

# A LIFE OF TRUE SECURITY

Based on the talk

by

Bhikkhu Revata

(Pa-Auk Tawya)

"Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu is not skillful in the habit of other's thoughts, he should train himself to be skillful in the habit of his own mind."

"The evil he himself has done, born of himself and produced by himself, grinds him as a diamond grinds a hard gem."

"In all the shades in the world, the shade of relatives is coolest and the best."

— by The Buddha

"It is not because of beautifying our faces that we are reborn as humans. It is because of beautifying and purifying our minds."

"What is more beautiful: a beautiful face of a beautiful mind. Shouldn't the answer be beautiful mind?"

"If we just allow the kamma to ripen as it ripens and accept its result accordingly, our kammic load will be lightened and our future will become that much brighter."

"Performing wholesome actions will improve our future existence. Performing unwholesome actions will surely lead to more suffering."

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Namo Tassa,  
Bhagavato,  
Arahato,  
Sammā  
Sambuddhassa,

Homage to Him,  
The Exalted One,  
The Worthy One,  
The Perfectly  
Self-Enlightened One

~~~~~  
May all be well and happy.  
~~~~~

*May we all transform our lives into lives of true  
security.*

*May each and every one of us attain Nibbāna.*



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## Editorial Note

The Buddha's message on the value of the Three Trainings was made clear to me and many others at a meditation retreat taught by the Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw in November of 2005. The Venerable Revata, a teacher from Pa-Auk Tawya Monastery in Myanmar, presented this talk as one would expect the Dhamma to be delivered: "Beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful in the end." His voice and manner during the talk reflected the composure, reserve and compassion that one would expect from a true monk.

I was so inspired by the talk that I offered to edit it. Bhante kindly granted me the privilege of doing so.

Here then is the edited version of an important Dhamma lesson: How and why to develop the Three Trainings – *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

This talk, which includes references and quotations from the suttas and Dhammapada, teaches us –

1. How to prevent bodily and verbal wrong actions from arising.
2. How to protect ourselves from mental wrong actions.
3. How to eradicate latent defilements that lie dormant at the base of our mental continuum.

I would like to thank the Venerable Revata for the privilege of sharing this wonderful gift of Dhamma. May his talk guide each of us on the Path to Nibbāna.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Gary Chan



## Acknowledgments

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Bhikkhu Revata  
Pa-Auk Tawya Monastery  
2 February 2006

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*Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!*

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## A Life Of True Security

From time immemorial, we humans have sought protection against the countless dangers that threaten to engulf us and our loved ones, as well as entire nations and society as a whole. Some dangers we can see, they touch and harm us through our physical organs; others arise mysteriously and imperceptible to plague us like ghosts and goblins in the night. Man counters them with various rites and rituals. Some of these are colorful and elaborate; some even seem to produce the desired result. But, without our knowing their long-term effects or when our life circumstances will change, even the most powerful ritual cannot protect us from the result of our past kamma.

Equally elaborate is the protection and security we build around ourselves to counter physical dangers and threats. Health insurance, life insurance, police, vaccinations, medical check-ups, vitamins, organic food, low cholesterol diets,

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fallout shelters, and bullet-proof vests are just some of the measures we employ to protect ourselves against the danger of the unknown. How often do we see rings of bodyguards surrounding important personages or security systems and guard dogs at the homes of the wealthy? Nations, too, stockpile huge armories of weapons, some even want to send their weapons into outer space.

When people see a person surrounded by signs and symbols of external security, such as armed guards and kung-fu experts, they are almost always impressed. Some even crave such a show of security. They mistakenly believe that this will help bring them the security that they crave.

Let us now ask ourselves two important questions:

- ♦ what is a life of true security?
- ♦ how is a life of true security developed?

These two questions **are the** subject of my talk tonight. I am basing this talk on selections from the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Aṅguttara Nikāya **and the** Dhammapada. Thus, the foundation for my talk **tonight** is the Dhamma of our Lord Buddha. Once I **present the** facts, you can draw your own conclusions.

Let us begin with the first question: “What is a life of true security?”

