

Knowing and Seeing

**Talks and Questions-and-Answers
at a Meditation Retreat in Taiwan
by Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw**

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Table of Contents

Foreword	I
by Taiwanese Bhikshuni Hong Shien	
Introductory Note	III
Talk 1: How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption	1
Questions and Answers 1	21
Talk 2: How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects	27
Questions and Answers 2	47
Talk 3: How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditations	57
Questions and Answers 3	77
Talk 4: How to Discern Materiality	91
Questions and Answers 4	113
Talk 5: How to Discern Mentality	133
Questions and Answers 5	145
Talk 6: How to See the Links of Dependent-Origination	157
Questions and Answers 6	165
Talk 7: How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna	183
Questions and Answers 7	203
Talk 8: The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings	221
Talk 9: The Most Superior Type of Offering	237
Appendix 1: Glossary of Untranslated Pāḷi Terms	259
Appendix 2: Centres Teaching the Pa-Auk System	263

Foreword

As most of us know, the three trainings of virtuous conduct, concentration, and wisdom are the three stages of Buddhist practice. Through the practice of the three trainings, an ordinary person can attain the supreme Nibbāna and become a noble one.

The Visuddhimagga compiled by the Venerable Buddhaghosa is an exposition of the three trainings. It is based on the Pāḷi texts and various commentaries, and explains the seven stages of purification and sixteen insight-knowledges. But how to practise them has been a difficult question for all Buddhists for many generations. For this, we are fortunate to have the Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw. His teaching is the same as, indeed it is in much more detail than what is described in the Visuddhimagga. Based on the very same sources, the Pāḷi texts, commentaries and Visuddhimagga, the Sayadaw teaches meditators, step by step, those stages of purification and insight-knowledges.

The goal of the teaching at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, as in accordance with the orthodox teaching, is to realize Nibbāna in this very life. To achieve that end, meditators must comprehend all mentality-and-materiality, also known as the five aggregates, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. As for the objects of Vipassanā meditation, they are not only the internal and external five aggregates, but also the five aggregates of the past, future, present, gross, subtle, superior, inferior, far, and near. Only after comprehending penetratively all of them as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, can meditators attain the noble paths and fruitions, and gradually eradicate or reduce various types of defilement. After having seen Nibbanā for the first time, meditators can clearly see the first path and fruition they have attained, what defilements they have abandoned, and what defilements they still have to abandon. Then they continue to practise Vipassanā to attain higher paths and fruitions up to the fourth and final stage, arahantship, whereby they are no longer subject to rebirth and will attain final Nibbāna after death.

It is very fortunate that I, in this present age wherein Buddhism is degenerating, still have the opportunity to practise the original system of Buddhist meditation. This makes me feel as if I were back in the Buddha's time. For this I am very grateful to the Sayadaw, who spent many years practising with the Pāḷi texts and commentaries in the forest to rediscover this teaching. It is out of his compassion that he sacrifices much of his time to teach meditation for the benefit of humankind. His teaching is markedly clear and detailed throughout the seven stages of purification. This is a rare teaching and hard to come by, not only in Taiwan, but in the whole world.

From April to June, the Sayadaw conducted a two-month meditation retreat for the first time at Yi-Tung Temple in Taiwan. Among many Taiwanese, his teaching will definitely arouse interest in the original meditation. It is also a great help to fill in the gap of meditation practices of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Hopefully the reader will, after reading the profound talks, and answers to questions, given in Taiwan by the Sayadaw, be able to have a deeper understanding of the Buddha's teachings.

May the true Dhamma endure long. May the publication of this book provide a refuge for those who wish to know what are the rounds of birth-and-death, and wish to attain liberation. May this book be able to guide more people to the right path to liberation, so that they can realize for themselves: 'all formations are impermanent, all dhammas are non-self, and Nibbāna is utterly peaceful.' To see that is certainly not something impracticable, but something absolutely practical. Only he who sees it knows it, and only he who experiences it can enjoy the bliss of the Dhamma.

Bhikshuni Hong Shien
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**Namo Tassa,
Bhagavato,
Arahato,
Sammā-
Sambuddhassa.**

**Homage to Him,
the Blessed,
the Worthy,
the Perfectly
Self-Enlightened One**

Introductory Note

The talks in this book were given by the Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, Pa-Auk, Mawlamyine, Myanmar, while he conducted a two-month meditation retreat at Yi-Tung Temple, Sing Choo City, Taiwan. In the course of those two months, apart from giving daily meditation instructions to individual meditators, the Sayadaw read seven main talks, which had been prepared at Pa-Auk prior to the retreat. Those talks were interspersed with seven Question-and-Answer talks; the questions having been given beforehand by the meditators at the retreat, and the answers then having been likewise prepared beforehand by the Sayadaw. The Sayadaw read a further two talks. One was read to the general public on the occasion of Vesākha day (the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and final passing away). The other was read at the end of the retreat, and was the traditional talk on offerings, for the chief donor, the abbess of Yi-Tung Temple, other donors, and the organizers and helpers at the retreat. All sixteen talks had been prepared in English, and then read in English by the Sayadaw. For the benefit of the audience, who were all Chinese, the talks were also translated beforehand into Chinese, and the Chinese read concurrently with the Sayadaw's reading.

The talks are concerned mainly with the Sayadaw's principal approach to insight meditation: tranquillity meditation as the vehicle for insight meditation. The Sayadaw teaches also bare-insight meditation, which is why he provides an exposition of the orthodox instructions for both methods.

The talks, as they appear here, are not word-perfect versions of the talks as they were given in Taiwan. This is because the Say-

adaw decided that the material should be edited prior to publication. To that end, the Sayadaw requested that the language be changed in any way deemed necessary, and he was very frequently consulted during the entire editing process.

The editing has mostly been of form and not content. Efforts have been made to retain the Sayadaw's particular way of speaking English when he discusses with and instructs meditators. Since the Sayadaw was addressing Taiwanese and Malaysian-Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhists, there are considerably fewer of his usual copious references from the Theravāda texts and commentaries. It should here be mentioned that, when the Sayadaw translates a Pāḷi quotation, he usually follows the Burmese custom of including a gloss from the commentaries.

Most of the Pāḷi terms used by the Sayadaw have been translated. The Pāḷi has initially been retained in brackets, after which it has usually been omitted; as for example, initially: 'impermanent (*anicca*)', subsequently: 'impermanent'. Conversely, some terms, awkward in English, have been left untranslated, such as: *kasiṇa* (totality? device?), *deva* (god? deity?), *brahmā* (supreme being on a very high plane of existence?). Appendix 1 is a glossary which gives definitions rather than translations of those terms.

The editorial priorities have been to maintain the required degree of accuracy, and to try to make the talks readable to newcomer, meditator, and scholar alike. Complete uniformity in editing has, for those reasons, been somewhat compromised. In the genesis of this book, diverse helping hands have been involved in the translating, composing, and editing. For any errors or faults in the material, the helping hands alone are responsible.

Editors

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

‘Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see.’

~ The Buddha,
Sabbāsava Sutta (M.2).

‘One’s own opinion is the weakest authority of all...’

~ Venerable Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa,
Sumaṅgalavilāsini (DA.567-8).

‘This is not my method. I have just taken it from the Pāli texts and commentaries.’

~ Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw,
Pa-Auk Forest Monastery,
Mawlamyine. Myanmar.

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

Introduction

I am very happy to have come to Taiwan at the invitation of some Taiwanese monks and nuns who stayed at Pa-Auk Meditation Centre near Mawlamyine in Myanmar. While in Taiwan I would like to teach you something about the system of meditation taught at Pa-Auk Meditation Centre. The system of meditation is based upon instructions found in the Pāḷi¹ Buddhist texts and the Visuddhimagga, or The Path of Purification. We believe that the meditation taught in the Pāḷi Buddhist texts is the same as the meditation practised by the Buddha himself, and taught by him to his disciples during his lifetime.

Why Meditate?

First we should ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Buddha teach meditation?’, or ‘What is the purpose of meditation?’

The purpose of Buddhist Meditation is to attain Nibbāna. Nibbāna is the cessation of mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*). To reach Nibbāna, therefore, we must completely destroy both wholesome mental states rooted in non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion, and unwholesome mental states rooted in greed, anger, and delusion, and which can produce new birth, aging, sickness and death. If we can destroy them totally by the insight-knowledges and path knowledge (*ariyamagga*) then we will reach Nibbāna. In other words, Nibbāna is release and freedom from the suffering of the round of rebirths, and the cessa-

¹ For untranslated Pāḷi terms, please refer to Appendix 1.

tion of rebirth, aging, sickness, and death. We are all subject to the suffering of rebirth, aging, sickness, and death, and so to free ourselves from the many forms of suffering we need to practise meditation. Since we wish to be free from all suffering we must learn how to meditate in order to attain Nibbāna.

What Is Meditation?

So what is meditation? Meditation consists of Samatha and Vipassanā meditation, which both must be based upon virtuous conduct of body and speech. In other words, meditation is the development and perfection of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Right view and right thought taken together are called the training of insight or wisdom. This the Buddha called Vipassanā right view (*vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi*) and path right view (*maggā-sammā-diṭṭhi*). Right speech, right action, and right livelihood taken together are called the training of virtuous conduct. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration taken together are called the training of concentration, which is Samatha meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*).

The Noble Eightfold Path

Now, I would like to explain a little bit more about each of the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

What is right view? Right view consists of four kinds of knowledge. First there is the insight-knowledge of the Truth of Suffering. The Truth of Suffering is the same as the five aggregates of clinging. Second there is the insight-knowledge of the Cause of Suffering which is the insight-knowledge which discerns the causes of the five aggregates of clinging. In other words, it is the insight-knowledge of dependent-origination. These first two truths are the objects of insight-knowledge. Third, there is the realisation of Nibbāna, which is the cessation

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

of the five aggregates of clinging. And fourth, there is the understanding of the Noble Eightfold Path which is the way of practice which leads to the realisation of Nibbāna.

The second factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right thought. Right thought is applied thought to the object of the Truth of Suffering, which means the five aggregates of clinging; applied thought to the object of the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, which means the causes of the five aggregates of clinging; applied thought to the object of the Cessation of Suffering, Nibbāna; and finally, applied thought to the object of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

Of these two, right thought applies the mind to the object of the Truth of Suffering, which is the five aggregates of clinging, and right view understands the object as it really is. In the same way these two work together to apply the mind to the object of each of the Four Noble Truths, and to understand each object. So because they work together in this way, they are taken together, and are called the training of wisdom (*paññā-sikkhā*).

The third factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right speech. Right speech is abstaining from telling lies, backbiting, harsh speech, and useless talk.

The fourth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right action. Right action is abstaining from killing living beings, from stealing, and from sexual misconduct.

The fifth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right livelihood. This means abstaining from obtaining a living by wrong speech or wrong actions such as by killing living beings, stealing, or lying. For laypeople this also includes abstaining from the five types of wrong trade, which are: trading in weapons, trading in humans, trading in animals for meat, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poisons.

The three factors of right speech, right action, and right livelihood are called the training of virtuous conduct (*sīla-sikkhā*).

The sixth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right effort. Right effort is of four kinds. They are: the effort to stop the

Knowing and Seeing

arising of unwholesome states that have not yet arisen; the effort to remove unwholesome states that have already arisen; the effort to arouse the arising of wholesome states that have not yet arisen; and the effort to increase wholesome states that have already arisen. In order to develop these four types of right effort, we must practise and develop the three trainings of virtuous conduct, concentration, and wisdom.

The seventh factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right mindfulness. There are four kinds of right mindfulness. They are mindfulness of body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of dhammas. Here dhammas mean the fifty-one mental-concomitants excluding feeling, or in another way, dhammas mean the five aggregates of clinging, the twelve internal and external sense-bases, the eighteen elements, the seven factors of enlightenment, the Four Noble Truths, etc. But in brief the four types of mindfulness can be reduced to only two, mindfulness of materiality and mindfulness of mentality.

The eighth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right concentration. Right concentration means the first jhāna (absorption), the second jhāna, the third jhāna, and the fourth jhāna. These are called right concentration according to the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. In the Path of Purification, right concentration is explained in more detail as the four fine-material jhānas (*rūpa-jhāna*), the four immaterial jhānas (*arūpa-jhāna*) and access concentration (*upacāra-samādhī*).

There are some people who have a great accumulation of pāramīs and can attain Nibbāna simply by listening to a brief or detailed talk on the Dhamma. However, most people do not have the pāramī to attain Nibbāna simply by listening to a talk on the Dhamma, and they must practise the Noble Eightfold Path. These people are called person-to-be-led (*neyya-puggala*). These people must develop the Noble Eightfold Path step by step, which means in the order of virtue, concentration, and wisdom. After purifying their virtue they must train in concentration, and after purifying their mind by way of concentration

practice they must train in wisdom.

How to Develop Concentration

How should they develop concentration?

There are forty subjects of Samatha meditation, and a person can develop any of these in order to attain concentration.

For those who cannot decide which meditation subject to choose they should start with mindfulness-of-breathing. Most people are successful in meditation by using either mindfulness-of-breathing or the four-elements meditation. Therefore, I shall now explain briefly how to practise mindfulness-of-breathing.

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing

The development of mindfulness-of-breathing is taught by the Buddha in the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta. There he says:

‘Bhikkhus, here in this Teaching a bhikkhu having gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty place, sits down cross-legged and keeps his body erect and establishes mindfulness on the meditation object; only mindfully he breathes in and only mindfully he breathes out.

1. Breathing in a long breath he knows, “I am breathing in a long breath”, or breathing out a long breath he knows, “I am breathing out a long breath”.

2. Breathing in a short breath he knows, “I am breathing in a short breath”, or breathing out a short breath he knows, “I am breathing out a short breath”.

3. “Experiencing the whole breath body I will breathe in”, thus he trains himself, and, “Experiencing the whole breath body I will breathe out”, thus he trains himself.

4. “Calming the breath body I will breathe in”, thus he trains himself, and, “Calming the breath body I will breathe out”, thus he trains himself.’

To begin meditating, sit in a comfortable position and try to be aware of the breath as it enters and leaves the body through the nostrils. You should be able to feel it either just below the nose

Knowing and Seeing

or somewhere around the nostrils. Do not follow the breath inside the body or outside the body. Just be aware of the breath at the place where it brushes against and touches either the top of the upper lip or around the nostrils. If you follow the breath in and out, you will not be able to perfect your concentration, but if you keep aware of the breath at the most obvious place it touches, either the upper lip or around the nostrils, you will be able to develop and perfect your concentration.

Do not pay attention to the individual characteristics (*sabhāva-lakkhaṇa*), general characteristics (*sammāñā-lakkhaṇa*) or the colour of the nimitta (the sign of concentration). The individual characteristics are the natural characteristics of the four elements in the breath: hardness, roughness, flowing, heat, supporting, pushing, etc. The general characteristics are the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), or non-self (*anatta*) characteristics of the breath. This means do not note 'in, out, impermanent', or 'in, out, suffering', or 'in, out, non-self'.

Simply be aware of the in-and-out-breath as a concept. The concept of the breath is the object of mindfulness-of-breathing. It is this object to which you must direct your attention in order to develop concentration. As you pay attention to the concept of the breath in this way, and if you have practised this meditation in a previous life and have developed some pāramīs, you will easily be able to concentrate on the in-and-out-breath.

If your mind does not easily concentrate on the in-and-out-breath, the Visuddhimagga suggests to count the breaths. This will aid you to develop concentration. You should count after the end of each breath: 'In, out, one - In, out, two - In, out, three - In, out, four - In, out, five - In, out, six - In, out, seven - In, out, eight.'

You should count up to at least five, and not count up to more than ten. But we encourage you to count to eight, because it reminds you of the Noble Eightfold Path, which you are trying to develop. So you should count, as you like, up to any number between five and ten, and should determine in your mind that

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

during that time you will not let your mind drift or go somewhere else. You want to simply be calmly aware of the breath. When you count like this, you find that you are able to concentrate your mind, and make it calmly aware of only the breath.

After you can concentrate your mind like this for at least half an hour, you should proceed to the second stage which is:

1. 'Breathing in a long breath he knows, "I am breathing in a long breath", or breathing out a long breath he knows, "I am breathing out a long breath".

2. 'Breathing in a short breath he knows, "I am breathing in a short breath", breathing out a short breath he knows, "I am breathing out a short breath".'

At this stage you have to develop awareness of whether the in and out breaths are long or short. Long or short here do not refer to length in feet and inches, but length of time. It is the duration. You should decide for yourself what length of time you will call long, and what length of time you will call short. Be aware of the duration of each in-and-out-breath. You will notice that sometimes the breath is long in time, and sometimes short. Just knowing this is all you have to do at this stage. You should not note, 'In, out, long - In, out, short', but just note 'In, out', and be aware of whether the breaths are long or short. You should know this by just being aware of the length of time that the breath brushes and touches the upper lip, or around the nostrils, as it enters and leaves the body. Sometimes the breath may be long throughout the sitting, and sometimes it may be short throughout the sitting. But you should not purposely try to make it long or short.

For some meditators at this stage the nimitta may appear, but if you can do this calmly for about one hour and no nimitta appears, you should move on to the third stage:

3. "Experiencing the whole breath body I will breathe in", thus he trains himself and, "Experiencing the whole breath body I will breathe out", thus he trains himself.'

Here the Buddha is instructing you to be aware of the whole

Knowing and Seeing

breath continuously from beginning to end. You are training your mind to be thus continuously aware of the breath from beginning to end. As you are doing this the nimitta may appear. If the nimitta appears you should not immediately shift your attention to it, but continue to be aware of the breath.

If you are continuously and calmly aware of the breath from beginning to end for about one hour, and no nimitta appears you should move on to the fourth stage:

4. “Calming the breath body I will breathe in”, thus he trains himself and, “Calming the breath body I will breathe out”, thus he trains himself.’

To do this you should decide to make the breath calm, and go on being continuously aware of the breath from beginning to end. You should do nothing else to make the breath calm, because if you do you will find that your concentration will break and fall away. There are four factors given in the Visuddhimagga that make the breath calm. They are: reflecting (*ābhoga*), bringing to mind (*samannāhāra*), attending (*manasikāra*), and deciding (*vīmaṁsa*). So all you need to do at this stage is to decide to calm the breath, and to be continuously aware of the breath. Practising in this way, you will find that the breath becomes calmer and the nimitta may appear.

Just before the nimitta appears a lot of meditators encounter difficulties. Mostly they find that the breath becomes very subtle, and is not clear to their mind. If this happens, you should keep your awareness at the place where you last noticed the breath, and wait for it there.

You should reflect on the fact that you are not a person who is not breathing, but that you are in fact breathing, and it is your mindfulness which is not strong enough to be aware of the breath. A dead person, a fetus in the womb, a drowned person, an unconscious person, a person in the fourth jhāna, a person experiencing attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*) (an attainment in which consciousness, mental-concomitants, and materiality produced by consciousness are suspended), and a

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

brahmā: only these seven types of people do not breathe, and you are not one of them. So you are breathing, but you are simply not mindful enough to be aware of it.

When it is subtle, you should not try to change the breath and make it more obvious, because of agitation produced by excessive effort. If you do so you will not develop in concentration. Just be aware of the breath as it is, and if it is not clear simply wait for it at the place where you last noticed it. You will find that as you apply your mindfulness and understanding in this way the breath will reappear.

The appearance of the nimitta produced by developing mindfulness-of-breathing is not the same for everyone, but varies according to the individual. To some people it appears as a pleasant sensation like:

1. Cotton wool (*uggaha-nimitta*),
2. Drawn out cotton (*uggaha-nimitta*),
3. Moving air or a draught (*uggaha-nimitta*),
4. A bright light like the morning star Venus (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
5. A bright ruby or gem (*pañbhāga-nimitta*),
6. A bright pearl (*pañbhāga-nimitta*).

To some people it appears as a coarse sensation like:

1. The stem of a cotton plant (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
2. A sharpened piece of wood (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),

To some people it appears like:

1. A long rope or string (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
2. A wreath of flowers (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-*

Knowing and Seeing

- nimitta*),
3. A puff of smoke (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 4. A stretched out spiders web (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 5. A film of mist (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 6. A lotus (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 7. A chariot wheel (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 8. A moon (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*),
 9. A sun (*uggaha-nimitta* and *pañbhāga-nimitta*).

In most cases a pure white nimitta like cotton wool is the *uggaha-nimitta* (taken-up sign or learning sign), because the *uggaha-nimitta* is usually not clear and bright. When the nimitta becomes bright like the morning star, brilliant and clear, it is the *pañbhāga-nimitta* (counterpart sign). When the nimitta is like a ruby or gem and not bright, it is the *uggaha-nimitta*, but when it is bright and sparkling, it is the *pañbhāga-nimitta*. The rest of the images and colours should be understood in the same way.

The nimitta appears to different people in different ways because it is produced by perception. The different perceptions of different meditators before the arising of the nimitta produces different types of nimitta. Even though mindfulness-of-breathing is a single meditation subject, it produces various types of nimitta, depending on the individual.

When you have reached this stage it is important not to play with your nimitta. Do not let it go away, and do not intentionally change its shape or appearance. If you do this your concentration will not develop any further, and your progress will stop. Your nimitta will probably disappear. So at this point, when your nimitta first appears, do not move your concentration from the breath to the nimitta. If you do you will find it disappears.

If you find that the nimitta is stable and your mind on its own has become fixed on it, then just leave your mind there. If you

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

force your mind to come away from it, you will probably lose your concentration.

If your nimitta appears far away in front of you, do not pay attention to it, as it will probably disappear. If you do not pay attention to it and simply continue to concentrate on the breath at the place where the breath touches, you will find that the nimitta will come and stay at that place.

If your nimitta appears at the place where the breath touches, and the nimitta is stable, and appears as if it is the breath itself, and the breath appears as if it is the nimitta, then you can forget about the breath, and just be aware of the nimitta. In this way, by moving your attention from the breath to the nimitta, you will be able to make further progress. As you keep your mind on the nimitta, you will find that it becomes whiter and whiter, and when it is white like cotton wool it is the uggaha-nimitta.

You should determine to keep your mind calmly concentrated on that white uggaha-nimitta for one hour, two hours, three hours, etc. If you are able to keep your mind fixed on the uggaha-nimitta for one or two hours, you should find that it becomes clear, bright, and brilliant. This is then the paṭibhāga-nimitta (counterpart sign). At this point you should determine and practise keeping your mind fixed on the paṭibhāga-nimitta for one hour, two hours, or three hours. Practise until you succeed.

At this stage you will reach either access (*upacāra*) or absorption (*appanā*) concentration. Access concentration is the concentration close to and preceding jhāna. Absorption concentration is the concentration of jhāna.

Both these types of concentration have the paṭibhāga-nimitta as their object. The difference between them is that in access concentration the jhāna factors are not developed to full strength. For this reason during access concentration bhavaṅga mind states still occur and one can fall into bhavaṅga (life-continuum consciousness). The meditator experiences this, and will say that everything stopped, and he may even think this is

Nibbāna. In reality the mind has not stopped, but the meditator just does not have sufficient skill to discern this, because of the subtlety of those bhavaṅga mind states.

To avoid dropping into bhavaṅga, and to develop further, you need the help of the five controlling faculties of faith (*saddhā*), effort (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and understanding (*paññā*) to push the mind and fix it on the paṭibhāga-nimitta. It takes effort to make the mind know the paṭibhāga-nimitta again and again, mindfulness not to forget the paṭibhāga-nimitta, and understanding to know the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

Balancing the Five Controlling Faculties

The five controlling faculties are the five powers that control the mind, and keep it from straying off the path of Samatha (tranquillity) and Vipassanā (insight) that leads to Nibbāna.

Of those five, the first is the faith in what one should have faith in, such as the Triple Gem, or faith in kamma and its results. It is important to believe in the enlightenment of the Buddha because if a person does not have such faith he will regress from the work of meditation. It is also important to have faith in the teachings of the Buddha, namely the Four Paths, the Four Fruits, Nibbāna, and the Teaching. The teachings of the Buddha show us the way of meditation, so at this stage it is important to have complete faith in that teaching.

Let us say the meditator thinks, ‘Can jhāna really be attained by just watching the in-breath and out-breath? Is what has been said about the uggaha-nimitta being like white cotton wool, the paṭibhāga-nimitta being like clear ice or glass, really true?’ If these kinds of thought persist they will result in views such as, ‘Jhāna cannot be attained in the present age,’ and then because of that view the meditator will decline in faith in the teaching, and will not be able to stop himself from giving up the development of Samatha.

So a person who is developing concentration with a meditation

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

subject like mindfulness-of-breathing needs to have strong faith. He should develop mindfulness-of-breathing without any doubts. He should think, 'Jhāna can be achieved if I follow the instructions of the Fully Enlightened Buddha systematically.'

If, however, a person lets his faith concerning the objects that he should have faith in become excessive, and here we are talking about the meditation subject of mindfulness-of-breathing, then because of the function of faith, namely, to decide about an object, is in excess, the faculty of wisdom is not clear, and the remaining faculties of effort, mindfulness, and concentration are also weakened. At that time the faculty of effort is not able to perform its function of raising associated mental formations² to the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, and keeping them there. Also mindfulness will not be able to perform its function of establishing knowledge of the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*. The faculty of concentration will not be able to perform its function of preventing the mind from going to an object other than the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*. The faculty of wisdom will not be able to perform its function of seeing penetratively the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*. Because of the inability of wisdom to understand the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, and support the faculty of faith, faith decreases.

If the faculty of effort is too strong, the remaining faculties of faith, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom will again not be able to perform their respective functions of decision, establishment, absence of distraction, and penetrative discernment. Thus excessive effort causes the mind not to stay calmly concentrated on the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, and this means the enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity do not arise with sufficient strength.

In the same way, one should know that when the controlling faculties of concentration and wisdom are in excess, that too will have detrimental effects.

² Mental formations include both consciousness and its mental-concomitants.

Knowing and Seeing

The balancing of faith with wisdom, and concentration with effort, is praised by the wise. If, for instance, faith is strong and wisdom is weak then a person will develop faith in, and respect for objects that are useless and without essence. For instance, they will develop faith in, and reverence for objects that are respected and revered by religions outside the orthodox Buddhism. For example, faith in and reverence for Guardian Spirits or Protective Deities.

If, on the other hand, wisdom is strong and faith is weak, a person can become quite crafty. Without meditating, they will spend their time simply passing judgements and making evaluations. It is as difficult to cure this as it is to cure a disease caused by an overdose of medicine.

If, however, faith and wisdom are balanced, a person will have faith in objects that he should have faith in. He will have faith in the Triple Gem, and in kamma and its effects. He will believe that if he meditates, in accordance with the instructions of the Buddha, he will be able to attain the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, and *jhāna*. If he meditates with faith such as this, and is able to discern the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* with wisdom, his faith and wisdom will be balanced.

Again, if concentration is strong and effort is weak, then because of the tendency of concentration to produce laziness, laziness can overcome the mind. If effort is strong, and concentration is weak, then because of the tendency of effort to produce agitation, agitation can overcome the mind. So when concentration and effort are balanced, the mind will neither fall into laziness, nor fall into agitation, and will be able to attain *jhāna*.

When a person wishes to cultivate a Samatha subject it is good to have very strong faith. If a person thinks, ‘I will certainly reach *jhāna* if I develop concentration on the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*’, then by the power of that faith, and by concentrating on the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, he will definitely achieve *jhāna*. This is because *jhāna* is based primarily on concentration.

For a person developing *Vipassanā* it is good that wisdom be

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

strong, because when wisdom is strong he will be able to see the three characteristics penetratively, and acquire knowledge that realizes the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

When concentration and wisdom are balanced, mundane *jhāna* (*lokiya-jhāna*) can arise. Because the Buddha taught to develop Samatha and Vipassanā together, supramundane *jhāna* (*lokuttara-jhāna*) can also only arise when concentration and wisdom are balanced.

Mindfulness is always necessary to balance faith with wisdom, concentration with effort, and concentration with wisdom. Mindfulness is desirable under all circumstances, because mindfulness protects the mind from becoming agitated due to excess faith, effort, or wisdom. Mindfulness also protects the mind from falling into laziness because of excess concentration.

So mindfulness is necessary under all circumstances as is the seasoning of salt in all sauces, as a prime minister for all the king's affairs. Hence it says in the ancient commentaries that the Blessed One said, 'Mindfulness is always necessary in any meditation subject.' Why is that? It is because mindfulness is a refuge and protection for the meditating mind. Mindfulness is a refuge because it helps the mind arrive at special and high states it has never reached or known before. Without mindfulness the mind is not capable of attaining any special and extraordinary states. Mindfulness protects the mind and keeps the object of meditation from being lost. That is why to one discerning it, with insight-knowledge, mindfulness appears as that which protects the object of meditation, as well as the mind of the meditator. Without mindfulness a person is unable to lift up the mind or restrain the mind. That is why the Buddha has said it is useful in all instances. (See also *Vsm Ch.IV*, para.49. *Mahāṭīkā* 1, 150-154.)

Balancing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment

If one is to achieve *jhāna* using mindfulness-of-breathing, it is

Knowing and Seeing

also important to balance the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. They are:

1. The Enlightenment Factor of Mindfulness (*sati*), which is the mindfulness that remembers the paṭibhāga-nimitta, and discerns it again and again.
2. The Enlightenment Factor of Investigation of Phenomena (*dhammavicaya*), which is the penetrative understanding of the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
3. The Enlightenment Factor of Effort (*vīriya*), which is the effort to bring the enlightenment factors together, and balance them on the paṭibhāga-nimitta; especially the effort to further strengthen the Enlightenment Factor of Investigation of Phenomena, and the Enlightenment Factor of Effort itself.
4. The Enlightenment Factor of Joy (*pīti*), which is the gladness of the mind when experiencing the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
5. The Enlightenment Factor of Tranquillity (*passaddhi*), which is the calmness of the mind and mental-concomitants that have the paṭibhāga-nimitta as their object.
6. The Enlightenment Factor of Concentration (*samādhi*), which is the one-pointedness of the mind on the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
7. The Enlightenment Factor of Equanimity (*upekkhā*), which is the evenness of mind that becomes neither excited nor withdrawn from the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

A meditator must develop and balance all seven enlightenment factors. However, with insufficient effort, the mind of the meditator will fall away from the object of meditation, which in this case is the paṭibhāga-nimitta. Then one should not develop the three enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity, but instead develop the three enlightenment factors

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

of investigation of phenomena, effort, and joy. In this way the mind is raised up again.

Likewise, when there is too much effort the mind will become agitated and distracted. Then one should not develop the three enlightenment factors of investigation of phenomena, effort, and joy, but should instead develop the three enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity. In this way the agitated and distracted mind will become restrained and calmed.

This is how the five controlling faculties and seven factors of enlightenment are balanced.

Attaining Jhāna

When those five controlling faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding are sufficiently developed, concentration will go beyond access up to absorption concentration. When you reach jhāna in this way your mind will know the paṭibhāga-nimitta without interruption. This can continue for several hours, even all night, or for a whole day.

When your mind stays continuously concentrated on the paṭibhāga-nimitta for one or two hours, you should try to discern the area in the heart where the mind-door (bhavaṅga consciousness) rests, that is the heart-base materiality. The bhavaṅga consciousness is bright and luminous, and the commentaries explain that it is the mind-door (*manodvāra*). If you practise this many times, again and again, you will easily be able to discern both the mind-door dependent on the heart-base materiality, and the paṭibhāga-nimitta as it appears there. When you can do this, you should try to discern the five jhāna factors of applied thought, sustained thought, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness, one at a time. Eventually with continued practice, you will be able to discern them all together at once. The five jhāna factors are:

1. Applied thought (*vitakka*): directing and placing the mind on the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
2. Sustained thought (*vicāra*): maintaining the mind on

Knowing and Seeing

the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

3. Joy (*pīti*): liking for the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
4. Bliss (*sukha*): pleasant feeling or happiness associated with experiencing the paṭibhāga-nimitta.
5. One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*): one-pointedness of mind on the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

Each of the individual jhāna factor is on its own called a jhāna factor, but when taken as a group they are called jhāna. When you are just beginning to practise jhāna, you should practise to enter jhāna for a long time, and not spend too much time discerning the jhāna factors. You should practise mastery (*vasībhāva*) of the first jhāna. There are five kinds of mastery:

1. Mastery in adverting; being able to discern the jhāna factors after emerging from jhāna.
2. Mastery in attaining; being able to enter jhāna whenever you wish.
3. Mastery in resolving; being able to stay in jhāna for as long as you have determined to stay.
4. Mastery in emerging; being able to leave the jhāna at the time you determined to emerge.
5. Mastery in reviewing; being able to discern the jhāna factors.

Adverting and reviewing both occur in the same mind-door thought-process (*manodvāra-vīthi*). Adverting is performed by the mind-door adverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*), which in this case takes as its object one of the five jhāna factors such as applied thought. Reviewing is performed by the four, five, six, or seven reviewing impulsion consciousnesses that occur immediately after the mind-door adverting consciousness, and which have the same object.

It says in the Pabbateyyagāvī Sutta in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, that once the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, still only a stream-

How to Develop Mindfulness-of-Breathing to Absorption

enterer, was practising to attain jhāna. The Buddha warned him not to try to progress to the second jhāna before having become skilled in the mastery of the first jhāna. He explained that if one does not master the first jhāna thoroughly, but tries to go to higher jhānas, one will miss the first jhāna as well as be unable to attain the second jhāna. One will miss both jhānas.

When you have become proficient in these five masteries of the first jhāna, you can try to progress to the second jhāna. To do this you need to enter into the first jhāna, emerge from it, and reflect on the faults of the first jhāna, and advantages of the second jhāna. You should consider that the first jhāna is close to the five hindrances. You should also consider that the jhāna factors of applied thought and sustain thought in the first jhāna are gross, and make it less calm than the second jhāna which is without them. So, wanting to remove these two jhāna factors, to be left with just joy, happiness, and one-pointedness, you should again apply your mind to concentrating on the paṭibhāga-nimitta. In this way you will be able to attain the second jhāna, possessed of those three factors, joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.

You should then practise the five masteries of the second jhāna, and when you have succeeded and want to develop the third jhāna, you should reflect on the faults of the second jhāna, and advantages of the third jhāna. That is the second jhāna is close to the first jhāna, and the third jhāna is calmer than the second jhāna. You should also consider that the jhāna factor of joy in the second jhāna is gross, and makes it less calm than the third jhāna, which is without joy. Reflecting in this way, after arising from the second jhāna, you should develop a desire to attain the third jhāna, and again concentrate on the paṭibhāga-nimitta. In this way you will be able to attain the third jhāna, possessed of happiness and one-pointedness.

You should then practise the five masteries of the third jhāna, and when you have succeeded and want to develop the fourth jhāna you should reflect on the faults of the third jhāna and advantages of the fourth jhāna. You should consider that the jhāna

factor of happiness in the third jhāna is gross, and makes it less calm than the fourth jhāna, which is without happiness. Reflecting in this way, after arising from the third jhāna, you should develop a desire to attain the fourth jhāna, and again concentrate on the paṭibhāga-nimitta. In this way you will be able to attain the fourth jhāna, possessed of equanimity and one-pointedness. You should then practise the five masteries of the fourth jhāna.

With the attainment of the fourth jhāna the breath stops completely. This completes the fourth stage in the development of mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānassati*):

4. “Calming the breath body I will breathe in”, thus he trains himself, and, “Calming the breath body I will breathe out”, thus he trains himself.’

This stage began just before the nimitta appeared, and as concentration developed through the four jhānas, the breath became progressively calmer and calmer until it stopped in the fourth jhāna.

When a meditator has reached the fourth jhāna by using mindfulness-of-breathing, and has developed the five masteries, then when the light produced by that concentration is bright, brilliant and radiant, he can, if he wishes, move on to develop Vipassanā meditation. The meditator can on the other hand continue to develop Samatha meditation. That will be the subject of my next talk, namely, how to develop the ten kasiṇas.

Questions and Answers (1)

Question 1.1: How do we, in the four stages of mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānassati*), decide when to go from one stage to another?

Answer 1.1: The Buddha taught mindfulness-of-breathing step by step: long breath, short breath, whole breath and subtle breath, only for easy understanding. At the time of actual practice, all the four stages may occur at the same time. For example, when the breath is long, we should try to know the whole breath; when the breath is short, we should try to know the whole breath. This should be done only when the concentration has improved, for example, when you can concentrate for about half an hour. Then if you can concentrate on the whole long breath, and the whole short breath for about one hour, the breath will automatically become subtle, and you can change to concentrate on the subtle breath. If the breath does not become subtle, you should just concentrate on the breath. You must not make the breath subtle on purpose; also you must not make the breath long or short on purpose. In this way, all the four stages are included in a single stage. At the fourth stage, the breath becomes only subtle. It does not cease entirely. The breath ceases entirely only at the fourth jhāna. This is the most subtle stage.

Question 1.2: Is it necessary, in meditation, to have a nimitta?

Answer 1.2: In some meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) like mindfulness-of-breathing, kasiṇa-meditation and repulsiveness-meditation (*asubha*), a nimitta is necessary. If one wants to attain jhana in these meditation subjects a nimitta is necessary. In some other meditation subjects, like recollection-of-the-Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), a nimitta is not necessary. In lovingkindness-

Knowing and Seeing

meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*), breaking down the boundaries is called the nimitta.

Question 1.3: Some say that while practising mindfulness-of-breathing their soul goes out of the body. Is that true, or are they on the wrong path?

Answer 1.3: A concentrated mind can usually create a nimitta. When concentration is deep, strong, and powerful, then according to different perceptions, different nimittas occur. For example, if you want the nimitta to be long it will be long; if you want it to be short it will be short; if you want it to be round it will be round; if you want it to be red it will be red. At that time, because of different perceptions, different nimittas occur. Similarly, various perceptions may arise while practising mindfulness-of-breathing. You perceive as if you were outside the body. It is simply a mental creation, but not created by soul. This is not a problem. Just ignore it and return to being mindful of your breath.

Only when you can discern ultimate mentality-materiality (*paramattha-nāmarūpa*) internally and externally, can you solve the problem of soul. When you can discern ultimate mentality-materiality internally and externally, you cannot find a soul internally or externally. So, you need to break down the compactness of mentality and materiality, to realize ultimate mentality and materiality.

‘*Nānādhātuyo vinibbhujitva ghanavinibbhoge kate anattalakkhaṇam yāthāvasarasato upaṭṭhāti*’: ‘When we break down compactness, the perception of non-self (*anatta-saññā*) will arise. It is because of the perception of compactness, that the perception of soul occur.

To break down the compactness of materiality, you must first discern rūpa kalāpas (small particles). Then you must be able to discern the ultimate materiality, which are at least eight in quantity in each rūpa kalāpa. Without breaking down the compact-

Questions and Answers (1)

ness of materiality, the perception of soul will not disappear.

Similarly, without breaking down the compactness of mentality, the perception of soul will not disappear. For example, when your mind wanders you may think that the wandering mind is your soul. Another example is *visaṅkhāragataṃ citta*. *Visaṅkhāra* means Nibbāna which has no formations (*saṅkhāra*). Formations mean mentality-and-materiality and their causes. Nibbāna has no formations, but the seeing of Nibbāna does require the formation of consciousness. In the case of the Buddha, that consciousness is the arahant-fruit consciousness (*arahattaphala-citta*). That arahant-fruit consciousness is associated with mental-concomitants. If it is the first jhāna arahant-fruit consciousness, there are thirty-seven mental formations. Those who have not yet attained a Path Knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*), Fruition Knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*), and insight-knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), or who have not yet broken down the compactness of mentality, may think the consciousness is their soul. But if they break down the compactness of mentality, they will see the rapid arising and passing-away of consciousness and its concomitants. With the perception of impermanence, the perception of non-self will occur. In the Meghiya Sutta the Buddha said: ‘*Aniccasaññīno Meghiya anattasaññā saṃphāti.*’ ‘For those who have powerful insight-knowledge of impermanence, insight-knowledge of non-self will also clearly appear.’

Question 1.4: Where does the [ānāpāna] nimitta come from? What is it based on to appear?

Answer 1.4: Most mind states which arise dependent upon heart-base produce breathing. A real ānāpāna-nimitta comes from the breath. However, not every mind state can produce a nimitta. Only a deeply concentrated mind can produce a nimitta. Therefore, an ānāpāna-nimitta appears based on the breath produced by a deep and concentrated mind. If the nimitta is far

Knowing and Seeing

away from the nostrils, it is not a real nimitta. Because of concentration a nimitta may occur, but not the real ānāpāna-nimitta. If the nimitta can produce jhāna, we call it an ānāpāna-nimitta. But if that nimitta does not produce jhāna, it is not the real ānāpāna-nimitta. If you concentrate on that nimitta, jhāna will not occur. Usually the concentration cannot become strong and powerful. If you meditate on that nimitta, it will very soon disappear.

Question 1.5: What are the seven stages of purification and sixteen insight-knowledges?

Answer 1.5: The seven stages of purification are:

1. The Purification of Virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*),
2. The Purification of Mind (*citta-visuddhi*),
3. The Purification of View (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*),
4. The Purification by Overcoming doubt (*kaṛīkhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*),
5. The Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path (*maggāmaggaññāpadassana-visuddhi*),
6. The Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way (*paṭipadāññāpadassana-visuddhi*),
7. The Purification by Knowledge and Vision (*ññāpadassana-visuddhi*).

And the sixteen insight-knowledges are:

1. The Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ññāṇa*),
2. The Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ññāṇa*),
3. The Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana-ññāṇa*),
4. The Knowledge of Arising and Passing-away

Questions and Answers (1)

- (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*),
5. The Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*),
 6. The Knowledge of Terror (*bhaya-ñāṇa*),
 7. The Knowledge of Danger (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*),
 8. The Knowledge of Disenchantment (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*),
 9. The Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muñcitu-kamyatā-ñāṇa*),
 10. The Knowledge of Reflection (*paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa*),
 11. The Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*),
 12. The Knowledge of Conformity (*anuloma-ñāṇa*),
 13. The Knowledge of Change-of-lineage (*gotrabhu-ñāṇa*),
 14. The Path Knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*),
 15. The Fruition Knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*),
 16. The Knowledge of Reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*).

Now you know the names of these insight-knowledges, can you experience them? No. That is why to have only theoretical knowledge is not enough; you must practise with great effort to also realize them.

[Editor's Note: At the end of this talk the Pa-Auk Sayadaw added the following comment on the five hindrances.]

Now I would like to briefly explain the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). The first hindrance is sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*). It is the attachment to property or to people. It is the desire to get sense objects. For example, you may get attached to your *kuṭī* (hut) or room. While meditating you may think, 'Oh, it would be good if my *kuṭī* were beautiful.' Or you may think, 'Oh, it would be good if the whole bedroom belonged to me.' If you are overwhelmed by sensual desire, you will not be able to concentrate well on your meditation object. You must have strong mindfulness and effort, to stop the arising of sensual desire.

The second hindrance is ill-will (*byāpāda*). It is hatred or dissatisfaction with people or things. For example, if the meditator

Knowing and Seeing

sitting next to you, while sitting down, makes a noise with his or her robes, you may become angry and think, ‘Oh, why is he making so much noise.’ If your mind is overwhelmed by hatred or dissatisfaction, you will also not be able to concentrate well on your meditation object.

The third hindrance is sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*). If the mind is weak, or not interested in the meditation object, sloth and torpor can occur. However, sometimes sleepiness may be due to tiredness, or lack of rest.

The fourth hindrance is restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*). If your mind is restless, it will be like a heap of ashes hit by a stone, flying up and getting scattered. Similarly, when there is restlessness, the mind is scattered. While meditating, you must not relax the mind, and let it go away from your meditation object. If you do, restlessness will occur. Remorse is to regret bad deeds done, and good deeds not done in the past. Here too, you must have great mindfulness, and great effort to stop the arising of restlessness and remorse.

The fifth one is sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*). It is having doubts about:

1. The Buddha,
2. The Dhamma,
3. The Saṅgha,
4. The three trainings, virtue, concentration, and wisdom,
5. Past five aggregates (*khandha*),
6. Future five aggregates,
7. Both past and future five aggregates,
8. Dependent-Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).

If you have doubts about the training of concentration, you cannot meditate well. For example, you may think: ‘Is it possible to attain jhāna through mindfulness-of-breathing? Can jhana be attained by concentrating on the ānāpāna-nimitta?’

The five hindrances are opposite to jhāna concentration.

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

In my previous talk I explained how to develop the meditation subject of mindfulness-of-breathing up to the attainment of the fourth jhāna. Today, I would like to explain how to go on to develop other forms of Samatha meditation, in particular the ten kasiṇas.

When a meditator has reached the fourth jhāna by using mindfulness-of-breathing, and has developed the five masteries, then when the light produced by that concentration (*samādhi*) is bright, brilliant and radiant, he can, if he wishes, move on to develop Vipassanā meditation.

But at this point the meditator can also go on to develop other Samatha meditations. I shall now explain how to develop other Samatha subjects: the thirty-two parts of the body meditation, the skeleton-meditation, the white kasiṇa, etc.

The Thirty-Two Parts of the Body

If you want to develop the thirty-two parts of the body meditation, you should first develop the fourth jhāna using mindfulness-of-breathing. When your light of concentration is bright, brilliant, and radiant, you should with the assistance of that light try to discern the thirty-two parts of the body one at a time.

The thirty-two parts of the body are twenty parts with predominantly earth-element, and twelve parts with predominantly water-element.

The Earth-Element Parts:

1. Head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin.
2. Flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys.

Knowing and Seeing

3. Heart, liver, membrane, spleen, lungs.
4. Intestines, mesentery, undigested food, faeces, brain.

The Water-Element Parts:

5. Bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat.
6. Tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.

When discerning the thirty-two parts of the body, you should discern the twenty earth-element parts in four sets of five. Then discern the twelve water-element parts in two sets of six. Discern the parts in the given order but one at a time.

You should try to see and discern each of the thirty-two parts as distinctly as you would see and discern your face in a clean mirror.

If, while doing this, your light of concentration should fade, and the part of the body you are discerning becomes unclear, you should re-establish concentration up to the fourth *jhāna* based upon mindfulness-of-breathing. Then when the light of concentration again is bright and strong, you should return to discerning the parts of the body. You should practise like this whenever your light of concentration fades.

You should practise to see all of the thirty-two parts with the assistance of the light of concentration of the fourth *jhāna* based on mindfulness-of-breathing. Practise so that when you discern from head hair down to urine, or backwards from urine up to head hair, you are able to see each clearly and with penetrating knowledge, and keep practising until you become skilled at it.

Then using the same light of concentration of the fourth *jhāna* based on mindfulness-of-breathing to assist, you should try to discern, with your eyes closed, the person or being who is nearest. It is especially good to discern a person who is in front of you. Then you should discern the thirty-two parts of the body in that person, or being, beginning with head hairs and going down to urine. Then from urine back up to head hairs. You should

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

discern the thirty-two parts forwards and backwards many times. When you have succeeded in doing this, you should discern the thirty-two parts once internally, that is the parts of your own body, and once externally, that is the parts of the other person's body, and do this many times, again and again.

When you are able to discern the thirty-two parts of the body internally and externally like this, the power of the meditation will increase. Using this method you should gradually extend the field of your discernment bit by bit, from near to far. Do not worry that you cannot discern the beings which are far away. With the assistance of the brilliant light of the fourth jhāna, you can easily see the beings far away from you, not with your naked-eyes, but with your wisdom-eye (*ñāṇacakkhu*). You should be able to increase the area of discerning the thirty-two parts of the body in beings in all ten directions: above, below, east, west, north, south, north east, south east, north west, south west. You take whomever you discern, be they human, animal or other beings, in those ten directions. You then discern the thirty-two parts, once internally and once externally, one person or being at a time.

