

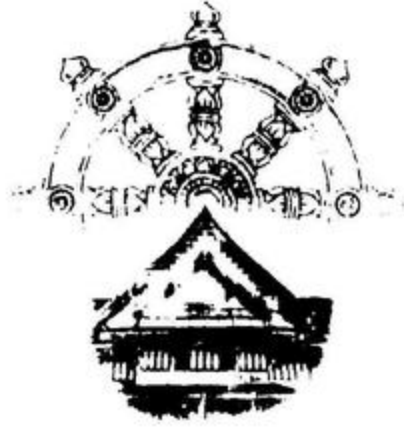


THE BASIC PRINCIPLES
Of
SATIPAṬṬHĀNA-VIPASSANĀ PRACTICE
&
OTHER LECTURES

by

Sayadaw U Panditabhivaṃsa
Nayaka Sayadaw Kammatthānācariya
Mahasi Sāsāna Yeiktha

Compiled By
BHIKKHU SUJIVO



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PREFACE

“The basic principles of Satipaṭṭhāna-Vipassanā practice & other lectures” is taken from a series of lectures delivered by Sayadaw U Panditabhivamsa, a leading kammattḥānācariya of Mahasi Sāsāna Yeiktha for the welfare of foreign yogis who were practising Satipaṭṭhāna-Vipassanā bhāvanā in an intensive manner as taught by the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma. These were first taken down as notes and are now presented in a written form so that those who were not present may also benefit from it.

We shall be ever grateful for this “Gift of Dhamma” to us by the Most Venerable Sayadaws, the various translators, especially U Aggacitta who had also taken great pains to proof-read, edit and make relevant notes. We also find opportunity here to thank all those who had helped us Malaysians while we were practising in Rangoon, and also to all those here who had helped to make this publication a success.

Bhikkhu Sujivo

Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre

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11 August 1982



1. THE BUDDHA SĀSĀNA

Sāsāna is usually loosely translated as 'teaching'. It refers to the instructions given by the Buddha for self-cultivation through the three doors (bodily, vocal and mental). Perhaps it may be more appropriately translated as the culture or refinement of the Buddha.

Being truly cultured or civilised involves the ability to restrain any harmful actions directed through the three doors towards any living being.

One may add another further step - that is of cultivating a high degree of wisdom with regards to knowing whether one's deeds are wholesome or unwholesome.

If an action is harmful yet one still does it, then one is uncivilised.

If an action is harmful but one restrains from doing it, then one is civilised.

One should consider oneself in the position of the other with regards to harmful actions. The Buddha instructs one to put oneself in the position of a mother to understand the other being. Another way to say it is that the *Sāsāna* lies in the heart.

This aspect of being cultured in physical acts (though not confined to the Buddha's teachings) can be spoken with reference to the 5 precepts ** (for layman). This is called the '*Buddha Sīla Sāsāna*'.

**** abstinence of intentional**

- (i) taking of life;
- (ii) taking things not given;
- (iii) sexual misconduct;
- (iv) falsehood;
- (v) taking of intoxicants.

There is a controversy about the last precept involving alcohols when taken in small quantities especially social drinking. But the fact remains that the danger is always present. What may one say of the limit? Transgressing this training rule is a cause for breaking the other precepts.

If we consider the faults of breaking the precepts, then we could shun breaking them. And if we consider the benefits of keeping precepts, then we will try to observe them.

Perfection in *sīla* indicates a high level of being truly civilised. Although one's precepts are pure, unwholesome states of mind can still arise. That is, the mind is still uncivilised and barbaric. To be mentally civilised, we have to go to the next step - *Samādhi Sāsāna*.

Samādhi Sāsāna falls into two categories:

(i) **Pure concentration culture** that is pure *samatha bhāvanā*. This is not the time and place to talk about this. (The Sayadaw was speaking to a group of meditators of the pure-*vipassanā* vehicle).

(ii) **Vipassanā bhāvanā**. As we try to mindfully note the bodily processes, the mind ceases to wander. At that moment, there are no thoughts of aggression, lust or breaking the precepts. The

mind is clear and pure. The three factors - energy, mindfulness and concentration present contribute to a truly cultured mind.

One also becomes moral as a result of that. This is morality which comes about because of concentration (*samādhi*).

To really enjoy the benefits of such a culture, one should be very resolved to be serious and continuous in one's practice.

The benefits here include the seeing of things according to their true Nature - that there are only conditioned and material phenomena, that these are impermanent, oppressive and occur according to impersonal laws. This culminates in the attainment of the first path consciousness (*sotapatti magga citta*) which has the important function of eliminating forever certain classes of unwholesome consciousness). This culmination marks the establishment of wisdom *sāsāna* (*paññasāsana*), of the *Buddhasāsāna* in our hearts.

Two factors contribute greatly to such a noble aim. They are:

- (i) faithfully listening to instructions given by the teacher;
- (ii) seriously putting the teachings into practice.



2. THE WAY TO SANTI SUKHA

The way to *santi sukha* (happiness of peace) is three-fold:

- (i) *Mūla magga* - basic path
- (ii) *Pubbabhāga magga* - preliminary path
- (iii) *Ariya magga* - the noble path.

(i) MŪLA MAGGA

The basic path concerns the fundamental right view on *kamma* (*kammassaka sammāditthi*) i.e. moral actions begets wholesome results, immoral actions begets unwholesome results.

It is on the basis of this confidence that one follows the morality which is in accordance with the 8-fold path.

On this level, one leads a good moral life, cultivating good intentions, effort, speech, livelihood and mindful of the higher things in life. By 'good' we mean that it is conducive to the extinction of defilements.

This *kammassaka sammāditthi* however, will not disappear altogether. If it vanishes in one country, it will spring up in another in some degree. For this reason, it is also called the light of the world (*samsara*).

The benefit derived from this right view is the ability to avoid evil deeds and perform good actions with strong determination.



(ii) **PUBBABHĀGAMAGGA**

In this centre, yogis observe 8 precepts, bent on avoiding evil and doing good. Such a wholesome and moral life is essential to serious practice of mindfulness and concentration. The strict observance of precepts frees one from the gross faults of greed, hatred and delusion. There is momentary peace (*tadaṅga santi*). It also occurs when one is noting phenomena arising at the six sense doors. For example, while watching 'arising' and 'falling' of the abdomen, the transgressive defilements (*pariyutthāna kilesa*) as well as those that occur at the mental level (*vīṭikkama kilesa*) do not arise.

If they do not relax, then the energy for noting will gather momentum. It will then be easier to keep away the defilements.

What matters most is that the drive against the defilements is constant and vigilant. Otherwise, it may go to the opposite direction, i.e. laziness, unmindfulness and distractedness may set in.

The application of energy may be described with the use of the simile below:

It is like trying to fill an empty narrow-necked bottle (full of air) with water. Each drop will remove a little air. But because the mouth is small, one will need to be accurate and careful to ensure that the drop falls straight in.

Like the vacuum flask which can keep the water cool for a long time, one should likewise be able to keep the mind free from defilements for a long time. There should also be the right object at the right time. If one is able to go on noting, one will begin to gain insight into mind and matter, their causal relationship and so on, until we reach the **ARIYA MAGGA** (noble path) where the relevant defilements are completely uprooted.

The practise of mindfulness in the *pubbabhāga magga* is none other than the mind training given by the Buddha in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta. If one practices *Satipaṭṭhāna* seriously, then the Noble Eight-Fold Path itself is involved:-

- (i) The careful noting at the sense-doors - e.g. of the 'rising and falling' occurrences at the belly has to be done with effort. This is **RIGHT EFFORT**.
- (ii) Seeing that nothing escapes mindfulness i.e. observantly noting every occurrence - e.g. sound, painful sensations, etc. This is **RIGHT MINDFULNESS**.
- (iii) While noting, the mind concentrates onto the noted object. This is **RIGHT CONCENTRATION**.

These three factors constitutes the concentration group of the Noble Eight-Fold Path (*Samādhi Khandha*).

- (iv) While watching 'rising', the mind is aware of the

primary elements - such as hardness, heat and motion. It is also aware of these unique characteristics arising and vanishing, of their suffering nature and the absence of anyone controlling their occurrence. This knowledge occurs not because of hearsay or on the teachers' authority but intuitively, based on direct personal experience. This is RIGHT VIEW.

- (v) At that moment, the mind must also be attending to or watching the right object in the right way. This is RIGHT AIM which is free from wrong aims at thoughts of sensual desire, ill-will and cruelty.

Right View and Right Aim make up the wisdom group of the path (*Pañña Khandha*).

During practise, the 3 moral factors:

Right Speech: abstinence from falsehood, malicious speech, harsh speech, frivolous talk

Right Action: abstinence from taking life, stealing, sexual misconduct, taking intoxicants, etc.

Right Livelihood: abstinence from the above two categories (speech & action) with regards to earning a living.

have to be present and are likewise involved. They make up the morality group of the path (*Sīla Khandha*).

Developing The Understanding Of The Four Noble Truths Here & Now

This may be illustrated as follows:-

While trying to observe ‘rising’ and ‘falling’, pain, restlessness, etc. are noticed. These are things of *DUKKHA*.

So, when noting mindfully thus, one is watching “Suffering (things)”, knowing what there is to be known.

One is also abandoning the Cause of Suffering (*SAMUDAYA*) i.e. craving as well as the rest of the defilements such as ignorance and anger, which means that at that moment there is also (momentary) extinction (*NIRODHA*) defilements.

And of course, as has often been pointed out, the Fourth Noble Truth of the Path (*MAGGASACCA*) is being developed with each moment of proper mindfulness.



3. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF VIPASSANĀ PRACTICE

Before commencing *vipassanā* practice, it is advisable firstly to practise the 4 guardian meditation.

- (a) **BUDDHANUSSATI** - the recollection of the Buddha
(virtue)

Here one can select just one of the many qualities and reflect on it e.g. *arahant* (the perfect one). However, only a brief contemplation is sufficient.

At some phases of one's meditation, one may meet with many fearsome objects. This recollection helps to overcome fear.

