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MEDITATION THE BUDDHA'S WAY

by

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

B.Sc. Hons. (Ygn), M.Sc., Ph.D. (U.S.A)

Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja

Professor of Chemistry, Maw-la-myine University (Rtd.)

Professor of Paṭipatti, International Theravāda

Buddhist Missionary University (Rtd.)

Adviser to the Ministry of Religions Affairs (Rtd.)

President, International Pa-auk Forest

Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Federation

**Only if you meditate as taught by the Buddha,
will you gain enlightenment and
realization of Nibbāna.**

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Better than a hundred years in the life of a person who does not perceive the arising and the dissolving of the five aggregates (mentalities and materialities), is a day in the life of one who perceives the arising and the dissolving of the five aggregates.

(Dhammapada 113)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambhuddassa

MEDITATION THE BUDDHA'S WAY

“SYNOPSIS”

Meditation constitutes the major task in the Noble Eightfold Path which is the only Path to Nibbāna. The eight factors of the Path are classified as the Noble Threefold Training, comprising the Training of Morality (*Sīla*), the Training of Concentration (*Samādhi*) and the Training of Wisdom (*Paññā*). Thus morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*) are regarded as the essence of all the Buddha's teachings.

All the teachings and instructions of the Buddha with respect to the Noble Eightfold Path are systematically compiled by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa* in **Visuddhi Magga** which was translated by Venerable *Ñāṇamoli* into English, with the title ‘The Path of Purification’, and by *Venerable Nandamālā* as well as by *Venerable Sobhana*, also known as Mahāsī Sayādaw, into Myanmar language. So it can be easily referred to.

However, it is extremely difficult to meditate

in detail as described in *Visuddhi Magga*, because the teachings of the Buddha are very deep and very profound. Fortunately a competent meditation teacher by the name of *Venerable Āciṇṇa*, commonly known as *Pa-auk Forest Sayādaw*, appeared in Myanmar, and he is teaching both Tranquillity Meditation (*Samatha Bhāvanā*) and Insight Meditation (*Vipassanā Bhāvanā*) in detail as taught by the Buddha.

The Noble Threefold Training Systematically eliminates all defilements (*kilesās*) from the mind; so the mind becomes completely pure. According to *Rathavinīta Sutta*² and *Visuddhi Magga*³, the mind is systematically purified in seven stages in the following order.

1. *Sīla-visuddhi* – the purification of morality,
2. *Citta-visuddhi* – purification of the mind,
3. *Diṭṭhi-visuddhi* – purification of view,
4. *Kaṅkhāvitarana-visuddhi* – purification by overcoming doubt,
5. *Maggāmagga-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and not-path,
6. *Paṭipadā-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi* – purifica-

- tion by knowledge and vision of the way,
7. *Ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision.

Thus after establishing pure morality, the meditator should undertake tranquillity meditation to develop the right concentration and the purity of the mind. As this step is very important, the Buddha teaches 40 subjects of meditation, everyone of which can develop the right concentration. It is not proper to abandon all these meditation subjects and follow or invent a new way of meditation called 'the teacher's method' (*ācariya vāda*).

Mindfulness of breathing (*Ānāpānassati*) is the foremost meditation subject among the 40 subjects, and it is used in many meditation centres. The right way of practising *Ānāpānassati* as taught by the Buddha is discussed. If one attains the fourfold rūpāvacara jhānas in *Ānāpānassati*, his meditation is correct. If he does not follow the Buddha's way or does not exert the right effort, he cannot attain the jhāna. If he can develop correct meditation signs such as learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) and then the counter sign

(*paṭibhāga nimitta*), he should exert greater effort to attain the fourth *rūpā-vacara jhāna* which is the best foundation for performing vipassanā effectively.

After attaining the purity of the mind, he can proceed to the third stage to develop the purity of view and to discard the basic wrong view called '**personality-belief**'. He must undertake the meditation called '**defining the four primary elements**' successfully, and analyze his body to material groups (*rūpa-kalāpas*) and then to ultimate materialities. He should define each ultimate materiality by its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause.

Then he should undertake the meditation called '**defining mentality**' (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*). He should discern all the cognitive series that arise in the six sense-doors. He should then discern the various types of consciousness in the cognitive series and the mental factors which associate with each consciousness.

Each type of consciousness and each type of mental factors are then defined by its character-

istic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. When he can discern all materiality and all mentality in himself, he should discern them in others in a similar way.

When he finds out that all persons are made up of ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities, which constitute five aggregates of grasping and which are arising and perishing very rapidly, he will be convinced that there is no person, no self, no soul, no ego, no 'atta'. So he can temporarily discard 'personality-belief' and attain '**the knowledge of defining mentality-materiality**' (*nāmarū pa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*).

He can now proceed to the fourth stage of purification. To get rid of sixteen doubts concerning the past, the present and the future, he must discern mentalities and materialities that exist in the present life, in the past lives and in the future lives, and correlate the past causes of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* with the present effects, and the present causes with the future effects. Pa-auk Forest Meditation teachers can guide meditators how to do this successfully. **Meditators, who can discern mentalities and materialities**

internally (in himself) and externally (in others) can trace the mentality-materiality series either backward or forward, and thus can discern past mentalities-materialities and future mentalities-materialities. Therefore, he can verify the causal relations of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, and get rid of all the 16 doubts.

He can also discern the four causes – *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* (*tejo*), *āhāra* (nutriment) – which produce materialities as well as the causes which give rise to mentalities. So now he also attains '**the knowledge of discerning the causes of mentality-materiality**' (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).

The meditator can also discern the three characteristic marks of *impermanence* (*anicca*), *suffering* (*dukkha*) and *not-self* (*anatta*) as he can vividly see ultimate materialities and mentalities arising and perishing very rapidly. He has already discerned the causes and the effects of Dependent Origination. So now he can undertake vipassanā correctly, reflecting the ultimate mentalities-materialities together with their causes and effects as impermanence, suffering and not-self

in several ways as described in Visuddhi Magga, if he is guided by a competent teacher.

If he can develop ten insight knowledges starting from *Sammasana-nāṇa*, the knowledge of defining mentality-materiality as impermanence, suffering and not-self, up to conformity knowledge (*Anuloma-nāṇa*), Gotrabhu-nāṇa, the knowledge which cuts the worldling lineage to form the holy-lineage, automatically follows. Soon after that, Sotāpatti Path-consciousness arises, accompanied by Sotāpatti Path-wisdom, which realizes the four Noble Truths and totally eliminates two defilements, namely, the wrong view and sceptical doubt.

The meditator becomes a stream-winner (*sotāpanna*), who can enjoy the eternal peace and unique happiness of Nibbāna as much as he likes and is guaranteed never to be reborn in woeful abodes. If the reader will undertake meditation the Buddha's way under the guidance of a competent teacher in an International Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centre, he can become a stream-winner in this very life.

Then if he undertakes Vipassanā meditation further, he can develop the three higher Path-wisdoms and become an Arahant, a perfect person, enjoying the eternal peace and unique bliss of Nibbāna for ever. Even if the stream-winner does not undertake vipassanā meditation further, he will become an Arahant in due course.

Better than a hundred years in the life of an immoral person who has no control over his senses, is a day in the life of a virtuous person who practises tranquillity meditation and vipassanā meditation.

(Dhammapada 110)

"Main Paper"

Introduction

In the historical night of his full enlightenment as a Sammāsambuddha, the Buddha Gotama discovered the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the total purification of the mind from all defilements (*kilesās*) as well as to the emancipation from all suffering to enjoy eternal peace and unique happiness called Nibbāna.

What are Defilements?

They are ten immoral mental factors which make the minds immoral or unwholesome to perform immoral or evil actions. They defile, debase, inflict and burn the mind causing innumerable suffering. They overwhelm and influence the mind to perform evil actions, producing billions of immoral or bad kammās which cause beings to be born in woeful abodes life after life. So they are our worst enemies. We must know our enemies and subdue them not to arise in our minds. They are:

Lobha (*taṇhā, rāga*) – greed, craving, attachment

It craves for money, wealth, power, fame, sen-

sual pleasure, good food, luxurious goods, etc. It can never be satisfied. Dissatisfaction means suffering. It makes people attached to their beloved ones, wealth, power, etc. When they lose them, they even commit suicide. It is the main cause of suffering.

Dosa (*paṭigha*) – anger, hatred, ill-will

It makes us angry, cruel, sad, disappointed, depressed, etc. It gives rise to hatred, dislike, grief, sorrow, lamentation, despair, mental pain, mental stress and strain, and many diseases. It causes quarrels, fighting, battles, wars and many deaths.

Moha (*avijjā*) – ignorance, delusion

It blinds the mind so that we do not know the true nature of sense objects. We don't know that we are made up of ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities (consciousness and mental factors) which are formless, massless, arising and perishing extremely rapidly and incessantly with the characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*). It gives us the illusion that we are

permanent, happy, selves or persons, and handsome or beautiful. In reality, we are impermanent, suffering, not-self and not handsome or not beautiful. It deludes or deceives us that sensual pleasure is very enjoyable and lures us to enjoy sensual pleasure as much as possible. It makes us ignorant of what is good and what is bad, kamma and its results, our past existences and future existences, and the Four Noble Truths.

Māna – pride, conceit

It makes us proud, conceited, arrogant

Diṭṭhi – wrong view

The basic wrong view is 'personality-belief', thinking that I exist, my family exists, beings exist, etc. It makes one very selfish.

Vicikicchā – sceptical doubt

It is the doubt about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, because one is ignorant of their noblest attributes. It makes us doubtful about kamma and its result, about the causal relations of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) which beautifully explains the round of rebirths

(*samsāra*), and also about the four Noble Truths.

Thina – sloth, idleness

It makes us idle and inactive.

Uddhacca – restlessness

It makes the mind restless and immoral.

Ahirika – moral shamelessness; not ashamed to do evil actions, because one is ignorant of kamma and its result.

Anottappa – moral fearlessness; not afraid to do evil actions because of the ignorance of kamma and its result.

Defilements exist in the mind in three layers. They always exist in the mind as **Latent defilements** (*anusaya-kilesās*) life after life, ready to arise in the mind as **moderate defilements** (*pari-yuṭṭhāna-kilesās*) when we are in contact with various sense objects. These moderate defilements start to agitate and influence the mind to get this and that, and they prevent or hinder the arising of moral minds, jhāna and magga. So they are called '**hindrances**' (*nīvaraṇas*).

