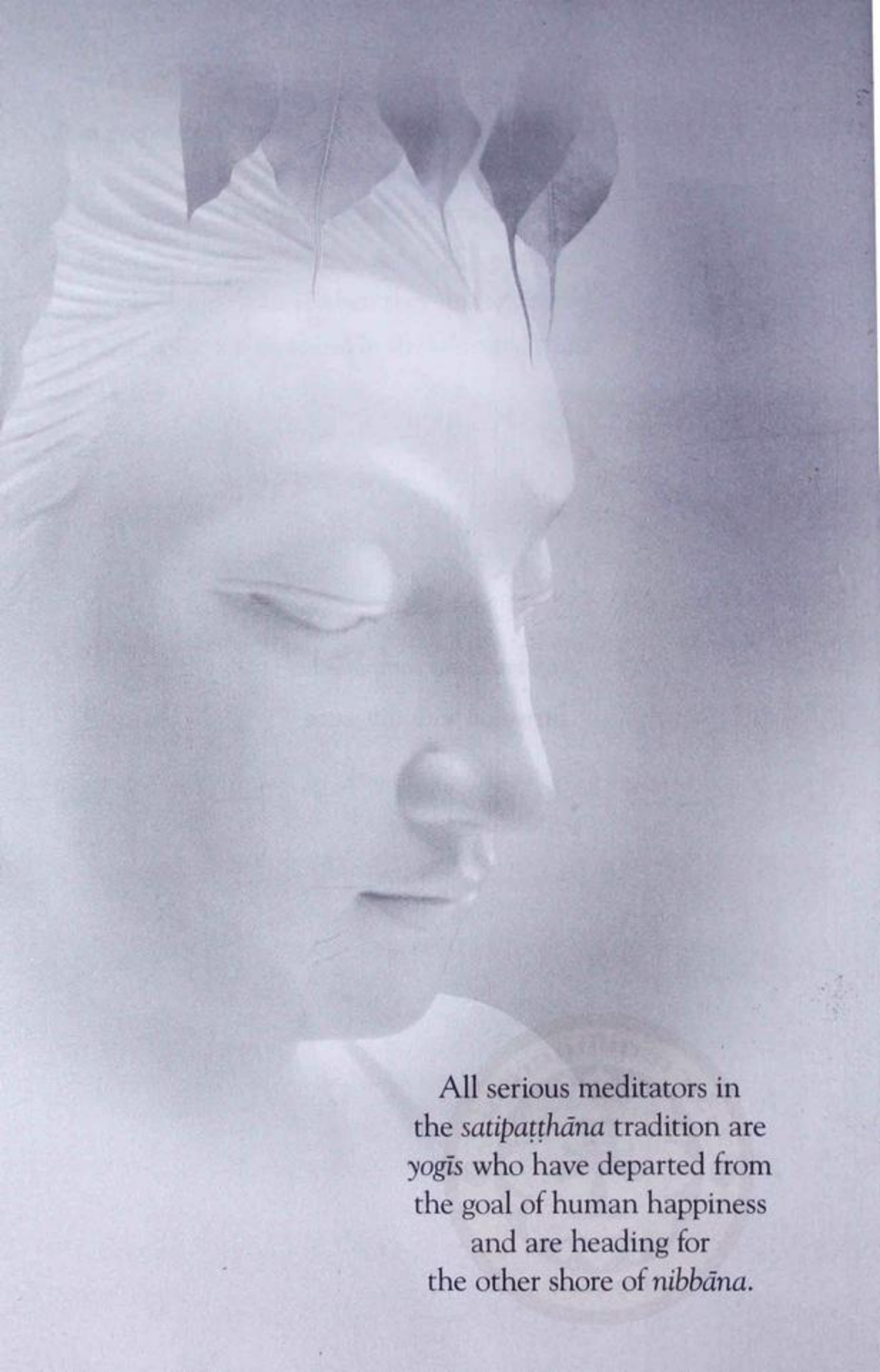
in preparing the text. Thus Dhamma words and phrases which may be new to the reader are explained by the use of footnotes to the text when they first appear. Likewise, Pāli words are italicised and defined when they first appear. Definitions can be found in the Glossary, pages 123-136.



Appamādena sampādetha

Strive on with diligence





All serious meditators in
the *satipaṭṭhāna* tradition are
yogīs who have departed from
the goal of human happiness
and are heading for
the other shore of *nibbāna*.

CHAPTER ONE

.....

What is a Yogī?

From the time one enters a meditation retreat, takes refuge in the Triple Gem¹, observes the Eight Precepts², and receives instructions in meditation, one becomes a *yogī*. Everyone attending a *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation retreat, including monks and nuns, novices, laymen and laywomen, is a *yogī*. Still we need to define what a *yogī* is. What does a *yogī* have to do? What are the benefits of being a *yogī*? Such questions will be dealt with in the forthcoming Dhamma talks.

The word 'yogī' is a Pāḷi compound word consisting of two parts: *yoga* and *i*. The word 'yoga' means 'effort', and the word 'i', 'possessor' or 'owner'. Thus the meaning of the compound 'yogī' is 'possessor of effort'. This effort is of three degrees or levels:

1. *ārambha dhātu* : initial or launching effort
2. *nikkama dhātu* : stepped up or boosted effort
3. *parakkama dhātu* : culminating effort with
which the goal is reached.

1 *Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.*

2 The eight trainings in morality which one undertakes to observe during a meditation retreat: not to kill, not to take what is not given, not to indulge in sexual activity, not to lie, not to take intoxicants, not to take food after noon, not to indulge in entertainments or adorning or perfuming one's body, not to sleep on a high or luxurious bed.

A person who strives to possess these three levels of effort is called a true *yogī*. However, it is necessary not to confound the term ‘*yogī*’ as used here with the term used to describe the practitioner of Hindu *yoga*. In the physical aspect of Hindu *yoga*, the body is trained for health, and in the spiritual aspect, *samatha*, the objective is to gain the *jhānas*.³ The Buddhist interpretation of the word ‘*yoga*’ is quite different from the Hindu interpretation. It does not place emphasis on the body, and its spiritual aspect is not limited to *samatha* practice only. The Buddha’s *yoga* will be explained in the course of these talks.

The essence of Buddhist *yoga* practice is mental courage or effort, ‘*virīya*’. One needs to possess the four supreme efforts (*sammappadhānā*):

- The courage to avoid unwholesome deeds from arising (*saṃvara padhānā*)
- The courage to overcome unwholesomeness that has arisen (*pahāna padhānā*)
- The courage to develop wholesomeness that has not yet arisen (*bhāvanā padhānā*)
- The courage to maintain wholesomeness that has already arisen (*anurakkhaṇa padhānā*)

The fourfold supreme effort has a single essence, namely that of exertion or effort (*virīya*). It performs, however, four different functions. Unfortunately, quite a number of people do not know

3 *Jhāna* is a Pāli word meaning absorption. The *jhānas* are generally taken to mean the states of absorption generated during intensive meditation practice. There are four of these according to the SUTTANTA, and five according to the ABHIDHAMMA.

the difference between wholesome and unwholesome deeds. Furthermore, many people, do not understand that wholesome deeds give rise to wholesome results, and unwholesome deeds give rise to unwholesome results. Not understanding, they do not know how to summon the courage to avoid unwholesomeness. Nor do they know how to summon the courage to perform wholesomeness.

The Buddha teaches that we need to nourish the courage to avoid unwholesomeness and develop courageous effort to perform wholesome deeds. With launching effort does a *yogī* come to a meditation retreat centre, leaving behind his or her family and business affairs, loved and dear ones. But this kind of courageous effort is not enough. The effort to prevent the defilements from entering the stream of consciousness has to be aroused from the beginning, and such effort is called '*ārambha dhātu*'. This is the courageous effort not to let defilements arise in the mind, and the constant effort to nurture wholesome mental states. The possessor of such kind of initial effort is called a '*yogī*'.

Most people give importance only to personal happiness and family happiness. In pursuit of personal happiness and sufficiency to meet their needs, for example for food, people endure much suffering, even risking their bodies and lives. For these ends people have a great deal of courage. They can withstand heat, cold, mental stress and lack of sleep. Thus for their present existence, people often have much courage. But when it comes to working towards freedom from the cycle of

existence (*saṃsāra*), especially freedom from the danger of falling into states of loss (*apāya*), and when it comes to avoiding unwholesomeness, performing wholesome deeds, and giving up sensual pleasures for the sake of spiritual happiness, then most people are not so courageous. Only when one has the courage to give up sensual pleasures and worldly happiness can one make the heroic effort required to accomplish an assured happiness. People who are serious enough about their meditation practice to go on short or long-term retreat demonstrate such courage.

Mental Courage

The word '*virīya*' is defined in Pāḷi as *vīrassa bhāvo viriyam*, meaning the state of a courageous, energetic person. It is the courage to give up unassured, worldly happiness and to go in pursuit of a genuine, assured happiness which many times exceeds worldly happiness. '*Vīra*' means 'hero' or 'heroic person', that is, a person who has the courage to give up unassured happiness, and reach for the assured kind of happiness; '*bhāvo*' means 'state of'; and '*virīya*' means mental courage. People who possess good *virīya* are not satisfied with the ordinary kind of worldly happiness. They know that a genuine, assured type of happiness exists, and will willingly give up worldly happiness and exert effort to gain this assured happiness. Implied here is that this work is not for the cowardly, but rather for the brave and courageous. According to the scriptures, it is the way of the energetic. The serious meditator fulfils this definition, and this is praiseworthy.

All serious meditators in the *satipaṭṭhāna* tradition are *yogīs* who have departed from the goal of human happiness and are heading for the other shore of *nibbāna*. Courageous effort inspires such *yogīs* to go on retreats. Courage makes them avoid unwholesomeness and perform wholesome deeds. Moreover, having become a human being and having met with the Buddha *sāsana* (the Buddha's teachings), the *yogī* brings along the effort that is required to observe morality, deepen concentration and cultivate wisdom. Such effort brings the *yogī* to a meditation retreat centre, where he or she can plant and nurture this initial, launching effort.

Method of Practice

In order to nurture one's effort, one first needs to know the method of practice. When sitting, one should sit with legs crossed or kneeling, keeping the back upright and focusing the mind on the abdomen. Bend the legs and keep the upper part of the body straight, at right angles to the ground. Why do we focus the mind on the abdomen? In order to know the true nature of the rising and falling movement, which becomes possible when the mind is concentrated to some degree. Breathe in and out naturally and fix the mind on the movements of the abdomen.

Breathe normally, not forcing your breathing, neither slowing it down nor hastening it, just taking a natural breath. As you breathe in and the abdomen rises, as you breathe out and the abdomen falls, aim and fix the mind on to the abdominal movements. Aiming and aligning the mind with the

meditation object in this way is a jhanic factor⁴. The nature of fixing the mind is to exert effort in following the object. As the rising and falling movements occur, exert effort and follow the movements. Formal walking meditation is an integral part of the training in mindfulness. Do the walking meditation as slowly and as mindfully as possible. Divide each step into three steps, namely the lifting of the foot, the forward movement of the foot and the placing of the foot. Aim and send the mind towards the respective movement of the foot and try to know the predominant sensations. Such effort exerted in the sitting and walking meditation is called initial, nurturing effort (*ārambha dhātu*).

Nurturing Effort

Just as a sapling has to be nurtured and guarded, so too effort in one's meditation practice has to be nurtured and guarded so that it will succeed in becoming fruitful. Such application or exertion of initial effort is called *yoga*, and making this effort leads to the arising of energy in the *yogī*.

Practically speaking, the nature of applying effort is to propel the mind towards the meditation object. In other words, effort (*virīya*) permits the noting and observing mind to reach the

4 The *jhānas* are characterised by the presence of up to five mental factors, known as jhanic factors. These are: *vitakka* (aiming), *vicāra* (rubbing), *pīti* (rapture or delight), *sukha* (happiness), and *samādhi* (concentration). Only concentration (*samādhi*) is characteristic of all the *jhānas*. The first *jhāna* includes all five jhanic factors, though with the attainment of the successive *jhānas*, different factors fall away. Thus according to the ABHIDHAMMA, *vitakka* (aiming) falls away in the second *jhāna*, *vicāra* (rubbing) in the third, *pīti* (joy and rapture) in the fourth, and *sukha* (happiness) in the fifth, *sukha* being replaced by *upekkhā* (equanimity) in the fifth *jhāna*.

rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Because of the propelling power of effort, the mind lands on the object. Exerting effort and propelling the mind so that it lands on every rising and falling movement is called courageous, initial effort. What are the benefits of such exertion of effort? Simply put, effort (*virīya*) dispels unwholesomeness and develops wholesomeness. When effort enters the stream of consciousness second by second, the mind will be free from cloudy, unwholesome mental states and as a result clear and wholesome mental states will arise second by second. These are the qualities of *virīya*.

Not exerting effort in this way, one does not expend energy but stops short and draws back. This amounts to *thīna*, sloth or slothfulness. Not wanting to expend energy and instead withdrawing from such high level practice is always a danger. The exhaustion of energy that can arise in even contemplating this wholesome, high level practice and the tiredness that can arise when one actually does the practice is called *middha* in Pāli, meaning torpor. These two unwholesome mental states, sloth and torpor, usually arise in parallel (*thīna-middha*), and are also referred to as '*kosajja*', laziness. When such laziness overwhelms the mind, much unwholesomeness arises. It is as if one gives unwholesomeness permission to arise. However, when one courageously exerts effort so that the mind lands on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, then there is no more non-exertion of effort or withdrawal, no more exhaustion of energy or tiredness. *Thīna-middha* and the unwholesome mental states that come along with it then have no chance of arising,

and can be boldly avoided and dispelled. Instead, wholesome mental states following the exertion of effort (*virīya*) have the opportunity to arise.

May you all be genuine *yogīs* in the Buddhist sense of the term. May you possess the effort to dispel unwholesomeness and to develop wholesomeness.



CHAPTER TWO

.....

Vitakka and Viriya

A yogi is a possessor of effort. The term 'yoga' means effort or exertion and can be equated with the Pāli term, 'viriya'. This *viriya* is of three kinds: launching effort (*ārambha dhātu*); stepped-up or boosted effort (*nikkama dhātu*); and culminating effort with which the goal is reached (*parakkama dhātu*). At the beginning of the practice, only *ārambha dhātu* is likely to arise. First, one has to make the effort to find out how to practise *satipaṭṭhāna*, how to note the primary object of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, and how to note and observe during sitting and walking meditation generally. This can be compared to the planting of a seed and the nurturing of the sapling that arises. Such initial effort is called *ārambha dhātu*.

In terms of sitting meditation, making such initial effort means focusing the mind on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen as they occur. The tension, stiffness and motion that may be noticed during the rising and falling movements are due to the air element. To know the true nature of the air element as it presents itself, we need to send the mind towards the meditation object, the rising and falling. When sending the

mind towards the object, 'yoga' or 'virīya' is very important. It has the nature of exerting effort. When we practise meditation it is *virīya* with which the noting and observing mind is sent towards the target of observation. Thus, *virīya* has the nature of sending, pushing. And with this pushing force, the mind reaches the object.

Effort alone, however, is not enough. Proper aiming or focusing is also required, so that the mind reaches the object squarely. For this purpose, *vitakka*, aiming, is needed. 'Vitakka' has the nature of aiming, focusing and pointing at. The term 'vitakka' applies to absorption meditation, or *jhāna* meditation. Because *vitakka* is a jhanic factor, it needs to be further qualified as a concentrated form of aiming or focusing, 'concentrated aiming'. Thus, when the rising movement of the abdomen occurs, one needs to aim or focus the noting and observing mind on the rising movement, and one also needs to be concentrated. When the falling movement of the abdomen occurs, one has to squarely aim or focus the noting and observing mind likewise on the falling movement in a concentrated manner.

The two mental factors of *vitakka* and *virīya* have to be present in every rising and falling movement, without missing even for a second. Both factors are very important. If one aims at the object and also exerts effort, then the mind will fall squarely on the rising and falling movements and mindfulness will arise. The operation of these factors can be compared to piercing a chunk of food with a fork during a meal. One needs to aim the fork at the chunk of food and also exert effort. Without effort,

the fork will not reach the chunk of food. With too much effort, the fork will slip off the chunk of food. Aiming is also necessary so that the fork neither falls short of nor overshoots the chunk of food. If there is proper aiming and exertion of effort, the fork will pierce the chunk of food, and it can then be brought to the mouth.

Benefits of Aiming and Effort

Let us consider the benefits of the presence of aiming and effort, and the disadvantages of their absence. When aiming and effort are present, the noting and observing mind will catch the object of observation. However, when aiming and effort are absent or lacking, the noting and observing mind will either miss the object altogether, or slip off it, and one will end up thinking about something else. People of this sense-sphere realm¹ will tend to become occupied with sense objects. When coming across a pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste, touch impression or thought, a desire for the pleasant object will arise. This is the hindrance of sense desire (*kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*), which is basically a form of greed, wanting, or passion (*lobha*). This hindrance of sense desire arises when one comes across an object of one's liking and then thinks about it. It is also called *kāma vitakka*², sensuous thought. In a similar way, when one encounters a dissatisfying or displeasing object, then dissatisfaction, ill-will,

1 The texts define three spheres of existence: the sensory sphere (*kāmvācāra*), the fine-material sphere (*rūpivācāra*), and the immaterial sphere (*arūpivācāra*).

2 *Vitakka* translates literally as thought or thought conception. Śaṅkara U' Pandita prefers the translation of 'aiming' in the context of *satipatthāna* practice, since here 'aiming' is more precise.

anger, annoyance or aversion (*byāpāda*³) may arise. This is called *byāpāda vitakka*, hateful thought. When hatred (*dosa*) arises, one may entertain thoughts of wanting to destroy or kill others. If one's *dosa* does not develop to this stage, one may want to give trouble to others. This is called *vihiṃsā vitakka*, thoughts of cruelty. If proper aiming is lacking in the observation of an object, the mind will slip off it, and instead sensuous, hateful, or cruel thoughts will arise in its place. When such thoughts arise, they tend to pollute the mind and also cause it to shrink and become weak and tender. These mental states have to be dispelled and removed.

With proper aiming, one is free from the three forms of wrongful thought (*micchā vitakka*) in that instant. The mind is pure, and it will not be small, weak, or tender. These are no small benefits. If effort (*virīya*) is involved in noting a meditation object, the mind will not accept the mental defilements. Thus *virīya* acts to dispel or remove unwholesome mental states, and this removal happens in two ways: 1. by avoiding, and 2. by expelling. Removal by avoiding means not giving unwholesome mental states the opportunity to arise. If an unwholesome mental state has already arisen, however, it needs to be removed by expulsion. When effort (*virīya*) is present, then unwholesome mental states have no chance to arise, and the mental defilements will be avoided or not accepted. The great benefit of not accepting unwholesome mental states is that the

3 Alternative spelling *vyāpāda*.

road towards wholesome mental states opens up. The mind will be pure, clean and free from mental impurities. As this happens, increasingly, pure, clean mental states gradually develop, and this is known as *bhāvanā*, or mental development.

Mental Development

There are two forms of aiming (*vitakka*), namely *sammā vitakka* and *micchā vitakka*. If, because of proper aiming, the mind is free from the three forms of wrongful thought (*micchā vitakka*), then such aiming qualifies as *sammā vitakka*, or right aiming. This *sammā vitakka* is tantamount to *sammā saṅkappa*, or right thought, which is one of the path factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. The courageous effort involved in noting an object of observation is another path factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. Thus, when we note and observe an object of observation with aiming and effort, the path factors of right aiming (*sammā saṅkappa*) and right effort (*sammā vāyāma*) are involved.⁴ These two path factors should be present in one's stream of consciousness, and should be encouraged to develop. When one aims and exerts effort once in noting and observing an object, then *sammā saṅkappa* and *sammā vāyāma* are present once. When one aims and exerts effort once every second, then 60 moments of right aiming and right effort are present in each minute.

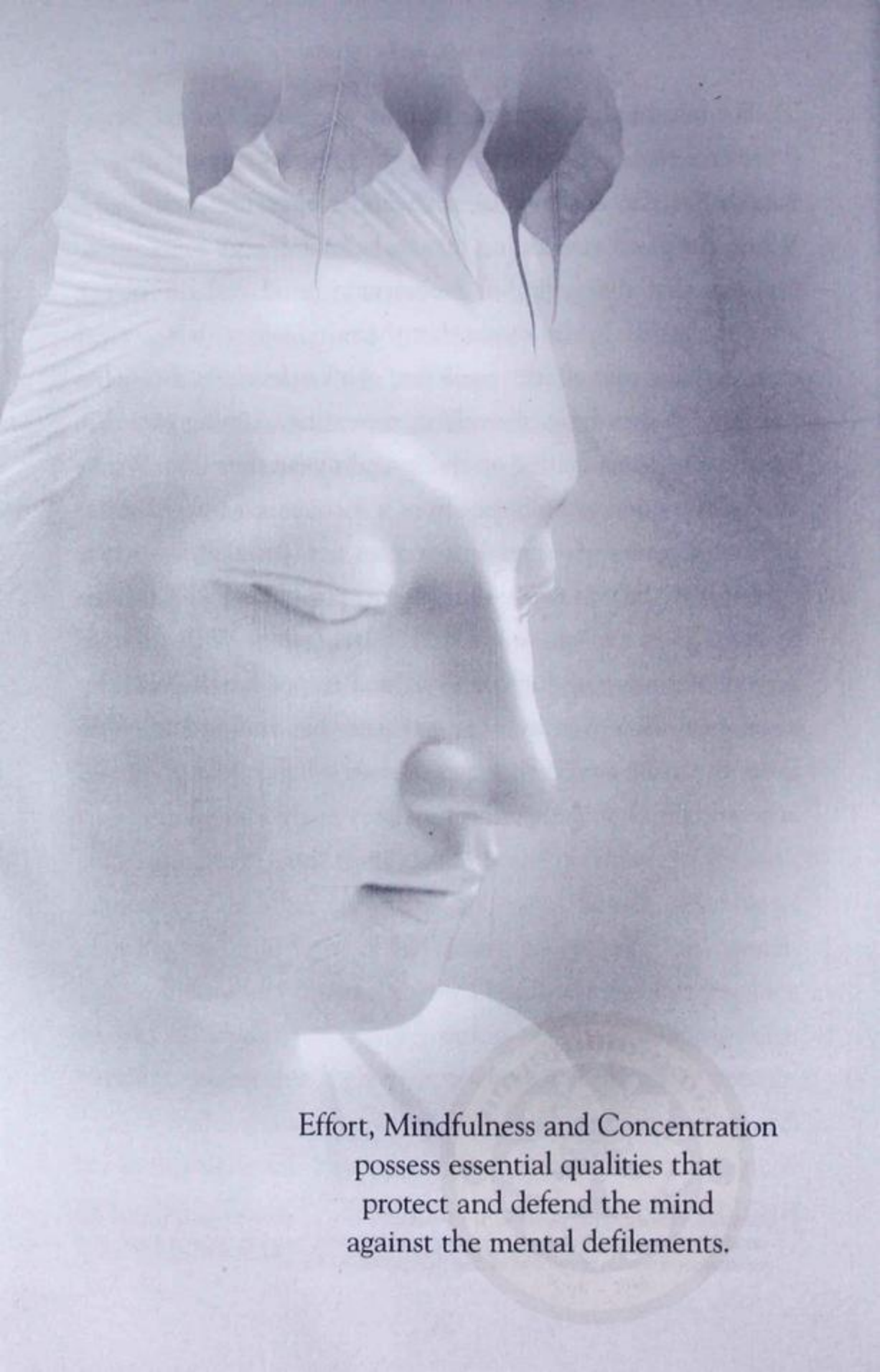
4 *Saṅkappa* and *vāyāma* are synonymous with *vitakka* and *virīya*, respectively, though the former are used conventionally in the context of the Noble Eightfold Path and the latter in the context of the *jhānas*.