In order to give the correct answer to this question, a Buddha has to arise in the world. Why? Just as darkness disappears with the rising of the sun, ignorance disappears with the arising of a Buddha. It is only with the arising of a Buddha that we can understand what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. When we put that understanding

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into practice we can dispel our own ignorance. Only then can we truly know the difference between reality and illusion, wholesome and unwholesome, samsāra and Nibbāna.

Let us now refer to the teachings of Lord Buddha.

My first reference comes from the Kosala Saṃyutta in the Sagātha Vagga Saṃyutta. The title of the sutta is *Attarakkhita*, which means *self (Atta)-protected (rakkhita)*.

*“Once, when our Lord Buddha was staying in Sāvatti, King Pasenadi of Kosala visited the Lord. Having paid proper respects to the Lord and sitting to one side, the King addressed the Lord:*

*“Venerable Sir. While I was alone in seclusion, this question arose in my mind, ‘Who protects themselves and who leave themselves unprotected?’*

*“Then it occurred to me, ‘those who engage in misconduct with the body, misconduct in speech and misconduct in the mind do leave themselves unprotected. Even though a company of elephant troops may protect them; or a company of soldiers who fight on horseback; or a company of soldiers who fight on chariots; or a company of soldiers who fight on foot may protect them, still they leave themselves unprotected.’*

*‘For what reason? The reason is that that protection is external, not internal. Therefore, they leave themselves unprotected. However, those who engage in good conduct with the body, good conduct in speech and good conduct in the mind will protect themselves even though they have no companies of special soldiers to protect them.’*

*‘For what reason? The reason is that that protection is*

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*internal, not external. Therefore, they protect themselves.”*

*The Buddha agreed with the King, saying, “So it is, great King; so it is”, thereon repeating the entire previous statement of King Pasenadi, Lord Buddha then went on to recite this stanza:*

*“Good is restraint with the body,  
Restraint by speech is also good;  
Good is restraint in the mind,  
Restraint everywhere is good.  
Conscientious, everywhere restrained,  
One is said to be protected.”*

Reading this sutta, we may know to some extent who is protected and who is unprotected. However, in order to really know how to gain ‘true security’ for ourselves, we need to reflect deeply.

When we thoroughly understand the nature of security, then even if we have no external protection, we need not fear. Why? Remember the stanza recited by the Buddha to King Pasenadi?

*“Good is restraint with the body,  
Restraint by speech is also good,  
Good is restraint in the mind,  
Restraint everywhere is good.  
Conscientious, everywhere restrained,  
One is said to be protected.”*



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The meaning of this verse is that good (wholesome) bodily, verbal and mental conduct is the foundation for real self-protection and is effective even if we have no external protection. In fact when we protect ourselves internally, the need for external protection is substantially reduced.

Moreover, we should consider this: Those who have superior or extensive external protection often become proud, arrogant or over-confident. When they mistake external protection for real protection, they become careless in their behavior with others. They speak or act carelessly and have little consideration for the happiness and well being of others. Their only concern is for their own happiness and well being. With such wrong conduct, they leave themselves unprotected. This is not a life of true security.

On the other hand, as the Buddha explains in the *Attarakkhita Sutta*, those who want to protect themselves and want true security should perform wholesome bodily, verbal and mental actions.

Please keep in mind the following two important points:

1. The Dhamma taught by the Buddha is not a teaching that cannot be understood and practiced. On the contrary, that Dhamma is one that can be understood and practiced.
2. The Dhamma is taught entirely for the benefit of humans and devas who recognize its benefit and seek it out, both for themselves and others.

In order to live a life of true security, the Buddha taught that wholesome bodily, verbal and mental actions protect us from grief, worry, fear and danger, as well as the suffering arising from rebirth in the four woeful states. Unwhole-

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some bodily, verbal and mental actions, on the other hand, are the cause of grief, worry, fear, danger and rebirth in the lower states.

Why is that so? To understand right and wrong bodily, verbal and mental actions, we must analyze their causes. When we know their causes, we can start to train ourselves to suppress, reduce or even eradicate them.

Let me ask you a few simple questions:

Can you find any greed in your mind right now? Can you find any anger in your mind right now?