- (b) **METTA BHĀVANĀ** - cultivation of loving kindness

In this practice one develops friendliness towards all beings using the concise phrase:-

'Sabbe satta avera hontu'

'May all beings be free from enmity'

One radiates loving kindness to all beings repeatedly. The short and concise phrase should not be underestimated. For example 'enmity' refers both to internal enemies (i.e. defilements) and external enemies (unfriendly beings, dangers, etc.)

If one is really free from enmity, then there will be true peace in humanity.

Such a practice creates a friendly atmosphere around and therefore one will not be harassed or disturbed by other beings.

(c) **ASUBHA**

By 'asubha' (ugly) one need not necessarily refer to corpses. One can refer to recollection of loathesomeness of the body.

Normally people have a lot of attachment to 'bodies' - their own or others. If you really look closely into it in parts, you can loosen attachment to it.

Example: *kesā* (head hair), *lomā* (body hair),
nakhā (nails), *danta* (teeth), *taco* (skin), etc.

The development of loathesome perception with regards to the body helps to overcome lust which may arise as a great hindrance in one's own practice.

(d) **MARANASATI** - recollection of death

Frequent recollection of the inevitable nature of death irrespective of caste, rank, age, place, etc. cultivates a sense of fearlessness of death together with an increased sense of urgency to purify the mind and practise *satipaṭṭhāna*. Such a one will also be able to endure excruciating sensations that arise in the course of one's practice.

For those who intend to practise *vipassanā*, these 4 guardian meditations may take a total of 8 minutes (i.e. 2 minutes each).

(e) **KĀYĀNUPASSANĀ**

Kāyā - means a heap of combination of material qualities
anupassanā; *anu* - repeated, *passanā* - observation

Kāyānupassanā- repeated observation of the heap of material qualities.

Four postures are used when one practises *Kāyānupassanā*. But for the beginner 'sitting' is suitable because -

- (i) walking requires a lot of energy and may not be conducive for the development of concentration.
- (ii) standing - it is unlikely for the beginner to be able to stand for a long time.
- (iii) lying - one may fall asleep.

Sitting on the other hand is most suitable for the balancing of faculties. The body is still allowing concentration to develop yet a certain amount of energy is required to keep it upright.

Traditionally, sitting is done cross-legged. If done awkwardly, a lot of pain may arise shortly, so it should be done carefully and properly. The trunk should be erect, preferably perpendicular. This prevents painful feelings from arising too soon. It also helps blood circulation.

Back straight, seated;
cross-legged;
centred on belly.

The next step is placing the mindfulness on the basic meditation object i.e. the 'rising' and 'falling' processes of the abdomen. We do this because natural phenomenon which can be penetrated

(with regards to its true nature) can be found there.

If this penetration or insight is to be brought forth - we have to be at the right place at the right time.

Place - i.e. the processes of 'rising' or 'falling' of abdomen.

Time - i.e. the very moment of their occurrence.

The mind is naturally swept away by defilements. By fixing the mind on 'rising' 'falling', the mind is freed from the defilements.

Of course, initially a lot of effort is required.

Similie: A little boat is easily swept downstream but to get it upstream is difficult. To do that, we must first manipulate the rudder (i.e. place our mindfulness on the belly).

After that, we need to row (i.e. following the 'rising-falling' uninterruptedly and relentlessly with continuous effort) if we are to go upstream.

To do that, two kinds of powers are involved:

- (i) energetic power - the effort to follow
- (ii) accurate power - the accuracy in following

The breathing rhythm by itself should be normal and natural not by force.

Normal breathing,
Rise - fall - ing,
Fixing on, the mind.

Question: But why do we fix the mind on the belly?



Answer: It is the first step to stop the mind from being swept away by defilements. This is because at every moment of noting, the dhammas for the elimination of defilements are being developed.

They are:

Sammā Vāyāma (Right Effort) which has the function of not accepting defilements.

Sammā Saṅkappa (Right Aim) which has the function of applying the mind accurately on the desired object - right on the target.

Sammā Sati (Right Mindfulness) whose function is guarding the mind from defilements.

Sammā Samādhi (Right Concentration) whose function is to prevent the mind from being scattered.

The mind thus is in a pure state. This itself is virtue and goodness, a benefit that comes simultaneous with every moment of mindfulness. Therefore at every noting we are cultivating the skilful and wholesome mind is *bhāvanā*.

Pure dwells the mind,
Guiltless kind;
Great, fine 'Virtue True'

The three factors - Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration belong to the concentration group of the 8-fold path (*Samādhi Khandha*). Therefore, we are also doing *samathā bhāvanā*.

When we begin practise, we start to see how wild the mind is - like a kid neglected by his parents. If we let it continue that way, we will not be free from obstacles blocking our spiritual growth i.e. constant bombardment by objects giving rise to pleasant, unpleasant feelings, thus to greed, hatred and delusion. This can only be overcome by proper mind control.

For example, if parents do not exercise control over their children, they may, through the influence of bad company turn out to be juvenile delinquents. However, if proper control is exercised, the child would eventually mature in wisdom and discretion to keep away from bad habits even though his parents are not around.

It is the same with practice. The mind now and again runs after sensual desires, etc., and we need to control it to allow it to grow up. This period of discipline though painful, is necessary. Despite initial resentment in the child's mind, he will eventually come to realize its benefits otherwise his whole life may be ruined.

Becoming independent, his control will then come from within, no longer having to be imposed from without i.e. he knows how to discern, avoid evil, cultivate the good throughout his life.

At the beginning, it is difficult to centre the mind on 'rising-falling'. But it is reassuring to know that the effort and discipline are actually allowing it space to grow and develop skilfulness. This difficult technique however is essential for mental purity.

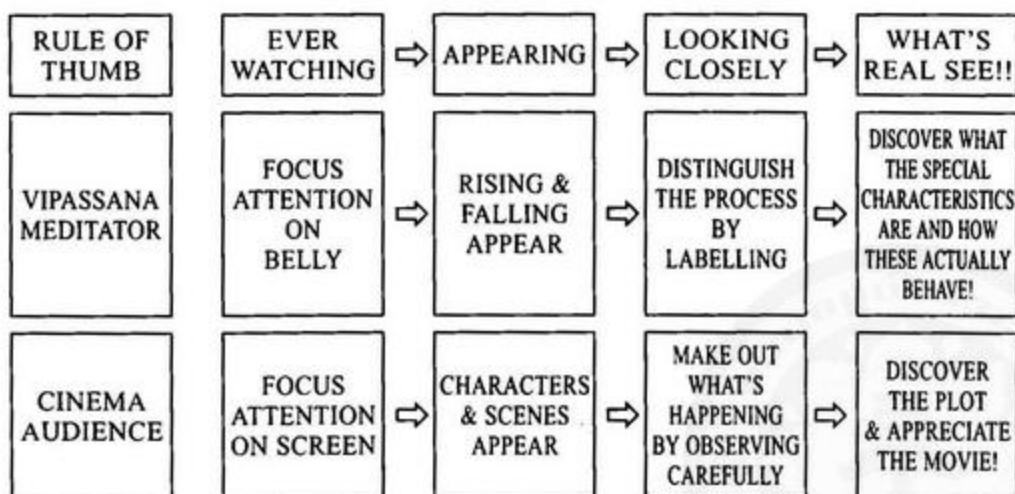
This is what *bhāvanā* is meant - the cultivation of skilful states, enabling wisdom to blossom.

Question: What do we mean by insight/wisdom?

Answer: When these hindrances are absent for longer periods of time, we can see natural phenomena directly, eg. movements, stiffness, heat, sensations, etc. As we go further, we begin to be able to differentiate between conscious and unconscious phenomena occurring within our field of awareness. Furthermore, the intricate chain of conditioning of phenomena can also be discerned.

Stiff, tense, movement,
displacement;
discern all of them.

The mechanism whereby one is able to see how all these natural phenomena actually behave can be compared to watching a cinema movie.



In this way, the characteristics of these natural phenomena are experienced directly. They fall into two categories:

- (i) Specific or unique characteristics - eg. tension, heat, pressure;
- (ii) Common characteristics - in arising and vanishing, unsatisfactoriness, no absolute ownership i.e. *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

If we are to know true nature as such, it is important to have:

- (i) **Power of Effort:** i.e. complete and relentless effort to place the mind on whatever that arises (eg. the 'rising and falling' of the belly);
- (ii) **Power of Accuracy:** i.e. hitting the right target - to be able to note each and every occurrence of phenomena with right mindfulness.

When these two powers of effort and accuracy are balanced, there is momentary concentration.

The procedure may be compared to the spider in its web.

Normally, the spider is poised at the centre of the web (i.e. rising and falling). Whenever an insect gets caught, it rushes to it, saps its nutrition, and returns to the centre.

If we ask: At the moment of correct noting, is there any greed, aversion, delusion, conceit, envy and all other negative tendencies?

The answer is no. The mind is clear and pure. From here, we can

understand the value of the practice. Further more, insight can also arise.

(f) **CITTANUPASSANA**

Wandering Mind

Wandering occurs when the mind moves away from its' primary object, when mindfulness (which has the quality of guarding the mind from the defilements) slips. Without the guardian, pollutions move in - especially with an object that can stimulate greed, hatred and delusion. When we note the wandering mind, it disappears and is immediately followed by a pure mind.

In the course of noting mental processes, the whole process and nature of the mind can be discovered. That is why the fifth verse encourages us not to miss the very moment of wandering.

Wandering thoughts,
On the spot,
Miss not, Note them all.

Can we gain anything by watching eg. anger? Would it not turn for the worse?

The teachings tell us that by being with the moment, not only can we see true nature, we can also put a stop to the defilements just as, by being watchful of an infiltrator, guerilla or public menace, one can get rid of them if one is vigilant enough.

The mind is naturally wild and easily possessed by

negative mental states but it is not useful eg. wild animals are useless unless they are tamed. There are three characteristics of the mind:

- (i) difficult to tame;
 - (ii) very quick - it skims over superficially on what is really happening;
 - (iii) capricious and frivolous;
- therefore treacherous to the owner.

The Buddha teaches us that to be able to tame the wild mind is very good.

How are we to tame it?

We tame it as we do a wild elephant, i.e. we have to first catch hold of it from where it originates viz. the wild jungle.

Similarly, we catch the mind where it originates - i.e. at the six sense-doors.

