

# Timeless Wisdom

Teachings on Satipatthāna Vipassanā  
Meditation Practice

Revised Fourth English Edition



by Sayadaw U Pandita

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*Sabbadānam dhammadānam jināti.*  
The gift of Dhamma surpasses all other gifts.

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by Sayadaw U. Pandita  
Revised Fourth English Addition

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This revised edition is dedicated to the memory and skillful teachings of the late Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita - 1921 - 2016.

October 2016

## Foreword

We have been close students of Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita (Sayadawgyi) since 1980. Throughout this time he has been an exceptional spiritual guide (*kalyana-mitta*) and father to us. With *metta* (loving kindness) and *karuna* (compassion), Sayadawgyi has always provided invaluable guidance that has ranged from intuitive to uncompromising. In other words, for those who listen, Sayadawgyi's method of teaching offers an essential wake up call.

This book contains the distillation of over 50 years of his clarification of *Satipatthāna Vipassanā* meditation practice. The main message conveyed in this set of lectures is that one must be meticulous with the correct practice if one wants to experience the incredible Buddha *Dhamma* for oneself.

In this series of talks, Sayadawgyi gives very clear and detailed instruction on the correct way to practice *Satipatthāna Vipassanā* meditation. He is also explicit about what practices do not lead to *Vipassanā* insight. A guide for both beginning and experienced meditators, Sayadawgyi explains in detail how to develop proper concentration and mindfulness in one's practice. In addition, he explains the essentials of correct reporting during teacher/student interviews; communicating one's experience in a clear and precise manner is absolutely necessary for one's teacher to guide the yogi correctly and help him or her avoid pitfalls and obstructions that inevitably arise during intensive retreats.

Sayadawgyi provides us with the map the Buddha revealed over 2500 years ago, showing the direct path to *nibbana*. What we need to do is put in the necessary effort under the guidance of an experienced teacher to reach the goal of liberation from *Dukkha*.

Barbara Janus and Kenneth Morris  
Saddhamma Foundation  
Santa Barbara, California  
April 2016

## Brief Biography of Sayadaw U Panditabhivamsa

Panditarama Sayadaw U Panditabhivamsa (Sayadawgyi) was one of the foremost living masters of Satipatthāna Vipassanā meditation. Trained in the Burmese Theravada Buddhist tradition, he was the successor to the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, and was one of the most prominent Satipatthāna Vipassanā meditation teachers in the modern era.

Sayadawgyi taught yogis and trained teachers for over 50 years. He personally supervised the arduous training of teachers in order to qualify them to instruct yogis in correct meditation methods. In addition, Sayadawgyi worked tirelessly to make the Buddha's teaching available to monks, nuns and lay people.

Soon after the passing away of the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw in 1982, Sayadawgyi became the guiding teacher (*Ovadacariya*) of the Mahāsi Meditation Center. In 1991, after leaving that position, Sayadawgyi established the Panditarama Meditation Center in Yangon (Rangoon).

Sayadawgyi became well-known in the West in 1984 when he conducted his first retreat for Westerners in the USA. Sayadawgyi continued to lead retreats in various parts of the world and guide the Panditarama branch centers in Myanmar, Nepal, Taiwan, Australia, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

## Editors' Note

*Dukkha* is commonly translated as suffering. However, the meaning of *dukkha* is much broader. It includes physical and mental pain, suffering and distress, the unsatisfactoriness inherent in obtaining pleasure from sense objects, the ongoing stress and tension of daily existence and “that which is difficult to be endured.” (Narada Thera)

With this range of meanings in mind, we have decided to keep the Pāli term, *dukkha*, where it seemed more appropriate than the limited meaning of suffering.

The original Pāli spelling is used throughout rather than the familiar Sanskrit spellings, for example, *nibbāna* instead of *nirvana*.



## Chapter 1: The Four Noble Truths

To realize the *Dhamma* one should know how to practice and strive toward discerning the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths include: the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*), the truth of the origin of *dukkha* (*dukkha samudaya sacca*), the truth of the cessation of *dukkha* (*dukkha nirodha sacca*) and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (*magga sacca*).

The First Noble Truth (*dukkha sacca*) is that the whole body is one mass of *dukkha*. All actions, be it sitting, touching, feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, standing, turning, stretching, lifting or moving involve mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*). They are continually arising and passing away as causes and effects. Through this constant arising and passing away, we are able to see the truth of *dukkha*.

The second noble truth (*samudaya sacca*) states that greed (*lobha*) and craving (*tanhā*) are the root cause of *dukkha*. Greed (*lobha*) is wanting to see pleasant things, hear pleasant sounds, wishing for a comfortable life, and so on. Having greed and craving toward objects is *lobha*. This constant craving (*tanhā*) is the origin of all *dukkha*.

The Third Noble Truth (*nirodha sacca*) is the truth of the cessation of craving (the cause or origin of *dukkha*). When craving (the cause) ceases, *dukkha* (the effect) comes to an end. So, *nirodha sacca* is the cessation of both *dukkha* and the origin of *dukkha*.

The Fourth Noble Truth (*magga sacca*) is the truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. The path leading to *nibbāna* (the realization of the Four Noble Truths) involves three factors of morality (*sīla*), three factors of concentration (*samādhi*) and two factors of wisdom (*paññā*).

*Sīla* involves right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kammantha*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*). By practicing morality (*sīla*) we refrain from acting upon mental defilements.

Utilizing the three factors of concentration (*samādhi*), including right effort (*sammā vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) and right concentration (*sammā samādhi*), one overcomes the obsessive forms of defilements that arise in the mind.

When the mind is directed toward an object continuously (*sammā sankappa*) one has right view and knowledge (*sammā ditthi*), which in turn develops the mental factors that

lead to *nibbāna*. These latter two factors fall within the wisdom group (*paññā*). The eight factors of the path are thus understood within the framework of morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*) which lead to the cessation of all *dukkha*. These are the foundations of the path leading to *nibbāna*.

A yogi must discern the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*) with direct knowledge, aim to abandon the origin of *dukkha* – craving (*samudhaya sacca*), realize the cessation of all *dukkha* (*nirodha sacca*) and develop the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (*magga sacca*). In this way a yogi practices by discerning, abandoning, realizing and developing the Four Noble Truths.

Experiencing the Four Noble Truths (*ariya sacca*) makes one pure, exalted and noble. *Ariya* means purified, exalted and noble. *Sacca* means the truth. All beings should aim to develop and maintain high standards. By practicing morality, one does not give into defilements; by developing concentration, one temporarily suppresses the obsessive forms of defilements that manifest in the mind, and by practicing wisdom, one uproots the latent, dormant defilements completely. *Ariya sacca* is therefore the truth that can make one pure, exalted and noble. The foundation for this development is *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

Where there is craving, there is *dukkha*. The truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*) and the origin of *dukkha* (*samudhaya sacca*) are called *vatta sacca*. This is because the *dukkha* and the origin of *dukkha* are continuously arising. The truth of the cessation of *dukkha* (*dukkha nirodha sacca*) and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (*magga sacca*) are *vivatta sacca*, as they prevent the arising of the first two truths, *dukkha* and craving (*tanhā*). The latter two truths are within the supra-mundane category. As long as there is craving, *dukkha* will arise and the round of existences (*vatta*) will continue to rotate, giving rise to birth and death through an infinite and continuous cycle (*samsāra*).

Before he attained enlightenment, the Buddha-to-be (the Bodhisattva) did not know about the Four Noble Truths. Not knowing and not practicing correctly, he did not attain the knowledge of conformity (*anuloma ñāna*) leading to *nibbāna*.

So the Bodhisattva had to go around in many cycles of existence, not knowing the Four Noble Truths. Because the first noble truth was not discerned, *samsāra* was extremely long. But in his last birth the Bodhisattva practiced and penetrated the Four Noble Truths, one by one. He was able to fully understand *dukkha*, abandon the cause of *dukkha* and realize the truth of the cessation of *dukkha*. Thus, the noble path (*magga sacca*) was realized. Having understood the *dukkha* of existence at the deepest level, the Buddha fully overcame craving (*tanhā*) and realized the peace of the deathless, *nibbāna*.

If you are born sickness and old age follow. Because there is mind, there is mental *dukkha*. Because there is body, there is bodily *dukkha*. Being reborn, one inevitably experiences *dukkha*. When you fully understand the benefits of not having a rebirth, you experience ultimate peace and happiness. If it is not realized that rebirth gives rise to *dukkha*, you continue to experience *dukkha*. It is by discerning the Four Noble Truths that the Buddha was able to escape the round of existences.

### **Discerning the Truth of Dukkha**

The Four Noble Truths must be understood both in theory and in practice. *Dukkha* involves mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*), arising in the three realms: the sensual realm, the material realm and the non-material realm. *Nāma* and *rūpa* are arising continuously, one after another and are therefore called *vatta*.

*Vatta* (round of existences) includes consciousness and the mental factors as well as materiality, arising in the three realms. One should be able to clearly differentiate *nāma* (mentality) from *rūpa* (materiality). To discern *dukkha sacca* one should listen to *Dhamma* talks on how the origin of *dukkha* should be abandoned. Having listened, one should bear it in mind and analyze it through deductive reasoning.

During meditation one must then put this knowledge into practice by continuously noting the presently arising object. The noting mind must rub against and be directly face to face with the object. To note the object one should exert ardent effort (*ātāpa viriya*) to aim and direct the noting mind toward the object. By practicing like this, one develops insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*), stage by stage, toward experiencing Path and Fruition Knowledge (*magga ñāna*) and consequently to discern the Four Noble Truths.

A yogi must develop the understanding that one's body is *dukkha*. This *dukkha* must be accurately discerned with mindfulness. A yogi must become aware of the whole body and all mental objects.

All objects that arise at the six sense doors: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, as well as the contact and the feelings arising through these sense doors, must be noted at the moment that they arise.

Seeing takes place because there is a physical object. If a physical object is absent, seeing will not take place. Without a healthy eye seeing cannot take place. In the process of seeing there is the visible object and the eye sensitivity. Eye sensitivity is the materiality

that receives the visible object. The visible object (*rūpa*) is the striker element; the eye is the receptor element. When the object strikes the receptor (the eye), seeing-consciousness (the ignition element) takes place.

The seeing-consciousness is mentality (*nāma*) and the contact (*phassa*) between the visible object and the consciousness is also mentality. All three elements, the striker, the receptor and the ignition involve *dukkha sacca*. In the process of seeing, the materiality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*) are *dukkha*. So the mental aspects of consciousness, contact and feeling are all *dukkha*.

There is also a resultant feeling (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral). In this feeling there is the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*). So when seeing takes place, one should just be mindful of the process and note it as “seeing, seeing” without analyzing it.

When we see someone, we first become aware of their face. The face is very important to recognize the person. So at first we look at the overall face.

At times the mind will focus on the forehead, the eyes, or the chin. If we continue to look on, we can observe each of the features individually.

Similarly, when mindfulness becomes strong, the noting mind comes to know the visible object, the eye sensitivity, the seeing-consciousness, contact, or the feeling clearly and separately. In the process of hearing, a yogi can discern the sound (the striker element), the ear sensitivity (the receptor) and the resulting hearing-consciousness, which takes place when a sound impinges upon the eardrum. A pleasant sound will give rise to a pleasant feeling.

A disturbing sound may give rise to an unpleasant feeling. Alternatively, there can be a neutral feeling, depending on the state of mind receiving it. In hearing also, there is *nāma* and *rūpa*. When hearing occurs a yogi should note it as “hearing, hearing” and discern the interaction of mind and matter in the process.

When the experience of smelling is noted, the material aspects (*rūpa*) arising in nose sensitivity and the smell must be observed. When a fragrance strikes the nose, there will be smelling-consciousness, contact and feeling. These are the mental aspects of the process. Smelling-consciousness, contact and feeling are *nāma* aspects and the nose and the smell are *rūpa*. When you experience a smell, you should note it as “smelling, smelling.”

The same noting should be done with the process of tasting. When the food comes into contact with the tongue, there is tasting-consciousness, tasting contact and feelings. These are the mental aspects. When you eat you must also note the chewing, biting and swallowing involved in the process.

At various times, the body will experience, hardness, softness, heat, lightness, tension, movement, and so on. The earth element, the fire element, the water element and the air element are all tangible. When one experiences hardness, it must be noted. When there is temperature, it must be noted as heat or coolness. These experiences of the four elements are available in all bodily postures.

A diligent yogi will note each process as “seeing, seeing,” “hearing, hearing,” “touching, touching,” and so on, to discern the mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*) involved in these processes. By noting the interaction of mind and matter that arises at the six sense doors, a yogi comes to know that all mental and physical processes are dukkha.

### **Three Kinds of Dukkha**

*Dukkha sacca* will be obvious to a yogi who diligently observes all the objects arriving at the six sense doors (the eye, ear, nose, body and so forth). When an object strikes the six sense doors, there will be seeing-consciousness, hearing-consciousness, and so on. When the object and the consciousness come into contact at the six sense doors, contact (*phassa*) arises, which in turn gives rise to a pleasant, unpleasant or a neutral feeling, depending on the object and the quality of the mind receiving it.

In any process of hearing, smelling or touching, there is mentality and materiality (*nāma* and *rūpa*): for example, a visual object, the sense-base, seeing-consciousness. When hearing occurs a yogi must note it as “hearing, hearing” and not analyze it. The same goes with bodily movements such as bending, stretching, moving and placing. The noting must be done using general terms, such as “seeing, seeing,” “hearing, hearing,” and so on.

In the beginning of the practice, a yogi’s effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are not very strong, so it is difficult to discern the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*) and free oneself from the origin of the truth of *dukkha* (craving). To observe *dukkha sacca* in practice, the object should be noted with correct aim and effort so that there is sustained mindfulness on the object. When the mind falls calm and collected on the object, *dukkha sacca* can be discerned in practice and insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*) can be developed stage by stage to realize *nibbāna*.

*Dukkha sacca* is obvious when you step on a thorn or trip over a stone while walking and you experience bodily pain. The truth of the origin of *dukkha* (*samudaya sacca*) is obvious when you crave to eat a snack or crave a meal. In similar instances the truth of the origin of *dukkha* is obvious.

The Buddha categorized *dukkha* into twelve forms. There are three categories of *dukkha*: *dukkha dukkha*, *sankhāra dukkha* and *viparināma dukkha*.

The first (*dukkha dukkha*) includes physical *dukkha* (*kāyika dukkha*), which manifests as hardness, heat, coolness, stiffness, tension: the characteristics of the four elements. *Kāyika dukkha* can be extreme in nature and cause great bodily suffering. Especially with certain kinds of illnesses, the bodily *dukkha* can be very intense.

The second involves the *dukkha* of having to do things (*sankhāra dukkha*). To experience human or deva pleasure, we have to do wholesome actions such as *dāna* (acts of generosity), practice morality, develop our mind and increase our knowledge. For example, *sankhāra dukkha* becomes obvious in our daily life when we go to a party. We have to look for the appropriate clothes and put on cosmetics and ornaments. This can be troublesome and is a cause for *dukkha*. There is arising, decaying and passing away in *sankhāra dukkha*. When we see the signs of dissolution, especially when we get near to death, we feel great sorrow and grief. Having to depart this world is very sorrowful.

So the benefits gained from *sankhāra dukkha* may feel good in the short term, but due to various circumstances, we feel sorrow and grief when we are forced to part with them. The more good things we part with, the more sorrow and grief there will be, and this causes us great *dukkha*.

The third type of *dukkha* is the *dukkha* caused by reversal or loss (*viparināma dukkha*). When pleasant things change or pass away due to their circumstances or nature, there is *dukkha*. All worldly beings experience *viparināma dukkha*. It is like the bolts fixed to pull a trailer. Each time the trailer moves forward, the bolts experience a jerk or a pull which causes stress on them. In a similar way, we continually meet with the stress of *viparināma dukkha* in our daily lives due to all the changes experienced within and around us.

Identifying with *dukkha* as good and pleasant is called *miccā patipatti avijjā* – ignorance and delusion. Some will take the origin of *dukkha* as good and pleasant and may work very hard to gain what they want and to have as many things as possible, thinking that it brings happiness. Not knowing the origin of *dukkha*, one operates in ignorance. If the origin of *dukkha* is removed, then *dukkha* is removed and there is no more rebirth.

Because the benefits of the cessation of all *dukkha* and the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* are not understood, one has no desire to remove the origin of *dukkha*.

If one does not know that it is good to attain the cessation of *dukkha*, one thinks that *nibbāna* is not necessary. So one also thinks there is no need to practice the right path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. Because one is still attached in the world to *dukkha* and ignorant to the origin of *dukkha*, one sees these attachments as beneficial and as giving rise to happiness. In this case *nibbāna* and the path leading to it are not held in high esteem.

The Buddha recommends that we become mindful of whatever manifests at the six sense doors as they are the cause of *dukkha*. That does not mean to become reflective, but to simply note and observe all objects as and when they arise. This is the *satipatthāna* practice. You may begin with only a few objects that can be noted easily during a session of sitting meditation. For example, you can observe the rising and the falling of the abdomen as the primary object. In doing this you must remember to breathe normally.

When breathing in the abdomen naturally rises, manifesting as stiffness and movement. This is materiality (*rūpa*). Noting the rising and falling involves both *rūpa* (materiality) and *nāma* (mentality) components. The rising of the abdomen must be noted from the beginning to the end. This noting must be done with exact aim and consistent effort to note the rising of the abdomen to its peak and then the falling to its end. Every time the abdomen rises, you note it with exact aim so that the noting mind operates concurrently with the rising. When noting falling, you must mindfully follow it to the end. By continuously noting and observing the rising and falling of the abdomen, you develop mindfulness and concentration.

At the beginning, you will not be able to immediately discern the truth of *dukkha*. When noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, the noting mind will at first focus on the form or shape of the abdomen. At times it will be on the manner and the nature of the rising and falling. When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) is strengthened, the characteristics of the object (that is, stiffness, tension and movement) can be noted. When you note the rising and the falling of the abdomen in this way, defilements like laziness become inactive. Your effort (*virīya*) prevents the arising of defilements.

When the noting mind is aimed and directed toward the object, there will no longer be any wrong thoughts of ill will, envy, jealousy, or wanting to torment others. Mindfulness will protect the mind from these defilements. The noting mind becomes calm and collected due to noting the present object, and therefore it will not give rise to restlessness or worry. When defilements are absent, the mind becomes pure and clean. It is in this state of mind that *dukkha sacca* becomes obvious to the yogi. This is the immediate benefit of the practice.

## Chapter 2: Sloth and Torpor – Our Nearest Enemy

In the beginning of the practice, it is not always possible to note the object as soon as it arises. During sitting meditation, we first focus on the rising and the falling of the abdomen. We note the rising process then the falling process. Through this noting we can discern the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*).

In the *Satipatthāna* meditation practice, we develop the mental strength of faith and confidence (*saddhā*), the power of courageous effort (*virīya*), sustained mindfulness on the object (*sati*), the one-pointedness of a calm and collected mind (*samādhi*), discerning wisdom that arises in the mind (*paññā*), and the moral shame and moral fear of wrong doing or the power of moral shame and moral fear (*hiri otappa*).

To develop these mental powers, we must first focus our attention on the abdomen and note its rising and falling. In order to have sustained mindfulness on the rising and falling object, we must exert ardent effort (*ātāpa virīya*). We must be active and alert to note the object clearly and be ready to note the object as soon as it arises.

By applying ardent effort, the noting mind will develop the ability to follow all the other objects that capture our attention such as the lifting, moving and placing when walking, or the rising and falling process of the abdomen. However, if one is too eager to note the object, then the effort becomes excessive and the noting mind will overshoot the target of meditation and at times slip away from the object.

If one is lazy, effort slackens. Then, the noting mind falls short of the object. So the effort must be balanced. One should aim and direct the noting mind toward the object. If the effort is not right, one must make adjustments to maintain the correct proportion or degree of energy.

To have sustained mindfulness, the yogi must note the arising object with sustained effort. When the mind becomes calm, collected and focused on the object, one can then see the true nature of the object and, subsequently, the truth of *dukkha*. In the beginning, you will not know the true nature underpinning the object. But with continued practice, one purifies the mind and comes to understand the true nature of phenomena.

To develop sustained attention, the Buddha recommends *atanditto* – a mind free from sluggishness and laziness. Instead of being sluggish or lazy, you must exert ardent effort that is full of alertness, readiness and exactness. Laziness (*thīna middha*) is a hin-



drance that pollutes the mind. When laziness is present in the mind, knowledge cannot arise and the knowledge that has already arisen is weakened.