The initial effort (*ārambha dhātu*) required to propel the mind towards the rising and falling of the abdomen and other objects is not just ordinary effort, but has the qualities of firmness and promptness. Exerting such effort can be compared to applying heat to a stick of solid butter, which will melt in the process. By contrast, applying cold to a stick of butter will cause it to congeal and become thick and hard. When firm and prompt effort is applied, mental states such as exhaustion and tiredness, which are comparable to the thick and hard conditions of cold butter, are avoided. Sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*) either do not enter the stream of consciousness, or if they momentarily enter the stream of consciousness, the meditator can dispel them by stepping up his or her effort. This is highly commendable.

The arising of *thīna-middha* in beginning meditators can be very fast. People of a lazy disposition will not even think of undertaking meditation practice. Or if they do, they will not practise with courage or without concern for body or life. Meditators who possess the three levels of effort (*virīya*) will practise courageously, without fear of aches and pains, and with the sole objective of realising the true form of happiness. In an effortful manner, they will note and observe arising objects without missing for a second. Whatever the posture: sitting, standing, walking, lying, bending, or stretching, exertion of effort will always be present. Thus mindfulness will be continuous, and as a result there will be no unwillingness to expend energy, withdrawal of energy, or exhaustion of energy. Thus the mind will not be thick, hard and lazy, but instead active, alert and clear-cut.

For any hindrance to meditation, there is a mental factor that can overpower and supersede the hindrance. Thus aiming (*vitakka*) is the antidote to sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*).⁵ When the head is nodding due to lack of energy or laziness, it shows that the noting and observing mind and the object are not aligned. It also shows that the mind is not alert, active, clear-cut, and that effort is weak and of a low level. At this point the mind is shrinking, shrivelling, retreating. Aiming (*vitakka*) has the nature of opening up and spreading out the mind. When aiming the mind at an object from a shrunken, withered state, the mind opens up, spreads, becomes active. Likewise, when applying the heat of *virīya*, sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*) have to leave; they can no longer stick to the mind. With the two powers of aiming and effort, sloth and torpor are dispelled by avoidance. Moreover, in every moment that aiming and effort arise, the associated higher mental states (*adhikusala citta*) also arise and develop quite automatically.

5 Likewise, concentration (*samādhi*) is the antidote to sense desire, rapture (*pīti*) is the antidote to aversion, happiness or comfort (*sukha*) is the antidote to restlessness, and continuous attention or rubbing (*vicāra*) the antidote to doubt.



Effort, Mindfulness and Concentration
possess essential qualities that
protect and defend the mind
against the mental defilements.

CHAPTER THREE

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Developing Wholesomeness

When we begin to meditate, we need to possess initial or launching effort (*ārambha dhātu*), i.e. the effort to note and observe all arising objects, starting with the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. *Ārambha dhātu* has the nature of propelling the noting and observing mind towards the object of observation. This effort should not be listless and slack, but urgent, active, alert and decisive. The effort or power arises from one's own stream of consciousness, and thus one owns it. If one has 60 moments of effort in a minute, one possesses launching effort 60 times; in five minutes one possesses launching effort 300 times; in one hour one possesses launching effort 3,600 times; thus in a day one can possess many thousands of moments of launching effort. Such meditators are called 'yogīs'.

With continuous effort, unwholesomeness will be removed or dispelled. 'Removed' in this sense means that unwholesomeness is not given the chance or the space to arise. In other words, unwholesomeness is not accepted. Unwholesomeness, as the term indicates, is flawed, not good. Removing the flawed, unbeneficial unwholesomeness, what arises instead? Pure,

wholesome Dhamma arises. Among the mental factors arising in association with effort (*virīya*), ordinary or excessive greed (*lobha*) is not included, nor is ordinary or excessive ill-will or anger (*dosa*). As meditation progresses, knowledge will arise, and ordinary and excessive delusion, ignorance and bewilderment (*moha*) will not arise. When the three roots of all unwholesomeness: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), are absent, then other unwholesome mental factors based on greed, hatred and delusion will not arise. What arises instead? *Alobha* (non-greed), the opposite of *lobha* (greed); *adosa* (non-hatred), the opposite of hatred; and *amoha* (knowledge), the opposite of delusion (*moha*). This is how wholesome mental states arise. As much as effort (*virīya*) arises, wholesomeness arises. With one moment of effort a second, there will be 60 moments of pure, clean wholesomeness arising in a minute, and 3,600 moments of wholesomeness in an hour.

Higher Wholesomeness

In intensive meditation practice, groups of wholesome mental states arise one after another in association with *virīya*. When such a group of associated mental states arises, then sense desire, namely wanting to see, wanting to hear, wanting to smell, taste, touch or think, does not arise. Dissatisfaction (*dosa*) does not arise either. Other impurities do not arise at all. This means that unwholesomeness is dispelled. The wholesomeness that arises is not of an ordinary type; it is wholesomeness that exceeds ordinary wholesomeness. Ordinary wholesomeness (*kusala*) is the type

that arises when performing acts of generosity (*dāna*), paying homage to the Buddha (*vandanā*), or doing voluntary service (*veyyāvaccā*). However, such wholesomeness is often performed with the expectation of worldly results. Higher wholesomeness (*adhikusala*), which exceeds ordinary wholesomeness, needs to be cultivated by meditation practice and thus increased. This kind of development is called *bhāvanā*.

Let us discern the important mental factors present in 'adhikusala', or higher wholesomeness. Because of making effort and sending the noting and observing mind towards the object of observation, mindfulness (*sati*) arises. As one sends the mind towards the rising or falling movement of the abdomen, the mind sticks and adheres to the movement. This is mindfulness. As one sends the mind towards other arising objects and the mind lands on those targets of observation and sticks, adheres, mindfulness arises. Moreover, as one consistently notes an object moment by moment, the mind penetrates that object and so-called momentary concentration, *khanika samādhi*, arises. Thus mindfulness arises and concentration arises. Mindfulness and concentration arise because of making effort (*virīya*) and all three are clear, pure mental states (*adhikusala*). Second by second these wholesome mental states arise, increase, develop and strengthen, the mind becomes clearer and clearer, and faith and confidence (*saddhā*) arises. As the mind becomes free from impurities it becomes clear. This kind of development is called *bhāvanā*.

Training in Concentration

With the exertion of effort, mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) arise simultaneously. If one sends the mind towards an object of observation with effort (*virīya*), then there will be consistent, mindful awareness of the object of observation (*sati*), and the mind will fall concentratedly on the object (*samādhi*). The three mental factors, of *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* are known as *samādhi sāsana*, or *samādhikkhandha*, the concentration group of the Noble Eightfold Path¹, while training in concentration is referred to as *samādhi sikkhā*. As one becomes established in *samādhi sikkhā*, one develops the *sāsana* (i.e. the Buddha's teachings) within oneself. Because the concentration group of *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* calm and suppress the mental impurities of lust (*rāga*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), they are also collectively called *samatha*. With one moment of noting and observation, lust, ill-will and delusion will be calmed once. With two moments of noting and observation, lust, ill-will and delusion will be calmed twice.

Effort, mindfulness and concentration possess essential qualities that protect and defend the mind against the mental defilements. Effort (*virīya*) removes the mental defilements and opens the road for the arising of wholesomeness. Mindfulness (*sati*) protects against mental defilements entering into the

1 The eight links of the Noble Eightfold Path fall into three groups: the wisdom group, consisting of right view (*sammā ditṭhi*) and right thought (*sammā sankappa*, synonymous with *vitakka*); the morality group, consisting of right speech (*sammā vāca*), right action (*sammā kammanta*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājiva*); and the concentration group, consisting of right effort (*sammā vāyāma*, synonymous with *virīya*), right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) and right concentration (*sammā samādhi*).

stream of consciousness; concentration (*samādhi*) suppresses the mental defilements. In being protected against lust, ill-will and delusion, the mind is secure. If there is good protection, there is good security. If there is security, there is deliverance from the bondage of *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*. This deliverance is called *vimutti*. When there is freedom from bondage there is peace (*santi*), and that peace is a cause for genuine happiness (*sukha*). Concentration unifies and collects the mind, and fixes it on an object, and as a result the mind will not be agitated, nor filled with worries. How good this is! The individual qualities of effort, mindfulness and concentration are very good. Effort, mindfulness and concentration together are a very powerful force.

When one considers the qualities of these three mental forces, it is evident that they are extremely beneficial. When one also considers the other wholesome mental states arising in association with effort, mindfulness and concentration, then there are even more benefits. In one minute we gain these benefits 60 times. Effort, mindfulness and concentration increase second by second. If we ask ourselves, 'Is this mind blameworthy or free from blame?' we must admit that it is free from blame, clean, and pure. If the mind is clean and cultivated, then it becomes a mind of a high and noble standard. How good this is! Furthermore, such a mind is peaceful and loveable. These are the immediate and subsequent benefits of effort, and this is referred to in the Pāli language as *bhāvanāya*, meaning the cultivation of higher wholesomeness (*adhikusala*) by the practice of meditation, i.e. the cultivation of dhammas that lead to prosperity.

When one exerts effort towards this end one becomes a *yogī*. That is, any meditator, whether monastic or lay, who is developing the mind from a small and tender condition to a high and noble condition is a *yogī*. With this we have obtained the answer to our initial questions: What is a *yogī*? What are the qualities of a *yogī*? What are the benefits of being a *yogī*? Only when making effort to align the mind and the object of observation, and to propel the mind towards the object with the objective of developing the mind, is one a *yogī*. It follows that if one does not exert effort one is not a *yogī*. Not exerting effort for one second, one is not a *yogī* for that second. Not exerting effort for five minutes one loses the status of a *yogī* for five minutes. Only when one notes and observes without missing for a moment is one a *yogī*. Not making effort, one is a *yogī* in name only. A true *yogī* needs to make consistent effort in noting and observing arising objects, without gaps, whether sitting, walking, standing, lying down, bending, stretching, lifting, moving, placing, whatever. For the mind to reach the arising object there always needs to be a propelling force. In addition, for the mind to align with the object of observation there always needs to be aiming. When there is aiming and effort, then mindfulness and concentration are bound to arise. This is certain. When these two mental forces arise, the benefits of mental development (*bhāvanā*) will arise automatically.

Mental Nourishment

People do not generally forget to take food when the body is hungry, nor nutriment when the body is weak, nor do they forget to take medicine when the body is sick. By contrast, people generally do forget to provide the mind with what it requires: they forget to nourish the mind when it needs nourishment, and they forget to develop the mind from a small and tender state to a high and mature state. Occasionally, when they remember, they will give the mind some nourishment, but they will not do so in a regular, satisfactory and effective manner, and as a result the mind becomes smaller and smaller, weaker and weaker, and more and more tender. The mind in its original, undeveloped state will be influenced by mental defilements which have accumulated over many existences: simple unknowing and wrong knowing (*avijja*), and thirst or craving for pleasant objects (*taṇhā*). Since ignorance (*avijja*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are always present in the mind and since they are not being dispelled, the mind becomes smaller and smaller: it is not developed and strong, but instead it is tender.

If one does not shape the mind with *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, the mind will gradually become smaller and more tender. Like a baby that needs to be given milk and other nourishment at the appropriate age and time to make it strong and resistant to diseases, the mind needs to be provided with vital nutrients in the form of tranquility practice (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*) for the mental development which is *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*. Only then will the mind grow and become strong.

Without this mental nourishment, the mind will remain young and tender even though the body grows older. Such a mind will be much distressed by the eight worldly conditions (*lokadhammā*) — gain and loss, honour and dishonour, blame and praise, happiness and suffering.



*The ABC
of Satipaṭṭhāna*

A *yogī* is a person who exerts launching effort, who then steps up the effort, and who possesses culminating effort with which the goal is reached. With such effort, higher wholesomeness (*adhikusala*) is aroused, increased, developed and strengthened in the stream of consciousness. It is said that one needs to practise meditation to arouse the higher wholesome mental states in one's stream of consciousness, and that when these wholesome mental states have arisen one gains the corresponding benefits. To put it another way, one needs to practise meditation to arouse the mental states that should be aroused, i.e. faith and confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. If these mental factors do not yet exist in one's stream of consciousness they need to be aroused. If they are arising, they need to be increased and strengthened. Only then is one a *yogī*. If, on the other hand, one does not hold the objective of broadening and strengthening the mind and no effort is made, then one is not a *yogī*. When a meditator talks, gazes, nods or daydreams, then he or she is not a *yogī*. The meaning is very clear. From what has been said so far you will

understand what you need to do to be a real *yogī*. You will also understand what the immediate benefits of being a *yogī* are.

For effort to become strong, courageous and consistently present, two further mental factors are required: *saddhā*, faith and confidence and *chanda*, a desire to practise. As for *saddhā*, what should we have faith and confidence in? Fundamentally, we need to have faith in the benefits that should be developed, increased and strengthened with the meditation practice. We have to have faith in the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice itself.

Seven Benefits of Satipaṭṭhāna

If we steadily walk the *satipaṭṭhāna* path, consistently noting and observing objects as they arise in the present, we can gain seven benefits. These we have to study and understand to some extent beforehand.

The first benefit is purification of the mind (*sattānaṃ visuddhiyā*). Most people's minds are polluted by lust (*rāga*), ill-will (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), pride and conceit (*māna*), jealousy (*issā*), and many other impurities. Such mental impurities arise the whole day long and give rise to suffering. The Buddha has given the assurance that the *satipaṭṭhāna* path is the one and only path leading to purification of the mind, and that if one follows this path the mind will be purified. This is the first benefit. The second benefit is the overcoming of sorrow (*soka*), meaning that one can be free from sorrow. The third benefit is the overcoming of lamentation (*parideva*). The fourth benefit is the destruction of physical suffering (*dukkha*), the

fifth, the destruction of mental distress (*domanassa*). The sixth benefit is the entering of the right path. The seventh benefit is the realisation of *nibbāna*. These are the seven benefits, as boldly declared by the Buddha. No one beside the Buddha ever preached like this.

When one understands the seven benefits of *satipaṭṭhāna*, one realises that this is no minor work, and one develops confidence in it. Faith and confidence awaken, and with this a strong desire to gain the benefits. The stronger the desire to gain the benefits of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the stronger the effort exerted. To encourage effort, it is helpful to know the benefits of *satipaṭṭhāna* and to have confidence in it and a strong desire to undertake the practice. In other words, sprouting effort (*virīya*) will be nourished by faith and confidence (*saddhā*), and the desire to practise (*chanda*), and will grow stronger day by day.

Beautifying Oneself

When the mind sticks to an object and does not go anywhere else, that mind is concentrated and thus united and protected from mental pollutants. Looking at the mind at this point, one can see that lust, ill-will, ignorance, jealousy and so on, are no longer present. Gradually, with practice, the mind becomes stronger and purer, more and more free from unwholesome mental states. With the daily observance of morality, or *sīla*, i.e. the eight precepts for laypeople on a meditation retreat or the monastic vows for monks and nuns, one's physical and verbal behaviour will also be free from fault and thus pure and clean,

and the gross or transgressive defilements¹ will be appeased. When the transgressive defilements are thus calmed, both action and speech become refined, gentle, cultured and loveable. Thus, one will be loved by the wise and one will also like oneself.

With the observance of morality and the purification of the mind, one gains three forms of culture: one's physical behaviour will be beautiful, one's verbal behaviour will be beautiful, and one's mental behaviour will be beautiful. This is beautifying oneself. Out of the effort exerted in the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, mindfulness and concentration arise, and with concentration the mind will be purified of mental impurities. With every noting, one's mind will be purified of the obsessive defilements, and as a result the mind becomes cultured, refined, no longer wild. This is loveable. With the observance of morality (*sīla*), one's physical and verbal behaviour will also be free from fault, clean, pure and cultured. Body, speech and mind thus become cultured and one gains three forms of culture. This is beautifying oneself. With one noting, one beautifies oneself once, with two notings, one beautifies oneself twice. If one notes and observes continuously, body, speech and mind will be continuously beautiful. People very much like beauty. The *satipaṭṭhāna* practice very much suits people who like beauty. So, make effort in beautifying yourselves.

1 Mental defilements or torments, in Pāli termed *kilesas*, are of three kinds: transgressive, obsessive and latent or dormant. Defilements of transgression manifest as actions that violate the basic precepts: lying, stealing, killing and so on. Defilements of obsession may not involve outward immoral action, occurring at a mental level only. Latent defilements lay hidden, waiting for the right conditions to become activated in the mind.

Practising Restraint

When thus beautifying body, speech and mind without missing for a second, one needs to pay attention to being free from disturbances. This means having control of the senses, for example, not looking here and there without controlling the eyes. Thus, even though a meditator may possess good eyesight, he or she should act like a blind person. Likewise, a meditator should act like a deaf person, not reflecting, commenting on or judging the sounds he or she may hear. A meditator should not listen to sounds and, in hearing, should pretend not to understand them. Also to minimise disturbance, silence should be diligently practised during a meditation retreat. Chatting and talking here and there is tantamount to destroying the beauty of the *satipatthana* practice, and amounts to disrespect for the practice. One should not act like this.

Restraint also extends into other areas. For instance, although a meditator may have a good deal of learning, he or she should put away all this knowledge during a meditation retreat, and should act like an ignorant person who does not know much. Further, although a meditator may be strong, he or she should act like a weak and frail person. When getting up, sitting down, bending, stretching, or going here or there, he or she should not move in a rapid manner, but slowly and with great care, like a hospital patient suffering from a back injury. Only when moving slowly will one be able to note and observe arising objects without omission. When unpleasant sensations arise, one should note and observe with especial determination

and patience. In the face of aches and pains, a meditator should be like a corpse, completely oblivious to these painful sensations. In this way, one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour will become free from impurities, cleaner and purer, and will tend to be more beautiful.

So, make effort not to destroy your beauty, and avoid behaviours that may destroy your beauty!



Samatha and Vipassanā

B*hāvanā* is the development of the mind so that it becomes expansive, high, noble and pure, and so that insight knowledges can arise and mature. There are two forms of *bhāvanā*:

1. *samatha bhāvanā* and
2. *vipassanā bhāvanā*,

Samatha Bhāvanā

In *samatha bhāvanā*, the mind is fixed on a single object. Likewise in loving kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*), compassion meditation (*karuṇā bhāvanā*), and so forth, which are types of *samatha* practice. Similarly, meditators who practise *satipaṭṭhāna* (mindfulness) aim and send the mind towards the primary object, in our case, the rising and falling of the abdomen, or other prominent meditation objects. As much as the noting and observing mind then falls squarely on the object of observation, effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) arise, and this we call *samatha bhāvanā*.

How does *samatha bhāvanā* arise in *satipaṭṭhāna* practitioners, for instance during sitting practice? The rising movement takes place, the falling movement takes place. For the noting and observing mind to fall on the target of observation one needs to exert effort (*virīya*). When one exerts effort, one catches the rising and falling movements. Like a stone thrown into water that sinks to the bottom, the noting and observing mind sinks into the object of observation. It is not going anywhere else. When one notes consistently, the mind falls in a concentrated manner on the object. At that moment the mind is free from agitation and distraction, and undistracted concentration (*avikkhepa samādhi*) arises. Then there are no impurities; the mind has become calm and stable, termed in Pāli 'samatha', which is synonymous with the term 'samādhi'.

To achieve *samatha*, the help of effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and aiming (*vitakka*) are required. Strictly speaking, aiming (*vitakka*) does not belong to the concentration group, but rather to the wisdom group of the Noble Eightfold Path. Aiming (*vitakka*) is included as a jhanic factor. In meditators who practise *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, the three mental factors of effort, mindfulness and concentration, collectively called *samatha*, arise continuously, second by second, increase and grow. Such right concentration (*sammā samādhi*), which calms and stabilises the mind, is called *samatha bhāvanā*.

The Untrained Mind

Before considering the benefits of the calmness and stability of the mind that comprise 'samatha', let us study the normal condition of the mind. This is best done by studying one's own mind, since one knows this best. The untamed mind is like a monkey in a forest, always on the move, swinging from branch to branch, never still, not even for a second. Just like a monkey, the mind is not calm or stable. People of this sense-sphere realm mostly act on lust (*rāga*), or greed (*lobha*), which manifest as desire: wanting this, wanting that. Under the influence of *lobha*, the mind is always agitated. Not getting what one wants, one becomes angry, disappointed, disheartened, unhappy, dissatisfied — all manifestations of *dosa* (ill-will). When one sees that others are better than oneself: more educated, materially better off, of greater physical beauty, whatever, jealousy (*issā*) arises. When one sees oneself as better than others, more beautiful, better educated, wealthier, of a higher social standing, whatever, pride and conceit (*māna*) arise, and can lead to arrogant behaviour.