You will probably answer 'No.'

Even if after exhaustively searching your mind you cannot find a single unwholesome quality, that does not mean unwholesome qualities do not exist. They do exist - but at this moment they exist only as latent defilement (*anusaya kilesā*) lying dormant at the base of the mental continuum. Until we eradicate these defilements with path-knowledge, they accompany us from rebirth to rebirth and bind us to the wheel of existence.

Let me illustrate:

Immediately after death-consciousness, rebirth-consciousness arises. '*Anusaya kilesā*,' the latent defilements which we are talking about, lie dormant at the moment of death-consciousness and the immediate following moment of rebirth-consciousness. Thus, at the arising of every rebirth-consciousness, the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion also arise, but only as '*anusaya kilesā*.' They exist unseen, in a state of potentiality, just as the potential exists in every seed to generate a plant and in every plant to pro-

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duce its corresponding fruit. We know these latent defilements exist because they arise when suitable conditions are present, just as the plant arises from the seed in the presence of moisture, and the fruit arises from the plant in the presence of sunlight.

Defilements can be classified into three stages:

1. The Stage of Dormancy (*Anusaya*), when the defilement lies inactive and latent at the base of the mental continuum.
2. The Stage of Obsession (*Pariyut-thāna*), when the mind becomes fixated on the defilement. It is at this crucial point that the defilement rises to the surface of the mind, as it transits from dormancy to activity upon making contact with suitable conditions.
3. The Stage of Transgression (*Vi-tikkama*), when bodily, verbal and mental wrong actions are performed.

As we have already looked at stage one, the Stage of Dormancy, let us now look at stage two, the Stage of Obsession. When we see an attractive object, a desire for that object often arises in the mind. Defilements transit from dormancy to activity in the sense that one is now ready to act, are now prepare to act *i.e.*, to perform unwholesome bodily and verbal actions. The same basic pattern occurs with the defilements rooted in hatred and delusion. When we see an object that we do not like, aversion arises. Likewise, when we see an object without knowing that its fundamental nature is impermanence, suffering and non-self, delusion arises.

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At this Stage of Obsession, if we keep our mindfulness, the defilement can be suppressed. In this way, we can prevent unwholesome actions from being performed. However, when there is a lack of mindfulness, our 'obsession' quickly and invariably gives rise to wrong action. This is the Stage of Transgression.

Let me go one step further:

There are six sense-doors on which visible objects, sound objects, smell objects, taste objects, tangible objects and mind objects can impinge. Due to unwise attention greed arises upon contact with a desirable object. In the same way, due to unwise attention hatred arises upon contact an undesirable object. Whenever greed or hatred arises delusion follows.

The nature of greed is wanting or desiring. Its function is to stick like glue. When desire for an object arises, greed sticks to the object. Thus, greed is only doing its job. Hatred and delusion also have their jobs to do.

The problem comes with self-identity, which ensures that greed, hatred and delusion cannot be separated from 'I', 'me', and 'mine'.

Due to self-identity, defilements (like greed, hatred and delusion) and the 'I' cannot be separated. Thus, when greed, hatred and delusion arise, we take them to be 'my' greed, 'my' hatred and 'my' delusion. The same applies to pride, jealousy, envy and so on.

Due to wrong view, i.e., seeing things as 'I', 'me', and 'mine', we perform unwholesome actions. If we examine these wrong actions, we see that bodily and verbal wrong actions are the end result of mental wrong actions. If men-

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tal actions are wholesome, the resulting bodily and verbal actions are also wholesome. If mental actions are unwholesome, the resulting bodily and verbal actions are likewise unwholesome. Lacking mindfulness, we are not aware of our defilements as they progress from the Stage of Dormancy to the Stage of Obsession and then finally to the Stage of Transgression. When this occurs it is too late to stop the process and we have no choice but to suffer the consequences.

In describing Right Effort, Lord Buddha advises us to suppress unwholesome mental states and to develop wholesome mental states. This advice is given in the *Sacitta Sutta* (sutta of Self-Examination) from the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, Chapter of Ten (X.51). In this sutta, the Buddha states:

*“Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu is not skillful in the habit of other’s thoughts, he should train himself to be skillful in the habit of his own mind.”*

This means that if we are not skillful in reading the thoughts and habits of other minds, we should train ourselves to be skillful in knowing the thoughts and habits of our own mind.

