

Maha-Si Insight Meditation

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Chapter I

Admonishment and purification of virtue (*sīla*)

Insight meditation (*vipassanā*) is the core of the Buddha's exhortation as it is the basis upon which one realizes mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*); the triple characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*); and the four noble truths (*ariya sacca*) with one's own personal understanding or wisdom. When one is negligent of insight meditation, once becomes negligent of the Buddha's noble message *in toto*. Consequently, those with some faith could eventually lose it. Those who are already engaged in contemplation could lose their confidence in insight meditation and in the attainment of path and fruition knowledge. They will lose this golden opportunity to realise the Buddha's teachings.

The following stanza from the *Dhammapada*, clearly and directly articulates this notion:

*Yo sāsanaṃ arahataṃ
Ariyānaṃ dhamma jīvināṃ
Paṭikkosati dummedho
Diṭṭhiṃ nissāya pāpikāṃ
Phalāni kaṭṭakasseva
Attaghaññāya phallati. (Dhp.164)*

Whoever, on account of perverted views
Reviles the Teaching of the Arahats,
The Noble Ones of righteous life,
That fool, like the bamboo,
Produces fruits only for self-destruction.

(Dhp-AB. 164)

A golden opportunity and noble doctrine

If you have already discovered the Buddha's doctrine, you are fortunate as you are endowed with the golden opportunity to expect the highest achievements in this very life, being the attainment of path and fruition knowledge and enlightenment.

A rare opportunity

This rare opportunity will not last forever. A human lifespan is short and has its limitations. Aging is a rapid process and final death is unavoidable. No one can be sure of their time of death. Even a person living with a full spirit would not know the time of death beforehand, not even for a split second. Being burdened with daily chores and duties, the practice is postponed. We experience physical weakness, sickness and disease and finally, death. We are often occupied enough to keep ourselves away from meditation, although we desire to strive in the practice. Then of course, there are those who do not really wish to meditate.

Don't waste precious time

Having read this treatise, how are you going to make use of this precious and valuable opportunity? Don't you think that you need to be endowed with the *Dhamma*, which is not one worth of just listening to, but is also to be realized? Or should one simply indulge in seeking sense-pleasure that is insatiable and not able to appease the hunger for more desire? Don't you feel that it is now time for you to strive for this priceless *dhamma*, to avoid regret and disappointment at the last minute of your life, as you lie on your death bed, helpless and beyond recovery?

The following exhortation of the Buddha may awaken one's mind:

*Ajj'eva kiccam ātappam
Ko jaññā maraṇam suve?
Na hi no saṅgaran tena
Mahāsenena maccunā (M. 131)*

Today the effort must be made;
Tomorrow death may come, who knows?
No bargain with mortality
Can keep him and his hordes away (MLD. 131)

Realizing the mistake too late is difficult

Once the opportunity is missed, one may regret and be overcome by remorse when feeble and in old age or when facing death. One may also become remorseful in the lower realm of intense suffering and think to oneself: “Oh! It is a great loss!” Realizing this bitter fate too late, one will suffer persistent remorse and disappointment. To avoid such an unfortunate encounter, attentively read the following admonishment:

*Jhāyatha bhikkhave, mā pamādattha, mā pacchā
vippaṭisārino ahuvattha; ayam vo amhākam
anusāsanī'ti.(M. 19)*

“Meditate (referring to *vipassanā*), o monk, don't be lazy and indolent, or else you will be remorseful and regretful later (when it is too late to make use of the golden opportunity). This is our (repeated) admonishment to you.”

This message of the Buddha is rich in the quality of *svakkhāta* (well explained, well expounded); rich in the quality of *sandiṭṭhika* (to be directly experienced by oneself);

rich in the quality of *akālika* (timeless and able to give results at anytime); rich in the quality of *ehipassika* (invites one to come and see and to experience). Have you ever verified these qualities of the doctrine yourself?

Do not belittle

Perhaps you have already tried some meditation methods, probably under a quack master and feel completely discouraged. But, you now have hope. Practice the method put forward in this book systematically under a veteran master for a short period of time- may be seven days or for a fortnight and you can see the benefits yourself. When you see the benefits yourself and develop exceptional or special knowledge, you will reach a positive estimation about the comprehensive and complete method conveyed in this book.

Do not underestimate

You have to grasp the message conveyed in this text with the assistance of the *Pāli*-canon, the commentaries, and sub-commentaries. Be armed with right reflection and read it from the beginning through the middle till the end to understand it with clarity. Try to grasp the message and retain it in your heart.

An encouragement

Don't be discouraged at first glance at canonical and other *Pāli*-quotations, thinking that it will be difficult to understand. Equally you must not rush to conclude that the standard of this treatise is higher than your understanding and is only digestible by high-level scholars. If you happen to come across unclear or unknown terms, you should not hesitate to consult a suitable scholar and seek clarification.

Concise explanations

The language used here is concise. This is to ensure that the book is not too voluminous. For the same reason, detailed explanations are not provided, keeping in mind that the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and its explanatory notes are readily available and are not difficult to find.

The language

Classical monastic language is purposefully avoided (compared to the common usage of classical monastic language in religious books written in Myanmar). Instead, a style of common usage is adopted. Explanations, as far as possible, are given in common diction. Usage of common language is especially maintained in Chapter five.

The Buddha himself avoided *Sanskrit*, which was confined to the pandits and to classical literature. The Buddha used *Māghadī (Pāli)*, which is common among villagers and children. This is a way to respect the common language, but one must not rush to underestimate it, thinking that it is inferior or undesirably modernized.

Beginners with less knowledge

If you consider yourself a beginner, it is recommended that you read chapters four and five carefully. Chapter five consists of a summary of both chapters and if you wish to save time, you may choose to read that chapter only. It is the author's assurance that if you read and understand Chapter five carefully, it is sufficient to commence the practice of insight meditation, which could lead to an attainment of the desired knowledge of path and fruition and the final bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Disciplinary rules for the *bhikkhus*

Purity of virtue

Sīlavisuddhi nāma supārisuddham pāṭimokkha-samvarādi catubbhidham sīlam. (Vism. 18, 1)

“Purification of virtue is the quite purified fourfold virtue beginning with *pāṭimokkha* restraint.”

(PoP. 18, 1)

This general explanation about the purification of virtue could be analysed separately in respect of the purification of virtue of *bhikkhus* and that of the laity.

A monk with higher ordination (*bhikkhu*) should restrain himself in four ways, namely:

1.) *Pāṭimokkha samvara sīla*:

The monastic code of discipline - the basket of discipline comprising the restraint of physical and verbal deeds

2.) *Indriya samvara sīla*:

Virtue by restraint of the faculties

3.) *Ājīva pārisuddhi sīla*:

Virtue concerning livelihood

4.) *Paccaya sannissita sīla*:

Virtue concerning the requisites

Purification of morality (sīla)

1.) *Pāṭimokkha samvara sīla* (basket of discipline) comprises the restraint of physical and verbal actions according to the monastic code of discipline. If a *bhikkhu* maintains this

morality, he will be free from sorrow and fears. This is a common characteristic of virtue.

The canonical indications of one's purification of virtues are as follows:

“*Anumattesu vajjesu bhaya dassāvī, samādāya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu.*” (*Vibh. p. 244; Vism. 1, 42*)

“Seeing with fear the slightest fault he trains himself by undertaking the precepts of training.”
(PoP. 1, 42a + 52)

Even the slightest fault, *dubbhāsita* (wrong speech) or *dukkāṭa* (wrong doing) could be dangerous and prevent one from achieving path and fruition knowledge. Depending on the circumstances, it could lead one to the lower world of intense suffering (*apāya*), immediately upon death. Knowing the gravity of these mistakes, one must restrain oneself from transgressing these precepts. If there is a lapse, one should clarify or rectify the misdeed immediately, just like a child that touches burning charcoal. A *bhikkhu* must rectify the misdeed by the prescribed method or procedure set out in the *Pāṭimokkha*. Either by confessing or if required by undergoing penance with or without probation or by forfeiting the relevant item one must purify oneself.

A *bhikkhu*, when fallen into a lapse (*āpatti*), must act according to the *Pāṭimokkha* rules by confessing it to one or more *bhikkhus* or to the whole *saṅgha*. This is the way of purification of virtue according to the *Pāṭimokkha*.

2.) Restraint of faculties (*indriya samvara*) is a vast subject and will therefore be discussed later in this book.

3.) The four requisites of a *bhikkhu* (robes, alms food, dwellings and medicines) should be earned in an appropriate

manner. Following such an appropriate livelihood is fulfilling the ‘purity of livelihood’ (*ājīva pārisuddhi*). It is described in the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification) as “*paccaya pariyesana vāyāmo*”, being the right effort in the search for requisites. There are many improper ways of livelihood which are detailed in the Path of Purification (PoP. 1, 60 – 84).

If a *bhikkhu* is accustomed to improper ways of livelihood, he could experience defeat (*pārājikā*); initial and subsequent meetings of the community (*saṅghādisesā*); commit a grave offence (*thullaccayā*); and attract a light penalty (*dukkāṭa*). By repeated usage of items, entailing forfeiture, he could fall into *dukkāṭa* lapses again and again, each time that the requisites are used. A repetitive falling into such a lapse suggests that his purity in virtues in accordance with *Pāṭimokkha* rules is in danger. This could cause danger to the paths to heaven and to noble path-knowledge. If such a *bhikkhu* is keen to rectify the lapse by the appropriate methods mentioned above, he can purify his virtues and be free of dangers. It is imperative that a *bhikkhu* takes care to purify his livelihood in the event that he feels that his livelihood is impure.

4.) In the Path of Purification, virtue concerning requisites (*paccaya sannissita sīla*) is described as follows: “[r]eflecting wisely, he uses the robes only for protection from cold, for protection from heat...etc.” (PoP. 1, 85).

Accordingly, each time that one uses the four requisites, one must contemplate on their utility aspect. In order to be purified with this virtue, one must reflect on the utility aspect, each time one uses the four requisites. For example, if a *bikkhu* forgets to reflect on alms food, for each morsel that he swallows, he experiences the lapse called ‘use as

debt' (*iṇa paribhoga*), described in the Path of Purification (PoP. 1, 28).

'Use as debt' (*iṇa paribhoga*)

In this context, the designation 'use as debt' does not mean that the *bhikkhu* has to compensate the used item specifically to the giver in a later existence. In fact, it means usage as debt. The following example clarifies the usage of debt. A donor, when making a donation to a virtuous *bhikkhu*, in return receives or earns the maximum benefits (merits) as the virtue of the receiver, who is pure, qualifies the condition. If the receiving *bhikkhu* uses the donated item without proper reflection, he fails in virtue concerning requisites. This deprives the donor of his merits. This makes the donation somewhat like a transaction made in debt, hence it is given the commentarial expression, 'use as debt'.

A further commentarial explanation is provided below:

Iṇa vasena paribhogo iṇa paribhogo. Paṭiggāhakato dakkhiṇā visuddhiyā abhāvato inam gahetvā paribhogo viyāti attho. (Vism-Mṭī, Singh. p. 61)

“Usage by way of a debt is using as debt. The meaning is: For the receiver, who is not developing purity with regard to the gift, it is like using (something) taken (on a) debt.”

With this meaning in mind, one should understand the explanation given in the *Visuddhimagga* as stated below:

Yathā ināyiko attano ruciyā icchitam desam gantum na labhati. Evam iṇa paribhoga yutto lokato nissaritam na labhatī'ti. (Vism-Mṭī. Singh. p. 63)

“Just as a debtor is not free to go to a locality as he likes, so too in a debt one is bound and cannot get (the opportunity) to escape from the world.”

If a *bhikkhu* falls into the lapse of ‘use as debt’, which means usage without reflection, then he will not be able to overcome craving towards the item he uses. A lack of reflection results in an increased likelihood for him to become attached to the item and a greater opportunity for defilements to creep in. By giving into these defilements, he falls into the lower world (*apāya*) upon death. According to the commentary, this *bhikkhu*, commits ‘use as debt’ and misses the golden opportunity for liberation from *samsāra*. The example of *Bhikkhu Tissa*, which is given below, further exemplifies how attachment can lead one to the lower realm of existence.

Bhikkhu Tissa had an extraordinary attachment to his robes. When he passed away, he was reborn as a louse in his own robes. *Bhikkhu Tissa*’s belongings automatically became the property of the *saṅgha* (*saṅghika*) in accordance with the set rules of the *bhikkhus*. If a *bhikkhu* passes away, his properties pass to the community. When, according to custom, the other *bhikkhus* distributed *Bhikkhu Tissa*’s property, the louse started to protest by yelling that these monks were stealing his robes. The Buddha, hearing this lamentation with his divine ear (clairaudience), understood that this distribution would lead this louse to hell and stopped the distribution. After seven days had passed, the louse died naturally and was reborn in the comfort of the *Tusita*-heaven. Then only the Buddha permitted the other monks to distribute *Bhikkhu Tissa*’s robes. This incident is recorded in the commentary of the *Dhammapada*.

A reason to become frightened

It is clear from this narration that if *Bhikkhu Tissa* did not indulge in such an attachment to his old robes, he would have immediately gone to the *Tusita*-heaven after his death without the delay of seven days. Equally, had the Buddha not stopped the distribution, his attachment would have caused him into a rebirth in the lower realm. It demonstrates how such an attachment could have such a frightening influence on one's destiny.

The following utterance made the Buddha, further illustrates this:

*Ayasā'va malam samuṭṭhitam - tat uṭṭhāya tam eva
khādati,*

*Evam atidhona-cārinam - sāni kammāni
nayanti duggatim.*

(*Dhp.* 240)

Like rust in iron that keeps arising,
Being there destroys the very thing,
So those indulging much in luxuries
To woeful states lead their own deeds

(*DP-M.* 240)

Some commentators state that a person who uses requisites as a debt is unable to attain any fruition-knowledge in this lifetime, as he must pay back the debt to the donor first. This assertion is not expressly asserted in the *Pāli* canon or the *Visuddhimagga*. It could be argued that the commentary is deficient in that it does not accord with the authenticity of what is stated by traditional teachers.

Inappropriateness

Some teachers state that “use as debt” is far more serious than *pārājikā* (use as theft), on the basis that a *bhikkhu*, who commits a *pārājikā* (use as theft) can undergo rehabilitation and have hope in the attainment of path and fruition knowledge in the present life. Evidence in support of this assertion could be extracted from the commentary provided in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Gradual Sayings) as follows:

Imam pana desanam sutvā jātasamvegā ṭhānam jahitvā sāmaṇera bhumiyaṃ ṭhitā dasa sīlāni pūretvā yoniso-manasikāre yuttapayuttā keci sotapannā keci sakadāgāmi, keci anāgāmino ahesum; keci devaloke nibbattimsu. Evam pārājikā pannānampi saphalā ahoṣi. (A-com. I, 6, 3; Singh.)

Sixty *bhikkhus*, after listening to the sermon, *Aggikkhandopama Sutta* [A, VII, 7, 8, (68)], stepped back to novicehood and undertook meditation to become stream-enterers, once-returners, and some non-returners. Some went to the heavenly realms. The sixty *bhikkhus*, who had fallen into a state of *pārājikā āpatti*, were able to overcome their fate and reap beneficial results. Accordingly, *bhikkhus*, after committing *pārājikā* and *thullaccaya* can correct themselves and realize path and fruition-knowledge. A *bhikkhu*, who is in tact in *pāṭimokkha* restraint but has fallen into the lapse of “use as debt”, has no reason, not to hope for an attainment of path and fruition knowledge in this very life. It is inappropriate that they are denied the opportunity.

Further, it should be noted that ‘use as debt’, or use without reflection is not listed under the *anā desanā* (disciplinary code) in the *vinaya pitaka*. Accordingly, usage without reflection does not appear to amount to a breach of the disciplinary code or a transgression of any *vinaya* rule.

Equally, it does not appear to fall into any other kind of danger.

Considering all these aspects, it could be concluded that ‘use as debt’ is not as serious as a *dukkaṭa* lapse.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, consuming permitted medicinal tonics without mindfulness also results in a lapse.

One may query whether this amounts to a breach of virtue.

An explanation of the commentary is as follows: medicinal tonics are recommended only to someone who has a proper reason like a sickness or a disease. The one who consumes must therefore be aware of its utility value, prior to consumption. If a *bhikkhu* consumes medicinal tonics without a justification, it is a consumption of food without a reason. As set out in the following expression, this amounts to a *dukkaṭa āpatti*:

“*Yāmakālikam sattāhakālikam yāvajīvikam
āhāratthāya paṭigaṇhāti, āpatti dukkaṭassa.
Ajjhohāre ajjhohāre āpatti dukkaṭassa.*” (*PcP, Pc*
37).

One must note that an awareness of the reason; being mindful of the usage and reflection in consumption have equal weight.

For example, a *bhikkhu*, who consumes a staple item of food (*yāvakālika*) in the morning (*kāle*), but with the perception of ‘before dawn’, meaning, with the perception of *vikāla* (wrong time), commits a *dukkaṭa*. This is because the item of food was consumed with the perception of *vikāla*. As stated in the clause: ‘*kāle vikāla saññi āpatti dukkaṭassa*’ (*PcP, Pc* 37), it becomes a *dukkaṭa āpatti*. Should one say,

that “consumption of any medicinal tonic without mindfulness amounts to a lapse”, then one contradicts the code of discipline, if the line of argument presented so far is correct. This is not a proper interpretation of the virtues regarding the use of the four requisites. This may be why the commentary states that “even after improper consumption one’s virtue becomes purified, if one is careful enough to reflect about it just before the next dawn”. Still there are some contradictions in the aforementioned commentary amongst some elders.

Cūlanāga Mahāthera’s opinion

Tipiṭaka Cūlanāga thero panāha, pāṭimokkhasamvarova sīlam. Itarāni tīṇi sīlan’ti vuttatthānam nāma nattī’ti. Vatvā ananujānantova āha - indriyasamvaro nāma cha dvāra rakkaṇamattameva. Ājīvapārisuddhi dhammeneva samena paccayuppatti mattakam, paccayasannissitam-paṭiladdha-paccaye idamatthanti paccavekkhitvā paribhuñjanamattakam. Nippariyāyena pāṭimokkhasamvarova sīlam. Yassa so bhinno, ayam “chinnasīso viya puriso hatthapāde”, sesāni rakkhissatīti na vattabbo. Yassa pana so ārogo, ayam “acchinnasīsoviya puriso jīvitam” sesani puna pākaticāni katvā rakkhitumpi sakkoti. (S-com, Singh, vol. 3, p. 184)

Venerable *Cūlanāga* was renowned for his knowledge on all the three baskets. In his view, *pāṭimokkha samvara* is the *sīla* (morality) *de facto*. There is no mention in the canon that *indriya samvara sīla* (virtue by restraint of the faculties); *ājīva parisuddhi sīla* (virtue concerning livelihood); and *paccaya sannissita sīla* (virtue concerning the requisites) falls under morality. Reiterating his view firmly, he asserts that *indriya samvara sīla* means nothing but restraining the doors of the faculties; *ājīva parisuddhi sīla* means earning

the four requisites in an appropriate way; *paccaya sannissita sīla* means the use of four requisites with the perception of their utility value (for example, that robes are just to avoid cold, heat (etc)). Simply, ‘*pāṭimokkha samvara sīla*’ is the only stand alone restraint. Should a *bhikkhu* break the *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla*, then, it would be difficult to maintain the remaining forms of restraint. To use a simile, a man who is decapitated, becomes deprived of his command of the other parts of his body such as his limbs. On the other hand, if a *bhikkhu* is sure about his *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla* he can take care for his other virtues. As if a man has his head intact and firm, he can take care about the other parts of the body such as his limbs.

Cūlanāga Mahāthera was more historical than Venerable *Buddhaghosa* (author of the *Visuddhimagga*). Also, he had earned a reputation for his knowledge on the three baskets. Therefore his opinion is quite laudable. According to him, if one’s *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla* is in tact and unbroken, one can be hopeful about the pure maintenance of the other restraints. Accordingly, one could also be hopeful about path and fruition-knowledge in this very life.

If ‘use as debt’ deprives one of path and fruition knowledge, as it is believed by some teachers, and if the damage is unrecoverable there would be a contradiction of the traditional *Theravāda* canon, so far quoted by the commentary.

‘Reflection’ is a term used in the commentary in the context of virtue in respect of the proper use of requisites. It is also common in the canon as well as in the *Abhidhamma* as an explanatory term on eating in moderation (*bhojane mattaññutā*). The way the latter usage is employed in the *suttas* and in the *Abhidhamma*, namely in the commentary to the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (*M. 2*) under the virtue concerning

requisites, i.e. *paṭisevena pahātabba* (cankers to get rid of by use), is not the same as in the *Vinaya* (code of discipline). *Cūlanāga Mahāthera* argues that the term ‘reflection’ used here is not to be considered in the context of discipline or virtues. Rather, it is asserted that it is a form of knowledge or wisdom and for that reason it comes under the training of wisdom and not under the training of virtues.

These presentations of the *Suttanta* and the *Abhidhamma* are not a hint at mere verbalization, as it is the case with *Hindu Mantrās*. Further, it is not a ritualistic formula as found in the *Vinaya* such as *vikappanā* or *adhiṭṭhāna*. In its true sense, it is meant to discourage latent kinds of defilements from arising in the use of the four requisites. Therefore, in practice, a *bhikkhu* should reflect on the four requisites each time they are used to remind themselves of nothing other than their utility value.