One who is lazy will not practice meditation. If a lazy person commences meditation, the practice will not be diligent. Such a person will not reach the destination of supra-mundane knowledge. Not practicing diligently, a lazy person can spend two or three months at a retreat and go home without gaining any knowledge. When the benefits of meditation are not forthcoming, a lazy person's effort slackens even further. One may even look for shortcuts.

A lazy, indolent yogi has *hīna viriya*, insufficient effort. The opposite is true of a diligent yogi who exerts ardent effort. An indolent person lives in *dukkha* and may pursue sensual objects and indulge in them without realizing that such happiness is dangerous and ultimately fatal. Entangled in unwholesomeness, their life becomes one of inferior quality, due to their indulgence in *kāma vittakka* (sensual thoughts – wanting to hear good sounds, and so on) or *vyāpādhā vittakka* (thoughts of wanting to destroy or torment others). One with anger (*dosa*) falls short of moral restraint (*sīla*) and therefore is not able to develop the concentration necessary to reach a state of calm and collectedness in the mind which gives rise to wisdom.

Without moral restraint (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), you lose the benefits and welfare that is possible in this life. Training in *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* have the benefit of removing defilements. If you are lacking in this training, you don't develop a humane mind and will become a person of inferior standing. Even if you have the highest education and material wealth, if you lack this essential training, you fail in virtue and will lack the courage that is necessary to remove unwholesome mental states. You will also lack happiness.

A diligent yogi must possess three levels of energy (*viriya*): initial application (*ārambha dhātu*), sustained application (*nikkhama dhātu*) and fulfilling application (*paratthama dhātu*). In the beginning, when a yogi doesn't see the beneficial results of meditation, it is natural to become lazy and for the mind to become slack. When seated for some time, it is natural for bodily pains to arise, and one might feel like relaxing or changing one's posture. But one should not give up when faced with such aches and pains. With courageous effort one must boost their energy and continue to aim and note the pain that has arisen in the body. The goal of attaining ultimate peace must be kept in mind and one must continue to strive toward it.

If one's mind has spiritual resistance, then one will be able to maintain a balanced mind under stressful conditions. Spiritual resistance is an important factor for developing a

balanced mind. One should continue to strive in their practice by exerting the requisite effort stage by stage until one's goal is reached.

For example, if you are intending to lift an object, it is important that the effort to lift does not stagnate in the middle and that the object continues to be lifted, higher and higher. This is how effort (*virīya*) has to be stepped up. A person meditating with ardent energy is free of wrongful unwholesome thoughts. Being free from such thoughts, one becomes lovable and peaceful. If the mind is pure, clean and gentle, one becomes virtuous and has control of their speech and actions.

Each rising that occurs in the abdomen must be noted. One must become aware when the falling of the abdomen takes place. To ensure that the noting mind meets the object directly, one should exert ardent effort. In this way mindfulness is developed and sustained on the object.

. Therefore, one should continuously aim one's noting mind toward the object and come in direct contact with it. The mind becomes open when there is sufficient energy. To ensure that laziness does not arise, one should note the object as soon as it arises so that the mind is alert, active and open.

In the practice of meditation, laziness is the strongest enemy that gives one the most trouble! Ardent energy is the only antidote. When ardent energy is exerted, one is free from laziness. By applying such energy to drive out laziness, mental development increases. Mindfulness will lead to concentration. Once the mind reaches a stage of what is known as momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*), one will come to know the true nature of all phenomena.

## Chapter 3: Two Kinds of Jhāna

In our practice we must gain victory over defilements such as greed, anger and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*) that have troubled us throughout our existences. To do this we should cultivate the mental strength that is necessary to drive them out. Laziness gives us the most trouble. Ardent effort (*ātāpa viriya*) can overcome laziness. This is the effort of continuously directing our noting mind toward the object.

It is very important to practice according to your teacher's guidance. You must listen to the instructions attentively and practice in a way that is effective. By practicing diligently according to instructions, you will come to understand the *Dhamma*. By listening to the instructions and putting them into practice, you will become endowed with the teachings of the Buddha. The goal of *satipatthāna* practice is to cultivate the practice within oneself.

To be endowed with an understanding of the *Dhamma*, you should practice morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*). This is called the *sikkhā*, training. With *sikkhā*, gross, medium-level and deep-rooted defilements can be uprooted and you will become a lovable and peaceful person, endowed with the Buddha's teachings.

Listening to the Buddha's teachings must be done attentively and with respect. Every arising object must be continuously noted with sustained mindfulness. You should not take it easy in the practice or practice in a haphazard manner. Practice diligently, respectfully and continuously. Yogis should not rest during retreats. The only time for a rest is during sleep at night. If you take a break during the practice, your defilements will become active once again. The practice of *satipatthāna* is very strict and when taken up should be valued as a precious training. So value it and practice with precision, according to the guidance given by the Buddha.

In the *Satipatthāna* sutta, effort, mindfulness and wisdom (*viriya*, *sati* and *paññā*) are mentioned. The truth (*sacca*) is explained with reference to right concentration (*sammā samādhi*). There is also reference to absorption (*jhāna*) which involves the close observation on a single object of meditation. When noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, you must note it with sustained mindfulness, keeping the mind concentrated in order to discern its true nature.

At times a yogi is overeager and the resulting effort could become excessive. When effort is excessive, the noting mind overshoots the target and the mind slips away from the object. The noting mind must come face to face with the object and the mind must

meet the object directly. Effort should be applied so that the noting mind directly meets the object. It is like playing a game of marbles. When you play a game of marbles, you aim so that the marble hits the target. Aiming at the marble alone will not get it to the target. You must exert effort and aim the marble toward the target so that, when the marble moves, it hits the target.

Similarly, if you are eating a meal, to pick up a piece of fruit, you need to aim the fork toward the fruit and exert effort so that the fork reaches it. Aiming the fork toward the fruit alone will not take it to the fruit. Effort alone without aim will not take you to the fruit either.

Whether your practice is as a concentration (*samatha*) yogi or an insight (*vipassanā*) yogi, you must observe the object of meditation closely and fully – not partially. When the mind closely and completely observes an object, it is in a state of absorption (*jhāna*). There are two kinds of *jhāna*: *arammanupa ni jhāna* (observing a single object of meditation) and *lakkhānupa ni jhāna* (observing the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*).

When you practice *arammanupa ni jhāna*, your attention is focused closely and completely on a single object. In a state of *lakkhānupa ni jhāna*, you observe mind and matter in order to note the unique and common characteristics. To note the characteristics, each time the abdomen rises or falls (or you see, hear, smell, touch, and so on), you must note it with effort. Only then can you discern the unique characteristics of mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*). When effort, mindfulness and concentration are strong, you will be able to discern that these objects arise and pass away according to their natural cycles and, as a result, they cause *dukkha*. These are the common characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* that you must observe fully and completely as soon as the object arises.

Of the two types of *jhāna*, the first, *arammanupa ni jhāna* involves closely observing a single object of meditation to keep the mind calm and concentrated. This is related to the *samatha* practice and is called *samatha jhāna*. *Lakkhānupa ni jhāna* involves a yogi observing the unique characteristics (*sabāva lakkhānā*) and common characteristics (*sāmanña lakkhānā*). This is related to *vipassanā* practice and is called *vipassanā jhāna*. In the practice of *samatha jhāna* the attention is focused on a single object. This is conceptual. The mind is concentrated on one object continuously to develop concentration. To develop *vipassanā jhāna*, the *nāma* and *rūpa* arising at the six sense doors must be observed with continuous mindfulness. When mindfulness and concentration (*sati* and *samādhi*) are developed, one will discern the ultimate truth.

By practicing *vipassanā* one will first discern the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* then their cause and effect relationship. This, however, is only the beginning stage of *vipas-*

*sanā jhāna*. As one continues to practice, one sees the unique characteristics (*sabāva lakḥhanā*), the natural characteristics of all objects arising and passing away on their own and that *dukkha* is inherent in all objects. Through these observations, one then discerns the common characteristics (*sāmanṇa lakḥhanā*) which are common to all *nāma* and *rūpa*.

The difference between the two types of *jhāna* is that *samatha jhāna* focuses and concentrates the mind on a concept, a single object, resulting in a calm and focused mind. Through *vipassanā jhāna*, one notes mental and physical phenomena (*nāma* and *rūpa*) arising in the present moment. By noting this, one eventually realizes that they are subject to cause and effect and *dukkha*. *Vipassanā jhāna* is necessary to understand the three aspects of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*).

*Samatha jhāna* is practiced in order to develop concentration only. *Vipassanā jhāna*, however, is practiced to develop knowledge and wisdom. When practicing *vipassanā jhāna*, the noting mind aims and directs itself toward and rubs directly on the object. At that point a yogi can experience rapture and joy (*pīti*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggathā*). When the noting mind rubs against the object, the noting is effective and joy and happiness are experienced due to the one-pointedness of the mind. When the mind rubs against the object, completely and closely, uncertainty and skeptical doubt (*vicikiccā*) are removed.

When joy is experienced in the practice in this way, you remove ill will (*vyāpāda*), which corrodes the mind. *Pīti* will keep the mind fresh. With one-pointedness of mind you remove any restlessness and remorse (*udacca kukkucca*) that may have arisen previously in the mind. You will also temporarily remove sensual desire (*kāma chanda*). The five hindrances are thus removed when one experiences *jhāna* (absorption). When the hindrances that weaken knowledge are removed, a yogi can experience joy, happiness and one-pointedness of mind.

This is the result achieved by a diligent yogi. A lazy yogi will not experience such states of mind. When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops, the noting mind directly meets the object and right contemplation (*sammā sankhappa*) and clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) will develop.

## Chapter 4: Clear Comprehension (Sampañña)

When an object is noted at the moment it arises, the noting mind rubs and strokes it. Then the mind becomes temporarily free from the hindrances (*nīvarana*).

The mental factors involved are: *vitakka* (aiming and directing the mind to the object) and *vicāra* (the mind rubbing and stroking the object). *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are *jhānic* factors. When they are present hindrances are kept at bay. When the mind is free from the hindrances, a joy born of seclusion (*vivekajan pīti sukkhan*) is experienced.

When you undertake solitary meditation practice, you first experience seclusion from people and second seclusion from the hindrances. When one is secluded from friends and company, one's mind is free from the imposition of social interaction. Even when you are in a group sitting, if you refrain from speaking to fellow yogis, you experience seclusion from companionship. Yet at the same time if your mind is preoccupied with thoughts and you have the companionship of the hindrances, you will not experience the state of *vivekajan pīti sukkhan*.

For the mind to be free from the hindrances, the noting mind must be aimed toward the object so that it comes face to face with the object. Whenever the noting mind is directly aligned with and rubs against the object, you are free from defilements. The mind is free from sensual desire (*kāma chanda*), greed (*lobha*), and so on, and there is no aversion, hatred or ill-will in the mind. When the noting mind rubs against and falls calm and collected on the object, sloth and torpor can be overcome. There is no restlessness or remorse when the noting is effective, nor is there any uncertainty or doubt. A yogi is then free from the hindrances and thus experiences a joy that is born of seclusion.

When the noting is effective, a yogi may also experience minor forms of joy and rapture (*pīti*) in the form of thrills occurring in the body. With lust (*rāga*) and aversion (*dosa*) at bay, there is momentary peace. The mind becomes one-pointed and *samādhi* develops. With ardent effort (*ātapa viriya*), the noting remains sustained on the object and the mind becomes calm and collected. Mindfulness is firmly established on the object. Lust (*rāga*) does not arise, restlessness subsides, and the mind becomes secure from the hindrances and is no longer agitated by them. The mind is temporarily free from lust, aversion or greed (*rāga, dosa, or lobha*).

The rising and falling of the abdomen must be noted with aim and effort so that the mind comes face to face with the object. Further, when mindfulness (*sati*) is strong the defilements that can arise due to a lack of mindfulness are removed. With sustained

mindfulness the mind becomes fixed upon the object, the noting mind falls calm and collected on the object, and momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops. In the process mindfulness and concentration are automatically developed. The mind remains calmly collected on the object and is not distracted or scattered. The quality of *kanika samādhi* is a mind that retains its awareness on the object. As a yogi becomes skillful in the practice, the mind automatically fixes on the object and there is no longer the need to aim toward the object. This is right contemplation (*sammā sankappā*).

When the noting mind falls calm and collected on the object, clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) develops. *Sammā dhitti* is another term for clear comprehension (*sampajañña*). At this stage the mental strength that is being developed is complete.

When your attention is fixed on the object (for example, the rising and falling of the abdomen), you no longer see the form or the shape of the abdomen or the manner of its rising or falling. The mind is focused on the stiffness, the tension and the movement. These attributes are the true nature of materiality (*rūpa*), and you discern the truth of *dukkha* through this process. This is clear comprehension (*sampajañña*).

In the *Satipatthāna* sutta, knowledge is mentioned as *sampajañña*. This is not theoretical or deductive knowledge. It is direct experiential knowledge. It is impartial, and it is knowing correctly and fully for oneself. It is a clear knowing. *Sampajañña* means to know distinctly. When the rising and falling occur, the yogi distinguishes between the process involved in the body and the noting mind that observes the bodily process; the yogi clearly discerns body (*rūpa*) and mind (*nāma*). Similarly, when the falling occurs, a yogi knows the difference between the object and the mind noting it. There is no longer any confusion. Clearly, the object and the mind that notes the process are discerned.

Direct experiential knowledge is outstanding and special. *Sampajañña* is to know fully, correctly and distinctly by oneself. This is not ordinary knowledge as it knows clearly, unmistakably and completely.

You must observe the body as body and know *rūpa* as *rūpa*. Be mindful of your posture, whether you are walking, sitting or lying down. Become aware of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note the rising as “rising” and the falling as “falling” and observe the process. *Kāyānupassī* is to repeatedly observe the body, such as the rising and falling of the abdomen.

*Anupassanā* is repeated observation of the presently arising object. A yogi endowed with ardent effort will repeatedly observe the object. When mindfulness is sustained on the

object, it is not ordinary mindfulness, but rather outstanding awareness. With repeated observation the mind gradually falls calm and collected on the object.

With sustained mindfulness concentration develops. When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops, there is clear comprehension. The object will then be noted clearly, distinctively and completely. With sustained attention on the object, defilements arising due to a lack of mindfulness are overcome. It is in the absence of sustained mindfulness that extreme greed and anger can arise. Ill-will can set in, and the desire to destroy others, and hatred can manifest.

As the practice gains momentum, greed and anger are suppressed, and the mind gains distance from these defilements. These are the immediate benefits of the practice. By noting the object at the moment of its arising with sustained mindfulness, defilements lose their opportunity to manifest. There will be a momentary cessation of defilements in your stream of consciousness. When the awareness of the object is continuous, defilements are kept at bay. Even if you intermittently fail to note the object, defilements remain suppressed.

During interviews, yogis must describe their practice and what they came to know. When the object arises is your attention aimed toward the object? Did you note the object closely and clearly? Did you follow the rising and falling of the abdomen closely and observe the process from the beginning, through the middle and to the end? Similarly, with walking meditation, you must recollect whether your attention was directed clearly and closely toward each lifting, moving and placing of the foot.

When you describe the practice to your teacher in this way, you can discern whether your noting was effective. If your noting was thorough and effective, you must report on what you came to know. Were you aware of the shape, the mode, or the manner of movement? Or were the natural characteristics of the object like stiffness and tension clear? These observations must be reported clearly. When the mind wanders, were you aware of its wandering nature and did you note it as wandering mind? When pains and any itching occurred, did you note whether they increased or decreased in their intensity or did they fade away and disappear? In this way your practice must be reported to your teacher.

If a yogi reports systematically, it is easy for the teacher to guide and give the appropriate instructions. The *satipatthāna* practice is like undertaking self-research, where one comes to know more about oneself. When undertaking research, you must report the findings precisely and accurately.



You don't report on what you thought, but you report on your findings. Similarly, you must report what you came to know by noting the object. Some yogis imagine and report their imagination, which leads to confused reporting. As a result their teacher will not be able to give them the appropriate guidance or instructions.

So, at interviews yogis must report the object that was noted, how it was noted, and what they came to know as a result of that noting. The reporting must be sincere and honest, and the experiences must be conveyed accurately so that the appropriate guidance can be received to develop the practice.

## Chapter 5: Two at a Blow

If an object is noted with aim and effort, there is sustained mindfulness. Whatever object arises at the six sense doors involves the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*). In *Satipatthāna* meditation a yogi is mindful of the object that arises at the present moment. When the object is noted with aim and effort, the noting mind rests on the object and momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops, then the truth of *dukkha* can be discerned. By knowing and discerning in this way, a yogi removes ignorance. Ignorance is not knowing, as well as knowing incorrectly or wrongly. When the truth of *dukkha* is realized, ignorance (*avijjā*) is removed. It is like a light that dispels darkness!

When knowledge arises, you discern the truth of *dukkha* clearly and ignorance (*avijjā*) is dispelled. When you are mindful of the object, you can discern its true nature, stiffness, tension, movement and so forth. If you don't know the truth underpinning existence, you wrongly hold things in high esteem and treat experiences as good and pleasant, thus giving cause for craving (*tanhā*) and greed (*lobha*) to arise. Not knowing the truth, you give in to craving and greed.

When effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are strengthened, the noting mind automatically aims at the object. When the noting is concurrent with the object, one can discern the truth. Discerning correctly, one removes ignorance (*avijjā*). When ignorance is removed, craving (*tanhā*) does not arise. In this way you remove the basis for the origin of *dukkha* (*samudhaya sacca*). So it is "two at a blow!" This needs to be understood both theoretically and in one's practice.

When minor forms of craving (*tanhā*) are removed, the more acute forms of greed (*lobha*) will not arise and you will not cling to sensual desire. When ignorance is dispelled, craving toward lustful objects is also removed. When the mind (*nāma*) and body (*rūpa*) are clearly and distinctly discerned, you remove the wrong view of a self. We are all mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*). Ultimately, there is no man or woman or person, but just simply name and form. When you begin to see that just mind and matter exists in all existence, you will no longer believe that there is a living soul residing within you. Previously, clinging to wrong view, you believed in a personality, a being and an individual soul (*jīva attā*).

Ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*tanhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) are round of defilements that continue to rotate (*kilesa vatta*). When the truth is discerned and you are mindful of whatever object arises, you discern the truth of *dukkha* and ignorance; craving and clinging plus the round of defilements momentarily come to a halt.

When delusion (*moha*) and ignorance (*avijja*) are removed, the defilements associated with them will cease and there will no longer be restlessness, uncertainty, or doubt. When greed (*lobha*) is removed, unwholesome consciousness does not arise since it is wrong view that gives rise to unwholesome consciousness. When unwholesome states of mind arise, volition (*cetanā*) is involved. Volition is *kamma*. When the round of defilements (*kilesa*) comes to an end, the round of existences (*kamma vatta*) also come to a stop. When unwholesome mental states and deeds (*akusala*) are uprooted; wholesome mental states and deeds (*kusala*) arise.

Wholesomeness is two-fold: wholesome deeds that do not lead to further existence (*vivatta kusala*), and wholesome deeds that give rise to further existences (*vatta kusala*).

When the truth is discerned and ignorance, craving and clinging come to a halt; you will no longer do unwholesome or ordinary wholesome deeds that lead to future existences. One develops only wholesome deeds (*vivatta kusala*) but they will not give rise to future existences. When ignorance, craving and clinging are removed, you also stop the round of existences (*kamma vatta*). Volition no longer gives cause to further existences. Here, wholesomeness has knowledge (*paññā*) as the prevailing factor. When the round of existences are removed, of course, one also removes the round of resultants, moment after moment!

When the presently arising object is noted and discerned clearly, you temporarily remove the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*), the round of existences (*kamma vatta*) and the round of resultants (*vipāka vatta*) on a momentary basis. In each noting, effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are involved. When the noting mind falls on the object, the true nature of phenomena is discerned and the unwholesome states of mind are removed. Then the truth and the origin of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca* and *samudaya sacca*) become very obvious to the yogi. Thus, a yogi removes greed (*lobha*).

At first, when the object is noted, you may only discern the form, shape, mode or manner of its movement. When effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are strong, you discern the true nature of materiality such as stiffness, tension, movement, and so on. When these characteristics are discerned, you see the truth of *dukkha* unfold and through this process, the origin of *dukkha* is also removed. However, you must become mindful of the object to discern its true nature. When you practice diligently, you will know this from your own experience. Wanting and clinging (*tanhā* and *upādāna*) are removed and you stop the round of defilements. There will no longer be any agitation due to ignorance and wrong view (*lobha* and *miccā dhitti*).