When moderate defilements grow strong and

violent, ready to perform evil actions, they are known as **gross defilements** (*vītikkama-kilesās*). So defilements are growing and thriving in our minds like a big kilesā-tree for aeons.

It is the greatest battle to fight against defilements, because they overwhelm our minds most of the time and we have to obey their commands. But the Buddha showed the way how to fight and conquer them peacefully by the Noble Eightfold Path.

Systematic Elimination of Defilements

The eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are classified as the Noble Threefold Training as follows.

(i) **Training of Wisdom** (*Paññā-sikkhā*)

- 1 *Sammādit̥ṭhi* – the right understanding,
- 2 *Sammāsaṅkappa* – the right thought.

(ii) **Training of Morality** (*Sīla-sikkhā*)

- 3 *Sammāvācā* – the right speech,
- 4 *Sammākammanta* – the right action,
- 5 *Sammā-ājīva* – the right livelihood.

(iii) **Training of Concentration** (*Samādhi-sikkhā*)

- 6 *Sammāvāyāma* – the right effort,

7 *Sammāsati* – the right mindfulness,

8 *Sammāsamādhi* – the right concentration.

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

Similarly to destroy all defilements, we must first undertake the Training of Morality by observing moral precepts diligently to suppress and subdue violent defilements not to arise in the mind.

After that, we should undertake the Training of Concentration by practising samatha meditation to suppress and subdue moderate defilements not to arise in the mind.

Then we should undertake the Training of Wisdom by practising Vipassanā meditation to develop ten insight knowledges (*Vipassanā-ñāṇas*) and the fourfold Path-wisdom which destroy all defilements including latent defilements. The mind is then totally pure, and the meditator becomes an Arahant, a Perfect Person. This is the best attainment in life.

Five Spiritual Powers and Faculties

There are five mental factors which function as our spiritual powers and spiritual faculties to fight against the greatest enemies called defilements. Each of these five mental factors possess two distinct properties:

- (1) As faculties, they have the ability to control their concomitants and the mind,
- (2) As powers, they have the ability to be firm and unshakable by the opposing force. They are:

- 1 *Saddhā* – faith or confidence in the Triple Gem,
- 2 *Vīriya* – effort or energy,
- 3 *Sati* – mindfulness, heedfulness,
- 4 *Samādhi* – mental concentration,
- 5 *Paññā* – wisdom.

Faith (*saddhā*) is the leader of beautiful mental factors. It is the most precious treasure that we can possess. We should understand the noble attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha and the Law of Kamma well to make our faith strong. If our faith is strong, we can get rid of sceptical doubt and sloth or idleness, and we shall perform meritorious deeds willingly and

actively.

The remaining four powers also represent the four factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. They should all be very strong to defeat the enemies.

In meditation, *faith* and *wisdom* should balance each other, because too much faith leads to unreasonable belief, and too much investigation leads to no concentration.

Similarly *effort* and *concentration* should balance each other, because too much effort may lead to restlessness, and too much concentration may lead to drowsiness.

Mindfulness need not be balanced by any factor. It is most important in meditation, because it balances the remaining powers and controls the remaining path-factors not to slacken and not to be in excess.

*Mindfulness is the way to the deathless
(Nibbāna). Heedlessness is the way to death.
Those who are mindful do not die;
Those who are heedless are as if already dead.*

(*Dhammapada 21*)

1 Development of Pure Morality

(*Sīla-visuddhi*)

A lay-person should keep pure morality by diligently observing five moral precepts of **Pañca-sīla**:

- 1 Abstaining from killing any living being,
- 2 Abstaining from stealing others' properties,
- 3 Abstaining from sexual misconduct and the misuse of the senses,
- 4 Abstaining from lying, slandering, using abusive language, and talking vainly or gossiping,
- 5 Abstaining from consuming intoxicating drinks and drugs.

By observing these five precepts, one can maintain the best moral character and live happily, because he is guaranteed to be reborn in blissful realms after death.

When one undertakes meditation in a meditation centre, one should diligently observe **8, 9 or 10 moral precepts**. The precepts, 1, 2, 4, 5 are the same as Pañca-sīla. The remaining precepts are:

- 3 Abstaining from all sexual activity,
- 6 Abstaining from taking food after midday till

dawn the next day,

7 Abstaining from dancing, singing, playing musical instruments which are obstacles to meditation,

8 Abstaining from wearing flowers, using perfumes, and beautifying oneself with any cosmetic,

9 Abstaining from staying on any high or luxurious seat or bed,

10 Abstaining from using money, gold and jewelry.

In observing 8 or 9 precepts, number 7 and 8 precepts are combined as one precept and precept 10 is omitted. In observing 9 precepts, radiation of living-kindness to all living being is added as a precept.

The benefits of observing moral precepts diligently are very great. Morality is the beginning of all profitable things or meritorious deeds. Those who keep pure morality will get great fortune and great blessings. All their good wishes will be fulfilled, because their minds are pure. Pure morality serves as the foundation of meditation.

Monks or *bhikkhus* should observe **Catupārisuddhi Sīla**, the fourfold morality for overall purity, by observing diligently the following four types of morality.

- 1 *Pātimokkhasaṃvara Sīla* – observing with faith 227 rules of moral discipline prescribed by the Buddha for bhikkhus,
- 2 *Indriyasaṃvara Sīla* – guarding the six sense doors with mindfulness so that they will not be invaded by defilements,
- 3 *Ājīvaparissuddhi Sīla* – cultivating pure livelihood with effort by acquiring requisites of pure origin,
- 4 *Paccayasannissita Sīla* – using requisites obtained lawfully and properly after reviewing them with understanding.

When an upright person can maintain the above fourfold morality perfectly pure without even the stain of a wrong thought, that pure morality becomes the proximate cause for Arahantship itself as it has been demonstrated by the Elder Saṃgharakkhita and the Elder Cittagutta.

As moral training and moral purity constitute

part of the Noble Eightfold Path and serve as the foundation of meditation, we should not neglect it. In fact, we should respectfully lay down the foundation of moral purity very strongly and firmly, because pure morality will support and uphold the higher structures of **concentration** (*samādhi*) and *wisdom* (*paññā*) very well.

2 Development of Pure Mind (*Citta-visuddhi*)

Morality (*sīla*) can subdue gross defilements momentarily. Even when we maintain pure morality, moderate defilements, also called **hindrances** (*nīvaraṇas*), keep arising and agitating the mind. They make the mind restless and wandering. They also block or prevent moral minds, mental absorption (*jhāna*) and Path – consciousness (*magga*) from arising. Furthermore, they blind the mind not to see things (ultimate realities and Noble Truths) as they really are.

So, in **Samādhi Sutta**, the Buddha persuaded monks to develop the right concentration to make the mind pure, that is, free from hindrances or defilements.

The reason is that when the mind is pure, it ra-

diates very bright and penetrative light, with the help of which one can see penetratively into the body to see internal organs and also **ultimate realities** consisting of ultimate materialities and mentalities (consciousness and mental factors) as they really are.

The **right concentration** is equivalent to the concentration of any of the four rūpāvacara jhānas, according to the statement of the Buddha in **Mahā -saṭipatṭhāna Sutta**.

Visuddhi Magga defines the **pruity of the mind** (*citta-visuddhi*) as the state of the mind at the neighbourhood concentration or at any of the eight jhāna attainments.

This means that the mind becomes pure at the neighbourhood concentration and remains pure at the higher concentration associated with four rūpāvacara jhānas and four arūpāvacara jhānas.

Visuddhi Magga also states that the neighbourhood concentration is not stable and it falls down very often as a child who has started to walk falls down very often. It also says that the jhāna concentration is stable and it does not fall down as a grown-up man does not fall down even

after walking for several hours.

These statements are found to be true by the meditators in the International Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres. These meditators can develop the eight jhāna attainments by kasīṇa meditations. They also found the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna to be the best foundation for going into vipassanā meditation. Gotama Bodhisatta also used this fourth jhāna concentration when he performed vipassanā meditation on the night of his enlightenment as a Sammāsambuddha.

Undertaking Mindfulness of Breathing

As to develop the right concentration is very essential and very important, the Buddha taught 40 subjects of samatha meditation, all of which can develop the right concentration. Among these meditation subjects, mindfulness of breathing (*Ānāpānassati*) is the foremost one and the most popular one throughout the ages up to the present day. If it is practised as taught by the Buddha, one can attain the four rūpāvacara jhānas.

The subject of meditation in *Ānāpānassati* is the in-breath and the out-breath which can be

observed by their gentle touch at a point around the nostrils or on the upper lip just below the nostrils.

If one takes notice of the touching or focus one's attention on the chest or on the forehead or on the belly or at any other point, one is not doing *Ānāpānassati*. Also one should not mix *Ānāpānassati* with another meditation such as 'in-breath, out-breath, Buddha' or 'in, out, anicca', etc.

Visuddhi Magga gives the instruction thus:

"Only if the meditator practises Ānāpānassati by establishing his mindfulness on the breath at the point of distinct contact with the in-breath and the out-breath, will the Ānāpānassati concentration and meditation be fully accomplished in him."

Ānāpānassati consists of four steps:

First one should try to be aware of the in-breath and the out-breath continuously for one hour at every sitting. One should always focus one's mind only on the in-breath and the out-breath at the touching point, without following the breaths either inward or outward and also without taking

notice of any sensation on the body.

If one's mind is restless and wandering to outward sense objects, one should count the breaths as 'in, out – one; in, out – two; ... in; out – eight' again and again. The power of counting will keep the mind focused on the breaths. When one can focus well, one can stop counting.

Secondly, while one is observing the in-breath and the out-breath as in step one, one also takes notice of the length of the in-breath and the out-breath to know whether they are short or long occasionally. When one is breathing fast, one takes note that the length is short; when one is breathing slowly with longer duration, one takes note that the length is long. The in-breath and the out-breath should be of equal length.

Thirdly one increases one's mindfulness to be aware of the whole in-breath and the whole out-breath from the beginning to the end, taking notice of every part of the breath without following the breath either inward and outward. When one can concentrate continuously for one hour or more at every sitting, one's breaths will become

more and more gentle and subtle until it is no longer distinct.

When the breaths become not distinct or disappear, one reaches the **fourth step**. One should now keep one's mind fixed at the previous touching point, bearing in mind that one must be breathing. When one's mindfulness and wisdom become more developed, the gentle breaths will reappear. Then one should go on focusing one's mind on the whole in-breath and the whole out-breath at the touching point again.