The Buddha continues:

*“Just as a man or woman is fond of self-beautification, examining the image of his or her own face in a bright clear mirror or a bowl of clear water; just so, if he or she sees any dirt or blemish on the face, he or she will try to remove it. If he or she sees no dirt or blemish, she will be pleased, thinking, ‘How clean am I. How fortunate am I!’*

*“In the same way, bhikkhus, self-examination is for the*

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*improvement of skillful qualities (kusala dhamma). A bhikkhu should examine himself, asking, 'Is my mind clogged with much desire to get the possessions of others? Is it clogged with thoughts of ill-will? With sloth and torpor? With restlessness? Often with doubt? With much anger? With sensual thoughts? With thoughts of exhaustion? With laziness? With distraction?*

In short, is my mind clogged with the three defiling roots of greed, hatred and delusion?'

It is only through this constant self-examination, that we can know whether our minds are clogged with defilements or free of them. Being mindful in this way will encourage us to put forth greater effort to abandon unwholesome (*unskillful qualities*). This advice, given by Lord Buddha, is as valid today as it was over 2,500 years ago.

Today people all over the world love physical beauty. They constantly look at their faces in mirrors to spot dirt and blemishes, checking whether their hair is in place, looking for various ways to enhance their physical image. So much time is spent in this way! But how many people take time to examine themselves for greed, anger, delusion, jealousy, envy, stinginess, pride, etc., when these defilements rise to the surface of the mind? I think very few indeed.

How rare it is to find an individual who can recognize the arising of defilements and then willingly suppress them. The rest of us give free rein to our defilements and allow them to run rampant in our mind. As if this were not enough our defilements are promoted and bolstered by the media to make sure that we all become addicted to them.

At this point, let me ask you another question. What is

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more beautiful: a beautiful face or a beautiful mind? Shouldn't the answer be beautiful mind? It is not because of beautifying our faces that we are reborn as humans. It is because of beautifying and purifying our minds.

That being so, shouldn't we reverse the 'time-and-effort scale'? Wouldn't it be better if we spent more time putting forth effort to cultivate wholesome qualities and eradicate unwholesome qualities and less time and effort on physical beauty and self-admiration? If we do not do this how will we be protected? Remember what the Buddha said in the *Attarakkhita Sutta*?

*"Restraint everywhere is good.*

*Conscientious, everywhere restrained,*

*One is said to be protected."*

In order to further illustrate how latent defilements lead to bodily and verbal wrong actions, let me next refer to the *Vidūdabha Story* which occurs in the *Dhammapada, Book IV, Flower, Puppā Vagga*. This story dramatically demonstrates the importance of suppressing and reducing unwholesome qualities at the earlier stages of the mental process.

One day King Pasenadi saw thousands of bhikkhus passing through the streets going to the houses of Anāthapiṇḍika, Cūḷa Anāthapiṇḍika, Visākhā and Suppavāsā for their meals. Desiring to perform such meritorious deeds as well, the King set forth to invite the Buddha and one thousand bhikkhus to also take meals at his palace. He was granted the opportunity to do so for seven days consecutively. He did so diligently and graciously.

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On the seventh day, he invited the Buddha to continue to have meals regularly in the royal palace. However, it is not the habit of Buddhas to regularly accept food from the same person, as Buddhas arise for the benefit of the many. So the Lord asked Venerable Ānanda and five hundred other bhikkhus to do so in his place. For seven days the King served Venerable Ānanda and the Saṅgha attentively.

However, on the next day, the eight day, the King was so busy with his royal duties that he forgot to serve the Saṅgha. On the ninth day it happened again. On the tenth day, when the time for the start of the meal had passed, all the bhikkhus left the palace leaving only Venerable Ānanda behind. Actually, food had been prepared but the King had forgotten to order his servants to serve the meals in his absence. Without the King's order, no one dared to do so. When the King found out later that the Saṅgha had left without taking the prepared food, he felt offended. He went to the Buddha to complain.