When the round of defilements come to a stop, there is a momentary cessation and momentary peace. A momentary cessation is experienced with the removal of ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*tanhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*).

With each instance of noting, there is an aspect of effort, mindfulness and concentration (*virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*). When effort is exerted, the noting mind reaches the object, and there is sustained mindfulness. Sustained mindfulness is right effort (*sammā vāyāma*), and when the mind is aimed at the object, there is right application (*sammā sankhappa*). When the true nature of matter or physical phenomena (*rūpa*) is discerned, there is right view (*sammā dhitti*).

When the noting mind is aimed and directed to the object, there is right application (*sammā sankhappa*) and you can discern tension, movement, and so on, while your mindfulness continues to protect you by keeping the defilements at bay. When knowledge is developed, you weaken your defilements. Then, when the truth is discerned, ignorance is removed, and thus craving does not arise. Discerning mental and physical phenomena (*nāma* and *rūpa*) distinctly, you will no longer believe in a “person” or a “being.” You will not believe in a soul or permanent being residing in you (*atta*).

Whenever you reflect, you note that there is no single being, person or entity present. In the practice, you also fulfill morality (*sīla*), and in each noting, you develop effort, mindfulness and concentration (*virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*). There is also right application (*sammā sankhappa*) when the mind is aimed at the object and discernment of its true nature (*sammā dhitti*) arises. This, together with the factors of morality, right speech, right action and right livelihood (*sīla*, *sammā vāca*, *sammā kammanta* and *sammā ājīva*) enables a yogi to develop all of the eight factors of the path.

So with the Four Noble Truths, you remove the truth and origin of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca* and *samudhaya sacca*) to realize the truth of cessation of *dukkha* (*nirodha sacca*) and develop the path leading to cessation (*magga sacca*). When you are mindful of the object, you discern its nature: the stiffness, tension, and so on. And, you see the truth of *dukkha* in physical phenomena (*rūpa*). When the truth of *dukkha* is discerned, the other three noble truths are also automatically revealed. A yogi that practices diligently and meticulously can discern the Four Noble Truths within a span of one or two days.

There are three types of defilements to be removed. You apply three factors: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) in turn to remove the three types of defilements. The first are transgressive forms of defilements that manifest in bodily and verbal action. The second includes obsessive defilements that manifest in the mind (*parivutthāna kilesa*) and the third, latent forms of defilements (*anusaya kilesa*).

One must overcome transgressive defilements through morality (*sīla*). The second type, mental, obsessive defilements (*parivutthāna kilesa*) are removed through concentration (*samādhi*), and latent forms of defilements (*anusaya kilesa*) are overcome through insight knowledge and the development of path knowledge (*vipassanā nana* and *magga nana*).

When insight knowledge is developed, defilements can be clearly discerned. So, as the practice matures, the three types of the *kilesas* are removed by these three groups and when the truth of dukkha (*dukkha sacca*) is discerned, you remove the origin of *dukkha* (*samudhaya sacca*), realize the truth of the cessation of *dukkha* (*nirodha sacca*) and develop *magga sacca*, the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*.

## Chapter 6: Jīva atta and Parama atta

Each time you note an object, the three trainings (*sikha*), morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), are involved. Through the noting process, you overcome gross and medium forms of defilements and remove ignorance (*avijja*). The round of deeds (*kamma vatta*) rooted in defilements come to a stop, which in turn causes the round of resultants (*vipāka vatta*) to also come to a halt. There are no longer good or bad deeds giving rise to further existence.

Due to ignorance, one continues to crave for sensual objects, wishing to see beautiful things, hear pleasant sounds, taste good flavors and touch nice objects. When one gets what one wants, one clings to them, perpetuating the wrong view of a self, an “I.” One holds as truth the false idea that, even if the body perishes, a soul will remain, thus an incorrect view of living eternally is formed. On the other hand, one might hold the view that mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*) arise due to circumstances and that, when life comes to an end, there is no longer anything left. This is the incorrect view of annihilation.

Due to a lack of mindfulness, the mind does not fall calm and collected on the object or discern it correctly. So craving toward the object continues and, as a result, the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*) continue to rotate, perpetuating the belief in an individual or permanent soul (*jīva atta*). In order to protect and to further this false perception of a soul, one performs various deeds by body, speech and mind.

When one’s intentions are rooted in wholesome states of mind, one performs wholesome deeds by body, speech and mind. These wholesome intentions lead to further existences, giving rise to the round of intentions and deeds (*kamma vatta*). Due to unwholesome states of mind, one performs bad deeds. If there is the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*), there is the round of intentions and deeds (*kamma vatta*) leading to the round of resultants (*vipāka vatta*). Having ignorance (*avijja*) and craving (*tanhā*), one clings to the wrong view of a soul or an enduring identity (*atta*). So, the round of existences continue to rotate, from one deed to another, from one life to another.

By practicing *satipatthāna* meditation, a yogi develops knowledge into mind (*nāma*) and physical phenomena (*rūpa*), and gains an insight into the triple aspects that underpin all phenomena: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*).

When a yogi develops *vipassanā* knowledge, the three round of defilements, deeds and resultants, (*kilesa vatta*, *kamma vatta* and *vipāka vatta*) momentarily stop.

Generally, ignorance, craving and clinging (*avijja*, *tanhā* and *upādāna*) spring up due to objects arising at the six sense doors. When there are good and pleasant objects, there is craving (*tanhā*) and one craves for beautiful sights, pleasant sounds and good fragrances. One clings (*upādāna*) to them as real happiness and holds sensual (and worldly) happiness in high esteem, continually craving for even better things. When one believes that a soul (*atta*) exists in oneself and in others, one holds onto sensual objects due to ignorance and craving. One believes in the wrong view that there is an “I” who enjoys “seeing,” “tasting,” and so on.

Where does this belief in a soul (*atta*) arise? There are two kinds of *atta*: a living soul and a supreme soul (*jīva atta* and *parama atta*). Some people believe that a supreme soul (*parama atta*) creates and governs the whole world and controls all animate and inanimate things. This view relies on the belief in a creator: a supreme soul or god who has created all beings as mortal souls and knows everything about all that exists. The belief, moreover, is that this supreme soul is beyond happiness and *dukkha*.

When one holds the wrong view of a soul (*jīva atta*), one believes that an individual soul exists in every being. Whether it is a small insect or an elephant, it is believed that an individual soul with its own power to undertake all bodily action exists. Before the Buddha came into this world, many believed in a living soul and supreme soul. The Buddha taught that all living beings involve mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*) arising and passing away as cause and effect. According to the Buddha, there is nothing more than mentality and physicality (*nāma* and *rūpa*); there is no living soul nor a supreme soul; all material things are the results of cause and effect. There is no soul in *nāma* and *rūpa*, and they themselves are not based on a soul (*atta*)!

Materiality is the result of one’s good and bad deeds (*kamma*), consciousness (*citta*), temperature (*utu*) and nutrients (*āhāra*). These are the four causes of materiality. Some believe that beings are created by the Mahā Brahma and that a permanent soul exists and continues from one life to the next, from one body to another. Even if the body perishes, it is believed that this soul transmigrates to the next form of existence. Some even hold the misconceived view that a soul (*jīva atta*) is the result of the four elements of water, fire, earth and air.

A Buddhist who does not practice meditation will also believe in the existence of a soul and a supreme being. The *satipatthāna* practice and insight into mind and physical phenomena (*nāma* and *rūpa*) is the only way to overcome this wrong view.

Due to ignorance, greed and clinging, the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*) rotate, giving rise to the round of intentions (*kamma vatta*) and resultants (*vipāka vatta*). The rotation of the three rounds (*vatta*) is analogous to a tree. The tree has sap and moisture generated by nutrients from soil, water, sun and air. The sap helps the tree to bear fruit. The fruit contains seeds with the potency to generate more trees. The sap pervades throughout the tree and, because of the sap, the tree bears fruit with seeds that can sow the next generation of trees. The sap pervading throughout the tree is compared to the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*). Due to the sap, the tree bears fruit and the seeds can generate more trees. This potency is compared to the round of deeds (*kamma vatta*). The new generation of trees is compared to the round of resultants (*vipāka vatta*).

To stop the new generation of trees from growing, you have to adopt various methods. For example, with a teak tree you peel the bark off the tree, starting from the bottom. Over time, this will kill the tree. This peeling is compared to the *vipassanā* meditation practice.

In the *vipassanā* practice, you observe the presently arising object and discern the process of mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*) and the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self in all phenomena. Discerning correctly, you remove ignorance and there is no longer any *dukkha* or craving toward the object.

Clinging arises only if and when craving exists. When craving is overcome, clinging does not arise. Discerning what underlies all phenomena correctly, one no longer craves. By clearly discerning mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*), you realize that there is no longer the concept of a soul within you. When cause and effect is understood correctly, the wrong view of a supreme soul (*parama atta*) is removed.

Good tastes and pleasant sounds give rise to defilements due to ignorance and cause clinging to arise. Just like the soil and water in the sap generates the tree, greed, ignorance and clinging give rise to defilements. Defilements are like the sap that pervades the tree. Not understanding the true nature of sensual pleasures, you cling to them and the round of defilements continues to rotate.

If a yogi practices according to guidance and instructions and notes every object that arises with aim and effort, insight knowledge will be developed, stage by stage. By practicing diligently, the *kilesa* sap becomes weaker and weaker and will eventually dry up. When *nāma* and *rūpa* are discerned and cause and effect are understood, you develop insight knowledge and understand the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self, directly and clearly. When the true nature of all existence is discerned, there is no longer any craving or clinging, and ignorance is removed completely.



## Chapter 7: Cutting the Round of Defilements

Not knowing what generates defilements, you continue to rotate through *samsāra* and fall victim to the rounds of cause and effect. By clinging to the wrong view of a self, you continue to believe that the world is controlled by a creator – the Maha Brahma.

If you are mindful of the presently arising object, you develop the mental strength that needs to be developed, cultivated and increased. As the practice matures, you discern mentality and materiality (*nāma* and *rūpa*), as well as cause and effect, which leads one to realize the non-existence of a living entity or soul. When it is understood that *nāma* and *rūpa* arise due to cause and effect, you also remove the wrong view that they are causeless.

When the practice develops even further to discern the arising and passing away of all phenomena, you remove the perception of permanence. When the impermanence of all that is within and around you is realized, you discern the *dukkha* underpinning all existence. As it is realized that impermanence is the order of the day, the wrong view of a self is also dispelled.

If the round of defilements does not cease, the round of actions continues to give cause to the round of resultants and one continues to rotate from one existence to another. If ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*tanhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) are present, based on them, there will be the round of volition (*kamma vatta*) and good and bad actions will be performed, giving cause to their respective results. When the round of defilements comes to a stop, the round of actions and resultants also come to a stop. So, we need to work on stopping the currents of defilements arising in our stream of consciousness.

If you lack morality (*sīla*) you can't remove the transgressive forms of defilements. Without concentration, the obsessive forms of defilements continue to arise in the mind. If you fail to develop insight knowledge (*vipassanā nāñña*) and path knowledge (*magga nāñña*), the latent forms of defilements can't be removed.

Ignorance can be overcome gradually, through the practice of morality, concentration and wisdom. If you are mindful, defilements are kept at bay and with concentration and wisdom you gradually remove them.

One's body and mind is a field in which arising objects must be noted. There is seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, bending, stretching, turning, lifting, moving, and so on. Whatever object arises and becomes predominant in the present moment, you should

note it with ardent effort. For the noting mind to directly meet the object, your aim should be precise. When the object is noted with aim and effort, mindfulness is sustained on the object.

With sustained mindfulness, the mind falls calm and collected on the object and momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) is strengthened. You can then discern the true nature of the object and the truth of *dukkha* underpinning it. If you are mindful of the rising and falling, you must observe the stiffness, tension, hardness, and so on, involved in the rising and falling process. Then you discern the true nature of materiality and come to understand the truth of *dukkha*.

Defilements enter the mind when effort is weak and delusion, craving and clinging take over. Then, defilements like anger, envy or jealousy creep in. Ardent effort gives effect to an alert mind, and when you mindfully note the objects as they arise, continuously, the mind is protected from defilements as they are kept at bay.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is like having the door guarded and protected from enemies. When you continuously note the objects, you gain a distance from the disturbances that are created by defilements. Once your mind is free from agitation caused by lust (*rāga*) or anger (*dosa*), it will become calm and peaceful.

When you practice in this way, you develop the mental strength that can cut the three rounds of defilements, actions and resultants. Ordinarily, there is consciousness such as seeing, hearing and tasting – the results of the deeds you have done in the past. When the ear and sounds connect, hearing takes place; when the eye and sights connect, seeing takes place, and so on.

Based on seeing, hearing or tasting, there is a feeling. Pleasant objects give rise to pleasant feelings (*sukha vedanā*) and unpleasant objects give cause for unpleasant feeling (*dukkha vedanā*). At the six sense doors, the object and consciousness come into contact and this contact (*passa*) produces feeling. Some enjoy their thoughts and spend their time day-dreaming, attaching to pleasant thoughts. Unpleasant feelings can give rise to dissatisfaction, anger and aversion, and so one craves for pleasant feelings to arise instead.

When the object is neither good nor bad, the feeling is neutral (*adukkamasukha vedanā*). One must be cautious as the calm and peaceful nature of neutral feeling can also give rise to craving as you might long for more and more peaceful bliss. So, you must note “calm, calm” and not cling to its peace. Be careful not to crave for more peaceful and calm states of mind.

Based on the quality of the feeling, there is craving (*tanhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*). If we are mindful, we can stop at the feeling, observe and note it to ensure that it does not progress to craving or rejection. When the reaction is absent, you no longer perform deeds that could lead to further *dukkha*. If there is no cause giving rise to *dukkha*, there is no birth (*jāti*), no old age (*jarā*) and no death (*marana*); the results come to a halt. So become mindful as soon as you see, hear or taste. Note all objects with aim and effort. Experience directly and without rationalization or reasoning.

Whatever you see, taste, hear or touch will involve a feeling. Feelings that arise due to seeing, hearing, tasting and touching are the resultants of one's deeds done in the past. When you add a further cause to the feeling (by reacting), it gives rise to future resultants.

Note the presently arising object with ardent effort so that your attention is sustained on the object and concentration is developed to a stage of momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*). Then you have right contemplation (*sammā sankhappa*) as mind and matter plus cause and effect are discerned through your direct practice. You need effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) to dispel unwholesome states of mind. When unwholesome states of mind are removed, the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*) is discerned.

When your mindfulness is not strong, unwholesome states have an opportunity to manifest. By practicing *satipatthāna* correctly, one no longer craves. When *dukkha sacca* is discerned, the removal of craving, the origin of *dukkha*, (*samudaya sacca*) follows. In your practice you give up the lower sensual pleasures to gain a higher state of bliss. Giving up sensual pleasure is insignificant compared to the benefits of the practice and *Dhamma* happiness. You profit each time you note the presently arising object with aim and effort, as you free yourself from the craving that propels the *samsāric* knotting process.

When you free yourself from sensual happiness, you experience *nekkhama sukha*. If you practice diligently, you will also experience a joy that is due to seclusion from defilements (*pavivekha sukha*). You are free from the fires of lust and anger. The more you diligently practice, the more you free yourself from these defilements. When knowledge matures, you attain cessation of the senses. Even before reaching the stage where *vipassanā* matures to realize the triple aspects of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*), you have many moments of reaching unrelinquishable happiness.

When you develop path knowledge (*ariya magga*), wrong view and skeptical doubt are removed. Through morality, concentration and wisdom, gross, medium and refined forms of defilements are removed. When the defilements are at bay, one can clearly discern the truth of *dukkha* and the truth of the origin of *dukkha*.

Without guidance from a spiritual friend and teacher (*kalyāna mitta*), it is difficult to know the correct way of practice. So, it is important that you learn the correct method of practice by associating with a true *kalyāna mitta* and practice systematically, meticulously and continuously. You must associate with a *kalyāna mitta* who knows the theory and has practiced to a satisfactory level. The Buddha himself undertook *satipatthāna* meditation and discerned the Four Noble Truths so that beings could practice and follow his way. The Buddha is a true *kalyāna mitta* and one must have confidence that, by practicing the *Dhamma*, one can gain the desired benefits in this life itself.

*Dhamma* is uplifting. With dedicated practice, you understand cause and effect, and develop the competence to become pure, clean, gentle, blameless and cultured in body, speech and mind!

## Chapter 8: Virtue

When the presently arising object is noted with the necessary mental strength, the mind falls calm and collected on the object, and *nāma* and *rūpa* are discerned. In each noting, the three *sikkha* trainings – morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*) are present. The *sikkha* training is necessary to remove unwholesomeness, and to develop wholesome virtues within oneself. For the noting mind to reach the object, the noting mind must be directed toward the object with correct aim and effort.

When there is sustained mindfulness on the object, there is little opportunity for defilements to arise, so hindrances such as laziness have no chance to arise. As long as effort is present, one is able to sustain the mind on the object.

Mindfulness (*sati*) guards and protects the mind from defilements as objects arise continuously, one after another, and each one is noted with sustained effort. When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops, the mind becomes unified. It doesn't scatter and is not distracted. Obsessive defilements are kept at bay and the mind is no longer agitated by them. This is the quality of *samādhi sikkha* training – suppressing obsessive defilements, so that the mind becomes pure, clean and blameless. When effort, mindfulness and concentration are aligned, insight knowledge arises, stage by stage. When one undertakes and develops the wisdom training (*paññā sikkha*), one can uproot the latent forms of defilements hidden in our subconscious.

By practicing *sīla sikkha* one keeps the precepts, ensuring that body, speech and mind are endowed with wholesome qualities. One has control of oneself and does not act in a way that hurts others. One does not transgress social norms. With each stage of the *sikkha* training (morality, concentration or wisdom) the three types of defilements (transgressive, obsessive and latent forms of defilements) are suppressed and removed. The *sikkha* training is the medicine that the Buddha prescribed for yogis to uproot defilements in their meditative life.

Virtue is gained through practice. *Sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are the virtues that are connected with animate beings. They demonstrate the quality of each animate being. It is like purified water, which has the quality of purity and cleanliness. Drinking it can quench your thirst and your health can be improved. On the other hand, consuming water that is polluted could be harmful to one's health. It is the quality of purity or impurity that gives rise to good and bad outcomes.

Similarly, it is based on one's purity or impurity that one gains either praise or blame. If something is pure and beneficial, people praise it. If something is impure and harmful, it is blameworthy.

Just like purified water, the *sikkha* training of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are beneficial for people. They have the quality of purifying bodily, verbal and mental behavior of those undertaking it. Just like purified water, the purity of those undertaking *sikkha* training is praiseworthy. Wholesome actions (*kusala*) are blameless and pure and can bring benefits. When you are a wholesome person, you are blameless. *Sīla* is virtuous and makes one praiseworthy.

By developing wholesome deeds and becoming blameless and pure, you automatically remove the opposite states which are unwholesome. Virtue arises together with benefits. The *sikkha* training is essential, and even if concentration and wisdom training are not undertaken, all beings must aim to practice moral training at the very least.

If you fail in developing morality, your body, speech and mind will be degraded and you will continue to hurt others, physically and mentally. If extreme anger (*dosa*) manifests, you may even kill others. If you practice morality (*sīla*), you will be a true human. You will uplift yourself from inferior states of mind and will not act in a blameworthy manner. Practicing *sīla* is free of charge, unlike in the material realm, where praise often requires financial expenditure. If you refrain from wrong doing, you automatically become noble and exalted.

We all seek after a good reputation for ourselves. People have a good reputation for being outstanding in their education, for their wealth or for being born to the elite or having high social status. Worldlings tend to give priority to reputation based on business, education and societal status, but this type of reputation is never measured against virtues.

Failing in your precepts, you experience the danger of self-criticism, being blamed by the wise and the noble, being punished by the law for transgressing social laws and order. In addition, those you have hurt will take revenge on you, and the bad volition in wrong doing will lead to a rebirth in lower existences. So an immoral person lives in fear. Worldly education and prosperity will not lead you to greater virtue. It is the practice of the three *sikkha* trainings that will free you from transgressive, obsessive and latent forms of defilements and help you to become a person of impeccable character, one that is pure, gentle and exalted. With a strong sense of morality, well-developed concentration and maturity in wisdom, you will progress along the path with ease and be honored for your praiseworthy qualities by those around you.