'Noting' fulfills this reflection

*Paṭilābhakāle pi hi dhātuvasena vā paṭikkūlavasena
vā paccavekkhitvā ṭhapitāni cīvarādīni tato uttari
pari-bhuñjantassa anavajjo va paribhogo;
paribhogakāle pi. (Vism. 1, 124)*

“For use is blameless in one who at the time of receiving robes, etc., reviews them either as (mere) elements or as repulsive, and puts them aside for later use, and in one who reviews them thus at the time of using them.” (PoP. 1, 124)

For one who practices insight meditation, reflection on the utility value is not strictly necessary if one contemplates on the four elements; or on mind and matter and notes accordingly, either in receiving or consuming the requisites. In other words, proper noting fulfils the reflection that is

required of the *bhikkhu*. Later, under the topic of ‘virtues for the laity’ this will be considered in greater detail.

Therefore, a *bhikkhu*, when consuming one of the four requisites, should take care to either consider its utility value or otherwise, to properly note, so that his virtues concerning the requisites are purified. If he is careful in these two aspects, his virtue becomes pure.

Restraint of the faculties

Restraining of the faculties involves one becoming mindful at the relevant sense door (where the sensitivity of the faculty meets with the relevant stimuli - the juncture where consciousness arises) to avoid defilements from arising. In the following section, the eye-faculty will be used as an example to learn this in detail. Please note that the other sense doors also operate in a similar manner.

*“So cakkhunā rūpam disvā na nimittaggāhī hoti
nānubyañjanaggāhī,” (Vism. 1, 42).*

“Seeing a visible object with the eye, one apprehends neither the sign nor the particulars,” (PoP. 1, 42b).

According to this exhortation, when seeing a visible object, one must not apprehend signs like the signs of women, men or similar signs, which are a base for the arising of defilements.

“Diṭṭhamatte yeva sañṭhāti” (Vism. 1, 54).

Just stop or restrain at the mere sight (a commentarial indication). In other words, just stop at the mere sight of the visible object.

“Diṭṭhe diṭṭha mattam bhavissati” (Ud. 1, 10).

With this quotation, the commentary further indicates that one must stop at the juncture where eye-consciousness arises (at seeing). To see beyond that is more than mere seeing. One must not get involved in it, irrespective of the desirability or undesirability of the object that is being seen.

If one apprehends the object or becomes involved with it, especially in apprehending the personal features of a person of the opposite sex, such as the face, hands, legs (etc), there is a danger that feelings of lust could arise. Therefore, such an apprehension, which promotes lust by seeing his or her face, eyebrows, eye balls, nose, lips, breast, belly, limbs, (etc), must not be encouraged. Equally, manners like smile, laughter, speech, different expressions of the mouth, gaze (etc) must not be apprehended affectionately.

“*Yam tattha bhūtam tadeva gaṇhāti*” (*Vism. I, 54*).

“He only apprehends, what is really there”
(PoP. 1, 54).

One may only contemplate on the person’s obvious absolute features such as hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, veins, bones (etc); or else on the elements as well as on the derived elements.

Restraining – how to bring into effect

If one analyzes the cognitive process as stated in the tradition of the commentary, when a visible object strikes the eye-door, the thought moment - adverting (*āvajjana*) arises once and then passes away. Then, eye-consciousness arises; and the receiving mind (*sampaṭicchana*), investigation (*santīraṇa*), determining (*voṭṭhapana*) (etc) appear as a consecutive process and will soon disappear. Then arises

javana (the active phase of the cognitive process). If *javana* is accompanied by virtue, mindfulness, wisdom, patience, and energy (the five *samvara dhammas*) one is assured of restraint at the eye-door. Then, one can be satisfied of one's purification of virtues in the restraint of the faculties. Instead, if immorality, unmindfulness, ignorance, impatience and idleness (the five *asamvara dhammas*) are prevalent, this makes restraint of the eye-faculty, impossible. This is the commentarial interpretation.

Their apparent nature

1.) The apparent nature of restraint and unrestraint of the faculties could also be understood as follows:

“*Iminā pāṭimokkhasamvarena upeto hoti samupeto'ti*” (*Vibh. 246; Vism. 1, 18*).

“He is furnished, fully furnished with the *pāṭimokkha* restraint” (PoP. 1, 18).

Virtue means restraint according to the *pāṭimokkha* rules. Accordingly, immorality or unrestraint means a breach of the *pāṭimokkha* rules. Transgression of disciplinary rules by physical and verbal deeds results in a lapse by the *bhikkhu*. As stated in the commentary, immoral or unrestraint behavior could lead to a transgression of defilements. This occurs in the mind. The aforementioned four types of unrestraint: *mutthasacca asamvara*; *ñāna-samvara*; *khanti asamvara*; and *kosajja asamvara* occur in the other five sense doors (see *Mūla Ṭīka* and *Mahā Ṭīka*).

“*Rakkhati cakkhundriyam cakkhundriye samvaram āpajjati'ti ayam sati samvaro.*” (*Vism 1, 18*)

‘Restraint by mindfulness’ is this: ‘He guards the eye faculty, enters upon restraint of the eye-faculty.’
(PoP. 1, 18)

2.) According to the *Visuddhimagga*, a real restraint of the faculties occurs when there is restraint with mindfulness. When mindfulness is present, it has the quality of preventing defilements from arising at the sense door itself. In contrast, a state of *muṭṭhasacca asamvara*, is to be unmindful and forgetful at the sight of an object. As a consequence, in such a state of mind, defilements have room to operate.

“*Cakkhundriyam asamvutam viharantam abhijjā-domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyum.*” (*Vism. 1, 42*)

In this exhortation of the *Visuddhimagga*, the term *abhijjā* means covetousness and *domanassā* means grief. The commentary, however, also includes ignorance.

3.)

“*Sotānam samvaram brūmi – paññāy’ete pithīyyare.*”
(*CN. 1035*)

“Restraint of currents I proclaim by understanding them they are dammed.” (PoP. I, 18)

According to the *Culla Niddesa* and the *Sutta Nipāta* commentary, the stream of defilements such as craving, wrong view, misconduct and ignorance could be stopped only by the attainment of noble path-knowledge, being the only knowledge worthy of the name ‘knowledge of restraint’ (*ñāṇa-samvara*).

As stated in the *Visuddhimagga*, restraint in respect of requisites also comes under restraint by knowledge (*ñāṇa-samvara*). The whole of insight knowledge is included here.

Removing the stream of defilements, not by reflection, but through insight, gives more security as it can remove defilements altogether (*ārammanānusaya tadaṅga*).

“*Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā’ti jānato passato paññāyayete sotā pithīyanti ...*” (CN. 1035)

This quotation presented in the *Culla Niddesa* supports the approach of restraint through insight knowledge.

Accordingly, the virtues concerning requisites, insight knowledge and path-knowledge fall under restraint by knowledge (*ñāṇa-samvara*). Unrestraint due to lack of knowledge on the other hand is the opposite and is ignorance.

4.)

“*Khamo hoti sītassa uṅhassā’ti ... ayam khanti samvaro nāma.*” (Vism. 1, 18)

“But what is called ‘restraint by patience’... ‘He is one who bears cold and heat.’” (PoP. 1, 18)

If one patiently withstands unbearable cold or heat and also harsh and rude words and restrains oneself without losing one’s temper, then there is ‘restraint by patience’. This is the mental factor of non-hatred. A person who is full of hatred and impatience loses his or her patience and experiences unrestraint by impatience.

5.)

“*Uppannam kāmavitakkam nādhivāsetī’ti ... ayam viriya-samvaro.*” (Vism. 1, 18)

“And what is called ‘restraint by energy’... ‘He does not endure a thought of sense desire when it arises.’”
(PoP. 1, 18)

As stated in the commentary, the effort to get rid of thoughts of sense desire is ‘restraint by energy’.

“*Anuppannānam akusalānam pāpakānam dhammānam anuppādāya chandam janeti vāyamati.*” (A. IV, 13)

The effort and the desire to not allow the arising of defilements that have not yet arisen is *sammappadhāna* energy.

Virtue concerning livelihood is included under restraint by energy in the *Visuddhimagga*. Not striving to get rid of thoughts of sensual desire and to give in to them due to sloth and torpor is called unrestraint by laziness. This is an unprofitable mental state.

Of these four kinds of restraint, restraint by virtue is *pāṭimokkha samvara*. Virtue concerning requisites is included under restraint by knowledge; and virtue regarding livelihood is included under restraint by energy. They are separate from *pāṭimokkha samvara*. Where virtues are presented in a fourfold manner and are discussed in their respective purification, the three kinds of restraint mentioned above do not come under virtue by restraint of faculties.

Therefore, purification of virtue by restraint of the faculties should be understood as supported by a balance of the four restraints, namely mindfulness, knowledge, patience and by energy. Of these four, restraint by knowledge is insight-knowledge and path-knowledge, which can only be experienced through meditation practice. Without meditative experience, one can only expect the three restraints available as a result of mindfulness, patience, and energy.

Restraint that one should possess prior to meditation

To have purification of restraint of the faculties, one must have purification by mindfulness, patience and energy. The *Atthasālinī* explains the effort, necessary for such purification:

“*Tassa iminā niyamita-vasena, pariñāmita-vasena, samudācāra-vasena, ābhujjita-vasena ca kusalam nāma jātam hoti.*” (*Dhs-com., Singh. p. 90*)

“For him arose a wholesome mind, because of fixing it (in wholesome thinking = at the meditation object), because of transforming (unwholesome thinking into wholesome thinking), because of the habit (to be familiar with wholesome actions), because it is bent (towards the wholesome)”¹

Restrain your mind (niyamita)

In restraining one’s mind, one must only have wholesome (righteous (*kusala*)) thoughts. Verbal or physical actions should also be limited to *kusala*. Thoughts arising in the six sense doors must always be *kusala*. Mindfulness must be uninterrupted towards *kusala*. One should not entertain unwholesome thoughts or states of mind. Under all circumstances, one should have nothing but wholesome thoughts!

If a naturally very generous minded person earns a valuable property, which is suitable as a gift (*dāna*), no desire will arise in his mind to consume it himself but instead the wish to donate it. Similarly, in the presence of undesirable objects, if one is resolutely determined to be patient, it will be

¹ The translator has added this translation for the reader’s better understanding.

possible to withstand aversion without much trouble. According to the commentary this is called *niyamita*, the technique of self-restraint to purify one's mind.

The shifting technique (pariṇāmita)

If unwholesome states of mind arise, then replace them with wholesome states or try to shift into a wholesome mind. For example, if at the sight of an attractive woman, sensuous desire arises in a man, he should try to transform it into compassion or loving-kindness. If she is in his mother's age, he should consider her as his mother. Similarly, if she is in his sister's age, he should consider her as his sister. In the same way he can act if facing a woman of his daughter's age or of another close relative. Then, it is easy to contemplate on her miserable state or her vulnerable situation. Still further, one can contemplate on her repulsive body parts such as tears, grease, mucus, phlegm, excrements and urine. This will help to develop repulsion instead.

Alternatively, one can replace lustful thoughts about the woman with thoughts of some other interest or hobby; may be a *Dhamma* discussion; or the qualities of the Buddha; delivering or listening to a *Dhamma* talk; reading or engaging in daily chores. In this way, one's state of mind could be shifted from the unwholesome trend to a more wholesome state.

Contemplating the transient nature of the lustful object, the *āgantuka* (strange) nature of the object or contemplating its aggregates such as faculties, elements, causative factors (etc) are also useful in shifting one's attention to a wholesome state of mind.

Familiarity with wholesome activities (samudācāra)

Wholesome actions like studying *Dhamma* books, teaching, listening, reading, chanting or delivering *Dhamma* talks, conducting *Dhamma* discussions, observing ascetic practices, and also contemplating the aforementioned facts with the *pariñña* method (the exact knowledge of the correct view) should be carried out without a gap and tirelessly, so that there is no opportunity for the arising of unwholesome states of mind. Only wholesome thoughts will be present, when there is contact arising at the six sense doors. This is called *samudācāra* method (becoming acquainted with or gaining familiar with wholesome behavior).

Appropriate ways of reflection (ābhujjita)

Whenever a sense object strikes on any of the six sense-doors, one must be alert to wisely reflect upon it. This is so that one's mental state invariably becomes a wholesome one.

For example, if an unfounded accusation is carried out against a yogi, he should reflect upon it as follows: “this accusation is due to his ignorance. Many who have no restraint on verbal behavior act like this. The day he understands this, he will be remorseful because of his wrong act. Presently, I may be receiving such an unfounded accusation due to a wrong behaviour on my part in the past. I may have similarly accused an innocent person in the unknown past, just as it is happening to me now. That means, due to my own past wrong deeds, I have to harvest the bitter fruits today.” This way of consideration would help support a release of the tension that may have arisen in the mind.

Another way of reflection is as follows: “An accusation is a common incident in society. Even the Buddha was subject to such accusations. How can a person like me expect an exception from accusations? It is normal and natural for the

mind of a commoner to be quite irritable amidst the vicissitudes of worldly situations. Rare are the characters that can forebear such a situation and this is the nature of a noble man. I must follow the example of such a noble lineage. In fact, according to the exhortation of the Buddha, a person like me should be patient, even while cut apart with a cross saw. I must not be angry with the very people who cut me with a cross saw. If I am a true disciple of the Buddha, I must not entertain hatred. If I am angry with anyone, how can I be a restrained disciple in accordance with the Buddha's exhortation? Forebearance amidst a wrong accusation is not as difficult as being cut into pieces by a saw." This is also another wise and appropriate way of reflection.

You may also reflect on how the accuser is producing a hateful mental state and materiality based on anger. They are nothing but aggregates, just *nāma* and *rūpa*. There is no separate person that exists other than that. This phenomenon of *nāma-rūpa* also arises and passes away then and there. There is nothing to worry about such a phenomenon, which has already passed away.

If one still maintains hatred because of that accusation, which was made in the past and had already passed away, that could be explained only through the relationship of cause and effect of that *nāma-rūpa*. If hatred is still present, even after the incident, it is like hatred against children whose parents misbehaved. The very person, who was the subject of the accusation, is also nothing but, a heap of aggregates. These aggregates, which are just a relationship between *nāma* and *rūpa*, are transient and may give rise to further resultant (and transient) hateful aggregates, also. This is, as if children and grandchildren are going to take revenge spitefully on behalf of their parents. These are some hints to

promote wise reflection. There are many more methods and this all comes under the name of *yoniso-manasikāra* (wise reflection). This is so far a brief description of the *ābhujita* method. More options can be found under the topic of '*dhammānupassanā-nīvarana*'.

Using one of these aforementioned methods, starting from *niyamita*, restraint of the faculties is possible only by maintaining a wholesome state of mind in all the sense-doors. Any success along these methods could result in a wholesome state of mindfulness, whenever an object strikes at the sense-door. The arising of mindfulness is called restraint of faculties by mindfulness (*sati samvara*). Occasionally or rarely, an unwholesome state can occur. If this is the case, one must work with resolute determination to not succumb to it at the time that it appears. This restraint also comes under a purification of virtues by restraint of the faculties.

Another example is confession for *bhikkhus*. To declare one's misdeed or the lapse to another *bhikkhu* as confession, is enough to rectify the misdeed or the lapse of the offender. Further, this will help to increase the degree of restraint or forbearance. This forbearance is called restraint by patience (*khanti samvara*).

The energy, which is put forth, to rid of defilements that have already arisen such as thoughts of sense desire and so forth, is called restraint by energy (*virīya samvara*).

These methods are good as well as beneficial, although their implementation in reality is not easy. One will experience difficulties and hardships in connection with each of them. Especially, an uncultivated mind without meditation is quite hectic and rude and meets sense objects in an offensive manner. If this is the case, then it is rather difficult to control

it. To behave wildly and in an unruly manner is the common nature of an uncultivated mind.

Still, some tend to believe that one must start meditation only with purified virtue or that this purification of virtue is possible without meditation. If such a notion is true, one has to give serious consideration to the following commentarial instruction: “stop the mind just at mere seeing”, meaning that one should not allow defilements to arise at the six sense-doors. Who else, but one who is an experienced meditator can arrest defilements right at the beginning of the stream of consciousness occurring at each sense door? Even advanced insight yogis succumb to the attack of defilements. Understanding the seriousness of this bare fact, one must weigh the gravity of the above commentarial recommendation.

Why is it impossible to restrain oneself as recommended by the commentary? It is impossible because the type of defilement, which is the target of this method of restraining the faculties, is not that of the gross type called - transgression by body and speech. Rather, restraint of faculties is aimed at the obsessive and latent types of defilements. Only concentration training and wisdom training, through concentration meditation and insight meditation could overcome these. Restraint of faculties is therefore an indirect virtue. A direct virtue is *pāṭimokkha samvara*. A balance of mindfulness, knowledge, patience and energy is the basis for the *pāṭimokkha samvara* and is categorized as concentration and insight meditation or simply ‘meditation’ in general terms. Out of these, restraint by knowledge is explained as the path-knowledge, according to the *Culla Niddesa* and the *Sutta Nipāta* commentary. A restraint of the faculties cannot be fulfilled without meditation practice.

A cultured mind is subtle and soft. It is malleable, so that one can direct it at a desired object according to one's wishes. These praiseworthy qualities are taken as natural characteristics of a cultured mind that is advanced in meditation. Therefore, restraint of faculties can be perfected only through meditation.

It is a direct relationship, whereby the degree of the mind's cultivation by meditation determines one's restraint of the faculties. Once the meditation has reached its peak, as stated in the *Visuddhimagga* and the commentary, one's virtues come to a completion of their purity.

The *Visuddhimagga* recommends one to follow *Bhikkhu Tissa* as a role model. He was renowned for his skillfulness in contemplating the repulsive nature of the body parts. Once, on his way, he met a woman who was laughing very loud. Due to the deep contemplative state of his mind, he perceived only the repulsion of her teeth as she laughed and immediately attained the 1st *jhāna*. Proceeding further, based on the attainment of the 1st *jhāna*, he continued to practice insight meditation to reach a state of Arahantship. Narrating this incident, the *Visuddhimagga* quotes the following ancient stanza:

*“Tassā dantaṭṭhikam disvā pubbasāññam anussari
Tatth’eva so ṭhito thero arahattam apāpuṇī” ti.*
(*Vism. I, 55*)

“He saw the bones that were her teeth
and kept in mind his first perception.
And standing on that very spot
- the elder became an *arahant*.” (PoP. 1, 55)

In understanding this stanza, ‘*pubbasaññam anussari*’ indicates that the *bhikkhu* had previously engaged in the practice of contemplating on the repulsive aspect of bone as a meditation object. Accordingly, one needs a well-developed meditative mind. One who does not have a well-cultured meditative mind is not able to skillfully perceive in the way that *Bhikkhu Tissa* did. Could someone without experience in meditation, but endowed with perfected *pāramī* (perfections), be successful with such contemplation? The answer is positive, but the perception of repulsion is a result of specific contemplations or meditation and therefore ‘restraint of faculties cannot be fulfilled without meditation’! That is why the commentary stresses that "there should not arise any defilement at all at the six sense-doors", to reiterate the importance of protection by nothing but, meditation.

If one is interested in the restraint of faculties before meditation, one may try the said methods as much as one likes. Fulfillment, however, can be achieved only through meditation. Under no circumstances could one delay one’s meditation, thinking that the restraint of faculties, which is not yet perfected, has to be perfect before meditation can be commenced. As the meditation progresses, the five kinds of restraint come to completion, moment by moment and consequently, virtue also becomes purified.

It is a prerequisite that a *bhikkhu* must be completely pure with *pāṭimokkha samvara* and *ājīva pārisuddhi* before commencing meditation. Any transgression of these virtues could amount to a danger called *āṇā vītikkama*. Out of these two, *pāṭimokkha samvara* is crucial as the *ājīva pārisuddhi* of someone with pure *pāṭimokkha samvara* will also become blameless. One will not commit a wrong with *ājīva pārisuddhi* if one does not commit an offence (*āpatti*)

regarding one's *pāṭimokkha samvara*. Therefore, if one claims purity in one's *pāṭimokkha samvara*, one must, take safety precautions regarding one's *ājīva pārisuddhi* beforehand. One must ensure that one consumes only requisites, which are well earned. This is the way to assure a sound *ājīva pārisuddhi*.

If possible, one must be sure of *indriya samvara* and *paccaya sannissita sīla* also, beforehand. If this purity is assured, one can enjoy an undisrupted mind called *avippaṭisārī*. One must however, bear in mind that the incompleteness of these virtues is not a danger for the commencement of one's meditation practice. Therefore, one must not delay to commence meditation, owing to incompleteness of one's virtues.

Start meditation right from the moment where your *pāṭimokkha samvara* and *ājīva pārisuddhi* become pure. As the meditation progresses, gradually, the four kinds of virtue will be purified. This will become clear towards the latter part of the following section, which discusses the purification of virtue for the laity.

Purification of virtue for the laity

Purification of virtue for the laity is not extensive, when compared with the standards for the *bhikkhus*. Observing the *pañca sīla* (five precepts) or *ājīva aṭṭhamaka sīla* (eight precepts with livelihood as the eighth) will suffice to achieve a purification of virtue for the laity. Although these two kinds of *sīla* differ in the number of precepts that are to be observed, the resulting purity is the same. There is very little substantive difference in observing these precepts and the moral restraint that follows.