The meditation sign usually appears not long after the breath reappears. If the meditation sign appears in the second or third step, ignore it for it is unstable.

The Appearance of Meditation Signs

(Bhā-vanā- nimitta)

All three types of meditation sign appear in *Ānāpānāsati*. The natural in-breath and out-breath are taken as the **preparatory sign** (*parikamma-nimitta*). The grey dirty image that appears at a certain degree of concentration is also regarded as the preparatory sign.

A white image like a cotton-mass or silk cotton

that appears at the point of distinct contact of the in-breath and the out-breath at the nostril or at the upper lip is called the **acquired sign** or **learning sign** (*uggaha-nimitta*)

The meditator then keeps his meditating mind fixed and absorbed at the learning sign for one hour or more at every sitting. When the white mass becomes very clear and very bright like the evening star, it is called the **counter-sign** or **counter-part sign** (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). Different signs may appear to different persons due to the difference in perception.

The meditator should know the difference between the **meditation sign** and the **wisdom light** radiated from concentrated minds. The Buddha describes four types of light in *Āloka Sutta*¹⁵ – viz., sun light, moon light, fire light and wisdom light. Again in *Pacalāyamāna Sutta*¹⁶ four kinds of wisdom light are described, including the light radiated from the mind associated with preparatory concentration, neighbourhood concentration or jhāna concentration.

Starting from a certain preliminary concentration, the wisdom light starts to appear. It seems

to come out from the body, the head or the eye or like a torch-light pointed to one's face. This light becomes brighter and brighter as the concentration rises higher and higher. At the neighbourhood concentration, it becomes very bright and penetrative. With the help of this light one can see all objects in front of him with closed eyes. He can also see all his internal organs one after another better than seeing with ultrasound. Besides he comes to possess **extrasensory perception** (e.s.p.), seeing objects which are far away. One should not pay attention to these wisdom lights.

When the counter sign appears as described above, the meditator is said to attain the neighbourhood concentration (upacāra-samādhi) and arrive at the neighbourhood stage of meditation (upacāra-bhāvanā). But it should be made sure that he can see objects in front of him with closed eyes and his internal organs as well.

In Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres the meditator is also asked to look into his heart to see his life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-citta*) which appears like a bright star and serves as the mind-door. As

past objects can appear at the mind-door, the counter sign and the previous consciousness associated with the neighbourhood concentration appear at the mind-door. The meditator is instructed how to discern the five jhāna factors which associate with the neighbourhood consciousness . If he can discern the jhāna factors quite clearly, it is certain that he attains the neighbourhood concentration.

Developing Four Rūpāvacara Jhānas

When the meditator attains the counter-sign, he should guard it carefully as a king's chief queen guards the embryo of a universal monarch as it is very hard to get the counter sign. He should keep his mind fixed and absorbed at the counter-sign for one hour, two hours or more at every sitting. He should avoid the seven unsuitable things and cultivate the seven suitable things. He should balance his faith with his wisdom, and also his effort with his concentration. As he strives on thus continuously, the **first rūpāvacara jhāna** will arise in due course.

He practises to acquire mastery in five ways

with respect to the first jhāna. He then examines the five jhāna factors and finds that *vitakka* and *vicāra* are gross and weak and the first jhāna is close to the enemies (hindrances) due to *vitakka* and *vicāra*. The first jhāna is less calm and less blissful than the second jhāna due to those two jhāna factors.

He cuts off his attachment to the first jhāna and fixes his mind on the counter sign without *vitakka* and *vicāra*. When his mind remains absorbed for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the **second rūpāvacara jhāna**. After developing mastery and the fivefold skill in the second jhāna, he develops the **third rūpāvacara jhāna** by further eliminating *pīti* (joy) as before.

Again after developing mastery and the fivefold skill in the third jhāna, he develops the **fourth rūpāvacara jhāna** by further eliminating *sukha* (bliss) as before. The fourth jhāna contains only *upekkhā*, *ekaggatā* as jhāna factors. However, because the jhāna factors as well as equanimity (*tatramajjattatā*) and mindfulness (*satī*) are more developed, the fourth jhāna is very peaceful and very stable. Also because it radi-

ates more brilliant and more penetrative light than the lower jhānas, it is found to be the best basic jhāna for undertaking vipassanā meditation.

Attainment of Jhāna means Half-way to Nibbāna

"Yamhi jānañca paññā ca sa ve Nibbāna santike"

"If a person possesses jhāna which is the foundation of vipassanā and carries on insight meditation to develop insight knowledges, he is near Nibbāna."

So it is said in Visuddhi Magga. According to the experiences of meditators in the International Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres, the attainment of jhāna means half-way to Nibbāna.

As the Buddha teaches how to develop four **rūpāvacara jhānas** in Ānāpānassati Sutta, the meditator should undertake **Ānāpānassati** meditation until he attains all the four **rūpāvacara jhānas**.

In Pa-auk Forest Meditation centres, when a meditator can develop the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna correctly, he is guided to do **Kāyagatāsati meditation**, the **four Guardian meditations** and

the **ten Kasiṇa meditations** until he can develop the **eight jhāna attainments** in all the ten *kasiṇas*. So he becomes very skilful in developing the jhānas.

Moreover, the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna of white kasiṇa radiates brighter light than the Ānāpānasati fourth rūpāvacara jhāna. So it serves as a better foundation for undertaking vipassanā meditation.

3. Development of The Purity of View

(*Diṭṭhi Visuddhi*)

A popular question is "How to go into vipassanā after attaining the right concentration and the purity of the mind?" The answer is "We should proceed to the third stage of purifying the mind called '*the Purity of View*' (*Diṭṭhi-visuddhi*) as described in Visuddhi Magga.

The wrong view 'diṭṭhi' is a defilement. The basic wrong view which has plagued men for aeons is '**Personality belief**' (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), interpreting the combination of body and mind as an 'individual' or 'I'. Seeing all living beings as persons, men, women, dogs, cats, etc., is also per-

sonality belief. This wrong view makes everyone selfish and behave in a very selfish way. All sorts of trouble, evil actions, suffering, and thousands of wrong views spring up from this basic wrong view.

The dreadful thing about 'personality belief' is that it can couple with bad kamma to throw one down to the woeful abodes again and again. According to the Buddha's teachings, to get rid of personality belief is most important and is most urgent. It is as urgent as putting out the fire on one's head when one's head is on fire, and as removing the spear and treating the wound on one's chest when the chest is impaled by a spear.

To get rid of personality belief, we must discard concepts (*paññatti*) and go into ultimate realities. Also the **Commentary teacher** gave the following advice:

"Paññattiṃ thapetvā aniccādi ākāreṇa vividham passatīti vipassanā."

"In going into vipassanā one must discard all concepts and penetrate into ultimate realities, reflecting on three characteristic marks of impermanence, suffering and not-self in several

special ways."

Visuddhi Magga also points out that one must first perform **Rūpakammaṭṭhāna** and **Nāma-kammaṭṭhāna** analyzing body and mind into ultimate realities and characterizing each ultimate materiality (*rūpa*), each consciousness (*citta*) and each mental factor (*cetasika*) in four ways by means of its characteristic (*lakkaṇa*), its function (*rasa*), its manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) and its proximate cause for its arising (*padaṭṭhāna*).

How can one analyze one's body? One must first break it down into *material groups* (*rūpakalāpas*) which make up the body, and then analyze each material group to discern its components. The Buddha teaches the meditation '*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*' (defining the four primary elements) for this purpose.

Defining Materiality (*Rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*)

The Meditator first develops the jhāna that he has attained, comes out of the jhāna, and defines the four primary elements by their characteristics. He defines *pathavī* (the element of solidity) by its characteristics of hardness and softness,

āpo (the element of liquidity) by its characteristics of cohesiveness and fluidity, *tejo* (the element of heat) by its characteristics of hotness and coldness, and *vāyo* (the element of motion) by its characteristics of pushing and supporting.

Starting from a place of his body where hardness is distinct, he reflects on the nature of hardness in every part of his whole body. He does the same for the remaining seven characteristics. He practises to discern all the eight characteristics one by one repeatedly until he can discern all of them almost simultaneously. He then concentrates his mind on the eight characteristics which represent the four primary elements, until the neighbourhood concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) arises. At this time he is aware of only the four elements, but not his body.

As he keeps on focusing his mind on the elements, a grey colour, then a white colour, and then a clear mass like glass or a block of ice generally appear. This clear mass represents transparent materialities (*pasāda rūpas*). When he continues to discern the four elements in the clear mass, the mass breaks down into very tiny par-

ticles of material groups which arise and dissolve very rapidly.

He continues to discern the four elements in each tiny particle with his wisdom as he has discerned them in his body. After that he discerns derived materialities in the particles. He should analyze the particles in accordance with the five sense door (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body).

According to *Mahā Gopālaka Sutta*¹⁰ all the primary materialities (*bhūta-rūpa*) and all derived materialities (*upādā-rūpa*) must be defined in order to progress to the attainment to Path-wisdom (*magga-ñāṇa*). After defining all ultimate materialities in one's body, one should define all ultimate materialities in others' bodies in a similar way.

Defining Mentality (*Nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*)

Mentality (*nāma*) means consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) that make up the mind. According to Abhidhamma Commentary¹¹, billions of minds arise and dissolve one after another per second, and *cittas* and *cetasikas* have no form and no shape. So "How can one see them" is the question.

Abhidhamma Saṅgaha (Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma¹¹) describes that life-continuum (*bhavaṅga cittas*) serve as the mind door, and sense objects like ultimate realities and concepts (meditation signs) as well as past sense objects, future sense objects can appear in the mind-door. So ultimate realities can be observed by the minds that arise in the mind-door cognitive series when they are associated with the right concentration.

For clarity the mentality should be discerned according to the six sense-doors in terms of cognitive series of consciousness¹². According to *Abhidhamma Commentary*¹³ the visible object appears in the eye-door and the mind-door simultaneously; the sound appears at the ear-door and the mind-door simultaneously, and so on.

So the meditator first develops the right concentration until very brilliant and penetrative light is radiated. He observes the eye door (*cakkhu-pasāda*) and the mind-door (*bhavaṅga citta*) together, and then observes a visible object striking the two doors simultaneously. Then he discerns the cognitive series of consciousness that arises as follows.

-Bh- " Ti-Na-Da-Pa-Ca-Sp-St-Vo-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-
Ja-Ja-Td-Td" - Bh

Bh = bhavaṅga stream (life continuum).

