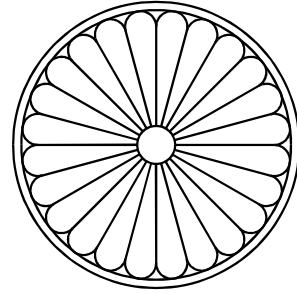


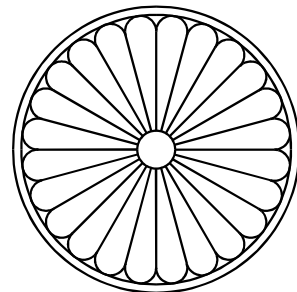
**Mahāsī Abroad**  
**Part II**  
*Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw*



Mahāsī Abroad — Part II

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# Remove this Half Sheet Before Stapling

## Nibbāna is Near When There is Mindfulness

*“Na so rajjati rūpesu, rūpaṃ disvā patissatto;  
viratta-citto vedeti, tañca najjhosa tithati.”*

At the moment of seeing, if one meditates on the act of seeing, craving for the object seen will not arise. This is true! If every time that seeing arises, one notes it continuously as ‘seeing, seeing’, craving for the object will not arise, nor will there be any reflections concerning it. On discerning the impermanent nature of seeing and the object seen, neither pleasure nor aversion will arise in connection with it. Therefore if one is mindful, the mind will be free from craving and there will be only passive sensations, meaning sensations without emotional reactions. The visual form seen does not become an object of desire.

*“Yathāssa passato rūpaṃ, sevato cāpi vedanaṃ;  
khiyati nopaciyati, evaṃ so caratissato; evaṃ  
apacinato dukkhaṃ, santike nibbāna vuccati.”*

As mentioned above, if due to mindfulness there is only passive sensation, suffering will have no chance to arise and thus it will cease. It means that if there is no mindfulness at the moment of seeing, craving and clinging to the object seen will arise, and the suffering of repeated rebirth will follow. On the other hand, if there is mindfulness, suffering will be got rid of as it has no chance to arise. So if one wishes to get rid of suffering and realise happiness, one must be mindful every time seeing arises. The development of this knowledge through meditation is called the factors of the preliminary path (*pubbabhāga maggaṅga*). By developing this preliminary path,

## Unwholesome Deeds (*Akusala Kamma*)

Bodily misdeeds means killing or harming living beings, unlawfully taking the property of others, and sexual misconduct. These three unwholesome deeds should always be avoided.

Verbal misdeeds means telling lies that harm others, creating discord by tale-bearing, using harsh or abusive language, and speaking untruths as if they were true (this concerns teaching false doctrines). These four kinds of speech are unwholesome and should always be avoided.

Acting or speaking to gain the property of others unlawfully is a wrong livelihood, which should always be avoided.

Careful observance of the five precepts amounts to obeying the Buddha’s advice to abstain from all evil deeds and to live a good life.

## Wholesome Deeds (*Kusala Kamma*)

Briefly, wholesome deeds consist of charity, morality and mental development through concentration and insight. Of these, charity or almsgiving is appreciated by almost every Buddhist. Those who practise charity as much as they can, earn the praise of others and enjoy freedom from blame. The recipients of their charity come to respect and like them, and therefore help them whenever they can. They will be reborn in fortunate and noble existences, and will prosper in all manner of ways.

Morality means taking refuge in the three gems of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. It also means observing the rules of moral conduct such as the five or eight precepts. Buddhists express their faith in and reliance on the three refuges and undertake to observe the precepts. Thus, they are protected from future rebirths in the lower worlds

such as in hell, as animals, as hungry ghosts or as demons (*asūra*). Instead they are reborn in the fortunate human and celestial realms where they can continue to prosper.

Mental Development is of two kinds: tranquillity meditation (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*). There is also a third kind, which is known as ‘*Ariya Magga Bhāvanā*’ (mind training leading to the supramundane path). Tranquillity meditation includes ten kinds of concentration devices (*kaṣiṇa*), ten kinds of impurity (*asubha*), ten kinds of recollection (*anussati*) and ten others, making a total of forty. Among these types of meditation, *Buddhānussati* means contemplation and veneration of the Buddha’s virtues such as the virtue of *Arahamaṃ* (worthiness of reverence by human beings, *devas* and *Brahmās*). How should this meditation be practised? By contemplating that the Buddha was endowed with the loftiest virtues of morality, concentration and wisdom, revering him will bring rebirth in fortunate and noble existences hereafter. Another of the Buddha’s virtues, *Sammāsambuddho*, is his unaided realisation of the Four Noble Truths. This virtue also entitles the Buddha to special veneration. Because of his omniscience and compassion in teaching what he knew to all beings to liberate them from suffering, he was also endowed with the virtue of *Buddho*. This virtue should also be contemplated. *Buddhānussati* may also be practised by reflecting on his other virtues. Every time Buddhists respect and venerate the Buddha, they are practising *Buddhānussati*.