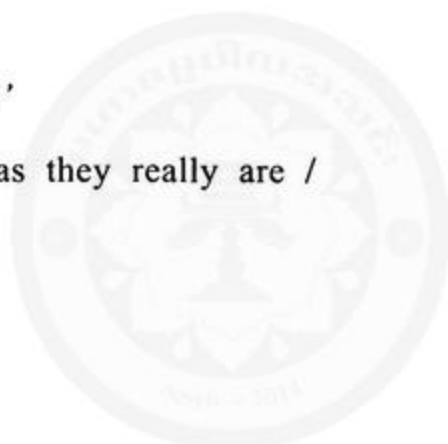
How do we catch it?

We have to be there with each moment of what's happening - persistently and relentlessly. Then only can we experience that peace never experienced before.

The Importance of Labelling

From the Canon: '*Bhūtaṃ bhūtaṃ passati*'

'One looks at things as they really are / occurs'.



“Things” refers to conditioned phenomena and must be something that can be directly experienced; eg. intention (to sit) and the whole process (of sitting) that follows.

How do we see things as they really occur?

To start, we have to label it, as it really occurs eg.

- (a) ‘intending’ (to sit) when there is intention and ‘sitting’ when the process of sitting occurs;
- (b) ‘rising’ for the rising process of the abdomen, and ‘falling’ for the falling process of the abdomen.

When we are directing attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen caused by gross breathing, we are able to distinguish the:

- (i) form or shape of the belly
- (ii) modes of disposition
- (iii) the sensations that are felt through bare experience, eg. ‘rising’ ‘falling’ are modes of disposition.

When noting these modes of disposition, with improvement of practice, we experience them as only bare sensations such as tension, hardness, motion, heat, pain, etc.

This concise instruction of ‘*Bhūtaṃ bhūtaṃ passati*’ was sufficient for people with keen insight (during Buddha’s time) who can act on simple and bare guidance to gain insight. Later these types of people became rare and therefore teachers of the commentaries explained the necessity of labelling.

There is an argument which says that:

Does not labelling (which is actually an introduction of a new set of concepts) contradict the actual instruction of seeing things as they really are?

The commentaries refer to a certain type of concept: '*tajja paññatti*'.

For example 'heat' can be felt without labelling. But there's a name concept for it - 'heat' or '*unha*' which can be used by beginners (whose concentration and mindfulness are not developed enough) in *vipassanā* as a tool to direct the mind to the object. With the deepening of practice, the labels are automatically dropped and the mind will experience its object free from concepts; i.e. the labelling helps to keep the noting (by the mind) in order - as does a tally stick.

When insight matures, especially at the strong 4th and 5th insight knowledges, there is a sudden increase in the rate of what's happening. It is so fast that one does not have the time to label. Then there will be only bare awareness of phenomena/sensations without shape, form or mode of disposition.

At this point, the yogi has 2 choices:

(i) to continue labelling; but he must remember that he cannot label everything. He will have to be content with labelling just what he can;

(ii) just allow the mind to flow with what's happening without using labels.

If we are to be able to know everything, the second method

is preferable, because if we continue trying to label, there is a tendency for fatigue to set in pretty soon.

There is a phrase which says-

‘Only if caught on the spot, you’ll spot *sabhava* (things as they really are)’.

‘Only’ is important because it emphasizes the present moment. There is no place for thinking, reflections, speculations or interpretations. One has to be with the moment - here and now on the spot, not before or after.

Just like if one is to behold a lightning, one has to watch it at the moment it occurs. No amount of speculations will enable the same event to be experienced; eg. self demonstration.

Lean your weight on one side (with a hand resting on the floor/seat and the same arm propping up the body) and label ‘supporting’. Close your eyes and at the same time put your whole attention onto the mode of the body posture.

After sometime, you can experience stiffness, tension, discomfort, vibrations, heat, hardness, etc. It will be obvious that only with the help of labelling, can one notice everything (at the start).

(g) VEDANANUPASSANA

Good, bad, neutral,
Feelings’ world;
Bungle not! Note! Note!



(i) **Painful Feelings**

While the yogi is engaged in his work of mindfulness, another frequent encounter is discomfort, eg. itches, aches, pain and the like.

To overcome it, we have to be at the very moment of its occurrence so that we can see into its true nature. For if we do not note, we would not be aware of it and we would be deluded to think that 'I' am painful.

Furthermore, the mind usually reacts to pain with anger or disappointment, so we suffer unnecessarily. This is what happens when we think **about** the pain and react **to** it rather than just being **with** the pain. We should not multiply the suffering, rather we should firmly and recollectedly watch and penetrate it.

Everytime we are not mindful whenever a painful sensation occurs, anger arises, followed by unhappiness and oppression. Moreover, we are also likely to crave for pleasant sensations. This is disguised as hope.

Example: when one drinks dirty water, one suffers not for having to drink it but also the hoping for clean water. This hope is also another form of suffering.

It is obvious that if the diligent effort to look into these sensations is insufficient, a lot of aversion and hopeful feelings will arise. So one should be very resolved and endeavour to look at the pain. This is a good opportunity to take a good look at it and discover its true nature.

Energy is a wonderful quality that can arouse the mindfulness to just look at the pain. It can also bring about collectedness of mind and penetration into the object. When that happens, then there is no chance for anger and wishful thinking to arise. With the deepening of practise one may even lose perception of the body-form. Then there would just be the noting mind and the various bare sensations. At that time the mindfulness would be exact and impeccable. And you can have good meditation despite of all the pain. This is evidence of the supreme quality of meditative penetration - *tadibhāva* or equipoise.

Therefore with relentless effort, collectedness of mind, accuracy of application (on the desired object), at every moment, there is development of this wonderful quality.

But before insight matures, the pain may increase while watching it, to such an extent that one may think that one has never experienced so much pain before. As a result, we may doubt and regret having undertook the practice.

But actually the pain is magnified by the power of concentration.

For example, one with eye defects without glasses cannot make out what is in front of him unless he puts on the glasses.

At such a stage, it is essential to be patient and cultivate a heroic effort to watch the pain being experienced. Very likely with the deepening of insight, there will be non-association with the pain. Then there will only be bare

noting and the bare sensation. One must not be afraid of pain or even death. In all the (Sayadaw's) experience there has not been anyone who has died because of his encounter with pain in the course of meditation. One should therefore be like a fearless warrior.

The other quality to cultivate here is patience. This practice is indeed a good test of valour, patience, and strength of mind. So try your very best not to move and give in. Just freeze and watch.

Once one is able to overcome this initial difficulty, then one would have gained confidence in one's own strength and effort. A lot of energy and concentration will also peak up.

This victory over fear and oppression by pain develops good qualities. One will have real appreciation for the work of insight. When that happens, one is very likely to encounter very special experiences in the future.

(ii) **Pleasant Sensations (Sukha Vedanā)**

'*Sukha vedanā*' 'refers to pleasant sensations of both body (eg. comfort) and mind (eg. happiness).

If one is not mindful when it arises, one tends to be swayed by craving. One would wish it to last longer and this would give rise to unlimited desire.

This link: *vedanā paccaya tanhā*

(feelings conditions the arising of craving)

should be checked by noting at the very moment of its

occurrence. When doing so, we can also penetrate into its true nature.

There are 2 types of pleasant sensations:

- (a) worldly pleasant sensations - such as those induced by good sight, sounds, flavour, touch and thoughts;
- (b) pleasant sensations that are strictly concerned with meditation.

This occurs when practice deepens. One experiences tremendous peace and calm. There is also a lot of buoyancy and satisfaction. The mind becomes bright and alert. These are quite remote from sensual pleasures but if the yogi is still not well-trained, there is still a tendency to be attached (*nikkhanti*).

The Buddha once posed a riddle for one who is bent on peace:

“Neither to allow the mind to wander outside nor to stop inside.

If one is able to do that one will experience true peace.”

Wandering outside means being careless when the 5 sensual objects strike and so the mind runs after them.

Example: It is like a child up to mischief behind the parents' back. If the parents are wise and understanding, they can help to take care by being strict. Therefore, we must try to free

the mind from indulging in sense pleasures.

Actually, the pleasant sensation arising at the moment the external object contacts the mind is unmoral. The danger is in what happens after that i.e. the craving for more. The first step is to be mindful and clean it up. As a result, the mind becomes bright and peaceful. Following it will be many pleasant sensations such as trills and rapture. One may even enter stages of extreme calmness and coolness. As a result, a lot of satisfaction arises after allowing a subtle form of craving to creep in. This is called stopping inside or stagnating within. Therefore, the antidote is again to be mindful and note every arising.

For example; a traveller is on a journey to meet with an appointment. Even if he stops at certain very pleasant places, he cannot afford to stop too long. If he does so, he may be exposing himself to dangers. So he has to go according to schedule.

After the yogi has overcome this subtle craving, he needs to keep on noting whatever that arises. And if he is to wish for true happiness, he has to have impeccable mindfulness so that he would neither wander outside nor stagnate inside.

(iii) Neutral Feelings (Adukkham Asukha Vedanā)

It is natural for pleasant feelings to follow after meeting with an agreeable object and unpleasant feelings after meeting with a disagreeable object.

Similarly, neutral feelings follow after meeting with a neither agreeable nor disagreeable object. However, it is difficult for beginner to spot these indifferent/neutral feelings.

Actually, daily we meet with a lot of neutral objects. For example, we may glance at a stone or pebble. At the very moment of contact there is neutral feelings. It also occurs with sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and thoughts.

In the instructions for the beginner, a yogi is told to concentrate on prominent objects (i.e. pleasant and painful feelings with regards to feelings and not neutral feelings). As practice deepens, one will be able to distinguish them. They become very distinct starting from *bhaṅga ñāna* (knowledge of dissolution) until *sankhārupekkha ñāna* (knowledge of equanimity of formations) when it becomes pretty obvious. It is a peaceful and tranquil state where one has a lot of energy and can very silently watch and meditate for long hours. At this point one can also very easily get attached to the tranquility and we may kid ourselves that we have at last nourished the dhamma. But as long as we are still clinging to good practice, the yogi will tend to stagnate.