These negative mental states, termed *pāpa* in Pāli, are evil, degrading and debased. They are impurities of the mind. When one cultivates such mental states, then mental misconduct (*mano duccharita*) overwhelms the mind. This mental misconduct is of three kinds. The first is covetousness (*abhijjhā*), i.e. unfairly wishing to possess other people's property; misappropriating or taking possession of other people's property forcibly. The second is hatefulness (*byāpāda*), i.e. dissatisfaction, wanting to destroy, kill or give trouble to others, in essence, *dosa*

(ill-will). The third kind of mental misconduct is wrong views (*micchā ditṭhi*), e.g. the nihilistic view that there is nothing after death. Among other wrong views are not understanding that good deeds lead to good results and that bad deeds lead to bad results, or thinking that there are no further existences. Because of such views, one does not perform wholesome deeds during one's present existence, or the wholesome deeds that one does perform are small and insignificant.

In the grip of such mental states, one will not avoid unwholesomeness (*akusala*), but will unhesitatingly carry out all kinds of unwholesome deeds, including killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. This is how physical misconduct (*kāya duccharita*) comes about. Furthermore, one will indulge in false speech, slander, harsh words and meaningless talk — all forms of verbal misconduct (*vacī duccharita*). Non-stop one will commit acts of physical and verbal misconduct, and in this way human culture is destroyed. At the same time mental misconduct proliferates, leading to further physical and verbal misconduct. Thus, one's standard of life will drop in this present existence, and future existences will likewise be of a low standard.

Calming the Mind

When the mind falls concentratedly and steadily on an object of observation, be it the rising or falling movement of the abdomen during sitting meditation, or the lifting, moving or dropping process during walking meditation, or any other arising object; then mental states leading to despicable physical

and verbal behaviour no longer arise. Since these mental states are no longer obstructing the mind, one's behaviour becomes peaceful. Debasing and degrading mental states have the quality of burning the mind. With mindful observation, however, they can no longer even enter the mind, and the mind becomes cool, serene and peaceful. Eventually, mental happiness (*citta sukha*) arises, and when this dominates in the mind, sooner or later it will manifest in the body (*kāya sukha*).

One can study the effects of tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*) in one's own practice. Every time we generate concentration, *samatha bhāvanā* takes place. All we need to do is to aim the mind at the meditation object, exerting appropriate effort so that the mind falls steadily on the object of observation and is free from impurities, calm and peaceful. Then with effort and consistency, note and observe arising objects. Concentration is generated automatically. This spontaneous arising of *samatha*, in turn, forms the basis for the arising of *vipassanā* (insight).

Vipassanā Bhāvanā

The term '*vipassanā*' is a Pāli compound word comprising '*vi*' and '*passanā*'; '*passanā*' meaning 'seeing or knowing', and '*vi*' meaning 'in various modes or ways', i.e. in the modes of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anattā*). Knowledge gained through *vipassanā* practice is called insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*). When one discerns mind and matter, and then progresses to the comprehension of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self, this is the

beginning of insight knowledge. With continued practice, this knowledge gains strength, develops and unfolds stage by stage. This development of insight knowledge is called *vipassanā bhāvanā*, which also translates as insight meditation.

Vipassanā bhāvanā does not require any special technique. When tranquility and calmness of the mind gain strength, then quite automatically we come to understand any meditation object, stage by stage, according to its reality. This understanding is not gained from imagination or reflection, but rather because of the strengthening of concentration gained (*samatha bhāvanā*). Thus quite automatically we come to discern mind from matter, and to understand the cause and effect relationship: how a mental object or phenomenon is the cause of another mental or physical object or phenomenon, which is the effect.

As meditation continues and *samatha bhāvanā* gains strength, we come to understand the characteristic of impermanence of all phenomena (*anicca lakkhaṇa*): they appear and disappear. Furthermore, we come to see that this very appearance and disappearance of objects makes them unsatisfactory (*dukkha lakkhaṇa*), and that unpleasant phenomena in particular have an obvious suffering nature. Ultimately, we come to understand that there is no-one and nothing behind the appearance and disappearance of phenomena: they are related only by cause and effect. Neither do the appearing and disappearing objects themselves have any fixed self essence (*atta*): they are non-self (*anatta lakkhaṇa*), meaning free of a separate self. Things happen on their own accord. Just as the weather keeps changing

according to various natural laws, so it is with the body. Nobody governs the body or mind: there is just cause and effect at work, devoid of a separate self (*atta*). The arising of such knowledge signifies the beginning of the insight knowledges (*vipassanā ñāṇa*).

The Path to Dhamma Prosperity

The development of concentration (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) form a straight path to Dhamma prosperity. Very few is the number of people who pursue this path. Most people are instead preoccupied with providing for themselves and their families. They tend to view human existence as short and limited to one lifetime only. They do not want a high standard of life as a person cultured in action, speech and mind, and thus do not practise morality (*sīla*) or concentration (*samatha*). They do not want a high mind, developed and advanced in insight knowledge, so they do not practise insight meditation (*vipassanā*). Instead, most people spend their time carelessly, being overwhelmed by negligence (*pamāda*). This is very sad. Having gained a human existence, if one passes away without having developed meritorious deeds which give assurance, it amounts to having wasted one's life. Furthermore, if one ends up in a state of loss, it is not easy to regain human birth.

A human being should have enough foresight to undertake a training in morality and the trainings in concentration and wisdom available through practising *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation in order to gain Dhamma prosperity in the form of at least

one path and fruition knowledge.¹ For this, *samatha* practice (*samatha bhāvanā*) alone is not sufficient: it needs to be coupled with *vipassanā* practice (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) to bring it to completion. When one practises either pure *samatha bhāvanā* or *satipaṭṭhāna*, the mental defilements present in one's stream of consciousness are calmed or suppressed, but not uprooted for good. Similarly, when practising *vipassanā bhāvanā*, the mental defilements are temporarily calmed only. However, only the practice of *vipassanā bhāvanā*, either alone or together with *samatha* practice, paves the way for the attainment of noble path and fruition consciousness. If one practises *satipaṭṭhāna* diligently, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom will arise, and both *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā bhāvanā* will come to fulfillment. Only with the attainment of path and fruition knowledge will the mental defilements be successively uprooted and stilled for good.²

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- 1 Knowledge or consciousness of the noble path (*ariya magga*) and noble fruition (*ariya phala*) develops in four stages, also known as the four levels of enlightenment or nibbanic attainment. The first level is that of stream entry (*sotāpatti*), the second that of the once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*), meaning one who will be reborn only once more in the realm of *samsāra*, the third that of the non-returner (*anāgāmi*), and the fourth that of perfection or holiness (*arahatta*).
 - 2 Attainment of noble path consciousness successively uproots the mental defilements or fetters (*saṃyojana*) that bind one to the cycle of existence (*samsāra*). Through the path of stream entry, one becomes free of the first three fetters: personality belief, sceptical doubt, and the belief that rites and rituals alone can lead to purification of the mind. Through the path of the once-returner, one becomes nearly free of the fourth and fifth fetters: sensuous craving and ill-will. Through the path of non-returning, one becomes fully free of the five lower fetters. Through the path of holiness, one becomes free from the five remaining, higher fetters: craving for fine-material existence, craving for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

Stepped-up Effort
(*Nikkama Dhātu*)

People are generally mindful about eating regularly, but tend to be forgetful when it comes to nourishing the mind with mental food. When they do nourish the mind, moreover, they are rather slow and inactive with it. Thus though the body may be well-developed through sufficiency of food, the mind is usually underdeveloped and weak owing to insufficient mental nourishment. The mind will be tender also if no insight knowledges have arisen. Just as a sapling cannot withstand adverse climate conditions such as strong heat or cold until it has grown into a small tree, so it is with the mind. When the mind is nourished by the mental forces of faith and confidence (*saddhā*), effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), it gains strength, and can withstand adverse conditions in the form of lust (*rāga*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). The more insight knowledges arise and mature, the more the mind can withstand the eight worldly conditions (*lokadhammā*). The work of *satipaṭṭhāna* is to provide the mind with the mental forces required to produce mental health and strength, and spiritual resilience. In other words, *satipaṭṭhāna* nourishes the mind with mental food.

Physical nutriment, known as *ojā* or *āhāra* in the Pāli language, has the characteristic of nutritive essence and the potential to create new matter. The nutritive essence (*ojā*) in one's body can be traced back to previous existences; it is in fact conditioned by past wholesome deeds (*kamma-ja ojā* or *kamma-ja āhāra*), and is inherent in the body. This inherent nutritive essence has to be combined with another type of nutritive essence, found in food, which is included in the six tastes attributed to food: sweet, sour, pungent (spicy), salty, bitter and astringent. The nutritive essence from food is equivalent to multivitamins, spread out in the six flavours, which then permeate the body and create new matter, referred to as *āhāra-ja rūpa* or *ojā-ja rūpa*.

Spiritual Nutriments

Just as the body is sustained by physical nutriment (*ojā*), the mind is sustained by a nutritional substance called *dhammojā*. This *dhammojā* is the food of the mind, or spiritual multivitamins. If one supplies the mind with spiritual multivitamins, new mentality miraculously arises, increases and develops. The mind develops away from its small and weak state, and tends to mature in a rather outstanding manner. This happens because spiritual nutriments (*dhammojā*) have entered and spread in the mind, and tend to change it quite distinctively.

Let us consider how food (*āhāra*) influences the body. We need to have good food, pure, clean water and fresh air on a daily basis. These are essential nutrients. When we are hungry or weak, eating food revitalises the system and it gains

strength. When we are withered by thirst and we drink fresh, clean water, the body immediately comes alive and feels fresh. The nutritive essence inherent in the water has an immediate and distinct effect. When we are exposed to polluted air, we end up becoming dizzy, even sick. But when we breathe fresh, clean air, the mind immediately starts to clear. Thus it is quite evident that clean, healthy food, fresh, pure water and fresh, clean air contain nutritive essences which can strengthen and refresh the body. With suitable food, good new materiality arises and develops and one is healthy. With unsuitable food, however, weak and inferior materiality arises and develops, and the body withers and may become sick. People who understand this will pay attention to the development of strong, healthy materiality, and will consequently eat suitable food, drink pure water, and breathe fresh air. They will also avoid unsuitable food, water and air that will cause the body to wither, dehydrate or become diseased. Thus the body will be free from dangers and at ease, and comfort and mental happiness will ensue.

Wholesome mental states have an effect on the mind that is similar to the effect of good food, air and water on the body. To ensure good spiritual nourishment, however, there is a particular difficulty to be overcome. On a physical level, it is only when one takes unsuitable food intentionally that it will cause problems. On a mental level, we do not have to intend to take unwholesome mental food: it arises automatically, that is to say, it already exists in the stream of consciousness and it arises as soon as we cease to be mindful. Thus if we are not completely

mindful, passion or greed (*lobha*) will enter the stream of consciousness as soon as we come across a desirable or enticing sight, sound, smell, taste or touch. Likewise, hatred (*dosa*) will arise whenever we encounter a displeasing or hatred-inducing object. It is the same for other unwholesome mental states such as ignorance (*avijjā*), pride and conceit (*māna*), jealousy (*issā*) and stinginess (*macchariya*). All these are unsuitable food for the mind. However, such unwholesome states will arise even during meditation practice, when one is providing the mind again and again with suitable mental nourishment: here they are referred to as the near internal enemies, or poisons, of the meditator.¹

Overcoming the Near Internal Enemies in Meditation

If we are fortunate enough to meet with a good teacher and get the opportunity to shape the mind and develop wholesome mental qualities, then one quality was said by the Buddha to be particularly important: *atandito*, meaning industriousness, activity, and keenness. This is because in practising *samatha* and *vipassanā bhāvanā* one first needs to tackle the mental poison of *tandito*, meaning laziness or weariness, referred to as *thīna* (sloth) in the ABHIDHAMMA. *Tandito* or *thīna* has the nature of mental withdrawal, making the mind dull, sluggish and lazy. Freedom from *thīna* is called *atandito*, the absence of laziness.

1 The Buddha referred to these poisons as the 'armies of *Māra*'; *Māra* in Pāli meaning 'killer', the personification of evil. For further discourse on this subject see Sayādaw U Paṇḍita's book: 'IN THIS VERY LIFE'.

The mental poison of torpor (*middha*), meaning exhaustion of the mind, usually arises together with sloth (*thīna*), mental sluggishness. *Middha* manifests as sleepiness, drowsiness or nodding. In an activity that is beneficial to oneself, such sleepiness shows a lack of courage tantamount to mental slackness. When the two mental factors of *thīna* and *middha* arise together in our practice, it feels like having an injury: the mind becomes slimy and solidifies. In either case, we need to redouble, or step up, our effort. It is especially important to melt the shrinking, slimy, solid, withered mind of *thīna-middha* with stepped-up effort (*nikkama dhātu*). As a result of determined application of effort (*virīya*) the mind becomes active, fresh. The mental nutriment of effort (*virīya*) is particularly important at the beginning of a meditation retreat when *thīna-middha* tends to attack with full force. Another way of opening up this contracted, withered, sinking state of mind is the application of *vitakka* (aiming), the given antidote to the hindrance of sloth and torpor. Precisely aiming the mind at the object of observation, moment by moment, has the effect of activating and opening it up, so that it is again refreshed.

Development of high-level wholesomeness requires exertion of energy, known in Pāli as *ussāha* or *ussāhana lakkhaṇa*, which is the natural characteristic of *virīya* (effort). *Ussāhana* signifies forbearance in the face of difficulties such as *thīna-middha*. Forbearing difficulties with gritted teeth generates courageous energy. Forbearance in the form of patience is needed in restraining one's food, sleep and speech. Forbearance in the

form of endurance is needed for sitting and walking regularly, and for noting and observing arising objects without missing from second to second. Especially important is the exertion of energy in the face of unbearable sensations arising due to the meditation practice. Exertion of energy is needed at each stage of our meditation practice, when we are required to step up our effort. Exerting energy stage by stage in this way as required, we will succeed in bringing our practice to fulfilment.



CHAPTER SEVEN

.....

Effort

(*Viriya*)

A *yogī* is one who repels the mental defilements that have oppressed him or her throughout the cycle of existence (*saṃsāra*) using the weapons given by the Buddha. Only then is one a true revolutionary. If we do not repel the mental defilements in this existence, then for how many more existences will we be oppressed by them? This only the Buddha can guess.

The mental defilements that can oppress us and cause a great deal of suffering are our nearest internal enemies. Generally people take sleepiness and dizziness for sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*). In fact, *thīna-middha* has the nature of shrinking from a wholesome activity such as meditation, or the nature of energy exhaustion and its resulting tiredness. Then there is no desire (*chanda*) to exert effort in doing wholesome deeds. This is 'thick' laziness, and it is very frightening. During meditation it is quite difficult to remove such internal enemies. In battling this thick laziness (*thīna-middha*), effort (*virīya*) is very important and most relevant. We need both to possess energy and to exert that energy. Everybody has energy. However, because most people do not exert their energy appropriately, they do not succeed in wholesome activities.

Let us look at the detailed meaning of the term 'virīya'. 'Virīya' is defined in the texts as 'vīrānaṃ bhāvo vīriyaṃ', meaning the state of a courageous or heroic person. *Virīya* means the energy or courage to face suffering. Its *natural characteristic* is exertion, striving (*ussāhana*). Its *function* is to support its associated mental states.¹ Its *manifestation* is non-collapse, not giving in. Its *proximate cause* is a sense of urgency, called *saṃvega* in Pāli, or a ground for arousing energy, i.e. anything that stirs one to vigorous action.² Thus *virīya* has the characteristic of exerting energy, and the possessor of *virīya*, whatever the task may be, is courageous.

A possessor of effort, because he or she tends to carry out any task with courage, can boldly endure suffering with patience, and boldly face suffering. All *yogīs* engaged in *satīpaṭṭhāna* practice on a meditation retreat are there because they have courage. With the thought: 'I am going to meditate', they pack their things and go into retreat to engage in a really noble work, in the course of which they will encounter suffering. To separate from one's family is suffering, to temporarily leave behind one's spouse, one's children, one's job, and one's household affairs in order to do this noble work is suffering. Sleep, rest and food are limited, and this also requires courage. From the time a person decides to go on retreat, he or she is prepared to boldly endure

1 In any moment of consciousness, *virīya* has associated with it a number of other positive mental states or factors which have arisen at that moment. These associated states are not always the same, but vary dependent on other existing conditions.

2 The ABHIDHAMMA philosophy recognises 52 mental factors or states that are associated with consciousness, each of which is defined by the four devices of characteristic (*lakkhana*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) and proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*). For further detail, see Bhikkhu Bodhi (ed.). A COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL OF ABHIDHAMMA, 1993.

suffering. From that time onwards, he or she has the necessary courage, and becomes a heroic person.

Different Kinds of Happiness

When some meditators come on retreat and find everything restricted, food and sleep limited, and painful sensations in sitting which they haven't yet overcome, they start thinking: "I was wrong to come here. If I'd only stayed at home I'd be happy". The Venerable Sayādaw concedes that the meditators would be happy if they had stayed at home. However, the happiness experienced would be an impure kind of happiness, termed *vyāseka sukha*. Seeing a beautiful sight one's happiness may increase. Listening to a sweet sound, one may delight in it. Likewise smelling a fragrant odour, preparing and eating delicious food, experiencing a pleasant touch from soft, smooth clothing or another person: all these things can induce happiness. But this happiness always arises together with the added mental defilement of craving (*rāga*). This kind of happiness is termed '*vyāseka sukha*'.

When someone has a passion or desire for something, happiness arises only when that craving or desire is present. Without the added craving, it is no longer a form of happiness. In fact, most people experience happiness only when *rāga* (craving) is involved. In smoking a cigarette, for example, the smoking itself is quite neutral: the pleasure arises because smoking relieves the craving they have for it. The same applies to drinking alcohol, and to tasting, smelling, touching, seeing,

hearing other desirable sense objects. When one encounters them there is attachment, and one derives some happiness from the experience. To draw a parallel: raw meat or fish is smelly. To enhance its flavour one needs salt and pepper, bayleaf, masala or other spices. Only by adding such spices does the raw meat or fish lose its smell and become tasty. In the same way, only by adding craving (*rāga*) to a sense experience does happiness arise. The craving is a mental additive.

Happiness mixed with craving or attachment is termed *sammissa sukha*. Moreover, since craving (*rāga*) is a mental defilement, it tends to pollute and burn the mind, thus the happiness arising is impure happiness (*aparisuddha sukha*). Not coming on retreat and staying at home instead, one experiences a sensuous type of happiness to which craving (*rāga*) has been added (*vyāseka sukha*). Such happiness is mixed with craving (*sammissa sukha*) and craving therefore pollutes the mind (*aparisuddha sukha*).

The Value of Restraint

Restraint of the senses (*indriya saṁvara sīla*) reduces the opportunity for mental defilements to arise in the stream of consciousness. Mindfulness (*sati*) and effort (*viriya*) are both necessary for this. One needs to be mindful at all times in accordance with the saying: 'Guard the mind with vigilant mindfulness at the moment of every arising'. For this, one needs to exert courageous effort (*viriya*). Of course it can be quite tiring, especially for the first few days, though having gained some

skills in meditation, one becomes accustomed to both restraint of the senses and guarding the mind with vigilant mindfulness at the moment of every arising object. With this, one's effort becomes good and bold and the practice is no longer perceived as tiring. Effort (*virīya*) no longer accepts the mental defilements (*kilesas*) or impurities, but tends to repel them, and thus the mind becomes pure. Mindfulness guards against the entry of the mental defilements (*kilesas*). How good this is! When one notes and observes consistently, the mind falls on the object of observation from moment to moment, one gets accustomed to and skilled in the practice, and the mind becomes concentrated. Such a mind is called *adhicitta*, i.e. a mind that many times surpasses an ordinary mind. The happiness that arises in association with concentration is called *adhicitta sukha*.

Restraint of the senses (*indriya saṃvara sīla*) is essentially the practice of mindfulness (*sati*) or the development of the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*). It is the work of paying attention, being mindful, at every moment of seeing, hearing, and so on, so that the mental defilements do not arise. It is also the work of exerting continuous, consistent bold effort so that mindfulness arises. Once mindfulness (*sati*) arises, concentration (*samādhi*) will also arise. When the noting is good, effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) will sooner or later lead to joy and rapture (*pīti*) in the body. In the beginning of the practice this manifests as goose flesh, then delight, freshness of the mind, and happiness. As one practises further, effort will further increase, mindfulness will

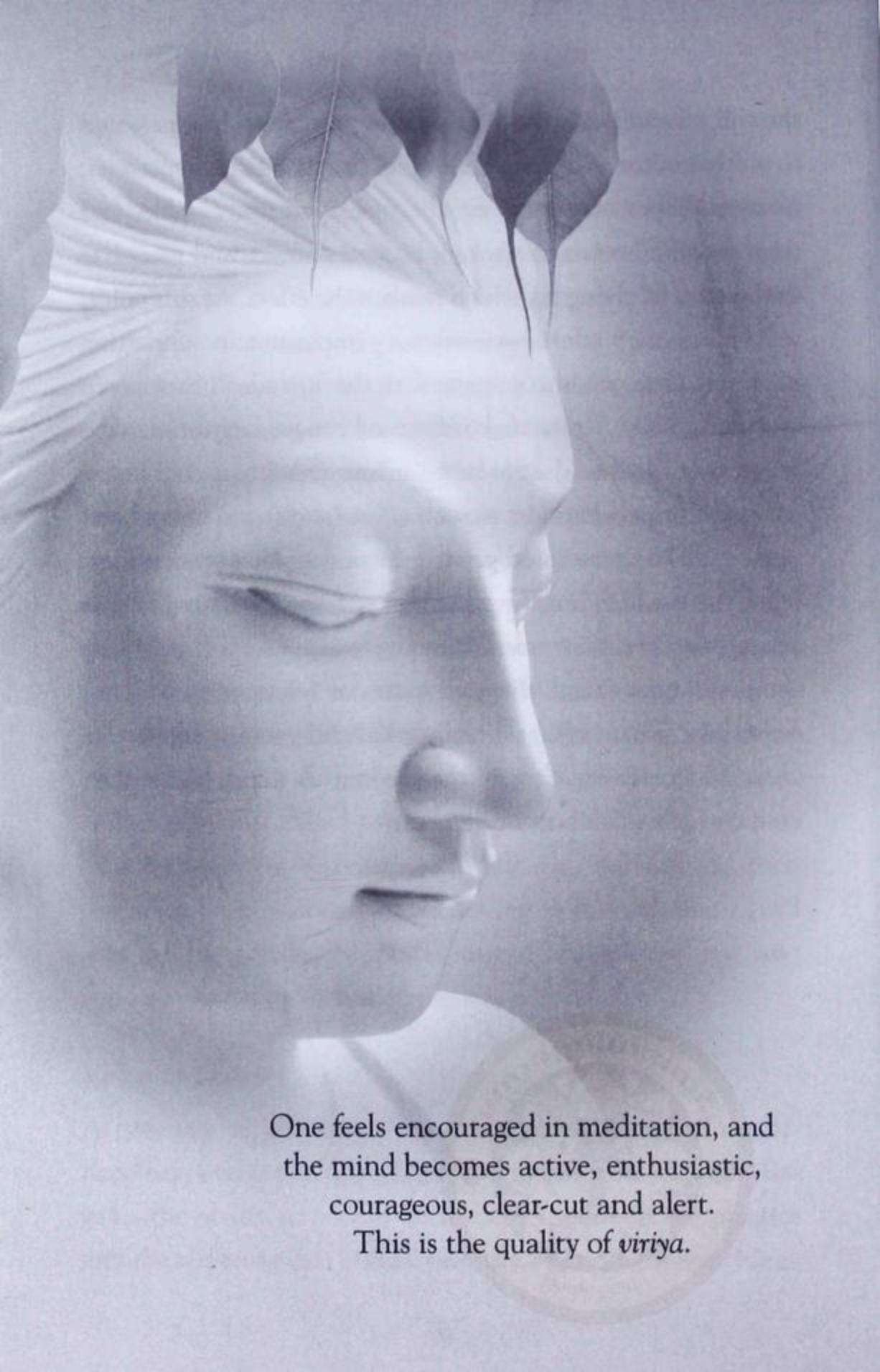
improve, the concentrated mind (*adhicitta*) will become very tranquil, and great joy and rapture (*balava pīti*) will arise. Mind and body become peaceful and there is a sense of wellbeing and of delight in the meditation practice (*bhāvanā rati*). The delight arises because one is restraining the senses and not giving any special consideration to worldly happiness (*vyāseka sukha*), but instead focusing on the happiness which grows from the practice, termed *avyāseka sukha*. This kind of happiness, unlike ordinary happiness (*vyāseka sukha*) has no added craving or attachment (*rāga*). Although we may not crave this happiness, we automatically appreciate it. Just as when we eat a sweet apple or mango, there is no need to add anything because the fruits are naturally sweet, likewise the Dhamma is naturally sweet and good, there is no need to add anything. Since this happiness is not mixed with any mental defilements, it is referred to as *asammissa sukha*, and since it is a pure kind of happiness, unpolluted with defilements, it is called *parisuddha sukha*. People who give up worldly happiness to practise *satipaṭṭhāna*, and who do their practice diligently, noting and observing quite continuously, will gain this high quality happiness instead within a few days, and will become happy with the practice.