## Chapter 9: the Meaning of Dukkha

It is the responsibility of all monks to learn the scriptures and practice according to the Buddha's teachings, discern mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*), cause and effect and to understand the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self that underpin all phenomena. These will be revealed, stage by stage, as insight knowledge matures in the practice. When knowledge matures, the true cessation – *nibbāna* – is realized.

Once the practice reaches a satisfactory level, monks have the responsibility and the duty to share the *Dhamma* with others. Even during the time of the Buddha, at the end of the *vassa* (the rains retreat) and after attaining a satisfactory level of maturity in their practice, monks traveled from one place to another, expounding the *Dhamma* for the benefit and welfare of humans and devas. Their aim was to teach the practice of the three *sikkha* trainings of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) so that beings could purify their body, speech and mind. I too have been traveling since 1984, teaching the virtues of the Triple Gem.

*Nāma* and *rūpa* are like a boy who misbehaves and is obstinate. Although *nāma* and *rūpa* cause great *dukkha*, in reality, they are empty and void as the sky. There is nothing in mentality and physicality, other than emptiness. In spite of this, many hold onto the incorrect belief of a creator and a living soul. Foolishly, one believes that although the body perishes, the soul (*atta*) moves to the next body and is permanent. Unless you practice *satipatthāna* meditation, you cannot discern distinctly between *nāma* and *rūpa* and realize that there is nothing good or permanent in them and that, like the sky, they are empty and void.

Once birth takes place, even if one wants to stay young, one grows old. Even if one wishes to remain healthy, due to illness, one dies. Even if there were no ailments, one still dies of old age. So, there is *dukkha* accompanying birth.

If you remain in the same posture for a long time, you can have discomfort in the body. At times, you experience accidents and deaths of family members that you love; you could lose your job or your business may become insolvent. So there is sorrow and lamentation.

All *dukkha* is located in *nāma* and *rūpa* and is due to the false belief in a self. Our experience of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and so forth are resultants, caused by rebirth consciousness (*patissandhi*). Rebirth consciousness arises together with mental factors and materiality. It is due to a cause (*kamma*), a deed done in the past.

Due to ignorance people commit wrongdoing. Based on ignorance (the darkness of ignorance) one is continuously committing good and bad deeds. Depending on the good and bad deeds, rebirth consciousness arises together with mental factors and some form of materiality. When the sperm and ova come into contact, rebirth takes place.

The materiality grows and develops into body parts like the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, and contains sensitivity that can receive objects. When objects come into contact with sensitivity, there is seeing, hearing, tasting, and so on.

When pleasant objects strike the base, there is a good feeling. Contact (*phassa*) produces feeling (*vedanā*). These resultants are caused by good and bad volitions from our past actions (*sankhāra*). To ensure that craving does not arise, one must become mindful at the time of seeing, hearing, tasting, and so on.

Of the Four Noble Truths, the first is the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*) and the second is the truth of the origin of *dukkha* (*samudaya sacca*), which is craving (*tanhā*). But craving itself cannot cause *dukkha* and generate unwholesomeness. It has to be combined with other causes for *dukkha* to arise. Craving (*tanhā*) is cut when the mind falls calm and collected on the object in practice. If one fails to discern correctly, one will have clinging (*upādāna*), giving rise to future existences. To ensure that resultants do not arise, one should become mindful and discern the processes of hearing, seeing, tasting, and so on.

There are minor forms of craving (*dubala tanhā*) and intense forms of craving (*balava tanhā*). When craving is combined with ignorance, *dukkha* arises. *Samudaya* means the combined causes meeting together to give rise to *dukkha*. Due to ignorance as soon as craving arises, there is clinging. "Sam" means "to cause coming together" and "udaya" means "arising." The only way to minimize the clinging is to become mindful and continue with the *satipatthāna* practice.

The *satipatthāna* practice brings many benefits: it purifies the mind, overcomes sorrow and lamentation, overcomes physical and mental *dukkha*, removes *kilesas* that have followed one throughout the round of existences and allows one to realize *nibbāna*, the true happiness. In your practice, you will develop faith and confidence in the Triple Gem, and you will also develop strong *samādhi* as the mind meets the object directly. If you fail to practice, you add more causes that generate more results, leading to more and more *dukkha*.



## Chapter 10: Three (or Four Types) of Samādhi

In the practice, one encounters three or four types of *samādhi* (concentration): neighborhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), absorption concentration (*arpanā samādhi*), momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) and insight concentration (*vipassanā samādhi*). Like *arpanā samādhi*, *kanika samādhi* is able to keep the mind calm and collected on the object. In the practice of *satipatthāna* meditation, both *kanika samādhi* and *vipassanā samādhi* are essential.

The texts say that *vipassanā* cannot develop without momentary concentration. The term *vipassanā* includes two words: *vi* meaning "outstanding" and *passanā* meaning "observance." This "outstanding observation" is clearly not an ordinary one. In ordinary observance, one does not come to know that mentality (*nāma*) and physicality (*rūpa*) are arising at the six sense doors, and that seeing, tasting, hearing or smelling takes place. Neither does ordinary observation note that *nāma* and *rūpa* arise and relate to one another as cause and effect. As a result, the impermanence (*anicca*), *dukkha* and non-self (*anatta*) nature of phenomena is not understood. When seeing or hearing takes place, a person believes it is their own seeing and therefore believes in an individual soul (*jīva atta*). Others believe in a supreme soul (*parama atta*) and that a supreme being (*Maha Brahma*) is manipulating all existence. This is the ordinary way of knowledge. On the contrary, the knowledge gained through *vipassanā* is outstanding and one is able to discern the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self in all phenomena, directly and clearly in their own practice.

To discern the truth underlying existence and develop this outstanding knowledge, all objects should be noted with effort, ensuring the continuity of sustained mindfulness on each object that arises.

If one is not mindful, the mind doesn't fall calm and collected on the object and momentary concentration will not develop. When energy (*virīya*) is lacking and the object is not noted with effort, mindfulness will not develop. In the *satipatthāna* practice, one should note each and every object that arises and practice with faith and confidence and a strong inclination to discern the truth. With diligent practice there will be sustained mindfulness on the object. When mindfulness is sustained on the object, momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) develops. When the mind experiences *kanika samādhi*, one clearly discerns the arising of mind and body (*nāma* and *rūpa*) objects.

If you are mindful, you can discern the *nāma* and *rūpa* involved in all activities. Become aware as you sit down to know the form and shape of the process of sitting down.

When effort, mindfulness and concentration are strengthened, you discern the characteristics of materiality such as heaviness, stiffness, tension, and so on. There is no personality involved in the manifestation of the four elements which are the characteristics of *rūpa*. With continuous mindfulness you will become aware of the intention to sit down, so the mind notes and discerns the process of *nāma*.

You will realize that there is only a series of intentions to sit and the experience of the process of sitting down in the form of *rūpa*. There is nothing else. When sitting down, there is the intention to sit. This is the cause (a process of *nāma*) that results in the actual sitting down.

As you sit down you feel the heaviness, tension and stiffness of the body. The same process is involved in the other movements: bending, stretching, lying down, lifting or moving, and so on. Even in the opening and closing of the eyes, there is an intention to shut the eyes and to open them. The intention (*nāma*) to blink causes the eye (*rūpa*) to blink. If there is a cause, its corresponding effect must take place. If there is no cause, an effect does not arise. If there is no intention to sit, sitting down will not take place.

When cause and effect is discerned in each bodily process, you realize that there is no person that controls bodily activities and movements. The relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect. When this process is understood, you realize that there is no creator of the universe – just cause and effect.

When the cause is noted, you automatically become aware of the effect. When the noting mind falls on the effect, you become aware of its cause. This is when the mind experiences *vipassanā samādhi*, the concentration associated with *vipassanā*. Any *rūpa* that arises in connection with *nāma* can only continue due to its cause. It is like the operation of a ceiling fan. You need to push the button for the electricity to flow through the wires and to cause the fan to rotate. When you see the fan rotating, you know that there is electricity flowing through the wires. Seeing this effect (the fan rotating) you come to know that there is the cause (electricity flowing through wires).

If there is a cause, its corresponding effect will take place. The intention to move causes stiffness, tension and movement to take place. Not knowing, not discerning and not being mindful, one does not discern “knowingly.” You must become mindful at the moment of each sitting, bending, blinking, opening and shutting the eyes to understand this process of cause and effect.

*Vipassanā* is knowing distinctly and outstandingly. Without momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*), you will not develop insight concentration (*vipassanā samādhi*). To develop concentration, the most proximate cause is mindfulness. To develop mindfulness,

you must exert effort and tend the mind toward the object. These are the causes that give rise to momentary concentration.

When *kanika samādhi* is strengthened, knowledge is developed stage by stage, discerning the truth of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. Yogis must continue to practice meticulously and with respect. It is only with the continuity of mindfulness that the practice is energized. Yogis must practice diligently, accurately and precisely, according to their teacher's instructions. Be continuously mindful without any gaps in between. When *nāma* and *rūpa* are discerned clearly and accurately, there is *vipassanā* knowledge; impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self in all phenomena are revealed!

## Chapter 11: Vipassanā Samādhi

In the *satipatthāna* meditation practice, both momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) and insight concentration (*Vipassanā Samādhi*) are essential. According to the texts insight (*vipassanā*) will never develop without momentary concentration.

*Vi* means outstanding and *passanā* means observance. So, *vipassanā* is outstanding observance, or outstanding discerning. This is different from the knowledge of ordinary people. Those who do not practice would not know that mind and body (*nāma* and *rūpa*) are arising in the six sense doors as seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and are cause and effect. In other words, they don't know that *nāma* and *rūpa* are relating as cause and effect, that things arise and pass away and are impermanent and cause *dukkha*. As they are impermanent, there is no self (*atta*) in them. Ordinary knowledge discerns the hearing or seeing processes as a man hearing or a woman seeing, and it is believed that this being, or self, is the creation of the Maha Brahma (*parama atta*).

*Vipassanā* (outstanding knowledge) on the other hand discerns the impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self that underlies all experience and discerns the *nāma* and *rūpa* arising in the six sense doors as cause and effect. This process can be discerned when all objects arising at the six sense doors are noted with aim and effort, so that mindfulness is sustained on the object. If one is not mindful, the mind will not fall calm and collected on the object, and will not develop momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*). Concentration that arises with *vipassanā* is called *Vipassanā Samādhi*. If you are negligent and fail to note the object, it is clear that you are not exerting sufficient effort in the practice. Lacking in effort (*virīya*), you become lazy.

In each posture, whether one is sitting, standing or lying down, one must become mindful. Discerning a man or a woman sitting or lying down is just ordinary knowledge. What should be discerned is the interrelationship between *nāma* and *rūpa* that arise as cause and effect in all experiences.

People spend so much of their time with ordinary knowledge and wrong perception. If you undertake the *satipatthāna* practice, you should note all presently arising objects. There are fields of objects to be noted in oneself. Within the field of objects, there is the presently arising object, and this is what should be noted.

Whenever an object arises, it should be noted with accurate aim and correct effort, so that the mind falls calm and collected on the object. A yogi must practice with faith and confidence, in addition to a strong urge and desire to discern the truth. Practice diligent-

ly by exerting ardent effort so that mindfulness is sustained on the object. It is only diligent practice and sustained mindfulness that will give effect to momentary concentration.

When momentary concentration develops, *nāma* and *rūpa* are discerned. When the mind is directed to *nāma*, one comes to discern *nāma*. When the mind falls on *rūpa*, the mind discerns *rūpa*. In the process of sitting down, if you are mindful, you will first observe the form or shape of the process of sitting down.

At times, the attention will be on the manner of sitting down. When effort, mindfulness and concentration are strengthened and aligned, the characteristics of materiality (*rūpa*) such as tension, stiffness or hardness can be discerned. The experiences of stiffness or tension are not a person or a being, but the characteristics of *rūpa*.

When the mind falls on the intention to sit, one discerns *nāma*. This is *nāma* inclined toward the object, *nāma* as the nature of cognizing the object. *Nāma* is not a person or a being. When the mind falls on *rūpa*, the stiffness, tension and heaviness of the sitting process is discerned. This is different from ordinary knowing of a man, woman, or a person sitting down. Being continuously mindful of the process of sitting down, you realize that there is not a person or being involved in the process, but only a series of intentions to sit and the characteristics of materiality. There is nothing else apart from *nāma* and *rūpa*.

As you sit down the body feels heavy and you may feel tension and stiffness, which is *rūpa* (materiality), the effect that follows the intention to sit. The same process is involved in other movements like bending and stretching. There is the intention to bend and bending takes place. The intention to stretch and stretching takes place. Even the opening and the closing of eye lids is caused by an intention to open and close the eyes. Even the blinking of the eyes is caused by an intention to blink. When *kanika samādhi* is strengthened, as you sit down you discern cause and effect. If there is a cause, the effect takes place. If there is an intention to sit, then you sit down. When the intention stops, you stop the sitting process.

By discerning cause and effect, one removes the wrong view of causelessness. If there is an intention to blink, you blink your eyes. If you wish to open your eyes, the result – the opening of eyes – happens. The relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect. *Rūpa* is arising in connection with *nāma* and will not move without a cause. It is like the electric ceiling fan. The ceiling fan is made of metal, and it contains an engine within it. But if there is no electricity, the fan will not rotate. By pressing the button, the electricity flows through the wires and the fan rotates. You will only see the fan rotating as the electricity is not visually present.

But, if you see a fan rotating, you know that someone has pushed the button to activate the electricity that is causing its movement. In the same way, when you see someone sitting down, you know that an intention has directed its process. All actions involve this causal interplay of mind and matter.

Momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) does not arise without mindfulness (*sati*). It is only ardent effort that will activate mindfulness to direct the mind toward the presently arising object. *Sati* will not arise without effort. All processes of sitting down, bending, stretching or standing up should be done mindfully and slowly, so that you can observe the processes and establish sustained mindfulness on all bodily actions. Nothing should be done abruptly. When momentary concentration is strengthened, stage by stage, you develop the knowledge of discerning cause and effect, impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self.

Practice respectfully and meticulously. Move about slowly just like a sick person, but mindfully so that your concentration can be strengthened to discern outstandingly. When there is continuity of mindfulness, concentration is strengthened and your practice is energized. Don't have any gaps in between noting. If you rest, your mind will wander aimlessly and will start day dreaming and imagination will take over.

When the momentum of *kanika samādhi* is lost, you will fail to discern cause and effect. You will miss the interplay of mind and matter that lays the foundation for the development of greater insights into impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. So practice diligently, accurately and precisely, according to your teacher's instructions.

## Chapter 12: Nāma Causing Nāma

If you are mindful at the moment of arising, you come to know mind and matter and discern that they arise as cause and effect. An effect takes place if there is a cause. The relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect. So, sitting takes place only if there is an intention to sit. If there is an intention to stand up, then you stand up. Here, consciousness (*nāma*) is the cause and materiality (*rūpa*) is the effect. At other instances, consciousness (cause) gives rise to consciousness (effect) or *rūpa* (cause) gives rise to a *nāma* (effect).

It can be clearly observed how a *nāma* cause gives rise to a *nāma* effect when there are many objects arising at the six sense doors; there are many things to be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, and so on. For example, if you are at a party, you will see people dancing, hear loud music, smell fine fragrances and taste good flavors. To sit down there are luxurious seats. There are many objects arising at the six sense doors and they will compete for the mind's attention. The mind will give priority to one object in a given moment. The mind receives the object that is most prominent, which captivates it the most at that given time. The priority depends on the mind's attention to the object.

While tasting fine food, suddenly you see someone good looking and your attention shifts and gives priority to their attractive features. Then seeing-consciousness is activated. When seeing-consciousness is activated the mind doesn't wander to experience hearing, smelling, or tasting at that moment. Consciousness takes a single object that attracts the mind. If the attention goes to the loud music, then hearing-consciousness is activated. If you suddenly munch on a spicy food item, your attention would shift to the flavor which activates tasting-consciousness.

Based on the object that is most prominent in your awareness, your attention will shift to it. If you sit for a long time, you will experience discomfort and the mind will focus on the painful sensations. If thinking predominates, there is knowing-consciousness. Then, your attention is no longer fixed on other visible objects or the loud music. In countries that are technologically advanced, people are mostly carried away by the predominant currents of their thoughts. If thinking proliferates, the mind will shift to the thinking, which will take over so that the mind is no longer captivated by other objects entering the six sense doors. Here, you can see how a *nāma* cause gives rise to a *nāma* effect.

When you undertake sitting meditation, you note the primary object, the rising and the falling of the abdomen. To note the primary object, yogis must exert ardent effort and

direct the mind to the object so that sustained attention is maintained on the object. When the mind is sustained on the object, continuous mindfulness will ensure that concentration gathers momentum. As attention continues to be applied on the object, the mind is no longer distracted by other things. Due to attention (*manasikāra*) the cause, which is the mind (*nāma*), discerns the rising and the falling of the abdomen, which is the effect.

Attention is like the rudder of a ship or boat. When there is attention on the primary object, the noting mind keeps noting it, until it is distracted by a sharp sound, which takes the mind's attention away from the primary object.

As the sound distracts the mind away from the rising and the falling of the abdomen, hearing-consciousness takes place. Just like a boat rudder turns here and there, attention shifts to new objects and picks up the one that is most prominent in the stream of consciousness. At times, discomfort will arise in the body and one may feel a piercing itchiness. The mind becomes distracted and will be taken away from the primary object. If the piercing itchiness is noted, a yogi discerns hardness (*pathavi dhātu*) and how the itch moves from one place to another. At times, excessive coolness, stiffness, tension and movement can be discerned.

When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) is strengthened, one discerns the unique and individual characteristics (*sabhāva lakṣhanā*) and the common characteristics (*sāmanna lakṣhanā*) sharply and clearly. As *kanika samādhi* is strengthened, the cause, which is momentary concentration that gives rise to knowledge, can be discerned sharply and clearly. When *kanika samādhi* is strong, one notes the presently arising object without missing and the noting mind is directed at the object. When an object can be noted without missing or failing, knowledge becomes wide and the yogi comes to know many things, including the fact that there are many stages involved in each process of rising and falling of the abdomen.

Noting every arising object, concentration (*samādhi*) falls on the object and knowledge becomes very strong and sharp. If mindfulness (*sati*) is not strong, you will not discern in a sharp manner. It is like shooting arrows to hit the bull's eye – if the force of the arrow is strong, it will pierce into the bull's eye. If not, the arrow will just fall on the ground. The aim should be sharp and the arrow needs to be strong to reach the bull's eye. Here, the sharpness of the arrow is *samādhi* and the strength of the arrow is mindfulness. Don't become a weak arrow that just falls to the ground. Aim with effort and sharpen your focus to have sustained mindfulness on the object, so that the knowledge gained is strong and wide. When mindfulness is strong it is possible for yogis to experience even the minute objects that arise in the stream of consciousness.



Even dedicated yogis fall into traps in their practice. When a yogi is able to note every arising object, pride can intervene and a yogi may take pride in his or her practice. When the mind is calm, subtle and refined forms of attachment to these peaceful experiences can interfere with progress. These defilements are like sediment that muddy the water. When the water settles down, it is clear. If you stir it, then it is disturbed and sediments surface to the top. When the sediments of conceit and craving are absent, knowledge becomes clear, sharp and active. If there is uncertainty and doubt, knowledge will not arise. Doubt can be deceiving and can manifest as a quest for knowledge. But, if there is too much reflection, thinking and doubt, then knowledge will not arise. You will simply remain in a muddled state of mind.

With ardent effort, you must aim the mind to rub against the object each and every second. As long as the mind continues to rub against the object, there will be certainty. When doubt is removed, the mind will be clear and the knowledge will be active. As the hindrances and defilements are kept at bay, the mind starts to become refined like purified water. You need faith and confidence in the practice. In whatever posture and whatever the activity, such as walking, sitting, lying down, bending, stretching, lifting or moving, continuous mindfulness is required so that defilements cannot arise. If you stop to rest, the mind will wander into day dreaming, gazing and thinking and the practice will be interrupted.

Become courageous so that you can overcome these difficulties. Have courageous effort to refrain from what should be refrained from and to perform things that are wholesome. Don't miss noting the objects that arise in your awareness. If your noting is continuous and you are aware of all objects, you will gain the courage to overcome difficulties and to meet defilements directly. With courageous effort you will progress in your practice, developing insight knowledge stage by stage to reach your goal.