Ti = atīta-bhavaṅga – past bhavaṅga which passes by from the time the sense-object strikes the sense door to the time the object appears at the door;

Na = bhavaṅga calana – vibrating bhavaṅga which arises when the sense-object appears at the sense door;

Da = bhavaṅgu-paccheda – arrested bhavaṅga; the bhavaṅga stream is cut off after this citta;

Pa = pañcadvārāvajjana – five-door directing consciousness; it apprehends or pays attention to the sense-object;

Ca = cakkhu-viññāṇa – eye-consciousness; it sees the sense-object;

Sp = sampaticchana – receiving consciousness; it receives the sense object transmitted by eye-consciousness;

St = santirana – investigating consciousness; it investigates the sense-object;

Vo = voṭṭhapana – determining consciousness; it determines whether the sense-object is good

or bad;

Ja = javana – impulsive consciousness; it enjoys the taste of the sense-object;

Td = tadāmbana – registering consciousness; it follows javana citta and continues to enjoy the taste of the sense-object;

Bh = bhavaṅga stream – life-continuum.

Similar cognitive series arises at the ear-door, the nose-door, the tongue-door and the body-door when the corresponding sense-objects appear at the doors.

After the termination of each of the above five-door cognitive series, **several consequent mind-door cognitive series arise** taking the past sense-object in order to investigate the detailed features of the object. Indeed the mind functions like a super computer storing up billions of sense data in the mental stream and identifying each sense-object presently observed by matching it with the stored-up data.

Independent mind-door cognitive series also arises when a mind-object (thought) appears in the mind-door as follows.

Bh-"Na-Da-Ma-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja" - Bh-

The symbols have the same significance as described earlier. 'Ma' stands for mono-dvārā-vajjana which is identical with voṭṭhapana.

After discerning each consciousness in the cognitive series, the meditator then investigates the mental factors that associate with each consciousness. He investigates whether the characteristic of ***Phassa*** making contact between the consciousness and the sense-object is present or not in each mind. Next he investigates whether the characteristic of ***vedanā***, i.e., the sensation or feeling, is present or not in each consciousness. In this way he can discern all the mental factors which associate with each consciousness.

The Characteristic of Not-self becomes distinct

It is very important to analyze each mental group (mind) and each material group (*rūpakalāpa*) into their ultimate components in order to know the ultimate realities (*paramatthas*), to achieve '*ghana vinibbhoga*' – breaking down the compactness and discerning the components in each material group and each mental group, and to penetrate to the characteristic of not-self or no-soul (*anatta*).

The not-self characteristic is not distinct and not known because it is covered up by 'ghana' (compactness as group or person). If the 'ghana' can be broken down or analyzed, the not-self characteristic becomes clear and evident as it really is.^{14.15}

When the combination of body and mind, which is regarded as a person, a being, I or you, is analyzed into ultimate materialities and mentalities that have no form and no mass, the person, the being, I, you, etc., disappear. Again as the ultimate materialities and mentalities are arising and dissolving very rapidly leaving no permanent substance, the *soul, ego, self, jīva, atta*, etc., that are proposed by Creation Theory, do not really exist. On the other hand, the '*not-self*' characteristic as well as the three characteristic marks of existence—viz., *impermanence (anicca)*, *suffering (dukkha)* and *not-self (anatta)* – become very distinct.

When the body and mind are analyzed into ultimate materialities, consciousnesses and mental factors, the group of all ultimate materialities is called the material aggregate, the group of all

feeling (a mental factor) which associates with all mundane consciousnesses is called the feeling aggregate, the group of all *perception* (a mental factor) which associate with all mundane consciousnesses is called the perception aggregate, all the remaining mental factors with *volition* as the foremost is called the aggregate of mental formations, and finally the group of all mundane consciousnesses is called the consciousness aggregate. So the meditator comes to know **five aggregates of grasping** which constitute a person. As these five aggregates are arising and perishing very rapidly, they are impermanent and suffering. Thus the meditator also knows the **First Noble Truth** which states that the five aggregates of grasping are suffering.

What really exist in the whole universe, that is in the 31 planes of existence, are only these aggregates of grasping which are suffering. So in whatever existence one may be born, one gets only suffering. If one understands this Noble Truth of Suffering very well, one can get rid of one's attachment to any existence. This profound knowledge will support one to gain emancipa-

tion form all suffering.

Thus the ability to analyze body and mind into their ultimate components called ultimate realities is very important and very beneficial. Without such analysis, one does not know truly the three characteristic marks of impermanence, suffering and not-self. So one cannot perform vipassanā meditation properly because vipassanā is reflecting on these three characteristics in several ways.

Yet many meditation teachers nowadays are claiming that they are teaching vipassanā without the ability of analyzing body and mind into ultimate realities. They should also understand that vipassanā deals with entirely with *ultimate realities (paramatthas)* which really exist in nature and in the universe whereas living beings and inanimate things are *concepts (paññattis)* which do not exist in their own right as irreducible realities.

Without seeing and knowing clearly the ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities, arising and perishing very rapidly, one does not

know the three characteristic marks and thus one cannot practise vipassanā meditation and consequently one cannot gain emancipation from the round of suffering, neither can one enjoy the eternal peace and unique happiness of Nibbāna, that is the real goal of Buddhism.

Furthermore, when the meditator clearly understands that there are only five aggregates of clinging, arising and dissolving very rapidly and incessantly, and there is no substantial entity that can be called a 'person', 'I', 'self', 'soul' or 'ego', he can dismiss the wrong view of 'personality-belief' and attain the Purity of View (*ditṭhi-visuddhi*).

Knowledge of Defining Mentality-Materiality

The Knowledge of defining each consciousness, each mental factor, and each ultimate materiality by means of their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations and proximate causes is known as '*Nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*' – 'the Knowledge of defining mentality-materiality'. This knowledge is the land-mark of the 'Purity of View'.

4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt

(*Kaṅkhāvitarana-visuddhī*)

The meditator, who has defined materiality and mentality both internally in himself and externally in others, must further discern the **causes that give rise to mentality and materiality**. Otherwise, doubt and wrong views may arise in him. He may think that an Almighty God created them or there are no causes which produce them. Since doubt (*vicikicchā*) and wrong view (*ditṭhī*) are defilements (*kilesās*), they must be got rid off.

Visuddhi Magga describes four causes – *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* (heat), *ojā* (nutriment) – which produce materiality.

The meditator develops the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna until it radiates brilliant and penetrative wisdom light. He comes out of the jhāna and focuses his attention on his consciousness (*citta*) which arises in the heart depending on a heart-base. When he bends his finger, he can see thousands of consciousness-born materiality-groups (*cittaja-rūpa*), arising and dissolving and also causing he fore finger to bend. He can also understand that all his bodily movements are caused

by arising and perishing of consciousness born material groups.

Next he focuses his attention on a material group and discerns a series of heat-born material groups produced by the heat (*tejo*) in the material group.

He can also discern another stream of nutriment-born material groups produced by the nutriment (*ojā*) in the material group in combination with the external nutriment.

When he can discern the kamma that gives rise to the present existence, he can also observe kamma-born material groups being incessantly produced by that kamma.

Discerning the Causes which give rise to Mentality

Next he investigates with the right thought and the right understanding the causes which give rise to mentality. Again with the help of the glittering, penetrative wisdom light he discerns clearly that the eye-door cognitive series of consciousness arises due to the contact between the eye-door and a visible object; the ear-door cognitive series of consciousness arises due to the contact

between the ear-door and an audible sound, and so on¹⁶. Attention (*manasikāra*) to the sense object that appears at the sense-door must also be present for each cognitive series to arise.

In the case of impulsive consciousness (*javana cittas*), wise reflection gives rise to moral consciousness (*kusala cittas*), and unwise reflection gives rise to immoral consciousness (*akusala cittas*).

Discarding Sixteen Kinds of Doubt

Now there still exist five kinds of doubt about the past: "Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?"

Also there exist five kinds of doubt about the future: "Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?"

Again there exist six kinds of doubt about the present; "Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? From what existence comes this existence? What existence will follow the present existence?" ^{17,18}

These 16 kinds of doubt can be discarded only when the meditator can penetratively discern the causal relations of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*).

Discerning the Causal Relations of Paṭiccasamuppāda

The Buddha has reminded Ānanda that beings have to undergo the round of rebirths life after life, because they do not understand properly and penetratively the causal relations of Dependent Origination or Dependent Arising¹⁹.

Also in *Visuddhi Magga*²⁰ and *Abhidhamma Commentary*²¹ it is clearly stated thus:

"There is no one, even in a dream, who has emancipated from the round of misery without the ability to break through the Paṭiccasamuppāda causal relations of the saṃsāra machine with his wisdom sword which has been sharpened on the sacred whetstone of concentration."

Thus the causal relations of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* must be discerned and verified by insight wisdom to clarify all doubts and straighten all wrong

views. According to the instruction given in the Visuddhi Magga Commentory²²:

(1) The past five causes – viz., ignorance (*avijjā*), kamma-formations (*saṅkhāra*), craving (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upādāna*), and kamma (*kamma-bhava*) – must be investigated and discerned clearly, and the arising of the present five effects – viz., resultant consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*), six sense-bases (*saḷāyatana*), contact (*phassa*) and feeling (*vedanā*) – due to the past causes must be observed vividly with wisdom by insight meditation.

(2) The present five causes – viz., ignorance, craving, grasping, kamma-formations and kamma must be discerned next, and the arising of the future five effects – viz., resultant consciousness, mentality-materiality, six sense-bases, contact and feeling – due to the present five causes must be observed clearly with wisdom by insight meditation.

Herein the causes of Dependent Origination constitute the truth of the cause of suffering (*samudaya-sacca*) and the effects of Dependent

Origination constitute the truth of suffering (*dukkha-sacca*).

Therefore, the meditator must observe with wisdom

- (1) the arising of the present truth of suffering due to the past truth of the cause of suffering;
- (2) the arising of the future truth of suffering due to the present truth of the cause of suffering.

In order to correlate the past causes with the present effects and the present causes with the future effects, we should know the mental and physical phenomena in the past, the present and the future.

How can one know the past mental and material phenomena which have already dissolved and the future phenomena which do not come into existence yet?

Well, the ability of the concentrated mind is marvellous. We have learnt about **pubbenivāsānussati-abhiññā** which can remember thousands of one's past lives and **anāgatamsañāṇa** which can know one's future existences.