Viriya as Support

A possessor of effort who has courageously given up worldly happiness and is practising high level *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* thus gains the ability to endure both the discipline of the practice and the suffering that comes with the beginning stages. He or

she will take in stride the aches, pains, numbness, hardness and so on that occur within one hour of sitting practice. Sometimes, however, aches and pains can become quite unbearable, and then the mind tends to slacken, becomes afraid, and gives rise to thoughts of giving up, which weaken the effort. At this point, redoubling one's effort becomes very important in supporting the mind. One needs to practise with the attitude: 'I have given up *vyāseka sukha*, let me make effort so I can gain *avyāseka sukha* one way or another'. Just as new timbers added to an old house prevent it from collapsing, so such effort (*virīya*) can uphold and support all the associated positive mental states and not allow them to recede. Thus, by means of *virīya*, difficulties such as aches, pains and *thīna-middha* are overcome, and the meditator comes to understand the real value of effort (*virīya*) in an emergency. That *virīya* is a really good and genuine supportive factor becomes very clear in the meditator's mind, and this in itself can give great encouragement.





One feels encouraged in meditation, and
the mind becomes active, enthusiastic,
courageous, clear-cut and alert.
This is the quality of *virīya*.

*The Proximate Cause for
the Arising of Effort —
Sense of Urgency*

When one meditates, unbearable sensations tend to arise. Enduring these unbearable sensations with gritted teeth is the characteristic of *virīya*. In the face of unbearable sensations the mind can collapse. By applying effort, the associated positive mental states are supported and the mind gains strength. Gaining the help of *virīya*, the next time one encounters difficulties one no longer retreats, but instead boldly overcomes the difficulties. Thus, one will remember *virīya* as a mental state (*dhamma*) leading to victory or success, a mental state that is not giving in. This will become very evident in one's understanding. One feels encouraged in meditation, and the mind becomes active, enthusiastic, courageous, clear-cut and alert. This is the quality of *virīya*.

Causes for the Arising of Effort

There are certain causes for an active, encouraged, courageous, energetic and alert kind of effort to arise. These are: the root cause, the supportive causes, and the proximate cause. Two proximate causes have been given: *saṃvega vatthu padaṭṭhāna*

and *vīriya vatthu padaṭṭhāna*, the second meaning a strong desire to exert effort, or to practise. As for *saṃvega padaṭṭhāna*, *saṃvega* as the proximate cause; *saṃvega* is defined as 'seeing or knowing the danger (fear), and the sense of urgency that is associated with such fear.' To give an example: Prince Siddhattha initially enjoyed the sense pleasures, but on seeing the flaws of the sense pleasures, he became afraid. His fear was not the sinking type of ill-will (*dosa*); it was ill-will associated with knowledge. Seeing fear and suffering he became alarmed, *saṃvega* arose in association with this alarmed state, and he ran away from home and family and renounced the world. This knowledge is called *saṃvega ñāṇa*.

Causes for the Arising of Saṃvega

Eight causes for the arising of a sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) have been mentioned in the texts: birth (*jāti*), old age (*jarā*), disease (*byādhi*), death (*maraṇa*), fear of the suffering in the lower worlds, fear of the suffering of the past rooted in the cycle of rebirth, fear of the suffering of the future rooted in the cycle of rebirth, and fear of the suffering rooted in the search for food. These are also defined as the eight stirring objects (*saṃvega vatthu*).

Of the eight causes, *jāti* (birth) is given first. A desire for birth is based on ignorance (*avijjā*), not seeing the flaws of renewed existences, taking new existences as good, and delighting in and craving for new existences. Having gained a new existence, one develops attachments out of perceiving a separate sense of self, and the cycle of defilements arises. Based on the defilements, one

performs all sorts of actions; at times wholesome, at other times unwholesome. Then, based on the wholesome and unwholesome actions one performs, a new existence takes place. In the human realm, the very first arising of the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi citta*), together with some materiality in the womb, is called birth or, in Pāḷi, *jāti*. Life starts with this birth.

The beginning of life, *jāti*, does not take long; only a few seconds, when spermatozoa and ovum combine. This moment of birth is not real physical suffering (*dukkha dukkha*). However, because birth is followed by a series of sufferings, birth is included under *dukkha*. Because of birth, one is bound to encounter suffering in the form of old age (*jarā*), disease (*byādhi*) and death (*maraṇa*). *Jāti* is comparable to a mushroom, which comes popping out of the earth with some soil on its cap (*jarā, byādhi, maraṇa*). Nobody put the earth there, it came by itself. *Jāti* by itself is not suffering, but it brings along with it the sufferings of old age, disease and death. This is quite frightful. Within the first few hours in the womb, the new life can come to an end. Even within the first few days and months, the foetus can die. To be in the womb for 9-10 months is suffering for both foetus and mother. Giving birth is another form of suffering. If we were able to relate all our experiences during birth, then the true extent of the suffering would be revealed, and it would be quite frightful. Such reflection on birth and its inherent suffering is one cause for the arising of a sense of urgency (*saṃvega nāṇa*). Only when there is no more birth will the subsequent sufferings of old age, disease and death be stilled. One says to oneself, 'Only

if I make the effort can the sufferings of birth, old age and so on be stilled', and as a result, effort (*virīya*) tends to be awakened. Thus, one comes to a meditation centre and makes effort in one's meditation. Those who have a strong sense of urgency practise meditation actively, wholeheartedly, and therefore the sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) is the proximate cause for the arising of effort (*virīya*).

To gain a miserable (low) existence because of unwholesome deeds is really fearful. If, because of highly unwholesome deeds one ends up being reborn in one of the lower realms or states of loss, then it is very frightful. Just look at the animal existence! Animals in the animal realm eat each other. The big animals go after the small animals, the unintelligent animals are hunted by the intelligent, and the weaker are hunted down by the stronger. For an animal to die with a polluted mind is very frightful. Once one has been reborn in the animal realm because of unwholesome deeds, it is not easy to regain human birth, since it is difficult for an animal to perform wholesome deeds. So it is really frightful to be reborn in a state of loss owing to some unwholesome deed or deeds one has performed. Reflecting along these lines can arouse a sense of urgency. A person who has a sense of urgency will be encouraged in doing high-level, wholesome deeds. He or she will be very enthusiastic. Here again, *saṃvega* is the proximate cause for the arising of *virīya*.

The Nature of Life

Beginning with *jāti*, the foetus gradually matures in the mother's womb. After birth, the small child gradually grows older, reaches youth, and is of beautiful appearance. But development does not stop there: one's beauty gradually withers day by day, month by month, year by year. Thus, old age (*jarā*) happens. Then one may contract a disease, maybe even a fatal disease. One can die at any time, even at a young age, during childhood, youth or as an adult. Nothing can be done to prevent death. One may even be free from diseases and die. Though one wants to stay young and beautiful, one grows old; though one wants to be healthy, one falls sick; though one wants to stay alive, one dies. Nobody can avoid these *dhammas* (facts). We can only give in to them. Life does not happen according to our wishes; it is full of suffering. We have to reflect on these things.

Like a cowherd drives cattle towards pasture, human beings are driven towards old age, disease and death. There is no stability. This is the first of the four essences of the Dhamma, or *Dhammuddesa*, which states that life in any world is unstable, it is swept away towards ageing and death. Of the four essences of the Dhamma, if one understands only this first one well, a sense of urgency will arise. Then, nobody can protect us: we can only protect ourselves. This is the second essence of the Dhamma. When we understand this, a strong sense of urgency will also develop. It really underlines the importance of establishing our meditation practice before we reach old age.

A person who possesses a sense of urgency will be highly encouraged to develop wholesomeness — an assured type of wholesomeness.¹ He or she will be active, alert and decisive. He or she will pursue that assured happiness with courage, boldly and with full force. For such wholehearted effort to arise, *samvega* is the proximate cause.

1 By this, Sayādaw U Paṇḍita means wholesomeness that brings assurance of life via the path of stream entry. A stream enterer (*sotāpanna*) is one who has attained the first stage of enlightenment by realising *nibbāna* for the first time. After this, one is said to be no more subject to rebirth in the lower worlds (*apāya*), but instead firmly established in the Dhamma and destined to achieve full enlightenment.

CHAPTER NINE

.....

The Four Essences of the Dhamma

Of the various causes for the arising of effort in this high-level practice, the first of the two proximate causes, namely *saṃvega vatthu padaṭṭhāna*, has been covered (see pages 53-58). To arouse an even stronger sense of urgency it is worthwhile to consider further the four essences of the Dhamma (*Dhammuddesa*) as given by the Buddha in the RAṬṬHAPĀLA SUTTA.¹

The Story of Raṭṭhapāla

Raṭṭhapāla was the son of an affluent family in the town of Thullakoṭṭhita in the Kuru country, not far from where Lumbinī is now in Nepal. Now it so happened that the Buddha was passing through this town with a large *saṅgha* of *bhikkhus*, and stopped there to give teachings on the Dhamma. Hearing the Buddha preach from his place in the assembly, Raṭṭhapāla was seized with a sense of urgency, and approached the Enlightened One to request ordination. “Venerable Sir,” he said, “it is not

1 MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA NO. 82, 36

easy while living in a home to lead the holy life. Only as a monk is it easy to lead the holy life.” The Buddha answered that Raṭṭhapāla could be ordained only if he had his parents’ permission. Raṭṭhapāla duly requested his parents’ permission. However, since he was their one and only son, his parents would not countenance letting him go. For seven days Raṭṭhapāla went on hunger strike, and only then did his parents concede.

As a monk, Raṭṭhapāla practised meditation with all-out effort while he was still young, exhausted the mental defilements and became an *arahant*. At this point, Raṭṭhapāla Mahāthera wished to return to preach the Dhamma to his parents, and he requested the Buddha’s permission to revisit his former home. When he arrived, however, his father did not recognise him, but instead abused him as an itinerant. On realising their mistake, his parents tried to make amends, insisting that he come the next day for lunch. There they tried every means of persuading him to return to his old way of life, but Raṭṭhapāla was not to be persuaded away from the high way of life he had found, and he departed.

On his way back to join the Saṅgha, Raṭṭhapāla came to the garden of King Koravya, and the gardener reported to the King the arrival of this very restrained monk. The King went to meet with Raṭṭhapāla in the garden, and said to him: “Master Raṭṭhapāla, there are four reasons why some people shave off their hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness: they are loss through ageing, loss through sickness, loss of wealth, and loss of relatives. But in

your case, Master Raṭṭhapāla,” said the King, “these four reasons do not apply. You are still young, in the prime of life, healthy, from a wealthy family, and with plenty of relatives. What can you possibly have known, seen or heard that made you go forth from the home life into homelessness?” To this, Raṭṭhapāla Mahāthera answered: “There are four essences of the Dhamma, as realised by the Blessed One and taught by him. The first is that life in any world is unstable, it is swept away towards ageing and death. The second is that life in any world has no shelter and no protector. The third is that life in any world has nothing of its own, one has to leave all and pass on according to one’s actions. The fourth is that life in any world is incomplete, insatiate, the slave of craving. At a young age, I heard and appreciated these essences of the Dhamma. Then, I went forth from the home life into homelessness to practise the teachings because I have encountered suffering in many past existences, and I do not want to encounter any more suffering in future existences: I want to be free from the cycle of existences.” After talking further with the venerable Raṭṭhapāla, King Koravya was convinced of the truth of the teachings.

The Second Essence of the Dhamma

As for the first essence of the Dhamma, ‘Life in any world is unstable, it is swept away towards ageing and death’, this has been dealt with (see pages 57-58). As for the second essence of the Dhamma: ‘Life in any world has no shelter and no protector’, by this is meant that however many followers or relatives one

may have, no relative or friend can experience the suffering of old age, disease and death on our behalf. No relative or friend can defend us from this suffering. This is a weakness of human beings: there is nobody who can protect us, and nothing we can rely on. It is said in the scriptures that not even mother and son can help each other. The relationship between mother and son is said to be the closest in the world. But when a mother is afflicted by the suffering of old age, disease or death, her son cannot alleviate the suffering. Nor can a son, out of gratitude to his mother, endure her suffering. Likewise, when the son is afflicted by the suffering of old age, disease and death, the mother cannot alleviate his suffering nor experience the suffering in his place. Thus, one can only protect oneself from the suffering of life. Once one understands this, a strong sense of urgency develops.

The Third Essence of the Dhamma

The third essence of the Dhamma states that beings of this world do not possess property of their own. The question arises of whether the things one has worked for and acquired are not one's property. Though we speak of individual property, when the time comes to cross from one's present existence to a new existence, no property whatsoever can be taken along. Even during our lifetime, though we have acquired individual property such as houses, furniture, clothing, and all the other things we use from day to day, this property does not provide any assurance. If there is a fire, our property will be consumed, we will lose it. How can we then say that it is our property? If

we live near a river in the mountains, and heavy rainfall causes flooding so that houses, people and belongings are carried away, how then can we say that these things are our property? However much we may protect our property, in reality, there is no true security.

The scriptures describe four kinds of property, or *dhana*. The first is immovable property: houses, land and so forth. The second is property that can be moved: household goods, clothing, and so on. The third is the worldly knowledge or skills that one has acquired from childhood onwards: one's profession, know-how, verbal and mechanical skills, proficiency in the arts or sciences. Such skills are comparable to the limbs of the body, fingers, and toes. Just as when the limbs are in good working order they have to be put to use, human beings are necessarily employed according to their skills. These first three categories of property are worldly property, acquired because of one's effort, and thus called one's personal property. However, all of this may be lost during one's lifetime, all of it has to be given up at the time of death, and none of it gives any real assurance. Thus, there is really no personal property to speak of.

One's True Prosperity

Only one category of goods can be transferred between existences, and that is the fourth type of property defined by the Buddha: the kammic results of wholesome and unwholesome deeds. These include the pure and clean merits gained through acts of generosity (*dāna*) and through observing the moral

precepts (*sīla*).² For these merits to become durable and give results, however, one needs to practise *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation (*bhāvanā*), which develops the mind and causes the insight knowledges to arise. When one practises and has gained at least one path and fruition knowledge, one's life will become assured. This is the third essence of the Dhamma, which states that only Dhamma property, or noble property, can be taken from one existence to another, and only such Dhamma property provides assurance. Thus *kamma* constitutes one's true prosperity, rather than any category of worldly property.

With the realisation of *nibbāna*, the seven-fold property of noble ones (*ariya dhana*) will come to fulfilment in one's stream of consciousness automatically, and give stable and assured results. Only when one reaches this level will it have been worthwhile to have been born a human being and to have come into contact with the Buddha's teachings. The seven-fold property of noble ones (*ariya dhana*) refers to the seven pure and high properties possessed by noble persons. These are: faith and confidence (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), shame and disgust with regard to misconduct (*hiri*), fear of misconduct (*ottappa*), learning (*suta*) gained through theoretical and practical study of the Buddhist texts, open-hearted generosity (*cāga*), and noble wisdom (*ariya paññā*). Once one has searched for and gained these seven properties, one will never lose them again: they

2 The tenfold course of meritorious action (*kammāpatha*), also known as the ten bases for meritorious action (*puñña kiriya vatthu*), namely; three bodily actions: avoidance of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; four verbal actions: avoidance of lying, slandering, coarse speech, meaningless talk; three mental actions: unselfishness, goodwill, right views.

become one's own property, the only form of property that can be taken over to future existences. If we practise high-level *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation until finally we realise the noble path and fruition knowledge, then the merits gained from previously performed acts of generosity (*dāna*) and morality (*sīla*) will give firm and full results. Then, mundane morality (*lokiya sīla*) changes to supramundane morality (*lokuttara sīla*), faith and confidence become exceptional, moral shame and fear of wrongdoing become very strong, and one will give freely and with a pure mind. However, it is necessary to give time and effort to the pursuit of this noble property that gives assurance. We must strive hard when conditions permit!

The Value of Sīla and Dāna

According to the Buddha's teachings, mundane morality is the foundation for the full ripening of merits owing to acts of generosity, observance of the precepts and the search for prosperity that gives assurance. Hence, one needs to make effort to develop one's moral conduct, including the habit of avoiding what should not be done and said. Because such effort is more noble than the giving of material things (*dāna*), it is called *maha dāna*. Such acts of giving are very important. When we practise generosity (*dāna*) with a pure and clean intention, this opens up the path to morality. When we follow this path, we will be free from flawed physical and verbal conduct, and our behaviour will become pure, gentle, peaceful and loveable.

A further beneficial effect of performing generous acts, in training oneself in giving things away, is that greed (*lobha*) will be lessened. However, it is important to practise generosity (*dāna*) in the right way. In particular, we have to be free of unwholesome mental states, such as wanting any reward for our actions, or this will be an impure form of *dāna*. Neither should *dāna* be performed with any ill-will: if one has aversion for the recipient, the deed will not be wholesome. Likewise, we should be free of delusion or ignorance: we should have a clear understanding that wholesome deeds lead to wholesome results, and unwholesome deeds lead to unwholesome results. Instead, generous acts need to be performed with loving kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) for the recipient. As one continues to practise *dāna* in this way, there will be development of forgiveness and compassion. In fact, the best way to practise *dāna* is with the wish of aspiring to *nibbāna*. Done with such an aspiration, 'it may lead me to *nibbāna*', *dāna* is very wholesome. Even though the act arises and passes away, the kammic forces continue and lead to prosperity, in this and future existences. Such acts thus become a supportive factor in our reaching *nibbāna*, as well as supporting our morality, and will also lead to an increase in compassion and a decrease in aversion.

The Dangers of Existence

The dangers of old age, disease, death and *apāya* have existed since beginningless time. This needs to be carefully considered. Unless one has become a stream enterer, future lives are countless.

If one considers the amount of suffering that arises based on the cycle of defilements (*kilesa vaṭṭa*), and the endless suffering based on the cycle of actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*) and the cycle of results (*vipāka vaṭṭa*), it is frightening. Because of wholesome and unwholesome deeds performed out of ignorance of life (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*), one has encountered many times in the past the dangers of old age, disease and death, and fallen many times into states of loss. Even as a human being, the suffering involved in providing for one's basic needs and those of one's family is substantial. There is relief only at night, during sleep. During the remaining hours one needs to think, plan, be active: life is hard. These are fearful *dhammas* (things). To see the suffering and become afraid is very important. If, instead of being afraid of the suffering one delights in it, one will never be contented. Without contentment, one will just be wanting more and more. Hence one becomes a slave of craving.

The Fourth Essence of the Dhamma

Endless craving is a shortcoming of human beings. The Buddha has expressed this as the fourth essence of the Dhamma, which states that life in any world is incomplete, insatiate, the slave of craving. It means that if one keeps looking for satisfaction or contentment in the pursuit of worldly things, one will never succeed, one will always be caught in an endless cycle of wanting more and more. In buying a personal computer, for example, one may be happy for only a few weeks or months. Very soon, one is dissatisfied with one's purchase: it is too slow, too out-of-date.

The same applies to all the objects of our craving. Without some degree of contentment, we will always be wanting, desiring. This is the suffering nature of human existence.

According to the texts, human beings are subject to five different forms of desire. The first is simple desire, *icchā*: not being satisfied, one wants or desires. The second is great desire, *mahicchā*. Third is extreme or intense wanting such that it keeps one awake at night, *adhicchā* (*adhi* + *icchā*). Fourth is covetousness, wanting or desiring what another person has, called *atrichchā*. *Pāpicchā*, the fifth type of desire, is a wicked form of wanting or desiring, such as practised by a person not having high morals or not following the Dhamma. Such a person pretends to be pure and holy in order to gain wealth, status and fame, thus their desire involves wicked pretence. In the end, all these forms of desire are self-defeating. Such desires can never be satisfied, they lead only to more craving.