When you have the courage to overcome difficulties, you will discern the true nature, clearly, distinctly and firmly. To develop knowledge that is strong, clear and active, the supporting factors of effort, mindfulness and concentration are essential. Ordinary thinking will not discern how a *nāma* cause can give rise to a *nāma* effect. If you practice according to instructions and strive courageously in your practice, you will see this. So, start practicing with respect, diligently and meticulously so that insight knowledge will develop in your practice.

It is the proverbial "practice makes perfect." To directly see how a *nāma* cause can give rise to a *nāma* effect, you must regularize your practice and progress according to guidance and instructions.

## Chapter 13: Striker Plus Receptor Equals Ignition

In each process of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, we see a *rūpa* cause giving rise to a *rūpa* effect. In each process there is both mind and body (*nāma* and *rūpa*). Seeing, seeing-consciousness, seeing-contact and seeing-feeling involve aspects of *nāma*. Seeing-consciousness takes place at the level of eye sensitivity. When a visible object strikes the eye sensitivity (materiality), we experience seeing-consciousness. The eye and the visual object come into contact and seeing takes place. The eye and the visual object are *rūpa*.

Without a healthy eye or a visual object, there cannot be any seeing-consciousness. If the eye-sensitivity is not healthy, then the visual object cannot strike on the eye base. Eye-sensitivity is where seeing-consciousness takes place. In each process occurring through the sense doors, *nāma* and *rūpa* are relating as cause and effect. To discern the cause and effect that underpins each interaction, become mindful of seeing as soon as it takes place.

When a visual object strikes the eye sensitivity, the visual object becomes imprinted on the eye base and seeing-consciousness takes place. The process of seeing involves seeing-consciousness, cognizing the object that strikes the eye sensitivity. The contact between the sense base and the object is *phassa*, which gives rise to a resultant feeling. If the visible object is pleasant, there is a pleasant feeling.

In this process, there is no personality. What it involves is the visible object, the eye sensitivity, seeing-consciousness, seeing-contact and the seeing-feeling. Just *nāma* and *rūpa* arising due to cause and effect. Because we ordinarily do not discern clearly and distinctly, we import a self into this process and say: "I am seeing" the object. We experience seeing-consciousness within a prism of an individual soul (*jīva attā*). This is the cause for the arising of defilements, when in fact the process only involves the striker element, the receptor element and the ignition element.

In the process of seeing, the visible object is the striker element, the eye sensitivity is the receptor element and the seeing-consciousness is the ignition element. Take the example of a match box and a match stick. On the side of the match box, there is potassium nitrate. The tip of the match stick also includes this substance. When the matchstick rubs against the match box, a spark ignites. The substance in the match box is compared to the receptor element. The substance at the tip of the match stick is the striker element, and the spark could be compared to the ignition element. They arise due to cause and effect.

In the Buddhist texts, the example of the striker, receptor and ignition elements are discussed according to the example of sun rays passing through a magnifying glass onto a piece of paper. As the sun rays go through the magnifying glass, the heat builds up and the heat makes the piece of paper burn. The magnifying glass alone will not burn the paper. Similarly, the sun rays alone will not burn the paper. The sun rays need to pass through the magnifying glass and cause the heat to build up for the paper to burn. Due to a combination of these two causes, the sun rays (and their heat) and their passing through a magnifying glass, the paper is burnt. Just as the paper burns due to the sun rays passing through the magnifying glass, in the process of seeing, the seeing-consciousness takes place at the eye base.

The same process is involved in hearing, tasting, touching, and so on. *Nāma* arises, dwelling on *rūpa*. In the process of seeing, *nāma* and *rūpa* do not exist as a precondition. It is the interaction of *nāma* and *rūpa* as cause and effect that gives rise to seeing-consciousness, seeing-contact and the resultant feeling. The concurrence of seeing-consciousness, seeing-contact and the resultant feeling does not involve a personality. It does not contain a self. It simply involves mind and matter, interacting as the striker element, the receptor element and the ignition element. It is the concurrence of the three that gives rise to seeing. The process cannot be induced by a creator, and it does not involve an (individual) person.

In each process of hearing, smelling, tasting, and so on, there is the striker element, the receptor element and the ignition element. When hearing occurs the sound is the striker element, the ear is the receptor element, and the hearing-consciousness is the ignition element. In each process there is mentality and materiality arising as cause and effect. To discern their interaction, become mindful whenever you hear, smell, taste, touch, and so on.

To observe how *rūpa* gives effect to *nāma*, you must become mindful at the moment of seeing and observe the process with ardent effort. By developing sustained mindfulness on the process of seeing and the process occurring between the striker, receptor and ignition elements, a yogi can discern the interaction of *nāma* and *rūpa*. As a preliminary step, a yogi will note it "seeing, seeing." When *kanika samādhi* develops, the attention will focus on either the striker element, the receptor element, or the ignition element, and you will discern the process involved in one of them.

You may discern eye sensitivity (the receptor element) or the seeing-consciousness that has taken place. At one moment, your attention may be with the cause and, at another moment, it will be with the effect. When momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) is

strengthened, you can discern *nāma* and *rūpa* and also the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self.

You realize that in the striker element, the receptor element, or the ignition element, there is no being, no soul (*jīva atta*). It is just an arising and passing away of mentality and materiality. When you understand the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self, the mind experiences a state of *vipassanā samādhi*, concentration associated with insight knowledge.

So yogis must become mindful and discern the striker, receptor and ignition elements involved in all sensory interactions. Effort must be exerted to ensure that the noting mind reaches the object directly as soon as it arises. If effort is lacking, laziness will arise in your stream of consciousness, opening up the path for unwholesome states of mind to creep in. When the object is noted with aim and effort, the mind doesn't slip away from the object to give rise to sensual thoughts, angry thoughts, or harmful thoughts.

When defilements arise due to lack of mindfulness, the mind loses its protection from them. The mind will stray away and become unruly, giving into delusion and mental proliferation. Instead of discerning seeing-consciousness, seeing-contact and seeing-feeling, the mind will just pursue craving (*tanhā*) that has arisen due to sense contact. The mind will wander off after beautiful objects, pleasant tastes and fragrances due to the pleasant feelings that are experienced from them.

Craving arises due to feelings. If a beautiful object is observed unmindfully, the mind will simply run after it, craving for more and more of that beautiful sight. Because one is not aware of the involvement of the striker, receptor and ignition elements as well as the interaction of mind and matter, one will import the idea of a being into the process. This gives rise to *jīva atta*, the wrongful perception of the existence of an individual soul. Not knowing correctly, states of craving, wrong view and conceit will arise in the mind, causing us to build an ego around sensory experience.

To dispel the darkness of ignorance (*avijja*), one needs to become mindful of the seeing as soon as it takes place and become aware of the process. Discerning, clearly, you will have knowledge. This knowing is compared to a light that is brought into a dark room.

When the light of knowledge arises, one discerns things very clearly. This is possible when the noting mind is face to face with the object and sustained mindfulness is developed.

## Chapter 14: Rūpa Causing Rūpa

Temperature (*utu*), which is both heat and cold, involves materiality produced in the body. This is an example of materiality (*rūpa*) as the cause giving rise to *rūpa* as the effect. Heat and cold arise as cause and effect in one's body. Whether the cause is heat or cold from outside, or heat or cold from within, the effect on our bodies is that it produces temperature (materiality).

When the temperature is hot the body (materiality) becomes withered and dry and you can easily feel tired and exhausted. If you have been in a cold place, you may become more comfortable when you return to a place where heating and warmth touches your skin. You may also wear warm clothes to keep yourself warm. Then the cold (materiality) passes away. So, we can see how temperature (*utu*) causes the body to change. You must become mindful of these changes caused to the body. Unpleasant states of materiality could give rise to anger (*dosa*), and pleasant circumstances of materiality will give rise to craving (*tanhā*). If the temperature is neither hot nor cold, your reaction may be neutral.

In this way we see that due to temperature there is pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feeling. Materiality in the body changes when there is heat, and it causes the body (materiality) to wither. If you are mindful, you see that materiality caused by the heat is not continuous and that it arises and passes away. There is no self (*jīva attā*) in it. Heat arises due to certain conditions and causes and is not due to the will of a creator. If the temperature is pleasant and cool, the body (materiality) retains its moisture and is stable. This is how ordinary people know and observe temperature.

If you are mindful, you will discern how materiality is caused by heat and observe the changes that occur as a result of that heat. Cold temperature will also be observed in this way. You observe the cause and the corresponding effect. To discern cause and effect, you must become mindful at the moment materiality arises. If you don't discern the cause, you remain ignorant with the wrong view of "causelessness." You may even believe in fictitious or imaginary causes. So you must continuously note all the changes that occur, keeping your aim and effort with sustained mindfulness on the object. When the noting mind falls calm and collected on the object, momentary concentration develops and you can discern the cause and effect of all phenomena arising in your stream of consciousness.

At times, the noting mind falls on the temperature and on materiality caused by heat or cold, and you can discern the cause (materiality) and the effect (materiality). When you develop *vipassanā samādhi*, you will understand cause and effect clearly and distinctly.

You need to exert ardent effort to continuously note the presently arising object. To discern cause and effect, impermanence (*anicca*), *dukkha* and non-self (*anatta*) you need effort (*virīya*) to support and enable knowledge to arise. The three attributes of mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are required. Supported by these attributes, you will experience a dramatic change in your life.

When you discern cause and effect in your practice, you develop insight knowledge into cause and effect (*paccaya pariggaha ñāna*). This is not knowledge based on deduction or reasoning. Rather, it is direct experiential knowledge developed through your own practice. When you observe these experiences directly, there is no longer uncertainty or doubt. One discerns the correlation between cause and effect in the present to realize that the same cause and effect had occurred in the past and the same equation will take place in the future. For example, a temperature cause may give rise to a temperature effect, and this causality will govern all resulting phenomena.

When the true nature of phenomena is discerned through practice, you develop faith and confidence with acceptance, confirmation and decision. Thinking, reasoning or reflecting will not give rise to such faith and confidence. We see scientists persisting with experiments to prove a hypothesis, but they continue to have doubt and confusion because their understanding is not based on direct experiential knowledge. They are not interested in discerning cause and effect within themselves and do not have the aim and objective to attain deliverance from *dukkha* and the rounds of *samsāra*.

With each arising object a yogi must discern the interaction between mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*). A yogi must observe how a *nāma* cause gives rise to a *rūpa* effect and vice versa, how a *rūpa* cause gives rise to a *rūpa* effect, and a *nāma* cause gives rise to a *nāma* effect. This is discerning things in the way they really are! To clearly discern cause and effect yogis need to be continuously mindful. By discerning correctly one removes the intense form of ignorance that has deluded oneself throughout *samsara*, and the wrong view of a self or a creator will be dispelled. Then you will feel a sense of relief, comfort and confidence in the Buddha's dispensation.

If a person dies attaining this knowledge, that person will be reborn in a good existence. Just like a stream enterer (*sotāpanna*) is not reborn in a lower realm, a person endowed with knowledge into cause and effect (*paccaya pariggaha ñāna*) also will not be reborn in a lower existence. A person who develops insight knowledge of cause and effect (*pac-*

*caya pariggaha ñāna*) is a minor stream enterer (*cula sotāppana*). With continuous practice such a person will certainly become a *mahā sotāpanna* (great stream enterer).

## Chapter 15: The Three Factors Conducive for Meditation

*Nāma* and *rūpa* can be discerned through one's practice. One must undertake the *satipatthāna* practice and note the object as soon as it arises. When the object is noted with sustained attention, momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) automatically develops. When the mind falls calm and collected on the object, *nāma* and *rūpa* can be discerned. It is also possible to observe how the relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect. As cause and effect is understood, it becomes clear that there is no soul, man or a woman that underpins our existence. The wrong view of causelessness is removed and when knowledge into impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self is realized, it becomes apparent that there is no refuge in a soul, and there is nothing tangible to rely upon. When these realizations bear fruit, the yogi disposes the incorrect view of a creator god (Maha Brahma).

To practice successfully one must develop mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. One should have ardent effort, be alert and strive in the practice. This must be accompanied by knowledge that it is beneficial and suitable for the practice. The clear comprehension of suitability (*sappāya sampajañña*) will guide us as to what is beneficial or not. If we feel that we can benefit and that an activity is suitable for the development of mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, then we should take it on. Having the power of reasoning and prudence, we must have maturity in our decisions. Exercising our power of reasoning and reflecting before embarking upon a task, we can make decisions that are beneficial and suitable for our mental training.

If possible, practice meditation while you are still young. Reflect with maturity and give up worldly and sensual desires to dedicate time for the practice. Sacrifice insignificant worldly matters to dedicate time for the practice, so that you benefit from a practice that gives results in this very life. So give up unnecessary pursuits and cultivate factors that are beneficial and conducive to the practice!

The Visuddhimagga states that there are three factors beneficial to meditation practice. Whether you are a monk, layman or lay woman, your practice must harness effort, mindfulness and clear comprehension.

Effort (*virīya*) is the courage to refrain from unwholesome acts and to perform wholesome deeds that purify bodily behavior and mental behavior. We are not talking about ordinary courage here. It is outstanding courage whereby one is able to admit one's weaknesses and shortcomings and not pretend to be innocent. Effort must also be exerted to keep defilements at bay. When the presently arising object is noted with sustained



mindfulness on the object, defilements are kept at bay. Laziness does not arise when the mind is alert. If you relax your effort, then the path will be open for defilements to enter and to disturb the practice.

As long as effort is balanced and sustained, defilements are at bay and will be suppressed. So, one minute of mindfulness will guarantee you sixty moments in which defilements will be suppressed. With sustained mindfulness you gradually abandon defilements. Then the mind is guarded and protected from the disturbances that defilements create.

A mind free from defilements will experience peace. When the noting mind falls calm and collected on the object, momentary concentration develops. The mind is no longer agitated by lust or other defilements. When the mind gradually falls on the object, one discerns *nāma* and *rūpa*. When the mind falls on mentality, *nāma* can be discerned and the same with materiality (*rūpa*). When you focus on the cause, you discern the cause and when the mind falls on the effect, you discern the effect. In this way one discerns distinctly and outstandingly.

If you just think and reflect, then the knowledge that arises will be incomplete, and you will not know the truth underpinning existence. Instead, your knowledge will be theoretical and will be based on what you have learnt from others or what you have read. In oneself there is *nāma* and *rūpa* phenomena, and one discerns this very clearly. So, clear comprehension is not ordinary knowledge, but is outstanding knowledge that discerns correctly and distinctly. If your practice is supported by ardent effort (*virīya*) and protected by mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati* and *sampajañña*), then you will progress further and further in your mental training. If mindfulness is sustained on the object, the mind falls calm and collected on the object, and by noting the rising and the falling of the abdomen, you will discern that stiffness, movement and tension are the natural characteristics of *rūpa*.

To make progress, every arising object should be noted with aim and effort. If you fail to note the object, then the noting will not be effective and mindfulness and concentration will not be strong. For example, when you eat you must be aware of the flavors, such as sweetness, whether it is hot, sour, and so on. Eat the food slowly and pay attention so that you can observe the process and discern the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* distinctly and clearly.

If you practice diligently and meticulously, you will make progress even within one or two days. One must exert effort every single second, so that the practice will progress. Without meditation, the mind will be tender and weak.

By undertaking the *satipatthāna* practice, the mind will become wholesome and develop to a mature stage. If you just imagine, gaze and wonder, you will not make any progress. If you have the support of effort, mindfulness and clear comprehension, your practice will develop to reap the desired benefits.

## Chapter 16: The Teaching with Outstanding Results

When the practice is supported by ardent effort (*virīya*) and continuous mindfulness (*sati*), clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) is ensured. Yogis can assess this through their own practice. If one practices with respect, meticulously and continuously, the practice can improve even within only a few days.

If one's knowledge is both theoretical and practical, then the teachings will be beneficial and give outstanding results. Teachings concerning practical knowledge are essential for the development of the practice. A person endowed with both theoretical and practical knowledge has faith and confidence that the teachings are correct, having tested it through their own practice.

With dedicated practice, one attains knowledge into mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*). As one practices further, one understands cause and effect. Ordinary people believe in a creator, Maha Brahma, or a self that governs all actions. When cause and effect is discerned through direct practice, one's knowledge is outstanding in comparison to ordinary people. With continued practice, one comes to understand the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. In this way, through *satipatthāna* meditation practice, one gains the virtues of the *Dhamma* and reaps its benefits.

If you practice with ardent effort, defilements don't creep into your stream of consciousness. Mindfulness protects the mind from defilements and concentration keeps the mind calm, collected and unified so that it doesn't wander. In noting, correct aim (*vitakka*) is present and continuous, wrongful thoughts are kept at bay. Discerning correctly, there will be right view (*sammā dhitti*). When knowledge arises in the practice, the darkness of delusion (ignorance) is dispelled. If your morality (*sīla*) is intact and you maintain the five precepts, you will naturally have the volition to refrain from doing wrong.

With *sikkha* training (developing *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*), one develops the Buddha's teachings within oneself, and one removes obsessive and latent forms of defilements. As a result, one's bodily, verbal and mental behavior will not be unruly. By practicing the *sikkha* training, one can become a stream enterer (*sotāpanna*) in this life itself.

If one practices according to the teachings, one can be assured of reaching this stage in their practice. Then one truly understands (from direct knowledge) that the Buddha's teachings are beneficial. One realizes the benefits of the teachings by knowing firsthand the virtues of the Buddha. That person is endowed with basic Buddhist culture. As a

human being it is important to become a true human. As a true human one refrains from killing, stealing, and so on.

With mindfulness and concentration the defilements are suppressed and one becomes more gentle and cultured. When insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*) is developed, stage by stage, one also removes dormant forms of defilements.

Defilements arise due to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and so on. The Buddha eradicated all forms of defilements without anything remaining. The Buddha was endowed with the knowledge and compassion to guide beings. The Buddha knew what was beneficial and what was harmful to beings. Both knowledge and compassion are essential to guide others. If one does not have this knowledge, one does not know what is beneficial and what is harmful. The Buddha taught *Dhamma* and *vinaya* (discipline) that enable beings to reap the benefits of the practice and to eradicate all defilements.

Only those who have practiced satisfactorily can guide others. Without direct knowledge and a realization of the path, it is impossible to guide others correctly. Some teachers try to teach without a realization of the *Dhamma* and from theoretical knowledge only. This can be dangerous as their understanding of the *Dhamma* is incomplete. To teach others one should clearly understand what is beneficial and what is harmful.

Years ago, when Sayadawgyi was teaching in Hawaii, a question was posed whether it was more important to work to free others first or free oneself first. Some felt that it was selfish to free oneself first and that one should be selfless and save others. If two people are sunk in mud to nose level and one says to the other "I will save you," it is impossible. One must free oneself first from the mud before saving the other. In actual practice we must free ourselves first. Then, when we are free from defilements, we can save others and show them the way to be free from their defilements.

During the time of the Buddha, there were those who attained mundane absorption, but didn't know how to free themselves from defilements. It is only by cutting the current of defilements through insight knowledge, stage by stage, that one can free oneself and be in a position to save others!

## Chapter 17: Anicca, Aniccalakkhanā and Aniccānupassanā

If you don't know how to practice *satipatthāna* meditation, you will continue to drift aimlessly or drown in the current of defilements. One's life becomes futile and useless.

A yogi who has discerned between mind and matter and cause and effect removes the wrong view of a self, a being or a living soul. The wrong view of a creator is also removed and the triple characteristics of impermanence (*aniccānupassā*), *dukkha* (*dukkhānupassanā*) and non-self (*anattānupassanā*) are understood directly through one's experience.

A yogi must discern impermanence (*anicca*), the characteristics of impermanence (*aniccalakkhanā*) and contemplate on impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*). In discerning *anicca* we realize that the five aggregates are impermanent. Among the five aggregates there is materiality (*rūpa*) and four aggregates of mentality (*nāma*). Qualities such as hardness, softness, tension, cohesion, stiffness, fluidity, movement, warmth and coolness, and so on, are aggregates of materiality. Seeing-consciousness, hearing-consciousness, touching-consciousness, and so on, make up the aggregates of consciousness. Then, there are feelings, perceptions and mental projections.

All five aggregates, after arising, pass away. For example, when water is mixed with flour, the combination congeals, and the result is to produce dough. Just as the dough is made of many components, materiality comes together as a group to form the body (*kāya*). When we see, hear, taste and touch, we experience good and bad feelings. With consciousness and contact, we see the interaction of mentality and materiality. Mind and matter continuously arise and pass away.