The strategy to combat subtle attachment is to be very mindful with regards to its specific and common characteristics.

Having overcome this attachment, one may experience a jump into emptiness while clearly watching the object i.e.

the noting mind disappears. For the yogi at this stage (*saṅkhārupekkha ñāna*) it is even more important that he be continuous and relentless in his effort throughout the day (apart from sleeping).

(h) DHAMMĀNUPASSANĀ

Dhammas, here may be interpreted as 'True Nature' or 'natural phenomena', empty of a permanent entity (which is experienced directly through any of the 6 sense doors).

Firstly, let us deal with a set of prominent dhammas involved in the act of seeing, the process may be compared to the striking of a match (striker) on the box (receptor) to produce the flame (ignition). There are 3 component parts present for it to occur;

- (a) the seeing consciousness (ignition);
- (b) the visual object (striker);
- (c) the eye basis (receptor).

The receptor or the sensitivity of the eye is a natural phenomena. It is the sensitive material basis for the reception of the visual object. It is egoless and liable to change.

At the moment of contact between the striker (visual object) and receptor (eye basis), there is ignition (the seeing consciousness). The striker and the ignition, like the receptor are also egoless and liable to change. Each of these phenomena also has its peculiar or unique characteristics. These 3 elements occur simultaneously during the act of 'seeing'. This is noted in a general way with the use of the convenient label 'seeing'. When doing so, the mind will be able to pick up any one of the

3 which happens to be the most prominent at that particular moment. If one is able to take note in this way, one is said to be practising '*dhammānupassanā*'.

The point of *dhammānupassanā* is to penetrate the unique characteristics and see the cause-effect relationship between these characteristics.

If one is not mindful, i.e. not seeing the impersonality of these natural phenomena, we are overcome by ignorance (*avijja*). This is also the cause of craving for any of the 3 elements i.e. we may crave to see, cling to the eye and desire for the seen. When craving increases it turns to grasping (*upādānā*) to sensuality (*kāma*) and the notion of I (*atta ditthi*).

There is a verse to illustrate this:

Not knowing, we cling;

Clinging brings fear. (fearsome because it knows no bound)

Knowing, its freeing; (freeing from craving)

Freeing-peace clear.

Clinging is 'sticky attachment'.

There are 2 prominent characteristics regarding these sticky defilements:

(i) **They are oppressive dhammas**

There is a lot of frustration while trying to get the objects craved for. There is also a lot of suffering guarding from the possessive guarding of it and its inevitable separation.

(ii) **Strong Heat**

Like a fire it burns (eg. while scheming to get something or unsuccessful in getting it). A fire burns off the fuel leaving only filth and ashes. Similarly, defilements burn us, leaving our minds dirty.

Knowing this, let us build up an efficient and effective defense i.e. mobilise a fire brigade of mindfulness to put out the raging fire of defilements.

At the moment of 'hearing' there also occur

- (i) sound
- (ii) ear basis
- (iii) hearing consciousness.

If we are unmindful, there is ignorance and therefore tend to cling to pleasant sounds or have aversion to sounds we do not like. We tend to think that 'I' am hearing, and we get attached to ear base as well. Unless we are mindful, we cannot successfully penetrate into their true nature.

When we are unmindful, the 3 cycles run on;

- (i) *kilesa vaṭṭa* (cycle of defilements);
- (ii) *kamma vaṭṭa* (cycle of action);
- (iii) *vipaka vaṭṭa* (cycle of results of actions).

For example, we may hear a sweet sound of the opposite sex singing. If we are not mindful, we first cling (*kilesa vaṭṭa*) to the sound. If unchecked, we cling to the song. Further, there is a shift of clinging to the singer. This leads to desire for possession

which will result in a lot of scheming and actions (i.e. *kamma vaṭṭa*). We may even resort to illegal and immoral means. All this is bound to make us reap kammic results (*vipaka vaṭṭa*).

Therefore, if we do not nip it at the bud, the cycles will start rolling and create a lot of becoming and suffering.

But if we are in the habit of being mindful and at once note the process as 'hearing', we would at times be able to notice the most prominent one of the 3 elements. We may penetrate intuitively into the true nature of that element. Then the cycle of defilements will be cut off. So will the cycles of action and its results. The same principle applies to the rest of the conscious processes occurring at the other sense doors.

See, hear, senses;

Consciousness:

Careless - don't! Note! Note!

When we are watching the 'rising' and 'falling' processes of the abdomen, the three elements are likewise present - i.e. the receptor (body basis), the ignition (body or touching consciousness), the striker which is predominantly the wind element manifesting as tension, tightness, movement, vibrations, relaxation and so on. When the mind is intently attending to the process, one may pick up the striker, the receptor or the ignition i.e. body consciousness. The purpose of watching the process is to penetrate deeply into the nature of these 3 elements.

Attentively watching these various sensations of tension, etc. is also called the practice of *kāyanupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*.

Kāyā - heap of material qualities;

anu - repeatedly;

passanā - seeing, observing;

sati - mindfulness;

paṭṭhāna - ability to stay there (and penetrate) i.e. foundation, establishment.

Kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna - establishment of mindfulness by repeatedly watching/ observing the heap of material qualities.

There are three classes of defilements:

- (i) *vītikkama kilesa* - defilements of transgression i.e. over one's precepts, rights of others and morality.
- (ii) *pariyuṭṭhana kilesa* - obsessive defilements are those that occur purely at the mental level, not manifesting through body and speech.
- (iii) *anusaya kilesa* - defilements that lie latent and waiting for the time to assault us.

In the course of practice, there is:

- (i) a lot of effort made to direct the mind to 'rising' and 'falling' (i.e. right effort). This power results in the non-acceptance of defilements;

- (ii) the relentless noting, the ability to be aware of just what is there (i.e. right mindfulness);
- (iii) the ability to stay collected, unscattered and one-pointed, concentrated on the process (i.e. right concentration).

These three make up the concentration group (*samādhikhandha*) of the Noble Eightfold Path, which has the ability to abandon the defilements at the mental level (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa*).

- (iv) as the practise matures, the penetration into the (a) unique characteristics; (b) common characteristics of the phenomena while noting the 'rising' and 'falling' processes (i.e. right understanding);
- (v) right aim i.e. the ability to aim correctly at the object.

(iv) and (v) belong to the insight group (*paññā khandha*) of the Noble Eightfold Path and when developed, can cut off the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesa*).

The morality group of the Noble Eightfold Path viz. right action, speech and livelihood are accomplished by the yogi on taking up the 8 precepts. In the case of the bhikkhus, it will entail restraint according to the patimokkha. Morality (*Sīla*) whether it is for bhikkhus or layman, has the quality of abandoning the defilements of transgression (*vītikkama kilesa*).

Therefore, when one practises *satipaṭṭhāna*, everytime one is clearly aware for instance of the 'rising-falling', there is purification of the defilements at the three levels.

It is these defilements that cause turmoil and conflicts in

those they arise in.

True missionary work involves the establishment of the dhamma in oneself before one can share it with others i.e. one should practise *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

With the deepening of practise and understanding, there will be the removal of defilements. Even if one has still yet to reach the state of nobility (*ariya*), the latent tendencies* are temporary abandoned.

Anusaya kilesas may again be sub-divided into two:

- (a) *Santānānusaya kilesas* - or 'latent defilements in continuity' are the *kilesas* which can arise within the continuity of a being's samsaric existence when conditions are favourable, because they have not yet been uprooted by the *ariya magga*.
- (b) *Ārammanānusaya kilesas* - or 'latent defilements in objects' are *kilesas* which can arise in (connection with) all clear objects of *nama-rupa* when conditions are favourable if the said objects are not perceived according to reality through *vipassanā* insight.

But when the dhamma is established, then there will be penetration into the whole process of Nature. There will be the peace of mind which comes from this understanding and purity. Only when we are at peace with ourselves, will we be with others. It will shine forth from us and encompass the hearts of others.

Without *satipaṭṭhanā vipassanā*, one is like a dry parched

desert. Existence is meaningless. But for one who is with *satipaṭṭhanā vipassanā*, he is like an oasis that is cool, fresh and alive.

May you all seriously continue your practise so that you will have an oasis within.

The Mind Door Elements

In the case of the mind-door, the 3 elements involved are:

- (i) the mind element (*manodhātu*) - receptor;
- (ii) the mind consciousness element (*manoviññanadhātu*) - ignition;
- (iii) the mental object element (*dhammadhātu*) - striker

2 classes of consciousness make up the mind element. They are:-

- (i) *Bhavanga cittas*

Usually translated as life continuum, they are the types of consciousness occurring in deep, dreamless sleep.

- (ii) *Āvajjana cittas*

The mind-door adverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*). The sense-door adverting consciousness (*pañcadvārāvajjana*).

The striker element (*dhammadhātu*) includes;

- (i) 5 sensitivities - eye base, ear base, nose base, tongue base, and body base;
- (ii) 16 subtle *rupa* (including the water element);

- (iii) all classes of consciousness (*citta*);
- (iv) mental factors (*cetasika*);
- (v) *nibbāna*;
- (vi) concepts (*paññātti*).

Except for concepts, the rest are ultimate realities (*paramattha dhamma*).

The mind consciousness element or 'ignition' includes all classes of consciousness which can 'imagine' or 'think' eg. as if seeing (images, visions, hallucinations), hearing (sounds in the mind) and the like.

The material basis for the mind is the '*hadaya vatthu*' or 'heart base'. Although not specifically named, it is stated in the *Rūpakaṇḍapāli*, *Dhammasaṅgani* that consciousness and their associated mental factors have a material basis. Commentators say that this material basis is located in the clear blood found within the anatomical heart thus the term '*hadaya vatthu*'. Science however refers its site to the brain. One may have question how the latter assertion is possible since the rebirth consciousness arises simultaneously with this material basis and at that time (in the case of womb-born beings, just after the moment of fertilization) the brain, eyes, etc. have yet to develop. However, if one's insight develops, one can experience directly the site of the mind consciousness that is within the heart.

Burmese translation of the receptor element at the mind-door - i.e. it includes both mental and material phenomena.

Handling mental objects, one should take note every moment that any thinking occurs. That is we should note all activities of the mind. It may be observed that apart from concepts (and *Nibbāna*), the rest of the mental objects can be used for *vipassanā*.