In the case of insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) we

need not go to the *Abhiññā*-stage and we have no *Abhiññā* – the power of which we could make use of. But, if we have the right concentration and the knowledge to characterize the mental and material phenomena both internally (in one's self) and externally (in others), then we can trace the stream of arising and dissolving of mentality and materiality backward to past lives. This method is mentioned in *Samyutta Nikāya (II.71 Myanmar)*, in *Khajjaniya Sutta*, and it is being practised satisfactorily in Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres.

In Pa-auk forest Meditation Centres the yogi performs some meritorious deeds at the shrine by offering candles and flowres. He characterises the mental and material phenomena which arise during this performance. He then goes to the meditation hall and meditates together with the other yogis. He develops concentration, discerns his mentality-materiality, and traces the series of mentality-materiality backward to the previous performance of the meritorious deed and again analyses the mental and material phenomena arising at the time. If he observes the same results as

he has noted before, he is assured that he can characterize the near past mentality-materiality.

After that he can go on tracing the series of mentality-materiality backward to observe the stream of mentality-materiality until he can discern the mentality-materiality at the time of conception in his mother's womb.

So now he knows the present five effects pertaining to the present existence: rebirth consciousness and its associated mental factors, kamma-born materiality including the sense bases, the contact of the sense base with the sense object, and the resultant feeling.

Then he goes on tracing the series of mentality-materiality backward in the immediate past existence, the important events and the actions done in that existence. He can actually observe his past existence, the important events and the actions done in that existence. Then he focuses his mind on the mentality-materiality which arose at the time of near-death when the near-death sign appeared. From this sign he discerns the *kamma-formations* and the *kamma* which produces the present existence. He can also discern the three

supporting forces, that is, *ingorance*, *craving* and *grasping*, from their accompanying consciousness which arose at the time when the near-death sign appeared.

Next he tries to discern whether the past five causes gave rise to the present five effects. He can see the arising of the five effects due to the five causes if they represent the true cause – effect relation. He also feels convinced that the past existence was his real existence.

Then he traces the series of mentality-materiality backward in his first past existence until he discerns the rebirth consciousness, its associated mental factors, the kamma-born materiality, the sense bases, the contact of the sense base with the sense object and the resultant feeling.

He then proceeds tracing the series of mentality-materiality in his second past existence in order to find the five causes in that existence that give rise to the five effects in the first past existence. If he is successful, he can proceed to find the cause-effect relation of the third past existence and the second past existence.

He must also discern the cause-effect relation

of the present existence with the future existence. So he offers food to the Buddha again, making a wish what he wants to be in the next existence. If he wishes to become a celestial being, then thinking the celestial existence to really exist is *ignorance* (*avijjā*), the desire to become a celestial being is *craving* (*taṇhā*), and clinging to that desire is *grasping* (*upādāna*). His wholesome consciousness and volition for offering food to the Buddha are *kamma-formations* (*saṅkhāra*) and the kamma seed deposited in his mental stream is *kamma-bhava*. So now he has developed the five causes for conditioning a new existence to arise.

Then he develops the concentration till it radiates very bright light and intently tries to observe the new existence which will arise due to the five present causes. Usually the new existence which he has wished for appears vividly. He discerns the *rebirth consciousness* (*viññāṇa*), its associated *mental factors* (*nāma*), the *kamma-born materiality* (*rūpa*), the six internal bases (*salāyatana*), the contact (*phassa*) of the sense base and the sense object, and the resultant feeling (*vedanā*) at the moment of rebirth of the new existence.

He then tries to discern whether the present five causes give rise to the future five effects. If they are the true cause-effect relation, he can observe the arising of the five future effects due to the present five causes. He continues to discern the cause-effect relation of the first future existence and the second future existence in a similar way, and so on until he can observe no more future existence.

So now he has successfully discerned the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* causal relations of his past three existences, the present existence and the future existences in terms of five causes and five effects.

*"Five causes were there in the past;
Five fruits we find in the present life;
Five causes do we now produce.
Five fruits we reap in future life."*

(Vs. 2.214,Ps.50)

He further discerns the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* causal relations from one existence to another in terms of one cause and one effect as:

1. dependent on *ignorance (avijjā)* arise *kamma-formations (saṅkhāra)*;

2. dependent on kamma formations arises the resultant consciousness (*viññāṇa*);
3. dependent on the resultant consciousness arise associated *mental factors* (*nāma*) and *kamma-born materiality* (*rūpa*);
4. dependent on mentality-materiality arise six internal bases (*saḷāyatana*);
5. dependent on six internal bases arises contact (*phassa*) with sense objects;
6. dependent on contact arises feeling (*vedanā*);
7. dependent on feeling arises craving (*taṇhā*);
8. dependent on craving arises grasping (*upādāna*);
9. dependent on grasping arises kamma-formations (*kamma-bhava*) and rebirth process; (*upapatti-bhava*);
10. dependent on kamma formations (in the present existence) arises rebirth (*jāti*) (in the future existence);
11. dependent on birth arise *decay-and-death* (*jarā - maraṇa*), *worry* (*soka*), *lamentation* (*parideva*), *pain* (*dukkha*), *grief* (*domanassa*) and *despair* (*upayāsa*). (S.1.243).

After discerning clearly all the causal relations

from the third past existence to the last future existence, he can observe the whole series of the arising and perishing of mentality-materiality extending from the most past existence to the last future existence. So he can get rid of all the 16 doubts described earlier.

When the immediate causes as well as the major causes for the arising of mental groups and material groups have been thoroughly investigated, the yogi knows definitely that the five groups of existence that constitute each living being are being produced by the respective appropriate causes. So he is able to eliminate the "*View of Uncausedness*" (*Ahetuka-diṭṭhi*) which believes in the arising of living beings without any cause, and also the '*View of the Wrong Cause of Existence*' (*Visama-hetuka-diṭṭhi*) which believes in the creation of living beings by a Creator.

Furthermore, since the yogi has observed the continuous chain of cause and effect relations occurring in accordance with the Law of Dependent Origination, he can discard the '*View of the Inefficacy of Action*' (*Akiriya-diṭṭhi*), the '*View*

of Nihilism' (*Natthika-diṭṭhī*), the 'View of Eternity of the Soul or Ego' (*Sassata-diṭṭhī*) and the 'View of Annihilation of the Soul or Ego' (*Uccheda-diṭṭhī*).

Numerous speculative opinions and theories, which at all times have influenced and still are influencing mankind, and which are not in accord with the causal relations, can all be eliminated.

Now the mind of the yogi is free from all false views. Thus the stage of the 'Purity of View' (*Diṭṭhi Visuddhi*) is further reinforced. Besides since the yogi has now overcome all the 16 doubts (*kaṅkhā*) mentioned above as well as the sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) with respect to the causal relations, he is said to overcome or transcend all doubts. So he has also attained the '**Purity by Transcending Doubt**' (*Kaṅkhā-vitarana Visuddhi*).

Knowledge of Discerning the Causes of Mentality and Materiality

The Landmark of this stage of purity is *Yathābhūta-ñāṇa* (the knowledge which can discern the ultimate realities correctly) or **Paccaya-**

pariggaha-ñāṇa(the knowledge of discerning the causes of mentality and materiality).

The meditator also attains this knowledge.

Junior Stream-winner (*Cūla-Sotāpanna*)

‘A stream-winner’ is a noble person who has eliminated two defilements (*diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*) completely. He will never be reborn in the woeful abodes and is destined to enter Nibbāna in due course.

Now the meditator, who has attained **Nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa** and **Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa**, has temporarily eliminated *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* as described above. So he resembles a stream-winner but he is not a stream-winner yet. He is called a *cūla-sotāpanna* meaning a ‘*junior stream-winner*’. He will not be reborn in the woeful abode in his subsequent life.

The Importance of Developing the Two Basic Knowledges for Vipassanā Meditation

These two knowledges, i.e, *Ñamarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* and *Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*, are very important. They are the basic knowledges for insight-meditation and they constitute the

foundation for the arising of ten insight-knowledges in later stages. They are not included in *Vipassanā-ñāṇas* because they do not contemplate the three characteristic marks (*tilakkhaṇa*) of existence.

You will understand how very difficult to develop these two basic knowledges correctly if you understand the above description. Some teachers even say that in bending your hand, the hand which is bending is materiality and the knowledge which knows the bending of the hand is mentality. If you know this, you can differentiate between materiality and mentality, and so you possess the knowledge called '*Nāmarūpa-paricccheda-ñāṇa*'. This is not correct. This knowledge is really the knowledge of defining each ultimate materiality and each ultimate mentality by their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations and nearest causes. To know like this, you have to analyze body and mind into 28 types of ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities consisting of all consciousnesses and all mental factors which arise and perish very rapidly in you. Besides, you should be able to dis-

cern all these ultimate realities by their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations, and nearest causes for their arising. You should know all these, because they constitute the objects of vipassanā meditation. So you can see the great difference.

Also some teachers say that if you know that the hand bends because of the intention to bend the hand, you possess the knowledge called ‘**Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa**’. Again this is not correct. This knowledge really means the knowledge which knows all the causes which give rise to all materialities and all mentalities, including all the causal relations of Dependent Origination, the discourse known as **Paṭiccasamuppāda** which beautifully explains why every living being is born life after life in the long ‘*Samāsāra*’ which is ‘*the round of rebirths*’. Only when you know all these causes vividly, can you get rid of all doubts concerning the past, the present and the future as well as all wrong views about continuous existences and kamma and its effect.

All sceptical doubts about the teachings of the Buddha are known as ‘*Vicikicchā*’ and all

wrong views are included in '*diṭṭhi*'. *Vicikicchā* and *diṭṭhi* are two defilements which must be eliminated first in vipassanā meditation.

The two knowledge which we have just discussed eliminate these two defilements temporarily to develop the **Purity of View** (*Diṭṭhi-Visuddhi*) and the **Purity of the Mind from Doubt** (*Kaṅkhāvitarana-visuddhi*). Unless we attain these two Purities, we cannot undertake vipassanā meditation according to *Visuddhi Magga*¹² and *Rathavinīta Sutta*¹¹. Consequently we cannot go into vipassanā meditation directly from the beginning of meditation as claimed by some meditation teachers. Remember that only the meditation as taught by the Buddha leads to real Vipassanā and real realization of Nibbāna.

5. PURITY OF VISION IN DISCERNING THE PATH AND NOT-PATH

(*Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-Visuddhi*)

The criteria of this Purity of Vision is *Samma-sana-ñāṇa* and the first part of *Udayabbaya-ñāṇa*.