Because the five aggregates (mind and matter) are impermanent, they cause *dukkha*. Mentality and materiality (*nāma* and *rūpa*) arise in a pair and then dissolve. One is constantly tormented by the arising and passing away of mind and matter. There is no self in it. There is no person, being or living soul in mind and matter. There is no individual soul (*jīva attā*) in *nāma* and *rūpa* as they arise on their own accord due to the relevant conditions. Just as a person has three names, similarly, *nāma* and *rūpa* are also known as *dukkha* and non-self. This must be understood through one's own practice. When one notes the presently arising object, one discerns impermanence through one's own experience in practice.

When noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, by noting stiffness, tension, movement, and so on, one discerns materiality (*rūpa*) which is the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*). Knowing-consciousness is *nāma*; feeling and contact are also *nāma*.

By noting the presently arising object, you become mindful of *nāma* and *rūpa* and their characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. When impermanence is discerned, you will also discern *dukkha* and non-self. By discerning *dukkha* you also discern impermanence and non-self. By discerning non-self you also discern impermanence and *dukkha*.

You must discern impermanence and the characteristics of impermanence through experiential practice. Those of Caucasian descent have fair skin; Asians have yellowish skin, and then there are those with brown and black complexions. The complexion and the person is not the same. Complexion is just a sign of being a white, yellow or a black person.

In the same way, mind and matter have a sign: the characteristic of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. The rising of the abdomen will occur due to circumstances and will manifest as stiffness, hardness, tension, and so on. The abdomen will fall, and the falling experience will manifest similar characteristics. Whatever the experience, be it stiffness, movement or tension, it arises and passes away and has the characteristics of impermanence (*aniccalakkhanā*). Just like in the case of complexion, where the person and complexion are separate, the characteristics of impermanence (*aniccalakkhanā*) and *anicca* (which is the *nāma* and *rūpa*) are separate.

The manner of arising and passing away is the characteristic of impermanence. When you observe the manner of arising and passing away, you contemplate impermanence. Each time you note the object, you contemplate impermanence. For example, when heat, which is impermanent, arises, you note the heat and observe its arising and passing away nature (*aniccānupassanā*). The manner of arising and passing way is the observation of the characteristics of impermanence. This knowledge cannot be obtained by thinking or reflecting. You must, through direct experience, observe the arising, the disintegration and dissolution of each object.

If the object of awareness is heat, while noting the heat, the yogi will discern the dissolution of the heat and develop *aniccānupassanā*. Here the heat is impermanent. The manner of passing away is *aniccalakkhanā*. Discerning the manner of passing away and observing impermanence, you develop *aniccānupassanā* and also develop insight (*vipassanā*). One develops *vipassanā* when one is able to discern the manner of dissolution.

In each instance you may discern only one of the three characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self at a time. You can't discern all three at the same time. At times you may discern either *dukkha*, impermanence or non-self. When one of the three characteristics is discerned, the other two are revealed. *Vipassanā* means observing the various characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self and developing insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*).

By knowing the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self, one develops *vipassanā ñāna* (insight knowledge). When noting heat, a yogi discerns its dissolution and develops *aniccānupassanā* by discerning the dissolution of heat. When the object is noted as soon as it arises with aim and effort, the noting mind falls calm and collected on the object and you discern impermanence and develop insight knowledge. One who develops *aniccānupassanā* through practice is called *aniccānupassī*.

When heat arises, it should be carefully noted with aim and effort. Then one will be able to note its dissolution. In this noting one can observe cause and effect and also *dukkha* and non-self. If one is not mindful, one will have a wrong view of permanence; there will be ignorance caused by knowing incorrectly or the ignorance of simply not knowing the true nature of phenomena. With this wrong view there will be clinging. When you are mindful there is no craving toward the object that is being noted. Because craving is absent, there is no clinging (*upādāna*).

Discerning correctly, one will no longer take things as permanent. As a result craving will not arise and therefore there will be no clinging. When you are mindful you stop the current of defilements.

By developing knowledge you stop the current of defilements. As one continues with the practice, one develops insight knowledge, stage by stage, until it matures and one reaches a state of cessation. When defilements are uprooted, one reaches a point of no-return.

## Chapter 18: Currents

When you are unmindful you are in darkness and the mind remains cluttered with unwholesomeness. You don't discern the true nature of phenomena, as knowledge doesn't arise in such a state of mind. The light of knowledge is only possible with mindfulness. When you are ignorant, you simply don't know and also know incorrectly. This is because delusion conceals the truth from us and we remain in darkness.

The fact is that existence is just mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*). There is no enduring self or a living soul residing in us. *Nāma* and *rūpa* arise as cause and effect. Due to the relevant cause, the relevant effect takes place. When you are not mindful, you wrongly believe that things arise without any cause and you may also believe in a creator. You don't discern impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self, and you develop self-importance, believing that you have a soul. Not knowing the truth of *dukkha*, you attach to sense objects and greed arises.

If you don't know that all things arise and pass away, you will believe in eternity, thinking that you will live forever. When one does not discern the truth, there is wrong view. If you are not mindful of the presently arising object, you fail to develop knowledge and penetrate into the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. The currents of defilements arise due to a weak state of mindfulness. By becoming mindful you stop the current of defilements from arising momentarily. When path knowledge is attained, you permanently remove defilements.

In the absence of mindfulness, defilements continue to flow in currents without a pause. It is only by developing path knowledge that the defilement currents can come to a halt. It is not necessary to be formally educated to know that life is full of defilement currents. Throughout life we experience seeing, hearing, tasting and touching. If we are unmindful, based on the object that captivates our attention, we give in to the ever flowing current of defilements.

When you are trapped in a current of defilements, it is like being caught in a waterfall. There is water below and above you and nothing to hold on to or to depend on. You become destitute. If you remain trapped in the current, day by day, life becomes valueless and worthless as you continue to drown in a current of defilements. The only way out of the current is to practice *satipatthāna* meditation.

As you progress in your practice, stage by stage, the defilement currents are weakened, and with the realization of the Four Noble Truths, will eventually come to a stop.



Cutting through the currents is not possible with theoretical or deductive knowledge. Many people are interested in mundane absorption (*lokiya jhāna*), which provides no cure for the defilement currents.

To free yourself from the currents in a waterfall, you need something to rely on, a trunk of a tree or something else to navigate yourself to the shore – toward safety.

The Buddha recommended that one should depend on oneself, become assured of the true nature of phenomena, the interplay of mind and matter and cause and effect. There is no creator to salvage you, but just your own knowledge and realization, obtained through direct experience and practice.

If you believe in a creator, you will not exert effort and you will not depend on your own ability to free yourself. The Buddha's instructions were that one should depend on oneself for liberation. One should be one's own refuge. So, strive diligently to reach the shore, against the current of defilements. The Buddha can only guide the way. The practice is in your hands. Walking the path that the Buddha mapped out, you free yourself from the bondage of defilements.

Our bodies are impermanent. They deteriorate. It is possible that you suddenly become afflicted with illness or that you die a sudden death. So, practicing with ardent effort and without delay is important. Treat the *Dhamma* as your island and take refuge in it so that you are protected. Practice systematically and become mindful of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness: all bodily activities, feelings and sensations, all thoughts and mental formations and the processes of seeing, hearing, and so on. You must become mindful of the presently arising object so that the mind falls calm and collected on the object.

These days people are technologically advanced, inventing new things and thinking of even newer things to invent. This type of thinking proliferates without any essence, without any refuge, and one experiences many social problems, mental stress, tension and depression. Scientifically, there is advancement, but spiritually, there is very little to depend on. The currents of ignorance, craving, conceit, anger and aversion continue to flow without any end or pause. Because there is very little moral restraint many people misbehave, simply drowning in the current of their own defilements.

Before the time of the Buddha (and also during the time of the Buddha), there were many who had attained *lokiya (mundane) jhāna* and supranormal knowledges. During the Buddha's time, there was an adviser to the king called Bavari, who later became a

hermit and practiced to a level of *lokiya jhāna*. He had sixteen students, who also practiced under his guidance. Each of the students had 1,000 followers. So, together they had tens of thousands of followers. One day, Bavari asked his students to test the Buddha's knowledge and investigate whether the Buddha was really enlightened according to their Vedic test. The students presented themselves before the Buddha and asked their questions through psychic powers. The Buddha responded verbally. One of the students, Ajitha, asked the Buddha, "How does one stop the current of defilements and with what should one stop the current of defilements?"

There is the defilement current of craving, which arises swiftly and in leaps and bounds as soon as a pleasurable object is in sight. Then, there is the current of wrong view that there is a creator. There are the defilements of aversion, conceit, envy, jealousy, restlessness and remorse, uncertainty and doubt. There is the craving to see pleasant objects, hear pleasant sounds and to taste pleasant things – always desiring for more pleasant objects.

Due to ignorance, there is a lack of moral shame and moral fear from wrong doing, giving rise to misconduct: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, as well as lying and deceiving others for one's own benefit. Friendships are destroyed due to harsh speech and selfish acts. When there is such a lack of moral shame, one commits transgressions by body, speech and mind. Indulging in anger, one can commit the act of killing, and based on envy and jealousy, one can destroy other people's property.

So, Ajitha asked for the Buddha's guidance on how these currents could be weakened to a point where they completely stop. The Buddha explained about sensory contact and the operation of the six-fold consciousness arising at the six sense doors. At the six sense doors the object and the consciousness come into contact (*phassa*) to produce a feeling. Consciousness, contact and feeling are mentality (*nāma*) arising at the six sense doors. In each experience of seeing, hearing, and so on, there is mentality and physicality (*nāma* and *rūpa*) arising due to conditions. They are produced by *kamma* and supported by consciousness (*citta*), temperature (*urtu*) and nutriment (*āhāra*). If you are not mindful, you add more causes and conditions which produce more resultants. Not discerning and not knowing, there will be attachment and a belief in a creator. Not discerning impermanence, one takes things as permanent and not discerning things as *dukkha*, one takes things as good and pleasant. Not discerning that there is non-self, one believes that there is a self (*atta*) that is permanent and good.

If one has good intentions, one may be doing wholesome acts such as generosity, keeping the five precepts and practicing meditation (*dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*), and if one does

not have good intentions, one will develop unwholesome deeds. There will be unwholesomeness associated with greed, anger and delusion (*lobha, dosa* and *moha*).

Based on the intention (volition) to develop wholesome and unwholesome deeds, there will be more and more round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*). When the round of defilements is generated, the round of intentions (*kamma vatta*) and the round of results (*vipāka vatta*) will follow. These three rounds will continue to rotate, giving rise to an ever-continuing flow of defilement currents at the six sense doors. So it is important to stop the defilement currents.

### **Stopping the defilement currents**

The Buddha's response was that the currents can be hindered by mindfulness (*sati*). It is mindfulness that will guard and protect the mind from defilements, weakening them and eventually enabling them to come to a complete stop.

The currents are flowing everywhere in the human and deity realms. They are flowing in seeing, hearing, tasting and touching. If one does not have the protection of mindfulness, there won't be any restraint of the senses. Such persons do not have anything to depend on and so they drown in the currents; there is water above and below, and at every angle. Being destitute and with no refuge, they just delve further into the currents.

Many people do not know the virtue of restraint by mindfulness. Due to a lack of mindfulness, many people end up committing evil acts.

They let their minds wander freely in pursuit of sensual objects. Not seeing the limits and flaws of sensual objects, they indulge in them, especially in countries that are most technologically and scientifically advanced. You see many having fun in unlawful ways. Not seeing the flaws, one lacks moral shame and moral fear. Sensual pleasure is taken as beneficial, and joy is taken in sensual pleasure without any moral shame or restraint. Although one is having fun, their body, speech and mind become blameworthy, impure and crude, creating conditions for future bad consequences. Failing to practice restraint is *pamāda* – negligence and heedlessness in restraining moral conduct.

During the old days kings did whatever they wished. They had many wives and many queens. During the time of the Buddha, there was a king who came across a young monk and became rather curious about his moral restraint. He was impressed that this young monk maintained a life of chastity even in the vigor of his prime when lust very easily creeps up in the mind. The king asked, "Venerable bhante, you are still very young and at an age of youth that must be spent indulging in sensual pleasures. How

can the venerable one control himself from lust?" The young monk said that he regarded women of a mother's age, as mother, a woman of a sister's age as a sister, and this helped him overcome the arising of any lust.

Still the king was not satisfied with the answer and probed even further, explaining that even when one regards someone as a relative, lust may have already arisen.

The young monk explained further: "If a monk is unmindful, he may begin to admire the woman's features and her body, and naturally, lust will arise. But, if he doesn't look at her as a whole, and instead dissects her in terms of the thirty two parts of the body – the hair, teeth, nails and skin – and reflects on the repulsive aspects of the body, he will not desire her and will instead feel disgusted." It is like dismantling a car, part by part. When the separate parts are taken out, one by one, the aesthetic appeal of the car is lost.

The king was still dissatisfied and probed further. In his third response, the young monk said that in the alternative, when looking at someone of the opposite sex, if you activate restraint of the senses so that you are guarded at each sense door, as a result your mind is not wild and you will not engage in fantasizing. The king was satisfied with the answer and explained to the young monk that due to his lack of mindfulness, when he is amidst his harem of queens, he acts like an unleashed and unruly bull. If he was mindful and had restraint of the senses, he would be of a calm temperament, even when he is with his consort of women.

It is only through the practice of *satipatthāna* meditation that you can stop the defilement currents. You must become mindful of every passing moment and have restraint of the senses. If you look here and there, you will only have ignorance and unwholesome states of mind that will arise in leaps and bounds. It is like driving a car. When you drive you must be skillful and steer the car in the correct lane. If you speed, you get a ticket or may have an accident. At the traffic lights the driver must slow down and when the light is red, bring the car to a full stop. Similarly, you must have self-control to exercise moral restraint and act with moral fear to not hurt others or engage in misconduct.

When mindfulness is present defilements have no space to operate. The currents of defilements and misconduct come to a stop (even though it's only momentarily). As insight knowledge matures, the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self are understood to remove the wrong view of a soul or a creator. Within all of us, there are many objects to be noted. With ardent effort and with faith plus confidence in the practice, one should strive with sustained mindfulness to stop the arising of defilements. It

is mindfulness that serves as our refuge to deliver us to the safety of the shore and away from the drowning current of defilements.

## Chapter 19: Pamāda and Appamāda

When mindfulness (*sati*) is present, the defilement currents are weakened. This is not an ordinary state of mindfulness but one associated with insight (*vipassanā*).

At the beginning of the practice, teachers encourage yogis to note all the objects without missing any. When the objects are in a gross state, it is possible to note them, although as the practice matures, observing what is subtle is a challenge. When you discern mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*) distinctly, you are free from the wrong view of an individual soul or that of a creator. When cause and effect is discerned in practice, one realizes that mind and matter arise due to cause and effect. When your mindfulness is associated with insight knowledge, you see the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self in all phenomena. This mindfulness is penetrative, continuous and strong. All objects will be noted and the noting becomes somewhat “automatic and effortless” as awareness gains an autonomous momentum. The yogis’ effort at this stage of practice is one of fulfilling effort. The ardent effort exerted at the beginning is not required when a state of momentary concentration is developed.

The current of defilements are weakened. There is a gradual stilling of the currents. There will be less agitation from greed, wrong view and anger (*tanhā*, *dhitti* and *dosa*). In other words, the defilements are suppressed although they are not totally extinct.

*Sati* is called *appamāda* – the opposite of *pamāda*, being negligent and failing in one’s duties and responsibilities. *Appamāda* means having sustained and continuous mindfulness. When one lacks mindfulness, one gives into the three forms of defilements: obsessive forms of defilements (*vīṭikkama kilesa*), medium forms of defilements (*parivuttāna kilesa*) and latent forms of defilements (*anusaya kilesa*), which are not suppressed or cured. Without practice, defilements cannot be suppressed or removed.

Most people lack mindfulness, and when they see, hear, smell and feel, they give into the defilements of desire, aversion, hatred, envy, jealousy that arise in the mind. Being negligent in preventing defilements from arising, they allow the current of defilements to flow endlessly. It is only with mindfulness and the practice of non-negligence and non-heedlessness that one can make oneself pure and gentle. Being negligent in refraining from things that should be refrained from and not performing duties that should be performed is *pamāda*.

Even if you are able to refrain from misconduct, as a sensual being with a great thirst for sensual desire, you would still wish to see good objects and hear good sounds.

When things don't go according to your plan or expectations, one feels discouraged and lets the mind go free to indulge in sensual desire.

When you arrive at a meditation center to practice, you have to cultivate a high level of mental development, and if you fail to practice diligently and lack in mindfulness, then you are in a state of *pamāda*. So, your aim should be to cultivate continuous mindfulness. If there are gaps, then mindfulness is weak.

To practice for a while and then to rest is to lose the continuity of intensive practice. As a yogi, mindfulness should be practiced in every posture without a break, apart from sleeping hours. Otherwise, there is *pamāda*, and you are like a chameleon, a kind of lizard that dwells in trees. As it moves about, it stops to gaze, here and there, then goes on its way again. When you stop and rest your performance is like the movement of the chameleon.

Even if you strive for continuous mindfulness, there will be moments of *pamāda* in your practice. It is only at a stage of momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) that your mindfulness is strong and *pamāda* comes to a stop. When path and fruition knowledge is attained, inferior forms of defilements are uprooted. Yogis must practice respectfully, meticulously and without stop. If you stop and gaze, like the chameleon, *pamāda* will arise. It is *pamāda* that has followed us throughout the round of existences, to prevent us from heedfulness. So, it is not an easy task to stop the current of defilements with heedfulness (*appamāda*).

Become mindful of the presently arising object. Noting the object with effort, one discerns *nāma* and *rūpa* then cause and effect. When the triple characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self are observed, the mindfulness associated with knowledge becomes even stronger. One gains a wholesome quality of mind that is blameless and gives results. When the noting is continuous and the practice gains momentum, mindfulness is sustained on the object without having to exert effort. As mindfulness becomes strong, one cultivates wholesome states of consciousness. When *nāma* and *rūpa* are discerned and cause and effect is understood, the mindfulness associated with knowledge can hinder the currents to make them weaker. So it is important to note the object with sustained mindfulness to weaken the currents.

To practice correctly one should know the benefits of the *satipatthāna* practice. Then, one will have faith and confidence in the practice. One will also have faith and confidence in oneself, then one develops a strong desire to practice. When you come to a meditation retreat, you have to make an investment in the practice by giving up worldly pleasures.

It is by noting the presently arising object that you can make a profit in the practice. Exert ardent effort to note the object. As the mind reaches to note the object, the defilement currents are stopped. It is only when unwholesome states of mind are absent that wholesome states of mind can be cultivated.

When the practice develops to a stage of momentary concentration, the mind is secured from defilements; the mind becomes calm, collected and unified on the object and will not be unruly. It is only a stray mind that can entertain the current of defilements. Each moment that there is mindfulness, there will be a stopping of the current of defilements. So, if you are mindful for ten minutes, the current of defilements will be stopped for ten minutes.

Therefore, we must aim to sustain mindfulness in each passing moment without missing a single opportunity and exert ardent effort, so that the currents will be weakened and finally put to rest.

The *satipatthāna* practice can give rise to a happiness that excels all forms of sensual happiness. The benefits of mindfulness are many. If you invest in your practice and exert ardent effort, then you will benefit from a unique form of happiness that excels worldly forms of happiness.

So make the investment today and practice diligently. If your practice is systematic, you will make progress even within an hour!



## Chapter 20: Stopping the Currents

The currents of craving (*tanhā sota*) and the currents of defilements (*kilesa sota*) are flowing from everywhere. As beings drown in these currents, there is water above, below and in every direction. They become destitute without something to rely upon. With great compassion, the Buddha taught us the way out of these currents and guided us to take refuge in ourselves and not to depend on others.

One should have *Dhamma* as their island of refuge. The Buddha's teachings are aimed at autonomous striving, and we are all encouraged to depend upon ourselves to realize the *Dhamma*. We are encouraged to not immerse ourselves only in theoretical or reflective knowledge, but to practice according to guidance and instructions. The practice of the *Dhamma* can uplift you if your practice is systematic and is done in accordance with your teacher's instructions. When you practice in this way, you are ensured of not being reborn into lower existences, but into human or deva realms.