If however, one is not mindful while thinking, one tends to think that there is someone behind the process. But if one is mindful, one will know that there is actually no one. Just phenomena behaving according to its true Nature - impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self (egoless).

Mental objects occupy a very wide range. Here we shall only mention some of them.

For example:

- (i) At the moment of 'seeing' it is possible that the yogi (when concentrated and mindful) may pick up the eye sensitivity (*cakkhu pasada*) in one of the three ways; that is, as:-
 - (a) the sensitivity that allows visual objects in;
 - (b) the connection between the seeing consciousness and the visual object;
 - (c) the physical basis upon which the seeing process depends.

The same can also be applied to other sensitivities.

- (ii) In the case of the body door, there is subtle mind-object connected with it.

When experiencing physical sensations such as trickling, solidity, heat, hardness, etc. one may experience them in lumps. This cohesive quality is actually the 'element of water' (*āpo dhātu*). It is always experienced together with another element eg. a cohesive lump of hardness (*pathāvi*), or heat (*tejo*), etc. While watching the cohesiveness, it is *dhammānupassanā*.

(iii) There is yet another mental object picked up usually after a meal. That is after a meal, one feels that one has more strength together with fullness of belly and tightness of the body. The *dhammārammanā* here is 'oja' or nutritive essence.

(iv) Besides, one may also during *dhammānupassanā* when observing the 5 hindrances (*nivāraṇa*):

(a) **Kammachanda** - while trying to follow 'rising', 'falling', sensual desires to experience nice sights and sounds may arise. We may come to know of it automatically or we may deliberately note it as 'sensual desires'. Then we are doing *dhammānupassanā*.

(b) **Vyāpāda** (aversion);

(c) **Thina-middha** (sleepiness, laziness);

(d) **Uddhacca, kukkucā** (restlessness, regret, worry);

(e) **Vicikiccha** (doubts regarding the practise, the Buddha, and those people who have attained Nobility [Ariyahood] through the practise);

While noting, we may come to know the cause for the

arising of these hindrances, the cause for overcoming them, and the cause of their eradication. This is also *dhammānupassanā*.

(v) It may also occur with the Factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhaṅga*) which are:-

(a) **Sati (mindfulness)**

This becomes obvious at the stage of the insight knowledge into arising and passing away of phenomena (*udabaya ñāna*). At this point it is clear that mindfulness and its corresponding object occur in pairs. That mindfulness is the enlightenment factor of mindfulness (*satisambojjhaṅga*).

(b) **Dhamma Vicaya (investigation of the Dhamma)**

Investigation of the Dhamma actually refers to insight knowledge itself. At times, as insight knowledge arises, there is a looking back on it and acknowledging it. This is *Dhammānupassanā* i.e. watching the enlightenment factor of investigations of dhamma.

(c) **Viriya (energy)**

At a certain point in the practise, one may notice that even without any deliberate or special exertion, effort comes about automatically and evenly i.e. we are noting the enlightenment factor of energy-another instance of *dhammānupassanā*.

(d) **Piti (joyful interest)**

Similarly when insight knowledge arises, it may occur with various forms of joyful interest or deep satisfaction. When we take note of that, we are watching the enlightenment factor of joy (*piti sambojjhaṅga*)

(e) **Passadhi (calm)**

Again, at that stage, one also experiences ease of body and mind. Being free from worries one is tranquil. This is the enlightenment factor of calm (*passadhi sambojjhaṅga*).

(f) **Samādhi (concentration)**

Furthermore, the mind keeps on sinking, penetrating into whatever objects that arise. That is, the mind is not scattered but collected, falling accurately onto the object observed. This is the enlightenment factor of one-pointed concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*).

(g) **Upekkha (equanimity)**

Lastly, the mind becomes very balanced, (observantly noting with composure all pleasant and unpleasant phenomena appearing in its field of awareness, without reacting either positively or negatively to them). This balanced state is the enlightenment factor of equanimity (*upekkha sambojjhaṅga*).

Physiological benefits resulting from the practise of Satipaṭṭhāna

The immediate benefit of the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is the development of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment eventually leading to the utter release from suffering. Besides this, there are also changes in material phenomena, a by-product of *Bojjhaṅga* development.

In the *Samyutta Nikaya*, the Buddha once commented that if one regrets and remorse over the past, worry and craves for the future, such a one will not be blessed with beauty and the like. But if one does not remorse, worry or crave for things of the past and future, but is easily satisfied, then he will have a complexion that is pleasant and clear.

When a yogi is engrossed in *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, with every moment of mindfulness he is developing special qualities manifested as lights, joyful contentment and other non-sensual ecstasies. One becomes very calm and with the deepening of practise, insight and mindfulness arise to abandon the mental defilements.

This also brings about a radical change for the better in the physiological system, especially blood circulation. As a result, there is also heightened awareness and sensitivity through the sense organs.

What is more, there have also been cases of yogis being cured of many chronic ailments and disease. To quote two cases:-

- (a) 15 years ago at the Mahasi branch centre in Moulmein,

there was a man suffering from stomach ulcer. He had been advised by a physician to undergo surgical operation. Being afraid that he may die, he decided to put it off and went to do meditation instead.

After one week, there was a relapse and he suffered intense pain. If not for the teachers' encouragement, he would have given up.

By the third week, he felt the ulcer stiffen giving rise to a lot of pain. But by then, the concentration and mindfulness has increased and he could endure it.

At one point, he lost all sense of the body form and there was only the mindful consciousness noting the pain. There was detachment while watching dhammas arising and passing away. Then, he thought he heard a loud sound that the ulcer had burst. When he got up there was a lot of sweat and heat. He was cured of the ailment! He no longer had to avoid certain type of food, nor to undergo the operation. After the retreat, his eyes and skin became very clear and bright. He had put on weight. Ever since he had been helping the *sāsāna* in many ways.

- (b) There was a lady who had high blood pressure for 30 years. She had spent a lot of money consulting physicians but to no avail. About 10 years ago, she came to practise meditation in the Yeiktha. After a while, there was a lot of tension, pain in the brain, and at times she felt as if the blood vessels were at the point of

bursting. Despite the pleas by relatives to go back, she endured the pain and continued the practice of pin-pointing it whenever it arose until she even felt giddy at times. Later, a lot of heat began to emanate, together with profuse sweating. Then, a stinking odour came out of her armpits. As she persisted noting observantly, the heat subsided and her whole body eventually cooled down. After that, she was completely cured of high blood pressure.

Many yogis have been cured through the practise of *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* i.e. the development of *bojjhaṅgas* - especially of ailments connected with the blood, stomach and nerves, In the *Pāli* Cannon, we also come across the Buddha and his close disciples being cured by this practise.

Mahakassapa once became ill because of food. His sense organs dulled. When the Buddha recited to him the *bojjhaṅgas*, he listened and reflected on how he had first become a bhikkhu and within one week of practise, had penetrated the 4 noble truths (i.e. had developed the 7 *bojjhaṅgas* to perfection). As a result, there was an upsurge of joy and he was filled with praise for the Buddha and his teachings. After that, his faculties and complexion became very clear.

Therefore, the *bojjhaṅgas* have great power and potential, They are said to be the most effective medicine. This practice of the *Satipaṭṭhāna*, though essentially is the process of purifying the mind, also results in the purification of the body.

4. HOW TO AROUSE SKILFUL STATES OF MIND (KUSALA) WHEN THE OBJECTS TEND TO CONDITION OTHERWISE

There are 4 accomplishments responsible for this. They are:-

(a) RESTRICTION

This is delimiting the mind to stay only within the confines of wholesome states by means of a strong resolve 'May my mind dwell only in the field of wholesome states'. This is a powerful force which carries on even when one meets with strong objects that tend to stimulate unwholesome mental activity.

For example, before one goes to a busy town, one resolves not to get accidents. As a result, one drives into town very mindfully. Similarly, one may resolve to abstain from harmful food even though they may taste very nice.

In the same way, a resolve can restrict the mind to dwell only in the realm of mindfulness.

(b) REORIENTATION

Despite the resolution of restriction, the mind may still wander to unwholesome states of mind. When that happens, one should quickly disengage from that unwholesome states and reorientate it to wholesomeness. That is, to bring the mind back to the principle object of meditation.

For example, a foolish driver may cause one to swerve away from one's lane but later, one brings the car back to where it should go.

In the practise of *Vipassanā*, one is supposed to note whatever that arises, but there are times when one is unable to handle a predominant object effectively. That is to say, the strong object tends to take the mind away to unwholesome states. At such a time, it is wiser to disengage it from the intervening object (the method being more *samathā* in principle) and reorientate to the basic object.

(c) **CONSECUTIVE OCCURRENCE**

This is a mastery that comes from continuous practice. As a result of uninterrupted mindfulness, one becomes progressively more skilful in maintaining wholesome mental states. There will come a time when one will not be drawn even to a very attractive object.

The foundation for this is two-fold:-

- (i) one has good confidence in the practice of *vipassanā*;
- (ii) one's motivations are pure and noble.

After that, one has to exert a lot of effort to develop the power of accuracy and mindfulness. With unbroken mindfulness, one grows in the accomplishment of consecutive occurrence of wholesome states, culminating in the power of mind to stay unaffected

even at times of crises, and in the realisation of *aniccā*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

(d) **GIVING APT ATTENTION**

This is the accomplishment of giving apt attention whenever encountering attractive, repulsive or delusive objects, a natural inclination arising from supportive kammic and social environmental conditioning. This can be seen as the 4 wheels of fulfilment viz:-

(i) **Suitable locality (patirupadesa)**

A suitable locality is where one can find conducive social conditions that can bring about wholesome actions. That is, one can find the 4 *parisaddo* (*bhikkhu*, *bhikkhuni*, *upasaka*, *upasika*) there and can perform charity (*dāna*), observe precepts (*sīla*) and practise meditation (*bhāvana*). In other words, it is a place where the Buddha-dhamma is flourishing, and expressed in the life of the people.