Making a Profit from Life

Not realising the truth of the Dhamma, most people engage in endless pursuit of things that have no lasting value, and give little consideration to anything of genuine, spiritual value. For example, people will work to the point of exhaustion, even risking their lives in pursuit of a property, then becoming attached to the property, in the sense of 'This is my property, I own it'. By contrast, people are weak and slow in accumulating wholesomeness (*kusala*), which follows one like a shadow when one crosses from one existence to another, and people are

especially weak in accumulating assured goods of wholesomeness (*kusala ussā*).

Even if they practise meditation, many people do not want to put in the effort to practise to a satisfactory level.³ To achieve the very beneficial results possible with *satipaṭṭhāna*, one has to give time and energy to the practice. However, when one practises, the body gets stiff in no time, and pains and aches arise. Fear then arises, along with thoughts such as ‘Will I die?’ ‘Will I be permanently injured?’ Most people have only limited courage in the face of such adversity. We should remember that we have gained our present human birth because of meritorious deeds performed in previous existences. If we increase our knowledge during this present existence, then a great profit that gives assurance of future life will result. For people who waste their time on worldly things, who do not have a sense of shame or a sense of urgency when accumulating wholesomeness (*kusala*), much unwholesomeness creeps in, and that unwholesomeness gives rise to negative results. In particular, it may destroy the merits that one has accumulated thus far. If one performs acts of generosity, does *Buddha-pūjā*, observes the five precepts and occasionally practises mental development (*bhāvanā*), then one may well be reborn as a human being. But then, one is getting only one’s investment back and no more. There is no profit.

Like a business that retains only its capital investment, a human life that retains only the prosperity it had to start with

3 By this, Sayādaw U Paṇḍita means attainment of the first path (*sotāpatti magga*).

is no good. Over time, one's initial capital may be lost. If one makes a mistake as a human being and loses the wholesome kamma one had to start with, one may end up in a state of loss. This is most unsatisfying: a waste of time. Hence, reflect on your life. Having gained a human existence, will you accept a loss of the capital invested owing to a lack of practice? Or if you are practising only to a degree, are you going to be satisfied with a profit that may be negligible, or with risking your initial investment? Think it over!



*Moral Shame and Fear
of Wrongdoing
(Hiri-Ottappa)*

To practise high-level meditation energetically and to a level of satisfaction, bold and courageous effort needs to be awakened and brought to fulfilment. For this to happen, the texts have cited two proximate causes, *saṃvega vatthu padaṭṭhāna*, a basis for arousing a sense of urgency (*saṃvega*), and *vīriyaṃ vatthu padaṭṭhāna*, a basis for arousing energy, i.e. anything that stirs one to vigorous action. *Samvega* is defined as *sa-ottappa nāṇa*, that is, knowledge associated with moral fear, for example the fear of mental defilements arising. Once the mental defilements have arisen, *saṃvega* may manifest as fear of wrongdoing by body, speech and mind, or fear that these unwholesome mental factors (*cetasika*) will lead one to fall into states of loss. When one reflects on these fears, and the fear of wrongdoing is associated with such knowledge, it is called *saṃvega*. People who have this *saṃvega* in developing wholesomeness become very energetic, especially in developing wholesomeness for liberation and assurance of life. For such energetic, bold, courageous practice, the proximate cause is thus *saṃvega*, i.e. a sense of urgency. This proximate cause concerns the development of wholesomeness

and not the development of unwholesomeness. This also needs to be discerned and understood.

Samvega in Developing Wholesomeness

Samvega is a form of fear. It is not ordinary fear, which is a sinking form of ill-will (*dosa*), but fear associated with knowledge and discriminative reflection or reasoning. When one practises meditation and clearly sees the dissolution of all physical and mental objects, this extraordinary form of fear arises, not because of ill-will, but rather because of insight knowledge (*bhaya nāṇa*). This fear is of two types:

1. Fear owing to discriminative reflection and
2. Fear owing to the power of mental development (*bhāvanā*).

The scriptures attribute two qualities or powers (*bala*) to these fears, respectively: *paṭisaṅkhāna bala* and *bhāvanā bala*. *Paṭisaṅkhāna bala* is the power of reflection or discernment as a result of consideration of the sufferings of life, for example old age, disease and death, the suffering of the past rooted in the round of existence, the suffering of the future rooted in the round of existence, and the suffering of the present rooted in the tiring search for food. Seeing such suffering and reflecting on it, one becomes alarmed, and fear arises. This is the first form of *samvega* that arises together with knowledge, and this form of *samvega* is known as ordinary *samvega*. There is also a stronger form of *samvega*. When one practises meditation

and sees the dissolution of all objects, then the knowledge of fear (*bhayatupaṭṭhāna nāṇa*) arises, together with the power of mental development (*bhāvanā bala*), and this is referred to as *maha saṃvega*, a great sense of urgency. To establish this great sense of urgency, one first needs to reveal an ordinary sense of urgency with the power of reflection (*paṭisaṅkhāna bala*). Then one will practise meditation wholeheartedly and enthusiastically and in no time will reach a great sense of urgency.

High-level meditation will achieve assurance for life and gain deliverance for the meditator from the danger of falling into states of loss (*apāya*). In developing this assured wholesomeness, one needs to give up one's household affairs. Not everybody can do this. Only people who possess courage can do it. When coming on a retreat, one has to sleep in a dormitory and one cannot eat the food one likes. Food and accommodation are very basic. One has to get up early and practise until late at night. Moment by moment without fail, one has to dispel the mental defilements (*kilesas*) by exerting effort so that they do not overwhelm the mind. With such bold effort, one dispels the mental defilements and all unwholesomeness, moment by moment and 'reveals', or carves out, the *bhāvanā*, or wholesomeness, like carving an ornament from wood. The work is rather difficult. When a meditator does this work and also listens to talks on the four essences of the Dhamma (*Dhammuddesa*), then the mind becomes very encouraged, activated. Such effort has the characteristic of practising or working in the face of difficulties with clenched teeth (*ussahanam lakkhaṇam viriyam*). If one gives in near the beginning of the practice when one encounters unbearable

sensations, then it will take a long time to overcome these difficult sensations. If, for example, instead of sitting for a full hour in meditation, one gets up before the hour is up due to aches and pains, then one will be tempted to do the same the next time an unpleasant sensation arises, and eventually one may lose hope and give up the practice altogether. At this point one needs instead to raise one's effort. Having overcome a tight spot with increased effort, one becomes more courageous. This arising courage is the *function* of *virīya*. 'Huh, I thought I would have to give up! But when making effort, did I have to give up? Did I have to retreat?' Thus, the meditator is encouraged. The *manifestation* of *virīya* is non-collapse: it prevents the associated mental states from collapsing in the face of pain and difficulties. When the characteristic, function and manifestation of *virīya* arise, one becomes very bold, heroic. With this heroic effort, one dispels unwholesomeness and reveals wholesomeness. Just think of the benefits of *virīya*!

Hiri-ottappa and Avoiding Unwholesomeness

Through reflection on the eight stirring objects (*saṃvega vatthu*), a sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) arises. This sense of urgency can be equated with the mental factor of moral shame, *hiri*. This moral shame, *hiri*, automatically implies fear of wrongdoing, *ottappa*; these two mental states differ only slightly from one another.¹ When the power of reflection arises together with *hiri*

1 *Hiri* and *ottappa* are also sometimes translated as self-respect and respect for others, in turn, or taken together to mean moral conscience or integrity. Respect for self and respect for others are the respective proximate causes of *hiri* and *ottappa* given in the texts. For further discussion, see Bhikku Bodhi et al., A COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL OF ABHIDHAMMA, 1993, page 86.

and *ottappa*, then moral shame and fear of wrongdoing become powers, i.e. *hiri bala* and *ottappa bala*. *Hiri bala* is the power of being ashamed of performing misconduct (*duccarita*). *Ottappa bala* is the power of being afraid of or dreading to perform misconduct.

In avoiding unwholesomeness, the two forces of *hiri* and *ottappa* are extremely important. The scriptures refer to them in three memorable ways: as *sukka dhamma*, meaning white *dhamma*, white symbolising purity; as *lokapāla dhamma*, meaning guardians of the world; and as *deva dhamma*, meaning shining, radiant, bright with virtue. If *hiri* and *ottappa* are present, a person will behave in a moral way. Thus, they cause one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour to become pure and clean. Just as wearing white clothes in the sun repels the heat, so the white of *hiri-ottappa* reflects and repels the heat of the mental defilements and one is relieved of the heat. Then, if unwholesomeness does not arise or arises only to a small extent, one is certain to experience peace and coolness of mind.

As for *hiri-ottappa* as *lokapāla dhamma*, the guardians of the world, they are said to prevent the world from falling into immorality. It is *hiri* and *ottappa* that control one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour so that one does not go wrong. Once one knows unwholesomeness as unwholesomeness and is disgusted and afraid of it, and once one knows the fearful consequences of unwholesomeness, then quite naturally one will guard one's own world with bold effort (*virīya*), one's mindfulness will grow and become sustained, and one's mind will be protected against

the mental defilements. When one guards one's own world, one gains deliverance, *vimutti*, from the bondage of the defilements, and hence peace, *santi*. If others likewise guard their own small worlds, one by one the world at large will become peaceful. This is certain.

A person who possesses *hiri-ottappa* (fear of wrongdoing) will become a leader in their community at least, perhaps even a world leader. This too is certain. In the scriptures it is said that when one possesses *hiri-ottappa* to a small extent, one will become the head of a village. When one possesses *hiri-ottappa* to a medium extent one will become the mayor of a city. When one possesses *hiri-ottappa* to a great extent, one will become the ruler of a nation; and when one possesses *hiri-ottappa* completely one will become a world leader. Possessing *hiri-ottappa*, it is also said that a person can be reborn as a celestial being. When one avoids the gross type of mental defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesas*), one can have rebirth in the deva realm. When one avoids the obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas*) and develops the absorptions (*jhānas*), one can have rebirth in the brahma world. But with these, one is not yet liberated from existential suffering. When one practises *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, the trainings in morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are included. Such practice will lead to the temporary stilling of the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesas*), while the attainment of path knowledge (*magga ñāṇa*) will lead to the total eradication of the latent defilements. If one practises up to holiness (arahantship), the mind will manifest total purity, the complete absence of

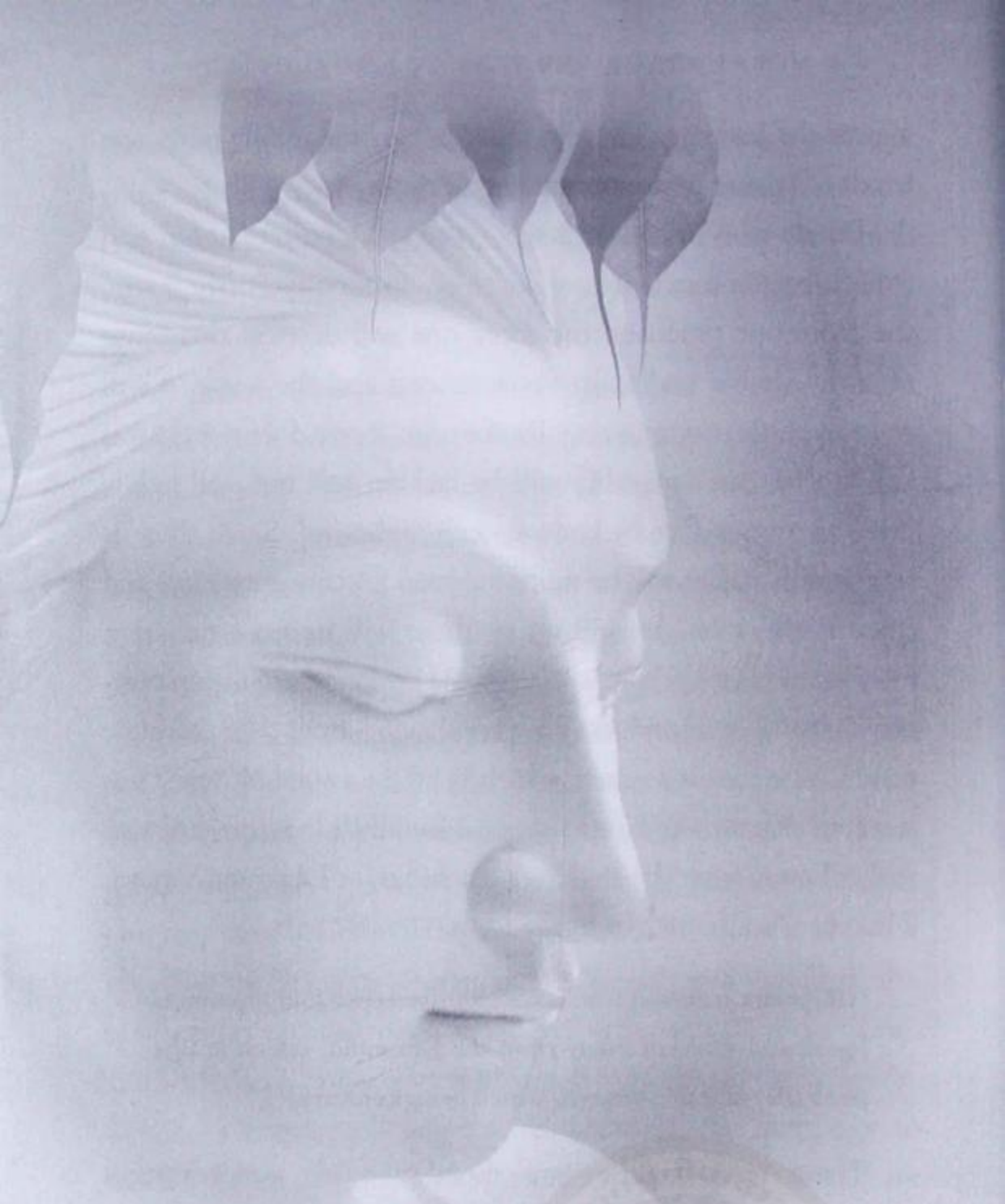
mental defilements. Thus, in order to become totally pure, one needs to ensure purity of mind at all times.

People who understand and possess the powers of *hiri* and *ottappa* to some extent are extremely fortunate. Furthermore, the more one practises, the more one will develop this sense of moral shame and fear of wrongdoing and the less one will want to perform wrong acts. By contrast, if one does not possess *hiri-ottappa*, one's morality will be lacking and one will boldly perform misconduct by body, speech and mind. Since there is no morality, there will be no foundation for concentration, and since there is no concentration, there will be no foundation for wisdom. As a consequence, one is no longer free from ever-proliferating misconduct (*duccarita*), nor from the kammic results of such misconduct, which is life in a state of loss. Thus it is said that although one may be a Buddhist in name, one can still fall away from the Buddha's teachings, or Dhamma-Vinaya. This the Buddha taught in the PAPATITA SUTTA²:

"Bhikkhus, a person who is not endowed with four dhammas (qualities) will fall away from the Dhamma, which uplifts one's life, and the Vinaya, which brings culture."

These four qualities are morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*) and deliverance (*vimutti*). The teachings of the Buddha on these four qualities will be dealt with in the remaining chapters.

2 ANGUTTARA NIKĀYA, CATUKKA NIPĀTA, 2.



The essence of the *Dhamma-Vinaya* is
the Buddha's teaching or admonition
to purify body, speech and mind,
and thus to be free from fault,
pure, cultured, gentle, peaceful and loveable.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

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Dhamma-Vinaya

The PĀPATITA SUTTA is instructive in the context of arousing effort. The word *paṭatita* is a compound of 'pa' and 'patita', from the Pāli. 'Patita' means to tumble down, fall away, slip. It is not an ordinary kind of tumbling or falling down. The particle 'pa' means excessively, severely, intensely. Thus the compound word, *paṭatita*, means falling, rolling or tumbling down without control. The word 'paṭatita' in Pāli quite effectively conveys this meaning.

We may ask, 'Falling down from what? From where?' In the context of the PĀPATITA SUTTA, 'paṭatita' refers to falling or tumbling from the Dhamma-Vinaya. The term Dhamma-Vinaya is frequently used. It is also a compound word, formed from the words 'Dhamma' and 'Vinaya'. The essence of the Dhamma-Vinaya is the Buddha's teaching or admonition to purify body, speech and mind, and thus to be free from fault, pure, cultured, gentle, peaceful and loveable.

The Three Trainings

The Dhamma-Vinaya consists of the three trainings (*sikkhā*), namely *sīla sikkhā*, *samādhi sikkhā* and *paññā sikkhā*. The Pāli term, *sikkhā*, signifies training oneself so that certain qualities arise. *Sīla sikkhā* is training the mind in morality. *Samādhi sikkhā* is training the mind in concentration. *Paññā sikkhā* is training the mind in wisdom. These three trainings should be taken as the meaning of the Dhamma-Vinaya. The three trainings, because they are the Buddha's admonition, are given as 'Vinaya', in other words 'discipline or way of conduct'. The admonition is to be free of bodily, verbal and mental misconduct, and to be cultured, pure and gentle.

Let us take for example tormenting and killing. The Buddha has admonished us to avoid tormenting and killing. In admonishing, the Buddha showed the kinds of faults that arise from not following the admonition and the benefits that arise from following it. Let us say that somebody insults us, or that a mosquito, ant or louse comes and bites us. When it bites, ill-will (*dosa*) can immediately arise in our mind. If we do not have patience and forgiveness for the biting insect, we will take revenge in one way or another. Not exercising patience, forgiveness and control of the mind, but instead taking revenge, is a disgusting, frightful behaviour, and the results of such behaviour are also disgusting and frightful. The Buddha's teachings aim to make us disgusted and afraid of such behaviour and its results. Once we know such behaviour to be disgusting and frightful, we will take great care to avoid it. One of the major benefits of avoiding

such behaviour and its results is that one scores a victory over the enemy of ill-will (*dosa*) in oneself. The internal enemy will thus be 'cooled'. This is called in Pāḷi, *avera*, meaning freedom from enmity, *vera*.

If we transgress in one way or another, remorse may arise along with self criticism or self blame. We also risk the disapproval of wise, kind and virtuous people whose good opinion we should treasure. This is given in the texts as 'censor by the wise'. If a transgression involves violating the law, moreover, we have to face the danger of punishment by the authorities. As a result of our unwholesome volition (*cetanā*), we may further be reborn in a state of loss. As long as the internal enemies are not appeased we will be afflicted by these dangers. Being free from internal enemies, we are no longer afflicted with dangers. Not being able to control the mind, we will have plenty of enemies, these enemies will multiply, and we will be afflicted by multiple dangers. This is how the Buddha simply explained the benefits and disadvantages of following or not following the trainings of the Dhamma-Vinaya.

The Benefits of Correct Conduct

If one does not see the disgusting and frightful nature of transgressions, there will be shamelessness and fearlessness of wrongdoing, in Pāḷi, *ahirika* and *anottappa*. Once shamelessness and fearlessness of wrongdoing have arisen, the mind becomes charred. This is called in Pāḷi, *kaṇha dhamma*, meaning black mental states. Just as a person wearing black clothes will absorb heat, so the mind that has been charred by shamelessness and

fearlessness of wrongdoing will absorb the internal enemy of ill-will (*dosa*). Moreover, the guardians of our world (*hiri* and *ottappa*) will be destroyed. Controlling the mind, we become radiant with the virtues of morality. Transgressing, our virtue fades away and we are no longer radiant. Thus the *deva-Dhamma* gets cut to pieces. Not being able to control our own world, we will naturally also upset our immediate surroundings. In the same way, a violent person intimidates the environment around them, and may inflict injury and even death on others. Just think of the agitation created in the immediate environment!

When we control ourself with moral shame and fear of wrongdoing, the mind will be pure and clean, and the heat of the mental defilements will be repelled, thus we guard our world. Being endowed with morality, the virtue of our morality will shine brightly.

The Buddha spoke in verse with regard to morality:

Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa
Sabbe bhāyanti maccuno
Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā
Na haneyya na ghātaye.¹

This translates as:

All are afraid of the stick
 All fear death
 Putting oneself in another's place
 One should not beat or kill others.

1 DHAMMAPĀDA, verse 129

All beings, excepting non-returners (*anāgāmi*) and holy ones (*arahants*) are afraid of dangers and punishment, and all beings are afraid of death. The term, *sabbe*, meaning all, includes your own self. Therefore, if you are planning to torment or kill another, put yourself in the other's place first. Can you take it? If not, then it is unjustified, an insult, a transgression. It is disgusting, wild, and burning, burning oneself as well as one's environment. It is fearful if one's unwholesome *dhammas* cause agitation and burning in one's environment. By contrast, it is good when wholesome *dhammas* exist. This again is how the Buddha showed the benefits of observing morality and the faults of immoral conduct.

The Benefits of Dhamma Practice

Because the Buddha's law (*Vinaya*) is based on reason and in accordance with the Dhamma, it is fair and just. Verify this for yourself. Powers that are ruling in an unjust way will want to oppress and will act accordingly. The Dhamma-Vinaya is not like that. As with all of the Buddha's teachings, it takes the form of guidelines. The Buddha wanted beings to be cultivated, gentle, peaceful and loveable. The guidelines of the Dhamma-Vinaya are designed to prevent people from falling down because of wrongful behaviour of body, speech and mind. They are designed to promote right action, speech and thought, and thus purify, cultivate, refine, beautify and appease. Those who follow the Vinaya tend to dispel the gross, medium and refined grades of defilements. The term '*Dhamma*' in Pāli also means 'that which

upholds, carries, uplifts or saves'. Thus the Dhamma uplifts and saves a person so that he or she does not drop in standard, and the Vinaya dispels coarseness so that he or she does not become wild. Here the question arises: does the Dhamma save and uplift everybody? Does the Vinaya cultivate everybody? No. Only those who practise the Dhamma and follow the Vinaya will get the benefits. Those who do not practise cannot be helped. The Dhamma only uplifts and saves those who practise it.

Dhamma practice has four parts to it. The first is learning the correct method of practice. The second is undertaking the practice. The third is gaining the benefits of the practice. The fourth is enjoying or applying these benefits. Regarding killing, for example, the Buddha has admonished us to refrain from tormenting and killing. He has pointed out the unwholesome consequences of not refraining and the benefits of refraining. These, first of all, we have to study. This is called learning the correct method. If we do not know how to refrain from unjust deeds, this represents a low standard. If we make an effort to learn how to refrain from such unwholesomeness, then our standards increase. Thus those who study the guidelines are uplifted. Then by actually practising we refrain from tormenting and killing. And thus we gain the benefits: we are free from injury, our internal enemies are cooled, and the coarse and insulting defilements are calmed. We become loveable.