Eventually, when you no longer see men, women, or buffaloes, cows, and other animals as such, but see only a group of thirty-two parts, whenever and wherever you look, whether internally or externally, then can you be said to be successful, skilled, and expert in the discernment of the thirty-two parts.

The Three Entrances to Nibbāna

Here, I would like to explain the three entrances to Nibbāna. In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha teaches that the meditation subject of the four foundations of mindfulness is the only way to Nibbāna. The commentary, on the other hand, explains that there are three entrances to Nibbāna:

1. Colour *kaṣiṇa* (*vaṇṇakasiṇa*),
2. Repulsiveness (*paṭikūla-manasikāra*),

3. Voidness of self (*suññata*), which is four-elements meditation.

They are, however, referred to Samatha meditation only, not Vipassanā. From the thirty-two parts of the body, we can proceed to practise any of those three. Since all of them can lead us to attain Nibbāna, they are explained as the entrances to Nibbāna.

Therefore, when a person has become proficient in discerning the thirty-two parts of the body, both internally and externally, he can choose to develop any of those three. First, I shall explain how to develop the perception of the repulsiveness in the thirty-two parts of the body.

When you have become skilled in discerning the thirty-two parts of the body, you can take either all thirty-two parts as a whole, or one individual part as your object to develop meditation on the repulsiveness of the body (*paṭikūla-manasikāra*).

The Skeleton-Meditation

Of the three entrances to Nibbāna, I shall explain how to meditate on the skeleton or bones, which is one of the thirty-two parts of the body.

To develop this meditation you should return to practising mindfulness-of-breathing and once again establish concentration up to the fourth jhāna. Then, when your light is bright, brilliant and radiant, discern your own thirty-two parts of the body. Then discern the thirty-two parts externally, in the person or being near you, using the same light of concentration. Discern the thirty-two parts internally and externally in this way once or twice. Then take the internal skeleton as a whole and discern it with wisdom. When the whole skeleton is clear, you take the repulsiveness of the skeleton as object and note it again and again as either:

1. Repulsive, repulsive (*paṭikūla, paṭikūla*),

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

2. Repulsive skeleton, repulsive skeleton (*aṭṭhikapaṭikūla*, *aṭṭhikapaṭikūla*),
3. Skeleton, skeleton (*aṭṭhika*, *aṭṭhika*).

You can note this in any language you like. You should try to keep your mind calmly concentrated on the object of repulsiveness of the skeleton for one or two hours. Because of the strength and momentum of the fourth jhāna concentration based on the mindfulness-of-breathing, you will find that this meditation on repulsiveness will also develop and become strong and fully established. Meditating in this way, you will be able to produce, sustain and develop the perception and knowledge of repulsiveness.

Be careful at this point to see the colour, shape, position and delimitation of the skeleton so that the repulsive nature of the skeleton can arise.

When concentrating on the repulsiveness of the skeleton as object, you should drop the perception of ‘skeleton’ and just be mindful of that skeleton as repulsive. But if, while trying to do this, the repulsive nature of the skeleton does not appear, then do not yet drop the perception of the skeleton. Only when the perception of repulsiveness has appeared, should you drop the perception of the skeleton, and just concentrate on ‘repulsive, repulsive’.

According to the Visuddhimagga, seeing the colour, shape, position, and delimitation of a part is seeing the uggaha-nimitta. Seeing and discerning the repulsiveness of that part is seeing the counterpart sign, or paṭibhāga-nimitta.

The Five Jhāna Factors

By concentrating on and developing this paṭibhāga-nimitta of the repulsiveness of bones, you can attain the first jhāna, at which time the five jhāna factors will be present. The five factors are:

Knowing and Seeing

1. Applied thought (*vitakka*): directing and placing the mind on the repulsiveness of bones.
2. Sustained thought (*vicāra*): maintaining the mind on the repulsiveness of bones.
3. Joy (*pīti*): liking for the repulsiveness of bones.
4. Bliss (*sukha*): pleasant feeling or happiness associated with experiencing the repulsiveness of bones.
5. One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*): one-pointedness of mind on the repulsiveness of bones.

You can use the other parts of the body in a similar way to attain the first jhāna based on repulsiveness.

A question arises as to how joy and happiness can arise with the repulsiveness of the skeleton as object. The answer is that, although in this method of concentrating on the repulsiveness, the skeleton really is repulsive, you have undertaken this meditation because you have seen the benefits of it, and understand that you will eventually attain freedom from aging, sickness, and death. Joy and happiness can also arise because you have removed the defilements of the five hindrances which make the mind hot and tired.

It is just like a flower-scavenger would be delighted to see a big heap of garbage thinking, ‘I will earn a lot of money from this.’ Or like a person who is severely ill would be happy and joyful when relieved by vomiting or passing diarrhoea.

The Abhidhamma commentary explains that whoever has attained the first jhāna by concentrating on the repulsiveness of the skeleton should go on to develop the usual five masteries of the first jhāna. After which, the meditator here too should take the nearest being, best of all a person sitting in front of him, and with his light of concentration take that person’s skeleton as object. He should concentrate on it as repulsive, and develop this perception until the jhāna factors become prominent. Even though the jhāna factors are prominent you cannot, according to the commentary, call this access concentration (*upacāra-*

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

samādhi) or absorption concentration (*appanā-samādhi*), because the object is living. If, however, you concentrate on the external bones as if they were a dead skeleton, you can, according to the sub-commentary to the Abhidhamma, the Mūlaṭīkā, attain access concentration.

When the jhāna factors become clear in this way you should again concentrate on the internal skeleton as repulsive. You should do this alternately, once internally then once externally. When you have concentrated on the repulsiveness of the skeleton many times like this, and when your meditation on repulsiveness has become very strong and fully developed, then you should extend your range of discernment of the skeleton in beings in all ten directions. Taking one direction at a time, wherever your light of concentration reaches, develop each direction in the same way. You should apply your penetrating knowledge both far and near, and in all directions in this way, once internally and once externally. You should practise until wherever you look in the ten directions you see only skeletons. Once you have succeeded you are ready to proceed to develop the white kasiṇa.

The Ten Kasiṇas

The Colour Kasiṇa

There are four colours used as a basis for kasiṇa meditation and they are blue, yellow, red, and white. Of these four colours the one translated as blue (*nīla*) can also be translated as black, or brown. All these four kasiṇas can be developed by using the colours of different parts of the body.

For example, according to the Abhidhamma commentary, the colour of head hairs, body hairs, and iris of the eyes can be used to develop the blue kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna. The colour of fat can be used to develop the yellow kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna. The colour of blood, and flesh can be used to develop the red kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna. And the white parts of the body such as the bones, teeth, and nails can be used to develop

the white kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna.

The White Kasiṇa

It says in the suttas that the white kasiṇa is the best of the four colour kasiṇas because it makes the mind clear and bright. For that reason I shall explain how to develop that particular colour kasiṇa first.

To develop the white kasiṇa, you should first re-establish the fourth jhāna based on mindfulness-of-breathing. When the light produced by that concentration is bright, brilliant, and radiant, you should discern the thirty-two parts of the body internally. Then discern the thirty-two parts of the body externally in a being sitting in front of you or nearby. Then, of those thirty-two external parts, discern just the skeleton. If you want to discern that skeleton as repulsive you can do so too, but if you do not wish to, simply discern the skeleton.

Then, having decided which is the whitest place of that skeleton and using that place, or by taking the white of the whole skeleton if the whole skeleton is white, or by taking the back of the skull as object, concentrate on it as ‘white, white’.

Alternatively, if your mind is really sharp and you have concentrated on the internal skeleton as repulsive and reached the first jhāna, then see the skeleton as white and use that as your object for preliminary development. If you are unable or do not want to use the colour of an internal part as a kasiṇa to reach jhāna, you should take an external skeleton and use the white of that to continue to develop and meditate on.

You could also discern the repulsiveness in an external skeleton, and develop it by making the perception of that skeleton stable and firm, you make the white of the skeleton more evident. Having achieved that, instead of continuing to concentrate on the skeleton as repulsive, you could concentrate on it as ‘white, white’, and thus change to the development of the white kasiṇa.

Having taken the white of the external skeleton as object, and concentrating on the white of the skull in particular, you should

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

practise to keep the mind calmly concentrated on that white object for one or two hours at a time.

Because of the assistance and support of the concentration of the fourth jhāna based on mindfulness-of-breathing, you will find that your mind will stay calmly concentrated on the object of white. When you are able to concentrate on the white for one or two hours, you will find that the skeleton disappears and only a white circle remains.

When the white circle is white as cotton wool it is the uggaha-nimitta (taken-up sign). When it is bright and clear like the morning star it is the paṭibhāga-nimitta (counterpart sign). Before the uggaha-nimitta arises, the skeleton nimitta from which it arose, is what is called the parikamma-nimitta (preparatory sign).

If you developed the white kasiṇa in a past life, either during this dispensation or a previous Buddha's dispensation, that is, if you have white kasiṇa pāramī, then by just trying, and concentrating on the white circle nimitta, you will be able to attain the paṭibhāga-nimitta. If that be the case, you will not need to expand the nimitta, because as you look at it and note it as 'white, white', it will automatically expand to fill all ten directions.

Should it happen that the white kasiṇa-nimitta does not automatically expand and spread to fill all ten directions, then just continue to note it as 'white, white'. When it is bright white and especially when it is clean and clear, which is the paṭibhāga-nimitta, then continue until you can enter the first jhāna. You will find, however, that this concentration is not very stable and does not last long. In order to make the concentration stable and last a long time, it is important to expand the nimitta.

To do this you should concentrate on the white paṭibhāga-nimitta and develop your concentration so that it stays with that object for one or two hours. Then you should make a determination in your mind to expand the white circle by one, two, three, or four inches, depending on how much you think you are able to expand it. You should try to do this and see if you can succeed. Do not try to expand the nimitta without first deter-

Knowing and Seeing

mining a measure: make sure to try to expand it by determining a limit of one, two, three, or four inches.

While you are expanding the white circle you may find that it becomes unstable. Then you will need to go back to noting it as ‘white, white’ to make it stable. As your concentration increases in strength, you will find that the nimitta becomes stable and calm.

When the expanded nimitta becomes stable you should repeat the process: that is, again determine to expand it by a few inches at a time. In this way you can expand the nimitta until it is one yard in size, then two yards in size and so on. As you succeed you should go on expanding the nimitta in stages, until it extends in all ten directions around you without limit. Thus you will reach a stage when wherever you look, you see only the white nimitta. At this point you will not see even a trace of materiality whether internal or external, but will be aware of only the white kasiṇa. You should keep your mind calmly concentrated on the white kasiṇa, and when it is stable, then just like hanging a hat on a hook, place your mind on one part of that white kasiṇa, and keep your mind there, and continue to note it as ‘white, white’.

When your mind is calm and stable, the white kasiṇa will also be calm and stable, and it will be exceedingly white, bright, and clear. This too is a paṭibhāga-nimitta that has been produced by expanding the original white kasiṇa-nimitta.

You must continue to meditate until you can keep your mind concentrated on that white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta continuously for one or two hours. Then the jhāna factors will become very prominent, clear, and strong in your mind. At that time you will have reached the first jhāna.

At that time the five jhāna factors will be present:

1. Applied thought (*vitakka*): directing and placing of the mind on the white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.
2. Sustained thought (*vicāra*): maintaining of the mind on the white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

3. Joy (*pīti*): liking for the white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.
4. Bliss (*sukha*): pleasant feeling or happiness associated with experiencing the white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.
5. One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*): one-pointedness of mind on the white kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.

Each of the individual factors of jhāna on its own is called a jhāna factor, but when they are taken together they are called jhāna. Practise until you have attained the five masteries of the first white kasiṇa jhāna. Then, when you have attained mastery of the first jhāna, develop the second, third, and fourth jhāna in the way I described in my talk on mindfulness-of-breathing.

The four jhānas are also called fine-material-plane jhānas, (*rūpāvacara-jhāna*), because they are capable of producing rebirth in the fine-material realm. But here we do not encourage the development of jhānas for the sake of attaining rebirth in the fine-material realm, but for the sake of using them as a basis for developing Vipassanā meditation.

If you have been able to develop the white kasiṇa meditation up to the fourth jhāna by using the white colour of external bones, then, in a similar way, you will be able to develop the brown (or blue) kasiṇa based on external head hairs, the yellow kasiṇa based on external fat or urine, and the red kasiṇa based on external blood. You can, in the same way, also practise colour kasiṇa based on internal parts of your body.

You will be able to develop all four colour kasiṇas up to the fourth jhāna by using the colours of different parts of the body. When you have succeeded, you can try to develop the different colour kasiṇas based on also the colour of flowers, or other external objects. All blue, brown, or dark flowers are calling out and inviting you to practise the blue kasiṇa. All yellow flowers are calling out and inviting you to practise the yellow kasiṇa. All red flowers are calling out and inviting you to practise the red kasiṇa. All white flowers are calling out and inviting you to

practise the white kasiṇa. Thus, a skilled meditator can use whatever he sees as object to develop kasiṇa concentration and insight, be it living or inanimate, internal or external.

According to the Pāḷi texts the Buddha taught ten kasiṇas. They are the mentioned four colour kasiṇas plus a further six kasiṇas: the earth kasiṇa, water kasiṇa, fire kasiṇa, wind kasiṇa, space kasiṇa, and light kasiṇa.

Now, I would like to explain how to develop the remaining six types of kasiṇa.

The Earth Kasiṇa

To develop the earth kasiṇa you should find an area of plain earth, which is reddish brown like the sky at dawn, is free from sticks, stones, and leaves, and then with a stick or some other instrument draw a circle about one foot across. Then you should concentrate on that circle of earth, and note it as 'earth, earth'. You should concentrate on that circle of earth with your eyes open for a while, and then close your eyes, and see if you can visualize the circle of earth. If you are unable to visualize the sign in this way, you should re-establish your concentration based on mindfulness-of-breathing, or on the white kasiṇa, up to the fourth jhāna. Then with the assistance of your light of concentration you should look at that circle of earth. When you can see the nimitta of that circle of earth as clearly as if you were looking at it with your eyes open, you can go somewhere else to develop the nimitta.

You should not concentrate on the colour of the earth nimitta, or the characteristics of hardness, roughness etc. of the earth-element, but just keep your mind concentrated on the concept of earth. You should continue to develop this learning sign until you are able to remove the five hindrances, and attain access concentration at which time the nimitta will become the paṭibhāga-nimitta, and be exceedingly pure and clear.

You should then expand the size of that paṭibhāga-nimitta a little at a time until it fills all ten directions, and then develop

concentration on it up to the fourth jhāna.

The Water Kasiṇa

To develop the water kasiṇa you should use a bowl, or bucket of pure, clear water, or a well of clear water. Then concentrate on that water as ‘water, water’ until you have developed the uggaha-nimitta. Then develop this sign in the same way as you did for the earth kasiṇa.

The Fire Kasiṇa

To develop the fire kasiṇa you should use the flames of a fire, a candle, or any other flames that you remember seeing before. If that is too difficult, you can make a screen with a circular hole in it about one foot across. Put the screen in front of a wood- or grass-fire in such a way that you see only the flames through the hole.

Without concentrating on the smoke, or the burning wood or grass, concentrate on the concept of fire and note it as ‘fire, fire’. Then develop the uggaha-nimitta in the same way.

The Wind Kasiṇa

The wind kasiṇa can be developed through the sense of touch, or of sight. Through the sense of touch you should be mindful of the wind as it comes in through a window or door, and brushes against the body, and note it as ‘wind, wind’. Through the sense of sight you should be mindful of the movement of leaves or branches of trees in the wind, and note it as ‘wind, wind’. You can do this by developing concentration up to the fourth jhāna using another kasiṇa object, and then using your light of concentration see this movement externally, and discern the nimitta of the wind. The uggaha-nimitta looks like steam coming off hot milk rice, but the paṭibhāga-nimitta is motionless.

The Light Kasiṇa

The light kasiṇa can be developed by looking at the rays of light as they stream into a room through a crack in the wall and fall on the floor, or as they stream through the leaves of a tree and fall on the earth, or by looking up through the branches of a tree at the light in the sky above. If that is too difficult, you can get an earthen pot and place a candle or a lamp inside it, and place the pot in such a way that rays of light come out of the opening of the pot and fall upon a wall. Then concentrate on the circle of light on the wall as ‘light, light’.

The Space Kasiṇa

The space kasiṇa can be developed by looking at the space in a doorway, window, or keyhole. If that is too difficult, you can make a piece of board with a circular hole in it about eight inches to one foot across. Hold the board up in such a way that you can see only the sky through the hole, no trees or other objects. Then concentrate on the space within that circle and note it as ‘space, space’.

The Four Immaterial Jhānas

Once you have attained the four jhānas with each of the ten kasiṇas you can proceed to develop the four immaterial jhānas (*arūpa-jhāna*) called the four immaterial states. The four immaterial states are:

1. The Base-of-Boundless-Space,
2. The Base-of-Boundless-Consciousness,
3. The Base-of-Nothingness,
4. The Base of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.

You should develop the four immaterial jhānas only after you have developed all ten kasiṇas up to the fourth jhāna. You can develop the four immaterial jhānas based on any of the nine

kasiṇas, but not the space kasiṇa.

The Base-of-Boundless-Space

To develop the four immaterial jhānas you should first reflect upon the disadvantages of materiality. The human body produced by the sperm and egg of your parents is called the produced-body (*karajakāya*). Because you have a produced-body, you are subject to assault with weapons such as knives, spears, and bullets, and you are subject to being beaten, struck, and tortured. The produced body is also subject to many different kinds of disease such as diseases of the eyes, ears, and heart. So you should first understand by wisdom that because you have a produced body, made of materiality, you are subject to various kinds of suffering, and that if you can be free of materiality, you can also be free of the suffering dependent upon that materiality.

Even though the fourth jhāna based on a kasiṇa surpasses gross physical materiality, you still need to surmount the kasiṇa materiality, since it is the counterpart of gross physical materiality. Having considered this and having become dispassionate towards the kasiṇa materiality, you should develop one of the nine kasiṇas, such as the earth kasiṇa, and use it to develop the fine-material jhāna (*rūpa-jhāna*), up to the fourth jhāna.

After emerging from the fourth fine-material jhāna based on one of the nine kasiṇas, such as the earth kasiṇa, you should reflect on the disadvantages of the jhāna based on materiality, namely that:

1. The fourth jhāna has as its object kasiṇa materiality towards which I have become dispassionate.
2. The fourth jhāna has joy of the third jhāna as its near enemy.
3. The fourth jhāna is grosser than the four immaterial jhānas.

Since the mental formations present in the fourth jhāna are the

same as the mental formations in the four immaterial jhānas, you do not need to reflect on any of their disadvantages, as you did when developing the four fine-material jhānas.

Having seen the disadvantages of, and become dispassionate towards the fourth fine-material jhāna, you should reflect on the advantages of the immaterial jhānas as being more peaceful.

Then you need to expand your nimitta, say, of the earth kasiṇa, so that it is infinite, or as large as you wish, and then remove the kasiṇa materiality by concentrating on the space occupied by the kasiṇa materiality as ‘space, space’ or ‘boundless space, boundless space’. Then what remains is the space left behind after the removal of the kasiṇa, in other words, the space which the kasiṇa formerly occupied.

If that is too difficult, you should try to discern space in one part of the earth kasiṇa-nimitta. When you can see a space in the earth kasiṇa-nimitta, you should emphasize only on the space and expand it up to the infinite universe. As a result, the entire earth kasiṇa-nimitta is replaced by the space.

You need to continue concentrating on that sign of space as ‘space, space’ with applied thought. By doing this again and again you will find that the hindrances are suppressed and that with the sign of space as object you reach access concentration. By concentrating repeatedly on that sign you will find that with the sign of space as object you reach jhāna. This is the first immaterial jhāna called the base-of-boundless-space.

The Base-of-Boundless-Consciousness

The second immaterial jhāna is the base-of-boundless-consciousness and it has as its object the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness (*ākāśānañcāyatana-jhāna-citta*), which had boundless space as its object.

If you wish to develop the base-of-boundless-consciousness, you must first attain the five masteries of the base-of-boundless-space. After that, you should reflect on the disadvantages of the base-of-boundless-space, and consider that it has the fourth fine-

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

material jhāna as its near enemy. Then consider that it is not as peaceful as the base-of-boundless-consciousness.

Having seen the disadvantages of, and become dispassionate towards the base-of-boundless-space, you should reflect on the peaceful nature of the base-of-boundless-consciousness. Then you should concentrate on the consciousness that was present during the attainment of the base-of-boundless-space, the consciousness which had boundless space as its object. You should concentrate again and again on that consciousness and note it as 'consciousness, consciousness'. You should not just note it as 'boundless, boundless,' but note it as 'boundless consciousness, boundless consciousness' or just 'consciousness, consciousness'.

You need to continue concentrating on that sign as 'consciousness, consciousness' with applied thought. By doing this again and again you will find that the hindrances are suppressed, and that access concentration arises with that sign as its object. By repeated attention to that sign you will find that absorption jhāna arises with that sign as its object. This is then the second immaterial jhāna called the base-of-boundless-consciousness.

The Base-of-Nothingness

The third immaterial jhāna is the base-of-nothingness. It has as its object the absence of the consciousness which took boundless space as its object. That consciousness had been taken as the object of the base-of-boundless-consciousness.

If you wish to develop the base-of-nothingness, you must first attain the five masteries of the base-of-boundless-consciousness. After that, you should reflect on the disadvantages of the base-of-boundless-consciousness, namely that: the base-of-boundless-consciousness has the base-of-boundless-space as its near enemy and it is not as peaceful as the base-of-nothingness.

Having seen the disadvantages of, and become dispassionate towards the base-of-boundless-consciousness, you should reflect on the peaceful nature of the base-of-nothingness.

Knowing and Seeing

Then you should concentrate on the absence of the consciousness that took boundless space as its object. In this case there are two types of consciousness: the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness (*ākāśānañcāyatana-jhāna-citta*) and the base-of-boundless-consciousness jhāna-consciousness (*viññānañcāyatana-jhāna-citta*). Two consciousnesses cannot arise in one mind-moment. When the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness is present as ‘arising-static-passing-away’, the base-of-boundless-consciousness jhāna-consciousness cannot be present as ‘arising-static-passing-away’. In the same way, when the base-of-boundless-consciousness jhāna-consciousness is present, the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness cannot be present either. It is the absence of the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness which we must take as object. Taking the absence of the base-of-boundless-space jhāna-consciousness as object, note it as ‘nothingness, nothingness...’ or ‘absence, absence...’.

You need to continue concentrating on that sign as ‘nothingness, nothingness’ with applied thought. By doing this again and again you will find that the hindrances are suppressed, and that access concentration arises with that sign as its object. By repeated attention to that sign you will find that absorption jhāna arises with that sign as its object. This is then the third immaterial jhāna called the base-of-nothingness.

The Base of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception

The fourth immaterial jhāna is the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and it has as its object the consciousness present during the attainment of the base-of-nothingness. It is called the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception because the perception present in it is extremely subtle.

If you wish to develop the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, you must first attain the five masteries of the base-of-nothingness. After that you should reflect on the disadvantages of the base-of-nothingness, namely that: the base-of-nothingness

How to Develop Absorption on Other Subjects

has the base-of-boundless-consciousness as its near enemy, and it is not as peaceful as the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Furthermore, perception is a disease, perception is a boil, perception is a dart, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is peaceful.

Having seen the disadvantages of, and become dispassionate towards the base-of-nothingness, you should reflect on the peaceful nature of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Then you should concentrate again and again on the base-of-nothingness jhāna-consciousness as ‘peaceful, peaceful’.

You need to continue concentrating on the sign of the base-of-nothingness jhāna-consciousness as ‘peaceful, peaceful’ with applied thought. By doing this again and again you will find that the hindrances are suppressed, and that access concentration arises with that sign as its object. By repeated attention to that sign you will find that absorption jhāna arises with that sign as its object. This is then the fourth immaterial jhāna called the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

Today I have explained how to develop the ten kasiṇas and the eight attainments consisting of the four fine-material jhānas and the four immaterial jhānas. In my next talk I would like to continue by explaining how to develop the four sublime abidings (*brahmavihāra*) of lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative-joy, and equanimity.

Knowing and Seeing

Questions and Answers (2)

Question 2.1: How should beginners balance the faculties of concentration and wisdom? How should they practise wisdom in mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānassati*)?

Answer 2.1: It is not important for beginners to balance concentration and wisdom. This is because they are only beginners, and their five controlling faculties have not yet matured. In the beginning of meditation, there is usually much restlessness in the mind. So the faculties are not yet strong and powerful. Only when the controlling faculties are strong and powerful, it is necessary to balance them. But if beginners are able to balance the faculties already at the beginning stage, it is also good.

For example, you are now practising *ānāpānassati*; *ānāpānassati* means mindfulness-of-breathing. Knowing the breath is wisdom (*paññā*). Being mindful of the breath is mindfulness (*sati*). One-pointedness of mind on the breath is concentration (*samādhi*). The effort to know the breath clearly is effort (*vīriya*). Having faith that mindfulness-of-breathing can lead to *jhāna* is faith (*saddhā*).

Beginners must try to possess strong and powerful controlling faculties. They must have strong enough faith in mindfulness-of-breathing. They must make strong enough effort to know the breath clearly. They must have strong enough mindfulness on the breath. They must have strong enough concentration on the breath. They must see the breath clearly. They must try to make their five controlling faculties strong and powerful, as well as try to balance them. If one is excessive, the others cannot perform their function.

For example, if faith is too strong and powerful, the effort faculty cannot perform its function of maintaining associated mental formations on the breath, because excess faith produces emotion. In the same way, mindfulness cannot become established

Knowing and Seeing

on the breath. Because of emotion, the concentration faculty too, cannot perform its function of concentrating deeply on the breath. Wisdom also cannot know the breath clearly. So, when faith is excessive, the remaining controlling faculties cannot perform their function properly.

When effort is excessive, the remaining faculties also cannot perform their function properly, because excess effort makes the mind restless. Because excess effort makes the mind restless, faith, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom become weak, and cannot perform their function properly. When mindfulness is weak, you cannot do anything, because you cannot concentrate on the breath, have little or no effort to discern the breath, and may have no faith.

Now you are practising Samatha. In Samatha meditation, strong and powerful concentration is good, but too much or excessive concentration can produce laziness. When there is laziness, the remaining faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness and wisdom become very weak. They cannot perform their function properly.

At this stage wisdom is very low or inferior. It is just knowing the natural breath. So for the beginner who is practising Samatha meditation, it is enough to just know the breath clearly. When the uggaha or paṭibhāga-nimitta appears, knowing the uggaha or paṭibhāga-nimitta is wisdom. Apart from this type of wisdom, too much other general knowledge is not good, as you will always be discussing and criticizing. If a meditator discusses and criticizes mindfulness-of-breathing too much, we can say that his wisdom is excessive. Discussing and criticizing make the other controlling faculties weak, and unable to perform their function properly.

So it is also good for a beginner to balance his five controlling faculties. How to balance them? We must practise with strong and powerful mindfulness, and effort to know the breath clearly; and concentrate on the breath with faith. However, we already talked about balancing the five controlling faculties in previous

Questions and Answers (2)

talks.

Question 2.2: Why don't we, after attaining the fourth jhāna, go straight to discern the five aggregates, their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, and attain Nibbāna? Why do we need to practise the thirty-two parts of body, skeleton, white kasiṇa, four-elements meditations, meditation-on-materiality, meditation-on-mentality, dependent-origination, and Vipassanā, before the attainment of Nibbāna?

Answer 2.2: What are the five aggregates? What is the difference between the five aggregates and mentality-materiality? Do you know the answer?

Before answering the second question, I would like to explain mentality-materiality and the five aggregates. According to the Buddha Abhidhamma, there are four ultimate realities (*paramattha*). They are:

1. Consciousness (*citta*),
2. Mental-concomitant (*cetasika*),
3. Materiality (*rūpa*),
4. Nibbāna.

To attain Nibbāna, the fourth ultimate reality, we must see the impermanent, suffering and non-self nature of consciousness, mental-concomitants and materiality.

1. There are eighty-nine types of consciousness,
2. There are fifty-two mental-concomitants,
3. There are twenty-eight types of materiality.

The eighty-nine types of consciousness are called the consciousness-aggregate (*viññāṇa-khandha*). Of the fifty-two mental-concomitants, feeling is the feeling-aggregate; perception is the perception-aggregate; and the remaining fifty mental-

concomitants are the formations-aggregate.

Sometimes consciousness (*citta*) and mental-concomitants (*cetasika*) together are called mentality (*nāma*). When divided into four groups, they are the feeling-aggregate, the perception-aggregate, the formations-aggregate and the consciousness-aggregate. These four are the mentality-aggregate (*nāma khandha*). The twenty-eight types of materiality are the materiality-aggregate (*rūpa-khandha*). Consciousness, mental-concomitants and materiality taken together are called mentality-materiality (*nāmarūpa*). They are sometimes called the five aggregates: materiality, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. Their causes are also only mentality-materiality.

The Buddha taught the five-aggregate method of practising Vipassanā, to three types of people: those who have sharp wisdom, those whose insight-knowledge of mentality is not clear, and those who prefer to practise Vipassanā in the brief way.

Now I shall go on to answer the second question. According to the Theravāda tradition, there are two types of meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*): *pārihāriya-kammaṭṭhāna* and *sabbatthaka-kammaṭṭhāna*. *Pārihāriya-kammaṭṭhāna* means the meditation subject the individual meditator uses as the foundation of concentration for Vipassanā. The meditator must always use that meditation subject. *Sabbatthaka-kammaṭṭhāna* means the meditation subjects which should be practised by all meditators alike. They are also called the four protective-meditations. They are, lovingkindness-meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*), recollection-of-the-Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), recollection-of-death (*marāṇānussati*), and repulsiveness-meditation (*asubha*). So a meditator may use mindfulness-of-breathing as his *pārihāriya-kammaṭṭhāna*. But he must also practise loving-kindness-meditation, recollection-of-the-Buddha, recollection-of-death, and repulsiveness-meditation before practising Vipassanā. This is the orthodox method.

To practise lovingkindness-meditation up to jhāna stage, it is better if the meditator has already practised the white-kasiṇa

Questions and Answers (2)

meditation up to the fourth jhāna. Take for example, the Mettā Sutta. It is about five hundred bhikkhus who were expert in the ten kasiṇas, and eight attainments (*samāpatti*). They had also practised the four protective-meditations. They had practised Vipassanā meditation up to the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*). When resident devas got annoyed and frightened them, the bhikkhus went back to the Buddha. The Buddha then taught them the Mettā Sutta as a meditation subject, as well as a protective chant (*paritta*).

There are eleven ways of developing lovingkindness in the Mettā Sutta. They are for those who have attained lovingkindness jhāna (*mettā-jhāna*), and have broken down the boundaries between different types of people. They are practised with the thought '*Sukhino va khemino hontu, sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā*: May all beings be happy and secure' etc., and must be practised up to the third jhāna. Those five hundred bhikkhus were expert in the kasiṇa meditation. So it was very easy for them to attain the third mettā jhāna.

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha taught that of the four colour kasiṇas, the white-kasiṇa is the best. The white-kasiṇa makes the meditator's mind clear and bright. A tranquil mind is superior and powerful. If a meditator practises lovingkindness-meditation with a clear mind and without any defilements, he usually attains mettā jhāna within one sitting. So if, before practising lovingkindness-meditation, one enters into the fourth white-kasiṇa-jhāna, and after emerging from it, practises mettā jhāna, it will be very easy to succeed, because the mind is clear and bright, without any defilements.

In order to succeed in practising the white-kasiṇa meditation up to the fourth jhāna, a meditator should first practise skeleton-meditation internally and externally, because then the white-kasiṇa meditation will be very easy for him. Therefore, after the fourth ānāpāna-jhāna we usually teach meditators to do the thirty-two parts of the body, skeleton-meditation and white-kasiṇa meditation. In our experience, most meditators say that

Knowing and Seeing

the fourth white-kasiṇa-jhāna is better than the fourth ānāpāna-jhāna, because it produces a clearer, brighter and more tranquil mind. Such a clear, bright and tranquil mind is very helpful for practising other meditation subjects. So we usually teach the white-kasiṇa meditation before lovingkindness-meditation.

Here I would like to point out a common problem for beginners. You might have practised lovingkindness-meditation. Did you succeed in attaining mettā jhāna? In practice, if a meditator wants to send lovingkindness to someone of the same sex, he should first take the smiling face of that person as object. Then he must send lovingkindness to him: ‘May this good person be free from mental suffering, etc.’ When he, a beginner, sends lovingkindness in that way, that smiling face very soon disappears. He cannot continue his lovingkindness-meditation, because there is no object to send lovingkindness to. If that is so, he cannot attain mettā jhāna.

With the fourth white-kasiṇa-jhāna it is different. The meditator emerges from the jhāna, and when he sends lovingkindness in the same way, the image of the person will not fade away. This is because of the preceding concentration. He is able to concentrate deeply on that smiling face. He is able to attain up to the third mettā jhāna within one sitting. If he practises systematically up to the breaking down of boundaries between different types of people, he can practise the five hundred and twenty-eight pervasions of lovingkindness mentioned in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāḷi Text, and eleven ways mentioned in the Mettā Sutta. For this reason, we usually teach the white-kasiṇa meditation before lovingkindness-meditation.

Furthermore, you might have practised recollection-of-the-Buddha (*Buddhānussati*). Did you succeed up to access concentration? When those who have succeeded in mettā jhāna practise recollection-of-the-Buddha, they are able to reach access concentration within one sitting, because the preceding concentration supports the succeeding concentration. Also repulsiveness-meditation (*asubha*) is easy for those who have succeeded

Questions and Answers (2)

in lovingkindness-meditation, mindfulness-of-breathing or white-kasiṇa meditation. If a meditator practises repulsiveness-meditation up to the first jhāna, and then practises recollection-of-death (*maraṇānussatī*), he is able to succeed within one sitting. That is why we teach the white-kasiṇa meditation before the four protective-meditations. If, however, a meditator wants to go straight to Vipassanā, without practising the four protective-meditations, he can do so. There is no problem.

Question 2.3: Why after having discerned materiality and mentality must one practise the fifth and first methods of dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*)? What are the first and fifth methods?

Answer 2.3: According to the Theravāda tradition there are seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*). Here I shall explain the first five. They are:

1. The Purification of Virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*).
2. The Purification of Mind (*citta-visuddhi*). This is the eight attainments (*samāpatti*) and access concentration.
3. The Purification of View (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*). This is the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*).
4. The Purification by Overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*). This is the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). In other words, at this stage we must try to see dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).
5. The Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not Path (*maggāmaggañāṇadassana-visuddhi*). This is the Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*) and Knowledge of Arising and Passing-away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*). This is the beginning of Vipassanā.

Knowing and Seeing

So before Vipassanā there are four purifications. Why? Vipassanā is the comprehension of the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of mentality-and-materiality and their causes. Without knowing mentality-and-materiality and their causes, how can we comprehend that they are impermanent, suffering, and non-self? How can we practise Vipassanā? It is only after we have thoroughly discerned mentality-and-materiality and their causes, that we can practise Vipassanā meditation.

Mentality-and-materiality and their causes are called formations or conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*).

1. They pass away as soon as they arise, so they are impermanent;
2. They are subject to constant arising and passing-away, so they are suffering;
3. They have no self (*atta*), have no stable and indistructible essence, so they are non-self.

Comprehending impermanence, suffering, and non-self in this way is real Vipassanā. So before Vipassanā, we teach meditators to discern mentality, materiality and dependent-origination. The commentary explains it as, ‘*aniccanti pañcakkhandhā*.’ That means impermanence is the five aggregates. The five aggregates, in other words, are mentality-and-materiality and their causes. So real Vipassanā depends on knowing the five aggregates, causes and effects.

The Buddha taught four methods of discerning dependent-origination, according to the character of his listeners. In the Paṭisambhidāmagga, there is yet another method. Altogether there are five methods. The first method is to discern dependent-origination in forward order: *avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇam, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpam*...etc. The first method is popular in Theravāda Buddhism. It may be very difficult for those who have no Abhidhamma knowledge, to practise the first method. However, those meditators who have

Questions and Answers (2)

studied Abhidhamma thoroughly, are able to practise the first method. But when they practise there may still be many difficulties.

The fifth method taught by the Venerable Sāriputta, and recorded in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāḷi Text, is easy to practise for beginners. The fifth method is to discern that the five past causes produced the five present effects; and that the five present causes will produce the five future effects. This is the main point in the fifth method. If you want to know it with direct experience, you should practise up to this stage.

After practising the fifth method systematically, you will not have much difficulty in practising the first method. For this reason we teach the dependent-origination fifth method first, and only then the first method. We teach all the methods to those who have enough time, and who want to practise further. Although the Buddha taught dependent-origination in different ways, according to the character of his listeners, one method is enough to attain Nibbāna. Of the five methods, the first method is popular in Theravāda Buddhism. It is necessary to practise the first method. Therefore we teach both the fifth and first methods.

One day, the Venerable Ānanda practised dependent-origination in all four ways. In the evening, he went to the Buddha and said, ‘Bhante, although dependent-origination is deep, it is easy to me’ Then the Buddha replied: ‘*Etassa cānanda, dhammassa ananubodhā, appaṭivedhā evamayam pajā tantākulakajātā, kulāgaṇṭhikajātā, muṅḍapabbajabhūtā apāyaṃ duggatim vinipataṃ saṃsāraṃ nātivattati.*’ It means that without knowing dependent-origination, through the *anubodha-ñāṇa* and the *paṭivedha-ñāṇa*, one cannot escape from the round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*), and the four woeful planes (*apāya*). The *anubodha-ñāṇa* means the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*), and Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). The *paṭivedha-ñāṇa* means all the insight-knowledges

Knowing and Seeing

(*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). So without knowing dependent-origination by the *anubodha-ñāṇa* and *paṭivedha-ñāṇa*, one cannot attain Nibbāna. Quoting this, the commentary says that without knowing dependent-origination, no one can escape from the round of rebirths, even in a dream.

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditations

Introduction

Today I would like to explain how to develop the four sublime abidings (*brahmavihāra*), and the four protective-meditations (*caturāraṅkha-bhāvanā*). The four meditation subjects consisting of lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative-joy, and equanimity are called the four sublime abidings.

The Four Sublime Abidings

Lovingkindness (*Mettā-Bhāvanā*)

If you wish to develop the sublime abiding of lovingkindness, you should first of all be aware that lovingkindness should not be developed towards the following types of person. They are:

1. Someone of the opposite sex (*liṅgavisabhāga*),
2. Someone not alive (*kālakatapuggala*).

In the case of sending lovingkindness to a person individually, a person of the opposite sex should not be used as object, because lust will arise towards him or her. However, after you have attained jhāna it is possible to develop lovingkindness towards them as a group: such as, ‘May all women be happy.’

Finally, you can never attain lovingkindness jhāna using as object a person who is not alive. So at no time should lovingkindness be developed for a dead person.

You should begin to develop lovingkindness towards:

Knowing and Seeing

1. Yourself (*atta*),
2. A person you like and respect (*piya*),
3. A neutral person (*majjhatta*),
4. An enemy (*verī*).

In the very beginning, however, you should develop lovingkindness towards only yourself and a person you like and respect. This means that in the very beginning you should not develop lovingkindness towards the following types of people:

1. An antipathetic person (*appiyapuggala*),
2. A very dear person (*atippiyasahāyaka*),
3. A neutral, indifferent person (*majjhattapuggala*),
4. An enemy (*verīpuggala*).

An antipathetic person is one who does not do what is beneficial to you, or to those for whom you care. An enemy is one who does what is detrimental to you and to those you care for. They are both difficult to develop lovingkindness towards in the beginning, as anger may arise towards them. Also, it is hard in the beginning to develop lovingkindness towards a person to whom you are indifferent. In the case of a person who is very dear to you, you may be too attached to that person, and even cry, and be filled with concern and grief if you hear that something has happened to them. So these four should not be used as objects for the development of lovingkindness in the initial stages. Though later, when you have attained jhāna, you can use them, and you will find you are able to develop lovingkindness towards them.

You cannot attain jhāna using yourself as object even if you were to develop that meditation for a hundred years. So why begin by developing lovingkindness to yourself? Lovingkindness is first developed with yourself as object simply so that you can use yourself as an example for later comparison. It is not for the purpose of attaining access concentration with yourself as

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

object. After you have developed lovingkindness towards yourself with the thought, ‘May I be happy’, you are able to compare yourself to others and see that just as you want to be happy, dislike suffering, want to live long, and do not want to die, so too all other beings want to be happy, dislike suffering, want to live long, and do not want to die.

Thus, by using yourself as an example, for comparison, you are able to develop a mind that wishes and desires the happiness and prosperity of other beings.

In the words of the Buddha:

*‘sabbā disā anuparigamma cetasā,
nevajjhagā piyatara mattanā kvaci.
Evaṃ piyo puthu attā paresaṃ,
tasmā na hiṃse paramattakāmo.’* (Saṃyutta-1-75)

‘Having searched all directions with the mind, one cannot find anyone anywhere whom one loves more than oneself.

In this same way do all beings in all directions love themselves more than anyone else, therefore one who wishes for his own welfare should not harm others.’

So in order to compare yourself with others and make your mind soft and kind, you should first develop lovingkindness towards yourself.

You can do it by developing the following four thoughts:

1. May I be free from danger (*ahaṃ avero homi*),
2. May I be free from mental pain (*abyāpajjo homi*),
3. May I be free from physical pain (*anīgho homi*),
4. May I be well and happy (*sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi*).

If a person’s mind is soft, kind, understanding, and has empathy for others, he should have no difficulty in developing lovingkindness towards another person. So it is important that the lovingkindness you have developed towards yourself be strong and powerful. When your mind has become soft, kind, and has empathy and understanding of others, you can begin to develop

lovingkindness towards other beings.

Extending Lovingkindness Towards A Person You Like and Respect

If you have attained the fourth jhāna using mindfulness-of-breathing, or the white kasiṇa, you should again develop that concentration until your mind emits bright and brilliant light. The fourth jhāna based on the white kasiṇa is especially good for this purpose. With the assistance and support of the light of the white kasiṇa concentration, it is really very easy for you to develop lovingkindness-meditation. The reason is that the concentration of the fourth jhāna has purified the mind of greed, anger, delusion, and other defilements. After emerging from the fourth jhāna the mind is pliant, workable, pure, bright and radiant, and because of this you will, in a very short time, with the assistance of this fourth jhāna concentration, be able to develop powerful and perfect lovingkindness.

So, when that light is strong and bright, you should direct your mind towards a person of the same sex, whom you like and respect: maybe your teacher or a fellow meditator. You will find that the light produced by the concentration of the fourth jhāna spreads out around you, in all directions, and that whomever you pick as object for the development of loving-kindness, is visible in that light. You then take the image of that person, sitting or standing, which you like the most. Try to select the image you like the most and that makes you the happiest. Choose an image you remember of the person when he was at his happiest, and make the image appear about one yard in front of you. Then when you can clearly see that person in front of you, develop lovingkindness towards him with the thoughts:

1. May this good person be free from danger (*ayaṃ sappuriso avero hotu*),
2. May this good person be free from mental pain (*ayaṃ sappuriso abyāpajjo hotu*),

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

3. May this good person be free from physical pain (*ayam sappuriso anīgho hotu*),
4. May this good person be well and happy (*ayam sappuriso sukhī attānam pariharatu*).

Extend lovingkindness towards that person in these four ways three or four times, and then select one you like the most. You may, for example, select ‘May this good person be free from danger’. Then taking an image of that person free from danger as object, extend lovingkindness to that person with the thought, ‘May this good person be free from danger, may this good person be free from danger’, again and again, many times. Once the mind is very calm and steadily fixed on the object, see if you can discern the jhāna factors. If so, keep practising until you reach the first, second, and third jhānas. After that take each of the other three ways to develop lovingkindness until you reach the third jhāna. While doing this you should have an appropriate mental image for each of the four different ways to extend lovingkindness. When thinking ‘May this good person be free from danger’ you should have an image of that person as free from danger. When thinking ‘May this good person be free from mental pain’ you should have an image of that person as free from mental pain. When thinking ‘May this good person be free from physical pain’ you should have an image of that person as free from physical pain. When thinking ‘May this good person be well and happy’, you should have an image of that person as well and happy. In this way you should develop the three jhānas, and then go on to practise the five masteries (*vasī-bhāva*) of those jhānas.

When you have succeeded with one person whom you like and respect, try to do the same thing again with another person of the same sex whom you like and respect. Try doing this with about ten people of the same sex whom you like and respect, until you can reach the third jhāna using any of them. By this stage you can safely include people who are still of the same sex, and who

Knowing and Seeing

are alive, but who are also particularly dear to you (*atippiyasahāyaka*). Take about ten people of this group, and, in the same way, develop lovingkindness towards them one by one, until you reach the third *jhāna*.

Again, by this stage you can also take the neutral type of people, as long as they are of the same sex and alive. Take about ten people towards whom you are neutral, and in the same way develop lovingkindness towards them, until you reach the third *jhāna*.

Finally, you have by now mastered the lovingkindness *jhāna* to such an extent that you can do the same thing with about ten people who are your enemies or whom you dislike, as long as they are of the same sex and alive. Develop lovingkindness towards them until you reach the third *jhāna* with each. If you are a type of Great Being like the bodhisatta when he was Nandiya, the monkey king, who never thought of anyone who harmed him as an enemy, and you really have no enemies, and do not dislike or despise anyone, then you need not look for one or use one here. Only those who have enemies or people that they despise should develop lovingkindness towards that type of person.

By developing lovingkindness this way, you are gradually able to develop concentration up to the third *jhāna* using the first type of people, and when the mind has become pliant the next type of people and so on, until you can attain *jhāna* using any of the four types: those you respect, those dear to you, neutral ones, and enemies.

The Breaking Down of Boundaries (*Sīmāsambheda*).

As you continue to develop lovingkindness up to the third *jhāna* towards the four types mentioned above, you will find that your lovingkindness towards those you like and respect and those who are dear to you become even, and you can take them as one. Then you will be left with only four:

1. Yourself,

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

2. Any person you like,
3. Any person who is neutral,
4. Any person who is an enemy.

You will need to continue developing lovingkindness towards these four types of individual so that it is balanced, even and without distinction or boundary. While trying to achieve this, you will find that you cannot attain lovingkindness jhāna by using yourself as object, but in order to remove the distinctions among the four types you still need to include yourself.

You need to return to your original meditation subject, be it mindfulness-of-breathing or the white kasiṇa, and develop your concentration up to the fourth jhāna. When the light is strong and bright, extend lovingkindness to yourself for a short time, say a minute or even a few seconds. Then take someone you like as object and develop lovingkindness towards that person until the third jhāna. Then take someone who is neutral as object and develop lovingkindness towards that person until the third jhāna. Then take someone who is an enemy as object and develop lovingkindness towards that person until the third jhāna.

Then start again by briefly sending lovingkindness to yourself, but this time you send lovingkindness to a different person whom you like, a different person who is neutral, and a different person who is your enemy. When sending lovingkindness to those three types, remember to develop each of the four ways of sending lovingkindness, ‘May this good person be free from danger’ etc. for each person, up to the third jhāna.