The Buddha’s teachings are the fruit of his own practice and experience, which he faithfully transmitted to his disciples. If the Dhamma is religiously and rightly practised it can lead to extraordinary insights. Every time one reflects on the special virtues

which is the realisation of *nibbāna*, and the development of the Eightfold Noble Path will be explained later. By practising meditation the realisation of *nibbāna* through the mundane path is explained in the *Māhūkyaputta Sutta* as follows.

#### **Nibbāna is Remote When There is No Mindfulness**

“*Rūpaṃ disvā sati muṭṭhā, piyaṃ nimittaṃ mānasikaroto; Sārattacitto vedeti, taṅca ajjhosa tūthati.*” (*Samyuttanikāya II, 296, Theragāthā 327*)

“At the moment of seeing a visible form, if you forget to note the act of seeing, if it is beautiful you enjoy it and craving arises.”

This is what happens when one sees a desirable object.

“*Tassa vaḍḍhanti vedanā, anekā rūpasambhavā; abhijjhā ca vihesā ca, cittamassūpahaññati; evaṃ ācīnato dukkhaṃ, ārā nibbāna vuccati.*” (*Ibid.*)

“One, in whom craving has arisen, will have pleasant and unpleasant feelings concerning the object seen. If the object is desirable, joy will arise and thus craving for it. If the object is undesirable, aversion will arise and thus hatred of it. This craving and hatred disturb one’s mind. Unmindfulness amounts to the creation of suffering, i.e. by being reborn repeatedly one has to undergo suffering. Thus, one is far from *nibbāna*.”

One who is mindful of seeing whenever seeing arises is said to be near to *nibbāna*. This is explained as follows.

Now the five minutes are over. Within one minute there will be fifty or sixty good deeds of mindful noting. In five minutes there will be at least two hundred and fifty good deeds. In each act of noting, the effort to note is right effort (*sammā vāyāma*). Mindfulness is right mindfulness (*sammā sati*). Keeping the mind continuously on the object of meditation is right concentration (*sammā samādhi*). These three path factors belong to the section of concentration and are called 'samādhi maggaṅga' — path factors of concentration. As these three develop, with every act of noting, right understanding (*sammā dīṭṭhi*) will arise. The will inclining the mind to the meditation object is right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*). These two belong to the section of wisdom and are called 'paññā maggaṅga' — path factors of wisdom. Right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kammaṅga*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) belong to the section of morality and are called 'sīla maggaṅga' — path factors of morality. By practising this meditation they are also fulfilled. Thus, every time you note the rising and falling movements of the abdomen you are developing the Eightfold Noble Path, which is the Middle Way discovered by the bodhisatta. This Middle Way leads to insight knowledge and knowledge of the path and its fruition. So I urge you to practise this meditation even at home to the best of your ability. By practising thus may you all develop concentration and soon realise nibbāna through the path and fruition knowledge.

## The Four Noble Truths

### How to Gain the Maximum Knowledge

The truths that ought to be realised are the Four Noble Truths, namely: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

The noble truth of suffering means the five aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*). In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* it says that one must discern suffering to understand it correctly. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking must be noted at the moment of their occurrence to understand them correctly. If there is no awareness at the moment of their occurrence, the nature of their arising and passing away will not be seen correctly. Then craving for the apparent physical and mental phenomena will arise, which is the cause of suffering. Because of this craving, attachment to the phenomena will arise and volitional actions will be committed. These deeds cause rebirth, which is how the suffering of old age, disease, death, etc. comes into being.

However, if continuous noting is made at the moment of seeing, hearing, etc. the physical and mental phenomena will be correctly known. Then there will be a reduction of craving to a certain extent. This is getting rid of the cause of suffering. This accords with the teaching in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.

Every act of noticing in this manner reduces suffering, i.e. reduces the number of rebirths to some extent. By noting thus, the cessation of suffering is momentarily realised through the truth of the (mundane) path. This accords with the teaching that the cessation of suffering is to be realised and the path is to be developed. The supramundane cessation of suffering,

# Mahāsi Abroad

## Lectures

by

## The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw

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*The Teaching of the Buddha*

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of the Buddha's teaching and puts one trust in it, one is cultivating *kusala kamma* in the form of *Dhammānussati*.