Sammasana-ñāṇa is the knowledge which can investigate the three characteristic marks of

ultimate mentalities and materialities in the five aggregates of grasping.

Udayabbaya-ñāṇa is the knowledge which can clearly discern the three characteristic marks of ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities together with their arising and perishing phenomena.

Vipassanā Meditation the Buddha's Way

Strictly speaking vipassanā meditation, which is reflecting on the three characteristic marks of mentality and materiality in the thirty-one planes of existence, begins at this stage.

To go up to the fifth stage of purification of the mind, one must perform vipassanā meditation. How should one perform vipassanā?

Some teachers say that just meditating on one materiality or one mentality will lead to the realization of Nibbāna. This is impossible; don't believe it.

Abhidhamma Commentary (1, 271) and *Visuddhi Magga Commentary* (2, 300) comment that (1) meditating on materialities alone will not lead to the Path-wisdom;

- (2) meditating on mentalities alone will not lead to the Path-wisdom;
- (3) meditating on only five internal aggregates will not lead to the Path-wisdom;
- (4) meditating on only five external aggregates will not lead to the Path-wisdom.

How should one meditate to attain Path-wisdom?

According to the instructions in *Visuddhi Magga* (Mahāsi 4, 282-283), *Paṭisambhidā Paḷi* (51-52), *Samyutta Paḷi* (2,258), *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Commentary* (1, 281) one must meditate on all internal materialities and mentalities, all external materialities and mentalities, all mundane ultimate materialities and mentalities which represent the causal relations of Dependent Origination, pertaining to the past, the present and the future, by reflecting repeatedly as ‘*anicca, anicca*’ (impermanence, impermanence), ‘*dukkha, dukkha*’ (suffering, suffering), and ‘*anatta, anatta*’ (not-self, not-self).

- (1) **Discerning all Materialities and all Mentalities again for Undertaking Vipassanā Meditation**

One must discern all ultimate materialities and all ultimate mentalities vividly internally in oneself and externally in others. One must define each ultimate materiality and each ultimate mentality by their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations and nearest causes for their arising.

(2) **Vipassanā Meditation on Materialities**

The meditator discerns 18 real materialities (*nīphanna rūpas*) in the six sense doors and in the 42 body parts (*koṭṭhāsas*) and contemplates the nature of their impermanence, suffering and not-self collectively in each sense door as well as in each body part.

He discerns the nature of arising and perishing of materialities with his wisdom and contemplates the nature of impermanence as ‘*anicca, anicca*’, repeatedly both internally and externally.

He discerns the nature of being tortured incessantly by the dissolution of materialities and contemplates the nature of suffering as ‘*dukkha, dukkha*’, repeatedly both internally and externally.

He discerns clearly with his wisdom the ab-

sence of a permanent, imperishable substance that can be called a 'self' or 'soul' and contemplates repeatedly the nature of not-self as '*anatta, anatta*', repeatedly.

(3) **Vipassanā Meditation on Mentalities**

When he can discern the three characteristic marks of materialities quite rapidly and well, he discerns the three characteristic marks of mentalities in the six kinds of cognitive series of consciousnesses in the six sense doors.

Observing the rapid arising and perishing of each cognitive consciousness and its concomitant mental factors at every consciousness-moment with his wisdom, he contemplates repeatedly '*anicca, anicca*'. He reflects in this way on all the consciousnesses and their mental factors in the six kinds of cognitive series both internally and externally.

Similarly he discerns the nature of being tortured incessantly by the rapid dissolution of consciousnesses and associated mental factors and contemplates repeatedly '*dukkha, dukkha*'.

Again he discerns with his wisdom the ab-

sence of a permanent, imperishable substance that can be called a ‘self’ or ‘soul’ and contemplates repeatedly ‘*anatta, anatta*’.

(4) **Vipassanā Meditation on Materialities and Mentalities Collectively**

Then he reflects on the three characteristic marks on materialities and mentalities together pertaining to the six kinds of cognitive series in the six sense doors.

In the eye-door there are *cakkhu-dassaka-kalapa*, *kāya-dassaka-kapāla* and *bhāva-dassaka-kalāpa* consisting of 30 ultimate materialities and also *cittaja-aṭṭhaka-kalāpa*, *utuja-aṭṭhaka-kalāpa* and *āhāraja-aṭṭhaka-kalāpa* consisting of 24 ultimate materialities, making up 54 ultimate materialities in all.

Also in the eye-door cognitive series of consciousness, the first consciousness ‘*pañcadvārāvaṭṭana*’ consists of consciousness and ten mental factors – viz., contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life-faculty, attention, initial application, sustained application and determination, making up 11 ultimate mentalities.

The meditator focuses his attention on each consciousness, its concomitants, the 54 materialities associated with the physical base and the sense object, and contemplates repeatedly ‘*anicca, anicca*’ on the nature of arising and perishing, ‘*dukkha, dukkha*’ on the nature of being tortured incessantly, and ‘*anatta, anatta*’ on the nature of not-self and no soul.

(5) Addhāpaccupanna Vipassanā Meditation

(a) He contemplates the impermanent characteristic of materiality in the past, in the present and in the future from birth to death at least once. He repeats contemplating the painful characteristic and the not-self characteristic. He continues reflecting on three characteristics internally and externally.

(b) He contemplates each of the three characteristics of mentality from birth to death in the same way. He should cover all the six types of cognitive series of consciousness.

(c) Then he should reflect on mentality and materiality in the same way both internally and externally.

(6) Vipassanā Meditation in three Periods

In all the past existences, the present existence, and the future existences in which he has discerned the causal relations of Dependent Origination, from birth to death, he contemplates in turn the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self on materiality alone, on mentality alone, and on mentality-materiality together.

(7) Vipassanā Meditation on gross and subtle, inferior and superior Materiality and Mentality

If he can skilfully contemplate the three characteristics in turn, both internally and externally, on materiality alone, on mentality alone, on mentality-materiality together, pertaining to the past, to the present and to the future, those materialities and mentalities will also include gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near materialities and mentalities.

(8) Vipassanā Meditation on present five Aggregates

He discerns the real materialities in the six

sense doors and in the 42 body parts of the present existence and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn. He also focuses his attention on the arising and perishing of external real materialities and contemplate their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn. This is the contemplation of the three characteristic marks on the present materiality aggregate.

Then he discerns the feeling (mental factor) in each consciousness of the six-door cognitive series and, focusing on its arising and perishing, he contemplates its characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn. He contemplates both internally and externally. This is the vipassanā meditation on the present feeling aggregate.

He then contemplates on the three characteristics in turn on the perception aggregate, on the aggregate of mental formations, and on the consciousness aggregate in turn in the same way.

(9) Vipassanā Meditation on Past-Present-Future five Aggregates

He discerns the real materialities in the six

sense doors and in the 42 body parts of the past existences, the present existence and the future existences successively and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn, both internally and externally.

He also discerns the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the aggregate of mental formations and the consciousness aggregate in turn in the past existences, in the present existence, in the future existences successively, and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn, both internally and externally.

(10) Vipassanā Meditation in 40 Ways

In order to strengthen the comprehension of impermanence, suffering, and not-self, the meditator contemplates the five aggregates in turn as impermanence, as pain, as a disease, a boil, a dert, a calamity, an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as a plague, a disaster, a terror, a menace, as fickle, perishable, unenduring, as no protection, no shelter, no refuge, as empty, vain, void, not-self, as danger, as subject to change, as having

no core, as the root of calamity, as murderous, as subject to cankers, as Māra's bait, as subject to birth, subject to ageing, subject to illness, subject to death, subject to sorrow, subject to lamentation, subject to despair, subject to defilement. (Visuddhi A. 2, 247-248)

(11) Vipassanā Meditation on the Causes and Effects of Dependent Origination

(Paṭiccasamuppāda)

Next he discerns the causes and the effects of Dependent Origination in the series of existence in the past, in the present and in the future, and focussing on their incessant existing and perishing, he repeatedly reflects, on their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn. For example;

Because *avijjā* arises, *saṅkhāra* arises.

Avijjā arises and perishes; so it is *anicca*

(dukkha, anatta).

Saṅkhāra arises and perishes; so it is *anicca*

(dukkha, anatta).

(12) Vipassanā Meditation on Material Septad and Immaterial Septad

(*Visuddhi Magga*, 2, 253-264)

Next he examines materialities in seven different conditions and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn and in detail.

Similarly he examines mentalities in seven different conditions and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn and in detail.

Sammasana-ñāṇa reaches the highest Level

As the meditator undertakes vipassanā meditation in many ways contemplating the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self of ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities very skilfully as described above, the arising and perishing natures of ultimate realities appear very clearly and distinctly in his wisdom.

So his *knowledge of defining ultimate mentality and materiality* (**sammasana-ñāṇa**) as impermanence, suffering and not-self reaches the highest level.

Developing Udayabbaya-ñāṇa

Udayabbaya-ñāṇa is the knowledge which can clearly discern ultimate mentalities and ulti-

mate materialities at their genetic instant and perishing instant together with their characteristic marks of impermanence, suffering and not-self.

In developing *Sammasana-nāṇa* the meditator has already contemplated the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in various ways in ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities as well as in the causes and effects of Dependent Origination. Now he must undertake 'Momentary Present Vipassanā Meditation'.

(13) **Momentary-Present Vipassanā Meditation**

'Momentary-Present' means the arising moment, the existing moment, the perishing moment of each consciousness respectively. Penetratively discerning ultimate materialities-mentalities at these sub-moments of arising, existing and perishing, the meditator contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn.

When he can do momentary-present vipassanā meditation in the present existence skilfully, he repeats the meditation in the past exist-

ences and the future existences contemplating on three characteristics in turn (1) in materialities alone, (2) in mentalities alone, (3) in materialities-mentalities together in each of the above existence. Then he gives priority to the characteristic that he can contemplate best, and reflects on it repeatedly.

When the arising and perishing of materialities-mentalities appear very rapidly in his wisdom, he performs the broad method of vipassanā meditation in connection with Udayabbaya-ñāṇa.

The broad Method of Vipassanā meditation in Connection with Udayabbaya-ñāṇa

Then the meditator discerns the cause-effect relations of Dependent Origination in his past existences, present existence and future existences, and performs the vipassanā meditation by contemplating the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self in turn on –

(14) The arising mentalities-materialities

(*samudaya-dhammānupassī*)

(15) The perishing mentalities-materialities

(*Vaya-dhammānupassī*)

(16) The arising and perishing mentalities-materialities

(*samudaya-vayadhammānupassī*)^{32,33,34}

When he can do *vapassanā*-meditation very skilfully, he can clearly discern the mentalities-materialities together with causes – effects at the arising moment, at the existing moment and at the perishing moment.