Thus you should change the people when developing lovingkindness towards the four types of people: yourself, a respected or dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. Do this again and again, with different groups of four, many times, so that your mind is continuously developing lovingkindness with no break, and with no distinction towards any person. When you are able to develop lovingkindness jhāna to any person without distinction, you will have broken down the distinction between indi-

viduals, which is called the breaking down of boundary (*sīmāsambheda*). With the distinction between individuals broken down, you will be able to continue to further develop your lovingkindness, by taking up the method taught by the Venerable Sāriputta and recorded in the Paṭisambhidāmagga (p.314).

The Twenty-Two Categories of Pervasion

The method in the Paṭisambhidāmagga involves twenty-two categories for extending one's lovingkindness:

1. Five categories of unspecified pervasion (*anodhisoparaṇā*),
2. Seven categories of specified pervasion (*odhisoparaṇā*),
3. Ten categories of directional pervasion (*disā-pharaṇā*).

Five categories of unspecified pervasion:

1. All beings (*sabbe sattā*)
2. All breathing things (*sabbe pāṇā*)
3. All creatures (*sabbe bhūtā*)
4. All persons (*sabbe puggalā*)
5. All individuals (*sabbe attabhāvapariyāpannā*)

Seven categories of specified pervasion:

1. All women (*sabbā itthiyo*)
2. All men (*sabbe purisā*)
3. All enlightened beings (*sabbe ariyā*)
4. All unenlightened beings (*sabbe anariyā*)
5. All Devas (*sabbe devā*)
6. All humans (*sabbe manussā*)
7. All beings in the lower realms (*sabbe vinipātikā*)

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

Ten categories of directional pervasion:

1. To the East (*puratthimāya disāya*)
2. To the West (*pacchimāya disāya*)
3. To the North (*uttarāya disāya*)
4. To the South (*dakkhiṇāya disāya*)
5. To the South East (*puratthimāya anudisāya*)
6. To the North West (*pacchimāya anudisāya*)
7. To the North East (*uttarāya anudisāya*)
8. To the South West (*dakkhiṇāya anudisāya*)
9. Below (*hetṭhimāya disāya*)
10. Above (*uparimāya disāya*)

To develop this method of lovingkindness-meditation, you should as before return to your initial object of meditation, and then develop concentration again until you have reached the fourth jhāna using the white kasiṇa. Then, as described above, develop lovingkindness again and again towards yourself, a respected or dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy until there are no longer distinctions between them. When you are able to extend lovingkindness to anyone, without distinction, then take as much of the area around you as you can, that is, around the monastery or the house where you are, and take all the beings there as object. Because of your concentrated mind you should experience bright and brilliant light, and when, with the assistance of that light, you choose a particular area, and take the beings in it as object, you will be able to see all those beings clearly in the radiance of that light. When you can see all those beings in this way, you can begin to practise the five types of unspecified pervasion of lovingkindness and the seven types of specified pervasion of lovingkindness, that is a total of twelve types of lovingkindness. In each of these twelve types you should pervade lovingkindness in a further four ways:

1. May all beings be free from danger,

Knowing and Seeing

2. May all beings be free from mental pain,
3. May all beings be free from physical pain,
4. May all beings be well and happy.

Thus you will be pervading lovingkindness in a total of forty-eight ways [(7+5) x 4].

As you practise lovingkindness in this way, you must develop each category for pervading lovingkindness until you reach the third jhāna before you move on to the next category. Also the beings who are the object of the lovingkindness jhāna should be clearly visible with the light of your concentration and understanding. When you are successful in pervading loving-kindness in these four ways to all beings, move on to the next category, all breathing things, and extend lovingkindness to this category in the same four ways. Thus you should extend lovingkindness to the first five categories of beings, one by one.

When, in the seven categories of specified pervasion, you extend lovingkindness to all women, you should actually see, in your light, all the women within the area that you determined. In the same way when you extend lovingkindness towards all men, devas, beings in lower realms etc., you should actually see all the men, devas, beings in lower realms etc., in the area you determined. You should practise in this way until you become proficient in pervading lovingkindness in all the forty-eight ways.

Once proficient, you should proceed to expand the determined area to include the whole monastery or house, the whole village, the whole township, the whole state, the whole country, the whole world, the whole solar system, the whole galaxy, and the whole of the infinite universe. Expanding the determined area you should develop it in each of the forty-eight ways until you reach the third jhāna.

Once proficient you may proceed to pervade lovingkindness in the ten directions.

Pervading Lovingkindness in the Ten Directions

Pervading lovingkindness in the ten directions consists of forty-eight pervasions to each of the ten directions which gives a total of (10 x 48) four hundred and eighty ways to extend lovingkindness. When we add the forty-eight ways of pervading lovingkindness above we get a total of (480 + 48) five hundred and twenty-eight ways to extend lovingkindness.

To practise the pervasion of lovingkindness according to direction, you should take all the beings in the whole universe situated to the east of you as object, and when you can see them in the light, extend lovingkindness to them in the forty-eight ways mentioned above. Then you can do the same thing in the west, and progressively in all the other directions.

Once you can master the practise of pervading lovingkindness in these five hundred and twenty-eight ways you will experience the eleven benefits of practising lovingkindness which the Buddha taught in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

‘Bhikkhus, when the mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is cultivated, developed, much practised, made the vehicle, made the foundation, established, consolidated, and properly undertaken, eleven benefits can be expected. What are the eleven? A man sleeps in comfort, wakes in comfort, and dreams no evil dreams, he is dear to human beings, he is dear to non-human beings, devas guard him, fire, poison and weapons do not affect him, his mind is easily concentrated, his complexion becomes bright, he dies unconfused, if he penetrates no higher he will be reborn in the Brahma World.’ (A.v,342)

Compassion (*Karuṇā-Bhāvanā*)

If you have developed lovingkindness as described above, it should not be difficult for you to develop the sublime abiding of compassion. To develop compassion you should first select a being who is suffering, who is of the same sex and who is alive. Reflecting on his suffering you should arouse compassion for that being.

Knowing and Seeing

Then you should develop the white *kaṣiṇa* up to the fourth *jhāna*, and when your light of concentration is bright and strong, you should with that light discern the being you selected. When you can see that being with your light of concentration, you should develop lovingkindness-meditation based on that person and enter into *jhāna*. After emerging from that lovingkindness *jhāna* and keeping that suffering person as object, you should develop compassion with the thought, ‘May this person be released from suffering’ (*ayaṃ sappuriso dukkhā muccatu*). You should repeat this many times, again and again, until you attain the first, second, and third *jhānas* and the five masteries of each *jhāna*. After that you should develop compassion as you did lovingkindness, that is, towards a person you like, a neutral person and an enemy. You should develop each of these up to the third *jhāna*.

To develop compassion towards beings who are happy and not suffering in any apparent way, you should reflect on the fact that all unenlightened beings are not free from being reborn in the lower realms. Also, because of the evil actions that they have performed during their wanderings through the round of rebirths, and while still not free from the danger of being reborn in lower realms, all beings are still liable to experience the results of those evil actions. Lastly, every being is an object for compassion because they are not free from the suffering of aging, sickness, and death.

After you have reflected thus, you should also here develop compassion as you did lovingkindness, that is, towards the four types of person: yourself, a respected or dear person, a neutral person and an enemy. Then, having removed the distinctions between individuals you should develop compassion up to the third *jhāna* in each instance.

After that you should develop the hundred and thirty-two ways of pervading compassion, namely: five unspecified pervasions, seven specified pervasions, and one hundred and twenty directional pervasions $[5 + 7 + (10 \times 12) = 132]$ which are the same

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

as those used in the development of lovingkindness-meditation.

Appreciative-Joy (*Muditā-Bhāvanā*)

To develop the sublime abiding of appreciative-joy, you should select a person of the same sex who is alive and happy, and whom you are very fond of and friendly with. Select a happy person the sight of whom makes you happy and glad.

Then you should develop the white kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna, and when your light of concentration is bright and strong you should with that light discern the being you selected. When you can see that being with your light of concentration, you should develop the sublime abiding of lovingkindness based on that person and enter jhāna. After emerging from that loving-kindness jhāna you should develop compassion jhāna, and then having emerged from that, and keeping that happy person as object you should develop appreciative-joy with the thought: ‘May this being not be separated from the prosperity he has attained.’ (*ayaṃ sappuriso yathāladhasampattito māvigacchatu.*) Develop this again and again until you attain the third jhāna, and the five masteries of each jhāna.

After that develop appreciative-joy in the same way for a respected or dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy. Then again to yourself, a respected or dear person, a neutral person, and an enemy until you are able to remove the distinctions between individuals. Then taking all beings in the infinite universe as object, develop appreciative-joy in the hundred and thirty-two ways.

Equanimity (*Upekkhā-Bhāvanā*)

To develop the sublime abiding of equanimity, you should first develop the white kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna, and then select a neutral person of the same sex, who is alive and develop lovingkindness, compassion, and appreciative joy each up to the third jhāna towards that person. Then, having arisen from the third jhāna, you should reflect on the disadvantages of those

Knowing and Seeing

three sublime abidings, namely their closeness to affection, like and dislike, elation and joy. Afterwards you should reflect on the fourth jhāna based on equanimity as peaceful. Taking a normally neutral person as object you should develop equanimity towards him by with the thought: ‘This being is the heir to his own actions.’ (*‘ayaṃ sappuriso kammaṣako’*)

With the support of the third jhānas of lovingkindness, compassion, and appreciative-joy, it should not take you long to develop the fourth jhāna of equanimity based on that neutral person. Following that you should develop the fourth jhāna of equanimity towards a respected or dear person, a very dear person, and an enemy. You should then develop equanimity again and again towards yourself, a respected or dear person, a neutral person and an enemy, up to the fourth jhāna for the last three types of individual, until you have removed the distinctions between individuals. Then taking all beings in the infinite universe as object, develop equanimity in the above hundred and thirty-two ways.

This completes the development of the Four Sublime Abidings.

The Four Protective-Meditations

The four meditation subjects of lovingkindness, recollection-of-the-Buddha, repulsiveness meditation and recollection-of-death are called the Four Protections, or the Four Protective-meditations. This is because they protect the meditator from various dangers. For this reason it is worthwhile to learn and develop them before proceeding to develop Vipassanā meditation. I have already described how to develop loving-kindness, therefore, I would like to go on and talk about how to develop the other three protective-meditations, beginning with the recollection-of-the-Buddha.

Recollection-of-the-Buddha (*Buddhānussati*)

According to the Pāḷi formula given in the suttas, this medita-

tion subject can be developed by looking at the nine qualities of the Buddha:

‘Itipi so bhagavā araham̃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇa-sampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānam̃ buddho bhagavāti.’

This can be explained as:

This Blessed One, having destroyed the mental defilements, is worthy of veneration (*araham̃*); he has attained perfect enlightenment by himself (*sammāsambuddho*); he is perfect in knowledge and the practice of morality (*vijjācaraṇasampanno*); he speaks only what is beneficial and true (*sugato*); he knows the world (*lokavidū*); he is the unsurpassable leader of men fit to be tamed (*anuttaro purisadammasārathi*); he is the teacher of devas and men (*satthā devamanussānam̃*); he is an Enlightened One (*buddho*); he is the most fortunate possessor of the results of previous meritorious actions (*bhagavā*).

I shall give an example of how to use the first quality, *araham̃*, to develop concentration. According to the Visuddhimagga the Pāli word *araham̃* has five meanings. They are:

1. Because he has totally removed, without remainder, all defilements and habitual tendencies, and has therefore made himself remote from them, the Buddha is a worthy one: *Arahanta*.
2. Because he has cut off all defilements with the sword of the Arahant Path, the Buddha is a worthy one: *Arahanta*.
3. Because he has broken and destroyed the spokes of the wheel of dependent-origination beginning with ignorance and craving, the Buddha is a worthy one: *Arahanta*.
4. Because of his unsurpassable qualities of virtue, concentration, and wisdom he is given the highest form of worship by brahmās, devas, and men: the Buddha is a worthy one: *Arahanta*.

Knowing and Seeing

5. Because, even when in seclusion and not seen by anyone, he does not perform any evil by body, speech, or mind, the Buddha is a worthy one: *Arahanta*.

To develop this meditation you should memorise these five reasons why the Buddha is an Arahanta, and learn them proficiently enough to recite them.

Then you should enter the fourth jhāna based on either the white kasiṇa or mindfulness-of-breathing. With the support of the light produced by that concentration, you should visualise a Buddha image that you remember and which you liked, and respected, and take that visualised image as object for developing concentration. When you can see that image clearly, imagine it to be the real Buddha and continue to watch it as such.

If in a past life you were fortunate enough to have met the Buddha, you may find that the image of the real Buddha will arise in your mind. Then you should start to pay attention to the qualities of the Buddha and not just the image of the Buddha. If the real image of the Buddha does not arise, then simply assume that the Buddha image you visualise is the real Buddha, and go on to recollect the qualities of the Buddha. You can choose the definition of *araham* you like the most, and take the meaning as object, and recollect it again and again as, '*araham, araham*'.

When your concentration develops and becomes stronger, the image of the Buddha will disappear and your mind should simply stay calmly concentrated on the quality you selected. When the mind stays calmly concentrated on that quality as object for about an hour, you should see if the jhāna factors are present. But in this case the jhāna can be only access-jhāna (*upacāra-jhāna*). You can recollect the other qualities of the Buddha in a similar way, and also practise the five jhāna masteries on this meditation subject.

Repulsiveness Meditation (*Asubha*)

To develop the meditation based on the repulsiveness of a

How to Develop the Sublime Abidings and Protective-Meditation

corpse, you should begin by re-establishing the fourth jhāna concentration using either the white kasiṇa or mindfulness-of-breathing. When the light produced by that concentration is bright and clear, you should with that light, take as object the most repulsive corpse of the same sex as yourself, that you remember seeing. Try to visualise that corpse in your light. Try to see it with the assistance of the light, so that it is exactly as you saw it previously. When you are able to see it clearly in this way, see it in the most repulsive way possible. Having calmly concentrated your mind on it, note it as, ‘repulsive, repulsive’ (*paṭikūla, paṭikūla*).

When you are able to concentrate your mind steadily on the object of the corpse for one or two hours, you will experience a change from the uggaha-nimitta (taken-up sign) to the paṭibhāga-nimitta (counterpart sign).

The uggaha-nimitta is the image which looks just the same as the corpse you saw once with your eyes. The uggaha-nimitta appears as a hideous, dreadful, and frightening sight, but the paṭibhāga-nimitta appears like a man with big limbs lying down after eating his fill.

You should pay attention to that paṭibhāga-nimitta as, ‘repulsive, repulsive’, again and again. When your mind stays constantly on that object for one or two hours, the jhāna factors will become clear. When they become clear it is the first jhāna. Continue to practise in this way and develop the five masteries of this jhāna.

Recollection-of-Death (*Maraṇānussati*)

In accordance with the Pāḷi of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta and the Visuddhimagga Commentary, recollection-of-death can be developed based upon a corpse you remember seeing. Therefore, to develop the recollection-of-death you should again enter the first jhāna concentration based on the repulsiveness of a corpse. Then when you have attained the first jhāna using that external corpse as object, you should reflect: ‘This body of mine

Knowing and Seeing

too is of a nature to die. Indeed, it will die just like this one. It cannot avoid becoming like this.’ By keeping the mind concentrated and mindful of your own mortal nature, you will also find that the sense of urgency (*sarñvega*) develops. When that knowledge is present in you, you will probably see your own body as a repulsive corpse. Then perceiving that the life-faculty has been cut off in that image of your own corpse, you should continue to meditate and concentrate the mind on the cutting off of the life-faculty. While concentrating on that you should note one of the following thoughts:

1. I am certain to die, life is impermanent (*marañam me dhuvam, jivitam me adhuvam*),
2. I will certainly die (*marañam me bhavissati*),
3. My life will end in death (*marañapariyosānam me jivitam*),
4. Death, death (*marañam, marañam*).

Taking whichever you like as a way to concentrate, you can note it in any language. You should practise until you are able to calmly concentrate on the image of absence of the life faculty in your own corpse for one or two hours. When you are able to do this you will find that the five jhāna factors arise, but with this meditation subject you can attain only access concentration.

Summary

The four meditation subjects of lovingkindness, recollection-of-the-Buddha, repulsiveness, and recollection-of-death are called the Four Protections, or the Four Protective-meditations, because they are able to protect the meditator from various dangers.

In the Meghiyasutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya. 3. p.169) it says:

‘For the removal of lust, meditation on repulsiveness should be developed; for the removal of anger, lovingkindness should be developed; and mindfulness-of-breathing should be developed

for the cutting off of discursive thought.’

According to this sutta, repulsiveness meditation can be considered as the best weapon for removing lust. If you take a corpse as object and see it as repulsive, it is called repulsiveness of a lifeless body (*aviññāṇaka-asubha*). To take the thirty-two parts of the body of a living being and see them as repulsive, as taught in the Girimānanda Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya, 3, 343), is called repulsiveness of a living body (*saviññāṇaka-asubha*). Both these forms of repulsiveness meditation, whether based on a living body or lifeless body, are weapons for removing lust.

Developing lovingkindness can be considered as the best weapon for removing anger, and mindfulness-of-breathing can be considered as the best weapon for removing discursive thought.

Therefore, if lust arises in a meditator he should develop repulsiveness meditation. If anger arises and becomes strong he should develop lovingkindness. When meditation and faith slacken, and the mind is dull, he should develop recollection-of-the-Buddha. When the sense of urgency is lacking, and he is bored with striving in meditation, he should develop recollection-of-death.

Today I have explained how to develop the Four Sublime Abidings and the Four Protective-meditations. In my next talk, I shall explain how to begin to develop Vipassanā meditation, beginning with the four-elements meditation, and analysis of the various kinds of materiality.

Before I end this talk, I would like to explain the relation between Samatha and Vipassanā.

In the Samādhi Sutta of the Khandha-vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Buddha said: ‘Bhikkhu, you should practise concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated, bhikkhus, knows dhamma as it really is. And what does he know as it really is? The arising of materiality and the passing-away thereof; the arising of feeling and the passing away of feeling, of perception and the formations; the arising of consciousness and the passing

Knowing and Seeing

away thereof.’

Therefore, a bhikkhu who is concentrated knows the five aggregates, their causes, and the arising and passing away of the five aggregates and their causes. He clearly see that because of the arising of their causes the five aggregates arise, and because of the completely cessation of their causes the five aggregates also completely cease.

The Samatha I discussed in the first three talks produces strong concentration. It is the light of concentration that lets you see ultimate mentality-and-materiality in Vipassanā. With that deep, strong and powerful concentration, you can clearly see the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of mentality-and-materiality and their causes. This clarity is a great benefit coming from Samatha.

Also, Samatha gives you a resting place. There is much to discern in Vipassanā and tiredness may occur. In that case, you can stay in one of the jhānas for a long time. That rests and refreshes your mind, so you can then switch back to Vipassanā. Any time tiredness occurs, you can enter jhāna to rest again.

It is good to remember these benefits of Samatha when I explain Vipassanā in the following talks.

Questions and Answers (3)

Question 3.1: In mindfulness-of-breathing there are the parikamma-nimitta, the uggaha-nimitta, and the paṭibhāga-nimitta: What is the parikamma-nimitta? Is the parikamma-nimitta always grey? What is the difference between the parikamma-nimitta and the uggaha-nimitta?

Answer 3.1: In mindfulness-of-breathing there are three types of nimitta, three types of concentration (*samādhi*) and three types of meditation (*bhāvanā*). The three types of nimitta are: the parikamma-nimitta, the uggaha-nimitta and the paṭibhāga-nimitta; the three types of concentration are: preparatory concentration (*parikamma-samādhi*) or momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*), access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), and absorption concentration (*appanā-samādhi*); the three types of meditation are: preparatory meditation, access meditation, and absorption meditation.

Sometimes preparatory concentration is called momentary concentration. The object of this concentration can be the parikamma-nimitta, the uggaha-nimitta, and occasionally the paṭibhāga-nimitta. Preparatory meditation is the same as preparatory concentration.

Real access meditation, and real access concentration are just before jhāna concentration, or absorption concentration. But sometimes deep and strong concentration before absorption-jhāna (*appanā-jhāna*), with the paṭibhāga-nimitta as object, is also called access meditation or access concentration. This is a metaphor, because real access meditation and real access concentration are very close to jhāna. When preparatory concentration, or momentary concentration, is fully developed it produces access concentration. When access concentration is fully developed, it leads to absorption or jhāna concentration.

We already discussed the nimitta in previous talks. There are

three types of nimitta: the parikamma-nimitta, the uggaha-nimitta, and the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

(1) The parikamma-nimitta: The natural breath is also a nimitta. The touching point is also a nimitta. Here nimitta means the object of concentration. The Commentary mentions that the nostril sign (*nāsika-nimitta*), and upper lip sign (*mukha-nimitta*) are the parikamma-nimitta for beginners. When concentration is a little stronger a grey or smoky colour usually appears around the nostrils. This grey or smoky colour is called the parikamma-nimitta. The concentration is called preparatory concentration, and the meditation too is called preparatory meditation. All meditation and concentration up to this stage, is called preparatory meditation and preparatory concentration. At this stage, the nimitta may be not only smoky grey, but also other colours.

(2) The uggaha-nimitta: When the previous concentration increases in strength and power, the smoky grey usually changes to white, like cotton wool. But it may become another colour, owing to a change in perception. When the perception changes, the colour and shape of the nimitta may also change. If the colour and shape change very often, the concentration will fall down gradually. This is because the meditator's perception changes. Whenever it changes, his object thereby also changes. He then has different objects. So the meditator should not pay attention to the colour and shape of the nimitta. He should pay attention to it as only an ānāpāna-nimitta. This is the second nimitta.

This concentration on the uggaha-nimitta is also called preparatory concentration, and the meditation too is called preparatory meditation.

(3) The paṭibhāga-nimitta: When the concentration has become even stronger and powerful, the uggaha-nimitta changes to the paṭibhāga-nimitta. Usually the paṭibhāga-nimitta is clear, bright and radiant, like the morning star. In this case too, if the perception changes, the nimitta may also change. If, when the concentration is strong and powerful, the meditator wants the

Questions and Answers (3)

nimitta to be long it will become long; if the meditator wants it to be short it will become short; if the meditator wants it to become ruby red it will become ruby red. This is because the meditator changes his perception, and this the Visuddhimagga says one should not do. If one does so, then even though the concentration is deep, it will gradually decrease. This is because one has different perceptions, and thereby different objects. So a meditator should not play with the nimitta. If he plays with it he cannot attain jhāna.

The beginning stage of concentration on the paṭibhāga-nimitta is also called preparatory concentration, and the meditation also preparatory meditation. But concentration on the paṭibhāga-nimitta close to jhāna is called access concentration. That meditation is called access meditation. The nimitta is the paṭibhāga-nimitta. When absorption arises, the nimitta is still the paṭibhāga-nimitta, but the concentration is absorption concentration. That meditation is absorption meditation.

Question 3.2: What is the difference between access concentration and absorption concentration?

Answer 3.2: When the paṭibhāga-nimitta appears, concentration is powerful. At this stage, the stage of access concentration, the jhāna factors are not fully developed. For this reason, during access concentration, bhavaṅga mind states (life-continuum consciousness) still occur, and one can fall into bhavaṅga. The meditator experiences this, and will say that everything stopped, or may think that it is Nibbāna and say: 'I knew nothing then.' If he practises in this way, he can stay in bhavaṅga for a long time.

In any kind of practice, be it good or bad, one can achieve one's aim if one tries again and again. 'Practice makes perfect.' In this case too, if he tries again and again, in the same way, he may fall into bhavaṅga for a long time. Why does he say he knows nothing? Because the bhavaṅga takes as object the object

Knowing and Seeing

at the time of near death in the past life. That object may be kamma, kamma sign (*kamma-nimitta*) or rebirth sign (*gati-nimitta*). But a meditator cannot see that the bhavaṅga takes one of these objects, because he has not yet discerned dependent-origination. It is only when they have discerned dependent-origination that meditators see that the bhavaṅga takes one of these objects.

If a meditator thinks it is Nibbāna, this belief is a very big ‘rock’ blocking the way to Nibbāna. If he cannot remove this big ‘rock’ he cannot attain real Nibbāna. Why does this belief occur? Many meditators think that a disciple (*sāvaka*) cannot know mentality-materiality as taught by the Buddha. Because of this belief, they do not try to discern mentality-and-materiality, and their causes, as taught by the Buddha, and do not think it is necessary to develop sufficiently deep concentration. In that case, when the concentration is only weak, bhavaṅga mind states still occur, because the jhāna factors too are weak. Concentration cannot be maintained for a long time. If one purposely practises to fall into bhavaṅga, one may also achieve one’s aim, but it is not Nibbāna. To attain Nibbāna we must practise the seven stages of purification step by step. Without knowing ultimate mentality, ultimate materiality, and their causes, one cannot attain real Nibbāna.

In the same way, when the ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta appears, the meditator’s mind may fall into bhavaṅga because the jhāna factors are not yet strong enough. Just like, when learning to walk, a small child who is too weak to stand by himself, will fall down again and again. In the same way, at the access concentration stage, the jhāna factors are not yet fully developed, and for that reason during the access concentration stage, bhavaṅga mind states still occur, and one may fall into bhavaṅga. In reality it is not Nibbāna.

To avoid falling into bhavaṅga, and develop concentration further, you need the help of the five controlling faculties of faith (*saddhā*), effort (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration

Questions and Answers (3)

(*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), to push the mind, and fix it on the paṭibhāga-nimitta. It takes effort to make the mind know the paṭibhāga-nimitta again and again, mindfulness not to forget the paṭibhāga-nimitta, and wisdom to know the paṭibhāga-nimitta.

At the absorption-jhāna stage, the jhāna factors are fully developed. Just like a strong and powerful man can stand up straight the whole day, a meditator can, taking the paṭibhāga-nimitta as object, stay in absorption jhāna for a long time, without falling into bhavaṅga. At this stage, complete absorption occurs without interruption for one hour, or two hours, or three hours, etc. At that time he cannot hear a sound. His mind does not go to other objects. Apart from the paṭibhāga-nimitta, he knows nothing.

Question 3.3: Under what conditions, or state, can we say that a meditation experience is access concentration or absorption concentration?

Answer 3.3: If many bhavaṅga states occur during concentration, one can say that it is access concentration. But then the nimitta must be the paṭibhāga-nimitta. Only if one is able to stay in complete absorption for a long time, without interruption, taking the same paṭibhāga-nimitta as object, can one say that it is absorption jhāna.

How can a meditator know that his mind is falling into bhavaṅga? He may notice that he was very often unaware of the paṭibhāga-nimitta. That is how he knows that it is bhavaṅga. Sometimes his mind may in quick moments think of an object other than the paṭibhāga-nimitta. But this does not happen in absorption jhāna. In absorption jhāna there is only complete absorption without interruption.

Question 3.4: Is there access concentration, and absorption concentration at each level of the four jhānas? What are their characteristics?

Answer 3.4: Let us take the example of the ānāpāna jhānas, which take the ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta as object. In this case there are four types of access concentration, and four types of absorption concentration. At each level of jhāna there are access concentration, and absorption concentration, which take only the ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta as object. So their object is the same, there is no difference, but their strength is different.

In the first access-jhāna stage, there are five jhāna factors; it is the same in the second access-jhāna, and third access-jhāna stage. But in the fourth access-jhāna stage, there is no bliss (*sukha*): only applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), equanimity (*upekkhā*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). Although they take the same ānāpāna-nimitta as object, the second access-jhāna factors are more powerful than the first access-jhāna factors, the third access-jhāna factors are more powerful than the second access-jhāna factors, and the fourth access-jhāna factors are more powerful than the third access-jhāna factors.

The first access-jhāna factors suppress physical pain (*kāyika-dukkha-vedanā*). The second access-jhāna factors suppress mental suffering (*domanassa-vedanā*). The third access-jhāna factors suppress physical pleasant feeling (*kāyika-sukha-vedanā*). The fourth-access jhāna factors suppress pleasant mental feeling or happiness (*somanassa-vedanā*). This is how we can distinguish between the different types of access concentration, especially the fourth access-jhāna concentration stage. At that stage, the breath is the subtlest; it has nearly stopped. The breath then stops completely at the fourth absorption-jhāna stage.

As for the differences between absorption-jhānas, we can distinguish them too by looking at the jhāna factors. In the first jhāna, five jhāna factors are present: applied thought, sustained thought, joy, bliss and one-pointedness. In the second jhāna, three jhāna factors are present: joy, bliss and one-pointedness. In the third jhāna, two jhāna factors are present: bliss and one-

Questions and Answers (3)

pointedness. In the fourth jhāna, two jhāna factors are present: equanimity and one-pointedness. By looking at the jhāna factors, we can say, ‘this is the first jhāna’, ‘this is the second jhāna’, ‘this is the third jhāna’, ‘this is the fourth jhāna’. Also, the concentration increases stage by stage. Fourth jhāna concentration is higher than the other types of jhāna concentration. How is it higher? You should try to experience it yourself. Many meditators report that the fourth jhāna is the best and the quietest.

Question 3.5: Under what conditions does a meditator ‘drop’, or regress from absorption to access concentration? Under what conditions does a meditator in access concentration attain absorption concentration?

Answer 3.5: If the meditator does not respect his meditation practice, but respects external objects other than the paṭibhāga-nimitta, then many hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) will occur. Many thoughts dependent upon sensual pleasure will occur, and many thoughts dependent upon hatred will occur. They are unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*). Those different objects will reduce the concentration, because wholesome dhammas and unwholesome dhammas are always in opposition. When wholesome dhammas are strong and powerful, unwholesome dhammas are far away. Also, when because of unwise attention, unwholesome dhammas are strong and powerful, wholesome dhammas are far away. Wholesome and unwholesome dhammas cannot arise simultaneously in one mind-moment or thought-process.

Here I would to explain wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) and unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*). In Samatha meditation practice, when a meditator is practising mindfulness-of-breathing, and he concentrates on the natural breath, then his attention is wise attention. When the uggaha-nimitta or paṭibhāga-nimitta appears, and the meditator concentrates on the uggaha-nimitta or paṭibhāga-nimitta, then his attention is also

Knowing and Seeing

called wise attention. If, in Vipassanā meditation, a meditator sees: ‘this is materiality’, ‘this is mentality’, ‘this is cause’, ‘this is effect’, ‘this is impermanent’, ‘this is suffering’, or ‘this is non-self’, then his attention is wise attention.

But if he sees: ‘this is a man, a woman, a son, a daughter, a father, a mother, a deity, a brahmā, an animal, etc.’; ‘this is gold, money, etc.’ then his attention is unwise attention. Generally speaking, we can say that because of wise attention many wholesome dhammas arise, and many unwholesome dhammas arise because of unwise attention. If, while you are practising meditation, unwise attention arises, then hindrances or defilements will certainly arise; they are unwholesome dhammas. Those unwholesome dhammas reduce the concentration, or cause it to regress and drop.

If you look at your meditation object with wise attention, again and again, then wholesome dhammas will increase. Jhāna wholesome dhammas too are among those wholesome dhammas. So, if you pay attention to the nimitta, such as the ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta, again and again, this is wise attention. If you develop this wise attention to full strength, then from the access concentration stage you will attain the absorption concentration stage.

Question 3.6: When a person dies, a kamma-nimitta may arise because of past wholesome or unwholesome kamma. Is this phenomenon similar to that which arises during meditation, when images of past events, which the meditator has forgotten, appear?

Answer 3.6: There may be some similarity, but only in some cases. It may be a little similar to those whose death took place quickly.

Question 3.7: While meditating, images of events from more than thirty years back, which the meditator had forgotten, appear.

Questions and Answers (3)

Is this due to lack of mindfulness, which lets the mind go away from the object?

Answer 3.7: It could be. But it also could be because of attention (*manasikāra*). But many meditators do not know about attention. It is only when they have practised meditation-on-mentality that they understand attention. Thought-processes occur very quickly, so they do not understand that because of attention these images appear. In the Buddha Abhidhamma, there is no dhamma which occurs by itself, without any cause. This is because all formations are conditioned.

Question 3.8: If, when dying, a person has strong mindfulness, can he prevent a kamma sign (*kamma-nimitta*) of previous unwholesome or wholesome kamma from arising?

Answer 3.8: Strong, powerful mindfulness can prevent such nimittas from arising; but what is strong, powerful mindfulness? For those who have attained jhāna, if they can practise that jhāna, and maintain it completely stable right up to the time of death, you can say that the mindfulness associated with that jhāna is strong and powerful. That mindfulness can prevent an unwholesome sign or sensual-plane wholesome sign from arising. That mindfulness takes as object only the jhāna object, like an ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta or white-kasiṇa paṭibhāga-nimitta.

Another type of strong powerful mindfulness is the mindfulness associated with insight-knowledge. If a meditator's insight-knowledge is the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*sarīkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*), then the mindfulness associated with that knowledge is strong and powerful. The meditator's sign, in this case, is wholesome. His mindfulness is capable of preventing unwholesome signs from appearing, as well as the other wholesome signs, which may replace his Vipassanā sign. The object of that Vipassanā mindfulness is the impermanent, suffering, or non-self nature of any formation one chooses. He may

pass away with that as his object. At that time, the object of his near-death impulsion (*marañāsanna-javana*) is insight-knowledge. That insight-knowledge prior to death can produce deva rebirth-linking consciousness (*deva-paṭisandhi*); he may be reborn as a deva spontaneously.

Referring to this type of meditator, the Buddha taught in the Sotanugata Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya Catukka Nipāta, as follows: ‘*So muṭṭhassati kālaṃ kurumāno aññatarāṃ devanikāyaṃ upapajjati. Tassa tattha sukhino dhammapadā plavanti. Dandho bhikkhave satuppādo, atha so satto khippaṃyeva visesagāmī hoti.*’: ‘Bhikkhus, if a worldling (*puthujjana*) dies, he may get reborn in one of the deva realms, and there all formations appear clearly in his mind. He may be slow to reflect on the Dhamma or to do Vipassanā, but he attains Nibbāna very quickly.’ Why do those formations appear clearly in his mind? Because the near-death impulsion consciousness of the previous life, take the impermanent, suffering, or non-self nature of the formations as object. The bhavaṅga mind state in the deva takes the same object. So the ‘host’ bhavaṅga knows the impermanent, suffering, or non-self nature of the formations. Therefore, the mindfulness associated with insight-knowledge, takes the object without hesitation. So according to that Sutta, strong mindfulness associated with Insight-knowledge is capable of preventing unwholesome signs from appearing, as well as the other wholesome signs, which may replace his Vipassanā sign. Before death takes place you should try to possess this type of mindfulness.

For example, the Sakkapañha Sutta is about three bhikkhus who practised Samatha and Vipassanā. They had good virtue and good concentration, but their minds inclined towards life as female gandhabbas (musicians and dancers in the deva realm). When they died they went to the deva realm. They were reborn as very beautiful and shiny gandhabbas, as if they were sixteen years old. During their lives as bhikkhus, there was also a lay-woman. The three bhikkhus had gone to her house every day for

Questions and Answers (3)

almsfood, and taught her Dhamma. She became a stream-enterer, and when she died she was reborn as Gopaka, the son of Sakka. The three gandhabbas performed for the son of Sakka, and he saw that they were very beautiful and shiny. He thought: ‘They are very beautiful and shiny. What kamma did they do?’ He saw they were the three bhikkhus who had come to his house when he was a laywoman. He knew that their virtue, concentration and wisdom had been very good. So he reminded them of their past lives. He said: ‘When you listened to the teachings and practised the Dhamma, what were your eyes and ears directed at?’ Two of the gandhabbas remembered their past lives and were ashamed. They developed Samatha and Vipassanā again, and quickly attained the non-returner path and fruition, and died. They were reborn in the pure abodes, and attained arahantship there. The third bhikkhu was not ashamed and remained a gandhabba.

So, it is not necessary to contact a life insurance company. This mindfulness is the best insurance.

Question 3.9: When practising the four-elements meditation, and discerning the twelve characteristics, is it necessary to start with hardness, roughness, and heaviness in that sequence? Can one choose to start with any one of the characteristics?

Answer 3.9: At the beginning stage we can start with a characteristic that is easy to discern. But when we can discern all the characteristics easily and clearly, it is necessary to follow the sequence given by the Buddha: earth-element (*paṭhavīdhātu*), water-element (*āpodhātu*), fire-element (*tejojdhātu*), air-element (*vāyodhātu*). This is because that sequence produces strong, powerful concentration. When we see the kalāpas, and are able to easily discern the four elements in each kalāpa, the sequence is not so important; what is very important is to discern them simultaneously.

Why? The life span of those kalāpas is very short. Their life

Knowing and Seeing

span may be less than a billionth of a second. So their life span is very short. At that stage there is not enough time to recite ‘earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element’. We must discern the four elements simultaneously, and yet in sequence.

Question 3.10: Practising the four-elements meditation enables one to balance the four elements in the body. One may at some time get sick because the four elements are out of balance. When one is sick, can one practise the four-elements meditation with strong mindfulness to cure the sickness?

Answer 3.10: There are many types of affliction. Some afflictions are produced by previous kamma, such as the Buddha’s back pain. Some afflictions are due to unbalanced four elements. So those afflictions produced by previous kamma cannot be cured by only balancing the four elements. But some afflictions which occur because of unbalanced four elements, may disappear when the meditator tries to balance those elements.

There are also some afflictions which occur because of food or temperature (*utu*) or mind (*citta*). So if an affliction arises because of mind, and we can cure that mind, that affliction may disappear; if an affliction arises because of temperature, fire-element, like with cancer, malaria, etc., it can be cured only by taking medicine, and not by balancing the elements. In the same way there are some afflictions produced by unsuitable food.

Question 3.11: Before we attain the fourth jhāna, and eradicate³ ignorance (*avijjā*), many thoughts still arise due to bad habits. For example, in our daily life (outside a meditation retreat) we are aware that greed or hatred arises. Can we use repulsiveness-meditation (*asubha*) or lovingkindness-meditation (*mettā*-

³ The fourth jhāna does not eradicate ignorance; it only suppresses ignorance.

Questions and Answers (3)

bhāvanā) to remove them? Or should we just pay attention to our meditation subject, without paying attention to them, and let them disappear automatically?

Answer 3.11: For unwholesome kamma, ignorance (*avijjā*) is a latent cause, and unwise attention is the proximate cause. Unwise attention is very important. If you are able to replace unwise attention with wise attention, the greed or hatred will disappear for a while, or maybe forever, if the wise attention is very strong and powerful. We already discussed wise attention and unwise attention in a previous question.

You can use repulsiveness-meditation or lovingkindness-meditation to remove them. These meditations are also wise attention. Vipassanā is the best weapon to destroy defilements. Vipassanā is the best wise attention.

Question 3.12: How does bhavaṅga function in the sensual realms, fine-material realms, immaterial realms and the supramundane realm? Would the Sayadaw please explain with examples.

Answer 3.12: The function of bhavaṅga is the same in the first three types of realms. That is, they arise so that the mind-moments in one life do not stop. This is because the kamma which produces this life is not yet exhausted. The object of the bhavaṅga may be a kamma or kamma sign (*kamma-nimitta*) or rebirth sign (*gati-nimitta*). In the fine-material realm and immaterial realms there are usually only kamma and kamma signs; there are no rebirth signs. For example, the object of one person's bhavaṅga may be the Kyaikthiyo Pagoda, while another person's kamma sign may be the Shwedagon Pagoda. When we say 'supramundane realm' (*lokuttara-bhūmi*) we are using 'realm' as a metaphor. The supramundane realm is, in fact, not a place at all. By 'supramundane realm' we mean only the four paths, four fruitions, and Nibbāna. It is not a place.

Knowing and Seeing

The four path and four fruition consciousnesses are not bhavaṅga. In Nibbāna there is no mentality-materiality (*nāmarūpa*), so there cannot be any bhavaṅga either.

The object of bhavaṅga for fine-material-sphere resultant jhānas (*rūpāvacara-vipākā-jhāna*) like ānāpāna jhāna, is the ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta. For the bhavaṅga of the base-of-infinite-consciousness immaterial realm (*viññāṇaṅcāyatana-arūpāvacara*), the object is the base-of-infinite-space jhāna consciousness (*ākāśanaṅcāyatana-jhāna-citta*). This is kamma. There is no rebirth sign.

Question 3.13: What is the difference between mundane jhānas (*lokiya-jhāna*) and supramundane jhānas (*lokuttara-jhāna*)?

Answer 3.13: Mundane jhānas are fine-material-sphere jhānas and immaterial-sphere jhānas (*arūpāvacara-jhāna*), the eight attainments (*samāpatti*). Supramundane jhānas are the jhāna factors associated with Path Knowledge and Fruition Knowledge. When you discern the mental formations of the fine-material-sphere first jhāna as impermanent or suffering or non-self, then if you attain Nibbāna, and see Nibbāna, your Path Knowledge is the first jhāna. This is a supramundane jhāna.

Why? In the mundane fine-material-sphere first jhāna, which is the object of Vipassanā, there are five jhāna factors. In the supramundane first jhāna there are also five which are: applied thought, sustained thought, joy, bliss and one-pointedness. So because the five jhāna factors are present, the path and the fruition are the first jhāna path and the first jhāna fruition. The other jhāna paths and fruitions are the same.

How to Discern Materiality

Introduction

Today, I shall explain how to begin to develop Vipassanā meditation beginning with four-elements meditation, and the analysis of the various kinds of materiality. One may take two paths for developing Vipassanā meditation. The first path is to develop a Samatha subject of meditation, such as mindfulness-of-breathing, up to the attainment of jhāna, and then proceed to develop Vipassanā. The second path is to begin by developing concentration based on the four elements up to access concentration, and then develop Vipassanā without having attained any of the jhānas. I teach both these paths at my meditation centres in Myanmar. Both paths require that the meditator develops four-elements meditation prior to beginning the development of Vipassanā.

How to Develop Four-Elements Meditation

In the Pāli texts there are two ways for developing the four-elements meditation, in brief and in detail. The brief method which will be explained here is meant for those of quick understanding. The detailed method is meant for those who have difficulty with the brief method. The Buddha taught the brief method in the Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta:

‘A bhikkhu reviews this very body however it be positioned or placed as consisting of just elements thus, “There are in this body just the earth-element, the water-element, the fire-element, and the air-element.”’

The Visuddhimagga (Ch.XI, para.41-43) explains further:

‘So firstly, one of quick understanding who wants to develop

Knowing and Seeing

this meditation should go into solitary retreat. Then he should advert to his entire material body, and discern the elements in brief in this way, “In this body what is hard or rough is the earth-element, what is flowing or cohesion is the water-element, what is maturing (ripening) or heat is the fire-element, what is pushing or supporting is the air-element,” and he should advert and give attention to it and review it again and again as “earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element,” that is to say, as mere elements, not a being, and soulless. As he makes effort in this way it is not long before concentration arises in him, which is reinforced by understanding that illuminates the classification of the elements, and which is only access and does not reach absorption because it has states with individual essences as its object.

‘Or alternatively, there are these four [bodily] parts mentioned by the Elder Sāriputta for the purpose of showing the absence of any living being in the four great primary elements thus: “When a space is enclosed with bones, sinews, flesh, and skin there comes to be the term material form (*rūpa*)” (M.1.p.190). And he should resolve each of these, separating them out by the hand of knowledge, and then discern in the way already stated thus (above): “In these what is hardness... as its objects.”’

As taught at Pa-Auk Meditation Centre, discern in the whole body:

1. Earth-element: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness.
2. Water-element: flowing, cohesion.
3. Fire-element: heat, coldness.
4. Air-element: supporting, pushing.

To learn this meditation, you must begin by learning how to discern each of the twelve qualities or characteristics of the four elements one at a time. Usually the beginner must be taught the characteristics which are easier to discern first, and the more dif-

How to Discern Materiality

ficult ones later. They are usually taught in this order: pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, heat, coldness, flowing, cohesion. Each characteristic must be discerned first in one place in the body, and then one must try discern it throughout the body.

1. To discern pushing, you may begin by being aware, through the sense of touch, of the pushing in the centre of the head as you breathe in and breathe out. When you can discern the characteristic of pushing, you should concentrate on it until it becomes clear to your mind. Then you should move your awareness to another part of the body nearby, and look for pushing there. In this way you will slowly be able to discern pushing first in the head, then the neck, the trunk of the body, the arms, and the legs and feet. You must do this again and again, many times, until wherever you place your awareness in the body you can easily see pushing.

If the pushing of the breath in the centre of the head is not easy to discern, then try being aware of pushing as the chest expands when breathing, or as the abdomen moves. If these are not clear, try to discern the pulse beat as the heart pumps, or any other obvious form of pushing. Wherever there is movement there is also pushing. Wherever you begin, you must continue to slowly develop your understanding so that you can discern pushing throughout the body. In some places it will be obvious, and in other places subtle, but it is present everywhere throughout the body.

2. When you are satisfied that you can do this, try to discern hardness. Begin by discerning hardness in the teeth. Bite your teeth together and feel how hard they are. Then relax your bite and feel the hardness of the teeth. When you can feel this, try to discern hardness throughout the body in a systematic way from head to feet, in the same way as you did to discern pushing. Care should be taken to not deliberately tense the body.

When you can discern hardness throughout the body, again look for pushing throughout the body. Alternate between these

Knowing and Seeing

two, pushing and hardness, again and again, discerning pushing throughout the body, and then hardness throughout the body, from head to feet. Repeat this process many times until you are satisfied that you can do it.

3. When you can discern pushing and hardness, try to discern roughness. Rub your tongue over the edge of your teeth, or brush your hand over the skin of your arm, and feel roughness. Now try to discern roughness throughout the body in a systematic way as before. If you cannot feel roughness, try looking at pushing and hardness again, and you may discern it with them. When you can discern roughness, continue to discern pushing, hardness, roughness, one at a time, again and again, throughout the body from head to feet.

4. When you are satisfied that you can discern those three characteristics, look for heaviness throughout the body. Begin by placing one hand on top of the other in your lap, and feel that the top hand is heavy, or feel the heaviness of the head by bending it forward. Practise systematically until you can discern heaviness throughout the body. Then continue to look for the four characteristics: pushing, hardness, roughness, and heaviness, in turn throughout the body.

5. When you are satisfied that you can discern those four characteristics, look for supporting throughout the body. Begin by relaxing your back so that your body bends forward. Then straighten your body and keep it straight and erect. The force which keeps the body straight, still, and erect is supporting. Practise systematically until you can discern supporting throughout the body from head to feet. If you have difficulty in doing this, you can try to discern supporting together with hardness as this can make it easier to discern supporting. Then when you can discern supporting easily, you should look for pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, and supporting throughout the body.

6. When you can discern these five, look for softness by pressing your tongue against the inside of your lip to feel its

How to Discern Materiality

softness. Then relax your body and practise systematically until you can discern softness throughout the body. You can now look for pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, and softness throughout the body.

7. Next look for smoothness by wetting your lips and rubbing your tongue over them from side to side. Practise as above until you can discern smoothness throughout the body. Then look for the seven characteristics throughout the body, one at a time.

8. Next look for lightness by wagging a single finger up and down, and feeling its lightness. Practise until you can discern lightness throughout the body, and then look for the eight characteristics as explained before.

9. Next look for heat (or warmth) throughout the body. This is usually very easy to do. You can now discern nine characteristics.

10. Next look for coldness by feeling the coldness of the breath as it enters the nostrils, and then discern it systematically throughout the body. You can now discern ten characteristics.

Note: The above ten characteristics are all known directly through the sense of touch, but the last two characteristics, flowing and cohesion, are known by inference based upon the other ten characteristics. That is a good reason to teach them last.

11. To discern cohesion, be aware of how the body is being held together by the skin, flesh, and sinews. The blood is being held in by the skin, like water in a balloon. Without cohesion the body would fall into separate pieces and particles. The force of gravity which keeps the body stuck to the earth is also cohesion. Develop it as before.