Respectfully contemplating the good and noble virtues well-practised by the disciples of the Buddha amounts to cultivating *Saṅghānussati*.

### Cultivation of Loving-Kindness

Just as one wants to be free from suffering and to dwell at ease, all others wish for the same. Practising *mettā* means to cultivate the sincere desire for the happiness of others, whether particular individuals or all living beings without discrimination.

By practising *Mettā Bhāvanā*, *Buddhānussati* and so forth as much as one can, one will be following the Buddha's advice to cultivate wholesome deeds (*kusalassa upasampadā*).

### Vipassanā Kusala

This means to accumulate merit by meditating constantly on the impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self nature of the mental and physical phenomena within oneself and in others. This kind of meditation is following the Buddha's own practice which was directed towards realisation of the true nature of the aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*). When this merit matures, it leads to attainment of the noble path and nibbāna.

After the realisation of the four stages of the noble path, the Buddha urged his disciples to cultivate the four fruitions. How the mind is purified after the arising of the four *phala cittas* will be explained in another talk.

### The Practice Leading to Happiness

I have said how the Buddha's teaching should be practised with reverence. In this way one can obtain the happiness that

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**Preface to the Second Series**

If the practice of the Buddha's teaching on insight meditation spreads all over the world, many people will become free from craving, hatred, ignorance, conceit and other defilements. Then there will be universal peace and harmony among mankind. Motivated by this hope and conviction, the members of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Association, headed by Sir U Thwin, invited the Ven. Mahāsī Sayādaw, the pre-eminent teacher of insight meditation, to Sāsana Yeikthā in Yangon in 1949, just after Myanmar's attainment of Independence.

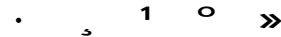
Since then, the Ven. Mahāsī Sayādaw resided at Sāsana Yeikthā, teaching the *Satipaṭṭhāna* practice to both monks and lay meditators, who came from all over Myanmar. With implicit faith in the Ven. Sayādaw's spiritual virtues and wisdom, many *bhikkhus* and lay disciples practised *vipassanā* correctly under his guidance. They then returned to their native places where they became instructors in the Mahāsī technique of insight meditation. According to the report read on the recent anniversary of the Mahāsī organization, there are now (in 1980) more than three hundred and twenty meditation centres in Myanmar. Altogether, more than eight hundred thousand meditators have practised the Mahāsī insight meditation method.

From 1952 onwards, the Ven. Mahāsī Sayādaw sometimes travelled abroad for the propagation of the Buddha-dhamma.

urable, but are suffering. Life is just an impersonal process of phenomena, and there is neither an ego nor a soul." This is the knowledge by comprehension (*sammasana-nāṇa*), i.e. knowledge of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā-nāṇa*), knowledge of unsatisfactoriness (*dukkhānupassanā-nāṇa*) and knowledge of not-self (*anattānupassanā-nāṇa*).

With the maturity of insight knowledge, nibbāna is realised through the path and fruition knowledges. Then one becomes at least a Stream-winner, and escapes forever from the four lower realms. One will be reborn in the good existences of the human and celestial realms, and within seven lives at the most one will gain the path and fruition of *Arahantship*. So it is essential to practise meditation to become at least a Stream-winner. Now I will explain in brief how to practise meditation.

Adjust your sitting posture so that you can sit comfortably and close your eyes. Focus your attention on your abdomen and take note of its rising and falling movements. If the movements are not clear, place one or both hands on the abdomen. Follow the rising movement from the beginning to the end attentively. Note the falling movement likewise. Noting should be done only mentally, not verbally. If, while thus noting, a thought arises, take note of it and then return to noting the rising and falling. If hearing arises, note as 'hearing, hearing' two or three times, then resume noting of the abdominal movements. If pain should arise, note as 'pain, pain' two or three times, then return to the abdominal movements. Practise in this manner for about five minutes.



one seeks. It will lead to rebirth in the happy existences of humans and celestial beings, and to the end of suffering. It will also be conducive to the preservation of the Buddha's teaching and to the happiness of those around you.

May you therefore be able to practise as I have explained to attain the happiness that you wish for and quickly reach the bliss of nibbāna.

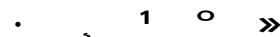
**Practising Vipassanā**

*Vipassanā* is the practice of observing the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena so that we may know them as they really are. Every time that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or know, these phenomena are constantly appearing and disappearing. It is important that we observe them and be aware of them constantly. However, at first it will not be possible to notice everything. We should, therefore, begin by noticing what we can. Every time we breathe, the abdomen rises and falls. This is the manifestation of the air element called *vāyodhātu*. We should begin by observing this process. Let us do this for three minutes, after sitting in a suitable position for meditation.