Establishment in the Sāsana

By practising abstinence together with *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation one gains many immediate benefits. One gains control over oneself and peace within, and one does not agitate the immediate environment, so this too becomes peaceful. How beneficial this is both for oneself and others! By applying this mindfulness practice frequently, one develops good habits and others can then take one as a role model to live up to. Step by step the benefits increase. This is what is meant by being carried by the Dhamma. The Dhamma uplifts and protects the practitioner. One avoids what should be avoided, such as wrongful actions and wrongful speech. The transgressive defilements are calmed because of avoidance and thus discipline (*Vinaya*) arises. One becomes clean, gentle and loveable.

On the other hand, if morality (*sīla*) is lacking, one will fall away from the Buddha's admonition, which otherwise uplifts and refines one's standard of life. One will not be liberated from the bondage of the transgressive defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesas*) and thus one will fall away from noble deliverance (*vimutti*). This is the meaning of '*paṭatita*'. Further, if one's morality (*sīla*) is lacking, one's concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) will be lacking also. One will not then be liberated either from the obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas*) or the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesas*). Lacking in these areas, one will be outside of the Buddha's teachings (*sāsana*). One may be a Buddhist in name, but since one is failing to practise, one has fallen away from the teachings.

Only when a person who has taken refuge in the Buddha listens to the teachings will his or her standard of life be raised, and will body, speech and mind become cultivated. In this case one will be well established in the *sāsana*. As a common worldling (*puthujjana*), however, one is bound to fall away from the Dhamma-Vinaya again and again. One always needs to exert effort not to fall away from the teachings. It is only with the attainment of full path and fruition knowledge (*magga phala ñāṇa*) or arahantship that one is guaranteed not to fall away from the Dhamma-Vinaya.



*Spiritual
Self-Reliance*

A person who is weak in four qualities falls away from the Dhamma-Vinaya. These four qualities are: *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), *paññā* (wisdom) and *vimutti* (deliverance). Being weak in morality one becomes unable to escape from the bondage of the transgressive defilements. If noble morality is weak, then noble deliverance will be weak, and one will automatically fall from the Dhamma-Vinaya. Nobody throws one off, one falls away by oneself. One falls from the Dhamma, which uplifts one's standard of life, and also from the Vinaya, which cultivates one's behaviour. One falls away from the Buddha's teachings, which automatically implies that one lets go of the Buddha. Why is this? The Buddha, shortly before entering into the great passing away (*mahāparinibbāna*), spoke to his disciple Ānanda, saying: "Ānanda, for 45 years I have taught the Dhamma-Vinaya. When I enter *mahāparinibbāna*, this Dhamma-Vinaya will be your teacher"¹ Thus the Dhamma-Vinaya and the Buddha cannot be separated. When one is weak

1 As recorded in the MAHĀPARINIBBĀNA SUTTA, DĪGHA NIKĀYA 16.

in morality, the Dhamma falls, and when the Dhamma falls, the Buddha, who has established the Dhamma, also falls. When one lets go of the Dhamma, one lets go of the Buddha. Simply put: no more Dhamma, no more Buddha. One will lose one's connection with the Saṅgha, and nothing will remain.

Morality as the Foundation of Practice

If one's morality is weak, one's deliverance from the gross defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesas*) will be weak, and one will not possess pure, clean and concentrated *samādhi*. Why? Concentration cannot arise or develop without a good foundation in morality. Wrong concentration (*micchā samādhi*) may arise, but right concentration (*sammā samādhi*) cannot arise. When pure, clean concentration is weak, one also falls away from the Dhamma-Vinaya, and noble deliverance from the bondage of the obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas*) will also be weak. With no morality as a foundation, concentration does not arise, and thus *vipassanā* knowledge, beginning with the discovery of mind and matter, does not arise either. Only if *vipassanā* knowledge is complete and mature will noble path and fruition consciousness arise. When *vipassanā* knowledge is weak, the development of path and fruition consciousness will be undermined, and with that noble deliverance from the bondage of the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesas*). There will be nothing left. Such a person is called 'papatita', that is, one who falls away without control from the Dhamma-Vinaya.

Strengthening One's Spiritual Self-Defences

Consider your life in this light. When one is weak, one lets go of the Buddha's teachings and the meditation practice. When one lets go of the Dhamma, one lets go of the Buddha and the Saṅgha, or if one still has contact with the Saṅgha it will only be on a superficial level. If there is no more genuine Buddha, no more genuine Dhamma and no more genuine Saṅgha, then one lacks a genuine refuge. In this case one ends up estranged from the Buddha *sāsana*, and one may tend to adopt rites, rituals and beliefs from other spiritual traditions. If one lives in proximity to Hinduism, one will surely adopt some Hindu practices. If one lives in proximity to Christianity, one may adopt Christian practices. If one lives in a region where Islam is strong, one may add Muslim rites or rituals to one's practice. If one comes across other charismatic spiritual teachers or sects of various sorts, one may be tempted to take up some of their beliefs and practices. This amounts to nothing but restlessness and confusion. As a result, everything gets mixed up.

In order to realise the true Dhamma of the Buddha, it is necessary for us to strengthen our spiritual self-defences, namely to be fulfilled with morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). When this is the case we will be free from the transgressive defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesas*), the obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas*) and the latent, dormant defilements (*anusaya kilesas*). If we are free from these defilements, the Dhamma arises. When the Dhamma arises, the Buddha arises, and the Saṅgha arises. Thus by following the

Dhamma, the three refuges, Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, arise in oneself.

The Triple Gem

If one does not take refuge in the Triple Gem, there is no foundation of faith and confidence (*saddhā*). The Buddha's teaching is no more; Buddhist culture is no more. A void (*suñña*) forms, and into the void of Buddhist culture rush beliefs of other traditions and religions. Just as air enters naturally into a void in space, other beliefs enter naturally into the void created in those who have fallen away from the Dhamma-Vinaya, who are weak in the four qualities of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* and *vimutti*. Other cultures connected with those beliefs also enter naturally. At that point, one can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. One will just follow whatever is most convenient. Thus in a Hindu country, one may adopt some Hindu beliefs and culture. For example, when a child is sick, the mother may go to the local Hindu priest and sacrifice a goat or a hen. When a man gets a promotion, he may make an offering to some Hindu spirit. Hindu beliefs and culture can thus overwhelm Buddhism and lead to its extinction. With this, the really reliable Buddha is out of the picture. Many other gods are worshipped. Many beliefs and cultures are adhered to. It becomes a real potpourri. The fundamental reason is that one has become weak and incomplete in the four qualities mentioned in the PĀPATITTA SUTTA. Please think about it.

It is really important that genuine new seeds of Buddhism arise. By this is meant that it is really important to have people in the Saṅgha who are strongly committed, who have faith and confidence in the genuine Buddha, the genuine Dhamma and the genuine Saṅgha, who are complete in the trainings in morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) and who are delivered (*vimutti*) from the gross, medium and refined defilements. Thus, with the meditation practice, one should strive to become at least a stream enterer. With this, a new 'seed' forms. And with the forming of a new seed, the Buddha is there, the Dhamma is there, and the Saṅgha is there. Faith in the Triple Gem becomes unshakeable. A void in Buddhist culture no longer exists and other beliefs and cultures can no longer enter. One's spiritual self-defence has become good.

Realising the Truth

If we do not practise the Dhamma, leading to the highest form of culture as expounded by the Enlightened One, we will not understand the four noble truths, namely the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth leading to the cessation of suffering. Those who have not understood the four noble truths can easily be influenced by missionaries of other religions. Such people are not awake or alert, they are like people who are fast asleep, negligent, casual, bewildered, ignorant and deluded. This ignorance starts with not knowing the true refuge, the true Dhamma. Just as when encountering a flood or other danger,

a sleeping person will be carried away first, those who do not know the true nature of things, who are covered with delusion, have to suffer in life. This is a great pity. To save us from such a fate, the Buddha has clearly described how we can realise the four noble truths through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*. A person who has fully realised these truths will never be influenced or swayed by missionaries of other religions, and although such missionaries will try to proselytise, they will not succeed. It is said that such a person can easily move about in this chaotic world of different beings, with all its suffering, unfairness and falsehood (*adhamma*). This is because of the Buddha's encouraging Dhamma.

Most people will fall away from the Dhamma-Vinaya. But as long as one exerts effort in the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the three trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom will be present and this will not happen. The Buddha has expressed this as: 'Whoever is endowed with the four qualities of noble morality, noble concentration, noble wisdom and noble deliverance will not fall away from my teachings'. The insight knowledges arise stage by stage beginning with the knowledge of discerning mind from matter. The protections of morality, concentration and wisdom are included in *satipaṭṭhāna*, and thus one is secure from attack by the gross, medium and refined mental defilements. If there is security, one gains freedom (*vimutti*). Being free, the heat of the mental defilements is cooled and one gains peace (*santi*). How good this is!

*The Buddha's Teaching
on Morality
(Sīla-Sāsana)*

Moral shame and fear of wrongdoing are a great support in the avoidance of all unwholesomeness. Effort (*virīya*) is another great support. When one makes effort, stage by stage, for one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour to be free from fault, pure and clean; new effort will arise repeatedly. With the support of *virīya*, a lot of clean wholesomeness develops. The greater the support of effort, the more wholesomeness develops. The development of wholesomeness second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour is astonishing. As effort (*virīya*) gets stronger and stronger, the courage to avoid unwholesomeness gets stronger and stronger. The courage to develop wholesomeness also gets stronger. The courage to avoid unwholesomeness and develop wholesomeness is called *virīya*. A possessor of such effort is called '*virīyavanta*'.

The Buddha has admonished us: 'Avoid misconduct'. As much as there is moral shame (*hiri*) and fear of wrongdoing (*ottappa*), one avoids misconduct (*duccarita*). You will understand that the avoidance of misconduct is beneficial. The more one avoids misconduct, the stronger one's effort. The stronger one's

effort, the more one avoids unwholesomeness and the more one reveals new wholesomeness. A person who listens to and follows the Buddha's instructions is called *ariya sāvaka*, a true and noble disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha called people who were completely pure and clean '*ariya*'. Thus '*ariya*' means a true disciple of the Buddha, a noble one.

Accomplishing Nobility

The hidden meaning of the term '*ariya sāvaka*' has been revealed in the texts. A *sāvaka* is he or she who respectfully listens, bears in mind and practises according to the admonitions and instructions of the Buddha. First we need to listen, then we need to take note or bear in mind, finally we need to practise. Only then will we be a genuine *sāvaka* or disciple.

To what extent do we have to listen respectfully? To what extent will respectful listening be beneficial? The extent to which respectful listening is required has again been shown in the texts. These indicate that pure and noble listening is necessary, and that respectful listening is necessary. What is meant is that in listening, one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour must be free from fault, pure and clean, and thus refined, gentle and of a high standard. To put it differently, the function of knowing what should be known must be accomplished; the function of dispelling what should be dispelled must be accomplished; and the function of revealing what should be revealed must be accomplished. Only when these functions have been accomplished does a state of purity and nobility arise. Thus,

only when one practises and accomplishes the four noble truths will the state of purity and nobility arise, and only then can listening be called respectful listening. That is, only when one practises to become a noble one (*ariya*) does one become a disciple (*sāvaka*).

Dispelling Unwholesomeness

The *dhammas* that need to be dispelled are the unwholesome *dhammas*. These are mental states associated with ordinary or excessive greed, ordinary or excessive ill-will, and ordinary or excessive ignorance. These base mental states arise together with the roots of all unwholesomeness. The opposing wholesome states, which are free from fault and pure, have to be revealed. To accomplish the function of dispelling what should be dispelled, one has to practise correctly, in accordance with the instructions. Thereby the function of dispelling unwholesome mental states is accomplished, and the state of respectful, noble, pure listening arises. Only then does one enter the list of *sāvakas*, or disciples.

The *dhammas* that should be dispelled are the tenfold unwholesome forms of action or evil conduct (*duccarita*), namely the three bodily actions (*kāya duccarita*), four verbal actions (*vacī duccarita*) and three mental actions (*mano duccarita*). The three unwholesome bodily actions are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four forms of evil conduct by speech are lying, slandering, harsh speech and meaningless talk. The three unwholesome mental actions are covetousness, wishing to destroy others (ill-will), and holding wrong views (*micchā*

ditṭhi), such as the view that doing wholesome deeds is not beneficial, the view that doing unwholesome deeds does not lead to unwholesome results, or the nihilistic view that life ends with death (*uccheda ditṭhi*). The ten courses of unwholesome action are bad, wicked forms of behaviour. They are wild, gross, despicable, disgusting and frightful. Moral shame (*hiri*) and fear of wrongdoing (*ottappa*) generate the courage to dispel the tenfold forms of unwholesome action. In dispelling unwholesomeness, courage arises; in revealing wholesomeness, courage arises. This is called *virīya*.

The Buddha has admonished: 'Be courageous in dispelling unwholesomeness, be courageous in developing wholesomeness, dispel what should be dispelled, reveal what should be revealed, be bold, heroic, courageous. In other words, be a possessor of happiness.' Possessing *virīya*, a noble disciple of the Buddha dispels unwholesomeness, and arouses, develops and increases wholesomeness; dispels the flawed, blemished *dhammas*, and develops the clean *dhammas*. If one is free from unwholesomeness, one's behaviour in body, speech and mind becomes purified, and oneself becomes purified.

Developing Wholesomeness

Purifying oneself is called in Pāli, *suddhanam attanam pariharati*, which means working towards one's own purification. A genuine disciple (*sāvaka*) has the courage to dispel unwholesomeness and develop wholesomeness. A person who is not a genuine disciple does not have the courage to do this. Working towards one's

purification, one becomes pure and clean, free from blemish. If one is not pure and clean, one is wild; being pure and clean, one is cultured. If one is not cultured, one is rough; if one is cultured, one is refined and gentle. If one is rough, one is burning; if one is gentle, one is peaceful, cool. If one is burning with internal fire, then it is despicable, disgusting and frightful. If one is peaceful, one becomes loveable. This is what is meant by *suddhanam attanam pariharati*: developing the Buddha's teachings in oneself.

Right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kammanta*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) are the concerns of morality. By dispelling wrongful speech, right speech arises quite automatically. Likewise, by dispelling unwholesome action, right action arises, and dispelling wrongful livelihood, right livelihood arises. Thus with the exertion of effort, one's *sīla* becomes complete. The forms of misconduct (*duccarita*) get dispelled and the forms of wholesomeness (*succarita*) arise. With this, wholesome mental states come along. One becomes clear, and the more one develops clarity, the more encouraged one feels. When one reflects on the purity of one's body, speech and mind with such a clear mind, the mind gains strength. Then as much as one gains courage and strength, mindfulness (*sati*) comes along. The mind also gains tranquillity. Thus by dispelling the wrongful dhammas, the rightful dhammas are revealed, clarity and purity arise in the mind, and one's knowledge increases steadily. The courage to avoid unwholesomeness and the courage to perform wholesomeness also increase. Thus morality

(*sīla*) improves in an exceptional manner. A person whose bodily and verbal behaviour is pure and who is endowed with morality does not fall away from the *sīla sāsana*, or Dhamma-Vinaya. He or she is also liberated from the bondage of the transgressive defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesas*). How gratifying this is!

Freedom from Danger

Being endowed with noble morality, one is also free from four further dangers. First, one is free from the great danger of self-blame, *attānuvāda bhaya*. This means one is freed from the danger of being dissatisfied with oneself, of having a low opinion of oneself, of feeling out of place. Second, one is free from the danger of being held in low esteem by society, by the wise and virtuous, called in Pāli *parānuvāda bhaya*. Third, one is free from the danger of legal punishment, *daṇḍa bhaya*, which carries with it utter disgrace, separation from one's family and other dangers. Finally, one is free from the danger of falling into states of loss (*duggati bhaya*). One can regain human birth or even rebirth as a celestial being. Such beings cannot fall into states of loss. Thus one is liberated from four kinds of fear. This is deliverance (*vimutti*). Wrongful behaviour by body, speech and mind are boldly avoided with courage and dispelled with strong effort (*virīya*); right action, speech and thought are revealed, and one is at once liberated from dangers. These are no small benefits. This is called spreading *sīla sāsana* within oneself.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Strenuous Effort (*Āraddha Viriya*)

When the first training, in *sīla* (morality) is fulfilled, the foundation is laid for one to become a genuine human being, someone with integrity. However, this is only the foundation. Just laying the foundation of a building is not enough. Having laid the foundation, one needs to erect the building and only then can one live in it. Similarly, though monks will be fulfilled in their monastic vows and lay people will be fulfilled in lay morality with the first training, this will be all. It remains necessary to know how to guard the mind and how to develop the knowledge of a genuine human being.

First, one needs to study a method of purifying and concentrating the mind, otherwise one's life will be of a low standard. If one does not study a method of developing and advancing the mind in insight knowledge, one will not have such a method at one's disposal, and one's standards will easily drop. Furthermore, if one has studied such a method but does not practise it, the mind will not become pure and clean, nor will the development of the insight knowledges be complete. The study of the Dhamma is called *pariyatti*. By coming to know this

method of purifying and concentrating the mind, one's standard of life rises. This is *pariyatti Dhamma*. It uplifts the standard of life of those who study the Dhamma.

The Need for Strenuous Effort

If one studies the Dhamma, but does not practise it, the mind will not be purified. One may have studied the Dhamma, even gained a BA, MA or PhD, and yet live in a casual, superficial manner. Encountering the sense objects, one drowns in them and lets the mind wander freely: there is no control of the obsessive defilements through concentration (*samādhi*). Such a person may observe the moral precepts but set the mind free to indulge in the sense pleasures. When one comes across a pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste or touch, one appreciates it and indulges in it. Among monastics and laity it is the same pattern. Most people live without control of the mind through mindfulness. How can the mind possibly be pure and clean? Not knowing and studying the method of practice, one will not gain a pure and clean mind. Thus, one enters neither the list of Dhamma practitioners, nor the list of *samādhi* Dhamma practitioners. And if one is not yet among the *samādhi* Dhamma practitioners, one is not yet free from the bondage of the obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesas*). In this case, one will fall away from the Buddha's teachings on concentration (*samādhi sāšana*) and wisdom (*paññā sāšana*).

Having gained human birth and come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, it is only when one practises with all-out

effort, thereby overcoming laziness and freeing oneself from the three forms of wrongful thought (*micchā vitakka*), that one will not lose the benefits that come with the three trainings. Not realising this, meditators may be overly concerned with their body and life. When sitting for long stretches, stiffness and pain can arise in the body, and provoke fears of injury, disability, even dying. In practising the Dhamma, which gives assurance for life, one should practise with all-out effort, without holding back. Having consideration for one's body and life, laziness will become very thick and one will live in dire Dhamma poverty. The antidote is the exertion of strenuous effort (*āradhā viriya*) in the development of the mind and the advancement of insight knowledge. Such effort must be exerted boldly, courageously, and without consideration for body or life.

Laziness and Misconduct

Lazy behaviour is despicable since it is the forerunner of all forms of misconduct (*duccarita*). Furthermore, it is blameworthy. To be surrounded by misconduct is despicable. A person who delights in despicable misconduct invites censure, even abuse. Such a person is known in Pāli as *kusita*, meaning lazy, indolent. The Buddha said to his disciples: 'Bhikkhus, a lay person tends to live in dire suffering and Dhamma poverty.' Coming and going in suffering, standing and sitting in suffering, lying down in suffering, bending, stretching, lifting, moving, placing, all in suffering. Whatever one may be doing one experiences suffering because one is mixing with blameworthy, impure,

unwholesomeness. Such unwholesomeness defiles or stains a person, and lowers his or her standard of life, hence it is wicked or sinful (*pāpaka*).

Not only does laziness bring about suffering, it also decreases and damages one's personal wealth and prosperity. This does not mean, of course, that laziness whittles away one's money, goods and property, but rather that it diminishes one's morality, concentration and wisdom, those qualities essential to cutting off the cycle of existence (*saṃsāra*). Having gained human birth and come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, both the mundane trainings in morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), and the supramundane trainings¹ represent one's genuine wealth and prosperity. Thus laziness destroys one's genuine wealth and prosperity.

The Benefits of Strenuous Effort (āradḍha viriya)

All those who are striving for insight knowledge need to possess *āradḍha viriya*, meaning strenuous, ardent, resolute effort. To overcome laziness takes more than just initial or launching effort (*ārambha dhātu*). One first has to step up one's effort (see Stepped-up Effort, *nikkama dhātu*, pages 39-44, chapter 6). When experiencing heavy laziness, or *thīna middha*, especially at the start of intensive practice, the meditator will need to arouse and thereby step up his or her effort to overcome the exhaustion, tiredness, loss of energy and laziness (*kosajja*). As

1 *Lokuttara sīla, lokuttara samādhi, lokuttara paññā* are the supramundane trainings, realised with the attainment of successive path and fruition knowledges.

the practice progresses to reach the stage of the fast arising and passing away of formations,² one requires another level of effort, namely *āradḍha viriya*. This *āradḍha viriya* has been described in the texts as steadily rising, uplifting effort, also known as *paḡḡahita viriya*, effort that steadily rises.³

The essential quality of *āradḍha viriya* is comparable to the persistent physical effort required in steadily lifting a heavy object from a low to a high place without stopping or lowering the object. However difficult, exhausting or tiring the situation may be, the effort needs to keep rising. If the effort keeps rising, eventually it becomes fulfilling effort (*paripuṇṇa viriya*). This fulfilled effort (*paripuṇṇa viriya*) is synonymous with culminating effort (*parakkama dhātu*) with which the goal is reached. When one has overcome the intermediate difficulties such as laziness, sluggishness, tiredness, sleepiness and boredom, one may find oneself in a smooth and subtle space and one becomes complacent. At this point, culminating effort needs to be applied. This is the effort to persist and maintain the practice, ascending one's insight knowledge (*ñāṇa*) after another until one reaches the goal. This goal should be at least the attainment of the path of stream entry (*sotāpatti magga*). A possessor of such steadily rising effort (*āradḍha viriya*) tends to live happily. What is meant by living happily? To live freely and purely. Free from what? Free from the three kinds of wrongful thought (*micchā*

2 By this, Sayādaw U Paṇḍita means insight into the momentary arising and passing away of objects, one of the stages in the progression of insight knowledge. For further detail on the progress of insight, see Sayādaw U Paṇḍita's book, *IN THIS VERY LIFE*, which has an appendix on the subject.