The Buddha released the bhikkhus from blame and told the King truthfully that the bhikkhus lacked confidence in him. For that reason they had left. Realizing and accepting his fault, King Pasenadi designed to regain the confidence of the Buddha and his Saṅgha. He thought that the best way was to establish a strong relationship between himself and the Buddha. A marriage with a Sakiya lady, a relative of the Buddha was considered an appropriate way. So he sent an ambassador to the Sakiyas requesting a Sakiyan daughter in marriage.



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The Sakiyas were worried about potential problems if they did not send a lady to marry the King. Kosala was a much bigger and stronger state than Sakiya. King Mahā Nāma of the Sakiyas decided to send Vāsabhakhattiyā, the beautiful daughter of King Mahā Nāma by a slave-woman. King Pasenadi married her and soon she became the mother of a son, Vidūdabha.

From the age of seven, Prince Vidūdabha constantly asked about his mother's family. At sixteen, Prince Vidūdabha persistently asked to visit his maternal grandfather, King Mahā Nāma. Finally, his mother, Vāsabhakhattiyā, agreed to let him go. As she knew his character, and therefore anticipated potential problems, she sent a letter ahead to the Sakiyas stating that she was happy where she was. She requested that for the happiness and peace of all concerned, the Sakiyas would do well not to behave proudly towards her son.

Prince Vidūdabha went to the Sakiyan capital, Kapilavathu with a large retinue. His Sakiyan relatives welcomed him very well and gave him many gifts. In the course of the visit, the Prince noted something strange. No relative paid respects to him. He himself had paid respects to all the relatives who were senior to him. When he enquired, he found out that all the princes younger than him were not there. (When the relatives of the Buddha knew of his coming, they decided not to pay respects to him, as he was the son of a slave-woman. So they sent away all the princes who were younger than him.)

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Nonetheless, he stayed there for three days before returning to Kosala. After he left, one of his servants realized that he had forgotten something at Kapilavathu. So he went back to collect it. There he saw a slave-woman washing with milk the seat that Prince Vidūdabha had used. Curious, the servant asked the slave why she was washing the seat with milk. She replied that the seat had been used by the son of a slave-woman, Prince Vidūdabha.

In a short time, that incident became common gossip. Soon it came to the ears of the Prince. With his pride pricked and deeply effected by this news, strong hatred arose in his mind. Hatred came to the surface of his mind.

Thereupon, he swore the following oath,

“As they now wash my seat with milk, when I become king so will I wash it with their blood!”

Thus, through wrong verbal action, he bound himself tightly to his Sakiyan relatives with strong hatred and resentment. Here, I would like to remind each of you to carefully reflect on the nature of human beings. Everyone, whether of high or low status, inferior or superior, poor or rich, stupid or intelligent, ignorant or wise, has a high opinion of himself. Most people think only of their own self-importance. If someone treats them poorly, regards them as worthless or low and behaves disrespectfully towards them, it can cause hurt, resentment and anger. A desire to retaliate may arise in the mind.

Back to the sutta. When Prince Vidūdabha became King, he remembered the insult he had suffered and

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the oath he had sworn against the Sakiyas. He soon assembled a large force to take revenge and set out for Kapilavathu. The Buddha, aware of the impending destruction of his relatives by King Vidūdabha, sat in the shade of a small tree on the Sakiyan side of the border with Kosala.

On the way to Kapilavathu, King Vidūdabha saw the Buddha in the shade of the small tree and he asked the Buddha why he chose a small tree when there were much bigger and shadier trees on the Kosalan side of the border. The Buddha replied,

*“In all the shades in the world, the shade of relatives is coolest and the best.”*

Realizing that the Buddha wanted to protect his relatives, the King turned his forces back. On two other occasions, the same thing happened. However, on the fourth occasion, realizing the futility of trying to stop the invasion, the Buddha withdrew his attempt to protect his relatives. King Vidūdabha sallied forth and killed his Sakiyan relatives violently. He killed all except those princes and princesses who were with his grandfather, King Mahā Nāma. Having destroyed them, he washed his seat with their blood as he had vowed.