12. To discern flowing begin by being aware of the flowing of saliva into the mouth, the flowing of blood through the blood vessels, the flowing of air into the lungs, or the flowing of heat throughout the body. Develop it as before.

If you experience difficulty in trying to discern flowing or cohesion, you should discern the previous ten qualities again and

Knowing and Seeing

again, one at a time throughout the body. When you have become skilled in this, you will find that the quality of cohesion also becomes clear. If cohesion still does not become clear, then pay attention again and again to just the qualities of pushing and hardness. Eventually you should feel as if the whole body is wrapped up in the coils of a rope. Discern this as the quality of cohesion. If the quality of flowing does not become clear, then look at it with the quality of coldness, heat, or pushing, and you should then be able to discern the quality of flowing.

When you can discern all twelve characteristics clearly throughout the body, from head to feet, you should continue to discern them again and again in this same order. When you are satisfied that you can do this, you should rearrange the order to the one first given above, which was: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, flowing, cohesion, heat, coldness, supporting, and pushing. In that order try to discern each characteristic, one at a time from head to feet. You should try to develop this until you can do it quite quickly, at least three rounds in a minute.

While practising in this way, the elements will for some meditators not be balanced, some elements may become excessive and unbearable. Particularly hardness, heat, and pushing can become excessively strong. If this occurs, you should pay more attention to the quality opposite the one that is in excess, and continue to develop concentration in that way. You may find that this will balance the elements again, and it is for this reason twelve characteristics were taught in the first place. When the elements are balanced it is easier to attain concentration.

For balancing the elements the opposites are: hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, heaviness and lightness, flowing and cohesion, heat and coldness, and supporting and pushing.

If one member of these pairs is in excess, balance it by paying attention to its opposite. For example, if flowing is in excess pay

How to Discern Materiality

more attention to cohesion, or if supporting is in excess pay more attention to pushing. The rest can be treated in a similar way.

Having now become skilled in the discernment of the twelve characteristics in the whole body, and those characteristics having become clear, you should note the first six together at one glance as the earth-element, the next two together at one glance as the water-element, the next two as the fire-element, and the last two as the air-element. You should continue to discern earth, water, fire, and air, in order to calm the mind and attain concentration. You should do this again and again hundreds, thousands, or millions of times.

At this point, a good method to use is to take an overview of the body all at once and to continue to perceive the four elements. In order to keep the mind calm and concentrated, you should not move the awareness from one part of the body to another as before. Instead take an overall view of the body. It is usually best to take the overview as if you were looking from behind the shoulders. It can also be done as if looking from above the head down, but this may lead to tension and imbalance of the elements in some meditators.

The sub-commentary to Visuddhimagga also says to develop concentration by giving attention in ten ways: in order, not too fast, not too slow, warding off distractions, going beyond the concept, discarding what is not clear, discerning the characteristics, and developing according to the Adhicitta Sutta, Anuttarasītibhāva Sutta, and Bojjhaṅga Sutta.

1. In order (*anupubbato*)

The order refers to the order taught by the Buddha, which is earth, water, fire, and air.

2. Not too fast (*nāṭisīghato*)

3. Not too slow (*nāṭisaṇikato*)

If you note too fast, the four elements, which are the object of this meditation, will not be seen clearly. If you note too slowly you will not reach the end of the meditation.

Knowing and Seeing

4. Warding off distractions (*vikkhepapaṭibāhanato*)

You should be sure to keep the mind with the object of meditation only, the four elements, and to not let it wander off to other objects.

5. Going beyond the concept (*paññattisamatikkamanato*)

You should not just mentally recite, ‘earth, water, fire, air’, but be aware of the actual realities they represent: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, flowing, cohesion, heat, coldness, supporting, and pushing.

6. Discarding what is unclear (*anupaṭṭhānamuñcanato*)

When you can discern all twelve characteristics, and are trying to develop calmness and concentration, you may temporarily leave out those characteristics which are unclear. This is not advisable if it leads to pain or tension because of an imbalance of the elements. You need also to keep at least one characteristic for each one of the four elements. You cannot just work on three, two, or one element. If all twelve characteristics are clear that is the best, and you should not discard any.

7. Discerning the characteristics (*lakkhaṇato*)

When you begin to meditate, and the natural characteristics of each element are not clear, you can also pay attention to their function. When the concentration gets better, you should concentrate on the natural characteristics (*sabhāva-lakkhaṇa*) of each of the four elements; the hardness and roughness of the earth-element, the flowing and cohesion of the water-element, the heat and coldness of the fire-element, and the supporting of the air-element. At this point you will see only elements, and see them as not a person or self.

8-9-10. The sub-commentary further recommends to develop according to the (8) Adhicitta Sutta, (9) Anuttarasītibhāva Sutta, and (10) Bojjhaṅga Sutta. These three suttas advise balancing the five faculties (*indriya*) of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding; and balancing the seven factors of enlightenment.

As you continue to develop concentration based upon the four

How to Discern Materiality

elements, and begin to approach access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), you will see different kinds of light. For some meditators the light begins as a smoke-like grey. If you continue to discern the four elements in this grey light, it will become whiter like cotton wool, and then bright white, like clouds. At this point, your whole body will appear as a white form. You should continue to concentrate on discerning the four elements in the white form, and you will find it becomes transparent like a block of ice or glass.

This transparent materiality is the five sensitivities (*pasāda*) and these we call ‘transparent-elements’. Of these five transparent-elements, the body transparent-element (*kāya-pasāda*) is found throughout the body. When at this stage the body transparent-element, eye transparent-element, ear transparent-element, nose transparent-element, and tongue transparent-element are seen as a transparent lump or block. This is because you have not yet removed the three kinds of compactness (*ghana*).

If you continue to discern the four elements in that transparent lump or block, you will find that it sparkles and emits light. When you can concentrate on this light continuously at least half an hour, you have reached access concentration. With that light try to discern the space-element in that transparent form, by looking for small spaces in it. You will find that the transparent form breaks down into small particles which are called *rūpa kalāpas*. Having reached this stage, which is purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*), you can proceed to develop purification of view (*ditṭhi-visuddhi*), by analysing these *rūpa kalāpas*.

That access concentration is also the resting place for bare-insight meditators who have no previous Samatha *jhāna*, as they start their practice directly with the four-elements meditation. If tiredness occurs during Vipassanā, they can rest in this access concentration, just as the Samatha meditator rests in *jhāna*. Then they emerge clear and refreshed again for Vipassanā.

The use of *jhāna* as a resting place is explained by a simile in

the commentary to the Dvedhāvitakka Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya. Sometimes during a battle, the warriors would feel tired. Also, the enemy might be strong. At that time many arrows would be flying. The warriors, feeling some weakness, would retreat to their fort. Behind its walls they were safe from the enemy's arrows. They would rest and their tiredness would gradually disappear. Then, feeling strong and powerful again, they would leave their fort and return to the battle field. Similarly, jhāna is just like the fort, a resting place for Vipassanā meditation. There is much to discern in Vipassanā meditation; so, meditators benefit greatly from having a resting place.

How to Analyse Rūpa Kalāpas

The rūpa kalāpas fall into two groups, those which are transparent and those which are opaque. Only the rūpa kalāpas which contain one of the five material transparent-elements (*pasādarūpa*) are transparent. All other rūpa kalāpas are opaque.

You should first begin to practise discerning the four elements, earth, water, fire, and air, in individual transparent and opaque rūpa kalāpas. You will probably find that the rūpa kalāpas arise and pass away very, very quickly. At this point, you will still not be able to analyse the rūpa kalāpas, because you still see the rūpa kalāpas as small particles with size. Since you have not yet removed the three kinds of compactness, compactness of continuity (*santati-ghana*), compactness of group (*samūha-ghana*), and compactness of function (*icca-ghana*), you are still in the realm of concepts (*paññatti*), and have not yet arrived at ultimate reality (*paramattha*).

It is because you have not removed the concept of group and shape, there is the concept of a small lump or block remaining. If you do not analyse the elements (*dhātu*) further than this, but instead attempt to do Vipassanā by contemplating the arising and passing-away of these rūpa kalāpas, then you would be trying to do Vipassanā on concepts. So you must continue to analyse the elements further, until you can see them in single kalāpas: this is

How to Discern Materiality

in order to reach ultimate reality.

If you are unable to discern the four elements in single kalāpas, because of their extremely fast arising and passing-away, you should ignore their arising and passing-away. It is just like pretending not to see or notice someone whom you do not want to meet, but have met by accident. Ignore the arising and passing-away; simply concentrate, and pay attention to the four elements in individual rūpa kalāpa, and stay aware of only that. It is the power of your concentration which allows you to ignore their arising and passing-away.

If you are still unsuccessful, you should pay attention to the earth-element alternately in the whole body at once, and then in a single kalāpa. Then pay attention to the water-element in the whole body at once, and in a single kalāpa. Then pay attention to the fire-element in the whole body at once, and in a single kalāpa. Then pay attention to the air-element in the whole body at once, and in a single kalāpa. If you practise in this way, you will be able to discern the four elements in the transparent rūpa kalāpas and opaque rūpa kalāpas.

When you have succeeded in this, discern the four elements in rūpa kalāpas of the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and heart-base each in turn. Discern the four elements in both the transparent and opaque rūpa kalāpas of those six bases.

Each rūpa kalāpa contains at least eight types of materiality. They are: earth, water, fire, air, colour, odour, taste, and nutritive-essence. Therefore, after you have discerned the four elements in both the transparent and opaque rūpa kalāpas of the six sense-bases, you should also try to discern the colour, odour, taste, and nutritive-essence in those rūpa kalāpas.

Colour (*vaṇṇa*) is found in every rūpa kalāpa, and is the object of seeing (*rūpārammaṇa*). It is very easy to discern this kind of object.

Odour, or smell (*gandha*) is present in every rūpa kalāpa. You should begin by discerning both the nose transparent-element

and the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element. To see these, you should discern the four elements in the nose, and then you will easily find the nose transparent-element. This nose transparent-element must be seen in the appropriate rūpa kalāpas in the nose.

If you have successfully discerned the four elements in the transparent kalāpas and opaque kalāpas of the six sense-bases, you will easily be able to discern the bright, luminous bhavaṅga mind transparent-element, the mind-door (*manodvāra*). It is located in the heart, and depends on the heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), which is made up of opaque kalāpas called heart-as-the-tenth-factor kalāpas or heart-decad kalāpas (*hadaya-dasaka-kalāpa*).

Having thus discerned the nose transparent-element and bhavaṅga mind transparent-element, proceed to discern the odour of a rūpa kalāpa which you have chosen to examine. Odour is a dhamma which can be known by either the nose consciousness or the mind consciousness. The nose consciousness arises resting on the nose transparent-element. The mind consciousness arises attracted by the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element which itself rests upon heart-base materiality. This is why when you wish to discern odour in rūpa kalāpas, both the transparent-elements of this process must be discerned.

Taste (*rasa*) is present in every rūpa kalāpa. Having discerned both the tongue transparent-element and bhavaṅga mind transparent-element, discern the taste of a rūpa kalāpa that you have chosen to examine. You can begin by discerning the taste of saliva which is on the tongue. As with the odour above, the taste of an object can be known by either the tongue consciousness or the mind consciousness. Both these elements must therefore be discerned.

The Abhidhamma Commentary (Abhi.Com.2.p.388) says: ‘*Sabbopi panesa pabhedo manodvārikajavaneyeva labhati.*’ This explains that the colour, odour, and taste of a rūpa kalāpa, can be known by the mind consciousness alone. Before your meditation becomes strong, you use the nose and tongue consciousness to assist you to learn how taste and odour can be

How to Discern Materiality

known by the mind consciousness. When your meditation is strong and powerful, you can know taste and odour of rūpa kalāpas by mind consciousness alone.

Nutritive-essence (*ojā*) is present in every rūpa kalāpa. It is of four types: nutritive-essence produced by kamma, consciousness (*citta*), temperature (*utu*), and nutriment (*āhāra*). Look inside any rūpa kalāpa and you will find the nutritive-essence. From this nutritive-essence, rūpa kalāpas are seen to multiply forth again and again.

After having discerned the basic eight kinds of materiality in rūpa kalāpas, you should try to discern the remaining types of materiality in specific rūpa kalāpas

Life-faculty (*jīvita*) is the materiality which sustains the life of materiality produced by kamma. It is not found in rūpa kalāpas produced by consciousness, temperature, or nutriment, but only in those produced by kamma. The transparent rūpa kalāpas are produced by kamma only, so this is where you should begin to look for it. You should discern the transparent rūpa kalāpas and then search for life-faculty in them. The life-faculty materiality sustains the life of other materiality in its own kalāpa, and not the materiality in other kalāpas.

After having discerned life-faculty in the transparent rūpa kalāpa, you should also try to discern it in the opaque rūpa kalāpa. There are three types of opaque kalāpa found in the body which contain life-faculty. One type, heart-decad kalāpas or heart-as-the-tenth-factor kalāpas (*hadaya-dasaka-kalāpa*) are found only in the heart. The other two, sex-decad kalāpas or sex-as-the-tenth-factor kalāpas (*bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa*) and life-nonad kalāpas or life-faculty-as-the-ninth-factor kalāpas (*jīvita-navaka-kalāpa*), are found throughout the body. Therefore, if you can discern life-faculty in an opaque kalāpa somewhere in the body besides the heart, you know it must be either a sex-decad kalāpa or life-nonad kalāpa. To tell these two apart you need to be able to discern sex-determining-materiality.

Sex-determining-materiality (*bhāva-rūpa*) is found in opaque

kalāpas throughout the body, in all six sense-bases. After you have discerned life-faculty in both transparent and opaque kalāpas, you should look for sex-determining-materiality in the opaque kalāpa where you found life-faculty. If you find sex-determining-materiality the kalāpa, it is a sex-decad kalāpa (*bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa*), and not a life-nonad kalāpa (*jīvitanavaka-kalāpa*). In a male there is only male sex-determining-materiality, and in a female only female sex-determining-materiality. Male sex-determining-materiality is a quality by which you know, ‘This is a man.’ Female sex-determining-materiality is a quality by which you know, ‘This is a woman.’ When you are able to discern sex-determining-materiality, look for it in each of the six bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and heart.

Heart-base materiality (*hadaya-rūpa*) is the materiality which supports the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element (also called mind-element and mind-door), and mind-consciousness-element (*manoviññāṇa-dhātu*). The mind-consciousness-element includes all types of consciousness except the five sense consciousnesses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. The heart-base is the place where the mind-element and mind-consciousness-element occur, and it has the characteristic of being the materiality on which they depend.

To discern the heart-base materiality, focus the mind on the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element. Then try to discern the rūpa kalāpas which support the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element. You should be able to find these rūpa kalāpas in the lower part of the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element. They are heart-decad kalāpas. They are opaque kalāpas and the heart-base materiality (*hadayavatthu-rūpa*) in them is the support for the mind-element and mind-consciousness-element.

How to Analyse the Transparent-Elements Materiality

The organ of the eye contains several kinds of rūpa kalāpa which are interspersed like rice flour and wheat flour mixed to-

gether. In the eye there are two kinds of transparent-element mixed together, the eye transparent-element and body transparent-element. This means that the eye-decad kalāpa or eye-as-the-tenth-factor kalāpa (*cakkhu-dasaka-kalāpa*) and body-decad kalāpa or body-as-the-tenth-factor kalāpa (*kāya-dasaka-kalāpa*) are interspersed. The body-decad kalāpas which contain body transparent-element are found spread throughout the six sense-bases. They are interspersed with the eye-decad kalāpas in the eye, with the ear-decad kalāpas (*sota-dasaka-kalāpa*) in the ear, with the nose-decad kalāpas (*ghāna-dasaka-kalāpa*) in the nose, with the tongue-decad kalāpas (*jivhā-dasaka-kalāpa*) in the tongue, and with the heart-decad kalāpas (*hadaya-dasaka-kalāpa*) in the heart. Sex-decad kalāpas are also spread throughout the six sense-bases, and are also interspersed with the transparent kalāpas. To be able to see this, you need to analyse the materiality of the transparent kalāpas.

(1) Eye transparent-element (*cakkhu-pasāda*): The eye transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of colour, whereas the body transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of touch, or tangible objects. This difference in sensitivity to objects allows you to analyse and know which is the eye transparent-element, and which is the body transparent-element. First discern the four elements in the eye and discern the transparent rūpa kalāpa. Then look at the colour of a rūpa kalāpa that is a little far away from the eye. If you see that colour impinge on the transparent-element you chose to examine, it is an eye transparent-element, and the rūpa kalāpa which contains it is an eye-decad kalāpa (*cakkhu-dasaka-kalāpa*). If the colour does not impinge on the transparent-element you are looking at, it is not an eye transparent-element. It must be a body transparent-element because there are only two types of transparent-element in the eye.

(2) Body transparent-element (*kāya-pasāda*): The body transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of tangible objects, which are the earth, fire, and air-elements. Discern the

transparent rūpa kalāpa. Then look at the earth, fire, or air-element of a rūpa kalāpa that is nearby. If you see one of the three elements impinge on the transparent-element you chose to examine, it is a body transparent-element, and the rūpa kalāpa which contains it is a body-decad kalāpa (*kāya-dasaka-kalāpa*). In the same way as you did in the eye discern the body-decad kalāpas in the ear, nose, tongue, body, and heart.

(3) Ear transparent-element (*sota-pasāda*): The ear transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of sound. Discern the four elements in the ear and discern the transparent rūpa kalāpa. Then listen to a sound, and if you see it impinge on the transparent-element you chose to examine, it is an ear transparent-element, and the rūpa kalāpa which contains it is an ear-decad kalāpa (*sota-dasaka-kalāpa*). The discernment of the body-decad kalāpa follows the same method as shown above for the eye.

(4) Nose transparent-element (*ghāna-pasāda*): The nose transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of odour. Discern the four elements in the nose and discern the transparent rūpa kalāpa. Then smell the odour of a nearby rūpa kalāpa in the nose. If you see that odour impinge on the transparent-element, it is a nose transparent-element, and the rūpa kalāpa which contains it is a nose-decad kalāpa (*ghāna-dasaka-kalāpa*).

(5) Tongue transparent-element (*jivhā-pasāda*): The tongue transparent-element is sensitive to the impingement of taste. Discern the four elements in the tongue and discern the transparent-element. Then taste the flavour of a rūpa kalāpa near it. If you see it impinge on that transparent-element, it is a tongue transparent-element, and the rūpa kalāpa which contains it is a tongue-decad kalāpa (*jivhā-dasaka-kalāpa*).

The body-decad kalāpa and sex-decad kalāpa are found in all six sense-bases and must be seen in each place in turn.

The Fifty-Four Types of Materiality in the Eye

So, if you analyse the materiality in the eye you will find there

How to Discern Materiality

are fifty-four kinds of materiality present in six types of rūpa kalāpa. The six types of rūpa kalāpa are:

1. The eye-decad kalāpa (*cakkhu-dasaka-kalāpa*) which is sensitive to the impingement of the colour of light, and is produced by kamma.
2. The body-decad kalāpa (*kāya-dasaka-kalāpa*) which is sensitive to the impingement of tangible objects (earth, fire, and air-elements), and is produced by kamma.
3. The sex-decad kalāpa (*bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa*) which is opaque and is produced by kamma.
4. The nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa or nutritive-essence-as-the-eighth-factor kalāpa (*cittaja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) which is opaque and produced by consciousness.
5. The nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa (*utuja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) which is opaque and produced by temperature.
6. The nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa (*āhāraja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) which is opaque and produced by nutriment.

I have already given examples of how to discern the first three of these six types of rūpa kalāpa. The last three are all rūpa kalāpas which consist of eight types of materiality. The only difference between them is their origin: consciousness, temperature, or nutriment. So I will now give examples of how to discern which of these rūpa kalāpas is produced by consciousness, which by temperature, and which by nutriment.

How to See Materiality Produced by Consciousness

All consciousnesses that occur depending on the heart-base materiality in the heart during one whole life are capable of producing consciousness-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa (*cittaja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*). Every single mind produces a great number of these nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas, which

spread throughout the body.

If you concentrate on the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element, you will see that many consciousnesses supported by the heart-base materiality continuously produce rūpa kalāpas. If this is not clear at first, then having concentrated on the bhavaṅga mind transparent-element, wiggle one of your fingers. You will see a large number of rūpa kalāpas being produced because of the mind's wanting to move the finger. You will also see these rūpa kalāpas spread throughout all six sense-bases of the body, including the eye. These are the nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas which are opaque and produced by consciousness.

How to See Materiality Produced by Temperature

The fire-element in rūpa kalāpas produced by kamma, consciousness, temperature, or nutriment, is called temperature (*utu*). This fire-element is capable of producing new temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas (*utuja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*), which are the first generation produced by temperature. These temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas also contain fire-element, and can again produce more temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas, which are the second generation produced by temperature. If the fire-element is that which is present in a kamma-produced kalāpa, such as the eye-decad kalāpa, then this fire-element, which is temperature (*utu*), can in the same way produce four or five generations of temperature-produced kalāpa. This happens only when the temperature has reached its standing phase (*ṭhiti-kāla*). It is a law of materiality that it has strength only when it reaches its standing phase.

How to See Materiality Produced by Nutriment

Four parts of the body, namely, undigested food, faeces, pus, and urine, consist of nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas that are produced by temperature (*utu*) only. Therefore, newly eaten food inside the stomach consists of only nutritive-essence-octad

How to Discern Materiality

kalāpas. With the assistance of the fire-element in the life-nonad kalāpas (*jīvita-navaka-kalāpa*), which make up the kammically produced digestive heat, the nutritive-essence (*ojā*) in these nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas produces many generations of nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa. These are nutriment-produced kalāpas (*āhāraja-kalāpa*), and spread throughout the six sense-bases. Nutriment taken in one day can produce nutriment-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas (*āhāraja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) for up to seven days. Divine nutriment can do this for up to one or two months. The nutriment taken on one day also, with the assistance of kammically produced digestive-heat, gives support for the next seven days to the nutritive-essence in kamma-produced, consciousness-produced, temperature-produced, and succeeding nutriment-produced kalāpas.

In order to see these things you can meditate at the time of eating. The nutriment-produced kalāpas can be seen to spread throughout the body beginning from the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines. Discern the four elements in the newly eaten food in the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines, and see the rūpa kalāpas there. Continue to look until you can see that, with the assistance of the kammically produced digestive heat, the nutritive-essence in the rūpa kalāpas in the food produces new rūpa kalāpas which spread throughout the body.

Alternatively, you can see these things if you meditate after having eaten. Having progressively developed concentration stage by stage, discern the four elements in the newly eaten food in the stomach, or in the intestines. Continue to look until you can see that with the assistance of kammically produced digestive heat, the fire-element in the life-nonad kalāpas, the nutritive-essence in the nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas (*ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) in the food produces the nutriment-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas (*āhāraja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*) which spread throughout the body. See that these kalāpas are opaque. Then analyse them, and discern the eight types of materiality found in each.

Knowing and Seeing

Develop concentration and then discern these nutriment-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas spreading out through the body and reaching the eye. Discern the eight types of materiality found in those kalāpas in the eye, and note that the nutritive-essence found in those kalāpas is nutriment-produced nutritive-essence (*āhāraja-ojā*). When this nutriment-produced nutritive-essence meets with the nutritive-essence contained in the eye-decad kalāpas (*cakkhu-dasaka-kalāpa*), it assists the kamma-produced nutritive-essence found in the eye-decad kalāpas in producing four or five generations of rūpa kalāpa. The number of generations depends on the strength of assistance of both kamma-produced nutritive-essence and nutriment-produced nutritive-essence. Again, in those four or five generations of rūpa kalāpa, there is fire-element, which is temperature. This temperature, at its standing phase, produces many generations of temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa. Try to discern this.

Also try to discern that the nutritive-essence of the body-decad kalāpas, and sex-decad kalāpas, with the assistance of the nutriment-produced nutritive-essence (*āhāraja-ojā*), can produce four or five generations of nutriment-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas. The fire-element, temperature, contained also in these many generations produces many more generations of temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa.

In every consciousness-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa in the eye there is nutritive-essence. This consciousness-produced nutritive-essence (*cittaja-ojā*), when assisted by the nutriment-produced nutritive-essence, produces two or three generations of nutriment-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa. The fire-element (*utu*) in these also produces many generations of the temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa.

When a consciousness is a Samatha, Vipassanā, Path, or Fruition Consciousness, it is capable of producing many generations of the consciousness-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpa

How to Discern Materiality

within the body. The fire-element (*utu*) in these kalāpas produces the temperature-produced nutritive-essence-octad kalāpas both inside and outside the body. Light is the brilliance of colour of the colour-materiality in these consciousness-produced kalāpas and temperature-produced kalāpas.

You can discern all the materiality in the other five bases in the same way as described in the case of the eye-base.

Summary

Today I have given just a very brief outline of how to analyse rūpa kalāpas. The actual practice involves much more, which I do not have the time to describe here. For example, the detailed method, which involves analysing what are called the forty-two ‘parts’ of the body, namely: twenty earth-element parts, twelve water-element parts, four aspects of fire-element, and six aspects of air-element. They are mentioned in the Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta in the Majjhama Nikāya. If you wish to know how to develop this, you should approach a proper teacher. By practising systematically, you will gradually become proficient in the discernment of the kalāpas produced by the four causes of kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment. To summarise:

1. Before you have seen the rūpa kalāpas, develop concentration up to access concentration by seeing the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air.

2. When you can see the rūpa kalāpas analyse them to see all the materiality in each kalāpa, for example: earth, water, fire, air, colour, odour, taste, nutriment, life-faculty, and eye transparent-element.

3. For the brief method, discern all the materiality in a single sense-base, and then in all six sense-bases. For the detailed method, discern all the materiality in all forty-two parts of the body. This completes my talk on the discernment of materiality. In my next talk I shall explain how to discern mentality.

Knowing and Seeing

Questions and Answers (4)

Question 4.1: Is a bodhisatta, including Arimetteyya bodhisatta, a worldling (*puthujjana*)? If Arimetteyya bodhisatta is a worldling like us, then at the time for him to come down to become Metteyya Buddha, what is the difference between the conditions for him to become a Buddha and for us?

Answer 4.1: It is because his pāramīs have matured, like for our Sakyamuni Buddha as bodhisatta Prince Siddhattha. They had been practising for many lives to fulfil their pāramīs, such as generosity pāramī (*dāna-pāramī*), virtue pāramī (*sīla-pāramī*), lovingkindness pāramī (*mettā-pāramī*), and wisdom pāramī (*paññā-pāramī*). Although they have enjoyment of sensual pleasures, their matured pāramīs ‘urge’ them to renounce the world. In the last life of every bodhisatta, he marries and has a son; this is a natural law. I forget the names of Metteyya bodhisatta’s wife and son. According to the Theravāda Tipiṭaka, no arahant including the Buddha is reborn after Parinibbāna. Parinibbāna is the end of the round of rebirths. They will not come back to this world.

Take our Sakyamuni bodhisatta: in his last life, before enlightenment, he was a worldling. Why? When he was sixteen years old, he became prince Siddhattha and married princess Yasodharā. He got a son. He had been enjoying sensual pleasures for more than thirteen years. He did not have five hundred female deities on his left, and five hundred female deities on his right, but was surrounded by twenty thousand princesses. This is *kāmasukhallikanuyogo*: enjoyment of sensual pleasures, or indulgence in sensual pleasures.

After he had renounced these sensual pleasures, he practised asceticism in the Uruvela forest. After six years of futile practice, he abandoned it, practised the middle way and, before long, attained enlightenment. After enlightenment, in his first sermon,

Knowing and Seeing

the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, he proclaimed: ‘...*kāmesu kāmāsukhallikanuyogo hīno, gammo, puthujjaniko, anariyo, anatthasaṃhito*.’: this enjoyment of sensual pleasures is inferior (*hīno*), the practice of villagers (*gammo*), the practice of worldlings (*puthujjaniko*); it is not the practice of the enlightened ones (*anariyo*); this practice cannot produce any benefit such as Path, Fruition, and Nibbāna (*anatthasaṃhito*).

So, in his first sermon the Buddha proclaimed that anyone who enjoys sensual pleasures is a worldling. When he was still a bodhisatta, he too had enjoyed sensual pleasures, that is, with Yasodharā in the palace. At that time, he too was a worldling, because enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the practice of a worldling.

This is not only for our bodhisatta, but for every bodhisatta. There may be many bodhisattas here among the present audience. You should consider this carefully: are these bodhisattas here worldlings or noble ones (*ariya*)? I think you may know the answer.

Question 4.2: After finishing the meditation course, can a meditator attain Path and Fruition Knowledges (*magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa*)? If not, why not?

Answer 4.2: Maybe he can; it depends on his pāramīs. Take for example the case of Bāhiya Dāruciriya. He practised Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) in the time of Kassapa Buddha’s dispensation. He had about twenty thousand years of practice, but he did not attain any Path and Fruition Knowledges, because he had received a definite prophecy from Padumuttara Buddha, that he was to be the *hippābhiñña*, the quickest to attain arahatship in Sakyamuni’s dispensation. In the same way, other disciples (*sāvaka*), who got the Four Analytical Knowledges (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*) in this Sakyamuni Buddha’s dispensation, had also practised Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of

Questions and Answers (4)

Equanimity Towards Formations in the dispensation of previous Buddhas'; this is a natural law. The four analytical knowledges are:

1. The analytical knowledge about meaning (*attha-paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*): the insight-knowledge of effect which is the Noble Truth of Suffering.
2. The analytical knowledge about dhamma (*dhamma-paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*): the insight-knowledge of cause, which is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.
3. The analytical knowledge about enunciation of language (*nirutti-paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*): skill in grammatical knowledge, especially about Pāli grammar.
4. The analytical knowledge about kinds of knowledge (*paṭibhāna-paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*): the insight-knowledge which knows the above three analytical knowledges.

There are five causes for having these four analytical knowledges:

1. Achievement (*adhigama*): this is the attainment of Arahant Path and Fruition or any Path and Fruition.
2. Mastery of scriptures (*pariyatti*): learning the Dhamma scriptures.
3. Hearing (*savana*): listening to the Dhamma explanations attentively and respectfully.
4. Questioning (*paripucchā*): discussing the knotty passages and explanatory in the texts and commentaries.
5. Prior effort (*pubbayoga*): the practice of Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) during the dispensation of former Buddhas.

For those who do not have a definite prophecy from a previous

Buddha; if they practise in this dispensation, and do not attain Nibbāna, this is because their pāramīs have not matured enough. It is also possible that they have received a definite prophecy, or have made an aspiration to escape from the round of rebirths (*samsāra*) in the future dispensation of Arimetteyya Buddha. For example, there were two thousand bhikkhunīs who attained Parinibbāna on the same day as Yasodharā. During Dīpaṅkara Buddha's time, they had made an aspiration to escape from the round of rebirths (*samsāra*) in the dispensation of Sakyamuni Buddha. Due to this, they remained in the round of rebirths, from the time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha up to the time of Sakyamuni Buddha. They did not receive a definite prophecy. They made aspirations only.

Question 4.3: If a meditator has finished the meditation course, but not yet attained the Path Knowledge (*maggañāṇa*) and Fruition Knowledge (*phalañāṇa*), if his concentration drops, will his insight-knowledge also drop? After death, can he get reborn in a woeful state (*apāya*)?

Answer 4.3: Maybe he will drop but it is very rare. If he does not practise for a long time, his Samatha-Vipassanā may weaken slowly. However the kammic force still exists as latent energy.

Regarding this, there was an occasion in Sri Lanka when sixty bhikkhus and novice monks (*sāmaṇera*) were going somewhere. On the way they met a layman, who was carrying charcoal and half-burnt firewood. His skin was the colour of charcoal. Some of the novice monks joked with each other, saying 'That is your father', 'That is your uncle', etc... And the layman was upset by their behaviour. He put down the charcoal and half-burnt firewood, and paid respect to the Mahāthera in order to detain him for a while. He then said the following: 'Bhante, you think you are a bhikkhu just because of the robes. You do not have enough concentration and insight. Once I too was a bhikkhu, with strong and powerful concentration, and strong powerful psychic pow-

ers.’

Then pointing to a tree he said further, ‘Sitting under that tree I could hold the sun and the moon with my hand. I used the sun and moon to rub my foot. But because of my forgetfulness (*pamāda*) of Samatha-Vipassanā wholesome dhamma, my jhāna concentration dropped. Defilements overwhelmed my mind. So I now do this work. Take me as an example and do not be forgetful (*pamāda*) of Samatha-Vipassanā wholesome dhamma. Please try not to become like me.’

Then those bhikkhus got the sense of urgency to practise (*sarīvega*). Standing in that place, they practised Samatha-Vipassanā and attained arahatship. So sometimes Samatha-Vipassanā may drop temporarily because of forgetfulness (*pamāda*). But its kammic force still exists and does not perish away.

There are three types of person: (1) bodhisatta, (2) the chief disciple (*aggasāvaka*), the great disciple (*mahāsāvaka*) and (3) the ordinary disciple (*pakatisāvaka*).

(1) Our bodhisatta had eight attainments (*samāpatti*) and five mundane psychic powers during Dīpaṅkara Buddha’s time. He had also practised Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations. At that time if he had really wanted to attain Nibbāna, he could have attained arahatship quickly after listening to a short stanza about the Four Noble Truths from Dīpaṅkara Buddha. But he did not want to only attain Nibbāna, so he made an aspiration to be a Buddha in the future. He received a definite prophecy from Dīpaṅkara Buddha.

During four incalculables (*asaṅkhyeyya*) and one hundred thousand aeons (*kappa*), that is from Dīpaṅkara Buddha’s time to Kassapa Buddha’s time, our bodhisatta was ordained as a bhikkhu in nine lives, under the guidance of previous Buddhas. Each time he:

1. Studied the Three Piṭakas by recitation,
2. Practised purification of the four types of virtue,

Knowing and Seeing

3. Practised the thirteen ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*),
4. Always stayed in the forest as a forest-dweller practice (*ārañṅakaṅga-dhutaṅga*),
5. Practised the eight attainments (*samāpatti*),
6. Practised the five mundane psychic powers,
7. Practised Vipassanā meditation up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations.

This is the nature of bodhisattas. These pāramīs are fulfilled for the attainment of the Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). But before his pāramīs matured, between Dīpaṅkara Buddha's time and his birth as Prince Siddhattha, our bodhisatta was sometimes reborn in the animal kingdom because of unwholesome kamma he had done. However the lives reborn as a bhikkhu and the lives reborn in the animal kingdom were very far apart. This is the first type of person.

(2) Some chief disciple arahants like the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna also received a definite prophecy from Anomadassī Buddha. But between that Buddha's time and Sakyamuni Buddha's time, they too were sometimes reborn in the animal kingdom together with our bodhisatta, because of unwholesome kamma they had done. They were arahants possessed of the Four Analytical Knowledges in our Buddha's time. This type of arahants must be skilful in Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations in a previous Buddha's time; this is a natural law. So they practised Samatha-Vipassanā in many previous lives, but sometimes they were reborn in the animal kingdom together with our bodhisatta. This is the second type of person.

(3) As for ordinary disciples, if they have practised Samatha-Vipassanā thoroughly up to the Knowledge of Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*) or the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) or the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, they will not be reborn in the four woeful planes (*apāya*) after death, even though they may not

Questions and Answers (4)

attain any Path and Fruition in this life. They may be reborn in a deva realm like, for example, Samaṇa-devaputta.

Samaṇa-devaputta was a bhikkhu who practised Samatha-Vipassanā earnestly. While he was practising, death took place and he was reborn spontaneously in the deva realm. He did not know of his own death so he continued meditating in his mansion in the deva realm. When the female deities in his mansion saw him they realized that he must have been a bhikkhu in his previous life, so they put a mirror in front of him and made a noise. The male deva opened his eyes and saw his image in the mirror. He was very disappointed because he did not want to be a deva; he wanted Nibbāna only.

So immediately he went down to the Buddha to listen to the Dhamma. The Buddha taught the Dhamma related to the Four Noble Truths. After listening to the Dhamma he attained Stream-Enterer Path Knowledge (*sotāpatti-maggañāṇa*) and Stream-Enterer Fruition Knowledge (*sotāpatti-phalañāṇa*). This is explained in the Commentary: ‘...*laddhassāso laddhapatiṭṭho niyatagatiko cūḷasotāpanno nāma hoti*’: he got relief, he got a secure place, he has a sure good destination, so he is called Lesser Stream-Enterer (*cūḷasotāpanna*). Then four things can happen.

In the Sotānugata Sutta, the Buddha taught which four:

1. As soon as he attains rebirth in the deva realm, if he reflects on the Dhamma then the Dhamma will be clear to his insight-knowledge. He can attain Nibbāna quickly.
2. If he does not attain Nibbāna by reflecting on the Dhamma with insight-knowledge, he can attain Nibbāna while listening to the Dhamma in the deva realm when it is taught by a bhikkhu who has psychic powers, and who has come to the deva realm to teach the Dhamma.
3. If he does not get the chance to listen to the Dhamma

Knowing and Seeing

from a Bhikkhu he may get the chance to listen to the Dhamma from Dhamma-teaching devas (*Dhamma-kathika-deva*), like Sanañkumāra Brahmā, etc. At that time he may attain Nibbāna by listening to them.

4. If he does not get the chance to listen to the Dhamma from Dhamma-teaching devas, he may get the chance to meet friends who were fellow meditators in his past human life in this dispensation. Those fellow meditators may say, for example: ‘Oh friend, please remember this and that Dhamma which we practised as bhikkhus in the human world.’ At that time he may remember the Dhamma and if he tries to practise Vipassanā he can attain Nibbāna very quickly.

These are the four types of result of Samatha-Vipassanā. So for an ordinary disciple, if he does not attain path and fruition in this life, he will certainly attain Nibbāna in the future.

At the time of death a meditator may not have strong Vipassanā or Samatha, but because of the powerful Samatha-Vipassanā meditation wholesome kamma, a good nimitta appears to his mind door. Death may take place with that good nimitta as object, and because of this wholesome kamma he will definitely reach a good place, and in that life he can attain Nibbāna.

However, if he can practise Vipassanā up to the moments of near-death impulsion (*maraṇāsanna-javana*), he will be the first type of person mentioned in the Sotānugata Sutta. But if he cannot practise Samatha-Vipassanā up to near-death impulsion, he may, as I explained before, be the second or third or fourth type of person also mentioned in the Sotānugata Sutta.

Question 4.4: A meditator who has finished the course, but has not yet attained Nibbāna, can he attain the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena (*dhammaññhiti-ñāṇa*)? If so, can it regress?

Answer 4.4: That meditator can attain the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena (*dhammaṭṭhiti-ñāṇa*). ‘*Pubbe kho Susīma dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇam pacchā nibbāne ñāṇam.*’: ‘The Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena is first, the Path Knowledge taking Nibbāna as object is next.’ This is the Buddha’s instruction to Susīma. Susīma was a wanderer (*paribbājaka*), who ordained in this dispensation to ‘steal’ the Dhamma. But the Buddha saw that he would attain Nibbāna within a few days so He accepted him.

Susīma heard that many arahants came to the Buddha and related their attainment of arahatship to the Buddha. So he approached those arahants and asked them whether they had the eight attainments and five psychic powers. Those arahants answered ‘no’. ‘If you do not have the eight attainments and five psychic powers, how did you attain arahatship?’ Then they answered ‘*Paññāvimuttā kho mayam āvuso Susīma*’: ‘Oh, friend Susīma, we are free from defilements and attained arahatship by the bare-insight vehicle (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*).’ He did not understand the meaning of their answer, and so he approached the Buddha to ask him the same question. Then the Buddha said, ‘*Pubbe kho Susīma dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇam pacchā nibbāne ñāṇam.*’: ‘The Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena is first, the Path Knowledge taking Nibbāna as object is next.’

What does this mean? The Path Knowledge is not the result of the eight attainments and five psychic powers. The Path Knowledge is the result of insight-knowledges. So the Path Knowledge can occur only after insight-knowledges; not after the eight attainments and five psychic powers. In this Susīma Sutta, all insight-knowledges are taught as the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena. Here the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena means the insight-knowledge of the impermanent, suffering and non-self nature of all formations or conditioned things (*sarīkhāra-dhamma*), which are mentality, materiality, and their causes. So the insight-knowledge which sees mentality, materi-

ality, their causes, and their impermanent, suffering, non-self nature is called the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena. So the Knowledge of the Relations of Phenomena is first and the Path Knowledge which takes Nibbāna as object is next.

Afterwards the Buddha gave a Teaching on the Three Rounds of Characteristic⁴ (*teparivaṭṭadhamma-desanā*) which is like the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta. When the discourse was finished Susīma attained arahatship, even though he did not have the eight attainments and five psychic powers. He was also a bare-insight vehicle person. At that time he clearly understood the meaning of the Buddha's discourse.

If a meditator gets this, then although he does not attain Nibbāna in this life, his insight-knowledge will not decrease. His latent Vipassanā kammic force is still powerful. If he is an ordinary disciple, he may attain Nibbāna in the coming future life.

Question 4.5: Can one attain any supramundane state with only access concentration?

Answer 4.5: Yes, one can. At access concentration stage there is also bright, brilliant and radiant light. Because of that light one can discern kalāpas, ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, and their causes. One can then continue with Vipassanā meditation stage by stage.

Question 4.6: With only momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*), can one practise mindfulness of feeling (*vedanānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*) to attain supramundane states?

Answer 4.6: Here we need to define momentary concentration. What is momentary concentration? There are two types of momentary concentration: Momentary concentration in Samatha

⁴ The three rounds of characteristic refer to the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

Questions and Answers (4)

meditation, and momentary concentration in Vipassanā meditation. In Samatha meditation there are three types of concentration; they are momentary concentration (a type of preparatory concentration), access concentration, and absorption concentration. That momentary concentration refers in particular to the concentration which takes a paṭibhāga-nimitta as object, like ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta. This is the type of concentration before access concentration. This is for a serenity vehicle person (*samatha-yānika*).

As for a bare-insight vehicle person (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*), there is also another type of momentary concentration. A bare-insight vehicle person must usually begin with four-elements meditation. If he practises the four-elements meditation systematically he can attain access concentration or momentary concentration to see kalāpas, and the four elements in each kalāpa. The Visuddhimagga says this type of concentration is access concentration. But the sub-commentary of Visuddhimagga explains that this is not real access concentration. This is only a metaphor because real access concentration is near jhāna concentration.

If a meditator tries the four-elements meditation he cannot attain any jhāna because the four elements in each kalāpa are very deep and profound. One cannot thoroughly concentrate on the four elements in each kalāpa; this is because the kalāpas pass away as soon as they arise. So one cannot concentrate deeply. The four elements in each kalāpa are ultimate materiality (*paramattha-rūpa*). They are deep and profound; it is not easy to see them clearly with insufficient concentration. So the four-elements meditation cannot produce any jhāna. Because of this, the access concentration which takes the four elements in each kalāpa as object is not real access concentration. It is in fact momentary concentration.

Also in Vipassanā, there is momentary concentration. This type of momentary concentration is mentioned in the Ānāpāna section of the Visuddhimagga. When he wants to practise Vi-

Knowing and Seeing

passanā, a serenity vehicle meditator who has attained ānāpāna jhāna enters into the first jhāna. This is Samatha. Having emerged from the first jhāna he discerns the thirty-four mental formations of the first jhāna, and then discerns impermanence, suffering or non-self by seeing the arising and passing-away nature of those jhāna formations (*jhāna-dhamma*). It is the same for the second jhāna, etc...

At that time there is still concentration. He can concentrate on the impermanent, suffering, or non-self nature of those jhāna formations. His concentration at that time is deep and profound, without moving to other objects. This type of concentration is momentary concentration, because the object is momentary; as soon as it arises, it passes away.

In the same way, when a meditator is practising Vipassanā in seeing either the impermanent, suffering, or non-self nature of ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes, then his mind usually does not go away from the formations object. His mind has sunk into one of the characteristics. This type of concentration is also called momentary concentration. Here you should know that Vipassanā momentary concentration is thoroughly seeing the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes. Without seeing ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes, how can there be Vipassanā momentary concentration. It is impossible. So, if a meditator can see ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes thoroughly and clearly, without doing any Samatha meditation, it is not necessary for him to practise Samatha meditation. But if he cannot see ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes, he should cultivate one of the Samatha meditation because only a concentrated mind can see ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes.

In the Khandha Vagga Saṃyutta and Sacca Saṃyutta the Buddha also said: ‘*Samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha, samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.*’: ‘Bhikkhus, you should cultivate concentration. If you have enough concentra-

tion you can see ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes as they really are.’ So you can see the five aggregates and their causes. You can see their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. You can see their cessation at the time of arahant path and Parinibbāna.

So, to know the five aggregates, their causes and their cessation one should cultivate concentration. In the same way, to know the Four Noble Truths one should cultivate concentration. That is mentioned in the Sacca Vagga Saṃyutta.

Again if a meditator tries to discern feeling he should be aware of the following facts: ‘*Sabbaṃ bhikkhave anabhijānaṃ aparijānaṃ avirājayaṃ appajahaṃ abhabbo dukkhakkhayāya ... (P)... Sabbañca kho bhikkhave abhijānaṃ parijānaṃ virājayaṃ pajahaṃ bhabbo dukkhakkhayāya.*’: ‘Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu does not know all mentality, materiality, and their causes by three types of full-understanding (*pariññā*), he cannot attain Nibbāna. Only those who know them by the three types of full understanding can attain Nibbāna.’ This is from the Aparijānana Sutta in the Saḷāyatana Vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya.

In the same way, it is taught in the Kūtāgāra Sutta in the Sacca Vagga that without knowing the Four Noble Truths by insight-knowledge and Path Knowledge, one cannot reach the end of the round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*). So if a meditator wants to attain Nibbāna he must try to know all mentality, materiality, and their causes by the three types of full-understanding.

What are the three types of full understanding? They are:

1. The Full-Understanding as the Known (*ñāta-pariññā*), this is the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*) and Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). They are the insight-knowledges which know all ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes.
2. The Full-Understanding as Investigation (*tīraṇa-*

Knowing and Seeing

pariññā), this is the Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*) and Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*). These two Insight-knowledges can clearly comprehend the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of the ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes. So they are called the Full-Understanding as Investigation.

3. The Full-Understanding as Abandoning (*pahāna-pariññā*), this is the upper insight-knowledges from the Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*) to the Path Knowledge.

The teaching in those two suttas, the Aparijānana Sutta and Kūtāgāra Sutta, are very important. So, if a meditator wants to try Vipassanā beginning from mindfulness of feeling, he should observe the following:

1. He must have discerned ultimate materiality.
2. Discerning feeling alone is not enough. He must also discern the mental formations associated with feeling according to the six-doors thought-processes.

Why? The Buddha taught that if a bhikkhu does not know all mentality-and-materiality and their causes by the three types of full-understanding he cannot attain Nibbāna. Therefore, without discerning ultimate materiality thoroughly, if a meditator tries to discern feeling alone, such as unpleasant feeling etc., it is not enough. Here ‘not enough’ means he cannot attain Nibbāna.

Question 4.7: The Buddha was a great arahant. What was the difference between Him and disciples like the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahāmgallāna who were also arahants?