As there is no need to look around, the eyes should be closed. Focus your mind on the abdomen. When the abdomen rises, note 'rising'. When it falls, note 'falling'. It is not necessary to say 'rising' and 'falling' verbally, just make a mental note while observing the process with awareness.

If the mind wanders elsewhere, notice the wandering of the mind. Then return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If bodily fatigue or discomfort intervenes, note it two or three times, then return to noting the rising and falling

the body (*kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). While thus noting the abdominal movements, if a thought or reflection arises, take note of it. This is contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). Then continue the noting of the abdominal movements. If a pain or an ache arises, take note of it. This is contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). After noting it two or three times return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If hearing occurs, take note of it two or three times and return to noting the abdominal movement. If seeing occurs, take note of it two or three times. This is contemplation of mind-objects (*dharmānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). Then resume noting the abdominal movements. Now let us practise for four or five minutes.



Now the five minutes are over. In one minute there can be fifty or sixty acts of noting, so in five minutes there will be not less than two hundred and fifty. This is developing the good deed of insight meditation in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. While noting thus, with the improvement of concentration, analytical knowledge of mind and matter, knowledge by discerning conditionality, knowledge of arising and passing away, knowledge of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness may arise, and so nibbāna may be realised through path and fruition knowledge.

By practising meditation in the way explained above to the best of your ability, may you all very soon realise nibbāna.

thoughts, ideas, forms, etc., but mental objects are mostly material things, that is why mental objects are called matter. The analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*) occurs more in meditators of high intelligence and less in those of less intelligence. Although a meditator may have only a few occurrences of this knowledge, he or she is said to have accomplished it.

With the improvement of concentration, the meditator comes to know the cause and effect relationship between things in the following manner. While noting walking, one discerns that because of the intention to walk, walking follows. In sitting down or standing up, too, one discerns that because of the intention, the action follows. While noting rising and falling, one discerns that because of the intention to breathe in, the rising occurs, and because of the intention to breathe out, the falling occurs. While noting 'seeing', one discerns that because of the sight and the eye, seeing arises. In hearing, because of the ear and the sound, hearing arises. Thus, one realises that these actions are not caused by any self or ego, but are just the result of their corresponding causes. This is the knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*).

Furthermore, while noting 'walking', 'standing', 'sitting', 'rising', 'falling', 'seeing', 'hearing', 'stiff', 'painful', 'disappointed', 'happy', etc., one notices that the object noted and the noting mind constantly arise and pass away. In the beginning of meditation one noticed the beginning and end of each step, and the beginning and end of the abdominal movements. However, with the improvement of concentration one discerns that these processes occur in segments. This leads to the realisations that, "Things are neither permanent nor pleas-

2. Contemplation of feelings, i.e. mindfulness of sensations such as pleasant, unpleasant, neutral, etc.
3. Contemplation of mind, i.e. mindfulness of thoughts such as thinking, reflecting, etc.
4. Contemplation of mind-objects, i.e. mindfulness of seeing, hearing, touching, etc.

The Buddha said that these four foundations of mindfulness are the only way (*ekāyano*) to attain the path knowledge (*ñāyassa adhigamāya*) and to realise nibbāna (*nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya*). Since the Buddha claimed that this is the only way, it must be remembered that no other way can lead to the attainment of the path, its fruition and nibbāna. So, to escape from all suffering one must practise this mindfulness meditation to the best of one's ability. So that you can practise this meditation, I will explain the method in brief.

#### Practising Vipassanā for About Five Minutes

Please sit with your legs crossed or in any other suitable manner. Since it is not helpful to look around, please close your eyes. At first it is difficult to take note of all phenomena such as hearing, etc. so please begin with noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Place your mind on the abdomen and, when it rises, note mentally as 'rising'; when it falls, note it mentally as 'falling'. Do not think of rising and falling as words, but just note the actual movement of the abdomen. Try to follow the rising movement from the beginning to the end. Do the same with the falling movement. The awareness of this movement by mindful noting amounts to knowing the element of motion as an ultimate reality. According to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* this is contemplation of

So now there are Mahāsi meditation centres in Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Indonesia and other Asian countries. Some westerners have also visited Sāsana Yeikthā to practise meditation under the guidance of the Sayādaw. Among them, the German *bhikkhu* Nāṇaponika and Rear-Admiral Shattock practised to their entire satisfaction. After returning to their countries they wrote books describing their spiritual experiences and attainment of inner peace at Mahāsi Yeikthā.