(ii) **Suitable company (sappurisupanissaya)**

Once we have found the suitable locality, then we also have the suitable company. The most important people who can influence our spiritual growth are parents, teachers and intimate friends. If we can have the company of those who are always thinking of others' welfare, pure in the 3 deeds, not malicious and hold dhammic values in high esteem, then we can also develop a lot of dhamma *chanda* and the sense of

urgency to perform meritorious action. We can also hear a lot of dhamma as well as have an opportunity to discuss the dhamma.

(iii) Skilful moulding of oneself(attasammāpanidhi)

When we have understanding of dhamma from our good friends, then it is up to us to value, cherish and put into practise these spiritual principles correctly. By skilful moulding, we achieve perfection in morality, purity of mind and insight when we can penetrate the dhamma and get a glimpse of *Nibbāna*, then it doesn't matter where we are, because the spiritual values will never be lost for they have become an integral part of us.

(iv) Past Merits (pubbekatapuññata)

That we are now having this wonderful opportunity to come across a suitable locality, rely upon good people and find success in skilfully moulding ourselves is because of our past meritorious actions. The results of these have helped to create an environment most conducive to spiritual growth.

These 4 conditions are also referred to as the 4 wheels of fulfilment (*sampatticakka*) because they are interdependent upon one another.

One who is endowed with these is invested with the opportunity to perfect the 4 accomplishment.

5. THE TEN ARMIES OF MĀRA

At one time, the Buddha addressed his bhikkhus -

“Listen bhikkhus, I will tell you the weapon that will completely pulverize the army of *Māra*. And this is nothing other than the 7 *bojjhaṅgas*”.

Meditation is actually a battle between the forces of good (*kusala*) and evil (*akusala*).

For most people, they are at the mercy of the evil forces. A weak mind, on meeting with an object likely to trigger off greed, hatred and delusion gets swept away by unwholesome tendencies. Therefore, they are trapped in the vicious cycle of *saṃsara* for a long time. One may doubt the possibilities of overcoming evil, but effort is a very potent force. One can use it to conquer the seemingly powerful forces of *māra*. Defensive tactics too, are needed and with each step of progress in insight, a battle is won.

The armed forces of *Māra* are:-

(a) SENSUAL PLEASURES - *kāma*

There are two groups involved:-

- (i) the sensual objects (*vatthukāma*);
- (ii) the hankering for these pleasant objects (*kilesakāma*).

The hankering over these objects is a vicious cycle, a perpetual drowning. You have to overcome it to start treading the path, but total conquest occurs only at the

stage of the non-returner (*anagamī*). Although we may not have overcome it totally, even at the stage of knowledge of rise and fall (*udayabaya ñāna*), there is a radical change in one's attitude - for delight in the dhamma will make sensual pleasures look cheap.

(b) **DISSATISFACTION** - *arati*

Those of you from an affluent society, after coming to meditate for sometime, may find the routine rather boring. You may also become unhappy with the lower quality of food and the lack of comfort. This dissatisfaction is the second army of *māra*. But if it is mindfully noted, you can get over it and carry on with the meditation, the path of purification.

(c) **HUNGER-THIRST** - *khuppiṭṭā*

The dissatisfaction will as a result drive the yogi to have thirst for good things such as special kinds of food or facilities. But at *udayabaya ñāna*, one realises that the dhamma is itself very scrumptious food.

(d) **CRAVING** - *tanha*

Craving comes from the deprivation of what we like. Frequent disappointment (eg. shattered hopes of getting fruits and cakes at lunch, of having something other than nice gruel and beans for breakfast) leads to a lot of effort to search and get what we crave for. But at *udayabaya ñāna*, the yogis realise that there is no taste that can beat the taste of the dhamma. Then there is no more of that familiar hankering.

(e) **SLOTH AND TORPOR** - *thina-middha*

When we are unable to stop the hunger and frantic search to gratify our sensual desires, we are exhausted by our many ingenious schemes and clandestine activities. As a result, mindfulness slackens and we find our minds at the mercy of *māra*'s fifth army - sloth and torpor.

This army is completely overcome only in an *arahant* but nevertheless, as the *bojjhaṅgas* are developed, one dispenses with more and more sleep. In fact, at *udayabaya ñāna*, one is boosted up with energy. This energy can go on by itself. One becomes accomplished in energy as the mind is crystal clear, fresh and alert.

We are told in the *Anguttara Nikaya* that Moggallāna encountered sloth and torpor while striving for the higher paths. The Buddha gave some pointers and a strategy to combat this fifth army of *māra*. They are:-

- (i) Sleepiness is aggravated by thoughts that encourage rest or taking a nap. Therefore, we should make a firm resolution to put away those lazy thoughts at once, and to strive on with vigour.
- (ii) We can also choose to increase the number of objects to watch. For example, if there is an interval between 'rising' and 'falling', it can be filled in with other notings, for instance, of the sitting posture or of various touch points.

To quote a simlie:-

There are two kinds of children having different attitudes towards homework;

one needs pushing;

the other is very bright and so finds the work easy.

As a result, he gets bored. We can increase the work-load to give him more challenge.

- (iii) The characteristic of sloth and torpor is a shrunken state which does not pick up objects easily. The opposite is accurate application of mind on the object (*vitakka*) eg. to make the mind note precisely with each rise and fall. This has the power to open and refresh the mind.
- (iv) In the advice to Moggallana, the Buddha recommended the recitation of inspiring passages (chanting). But care should be taken to ensure that this does not disturb other yogis.
- (v) Next is the mental recollection of inspiring passages of the dhamma.
- (vi) Pulling the ear lobes, rubbing the body, head and limbs vigorously help to stimulate increased blood circulation thus clearing up drowsiness somewhat. This does not mean that one may go to the extent of doing head stand as in yoga exercises.
- (vii) One may also wash or splash the face with cold water and then look mindfully in all directions eg.

constellations in the starry sky.

- (viii) Besides, one may also visualise light, moon, stars etc. or actually sit in a lighted room. Another interpretation of this (*āloka saññā*) is the creation of a more intense wish to see more clearly what one is actually doing.
- (ix) If all the above six fails, then one can get up to do brisk walking. But bear in mind that while doing so, one has to be very mindful and restrained in the senses while trying to keep the mind concentrated on the process of walking.
- (x) If this still does not work, then it is time for a 'graceful surrender'. That is, go to bed mindfully, lying down in the lion's posture. Before sleeping, set the alarm not of the clock but in the mind and then continue to watch the 'rising' and 'falling' processes of the abdomen. At the very moment of waking up, be mindful.

In the case of sloth owing to a heavy meal, a very short nap is allowable. But this should not be longer than the time it takes for a bhikkhu's hair to dry!!

(f) **FEAR** - *bhirū*

Fear may arise in the yogi in the yeiktha forest that will deter him in the practise. This is caused for example by sounds which may lead to imagined fears of non-existent ghosts or wild beasts. In the yeiktha, these sorts of

incidents may not be so obvious. But this sixth army of *māra* can assume in the form of the dread of interviews, disappointments, inferiority complex, self-pity and all sorts of paranoia. If we are able to transcend all these, we will have a lot of inspirations instead.

(g) **DOUBTS** - *vicikiccā*

A yogi may also begin to doubt the authenticity of others' report, one's own capability (maybe I don't have enough *paramis...*) and practice the method (this method is great for others but maybe it doesn't suit me...), the teacher (even during the Buddha's time different people had affinities with different teachers...) and so on. Doubt is yet another formidable army of *māra*.

(h) **STUBBORN-CONCEIT** - *makkho thambho*

When practice becomes better, one may have many unusual experiences. As a result, one may feel that one had attained to some supernormal state. When assaulted by this subversive force of *māra*, one is not willing to listen to the teachers' instructions, and may begin to look down on others' practice or other traditions. One may even end up being a fanatic.

(i) Good practice may also result in one coming into possession of gains (*labho*), fame (*silo*) and reverence (*sakkāro*). As a result, one may become attached to all these, thus slackening in one's own practise. This is comparable to the rare flowers of a bamboo that spell the end of the plant.

- (j) Lastly, out of the respect and homage shown by people, the yogi begins to greatly over-estimate and exalt himself while disparaging others.

The yogis who cannot defeat the armies of *māra* is like an *asura* who lacks courageous effort. But for one who has the ability to win each and every battle, he is indeed endowed with heroic effort.

There are three phases of heroic effort:-

- (i) 1st phase : the launching phase whereby the initial effort is made;
- (ii) 2nd phase: the booster phase occurs when increased effort is required to overcome the assault by hindrances, pain, and so forth;
- (iii) 3rd phase : when practice is good, infiltration by subversive elements from *Māra's* armies like pride, complacency, fame, gains, veneration, etc. has to be looked out for and the elements exterminated. The energy needed for this clearing up operation comes from the touchdown phase that leads to final victory in the war with *māra*. Until then, we must always remind ourselves that we have not yet reached the end of the journey.

As there are enemies within and without, so wars are fought internally and externally.

The external wars should be avoided as far as possible but the

war within must be fought and the enemies hounded down are exterminated. Wars without cause immense suffering and senseless destruction but the war within can be the cause of so much peace and happiness once the defilements are transcended.

Weapons of war are lethal but are also subject to wear and tear with continued use. For instance, in the days of old the more heads are cut off the more blunt the warrior's sword becomes.

The weapons employed in the war with *māra's* armed forces however, are not only effective, formidable and powerful, but increase in efficiency and sharpness with frequent usage. For example, the more continuously mindfulness is used, the more sharp it becomes enabling wisdom to penetrate into even more profound depths of reality.

With the deepening of practice, heroic effort is strengthened as our spiritual weapons are incredibly sharpened, until we cut through all with a single stroke and attain the path and fruition.



6. NIBBĀNA

Nibbāna is said to be a reality just like consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasika*) and matter (*rūpa*). It is therefore not a mere concept or imagination. It is also a mistaken view that the Noble Ones (*Ariyas*) have a special mind-body complex or a special core to the mind body complex. It is however true that *Nibbāna* cannot be really described to one who has not realised it.

One description is (*sabbadukka pamuncaram*) - the freedom from all suffering - i.e. peace. It is something better than all the good things in life.