Answer 4.7: The Buddha’s Arahant Path is always associated

Questions and Answers (4)

with the Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*), but not the Arahant Path of disciples. That is, the Enlightenment of Chief Disciple (*aggasāvaka-bodhi*) or the Enlightenment of Great Disciple (*mahāsāvaka-bodhi*) or the Enlightenment of Ordinary Disciple (*pakatisāvaka-bodhi*). They are sometimes associated with the Four Analytical Knowledges (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*); sometimes associated with the Six Direct Knowledges (*abhiññā*); sometimes associated with three Direct Knowledges; sometimes pure Arahant Path alone, but not the Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). For example, Venerable Sāriputta's and Mahāmoggallāna's Arahant Path were not associated with the Omniscient Knowledge. The Buddha's arahant path, on the other hand, is not only associated with the Omniscient Knowledge but also all the Buddha's qualities and other types of knowledge.

Another thing is that because of their matured pāramī Buddhas have attained the Path, Fruition, and Omniscient Knowledges by themselves, without any teacher. But a disciple can attain the Path and Fruition Knowledges only by listening to the Dhamma related to the Four Noble Truths from the Buddha, or one of the Buddha's disciples. They cannot practise by themselves, without a teacher. These are the differences.

Question 4.8: What is the 'intermediate life' (*antara-bhava*)?

Answer 4.8: According to the Theravāda Piṭaka there is no such thing as an intermediate life (*antara-bhava*). Between present death-consciousness (*cuti-citta*) and future rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*), there are no thought moments, or anything resembling an intermediate life. If a person were to reach the deva world after death, then between his death-consciousness and the deva's rebirth-linking consciousness, there would be no thought moment or something like an intermediate life. As soon as death takes place the deva rebirth-linking consciousness occurs. In the same way, if a person were

Knowing and Seeing

to reach hell after death, then between his present death-consciousness and the rebirth-linking consciousness in hell, there would be no such thing as an intermediate life. He would go to hell directly after death.

The problem of intermediate life usually arises when someone dies and inhabits the peta world for a short time, and then is reborn as a human being again. They may think of their peta life as something like an intermediate life. That peta life is, in fact, nothing like an intermediate life. What really happened is this: after present death-consciousness, the peta rebirth-linking consciousness occurred; after the peta death-consciousness, the human rebirth-linking consciousness occurred again. They suffered in the peta world only for a short time because of their unwholesome kamma. When the kammic force of that unwholesome kamma finished, they took human rebirth-linking consciousness again because of another wholesome kamma which was ready to produce its result.

So that short life in the peta world is mistaken for an intermediate life by those who cannot see the system of round of rebirths or dependent-origination. If they could discern dependent-origination thoroughly by insight-knowledge, then this misbelief would disappear. So I would like to suggest that you should discern dependent-origination by your own insight-knowledge. At that time also this question about an intermediate life will disappear in your mind.

Question 4.9: Are the methods for mindfulness-of-breathing and four-elements meditation the same? Why must we practise the four-elements meditation only after mindfulness-of-breathing?

Answer 4.9: No, the methods are not the same.

If you want to practise Vipassanā, you must first try to discern mentality and materiality. Second you must discern their causes. To discern materiality, we must practise the four-elements meditation. In Vipassanā there are two types of meditation: dis-

Questions and Answers (4)

cernment of materiality and discernment of mentality.

When the Buddha taught discernment of materiality he always taught the four-elements meditation, either in brief or at length. So if you want to practise discernment of materiality you must practise the four-elements meditation according to the Buddha's instructions. When we practise four-elements meditation, it is better if we have deep concentration like the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, because that strong and powerful concentration is a support for us to see ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, and their causes clearly.

But if you do not want to practise Samatha meditation like mindfulness-of-breathing you can practise the four-elements meditation directly; that is no problem. We discussed this in a previous question.

Question 4.10: Could the Sayadaw please explain the light experienced in meditation scientifically?

Answer 4.10: What is the light seen in meditation practice? Every consciousness (*citta*) which arises dependent upon heart-base (*hadaya-vatthu*) can produce consciousness-produced materiality (*cittaja-rūpa*) or kalāpas. One consciousness can produce many consciousness-produced kalāpas. Of the heart-base-dependent consciousnesses, Samatha meditation-consciousness (*samatha-bhāvanā-citta*) and Vipassanā meditation-consciousness (*vipassanā-bhāvanā-citta*) are stronger and more powerful; they can produce many consciousness-produced kalāpas. If we analyse these kalāpas we find there are eight types of materiality. They are earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element, colour, odour, taste, and nutritive-essence. The colour is bright. If the Samatha meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā meditation-consciousness are more powerful the colour is brighter. Because the kalāpas arise simultaneously and successively the colour of one kalāpa and the colour of another kalāpa arise closely together like in an electric bulb, and light

occurs.

Again, in each kalāpa produced by Samatha meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā meditation-consciousness there is fire-element, which also can produce many generations; that means many new kalāpas. These are called temperature-produced materiality because they are produced by fire-element or temperature (*utu*). This occurs not only internally but also externally. When we analyse these kalāpas there the same eight types of materiality: the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element, colour, odour, taste, and nutritive-essence. Again, colour is one of them. That colour is also bright because of the power of Samatha meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā meditation-consciousness. So the brightness of one colour and the brightness of another colour arise closely together like in an electric bulb.

Both the light of consciousness-produced materiality and the light of temperature-produced materiality occur simultaneously. Consciousness-produced colour-materiality arises internally only, but temperature-produced colour-materiality arises both internally and externally and spreads in ten directions up to the whole world system or universe (*cakkavala*) or farther, depending on the power of the Samatha meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā meditation-consciousness. The Buddha's Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality can produce light in up to ten thousand world systems. The Venerable Anuruddha's divine-eye consciousness (*dibba-cakkhu-citta*) could produce light in up to one thousand world systems. Other disciples' insight-knowledge can produce the light going up to one league (*yojana*), two leagues, etc..., in every direction depending on the power of their Samatha meditation-consciousness, Vipassanā meditation-consciousness.

Usually many meditators realize that this light is a group of kalāpas by the time they have reached the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away. While they are practising Samatha meditation they do not understand that this light is a group of kalāpas

Questions and Answers (4)

because these kalāpas are very subtle. It is not easy to understand and to see the kalāpas when practising Samatha meditation only. If you want to know with certainty you should try to possess the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away. It will be a real scientific way.

Question 4.11: Can those who have discerned the thirty-two parts of the body see the internal thirty-two parts of the body in someone else with eyes open?

Answer 4.11: It depends. With eyes open beginners can see external parts only. They can see internal parts only with insight-knowledge eyes. If you want to know scientifically, please try yourself to see by your insight-knowledge.

However a Mahāthera may because of previous practice be able to see the skeleton with eyes open, like the Venerable Mahā Tissa who was an expert in skeleton-meditation. He always practised internal skeleton-meditation as repulsiveness up to the first jhāna, and always practised Vipassanā based on that jhāna. He discerned mentality-and-materiality, their causes, and their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. This was his usual way of practice.

One day he went for alms-round (*piṇḍapāta*), from Anuraddhapura to Mahāgāma village. On the way he met a woman who tried to attract his attention with loud laughter. When he heard the sound he paid attention to that sound. Immediately he saw her teeth and paid attention to his skeleton-meditation with her teeth as object. Because of previous constant practice he saw her as a whole skeleton and did not see ‘woman’. He saw only skeleton. Then he paid attention to his internal skeleton and attained the first jhāna. Based on the first jhāna he practised Vipassanā quickly. He attained arahant path on the road in the standing posture.

That woman had quarrelled with her husband and had left her husband’s house to go to her parents’ house. On the way she

Knowing and Seeing

met Mahā Tissa Mahāthera. Her husband followed her. On the way he also met Mahā Tissa Mahāthera. He then asked Mahā Tissa Mahāthera, ‘Bhante, did you see a woman go this way?’ The Mahāthera answered, ‘Oh, lay-supporter (*dāyaka*), I did not see man or woman, I saw only skeleton going this way.’ This story is mentioned in the Visuddhimagga in the Virtue Section.

So this is one example. Any bhikkhu who has practised skeleton-meditation thoroughly like Mahā Tissa Mahāthera may be able to see the skeleton of another with eyes open.

How To Discern Mentality

Introduction

In my last talk I explained how to develop four-elements meditation and also how to analyse the particles of materiality called rūpa kalāpas. In this talk I would like to explain a little about the method for discerning mentality (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*) which is the next stage in the development of Vipassanā meditation.

Let me begin by explaining briefly the basic principles of Abhidhamma that are necessary to understand the discernment of mentality.

In Buddhist Abhidhamma the mind is seen as consisting of a consciousness which knows its object, and mental-concomitants which arise with that consciousness. There are fifty-two such mental-concomitants, for example: contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*), and attention (*manasikāra*).

There are a total of eighty-nine types of consciousness which are classified according to whether they are wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate, and also according to their plane of existence, sensual plane (*kāmāvacara*), fine-material plane (*rūpāvacara*), immaterial plane (*arūpāvacara*), or supramundane (*lokuttarā*).

In brief, there are two types of consciousness:

1. Consciousness in the thought-process or cognitive-process (*cittavīthi*) and,
2. Consciousness outside the thought-process (*vīthimutta*), on the occasion of rebirth, bhavaṅga, and death.

There are six types of thought-process, the eye-door, ear-door,

nose-door, tongue-door, body-door, mind-door thought-processes, taking visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and mental objects respectively as object. The first five types of thought-process are collectively called the five-door thought-process (*pañcadvāra-vīhi*), and the last one is called the mind-door thought-process (*manodvāra-vīhi*). Each type of thought-process comprises a series of different types of consciousness. The consciousnesses in any one thought-process, as well as in the preceding and following processes, occur in due order in accordance with natural law (*cittaniyāma*). If you want to discern mentality, you must try to see them in due order in accordance with that natural law.

In order to do that, you must have completed the development of concentration beginning with either mindfulness-of-breathing, some other Samatha meditation subjects, or the four-elements meditation. You should also have finished the discernment of materiality (*rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*) if you are a bare-insight meditator. Only then should you attempt to discern mentality (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*).

The discernment of mentality is made up of four parts. They are:

1. The discernment of all the types of consciousness that occur internally,
2. The discernment of all the individual mental formations present in each consciousness,
3. The discernment of the sequences of consciousness, each one called a thought-process or cognitive-process (*vīhi*), that occur at the six sense-doors.
4. The discernment of external mentality.

How to Discern the Jhāna Thought Process

If you have attained jhāna concentration using mindfulness-of-breathing, or another object, then the best place to start to discern mentality is to discern the consciousness and mental-concomitants associated with that jhāna state.

How to Discern Mentality

There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that you observed the five *jhāna* factors when developing *jhāna*, and so you have some experience already in discerning the mental-concomitants associated with *jhāna*. The second reason is that the *jhāna* impulsion consciousnesses (*jhāna-javana-citta*) that are present during *jhāna* occur many times in succession, and are therefore prominent and easy to discern. This is in contrast to the normal sensual plane thought-process (*kāmāvacara-vīthi*) in which impulsion (*javana*) only occurs seven times before a completely new thought-process occurs.

So if you have attained *jhāna*, such as *ānāpāna-jhāna*, and wish to discern mentality, begin by entering the first *jhāna*. Emerging from the first *jhāna*, you discern *bhavaṅga*, the mind-door, and *ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta* together. When the *ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta* appears in *bhavaṅga*, you discern the five *jhāna* factors according to their individual characteristics. Practise until you can discern the five factors all at once in each first *jhāna* impulsion consciousness (*javana-citta*). The five factors are:

1. Applied thought (*vitakka*): directing and placing of the mind on the object, the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.
2. Sustained thought (*vicāra*): maintaining the mind on the object, the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.
3. Joy (*pīti*): liking for the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.
4. Bliss (*sukha*): pleasant feeling or happiness associated with experiencing the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.
5. One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*): one-pointedness of mind on the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.

After you have discerned these five mental formations, you should attempt to discern each of the other mental formations present in the first *jhāna* impulsion consciousness. You should begin by discerning either consciousness (*viññāṇa*), contact (*phassa*), or feeling (*vedanā*). You should discern whichever is

prominent, and then discern it in every first jhāna impulsion consciousness. You should then discern each of the remaining types of mental formations by adding one type at a time, so that you are able to see first one type of mental formation in each first jhāna impulsion consciousness, then two types, then three types, etc., until eventually you can see all thirty-four types of mental formations in each first jhāna impulsion consciousness.

When you can discern all thirty-four types of mental formations in the first jhāna impulsion consciousness you should try to discern all types of mental formations present in each and every consciousness that occurs in a mind-door thought-process (*manodvāra-vīhi*).

A mind-door thought-process of the first jhāna consists of a sequence of six types of consciousness each with different functions. The first type has twelve mental formations and the rest all have thirty-four mental formations.

1. The first to occur is mind-door-adverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*), in which you can discern twelve mental formations.
2. The second one is a preparatory consciousness (*parikamma*), in which you can discern thirty-four mental formations.
3. The third one is an access consciousness (*upacāra*), in which you can discern also thirty-four mental formations.
4. The fourth one is a conformity consciousness (*anuloma*), in which you can discern also thirty-four mental formations.
5. The fifth one is a change-of-lineage consciousness (*gotrabhū*), in which you can discern also thirty-four mental formations.
6. Finally, the sixth one is an uninterrupted sequence of jhāna impulsion consciousnesses (*jhāna-javana-citta*), in which you can discern also thirty-four mental for-

mations.

To discern this you must enter into the first *jhāna*, such as the first *ānāpāna-jhāna*. After emerging from that *jhāna*, you again discern *bhavaṅga* and *ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta* together. When the *ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta* appears in *bhavaṅga*, you observe the *jhāna* mind-door thought-process that just occurred. You observe each of the different consciousnesses in the first *jhāna* mind-door thought-process, and discern all types of mental formation that occur in each consciousness be they twelve or thirty-four.

After you have discerned all the types of mental formation that arise in each consciousness of a first *jhāna* mind-door thought-process, you should discern the common characteristic of all mentality, which is their characteristic of bending towards and sticking to an object. Then you simply discern all the thirty-four mental formations in the first *jhāna* as mentality (*nāma*).

You need to go through the same discernment and analysis of mentality of the second, third, and fourth *jhānas* of mindfulness-of-breathing, as well as any other *jhāna* you are able to attain using other meditation subjects. For example, repulsiveness meditation, the white *kaṣiṇa*, and lovingkindness.

By now you have discerned the mentality of all your previous *Samatha* meditations. If, however, you have not attained *jhāna* but have attained only access concentration, by developing the four-elements meditation as your tranquillity subject, you must necessarily begin your discernment of mentality from there. This is because you are unable to discern the mentality associated with *jhāna* consciousness. Therefore, first you repeat your four-elements meditation up to access concentration, where the transparent form of your body sparkles and emits light. After resting in that access concentration for some time, with a refreshed and clear mind, you turn to *Vipassanā* to discern the mentality associated with that access concentration. Having discerned those different thought-processes in your *Samatha* prac-

tice, you move on to discern the different mental formations that occur when a wholesome mind-door thought-process of the sensual plane takes place (*kāṃāvacara-kusala-manodvāra-vīthi*).

How to Discern A Sensual Plane Thought-Process

Wise and Unwise Attention

A thought-process of the sensual plane may be wholesome or unwholesome. That depends on wise attention or unwise attention. The presence of either wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*), or unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*), is the most important factor to determine whether a sensual plane consciousness is wholesome or unwholesome.

If you look at an object and know it as materiality (*rūpa*), mentality (*nāma*), cause or effect, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), non-self (*anatta*), or repulsiveness (*asubha*), then your attention is wise attention, and the impulsion consciousness is wholesome.

If a you look at an object by way of a concept, such as person, man, woman, being, gold, silver, or as permanence, happiness, or self, then your attention is unwise attention, and the impulsion consciousness is unwholesome.

In exceptional cases, however, an impulsion consciousness connected with a concept may be wholesome, as for example, when practising lovingkindness and making offerings. You will see the differences when you discern those thought-processes yourselves.

Mind-Door Thought-Process

You should start by discerning the mind-door thought-process, because the types of consciousness are fewer in a mind-door thought-process.

To discern the mentality associated with a wholesome mind-door thought-process of the sensual plane (*kāṃāvacara-kusala-*

How to Discern Mentality

manodvāra-vīthi) you should first discern the bhavaṅga mind clear element which is the mind-door. Then look at the eye transparent-element (*cakkhu-pasāda*) as object.

When that object, the eye transparent-element, appears in the mind-door, a mind-door thought-process occurs.

Try to discern repeatedly the mental formations in the consciousness of that mind-door thought-process. Discern them one at a time in a way similar to the way mentioned for the jhāna mind-door thought-process. You discern the mental formations beginning either with consciousness, feeling, or contact. Then develop your understanding until you can discern progressively one, two, and three mental formations in each consciousness. Continue in this way, until you eventually are able to see all the different mental formations in each consciousness of a wholesome mind-door thought-process of the sensual plane, be they thirty-four, thirty-three or thirty-two.

A wholesome mind-door thought-process of the sensual plane consists of the following sequence of consciousnesses which have different functions.

1. First, there is a mind-door-adverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*), in which you discern twelve mental formations.
2. Second, there are seven impulsion consciousnesses (*javana-citta*), in which you discern either thirty-four, thirty-three, or thirty-two mental formations.
3. Third, there are two registration consciousnesses (*tadārammaṇa-citta*), in which you discern thirty-four, thirty-three, thirty-two, twelve, or eleven mental formations.

You continue to discern the mind-door thought-processes in the same way, using as objects each of the eighteen types of real materiality and ten types of artificial materiality examined when you did discernment of materiality (*rūpa-kamaṭṭhāna*).

Eye-Door Thought-Process

Once you have finished discerning the mind-door thought-process, you should go on to discern the eye-door thought-process. You should discern all the mental formations that make up each consciousness in an eye-door thought-process. In the same way as above, begin by discerning either consciousness, contact, or feeling. Then you look for and discern the different mental formations, by adding one every time until you see all the different mental formations together in one consciousness.

To discern the mental formations that make up each consciousness in an eye-door thought-process, you cause an eye-door thought-process to occur. First discern the eye transparent-element, which is the eye-door, and then look at the mind-door. Then discern both at the same time.

Then pay attention to the colour of a nearby group of kalāpas as it appears in both doors. At this point you will be able to discern the eye-door thought-process occurring, and the mind-door thought-process that follows it according to the natural law of the mind (*citta-niyāma*).

An eye-door thought-process consists of a sequence of seven types of consciousness each with different functions.

1. First, there is a five-door-adverting consciousness (*paññādvārāvajjana*) in which you discern eleven mental formations.
2. Second, there is an eye consciousness (*cakkhuvīññāṇa*) in which you discern eight mental formations.
3. Third, there is a receiving consciousness (*sampañicchana*) in which you discern eleven mental formations.
4. Fourth, there is an investigating consciousness (*santīraṇa*) in which you discern eleven or twelve mental formations.
5. Fifth, there is a determining consciousness

How to Discern Mentality

(*voṭṭhapana*) in which you discern twelve mental formations.

6. Sixth, there are seven impulsion consciousnesses (*javana-citta*) in which you discern either thirty-four, thirty-three, or thirty-two mental formations.
7. Then, there are two registration consciousnesses (*tadārammaṇa-citta*) in which you discern thirty-four, thirty-three, thirty-two, twelve, or eleven mental formations.

After this sequence several moments of bhavaṅga consciousness arise.

1. If a wholesome mind-door thought-process of the sensual plane arises with the same object as that eye-door thought-process, the first consciousness to arise is a mind-door adverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*), in which you discern twelve mental formations.
2. Immediately after that, there are the seven impulsion consciousnesses (*javana-citta*), in which you discern either thirty-four, thirty-three, or thirty-two mental formations.
3. These are followed by the two registration consciousnesses (*tadārammaṇa-citta*), in which you can discern thirty-four, thirty-three, thirty-two, twelve, or eleven mental formations.

Having discerned the above series, you start to discern all the different mental formations that occur in every consciousness in those eye-door and mind-door thought-processes. Beginning with either consciousness, contact, or feeling, you discern each of the other mental formations as before, one by one until you can discern all mentality in each consciousness in both eye-door and mind-door thought-processes.

Knowing and Seeing

In a similar way, you then proceed to discern the thought-processes for each of the other four sense-bases: the ear, the nose, the tongue, and the body.

By this stage you will have developed the ability to discern the mentality associated with wholesome consciousnesses, and now need to learn how to discern the mentality in unwholesome consciousnesses. To do this you simply take the same objects as you did for the wholesome consciousnesses given earlier, but instead pay unwise attention to each of them.

I do not have time to explain this in great detail, but I hope the examples that I have given here will be sufficient for you to gain at least an understanding of what is involved in the discerning of mentality.

Having reached this stage in meditation, you will have developed concentration, discerned all twenty-eight kinds of materiality, and discerned the three aspects of mentality internally. They are:

1. The analysis all the different types of consciousness that occur internally.
2. Discernment of all the individual mental formations present in each consciousness.
3. The discernment of the sequences of consciousness, each one called a thought-process (*vñhi*) that occur at the six sense-doors.

Discerning External Mentality

It is not enough, however, to discern mentality only internally. You should proceed to discern mentality also externally. You begin by discerning the four elements internally, and then in exactly the same way, discern them externally in the clothes you are wearing. You will see that your clothes break down into kalāpas, and that you are able to discern eight types of materiality in each of those kalāpas. They are called temperature-produced nutritive-essence-as-the-eighth-factor kalāpas or nutri-

How to Discern Mentality

tive-essence-octad kalāpas (*utuja-ojatt^hamaka-kalāpa*). In this case, the temperature they arise from is the fire-element in each external kalāpa.

You should discern materiality in this way, internally and externally, alternately, three or four times. Then using your light of concentration, you go on to observe materiality that is a little farther away, such as the floor on which you are sitting. There you will also be able to discern the eight types of materiality in each kalāpa, and should again discern materiality internally and externally, alternately, three or four times.

You go on to likewise see the materiality in the building in which you are sitting, the area around the building, including the trees, etc. In this way you gradually expand your field of discernment until you can discern all inanimate materiality externally.

While discerning materiality externally, you will find that you see transparent materiality also in inanimate objects. This is because there are small insects and animals living in the trees, buildings, etc., and you are seeing the transparent materiality of those beings.

Once you have discerned the external materiality that is inanimate, you go on to discern external materiality that is animate, and associated with consciousness. It is the materiality which makes up the bodies of other living beings.

You are discerning the materiality of other living beings, externally, and understanding that it is not a man, a woman, a person, or a being, but just materiality. Discern all external materiality at once. Then go on to discern all different types of materiality that exist, but in this case, both internally and externally.

That is, see the six basic types of kalāpas that exist in an eye, both internally and externally. These are produced by kamma, mind, temperature, and nutriment. As you did previously, discern their fifty-four types of materiality, but in this case, both internally and externally. This same procedure is followed for analysing the remaining five sense-bases internally and exter-

Knowing and Seeing

nally. You need to also discern all the remaining types of materiality both internally and externally.

Having now discerned materiality completely, you proceed to discern mentality internally and externally.

You discern mentality internally again by starting with the mind-door thought-process, and then the eye-door process. You discern all the mental formations in them, be they wholesome or unwholesome. Then do the same externally.

You do this by discerning a being's eye transparent-element and bhavaṅga mind clear element. Then discern the eye-door thought-process and mind-door thought-process that occur when the colour of a group of kalāpas appears in both doors. You do this many times, again and again, internally and externally, and do the same for the rest of the six sense-doors.

If you are able to attain jhāna, you can also discern the jhāna mind-door thought-processes that are external. Without the experience of jhāna, however, you will not be able to do this.

Thus, you should discern materiality internally and externally, gradually extending your range of discernment, until you can see materiality throughout the infinite universe. You should also discern mentality internally and externally, until you can see likewise mentality throughout the infinite universe. Lastly, you should discern mentality and materiality together throughout the infinite universe.

Then you define all those mentality and materiality with wisdom, seeing no beings, men, or women, only mentality and materiality as far as the extent of the entire universe. This concludes the discernment of mentality (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*).

In my next talk I shall continue to explain how to develop insight, and talk about the next stage of insight, which is the discernment of dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).

Questions and Answers (5)

Question 5.1: The four jhānas and eight attainments (*samāpatti*) can be a support to attain the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*), and to see their subtle arising and passing-away so that one becomes disgusted with those mentality and materiality, and attains the Path Knowledge (*maggañāṇa*). Are there, apart from this, other benefits of the four jhānas and eight attainments?

Answer 5.1: There are five benefits of developing concentration:

(1) As a blissful abiding here and now (*diṭṭhadhamma-sukhavihāra*): enjoying jhāna happiness in this very life. This refers especially to pure Vipassanā arahants (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika-arahant*). After attaining the arahant path and fruition (*arahattamagga* and *arahattaphala*), they practise jhāna meditation. These jhānas produce nothing except the enjoyment of jhāna bliss (*jhāna-sukha*) in this very life. This is because they have already done the work which should be done by a bhikkhu in this dispensation. That is the attainment of the four paths and the four fruitions.

The duty of a bhikkhu is to learn scriptures (*pariyatti*), to try Vipassanā meditation, and to attain the Arahant Path and Fruition. Those pure Vipassanā arahants have already fulfilled these duties completely. There is no more work for them to do in the dispensation. So their jhāna practice produces only the enjoyment of happiness in this very life. This is the first benefit of concentration.

(2) The benefit of insight (*vipassanā-nisamsa*). The jhāna attainment is a support for the result of insight-knowledge. Because of concentration one can see ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes clearly. With that concentration one can discern the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of those mentality-and-materiality and their causes. The develop-

ment of concentration provides the meditator with the benefit of insight-knowledge. This is the second benefit of concentration.

(3) The benefit of the kinds of psychic power (*abhiññānisaṃsa*). If a bhikkhu wants to possess mundane psychic powers like recollection of past lives (*pubbenivāsānussati-abhiññā*), the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), the divine ear (*dibba-sota*), the psychic power of knowing others' mind (*paracitta-vijānana*), the psychic power of various supernormal powers (*iddhividha*): flying in the sky, etc..., he must cultivate the ten kasiṇas and eight attainments (*samāpatti*) in fourteen ways. In that case these kasiṇas and eight attainments are the fundamental cause for the different types of psychic power. This is the third benefit of concentration.

(4) The benefit of an improved form of existence (*bhavavisesa-vahānisaṃsa*): the result of being reborn in a brahma realm. If someone wants to go to a brahma realm after death, he must practise jhāna like the ten kasiṇa jhānas, ānāpāna jhāna, lovingkindness jhāna. Due to the power of his jhāna, he can attain the rebirth in one of the brahma realms after death. But this jhāna must continue up to the moment of death. If the jhāna 'falls down' before death, it is not certain he will go to a brahma realm.

When a meditator has practised Vipassanā thoroughly, especially up to the Path Knowledge (*maggaññāṇa*) and Fruition Knowledge (*phalaññāṇa*), or the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ññāṇa*), the jhāna dhammas are usually stable. The jhāna dhammas make the insight-knowledge clear, bright, strong and powerful. That strong and powerful insight-knowledge in its turn also protects the jhāna dhammas from falling down.

Then again, when a meditator has been practising Vipassanā for a long time, tiredness may occur. When that happens he should stay in one of the jhāna attainment for a long time. When he does that the tiredness will disappear, and when his mind is refreshed he can switch back to Vipassanā practice. If tiredness

Questions and Answers (5)

occurs again then he can do the same thing again.

So, because of Samatha concentration, insight-knowledge is clear, bright, strong and powerful, and is well protected. Vipassanā in its turn destroys the defilements which are hindrances to jhāna, and keeps the jhāna concentration stable. So Samatha protects Vipassanā and vice-versa. This is the fourth benefit of concentration.

(5) The benefit of cessation (*nirodhānisamsa*): the benefit of the attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*). If non-returners (*anāgāmi*) and arahants want to enter into the attainment of cessation, they must practise Vipassanā meditation on the eight attainments jhāna dhammas in succession. The attainment of cessation means the temporary cessation of consciousness (*citta*), mental-concomitants (*cetasika*) and consciousness-produced materiality (*cittaja-rūpa*). Here ‘temporary’ means for a day, seven days, etc., depending on their wish and determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) upon entering into the attainment of cessation.

Non-returners and arahants never stop seeing mentality-and-materiality and their causes arising and passing-away, or just passing-away. They see this process all day, all night, for many days, months, years, except when asleep, so sometimes they just do not want to see those passing-away phenomena (*bhaṅga-dhamma*) anymore. They are bored and disgusted. But the time for their Parinibbāna has not come yet because their life span is not over. Therefore, when they want to stop seeing those passing-away phenomena, they enter into the attainment of cessation.

Why do they see those passing-away phenomena? Usually they have by that time destroyed the hindrances opposite to the jhāna factors. So they have sufficient concentration. The concentrated mind sees the ultimate phenomena (*paramattha-dhamma*) as they really are, so they always see the passing-away phenomena, which is the nature of ultimate mentality-and-materiality. When they enter into the attainment of cessation, let’s say for seven days, they do not see the passing-away phenomena for those seven days, because all consciousness and

Knowing and Seeing

mental-concomitants which know the passing-away phenomena have ceased.

If they want to enter into the attainment of cessation, they must first enter into the first jhāna. Having emerged from the first jhāna, they must discern the first jhāna dhamma as impermanent, suffering, or non-self. Then they must practise in the same way from the second jhāna to the base-of-infinite-consciousness jhāna (*viññāṇañcāyatana-jhāna*). Then they must enter into the base-of-nothingness jhāna (*ākāṅkhaññāyatana-jhāna*). After having emerged from the base-of-nothingness jhāna, they must make four determinations:

1. To emerge from the attainment of cessation after a fixed time, for example, seven days.
2. To emerge from the attainment of cessation should a Buddha want to see them. This is to be done only when there is a living Buddha.
3. To emerge from the attainment of cessation should the Saṅgha wants to see them.
4. That their requisites not be destroyed by any cause such as fire.

After making these four determinations, they enter into the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana-jhāna*). As soon as they enter into the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna, after just one or two thought moments, they go into the attainment of cessation for the given period, for example, seven days. They do not see anything while in the attainment because all consciousness and mental-concomitants have ceased for the given period. This is the fifth benefit of concentration.

It is true that the concentration of the eight attainments is basic to discerning mentality-and-materiality and their causes, but those eight attainments are also mentality dhammas. They are included under the section on mentality. So if a meditator has

Questions and Answers (5)

thoroughly discerned mentality-and-materiality and their causes, including the eight attainments as impermanent, suffering, and non-self up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*), he can specialise his discernment in the jhāna dhammas of only one of the eight attainments. This is ‘yoking together’ (*yuganaddha*) the practice of Samatha and Vipassanā, like two bullocks pulling one cart. When practising in that way, he can also attain Nibbāna. This is another supporting cause to attain Path, Fruition, and Nibbāna.

Question 5.2: Which is easier and quicker for the attainment of Nibbāna: using theory to perceive impermanence, suffering, and non-self, or using concentration to discern ultimate phenomena (*paramattha-dhamma*)?

Answer 5.2: What is impermanence (*aniccanti pañcakkhandhā*)? This definition is mentioned in many commentaries. So impermanence is the five aggregates. Without seeing the five aggregates, how can one perceive impermanence, suffering and non-self? If a meditator can see the five aggregates clearly he can perceive impermanence, suffering, and non-self. There will be no problem. But if he cannot see the five aggregates how can he? If he tries without seeing the five aggregates, his Vipassanā will be only reciting Vipassanā; not real Vipassanā. Only real Vipassanā can produce the attainment of Path and Fruition Knowledges.

What are the five aggregates? The materiality-aggregate, the feeling-aggregate, the perception-aggregate, the formations-aggregate and the consciousness-aggregate. The materiality-aggregate is the twenty-eight types of materiality. The feeling, perception and formations-aggregates are the fifty-two mental-concomitants. The consciousness-aggregate is the eighty-nine types of consciousness (*citta*). So the twenty-eight types of materiality are materiality, while the fifty-two mental-concomitants and eighty-nine types of consciousness are mentality. The five

Knowing and Seeing

aggregates and mentality-and-materiality are the same.

These are ultimate mentality-and-materiality. If a meditator can see those ultimate mentality-and-materiality, he can practise to see the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of these mentality-and-materiality. But if he cannot discern ultimate mentality-and-materiality how can he practise Vipassanā, because those ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes are the objects of insight-knowledge. This is real Vipassanā. Real Vipassanā can produce the attainment of Path and Fruition Knowledges.

So the Buddha taught in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta that to attain Nibbāna there is only one way (*ekāyana*); there is no other way. As to how a meditator should try to see those ultimate mentality-and-materiality, the Buddha said to practise concentration first, because a concentrated mind can produce the seeing of those ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes. Again, a concentrated mind can produce the seeing of impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of those ultimate mentality-and-materiality and their causes. So we cannot say which is the easier way. It depends on pāramīs to attain Nibbāna quickly.

For example, the Venerable Sāriputta worked hard for about two weeks to attain the arahant path and fruition, and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna worked hard for only seven days to attain the arahant path and fruition. Again, Bāhiya Daruciriya attained the arahant path and fruition by listening to a short discourse, ‘*Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattarū...*’: ‘In seeing there is only the seeing...’ This quick attainment of arahantship depended on their pāramīs. The Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna had fulfilled their pāramīs for one incalculable (*asaṅkhyeyya*) and one hundred thousand aeons (*kappa*), and Bāhiya Daruciriya fulfilled his pāramīs for about one hundred thousand aeons, but the Venerable Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna’s arahant paths were associated with the Knowledge of Enlightenment of a Chief Disciple (*aggasāvaka-bodhi-ñāṇa*). On the other hand, Bāhiya Daruciriya’s arahant path was associated with only the Knowl-

Questions and Answers (5)

edge of Enlightenment of a Great Disciple (*mahāsāvaka-bodhi-ñāṇa*). The Knowledge of Enlightenment of a Chief Disciple is higher than the Knowledge of Enlightenment of a Great Disciple. Therefore, their quick attainment of arahantship was because of their pāramīs. It did not depend on their wish, because there is only one way to attain Nibbāna.

Question 5.3: The round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*) is beginningless and endless. Living beings are also infinite, so those who have been our mother are also infinite. How can we develop lovingkindness by contemplating that all beings have been our mother? Can we attain lovingkindness jhāna (*mettā-jhāna*) by contemplating that all beings have been our mother?

Answer 5.3: Lovingkindness meditation does not concern the past and future. It concerns the present only. So if we send lovingkindness to the dead we cannot attain jhāna. In the endless round of rebirths, there may be no one who has not been our father or mother, but lovingkindness meditation is not concerned with the endless round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*).

In the Mettā Sutta the Buddha said, ‘*Māṭā yathā niyamputtamāyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe; evampi sabbabhūtesu, mānasarū bhāvaye aparimāṇam*’. A mother who had an only son would protect him with full lovingkindness by giving up even her own life. So a bhikkhu should send lovingkindness to all beings with the attitude of a mother. This is the Buddha’s instruction. So only a present object can produce lovingkindness jhāna (*mettā-jhāna*); not past or future. It is not necessary to consider that this was our mother, this was our father. If we send lovingkindness such as ‘May this person be well and happy’ it will produce jhāna. The attitude of a mother alone cannot produce any jhāna.

Question 5.4:

(The following questions all have the same answer.)

1. Was there a bodhisatta during the Buddha’s time? If

Knowing and Seeing

so, did he attain any path or was he just a worldling (*puthujjana*)?

2. Why can a noble one (*ariya*) not become a bodhisatta?
3. Can a disciple (*sāvaka*) change to become a bodhisatta? If not, why not?
4. When by following the Sayadaw's teaching one is able to attain the Path and Fruition Knowledges of Stream-Enterer (*sotāpatti-maggañāṇa* and *sotāpatti-phalañāṇa*), can one refrain from entering into it because of one's desire and vow to practise the bodhisatta path?

Answer 5.4: Before attaining a path or fruition one can change one's mind. After attaining a path or fruition one cannot change one's mind, because in many suttas the Buddha taught that the path is 'definite fixed-law' (*sammatta-niyāma*). It means that it is a fixed law that the Stream-Enterer Path (*sotāpatti-magga*) produces the Stream-Enterer Fruition (*sotāpatti-phala*); after the Stream-Enterer Fruition one can attain once-returner stage (*sakadāgāmi*), but cannot regress to worldling stage. In the same way, an once-returner can attain non-returner stage (*anāgāmi*), but cannot regress to stream-enterer or worldling stage. In the same way, a non-returner can attain arahant stage, but not regress to once-returner, stream-enterer or worldling stage. An arahant attains Parinibbāna after death, and does not regress to the lower noble stage, worldling stage, or any other stage. Arahant stage is the last stage. This is the definite fixed-law (*sammatta-niyāma*). Referring to the arahant stage, the Buddha said many times: '*Ayamantimā jāti natthidani puna bhavāti*': 'This is the last rebirth, now there is no new rebirth again.'

Before attaining a path or fruition, however, a meditator can change his mind and decide to become a bodhisatta. But because of this fixed law he cannot change to bodhisatta stage after attaining any path or fruition.

Moreover, before receiving any definite prophecy from a Bud-

Questions and Answers (5)

dha or arahant, a disciple can change the enlightenment he aspired for. But not after receiving a definite prophecy from a Buddha or arahant. For example, there was one Mahāthera who was always mindful of the four foundations of mindfulness only. He had practised Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations. He had never done any bodily or verbal action without mindfulness. At the time near his death a big assembly of people gathered, because they thought the Mahāthera would attain Parinibbāna. The Mahāthera was actually still a worldling. He wanted to see Arimetteyya Buddha. He wanted to become an arahant in Arimetteyya Buddha's dispensation. This was his desire. He had fulfilled Samatha-Vipassanā pāramī up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations. Then his disciple informed him that a big assembly of people had gathered because they thought the Mahāthera would attain Parinibbāna. So the Mahāthera said, 'Oh, I had wanted to see Arimetteyya Buddha. But if there is a large assembly then give me a chance to meditate.' Then he practised Vipassanā, and because he had changed his mind very soon he attained arahatship. So before receiving a definite prophecy one can change one's determination, but after a definite prophecy one cannot change one's determination.

During the Buddha's time there was no mention of a definite prophecy of bodhisattas except for Arimetteyya bodhisatta. At that time Arimetteyya bodhisatta was a bhikkhu named Ajita. But the Tipiṭaka does not say when the Buddha after Arimetteyya Buddha will arise, so we cannot say how many bodhisattas there were during the Buddha's time.

Question 5.5: Is it possible to practise the path to liberation (*vimuttimaggā*) and the path of bodhisatta at the same time? If so, what is the method?

Answer 5.5: Liberation (*vimutti*) means escape from defilements or the round of rebirths. So when a bodhisatta becomes a Bud-

Knowing and Seeing

dha, he gets to escape from the round of rebirths after Parinibbāna. If you try to attain arahantship and succeed in reaching the arahant stage, you also get to escape from the round of rebirths, as a disciple (*sāvaka*) after Parinibbāna.

So a person cannot become a Buddha as well as a disciple. He must choose either one or the other, but they both get to escape from the round of rebirths when they attain arahantship. The way to attain arahant path is the final path to liberation (*vimuttimaggā*).

Question 5.6: Is this method [of meditation] for liberation only, or is it also for the bodhisatta way?

Answer 5.6: It is for both. In a previous talk I explained that Sakyamuni Buddha was a bhikkhu in nine of his past lives as a bodhisatta. If we look at his practices in those nine lives, we see there are only the three trainings: virtuous conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). The bodhisatta was able to practise the eight attainments, five mundane psychic powers, and Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations.

Now you are also trying Samatha-Vipassanā meditation based on virtuous conduct. When you have practised the three trainings up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, you can choose either way. If you want liberation you can choose to go to Nibbāna; if you want to become a bodhisatta you can choose the bodhisatta way. There will be no problem.

Question 5.7: Do all good and bad kamma ripen for an arahant prior to his Parinibbāna?

Answer 5.7: Not all. Some good and bad kamma may produce their results when they mature. If they do not mature they cannot produce a result. They are lapsed kamma (*ahosi-kamma*), kamma that no longer bear any result. For example the un-

Questions and Answers (5)

wholesome kamma done in a previous life of the Venerable Mahāmogallāna's produced bad results prior to his Parinibbāna. In one of his past lives the Venerable Mahāmogallāna tried to kill his blind parents but they did not die. Due to that unwholesome kamma he suffered in hell for many thousands of years, and when he escaped from hell he was killed by others in about two hundred lives. His skull was crushed in each of those lives. In his last life too, every bone in his body was crushed, including his skull. Why? This unwholesome kamma was ready to produce its result due to its maturity. But if some unwholesome kamma and wholesome kamma have not yet matured, they do not produce any result. They are kamma by name only.

Question 5.8: After his enlightenment, did the Buddha say, 'Originally all beings have the Tathāgata's wisdom and other qualities'?

Answer 5.8: Now you have accepted that Sakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment. You should consider whether the Tathāgata's qualities, after his enlightenment, are present in all beings or not, especially in yourself. Do you possess any of the Tathāgata's qualities?

Question 5.9: Is the arahant's perception of voidness (*suññata*) in his own five aggregates the same as his perception of voidness in outside inanimate things? Is Nibbāna the same as entering into voidness?

Answer 5.9: The perceptions of voidness in one's own five aggregates and in outside inanimate things are the same.

Nibbāna got the name voidness (*suññatā*) because of the path. When a meditator comprehends formations or conditioned things (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*) as non-self, and if at that time he sees Nibbāna, his Path Knowledge is called the void liberation (*suññatā-vimokkha*). Like the path is the void liberation, the object of the

Knowing and Seeing

path which is Nibbāna is also called voidness. Here the void liberation means the escape from defilements by seeing non-self nature of formations.

Question 5.10: Are all suttas taught by the Buddha only?

Answer 5.10: Most of the suttas in the Tipiṭaka are taught by the Buddha. A few suttas are said to be taught by disciples like the Venerable Sāriputta, the Venerable Mahākaccāyana, and the Venerable Ānanda. But the suttas taught by disciples have the same meaning as the suttas taught by the Buddha. This is evident in some of the suttas which are approved by the Buddha when he uttered: ‘It is good (*sādhū*)...’, for example, the Mahākaccāyana Bhaddekaratta Sutta.

Question 5.11: Since we cannot see the Buddha while in concentration, can we see the Buddha by psychic powers to discuss Dhamma with him?

Answer 5.11: No, you cannot. One of the psychic powers is called recollection of past lives (*pubbenivasanussati*). If a meditator possesses this psychic power and met a Buddha in one of his past lives, he can see that as a past experience only, not as a new experience. If Dhamma was discussed in that past life, there will only be old questions and answers; there cannot be new questions and answers. This is the psychic power of recollection of past lives.

How to See the Links of Dependent-Origination

Introduction

In my last talk I explained how to discern mentality (*nāma*), and in the talk before that, I explained how to discern the different types of materiality (*rūpa*). If you are able to discern mentality and materiality in the way I described, you will also be able to discern the causes of mentality and materiality. This means discerning dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Dependent-origination is about the way in which causes and effects operate over the three periods of past, present, and future.

There are several ways in which a meditator can develop the ability to discern dependent-origination. It would take some time to explain in detail the many methods, so I shall illustrate only the two methods by which I most often teach meditators to discern dependent-origination.

Both of the two methods involve discerning the five aggregates (*khandha*) in the present, in the past, and in the future. After discerning the five aggregates in the present, past, and future, you need to discern the relationships of cause and effect over these three periods. Once you are able to discern the five aggregates in the present, past, and future, and see which of the aggregates is cause and which is effect, you can learn to discern dependent-origination in the other ways taught in the suttas and commentaries.

How To Discern the Past

To discern the past you begin by making an offering of either candles, flowers, or incense at a pagoda, or in front of a Buddha image. You should make a wish to be reborn as a monk, nun,

man, woman, deva, or whatever you would like to be reborn as.

Afterwards, you should go and sit in meditation, develop concentration, and discern in turn mentality and materiality that are internal and external. This is important because if you cannot discern external mentality and materiality, you will have great difficulty discerning mentality and materiality in the past. That is because the discernment of external mentality and materiality is similar to the discernment of past mentality and materiality.

Then you should try to discern the mentality and materiality that occurred at the time of making the offering at the pagoda or Buddha image, as if they were an external object. You will find that when doing this, an image of yourself at the time of offering appears. You should discern the four elements in that image.

When the image breaks into kalāpas, you discern all the types of materiality of the six doors, especially the fifty-four types of materiality of the heart-base. Then you will be able to discern the bhavaṅga consciousness, and mind-door thought-processes that occur between the bhavaṅga consciousnesses. You should discern those mind-door thought-processes backwards and forwards, and find the defilement round (*kilesavaṭṭa*) and the kamma round (*kammavaṭṭa*) mind-door thought-processes (*manodvāra-vīthi*). The kamma round mind-door thought-process has thirty-four mental formations, while the defilement round has twenty mental formations. Having discerned the mentality of the defilement round and kamma round, you then discern the materiality they depended upon.

There are three rounds (*vaṭṭa*) found in the process of dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). They are the round of defilements, the round of kamma, and the round of results (*vipākavaṭṭa*). Of the twelve factors of dependent-origination, the round of kamma refers to volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) and kamma-process becoming (*kammabhava*), the round of defilements refers to ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*), and the round of results refers to consciousness (*viññāṇa*), mentality-and-materiality (*nāmarūpa*), the six sense-

How to See the Links of Dependent-Origination

bases (*āyatana*), contact (*phassa*), and feeling (*vedanā*).

Let me illustrate this with a practical example: the case of making an offering of candles, flowers, or incense in front of a Buddha image, and making a wish to be reborn as a monk.

In this case, ignorance is the wrong knowledge thinking that ‘monk’ is a reality; craving is the desire and longing for life as a monk; and clinging is the attachment to life as a monk. These three, ignorance, craving, and clinging, are all found in the consciousness that makes up the round of defilements (*kilesa-vatṭa*).

If you had made an offering of candles, flowers, or incense in front of a Buddha image, and instead of making a wish to be reborn as a monk, had made a wish to be reborn as a woman, then the ignorance would be the wrong knowledge thinking that ‘woman’ is a reality; craving is the desire and longing for life as a woman; and clinging is the attachment to life as a woman.

In both examples, volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) are the wholesome intentions (*cetanā*) of offering either candles, flowers, or incense in front of a Buddha image, and kamma is the kammic force associated with those volitional formations. These two are both found in the consciousnesses that make up the kamma round of dependent-origination.

When you are able to discern the mentality and materiality of the defilement round and kamma round in the recent past, you should go back in time a little further, to sometime previous to that offering, and in the same way discern the mentality and materiality present at that time. After having discerned the mentality and materiality at that time, you go back a little further again and repeat the process. In this way, you will be able to discern mentality and materiality that occurred one day in the past, one week in the past, one month in the past, one year in the past, two years in the past, three years in the past and so on. Discerning the mentality and materiality in this way, you will eventually be able to discern backwards into the past until you can see the mentality and materiality associated with rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*) which occurred at the conception of

this present life.

By looking for the causes of conception, you will be able to go back even further, and will see either the mentality and materiality present at the time near death of the previous life, or the object of the near death impulsion consciousness (*maraṇāsanna-javana-citta*).

There are three possible objects of the near death impulsion. They are:

1. Kamma; again having the thoughts that produced the actions of giving, etc.
2. Kamma sign (*kamma-nimitta*); such as a pagoda, a monk, flowers, or an object offered.
3. Rebirth sign (*gati-nimitta*); the place where you will be reborn. For a human rebirth it is the mother's womb, and is usually red like a red carpet.

If you can discern the mentality and materiality near death, you will also be able to discern the object of the near death impulsion, be it kamma, kamma sign, or rebirth sign. This object appears because of the kammic force which produced the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*). If you can discern this, you will be able to discern the volitional formations and kamma that produced the related resultant aggregates in this present life. When you have discerned volitional formations and kamma, you should try to discern the ignorance, craving, and clinging that preceded them. After that, you should discern the other mental formations associated with that kamma round and defilement round.