3 *Āradḍhaviriyoti paḡḡahitaviriyō* (UDĀNA)

vitakka). Freed from wrongful thought, quite automatically one becomes fulfilled with one's true wealth or prosperity day-by-day, in the form of *sīla sikkhā*, *samādhi sikkhā* and *paññā sikkhā*. These are the benefits of possessing *āraddha viriya*, as explained by the Buddha.⁴

Wholesome and Unwholesome Vitakka

At this point some explanation is required on the subject of *vitakka*. *Vitakka* is usually translated as intention, directing, discursive thought. This is not wrong. However, it is not complete. *Vitakka* is of two categories, namely wholesome or correct *vitakka*, and unwholesome or wrongful *vitakka*. Wrongful *vitakka* consists of *kāma vitakka*, sensuous thought; *byāpāda vitakka*, hateful thought; and *vihimsa vitakka*, thoughts of cruelty. Wholesome *vitakka* consists of *nekkhamma vitakka*, thoughts of renunciation; *abyāpāda vitakka*, thoughts of non-hatred; and *avihimsa vitakka*, thoughts of non-cruelty.⁵ These will be considered as three pairs. *Kāma vitakka*, sensuous thoughts, are thoughts, intentions or directions connected to loveable and delightful sense objects, such as sights, sounds, fragrances, tastes and touch impressions. *Kāma vitakka* includes thoughts of wanting to see pleasurable objects, hear delightful sounds, taste delicious flavours, and so on, as well as thoughts connected with the search for food or clothing. The arising of such thoughts is associated with greed (*lobha*). The opposite of *kāma vitakka*

4 AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA 1.24

5 These three forms of *vitakka* constitute right thought, the second link of the Noble Eightfold Path.

is *nekkhamma vitakka*, thoughts of renunciation, for example of generosity, of observing moral precepts, of becoming a monk or a nun, or of taking time out to practise high-level meditation, as now. Such thoughts are free from greed (*lobha*) and craving (*taṇhā*).

Byāpāda vitakka, thoughts of ill-will, arise on contact with disagreeable sense objects, such as a disgusting taste, discordant sound and so on. This includes thoughts of disliking, irritation and anger towards others. The opposite of *byāpāda vitakka* is *abyāpāda vitakka*, thoughts free from ill-will, tantamount to loving kindness (*mettā*), thoughts for the welfare and happiness of other beings. *Vihimsa vitakka*, thoughts of cruelty, are thoughts of wanting to torture, ill-treat, torment or oppress other beings, also in essence ill-will (*dosa*). The opposite of *vihimsa vitakka* is *avihimsa vitakka*, thoughts of patience, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, wishing others to be free from suffering, and helping others to become free from suffering; in essence, compassion (*karuṇā*).

Dispelling Wrongful Thought

In the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the meditator aims the noting and observing mind at objects as they arise, beginning with the rising and falling movement, so that mind and object are aligned. Here, *vitakka* involves aiming or focusing, not intentional thinking. As well as the nature of concentrated aiming, this *vitakka* has an element of absorption (*jhāna*), hence it is called the jhanic factor of *vitakka* (*vitakka jhānaṅga*). When the mind is aligned with the correct object in this way, there will

be no more sensuous thoughts (*kāma vitakka*), no more hateful thoughts (*byāpāda vitakka*) and no more thoughts of wanting to oppress others (*vihimsa vitakka*). Thus, the jhanic factor of *vitakka* weakens and suppresses the three kinds of wrongful thought (*micchā vitakka*).

However, this *vitakka* can remove unwholesomeness only to a small extent. Exertion of heroic effort (*āradhha viriya*) is much more powerful.

In meditation practice, *vitakka* involves squarely aiming at an object. *Āradhha viriya* bravely propels the noting and observing mind towards the object from second to second so that it lands on the object and sticks to it. With such effort, mindfulness (*sati*) arises, and with the arising of mindfulness, concentration also arises. There is no need to intentionally create mindfulness and concentration. If one aims the mind squarely at the object and exerts effort, mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*śamādhī*) arise automatically. Hence, the mind sticks to the object of observation, and effort thus dispels the three forms of wrongful thought (*micchā vitakka*) in the sense of not giving them an opportunity to arise, not accepting them. Instead the three kinds of thoughts opposed to wrongful thoughts arise, namely thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma vitakka*), thoughts of non-hatred (*abyāpāda vitakka*), and thoughts of non-cruelty (*avihimsa vitakka*). Thus, *āradhha viriya* expels the leading unwholesome factors, and opens the way for wholesomeness.

*The Buddha's Teaching
on Concentration
(Samādhi-Sāsana)*

From the PĀPATITA SUTTA, it is clear that the term 'ariya samādhi' (noble concentration) does not refer exclusively to concentration, but rather should be interpreted as effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) occurring together. During sitting, for example, one follows the instruction: 'At the moment of arising of the rising movement, aim and send the mind towards the object, consistently note and observe the object.' When the rising or falling movement occurs, one exerts mental effort in sending the noting and observing mind towards the object. At that moment there is exertion of energy and no shrinking or withdrawal of energy. Neither is there any exhaustion of energy, tiredness, or easygoing contemplation. The mind is alert, active, sharp. Effort (*virīya*) is present. Second by second it propels the mind towards the object. Then there is the instruction: 'Aim consistently, note and observe', which means focus the mind so that it falls squarely on the object of observation. The element of exerting effort is always included. As a result, one can consistently note and observe the object, because mindfulness (*sati*) is present.

Establishing Noble Concentration

The characteristic of mindfulness is the sinking of the mind into the object of observation. When throwing a cork into water, it will float on the surface; when throwing a stone into water, it will sink immediately to the bottom. When the rising movement occurs, it is the same: the mind will sink into and penetrate the object. This is mindfulness. When one has become skilled in mindfulness, the mind no longer goes elsewhere, and so-called unscattered concentration (*avikkhepa samādhi*) arises. At the moment the mind sticks to and penetrates the object being noted, it is neither running about nor scattering, and momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*) is said to have arisen.

Let us look at what happens when effort, mindfulness and concentration arise. Effort (*virīya*) dispels the mental defilements (*kilesas*) beginning with laziness or indolence (*kosajja*). Not a single mental defilement is given the opportunity to arise. Effort thus reveals or exposes the wholesome *dhammas*. In these wholesome *dhammas*, mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are included. Mindfulness protects the mind against attack by the mental defilements. Concentration has the function of unifying the mind on a single object. At the same time, the mind gains strength. Think about it. When the mind penetrates an object there is not a single obsessive defilement (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa*). The mind is clean, noble. This is *ariya*. Here the term 'ariya' does not mean a permanently noble one, but refers to the temporary, momentary state of purity of the mind. When there is purity of mind, the mind becomes refined, and thus high or

noble (*uttama*). When the mind becomes pure, refined and noble through effort, mindfulness and concentration, one no longer falls away from the Dhamma-Vinaya. With that the Buddha's dispensation of concentration (*samādhi sāsaṇa*) becomes well established.

Dispelling the Hindrances

In dispelling unwholesomeness and revealing wholesomeness, effort (*virīya*) is crucial, and aiming (*vitakka*) and rubbing (*vicāra*) are also involved. *Vitakka* focuses the mind on the object of observation so that the mind falls squarely on the object. With the help of *vitakka*, the mind is aimed at the target, facing the target squarely. When aiming or propelling the mind towards an object, the mind intensely rubs the object. This is called *vicāra* or *anumajjana*, meaning stroking or rubbing the object. When the mind is squarely aimed at and propelled towards an object with effort, and intensely rubs that object, then two out of the five *jhāna* factors are present, namely *vitakka* and *vicāra*, and they free the mind from the hindrances.

When *vitakka* and *vicāra* have become strong, there is no desire to see, hear, smell, taste or touch desirable objects. In other words, there is no hindrance of sense desire (*kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*). Furthermore, there is no ill-will, aversion or anger (*byāpāda nīvaraṇa*). When the mind is directly aimed at an object of observation, that mind is opened up, and becomes refreshed and active. The hindrance of sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha nīvaraṇa*), which causes the mind to shrink and

contract, is thus overcome. How good this is! When the mind falls on an object, sticks to the object and is not dispersed, the mind is also free from the hindrance of restlessness (*uddhacca nīvaraṇa*). With this freedom, moreover, there is no remorse over the wrongs of commission and omission. The mind will also be free from the hindrance of sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā nīvaraṇa*); indeed, from all the hindrances. With one second of aiming and intense rubbing of the object, the mind is free from all the hindrances for one second. With one minute of aiming and intense rubbing, the mind is free from the hindrances for sixty seconds. When the mind is free from the hindrances in this way for some time, there will be seclusion from the hindrances, or mental detachment (*citta viveka*). Because of this seclusion from the hindrances, the meditator may experience a minor type of rapture in the form of goose bumps, chills and thrills.

The Sweet Taste of the Dhamma

The texts say that mindful contemplation of arising objects leads to freedom and purification from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). When one noting is connected to the next, mindfulness becomes strong. Likewise, when the preceding concentration and the succeeding concentration are connected, concentration becomes very good. When mindfulness and concentration become strong, weak joy and rapture (*dubbalo pīti*) arise, consisting of minor joy (*khuddaka pīti*), momentary joy (*khaṇika pīti*), and showering joy (*okkantika pīti*). These have the nature of gladness and jubilation. Body and mind feel comfortable and

at ease and happiness (*sukha*) ensues. And in the presence of joy and rapture and happiness, the sweet taste of the Dhamma comes along. This joy, rapture and happiness have to be noted and observed, otherwise one may get attached to them and one's practice may get disrupted. If one continues to note and observe with exertion of effort, mindfulness (*sati*) becomes more consistent, continuous, and firm, and concentration (*samādhi*) becomes increasingly strong.

As one continues to contemplate, joy and rapture may become even stronger. This is called joy and happiness (*pīti sukha*) or strong joy and rapture (*balava pīti*). One may feel as if one is separating from the meditation mat, levitating in the air, or sitting on a sofa. Sitting may feel so good that one may never want to get up again. Such experiences are manifestations of uplifting joy (*ubbega pīti*) and pervading joy (*pharaṇa pīti*). One feels at great ease. This is joy, rapture and happiness conditioned by concentration, which is given as *samādhi-ja pīti sukha*. Meditators who experience such strong joy and rapture are free from physical and mental impediments, mental scattering, worry and confusion. There is lightness of body and mind, the body feels comfortable, the mind steady and peaceful, and concentration is quite strong. If one is endowed with concentration in this way, how can one then fall away, from the Buddha's teachings? Thus the second dispensation (*samādhi sāsana*) becomes established.

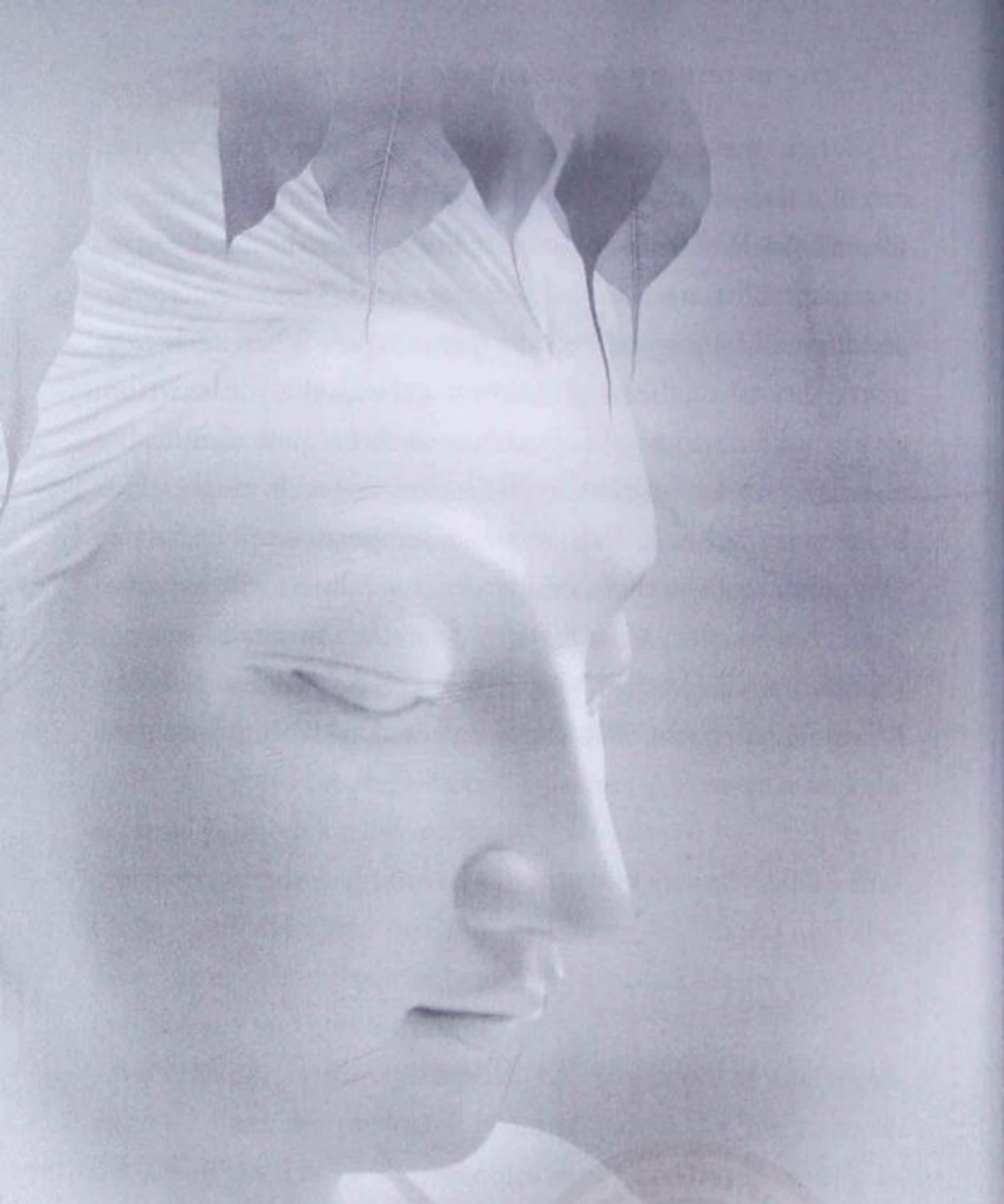
Developing the Mind

As the meditator experiences the taste of the Dhamma in an extraordinary manner, he or she comes to understand him or herself. One comes to understand that the mental defilements arise when mindfulness is absent, and that the mind burns with the heat of these mental defilements and becomes charred, soiled. If there is mindfulness, on the contrary, and one notes and observes whatever object arises, the mental defilements have no chance to enter, and as a result the mind will be cool, clear, peaceful and calm. Thus, the meditator comes to value and cherish the practice. Because of one's sustained contemplation, this good situation has arisen. Realising this, one comes to detest, hate, be disgusted with and ashamed of the entering of mental defilements into the stream of consciousness. Furthermore, one is afraid that one's good work will be destroyed by a failure or omission in noting and the ensuing entry of mental defilements. Quite naturally then, one will increase one's effort, and the more effort one exerts, the better will be one's clarity of mind, mindfulness and concentration.

As energy is thus generated, the condition of the mind improves, and the meditator becomes hungry for the taste of the Dhamma. He or she becomes very encouraged, which is nothing other than gaining faith and confidence (*saddhā*) in the practice. Faith and confidence become a power (*saddhā bala*), and this is followed by effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, which all become powers (*virīya bala*, *sati bala*, *samādhi bala*, *paññā bala*). Thus, the mind as a whole becomes powerful.

When the controlling faculties¹ have developed to this extent, the mind is provided with Dhamma nutriment (*dhammoja*). With this, new materiality forms in the mind, just as new materiality arises in the body from food. This is materiality conditioned by joy and rapture (*pīti-ja rūpa*). When such new materiality arises, the mind changes, and with this the body also changes, life changes. These changes can be quite significant, especially when one rises to the higher stages of insight. The more encouraged one feels, the more hungry one will be for the Dhamma, and the more one's mental condition will improve. Thus, heroic effort (*āradḍha viriya*) removes unwholesomeness (*akusala*) and reveals and develops wholesomeness (*kusala*). Dhamma nutriment (*dhammoja*) comes along with the group of wholesomeness.

1 The controlling faculties and powers comprise the same five positive mental factors: faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, though different functions are ascribed to the two categories. The controlling faculties exercise control in their respective domains, and thus help to overcome their opposites: faithlessness or disbelief, laziness, forgetfulness, distractedness and ignorance. The five powers are unshakeable by their opposites.



Within the available time, please strive to become at least a stream enterer so that it will have been worthwhile having become a human being and having come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, and so that you will become a true noble disciple of the Buddha.

*The Buddha's Teaching
on Wisdom
(Paññā-Sāsana)*

The three levels of defilements, gross, medium and refined, can be compared to the three phases of malaria. A typical attack starts with chills. These are followed by high fever or delirium, which may last several hours or days. Finally, the sick person begins to sweat, the temperature goes down, and he or she may feel OK, though a little weak. Bringing down the fever with ice cubes wrapped in a towel and placed on the chest and forehead, can help to treat the acute phase of malaria. If no medicine is taken, however, there will still be attacks of fever every two to three days, since the parasites have not been eliminated. These latent parasites will continue to attack whenever conditions are opportune. In the same way, latent mental defilements lingering in the mind can cause one to tumble away from the Dhamma-Vinaya. These latent defilements cannot be extinguished by morality (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*) alone: only by wisdom (*paññā*) can this be achieved. Only at the moment that insight knowledge arises can it temporarily dispel these subtle defilements. And only then will insight knowledge arise, stage by stage, mature and come to completion, and will both the

noted object and the noting mind be eventually extinguished or stilled.

The Roots of Suffering

Ignorance can be said to be the root cause of all the ills of this world. Human beings suffer from two types of ignorance. The first is not knowing or seeing clearly, according to reality (*apatipatti avijjā*), the second is wrong knowing or delusion (*micchā patipatti avijjā*). If we do not note and observe arising objects such as seeing, hearing, rising, falling, sitting, touching, bending and stretching as and when they happen, such simple unknowing and wrong knowing arise. This means that we do not see the true characteristics of objects as impermanent, suffering and non-self. Instead, we take them to be permanent and pleasurable. Furthermore, we build up a false picture of ourself as one who sees, hears, and so on.

The sense pleasures are no doubt good from the point of view of an ordinary worldling (*puthujjana*). Because their flaws are not seen, in fact, the sense pleasures are dangerously, even fatally good. This is because in taking the sense objects as good, quite naturally one wants to see, hear, smell, taste and touch, and one longs for even more of these objects. This is craving (*taṇhā*). Having obtained one's desire, craving (*taṇhā*) increases, and leads to clinging (*upādāna*). Then thinking that 'I am seeing, I am hearing, I am experiencing', and so on, the belief in a self or person grows. And taking the sense objects as good, one takes rebirths as good and hence longs for rebirths.

The Three Rounds

The mental defilements of ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) can be said to occur as a single package. Ignorance leads to craving, craving leads to clinging, and clinging entrenches ignorance. In this way, the cycle of mental defilements (*kilesa vaṭṭa*) revolves. These defilements quite naturally lead to actions, which may be wholesome or unwholesome. If the mental attitude is wholesome, good actions by body, speech and mind will result. If the mental attitude is not wholesome, wrongdoing by body, speech and mind will evolve. The round of wholesome and unwholesome actions is called *kamma vaṭṭa*.

This is not the end of the process. Any enthusiastically performed action, be it wholesome or unwholesome, will leave behind a potential in the body-mind, which later, when conditions are favourable, will give rise to respective results or effects. Wholesome deeds will leave behind the potential to produce wholesome effects. Killing, stealing and other unwholesome actions will leave behind the potential to produce unwholesome effects. In either case, the effects are of two types: fundamental and subsequent. The fundamental effect is a new existence (*paṭisandhi*). The subsequent effects are the arising of the simple mind-matter processes: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and knowing. Hence, when the round of defilements (*kilesa vaṭṭa*) has arisen, the round of actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*) is bound to arise. And if the round of actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*) arises, the round of kammic results (*vipāka vaṭṭa*) will also arise. If the round of results has arisen, and one has gained a new existence,

then with this comes the belief in a self (*atta ditṭhi*). Coupled with the belief in a self, the round of defilements (*kilesa vaṭṭa*) starts up again. Based on *kilesa vaṭṭa*, *kamma vaṭṭa* re-arises, and this leads to the renewed arising of *vipāka vaṭṭa*. In this way, like a rotating fan, the triple round keeps revolving.

Cutting Off the Cycle of Defilements

How then does one cut off the cycle of mental defilements? Let us consider the analogy of a fruiting tree. A tree is permeated in its entirety by moisture and sap. Because of the sap, the tree buds, blooms and fruits and seeds form. When these seeds germinate, a new generation of trees develops. There are three stages to the process. For the cycle to continue, the tree needs the supportive factors of soil, water, air and sunlight. To end the cycle, one simply needs to dry up the sap by removing about one foot of the bark. With this, the tree can no longer absorb nutrients and water from the soil, and as a result will dry up and die. Fruits and blossoms will no longer form. A new generation of trees can no longer grow. To dry up the sap of the *kilesas*, one has to work in a similar way. With the help of insight knowledge, one does not give the sap of ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) the opportunity to arise from the seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching processes; and furthermore, one dries them up. The endeavour of preventing the arising of craving and clinging in *vipassanā* practice is called *payoga*.

Coming to Know Reality

By continually catching and observing the sense objects at the place of arising, one comes to know according to reality. This begins to happen when one starts distinguishing mind from matter. For example, when one intends to change from the standing posture into the sitting posture, there will be first of all the mental intention to sit down. This mental intention will arise repeatedly as can be noted and observed. While lowering the body, one discovers that the intention to sit down occurs in stages, and that the physical process of sitting down also occurs in stages, that mentality (*nāma*) is the cause and materiality (*rūpa*) is the effect. One sees also that the mental intentions to sit down, having arisen, pass away. The series of movements in sitting down too, having arisen, pass away. Thus, one comes to know the impermanent nature of the process.