Observing the *pañca sīla* is not limited to the five precepts. As far as verbal actions are concerned, restraint from lying encapsulates all forms of verbal misbehavior, such as slandering, harsh speech and frivolous talk. If one restrains oneself from lying, then he automatically restrains from committing other verbal misdeeds. Similarly, if one restrains from all the four wrong verbal actions, together with the three wrong physical actions, one's livelihood undoubtedly becomes pure. Observing the five precepts (*pañca sīla*) in practice is equal to maintaining the eight precepts (*ājīva aṭṭhamaka sīla*). By observing the five precepts or the eight precepts, a purification of virtue is fulfilled. The *pañca sīla* and the three physical actions and the four verbal actions in *ājīva aṭṭhamaka sīla*, which are not related to *ājīva* (livelihood), assimilate the *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla*. Restraint with respect to actions relating to livelihood is *ājīva pārisuddhi* (purification of livelihood).

The laity and the *bhikkhus* have different standards of *sīla*. For instance, if a *bhikkhu* falls into a lapse due to wrong livelihood once, whenever he uses the improperly earned properties, there will be a transgression of a precept with the recurrent lapses. His purification of livelihood is also

affected. For the laity, it is common to breach physical and verbal precepts in order to earn their livelihood. As a result, their livelihood is not always wholesome and pure. However, unlike in the case of a *bhikkhu*, whatever they have earned in a correct or incorrect manner could be used again and again without any detriment to their virtue of livelihood. When lay people use improperly earned property, it is unlikely that there would be a transgression of any physical or verbal precepts. Unlike *bhikkhus*, for the laity, there is no violation of the Buddha's code of disciplinary rules for using improperly earned requisites. There is also no obligation of forfeiture for the laity, when compared to a *bhikkhu*. The laity can safeguard their purity of virtue without physical and verbal transgression or the obligation of forfeiture.

Restraint of the faculties is difficult to fulfill prior to meditation. This is the case, even for a *bhikkhu*. For the laity, it is even more difficult. For the laity, there is no lapse in respect of virtues regarding the requisites even when requisites are used without reflection. Further, they don't incur the lapse - 'use as a debt', which only applies to *bhikkhus*.

According to the *Suttanta* (the explanation in the *sutta piṭaka*), reflection before consumption or using the necessary requisites is an appreciable act which lends towards skillfulness.

Some believe that 'meditation should be commenced only after a particular duration - days, months, or years of one's purified virtues. It is only with such seasoned virtues over a period of time that one can achieve the results of concentration and knowledge of insight'. According to accepted documents that are available, there is no specified time duration on how long one should strive to maintain one's virtues. Rather, such comments appear to be their own

individual thoughts. To explain further, a *bhikkhu* with broken *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla* is already in danger of *āṇā vītikkama* (fault of transgressing the Buddha's jurisdiction). To avoid such complications, one must be sure about one's own purity of virtues well before commencing meditation. Neither the canon nor the commentary however, specifies a timeframe. Clearly, a *bhikkhu* can commence meditation immediately after purifying his virtues without any delay. For the laity, there are no conditions. If the *pāramī* (perfections) are completed, one can expect immediate results of meditation such as concentration, insight knowledge and path-and fruition- knowledge.

The five precepts, the minimum requirements of morality for the laity, not only existed during the time of the Buddha but are relevant to the present day. Purified virtue is an asset for a profitable practice. One who lacks in virtue and morality will face a challenge in the practice.

The advantages and disadvantages of the purity of virtue do not manifest only according to the Buddha's advice. It is a law of the nature. If the laity is free from five weighty misdeeds (*pañcānantariya akusala*), the *bhikkhunī dūsaka* and the *ariyūpavāda kamma*, even without complete adherence to the five precepts, there is no danger for a realization of *magga-phala* in one's lifetime. It is insignificant, whether one is ordained or not, if one has committed one of the *pañcānantariya akusala*, the *bhikkhunī dūsaka* or the *ariyūpavāda kamma*, one's liberation is obstructed.

Obstructions (antarāyakara dhamma)

An explanation of the *antarāyakara dhamma* (acts which are obstructions to the attainment of heaven or liberation) is as follows:

1.) Kammantarāya (obstructions by acts):

There are five major types under this topic. They are as follows:

- Mātu ghātaka* = the murder of one's own mother
(matricide),
Pitu ghātaka = the murder of one's own father
(patricide),
Arahanta ghātaka = the murder of an arahant,
Lohituppādaka = wounding of a Buddha,
Saṅgha bhedaka = the creation of a schism in the *saṅgha*
(applicable only to *bhikkhus*).

These five weighty wrong actions can immediately lead the doer to the lower world upon death without an escape or gap in-between. This is the meaning of the *Pāli* term, *ānantariya*. These acts obstruct the attainment of noble states as well as a heavenly rebirth. Equally, the attainment of noble states as well as a heavenly rebirth can be obstructed if one rapes a virtuous *bhikkhunī*. These six wrong acts are called *kammantarāya* (obstructions by acts).

2.) Kilesantarāya (obstruction by defilements):

“There is no skillfulness or unskillfulness in the world. Also there are no so called skillful actions or unskillful actions in the world. Even if one commits such actions, there are no respective results.” These are the basic characteristics of the view called *akiriya vāda* (determinism). The adherents of

another wrong view, called *natthika diṭṭhins* (annihilists), believe that “beings are annihilated after death. There is no further existence.” The *ahetuka diṭṭhins* (fatalists) believe that there are no causative factors such as good or bad for the present results. One can become rich or poor automatically without a cause. Those who strongly believe these three wrong views could be taken to the lower realm with immediate effect after their death. Views that could immediately send one to the lower realm are called ‘*niyata miccādiṭṭhi*’. They obstruct one from both the attainment of a rebirth in heaven and liberation in one’s lifetime. The first wrong view rejects the cause, the second wrong view rejects the effect, and the final wrong view rejects cause and effect. In short, one must understand that these three wrong views reject the causative skilful actions/ unskillful actions together with their results.

3.) *Vipākantarāya* (obstructions by fruits of past actions):

Those who are with rootless or double rooted rebirth consciousness, ill conditioned by past *kamma* are called ‘*vipākantarāya*’. It does not cause an obstacle to the attainment of a heavenly rebirth (*saggantarāya*). Such a birth is not endowed with understanding (that is born out of *kamma*), so that it causes an obstacle to the attainment of path-knowledge (*maggantarāya*). If one is keen and accumulates merit with skillful deeds, there is no obstacle to the attainment of a rebirth in heaven.

4.) *Ariyūpavāda kamma* (reviling Noble Ones):

Having a desire to harm Noble Ones; to revile them with the worst association or with the denial of their spiritual qualities; to abuse and reproach them is called *ariyūpavāda kamma*. To revile Noble Ones (no matter, whether one is conscious or unconscious of their noble state) generates

immediate effects, and it is an obstacle to both a rebirth in heaven and to the path of liberation. But it is remediable. One should ask the Noble Ones for forgiveness. When this is done properly, there is no more obstruction.

5.) *Āṇā vītikkama antarāya* (intentional transgressions of the Buddha's ordinance):

The act of intentionally transgressing any of the seven groups of offences laid down by the Buddha by a *bikkhu* is called '*āṇā vītikkama antarāya*'. It is also an obstacle to a rebirth in heaven and to the path of liberation. It is however, remediable. For that, a *bhikkhu* has to follow the code of discipline meant for *bhikkhus*.

“Tepi yāva bhikkhu bhāvam vā paṭijānāti, na vuṭṭhāti vā, na deseti vā, tāvadeve, na tato param”

(M-com.; Singh. vol. II, p. 85)

... The obstacle for heaven and liberation is that much, as much a *bhikkhu*, who is defeated but behaves like a normal *bhikkhu* and fails to rectify his heavy offences or fails to confess his minor offences. But, from then onwards, once the required steps to clear his offences such as disrobing after *pārājikā* offences or a confession after *pācittiyā* offences etc., there will no longer be an obstacle.

A layman, even if breaking his precepts, generates no obstacles for the attainment of path and fruition knowledge. Owing to this fact, it can be seen how characters like the Chief Minister - *Santati*, the fisherman - *Ariya*, a broad way robber, and *Upāsaka Sarakāni* from the *Sākyan* clan, without any purification of their virtue beforehand, successfully reached a realization of the dhamma in their lifetime.

Chief Minister Santati realizes Nibbāna

The King of *Kosala* was very happy with his chief minister's performance and his skills in warfare. As a compliment, the King granted him a royal feast for seven days. Chief Minister *Santati* entertained the feast grandiosely with dancing, alcohol, and other sensual pleasures. On the seventh day, together with his companions he went to the bathing place. On his way, riding the royal elephant, he met the Buddha on his alms round and paid homage whilst being seated on the elephant. At this event, the Buddha exclaimed: "this chief minister will meet me today again and listen to a stanza to become an *Arahant* and finish his life with the great *Parinibbāna*". Listening to this statement, the non-believers criticized: "how can such a total drunkard listen to a sermon today and realize *arahantship* to meet the great demise. This can't be possible! *Gotama* the Buddha will lose his credibility with this unfounded prediction today."

On the same day, in the evening, the chief minister's favorite damsel, a dancing and singing girl, collapsed on the stage and passed away while at the peak of her performance. The chief minister was thoroughly disheartened and grieved unbearably. He went to consult the Buddha. In response, the Buddha uttered the following stanza to him:

*"Yam pubbe tam visosehi - pacchā te māhu
kiñcanam,*

Majje ce no gahessasi - upasanto carissasi"

(Sn.1099)

"Make what (existed) previously wither away.

May there be nothing for you afterwards.

If you do not grasp anything in between,

You will wander calmed."

(GD.1099)

Chief Minister *Santati* became an *arahant* after listening to this stanza and performed his supernatural powers to clear the doubts of the onlookers by elevating himself in the air to a height of about seven palm trees and passed away then and there (according to the *Dhammapada* commentary). One must understand that his attainment to *arahantship* by listening to a single stanza, just like in other similar incidents, was not without preceding contemplation. In fact, while listening to this admonishment, he contemplated upon the respective *nāma-rūpa* phenomenon, so that the series of insight knowledge could progress and lead to stream-entry, once-returnee, non-returnee and at last to *arahantship*. To highlight this point, the commentary to the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* indicates as follows:

“*Yasmā pana kāya-vedanā-citta-dhammesu kañci dhammam anāmasivā bhāvanā nāma n’atthi, tasmā te pi iminā va maggena sokaparideve samatikkantā ti veditabbā.*”

(D-com. 22, 1, PTS, p.747)

“Since there is nothing called spiritual development (*bhāvana*) without touching something whatsoever in material form, feeling, consciousness and mental objects (*kāya-vedana-citta-dhammesu kañci dhammam anāmasivā*), it should be understood that they (*Santati* and *Paṭācara*) too overcame sorrow and lamentation just by this way of mindfulness.”

The fact that the chief minister became an *arahant* and that the lady, *Paṭācara* became a stream-winner is quite a truth. But, none of these attainments were without meditation - contemplation on one of the four foundations of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation called *kāya*, *vedanā*, *citta* and *dhamma* and thereby progressing along the sequence of insight

knowledge. Both these persons attained their respective attainments with the help of *sati* (mindfulness) that guides one to go through one of the four foundations of mindfulness. Eventually, they reaped the results and overcame grief and lamentation – the benefits of the *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation practice.

As the chief minister’s narration reveals, until his last day, when he listened to a stanza and attained arahantship, he led a hedonistic life and for a full week remained under the influence of alcohol and without any likelihood of purifying his virtues. His attainment cannot be attributed to previously purified *sīla*, but, to the fact that he was a ‘*pacchima bhavika*’ (a person in his last existence). Had he been a monk, it would have been impossible to have this spiritual attainment, since for a monk, impurity of *sīla* would amount to an obstacle for path and fruition knowledge.

The admonishment given by the Buddha to Venerable *Uttiya*, who also was in his very last existence, will be illustrated in the following section.

Admonishment given to Venerable Uttiya:

“Tasmā tiha tvam Uttiya ādimeva visodhehi kusalesu dhammesu. Ko cādi kusalānam dhammānam, sīlañca suvisuddham diṭṭhi ca ujukā . Yatho ca kho te Uttiya sīlañca suvisuddham bhavissati diṭṭhi ca ujukā, tato tvam Uttiya sīlam nissāya sīle patiṭṭhāya cattāro satipaṭṭhāne bhaveyyāsi.” (S. 47, 16)

“Well then, *Uttiya*, purify the very starting point of wholesome states. And what is the starting point of wholesome states? It is virtue that is well purified and a view that is straight. Then, *Uttiya*, when your virtue is well

purified and your view is straight, based upon virtue, established upon virtue, you should develop the four establishments of mindfulness.” (CD. 47, 16)

In this text, the word ‘*sīla*’ is presented with a general meaning, although according to both the sub-commentary to *Khaṅkhā Vitaranī* and the *Jhāna Vibhaṅga*, it is ingeniously explained as *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla*. This is reasonable. It says that all the *satipaṭṭhāna yogi bhikkhus* must be purified with *pāṭimokkha samvara sīla* well beforehand. It does not indicate a duration which is an important point to take into consideration. Also it is recommended that all four foundations of *satipaṭṭhāna* should be cultivated together, instead of cultivating them, one by one in a serial order, as indicated in the Buddha’s admonishment.

According to the canon, Venerable *Uttiya Thero* became an arahant without any delay through meditation as a consequence of this admonishment. He was a ‘*pacchima bhavika*’ (a person in his last existence). Even with the destiny to attain the final goal in this very existence, this admonishment for one to be purified in virtue well beforehand indicates that imperfections in virtue can obstruct the goal. Similarly, if he is a ‘*micchā diṭṭhikā*’ (a person with a wrong view), that also becomes an obstacle. Hence, it is apparent that the admonishment clearly aims at straightening one’s view.

Comparing these two narrations, for a *bhikkhu* with broken virtues (even if he is a *pacchima bhavika*), the attainment will be obstructed due to impure virtue. For a layperson however, it is not a decisive aspect. According to the narration, even for a *bhikkhu* who is a *pacchima bhavika*, attainment is not possible without purity of *sīla*.

How a fisherman realized the dhamma

Once the Buddha saw that a fisherman by the name of *Ariya* could become a stream-winner. The Buddha visited him with a group of monks after the alms round in a village close to the north gate of the city *Sāvatti*. At the time, *Ariya* was busy fishing with his fishing rod. Suddenly, he saw the group of monks led by the Buddha approaching him. Feeling rather ashamed, he lowered the rod and kept it under his foot while standing. The Buddha, approaching him, paused a while and asked for his name. He replied, “I am *Ariya*”. Then the Buddha queried how a person like him, who kills and tortures animals like this, could be called ‘*Ariya*’ (literally ‘a Noble One’). A Noble One (*ariya*) would never kill animals this way. The Buddha uttered the following stanza:

*“Na tena ariyo hoti - yena pāṇāni himsati:
Ahimsa sabba pāṇānam - ariyoti pavuccati.”*
(*Dhp.* 270)

He is not a noble one who injures living beings.
He is called a noble one because he is harmless
towards all living beings.

(DP-AB. 270)

According to the commentary of the *Dhammapada*, by listening to this admonishment, at that moment *Ariya* immediately attained the first path.

The pickpocket and the Dhamma

One day, at Jeta grove, while the Buddha was delivering a *Dhamma* talk, there were two pickpockets in the audience. One listened to the talk respectfully and became a

sotāpanna, while the other picked a pocket of a devotee with five gold coins. The latter joked to the former on their way back home: “Hey! Friend, you were too skillful in listening, so that you did not earn anything for the daily expenses.” The latter considered on this comment wisely as follows: “My friend is utterly unwise, but seems to consider that he is wise and skillful.” He went back and reported this to the Buddha. The Buddha summed up the incident with a single stanza as follows:

”*Yo bālo maññati bālyam – paṇḍito v’āpi tena so.
Bālo ca paṇḍitamānī – sa ve bāloti vuccati.*”

(*Dhp.* 63)

“A fool who knows his foolishness
Is wise at least to that extent,
But a fool who thinks himself wise - is called a fool indeed.”
(*DP-AB.* 63)

The reasoning in the stanza is as follows: even if one is unwise and unskillful but knows one’s status, for that very reason one is wise; for one can and may consult a wise and skillful person and receive advice. Accordingly, one can become wise or skillful with time. On the contrary, a fool, who thinks that he is wise, is worthy of being called a sheer fool indeed, because as far as he supposes to know, he is not ready to listen to the advice of a wise or a skillful person. This makes him a fool (*de facto*).

A lay devotee called Sarakāni

Sarakāni was a *Sākyan* citizen who lived in the *Sākyan* capital. At the time of his death he was proclaimed by the Buddha to be a *Sotāpanna* and free of the *apāya*. The other *Sākyans* however, grumbled as follows:

“Acchariyam vata bho abbhutam vata bho etthadāniko na sotāpanno bhavissati, yatra hi nāma Sarakāni sakko kālakato so Bhagavatā vyākato sotāpanno avinipāta dhammo niyato sambhodi parāyano’ti. Sarakāni sakko sikkhā dubbalyam āpādi, majjapānam apāyī’ti.” (S. 55. 24)

“Sarakāni sakko sikkhāya aparipūrakārī ahoṣī’ti.”
(S. 55, 25)

“It is wonderful indeed, Sir! It is amazing indeed, Sir! Now who here won’t be a stream-enterer when the Blessed One has declared *Sarkāni*, the *Sākyan* after he died to be a stream-enterer, to be free from the lower world, to be assured to progress along the path with enlightenment as his destination? *Sarkāni*, the *Sākyan* was too weak for the training; he had consumed an intoxicating drink!” (CD. 55, 24)

“*Sarkāni* the *Sākyan* was one who had failed to fulfill the training!” (CD. 55, 25)

Mahānāma, the *Sākyan* King reported this to the Buddha and he reminded the King that people are not equal, that they strongly differ from each other.

For further details one may read the following text, available in the *Pāli* Canon:

“Suppose, *Mahānāma*, there is a bad field, a bad piece of ground with stumps not cleared, and the seed sown there would be broken, spoilt, damaged by wind and sun, unfertile, not planted securely, and the sky would not send down a proper rainfall. Would those seeds come to growth, increase, and expand?”

“No Venerable Sir.”

“Suppose, *Mahānāma*, there is a good field, a good piece of ground, well cleared of stumps, and the seeds sown there would be unbroken, unspoiled, undamaged by wind and sun, fertile, planted securely, and the sky would send down proper rainfall. Would those seeds come to growth, increase, and expand?”

“Yes Venerable Sir.” (CD. 55, 25)

Towards the end of this catechism the Buddha summed up as follows:

“*Kimanga pana Sarakāni sakkam, Sarakāni Mahānāma sakko maraṇa kāle sikkhāya paripūrakarī ahoṣī’ti.*”

(S. 55, 25)

“How much more, then, *Sarakāni* the *Sākyan*? *Mahānāma*, *Sarakāni* the *Sākyan* was one who fulfilled the training at the time of death.” (CD. 55, 25)

This quotation indicates that the *Sākyan upāsaka* who was without purity beforehand, became a *sotāpanna* at the time of death, perfecting this due to purity of virtue at the last moment and then passed away.

As shown in the examples, *Ariya* the fisherman, the pick-pocket, and the *Sākyan Sarakāni*, were not *paccima bhavika* (people at their last existences), but were just *sotāpannā*. It is not difficult to understand how a *paccima bhavika* (a person in his last existence) can attain the goal without purified virtue. However, some argue that *Ariya* etc. belonged to the category of *ugghaṭitaññū* and *vipañcitaññū*, and that their attainment was a result of this status. Someone who is an *ugghaṭitaññū* is able to realize the dhamma after listening to a brief discourse on the four noble truths. One who is a

vipañcitaññū can realize the dhamma after listening to a detailed discourse on the four noble truths.

A *neyya* person, however, is not able to realize the dhamma by listening to a single discourse. Rather, a *neyya* person has to undertake the three *sikkha* trainings of *sila*, *samadhi* and *pañña* and persist with the practice for some time before realising the dhamma. Some have commented that a *neyya* person should purify his virtues beforehand - otherwise an attainment of path and fruition knowledge is not possible. Such a statement however is not available from the *Pāli* canon, the commentaries or the sub-commentaries. It appears to be a personal view or an idea of the commentators. According to the *Pāli* canon, the meditation procedure for *neyya* persons is as follows:

*Katamo ca puggalo neyyo? Yassa puggalassa
uddesato paripucchato yoniso manasikarato
kalyāṇamitte sevato bhajato payirupāsato evam
anupubbena dhammābhisamayo hoti, ayam vuccati
puggalo neyyo. (Pp. 4, 5)*

The meaning is as follows:

“What sort of person is one who requires guidance? A person requiring guidance is one, to whom comprehension of the doctrine gradually comes through advice and questioning, through wise consideration and through frequenting noble-minded friends, having intercourse with them, associating with them.”

As revealed in this quotation, learning about meditation, in whatever language it may be is called *uddesa*. To question about something which is unclear and what comes across, for clarification is called *paripuccā*. *Yonisomanasikāra* means continuing meditation with wise reflection. “*Kalyāṇamitte*

sevato bhajato payirupāsato” means: to maintain friendship, association and repeatedly approaching with suitable noble friends, who are competent enough to clear doubts in meditation, to encourage when one feels depressed when striving in the practice and to admonish whenever it is necessary. A *neyya* person with the aforesaid characteristics attains path and fruition knowledge in one’s lifetime. The text only enumerates these features without revealing more, i.e. how long one should maintain already purified virtue before commencing the practice (etc).