Examples

In order to make this clearer, let me give an example of what one meditator was able to discern. When she concentrated and investigated at the time near death, she discerned the mentality and materiality there, and saw the kamma object of a woman

How to See the Links of Dependent-Origination

offering fruit to a Buddhist monk. Then beginning with the four elements, she further examined the mentality and materiality present while making that offering of fruit to the Buddhist monk. She found that the woman was a very poor and uneducated villager, who having reflected on her own state of suffering, had made an offering to the monk with the wish for life as an educated woman in a large town.

In this case, ignorance (*avijjā*) is the wrong knowledge that ‘an educated woman in a large town’ is a reality; the liking and craving for life as an educated woman is craving (*taṇhā*); the attachment to life as an educated woman is clinging (*upādāna*). The wholesome intentions (*kusala-cetanā*) to offer fruit to a Buddhist monk are the volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*), and the kamma is the kammic force of those volitional formations.

In this present life that woman is an educated woman in a large town in Myanmar. She was able to directly discern with right view, how the kammic force of offering fruit in her past life has produced the resultant five aggregates in this present life.

The ability to discern causes and effects in this way is the knowledge called the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).

Here is a slightly different example. In this case, a man investigated and saw that around the time of the near death impulsion, there were four kamma objects competing with each other. There was one kamma involving teaching Buddhist texts, another involving teaching dhamma, yet another involving meditation, and finally one teaching meditation. When he investigated which of the four kamma had caused the resultant five aggregates in the present life, he found that the kamma of meditating was the one that had given the result, and that that kamma was the object of the near death impulsion (*maraṇāsanna-javanacitta*). When he further investigated to discern which meditation subject was being practised, he saw that he had been practising Vipassanā meditation, applying the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*)

Knowing and Seeing

to mentality and materiality. Then he made further investigations and saw that before and after each meditation sitting, he had made the wish to be reborn as a man, to become a monk, and be a monk who disseminates the Buddha's teachings.

In this case, ignorance is the wrong knowledge that 'a man, a monk, or a monk who disseminates the Buddha's teachings' is a reality. Craving is the liking and craving for it, and clinging is the attachment to it. Volitional formations are the acts of practising Vipassanā meditation, and kamma is the kammic force of that action.

When you are able to discern the immediate past life in this way, and are able to see the five causes of ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional formations, and kamma in the past life, and also the five results of rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*), mentality-and-materiality, the six sense-bases, contact, and feeling in the present life, you need to discern in the same way progressively further back to the second, third, and fourth past life. You should do this for as many lives as you can discern in the past.

How To Discern the Future

Once the power of this insight-knowledge has been developed by discerning causes and effects through those past lives, you can, in the same way, discern causes and effects in the future. The future you will see, and which may still change, is the result of past causes together with present causes, such as the meditation practice you are doing. To do this you start by discerning the present materiality and mentality, and then look into the future until the time of death in this life. At that time you are able to see that either the kamma, kamma sign, or rebirth sign will appear because of the power of a particular kamma you have performed in this life. You will then be able to discern the rebirth-linking mentality and materiality to be produced in the future life.

If when discerning a future life, it is a life in the brahma realm,

How to See the Links of Dependent-Origination

then there are only three doors: eye, ear, and mind, whereas the deva and human realms each has six doors.

You must continue to investigate in this way and discern up until the time when ignorance finally ceases without remainder. This happens with the attainment of the arahant path (*arahattamagga*). You should continue up till the cessation of the five aggregates without remainder, which occurs at the end of that arahant life, at Parinibbāna. Therefore, you have to discern as many lives into the future as will occur until your own attainment of arahantship and Parinibbāna. You are then able to discern that with the ceasing of ignorance, mentality and materiality cease. Thus you are able to discern the ceasing of phenomena (*dhamma*).

The method of discerning the five aggregates in this way, in the past, present, and future, and also discerning their causal relation, I call the fifth method. It is the method taught by the Venerable Sāriputta and recorded in the Paṭisambhidāmagga. Having completed the fifth method, you can learn how to discern according to what is called the first method. That is the method taught by the Buddha. He teaches it in many suttas, for example, the Nidāna Vagga Saṃyutta, and the Mahānidāna Sutta in the Dīgha Nikāya.

The first method of dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) goes over three lives and in forward order. It begins with the causes in the past life which are ignorance and volitional formations. Those cause the results in the present life: rebirth-linking consciousness, mentality-and-materiality, the six sense-bases, contact, and feeling. There are then the causes in this life, craving, clinging, and becoming, which produce the results of birth, aging, death, and all forms of suffering in the future life.

You have to look for ignorance, craving and clinging in the defilement round, and see how that defilement round causes the kamma round, and how the kammic force in the kamma round in turn produces the five aggregates of materiality and mentality present at conception.

Knowing and Seeing

That concludes my brief explanation of how to discern dependent-origination according to the fifth method and first method. There are many more details which I have not included here, but which you can learn by practising with a proper teacher.

Questions and Answers (6)

Question 6.1: How should a meditator who practises mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānassati*) but cannot see a nimitta check himself physically and mentally, so that he can improve and enter into jhāna? In other words, what are the conditions needed to have a nimitta?

Answer 6.1: Constant practice is necessary in all types of meditation. In mindfulness-of-breathing you should be mindful of the breath in every bodily posture and be so with respect. While walking or standing or sitting you should watch the breath object only. You should not take objects apart from the breath; that is, you should not pay attention to other objects. Try to stop thinking; try to stop talking. If you try continuously in this way, concentration will slowly improve. Only deep, strong and powerful concentration can produce a nimitta. Without a nimitta, especially paṭibhāga-nimitta, one cannot attain jhāna because ānāpāna jhāna's object is ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta.

Question 6.2: Does the sitting posture affect the ability for beginners to concentrate and enter into jhāna? There are many meditators who sit on a small stool to meditate; can they enter into jhāna?

Answer 6.2: For beginners the sitting posture is best. But those who have enough pāramī in mindfulness-of-breathing can enter into jhāna easily in any posture. The skilled meditator can also enter into jhāna in any posture. So the meditators who sit on a stool, if they have enough pāramī, or if they are skilled meditators, they can go into jhāna while sitting on that stool or chair.

In this connection, the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Subhūti are examples. The Venerable Sāriputta was expert in the attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*). When he went

Knowing and Seeing

for almsround in the village, he always entered into the attainment of cessation in front of every house before accepting their offerings. He accepted the offerings only after having emerged from the attainment of cessation. That was his nature.

The Venerable Subhūti was expert in lovingkindness meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*). He entered into lovingkindness jhāna (*mettā-jhāna*) also in front of every house before accepting the offerings. After emerging from lovingkindness jhāna he accepted the offerings. Why? They wanted the donor to get maximum benefit. They understood that if they did that immeasurable and superior wholesome kamma would occur in the donor's thought-process. They had enough lovingkindness for the donors to want to do that. You should think about ānāpāna jhāna in the same way.

Question 6.3: What is the object of the fourth ānāpāna jhāna? If there is no breath in the fourth jhāna, is there a nimitta?

Answer 6.3: There is still paṭibhāga-nimitta in the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, although there may be no in-breath and out-breath. In this case that ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta can be called in-breath-out-breath (*assāsa-passāsa*) because that ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta arises dependent upon the ordinary, natural breath. It is explained in the Paṭisambhidāmagga commentary and the Visuddhimagga sub-commentary.

Question 6.4: Can one enter into immaterial jhāna attainment (*arūpa-jhāna-samāpatti*) or practise lovingkindness meditation directly from mindfulness-of-breathing?

Answer 6.4: From the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, one cannot practise immaterial jhāna attainment directly. Why? Immaterial jhāna, especially the base-of-infinite-space jhāna (*ākāśānañcāyatana-jhāna*) occurs by removing a kasiṇa object. One cannot attain the base-of-infinite-space jhāna without removing or

Questions and Answers (6)

‘pulling out’ a kasiṇa object. After removing a kasiṇa object and concentrating on space (*ākāsa*), the object of the base-of-infinite-space jhāna will occur. When one sees space one must extend that space gradually, and when the space is spread in every direction the kasiṇa object will have disappeared. One must spread this space object further up to the infinite universe. That space is the object of the base-of-infinite-space jhāna. The object of the base-of-infinite-consciousness jhāna (*viññāṇaṅcāyatana-jhāna*) is then the base-of-infinite-space jhāna. The object of the base-of-nothingness jhāna (*ākāśānaññāyatana-jhāna*) is the absence of the base-of-infinite-space jhāna. The object of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana-jhāna*) is the base-of-nothingness jhāna. So the four immaterial jhānas are based on the fourth kasiṇa jhāna and kasiṇa object. Without removing the kasiṇa object one cannot go to immaterial jhāna. So if a meditator practises mindfulness-of-breathing up to the fourth jhāna, and then wants to go to immaterial jhāna, he should practise the ten kasiṇas first up to the fourth jhāna. Only after that can he go to immaterial jhāna.

If he wants to practise lovingkindness meditation (*mettābhāvanā*) from the fourth ānāpāna jhāna he can do so. In this case there will be no problem. He must try to see the person who is the object of lovingkindness with the light of the fourth ānāpāna jhāna. If his light is not strong enough it may be a little bit problematic. But this is exceptional. If after the fourth kasiṇa jhāna, especially the fourth white kasiṇa jhāna he practises lovingkindness, there may be quick success. So we teach lovingkindness meditation after white kasiṇa meditation.

Question 6.5: How can one decide oneself the time to die (that is, choose the time of death)?

Answer 6.5: If you have practised mindfulness-of-breathing up to arahant path, you can know the time of your Parinibbāna ex-

Knowing and Seeing

actly. The Visuddhimagga mentions a Mahāthera who attained Parinibbāna while walking. First he drew a line on his walking path, and then told his fellow-meditators that he would attain Parinibbāna when reaching that line, and it happened exactly as he had said. For those who are not arahants, if they have practised dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the causal relationship between causes and effects of the past, present and future, they can also know their life-span, but not exactly like the Mahāthera I just mentioned. They do not know the exact date. They may know the period in which they will die.

But they attain Parinibbāna, or they die, according to the law of kamma; not according to their own wish. There is one stanza recited by the Venerable Sāriputta:

‘Nābhinandāmi jīvitaṃ nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ; kālañca paṭikaṅkhāmi, nibbisam bhatako yathā.’: ‘I do not love life, I do not love death, but await the time of Parinibbāna, like a government servant who waits for his pay-day.’

‘To die when he wants’ is called ‘death by decision’ (*adhimutti-maraṇa*). This death by decision usually can be done by matured bodhisattas only. Why? When they are reborn in celestial planes where there is no opportunity to fulfil their pāramīs, they do not want to waste their time so sometimes they make ‘death by decision’. That means they die when they decide to die, and take rebirth in the human world to fulfil their pāramīs.

Question 6.6: If one day we were to die in an accident, for example in an air crash, could our mind at that time ‘leave’ so that we would not have any bodily pain? How? Can one, depending on the power of one’s meditation, be without fear at that time, and be liberated? What degree of concentration is required?

Answer 6.6: The degree of concentration required is that of the psychic power of various supernormal powers (*iddhividha-abhiññā*). At that time you can try to escape from danger. But if

Questions and Answers (6)

you have matured unwholesome kamma ready to produce its result, you should remember the case of Venerable Mahāmoggalāna. He was expert in psychic powers, but on the day when his unwholesome kamma matured he could not enter into jhāna. This was because of his matured unwholesome kamma; not because of defilements or hindrances. So the bandits were able to crush his bones to the size of rice grains. After the bandits had left, thinking he was dead, only then could he enter into jhāna again, and regain his psychic powers. He made a determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) that his body should become normal again, and then went to the Buddha to request permission for Parinibbāna. Then he returned to his Kalasila Monastery, and attained Parinibbāna there. In this case his matured unwholesome kamma produced their result, and only after that did they lose their power. Only then could he regain his psychic powers.

In the same way, if you have no matured unwholesome kamma, and if you have psychic powers, you can try to escape from an air crash. But ordinary jhāna concentration, and insight-knowledge, cannot save you from this danger. Here we can say that the reason why one meets with this type of accident may be that one's unwholesome kamma has matured.

The mind cannot leave the body, because the mind arises dependent upon one of the six bases. The six bases are eye transparent-element, ear transparent-element, nose transparent-element, tongue transparent-element, bodily transparent-element, and bhavaṅga mind door, or heart-base. These six bases are in your body. Without a base, a mind cannot occur in this human world. So the mind cannot leave the body.

However, we can suggest that if you have jhāna concentration, you should at the time of danger quickly enter into that jhāna concentration. In that case you need to have sufficient practice in entering into jhāna. It is not possible without sufficient practice. If you enter into jhāna at that time, then because of this wholesome kamma there may be a chance to escape from the danger, but we cannot say for sure. If you do die while in jhāna

Knowing and Seeing

you may go up to one of the brahma realms after death; if you were in jhāna up to the moment of death.

If you can practise Vipassanā well then at the time of danger you should practise Vipassanā again. You should discern the impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) nature of formations or conditioned things (*saiṅkhāra-dhamma*). In this case too you need to have sufficient practice. If you have sufficient practice and if you can practise Vipassanā thoroughly before death takes place, you may attain one of the paths (*maggā*) and fruitions (*phala*). If so you may reach a happy plane after death. But if you attain arahantship you can attain Parinibbāna. Should you, however, not have psychic power, or jhāna, or not be able to practise Vipassanā, you can still escape due to good kamma alone. If you have good enough kamma which ensures a long life, there may also be a chance to escape from this danger, just like Mahājanaka bodhisatta.

Question 6.7: After attaining path and fruition, a noble one (*ariya*) does not regress to be a worldling (*puthujjana*), this is the ‘definite fixed-law’ (*sammatta-niyāma*). Similarly, one who receives a definite prophecy cannot abandon his bodhisatta practice. This too is the definite fixed-law. But the Buddha proclaimed that everything is impermanent⁵. Is the above mentioned definite fixed-law in accordance with the law of impermanence?

Answer 6.7: Here you should understand the law of kamma. Unwholesome kamma (*akusala-kamma*) produces bad results, and wholesome kamma (*kusala-kamma*) produces good results. This is an eternal law. If this is so, is the wholesome kamma, and unwholesome kamma permanent (*nicca*) or impermanent? Please think about this question.

⁵ Editor’s note: The Buddha did not say: ‘Everything is impermanent’; the Buddha said: ‘All **conditioned** things are impermanent.’ (*The Dhammapada*. verse 277)

Questions and Answers (6)

If you think wholesome kamma is permanent then consider this: Now you are listening to the Dhamma concerning Buddha Abhidhamma. This is wholesome kamma of listening to Dhamma (*Dhammasāvana-kusala-kamma*). Is this wholesome kamma permanent or not? Please think about this question.

If this wholesome kamma were permanent then during your whole life you would have only this kamma, not other wholesome kamma or unwholesome kamma. Do you understand? Wholesome kamma produces good results and unwholesome kamma produces bad results. This is an eternal law, but we do not say that the wholesome kamma and unwholesome kamma themselves are permanent. Wholesome intention (*kusala-cetanā*) and unwholesome intention (*akusala-cetanā*) are called kamma. As soon as those kamma arise they pass away; that is impermanence. That is their nature. But the kammic force, the latent energy to produce the respective result of the kamma, still exists in the mentality-and-materiality process.

Suppose there is a mango tree. Now there is no fruit in the tree, but it is certain that one day it will bear fruit. You can say the energy which can produce the fruit exists in the tree. What is that energy? If we study the leaves, branches, bark and stems we cannot see that energy, but although we cannot see that energy we cannot say that it does not exist, because one day that tree will produce fruits. In the same way we do not say that wholesome kamma and unwholesome kamma are permanent. We say that the kammic force exists in the mentality-and-materiality process as latent energy, and that one day, when that force has matured, it will produce its result.

Let us now discuss the 'definite fixed-law' (*sammatta-niyāma*). We say that path dhamma (*magga-dhamma*) is dhamma of definite fixed-law, but we do not say that paths and fruitions are permanent (*nicca*). They are also impermanent (*anicca*), but the force of Path Knowledge exists in the mentality-and-materiality process of those who have attained path, fruition, and Nibbāna. That force is also called the definite

fixed-law. That force can produce higher and higher fruits, but it cannot produce lower fruit. This is also an eternal law. Here you should think about this: To attain arahantship is not easy. You have to practise with great effort; strong, powerful perseverance is necessary. For example, our Sakyamuni bodhisatta practised very hard for six years in his last life to attain arahantship associated with the Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). You can imagine how hard it was. So if after attaining arahantship with enormous difficulty he became a worldling (*puthujjana*) again, what would be the fruit of the practice? You should think about this carefully.

Now I would like to explain when can a bodhisatta receive a definite prophecy?

*‘Manussattaṃ liṅgasampatti, hetu satthāradassanaṃ;
pabbajjā guṇasampatti, adhikāro ca chandatā;
Aṭṭhadhammasamodhānā abhinīhāro samijjhati.’*

He can receive definite prophecy when the following eight factors are fulfilled:

1. *Manussattaṃ*: he is a human being.
2. *Liṅgasampatti*: he is a male.
3. *Hetu* (the cause or root): he has sufficient pāramī to attain arahantship while listening to a Buddha when He utters a short stanza related to the Four Noble Truths. That means he must have practised Vipassanā thoroughly up to the Knowledge of Equanimity of Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*).
4. *Satthāradassanaṃ* (the sight of the Master): he meets a living Buddha
5. *Pabbajjā* (the going forth): he is a hermit or a bhikkhu.
6. *Guṇasampatti* (the achievement of noble qualities): he has acquired the eight attainments (*samāpatti*) and five mundane psychic powers (*abhiññāṇa*).
7. *Adhikāro* (extreme dedication): he has sufficient pāramī to receive a definite prophecy. That means he

must have practised the pāramīs for attaining the Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*) in previous lives, so that he can receive a definite prophecy from a Buddha. In other words, he must have ‘sowed’ the seeds of knowledge (*vijjā*) and conduct (*caraṇa*) for the Omniscient Knowledge in a previous Buddha’s dispensation. According to the Yasodharā Apadāna, future prince Siddhattha and future princess Yasodharā had made the wish for Sakyamuni bodhisatta’s Omniscient Knowledge in the presence of many billions of Buddhas, and had practised all the pāramīs under the guidance of those Buddhas.

8. *Chandatā* (strong desire): he has a sufficiently strong desire to attain the Omniscient Knowledge. How strong is that desire? Suppose the whole world were burning charcoal. If someone told him that with the crossing of the burning charcoal from this side to that side he would attain the Omniscient Knowledge, he would certainly go across the burning charcoal. Here I ask you: Would you go across that burning charcoal? If not the whole world, then if all the way from Taiwan to Pa-Auk were burning charcoal, would you go across it? If it were certain that one could attain the Omniscient Knowledge that way, that bodhisatta would go across that burning charcoal. That is the strength of his desire for the Omniscient Knowledge.

If these eight factors are present in a bodhisatta he will certainly receive a definite prophecy from a Buddha. These eight factors were present in our Sakyamuni bodhisatta, when he was the hermit Sumedha, at the time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha. That is why he received a definite prophecy from Dīpaṅkara Buddha with the words: ‘You will certainly attain the Omniscient Knowledge after four incalculables (*asaṅkhyeyya*) and a hundred thousand aeons (*kappa*) later, and bear the name of Gotama.’

Knowing and Seeing

What does it mean that a definite prophecy is 'definite'? A definite prophecy is definite because it cannot be changed. We do not say that it is permanent. The mentality-and-materiality of Dīpaṅkara Buddha were also impermanent. The mentality-and-materiality of Sumedha were also impermanent. This is a fact, but here the kammic force, especially the kammic force of his pāramīs, cannot perish away so long as he has not attained the Omniscient Knowledge. The words of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, that means the definite prophecy also cannot be changed, or cannot be false. If those words were changed so that the definite prophecy was not true, then there would be another problem, namely that a Buddha uttered false speech. A Buddha gives a definite prophecy only when he sees that the above eight factors are present. For example, if a person skilled in agriculture saw a banana tree, he would be able to tell you that the tree was going to produce bananas four months later. Why? Because he was skilled in agriculture, and he saw flowers and small leaves growing out of the tree. When someone has fulfilled the eight factors mentioned above, a Buddha can see that he will attain the fruit of Omniscient Knowledge, that is why he can make a definite prophecy.

At the time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, our Sakyamuni bodhisatta was the hermit Sumedha and a worldling (*puṭhujjana*). In his last life before attaining enlightenment he was still a worldling. Only after enlightenment did he become Sakyamuni Buddha. After his attainment of the arahant path associated with the Omniscient Knowledge, he could not change his arahantship; this is the definite fixed-law (*sammatta-niyāma*). Here definite fixed-law means that the outcome of that arahant path cannot be changed. Here we are not saying that the arahant path is permanent. We say that the outcome of the arahant path is a kammic force which cannot be changed. What does this mean exactly? It is certain that the arahant path will produce arahant fruition, and it is certain that it will destroy all defilements, all unwholesome kamma and all wholesome kamma, which would otherwise

have produced their result at the time following the time of Parinibbāna. This law of kamma is called the definite fixed-law and cannot be changed. So the definite fixed-law and definite prophecy are not against the law of impermanence.

Here again I wish to make a further comment. Making an aspiration or wish alone is not enough to attain the Omniscient Knowledge. When bodhisattas receive a definite prophecy the above eight factors must already be present in them. Moreover, a definite prophecy alone cannot produce Buddhahood. Even after the definite prophecy they must continue to perfect the ten pāramīs on three levels:

1. They must fulfil the ten pāramīs by giving up sons, daughters, wives and external property. This is the ten ordinary pāramīs (*pāramī*).
2. They must fulfil the ten pāramīs by giving up their limbs and organs, such as eyes, hands. This is the ten medium pāramīs (*upapāramī*).
3. They must fulfil the ten pāramīs by giving up their lives. This is the ten superior pāramīs (*paramatthapāramī*).

Altogether there are thirty pāramīs. If we summarise these thirty pāramīs they are only giving (*dāna*), virtuous conduct (*sīla*), and mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*) through Samatha and Vipassanā. They are superior wholesome kamma. Bodhisattas must fulfil these wholesome kamma by giving up animate and inanimate property, their limbs, and their lives. If you believe you are a bodhisatta, can you and will you fulfil these pāramīs? If you can and if you have also received a definite prophecy from a Buddha, then one day you will attain the Omniscient Knowledge. But according to the Theravāda teachings, two or more Buddhas cannot appear at the same time, cannot appear simultaneously. At one given time, only one Buddha can appear. And how long must they fulfil their pāramīs? In the case of our Sak-

Knowing and Seeing

yamuni bodhisatta, after he had received his definite prophecy, he fulfilled the pāramīs for four incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons. This is the shortest time. But prior to the definite prophecy we cannot say exactly how long will it take. So you should remember that making an aspiration or a wish alone is not enough to become a Buddha.

Question 6.8: When an ordinary disciple (*pakati-sāvaka*) has practised Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*), the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), or the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, he will not fall into any of the four woeful planes (*apāya*) after death. Even if he loses his Samatha-Vipassanā due to negligence, the kamma of having practised Samatha-Vipassanā still exists. The Sotānugata Sutta also says that he will attain Nibbāna quickly. So, why did the Sayadaw in the Question-and-Answer session of June 2nd say that a bodhisatta who has received a definite prophecy from a Buddha, even if he practises meditation up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, will still fall? In which sutta is this mentioned?

Answer 6.8: This is because the bodhisatta way and ordinary disciple way are not the same. If you want to check the Pāḷi Text you can look at Buddhavaṃsa Pāḷi Text and Cariyapiṭaka Pāḷi Text.

How are the two ways different? Although a bodhisatta has received a definite prophecy from a Buddha, his pāramīs have not yet matured to attain the Omniscient Knowledge. He must cultivate his pāramīs up to maturity. For example, in the case of our Sakyamuni bodhisatta, after receiving the definite prophecy from Dīpaṅkara Buddha, he had to continue to cultivating his pāramīs for four incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons up to their maturity. During the interim between the definite prophecy and the life prior to the last life, a bodhisatta is sometimes

Questions and Answers (6)

reborn in the animal kingdom because of his previous unwholesome kamma. At that time he was still unable to totally destroy that unwholesome kammic force. So when those unwholesome kamma mature and are ready to produce their results, he cannot avoid them. He must experience their results. This is an eternal law.

But for ordinary disciples who have attained the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition, the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away, or the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, their pāramīs are mature to attain the Path Knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*) and Fruition Knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*). For this reason they attain path and fruition, and see Nibbāna in their subsequent future life. This is also an eternal law. This eternal law manifests itself as a kammic force, it is not an ultimate phenomenon or ultimate dhamma (*paramattha-dhamma*). Only ultimate phenomena are impermanent. Kammic force is not impermanent because it is the energy of wholesome kamma which we can call pāramī. That wholesome kamma, especially wholesome intention (*kusala-cetanā*), is an ultimate phenomenon. The energy of that ultimate phenomenon is the kammic force, which is not the same as the ultimate phenomenon.

Question 6.9: An arahant can also give a definite prophecy to someone; what is the definition of definite prophecy here? In which sutta or source can this information be found?

Answer 6.9: For that please refer to the Buddhavaṃsa Pāḷi and Apadāna Pāḷi. But not every arahant can give a definite prophecy. Only arahants who possess the divine eye psychic power (*dibba-cakkhu-abhiññā*), especially the Knowledge of Discerning Future (*anāgataṃsa-ñāṇa*) which is a secondary psychic power of divine eye, can give a definite prophecy. They can see the future for a few lives only. They cannot see many incalculables (*asaṅkhyeyya*), or many aeons (*kappa*), because their psychic power is not as strong as the Buddha's psychic power.

Question 6.10: Can one practise Vipassanā while in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception attainment (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana-samāpatti*)? In which sutta or source can the answer be found?

Answer 6.10: One cannot practise Vipassanā while in any jhāna attainment (*jhāna-samāpatti*). After having emerged from jhāna one can practise Vipassanā meditation on the jhāna dhammas, the consciousness and mental-concomitants of jhāna. For example, if a meditator enters into the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna attainment he cannot practise Vipassanā while in that attainment. But having emerged from that attainment he can practise Vipassana meditation on those jhāna dhammas of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, in this case especially the thirty one mental formations. This is mentioned in the Anupada Sutta in Uparipaññāsa. In that Sutta the Buddha explains in detail the experiences of the Venerable Sāriputta in the fifteen days after his attainment of stream-entry path and fruition.

For example the Venerable Sāriputta entered into the first jhāna attainment. Having emerged from it, he discerned the thirty-four first-jhāna dhammas one by one as impermanence, suffering, and non-self by seeing their arising, static and passing-away stages. He discerned in this manner up to the base-of-nothingness jhāna. This is Vipassanā of Individual-dhammas (*anupadadhamma-vipassanā*), the way of Vipassanā in which jhāna dhammas are discerned one by one. But when he reached the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna attainment, he could not discern its jhāna dhammas one by one, only as a whole. This is called Vipassana of Comprehension by Groups (*kalāpa-sammasana-vipassanā*). Only a Buddha can discern the jhāna dhammas of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception one by one. A disciple, like the Venerable Sāriputta, cannot study those jhāna dhammas of the base of nei-

Questions and Answers (6)

ther-perception-nor-non-perception one by one, because they are extremely subtle.

In the same way, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*) occurs only after the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception jhāna and not while in that attainment. You can read about this in the last chapter of the Visuddhimagga, that is Nirodhasamāpatti-Samāpajjanakathā. There the attainment of cessation, as described in the Pāḷi Texts Cūḷa-Suññata Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya and others, is discussed.

Question 6.11: Can a person who is mentally abnormal, hears voices, has schizophrenia, has a brain disease, stroke or malfunction of brain and nerves practise this type of meditation? If he can, what kinds of precaution should he take?

Answer 6.11: They can practise but usually they are not successful, because they cannot control thoroughly their mind long enough. Here 'long enough' means that when concentration is strong and powerful, the meditator must maintain his concentration for many hours, and many sittings. Usually it is so that sometimes they can, and sometimes they cannot control their mind on the meditation object. This is a problem. They may be successful if they can control their mind successively for many sittings, over many days or many months, and can maintain their concentration.

There is one famous example, Paṭācārā. Her husband and two children all died on the same day. Also, her parents and brothers died on that day. She went mad because of those tragic events. She went from here to there with no clothes on. One day she came to the Buddha who was preaching Dhamma in the meditation hall of Jetavana monastery in Sāvattthi. Her pāramīs which had been fulfilled in previous lives were ready to produce their results. Due to those matured pāramīs as well as the lovingkindness and compassion of the Buddha, she was able to listen to the Dhamma taught by the Buddha with respect.

Knowing and Seeing

Slowly her mind became quiet and she understood the meaning of the Dhamma. Very soon she became a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*). She ordained as a bhikkhunī. She continued her meditation practice. She could maintain her concentration and insight-knowledge. One day her meditation practice matured. She became an arahant with five mundane psychic powers, and Four Analytical Knowledges (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*). Among the bhikkhunīs who were expert in the monastic discipline she was the top. She put great emphasis on the Vinaya Piṭaka and learnt it by heart, together with commentaries, and also fully understood the meaning of the monastic discipline.

She had been fulfilling her pāramīs from Padumuttara Buddha's dispensation till Kassapa Buddha's dispensation, and particularly during Kassapa Buddha's dispensation. During Kassapa Buddha's dispensation she was the daughter of a King Kikī. She practised *komāri-brahmacariya* for twenty-thousand years. *Komāri-brahmacariya* means observing the five precepts and especially abstaining from any sexual activity. That is, in place of the ordinary precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct, the precept of abstaining from any sexual activity whatsoever is observed. She cultivated the three trainings, virtuous conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), as a lay devotee for twenty-thousand years. Those pāramīs matured in this Gotama Buddha's dispensation. So although she had gone mad, she was able to practise the three trainings well and became an arahant.

For such people, when they practise meditation, *kalyāna-mitta*, which mean good teachers, good friends, or spiritual friends, are necessary. Proper medicine and proper food can also be a support. From my experience I know that most of them cannot maintain their concentration for a long time. Usually they are not successful. Some people go mad towards the end of their lives. This may be because their pāramīs are not yet sufficient, or not yet matured.

Questions and Answers (6)

Question 6.12: For a person who does not have good human relations, if he succeeds in attaining the fourth jhāna, will this improve his skill in communicating with other people? Can attaining jhānas correct such problems?

Answer 6.12: Usually these problems occur because of hatred (*dosa*). This is one of the hindrances. As long as a person is unable to remove this attitude while meditating he cannot attain jhāna. But if he can remove this attitude, he not only can attain jhāna, but also can attain path and fruition up to arahantship. A famous example is the Venerable Channa Thera. He was born on the same day as our bodhisatta in the palace of King Suddhodana in Kapilavatthu. He was the son of one of King Suddhodana's female slaves. He became a playmate of the bodhisatta prince Siddhattha when they were young. This gave rise to much conceit in him. He thought things like: 'This is my King; the Buddha is my playmate; the Dhamma is our Dhamma; when he renounced the world I followed him up to riverside of the Anomā River. No one else followed him. Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna etc. were flowers that blossomed later, etc.' Because of this conceit he always used harsh language. He did not show respect to Mahātheras like the Venerable Sāriputta, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna and others. Due to these physical and verbal actions no one had friendly relations with him. He could not attain jhāna or path and fruition in the Buddha's lifetime, because he was unable to remove his conceit and anger.

After the Buddha's Parinibbāna, the Mahātheras gave him the noble punishment (*brahmadanda*) as instructed by the Buddha. On the night of the Parinibbāna the Buddha had told the Venerable Ānanda to carry out this punishment on the Venerable Channa. Here noble punishment (*brahmadanda*) means that no one was to talk to the Venerable Channa although he may have wanted to talk. So because of this noble punishment no bhikkhus talked with the Venerable Channa. When nobody talked with him, his conceit and anger disappeared. This act of

Knowing and Seeing

the Saṅgha (*saṅgha-kamma*) took place in Ghositārāma monastery in Kosambī five months after the Buddha's Parinibbāna.

After that act of the Saṅgha, the Venerable Channa left Ghositārāma and went to Isipatana monastery in the deer park near Benares. He worked hard on meditation practice but was not successful. So one day he went to the Venerable Ānanda and asked him to help him solve his problem of not succeeding in spite of great effort. Why was he not successful? He discerned the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of the five aggregates, but he did not practise dependent-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). So the Venerable Ānanda taught him how to practise dependent-origination and taught him the Kaccanagotta Sutta. After listening to the Venerable Ānanda's dhamma talk he attained stream-entry path. He continued his practice and very soon he became an arahant. So if a person can change his bad character and practise Samatha-Vipassanā in the right way he can attain jhāna, path and fruition.

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

Introduction

In my last talk, I explained briefly how to discern dependent-origination according to the fifth method and first method. Today, I would like to explain briefly how to continue to develop insight up to the attainment of Nibbāna.

There are sixteen knowledges (*ñāṇa*) which need to be developed progressively in order to attain Nibbāna.

The first insight-knowledge is the Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*). I explained this knowledge when I explained how to discern mentality and materiality in my previous talks.

The second insight-knowledge is the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). This is the knowledge that discerns the causes of mentality and materiality. I explained this knowledge in my last talk, when I explained how to discern mentality and materiality in the past, present, and future, and how to discern dependent-origination.

After you have developed the first two knowledges, you need to complete them by again discerning all mentality, all materiality, and all the factors of dependent-origination, according to their individual characteristics, functions, manifestations, and proximate causes. It is difficult to explain this in a brief way, so if you wish to know the details, it is best to learn them at the time of actually practising.

Now I would like to explain briefly the remaining knowledges.

The Knowledge of Comprehension

The third insight-knowledge is Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*). This is the knowledge that comprehends

Knowing and Seeing

formations by groups. The development of this knowledge involves dividing conditioned things into groups: into two groups, as mentality and materiality; or five groups, as the five aggregates; or twelve groups, as the twelve bases; or eighteen groups, as the eighteen elements; or again twelve groups, as the twelve factors of dependent-origination. Then it involves taking those groups, and applying the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) to each group.

For example, in the case of the five groups, there is the method given in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta, where the Buddha teaches to discern with right understanding the five aggregates. There he teaches to discern all materiality, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness as ‘not me’ (*anicca*), ‘not mine’ (*dukkha*), and ‘not myself’ (*anatta*). In that sutta he explains, ‘all’ as being ‘past, future, and present; internal and external; gross and subtle; inferior and superior; far and near.’

To develop this knowledge, you should begin by re-establishing concentration progressively up to the fourth jhāna. If you, as a bare-insight individual, have developed the four-elements meditation without absorption jhāna, you should re-establish your concentration until the light of concentration is bright and strong. Emerging from your concentration, your mind will be refreshed, clear and ready to discern mentality-and-materiality. In either case, start by discerning the real materiality of each of the six sense-doors.

Then you take that materiality as a group, see its arising and passing-away, and then know it with wisdom as impermanent (*anicca*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

Again take that materiality as a group, see the pain and suffering that one has to constantly experience because of its arising and passing-away, and then know it with wisdom as suffering (*dukkha*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

Lastly, take that materiality as a group, see it as devoid of a permanent self, and then know it with wisdom as non-self (*anatta*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

When you are satisfied that you can do this, you need to apply the three characteristics in a similar way to mentality. You should first discern all the mentality at the six sense-doors. This includes the consciousness and mental-concomitants present in each mind-moment of each sense-door thought-process (*vīthi*), and also the bhavaṅga consciousness that occurs between thought-processes.

So, you take that mentality as a group, see its arising and passing-away, and then know it with wisdom as impermanent (*anicca*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

Again take that mentality as a group, see the pain and suffering that one has to constantly experience because of its arising and passing-away, and then know it with wisdom as suffering (*dukkha*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

Lastly, you again take that mentality as a group, see it as devoid of a permanent self, and then know it with wisdom as non-self (*anatta*). You need to apply this characteristic internally and externally, alternately, again and again. While doing this externally, you should gradually extend your range of perception from near to far, throughout the infinite universe.

Knowing and Seeing

Having seen the materiality and mentality of the six sense-doors, you now need to apply the three characteristics firstly to the materiality in the whole of this present life, from the rebirth-linking consciousness up to the death-consciousness, and then to the mentality in the whole of this present life, from the rebirth-linking consciousness up to the death-consciousness. Here again, you need to apply the three characteristics one at a time, repeatedly, both internally and externally, to all the materiality and mentality of this present life.

After doing this present life, you need to apply the three characteristics to all the materiality and all the mentality in the past, present, and future lives that you have discerned. Here too, you need to apply the three characteristics one at a time, repeatedly, both internally and externally, to all materiality and mentality of the past, present, and future.

While doing this, you may find that you develop higher insight-knowledges quickly, stage by stage, up to the attainment of arahantship. But if you cannot develop higher insight-knowledges in that way, there are several exercises you can do to strengthen your insight.

The Forty Perceptions (*Cattāri ākāraanupassanā*)

In the first exercise apply forty different perceptions of impermanence, suffering, and non-self to mentality and materiality, internally and externally, in the past, present, and future. In Pāli, these forty perceptions all end with the suffix ‘to’, so we call them the forty ‘to’.

There are ten ‘to’ in the impermanence group:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Impermanent | <i>aniccato</i> |
| 2. Disintegrating | <i>palokato</i> |
| 3. Fickle | <i>calato</i> |
| 4. Perishable | <i>pabhaṅgato</i> |
| 5. Unenduring | <i>addhuvato</i> |

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6. Subject to change | <i>vipariṇāmadhammato</i> |
| 7. Having no core | <i>asāarakato</i> |
| 8. Subject to annihilation | <i>vibhavato</i> |
| 9. Subject to death | <i>maraṇadhammato</i> |
| 10. Formed | <i>saṅkhatato</i> |

There are twenty-five ‘to’ in the suffering group:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Suffering | <i>dukkhato</i> |
| 2. A disease | <i>rogato</i> |
| 3. A calamity | <i>aghato</i> |
| 4. A boil | <i>gaṇḍato</i> |
| 5. A dart | <i>sallato</i> |
| 6. An affliction | <i>ābādhato</i> |
| 7. A disaster | <i>upaddavato</i> |
| 8. A terror | <i>bhayato</i> |
| 9. A plague | <i>īṭito</i> |
| 10. A menace | <i>upasaggato</i> |
| 11. No protection | <i>atāṇato</i> |
| 12. No shelter | <i>aleṇato</i> |
| 13. No refuge | <i>asaraṇato</i> |
| 14. Murderous | <i>vadhakato</i> |
| 15. The root of calamity | <i>aghamūlato</i> |
| 16. A danger | <i>ādīnavato</i> |
| 17. Subject to taints | <i>sāsavato</i> |
| 18. Māra’s bait | <i>mārāmisato</i> |
| 19. Subject to birth | <i>jātidhammato</i> |
| 20. Subject to aging | <i>jarādhammato</i> |
| 21. Subject to illness | <i>byādhidhammato</i> |
| 22. Cause of sorrow | <i>sokadhammato</i> |
| 23. Cause of lamentation | <i>paridevadhhammato</i> |
| 24. Cause of despair | <i>upāyāsadhhammato</i> |
| 25. Subject to defilement | <i>saṅkilesikadhhammato</i> |

Knowing and Seeing

There are five 'to' in the non-self group:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Non-self | <i>anattato</i> |
| 2. Void | <i>suññato</i> |
| 3. Independent | <i>parato</i> |
| 4. Empty | <i>rittato</i> |
| 5. Vain | <i>tucchato</i> |

While applying the forty 'to' to mentality and materiality, internally and externally, in the past, present, and future, some people's insight progresses to the attainment of arahantship.

Should you find that that is not the case, you should try to apply the three characteristics to mentality and materiality, by using the method called the seven ways for materiality, and the seven ways for mentality.

The Seven Ways for Materiality (*Rūpa-Sattaka*)

1. The first way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to the materiality of this entire lifetime, from rebirth-linking to death, both internally and externally.

2. The second way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to the materiality of different periods from rebirth-linking to death in this lifetime, both internally and externally. To do this, you take this lifetime as being a hundred years, and divide it into three periods of thirty-three years each. Then apply the three characteristics to each period, by seeing that the materiality in the first period does not pass on to the second period, and the materiality in the second period does not pass on to the third period. You need to see that the materiality ceases in the period in which it has arisen.

You then divide this lifetime into progressively smaller periods of time, and apply the three characteristics to each new one. You divide the hundred-year of this lifetime; from rebirth-linking to death, into:

Ten periods of ten years, twenty periods of five years, twenty-

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

five periods of four years, thirty-three periods of three years, fifty periods of two years, and one hundred periods of one year.

Then three hundred periods of four months, six hundred periods of two months, and two thousand four hundred periods of half-a-month each.

Then divide each of the days into two periods, and then six periods, and see that the materiality in one period ceases in that same period, and does not pass on to the next period, and so is impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

You reduce the periods further by applying the three characteristics to the duration of each movement of the body. That is the period of going forwards, or going backwards, looking towards or looking away, bending a limb or stretching a limb, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

Then you divide each footstep into the six periods of lifting, raising, moving forward, lowering, placing, and pressing, and apply the three characteristics to each part of a footstep, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

3. The third way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to materiality produced by nutriment. This is done by discerning materiality at the time when hungry, and at the time of having eaten sufficient food, and applying the three characteristics to the materiality at each of those times, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

4. The fourth way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to materiality produced by temperature. This is done by discerning materiality at the time of being hot, and at the time of being cold, and applying the three characteristics to the materiality at each of those times, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

5. The fifth way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to materiality produced by kamma. This is done by discerning materiality associated with the six sense-doors: the eye-door, ear-door, nose-door, tongue-door, body-door, and mind-door. Then seeing that the materiality in any door does not pass

on to another door, but arises and ceases at its respective door, you apply the three characteristics to the materiality in each of those doors, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

6. The sixth way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to materiality produced by consciousness. This is done by discerning materiality at the time when happy and pleased, and at the time when unhappy and sad, and applying the three characteristics to the materiality at each of those times, from rebirth-linking to death in this hundred-year lifetime.

7. The seventh way for materiality, is to apply the three characteristics to natural materiality. Natural materiality is the materiality that is not related to the six sense-faculties. It is non-sentient materiality such as iron, copper, gold, silver, pearls, gems, shells, marble, coral, rubies, soil, rocks, and plants. That type of materiality is found only externally.

These are the seven ways for materiality.

The Seven Ways for Mentality (*Arūpa-Sattaka*)

1. The first way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality in groups. You apply the three characteristics to the insight-mind⁶ that perceived those same characteristics in the seven ways for materiality. For example, once you have seen with insight, all the materiality seen in those seven ways for materiality as impermanent, you then see all those insight-minds themselves as first impermanent, then as suffering, and then as non-self.

Once you have seen with insight, all the materiality seen in those seven ways for materiality as suffering, you then see those insight-minds themselves as first impermanent, then as suffering, and then as non-self.

Lastly, once you have seen with insight, all the materiality

⁶ The insight-mind is the thought-process (*vāñhi*) that discerns materiality or mentality as impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

seen in those seven ways for materiality as non-self, you then see those insight-minds themselves as first impermanent, then as suffering, and then as non-self.

2. The second way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality in pairs. For example, whenever you see all the materiality in the first of those seven ways for materiality as impermanent, suffering, or non-self, you immediately see that insight-mind itself as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self. You practise this way for each of the remaining six ways for materiality.

3. The third way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality in successive moments. In this case, whenever you see materiality in one of those seven ways for materiality as impermanent, suffering, or non-self, immediately see that insight-mind itself as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self. Then with a third insight-mind, you see that second insight-mind as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self. You then with a fourth insight-mind, see that third insight-mind as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self, and with a fifth insight-mind see that fourth insight-mind as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self.

4. The fourth way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality in series. This is similar to the previous way, except that you continue until, with an eleventh insight-mind, you see the tenth insight-mind as first impermanent, then suffering, and then non-self.

5. The fifth way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality, aiming specifically at the removal of views. Here again, see the seven ways for materiality and their insight-minds, intensifying the perception of non-self so as to overcome views; especially the view of self.

6. The sixth way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality, aiming specifically at the removal of conceit. To do this, again see the seven ways for materiality and their insight-minds, intensifying the perception of impermanence

so as to overcome conceit.

7. The seventh way for mentality, is to apply the three characteristics to mentality, aiming specifically at the ending of attachment. To do this, again see the seven ways for materiality and their insight-minds, intensifying the perception of suffering so as to overcome attachment.

By developing these seven ways for materiality, and seven ways for mentality, both materiality and mentality will become clear to you.

I have now explained how to develop the knowledge of formations in groups. Now I would like to explain how to develop the knowledge of arising and passing-away of formations.

The Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away

(Udayabbaya-Ñāṇa)

The knowledge of arising and passing-away of formations consists of two forms of insight-knowledge. The first is to see the momentary arising and passing-away of formations (*khaṇato*). The second is to see the causal arising and passing-away of formations (*paccayato*). Each of these is then seen also in three ways:

1. (a) Momentary arising, (b) Momentary passing-away, (c) Momentary arising and passing-away.
2. (a) Causal arising, (b) Causal passing-away, (c) Causal arising and passing-away.

Brief Method

To begin with, there is the method of discerning the arising and passing-away of formations in brief. To develop this, you should first discern the momentary nature of each of the following: mentality-and-materiality, the five aggregates, the twelve bases, the eighteen elements, the Four Noble Truths, and dependent-origination, internally and externally, in the past, pres-

ent, and future. You discern their momentary arising and passing-away, and apply the three characteristics to them. This brief method is based on seeing only the momentary arising and passing-away of formations, and not their causal arising and passing-away.

Detailed Method

To develop the detailed method, you have to see both the momentary arising and passing-away of mentality and materiality. You then also see the causal arising and passing-away of those mentality and materiality. The same two discernments, the momentary and the causal, are applied to: the five aggregates, the twelve bases, the eighteen elements, the Four Noble Truths, and dependent-origination.

The Observation of the Nature of Arising *(Samudayadhammānupassī)*

To begin the detailed method of developing the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away, you should see again and again only the momentary arising of formations and the cause of the arising of those same formations.

For example, in the case of materiality, you discern the causal arising of materiality by seeing it according to the fifth method of dependent-origination, as described in my previous talk. You look back to the near death moments of your past life, to see the five past causes, which caused the arising in this life of materiality produced by kamma. You then see that:

1. The arising of ignorance causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma.
2. The arising of craving causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma.
3. The arising of clinging causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma.

Knowing and Seeing

4. The arising of volitional formations causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma.
5. The arising of kamma causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma.

Having in that way discerned the causal arising of materiality produced by kamma, you now discern the momentary arising of materiality produced by kamma. That is seeing only the momentary arising of that materiality.

You then need to see both the causal and momentary kinds of arising for materiality produced by mind, materiality produced by temperature, and materiality produced by nutriment.

6. You discern that mind causes the arising of materiality produced by mind, and then discern just the momentary arising of materiality produced by mind.
7. You discern that temperature causes the arising of materiality produced by temperature, and then discern just the momentary arising of materiality produced by temperature.
8. You discern that nutriment causes the arising of materiality produced by nutriment, and then discern just the momentary arising of materiality produced by nutriment.