In this aspect of happiness, the dhamma classifies 2 kinds of happiness:

- (i) *vedayita sukha* - happiness associated with feelings eg. pleasure;
- (ii) *avedayita sukha* - happiness dissociated from feelings referred to the peace of *nibbāna* (*santi*)

The first kind of happiness is conditioned by 3 factors:-

- (i) the base (*vatthu*);
- (ii) the object (*ārammana*);
- (iii) the consciousness (*viññāna*).

The second kind of happiness is *nibbāna* which is unconditioned.

The first kind of sensual pleasures last a short time but we have to work hard for them. One can also get sick of them. In

the search for them, one may have to encounter a lot of suffering. In the final analysis, it may be said that these sensual pleasures are impermanent, troublesome and illusory.

For ordinary folks, happiness is bound up with feelings. They cannot think of it dissociated from feelings. So their good of life is sensual pleasure because they can't think of it otherwise.

To illustrate that there can be a happiness which is not associated with sensual pleasure we take for example, a millionaire who can enjoy many things like food, music etc. He is sleeping so soundly that he does not want to wake up. When someone does indeed wake him up, so that he may be able to enjoy all the blissful pleasures of the senses waiting in readiness for him, he gets angry. Why? Because that sleep though not directly a sensual pleasure is a kind of happiness.

Suffering in this world (*saṃsara*) is originated from the defilements. In order to overcome suffering, to get *nibbānic* peace, we have to remove the cause. Therefore, yogis practise mindfulness which guards against the defilements arising from moment to moment at the 6 sense doors. When they do so, for moment (at least), they are temporarily released and have peace. But if one is vigilant and persistent, one may reach the peace that it timeless!!



7. PRACTICAL VIPASSANĀ MEDITATIONAL EXERCISES

The practice of *Vipassanā* or Insight Meditation is the effort to understand correctly the nature of the mental and physical phenomena within one's own body. Physical phenomena are the things or objects that one clearly perceives around and within one. The whole of one's body constitutes a group of material qualities (*rūpa*). Mental phenomena are acts of consciousness or awareness (*nāma*). These (*nāma-rūpas*) are clearly perceived whenever things are seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, or thought of. We must make ourselves aware of these mental phenomena by observing them and noting thus: "Seeing, seeing", "hearing, hearing", "smelling, smelling", "tasting, tasting", "touching, touching", or "thinking, thinking". Every time one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, or thinks, one should make a note of the fact. However, in the beginning of one's practice, one cannot make a note all of these events. One should, therefore, begin with noting those events which are conspicuous and easily perceivable.

With every act of breathing, the abdomen rises and falls this movement is always evident. This is the material quality known as the element of motion (*vāyodhātu*). One should begin by noting this movement, which may be done by mentally observing the abdomen. You will find the abdomen rising when you breathe in, and falling when you breathe out. The rising should be noted mentally as "rising", and the falling as "falling". If the movement is not evident by just noting it mentally, keep touching the abdomen with the palm of your hand. Do not alter the manner of

your breathing. Neither slow it down, nor make it faster. Do not breathe too vigorously, either. You will tire if you change the manner of your breathing. Breathe steadily as usual and note the rising and falling of the abdomen as they occur. Note it mentally, not verbally.

In *vipassanā* meditation, what you name or say doesn't matter. What really matters is to know or perceive. While noting the rising of the abdomen, do so from the beginning to the end of the movement just as if you are seeing it with your eyes. Do the same with the falling movement. Note the rising movement in such a way that your awareness of it is concurrent with the movement itself. The movement and the mental awareness of it should coincide in the same way as a stone thrown hits the target. Similarly with the falling movement.

Your mind may wander elsewhere while you are noting the abdominal movement. This must also be noted by mentally saying, "wandering, wandering." When this has been noted once or twice, the mind stops wandering, in which case you return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the mind reaches somewhere, note as "reaching, reaching". Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. If you imagine meeting somebody, note as "meeting, meeting". Then return to the rising and falling. If you imagine meeting and talking to somebody, note as "talking, talking".

In short, whatever thought or reflection occurs should be noted. If you imagine, note as "imagining". If you think, "thinking". If you plan, "planning". If you perceive, "perceiving". If you reflect, "reflecting". If you feel happy, "happy". If you feel bored,

"bored". If you feel glad, "glad". If you feel disheartened, "disheartened". Noting all these acts of consciousness is called *cittānupassanā*.

Because we fail to note these acts of consciousness, we tend to identify them with a person or individual. We tend to think that it is "I" who is imagining, thinking, planning, knowing or perceiving. We think that there is a person who, from childhood onwards, has been living and thinking. Actually, no such person exists. There are instead only these continuing and successive acts of consciousness. That is why we have to note these acts of consciousness and know them for what they are. So we have to note each and every act of consciousness as it arises. When so noted, it tends to disappear. We then return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

When you have sat meditating for a long time, sensations of stiffness and heat will arise in your body. These are to be noted carefully too. Similarly with sensations of pain and fatigue. All of these sensations are *dukkhavedanā* (feeling of unsatisfactoriness) and noting them is *vedanānupassanā*. Failure or omission to note these sensations makes you think, "I am stiff, I am feeling hot, I am in pain. I was alright a moment ago. Now I am uneasy with these unpleasant sensations." The identification of these sensations with the ego is mistaken. There is really no "I" involved, only a succession of one new unpleasant sensation after another.

It is just like a continuous succession of new electrical impulses that light up an electric lamp. Every time unpleasant contacts are encountered in the body, unpleasant sensations arise

one after another. These sensations should be carefully and intently noted, whether they are sensations of stiffness, of heat, or of pain. In the beginning of one's meditation practice, these sensations may tend to increase and lead to a desire to change one's posture. This desire should be noted, after which the meditator should return to noting the sensations of stiffness, heat, etc.

There is a saying, "**Patience leads to Nibbāna.**" This saying is particularly relevant in meditation practice. One must be patient to meditate. If one shifts or changes one's posture too often because one cannot bear the sensation of stiffness or heat that arises, good concentration (*samādhi*) cannot develop. If concentration (*samādhi*) cannot develop, insight cannot result and there can be no attainment of the path (*magga*), the fruit of that path (*phala*) or *Nibbāna*. That is why patience is needed in meditation. It is mostly patience with unpleasant sensations in the body like stiffness, heat, pain and other unpleasant sensations. On the appearance of such sensations one should not immediately change one's posture. One should continue patiently, just noting as "stiff, stiff" or "hot, hot". Moderate unpleasant sensations will disappear if one notes them patiently. When concentration is strong, even intense sensations tend to disappear. One then reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

One will, of course, have to change one's posture if the sensations do not disappear even after noting them for a long time, or if they become unbearable. One should then begin by noting "wanting to change, wanting to change." If one raises the arm, note as "raising, raising". If one moves, note as "moving, moving". This

change should be made gently and noted as "raising, raising", "moving, moving" and "touching, touching".

If the body sways, note "swaying, swaying". If you raise the foot, note "raising, raising". If you move it, note "moving, moving". If you drop it, note "dropping, dropping". When there is no more movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. There must be no gaps, but continuity between a preceding act of noting and a succeeding one, between a preceding state of concentration (*samādhi*) and a succeeding one, between a preceding act of intelligence and a succeeding one. Only then will there be successive and ascending stages of maturity in the meditator's understanding. Knowledge of the path and its fruition (*magga-ñāna* and *phala-ñāna*) are attained only when there is this kind of accumulated momentum. The meditative process is like that of producing fire by energetically and unremittingly rubbing two sticks of wood together to generate enough heat to make fire.

In the same way, the noting in *vipassanā* meditation should be continuous and unremitting, without any interval between acts of noting, whatever phenomena may arise. For instance, if a sensation of itchiness intervenes and the meditator desires to scratch because it is hard to bear, both the sensation and the desire to get rid of it should be noted, without immediately getting rid of the sensation by scratching.

If one perseveres, the itchiness will generally disappear, in which case one reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the itchiness does not disappear, one may eliminate it by scratching, but first the desire to do so should be noted. All

the movements involved in the process of eliminating the itch should be noted, especially the touching, pulling and pushing, and scratching movements, eventually returning to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Whenever you change your posture, begin by noting your intention or desire to change, and note every movement closely, such as rising from the sitting posture, raising the arm, moving and stretching it. You should note the movements as the same time as making them. As your body sways forward, note it. As you rise, the body becomes light and rises. Focus your mind on this, you should gently note as "rising, rising".

A meditator should behave like a weak invalid. People in normal health rise easily and quickly, or abruptly. Not so with feeble invalids, who do so slowly and gently. The same is the case with people suffering from backache who rise gently lest the back hurts and causes pain. So also with meditators. They should make changes of posture gradually and gently; only then will mindfulness, concentration and insight be clear. Begin, therefore, with gentle and gradual movements. When rising, the meditator must do so gently like an invalid, at the same time noting as "rising, rising". Not only this: though the eye sees, the meditator must act as if blind. Similarly when the ear hears. While meditating, the meditator's concern is only to note. What one sees and hears are not one's concern. So whatever strange or striking things one may see or hear, one must behave as if one does not see or hear them, merely noting carefully.

When making bodily movements, the meditator should do so slowly, gently moving the arms and legs, bending or stretching

them, lowering the head and raising it up. When rising from the sitting posture, one should do so gradually, noting as "rising, rising". When straightening up and standing, note as "standing, standing". When looking here and there, note as "looking, seeing". When walking, note the steps, whether they are taken with the right or the left foot. You must be aware of all the successive movements involved, from the raising of the foot to the dropping of it. Note each step taken, whether with the right foot or the left foot. This is the manner of noting when one walks fast.

It will be enough if you note thus when walking fast and walking some distance. When walking slowly or pacing up and down (*cankama* walk), three stages should be noted for each step; when the foot is raised, when it is pushed forward, and when it is dropped. Begin with noting the raising and dropping movements. One must be fully aware of the raising of the foot. Similarly, when the foot is dropped, one should be fully aware of the "heavy" falling of the foot.

One must walk noting as "raising, dropping" with each step. This noting will become easier after about two days. Then go on to noting the three movements as described above, as "raising, pushing forward, dropping". In the beginning, it will suffice to note one or two movements only, thus "right step, left step" when walking fast and "raising, dropping" when walking slowly. If when walking thus, you want to sit down, note as "wanting to sit down, wanting to sit down". When actually sitting down, note attentively the "heavy" falling of your body.