Ugghaṭitaññussa samatha pubbaṅgama vipassanā sappāyā, neyyassa vipassanā pubbaṅgamo samatho, vipañcitaññussa yuganaddhā, ugghaṭitaññussa adhipañña sikkhā, vipañcitaññussa adhicitta sikkhā, neyyassa adhisīla sikkhā ca, adhicitta sikkhā ca, adhipañña sikkhā ca.

(*Net-com*, Singh. p.179)

“For a person of quick understanding (*ugghaṭitaññū*) *vipassanā* led by *samatha* is suitable. For a person requiring guidance (*neyya*) *samatha* led by *vipassanā* (is suitable). For a *vipañcitaññū* (clear-minded person with clear understanding) [*samatha* and *vipassanā*] yoked together (is suitable). For the *ugghaṭitaññū*, training in higher wisdom (is suitable). For the *vipañcitaññū*, training in the higher mind (is suitable). For the *neyya* person, training in higher virtue, higher mind and higher wisdom (is suitable).”

Although the commentary indicates what is suitable and conducive, it fails to indicate what is to be fulfilled beforehand by each practitioner. For example, for a *neyya puggalā*, all the three trainings are conducive. That does not imply that all *neyya puggalā* have to fulfill *sīla sikkhā*, *samādhi sikkhā* and *paññā sikkhā* without omission beforehand. It is not a compulsory factor to commence the

practice of meditation. To require that this be the case is like arguing that every *neyya* and *vipañcitaññū* person has to develop *samatha jhāna* before their attainment. This is not a sensible argument.

Further, if this is so, an *ugghaṭitaññū bhikkhu*'s lapse in *sīla* should not give rise to a '*āṇā vītikkama*' obstacle. Obviously, all such lapses, if done intentionally, are an obstruction for their attainment. It must be understood that the aforementioned quotation simply means that, if a *neyya* person is endowed with complete *sīla* and *samādhi* beforehand, he attains path and fruition knowledge with special qualities, so that all the three trainings are conducive for him.

For an *ugghaṭitaññū* person, insight knowledge arises immediately after listening to a brief *dhamma* talk. It is therefore not possible to enter into absorption again and again. Since both, an *ugghaṭitaññū* and *vipañcitaññū* person realizes their attainment while listening to a sermon it is not necessary to reinforce *sīla*. Out of trust (*saddha*) in the preacher and respect for the doctrine that is being listened to, he enjoys the talk. That very enjoyment and delight makes his mind energetic and powerful. Therefore, there is nothing special to say, that, for an *ugghaṭitaññū*, *sīla* and *samatha* or for a *vipañcitaññū*, *sīla* would be necessary.

For a *neyya* person, who has to meditate for a long period, occasionally *sīla* has to be revised. If the *sīla* is not kept well, he may become remorseful. For those who entertain doubts and worries, even after rectifying their own lapses, it is possible that their mind still remains restless. If one is not competent in dealing with such a restless mind, worry and remorse can hinder one's insight meditation practice. Either well before or during meditation, if one realizes that one's

sīla is purified, happiness and delight are bound to arise. Contentment can also arise in one's heart. This leads to a malleable and pliable mind and *samādhi* and *paññā* can progress without any hindrance. Accordingly, purifying one's virtues either before or at the beginning of meditation is especially suitable for a *neyya* person.

Samatha is especially helpful

Tassa hi samādhipi taruṇo vipassanāpi, tassa vipassanam paṭṭhapetvā aticiram nisinnassa kāyo kilamati, anto aggi viya uṭṭhahati, kaccehi sedā muccanti, matthakato usumavatti viya uṭṭhahati, cittam haññati vihaññati vipphandati, uddhatam hoti. So puna samāpattim samāpajjitvā tam paridametvā mudukam katvā samassāsetvā puna vipassanam paṭṭhapeti. Tassa puna aticiram nisinnassa ca tatheva hoti. So puna samāpattim samāpajjitvā tatheva karoti. Vipassanāya hi bahūpakārā samāpatti.

(M-com, Singh. vol. II, p. 68)

Where insight concentration is not mature, it is unlikely that there is a maturing of insight knowledge. While being seated for a long time with one's attention focused, one tends to feel tired in one's body. One may feel as if a fire is burning in the whole body and may perspire profusely in the armpits and some times everywhere else on the body. One may feel as if steam would gush out of the skull. The mind can become restless and agitated. At that time, one should enter into absorption and calm the body and mind before returning to *vipassanā*. The circumstances may persist as before. If so, one should try to enter into absorption as indicated above and seek release. In this way, *samatha* meditation is especially helpful in the *vipassanā* practice.

A person who has already developed absorption should make use of it freely to find release from such occasional difficulties during the *vipassanā* practice. One should develop insight concentration and knowledge. Once insight concentration and knowledge reach maturity, there is unlikely to be any further bodily pains and irritations as experienced earlier. It will be possible to continue with the meditation practice, day and night. Accordingly, *samatha* absorptions are also a great help for a *vipassanā* yogi.

Nowadays, *yogis* following the insight method of practice can also experience the difficulties that are stated in the above commentary. *Yogis* who are not skilled in *samatha* absorptions should cultivate strong effort in such a situation to continue with noting, to alleviate bodily pain and weariness to further progress with the insight meditation practice.

As the commentary correctly says, for a *neyya* person, all the three trainings are suitable, since both *sīla* and *samādhi* are especially helpful. But, one should bear in mind that the commentary has not specifically mentioned how long one should maintain purity before commencing the meditation practice.

Further, highlighting the case of *Sarakāni* the *Sākyan* it can be said that as a *neyya* person, he meditated only at the time of closer to his death and became a *sotāpanna*. The commentary does not mention that his attainment occurred after listening to any person or to any advice. Accordingly, he cannot be classified as an *ugghaṭitaññū* or a *vipañcitaññū* person. Considering all these examples, it could be decided that the statement: ‘a *neyya* person has to maintain purity of *sīla* for long time before attaining path and fruition knowledge’ is nothing more than a personal view or an opinion.

A person without attainment in their life can also achieve the whole range of insight knowledge without purifying *sīla* beforehand. The example of *Tambadāṭhika*, the executioner further illustrates this.

Tambadāṭhika - The Executioner

A citizen of the city of *Rājagaha* by the name of *Tambadāṭhika* (one who has a copper coloured mustache) was assigned by the King as the public executioner. Daily, he put to death robbers, killers and bandits, who had violated the law and condemned by the royal court to be decapitated. Daily, he executed a few as part of his duty and after fifty-five years he retired. Immediately after his retirement, he decided to cook rice-porridge, purely with milk. He had a bath and perfumed the body and garlanded himself with jasmine flowers after wearing new clean clothes. As he waited in his new costume, ready to consume the rice porridge, Venerable *Sāriputta* visited on his alms round. Seeing the Venerable approaching, *Tambadāṭhika*, became very happy and invited him to come in and offered some of the milk-rice porridge that had been prepared. Venerable *Sāriputta* consumed the porridge and gave a sermon, thanking *Tambadāṭhika*. Whilst listening to the talk, which he received as a blessing for his generosity, *Tambadāṭhika* became rather restless owing to the fact that he was the public executioner for the past 55 years.

Venerable *Sāriputta* noticed his restlessness and questioned him:

“Dear *Upāsaka*, did you execute people out of your own wish or was it due to a command of someone else?”

“Venerable Sir, I did it not out of my own wish but surely due to the King’s order”, he answered.

“If this is the case, should you be concerned upon it as your misdeed?”

Realizing that it was not his own mistake but rather carrying out the King’s order, his worry alleviated and his attention returned to the talk. After listening to the talk, he attained the insight knowledge - ‘*anulomakkhanti*’.

So, there anumodanam karonte ekagga citto hutvā Dhammam suṇanto sotāpatti maggassa orato anulomikam khantim nibbatesi. (Dhp-com. 100)

“When he (*Tambadāṭhika*) was listening to the elder’s (Venerable *Sāriputta*’s) sermon, his mind became one-pointed (concentrated), which resulted in the *anulomikam khantim* (referring to the *saṅkhārūpekkhā-ñāṇa* with conformity to the path-knowledge near to stream-entry (but still not mature enough to realize stream-entry).”

Normal insight knowledge is sometimes recognized as *anulomikam khantim*. But in this case, since the commentary specifically mentions it as *sotāpatti maggassa orato* (just short before *sotāpatti magga-ñāṇa*), there is no doubt that *saṅkhārūpekkhā-ñāṇa* (knowledge of equanimity towards all formations) is what was attained by *Tambadāṭhika*.

Out of courtesy, *Tambadāṭhika* accompanied Venerable *Sāriputta Thero*, a certain distance. On his return, a mad cow (possessed by a female *yakkhā*) knocked *Tambadāṭhika* down and killed him. His next birth was in the *Tusita*-heaven.

This became a topic for discussion among the monks: “*Tambadāṭhika* was a public executioner for 55 years and retired today. He made milk-porridge and offered it to Venerable *Sāriputta* and died immediately after that. How will be his next destiny?” In response, the Blessed One summarized *Tambadāṭhika*’s circumstances with the following stanza:

Subhāsitaṃ suṇitvāna - nagare cora ghātako
Anuloma khantiṃ laddhāna - modati tidivam gato’ti.
(Dhp-com. 100)

“Having (respectfully) listened to the well spoken (*Dhamma*-discourse, which was delivered by Venerable *Sāriputta*), the executioner of the city (*Rājagaha*) acquired the *anuloma khantiṃ* (and) went to heaven to enjoy happiness.”

The *bhikkhus* were not very happy and questioned further: “Venerable Sir, he has done grave mistakes, the effect of a sermon of *Dhamma* is not so powerful. Being the situation thus, how can he achieve such deep insight knowledge?”

In reply to this question the Buddha answered:

“O monks! Do not try to measure my *Dhamma* as less powerful. A meaningful sermon, even for a split second is significant and yields profound and delightful results.”

Further he admonished as follows:

“Sahassam api ce vācā - anatta-pada-samhitā,
Ekam attha-padam seyyo - yam sutvā upasammati.”
(Dhp. 100)

“Better than a thousand meaningless words

Is one meaningful word, hearing which one attains peace.”
(DP-AB. 100)

Since *Tambadāṭhika* did not attain path and fruition knowledge, he cannot be categorized as a *neyya*-person. As a result, one can never consider him as an *ugghaṭitaññū* or a *vipañcitaññū* person. Therefore, one must seriously consider how he could achieve such state of advanced knowledge such as *sañkhārūpekkhā-ñāṇa*, which marks the climax of the purification of *patipada ñāṇadassana*, even without basic virtue? It could be that for lay-people, even if their virtue is not pure, it is not an obstacle for their spiritual advancement.

There are two reasons why someone would fail to realize noble attainments in one's life. The first is association with ignoble friends (*pāpamittatā*). In the case of the King *Ajātasattu*, he lost the opportunity to become an *arahant* due to his association with *Bhikkhu Devadatta*. This has been reported in the texts thus: on the suggestion of the *Bhikkhu Devadatta* the King *Ajātasattu* committed patricide, which is called '*kammantarāya*' - an obstacle for liberation and accordingly he lost the opportunity to attain *magga-phala* in his lifetime. A person, who has committed such an obstructing act cannot attain even an insight-knowledge like that of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), not to mention the attainment of path and fruition knowledge.

The second reason why someone fails to attain the path and fruition knowledge is incompleteness in effort of restraint and admonishment - '*kiriya parihāni*'. In the 51st *sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, called *Kandaraka Sutta*, the following example is provided. A person called *Pessa*, a son of an elephant trainer unfortunately lost his opportunity to attain path-knowledge as he failed to pay full attention to the topic presented by the Blessed One. Had he paid full attention to

the complete exhortation, which explained the four kinds of people such as self-tormentor, he would have attained *sotāpatti*, according to the Buddha. But he got up half way and paid respect telling: “We must go. We are very busy; there is much to be done by us”, and left. He was fortunate to approach the correct person and to receive instructions about the correct path of practice, but gave up half way, showing incompleteness in his effort. As a result, he lost the opportunity. This exemplifies what is called ‘*kiriyaṃ parihāni*’ - incompleteness in effort of restraint and admonishment.

Further, the 59th *sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* illustrates a story of a *Brahmin* called *Dhānañjāni* at his deathbed. He was visited by Venerable *Sāriputta*, who delivered a sermon only about *samatha* meditation. *Dhānañjāni* successfully contemplated to attain only *samatha* then and there, and passed away to be born in the *Brahma*-abode. If instead, he had been bestowed with a complete sermon culminating with *vipassanā*, he would have attained path and fruition knowledge before passing away. His failure to attain path and fruition knowledge was due to an incompleteness of the admonishment. The Buddha points out the incompleteness of Venerable *Sāriputta*’s admonishment and recommended that he meet the new-born *Brahma* in the *Brahma*-world and to deliver a complete sermon including *vipassanā* teachings. Venerable *Sāriputta* followed the Buddha’s instruction.

From then onwards, Venerable *Sāriputta*, whenever he delivered a sermon, never failed to culminate it with the four noble truths. Even today there are people like *Dhānañjāni*, who have the potential to achieve noble attainments, but just while away their lives simply due to ‘*kiriyaṃ parihāni*’ (incompleteness of instructions), especially due to incorrect

presentation of *vipassanā* or simply due to an absence of such instructions.

As far as *Tambadāṭhika*'s incident is concerned, his non-attainment was mainly due to him being slack in his meditation practice (*kiriyaṃ parihāni*). The fact that he attained the *saṅkhārūpekkhā-ñāṇa* is clear evidence that the sermon was not incomplete. Further, the failure was not due to an association with ignoble friends.

For a realization of the dhamma, the decisive criterion is not being or not being an *ugghaṭitaññū* or a *vipañcitaññū* person. Impurity of virtue is an obstacle only for *bhikkhus*, but for the laity, it is not crucial. If purification of virtue is not fulfilled during meditation, it is impossible for the sequence of insight knowledge to arise. In the case of Chief Minister *Santati* and as illustrated in similar cases, fulfillment of a purification of virtue should be understood as follows: If, either just before a sermon or while listening to it, one makes a resolution not to repeat one's mistakes, then by that very resolution or pledge, the purification of virtue comes into effect. Even without such a distinct resolution, it can be stated, that just by meditative contemplation itself one's purification of virtue can come into effect.

Purification of virtue through meditation

*“Ñāṇena avijjam ... aniccānupassanāya
niccasaññam ...*

(Pṭ s. vol. I, p. 45)

*... pahānam sīlam, veramaṇī sīlam, cetanā sīlam,
samvaro sīlam, avītikkamo sīlam. Evarūpāni sīlāni
cittassa avippaṭisārāya samvattanti, pāmojjāya
samvattanti, pītiyā ..., passaddhiyā ..., somanassāya
samvattanti, ... ekanta- nibbidāya, virāgāya*

nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattanti. ... Yo tattha samvaraṭṭho, ayam adhisīlasikkhā, yo tattha avikkhepaṭṭho, ayam adhiccittasikkhā, yo tattha dassanaṭṭho, ayam adhipaññāsikkhā.” (Pṭs. vol. I, p. 46)

Some parts of this quotation, which are extracted from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, have been eliminated to make the essay not too voluminous. The full text can be found in (Pṭs. vol. I, p. 45 - 46)

“Through knowledge (of *nāma-rūpa paricceda* and *paccaya-pariggaha*) in the case of (equivalent) ignorance ...through contemplation of impermanence (at the stage of *sammasana ñāṇa*) in the case of perception of permanence ... abandoning (of harmful actions) is virtue ... abstention is virtue, volition is virtue, restraint is virtue, non-transgression is virtue. Such virtues lead to nonremorse cognizance, to gladness, to happiness, to tranquility, to joy, ... to perfection, to complete dispassion, to fading away of greed, to cessation, to peace, to direct-knowledge, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna*; ... The meaning of restraint therein is training in higher virtue. The meaning of non-distraction therein is training in higher cognizance. The meaning of seeing therein is training in higher understanding ...” (PD. I, 264 + 265).

In the *pahāna sīla*, with only the knowledge of *nāma* and *rūpa*, the delusion of a person or a being is abandoned. With the knowledge of cause and effect, ignorance is abandoned (wrong concepts that beings arise without a cause or that they are created by a *Brahman*, an omnipotent god or the king of the gods are abandoned). The perception of impermanence leads to an abandonment of defilements or delusion that “all *nāma-rūpa* arises as a permanent object”.

‘Abandoned’ means that when light arises, then darkness goes away; whenever true knowledge arises, defilements, which are based on wrong knowledge, go away or don’t have an opportunity to arise. In this way, when defilements lose the opportunity to arise, with time, only wholesome mental states (such as the series of insight knowledge) have the opportunity to arise, undisturbed.

Through the practice of insight meditation, only wholesome mental states will arise in time. As the practice progresses, there is very little opportunity for defilements to arise. This is abandonment. As a result, at that time, there will only be wholesome mental states, unmixed with unwholesome mental states. This abandonment gives a base for the arising of future wholesome mental states and is called ‘*upadhāraṇa*’. It also ensures that wholesome mental states are unshakable. Therefore, it is called *samādhāna*. Since abandonment has both these qualities, in the canon, it is referred to as ‘*pahāna sīla*. It indicates that the insight practice does not allow for the arising of defilements. By itself, it is said to be virtue.

Abstention is virtue (veramaṇī sīla)

According to the commentaries and subcommentaries, in the presence of any *vipassanā*-consciousness there is not a single mind moment without the three kinds of abstinence (*pahāna*). In the *vipassanā* practice, the arising of states of mind which are against misbehavior (misconduct) and wrong livelihood, serves this abstention at the *tadaṅga*-level (substitution of opposites). At the moment of path-consciousness, the abstentions are aimed solely towards liberation. At that moment, no other abstentions or intentions are possible. In this event, all forms of misbehavior (misconduct) and wrong livelihood will be completely

eradicated (*samucceda pahāna*). This facilitates the function of abstinence.

When *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* reaches maturity, it is unlikely that there be defilements in connection with the object of meditation or misunderstandings of a person, a being (etc); or that beings arise without a cause, or that there is permanence, pleasure or a permanent soul (etc). This is due to the eradication of underlying tendencies related to the object of meditation (*ārammaṇānusaya*). When defilements lose their opportunity to arise, there will no longer be obsessions relating to a being or a person. As a consequence there won't be any transgressions such as killing, stealing, (etc), as the misconception of a being or a person is absent. Each time that insight knowledge such as *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* (etc) arises, defilements emerging from the underlying tendencies related to the object of meditation cannot arise and develop to the transgression-level. Therefore, it is called 'virtue by abstention' (*veramaṇi sīlam*).

Volition is virtue (cetanā sīla)

To encourage the noting of each object as it arises, volition must be present at each moment of meditation. A person without discipline or any restraint is ready to commit physical or verbal misbehaviors at any moment. For a yogi, whenever faith, zeal and energy become weak, his intention to note also becomes weak. Then the noting will not be clear. Whenever faith, zeal and energy become strong, the noting also becomes strong and clear. Depending on the level of application of volition, the noting comes to completion. Since volition reflects on and applies to wholesome actions (*upadhāraṇa* and *samādhāna*), volition is called 'virtue by volition'.

Restraint is virtue (samvara sīla)

The five kinds of restraint listed under the topic of ‘restraint of the faculties’, are called ‘*samvara sīla*’. In the arising of *vipassanā*-consciousness, each noting comprises *samvara sīla*, which keeps unrestrained actions under control or prevents them from arising. Especially, mindfulness, knowledge, patience and energy are regarded as ‘*samvara sīla*’.

Non-transgression is virtue (avītikkama sīla)

By noting, the mind knows things as they really are. This leaves no space for misunderstandings or misconceptions. As a result, misunderstandings cannot cause transgressions of virtue as they do not enter the stream of consciousness. For further clarification: if volition of *pāṇātipātā* (the intention to kill a living being) arises, it can lead towards a transgression. One can understand volition as a potential misdeed. On the other hand, if one does not entertain this volition (*cetanā*), there is unlikely to a transgression. It is not even a potential *pāṇātipātā*. In the same way, a mind that does not note, opens the way for all the three types of defilements, namely dormant (underlying tendency), obsession and transgression by defilements. The noting mind however, does not allow for the arising of defilements and therefore transgression is impossible. Virtually, it means that there is no transgression by defilements. Accordingly, each noting can be referred to as ‘*avītikkama sīla*’.

Out of these five kinds of virtue, only *cetanā sīla* and *samvara sīla* are important. *Pahāna sīla* means the removal of defilements - not allowing them an opportunity to arise. Simply, it means getting rid of defilements. *Veramaṇī sīla* and *avītikkama sīla* means the arising of *vipassanā*-

consciousness according to the following quotation that is found in the *Visuddhimagga*:

*Veramaṇivasena ... avītikkamavasena ca cetaso
pavattisabbhāvam sandhāya vuttā. (Vism. 1, 141)*

“As abstention from such and such ... as restraint from such and such, as the volition associated with both of these, and as non-transgression in one who does not transgress such and such.” (PoP. 1, 141)

One must bear in mind that only a state of mind apart from *cetanā sīla* and *samvara sīla* does count in this context as *veramaṇī sīla* and *avītikkama sīla*.