When one notes and observes objects consistently in this way and comes to know their nature stage by stage, then the object-related defilements (*ārammaṇānusaya kilesas*) come to an end. Reflecting back on mind and matter, cause and effect, one comes to understand one's own person or being as impermanent. This is called cutting off the lineage or seed. When one reflects on knowing the impermanent, one realises that there is only the impermanent: what is true for oneself is also true for others, and what is true in the present must have been true in the past, and will remain so in the future. This too is cutting off the lineage. The knowledge that this is suffering also arises. Further, one

comes to know that there is no self essence (*atta*) in any object: just an endless round of cause and effect in process.

Discerning mind from matter, cause and effect, impermanence, suffering and the non-self is insight knowledge or wisdom (*vipassanā paññā*). With this, one is freed from the ignorance of wrong knowing. Not knowing reality, one imagines. Knowing reality, one is automatically freed from wrong knowing (*avijjā*). It fades away. Then, there is no more wanting (*taṇhā*). And when there is no more wanting there can be no attachment (*upādāna*). In this way, when the light of knowledge enters, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled. One is freed from craving and clinging. The round of defilements and the round of actions are destroyed: even wholesome actions leading to further rounds (*vaṭṭagāmi kusala*) no longer arise. As unwholesome actions are distanced, there are no more negative kammic results. And if no actions are performed, new existences are cut off automatically.

Extinguishing the Defilements

When mindfulness is applied to ever newly-arising objects, the latent defilements that arise when conditions are favourable are thus dispelled and cut off. However, they are extinguished only on a temporary basis. That is all. Only when the insight knowledges have matured and come to completion are the objects observed and the observing mind stilled. This is going from continued existence (*pavaṭṭa*) to discontinued existence (*apavaṭṭa*) i.e. going towards peace. The first such step is the path of stream entry (*sotāpatti magga*). When the noble path of

stream entry is realised, certain latent defilements will be cut off at once and completely. They are: personality belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and attachment to rites and rituals (*silabbata parāmāsa*). These forms of wrong conduct will never arise again. If because of further practice one becomes a once-returner, non-returner or holy one, the insight knowledges and the noble path and fruition knowledges become successively complete. In this case, one is no longer in bondage to any of the latent defilements. One is freed from them all.

Gaining Assurance

Of course, reaching this stage of holiness (*arahatta*) is best. But even if one becomes a stream enterer (*sotāpanna*), and thus free from the bondage of the *apāya*-related defilements, this is no small thing. While one is striving to attain this stage (*sotāpatti*) through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, one will be possessed of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*) and deliverance (*vimutti*) to some extent. Those worldlings who strive to realise the teachings of the Buddha in this way are called noble worldlings, *kalyāṇa puthujjana*. By contrast, those worldlings who are not endowed with any of the three trainings live in bondage to the mental defilements. They are called blinded worldlings, *andha puttujjana*.

With the element of initial effort (*ārambha dhātu*), you get started in the meditation practice. With the element of stepped-up effort (*nikkama dhātu*), you overcome hindrances such as idleness, sleepiness and the like. With the element of culminating

effort (*parakkama dhātu*), you exert harder and harder in your meditation, and as a result, you ascend one insight knowledge after another until you reach path and fruition knowledge. Thus, you become a true *yogī*, namely a possessor of the three elements of effort. Within the available time, please strive to become at least a stream enterer so that it will have been worthwhile having become a human being and having come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, and so that you will become a true noble disciple of the Buddha.



GLOSSARY

ABHIDHAMMA: Buddhist psychology and philosophy. The so-called 'Third Basket' or third group of texts in the Theravāda canon (also known as the Pāli canon) of the Buddhist literature.

abhijjhā: Covetousness. A synonym of *lobha*, *taṇhā* and *rāga*.

abyāpāda: Hatelessness, absence of ill-will.

adhamma: Falsehood, absence of Dhamma.

adhicitta: High state of mind or consciousness, particularly as developed through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

adhikusala: Higher wholesomeness.

adosa: Non-hatred, the absence of hatred (*dosa*).

āhāra: Food, nutriment. A synonym of *ojā*.

āhāra-ja rūpa: Corporeality conditioned by food.

ahirika: Shamelessness, literally 'lack of moral shame (*hiri*)'.

ājīva: Livelihood.

akusala: Unwholesome.

alobha: Non-greed, the absence of greed (*lobha*).

amoha: Non-delusion, wisdom, the absence of delusion (*moha*).

- anāgāmi*: Non-returner; one who has attained the third stage of enlightenment. This person will experience no more rebirths in sensual realms, but will attain final enlightenment from the Brahma realm. An *anāgāmi* has uprooted the defilements of greed and anger, but may still experience subtle defilements such as restlessness.
- anattā*: The absence of inherent or independent self; impersonality; lack of self-essence. The last of the three characteristics of all conditioned things.
- anicca*: Impermanence. The first of the three characteristics of all conditioned things.
- anottappa*: Fearlessness of wrongdoing, lit. lack of moral fear (*ottappa*).
- anusaya*: Tendencies or proclivities to wrongdoing. These are seven in number — sensuous greed, grudge, speculative opinion, sceptical doubt, conceit, craving for continued existence, ignorance.
- apāya*: The four lower worlds or states of loss — the animal realm, hell realm, demon realm and realm of hungry ghosts.
- āradhā*: Strenuous, ardent, resolute.
- arahant* (Pāḷi, *arahat*): Holy one. Fully enlightened being; one who has uprooted all the defilements and experiences no more mental suffering. Having attained the fourth and final stage of enlightenment, he or she will not be reborn again in any form, passing entirely into the unconditioned state upon death.

arahatta: The fourth level of noble path consciousness, also known as the path of holiness or the path of the *arahant*.

ārambha dhātu: The element of initial or launching effort.

arammaṇānusaya kilesa: Latent mental defilement triggered by contact with an object. One of two categories of latent defilements, the other being *kamma*-related.

ariya: Noble; noble ones.

arūpāvacara: The immaterial sphere of existence.

atandito: Industriousness, activity, keenness.

atta: Self, ego, personality.

avihiṃsā: Non-harm.

avijjā: Ignorance.

avikkhepa: Undistractedness. A synonym of *samādhi* and *samatha*.

bala: Power. Especially used to refer to faith (*saddhā*), effort or energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), when these have become powerful enough to be unshakeable by their opposites — faithlessness, laziness, forgetfulness, distractedness, and ignorance.

bhava: Becoming, existence.

bhāvanā: Mental development or meditation.

bhaya: Fear.

bhayatupaṭṭhāna nāṇa: Knowledge of fear or terror. One of the higher insight knowledges attained through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

bhikkhu: Buddhist monk.

Brahmā: Heavenly being of the *brahmā* plane, a type of divine realm where there is mind but no matter.

- ✓ **Buddha:** One who is awake. Historically, Prince Siddhatta Gotama, who lived in Nepal and Northern India 2,500 years ago.
- byādhī:* Disease.
- byāpāda:* Aversion, ill-will. A synonym of *dosa*. The second of the five hindrances to meditation.
- cāga:* Charity, liberality, generosity in temperament and behaviour. Willingness to relinquish the *kilesas*, as well as open-handed generosity on a material level.
- cetanā:* Volition, will. One of the seven so-called universal mental factors. which are bound up with all consciousness.
- cetasika:* Mental factors, mental concomitants of consciousness. The ABHIDHAMMA defines 52 of these — 25 beautiful factors, 14 karmically unwholesome and 13 karmically variable, depending on other associated mental factors.
- chanda:* Desire, intention, will.
- citta:* Mind, consciousness.
- dāna:* Generosity, the practice of generosity, or objects given generously. Said by the Buddha to be the first practice for those who want to diminish the force of craving as part of the holy life.
- deva:* Celestial being, lit. radiant one.
- dhamma:* Any object or phenomenon, or phenomena.
- Dhamma (Sanskrit, Dharma):** The teaching of the Buddha, the practice of meditation, fundamental truth.
- Dhamma-Vinaya:** The Buddha's teaching or discipline, consisting of the three trainings in morality, concentration and wisdom.

dhammojā: Food for the mind; spiritual nourishment, especially as conditioned by the development of wholesome mental states through mindfulness practice.

Dhammuddesa: The four essences of the Dhamma.

dhana: Property.

dhātu: Elements, constituents of a whole.

diṭṭhi: View, belief, opinion. If not qualified by *sammā* (right), it mostly refers to a wrong or evil view or opinion.

domanassa: Mental distress, lit. 'sad-mindedness'.

dosa: Hatred, anger.

duccarita: Misconduct. Evil conduct in deeds, words and thoughts, comprising the tenfold unwholesome course of action, namely — killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh speech, meaningless talk, covetousness, ill-will and wrong views.

duggati: Unhappy realms, states of loss. Synonymous with *apāya*.

✓ *dukkha*: Unsatisfactoriness, also rendered as pain, suffering. The second of the three characteristics of all conditioned things.

ekaggatā: One-pointedness. Synonymous with concentration (*samādhi*).

hiri: Moral shame.

icchā: Desire.

indriya saṁvara sīla: Restraint of the senses, literally morality consisting of restraint of the senses. Not to be confused with observance of the precepts.

issā: Jealousy.

jarā: Old age, decay

jāti: Birth. Considered to include the entire embryonic process, beginning with conception and ending with parturition.

jhāna: State of meditative absorption, defined by six mental factors — *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*, *upekkhā*; respectively — initial application, sustained application, joy and rapture, happiness, one-pointedness, equanimity.

jhānaṅga: Mental factor characterising a state of meditative absorption (*jhāna*); jhanic factor.

kāma: Subjective sensuality or sense desire, synonymous with *kāmacchanda*; objective sensuality, referring to the five sense objects, i.e. sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch impressions.

kāmacchanda: Sense desire. The first of the five hindrances to meditation.

kāmāvacara: The sensuous sphere of existence.

kamma (Sanskrit, *karma*): Action that bears results.

kamma-ja rūpa: Corporeality conditioned by *kamma*.

√*karuṇā*: Compassion.

kāya: Body.

khaṇika samādhi: Momentary concentration.

√*kilesa*: Mental torment or defilement. There are ten of these — greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*), speculative views (*diṭṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), mental torpor (*thīna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*), lack of moral dread (*anottappa*).

khandha: Group.

kosajja: Idleness, laziness, indolence.

kusala: Wholesomeness, wholesome consciousness.

kusīta: A lazy person.

lakkhaṇa: Characteristic.

lobha: Greed. A synonym of *rāga*, *taṇhā*, *abhijjhā*.

lokadhammā: Worldly conditions. The eight things arising in connection with worldly life, namely — gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, happiness and misery.

lokiya: Mundane.

lokuttara: Supramundane.

macchariya: Stinginess.

magga: Path. Generally used to refer to *magga citta*, meaning path consciousness with which certain mental defilements are abandoned.

mahā: Great.

Mahāthera: Senior monk.

māna: Conceit, pride.

mano: Mind. Synonym of *citta*, *nāma*.

Māra: Lit. killer. The personification of evil, of all forces that kill virtue and kill existence.

maraṇa: Death.

mettā: Loving kindness.

micchā: Wrong, wrongful, as in *micchā vitakka* (wrongful thought).

middha: Torpor. Combined with *thīna* (sloth) it forms one of the five hindrances (*thīna middha nīvaraṇa*).

moha: Delusion. A synonym of *avijjā*.

nāma: Mentality, mind.

- ñāṇa*: Knowledge, insight. A synonym of *paññā*.
- nekkhamma*: Renunciation.
- nibbāna*: The unconditioned. Ultimate Buddhist aspiration. Literally 'extinction', meaning full extinction of all the defilements.
- nikkama dhātu*: The element of stepped-up or boosted effort.
- nīvaraṇa*: Hindrances. The five qualities that obstruct the way to a heavenly rebirth and to the attainment of *nibbāna*, namely — sensuous desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna middha*), restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca kukkuccha*) and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).
- Noble Eightfold Path (Pāḷi, *ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*): The route described by the Buddha that leads to the extinction of suffering; also known as the Middle Way. Consists of eight links or factors — right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*), right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*), right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kammanta*), right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*), right effort (*sammā vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) and right concentration (*sammā samādhi*).
- ojā*: Food, nutriment. A synonym of *āhāra*.
- ottappa*: Fear of wrongdoing. See also pp 71-77.
- paccuṭṭhāna*: Manifestation.
- padatṭhāna*: Proximate cause.
- pamāda*: Negligence.
- ✓ *paññā*: Understanding, knowledge, wisdom, insight.
- parakkama dhātu*: The element of fulfilling or culminating effort, with which the goal of *nibbāna* is reached.
- parideva*: Lamentation.

parinibbāna: Full *nibbāna*. Final release from the round of existence of a fully enlightened being at physical death.

pariyatti: Theoretical study of the Buddha's teachings.

pariyutthāna kilesas: Obsessive defilements.

paṭisandhi citta: Rebirth-linking consciousness, which arises at the moment of conception with the forming of new life in the mother's womb.

paṭisaṅkhāna bala: Power of reflection.

phala: Fruit. Invariably used to refer to *phala citta*, the moment or moments of consciousness that occur immediately after the moment of path consciousness, which continue to perceive *nibbāna*, and during which the defilements are cooled.

pīti: Rapture, delight, joy. Physical and mental lightness and agility resulting from purity of mind; a delighted interest in what is happening. Third factor of the first *jhāna* (see also pp 110-111).

puthujjana: Worldling, ordinary person. One who is possessed of all ten fetters (*saṃyojana*) binding beings to the round of rebirths, i.e. one who has not attained to any of the four levels of holiness.

rāga: Lust, greed. A synonym of *lobha*, *taṇhā*, *abhiññhā*.

rasa: Function.

rati: Well-being, delight.

rūpa: Corporeality. Also refers to fine-material as in *rūpāvacara*.

rūpāvacara: The fine-material sphere of existence.

saddhā: Faith, confidence.

- sakadāgāmi*: Once-returner, one who has attained the second stage of enlightenment. Because of weakened craving and anger, this being will be reborn in only one more plane of existence.
- sakkāya*: Distinctly existing body-mind formation, comprising the five aggregates or groups of existence, namely — body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. Usually rendered imprecisely as personality.
- sāvaka*: Disciple.
- samādhi*: One-pointedness, concentration; characteristic of all the *jhānas*. Synonymous with *samatha*.
- samatha*: Tranquility or calmness of mind due to concentration. A synonym of *samādhi*. Meditation practices in which one concentrates on a single object, with the aim of achieving states of absorption (see *jhāna*).
- sammā*: Right, as in *sammā ditṭhi* (right view), *sammā saṅkappa* (right thought), and the other links of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- sammā kammanta*: Right action. Restraint from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.
- saṃsāra*: The continuing cycle of craving and suffering caused by ignorance of the ultimate truth; the continuing round of rebirths.
- saṃvega*: Sense of urgency.
- saṃvega vatthu*: The eight stirring objects, or sources, of a sense of urgency, namely: birth, old age, disease, death, fear of the suffering in the lower worlds, fear of the suffering of the past rooted in the cycle of rebirth, fear of the suffering of the

future rooted in the cycle of rebirth, and fear of the suffering rooted in the search for food.

samyojana: Fetters. The 10 fetters that bind beings to the wheel of existence — personality belief, sceptical doubt, clinging to mere rules and rituals, sensuous craving, ill-will, craving for fine-material existence, craving for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

saṅgha: Community of Dhamma practitioners, traditionally a community of *bhikkhus*.

sankappa: Thought, synonymous with *vitakka*. As *sammā sankappa*. one of the links of the Noble Eightfold Path.

santi: Peace.

sāsana: The Buddha's teachings, the Buddha's dispensation, the Buddhist religion.

sati: Mindfulness. One of the live spiritual faculties, along with faith and confidence (*saddhā*), effort (*virīya*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

satipaṭṭhāna: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness — mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral), mindfulness of the mind or mental states, and mindfulness of *dhamma*.

sattānaṃ visuddhiyā: Purification of beings.

Sayādaw: Burmese word meaning noble teacher, a monk who teaches meditation, or the abbot of a monastery.

Siddhattha, Prince (Sanskrit: Siddhartha): The Buddha's personal name and rank.

sikkhā: Training, discipline.

sīla: Morality.

soka: Sorrow.

sotāpanna: Stream enterer. One who has attained the first path or first stage of enlightenment (*sotāpatti*) by experiencing *nibbāna* for the first time. Such a person has uprooted the first three fetters (*saṃyojana*) that bind him or her to the cycle of existence (*saṃsāra*): belief in the illusion of self; sceptical doubt, for example in the efficacy of the meditation practice; and belief that any rite or ritual can bring about liberation. Due to the weakening of his or her defilements, a stream enterer will not be reborn in the lower worlds (*apāya*).

sotāpatti: The initial experience of enlightenment, also known as the first path, or the path of stream entry.

succarita: Good conduct. Comprises the tenfold wholesome course of action, namely the threefold bodily actions — avoidance of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; the fourfold verbal actions — avoidance of lying, slandering, harsh speech and meaningless talk; and the threefold mental actions — covetousness, ill-will and wrong views.

√ *sukha*: Happiness, contentment. The fourth factor of the first *jhāna*.

suñña: Void.

suññatā: Voidness, emptiness.

suta: Learning.

√ *sutta*: Discourse of the Buddha.

- suttanta*: Collected *sutta* texts, which together form the so-called 'Second Basket' or second group of texts, in the Theravāda canon of the Buddhist literature.
- tandito*: Laziness, weariness. A synonym of *thīna*.
- taṇhā*: Thirst, craving. A synonym of *lobha*, *rāga*, *abhijjhā*.
- thīna*: Mental factor of sloth.
- thīna middha*: Sloth and torpor. The third of the five hindrances to meditation.
- uddhacca kukkucca*: Restlessness and remorse. The fourth hindrance to meditation.
- upādāna*: Clinging.
- ūpekkhā*: Equanimity, balance of mind.
- ussāha*, *ussahana* or *ussāhana*: Exertion of energy; striving. The natural characteristic of *virīya*.
- vācā*: Speech.
- vatta*: Round, especially the round of rebirths comprising the cycle of existence, in which case a synonym of *saṃsāra*.
- vatthu*: Physical base.
- vāyāma*: Effort, as in *sammā vāyāma*, the sixth link of the Noble Eightfold Path. A synonym of *virīya*.
- vicāra*: The aspect of concentration consisting of the mind's 'rubbing' against the object. Second factor of the first *jhāna*.
- vicikicchā*: Sceptical doubt. The fifth hindrance to meditation.
- vihimsā*: Cruelty, harm.
- vimutti*: Deliverance.
- Vinaya*: Rules of discipline for monks comprising the so-called 'First Basket' or first group of texts in Theravāda Buddhism.

vipāka: Kamma result. Result of any wholesome or unwholesome volitional action through body, speech or mind, in this or some previous life.

✓ *vipassanā*: Literally 'seeing in various modes'. The energetic observation of mental and physical objects in their aspects of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and absence of inherent self-essence.

virīya: Effort, particularly the mental courage or effort required to direct the mind continuously towards an object of meditation. Derived from the word for hero.

vitakka: Thought or thought conception. In meditation practice, refers to aiming or focusing the mind on the object of observation, and forms the first factor of the first *jhāna* (see also pp 109-110).

vītikkaṃa kilesas: Transgressive or gross form of mental defilements, which manifest as unwholesome bodily and verbal actions.

viveka: Detachment, seclusion.

vyāpāda: Alternative spelling of *byāpāda*, meaning aversion, ill-will

yoga: Effort, endeavour, application.

yogī: Literally 'a possessor of effort'; one who practises meditation wholeheartedly, through exerting effort.

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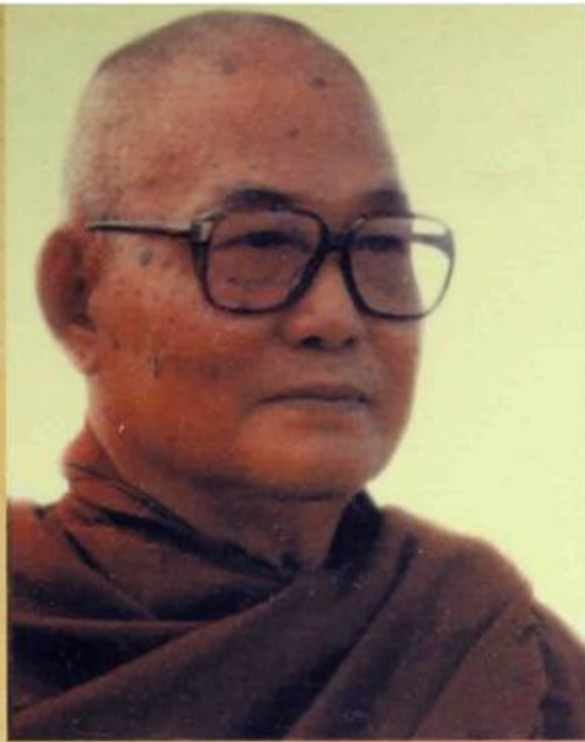
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from front flap

Sayādaw U Paṇḍita teaches from his own profound meditative experience gained over 62 years of monastic training, and from his detained study of the Pāli suttas.

Since 1951, he has taught thousands of students, and traveled to many Asian countries as well as to the United States, Europe and Australia to lead retreats. He is now the abbot of Paṇḍitārama Monastery and meditation center in Yangon (Rangoon), where he teaches ordained and lay students from Asia and the West.

THE EDITOR, Bhikkhu Vivekānanda, is the resident meditation teacher at Paṇḍitārāma Lumbini International Vipassanā Meditation Center, who has trained with the Venerable Sayādaw U Paṇḍita for fifteen years.

EFFORT is a vital theme in the Buddha's teachings on mental development. Many passages from the Tipiṭaka account for this. In a masterly manner the Venerable Sayādaw U Paṇḍitabhivamsa of Myanmar has knit the relevant teachings into an inspiring presentation drawn from the Buddhist canon.

The Venerable Sayādaw is an exemplary manifestation of someone who consistently applies heroic effort. Even at the age of eighty he is still travelling far and wide throughout the year to teach insight meditation and spread the Dhamma. This book is based on a series of talks given during an insight meditation retreat conducted at the Paṇḍitārāma Vipassanā Meditation Centre, Lumbini, Nepal, in February 2000. The talks were delivered to a mixed audience of Western meditators and a larger group of Newari Buddhists from the Kathmandu valley, some of whom would be direct descendants of the Sakyamuni clan of the Buddha. The talks contain reference to both groups as the Venerable Sayādaw endeavours to encourage the individual meditators in their practice.

~ from *The Foreword* by Bhikkhu Vivekānanda



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