We now see that the Stage of Obsession (*pariyut-thāna*) has shifted to the Stage of Transgression (*Vi-tikkama*) which involves bodily wrong action, in this case, killing.

When people heard about that terrible revenge-killing, they uttered with grief and disbelief,

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“The kamma that the relatives of the Buddha had accumulated when Vidūdabha was sixteen was just minor. What the King has done is very terrible and excessive. It should not be such.”

When the utterance came to the ears of the Buddha, the Lord explained that,

*“The kamma that my relatives did in the present life is very minor but it is not because of that present kamma that they have been destroyed. In a previous existence, they threw poison into a water-body to destroy water creatures. That unwholesome act has now made someone appear to perform the act of killing them. The present killing is a result of that past kamma.”*

That kamma has opened the door to give its results.

In another verse from the Dhammaada, the Buddha explains:

*“The evil he himself has done, born of himself and produced by himself, grinds him as a diamond grinds a hard gem.”*

(Dhammapada. 161)

Based on this understanding is it really necessary to complain that others have hurt us, insulted us or found fault with us? According to the Buddha, who is to blame? Should we not blame ourselves for having performed the kamma that results in mental or physical pain? This being the case, let us cease to respond unwisely towards anybody in our present life - no matter how much that person tries to harm

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us. If we just allow the kamma to ripen as it ripens and accept its result accordingly, our kammic load will be lightened and our future will become that much brighter. Let us, therefore, welcome with a smile the results of past kamma.

If we respond with wrong bodily or verbal actions, such actions will only add to our kammic debt – a debt which we may very well have to pay for in the future. Therefore, let us reflect carefully and thoroughly before we take any actions. Performing wholesome actions will improve our future existence. Performing unwholesome actions will surely lead to more suffering. Those with wisdom and discrimination will know which type of action to choose.

Let us now go back to the Saccitta Sutta:

*“If, on examination, a bhikkhu knows that his mind is not usually with much desire for the belongings of other; is without much thoughts of ill-will; is usually free of sloth and torpor; is free of restlessness; is free of doubt; is without much anger; is with very few unhealthy thoughts; is not with body exhausted; is not lazy or is not un-concentrated, the bhikkhu should not be satisfied. He should put in more effort to establish those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the eventual ending of all taints.”*

How can we establish these skillful qualities to a higher degree? Firstly, we keep *sīla* and abstain from the unwise acts of killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, telling lies and consuming drugs and alcohol. In this way, we purify our bodily and verbal actions, and protect ourselves from the results of these unwholesome actions. Such are the benefits of *sīla*.

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Secondly, we need to purify our mental action. This is accomplished by the practice of samatha meditation, in which deep concentration is developed. For many practitioners, here at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, this includes the cultivation and practice of Jhāna (*absorption concentration*). In this state of absorption, which can last for one, two, three or more hours, the meditator focuses solely on the meditation object. As a result, latent defilements are unable to rise to the surface of the mind - they remain in the Stage Dormancy. Since they do not reach the Stage of Obsession, they are unable to progress to the Stage of Transgression. Thus, the mind is temporarily purified of unwholesome mental actions.

Let me summarize the first two trainings:

By keeping *sīla* we protect ourselves from performing bodily and verbal wrong actions. By practicing absorption concentration, we protect ourselves from performing wrong mental actions. However, lying at the base of our mental continuum there are still defilements in the Stage of Dormancy. Given suitable conditions, these latent defilements quickly rise to the surface of the mind unless they have already been eradicated.

Think about the example of Vidūdabha after he heard the news concerning the washing of his seat. His dormant defilements of anger and hatred rapidly arose as obsessions, and then quickly turned into transgressions. This led to and resulted in the violent slaughter of his relatives which in turn generated new defiling kamma that he paid for just as quickly. As he was returning to Kosala after the slaughter, he and many of his men perished in a great flood while camped on the banks of the river, *Aciravati*.