The Appearance of Vipassanā Impurities

Now the four Noble Truths, the principles of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and three characteristic marks become distinct in his wisdom. *Taruṇavipassanā* and *Trunavipassanā-ñāṇa* arise in him. The landmark of this stage is the appearance of ‘*ten impurities of vipassanā (upakkilesās)*

- (1) *Obhāsa* – very bright body rays.
- (2) *Ñāṇa* – very pure insight wisdom,
- (3) *Pīti* – very intense joy,
- (4) *Passaddhi* - tranquillity of consciousness and mental factors,
- (5) *Sūkhā* – mental happiness,
- (6) *Adhimokkha* - intense faith and confidence,
- (7) *Paggaha* – intense effort,

- (8) *Upaṭṭhāna* – unshakeable mindfulness,
- (9) *Upekkhā* – equanimity,
- (10) *Nikanti* – mild attachment (craving).

The first nine impurities are not really defilements. By paying attention to them, “*Etam mama, eso ha masami, eso me attā*” = “These things are mine, these things are I, these things are my ‘self’—such thoughts together with craving (*taṇhā*), pride (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) arise in the mind. These three defilements are the real defilements of vipassanā.

These meditators without the knowledge of the teachings of the Buddha will wrongly think that the body rays, intense joy, tranquillity, happiness, etc., are produced by the Path-consciousness and Fruition-consciousness and wrongly believe that they attain Nibbāna. They are on the wrong Path.

Those who understand that appreciation of and attachment to body-rays, intense joy, etc., are not the right Path to the attainment of Nibbāna and that only performing vipassanā meditation without any craving and attachment to those body-rays is the right Path to Nibbāna. The

knowledge which clearly understands the right Path and the wrong Path correctly in this way is called “*the Purification by knowledge and vision of the Path and the not-Path.*”

6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way (*Paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhī*)

The meditator again undertakes vipassanā meditation contemplating the three characteristics in turn in (1) only materialities, (2) only mentalities, (3) materialities and mentalities together, (4) five aggregates (5) twelve bases, (6) eighteen elements, covering all mentalities-materialities which arise in the six sense doors.

(17) Undertaking Fourfold Anupassanā Meditation

Next he performs the fourfold Anupassanā meditation. He again defines the three characteristics in turn in all materialities-mentalities mentioned above, giving priority to materialities and proceeding to mentalities. This is called *Kāyānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*.

Next he defines the three characteristics in turn in all mentalities-materialities as above giv-

ing priority to feeling. This is called *Vedanānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*. For example;

Sense base arises and perishes – *anicca*
(*dukkha, anatta*)

Sense object arises and perishes – *anicca*
(*dukkha, anatta*)

Feeling arises and perishes – *anicca*
(*dukkha, anatta*)

He repeats the *Anupassanā* meditation as above, giving priority to consciousness. It is called *Cittānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*.

Again he repeats the *Anupassanā* meditation as above, giving priority to contact, volition, perception, etc. It is called *Dhammānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*.

(18) Vipassanā Meditation on Iriyāpatha-sampajañña

‘*Iriyapatha*’ means four postures of standing, sitting, going and lying. ‘*Sampajañña*’ means the wisdom of reflection.

The meditator discerns all mentalities-materialities or five aggregates while he is in any posture – standing, sitting, going, lying, bending, stretching, etc. In any bodily movement he must

be aware of the intention, the movement, the benefit of the movement with wisdom. He must also discern all mentalities-materialities in the six sense doors and contemplate on their three characteristics.

He performs vipassanā meditation on mentalities-materialities in each posture by dividing them:

- (1) as two groups of mentalities and materialities,
- (2) as five aggregates,
- (3) as twelve bases,
- (4) as 18 elements,
- (5) as 12 factors of Paṭiccasamuppāda.

He also occasionally reflects on the disgusting nature (*asubha*) of mentalities-materialities. He strives on strenuously until the “Knowledge of comprehending mentality-materiality at the genetic instant as well as at the perishing instant together with the three characteristic marks of impermanence, suffering and not-self” (*Udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) is fully developed.

(19) Meditation focused on the Dissolution of Mentalities-Materialities (*Baṅgānupassanā*)

As he repeatedly and strenuously contem-

plates the three characteristic marks of mentalities and materialities in the four postures, his preceding meditation knowledge connects with his subsequent meditation knowledge. So his insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) becomes very strong, very keen, sharp and pure. He pays no attention to the arising of mentalities-materialities, but focuses his attention on their dissolution. This is the meditation called ‘*Baṅgānupassanā*’.

“*Khaya vaya bheda nirodheyeva satisantittḥati*”.⁴²

“*With the powerful support of the preceding insight knowledge, the mindfulness associated with the subsequent insight knowledge becomes well established on the fading away, dissolution and cessation of formations.*”

(1) *Aniccaṃ khayatṭhena* – observing the nature of fading away, breaking up, dissolving and disappearing of formations with direct knowledge, he reflects ‘*anicca, anicca*’ repeatedly.

(2) *Dukkhaṃ bhayatṭhena* – observing the frightful nature of fading away, breaking up, dissolving and disappearing of formations with di-

rect knowledge, he reflects ‘*dukkha, dukkha*’ repeatedly.

(3) *Anatta asāraḱatṭhena* – observing the coreless, selfless and soulless nature of formations with direct knowledge, he reflects ‘*anatta, antta*’ repeatedly.

(4) He also reflects on the repulsive nature of formations intermittently.

When the meditator developed *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* and the Purification of View, he has broken the compactness of mentality-materiality by penetrating into the ultimate realities in mental groups and material groups. Now material groups (*rūpa-kalāpas*) and mental groups (minds) are no longer distinct.

Since his insight knowledge is very keen and very sharp, the ultimate realities (*paramattha dhammas*) of formations (mentality-materialities) become very quickly distinct in his knowledge. As they appear and dissolve so quickly that he could no longer observe their arising and existing; he observes only their dissolution.

This ‘knowledge of contemplation of dissolution’ is called *Baṅga-ñāṇa*.

(20) Undertaking Ñāta-Ñāṇa Vipassanā

‘Ñāta’ means the mentalities-materialities which exist internally and externally in three periods and which have to be observed by insight wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*)

‘Ñāṇa’ means the knowledge which is undertaking vipassanā meditation on mentalities-materialities known as ‘Ñāta’. This knowledge associates with the mind-door javana consciousnesses.

According to Visuddhi Magga³⁶ the meditator has to do vipassanā meditation on both Ñāta and Ñāṇa. For example:

- (1) Discern materiality, materiality perishes - *anicca*;
The meditating knowledge also perishes - *anicca*;
- (2) Discern mentality, mentality perishes - *anicca*;
The meditating knowledge also perishes - *anicca*.

Also contemplate as *dukkha,anatta*. He should contemplate the characteristics in turn (1) internally for some time, (2) externally for some time, (3) on materialities for some time, (4) on mentalities for some time, (5) on causes for some time, (6) on effects for some time, (7) on past formations for some time, (8) on present

formations for some time, (9) on future formations for some time. He can give priority to the dhamma which he can meditate better.

According to *Mahātikā*³⁷ it is desirable to do vipassanā meditation in several ways to make *bhaṅgañāṇa* perfect.

(21) Vipassanā Meditation on the Dissolution of Paṭiccasamuppāda

He discerns clearly only the dissolution of the materialities-mentalities, the causes and effects of Paṭiccasamuppāda pertaining to the past, the present and the future according to the First Method, and contemplates the three characteristics in turn internally as well as externally.

Avijja dissolves – *anicca*; the meditating knowledge dissolves – *anicca*.

Saṅkhāra dissolves – *anicca*; the meditating knowledge dissolves – *anicca*.

He should keep on meditating till the Path-wisdom arises.

The Arising of Bhayañāṇa

As he keeps on discerning continuously the dissolution of materialities, mentalities, forma-

tions, causes, effects in the past, in the present and in the future, internally and externally, he realizes very vividly the painful nature of being tortured incessantly and repeatedly by the continuous dissolution of formations. The painful nature becomes so distinct that all living abodes, all the 31 planes of existence, including Brahma realms which are regarded to be very peaceful, appear as great pain, great danger and great terror.

When he sees how past formations have dissolved, the present ones are dissolving, and those to be generated in the future will dissolve in the same way, the '**Knowledge of Appearance as Terror**' (*Bhayañāṇa*) arises in him.

The Arising of Ādīnava-ñāṇa

Also the materialities-mentalities, causes and effects, all formation in three periods, all internal formations and external ones, appear in his wisdom distinctly as impermanence, suffering, not-self, as changing and perishing phenomena. So all kinds of existence and all living abodes no longer appear as safe asylum, safe shelter and safe refuge.

As he repeats, develops and cultivates the knowledge of appearance as terror, he finds no place to go. The three kinds of becoming appear like charcoal pits full of glowing coal, the four primary elements like hideous venomous snakes, the five aggregates like murderers with raised weapons, the six internal bases like an empty village, the six external bases like village-raiding robbers, the seven stations of consciousness and the nine abodes of beings as though burning, blazing and glowing with eleven fires. All formations appear as a huge mass of danger and faults, devoid of satisfaction or substance, like a tumour, a disease, a dart, a calamity, an affliction.³⁸

Thus by the power of repeated contemplation of the nature of dissolution of formations (*baṅgānupassanā*), all formations appear as great dreadful danger, and ‘**the Knowledge of Realization of Fault and Unsatisfactoriness in Formations**’ arises in the meditator.

The Arising of Nibbidāñāṇa

When he sees all formations as great dreadful danger full of faults and unsatisfactoriness,

he becomes dispassionate, dissatisfied, disenchanted, disgusted and bored with all formations belonging to any kind of becoming, destiny, station or abode. So '**the Knowledge of Feeling bored and disgusted with all formations**' also arises in him.³⁹

The Arising of Muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa

When he feels bored and disgusted with all formations which are dissolving incessantly, he is dissatisfied with, takes no delight in, is no longer attached to any single formations in any kind of becoming, generation, destiny, station or abode. He desires to be delivered from the whole field of formations and to escape from it.