This is how you see both the causal arising of materiality, and momentary arising of materiality. You then have to see the momentary arising and causal arising of mentality. In the same way, the discernment of causal and momentary arising is applied to the mind-moments seen in the fifth method of dependent-origination. It would, however, take some time to list the details of the method for mentality; so, I shall pass over them, and in each instance explain the details for only materiality.

The Observation of the Nature of Passing-Away **(*Vayadhammānupassī*)**

After you are able to discern both the momentary arising and causal arising of materiality and mentality, you then see again and again their passing-away, and the cause of their passing-away.

For example, in the case of materiality, you discern the causal cessation of materiality by seeing it according to the fifth method of dependent-origination. You look forward to the future life in which you become an arahant, you see that when you attain Arahant Path and Fruition (*arahattamagga* and *arahattaphala*), all the defilements cease. You see that at the end of that life all formations cease: this is directly seeing your Parinibbāna when no new materiality or mentality arises. You see that:

1. The cessation of ignorance causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma.
2. The cessation of craving causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma.
3. The cessation of clinging causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma.
4. The cessation of volitional formations causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma.
5. The cessation of kamma causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma.

Having in that way discerned the causal cessation of materiality produced by kamma, you now discern the momentary passing-away of materiality produced by kamma. That is seeing only the momentary passing-away of that materiality.

You then need to see both the causal and momentary kinds of passing-away for materiality produced by mind, materiality produced by temperature, and materiality produced by nutriment. You see that:

Knowing and Seeing

6. The cessation of mind causes the cessation of materiality produced by mind, and then discern just the momentary cessation of materiality produced by mind.
7. The cessation of temperature causes the cessation of materiality produced by temperature, and then discern just the momentary cessation of materiality produced by temperature.
8. The cessation of nutriment causes the cessation of materiality produced by nutriment, and then discern just the momentary cessation of materiality produced by nutriment.

This is how you see both the momentary cessation of materiality, and the causal cessation of materiality. You then have to see the momentary cessation and causal cessation for mentality.

The Observation of the Nature of Arising And Passing-Away (*Samudayavayadhammānupassī*)

After you have seen both the momentary cessation and causal cessation of materiality and mentality, you then see again and again both their arising and passing-away. This involves seeing their momentary arising and momentary passing-away together. You then see their causal arising and causal passing-away.

In the case of materiality you see that:

1. The arising of ignorance causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma. The cessation of ignorance causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma. Ignorance is impermanent, materiality produced by kamma is impermanent
2. The arising of craving causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma. The cessation of craving causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma. Craving is impermanent, materiality produced by kamma is impermanent.

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

3. The arising of clinging causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma. The cessation of clinging causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma. Clinging is impermanent, materiality produced by kamma is impermanent.
4. The arising of volitional formations causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma. The cessation of volitional formations causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma. Volitional formations are impermanent, materiality produced by kamma is impermanent.
5. The arising of kamma causes the arising of materiality produced by kamma. The cessation of kamma causes the cessation of materiality produced by kamma. Kamma is impermanent, materiality produced by kamma is impermanent.
6. Mind causes the arising of materiality produced by mind. The cessation of mind causes the cessation of materiality produced by mind. Mind is impermanent, materiality produced by mind is impermanent.
7. Temperature causes the arising of materiality produced by temperature. The cessation of temperature causes the cessation of materiality produced by temperature. Temperature is impermanent, materiality produced by temperature is impermanent.
8. Nutriment causes the arising of materiality produced by nutriment. The cessation of nutriment causes the cessation of materiality produced by nutriment. Nutriment is impermanent, materiality produced by nutriment is impermanent.

This is how you see both the momentary arising and momentary passing-away of materiality, and then see the causal arising and causal passing-away of materiality.

After that, you have to see the momentary arising and mo-

Knowing and Seeing

mentary passing-away of mentality, and then see the causal arising and causal passing-away of mentality.

You have to be able to see the arising and passing-away of all the five aggregates in this way. That is, see that each of the five aggregates is momentary. Seeing this, means seeing those momentary five aggregates arise and pass-away in every mind-moment. It includes the five aggregates present at the time of the arising and passing-away of the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*), the bhavaṅga consciousness, and the death consciousness (*cuti-citta*), which are called process-freed consciousness (*vīhi-mutta-citta*). It also includes all the momentary five aggregates, present in each mind-moment of any of the six sense-door thought-processes (*vīhi*).

It further includes seeing the five causes in the past life, as for example, ignorance that produced the arising of the five aggregates in this life. It includes seeing the cessation of ignorance etc., in the future, with the attainment of arahantship, and after that, final Nibbāna which is the final cessation of the five aggregates.

So in the way I have just outlined, you can discern the momentary arising and passing-away of the five aggregates and the causal arising and passing-away of the five aggregates, and apply the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self to them. You should do this for the five aggregates that are internal, for the five aggregates that are external, and for the five aggregates that are in the past, present, and future.

Having done this for the five aggregates, you need to develop the same insight, using the first method of dependent-origination. In this case, when you discern the casual arising of formations, you just discern each factor of dependent-origination in forward order, to see that:

‘Ignorance causes volitional formations, volitional formations cause consciousness, consciousness causes mentality-and-materiality, mentality-and-materiality cause the six sense-bases, the six sense-bases cause contact, contact causes feeling, feeling

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

causes craving, craving causes clinging, clinging causes becoming, becoming causes birth, birth causes aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair.’ (M.38)

To discern the causal cessation of formations at arahantship, and the resultant Parinibbāna, you discern each factor of dependent-origination in forward order, to see that:

‘With the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance volitional formations cease, with the cessation of volitional formations consciousness ceases, with the cessation of consciousness mentality-and-materiality cease, with the cessation of mentality-and-materiality the six sense-bases cease, with the cessation of the six sense-bases contact ceases, with the cessation of contact feeling ceases, with the cessation of feeling craving ceases, with the cessation of craving clinging ceases, with the cessation of clinging becoming ceases, with the cessation of becoming birth ceases, with the cessation of birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair cease. It is in this way that all forms of suffering cease.’ (M.38)

As before, you discern the momentary arising and momentary passing-away, and causal arising and causal passing-away of formations. You then combine these two methods. For example, in the first one, ignorance, you would see that:

Ignorance causes volitional formations; with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance volitional formations cease; ignorance is impermanent, volitional formations are impermanent.

The other factors of dependent-origination are discerned in the same way. You need to discern dependent-origination in this way both internally and externally, and also in the past, present, and future.

This is a very brief outline of the development of the knowledge of arising and passing-away of formations.

The Ten Imperfections of Insight (*Dasa-Upakkilesa*)

It is at this stage that, as you apply these methods, and your in-

Knowing and Seeing

sight becomes stronger, the ten imperfections of insight can arise.

The ten imperfections are: light (*obhāsa*), insight (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), bliss (*sukha*), confidence (*adhimokkha*), effort (*paggaha*), mindfulness (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*). Of these ten, only light and attachment are not themselves wholesome mental states. Whereas the remaining eight are wholesome mental states; they are not themselves imperfections. They can, however, become the objects of unwholesome states if a meditator becomes attached to them. When a meditator experiences any of the ten imperfections of insight, he needs to see each of them as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, so that he does not become attached to them. By doing this, he is able to overcome the attachment and desire that may arise with those states, and thus continue to make progress.

The Knowledge of Dissolution (*Bhaṅga-Ñāṇa*)

After you have developed the knowledge of arising and passing-away of formations, your insight concerning formations is steadfast and pure. Then you have to develop the knowledge of dissolution of formations (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*). To do this, you stop paying attention to the arising of formations, and pay attention only to the passing-away and ceasing of formations.

At this stage, you see neither the arising-phase of formations, nor the standing-phase of formations, nor the signs of individual formations, nor the causes of the origination of formations. It is because of the power of your insight-knowledge, that you see only the passing-away and ceasing of formations:

1. Discerning the passing-away and ceasing of formations, you see them as impermanent.
2. Discerning the passing-away and ceasing of formations as something fearful, you see them as suffering.
3. Discerning that formations are without essence, you

How to Develop the Insight-Knowledges to See Nibbāna

see them as non-self.

You discern the five aggregates, in the past, present, and future both internally and externally, see only their passing-away and ceasing, and apply the three characteristics in turn.

When you take materiality as object, and see its passing-away, you know that it is impermanent. This knowledge of the impermanence of an object is called insight-knowledge.

At this stage, you should also discern once the passing-away and ceasing of that insight-knowledge consciousness itself. This means that as you discern materiality and mentality, you take materiality as object and see its momentary passing-away and ceasing. You see it with insight-knowledge as impermanent. Then with a second insight-mind, you see the passing-away and ceasing of that first insight-knowledge consciousness itself as impermanent.

Then you take mentality as object, and see its momentary passing-away and ceasing. You see it with insight-knowledge as impermanent. Then with a second insight-mind, you see the passing-away and ceasing of that first insight-knowledge consciousness itself as impermanent.

You repeat this, but now you see the passing-away and ceasing as suffering. Then you repeat this again seeing it as non-self. This process you repeat, alternating between internal and external, materiality and mentality, causal dhammas and resultant dhammas, past, present, and future.

The Remaining Knowledges

As you continue to discern the passing-away and ceasing of dhammas in this way, your strong and powerful insight will progress through the remaining insight-knowledges. That is: the Knowledge of Terror (*bhaya-ñāṇa*); the Knowledge of Danger (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*); the Knowledge of Disenchantment (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*); the Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*); the Knowledge of Reflection,

Knowing and Seeing

(*paṭisankhā-ñāṇa*); and the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*). Because you have developed the first five insight-knowledges thoroughly, these last insight-knowledges develop quickly. There are a few instructions for them, but I do not have enough time to explain in detail.

After these insight-knowledges, as you continue to discern the passing-away and vanishing of each formation, with a wish for release from them, you will find that eventually all the formations cease. Your mind directly sees, and is fully aware of the unformed Nibbāna as object.

Then you will have attained real knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, and will have realised Nibbāna for yourself. With this realisation, your mind will become purified and free from wrong views. If you continue in this way, you will be able to attain arahantship and Parinibbāna.

There are many more details that could be explained about this development of insight, but I have had to leave them out, so as to make this explanation as brief as possible. The best way to learn this practise is by undertaking a course in meditation with a competent teacher, and then you can learn in a systematic way, step by step.⁷

⁷ For centres teaching the Pa-Auk system, please refer to Appendix 2.

Questions and Answers (7)

Question 7.1: What is the difference between perception (*saññā*) and the perception-aggregate (*saññā-khandha*), and between feeling (*vedanā*) and the feeling-aggregate (*vedanā-khandha*)?

Answer 7.1: The eleven types of perception (*saññā*) together are called the perception-aggregate (*saññā-khandha*). The eleven types of feeling (*vedanā*) together are called the feeling-aggregate (*vedanā-khandha*). What are the eleven? Past, present, future, internal, external, gross, subtle, inferior, superior, near, and far. Altogether these eleven types of perception are called the perception-aggregate. In the same way the eleven types of feeling are called the feeling-aggregate. Please refer to the Khandha Sutta of the Khandha Vagga in the Saṃyutta Nikāya for the definition. All five aggregates should be understood in the same way.

Question 7.2: To which mental-concomitants do memory, inference and creativity belong? They are part of the five aggregates, but how do they become suffering (*dukkha*)?

Answer 7.2: What is memory? If you remember, or you can discern past, present, and future ultimate mentality-and-materiality (*paramattha-nāmarūpa*) and their causes, and can discern them as impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) this is called right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), the mindfulness which is associated with insight-knowledge. In other words, this mindfulness is associated with thirty-three mental formations, together they are the four mentality aggregates (*nāma-khandha*). In the same way remembering the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and offerings made in the past is right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). The mindfulness of remembering past actions which produce wholesome dhamma (*kusala-*

Knowing and Seeing

dhamma) when remembering them in the present, is also called right mindfulness, but the thinking of good or bad actions which produce unwholesome dhamma (*akusala-dhamma*) while remembering them is not right mindfulness. We call this unwholesome perception (*akusala-saññā*), perception associated with unwholesome dhamma; they are also the four mentality aggregates.

These wholesome mentality aggregates and unwholesome mentality aggregates are impermanent. As soon as they arise, they pass away; they are always subject to constant arising and passing-away so they are suffering.

Question 7.3: Which mental-concomitant does 'Taking an object' involve?

Answer 7.3: All consciousnesses (*citta*) and mental-concomitants (*cetasika*) take an object. Without an object they cannot occur. Here consciousness and mental-concomitants are the subject. The subject, *ārammaṇika-dhamma*, cannot arise without an object (*ārammaṇa*). Here *ārammaṇika* means the dhamma or phenomenon which takes an object. In other words, the dhamma which knows an object. If there is no object to be known then there is no occurrence of dhamma which knows. So different groups of consciousness and mental-concomitants take different objects. There are eighty-nine types of consciousness (*citta*) and fifty-two types of mental-concomitant (*cetasika*); they all take their respective object. For example, the path and fruition consciousnesses and mental-concomitants (*magga-citta-cetasika* and *phala-citta-cetasika*) take Nibbāna as object; *ānāpāna jhāna* consciousness and mental-concomitants take *ānāpāna paṭibhāga-nimitta* as object; the earth-kasiṇa jhāna takes the earth-kasiṇa *paṭibhāga-nimitta* as object. But the sensual-plane consciousness (*kāmāvacara-citta*) takes different objects which can be good or bad. If you want to know in detail you should study the Abhidhamma, more exactly the *Ārammaṇa* sec-

Questions and Answers (7)

tion of the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha.

Question 7.4: Does work for the Saṅgha affect one's meditation? Does it depend on the individual, or can one achieve a certain degree of concentration after which work has no affect?

Answer 7.4: In many suttas the Buddha criticizes bhikkhus who practise the following:

1. *Kammārāmatā*: enjoyment in working.
2. *Bhassārāmatā*: enjoyment in talking.
3. *Niddārāmatā*: enjoyment in sleeping.
4. *Saṅghanikārāmatā*: enjoyment in company.
5. *Indriyesu aguttadvāratā*: not controlling the faculties, etc.
6. *Bhojane amattaññūtā*: not knowing the proper amount of food to take.
7. *Jāgariye ananuyuttā*: not trying Samatha-Vipassanā with moderate sleep.
8. *Kusita* or *kosajja*: laziness in Samatha-Vipassanā practice.

So if there is any work which you have to do for the Saṅgha or for yourself, you should try to do it as quickly as possible, and afterwards return to your meditation practice with a peaceful mind. But if you enjoy working too much it is a hindrance to meditation practice. That enjoyment cannot produce good concentration, because strong powerful mindfulness on the meditation object cannot be attained with such enjoyment.

Question 7.5: Are there any benefits in attaining jhānas for a person who harbours bad evil intentions to attain jhānas? Or for example, if he has spent the money of a community for his personal use, and does not think his action is wrong. When such a person attains jhāna up to the fourth jhāna, does his mind or

view change?

Answer 7.5: In this case you should distinguish between a layman and a bhikkhu. For a bhikkhu, if he has committed an offence (*āpatti*), it is a hindrance to attain jhāna. For example, if he spent the money of a community for his personal use, it is not easy for him to attain jhāna, unless he corrects that offence (*āpatti*). That means he must pay it back with requisites equal to the amount of money used. Then he should confess his offence in front of the Saṅgha or to another bhikkhu. That means he should do confession of offence (*āpattidesanā*). After correcting his fault if he tries Samatha-Vipassanā he can attain jhāna, path, and fruition. If without correcting his fault he really did attain jhāna, then maybe he is not a real bhikkhu, and so the offence is in fact not an offence.

If the person is a layman the case is different. For lay-people, purification of virtue depends on the meditation retreat. While they are meditating if they have purified their virtue they can attain jhāna, although they were evil before meditation. For example, in the Dhammapada Commentary, there is a story about the servant Khujjuttarā. She was a servant for King Udena's wife Queen Sāmāvatī. Every day King Udena gave her eight coins to buy flowers for the queen. Every day Khujjuttarā put four of the coins into her pocket, and bought flowers with the other four coins. One day, the Buddha came with the Saṅgha for almsfood at the flower-seller's house. Khujjuttarā helped the flower-seller give the almsfood. After the meal the Buddha gave a Dhamma-talk and Khujjuttarā became a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*). On that day she did not put four coins in her pocket, but bought flowers for eight coins. When she gave the flowers to Queen Sāmāvatī, the queen was surprised because there were more flowers. At that time Khujjuttarā confessed.

Also consider the case of the Venerable Aṅgulimāla. He was a famous murderer. But while he was meditating as a bhikkhu he purified his virtue and strove hard in meditation practice. So

Questions and Answers (7)

he attained arahantship. Consider also this fact: In the round of rebirths everybody has done good and bad actions. There is no one who is free from bad actions. But if they have purification of virtue while they are meditating, then previous bad actions cannot prevent them from attaining jhāna. That is, however, only as long as those past actions were not any of the five immediate kamma (*anantariya-kamma*)⁸.

The five immediate kamma are:

1. Killing one's mother,
2. Killing one's father,
3. Killing an arahant,
4. Shedding blood from a living Buddha,
5. Causing schism in the Saṅgha.

If any of these bad actions have been done one cannot attain any jhāna, path, and fruition, like King Ajātasattu. King Ajātasattu had enough pāramī to become a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*) after listening to the Sāmaññaphala Sutta. But he had killed his father, King Bimbisāra. This bad action prevented him from attaining noble (*ariya*) state.

In your question you asked whether after attaining jhāna their mind or concept changes. Jhāna can remove the hindrances for a long time. By a long time I mean if they enter into jhāna for about an hour, then within that hour the hindrances cannot occur. When they emerge from jhāna the hindrances may again occur dependent upon unwise attention. So we cannot say for certain whether when he attains jhāna his mind will change or not. We can say only that when they are in jhāna the hindrances cannot occur.

There are exceptions, as for example, the Mahānāga Mahāthera. He was the teacher of Dhammadinna arahant and prac-

⁸ These five kamma are called 'immediate' because they will definitely ripen in the present life and produce rebirth-linking in the next life.

Knowing and Seeing

tised Samatha and Vipassanā meditation for more than sixty years, but he was still a worldling (*puṭhujjana*). Although he was still a worldling, no defilements appeared within those sixty years because of strong, powerful Samatha and Vipassanā practices. Due to this, he thought of himself, ‘I have attained arahantship.’ But his disciple Dhammadinna arahant knew that his teacher was still a worldling, so Dhammadinna tried to make him realize indirectly that he was still a worldling. When Mahānāga Mahāthera discovered that he was still a worldling he practised Vipassanā, and within a few minutes he attained arahantship. But this is a most exceptional case.

You should also remember another thing: he was expert in scriptures (*pariyatti*) as well as practice (*patipatti*). He was also a meditation teacher (*kammaṭṭhānācariya*), and there were many arahants who were his disciples like Dhammadinna. Although he was expert in Samatha and Vipassanā, sometimes misunderstandings occurred in his mind because of a similarity in experiences. So if you think of yourself, ‘I have attained the first jhāna, etc.’, you should examine your experience thoroughly over many days, and many months. Why? If it is real jhāna and real Vipassanā then they are beneficial for you as they can help you to attain real Nibbāna which is the ‘Pureland’ of Theravāda Buddhism. But artificial jhāna and artificial Vipassanā cannot give rise to this benefit. Do you want real benefit or artificial benefit? You should ask yourself this question.

So I would like to suggest that you do not say to others, ‘I have attained the first jhāna, etc.’ too soon because there may be someone who does not believe you. On the other hand, it could be that your experience is genuine, or even false like Mahānāga Mahāthera. You should be aware of this problem.

Question 7.6: What is the difference between kalāpas and ultimate materiality (*paramattha-rūpa*)?

Answer 7.6: Kalāpas mean small particles. If a meditator can

Questions and Answers (7)

analyse those kalāpas he can see ultimate materiality (*paramattha-rūpa*). In a kalāpa there are at least eight types of materiality: earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element, colour, smell, taste, and nutritive-essence. These eight types of materiality are ultimate materiality. In some kalāpas there are nine types of materiality, that is including life-faculty materiality (*jīvita-rūpa*). In some kalāpas there are ten types of materiality, that is including sex-determining materiality (*bhāva-rūpa*) or transparent-element materiality (*pasāda-rūpa*). These nine or ten types of materiality are all ultimate materiality.

Question 7.7: When a meditator is able to discern kalāpas or ultimate materiality will his mind (*citta*) and views (*diṭṭhi*) change?

Answer 7.7: When he with insight-knowledge sees ultimate materiality in each kalāpa his mind and views can change temporarily, because insight-knowledge removes wrong views and other defilements only temporarily. It is the noble path (*ariyamagga*) which stage by stage destroys his wrong views and other defilements totally.

Question 7.8: How does concentration purify the mind (*citta-visuddhi*)? What kinds of kilesa are removed by concentration?

Answer 7.8: Concentration practice is directly opposite the five hindrances. Access and first jhāna concentration remove the five hindrances for a long time. Second jhāna concentration can remove applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*). Third jhāna concentration can remove joy (*pīṭi*). Fourth jhāna concentration can remove bliss (*sukha*). In this way, the concentrated mind is purified and that concentration is called purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*).

Question 7.9: How does Vipassanā purify views (*diṭṭhi*)

Knowing and Seeing

visuddhi)? What kinds of kilesa are removed by Vipassanā?

Answer 7.9: Before seeing ultimate mentality-and-materiality, their causes, and their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, a meditator may have wrong views or wrong perception such as ‘this is a man, a woman, a mother, a father, a self, etc.’ But when he see ultimate mentality-and-materiality, their causes, and their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self clearly, this wrong view disappears temporarily. Why? He sees only ultimate mentality-and-materiality and causes. He sees also that as soon as they arise, they pass away; this is their impermanent nature. They are always subject to arising and passing-away; this is their suffering nature. There is no self in these mentality-and-materiality and causes, so they are non-self. This is their non-self nature. This is insight-knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). This is right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Right view can remove wrong views. That insight-knowledge can also remove defilements such as attachment and conceit which are ‘partners’ of wrong view. While a meditator is practising Vipassanā, right view is present. But when he stops meditating, wrong view can occur again, dependent on unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*). He will again perceive: ‘this is a man, a woman, a mother, a father, a self, etc.’ Because of this perception those associated defilements such as attachment, conceit, anger, will occur again, depending on wrong views. But if he again practises Vipassanā meditation this wrong view again disappears. So insight-knowledge can remove wrong views and other defilements only temporarily. But when he reaches up to path and fruition his Path Knowledge (*maggā-ñāṇa*) will completely destroy those wrong views and other defilements stage by stage.

Question 7.10: What is the difference between *citta* and *diṭṭhi*?

Answer 7.10: *Citta* means mind, but in purification of mind, it refers especially to access-concentration consciousness

Questions and Answers (7)

(*upacāra-samādhī-citta*) and absorption-jhāna consciousness (*appanā-jhāna-citta*). *Citta* is consciousness. *Diṭṭhi* means wrong view and is one type of mental-concomitant (*cetasika*). It arises together with the four consciousnesses rooted in greed and associated with wrong view (*diṭṭhi-sampayutta-lobhamūla-citta*). A consciousness rooted in greed (*lobhamūla-citta*) is the consciousness associated with greed and wrong view or conceit.

One of the wrong views is the perception of self (*atta-saññā*). There are two types of perception of self. One is the perception that there is a man, a woman, a father, a mother, etc. This is wrong view as a consequence of convention. We call this ‘the world’s general perception of self’ (*loka-samaññā-attavāda*). Another type of wrong view is the perception that there is an indestructible self (*atta*). We call this ‘wrong view of self’ (*atta-diṭṭhi*). Also there is the perception that an indestructible self is created by a creator (*parama-atta*); this perception is also wrong view. It is also called ‘wrong view of self’ (*atta-diṭṭhi*).

In the thirty-one realms there is no self, only mentality-and-materiality and their causes. They are always impermanent, suffering, and non-self. There is no self outside the thirty-one realms either. So insight-knowledge, that is right view, can temporarily destroy wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), which includes wrong view of self. But the Path Knowledge (*maggā-ñāṇa*), which is right view of path (*maggā-sammā-diṭṭhi*), destroys this wrong view completely. This means there are three types of view:

1. Wrong views,
2. Vipassanā right view (*vipassanā-sammā-diṭṭhi*): right views which are mundane (*lokiya*),
3. Right view of path (*maggā-sammā-diṭṭhi*): right views which are supramundane (*lokuttara*).

In the Brahmajāla Sutta sixty-two types of wrong views are discussed. All these go under wrong view of self. This wrong

Knowing and Seeing

view of self is also called wrong view of personality (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). Personality (*sakkāya*) means the five aggregates. Wrong view of personality means wrong view seeing the five aggregates as self. There are also many types of right view such as ‘jhāna right view’ (*jhāna-sammā-diṭṭhi*) which is jhāna wisdom associated with jhāna factors; ‘right view of discerning mentality-and-materiality’ (*nāmarūpa-pariggaha-sammā-diṭṭhi*) which is the insight-knowledge of ultimate mentality-and-materiality; ‘right view of kamma and kamma-result’ (*kammasakatā-sammā-diṭṭhi*) which is the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*); Vipassanā right view (*vipassanā-sammā-diṭṭhi*) which is the insight-knowledge of impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of mentality-and-materiality and their causes; right view of path (*magga-sammā-diṭṭhi*) and right view of fruition (*phala-sammā-diṭṭhi*) which know Nibbāna as object. All these right views are called Right Views About the Four Noble Truths (*catusacca-sammā-diṭṭhi*).

Question 7.11: How should a meditator practise wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) in his daily life, and how in practising Samatha-Vipassanā?

Answer 7.11: The best wise attention is Vipassanā. If you can practise up to Vipassanā level you can really know the best wise attention. Then if you can practise Vipassanā in your daily life it will produce good results such as path and fruition which see Nibbāna. But if you cannot practise up to Vipassanā level, you should consider the fact that all conditioned things are impermanent (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*). This is also wise attention. But this is very weak and only a ‘second-hand’ wise attention.

You can also practise the four sublime abidings (*brahmavihāra*), and especially the sublime abiding of equanimity (*upekkhā-brahmavihāra*). It is superior wise attention because the sublime abiding of equanimity sees the law of kamma as ‘*sabbe sattā kammaṣakā*’: ‘All beings have kamma as their own

Questions and Answers (7)

property'. Sometimes you should also reflect on the effects produced by unwise attention. Due to unwise attention many unwholesome kamma come one by one. This unwholesome kamma produces many sufferings in the four woeful planes (*apāya*). To know this is wise attention. You should practise it in your daily life.

Question 7.12: What is the difference between attention (*manasikāra*) and practising the seven enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅga*)?

Answer 7.12: When you practise the seven enlightenment factors, there are usually thirty-four mental formations headed by those seven enlightenment factors. Among the thirty-four, attention is one mental-concomitant (*cetasika*). Sometimes the thirty-four mental formations are called insight-knowledge, because the insight-knowledge (*paññā*), the thirty-fourth mental-formation, is the main factor.

In this connection you should know the three types of attention:

1. Attention as the basic cause for object (*ārammaṇa-paṭipādaka-manasikāra*)
2. Attention as the basic cause for thought-process (*vīthi-paṭipādaka-manasikāra*)
3. Attention as the basic cause for impulsion (*javana-paṭipādaka-manasikāra*)

(1) Attention as the basic cause for object means the mental-concomitant of attention. Its function is to make the object clear to the meditator's mind.

(2) Attention as the basic cause for thought-process is the five-door-adverting consciousness (*pañcadvārāvajjana*) in the five-door thought-process (*pañcadvāra-vīthi*). Because of this attention all five-door thought-processes are able to take their respec-

tive object.

(3) Attention as the basic cause for impulsion is the mind-door-advverting consciousness (*manodvārāvajjana*) in mind-door thought-process (*manodvāra-vīthi*), and determining consciousness (*voṭṭhapana*) in five-door thought-process. This attention is either wise attention or unwise attention. Depending upon this attention, impulsion (*javana*) occurs. If it is wise attention, the impulsion (*javana*) is wholesome for worldling (*puthujjana*) and trainer (*sekkha*), but is only functional (*kiriya*) for arahants. When it is unwise attention, impulsion is always unwholesome, and this is impossible for arahants.

Question 7.13: Could the Sayadaw please explain the diagram? Is it necessary, in this system of meditation, to practise more than thirty types of meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*)? What are the benefits of doing so?

Answer 7.13: I am not interested in diagrams. It was based on another diagram drawn by a school teacher who is very interested in diagrams. I teach many types of Samatha meditation to those who want to practise them. If they do not want to practise all the meditation, but want to practise only one meditation such as mindfulness-of-breathing (*ānāpānassati*), then I teach only one Samatha meditation. Based on that jhāna concentration I take them straight to Vipassanā, systematically, stage by stage. While practising Samatha-Vipassanā there may sometimes be hindrances such as lust (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*), discursive thought (*vitakka*), which will disturb your concentration and Vipassanā meditation practice. The following meditation subjects are the best weapon to remove these hindrances.

In the Meghiya Sutta the Buddha gave the following instructions:

1. *Asubhā bhāvetabbā rāgassa pahānāya*: you should practise repulsiveness-meditation (*asubha-bhāvanā*) to

Questions and Answers (7)

remove lust (*rāga*).

2. *Mettā bhāvetabbā byāpādassa pahānāya*: you should practise lovingkindness-meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*) to remove hatred or anger (*dosa*).
3. *Ānāpānassati bhāvetabbā vitakkupacchedāya*: you should practise mindfulness-of-breathing to cut discursive thought (*vitakka*).

Furthermore, a concentrated mind can see ultimate dhammas (*paramattha-dhamma*) as they really are. Of the concentration practices, the eight attainments (*samāpatti*) are very high and powerful; so for those who want to practise the eight attainments thoroughly we teach them kasiṇa meditation also. If you want to understand the system of the diagram thoroughly, you should practise Samatha-Vipassanā up to the Path and Fruition Knowledges. Only then will you fully understand the diagram.

Why am I not interested in diagrams? Because it is not enough to show the whole system within one page. I have explained the whole system in more than three thousand six hundred pages in Burmese. So one page is not enough.

Question 7.14: Can a hating mind produce many generations of temperature-produced octad kalāpa (*utuja-ojaṭṭhamaka-kalāpa*), and make the eyes flash?

Answer 7.14: This is only a metaphor, because in fact apart from rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*), all consciousnesses which arise dependent upon heart-base (*hadaya-vatthu*) produce consciousness-produced kalāpas (*cittaja-kalāpa*). Among these kalāpa there is always colour (*vaṇṇa*). Colour is brighter if that consciousness is Samatha consciousness, or Vipassanā consciousness associated with insight-knowledge. This is discussed in the Pāli Texts, Commentaries, and Sub-commentaries. But it does not say that consciousness-produced materiality produced by a hating mind also produce

light. So it is only a metaphor.

Question 7.15: Is the discerning mind which discerns mentality-and-materiality included in mentality-and-materiality? Is it included in wisdom?

Answer 7.15: You can discern it at all Vipassanā stages, especially at the stage of Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*), as mentioned in the Visuddhimagga, ‘*Nātañca ñāṇañca ubhopi vipassati*’: ‘We must practise Vipassanā on both the known (*nāta*) and knowledge (*ñāṇa*).’ Here the known means the five aggregates and their causes which should be known by insight-knowledge. Knowledge means the insight-knowledge which knows the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of the five aggregates and their causes which are conditioned things or formations (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*). Here, insight-knowledge is wisdom, Vipassanā right view. Usually Vipassanā right view arise together with thirty-three or thirty-two mental formations; altogether there are thirty-four or thirty-three mental formations. They are called insight-knowledge. They are mentality dhammas, because they incline towards the impermanent, suffering or non-self nature of formations as their object.

Why should you discern insight-knowledge itself as impermanent, suffering, and non-self? Some meditators may ask or think about whether insight-knowledge itself is permanent or impermanent, happiness or suffering, self or non-self. To solve this problem you should discern the Vipassanā thought-process itself, especially the thirty-four mental formations in each impulsion moment headed by insight-knowledge as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Furthermore some meditators may have attachment to their insight-knowledge. Some meditators may become proud because they can practise Vipassanā clearly and successfully. Also to remove these defilements you should discern the insight-knowledge or Vipassanā thought-process as impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

Questions and Answers (7)

Question 7.16: How to overcome the uninterested and bored mind which occurs during long periods of meditating, or staying alone in the forest? Is this kind of mind unwholesome dhamma?

Answer 7.16: This type of mind is called indolence (*kosajja*), and is usually weak unwholesome dhamma associated with greed or hatred, etc. This type of mind occurs due to unwise attention. If a person's unwise attention is changed and replaced with wise attention, then he may succeed in his meditation. Sometimes you should recall that our Sakyamuni bodhisatta's success was because of his perseverance. You should also recall stories of arahants who strove hard and with great difficulty to succeed in their meditation, and eventually attained arahantship. No one can have great success without striving. Especially in meditation it is necessary to persevere. Wise attention too is very important. You should try to pay attention to the nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self in conditioned things or formations. If you can do this one day you may be successful.

Question 7.17: Could the Sayadaw please give an example of a wish which is not associated with ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*)?

Answer 7.17: If you can practise Vipassanā when performing wholesome kamma, and if you also can discern the impermanent nature, suffering nature, or non-self nature of those wholesome kamma, then ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) do not arise with those wholesome kamma. If you cannot practise Vipassanā you should make the following aspiration:

‘*Idaṃ me puññam nibbānassa paccayo hotu*’: ‘May this merit be a supporting cause for realisation of Nibbāna.’

Question 7.18: If the five aggregates are non-self, then who,

Knowing and Seeing

Sayadaw, is giving a Dhamma talk? In other words, if the five aggregates are non-self no Sayadaw is giving a Dhamma talk. So is there a relationship between the five aggregates and self?

Answer 7.18: There are two types of truth:

1. Conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*) and
2. Ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*).

You should differentiate clearly between these two truths. According to conventional truth there is a Buddha, there is a Sayadaw, there is a father, there is a mother, etc. But according to ultimate truth, there is no Buddha, there is no Sayadaw, there is no father, there is no mother, etc. This you can see if you have strong enough insight-knowledge. If you look at the Buddha with insight-knowledge then you see ultimate mentality-and-materiality or the five aggregates. They are impermanent, suffering, and non-self. There is no self. In the same way if you look at me, or to a father, or to a mother etc., with insight-knowledge you see only ultimate mentality-and-materiality or the five aggregates, they are also impermanent, suffering, and non-self. There is no self. In other words, there is no Buddha, Sayadaw, father, mother, etc. These five aggregates and their causes are called conditioned things. So conditioned things are preaching conditioned things, sometimes about Nibbāna. There is no self at all.

For example, if someone were to ask you, ‘Are the horns of rabbits long or short?’, how should you answer? Or if someone asked you, ‘Are the body hairs on a tortoise black or white?’, how should you answer? If self does not exist at all we cannot speak of a relationship between self and the five aggregates. Even the Buddha did not answer this type of question. Why? Suppose you said that rabbit horns are long, that would mean you accept that rabbits have horns. And if you said that rabbit horns are short, that too would mean you accept that rabbits have

Questions and Answers (7)

horns. Again, if you said that a tortoise has black body hairs, that would mean you accept that a tortoise has hairs. If you said that tortoise hair is white, that too would mean you accept that a tortoise has hairs. In the same way, if the Buddha said that the five aggregates and self are related, then the answer would mean that the Buddha accepted self. And if the Buddha said that the five aggregates and self are not related, the answer would also mean that the Buddha accepted self. That is why the Buddha did not answer this type of question. So I would like to suggest that you try meditation up to Vipassanā level. Only then can you remove this view of self.

Question 7.19: The Buddha taught the Snake Mantra to bhikkhus. Is chanting the Snake Mantra the same as loving-kindness? Is chanting a mantra a Brahmanist tradition brought into Buddhism?

Answer 7.19: What is a mantra? What is the Snake Mantra? I do not know whether mantras are handed down from Hinduism or not. But in the Theravāda Piṭaka there is a protective sutta (*paritta-sutta*) called the Khandha Paritta. The Buddha taught this protective sutta for bhikkhus to recite everyday. There is a disciplinary rule (*vinaya*) which states that if a bhikkhu or bhikkhunī does not recite this protective sutta once a day, he or she will have committed an offence. This protective sutta is the Khandha Paritta. Once, in the Buddha's time, a bhikkhu was dwelling in the forest when a poisonous snake bit him. He died. Because of this the Buddha taught the Khandha Paritta. The purpose of this protective sutta is similar to lovingkindness-meditation. In that sutta there are different ways of sending lovingkindness to different types of snake or dragon. There is also an assertion of truth concerning the Triple Gem and the qualities of the Buddha and arahants. I shall recite this protective sutta tonight. This protective sutta is very powerful. You may call it a Snake Mantra. The name is not important. You can

Knowing and Seeing

call it whatever you like. Some bhikkhus in Burma use this protective sutta for those who have been bitten by a poisonous snake. It is effective. When they chant this protective sutta many times, and when the victims drink the protective water, the poison slowly decreases in them. Usually they recover. But the effect is not the same in every case. The Buddha taught this protective sutta to prevent bhikkhus from being bitten by poisonous snakes. If a bhikkhu recites this protective sutta with respect, and sends lovingkindness to all beings, including snakes, there will be no danger for him. Usually, if he also observes the monastic code there will be no harm.

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

(Talk given on Vesākha Day)

The Buddha spent his last rains (*vassa*) in the village of Beluva. At that time there arose in him a severe affliction. On the full moon day of Vassa, a sharp and deadly back pain came upon him, because of previous kamma.

In one of his past lives, the bodhisatta, who would become Sakyamuni Buddha, was a wrestler. Once he threw down an opponent and broke his back. That unwholesome kamma (*akusala-kamma*) produced its result when the time was mature, which was ten months before the Buddha's Parinibbāna. So that pain was because of kamma. The effect of that kamma was so powerful that the result would last until death. That type of affliction is called 'feeling having death as its end' (*marañantika-vedanā*). It ceases only when death occurs.

The Buddha prevented that affliction from arising by determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*). This was no ordinary determination. First the Buddha entered into Arahant Fruition Attainment (*arahattaphala-samāpatti*) based on the Seven Ways for Materiality (*rūpa-sattaka-vipassanā*) and Seven Ways for Mentality (*arūpa-sattaka-vipassanā*). Arahant fruition attainment means that the arahant fruition consciousness, with Nibbāna as object, occurs successively for a long time. After those Vipassanā practices he entered into arahant fruition attainment. Because the Vipassanā practices were strong and powerful, the arahant fruition attainment too was strong and powerful. After emerging from that arahant fruition attainment, the Buddha made the determination, 'From today until Parinibbāna day, may this affliction not occur.' Because of the power of the kamma, he had to make this determination every day.

This type of fruition attainment is called *āyusañikhāra-phala-samāpatti*, *āyupālaka-phala-samāpatti*, or *jīvitasañikhāra-phala-samāpatti*. *Āyusañikhāra-phala-samāpatti* means maintaining-life-span fruition attainment. *Āyupālaka-phala-samāpatti* means protecting-life-span fruition attainment. *Jīvitasañikhāra-phala-samāpatti* means maintaining-life-faculty fruition attainment. The Buddha did this every day.

After Vassa he wandered about from place to place, and eventually reached Vesālī. Three months before Vesākha full moon day, that is on the full moon day of February, at the place of the Cāpāla Cetiya, the Buddha decided to relinquish the will to live (*āyusañikhāra-ossajjana*). What does that mean? On that day he decided: ‘From today until the full moon day of Vesākha I shall practise this fruition attainment. After that full moon day I shall not practise this fruition attainment.’ This decision is called ‘relinquishing the will to live’.

So, on that day, in front of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha, who had assembled in the assembly hall of the Mahāvana monastery, the Buddha also declared his relinquishment of the will to live. He declared to the Bhikkhu Saṅgha: ‘*Tasmātiha bhikkhave ye te mayā dhammā abhiññā desitā, te vo sādḥukam uggahetva āsevitabbā bhāvetabbā bahulikātabbā*’: ‘Bhikkhus, you, to whom I have made known the Truths about which I have direct knowledge, having thoroughly learnt them, should cultivate them, develop them, and frequently practise them.’ The Buddha taught the Dhamma about which he had direct experience. Here the Buddha declared his wishes for his Teachings and Saṅgha as follows:

1. They should learn the Buddha’s teachings (*Dhamma*) by heart thoroughly, but learning by heart alone is not enough.
2. He instructed them to cultivate the Dhamma. In Pāḷi it is called *āsevitabbā*, and means that we must try to know this Dhamma in practice again and again. It is

translated as cultivation. This was the second wish of the Buddha for the Dhamma and Saṅgha.

3. Finally, he instructed them to develop (*bhāvetabbā*) the truths. When we cultivate, growing and progress is necessary. What does that mean? When we practise the Dhamma, only wholesome dhamma (*kusala-dhamma*) must occur in our thought-process. That is, wholesome virtue dhamma (*sīla-kusala-dhamma*), wholesome concentration dhamma (*samādhī-kusala-dhamma*) and wholesome wisdom dhamma (*paññā-kusala-dhamma*). These wholesome dhamma must occur successively without a break until the attainment of arahantship. If a disciple (*sāvaka*) of the Buddha attains arahantship his practice (*bhāvanā*) is fulfilled. So a disciple of the Buddha must practise until he attains that stage, and the cultivation must be developed until the arahant stage. This was the Buddha's third wish. To reach the arahant stage we must practise again and again. For that reason the Buddha gave the instruction of *bahulikātabbā*, which means we must practise frequently.

These wishes occurred in the Buddha's thought-process. Why? '*Yathayidaṃ brahmacariyaṃ addhaniyaṃ assa ciraṭṭhitikaṃ*': 'So that the pure teaching may be established and last long.' That is, to maintain the pure teaching so that it can last for a long time. It is very important that every Buddhist maintains the pure teaching so that it is not lost. We must try. How should we try? I repeat:

1. Firstly, we must learn the Buddha's teachings (*Dhamma*) by heart thoroughly.
2. Secondly, we must practise so as to know the Dhamma through personal experience.
3. Thirdly, we must try to practise until the attainment of

Knowing and Seeing

arahantship.

These are the duties of all Buddhists. If one is a Buddhist one must follow these three instructions. If one does not follow them then one is a Buddhist in name only. Not a real Buddhist. If one follows these three instructions thoroughly, then one is a real Buddhist. So you can today determine:

1. We will try to learn the Buddha's teachings by heart.
2. We will try to know the Dhamma through personal experience.
3. We will practise until the arahant stage.

If we do that, it can be said that we breathe according to the Buddha's instructions. Why should we do that? '*Tadassa bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ*': 'For the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare and happiness of devas and humans.' If we practise according to the Buddha's instructions, we will be able to give the Dhamma to future generations as an inheritance. We will be able to teach devas and humans the following:

1. To learn the Buddha's teachings by heart.
2. To practise the teachings in order to know it through personal experience.
3. To practise the Dhamma until the arahant stage.

By doing that, those devas and humans will receive benefits and happiness in this world, up to the attainment of Nibbāna. But if we do not learn the teachings by heart, and do not practise those teachings, how can we teach devas and humans to learn the teachings of the Buddha, and teach them how to practise those teachings, since we have no knowledge of those teachings. So, if we have strong enough faith (*saddhā*) in the teachings of the

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

Buddha, we Buddhists should try to learn those teachings by heart, cultivate them in practice, and develop them until the arahant stage.

Do you have strong enough faith in the teachings of the Buddha?

There is a statement in the Samaññaphala Sutta commentary: '*Pasanno ca pasannākāraṃ kātum sakkhissati*': 'Real devotees of the Triple Gem can show their devotion through practice.' If one cannot show devotion then we cannot say that he or she is a real devotee. If you have real faith in the Buddha's teachings, you should learn those teachings thoroughly, practise them, and not stop before attaining arahantship. These are important words of the Buddha before he passed away. If we have faith in the Buddha we should obey those words. If we have faith in our parents we should obey their instructions. In the same way we should obey our Father's words, that is Lord Buddha. So, what are those teachings? They are:

1. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*)
2. The Four Right Efforts (*cattāro sammappadhānā*)
3. The Four Bases of Success (*cattāro iddhipādā*)
4. The Five controlling faculties (*pañcīndriyāni*)
5. The Five Powers (*pañca balāni*)
6. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*satta bojjhaṅgā*)
7. The Noble Eightfold Path. (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*)

There are altogether Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*). I would like to briefly explain them. In the Pāli Canon, the Buddha taught the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment in different ways, according to the inclination of the listeners. The teachings in Pāli Canon can be reduced to only the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment. If they are again condensed, there is only the Noble Eightfold Path. If it is condensed, there are only the three trainings: virtuous

Knowing and Seeing

conduct, concentration, and wisdom.

We must first learn the training of virtuous conduct to practise. If we do not know the training of virtuous conduct we cannot purify our conduct. We must learn the Samatha meditation to control and concentrate our mind. If we do not know about Samatha meditation, how can we cultivate concentration? If we do not practise concentration how can we control our mind? Then we must learn wisdom cultivation. If we do not know the training of wisdom, how can we cultivate wisdom?

So, to purify our conduct, to control our mind, and to develop our wisdom, we must first learn the Dhamma by heart. Secondly, we must cultivate and develop it up to arahantship.

Therefore, in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, the Buddha urged his disciples many times: *‘Iti sīlam, iti samādhi iti paññā, sīla-paribhāvito samādhi mahapphalo hoti mahānisaṃso, samādhi-paribhāvītā paññā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā, paññāparibhāvitaṃ cittaṃ sammadeva āsavehi vimuccati, seyyathidaṃ kāmāsavā bhavāsavā diṭṭhāsavā avijjāsavā.’*: ‘Such is virtue; such is concentration; such is wisdom. Great is the result, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed based on virtuous conduct; great is the result, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed based on concentration; the mind that is fully developed in wisdom, is utterly free from the taints of lust, becoming, wrong views and ignorance.’

We all have a mind. If based on virtue, we can control our mind, then the power of that concentrated mind is wonderful. That mind can penetrate into ultimate materiality. Materiality arises as kalāpas. The kalāpas may be smaller than atoms. Our body is made of those kalāpas. The concentrated mind can analyse those kalāpas. The concentrated mind can penetrate into the ultimate reality of mentality. The concentrated mind can penetrate into their causes. The concentrated mind can penetrate into the nature of arising and passing-away of those mentality, materiality, and their causes. This insight-knowledge is called wisdom. This wisdom progresses because of concentration based on

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

virtue. The concentrated mind and wisdom are will-power. This will-power can lead to the attainment of Nibbāna, the destruction of all attachment, all defilements and all sufferings.

Everybody has a mind. When the mind is fully developed through concentration based on virtue, the insight-knowledge, or wisdom can free one from the taints of lust and the round of re-births completely. But that concentration must be based on virtue. For laypeople, the five precepts are necessary. They are:

1. To abstain from killing any living beings,
2. To abstain from stealing,
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct,
4. To abstain from telling lies,
5. To abstain from taking intoxicants.

These five precepts are necessary for all lay-Buddhists. If one breaks any of these five precepts, one is automatically not a real lay-Buddhist (*upāsaka*). One's refuge in the Triple Gem has been made invalid. Buddhists must also abstain from wrong livelihood. They must not use possessions acquired by killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slander, harsh speech, and frivolous speech. They must not engage in the five types of wrong trade: trading in weapons, trading in humans, trading in animals for slaughter, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poisons.

So virtue is very important for all Buddhists, not only to attain Nibbāna, but also to reach a happy state after death. If one's conduct is not purified, it is not easy to reach a happy state after death, because at the time of death, those misdeeds usually stick to one's mind; appearing in one's mind. By taking one of those misdeeds as the object of the mind, usually one goes to one of the four woeful planes after death.