Thus, the Mahāsi meditation method has become well known all over the world. Many people of various nationalities have come to Myanmar, practised *vipassanā* at Mahāsi Yeikthā. A few of them have also become *bhikkhus* or nuns. The Ven. Sayādaw's missionary work made much progress since 1970. More than eighty of the Sayādaw's books have been published by the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization and about thirty titles have been translated into English.

At the invitation of Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma (England), Mr. Joseph Goldstein and Mr. Jack Kornfield (America) and others, the Ven. Mahāsi Sayādaw and some of his disciples left Myanmar on a world missionary tour in 1979. Altogether he spent 118 days abroad, visiting nine countries: Thailand, Japan, USA, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany. The talks in English that the Sayādaw prepared for that missionary tour were published in the first series of 'Mahāsi Abroad'.

The Sayādaw went to England on 29th May 1980 for a second time at the invitation of Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma, U Myat Saw and others. The Sayādaw formally opened the Mahāsi meditation centre at Oakenholt, Oxford and gave instructions for long-term *vipassanā* practice. He returned to Yangon on 23rd July 1980, having spent 56 days in England.

movements. If a sound is heard, note it two or three times, then return to the rising and falling. Continue to note in this way for just three minutes.

•     •     1

Within a minute there are about fifty or sixty moments of noting, so in three minutes there are no less than a hundred and fifty such moments. All of these acts of noting are cultivation of *vipassanā kusala* in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. When our concentration deepens as we go on noting in this way, we will come to know mind and matter as distinct phenomena, and the causal relationship between them. We will realise that they arise and pass away constantly, which is their characteristic of impermanence. In the process we will develop progressive stages of insight, eventually realising nibbāna with the knowledge of the path and its fruition.

May you therefore practise this *vipassanā* meditation with as much vigour as you can and quickly attain nibbāna.

Then the lay meditators of Nepal, where the birth place of the Lord Buddha lies, invited the Mahāsi Sayādaw to visit their country for the dissemination of the Dhamma.

In 1960 the Nepalese nun, Daw Sudhammavati, came to Myanmar and practised *vipassanā* at Sāsana Yeikthā. On returning to Nepal, she and the Myanmar nun Daw Gunavati, started Theravāda Buddhist missionary work and gave instructions in *Satipatthāna Vipassanā* as taught by the Mahāsi Sayādaw. Moreover, Bhikkhu Sumaṅgala, Bhikkhu Nāṇaponika and other Nepalese *bhikkhus* came to Myanmar and practised *vipassanā* under the Sayādaw's guidance. So the Mahāsi method is now fairly well established at the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu, Lumbini and other places in Nepal.

The Nepalese *bhikkhus* and lay devotees have often come to Myanmar on pilgrimage and to practise *vipassanā* at Mahāsi Yeikthā. The largest group was led by the nun Daw Sudhammavati. They practised *vipassanā* at Sāsana Yeikthā for a month. They told the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization that they would like to invite the Ven. Sayādaw to visit Nepal in the Summer. Moreover, the President of the Lumbini Development Project, while on a visit to Yangon, requested the Sayādaw to visit Nepal for the laying of a foundation stone at Lumbini.

The Ven. Sayādaw kindly accepted the invitations of the Nepalese Buddhists and prepared the three talks of the second series for the people of Nepal. These talks were translated into English by U Nyi Nyi and Bhikkhu Aggadhamma. The talks were translated into Nepalese and published by Bhikkhu Nāṇaponika.

In response to the wishes of the Nepalese Buddhists, the Mahāsi Sayādaw opened a meditation centre in Nepal and taught *vipassanā* meditation for about twenty days.

## The Buddha's Method of Meditation

### The Dhamma in the Buddha's Own Words

*"Buddha so bhagavā bodhāya dhammaṃ deseti."*<sup>1</sup>

"After practising and realising the true Dhamma, the Buddha taught it so that others could practise it and realise the Dhamma as far as possible."

The Dhamma is not mere speculation or theory. The Buddha practised it himself, realised the truth, then preached it. So every intelligent person should practise it religiously and seriously.

How did the Buddha practise and teach it? Before his attainment of full enlightenment, the bodhisatta realised by direct knowledge that all beings (including himself) were reborn repeatedly due to deeds done with attachment. With his divine eye, the bodhisatta saw that beings after death were reborn according to their deeds. Every time one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or knows, desire and attachment arise regarding mental and physical phenomena. Because of this desire and attachment there is rebirth; and due to rebirth one has to undergo the suffering of old age, disease, death, and so forth, repeatedly. Whenever one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or knows, if one can notice the nature of arising and passing away no attachment will arise. Then there will be no rebirth, old age, disease or death. Thus, there will be the extinction of this whole mass of suffering. On having realised this, the bodhisatta, meditated continuously on the nature of the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment. How he finally gained full Enlightenment is described as follows.

cause-and-effect relationship between them, and their characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self. This is in conformity with the teaching "*Sāmāhito yathābhutaṃ pajānāti*" — concentration leads to seeing things as they really are, or right view.