Just as a fish in a net, a frog in a snake's jaws, a jungle fowl shut in a cage, a deer fallen into the clutches of a strong snare, a man encircled by enemies want to be delivered and to escape from their respective danger, so too the meditator wants to be delivered from the whole field of formations and to escape from it. So '**the Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance**' (*Muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*) also arises in him.⁴⁰

The Arising of Paṭisaṅkhā-nāṇa

The meditator, who desires to be delivered from all formations in the thirty-one planes of existence, pertaining to three periods, again discerns those same formations and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self for achieving deliverance from them.

He sees all formations as impermanence, because they (1) cannot go beyond dissolution, (2) exist temporarily, (3) are limited by arising and perishing, (4) unenduring, (5) subject to change, (6) subject to death, etc.

He sees them as suffering because they are (1) torturing incessantly, (2) hard to bear, (3) the basis of pain, (4) a disease, (5) a tumour, (6) a dart, (7) a calamity, (8) an affliction (9) a torture, (10) a terror, (11) no shelter, (12) no refuge, (13) a danger, (14) subject to birth, (15) subject to ageing, (16) subject to illness, (17) subject to sorrow, (18) subject to lamentation, (19) subject to despair, and so on.

He sees all formations as not-self, because they are (1) alien, (2) soulless, (3) vain, (4) void, (5) ownerless, (6) not subject to control and so

on.

He also sees them as repulsive, because they are (1) objectionable, (2) stinking, (3) disgusting, (4) unaffected by disguise, (5) hideous, (6) loathsome, and so on.

As he strives on in this way, **‘the Knowledge of Exertion for Deliverance’** (*Paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa*) arises in him.

The Arising of the Knowledge of Equanimity

He discerns repeatedly all formations, causes and effects, in the thirty-one planes of existence in three periods and contemplates their characteristics of impermanence, suffering, not-self and foulness in turn, sometimes internally, sometimes externally, the nature of dissolution of formation becomes very rapid and very distinct. He continues defining the three characteristics in turn in the nature of dissolution.

His meditating mind gradually abandons both terror and delight on formations and becomes equally indifferent and neutral. It becomes calmly established on the dissolution of formations.

When the meditating mind is calmly estab-

lished on the dissolution of formations, the meditator will not hear any external sound. The functions of the five-door cognitive series stop, and only the mind-door cognitive series keep arising. Then the vipassanā meditation becomes specially strong. The meditator can keep on discerning the formations which he can discern better, giving priority to the characteristic which he can reflect better.

At this stage *faith* (*saddhā*) and *Wisdom* (*paññā*), *effort* (*vīriya*) and *concentration* (*samādhi*) must be specially balanced by *mindfulness* (*satī*). All the five *faculties* (*indriyas*) must be balanced to progress to enlightenment.

The meditator, who clearly sees the faults of formations and is undertaking vipassanā by discerning the dissolution of formations with keen intention to emancipation from all formations, finds nothing which can be cherished as 'mine, I, myself'.⁴²

Abandoning the two extremes of 'terror' (*bhaya*) and *delight* (*nandī*) towards formations, he becomes indifferent and neutral towards them. He neither takes them as 'I' nor 'mine' nor

‘myself’; he is like a man who has divorced his unfaithful wife. The knowledge that takes him to this stage of equanimity is **‘the Knowledge of Equanimity towards Formations’** (*Saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*).

From Conformity-Knowledge to Path-wisdom

As he repeats, develops and cultivates that equanimity towards formations, his faith becomes more resolute, his energy better exerted, his mindfulness better established, his mind better concentrated, while his equanimity grows more refined.

Then when his meditating wisdom emerges from the dissolution of formations called ‘*pavatta*’ and sees the unformed and undissolved nature of Nibbāna called ‘*apavatta*’, the following Path Absorption cognitive series (*Magga Appanā Vithis*) arises.

(*Mandapaññā*) - Na- Da - Ma - Pa - U- Nu- Go-
Magga - Phala - Phala - Bh -

(*Tikkhapaññā*) - Na- Da - Ma - U- Nu- Go-
Magga - Phala - Phala - Phala - Bh -

When the object of formations as impermanence or suffering or not-self appears at the mind-

door, life-continuum vibrates twice as *bhavaṅga-cālana* (Na), *bhavaṅgu-paccheda* (Da) and is cut off. After that *manodvārāvajjana*(Ma) directs the mental stream towards the object, apprehends the object and decides whether it is good or bad.

Then one of the 4 sense-sphere moral consciousnesses associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa-sampayutta mahākusala citta*) arises four times, functioning as preparation(Pa), proximity (U), conformity (Nu) and change-of-lineage (Go),

‘Preparation’(*parikamma*) prepares for the arising of the Path consciousness.

‘Proximity’ (*upacāra*) functions as access to the Path.

‘Conformity’ (*anuloma*) conforms to the functions of truth both in the eight preceding insight knowledges and in the 37 requisite factors of enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya*) which follow.

The knowledge associated with preparation, proximity and conformity is the highest insight knowledge known as the ‘**knowledge of conformity**’(*anuloma-ñāṇa*).

Gotrabhu does not take formations as its ob-

ject; it takes Nibbāna as its object and points out Nibbāna so that the Path-consciousness can arise after it, also taking Nibbāna as its object. It is like the sailor's crow pointing out the land so that the ship can sail on towards the land.

Gotrabhu is called change-of-lineage because it changes the lineage of the meditator from a worldling to a noble person. Up to *gotrabhu* consciousness, the meditator is still a worldling (one who is bound by all ten fetters). But as soon as the path-consciousness arises, he becomes a noble person. The knowledge associated with *gotrabhu* is called '*Gotrabhu-ñāṇa*.'

The knowledge associated with the Path-consciousness is called '*Path-wisdom*' (*Maggā-ñāṇa*).

The knowledge associated with Fruition-consciousnesses is called '*Fruition-wisdom*' (*Phala-ñāṇa*).

The **path-consciousness** always arises just once performing four functions – viz., (1) comprehension of the truth of suffering, (2) eradication of craving which is the cause of suffering, (3) realization of Nibbāna, (4) full development

of the eight constituents of the Path.

Fruit-consciousnesses arises soon after the Path-consciousness without any lapse in time (*akāliko*) two or three times, taking Nibbāna as its object. As soon as Fruition-consciousness arises, the meditator becomes a **stream-winner** (*sotapanna*).⁴³ He can enjoy the unique bliss of Nibbāna as much as he likes and is fully guaranteed never to be reborn in woeful abodes.

After the Path-absorption cognitive series and a few bhavaṅga cittas (life-continuum) have passed by, five **Reviewing cognitive series** (*Paccavekkhana-vīhis*) normally arise. By these cognitive series the javana cittas (1) review the Path, (2) review the Fruit, (3) review Nibbāna, (4) review the defilements (*ditthi* and *vicikicchā*) which have been annihilated, and (5) the defilements still remaining to be annihilated. The knowledge associated with these javana cittas is called '**Reviewing wisdom**' (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*).

7. The Purification by Knowledge and Wisdom (*Ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*)

Starting from the training of morality to the

time when conformity knowledge arises, the first six stages of purification of the mind, i.e. from *Sila-visuddhi* to *Paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*, are completed. On attaining the first Path-consciousness, the seventh stage of purification called *Ñāṇadassana-visuddhi* is reached.

When the stream-winner continues performing vipassanā meditation and attains the three higher Path-wisdoms and Fruition-wisdoms, all the seven stages of Purification (*Visuddhi*) are completed and the mind becomes totally pure. The meditator then becomes an **Arahant**, a perfect person.

(i) **Sotāpatti-magga and Stream-winner**

The First path-wisdom (*Sotāpatti Magga-ñāṇa*) totally eliminates two defilements (*diṭṭhi, vicikicchā*) and three fetters (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbataparāmāsa*). It also eliminates the coarse aspects of other defilements so that a stream-winner will not commit any evil action. He will never be reborn in woeful abodes.

A stream-winner can be reborn in the sense-sphere up to seven existences. He can be further

reborn in brahma realms, but he is destined to become an Arahant in due course.

As a stream-winner will never be reborn in woeful abodes, enjoying Nibbāna bliss as much as he likes, and he is destined to become an Arahant in due course, it is better to be a stream-winner rather than to be a universal monarch or a brahma.

(ii) Sakadāgāmi-magga and Once-returner

When the stream-winner undertakes vipassanā meditation and attains *Sakadāgāmi-magga and Phala*, he becomes a once-returner as he will be reborn in the sense-sphere only once. The second Path-wisdom does not eradicate any defilement, but it reduces the strength of the remaining defilements. He can be further reborn in brahma realms and will be an Arahant in due course.

(iii) Anāgāmi-magga and Non-returner

When the once-returner undertakes vipassanā meditation and attains *Anāgāmi-magga and phala*, he becomes a non-returner as he will not be reborn in the sense-sphere. The third Path-wisdom further eradicates the defilement 'anger'

(dosa) and two fetters (*kāmarāga*, *paṭigha*). As anger is totally eliminated, he will never be angry, upset, sad or depressed. He does not enjoy sensual pleasure any more. He will be reborn in a brahma realm after death. He will become an Arahant in due course.

(iv) Arahatta-Magga and Arahant

If a non-returner undertakes vipassanā meditation and attains Arahatta-magga and phala, he will become an Arahant in this very life. The Arahatta path-wisdom totally eliminate all remaining defilements and fetters in him. His mind is totally free from all defilements which are the causes of suffering. So he will never experience mental pain any more. As he is bearing his last body, he will lay down this heavy burden at death. He is rightly liberated with the highest wisdom and worthy of the highest offerings of the world with its deities.⁴⁷ He fully enjoys the unique bliss and eternal peace of Nibbāna. He will pass over to Nibbāna after death.

Conclusion

The appearance of the fully enlightened Buddha in the world is really for the welfare and hap-

piness all living beings. If we can maintain well all the teachings of the Buddha including meditation, more people will have the good chance to enjoy the eternal peace and unique bliss of Nibbāna.

At the time when it is very hard to undertake tranquillity meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā-meditation*) fully and correctly as taught by the Buddha, it is a special, great, good news that Venerable Āciṇṇa (*Aggamahā-kammaṭṭhānācariya*), commonly known as Pa-auk Forest Sayādaw, and International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres, where all Buddha's meditations can be practised fully and correctly as taught by the Buddha, appear in the world today.

We should highly rejoice this good news and make use of this excellent opportunity to meditate the Buddha's way now without delay in order to enjoy the highest and noblest happiness in this very life!

May all the teachings of the Buddha last and blossom for ever!

Dr. Mahn Tin Mon

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