The correct method of practice will lead one to understand the true nature of existence, that there is *nāma* and *rūpa* (mind and matter) and that they are impermanent, *dukkha*, and do not involve a soul or a self. Both mind and matter are not causeless and arise due to conditions. They arise and pass away. So they are impermanent. Things that perish and dissolve give us great *dukkha*; they offer no assurance and are unreliable. Because they arise and pass away according to their nature, their characteristic is non-self. To directly experience this during intensive meditation training, you must practice according to guidance and instructions, cultivating morality, concentration and wisdom. When you practice morality, your mind, speech and bodily actions are pure and clean, and the path to unwholesomeness and defilements is blocked.

A mind that falls calm and collected on the object is assured of becoming concentrated (*samādhi*). When effort and mindfulness are aligned, defilements are kept at bay and the mind becomes one-pointed. A concentrated mind removes obsessive forms of defilements, and this mental development (*bhāvanā citta*) prevents the arising of more defilements. When the mind is concentrated, the true nature of phenomena can be discerned; *nāma* and *rūpa* can be observed distinctly and cause and effect is revealed. All objects of mind and matter arise due to their respective causes; they are not causeless.

The relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect. When *samādhi* is strengthened, one discerns the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. The old dissolving to give way to the new that is arising; *nāma* and *rūpa* arising in one moment and dissolving in the next. When you gain insight into the quick arising and passing away at the stage of

*udayabbaya ñāna*, their impermanent nature becomes very clear. It becomes very clear that there is no one creating mind and matter. They arise according to their own accord and due to their respective conditions.

When the mind is energized with mindfulness (*sati*), defilements are calmed and suppressed. When knowledge is gained, the defilements are cut to the point of non-return. For example, if you are afflicted with malaria, you develop a fever and you have to take medicine to reduce its intensity. The fever may become less, but the medicine doesn't cure the illness.

Continuing with the dosage of medicine, there will be moments of intermittent fever, but no permanent curing of the illness; although when the full dosage is consumed and with continued attention you can finally cure the fever to a point of no return. Similarly, mindfulness can hinder defilements only momentarily. It is Path Knowledge that removes defilements to the point of no return. One must undertake practice to abandon defilements completely without any defilements remaining.

One should be mindful of seeing-consciousness, smelling-consciousness and knowing-consciousness, noting each process as "seeing," "hearing," and so on. The six-fold contact gives rise to feeling. So, all forms of consciousness, contact and the resultant feelings must be noted with aim and effort to gain knowledge.

Path consciousness which penetrates impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self can totally cut the currents. One should gain knowledge in the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self that underpin all existence.

There are two kinds of Path Knowledge: first, preliminary Path Knowledge and second, Noble Path Knowledge. When effort, mindfulness and concentration are strengthened, one discerns cause and effect and penetrates impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. This is preliminary Path Knowledge. Once preliminary Path Knowledge is developed and becomes mature, it is possible to gain Noble Path Knowledge. At the stage of preliminary Path Knowledge, defilements are cut only momentarily. Preliminary Path Knowledge is also a state of *vipassanā* right view (*vipassanā sammā dhitti*).

By developing Noble Path Knowledge, one can abandon defilements to a point of non-return. When insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāna*) which is knowledge that discerns the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self matures, Noble Path Knowledge (*ariya magga paññā*) is attained and one abandons and eradicates defilements to the point of no return.

If defilements are not removed, you will continue in ignorance, developing more and more mental impurities. There will be craving toward good and pleasant objects. There could also be extreme forms of craving and clinging, where one would do anything to get what one craves. If one is free from ignorance, one is also free from intense greed. When you have extreme greed, you may take another's possessions by force, commit misconduct and exploit others for personal gain. When knowledge is gained, defilements are suppressed, and you will not experience extreme forms of anger or lust. There will not be any desire to hurt or torment others. Intense forms of ill will are removed. The current of misconduct will come to a temporary halt. Being free from anger, defilements such as envy and stinginess are kept at bay. When mindful, defilements like restlessness and remorse are also removed. By discerning correctly, there is no uncertainty or doubt.

When the mind is directed to the object, there is right application or contemplation (*sammā sankhappa*) which is one of the causes that leads to the development of right view (*sammā dhitti*). When the object is noted correctly, the mind falls calm and collected on the object to develop *vipassanā samādhi*.

This is the proximate cause for knowledge of right view (*sammā dhitti*) to arise. To note the object, one has to exert ardent effort in the practice. If you discern correctly and have right view, extreme forms of greed and ignorance will be removed.

Gradually, you transcend the bounds of greed, hatred and delusion and refrain from committing wrong doing by body, speech and mind. By not committing misconduct, one is cutting the current of misconduct. You will become truthful, and the mind will be pure and clean. As knowledge is developed one stage at a time, you develop faith and confidence in the practice by clearly discerning that all effects are caused by conditions.

Discerning correctly, you gain right view and the current of wrong view will be cut. Having developed morality, concentration and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi* and *paññā*), you remove gross, medium and latent forms of defilements. With the maturing of insight knowledge, you will gain Noble Path Knowledge and the Noble Path View to cut through defilements completely and finally.

## Chapter 21: Culasotāpanna

According to the Buddha's teachings on dependent origination, feelings lead to craving (*vedanā paccayā tanhā*). Craving for pleasant objects or wanting to hear pleasant sounds is *tanhā*. Craving also leads to clinging. Dependent on the three kinds of feelings (pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and neutral feelings) the currents of craving arise. When experiencing a pleasant feeling by seeing pleasant objects, hearing good sounds or smelling a nice fragrance, one feels happy and craves for more of it. When encountering a bad experience (*dukkha* in the body or in the mind), one wishes for good feelings to arise to overcome it. When there is comfort, one craves for more and more comfort.

Instances of neutral feelings are not very obvious in one's daily life. In the practice however, one can directly experience neutral feelings. When insight knowledge matures to a stage where one feels equanimity toward all formations (*sankhāra upekkha ñāna*), one feels a deep calmness. When a yogi experiences equanimity, a neutral feeling (*adhukkhamā sukha*), the resulting calm feeling can be very pleasant. A common trap for a yogi at this stage is craving for more and more experiences of calmness, more and more equanimity. The only way to hinder this subtle current of craving is mindfulness – to become mindful of these sensations, to gain Path Knowledge.

Become mindful of unpleasant sensations in the body. In the practice, when momentary concentration is weak, a yogi is not able to forebear unpleasant sensations. So, you see many yogis trying to change their posture, and so on. When the pain is acute, due to a lack of patience, one creates mental *dukkha* around it. Instead, become aware of the characteristics of the unpleasant feeling: is it hardness, stiffness or tension? When the earth element (*pathavi dhātu*) is activated, it is common to feel a piercing pain.

At times, one feels extreme heat and extreme cold that can be unpleasant. Experiences of physical pain are caused by the elements – mostly, the air element (*vāyo dhātu*), heat element (*tejo dhātu*) and the earth element (*pathavi dhātu*). When noting pain, the mind becomes withered and one may feel discouraged due to the *dukkha* in the mind. Due to mental *dukkha* (*mānasika dukkha*) caused by physical discomfort, one feels unable to forebear pain. Painful feelings (*dukkha vedanā*) have the effect of tormenting or torturing a person.

This mental agony can be overcome only if one patiently notes the pain to gain knowledge into its nature and characteristics. When the pain is noted with patience, the mind falls calm and collected on the object to free itself from craving and to experience the characteristics underpinning the unpleasant physical sensation.

By noting the pain and discerning its characteristics, function and manifestation, one removes craving and will not have mental *dukkha* created as a result of it. So, one is left with the physical discomfort only, and no mental *dukkha* is imparted on the physical *dukkha*.

A diligent yogi will forebear the pain and try to note it as much as possible. Otherwise, one will just react to the pain and try to change one's posture interrupting the continuity of mindfulness. By being mindful, one discerns a tangible object (*rūpa*) which is unpleasant.

This unpleasant feeling also involves mentality (*nāma*). So by observing pain, one discerns *nāma* and *rūpa*. If one does not discern distinctly, one remains in ignorance, believing in a person, a being or a soul. Discerning correctly, the current of craving and wrong view are momentarily stopped.

When mindfulness (*sati*) is weak, the defilement currents will not be hindered. The currents will continue to flow. One will have active forms of anger and aversion. (*dosa*). Not being able to note, the mind will feel agitated. You may even begin to doubt the practice, feeling that this practice is bringing great pain instead of the anticipated joyful bliss. A yogi may wonder, "What am I doing here? Why am I experiencing so much pain and difficulty?" So, in this way, skeptical doubt will arise in the mind. This affects one's effort, as one feels discouraged and no longer wishes to maintain the requisite alertness to note the presently arising object.

It is common for yogis to withdraw from the practice when they feel discouraged. The currents of sloth and torpor will then take over to hinder the practice. Withdrawing from the practice, not exerting effort, the current of defilements enter the mind in abundance. Lacking moral shame and moral fear, one's actions will result in misconduct. Not discerning, not gaining knowledge, the current of ignorance (*avijja sota*) will continue to flow. These currents will flow swiftly at times and abundantly, like water flowing from a higher place. If you can't forebear and note the objects, then you will drown in the currents.

Note all feelings with patience, whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. If you are mindful, you will not crave for more and more pleasant feelings by attaching to the pleasant experiences. There can also be neutral feelings, based on seeing, hearing, feeling, touching and knowing. Because you are mindful, you will not crave for more calm and bliss when encountering neutral feelings. With physical *dukkha*, you will forebear and just note the painful sensations.

As you note, you gain insight into *nāma* and *rūpa* and the currents of craving and wrong view are hindered and stopped. If you fail to note, you will immerse yourself in intense forms of craving and clinging, not knowing the interaction of *nāma* and *rūpa* that underpins experience. It is clinging that leads to good and bad volition (*upādāna paccayā bhavo*). When there is no clinging, volition will not arise. If there is volition, there will be birth, old age, death, sorrow and lamentation. The *samsāric* cycle will be set in motion.

By continuing the practice, one clearly discerns mind and body (*nāma* and *rūpa*) and realizes cause and effect. It is not simply a coincidence: for example, an irrelevant cause giving rise to an irrelevant effect. Hearing takes place because sounds strike the ear base. If you are mindful of hearing, you will discern *nāma* and *rūpa*. You will become aware of the cause that gives rise to the effect. Sounds strike the ear base, and the resulting hearing consciousness is the effect.

When you see that the relevant cause gives rise to the relevant effect, you will no longer believe in a creator. A yogi realizes that dependent on contact (*phassa*), feelings arise (*passa paccayā vedanā*). Coming into contact with pleasant objects gives rise to pleasant feelings, unpleasant objects can give rise to unpleasant feelings and neutral objects give rise to neutral feelings. It is contact with the object that gives rise to the feeling.

In the past, present and future, feelings will arise because there has been contact with an object. Everything is governed by cause and effect. As mental and physical phenomena arise (as cause and effect), there is no refuge possible in a being or a creator. The Visuddhimagga praises a person who has attained knowledge into cause and effect (*paccaya pariggaha ñāna*). Such a person is considered a minor stream enterer (*culasotāpanna*). Such a person's future destination will be a good existence, and that person will not be born into a lower existence. But, one must strive to become a stream enterer, a *sotāpanna*. If you continue further in the practice, you will discern the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. At the stage of a *culasotāpanna*, one discerns only the beginning and the middle of the object, not its dissolution.

With continued practice, a yogi will discern the common characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* (their arising, presence and dissolution). It is only when one discerns the dissolution of objects (not just their arising and their presence) that one gains insight into impermanence. Until such time one will have the wrong view of permanence and believe in the wrong view of a self (*atta*) and not realize the *dukkha* which is common to all experiences of phenomena. So, one must strive to become a *sotāpanna* and continue with the practice.

## Chapter 22: Imperfections of Insight

Whenever there is seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings arise. Don't add any more causes to the effects (feelings) that are taking place. To do this, become mindful of whatever object that arises without missing and failing.

In the practice of *samatha* meditation (the practice leading toward tranquility), when a yogi reaches a stage of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), a cool feeling arises. It is easy to have pleasant feelings (*sukha vedanā*) when concentration is developed in the *samatha* practice.

However, in the practice of *Satipatthāna* meditation, it is common for yogis to encounter unpleasant feelings (*dukkha vedanā*). Instead of being mindful of pains and aches and noting them thoroughly, yogis tend to give up the practice. In the battlefield if one army is weaker then it has to withdraw. In the same way, when encountering aches and pains, if the yogi withdraws and unmindfully changes posture by giving up, the yogi loses the battle. If the pain is severe, then mindfully withdraw noting the intention to move and moving slowly and mindfully; note the movements thoroughly and meticulously.

When momentary concentration develops in the practice, a yogi discerns the arising and passing away of pain and its characteristics. In this observation the location of the pain (be it in the leg, the arm or the knee) fades away, and the focus remains on the nature of the pain. There is no longer a person, a man or a woman experiencing the pain. A yogi will gain maturity in the practice and feel courageous and even take on the pain as a challenge, "Let it come, and I will note it." Many yogis experience hard, cold, stiff and congealing pain, and it causes discomfort. When you are mindful you realize that the pain arises due to contact with a tangible object, and in this way the yogi understands cause and effect. When a yogi courageously notes the pain with forbearance, it is possible to remain unshaken by the pain. You develop the patience to forebear *dukkha* while remaining calm and concentrated in the mind. At times the pain increases in its intensity, and at other times it decreases. Gradually, as the noting continues, the pain disappears. When the pain passes away, a feeling of comfort, a pleasant feeling (*sukha vedanā*) can be experienced.

All forms of mind and matter have their unique and individual characteristics that arise and pass away. It is their nature to arise and pass away. Whatever *nāma* and *rūpa* arises also passes away. The arising and passing away are the common characteristics of im-

permanence, underpinning all existence. When things are impermanent, there is *dukkha*. All *nāma* and *rūpa* arise due to their relevant causes. Noting all objects, a yogi discerns the unique characteristics as well as the common characteristics. The arising and passing away can be discerned as a flux in a fast manner. At this stage of the practice (*udayabbaya ñāna*), a yogi notes all objects without missing, clearly and consistently. A yogi can note with ease and effort, and the defilement currents are stopped and suppressed.

As the currents are gradually stopped and cut, the blood becomes purified; the yogi's complexion shines and can pervade outside the room.

At this stage of discerning, the yogi develops insight into arising and passing away (*udayabbhaya ñāna*). The knowledge gained at this stage is outstanding when compared to the prior knowledge gained through *sammassana ñāna*. As a yogi discerns the rapid arising and passing away of objects, it is understood that there is no refuge in a being or a self, that all experiences are *nāma* and *rūpa* and that they are impermanent. There is no self (*atta*). At the stage of arising and passing away (*udayabbhaya ñāna*), the mind is automatically aimed at the object. It is like shooting a target with a bow and arrow. If you are skillful in aiming toward the target, then the arrow automatically reaches it without missing. Similarly, if a yogi is skillful in noting objects, the noting mind automatically reaches the object of meditation. It is like a well-aimed arrow that pierces through the target: it will not fall, become soft or bent. Mindfulness is so strong at the stage of *udayabbhaya ñāna* that defilement currents are automatically stopped.

As knowledge arises and mindfulness is sharpened stage by stage, the defilement currents are cut, and a yogi is able to note even small minute objects without missing. Gaining knowledge, the current of craving is also cut. There will no longer be wrong view since the yogi understands that all phenomena are underpinned by cause and effect. The wrong view of annihilation is also abandoned. When cause and effect is understood clearly and distinctly, it is no longer possible to hold on to the wrong view of eternity.

When these realizations bear fruit, a yogi will feel great joy and rapture that pervades the whole body. The joy accompanying the stage of *udayabbhaya ñāna* is extreme bliss. The noting of objects becomes easy, and the current of defilements are stopped and cut. A yogi experiences one or more of the five forms of joy and rapture (*pīti*) during the practice: (1) minor forms of joy, (2) momentary joy, (3) states of bliss when it feels as if the whole body is being enveloped, (4) the feeling of thrills across the whole body, and (5) that of uplifting joy when it feels as if the body is levitating in the air. The joy that pervades the whole body is so strong that a yogi does not even want to stop the session of sitting or does not feel like opening the eyes.



Tranquility (*passadhi*) also arises together with the insight into the fast arising and passing away of objects (*udayabbhaya ñāna*). One feels a lightness in the body; the practice seems very smooth and there is adaptability as the yogi becomes skillful in the practice. One feels very fresh and bright as proficiency is gained in the practice. At this stage one is endowed with uprightness. Yogis confess to themselves about past wrongdoings and may confess to their teacher about their weaknesses and shortcomings without any pretense. There is honesty and uprightness instilled in the yogi.

When the practice is supported by tranquility (*passadhi*), a yogi experiences a unique kind of *Dhamma* happiness that excels worldly and sensual happiness many times over. This happiness is praised by the Buddha, and it is described as *amānusi rati* – an unalloyed form of happiness. The mind is no longer agitated by *raga* (lust), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (delusion) as one attains a *Dhamma* happiness that surpasses the sensual happiness of the humans and deities.

This feeling of *amānusi rati* is supported by extreme lightness in the mind and the body with peace and tranquility pervading the whole body. It is like driving on a freeway in a smooth and controlled manner: the driver feels relaxed and comfortable. The whole body feels light and cool. The joy, peace and rapture are not an ordinary human experience.

Also, faith and confidence (*saddhā*) in the practice arises together with *udayabbhaya ñāna* when one has confirmation through direct experiential knowledge that this path is correct. The mind and mental factors become very serene and clear, and one has resolute faith and confidence in the practice. Then courageous effort also arises. Yogis will not be slack and the noting mind will not fall short or overshoot the target.

The noting mind falls directly on the object and courageous effort will push the mind to the object; with fulfilling effort a yogi will be encouraged to reach the goal. It is like lifting something off the ground: the object must not fall down or stagnate in the middle but must be pushed higher and higher. When mindfulness is firmly rested on the object, it sticks to the object. It is like something sharp falling on the ground; it firmly pierces the ground as it reaches it. As mindfulness gains momentum, the mind sticks completely and closely to the object and penetrates it. It is like a stone being thrown and sinking into the water: it reaches the bottom without much effort.

At the stage of *udayabbhaya ñāna*, mindfulness (*sati*) is very strong. This is accompanied by equanimity (*upekkha*), a peaceful and balanced state of mind. Whatever object that arises, it is noted with ease and comfort without missing.

One trap, however, is that yogis can feel minor forms of attachment toward the tranquil and peaceful experience. As the experience is so peaceful and joyous, it is also possible to think that these unique states of mind are an attainment of Path and Fruition Knowledge (*magga ñāna*).

So it is imperative that these experiences are shared with a *kalyāna mitra* (spiritual friend) or one's teacher. If you misunderstand these experiences to be an attainment of supramundane knowledge, you may withdraw from the practice and rest without practicing any further, thinking that you have reached your goal. This will be a great hindrance to the yogi's practice.

## Chapter 23: Realizing Nibbāna

One should not be satisfied with developing the practice only to the stage where one gains insight into mind and matter and cause and effect. One must continue to strive to reach one's final goal. When effort, mindfulness and concentration are aligned even minute objects can be noted without missing or failing. This is possible when mindfulness (*sati*) is firmly sustained on the object. Effort is also persistent when the practice gains momentum. In the beginning yogis must note the object by directing the mind to the object (*vitakka* or initial application). When the mind rubs against the object (*vicāra*), there is sustained application.

When the mind is developed to the stage where there is insight into the rapid arising and passing away (*udayabbhaya ñāna*), the noting mind is automatically directed to the object. Then, consciousness is free from initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*). It is like mastering a game of darts. At the beginning the player has to take careful aim with the dart before throwing it toward the target. As the player becomes more skillful, the dart can be thrown to the target without having to aim specifically toward it.

As the fast arising and passing away of objects is noted at the stage of *udayabbhaya ñāna*, yogis can discern how the objects pass away and make way for new objects, seeing objects arising and passing away in complete flux.

When your practice matures to this stage, the wrong view of annihilation and eternity are removed. By discerning how the object arises and passes away in complete flux, yogis discern the characteristics of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. Thus, ignorance is removed as one comes to grips with the non-self of conditional phenomena. With persistent application, knowledge is developed stage by stage until finally the yogi attains total cessation (*nibbāna*).

Conditional phenomena that arise continuously are called *pavatha*. Realizing *nibbāna* is *appavatha* as it is the cessation of all *nāma* and *rūpa*. At the stage of *nibbāna*, the object and the noting mind comes to complete cessation. At the first stage of the Path and Fruition Knowledge, one becomes a Stream Enterer. Then one is free from rebirth in the four lower realms of existence. One will only be reborn as a human or a *deva*, and the higher stages of Path and Fruition Knowledge can be attained if one continues their practice in order to be completely free from all the defilements. Then one can become an *arahant*.