### Right View During Meditation

When concentration is strong, you can discriminate between the visual object, the eye and the seeing, in every act of noting. Among these three, the visual object and the eye are matter, which has no consciousness. Eye-consciousness and noting are mind, which has consciousness. So in every act of noting the seeing, you discern that there are only mind and matter, and no ego or soul. This is analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*).

In hearing also, you come to know that the ear and sound are matter, and that ear-consciousness and noting are mind. Again, there are only mind and matter. In smelling, the nose and odour are matter, and the nose-consciousness and noting are mind. In tasting, the tongue and taste are matter, and tongue-consciousness and noting are mind. When you note 'walking, walking', 'standing, standing', 'sitting, sitting', 'touching, touching', 'rising, falling', etc. you realise that the body and the tangible objects are matter, and that tactile-consciousness and noting are mind. There too, there are only mind and matter.

When you note 'reflecting', 'thinking', etc., you come to know that the seat of consciousness and the mental object are matter, and consciousness and noting are mind. There are only mind and matter. Here the objects of mind can be reflections,

### The Buddha's Method of Meditation

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tration and the two path factors of wisdom. This is in conformity with the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, which says that the Middle Way causes the Eye of Wisdom to arise.

Right speech (*sammā vācā*), right action (*sammā kam-manta*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) belong to the section of morality. By practising meditation these path factors of morality are also fulfilled. The three *samādhi maggaṅgas*, the two *paññā maggaṅgas* and the three *śīla maggaṅgas* are called, in other words, the Middle Way or the Eightfold Noble Path. Continuous noting of every act of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking develops new path factors. This development of the path factors begins from analytical knowledge of mind and matter up to the knowledge of equanimity with regard to formations, and amounts to the arising of the Eye of Wisdom. When this mundane Eye of Wisdom is mature, nibbāna is realised through the supramundane path and fruition knowledges (*maggā ñāṇa* and *phala ñāṇa*). By practising the Middle Way, the bodhisatta developed insight knowledge, and after attaining the path and fruition of *Arahantship*, became a Fully Enlightened One. After becoming a Buddha he preached the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* so that others may, like himself, realise nibbāna through the Noble path and fruition knowledges by meditating on the arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena.

In the *Satipatthāna Sutta*, the way to practise insight meditation is explained in detail. It is divided into four main sections:

1. Contemplation of the body, i.e. mindfulness of bodily activities such as walking, standing, sitting and lying down.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from *Pāthika Vagga, Dīghanikāya*.



### The Practice of Mindfulness in Brief

“*Diṭṭha-suta-muta-viññātesu dhammesu diṭṭhe diṭṭha mattaṃ bhavissati, sute suta mattaṃ bhavissati, mute muta mattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññāta mattaṃ bhavissati.*”

While meditating on seeing, there will be only passive consciousness of the visual object, while meditating on hearing there will be only passive consciousness of sound, while meditating on smelling, tasting or touching, there will be only passive consciousness of odour, taste or touch, while meditating on thinking there will be only passive consciousness of thought. To have this kind of passive consciousness one must practise meditation constantly. If one has only passive consciousness, this is the end of all suffering. This was the Buddha’s brief teaching to Bhikkhu Māluṅkyaputta.

After listening to this teaching, Bhikkhu Māluṅkyaputta reported to the Buddha how he realised that if one is not mindful of seeing at the moment of its arising, one is bound to meet suffering and thus one is far from nibbāna. However, if there is mindfulness, one will be free from suffering and near to nibbāna. The Buddha confirmed this by preaching the Dhamma on “*Rupaṃ disvā sati mutthā ...*” as mentioned above.

Bhikkhu Māluṅkyaputta meditated on seeing, hearing, etc., at the moment of their arising, and before long became an *Arahant*. So if you want to be a Stream-winner, practise meditation continuously on seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking whenever they arise. If you practise thus, when concentration becomes strong you will gain direct knowledge of the difference between mind and matter, the

## The Teaching of the Buddha

“*Buddho loke samuḍḍhā hitāya sabbapāninaṃ.*”  
(Sutta-Nipāta Aṭṭhakathā, II, 293.)