Abstention as virtue (*veramaṇī sīla*) and non-transgression as virtue (*avītikkama sīla*) are, in principle, equal. Abstention as *sīla* refers to the complete abstention from all the three types of defilements such as underlying tendencies, obsession and transgression. Not allowing them to enter into one’s stream of consciousness, to make free from their arising or rather not allowing them to enter is called *avītikkama sīla* (non-transgression is *sīla*). This is a fairly discriminative explanation.

As stated in the stanza, “*Yo tattha samvarattho*”, the four kinds of virtues - *pahāna*, *veramaṇī*, *cetanā* and *avītikkama* are considered to be virtue by restraint (*sīla samvara*). When the mind is fully aware of or if mindfulness penetrates into the *nāma-rūpa* object of meditation, one experiences *ñāṇa samvara* (restraint by knowledge). Knowledge, which leads to understanding, is also called *ñāṇa samvara*. If non-hatred (which has the potential of restraint from misdeeds or misconduct) can be maintained when perceiving undesired objects, one experiences *khanti samvara* (restraint by patience). The energy applied in meditation is *virīya*

samvara (restraint by energy). These five kinds of restraint occur simultaneously during each moment of *vipassanā*-consciousness. In each moment of *vipassanā*-consciousness, this fivefold restraint is the training of higher virtue (*adhisīlasikkhā*).

Presenting *ñāṇa*, *sati* and *virīya* as *sīla* is just a mode of speech. Invariably, *ñāṇa* (knowledge) means the real accumulation of wisdom. *Sati* and *virīya* come under the training of concentration.

Completing the four types of *sīla* in *vipassanā*-consciousness: *pahāna*, *veramaṇi*, *cetanā* and *avītikkama sīla* fulfills the *pāṭimokkha samvara* and *ājīva pārisuddhi sīla*. These forms of *sīla* keep the three kinds of defilements - underlying tendencies, obsession and transgression defilements away from the stream of consciousness or do not allow them to enter the stream of consciousness. Restraint by *sati*, *ñāṇa*, *khanti* and *virīya* can be understood as virtues of restraint of the faculties. Out of these four, restraint by knowledge (*ñāṇa*), which occurs by noting and reflecting whenever one uses the four requisites, covers the *paccaya sannissita sīla* (virtue concerning the requisites).

The Buddha's exhortation was to contemplate on the usage of the four requisites and to not arouse defilements in respect of requisites. Training in this restraint prevents one from obsessive and the transgressional forms of defilements. It is however not possible to eradicate the underlying tendencies in this way. They can be uprooted only by insight knowledge. Accordingly, total purification of virtues concerning the requisites comes only through *ñāṇa samvara*. This is an important fact to keep in mind.

With meditation purification of virtue comes to completion

In the course of history, the real method of meditation gradually became weaker. There was a belief that reflection (on the usage of requisites) was better and nobler than meditation itself. Due to this misconception, it was impossible to convince some people that it was meditation that brought reflection to completion. In fact, concentration and insight meditation is incomparably superior and broader than reflection. The Buddha exhorted that virtue concerning the requisites comes to fulfillment by meditation in just a split second. A quotation from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* shown below, reiterates this. It is only relevant to *bhikkhus*:

“Accharā-saṅghāta-mattam pi ce bhikkhave bhikkhu metta-cittam āsevatī..., bhāvetī..., manasikaroti ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu. Arittajjhāno viharati satthu sāsana-karo, ovādapatikaro amogham raṭṭhapiṇḍam bhūñjati. Ko pana vādo ye nam bahulīkarontī’ti.” (A. I, 6, 3-5)

“Accharā-saṅghāta-mattam pi bhikkhave bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati,... vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati,... citte cittānupassī viharati, ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjā-domanassam, ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu arittajjhāno viharati, satthu sāsana-karo ovāda-patikaro amogham raṭṭhapiṇḍam bhūñjati. Ko pana vādo ye nam bahulīkarontī’ti.” (A. I, 20, 10-13)

“Monks, if for the time of a finger-snap, a monk produces a thought of loving-kindness, develops it, gives attention to it, such a one is rightly called a monk. Not in vain does he meditate. He acts in accordance with the master’s teaching; he follows his advice and eats deservingly the country’s alms food. How much more would it be, if he cultivates it.” (ND. I, 6, 3-5)

“Monks, if for the time of a finger-snap a monk produces a thought of contemplation of the body as a body, contemplation of the feelings as feelings, contemplation of consciousness as consciousness, contemplation of the *Dhamma* as *Dhamma*, develops it, gives attention to it, such a one is rightly called a monk. Not in vain does he meditate. He acts in accordance with the master’s teaching; he follows his advice and eats deservedly the country’s alms food. How much more would it be, if he cultivates it.” (ND. I, 20, 10-13)

In the first part the meaning of a thought of loving-kindness is explained in the commentary as follows:

“Mettāya sabba pubba bhāgo nāma neva appanā, na upacāro, sattānam hita pharaṇamatta mevā’ti.”

(A-com. I, 6, 3, Singh.)

“It is the early part, not absorption, not access, just mere radiating wishes of welfare for all beings...”¹

“Idha pana mettā pubba bhāgena hita pharaṇapavattana matteneva āsevatīti vedītabbo.”

(A-com. I, 6, 3, Singh.)

“Thus the meaning of the practice should be understood here as *mettā* in its early part – just the mere proceeding of radiating (wishes of) welfare”.¹

Here, loving-kindness means neither absorption nor access concentration but, normal friendly thoughts towards all beings. The meaning of the second part is clear and does not require further explanation.

¹ The translator added this translation for the reader’s better understanding.

A *bhikkhu*, who meditates even for a time period of a finger-snap on loving-kindness, contemplation on the body or another kind of concentration meditation is in accordance with the master's teaching and restrains himself, so that he becomes equal with a *sekha puggala* (one in training) and deservedly consumes the donor's alms-food. Accordingly, the donors also receive higher merits in return. Such a usage of requisites can be considered as completely free from debt (*anaṇā paribhoga*), used as inheritance (*dāyajja paribhoga*) or used as the proper owner (*sāmi paribhoga*). There is nothing special to mention about a person who meditates continuously.

The explanation in the commentary is as follows:

“Paribhuñjatīti cattāro paribhogā, theyya paribhogo, iṇa ..., dāyajja ..., sāmi paribhogo’ti; ... tatta imassa bhikkhuno ayam raṭṭha piṇḍa paribhogo dvihi kāraṇehi amogho hoti. Accharā saṅghāta mattam kālam mettam āsevanto, bhikkhu raṭṭha piṇḍassa sāmī hutvā anaṇo hutvā dāyādako hutvā paribhuñjatīti pissa amogho raṭṭha piṇḍa paribhogo; accharā saṅghāta mattampi mettam āsevantassa bhikkhuno dinnam dānam mahatthiyam hoti mahapphalam mahānisamsam mahā jutikam mahā vipphārantipissa amogho raṭṭha piṇḍa paribhogo; ... Ye pana idam mettam cittam bahulam āsevanti, bhāventi punappuna karoti, te amogham raṭṭha piṇḍam paribhuñjatīti ettha vattabbameva kim; eva rūpā hi bhikkhu raṭṭha piṇḍassa sāmīno anaṇā dāyādā hutva paribhuñjantī’ti.” (A-com. I, 6, 3, Singh.)

“The way (he) uses are the four (ways of) using: using as a theft, ...as a debt, ...as an inheritance, and using as the owner ... In this regard for a monk the usage of country's alms-food will not be in vain out of two reasons: Even if he practices *mettā* for the mere time of a finger-snap the monk

uses the country's alms-food as (its) owner, free of debt, and as (its) heir. Thus, his usage of the country's alms-food is not in vain. A gift to a monk, who practices *mettā* for the mere time of a finger-snap will be of great purpose, of great fruit, of great benefit, of great shining, of great radiation, then not in vain is his usage of the country's alms-food. ...Those who are cultivating a mind of *mettā*, developing it, doing it again and again, thus not in vain they use the country's alms-food, what should be said in this regard, indeed such monks use the country's alms-food as the owner, free of debt, as (its) heir'.¹

The alms-food of a *bhikkhu*, who develops loving-kindness even for a time of a finger-snap, gives two-fold results to the donor called '*amogha paribhoga*' (efficacious use). Firstly, it is efficacious for himself and secondly for the donor. It gives full benefits, because by using it with loving-kindness the *bhikkhu* himself can use it as the proper owner, as an inheritor or as free of debt. Even if he is not reflecting at each time of usage, there is no mistake such as usage as debt (referring to: *anaṅo hutva*).

When using requisites, loving-kindness can be developed as a meditation. The more loving kindness is developed, the more benefits are assured for the consumer yogi as well as for the donor. This is because the receiving *bhikkhu* meditates and also strives on the path of stream winners, whereby he becomes a middle class person out of eight individuals deserving a donation. The donation given to such a person is superior and bears great fruits and benefits for the donor. For that reason and because it assures such two-fold results for both the yogi and the donor, it is called '*amogha*

¹ The translator added this translation for the reader's better understanding.

paribhoga'. *Bhikkhus* that cultivate loving kindness are the real owners, the real inheritors of alms food and are really free of debts.

Although the commentary refers to loving-kindness meditation, one must not think that the benefits can only be assured for loving-kindness meditation. It is assured in the canon that these beneficial results accrue as a result of *samatha*-meditation - all the *jhānas* and their attainments - and all kinds of *vipassanā*-meditation (*kāyānupassanā* (etc)). All forms of meditation have equal benefits as loving kindness meditation, which leads the list. One must bear in mind that by insight knowledge, virtue concerning requisites comes to completion.

For the laity, whether or not they are pure in the four kinds of virtues before commencing meditation, the arising insight consciousness, eventually makes them totally pure.

For those whom, a purity of virtue reaches completion as a result of meditation, the development of concentration and knowledge is indicated in the following verse:

“*Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño - cittam paññañca bhāvayam.*” (S. I, 3, 3)

“A man, established in virtue, wise - developing the mind and wisdom.” (CD. 1, 23)

For yogis, the development of *samādhi* and *pañña* is based upon or rests upon two kinds of virtues: *pubba bhāga sīla* (previous virtue), which acts as *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* (decisive support) and the *sahajāta sīla* (co-nascent virtue,) which acts as *nissaya patiṭṭhā* (supportive cause). Details are provided below.

Upanissaya patiṭṭhā - cause of decisive support or of inducement = founded on previous conditions

Maintaining pure virtue for a long period of time or just prior to commencing meditation is a cause of decisive support (*upanissaya patiṭṭhā*) and provides the base for *vipassanā* concentration or knowledge. Irrespective of the presence of virtues that are already developed, early *vipassanā* consciousness and early path and fruition consciousness provides the base and decisive support (*upanissaya patiṭṭhā*) for the development of latter *vipassanā* consciousness and knowledge as well as for path and fruition consciousness and knowledge.

Nissaya patiṭṭhā - supportive cause = supported by attending conditions

The virtue present in *vipassanā* consciousness and path and fruition consciousness acts as a supportive cause for concentration and knowledge present in the same consciousness. A person endowed with previously purified virtues entertains both *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* (due to previous virtue) and the *nissaya patiṭṭhā* (due to the virtue present in this moment), as a base for developing concentration and knowledge.

A person who fulfills virtue only with insight meditation, solely depends on *sahajāta sīla = nissaya patiṭṭhā* of the earliest consciousness in developing his concentration and knowledge. From the second contemplative consciousness onwards both *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* and *nissaya patiṭṭhā* could be used to develop concentration and knowledge.

This appears in the *Mahā Ṭīka* as follows:

“Patiṭṭhāyāti duvidhā patiṭṭhā nissayūpanissaya bhedato. Tattha upanissaya patiṭṭhā lokiyā, itarā lokuttarā va

abhinditvā gahaṇe. Bhinditvā pana gahaṇe yathā lokiya cittuppādesu sahaḷātānam purima pacchimānaṅca vasena nissayūpanissaya patiṭṭhā sambhavati, evam lokuttaresu heṭṭhima magga phala sīla vasena upanissaya patiṭṭhāpi sambhavatī'ti. 'Patiṭṭhāyā'ti padassa yadā upanissaya patiṭṭhā adhippetā, tadā 'saddham upanissāyā'ti ādisu viya purima kāla kiriyā vasena attho vedītabbo. Tenāha: 'pubbeva kho panassa kāyakammam vacīkammam ājīvo ca supārisuddho hotī'ti. Yadā pana nissaya patiṭṭhā adhippetā, tadā' cakkhuṅca paṭiccā'ti ādisu viya samāna kālakiriyā vasena attho vedītabbo.' (Vism-MṬī, p.11/12, Singh.)

In this context, the term '*patiṭṭhā*' gives two meanings depending upon its adjectives: namely *upanissaya* and *nissaya*. Out of these two, if one, indiscriminately takes concentration and knowledge of all the four paths (*magga*) without analyzing them separately, mundane virtue serves as *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* (support by previous conditions) and supramundane virtue serves as *nissaya patiṭṭhā* (support by attending conditions).

On the other hand, if one analyzes the four paths (*magga*) separately, than the preceding mundane virtue serves as *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* for the 1st path concentration and path-knowledge. Simultaneously, with such path consciousness occurring, supramundane virtue serves as *nissaya patiṭṭhā* and in turn for path concentration and path knowledge of the next higher path consciousness it serves as *upanissaya patiṭṭhā* and so on. Accordingly, virtue of the lower paths and fruits give support or a base for the attainment of higher paths and fruits and their concentration and knowledge. When it is used as in '*saddham upanissāyā'ti*' ('based on faith'), the word '*patiṭṭhā*' should be understood as 'action

belonging to the past' (*purima kāla kiriya*). This is comparable to 'sīle patiṭṭhāya' ('based upon *sīla*').

The *bhikkhu's* physical and verbal actions as well as livelihood should be already purified. As far as *nissaya patiṭṭhā* is concerned, it must be viewed in the present tense (*samāna kāla kiriya*). This is comparable to '*cakkhuñca paticca*' ('dependent on the eye ...') and '*sīle patiṭṭhāya*' ('establishing on virtue').

The fact that meditation helps to fulfill the purification of virtue has been comprehensively dealt with in this book for two reasons. Some state that: if one wants to practice meditation one must purify one's virtues for a long time before commencing meditation. Only then can one commence meditation. That is why one should first purify one's virtues. Before this is done, one should not commence meditation. Accordingly, the first reason is to prevent delay for potential meditators, caused by such unfounded statements and to stop such remarks by showing real facts that are found in the authentic texts. The second reason is to prevent the accumulation of possible demerits for such speakers who try to find fault in such a blameless practice.

Virtue is a discipline worthy of high respect and esteem. Probably not less than ninety-nine percent of all the suffering that beings in hell experience is due to a lack of virtues. In the same way, not less than fifty percent of the present heavenly beings and human beings enjoy a happy life due to past virtues. The majority of the Noble Ones attained their state after purifying their virtues well before meditation. Cases like the Chief Minister *Santati* are unusual.

Therefore, everyone should value one's own virtue more than one's life. Virtue is really worthy of protection. One should not underestimate and postpone this, telling that one

will observe it later, in the future. It is said that, if one's life ends with impure virtues and one looks back on such an immoral life, then, in one moment one will fall into hell. No further comment appears to be necessary for those engaged in meditation. Such people should be invariably keen to protect and foster their virtue more than their very life.

People who wish to commence meditation, even if with virtue, already in tact, should first renew their precepts, may be the *pañca sīla* or the *ājīva aṭṭhamaka sīla*, before commencing the practice. They should safeguard them, considering their contribution towards the development of concentration and knowledge. If one is planning to undertake a retreat, may be for a week or more to practise day and night uninterruptedly, then after removing all obstacles to a religious life one should strictly observe eight or ten precepts.

The benefits of virtue

If one safeguards one's purity of virtue throughout the retreat, each time one reflects upon it, the mind will be free from regret. Instead, delight will arise. Happiness will arise. Serenity will arise. It will facilitate one's comfort and eventually, concentration will arise. It will be easier to note *nāma* and *rūpa* as they arise and as a result, knowledge will arise to see things as they really are. This is how the purification of virtues for lay-people actually happens.

Chapter II

Purification of the mind

Owing to the power of pure concentration (*samatha* = calm) or pure insight (*vipassanā*) concentration, it is not possible to think or ponder about various objects or the hindrances for a long period of time. Only concentration based upon either *samatha* or *vipassanā* will continue to develop, resulting in a purity of the mind. Due to the power of such concentration, all the mental concomitants become free and separate from the hindrances.

Three kinds of samādhi

There are three kinds of concentration that lend towards a purification of the mind: *upacāra-samādhi*, *appanā-samādhi*, and *khaṇika-samādhi*. A *samatha* yogi, successfully managing to keep the hindrances at bay and sees a *paṭibhāga-nimitta* (counterpart-sign), or experiences continuous concentration on the object such as the virtues of the Buddha, experiences *upacāra-samādhi* (neighborhood-or access-concentration). This degree of concentration (or unification in the consciousness) is experienced just prior to entering *appanā-samādhi* (any of the absorptions or *jhānas*). This form of concentration based on *kasina*, *asubha*, *kāyagatā-sati*, *ānāpāna-sati*, *brahma-vihāra*, or *āruppa-kammatthān*, is considered to be genuine *upacāra samādhi*. Concentration which arises as a result of other sources such as the eight recollections (*anussati*), *paṭikkūla-saññā* and *dhātu-vavatthāna*, does not arise in the neighborhood of *appanā-jhāna* and cannot be considered as real *upacāra-samādhi*. Characteristically, such concentration is sufficiently strong to suppress the hindrances just as it is the

case with *upacāra-samādhi*. Accordingly, it could also be reckoned as *upacāra-samādhi*.

There are four fine-material spheres (*rūpa jhānas*) in the method of fourfold reckoning or five in the method of fivefold reckoning. There are also four immaterial-spheres (*arūpa jhanās*), comprising a sum of eight or nine attainments (*samāpatti*) called *appanā-samādhi*. *Samādhi* meaning a tranquil state of concentration, where the mind or consciousness is first settled on an object of meditation (such as *kasina*) as if being fully absorbed in it.

The meditative attention of a pure insight *yogi* becomes continuous and pure on the object of meditation if the power of his/her faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and knowledge remains strong and balanced. As a result, there is no opportunity for discursive fantasy thoughts (*nīvaraṇas*) to enter the stream of consciousness or to interrupt the awareness on the object of meditation for a long period of time. Under such circumstances, each time that contemplation and noting occurs, the mind remains strong and unmistakably concentrated on the *nāma-rūpa* object. This moment to moment fixing of the mind on the process of mind and matter in their present immediacy is momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*).

Purification of a samathayānika (vehicle of calm) yogi's mind

A *samathayānika yogi* is one who progresses towards *Nibbāna* or final liberation with the help of *samatha* (calm) concentration as a vehicle. He or she develops *vipassanā* based upon two of the above-mentioned three kinds of concentration (*samādhi*) – either *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi*. Thus, *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi* forms a basis for the purification of the mind.

Purification of a vipassanāyānika (vehicle of pure insight) yogi's mind

One who develops bare *vipassanā* concentration without making use of *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi* is called a *vipassanāyānika yogi*. Such a person does not make use of any form of *samatha* practice and proceeds towards final liberation with pure insight practice, without employing the development of calm or tranquility as a foundation to develop insight, associating only with *khaṇika-samādhi*. This is the path of purification of the mind for a *vipassanāyānika yogi*. The following quotations from the commentary and the sub-commentary support this conclusion:

“*Cittavisuddhi nāma sa-upacārā aṭṭha samāpattiyo...*”

(*Vism.* 18, 1)

“And the purification of consciousness, namely, the eight attainments, together with access concentration...”

(PoP 18, 1)

This quotation does not expressly refer to *khaṇika-samādhi*, although the other quotations from the commentary and the sub-commentary presented below clearly refer to it. The quotation is extracted from a section which separately explains the methodology of a *samathayānika* (vehicle of calm) *yogi's* purification of the mind and the purification of the mind of a *vipassanāyānika yogi*. The involvement of *khaṇika-samādhi* is not discussed because it automatically purifies the *vipassanā*-consciousness and functionally removes the hindrances just like in the case of *upacāra-samādhi*. As indicated in the commentary to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, this is already included in *upacāra-samādhi* and therefore not separately mentioned here.

The following sub-commentarial quotation clearly and directly indicates that the vehicle of calm (*samathayānika*) involves the prior establishment of calm or tranquil meditation to the level of access concentration or absorption concentration as a foundation for insight:

Samatho va yānam samatha yānam, tam etassa atthiti samatha yāniko, jhāne jhānūpacāre vā patiṭṭhāya vipassanam anuyuñjantassetam nāmam. Samatha yānikassa samatha mukhena vipassanābhiniveso. Vipassanā yānikassa pana samatha anissāyāti āha suddha vipassanāyānikoti. Samatha bhāvanāya amissita vipassanāyānavāti attho.