Try to at least aim to become a stream enterer (*sotāpanna*) by realizing the first stage of Path and Fruition Knowledge. This will ensure that you only have seven more existences left in the human or deity realms.

Yogis must be careful of one trap, however, at the stage of arising and passing (*udayabbhaya ñāna*). As the mind is peaceful and supported by beautiful mental factors, such as joy and rapture, there can be minor forms of craving that can cause one to deviate from the correct path. Such craving is not in a gross form such as when you experience seeing, hearing, touching in the ordinary way. These states of mind concern the practice and being attached to good meditative experiences.

At the stage of mature *udayabbhaya ñāna*, yogis experience illumination, joy, rapture and exceptional calmness. So, it is easy to become attached to these subtle mental experiences. Some yogis even confuse this calmness to the attainment of Path and Fruition Knowledge. This is where the direction of a skillful meditation master (*kalyāna mitta*) is necessary to guide you along the correct path toward your goal.

Even though what unfolds is the arising and passing away of mentality and materiality and there is no self or an “I,” one still takes it as “I am having good experiences such as illumination and joy” and attaches to this experience. These experiences are also accompanied by conceit and pride, as one gains confidence in being a yogi who experiences such illumination and outstanding knowledge. Holding oneself in high esteem is another trap that yogis must try to avoid.

If a yogi is not skillful, craving (*tanhā*) will dominate these experiences. Some may even stop the practice, assuming that they have reached their goal. At a stage of mature *udayabbhaya ñāna*, the mind is purified and is beautiful and shining. Knowledge and rapture (*pīti*), happiness and tranquility (*sukha* and *passadi*) arise with great momentum. These mental factors also make *rūpa* beautiful and shining. The blood becomes pure and at times illnesses can also be cured and overcome due to the momentum of the practice.

As pure and clean blood circulates throughout the body, one’s eye faculty becomes clear, and the ear and nose sensitivity also become strong. A yogi’s complexion will also be shining and beautiful. Faith and confidence in the practice is also increased as the mind tends toward knowledge that results in non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*) and non-delusion (*amoha*).

When *udayabbhaya ñāna* is developed, knowledge arises together with joy and rapture. The mind is wholesome and faith (*saddhā*) and mindfulness (*sati*) also dominate the mind. Yogis become very honest and confess to oneself as well as to their teachers about

any unwholesome states of mind. Moral shame and moral fear (*hiri otappa*) also arise. The currents of craving (*tanhā sota*) are suppressed as knowledge is gained into the triple aspects of impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self.

You have control of yourself, and indirectly, you contribute to the peace in your surroundings. Naturally, you become a person with compassion (*karunā*), consideration and empathy toward others. You protect yourself and others from wrongdoing, and loving kindness (*mettā*) arises in leaps and bounds in your heart. Always wishing for the welfare of others, one will strive to encourage family and friends to also take on the practice. One's heart is also filled with inspiration and joy at the success of others in their practice. Thus, altruistic joy (*mudithā*) permeates one's thoughts and actions.

When you have moral shame and moral fear of wrong doing, wrong thoughts and wrong actions, you have right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kammantha*) and right livelihood (*sammā ajīva*). Having moral shame and moral fear, you take care of your practice and become thorough and meticulous. If you miss to note an object, you know it and will report it to the teacher.

Having *hiri* and *otappa*, one does not transgress from wrongdoing and inadvertently contributes to the peace of the world. If at least one-third of human beings have moral shame and moral fear, the world will be very peaceful.

We see many leaders trying to bring peace to the world. Yet the world is filled with aggression and violence and falls short of peace and happiness. It is important to know genuine peace and happiness and how your practice can achieve this aim and contribute to the society we live in.

When *udayabbhaya ñāna* matures, the joy and rapture which existed in the mind is taken over by calmness and tranquility. As you progress further in the practice, you gain insight into dissolution (*bhanga ñāna*). At this stage of insight knowledge, you discern only the dissolution of objects. In addition to the dissolution of the objects you discern the dissolution of the noting mind. You are no longer aware of forms, such as hands and feet. As forms are not very clear, you may begin to wonder whether your practice has deteriorated. A state of equanimity pervades the mind and the calm you experience also reaches a state of equilibrium. One's mind becomes comfortable and subtle at this stage of the practice. Gradually, you progress toward the insight into equanimity toward all formations (*sankhāra upekkha ñāna*). Even illnesses can be cured at this stage of mental development. In the practice, as insight matures, yogis discern the rapid arising and passing away of objects, accompanied by the rapid dissolution of objects, and gradually progress to a complete cessation of objects.

Equanimity arises as knowledge into dissolution (*bhanga ñāna*) is gained. This is followed by equanimity toward all formations (*sankhāra upekkha ñāna*) and knowledge of conformity (*anuloma ñāna*). This stage of equanimity cannot be deliberately developed as it arises at the stage of *bhanga ñāna* and continues to development with the knowledge of conformity (*anuloma ñāna*). Equanimity does not develop easily in the practice. Only a yogi that practices diligently and according to instructions can reach the stage of equanimity of mind.

To realize *nibbāna* by attaining Path and Fruition Knowledge, one has to note the presently arising object with sustained mindfulness. At the stage of the preliminary path, one is discerning the truth of *dukkha* (*dukkha sacca*), removing the origin of *dukkha* (*samudaya sacca*), and also removing ignorance, craving and clinging momentarily. When *dukkha sacca* is discerned and *samudaya sacca* is removed, momentary cessation (*nirodha sacca*) is realized and the preliminary path is developed. Realizing *nibbāna* involves discerning *dukkha sacca*, abandoning *samudaya sacca*, realizing *nirodha sacca* and experiencing Path and Fruition Knowledge (*magga phala sacca*).

Removing ignorance, craving and clinging, one no longer commits unwholesome deeds leading to further existences. If you are a *sotāpanna*, you will only have seven more existences. When *nibbāna* is realized, the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*), the round of deeds (*kamma vatta*) and the round of effects (*vipāka vatta*) come to a complete halt.

You have now come across the Buddha's teachings in a human birth. You are also healthy and have the benefit of a teacher (*kalyāna mitta*). So use this opportunity to practice so that you can realize the benefits in this very life.

Practice *satipatthāna* meditation to discern the Four Noble Truths and attain Path and Fruition Knowledge in order to be free from a rebirth into the lower existences.

Practice so that the round of existences are not prolonged and you transcend birth, old age, illness and death. While having this opportunity, practice with respect, meticulously and thoroughly until Path and Fruition Knowledge is realized.

## Chapter 24: Questions and Answers

Q: When we meditate with our eyes shut, our mind still sees various things. Please explain how this seeing occurs.

The question does not appear to be referring to seeing with the assistance of eyes, but seeing as a result of mental projection. Even when our eyes are shut, we continue to see mental images that are projected by the mind. Sometimes in the practice when momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) becomes strong, one experiences mental seeing and mental hearing. These mental images and mental sounds arise due to perception (*saññā*). They are conceptual. They can be images of the Buddha, images related to the *Dhamma* or they can be images of being in a grand place, a forest or the mountains.

There is no ultimate truth in these images, so you should not take them seriously. Seeing Buddha images in the practice is not significant. The best way to pay respect to the Buddha is to discern the *Dhamma*. When you discern the *Dhamma*, you can see the Buddha within you. When you practice, you keep the *Dhamma* alive within yourself and you keep the Buddha within your heart. When mental seeing occurs during the practice, don't be carried away by it. Discuss your experiences with a skillful meditation teacher so that you don't have wrong view based on what you experience in the practice.

Q: To see the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* do we have to enter *vipassanā jhāna* or reach a stage of one-pointedness?

When one notes the presently arising object, the mind hits the target so the object of meditation and the mind are directly aligned. When the noting is effective, one discerns impermanence, *dukkha* and non-self. This is possible when the mind experiences concentration, a state of one-pointedness. When the object is noted with sustained mindfulness, the mind falls calm and collected on the object. When you have one-pointedness of mind, the mind is balanced and one is able to discern the arising and passing away of phenomena. Without concentration and one-pointedness of mind, knowledge cannot arise. Momentary concentration (*kanika samādhi*) is the approximate cause for knowledge to arise.

Q: Is it possible to retain mindfulness in daily life and gain insight wisdom. How can mindfulness be integrated into daily life?

In daily life, at certain hours of the day, one has to give priority to one's job and worldly matters. At other times, one gives priority to the *Dhamma* practice.

When you give priority to worldly matters, you have to retain mindfulness as much as possible. Even if you don't develop knowledge as you retain mindfulness in daily life, you will be mindful and have general awareness of what you are doing. It might seem difficult at first as the job requires fast thinking and a lot of reading. What you need to do is to keep general awareness of your activities as much as you can so that defilements don't have great momentum.

When you give priority to worldly matters, you are reminded that if *nāma* and *rūpa* have not been discerned, you will continue to have the wrong view of a living soul or a being and that Maha Brahma<sup>1</sup> created this world. Not being mindful, greed, aversion and delusion can arise in great momentum. As long as defilements arise, one can reach the lower existences at any time.

You must appreciate the value of a human birth. It is important to be a true and extraordinary human. Being born as a human, one should take advantage of the opportunity to practice. To practice during a retreat, one has to give up worldly matters. Then one's mind is uplifted and one becomes pure and clean and will gain knowledge. By realizing at least the first Path and Fruition Knowledge, one will gain the benefits of the *Dhamma*.

Your job may not allow time for a long retreat. In my view, to become worthy as a human being, and at least to attain the first Path and Fruition Knowledge, you must find a way to make time to practice at a retreat. Simply saying you are busy with work is an excuse and is not sufficient.

The Buddha-to-be gave up worldly pleasure and life in the palace. He went to a forest seeking the truth. The Buddha-to-be discovered the correct way to practice and to become totally free from the defilements that followed him through the round of existences. The Buddha knew the correct path from the wrong one. The Buddha also eradicated personality view (*sakkhāya dhitti*). If you are pricked by a thorn, you immediately try to take it out. Likewise, if your head catches fire and your hair is burning, you will immediately try to put out the fire. Similarly, the wrong view (*sakkhāya dhitti*) of a personality that has followed you throughout existences should be removed urgently.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to the concept of God in Western religions



When the defilements are removed, your mind will be uplifted. So, it is essential for you to take up the *satipatthāna* meditation practice. The Buddha eradicated all defilements without any remnants and became totally purified and worthy of the respect and the honor of all beings. Accepting the Buddha as the example, yogis must give time for the practice so that wrong view of personality belief (*sakkhāya dhitti*) is removed and the defilements that can take you to lower existences are also removed. So, please give priority to the practice to insure that you are free from enmity and danger.

Q: Once you reach enlightenment, do the defilements stop arising or are they made powerless by *sati*?

There are four kinds of noble persons: *sotāpanna* (stream enterer), *sakadagāmi* (twice returner), *anāgāmi* (non-returner) and *arahant* (one who is not reborn and is free from defilements). Maybe the questioner is asking about the enlightenment of these noble beings. Apart from an *arahant*, the other three are not totally free from defilements. They still have defilements left.

A *sotāpanna* has removed the wrong view of personality (*sakkhāya dhitti*), skeptical doubt (*vicikiccā*) and the hell-related hindrances (*vyāpāda*) as well as adherence to wrongful rites and rituals (*sīlabbata parāmāsa*). But, as a stream enterer, the gross forms of sensual desire and ill will are still left although they are not at such an extreme stage to take you to lower existences.

A *sakadagāmi* has eradicated gross forms of sensual desire and ill will (*kāmmacanda* and *vyāpāda*). An *anāgāmi* abandons the refined forms of *kāmmacanda* and *vyāpāda* but has not eradicated ignorance (*moha*), sloth and torpor (*tīna midda*) and craving for good existences (*bhava rāga*).

These are totally abandoned when one becomes an *arahant*. So, the enlightenment of an *arahant* eradicates all defilements. At certain stages of Path and Fruition Knowledge, certain defilements can be suppressed but will be removed totally only when one becomes an *arahant*.

If you suffer from a fatal illness, then you have to take the necessary measures to cure it. By taking medicine, the illness may be cured by 50%, but there can still be intermittent fever and so on. As the patient continues with the treatment, the illness can be cured by 75%. If the patient persists with the treatment to its completion, the illness can be completely cured. Compared to this example, the enlightenment of the four noble persons vary from one to another.

Q: Does *Māra* really exist or is he just a personification of the unwholesome mental states?

According to the text, there are different kinds of *Māra*. There is *Devapoda Māra*, the deity that gives trouble or hinders others from doing wholesome deeds. Especially in the era of the teachings of the Buddha (*sāsana*), when one is about to do wholesome deeds, this deity is believed to cause problems so that the person cannot perform wholesome deeds. Then there are defilements (*kilesa māra*). As long as one practices morality, concentration and wisdom, the force of the defilements become less and less to the extent of their practice. The defilements (*kilesa māra*) should be completely uprooted. When the defilements are removed completely, one becomes an *arahant* and will have no more rebirths. In this way, one overcomes *khanda māra*. One also overcomes the good and bad deeds that lead to further existences (*abisankhāra māra*). An arahant will not perform any good or bad deeds leading to further existences and therefore overcomes *abisankhāra māra*.

By practicing *satipatthāna* meditation, removing ignorance, craving and clinging (*avijja*, *tanhā* and *upādāna*), one will not perform actions (*kamma* and *vipāka*) that lead to further existences.

Understanding cause and effect, one respects the Buddha and develops faith in the teachings. So, rather than thinking whether *māra* exists as a person, what is more important is that you remove *kilesa māra* – the defilements that have caused you trouble throughout your existences. There can be ordinary and extreme forms of defilements. There can be selfishness and indulgence in greed (*lobha*) and extreme forms of aversion (*dosa*) in the form of hatred, anger and grudges. Not seeing the flaws of bad deeds is delusion (*moha*). One can commit much wrongdoing if one gives into these defilements.

Indulging in sensual desire, a person can be inflicted by disease. Taking intoxicants and drugs can lead to fatal consequences. Indulging in *dosa* and committing wrongdoing such as killing and tormenting others can be detrimental for oneself. By committing these wrong deeds, one's virtues die. So the most frightening *māra* is the defilements that arise internally.

It is only by practicing morality, concentration and wisdom that one can prevent, cure, suppress and uproot these defilements. One should aim to remove the defilements that give the most trouble. So, the *Devapoda Māra* that appears in the form of a being is not as frightening. Be afraid of defilements as they are the ones that have continued to give you trouble throughout your existences.

Q: Please kindly explain the *nāma* and *rūpa* process at the time of death and rebirth. If we continue to practice *vipassanā* ardently, can we prevent this process from happening?

The question has to be answered theoretically as it is not possible to be mindful of death or rebirth consciousness. There are three types of consciousness: the rebirth linking conscious, death consciousness and life continuing consciousness. Death consciousness and rebirth linking consciousness are the same kinds of consciousness.

There is a type of consciousness called life continuing consciousness (*bhavanga citta*), which is more obvious when you are asleep. When rebirth occurs, among materiality there is body sensitivity, life and gender, whether the person is a man or a woman. The four elements of earth (*pathavi*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*) and air (*vāyo*) plus visible objects (*vanna*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*) and nutrients (*oja*) form materiality. There are thirty kinds of materiality that are present at the moment of rebirth linking consciousness. At this stage, *nāma* and *rūpa* are very delicate and subtle and cannot be noted. It is not possible to be mindful of it at the time of rebirth linking consciousness.

If the yogi's mindfulness is strong and a yogi practices diligently, it is possible to discern *bhavanga citta*. This process, however, is not to be prevented by practice. Once you eradicate all defilements, these processes will naturally come to cessation.

Q: What are the qualities or characteristics of a *sotāpanna*?

In the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Patisamvidhāmagga*, the eight qualities of a *sotāpanna* are explained. A stream enterer only has seven more lives in the human or *deva* realm and has therefore eradicated the causes that lead to more than seven existences. The door to the lower existences has been closed. By practicing and becoming a *sotāpanna*, a person is endowed with seven kinds of noble possessions: faith (*saddha*), morality (*sīla*), moral shame (*hiri*) moral fear (*otappa*), generosity (*sutta*, *thyāga*) and wisdom (*paññā*). As a stream enterer has developed the Eightfold Noble Path, his or her path is correct and there will no longer be any digression to a wrong path.

A *sotāpanna* is free from internal enmity that leads to lower existences, keeps the five precepts, and therefore will not face the four kinds of dangers (self-blame and so on). A *sotāpanna* is a true son or daughter of the Buddha.

Even if you have deep faith in the Buddha and his teachings, if you are not a stream enterer, you will remain with thick layers of defilements and you will not be guaranteed

rebirth in a good existence. There are many hundreds of benefits that a *sotāpanna* obtains. It is not possible to state all the benefits that are described in the texts.

A *sotāpanna* carries the attainment of path and fruition consciousness to the next existence. A *sotāpanna*, even if indulging in sensual pleasures, depending on their rebirth, has a maximum of seven more existences and is guaranteed to realize *nibbāna* and extinguish all defilements

Q: What is the best way for yogis to express gratitude toward the meditation teachers?

The Buddha recommended *Dhamma puja*, undertaking the three *sikha* trainings: morality, concentration and wisdom. *Āmisa puja*, paying respect by offering material things, cannot maintain or prolong the teachings of the Buddha.

In fact, offering material things will not prolong or maintain the *sāsana* for even a short while. The *sāsana* can only be maintained by respecting and practicing the *Dhamma*.

Reciting and chanting is not the way of doing *Dhamma puja*. When the Buddha was about to enter *parinibbāna*, the deities were adorning the Buddha with many material things. The Buddha explained to Venerable Ananda that such forms of respect, offering material things and so forth, was not the true way of loving and cherishing the Buddha. The best way to pay respect to the Buddha was to practice *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* that lead to supra-mundane knowledge.

Organizing celebrations for the teacher is *āmisa puja* and is not the true way of paying respect and gratitude. To erect statues when the teacher passes away is also *āmisa puja*. Even constructing big monasteries and pagodas cannot maintain or prolong the *sāsana* for even one moment. It is only the practice of morality, concentration and wisdom that can ensure the propagation of the *sāsana*. If one practices meditation correctly and develops the mind to an appropriate level, then one can hand down the correct method of practice to the next generation. For as long as people practice the *sikha* training, the *sāsana* will be maintained.

This is not to say that celebrations are not important. They are not as important as the practice and are not as beneficial as undertaking *satipatthāna* meditation. See if your teacher lives and teaches the correct method and path in accordance with realizing *nibbāna* as the goal. If so, then one should undertake and develop the practice to experience at least the level of *sotāpanna* so that the Buddha's teachings can be maintained and taught to others.

The Buddha constructed the *Dhamma* pagoda (*Dhamma ceti*) by eradicating all defilements. *Ceti* is what people establish to pay respect and reflect upon the virtues of the Buddha. There are different types of *ceti*.

There are those that contain relics (*dhātu ceti*) and those that contain the Buddha's belongings (*pariboga ceti*) as well as those that contain images of the Buddha (*udesā ceti*).

None of these are as important as the construction of a *Dhamma ceti* through the practice of *satipatthāna* meditation. Practice the thirty seven requisites of enlightenment, become mindful of sensory consciousness and be aware of seeing, hearing, smelling, and so on, so that you can attain Path and Fruition Knowledge (*magga pala ñāna*) and construct a *Dhamma ceti* within your own heart. Constructing a *Dhamma ceti* doesn't involve brick, sand, water or cement. It is constructed through the practice of *satipatthāna* meditation.

By practicing diligently, one realizes the Four Noble Truths and can pay respect to the Buddha by offering the highest *Dhamma puja*.

Nowadays, we see many Buddhists giving priority to rituals and building pagodas (*ceti*) to pay respect to the Buddha. They fail to give priority to constructing a *Dhamma ceti* within their hearts. They say they are Buddhists but are confused and pay attention to superficial things only. So, please undertake the practice of the thirty seven requisites of enlightenment and start building a *Dhamma ceti* within your heart.

May you all be able to do *Dhamma puja* by practicing *satipatthāna* meditation in the way that the Buddha really liked and appreciated!

# Timeless Wisdom

You must appreciate the value of a human birth. It is important to be a true and extraordinary human. Being born as a human, one should take advantage of the opportunity to practice.

To practice during a retreat, one has to give up worldly matters. Then one's mind is uplifted and one becomes pure and clean and will gain knowledge. By realizing at least the first Path and Fruition knowledge, one will gain the benefits of the *Dhamma*.