When you are seated, note the movements involved in arranging your legs and arms. When there are no such movements of the body, note the rising and falling of the abdomen. If, while noting thus, stiffness or sensation of heat arise in any part of your body, note them. Then return to "rising, falling". If a desire to lie down arises, note it and the movements of your legs and arms as you lie down. The raising of the arm, the moving of it, the resting of the elbow on the floor, the swaying of the body, the stretching of the legs, the listing of the body as one slowly prepares to lie down - all these movements should be noted.

To note thus as you lie down is important. In the course of this movement (that is, lying down), you can gain distinctive knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the path and its fruition - *magga-nāna* and *phala-nāna*). When concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*ñāna*) are strong, distinctive knowledge can come at any moment. It can arise in a single "bend" of the arm or in a single "stretch" of the arm. That was how Venerable Ānanda became an *arahant*.

Venerable Ānanda was trying strenuously to attain Arahantship overnight on the eve of the First Buddhist Council. He was practising the whole night the form of *vipassanā* meditation known as *kāyagatāsati*, noting his steps, right and left, raising, pushing forward and dropping of the feet; noting, event by event, the mental desire to walk and the physical movements involved in walking. Although this went on until it was nearly dawn, he had not yet attained Arahantship. Realising that he had practised walking meditation to excess and that, in

order to balance concentration (*samādhi*) and effort (*virīya*), he should practise meditation in the lying posture for a while, he entered his room. He sat on the bed and then lay down. While doing so and noting, "lying, lying", he attained Arahantship in an instant.

Venerable Ānanda was only a stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) before he lay down. From the stage of a stream-winner he reached the stages of a once-returner (*sakadagāmi*) a non-returner (*anāgāmi*) and an *arahant* (the final stage of the path). Reaching these three successive stages of the higher path took only a moment. Remember this example of Venerable Ānanda's attainment of Arahantship. Such attainment can come at any moment and need not take long.

That is why meditators should always note diligently. One should not relax one's effort, thinking, "this little lapse should not matter much." All movements involved in lying down and arranging the arms and legs should be carefully and unremittingly noted. If there is no movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. Even when it is getting late and time for sleep, the meditator should not stop the noting. A really serious and energetic meditator should practise mindfulness as if forgoing sleep altogether. One should go on meditating until one falls asleep. If mindfulness has the upper hand, one will not fall asleep. If, however, drowsiness is stronger, one will fall asleep. When one feels sleepy, one should note as "sleepy, sleepy", if one's eyelids droop, as "drooping"; if they become heavy or leaden, as "heavy"; if the eyes smart, as "smarting". Noting thus, the drowsiness may pass and the eyes may become clear again.

One should then note as "clear, clear" and continue noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. However determined one may be, if real drowsiness intervenes, one does fall asleep. It is not difficult to fall asleep; in fact, it is easy. If you meditate in the lying posture, you soon become drowsy and easily fall asleep. That is why beginners should not meditate too much in the lying posture; they should meditate much more in the sitting and walking postures. However, as it grows late and becomes time for sleep, one should meditate in the lying position, noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. One will then naturally fall asleep.

The time one is asleep is the resting time for the meditator, but the really serious meditator should limit sleep to about four hours. This is the "midnight time" permitted by the Buddha. Four hours sleep is quite enough. If the beginner thinks that four hours' sleep is not enough for health, one may extend it to five or six hours. Six hours' sleep is clearly enough.

When one wakes up, one should immediately resume noting. The meditator who is really intent on attaining the path and its fruition (*magga-nāna* and *phala-nāna*) should rest from meditation only when asleep. At other times, in all waking moments, one should be noting continually and without let up. That is why, as soon as one awakens, one should note the awakening state of mind as "awakening, awakening". If one cannot yet be aware of this, one should begin with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

If one intends to get up from the bed, one should note as

"intending to get up, intending to get up". One should then note the movements one makes as one moves one's arms and legs. When one raises one's head and rises, one notes as "rising, rising". When one is seated, one notes as 'sitting, sitting'. If one makes any movements as one arranges one's arms and legs, all of these movements should also be noted. If there are no such changes, one should revert to noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen.

One should note when one washes one's face and when one takes a bath. As the movements involved in these acts are rather quick, as many of them should be noted as possible. There are then the acts of dressing, of tidying up the bed, of opening and closing the door; all these should also be noted as precisely as possible.

When one has one's meal and looks at the table, one should note as "looking, seeing, looking, seeing". When one extends one's hand towards the food, touches it, collect it and arranges it, handles it and brings it to the mouth, bends one head and puts the morsel into one's mouth, drops one's arm and raises one's head again, all these movements should be duly noted. (This way of noting is in accordance with the Burmese way of taking a meal. Those who use fork and spoon or chopsticks should note the movements in an appropriate manner.)

When one chews the food, one should note as "chewing, chewing". When one comes to know the taste of the food, one should note as "knowing, knowing". As one relishes the food and swallows it, as the food goes down one's throat, one should

note all these events. This is how the meditator should note when taking each morsel of food. As one takes soup, all the movements involved such as extending the arm, handling the spoon, scooping with it and so on, should all be noted. To note thus at meal-times is rather difficult as there are so many things to observe and note. The beginner is likely to miss several things that should be noted, but one should resolve to note them all. One cannot, of course, help overlooking some, but as one's concentration (*samādhi*) deepens, one will be able to note all of these events precisely.

I have mentioned so many things for the meditator to note, but in brief, there are only a few things to remember. When walking fast, note as 'right step', 'left step', and as "raising, dropping" when walking slowly. When sitting quietly, just note the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note the same when you are lying down, if there is nothing particular to note. While noting thus and if the mind wanders, note the acts of consciousness that arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also the sensations of stiffness, pain, aching and itchiness as they arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also, as they arise the bending, stretching and moving of the limbs, the bending and raising of the head, the swaying and straightening of the body. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

As one goes on noting thus, one will be able to note more and more of these events. In the beginning, as the mind wanders here and there, one may miss many things, but one should not be disheartened. Every beginner encounters the same difficulty, but as one becomes more skilled, one becomes aware of every act of

mind-wandering until, eventually, the mind does not wander any more. The mind is then riveted onto the object of its attention, the act of mindfulness becoming almost simultaneous with the object of its attention. In other words, the rising of the abdomen becomes concurrent with the act of noting it, and similarly with the falling of the abdomen.

The physical object of attention and the mental act of noting occur as a pair. There is in this occurrence no person or individual involved, only the physical object and the mental act of noting it, occurring in tandem. The meditator will, in time, actually and personally experience these occurrences. While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen one will come to distinguish the rising of the abdomen as physical phenomenon and the mental act of noting it as mental phenomenon ; similarly with the falling of the abdomen. Thus the meditator will distinctly realise the simultaneous occurrence in pairs of these psycho-physical phenomena.

With every act of noting, the meditator will come to know clearly that there are only this material quality which is the object of awareness or attention and the mental quality that makes a note of it. This discriminating knowledge is called analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*), which is the beginning of insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāna*). It is important to gain this knowledge correctly. This will be succeeded, as the meditator continues, by knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*).

As one goes on noting, one will see for oneself that what arises passes away after a short while. Ordinary people assume that

both the material and mental phenomena persist throughout life, that is, from youth to adulthood. In fact, that is not so. There is no phenomenon that lasts for ever. All phenomena arise and pass away so rapidly that they do not last even for the twinkling of an eye. One will come to know this personally as one goes on noting. One will then become convinced of the impermanency of all such phenomena. Such conviction is called *aniccānupassana-ñāna*.

This knowledge will be succeeded by *dukkhānupassana-ñāna*, which realises that all this impermanency is suffering. The meditator is also likely to encounter all kinds of hardship in the body, which is just an aggregate of suffering. This is also *dukkhānupassana-ñāna*. Next, the meditator will become convinced that all these psycho-physical phenomena are occurring of their own accord, following nobody's will and subject to nobody's control. They constitute no individual or ego-entity. This realisation is *anattānupassana-ñāna*.

When, as one continues meditating, one comes to realise firmly that all these phenomena are *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, one will attain *Nibbāna*. All the former Buddhas, *Arahants* and *Ariyas* realised *Nibbāna* by following this very path. All meditating meditators should recognize that they themselves are now on this *satipaṭṭhāna* path, in fulfilment of their wish for attainment of knowledge of the path (*magga-ñāna*), its fruition (*phala-ñāna*) and *Nibbāna*, following the ripening of their perfections (*pāramī*). They should feel glad at the prospect of experiencing the noble kind of tranquility brought about by concentration (*samādhi*) and the supramundane knowledge or wisdom (*ñāna*) experienced by the Buddhas, *Arahants* and *Ariyas*, which they themselves have

never experienced before. It will not be very long before they experience this knowledge for themselves. In fact, it may be within a month or twenty days of meditation practice. Those whose perfections are exceptional may have these experiences within seven days.

One should therefore be content in the faith that one will attain these insights in the time specified above, and that one will be freed of personality-belief (*sakkaya-ditthi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*), and thus saved from the danger of rebirth in the lower worlds. One should continue one's meditation practice optimistically with this faith.

May you all be able to practise meditation well and quickly attain that *Nibbāna* which the Buddhas, *Arahants*, and Noble Ones (*Āriyas*) have experienced!

Sādhu (well done)! *Sādhu!* *Sādhu!*





Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre (MBMC) is open throughout the whole year. Intensive retreats as well as part-time meditation classes are held throughout the year. The present *Kammaṭṭhānacariya* or meditation teacher is Sayādaw U Thuzana who is the disciple of Ovādacariya Sayādawgyi U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa of Paṇḍitārāma in Myanmar. Sayādaw speaks English well and teaches *Vipassanā* meditation based on the techniques of Mahāsī Sayādaw and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

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In Loving Memory of



TAN KOK HOE
(CLINSTON / 9M2SK)

Birth Date: 11 August 1952
Departed on 1 April 2010

May the merits accrued from this *Dhamma-dāna*
be a strong support to attain the bliss of Nibbāna.
May all beings be free from physical and mental *dukkhā*.
Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