(*Vism-MṬī*, Burmese, vol. 2, p. 350-351)

The vehicle of pure insight (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*) however, does not employ the development of calmness or tranquility as a foundation for insight. In the event that neither access concentration nor absorption concentration are used as a basis for the development of insight by the *suddha-vipassanāyānika*, then, such a *yogi* would only be employing the third kind of concentration - momentary concentration. Such a deduction could be demonstrated in the following example, which offers an indirect connotative meaning of what actually transpires. Instead of directly expressing the fact that the *Thera Devadatta* was taking dinner, it could be stated that “the *Thera Devadatta* increases in weight and becomes corpulent without taking the midday meal.” Thus, it is made clear that a *suddha-vipassanāyānika* could attain insight knowledge without access concentration or absorption concentration as a foundation. It could also be directly expressed that a *vipassanā-yānika yogi* could

practice insight meditation solely on the basis of *khaṇika-samādhi* as set out in the following quotation:

*Samatha yānikassa hi upacārappaṇāppabhedam
samādhim, itarassa khaṇika-samādhim,
ubhayesampi vimokkha mukhattayam, vinā na
kadācīpi lokuttarādhigamo sambhavati. Tenāha
samādhiñceva vipassanañca bhāvayamānoti.*

(*Vism-MṬī*, Singh. vol. 1, p. 13)

In the case of *samathayānika yogi*, it is said that the paths and fruits cannot be attained without access concentration or absorption concentration. On the other hand, for *avipassanāyānika yogi*, path and fruition attainment is not possible without *khaṇika-samādhi*. For both vehicles, attainment is unlikely if the practice is not based on one of the three gateways of liberation (the realization of either impermanence, suffering or not-self). To clearly understand the meaning of this extract from the *Mahā Ṭīka*, together with its background context, one must first pay attention to its original canonical reference provided below:

*“Sīle pathiṭṭhāya naro sapañño - cittam paññañca
bhāvayam,
Atāpī nipako bhikkhu - so imamvijaṭṭaye jaṭan’ti.”*

(S. 1, 3, 3)

“A man, established in virtue, wise - developing the
mind and wisdom,
A *bhikkhu* ardent and discreet: He can disentangle
this tangle.”

(CD. 1, 3, 3)

In this stanza, one must first see the connection between the two lines “*cittam paññañca bhāvayam*”, and “*so imam*

vijaṭaye jaṭan'ti“. The latter part says that: “he succeeds in disentangling this tangle”, although it fails to express a methodology for this disentanglement. It is not clear what form of meditation should be practiced. The method is revealed where the stanza refers to “developing the mind and wisdom”. Accordingly, the connection is that “by developing the mind and wisdom (one is) disentangling this tangle”. The term ‘*cittam*’ generally means the mind. The commentarial expression ‘*samādhī ceva vipassanañca bhāvayamāne*’ indicates that the term ‘*cittam*’ means concentration; and ‘*paññam*’ means an understanding of insight. It therefore means: “by developing concentration and insight knowledge one can disentangle this tangle”. When one gets rid of the complication of craving, one can become an *arahant*. The commentary does not however, make it clear who should develop what kind of concentration. Also, it does not clarify why the two kinds of concentration and insight knowledge need to be developed.

According to the sub-commentary, a *samathayānika yogi* has to develop either access or absorption concentration to attain path-and-fruit-knowledge. There is no other way. A *vipassanāyānika yogi* has to develop momentary concentration to attain path-and fruit-knowledge. There is no other way. For both, there is no prospect of liberation unless it is based on one of the three gateways to liberation being *aniccānupassanā* (contemplation of impermanence), *dukkhānupassanā* (contemplation of suffering) and *anattānupassanā* (contemplation of non-self). With the support of one of these three gateways of liberation, one develops the appropriate insight wisdom to realize final liberation. In this manner, one disentangles the tangle of craving. Without both, calm and insight meditation, it is impossible to attain path-and-fruit-knowledge. To stress

this impossibility, one commentator, with reference to the *Visuddhimagga* says “*samādhiñca vipassanañca bhāvayamāno*” - that only the development of calm and insight meditation makes it possible to disentangle the tangle.

for a *vipassanāyānika yogi*, the development of access or absorption concentration is not necessary. With momentary concentration alone, the purification of the mind comes into effect and facilitates the attainment of path and fruition consciousness. Since it is a general consensus that one should accept something only if it operates parallel to the commentary, the following quotation from the commentary on the *Dhammadāyāda Sutta* (M. 3) is cited as a basis for a discussion about the two methods:

Bhāvanā-nayoti koci samatha-pubbaṅgamam vipassanam bhāveti, koci vipassanā-pubbaṅgamam samatham; katham idhekacco paṭhamam upacāra-samādhim vā appanā-samādhim vā uppādeti, ayam samatho. So thañca tam sampayutte ca dhamme aniccādīhi vipassati, ayam vipassanā. Iti paṭhamam samatho, pacchā vipassanā, tena vuccati samathapubbaṅgamam vipassanam bhāvetīti; tassa samatha-pubbaṅgamam vipassanam bhāvayato maggo sañjāyati.

(M-com. 3, Singh. p.99)

Developing the noble path is possible in two ways. Some develop *vipassanā* preceded by *samatha*. Others develop *samatha* preceded by *vipassanā*. For some, the *vipassanā* practice is based on the development of either *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi*. This is the practice of *samatha yogis*. For such *yogis*, the development of insight is predicated upon *samādhi*, the mind and the mental factors,

which occur conjointly with *samādhi* to realize *anicca* (etc). This knowledge represents *vipassanā*. First, they develop *samatha samādhi*, upon which *vipassanā* develops.

This unfolding of the *vipassanā* practice, which is based on a development of *samatha samādhi* is explained in the sub-commentary as follows: “*paṭhamo samathayānikassa vasena vutto*”, revealing it as the *samathayānika*-person’s noble path. The commentarial explanation, “*so thañca tam sampayutte ca dhamme aniccādīhi vipassati*” (one must develop insight upon *samādhi* and the mind and the mental factors, which occur conjointly with *samādhi*) requires special attention as it is the most widespread method of practice for a *samathayānika yogi*.

Equally, the following explanation, given to the same quotation must also be treated with special care: “*So thañca tam sampayutte ca dhamme aniccādīhi vipassati*” (once *samādhi* is developed, *vipassanā* such as the contemplation of impermanence should be practiced). In this commentarial explanation, there is no mention or recommendation about developing the early or preliminary forms of insight knowledge such as knowledge into mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa*) and the knowledge into cause and effect (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*). However, it is clear that without these two forms of preliminary knowledge, it is impossible to practice the deeper contemplations, such as the contemplation of impermanence. It is reasonable to conclude that in practice, the early stages of insight knowledge must be developed soon after the requisite *samatha samādhi* is developed, so that the deeper contemplations are possible.

The expression, “*aniccādīhi vipassati*” is presented according to the ‘*padhāna-naya*’ method, where only the primary thing is directly highlighted, leaving aside the other

secondary things. Accordingly, the commentator directly highlights only the main thing (i.e. the insight knowledge on impermanence). The two preliminary forms of knowledge, which are not expressed and left aside, should accordingly, be presupposed or deduced. For example, when it is reported that ‘the king has set out’, it must be understood, unmistakably that his retinue has also accompanied him. Instead, if one isolates the main idea and treats it separately and concludes that one commences insight meditation directly with the contemplation of impermanence; there would be an inconsistency with the accepted methods of practice according to the texts. One must therefore, be careful and vigilant, when one extracts the correct meaning from the commentarial presentations:

Idha panekacco vuttappakāram samatham anuppādetvā ca pañcupādānakkhandhe aniccādīhi vipassati, ayam vipassanā. Tassa vipassanā pāripūriyā tattha jātānam dhammānam va vossaggārammaṇato upajjati cittassa ekaggatā, ayam samtho. Iti paṭhamam vipassanā pacchā samatho, tena vuccati vipassanā-pubbaṅgamam samatham bhāveti'ti. Tassa vipassanā-pubbaṅgamam samatham bhāvayato maggo sañjāyati, so tam maggam āsevati-pe-bahulīkaroti, tassa tam maggam āsevato-pe-anusayā byanti honti.

(M-Com. 3, Singh. p.99)

In the above commentarial expression, it is stated that persons who have no interest in the prior development of *samatha* concentration could commence a contemplation of the five groups of clinging, realizing impermanence (etc) in their practice. This is pure *vipassanā* practice. Progressing in the development of sharp insight knowledge, the *yogi*

overcomes mental distractions and builds up unshaken concentration on the object of meditation. This mental stability is his *samatha* foundation, which develops out of the *vipassanā* practice that has been undertaken previously. In this way, a *vipassanāyānika yogi* develops concentration with the insight practice operating as the forerunner.

This method of meditation with preceding *vipassanā*, explained in the sub-commentary as: “*dutiyo vipassanāyānikassa (vasena vuttā)*”, indicates that this is the noble path for a person using the vehicle of pure insight. It commences with pure *vipassanā*, which does not rely on the development of any concentration (*upacāra-samādhi or appanā-samādhi*), as set out in the quotation: “*vuttappakāram samatham anuppādetvā*”. The terms “*aniccādihi vipassati*” (as explained earlier), directly indicate only the main factor, but it is implicit that preliminary things such as the insight knowledge of *nāma-rūpa-paricceda* and *paccaya-pariggaha* should also be developed in time.

The sub-commentarial sentence: “[*t*]assa *vipassanā pāripuriya tattha jātānam dhammānam vossaggārammaṇato upajjati cittassa ekaggatā*”, states that when insight knowledge comes to completion, a unification of the mind arises. According to the sub-commentary, "completion" means ‘*vutthānagāmini vipassanā*’ (insight leading to emersion), and "unification of the mind" means ‘*magga-samādhi*’ (unification which is manifest in path consciousness).

Even though it is presented in this way, the following quotation of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* states, “cultivate *samādhi* based upon *vipassanā*”:

“*Vipassanam pubbaṅgamam purecārikam katvā samatham bhāveti, pakatiyā vipassanālābhī vipassanāya thatvā samādhim uppādetīti attho.*”

(A-com. 4, 2, 10, Singh. p. 542)

The above quotation does not specify whether it refers to *magga samādhi* (unification manifest in path-consciousness). It does not appear to mean *magga-samādhi*. It says that the supramundane path arises only for the person who first cultivates *samādhi*, indicating that the former is not *magga-samādhi* (unification manifest in path-consciousness). Otherwise, it would not have any meaning. If one says, “[i]f one pounds upon gold, it will turn into gold” because *magga-samādhi* is nothing but the *samādhi*, which arises in the very moment of *magga-ñāṇa*.

The method which requires the development of *samatha* concentration prior to commencing the *vipassanā* practice belongs to the mundane (*lokiya*) sphere. Similarly, the method of practice in which *vipassanā* precedes the development of the *samatha* practice is also in the mundane sphere. As a result, when one mentions ‘*samatha*’, it is appropriate to accept it as the momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*) which arises with insight.

The development of insight, which gives rise to momentary concentration, is of three varying degrees, namely: superior (*ukkaṭṭha*), medium (*majjhima*); and inferior (*omaka*). Each of these three stages of insight concentration is discussed in the following passages.

Superior (ukkaṭṭha) insight and concentration

From the stage of the knowledge of dissolution onwards, the insight knowledge that is developed is powerful and comprehensive. From there onwards, a superior form of momentary concentration (*ukkaṭṭha khaṇika-samādhi*) develops. This explanation operates parallel to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (the Path of Discrimination) and *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification), where *bhaṅga ñāṇa* (knowledge of dissolution) and ‘*vayalakkhanupatthānekatta*’ (the insight into the unity consisting in the establishment of the characteristic of decay). This will be discussed in greater detail towards the end of this chapter where the knowledge of dissolution is discussed.

Medium (majjhima) insight and concentration

The medium level of insight knowledge gathers momentum from *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* (knowledge of arising and passing away) onwards. The momentary concentration, which arises at this stage of mental development, is at a medium level. This is consistent with the *Visuddhimagga*, which states that: the knowledge of arising and passing away is the young insight and the person endowed with this knowledge is called ‘*āraddha vipassaka*’ (a person who has already started insight practice). This is also in conformity with the *Pāli*-quotation relating to ‘*udayabbayānupassi*’, where it is stated that this knowledge is ‘*padhāniyaṅga*’ (endowed with the faculty of meditation practice leading towards the attainment of *magga-phala*). Various *Pāli* texts and other relevant commentaries describe *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* as the first among the powerful and deeper forms of insight knowledge.

Inferior (omaka) insight and concentration

In the *vipassanā* practice, inferior insight knowledge becomes accomplished from the mature stages of *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* onwards. From then onwards, the inferior forms of momentary concentration begin to gain maturity. At this stage of the practice, discursive thoughts will not arise and the noting mind becomes free of the hindrances. The concentration which commences with *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* leads to an understanding of the natural characteristics of *nāma-rūpa*. Because the mind is cleansed of the hindrances, which is functionally similar to *upacāra-samādhi*, momentary concentration will invariably arise from this stage onwards. If not, there cannot be a proper understanding of *nāma-rūpa*. The momentary concentration, which helps to support the *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* for the insight yogi is called ‘purification of the mind’.

The following quotation from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* refers to this supreme and powerful concentration:

“*Yo tattha avikkhepaṭṭho, ayam adhicittasikkhā*”

(*Pṭs.* vol. I, p. 46)

“The meaning of non-distraction therein is training in the higher cognizance.”

Compared to “*ñāṇena avijjāya ... pahānam sīlam ...*” as set out at page 47 of Volume 1, the above quotation should be interpreted as “[t]he meaning of non-distraction therein (in that knowledge of *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* and of *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*) is training in the higher cognizance (concentration and insight)”.

The following quotation from the *Dhammasaṅgani*-commentary (*Atthasālinī*) explains the reason for *nāma-rūpa-paricceda-ñāṇa* and the *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa* being referred to as insight knowledge:

“*Yathāyam nāma-rūpa-pariccedādīsū vipassanā-ñāṇesu paṭipakkhabhāvato, dīpāloken’eva tamassa tena tena vipassanā-ñāṇena tassa tassa anātthassa pahānam seyyathīdam, nāma-rūpa-vavatthānena sakkāyadiṭṭhiyā, paccayapariggahena ahetu-visamahetu diṭṭhīnam – pe - gotrabhunā saṅkhāranimittaggāhassa pahānam etam tadaṅgappahānam nāma.*” (*Dhs-com.* 711, PTS. p. 351/352)

This quotation could be translated as: “[j]ust like darkness is expelled by the light of a lamp, each and every progressive and subsequent insight knowledge abandons a particular unwholesome state. The discrimination of mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa-pariccheda*) abandons personality view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*); and the discernment of conditionality (*paccayapariggaha*) abandons the view of no cause or fictitious cause (etc). This is called abandonment by opposites (*tadaṅgappahāna*)¹

When momentary concentration reaches maturity, the unity of the noting mind remains unshaken, even though the object (*nāma-rūpa*), which is being constantly noted, is changing rapidly. From that moment onwards this momentary concentration also can continue to exist as strong as absorption concentration (*jhāna*). The difference between these two types of concentration is that in absorption concentration (*jhāna*) the object of meditation does not

¹ This translation has been included by the Translator for the better understanding of the reader.

change. When the mind is in absorption, it is not possible to discriminatively discern mind and matter (*nāma and rūpa*). Neither is the arising and passing away of the object obvious. But, when a yogi undertakes insight meditation, the mind remains flexible to note the changing object and apprehend mind and matter clearly and discretely (*nāma and rūpa*). When knowledge matures, the arising and passing away will also become obvious. This is the primary difference between *samatha* concentration and *vipassanā* concentration. There is no difference in the focus and the unification of the mind.

This is mentioned in the sub-commentary to the *Visuddhimagga* (*Mahā Ṭīka*) as follows:

“Khaṇika cittekaggatāti khaṇamattaṭṭhitiko samādhi, so pi hi ārammaṇe nirantaram ekākārena pavattamāno paṭi-pakkhena anabhibhuto appito viya cittam niccalam ṭhapeti.”

(*Vism-MṬī*, Singh. vol. 1, p. 278)

“Thus momentary one-pointedness of the mind is concentration founded momentarily on an object. It is proceeding continuously in a one-pointed state of mind, not overwhelmed by the opposition of the hindrances and places the mind unshaken as if it is being absorbed.”¹

The sub-commentary (*Mahā Ṭīka*) expands the aforementioned commentarial expression stating that “the *vipassanā*-mind can be unified firmly by momentary concentration”, as set out in the topic of *Ānāpānakathā* in *Paṭisambhidā-magga* (*Pṭs.* p. 190 f. / *PD.* p. 201), which uses the expression ‘*samādaham cittam*’. Not only access

¹ This translation has been included by the Translator for the better understanding of the reader.

concentration and absorption concentration unifies the mind, but momentary concentration also has the ability to maintain a unification of the mind for a period of time.

If one were to query how strong the momentary concentration should be to maintain a firm mind, one would respond with “*ārammaṇe nirantaram ekākārena pavattamāno*”, meaning that when the strength of momentary concentration reaches a level of *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration), hindrances cannot disturb the noting mind, thus, enabling the noting to continue uninterrupted. From this time onwards, momentary concentration can be maintained without a gap. As stated in the expression: “*paṭipakkhena anabhibhuto appito viya cittam niccalam ṭhapeti*”, momentary concentration at the level of *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* (knowledge of arising and passing away) and *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* (knowledge of dissolution) (etc) is powerful and comes on par with *jhāna*-concentration (absorption). When momentary concentration becomes so powerful and continuous to have the quality of absorption, there is no space for hindrances to operate.

The word ‘*vossagga*’ in the term of ‘*vossaggārammaṇato*’, just like in the term ‘*vossaggaparināmin*’, gives two meanings: *pariccāga* (giving up of the secondary object (i.e. fantasizing or wandering(etc)) and *pakkhandana* (entering into or launching out into, meaning the plunging or entering into the primary object (*gocara ajjhata*)) [*Pṭs.* p. 190 f. / PD. p. 201]. Of these two, the former means ‘*ārammanāṇam vossaggo pariccāgo*’. The term *ārammaṇa* means secondary object. According to insight meditation instructions, anything other than the primary meditation-object, such as thinking, fantasizing or day-dreaming is a secondary object. The commentary on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta* supports this: “*Bahiddhā vā cittam vikkhipati*”, referring to a

consciousness outside the scope of the *vipassanā* consciousness. The latter '*pakkhandana*' (to enter into) is explained by '*ārammaṇe vossaggo pakkhandanam*', meaning, entering into the primary object

Although these words differ in grammatical form, their practical meaning is the same. They are similar because giving up of the secondary objects and launching into or entering into the primary object (without thinking, fantasizing (etc)) has the same practical meaning and effect. In other words, refusal of external objects and unification of the mind only with the primary object of meditation in practice is the same.

A noteworthy fact

The insight *yogi* commences the practice only with a development of momentary concentration without making use of either access or absorption concentration. He or she gains insight knowledge, which is not dependent on a development of access or absorption concentration. The concentration develops as insight gathers momentum. This has been well explained in the commentary with respect to the method of '*vipassanā-pubbañgamam samatham*' (concentration with preceding insight).

This commentary, which explains the difference between the two methods of meditation, is an extract from the original *Pāli*-Canon. Only the relevant part has been included in this translation to emphasise the idea. This commentary could be considered a reproduction of the *Pāli*-Canon as it is parallel to the original *Pāli*-Canon. To ascertain this conformity, one should read the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Numerical Discourses), Book of Four; the *Paṭipadā Vagga*, and the section on the *Yuganadhakathā* in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Path of Discrimination).

The *Pāli*-extract from the latter is cited here for the convenience of the reader:

“Rūpam aniccato anupassanaññhena vipassanā, rūpam dukkhato anupassanaññhena vipassanā, rūpam anattato anupassanaññhena vipassanā; tattha jatānam dhammānañca vossaggārammaṇatā cittassa ekaggatā avikkhepo samādhi. Iti paṭhamam vipassanā, pacchā samatho; tena vuccati vipassanāpubbaṅgamam samatham bhāveti.”

(*Pṭs.* vol. II, p. 96)

"Insight is the contemplation of materiality as impermanent, the contemplation of materiality as painful and the contemplation of materiality as non-self. Unification of cognizance and non-distraction due to ideas produced therein, having relinquishment as their supporting object is concentration. As there is insight first, followed by serenity, it was said 'he develops serenity preceded by insight'." (PD. XI, 73, p. 289)

To explain the meaning of the term '*tattha*', a quotation from the following *Majjhimā Nikāya* sub-commentary is given, which is in accordance with the above text:

“Tattha jātānañ’ti tasmim ariyamaggakkhane jātānam sammā diṭṭhi ādīnam dhammānam, niddhāranecetam sāmivacanam. Vossaggārammaṇā’ti vossaggassa āram-maṇatāya - pe - nibbānassa ārammaṇa karaṇenāti attho. Cittassa ekaggatā’ti iminā magga samādhim āha.”

(*M*-subcom, Burmese, vol. I, p. 203)

“The meaning of ‘*tattha jātānam*’ (‘arisen there’) is: The meaning of this quotation is discussed in the following paragraphs.

At the moment of the attainment of the Noble Path (*ariya magga*), *dhamma*, such as right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*), arises. This can be specified as arising (or origin). Thus, ‘*vossaggārammaṇa*’ (object of relinquishment) has the objective of relinquishing unwholesome states or ignorance. *Nibbāna* is taken as the object (a consciousness, which arises towards *Nibbāna*). In this context, ‘*cittassa ekaggatā*’ (one-pointedness of the mind) refers to path-concentration (unification of the path- consciousness = *magga-samādhi*).¹

The term ‘*tattha*’ means ‘at the moment of path-consciousness’. As the pronoun ‘*ta*’ here stands away from its usual three meanings (as found in the authentic texts), such as: the subject which has gone (*pakkanta visaya*), famous (*pasiddha*), and consumed (*anubhuta*), it is not easy to understand the correct meaning.