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According to the Buddha, “Two arrows follow all beings: one is wholesome and the other unwholesome.” These are arrows of the past. Thus, when we perform unwholesome actions in the present life, such unwholesome actions can cause the results of our past unwholesome kamma to ripen – thus, for a minor transgression (*which is only a supporting cause*) we may end up paying a big price. Conversely, when we perform wholesome actions in the present life, such wholesome actions can cause the results of our past wholesome kamma to ripen – thus for a single good action, we may reap great benefits.

Back to our story: If Vidūdabha had been mindful and practiced wise-attention, he would have been able to keep the defilements of anger and hatred from rising to the surface of his mind, and he would not have gone on to slaughter his relatives. Moreover, he and many of his men would not have been drowned.

Now, we know how latent defilements rise to the surface of the mind and become transgressions, and how to protect ourselves from these transgressions. However, I have not yet explained how to eradicate latent defilements. If we want to eradicate these defilements we must go on to the third training, the practice of insight meditation.

There are two basic ways to approach insight meditation. One is to develop absorption concentration through mindfulness of breathing or other samatha meditation and then to go on to Four Elements meditation for insight meditation. The other approach, for those who wish to take a more direct route to the practice of vipassana is to begin with Four Elements meditation. In this approach, we analyze the elements that compose the physical body. As con-

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centration improves, the body begins to emit light. With continued practice this light changes from grey to white. Eventually, it becomes brighter and brighter until we see the entire body as a block of bright light. As we continue to discern the four elements in that block of light, it finally breaks down into very small particles, called *rūpa-kalāpas*. With continued practice, we will see 8, 9 or 10 types of materiality within each *rūpa-kalāpa*. These 8, 9 or 10 types of materiality are the ultimate reality of the physical body.

Having discerned the four elements internally up to their ultimate reality, we then go on to discern the four elements externally, seeing all external animate and inanimate objects as *rūpa-kalāpas*, rising and perishing very rapidly. At this point, we no longer see men, women, trees or other conventional forms but only *rūpa-kalāpas* rapidly arising and perishing. We are now seeing things as they really are, just as we have been taught to do by the Buddha.

The next step is to analyze ultimate mentality. When we are successful in this practice we can know and see the mental process, arising in a series of mind moments, with consciousness and associated mental factors present in each moment.

After knowing and seeing ultimate materiality and mentality, we go on to practise “Dependent Origination” (*Paticcasamupāda*) in order to know cause and effect. Once we have discerned cause and effect, we go on to insight meditation by examining the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self throughout the mind-matter complex. When our insight matures, Path Knowledge arises. We see *Nibbāna*. There materiality and mentality cease.

With the arising of Path Knowledge, defilements are



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eradicated step by step. With the first Path, we attain the first fruit of enlightenment as a *sotāppanna*. With this attainment, the defilements of self-identity, doubt and attachment to rites and rituals are eradicated. We now know and see the workings of defilements clearly. We clearly see wrong view as 'I', 'me' and 'mine'. We no longer see greed as 'my' greed or hatred as 'my' hatred. We no longer harm ourselves by consciously performing wrong physical and verbal actions which can lead to rebirth in the four woeful planes.

### Conclusion

If we want a life of true security, we must practice the three trainings of *sīla* (virtue), *smādhi* (concentration) and *pañña* (wisdom). When our insight matures, the first path and fruition will arise. With this attainment, we protect ourselves from performing countless wrong physical and verbal actions.

Now I would like to ask you one final question, "How much effort are you willing to put into your practice?"

According to the Buddha,

*"Just as a person whose head is on fire will put forth extra determination, effort, diligence, etc., to put out the fire on his head; so, too, should a bhikkhu put forth extra determination, effort, etc., to abandon unwholesome, unskillful qualities in the mind."*

Here, the Buddha is describing Right Effort. Without Right Effort, how can we expect to attain the goal? If we fail to achieve our objective in this lifetime, then we may

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one day deeply regret that we did not put forth the effort when we had the opportunity. May each of us put forth the necessary effort and may we rouse the energy to make an end of suffering. When arahant path and fruition arise, all our defilements are destroyed without remainder and re-birth comes to an end. There will be peace. Only then does our life become “a life of true security”

*May we all transform our lives into lives of true security.*

*May each and every one of us attain Nibbāna.*

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

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