The Buddha appeared on Earth for the welfare of all humans, *devas* (celestial beings or shining ones) and *Brahmās* (pure or chaste ones).

It is very rare for a Buddha to appear on Earth. There are far more world cycles (*kappas*) in which Buddhas do not appear than those in which they do. Among the world cycles in which Buddhas appear, there are those in which only one Buddha appears and those in which two, three or four Buddhas appear. The present world cycle is one in which a maximum of five Buddhas appears. Of these five Buddhas, the Buddha Metteyya will not appear until millions of years after the disappearance of the present (Gotama) Buddha’s teaching. The teachings of the former Buddhas also disappeared from the world long after their final release from the cycle of birth and death. The eras in which the Buddhas’ teachings lasted so long are rare. According to the Commentaries, the teaching of Gotama Buddha will last for only five thousand years before its disappearance from the world. It is now 2,524 years (in 1981) since the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*. Already the number of people in the world who respect and accept the true teaching of the Buddha has dwindled. The disappearance of this *sāsana* in another 2,500 years is already approaching.

Gotama Buddha was born 2,604 years ago. Before that, for many millions of years, nobody had a chance to listen to the true teaching of the Buddha, to know it and to practise it. People of those former times were generally lacking in whole-

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known as the path factor of mundane right view (*vipassanā sammā diṭṭhi maggaṅga*).

After that, the knowledge arises that knows the instantaneous passing away of whatever object is noted, which is called “knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-nāṇa*).” When this knowledge arises, bright lights are seen even in the dark. The body seems very light and both the body and mind are at ease. Noting becomes very sharp and pleasant feelings occur. This is also mundane right view.

Next, the stage is reached in which only the dissolution of the objects noted is evident. It is known as knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-nāṇa*), which is also mundane right view. Following this there are the knowledges in which the objects noted are seen as fearful, miserable and disgusting. These are knowledge of fearfulness (*bhaya-nāṇa*), knowledge of misery (*ādinava-nāṇa*) and knowledge of disgust (*nibbida-nāṇa*). All these are also mundane right view.

Then a distinctive knowledge arises where bodily and mental processes (*saṅkhārā*) are perceived without much effort, and with equanimity. This is the knowledge of equanimity with regard to formations (*saṅkhārupekkha-nāṇa*), which is also mundane right view.

From *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-nāṇa* to *saṅkhārupekkha-nāṇa* the will that inclines the mind towards the meditation object to develop mundane right view is the path factor of mundane right thought (*vipassanā sammā saṅkappa maggaṅga*), which arises in every act of noting. Mundane right view and right thought belong to the section of wisdom (*paññā maggaṅga*).

Development of the insight knowledges up to *saṅkhārupekkha-nāṇa* is based on three path factors of concen-

### The Correct Method of Insight Meditation

“*Bodhisatto aparena samayena pañcāsu upādānakkhandhesu udayabbaya nupassi vihāsi<sup>1</sup> ... tassa pañcāsu upādānakkhandhesu udayabbaya nupassino viharato na cīrasseva anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ vimuccī.*”

After reflecting on how suffering arose and ceased, the bodhisatta meditated on the arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena. While meditating thus, before long his mind became completely detached. He gained deliverance from all defilements, i.e. he attained the path and fruition knowledge of *Arahantship* and became a Buddha. The Pāli text shows how Buddha Vipassī also practised the same method and became a Buddha.

In this practice one has to take note of the arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena in one’s own body at the time of their occurrence. If no note is made, one is likely to mistake them as permanent, happy and as a self. If no noting is made at the moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, they are not correctly seen and are mistaken to be happiness and self. Thus attachment to them arises. This attachment is called ‘*upādāna*’ in Pāli. The mental and physical phenomena that are the objects of attachment are called ‘*upādānakkhandhā*’.

Because there is no proper awareness of these physical and mental phenomena at the moment of their occurrence, attachment arises and wholesome and unwholesome deeds are committed. In every existence, when death approaches, the deed (*kamma*), the sign of the deed (*kamma-nimitta*) or an indication

<sup>1</sup> *Iti rupaṃ*, etc. omitted for brevity. (*Dīghanikāya, Mahāvagga 30*)

some *kamma* (meritorious deeds) and very few of them attained fortunate, noble and happy existences after death.

### Listening to and Practising the Dhamma

With the appearance of the Buddha, the true Dhamma was taught. After listening to his teaching, many people practised charity (*dāna*) and morality (*sīla*), and so prospered and were reborn in the celestial realms. Millions also became *Arahants* and attained nibbāna. Most of those people would have been from Nepal and India, because Prince Siddhattha was born in Nepal, and practised the Dhamma and attained Enlightenment in India. He preached the Dhamma in that region for forty-five years and the people there usually practised it, so they prospered and attained nibbāna, gaining release from all suffering.