‘*Jātānam dhammānam*’ means the Dhamma, such as the correct view (*sammā diṭṭhi*).

‘*Vossaggārammanatā*’ refers to a mind aiming towards *Nibbāna* (as the object of meditation).

‘*Cittassa ekaggatā*’ means one-pointedness in path-consciousness.

‘*Avikkhepo*’ means without distraction or an unscattered state of mind = ‘*samādhi*’.

¹ This translation has been included by the Translator for the better understanding of the reader

The Canon provides four methods of meditation, including the *Yuganaddhā* and the *Dhammuddhaccapahāna* method. Only two of the methods have been explained in detail so far in the above section. To clarify the remaining two methods, the *Yuganaddhā* and the *Dhammuddhaccapahāna* method, a brief explanation is provided below.

The Yuganaddhā method

This method involves a coupling together of both serenity and insight, where the *yogi* enters into the first absorption and practices insight meditation, contemplating on the absorption. Then he or she enters into the second absorption, followed by insight meditation based upon the second absorption. In this way, the *yogi* enters the absorptions sequentially and practices insight meditation (in a coupled manner) based upon the absorption concentration until the attainment of path-consciousness. In this method, serenity precedes insight. It is therefore included as a method that involves insight with preceding serenity.

The Dhammuddhaccapahāna method – dealing with agitation through overestimation (manifested in contemplation)

In the practice of these methods (*samatha* with preceding *vipassanā* and *vipassanā* with preceding *samatha*), when the meditation matures to an early stage of *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* (knowledge into the arising and passing away of phenomena), a *yogi* experiences several of the following: illumination, knowledge, rapture, serenity, happiness, faith, energy, attention (*sati*), equanimity and an attachment to these appearances. When this happens, a *yogi* tends to overestimate their unfolding in the practice, considering them to be special knowledge. As a result confusion arises. This is why it is called "the mind is agitated through

overestimation". When the mind is agitated due to overestimation, the *yogi* does not correctly understand *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter) as it is related to the object of meditation being noted. The noting also fails to progress. Instead, it may regress or the mind can become scattered. Without distracting oneself with these ten concomitants, the *yogi* must carry out the noting respectfully and meticulously. If the noting is respectfully carried out, the agitation or confusion will automatically subside.

Then, the *nāma-rūpa* object of meditation will become clear again. The noting as well as the cognizance are internally composed or resettled to meditate upon the *nāma-rūpa* as the object of meditation. From then onwards, insight knowledge will develop, enabling the *yogi* to progress and attain path-knowledge. This method of the removal of agitation due to overestimation is called '*dhammuddhaccapahāna*' (the abandoning of the agitation due to overestimation). It is relevant to both the *vipassanā-pubbaṅgamam* method and the *samatha-pubbaṅgamam* method of meditation.

The bare insight *yogi* does not develop concentration meditation for the purpose of purification of the mind prior to undertaking the insight meditation practice. Instead, such a *yogi* will commence with insight meditation right from the beginning. As the insight meditation progresses, momentary concentration sets in to purify the mind. The Canon cites many quotations about this effect based upon commentaries and sub-commentaries. The whole of this treatise deals mainly with the method of bare insight and does not therefore allocate a separate chapter to explain the methods of purification of the mind. It is nevertheless useful to highlight the benefits of momentary concentration, especially the eight kinds of outlets (*niyyāna*), the eight kinds of obstacles for the outlets (*niyyānāvaraṇa*), the six dangers for

concentration and the six escapes from these dangers as well as how the unification of the insight-mind takes place. Each of these will be explained in the remainder of this chapter with the assistance of the commentary available in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Path of Discrimination).

The first outlet and the blockade

“Nekkhammam ariyānam niyyānam, tena ca nekkhammena ariyā niyyanti; kāmacchando niyyānāvaraṇam, tena ca kāmacchandena nivutattā nekkhammam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ ti kāmacchando niyyānāvaraṇam.”

(*Pṭs.* Vol. I, p. 163)

“Renunciation is an outlet for noble ones and noble ones are let out by renunciation: zeal for sensual desires blocks that outlet, and because he is hindered by zeal for sensual desires he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in renunciation.” (PD. III, 5; p.165)

*“Pabbajjā paṭhamam jhānam nibbānañca vipassanā,
Sabbepi kusalā dhammā nekkhammanti pavuccare.”*

(*It-com.* 4, 1, 10, Singh. p. 271)

“Going forth, the first absorption, liberation, insight and all the skillful deeds are called *nekkhammam* (outlet).”

The commentary to the *Visuddhimagga* (*Mahā Ṭīkā*) explains non-greed as the main outlet. This interpretation is

proper in respect of conditioned things. This treatise deals mainly with *vipassanā-samādhi*. Accordingly, the meaning refers to insight as the outlet. The other outlets, which are yet to be explained, will be presented in respect of *vipassanā-samādhi*.

If one fails to note *nāma-rūpa* objects arising in one of the six sense-doors in each moment, then it is not possible to understand them as *nāma* and *rūpa* in their true nature and desire or longing for the pleasant objects or the resultant feelings that can arise. On the other hand, if one efficiently notes the *nāma-rūpa* objects at the moment of their arising in one of the six sense doors, one will comprehend the true nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*. One will understand them as cause and effect, as impermanent, unsatisfactory and uncontrollable. Due to this knowledge about presently arising objects or feelings, desire or craving will not arise. Because insight knowledge (*vipassanā*) offers this freedom from craving or desire, or does not give any opportunity for craving and desire to arise, it is called 'outlet'. It also helps the noble ones to escape from the suffering of the cycle of rebirths and functions as an outlet for them. One grows in insight (*vipassanā*) step by step to reach path-knowledge, so that one realizes liberation in the present life. *Vipassanā* is an outlet because it serves as a means for noble ones to set free from *samsāra*. It is the vehicle enables the noble ones to realize liberation.

Sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) or craving is called obstacle or hindrance because it blocks the progress of *vipassanā*. How does it obstruct? Everyone has endless responsibilities and duties for the prosperity of their life, such as one's own business, other people's business, duties concerning husbands, wives or one's children, duties towards relatives, friends, disciples, supporters, or teachers (etc). One is preoccupied with pondering and planning for the fulfillment

of these duties and responsibilities. One must strive a lot and exert extra effort to achieve that which is not achieved. One needs to painfully protect what is already earned and reaped. Among those thousand and one daily chores and activities, there is hardly any rest or free time. No space or energy is left even to think about insight meditation. Even if one may sometimes wish to practice *vipassanā* meditation, there is insufficient time available. The mind is filled with too much interest in the pleasures of life that it goes astray without any restraint.

One just wastes away the time, immersed in day-dreaming or in fantasizing. One takes delight in talking as one pleases, in walking around as one wishes, sleeping or resting and leading a relaxed life according to one's desires. In this way of life, even if one has the opportunity to meditate in isolation, one tends to worry about bodily comfort during the retreat. In the same way, one tends to worry about one's properties and one's security whilst meditating. These conditions don't allow for any meditation practice. As a result, there is no opportunity to gain insight knowledge. The personal experience and realization of insight knowledge as an outlet is not possible in this way and therefore it is not possible to attain liberation from the misery of the cycle of rebirths.

This obstacle for liberation is caused by expectation for worldly prosperity, hope for a luxurious lifestyle and the endlessly prominent desire for sensuality (*kāmacchanda*). This interest in sensual pleasure obstructs and blocks the progress of insight meditation. It prevents one from a realization of liberation (the outlet). Sometimes the desire for sensual pleasure in future existences could also be an obstacle for liberating insight. In this way, one is completely

obstructed or blocked from the practice of insight meditation to a point of making it impractical.

Even while practicing meditation, in the course of contemplation and noting the object of meditation, the hindrance of sense-desire can emerge and obstruct the progress. It is even possible that strong sense-desires arise just as it can happen before taking up the meditation practice. It is also possible to take delight in the progress of meditation, to entertain pleasant feelings in connection with successful noting of the object. The appearance of signs of success in meditation can cause desire to arise. This could lead to thinking and fantasizing. An interest to speak to others about one's own meditation may arise. One desires to teach meditation to close relatives and friends. Perhaps one makes plans to reorganize one's meditation timetable for the attainment of path and fruition knowledge. Some say that in this state of affairs, the desire for path- and fruition-knowledge (*Nibbāna*) would not be a craving, but a wholesome desire for purity, because craving does not aim at supramundane spiritual realizations (*lokuttaradhamma*). In this regard, it should be considered whether a *puthujjana* (a common worldling) with his or her desire to gain merit can comprehend the real path and fruit of *Nibbāna* as an object of mind or not.

In the case of a *puthujjana*, only the change-of-lineage consciousness (*gotrabhu*), which arises just prior to path-knowledge of the first stage (*sotāpatti-magga-phala*), can aim at *Nibbāna* as an object. Any other consciousness or mental capability is not able to aim at *Nibbāna* as an object. In the texts of the *Pāli*-Canon it is stated that contemplating consciousness of a common worldling cannot take the real *Nibbāna* as the object. Any effort outside the stage of *gotrabhu-ñāṇa* cannot aim at real *Nibbāna* as the object.

Therefore, for common worldly beings, even if they wish, it is not possible to aim at real *Nibbāna* as an object. Whatever that a *puthujjana* aims at *Nibbāna* or such supra-mundane states as an object is not the real *Nibbāna*. It is mere deductive or conventional knowledge (imagination) called *nāma paññatti* (convention of name), *ākāra paññatti* (convention of manner), *santhana paññatti* (convention of shape). Yearning for such a conventional or imagined *Nibbāna* can be based on craving (*taṇhā*) as well as wholesome desire (*kusalacchanda*). Desire can manifest in such a way.

See the *Salāyatana-vibhaṅga Sutta* (M. 137) and the related commentary:

“... *Anuttaresu vimokkhesu piham upaṭṭhāhāpeti*”
(M. 137)

“... One generates a longing for the supreme liberation.”
(MLD. 137)

The sub-commentary goes on to explain as follows:

“*Anussutiladdham pana parikappasiddham arahattam uddissa pattanam ṭhapeti.*”

(M-subcom, Burmese, vol. III, p. 383)

“It causes an aspiration after final liberation, which has been perceived either by assumption or imagination through hearsay.”

The sub-commentary on the *Sakkapañha Sutta* (D. 21) gives the following explanation:

“*Anussavupaladdhena pana anuttara vimokkhe
uddissa piham ...uppādentō.... tattha piham ...
upaṭṭhāpetīti vutto.*”

(D-subcom, Burmese, vol. II, p. 265)

“Though aiming at real supra-mundane liberation is impossible with desire or craving, the final liberation learned by listening could be expected with desire.”

If longing for desire or craving does not occur, insight will develop continuously without a gap. The arising of craving is equal to a blockage here, which could be expressed with a saying such as: “Hey! We are coming first! Insight knowledge, you will have to stop and wait for sometime!” Even for those who are developing stronger concentration and knowledge this craving can arise and become an obvious weakness or a complete break down of the meditation progress. This could lead to sorrow and disappointment.

Considering this obstruction or obstacle, it has been stated that: “due to this obstacle caused by sensual desire or craving the fruit of insight meditation, which leads the noble ones to liberation from the *samsāric* miseries is not known.” In this context, the impossibility of knowing does not refer to a knowing, which comes from learning or listening (*suta*). It refers to the impossibility of knowing or understanding by practical meditative experience. Since sensual desire obstructs or hinders the liberation of noble ones, it is called an obstruction or hindrance (*niyyanāvaraṇa*). It is also called ‘*nīvaraṇa*’.

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* states the following:

“Ken’ aṭṭhena nīvaranā? Niyyānāvaraṇaṭṭhena nīvaraṇā.”

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 163)

“In what sense are they hindrances? They are hindrances in the sense of blocking the outlets.”

(PD. III, 5, p.165)

The *vipassanā kusala* (skill in insight), an outlet for noble ones, is a cause for liberation. It is therefore called ‘*niyyāna*’. Someone who wishes for liberation from the cycle of rebirths should cultivate this outlet of the noble ones. Sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) blocks this insight, which leads to liberation and is therefore called ‘*niyyānāvaraṇa*’ or ‘blockade of the outlet’. One must overcome *kāmacchanda*. Where it arises, one must note it and try to get rid of it immediately.

The second outlet and the blockade

“*Abyāpādo ariyānam niyyānam, tena ca abyāpādena ariyā niyyanti; byāpādo niyyānāvaraṇam, tena ca byāpādena nivutattā abyāpādam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānāti’ti byāpādo niyyānāvaraṇam.*”

“Non-ill-will is an outlet for noble ones, and noble ones are let out by non-ill-will: ill-will blocks that outlet, and because he is hindered by ill-will he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in non-ill-will.”

(PD. III, 5; p.165)

A *vipassanā* mind, while noting and contemplating without any disappointment does not allow for ill-will to arise and is

therefore in a state of ‘absence of ill-will’ (*abyāpāda*). In the course of meditation, unpleasant objects or unpleasant feelings may arise and they must be noted. Noble ones realized liberation from the *samsāric* miseries, because of their untiring noting and contemplation of the presence of unpleasant or unbearable feelings and even in spite of unsuccessful efforts to get rid of annoyance. Therefore, non-disappointment or non-ill-will is an outlet for noble ones - a path leading to their liberation. One must continue to note and not become disheartened due to failures to allow for it to be an outlet towards the final goal of liberation.

Anger or disappointment in regard to a person or any other object of awareness, causing disturbance in the contemplation or in the noting is called ‘*byāpāda*’ (ill-will). In the presence of *byāpāda*, it is not possible to know and understand *Dhamma*, which brings liberation from the whole cycle of suffering and can only be realized by contemplating without disappointment. This disappointment or ill-will becomes an obstacle to final liberation. One must try to avoid it as much as possible. If *byāpāda* arises in the course of meditation, for instance due to anger against a person, imaginary meeting, debating and quarrel with an unwanted person, aversion against sights or sounds or painful feelings, disappointments due to failure in noting (etc), it must be noted skillfully with the aim of getting rid of it. If the effort to avoid *byāpāda* was successful, the mind will revert back to the primary object of meditation. If not, one should note the *byāpāda* and each moment of its arising until it finally, disappears.

The third outlet and the blockade

“*Ālokasaññā ariyānam niyyānam, tāya ca ālokasaññāya ariyā niyyanti; thīnamiddham niyyānāvarenaṃ, tena ca thīnamiddhena nivutattā ālokasaññam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ti thīnamiddham niyyānāvarenaṃ.*”

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 163)

”Perception of light is an outlet for noble ones, and noble ones are let out by perception of light: sloth and torpor blocks that outlet, and because he is hindered by sloth and torpor he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in the perception of light.”

Reflecting with concentrated mental awareness on sunlight, moonlight, starlight or the radiant light of a meditating mind is known as the development of *ālokasaññā* (the perception of light). As a remedy for a torpid or sleepy mind under the influence of sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), one could try to arouse *ālokasaññā* (the perception of light) or to recall a memory of it. One could apply *ālokasaññā* to avoid the mind becoming drowsy and sluggish during the meditation practice and then revert to *vipassanā*. This will open the door towards liberation and help to get rid of the suffering of *samsāra*. Accordingly, *ālokasaññā* is referred to as an outlet for the noble ones. In the *vipassanā*-sphere, the contemplation towards the discriminative knowledge of *nāma* and *rūpa* through mindful noting, the clear mental awareness and understanding of *nāma-rūpa* can be considered as ‘*ālokasaññā*’.

Diligently noting with clear awareness makes the mind bright and keeps away sloth and torpor. Day and night, the mind will be clear and alert without any headaches or dizziness. Even if one gives up noting during night time, the

mind will not feel sleepy but will be clear and alert. Accordingly, it is said that the perception of light, which leads to clarity in noting is an outlet for the noble ones, leading towards liberation by keeping away sloth and torpor and allowing the mind to develop insight knowledge to a stage of *magga-ñāṇa*.

The drowsy state of the mind caused by sloth and torpor is called ‘*thīnamiddha*’ in *Pāli*. Also, laziness in noting and contemplation is called *thīnamiddha*, which can obstruct the perception of light. That is why it is called an obstacle. Whenever it arises, one must note it clearly and try to avoid it.

The fourth outlet and the blockade

“*Avikkhepo ariyānam niyyānam, tene ca avikkhepena ariyā niyyanti; uddhaccam niyyānāvaraṇam, tena ca uddhaccena nivutattā avikkhepam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ti uddhaccam niyyānāvaraṇam.*”

Pfs. vol. I, p. 163)

“Non-distraction is an outlet for noble ones and noble ones are let out by non-distraction: distraction blocks that outlet and because he is hindered by distraction he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in the non-distraction.”

The momentary concentration, which arises due to focused attention upon the *nāma-rūpa* object of meditation, has the quality of *avikkhepo* (non-distraction). This means clear and stable focusing, which is the opposite of distraction. When *avikkhepo* or concentration becomes powerful, the noting mind penetrates into the object of meditation as if entering

into it. From then onwards, both the noting mind and the object which is being noted begins to operate in conjunction. It is as if a sack of rice which has dropped on the ground would remain at the very place it landed; or if a sharp and heavy spear hitting the soft ground would penetrate it and get stuck at that spot; or if a lump of wet clay thrown against a rough wall would stick to that spot on the wall. In the same way, even though *nāma-rūpa* phenomena tend to change rapidly, the momentary concentration on the object of meditation remains calm and unified. The noble ones reached relief from the misery of the cycle of rebirth after realizing path and fruition knowledge with the assistance of momentary concentration. Momentary concentration allows the mind to remain calm and concentrated on the object of meditation in each moment. It is therefore considered an outlet for the noble ones. It is upon a foundation of momentary concentration that one develops insight meditation.

If the noting mind wanders away from the primary object and is distracted by secondary objects, the mind becomes unsteady and lacks focus. This distraction is known as '*uddhacca*'. In other words, it is defined as distraction of the mind along the incoming diverse objects. A weak degree of *uddhacca* could lead towards a slow wavering or wandering of the mind. A stronger degree of *uddhacca* leads to acceleration of the wavering or wandering of the mind and is therefore a stronger weakness of concentration. The mind may also fail to note the object.

To cite some examples: instead of noting, the mind can become distracted, considering whether the noting is correct or not. Thinking arises, "how should I note this". One tends to worry about the lack of prominence of the object of meditation. These distractions weaken and destroy the

vipassanā-concentration that has been developed. This could result in a dim and obscure meditation object. Due to *uddhacca* (distraction) called ‘*niyyānāvarena*’, the outlet of the noble ones is blocked. To avoid it, one has to note this distraction immediately as and when it arises and revert back to the primary object.

The fifth outlet and the blockade

“Dhammavavatthānam ariyānam niyyānam, tena ca dhammavavatthānena ariyā niyyanti; vicikicchā niyyān-āvarenaṃ, tāya ca vicikicchāya nivutattā dhamma-vavatthānam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ ti vicikicchā niyyānāvarenaṃ.”

(*Pfs.* vol. I, p. 163)

“Discriminative knowledge (about skillful and unskillful actions) is an outlet for noble ones, and noble ones are let out by discriminative knowledge (about skillful and unskillful actions): uncertainty or doubt (regarding what is good and bad (etc.) blocks that outlet, and because he is hindered by uncertainty or doubt (regarding what is good and bad (etc.) he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in discriminative knowledge (about skillful and unskillful actions).”

The knowledge which discriminates what is a flawless skillful action and what is a blemish and unskillful action *dhammavavatthāna-ñāṇa* (knowledge about definition of ideas). The noble ones employ this analytical knowledge as much as possible to avoid committing unwholesome actions and to cultivate only wholesome actions to the best of their capability. This is how they realize liberation and release

themselves from the suffering of the cycle of rebirths. This analytical knowledge is an outlet for the noble ones. The ability to avoid unwholesome actions and to develop wholesome actions is hindered if doubts dominate the mind and blocks the liberation, preventing the noble ones from their escape from the sufferings of the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*).

In this journey of insight meditation, the precise knowledge capable of distinguishing between the unwholesome and the wholesome activities (to support insight) and the knowledge of discrimination which facilitates insight-knowledge (*vipassanā-kusala*) and that which doesn't facilitate insight knowledge are essential. These two forms of knowledge are worthy of being called outlets. The third and fourth chapters of this book present detailed and relevant information, which will assist in making a decision about the correct progress of insight knowledge.

A brief explanation is extrapolated here. To note the continuous flux of mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) at every moment of their momentary arising and to experience the inherent reality is insight (*vipassanā*). When such direct personal and experiential knowledge reaches maturity and becomes firm the experience of past, future, and external forms of *nāma-rūpa* will naturally be contemplated and determined by inference or deductive knowledge. Only these two forms of knowledge, namely direct personal experiential knowledge and the respective deductive knowledge are called insight-knowledge. Other forms of knowledge such as thinking, fantasizing and philosophizing cannot be considered as *vipassanā-kusala* (skill of *vipassanā*). This is a very important fact to be kept in mind. With the help of these two forms of real direct knowledge, the noble ones progress in the *vipassanā* practice and realize the truth ending the

suffering of the whole cycle of rebirths. Furthermore, virtue (*sīla*), the ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*), concentration (*samatha*) and contemplation with wise reflection (etc) are supportive skills that aid the development of *vipassanā*. Therefore, one must learn, study, and inquire about these two forms of outlets.