Virtuous conduct is also important in the present life to find happiness and peace. Without purification of virtue, one cannot find happiness or peace. Anyone with a bad character is natu-

Knowing and Seeing

rally surrounded by enemies. One who has many enemies cannot get any happiness.

So the Buddha taught the following:

*yo ca vassasataṃ jīve, dussīlo asamāhito;
ekāhaṃ jīvitaṃ seyyo, sīlavantassa jhāyino.*

‘Though one should live a hundred years without virtue and without concentration, his life is not worthy of praise; it is better to live a single day with the practice of virtue and concentration.’

Why? Because the mind which is fully developed through concentration can produce great wisdom which can see Nibbāna, the end of the round of rebirths, and can destroy all defilements and sufferings.

So we must practise Samatha and Vipassanā meditation based on virtue. When we practise Samatha and Vipassanā meditation, we must practise the Four Foundations of Mindfulness:

1. Mindfulness of body (*kāyānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
2. Mindfulness of feeling (*vedānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
3. Mindfulness of consciousness (*cittānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
4. Mindfulness of dhammas (*dhammānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)

What is ‘body’ (*kāya*)? There are two types of body in Vipassanā; they are the materiality body (*rūpa-kāya*) and the mentality body (*nāma-kāya*). The materiality body is a group of twenty-eight types of materiality. The mentality body is a group of a consciousness and its mental-concomitants. In other words, these are the five aggregates (*khandha*): materiality, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness.

But Samatha meditation objects such as: mindfulness-of-breathing, thirty-two parts of the body, repulsiveness-meditation and four-elements meditation, are also called body. Why? They are also compactness of materiality. For example, in breathing it

is a group of kalāpas produced by consciousness. If we analyse those kalāpas, we see that there are nine types of materiality in each kalāpa. They are: earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element, colour, smell, taste, nutritive-essence, and sound. A skeleton is in the same way compactness of kalāpas. If a skeleton is animate there are a total of five types of kalāpa. If we analyse those kalāpas we see that there are forty-four types of materiality.

Under the section of mindfulness of body, the Buddha taught two types of meditation: Samatha and Vipassanā. In mindfulness of body, the Buddha mentioned mindfulness-of-breathing, thirty-two parts of the body, repulsiveness-meditation, etc. So, if you are practising mindfulness-of-breathing, you are practising mindfulness of body. All those Samatha practices go under the section of mindfulness of body. After a meditator is successful in Samatha practice, he changes to Vipassanā meditation, and discerns the twenty-eight types of materiality. That is also practising mindfulness of body. At the time of practising discernment of mentality (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*), when he discerns feeling it is mindfulness of feeling; when he discerns consciousness it is mindfulness of consciousness; when he discerns contact it is mindfulness on dhammas. But discerning only feeling, consciousness, and contact is not enough to attain insight-knowledges. So we must discern the remaining associated mental formations. After having discerned mentality and materiality, we must discern their causes in the past, present, and future. This is the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). After the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition, when you have reached Vipassanā, you can emphasize either materiality, feeling, consciousness or contact. 'Emphasize' does not mean you should discern one state only. You can emphasize materiality, but you must also discern mentality. Then, when you discern mentality, you are discerning feeling, consciousness, and dhammas too.

You may emphasize feeling instead. But feeling alone is not

Knowing and Seeing

enough. You must also discern its associated mental formations, the sense-base, and object. The sense-base and object are materiality. It is the same for consciousness and dhammas.

So here Vipassanā is contemplating the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of those mentality-and-materiality and their causes. Those dhammas pass away as soon as they arise, so they are impermanent. They are oppressed by constant arising and passing-away, so they are suffering. In those dhammas there is no soul which is stable, permanent and immortal, so they are non-self. Discernment of the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of mentality-and-materiality, and their causes and effects is called Vipassanā meditation or insight meditation. When you practise Samatha and Vipassanā meditation, we can say you are practising the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

When you practise the Four Foundations of Mindfulness you must have enough of the Four Right Efforts. They are:

1. The effort to prevent unwholesome states from arising,
2. The effort to eradicate unwholesome states which have arisen,
3. The effort to produce wholesome states which have not yet arisen (concentration wholesome dhamma or *samādhi-kusala-dhamma*, Vipassanā wholesome dhamma or *vipassanā-kusala-dhamma*, path wholesome dhamma or *magga-kusala-dhamma*, etc...),
4. The effort to develop those wholesome states up to the arahant stage.

How should you practise? You must practise the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. When practising you must have enough of the four types of effort just mentioned. ‘Even if my flesh and blood were to dry up, leaving bones and sinews only, I will not give up my meditation.’

When you practise those things you should have the Four Bases of Success. They are:

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

1. Desire (*chandā*): strong and powerful desire to reach Nibbāna,
2. Effort (*vīriya*): strong and powerful effort to reach Nibbāna,
3. Consciousness (*citta*): strong and powerful consciousness to reach Nibbāna,
4. Investigation (*vīmaṃsa*): strong and powerful insight-knowledges to reach Nibbāna.

If we have strong enough desire we will attain our goal. There is nothing we cannot achieve if we have enough desire. If we have strong enough effort we will attain our goal. There is nothing we cannot achieve if we have enough effort. If we have strong enough consciousness we will attain our goal. There is nothing we cannot achieve if we have a strong and powerful mind. If we have strong enough insight-knowledge we will attain our goal. There is nothing we cannot achieve if we have enough wisdom.

When we practise Samatha and Vipassanā based on virtuous conduct we should also have the Five Controlling Faculties. They are:

1. Faith (*saddhā*): we must have strong enough faith in the Buddha and his teachings.
2. Effort (*vīriya*): we must have strong enough effort.
3. Mindfulness (*sati*): we must have strong enough mindfulness on the meditation object.
4. Concentration (*samādhi*): we must have strong enough concentration on the Samatha and Vipassanā objects. If it is a Samatha object, it must be an object like the ānāpāna-nimitta or kasiṇa-nimitta. If it is a Vipassanā object, it must be mentality, materiality, and their causes.
5. Wisdom (*paññā*): we must have enough understanding

Knowing and Seeing

about Samatha and Vipassanā objects.

These five controlling faculties control the meditator's mind, so it does not go away from the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to Nibbāna. If you do not have any of these controlling faculties you cannot reach your goal. You cannot control your mind. These controlling faculties have the power to control your mind, so that it does not go away from your meditation object. This power is also called will-power (*bala*). When we emphasize this will-power, those five faculties are called the five powers.

When we practise the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment are also very important. They are:

1. Mindfulness (*sati*)
2. Investigation of Phenomena (*dhammavicaya*): This is insight-knowledge.
3. Effort (*vīriya*)
4. Joy (*pīti*)
5. Tranquility (*passaddhi*)
6. Concentration (*samādhi*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*)

Then there is also the Noble Eightfold Path. It is:

1. Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)
2. Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*)
3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)
6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*)
8. Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*)

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

It is, in other words, virtuous conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*): the three trainings. We must practise these three trainings systematically.

Altogether, there are Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*).

It was the Buddha's wish that his disciples learn these Thirty-Seven Requisites of Enlightenment by heart, and practise them until arahantship. If we can do that, we can also give this inheritance to future generations. If so, we, as well as future generations, will receive benefits and happiness in this world, up to the attainment of Nibbāna.

The Buddha said further: '*Handa dāni bhikkhave āmantayāmi vo, vayadhammā saṅkhārā appamādena sampādetha.*' All mentality-and-materiality and their causes are called compounded things (*saṅkhāra*), because they are produced by their respective causes. These compounded things are always impermanent.

You should not forget about the nature of impermanence. It is because you forget about the nature of impermanence, you aspire for yourself, for sons, daughters, family, etc. If you know anything of the nature of impermanence, then throughout your life you will try to escape from it. So you should not forget how the Buddha exhorted us: 'Bhikkhus, all compounded things are subject to dissolution; therefore strive with diligence.'

The Buddha then said, '*Na ciram̐ Tathāgataṣṣa parinibbānam bhavissati. Ito tinnam̐ māsānam̐ accayena Tathāgato parinibbāyissati*': 'The time of the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna is near. Three months from now the Tathāgata will attain Parinibbāna.' That means he would pass away completely. Those words were really sad words to hear.

The Buddha also said: '*Paripakko vayo mayham̐, parittam̐ mama jīvitam̐*': 'My years are now full ripe; the life span left is short,' and the Buddha described his old age to the Venerable Ānanda: 'Now I am frail, Ānanda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old

cart, Ānanda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathāgata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ānanda, only when the Tathāgata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the signless concentration of mind, that his body is comfortable.’

The Buddha said further: ‘*Pahāya vo gamissāmi, kataṃ me saraṇamattano*’: ‘Departing, I go from you, relying on myself alone.’ That means he would attain Parinibbāna, and depart from them. He had made his own refuge up to the arahant stage. That is why the Buddha also said: ‘Therefore, Ānanda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge. And how, Ānanda, is a bhikkhu an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge, with the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge?’

The answer is as follows: ‘*Appamattā satīmato susīlā hotha bhikkhavo. Susamāhitasāṅkappā sacittamanurakkhatha*’: ‘Be diligent, then, O bhikkhus, be mindful and of virtue pure. With firm resolve, guard your own minds.’ So we must be mindful and diligent. Mindful of what? Mindful of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, or mentality-and-materiality, or in other words, mindful of compounded things. ‘*Susīlā hotha bhikkhavo*’, means, ‘Bhikkhus, you should try to purify your virtue. You should try to be a bhikkhu who has complete purification of virtue.’ This means we must cultivate the training of virtuous conduct, that is, right speech, right action and right livelihood.

The Buddha also said: ‘*Susamāhitasāṅkappā*.’ ‘*Susamāhita*’ means we must practise the training of concentration, that is right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. ‘*Sāṅkappā*’ means the training of wisdom, that is right thought and right view.

Then, ‘*appamattā*’ means to see with insight-knowledge the nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self in compounded things. ‘*Satīmato*’ means that when we practise the three

The Buddha's Wishes for His Disciples and His Teachings

trainings of virtuous conduct, concentration, and wisdom, we must have enough mindfulness.

Finally, the Buddha said: '*Yo imasmiṃ dhamma-vinaye appamatto vihessati. Pahāya jāti-sarīsāraṃ dukkhassantaṃ karissati*': 'Whoever earnestly pursues the Dhamma and the Discipline shall go beyond the round of births, and make an end of suffering.' So, if we want to reach the end of the round of rebirths, we must follow the Buddha's teachings; that is, the Noble Eightfold Path. Let us strive with effort before death takes place.

May all living beings be happy.

Knowing and Seeing

The Most Superior Type of Offering

(Thanksgiving Dhamma Talk)

There are two types of offering:

1. The offering which produces full fruition, and
2. The offering which produces no fruition.

Which type of offering do you prefer? Please answer.

I would like to explain the Buddha's wishes for his disciples (*sāvaka*), regarding offering in this dispensation. Your wish and the Buddha's wish may be the same or different. Let us look at the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta*:

‘On one occasion the Buddha was living in the Sakyan country, at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park. Then Mahāpajāpatigotamī went to the Buddha with a new pair of cloths, which she had had made by skilled weavers. After paying homage to the Buddha, she sat down at one side, and said to the Buddha: “Bhante, this new pair of cloths has been spun by me, and woven by me, specially for the Buddha. Bhante, let the Buddha out of compassion accept it from me.”

‘The Buddha then said: “Give it to the Saṅgha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Saṅgha, the offering will be made both to me and to the Saṅgha.”

‘She asked the Buddha in the same way three times, and the Buddha answered in the same way three times. Then Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Bhante, please accept the new pair of robes from Mahāpajāpatigotamī. Mahāpajāpatigotamī has been very helpful to the Buddha. Although she was your mother's sister, she was your nurse, your foster mother, and the one who gave you milk. She suckled the Buddha when the Bud-

dha's own mother died.

'The Buddha has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatigotamī. It is owing to the Buddha that Mahāpajāpatigotamī has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. It is owing to the Buddha that Mahāpajāpatigotamī abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor and intoxicants which are the basis of negligence. It is owing to the Buddha that Mahāpajāpatigotamī possesses perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, and that she possesses the virtue loved by noble ones (*ariya*). It is owing to the Buddha that Mahāpajāpatigotamī is free from doubt about the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha-sacca*), about the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*samudaya-sacca*), about the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha-sacca*), and about the Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*magga-sacca*). So the Buddha too has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatigotamī.'

'Then the Buddha replied as follows, "That is so, Ānanda, that is so. (*Evametam Ānanda; evametam Ānanda.*") When a disciple, owing to a teacher, has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, I say that it is not easy for that disciple to repay the teacher by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing the four requisites.

'When a disciple, owing to the teacher, has come to abstain from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor and intoxicants which are the basis of negligence, I say that it is not easy for that disciple to repay the teacher by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing the four requisites.

'When a disciple, owing to the teacher, has come to possess perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha,

The Most Superior Type of Offering

and to possess the virtue loved by noble ones (*ariya*), I say that it is not easy for that disciple to repay the teacher by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing the four requisites.

‘When a disciple, owing to the teacher, has become free from doubt about the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha-sacca*), about the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*samudaya-sacca*), about the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha-sacca*), and about the Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*magga-sacca*), I say that it is not easy for that disciple to repay the teacher by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing the four requisites.’”

Here, I would like to explain further. If a disciple knows the Four Noble Truths because of the guidance of a teacher, his insight-knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is comparatively more beneficial than his acts of respect, and providing of four requisites to the teacher. If he knows the Four Noble Truths through Stream-Entry Path Knowledge (*sotāpatti-maggañāṇa*), and Stream-Entry Fruition Knowledge (*sotāpatti-phalañāṇa*), then that insight-knowledge will help him escape from the four woeful planes (*apāya*). This result is wonderful. Those who are negligent in performing wholesome deeds are usually wandering in the four woeful planes. The four woeful planes are like their home: ‘*Pamattassa ca nāma cattāro apāyā sakagehasadisā.*’ They have only sometimes visited good planes. So it is a great opportunity to be able to escape from the four woeful planes. It cannot be compared with the disciple’s acts of respect, and providing of four requisites to the teacher. Again, if a disciple knows the Four Noble Truths through Once-Returner Path Knowledge (*sakadāgāmi-maggañāṇa*) and Once-Returner Fruition Knowledge (*sakadāgāmi-phalañāṇa*), he will come back to this human world once only. But if he knows the Four Noble Truths through Non-Returner Path Knowledge (*anāgāmi-maggañāṇa*), and Non-Returner Fruition Knowledge (*anāgāmi-*

phalaññāna), his insight-knowledge will help him escape from the eleven sensual realms. He will certainly be reborn in a brahma realm. He will never return to this sensual realm. Brahma bliss is far superior to sensual pleasure. In the brahma realm there is no man, no woman, no son, no daughter, no family. There is no fighting and quarrelling. It is not necessary to take any food. Their lifespan is very long. There is no one who can spoil their happiness. They are free from all dangers. But they are liable to decay; liable to death; liable to rebirth again if they do not attain arahantship.

Again, if a disciple knows the Four Noble Truths through the Arahant Path (*arahatta-magga*) and Arahant Fruition (*arahatta-phala*), his insight-knowledge will lead to his escape from the round of rebirths. After his Parinibbāna he will certainly attain Nibbāna, and he will have no more suffering at all, no more rebirth, decay, disease, death, etc... So these results are more valuable benefits than the disciple's acts of respect, and providing four requisites to the teacher. Even if a disciple offers an amount of requisites as high as Mount Meru, that offering is not enough to repay his debt because the escape from round of rebirths, or the escape from rebirth, decay, disease, and death is more valuable.

What are the Four Noble Truths?

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha-sacca*): this is the five aggregates. If a disciple knows the Noble Truth of Suffering, dependent upon a teacher, this insight-knowledge is more valuable than acts of respect, and providing the four requisites to the teacher.
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*samudaya-sacca*): this is dependent-origination. If a disciple knows dependent-origination dependent upon a teacher, this insight-knowledge is also more valuable than acts of respect, and providing four requisites to the teacher.

The Most Superior Type of Offering

3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha-sacca*): this is Nibbāna. If a disciple knows Nibbāna dependent upon a teacher, this insight-knowledge is also more valuable than acts of respect, and providing the four requisites to the teacher.
4. The Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*magga-sacca*): this is the Noble Eight-fold Path. In other words, this is insight-knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) and Path Knowledge (*maggañāṇa*).

If a disciple possesses insight-knowledge and Path Knowledge dependent upon a teacher, these insight-knowledges are more valuable than acts of respect, and providing the four requisites to the teacher, because these insight-knowledges lead to one's escape from the round of rebirths, but acts of respect, and providing the four requisites, cannot be a direct cause for escape from the round of rebirths. Indirectly, however, the four requisites can be a supporting cause for one who is practising Samatha-Vipassanā to reach Nibbāna.

Here again I would like to explain further. The five aggregates are the Noble Truth of Suffering. In the five aggregates is included the materiality-aggregate (*rūpa-khandha*). Materiality (*rūpa*) arises as kalāpas (small particles). When they are analysed, one sees that there are generally twenty-eight types of materiality. Please consider this problem. Outside the Buddha's dispensation, there is no teacher who can teach about these types of materiality, and how to classify them. Only a Buddha and his disciples can discern these types of materiality, and teach how to classify them. Again, in the five aggregates are included also the four mentality-aggregates (*nāma-khandha*). Apart from bhavaṅga, these mental formations arise according to thought-processes. The Buddha taught exactly how many mental-concomitants (*cetasika*) are associated with one consciousness (*citta*) in a mind-moment, and he taught how to discern and classify them. There is no teacher outside the Buddha's dispensation

Knowing and Seeing

who can show and teach these mental formations clearly, because there is no other teacher who fully understands. But if a disciple of this Sakyamuni Buddha practises hard and systematically, according to the instructions of the Buddha, he can discern these mental formations clearly. This is a unique opportunity for Buddhists. You should not miss this opportunity.

Again, dependent-origination is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. The Buddha also taught his disciples how to discern dependent-origination. When a disciple of the Buddha discerns dependent-origination according to the instructions of the Buddha, he fully understands the relationship between cause and effect. He can gain the insight-knowledge which knows that the past cause produces the present effect, and that the present cause produces the future effect. He knows that within the three periods, past, present and future, there is no creator who can create any effect, and that there is nothing which occurs without a cause. This knowledge can also be gained only in the Buddha's dispensation. You should not miss this opportunity either.

Again, when a disciple discerns dependent-origination he sees past lives and future lives. If you discern many past lives, you gain the insight-knowledge of knowing which type of unwholesome kamma produces rebirth in the woeful planes, and which type of wholesome kamma produces rebirth in good planes. Knowledge of the thirty-one planes, and the Law of Kamma, can be found in the teachings of only the Buddha. Outside the Buddha's dispensation there is no one who can come to know the thirty-one planes, and the Law of Kamma, that produces rebirth in each plane. You should not miss this opportunity either.

Again, if a disciple discerns cause and effect in future lives, he also sees the cessation of mentality-and-materiality. He can fully know when his mentality-and-materiality will cease. This is the Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering. This knowledge can be gained only in the Buddha's dispensation. You should not miss this opportunity either.

Again, the Buddha also taught the way, that is Samatha-

The Most Superior Type of Offering

Vipassanā, to reach that state of cessation. Samatha-Vipassanā means the Noble Eightfold Path. The Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality and the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition is right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). The Knowledge of the Cessation of Mentality-and-Materiality is also right view. The Knowledge of the Noble Eightfold Path is also right view. Application of mind to the Four Noble Truths is right thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*). These two are Vipassanā. To practise Vipassanā we must have Samatha concentration, which is right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), and right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). When we cultivate Samatha-Vipassanā, we should have purification of virtue, that is right speech (*sammā-vācā*), right action (*sammā-kammanta*), and right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*). Cultivating Samatha-Vipassanā based on virtuous conduct (*sīla*) is to cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path. This Noble Eightfold Path can be seen only in the Buddha's dispensation. You should not miss this opportunity either. Why? Insight-knowledge of the Four Noble Truths leads to a disciple's escape from the round of rebirths.

In the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta, mentioned in the beginning of the talk, the Buddha explains the fourteen types of personal offerings (*pāṭipuggalika-dakkhiṇa*). 'Ānanda, there are fourteen types of personal offerings:

1. One makes an offering to the Buddha; this is the first kind of personal offering.
2. One makes an offering to a Paccekabuddha; this is the second kind of personal offering.
3. One makes an offering to an arahant, a disciple of the Buddha; this is the third kind of personal offering.
4. One makes an offering to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of an arahantship; this is the fourth kind of personal offering.
5. One makes an offering to a non-returner (*anāgāmi*); this is the fifth kind of personal offering.

Knowing and Seeing

6. One makes an offering to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of non-return; this is the sixth kind of personal offering.
7. One makes an offering to a once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*); this is the seventh kind of personal offering.
8. One makes an offering to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of once-return; this is the eighth kind of personal offering.
9. One makes an offering to a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*); this is the ninth kind of personal offering.
10. One makes an offering to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of stream-entry; this is the tenth kind of personal offering.
11. One makes an offering to one outside the dispensation who is free from lust for sensual pleasures due to attainment of jhāna; this is the eleventh kind of personal offering.
12. One makes an offering to a virtuous ordinary person (*puthujjana*); this is the twelfth kind of personal offering.
13. One makes an offering to an immoral ordinary person; this is the thirteenth kind of personal offering.
14. One makes an offering to an animal; this is the fourteenth kind of personal offering.'

The Buddha then explained the benefits of these fourteen types of offerings. 'By making an offering to an animal, with a pure mind, the offering may be expected to repay a hundredfold.' That means it can produce its result in a hundred lives. Here 'pure mind' means offering without expecting any return or help from the receiver. One makes the merit to accumulate wholesome kamma only, with strong enough faith in the Law of Kamma. Suppose someone feeds a dog with the thought: 'this is my dog'; this is not a pure mind state. But if someone gives food to the birds, such as pigeons, then the offering is pure, because

The Most Superior Type of Offering

he does not expect any help from the birds. This applies also to the instances mentioned later. For example, if a person offers requisites to a bhikkhu with the thought that it will bring about success in his business, or other commercial activities, this is not offering with a pure mind. This type of offering does not produce superior benefits.

The Buddha explained further: ‘By making an offering with a pure mind to an immoral ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a thousandfold. By making an offering to a virtuous ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousandfold. By making an offering to one outside the dispensation who is free from lust for sensual pleasures due to attainment of jhāna, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousand times a hundred-thousandfold. By making an offering to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of stream-entry, the offering may be expected to repay incalculably, immeasurably. What then should be said about making an offering to a stream-enterer, or to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of once-return, or to a once-returner, or to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of non-return, or to a non-returner, or to one who has entered upon the way to the realisation of the fruit of arahantship, or to an arahant, or to a Paccekabuddha, or to a Buddha, Fully Enlightened One?’

Here, an offering means one offers food enough for once only. If a giver offers many times, such as, over many days or many months, there are no words to describe the benefits of those offerings. These are the different types of personal offerings (*pāṭipuggalika-dakkhiṇa*).

Offerings to the Saṅgha (*Saṅghika-Dāna*)

The Buddha then explained to the Venerable Ānanda: ‘There are seven kinds of offerings made to the Saṅgha, Ānanda.

1. One makes an offering to a Saṅgha of both bhikkhus

and bhikkhunīs headed by the Buddha; this is the first kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.

2. One makes an offering to a Saṅgha of both bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs after the Buddha has attained Parinibbāna; this is the second kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.
3. One makes an offering to a Saṅgha of bhikkhus; this is the third kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.
4. One makes an offering to a Saṅgha of bhikkhunīs; this is the fourth kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.
5. One makes an offering, saying: “Appoint so many bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs to me from the Saṅgha”; this is the fifth kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.
6. One makes an offering, saying: “Appoint so many bhikkhus to me from the Saṅgha”; this is the sixth kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.
7. One makes an offering, saying: “Appoint so many bhikkhunīs to me from the Saṅgha”; this is the seventh kind of offering made to the Saṅgha.’

These are the seven types of offering to the Saṅgha. The Buddha then compared the personal offerings with the offerings to the Saṅgha:

‘In future times, Ānanda, there will be members of the clan who are “yellow-necks”, immoral, of evil character. People will make offerings to those immoral persons on behalf of the Saṅgha. Even then, I say, an offering made to the Saṅgha is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way does an offering to a person individually ever have greater fruit than an offering made to the Saṅgha.’ This means that offerings made to the Saṅgha (*saṅghika-dāna*) are more beneficial than personal offerings (*pāṭipuggalika-dakkhiṇa*). If Mahāpajāpatigotamī offered the robes to the Saṅgha headed by the Buddha it would be far more beneficial. The result would be incalculable and immeasurable. So the Buddha urged her to offer them to the

The Most Superior Type of Offering

Saṅgha too.

The Buddha also explained the four kinds of purification of offering:

‘There are four kinds of purification of offering. What are the four? They are:

1. There is the offering that is purified by the giver, not by the receiver.
2. There is the offering that is purified by the receiver, not by the giver.
3. There is the offering that is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver.
4. There is the offering that is purified both by the giver and by the receiver.

(1) What is the offering that is purified by the giver, not by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus, the offering is purified by the giver, not by the receiver.

(2) What is the offering that is purified by the receiver, not by the giver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus, the offering is purified by the receiver, not by the giver.

(3) What is the offering that is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus, the offering is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver.

(4) What is the offering that is purified both by the giver and by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus, the offering is purified both by the giver and by the receiver. These are the four kinds of purification of offering.’

The Buddha further explained the four kinds of purification of offering:

Knowing and Seeing

(1) An offering is purified due to the giver's virtue, when a virtuous person with a clear, taintless mind, who has faith in that the fruit of kamma is great, makes an offering of what is righteously obtained to an immoral person. In this case:

- (a) The giver must be virtuous.
- (b) What is offered must be righteously obtained.
- (c) When the giver offers he must have a clear and taintless mind. He should have no attachment, anger, etc.
- (d) The giver must have strong enough faith in that the fruit of that kamma is great.

If the giver wants superior benefits then there should be these four factors. In this case, although the receiver is an immoral person, the offering is purified by the giver. The commentary mentions the case of Vessantara. Our bodhisatta in a past life as Vessantara, offered his son and daughter (the future Rāhula and Uppalavaṇṇā) to Jūjaka Brāhmaṇa who was immoral, of evil character. That offering was the final generosity pāramī for Vessantara. After fulfilling this last pāramī he was ready to attain enlightenment; he had only to wait for the time to mature. Because of this generosity pāramī, and other previous pāramīs, he was certain to attain Omniscient Knowledge (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). So we can say that this offering was a support to his attaining enlightenment. That offering was purified by Vessantara. At that time Vessantara was virtuous, of good character. What he offered was also rightly obtained. He had a clear and taintless mind because he had only one desire: to attain enlightenment. He had strong enough faith in the Law of Kamma and its result. So the offering was purified by the giver.

(2) An offering is purified by the receiver, when an immoral person with an unclear mind which is full of attachment, hatred, etc., without faith in the Law of Kamma, makes an offering of what is unrighteously obtained to a virtuous person. The commentary mentions the case of a fisherman. A fisherman living near the mouth of the Kalyāṇī River in Sri Lanka, had three times offered almsfood to a Mahāthera who was an arahant. At

The Most Superior Type of Offering

the time near death, the fisherman remembered his offering to that Mahāthera. Good signs of a deva plane appeared in his mind, so before he died he said to his relatives, ‘That Mahāthera saved me.’ After death he went to a deva plane. In this case the fisherman was immoral and of bad character, but the receiver was virtuous. So that offering was purified by the receiver.

(3) An offering is purified by neither the giver nor the receiver, when an immoral person with an unclear mind which is full of attachment, hatred, etc., without faith in the Law of Kamma, makes an offering of what is unrighteously obtained to an immoral person. The commentary mentions the case of hunter. When that hunter died, he went to the peta realm. Then his wife offered almsfood on his behalf, to a bhikkhu who was immoral, of bad character; so the peta could not call out ‘It is right (*sādhū*)’. Why? The giver too was immoral, and not virtuous, because she, as the wife of a hunter, had accompanied him when he killed animals. Also what she offered was unrighteously obtained, as it was acquired through killing animals. She had an unclear mind, because had she had a clear understanding mind, she would not have accompanied her husband. She did not have enough faith in the Law of Kamma and its results. Had she had enough faith in the Law of Kamma, she would never have killed living beings. Since the receiver too was immoral, of bad character, the offering could be purified by neither giver nor receiver. She offered almsfood in the same way three times, and no good result occurred; so the peta shouted, ‘An immoral person has three times stolen my wealth.’ Then she offered almsfood to a virtuous bhikkhu. At that time the peta could call out ‘It is good’, and escape from the peta realm.

Here I would like to say to the audience; if you want good results from offering you should fulfil the following four factors:

- (a) You must be virtuous,
- (b) What you offer must be righteously obtained,
- (c) You must have a clear and taintless mind,
- (d) You must have strong enough faith in the Law of

Kamma and its results.

Furthermore, if you are the receiver, and have strong enough loving-kindness and compassion for the giver, you should also be virtuous. If your virtue is accompanied by *jhāna* and insight-knowledge, it will be much better. Why? This type of offering can produce good results for the giver. Please note the next type of offering, the fourth kind of purification of offering.

(4) An offering is purified both by the giver and by the receiver, when it is a virtuous person with a clear and understanding mind, with faith in that the fruit of kamma is great, makes an offering of what is righteously obtained to a virtuous person. As for this type of offering, the Buddha said: ‘...Ānanda, I say, this type of offering will come to full fruition.’ In this case, the giver has the four factors:

- (a) He is virtuous,
- (b) What he offers is righteously obtained,
- (c) His mind is clear and taintless,
- (d) He has strong enough faith in the Law of Kamma and its result.

The receiver too is virtuous. This offering can produce incalculable, immeasurable results. If the receiver’s virtue is accompanied by *jhāna*, insight-knowledge, or Path and Fruition Knowledges, then that virtue is superior.

Here I would like to relate another sutta. This is the Nandamātā Sutta in the *Ānguttara Nikāya*, Chakka Nipāta. Once the Buddha was living near Sāvatti, at Jetavana in Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. Then Nanda’s mother, a lay disciple of the Buddha, who lived in Velukandaka, offered almsfood. Her offering was endowed with six factors, and the receiver was the Bhikkhu Saṅgha headed by the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna. The Buddha, with his divine eye, saw the offering and addressed the monks thus: ‘Bhikkhus, the lay disciple of Velukandaka has prepared an offering endowed with six factors to the Saṅgha, headed by Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna. How, bhikkhus, is an offering endowed with six factors? Bhikkhus,

The Most Superior Type of Offering

the giver should be endowed with three factors and the receiver also should be endowed with three factors.

What are the giver's three factors? Bhikkhus,

- (a) He is glad at heart before giving,
- (b) His heart is satisfied in giving,
- (c) He is joyful when he has given.

These are the three factors of the giver. What are the three factors of the receiver? Bhikkhus,

- (a) The receiver is free from attachment or trying to destroy attachment,
- (b) The receiver is free from anger or trying to destroy anger,
- (c) The receiver is free from delusion or trying to destroy delusion.

These are the three factors of the receiver.' Altogether there are six factors. If the offering is endowed with these six factors, it produces immeasurable and noble results.

The Buddha explained further: 'Bhikkhus, it is not easy to grasp the measure of merit of such offering by saying: "This much is the yield in merit, the yield in goodness, accumulated for wholesome kamma hereafter, ripening to happiness, leading to heaven, leading to happiness, longed for and loved." Verily the great mass of merit, wholesome kamma, is just reckoned unreckonable, immeasurable. Bhikkhus, just as it is not easy to grasp the measure of water in the great ocean and to say: "There are so many pailfuls, so many hundreds of pailfuls, so many thousands of pailfuls, so many hundreds of thousands of pailfuls"; for that great mass of water is reckoned unreckonable, immeasurable; even so bhikkhus, it is not easy to grasp the measure of merit in an offering endowed with the six factors. Verily the great mass of merit is reckoned unreckonable, immeasurable.'

Why? The giver was endowed with the four factors of the *Dakkhīṇāvibhaṅga Sutta*. They are:

- (a) She was virtuous,

Knowing and Seeing

- (b) Her offering had been righteously obtained,
- (c) Her mind was clear and taintless,
- (d) She had strong enough faith in the Law of Kamma and its results.

The three factors mentioned in the Nandamātā Sutta were also fulfilled. They are:

- (a) She was glad at heart before giving,
- (b) Her heart was satisfied in giving,
- (c) She was joyful when she had given.

These factors are very important for a giver, whether male or female. If he or she expects incalculable and immeasurable good results, he or she should try to fulfil those factors. But according to the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta, the receiver too must be virtuous. According to the Nandamātā Sutta, it should be a bhikkhu or bhikkhunī who has cultivated Samatha-Vipassanā meditation up to the arahant stage, or who is cultivating Samatha-Vipassanā meditation to destroy attachment (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

Now in Yi-Tung Temple, there are many bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs who are practising Samatha and Vipassanā meditation to destroy attachment, anger, and delusion totally. They are also virtuous. So we may say that now there are worthy receivers here. The givers too may be virtuous. Their minds may be clear and taintless. What they have offered has been righteously obtained. They may have strong enough faith in the Triple Gem, and the Law of Kamma and its results. They are glad before giving, and are satisfied in giving. They are joyful after they have given. So we can say that the offerings made in these two months have been in accordance with the Buddha's wishes. They are noble offerings. If the givers expect good results in the future, certainly this wholesome kamma will fulfil their desire. Why? The Buddha said in the Saṅkhārupapatti Sutta: '*Ijjhati bhikkhave sīlavato cetopañidhi visuddhattā*': 'Bhikkhus, a virtuous person's wish will certainly be fulfilled by purification of virtue.' So, a virtuous person's wholesome kamma can produce

The Most Superior Type of Offering

the result of his desire:

1. If he wants to become a Buddha he can become a Buddha,
2. If he wants to become a Paccekabuddha he can become a Paccekabuddha,
3. If he wants to become a Chief Disciple (*aggasāvaka*) he can become a Chief Disciple,
4. If he wants to become a Great Disciple (*mahāsāvaka*) he can become a Great Disciple,
5. If he wants to become an Ordinary Disciple (*pakatisāvaka*) he can become an Ordinary Disciple.

This is only when his pāramīs have matured. Wishing alone is not enough to attain those respective types of enlightenment (*bodhi*). Again:

1. If he wants human happiness after death, he can have human happiness in the human realm.
2. If he wants to go to the deva realm, he can go to the deva realm.
3. If he wants to go to the brahma realm after death, this wholesome kamma can be a support for him to go to the brahma realm.

How? If his offering fulfils the previously mentioned factors, the receiver is his mind's object. He has strong enough loving-kindness and compassion for the receiver. If he at that time practises lovingkindness meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*), his loving-kindness jhāna will take him to the brahma realm after death. In this way his offering is a support for him to go to the brahma realm. So, if the giver wants to go to the brahma realm after death, he should practise lovingkindness meditation up to the lovingkindness jhāna stage. If he has practised lovingkindness jhāna, and offers almsfood, his wholesome kamma is a very superior and powerful support for him to go to the brahma realm. So, if you want good results in the future, you should also practise lovingkindness meditation up to the lovingkindness jhāna stage. Among the three types of happiness; human happiness,

Knowing and Seeing

deva happiness, and brahma happiness, brahma happiness is the highest. There is no mundane happiness higher than brahma happiness. It is the most superior happiness in the thirty-one planes.

This is the first type of offering I mentioned in the beginning of this talk, namely, the offering which produces full fruition. Do you prefer this type of offering? If you do, then please listen to the following stanza from the Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta:

*‘Yo vītarāgo vītarāgesu dadāti dānaṃ
Dhammena laddhaṃ supasannacitto
Abhisaddahaṃ kammaphalaṃ uḥhāraṃ
Taṃ ve dānaṃ āmisadānanamagganti’*

‘Bhikkhus, I say that when an arahant, with clear and taintless mind, placing faith in that the fruit of kamma is great, offers to an arahant what is righteously obtained, then that offering indeed is the most superior of all worldly offerings.’ In this case, the four factors present in the giver are:

1. The giver is an arahant,
2. What is offered is righteously obtained,
3. He has a clear and taintless mind,
4. He has strong enough faith in the Law of Kamma and its results.

One more factor is necessary, namely:

5. The receiver also must be an arahant.

The Buddha taught that this type of offering is the most superior type of worldly offering. He praised this type of offering as the most superior. Why? This offering produces no result. Why? The giver has destroyed delusion and all attachment to any life. Ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*), are the main causes for kamma, that is volitional-formations (*saṅkhāra*). In this case, volitional-formations means good actions like making an offering to the receiver. But this kamma cannot produce any

The Most Superior Type of Offering

result, because there are no supporting causes; there is no ignorance (*avijjā*), and no craving (*taṇhā*). If the root of a tree is totally destroyed the tree cannot produce any fruit. In the same way, an arahant's offering cannot produce any result, because he has totally destroyed those roots; ignorance and craving. He has no expectation of a future life. In the Ratana Sutta the Buddha taught the following stanza:

*‘Khīṇaṃ purāṇaṃ nava natthi sambhavaṃ
virattacittā’yatike bhavasmim
te khīṇabījā avirūhichandā
nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ padīpo
idampi sanghe ratanaṃ paṇītaṃ
etena saccena suvatthi hotu.’*

‘Arahants have exhausted all old wholesome and unwholesome kamma. New wholesome and unwholesome kamma cannot occur in them. They have exhausted the seeds of rebirth, that is, ignorance, craving, and kammic force. They have no expectation of a future life. All their mentality-and-materiality will cease like a lighted oil lamp when the oil and wick are exhausted. By this truth may all beings be happy and free from all dangers.’

This is an assertion of truth. By the assertion of this truth all the people in Vesāli became free from dangers. Vesāli was a city visited by drought, famine, evil yakkhas (lower devas), and epidemic diseases. The people of Vesāli asked the Buddha to help them, and he taught them the Ratana Sutta as a way to become free from dangers.

An arahant's offering is the most superior because it produces no result in the future. If there is no future life, there will be no rebirth, decay, disease and death. This is the most superior. This is the second type of offering mentioned at the beginning of this Dhamma talk: an offering which produces no fruition.

On the other hand, if due to an offering there is a good result, such as happiness in the human realm, happiness in the deva realm, or happiness in the brahma realm, then there is still suf-

Knowing and Seeing

fering. The very least is that they are still subject to rebirth, subject to disease, subject to decay, and subject to death. If the giver still has attachment to sensual objects, animate and inanimate, then when those objects are destroyed or have died, there will be in him sorrow, lamentation, physical suffering, mental suffering, and despair.

Please consider this question: Can we say that an offering is superior when it produces rebirth, decay, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, physical suffering, mental suffering, and despair? Please consider also this question: Can we say that an offering is superior when it produces no result: produces no rebirth, no decay, no disease, no death, no sorrow, no lamentation, no physical suffering, no mental suffering, and no despair? This is why the Buddha praised the second type of offering as the most superior. Now you may understand the meaning of this Dhamma talk. At the beginning of this Dhamma talk I mentioned two types of offering:

1. The offering which produces full fruition,
2. The offering produces no fruition.

Which type of offering do you prefer? Now you know the answer.

But if the giver is not an arahant, how then can he make the second type of offering? In the Nandamātā Sutta mentioned before, the Buddha taught that there are two ways he can do this: the receiver is free from attachment, anger, and delusion, or he is trying to destroy attachment, anger, and delusion. You can say that the offering is also most superior if the giver too is trying to destroy attachment, anger, and delusion; if he at the time of offering practises Vipassanā, that is, if:

1. He discerns his own mentality-and-materiality, and discerns their impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) nature;

The Most Superior Type of Offering

2. He discerns the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of external mentality-and-materiality, especially the receiver's mentality-and-materiality.
3. He discerns the ultimate materiality (*paramattha-rūpa*) of the offerings.

When he looks at the four elements in the offerings, he sees the kalāpas easily. Then when he analyses the kalāpas, he discerns eight types of materiality: earth-element, water-element, fire-element, air-element, colour, smell, taste and nutritive-essence. They are materiality produced by temperature (*utuja-rūpa*). They are produced by the fire-element in each kalāpa. They are the generations of the fire-element. Furthermore, he should discern the impermanent, suffering, and non-self nature of the materiality produced by temperature (*utuja-rūpa*). If he is able to do this type of Vipassanā, his attachment, anger and delusion are suppressed at the time of offering, and also usually his offering cannot produce any result, and so we can say that also this type of offering is the most superior.

He can do this type of Vipassanā before, after, or while offering. But his Vipassanā must be strong and powerful. He must have practised up to the stage of Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*) at least. Only then can he practise this type of Vipassanā. We should not miss this opportunity either. This opportunity arises only in this dispensation. But you may ask how can we make this type of offering if we have no insight-knowledge. I would like to suggest that you then make your offering with the following thought: 'May this offering be the supporting cause to reach Nibbāna.' This is because the Buddha many times taught to make offerings with the wish for Nibbāna.

I would like to conclude my Dhamma talk by repeating the stanza from the Ratana Sutta:

*'Khīnaṃ purāṇaṃ nava natthi sambhavaṃ
virattacittā'yatike bhavasmīṃ
te khīṇabījā avirūhichandā*

Knowing and Seeing

*nibbanti dhīrā yathāyam padīpo
idampi sanghe ratanaṃ paṇītaṃ
etena saccena suvatthi hotu.'*

‘Arahants have exhausted all old wholesome and unwholesome kamma. New wholesome and unwholesome kamma cannot occur in them. They have exhausted the seeds of rebirth, that is, ignorance, craving, and kammic force. They have no expectation of a future life. All their mentality-and-materiality will cease like a lighted oil lamp when the oil and wick are exhausted. By this truth may all beings be happy and free from all dangers.’

May all beings be well and happy.

Glossary of Untranslated Pāli Terms

This glossary contains the Pāli terms left untranslated in the text. These terms have been left untranslated because the English translation has, in some way or other, been considered awkward or inadequate, if not misleading. The definitions have been kept as concise as at all possible, and refer to the meaning of the terms as they are used in the text of this book: according to the Theravāda tradition. For more extensive explanations of the terms, the reader is referred to the text itself, where most of the terms are, at some time or other, discussed. (An asterisk indicates which of the terms are discussed.)

Some of the terms in this glossary do have an adequate translation, but have been retained in the Pāli when in compounds, as for example, ‘ānāpāna-jhāna’, rather than ‘in-and-out-breath jhāna’, for obvious reasons.

Abhidhamma the third of what are called the Three Baskets (*Tipiṭaka*) of the Theravāda Canon; teachings of the Buddha on a far deeper level than in the suttas; deals only with ultimate reality; seen in Vipassanā meditation. (cf. sutta)

ānāpāna* in-and-out-breath; subject for Samatha meditation and later Vipassanā. (cf. Samatha)

arahant* ultimate stage in Theravāda meditation development; an arahant has eradicated all defilements, and at his or her death (Parinibbāna) there is no rebirth. (cf. kamma)

bhante venerable sir.

bhavaṅga* continuity of identical consciousnesses, broken only when thought-processes occur, the object of which is the same as that which arose at time near death in past-life; the bhavaṅga and its object are visible only in light of concentration. (cf. Abhidhamma)

bhikkhu / bhikkhunī Buddhist monk / nun; bhikkhu with two

hundred and twenty-seven precepts to observe; in Theravāda bhikkhunī lineage no longer extant; a bhikkhu's major duty is to work at trying to escape from the round of rebirths.

bodhisatta* a person who has vowed to become a Buddha; the ideal in Mahāyāna tradition; he is a bodhisatta for innumerable lives prior to his enlightenment, after which he is a Buddha. (cf. Buddha)

brahmā* inhabitant of one of twenty in thirty-one realms described in Buddhist cosmology, invisible to human-eye, visible in light of concentration; the realms are very much higher than human realm. (cf. deva, peta)

Buddha* a person fully enlightened without teacher, who has by himself discovered and teaches the Four Noble Truths. (cf. bodhisatta, Paccekabuddha)

deva inhabitant of realm just above human realm; invisible to human-eye, visible in light of concentration. (cf. brahmā, peta)

Dhamma* (capitalized) the Teachings of the Buddha; the noble truth.

dhamma* (uncapitalized) phenomenon; state; mind-object.

jhāna* increasingly advanced and subtle state of concentration on a specific object, with mind aware and increasingly pure. (cf. Samatha)

kalāpa* small particle; the smallest unit of materiality seen in conventional reality; invisible to human-eye, visible to light of concentration.

kamma* (Sanskrit: *karma*) action; force from volition which makes good actions produce good results, and bad actions produce bad results.

kaṣiṇa* meditation object which represents a quality in conventional reality, e.g. earth, colour, space and light; used for Samatha meditation. (cf. Samatha)

Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition prevalent in China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, and Bhutan, and the Tibetan tradition. (The majority of the listeners at these talks were Mahāyāna monks and nuns.) (cf. Theravāda)

Mahāthera Buddhist monk of twenty years standing or more.

Nibbāna* (Sanskrit: *nirvana*) final enlightenment; the cessation element; an ultimate reality, attained after discerning and surpassing the ultimate realities of mentality-and-materiality; it is seen after the insight knowledges have been matured; it is non-self and uniquely permanent and peaceful; not a place. (Language is at a loss to describe Nibbāna, because Nibbāna is beyond the range of concepts upon which language relies.)

nimitta* sign; image upon which meditator concentrates; product of the mind, which depends on perception and level of concentration. (cf. *kasiṇa*)

parikamma-nimitta preparatory sign in meditation.

uggaha-nimitta taken-up sign, image which is exact mental replica of object of meditation.

paṭibhāga-nimitta purified and clear version of *uggaha-nimitta*, appears at stable perception and concentration.

Paccekabuddha person enlightened without teacher, who has by himself discovered the Four Noble Truths, but does not teach. (cf. *Buddha*)

Pāḷi ancient Indian language spoken by the Buddha; all Theravāda texts are in Pāḷi, language is otherwise not extant.

pāramī ten *pāramīs*: generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity; qualities always developed for the benefit of others.

Parinibbāna death of a Buddha, a Paccekabuddha, and all other Arahants; after this no more rebirth, no more materiality and mentality. (cf. *arahant*, *Nibbāna*)

peta inhabitant of realm lower than human realm, but higher than animals, invisible to human-eye, visible in light of concentration.

rūpa / arūpa* materiality / immateriality.

Samatha* serenity; practice of concentrating the mind on an object, and developing higher and higher states of concentration, whereby the mind becomes serene. (cf. *jhāna*, *Vipassanā*)

Knowing and Seeing

saṅgha multitude, assembly; bhikkhus of past, present and future, worldwide, as a group; separate group of bhikkhus, e.g. bhikkhus in one monastery. (cf. bhikkhu)

sīla moral factors of the Noble Eightfold Path: right speech, right action, right livelihood; to be observed and cultivated by all Buddhists in varying degrees. (cf. bhikkhu)

sutta single discourse in the second basket of what is called the Three Baskets (Tipiṭaka) of Pāḷi Canon; teachings of the Buddha on a practical level; deals only with conventional truth. (cf. Abhidhamma)

Tathāgata one who has gone thus; the epithet used by the Buddha when referring to himself.

Theravāda Buddhist tradition prevalent in Sri-Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia. (The Pa-Auk Sayadaw is a Theravāda monk.) (cf. Mahāyāna)

Vipassanā discernment of specific characteristics of materiality and mentality, causes and results, in ultimate reality, and their general characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. (cf. Abhidhamma, arahant, Nibbāna)

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