### The Dhamma Should Also Be Practised Now

Today, those who can listen to the true teaching of the Buddha should consider themselves very fortunate, so they should religiously follow and practise the Dhamma. The people now living in Nepal and India, where the true teaching originated, should be especially devoted to practising it. What are those true teachings of the Buddha?

“*Sabbā pāpassa ākaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā, sacitta pariyoḍāpanaṃ, etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*”

“Abstain from all unwholesome deeds, cultivate wholesome deeds and purify your mind. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.”

of one's next birth (*gati-nimitta*) becomes an object of consciousness. This object conditions one's next birth. Because of rebirth one has to suffer old age, disease, death, and so forth. On proper reflection one will find this fact to be very alarming.

So for the extinction of attachment and craving, for the cessation of the five aggregates and to escape from all suffering, the bodhisatta meditated on the arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena at the time of their occurrence. While thus meditating, extraordinary insight knowledge arose in him. After attaining the path and fruition of *Arahantship* he became a Fully Enlightened One (a Buddha).

Having become a Fully Enlightened One, the Buddha preached the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (The Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of the Dhamma) so that others might practise meditation on the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment. By developing extraordinary insight knowledge they can realise nibbāna through path and fruition knowledge, and thus gain deliverance from all suffering, like himself. In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* it is mentioned that the Middle Way discovered by the Buddha caused the “Eye of Wisdom and Knowledge” to arise. Here, the eye of wisdom and knowledge means insight knowledge, and path and fruition knowledge. It also clarifies that the Middle Way means the Eightfold Noble Path. The correct awareness of seeing, hearing, and so on is also the Eightfold Noble Path.

### The Development of the Eightfold Noble Path

If the development of the Eightfold Noble Path is to be explained in brief, the effort to take note of seeing, hearing, etc. is right effort (*sammā vāyāma*). The awareness of seeing,

one is bound to realise nibbāna through the attainment of the supramundane path.

The *Māhūkyaputta Sutta* says that if one meditates to escape from suffering, when one realises the true nature of physical and mental phenomena, one near to nibbāna. How? If one practises meditation, insight knowledge will develop, and finally one will realise nibbāna through path and fruition knowledge. If one attains the path and fruition knowledge for the first time, one becomes a Stream-winner and escapes from the four lower worlds for ever. One will be reborn seven times at the most in the fortunate existences of the human and celestial realms. Finally, one will attain *Arahantship* and gain final deliverance from this mass of suffering, such as rebirth, old age, death, etc.

On attainment of the path of a Once-returned (*sakadāgāmi*), within two existences one will gain final deliverance. On attainment of the path of a Non-returned one will escape from the suffering connected with the human and celestial worlds and will be reborn in the Brahmā worlds. There one will become an *Arahant* and gain final deliverance.

So to extinguish suffering at the end of this life, you must practise intensive meditation on seeing every time it arises. At least, you should practise it enough to become a Stream-winner to escape from the four lower realms, so try to practise as much as possible.

Although I have only mentioned meditation on seeing, you should also meditate on hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking in the same manner. If there is no mindfulness of these, one is far from nibbāna, but if there is mindfulness one is near to nibbāna.

hearing etc. is right mindfulness (*sammā sati*). Keeping the mind on the object of meditation is right concentration (*sammā samādhi*). These three factors belong to the concentration section and so are called *samādhi maggaṅgas*.

As and when this concentration becomes stronger, insight knowledge develops as follows. Whenever one is mindful of walking, standing, sitting, lying down, moving, touching, rising, falling, etc., one can discriminate movement as physical phenomena and awareness as mental phenomena. Thus one distinguishes between mind and matter. This is called “analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*).” This knowledge arises at the beginning of good concentration.

Then one comes to know that because of the intention to move, movement arises; because of the intention to sit, sitting occurs; because of the in-breath, there is the rising of the abdomen; because of the out-breath, there is the falling of the abdomen; because there is an object to touch, the sensation of touch arises; because there is something to take note of, noting takes place. This understanding of the relationship between cause and effect is called “knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*).”

When concentration becomes stronger in every act of noting, the instantaneous arising and passing away of both the object noted and the noting mind become evident. On seeing thus by direct knowledge the reflection arises, “Things are neither permanent nor pleasurable, but all are suffering. Life is simply phenomena and there is no person or ego.” This reflection, which arises from one's personal experience, is called “knowledge by comprehension (*sammasana-ñāna*).” It is also