Doubt as to whether merely noting the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena at every moment of their arising could lead to insight knowledge or not is *vicikicchā*. When a *yogi* is overborne by the presence of *vicikicchā* in their mind, making it difficult for the *yogi* to recognize it as such, it becomes a great hindrance to the practice. Rather, the *yogi* may misunderstand it as a weighing investigation of comparative knowledge, which could lead to deception. The wise *yogi* will be mindful of such doubt.

The *Nettipakaraṇa* commentary cautions as follows:

“*Ubhaya-pakkha-santīraṇa-mukhena vicikicchā
vañceti’ti.*”

(*Net-com.* Singh. p. 76)

“As if weighing both the sides the doubt (doubting mind) is deceiving.”

This deception (*vicikicchā*) is not a problem for a person with limited theoretical knowledge. He or she could practice meditation according to the advice of the master and follow the instructions meticulously with confidence and respect for the teacher. Without a meditation master however, he or she will lose track or even find it impossible at all to undertake the meditation practice. A learned person, instead, can hopefully proceed without an immediate master if he or she has a theoretical understanding of the method of practice. As if traveling along a new path, one would always tend to

entertain doubts, as to the correct path making it difficult to progress at a smooth and steady pace. Similarly, one who has heard about many methods of meditation tends to weigh them again without fully embarking on the correct method of practice.

Doubt is exemplified as a junction at crossroads in the commentary to the *Vammika Sutta* (M 23). It provides a simile of a person traveling with valuables and arriving at a junction and stopping to consider the proper path. While waiting at the junction, a gang of highway-robbers following from behind could easily catch up and kill him or her and take possession of the valuables. Likewise, a *yogi*, just as the traveler waiting at the junction, could be caught by the enemies - the defilements making it difficult to progress further, thus missing the opportunity for liberation. By overcoming *vicikicchā* (skeptical doubt, uncertainty or distraction) through diligent noting and striving forward in one's meditation practice, one will progress towards liberation from *samsāric* suffering.

According to the *Pāli*-texts, *vicikicchā* occurs in an eightfold manner: doubt about the Buddha, the *Dhamma* (the doctrine), the *Saṅgha* (the community of noble disciples); the triple training (the training in higher virtue, higher concentration and higher wisdom); about the future, the past, and the present heap of aggregates (*khandha*); and about dependant origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Nowadays, doubts are entertained mainly in a fourfold manner, namely about one's preacher (whether the instructions given by the contemporary masters really lead to liberation); about the method of meditation (whether the method of meditation is suitable to lend towards success); about persons who claim to have realized special *dhammas* by applying this meditation method; or about one's own ability to

successfully progress in meditation. These four kinds of doubt are common amongst present day practitioners. Accordingly, this treatise attempts to clarify all the important points, beginning with purification of virtue so that one can strive without hesitation and uncertainty to reach the final goal as quickly as possible. Many of the details and explanations are presented in chapters three and four of this book.

To note each posture (such as walking, sitting, lying, stretching, bending (etc)) according to the method explained in chapter five of this book should be clearly understood as a skillful action. One should not entertain doubt about the skill of noting as it is skillful noting that leads towards the knowledge which enables one to see things as they really are with their true characteristics. One also develops effective mindfulness with noting. True faith will arise. No greed or grasping desire will arise, when noting is continuous and present. No aversion or hatred will appear. All these mental concomitances will align as knowledge (*ñāṇa*), mindfulness (*sati*), faith (*saddhā*), absence of greed (*alobha*), absence of anger (*adosa*) as right and flawless *dhamma*. Only such right *dhamma* will arise while proper noting continues.. It is therefore easy to conclude that noting helps to develop insight skill or knowledge, which cannot be developed without it. To cite an example: the *yogi* who develops the earth *kasina* will note it as “earth, earth” or as “*paṭhavī, paṭhavī*” and that is the correct and proper way so that he or she develops the *samatha* skill by each noting. Chapter 4 of this treatise will explain the benefits of noting in greater detail, although a short explanation has been provided here to assist with any doubts that may be hindering one's meditation practice.

If one entertains doubts as explained above, it is not possible for knowledge to arise that noting of the arising of *nāma-*

rūpa phenomena provides the skill of insight. If that outlet-knowledge is avoided, liberating insight will not occur and one fails to liberate oneself from the burdensome cycles of existence. For that reason, doubt or *vicikicchā* is a hindrance or blockade. It blocks the clarity of the mind through which one can shake off doubt about the Buddha or any skillful action. It muddles the mind. One must therefore be careful not to misunderstand such doubting as a special knowledge. One must aim to note it at every moment of their arising. Otherwise, they will be a blockage to the outlet through which the noble ones attain liberation.

The sixth outlet and the blockade

“Ñāṇam ariyānam niyyānam, tena ca ñāṇena ariyā niyyanti; avijjā niyyānāvaraṇam, tāya ca avijjāya nivutattā ñāṇam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ti avijjā niyyānāvaraṇam.”

(*Pṭs.* vol. I, p. 163)

—“Knowledge (that discriminately understands that there is nothing more than *nāma* and *rūpa* as well as cause and effect) is an outlet for noble ones. Noble ones are let out by that knowledge. Ignorance (the wrong belief that there is a being, a person, a permanent sole that there is an omnipotent creator god or that every thing happens without a cause (etc)) blocks that outlet and because he is hindered by ignorance, he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in knowledge.”

This translation in regard to the meaning of the terms ‘*ñāṇa*’ and ‘*avijjā*’ is based on the *Visuddhimagga* commentary called *Mahā Ṭīka*. However, here it is suitable to take the whole series of insight-knowledge and path-knowledge as

ñāṇa. Similarly, it is suitable to take all forms of ignorance or delusion (contrary to these *ñāṇas*) as *avijjā*. Since this treatise deals with insight meditation, the whole series of insight knowledge and the opposing ignorance will be explained throughout the course of the discussion.

At the initial stage of meditation, the *yogi*, who (at every moment) notes whatever *nāma* and *rūpa* that arises will understand that in reality, mentality (*nāma*) by its nature has the ability to see and know the object and materiality (*rūpa*) by its nature is not capable of seeing or understanding the phenomena. Further,, when the noting and concentration reaches maturity, the *yogi*'s understanding grows deeper to an understanding that all phenomena arises due to cause and effect or that *nāma* and *rūpa* has arisen due to preceding causes.

When the *yogi* clearly understands the relation between cause and effect, he or she truly comes to know *nāma* and *rūpa*. If the *yogi*'s concentration is stronger, then it leads towards the knowledge that all *nāma-rūpa* phenomena are impermanent, of suffering nature and not-self (and ungovernable). With even stronger concentration, the *yogi* experiences the insight knowledge into the rapid arising and passing away or the fleeting nature of the phenomena. When this stage reaches maturity, the *yogi* will experience nothing but dissolution at each moment of noting. Such knowledge, arising together with diligent noting is called '*ñāṇa*'. The noble ones progressed towards final liberation from all suffering by advancing in this manner through the whole series of insight knowledge, which served as an outlet for them. The series of insight knowledge represents an outlet for the noble ones, which should be developed by careful noting.

One who is not careful in noting whatever *nāma* and *rūpa* that arises, generally falls into lapses and will not be able to comprehend the real nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*. Such a person is unable to understand them as conditioned, as causes and effects, or as impermanent, suffering and non-self. Furthermore, one will never understand the fleeting nature of the rapid arising and passing away or the dissolution of all phenomena that arises. Because one does not experience directly owing to one's lack of diligent noting, even though the reality is such, one tends to misunderstand the phenomena as a being, a person or a permanent soul or having accidentally arisen or to be created by god. One tends to see them as permanent, pleasurable, self-existing or enduring and to misconceive them as a solid individual entity, as eternal, indestructible and unchangeable.

If one is negligent and delayed to note things immediately as and when they arise, and one only tries to reflect retrospectively, misunderstandings are unavoidable and it is possible that wrong conclusions about *nāma* and *rūpa* are perpetuated. Seeing things as they really are is called *ñāṇa* or *vijjā* (wisdom). The opposite mental state is delusion (*moha*) or ignorance (*avijjā*),. The aforementioned incorrect understandings and conclusions are included in delusion and ignorance. Ignorance (*avijjā*) continuously and uninterrupted appears to a person who does not meditate or fails to note the arising of objects. A person, who has already commenced meditation, but remains in the initial stage with immature *ñāṇa* is influenced by *avijjā* and as a result, mental and material phenomena continue to be misconceived.

General knowledge based on ignorance (eg. an ordinary worldly *kusala* mind) operates in ignorance (*avijjā*), leading to delusion. Awareness and understanding or wisdom (*ñāṇa*), representing the opposite of ignorance, appear

relatively late. Especially at the early stage of the meditation practice, even with proper noting, discriminative knowledge regarding *nāma* and *rūpa* will not occur and everything will appear as usual and according to ordinary perception. Conventional objects will appear as such so that their sign of formation (external shape) and compactness could not be penetrated. They may appear in the usual way as compact entities and with their own particular signs. For example, even if one notes them in a timely manner, before really seeing them as they are, one tends to perceive wrongly as “I am looking”, or “I see that thing”. This is ignorance. Due to this ignorance, things cannot be seen in their real or absolute nature. One would see things as superficial in their conventional appearance.

Due to this ignorance (*avijjā*), the mind will continue with wrong perception. So it is mentioned in the texts that *avijjā* veils the vision like a screen, making it impossible to see things as they really are. When the objects of insight meditation arising at the six sense doors and the six kinds of consciousnesses (i.e. *nāma* and *rūpa*) occur, there is no opportunity to develop insight knowledge, if *avijjā* is predominant, causing wrong perception to operate in the mind. Ignorance (*avijjā*) is called a hindrance which blocks the outlet for the noble ones.

Noting the arising of *nāma* and *rūpa* continuously is knowledge which is considered as an outlet (*ñāṇa niyyāna*). With each and every noting, *ñāṇa niyyāna* is progressing. Thinking, instead of noting represents an obstacle called *avijjā niyyānāvaraṇa*. If one fails to note the primary object due to thinking, but at least takes care to note it as “thinking” or “wandering”, one couldn't overcome *avijjā*.

The seventh outlet and the blockade

“Pāmojjam ariyānam niyyānam, tena ca pāmojjenena ariyā niyyanti; arati niyyānāvaraṇam, tāya ca aratiya nivutattā pāmojjam ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ ti arati niyyānāvaraṇam.”

(Pfs. vol. I, p. 163)

“Gladness is an outlet for noble ones and noble ones are let out by gladness: boredom blocks that outlet and because he is hindered by boredom he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in gladness.”

(PD. III, 5; p.165)

In the sub-commentary of the *Mahā Ṭṭka*, gladness is presented as gladness of absorption (*jhāna*). This general interpretation does not deny the concentration that comes out of insight. If one follows the *Pāli* Canon itself, there are recorded instances where *pāmojja* (gladness) leads to *pīti* (rapture), *sukha* (happiness), *samādhi* (concentration) and *yathābhūta-nāṇadassana* (knowledge to see things as they really are). An example of how concentration comes out of insight knowledge will be provided in the following explanation.

When one is able to note suitable and agreeable objects during meditation, gladness and satisfaction follow. This is ‘*pāmojja*’. When *pāmojja* is present, the noting is gainful in terms of happiness. As a result, the meditation practice becomes a delightful experience for the *yogi*. This delight, also called ‘*rati*’, helps the *yogi* to progress towards the development of the sequential stages of insight knowledge. As a result, the *yogi* is able to realize liberation from the stressful cycle of rebirths. Gladness is an outlet for the noble ones. For an unlearned and inexperienced person (with little

knowledge), *pāmojja* arises quite easily. For a learned and experienced person with a lot of worldly knowledge, *pāmojja* does not arise very easily due to the occurrence of a variety of mental activities in their discriminating mind. For example, a child will be very glad even with a small sum of money, but an adult may need a large sum of money to be glad and content. A learned and broadminded *yogi* can experience *pāmojja* in the course of noting when the practice gathers momentum and the *yogi* develops insight knowledge into the arising and passing away of objects. The *Dhammapada* mentions this as follows:

*Yato yato sammāsati - Khandhānam udayabbayam,
Labhatī pīti-pāmojjam - Amatam tam vijānatam.*

(*Dhp.* 374)

Whenever he sees with insight
The rise and fall of the aggregates,
He is full of joy and happiness.
To the discerning this reflects the Deathless.

(DP-AB. 374)

For one who successfully notes the object, as set out in chapter five of this book, *pāmojja* will be obvious and prominent whenever mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, reaches maturity. For this to occur, only insight meditation is required. It does not require a separate or special form of meditation. If the awareness and the noting is weak, sloth and torpor will set in. When this occurs, one must try to arouse *pāmojja* by reflecting on the virtues of the Triple Gem; the benefits of the insight meditation practice; one's own virtues since commencing the meditation practice; or the pure and noble nature of the noting mind.

A sluggish and negative attitude towards insight meditation is called 'arati'. Due to this very sluggish attitude itself, happiness fades away and the majority of *yogis* become dispirited with insight meditation. The determination to continue with the meditation practice may be lost. Only a very few tend to strive through towards liberation. The majority will not have a sense of the disadvantages presented by sensual pleasure and will indulge in worldly pleasures repeatedly and endlessly despite their obvious flaws.

This is discussed in the *Dhammapada* as follows:

Andha-bhūto ayam loko, - tanuk'ettha vipassati
Sakunto jāla-mutto'va - appo saggāya gacchati

(Dhp.174)

Blind is this world; here only a few possess insight
Only a few, like birds escaping from a net,
Go to the realm of bliss.

(DP-AB.

174)

Those who meditate only a little have a tendency to become sluggish when their noting is not successful or when they become discouraged or bored due to a lack of the expected results. This sluggishness itself gives rise to sorrow, resulting in a lack of continuity of the practice. Without meditation, there is no liberation from the vicious cycle of rebirth. Sluggishness or boredom could obstruct the outlet, through which the noble ones reach liberation. If sluggishness sets in, one must reflect on the virtues of the Triple Gem (etc) and try to overcome it. Otherwise, one should contemplate on the eight aspects that arouse the sense of urgency (*samvega-vatthu*: 1. birth, 2. old age, 3. disease, 4. death, 5. the

suffering in the lower states of existence, 6.the misery of the past and 7. the misery of the future, rooted in the cycle of rebirths, 8. the misery of the present, rooted in the search after food)². Whenever such sluggishness or boredom arises, one should take care to note and dispel it.

The eighth outlet and the blockade

“Sabbe pi kusalā dhammā ariyānam niyyānam, tehi ca kusalehi dhammehi ariyā niyyanti; sabbe pi akusalā dhammā niyyānāvaraṇā, tehi ca akusalehi dhammehi aratiyā nivutattā kusale dhamme ariyānam niyyānam na pajānātī’ ti sabbe pi akusalā dhammā niyyānāvaraṇā.”

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 163)

“All the wholesome actions (profitable ideas) are an outlet for noble ones, and noble ones are let out by all the wholesome actions (profitable ideas): unwholesome actions (unprofitable ideas) that block that outlet, and because he is hindered by unwholesome actions (unprofitable ideas) he does not understand the noble ones’ outlet consisting in all the wholesome actions (profitable ideas).”

All the profitable ideas or wholesome actions such as generosity, virtues, meditation and duties towards the Triple Gem are an outlet for the noble ones. The term ‘*pi*’ here in ‘*sabbe pi ...*’ indicates all such actions or ideas. Among such actions there is not a single one, which does not lead towards the way of liberation.

² For further reading on the *samvega-vatthu*, please refer to the Path of Purification (*Vism.* III).

“*Sammāpaṇihitam cittaṃ*” (A. V, 10, 47), “*Sammā paṇihitāya diṭṭhiyā* “

“A well directed mind ...“, “With a well directed view ...” assures that any skilful action supports the liberation of the mind and becomes an outlet for the noble ones, because all such performed actions or ideas were a help for noble ones to realize liberation from the cycle of rebirths. Therefore, one must take care to perform as much as possible, such generosity, virtue, meditation and duties towards the Triple Gem with the aim of liberation. There isn't a profitable idea or wholesome action that one should not foster.

During a meditation retreat, where full-time meditation is practiced day and night, one must consider the activity of insight meditation as the most profitable activity towards liberation. One must give priority to insight meditation, without a lapse of a single minute, one should continue with the insight meditation practice. Among worldly profitable ideas, insight is doubtlessly the best. When one fulfills the skill of insight meditation, one can reach path-knowledge, so that the liberation becomes possible. During a meditation retreat, one must not while away valuable time with other trivial matters, however meritorious they are. One should not compromise the insight meditation practice for concentration (*samatha*) meditation, not to mention other lower forms of skills, which are even less profitable and would be a hindrance for the *vipassanā* meditation practice. The following example of *Attadattha Māhathera* reveals this idea very clearly.

Mind your own business

Closer to the time of the great passing away of the Buddha, one monk reflected as follows: “The Buddha will pass away within four months from today. I have not yet fulfilled my task as a monk. How nice it would be, if I could end the task within this short period of time and realise final liberation at the end of these four months.” Accordingly, he prepared a tight timetable and commenced his meditation retreat in an intensive manner. He did not participate in the frequent meetings of the monks. Due to this behavior he earned the nickname *Attadattha* (the person concerning his own profit). Some of the unenlightened monks were not happy with his behavior and complained about it to the Buddha as follows: “Venerable sir, this *bhikkhu Attadattha* is not respectful towards you. He has no loving kindness and no compassion for you. He did not even participate in the meetings that were convened in respect of your great passing away. He spent his time in negligence.” The Buddha called him and inquired about this complaint and came to know about his real intentions and applauded him. To the complaining *bhikkhus*, the Buddha gave the following admonishment:

“Sathā tassa sādhu-kāram datvā – bhikkhave yassa mayi sineho atthi tena attadatthena viya bhavitum vaṭṭati, nahi gandhādīhi pūjento nāma mam pūjeti. Dhammānudhamma paṭipattiyā pana mam pūjeti tasmā aññenapi attadattha sadiseneva bhavitabbanti.”

(*Dhp-com.* 166, Singh)

“O monks, those who love and revere me should act like *Attadattha*. You are not paying homage to me by just offering flowers, perfumes and incense and by coming to see me; you pay homage to me

only by practicing the *Dhamma* as I have taught you...”

Further, the Buddha admonished the monks with the following stanza:

*Atta-d-attham paratthena – bahunā pi na hāpaye,
Atta-d-attham abhiññāya – sa-d-attha-pasuto siyā.*

(*Dhp.*166)

For the sake of others’ welfare, however great,
Let not one neglect one’s own welfare.
Clearly perceiving one’s own welfare,
Let one be intent on one’s own goal.

(DP-M. 166)

Even a welfare task worth a thousand rupees, if it is detrimental to one’s own welfare even for an amount of a single rupee, that form of duty could not be appreciated. According to *Dhamma* terminology, even a service by which another person’s final liberation is assured should be left aside if it hinders one’s own progress towards even a single step such as the attainment of stream-entry. Nothing serves you with the desired happiness as your own achievements or results from the practice. Therefore, if one understands one’s own progress clearly, one will strive without a gap or a pause. Even amongst one’s own tasks one must be selective, considering meditation as the foremost priority. If one is already engaged in meditation as a priority, it should not be compromise with less significant things. For example, one must not change one’s job even if it gives thousand rupees over a job that earns a single rupee, if it hinders the practice. This idea is explained in the commentary as follows:

“Attadattham na hāpemī’ti bhikkhusaṅghassa
 uppannam cetiya paṭisaṅkharaṇādi kiccam vā
 upajjhāya vattādīni vā na hāpetabbāni,
 ābhisamācārikavattam hi pūrento yeva
 ariyaphalādīni sacchikaroti tasmā ayampi
 attadatthova, yo pana accāraddhavipassako ajja
 ajjavāti paṭivedham patthayamāno vicarati, tena
 upajjhāyādīni vattānīpi hapetvā vā attano
 kiccameva kātabbam.”

(Dhp-com. 166, Singh)

‘Attadattam na hapaye’ means, for a *bhikkhu* there are unavoidable duties such as building maintenance, duties towards the preceptor or the teacher and such *ābhisamācarika* duties doubtlessly help to promote the realization of the final goal in the present life.. But if one is intensively engaged in meditation with the hope of achieving the goal on the same day or within a short period of time, one should not bother even about the above-mentioned *ābhisamācarika* duties. One should be concerned only about one’s insight practice.

The term ‘*upajjhāyādīni vattānīpi*’ in the above commentarial explanation carries the suffix ‘*pi*’ to highlight the honor involved in such duties. For example, the duty towards the preceptor is a responsibility of the attending monk; the duty towards the attending monk is a responsibility of the preceptor. Similarly, there are other duties that a *bhikkhu* cannot neglect and if a *bhikkhu* neglects them, it results in a lapse called ‘*vattabheda dukkaṭa*’, being a breach of the *pāṭimokkha* virtue. This could block a *bhikkhu*’s opportunity for liberation as well as for a heavenly rebirth. Despite such an important duty, one must carry out intensive insight meditation. A *bhikkhu* can develop the insight practice without performing duties of lesser

importance such as maintenance work at monastery buildings or other kinds of service for the *saṅgha*. A *bhikkhu*, who wants to practice intensive full-time meditation without performing his minor duties, must first ask his or her preceptor for permission to be free of such an offence. Then, he is released from lapses of virtue and can take up his meditation practice.

The admonishment close to the great passing away of the Buddha (parinibbāna)

Lying down on the deathbed and placed between two *Sāl*-trees in the *Sāl*-grove of the *Malla*-kings in the vicinity of *Kusinārā* Township, the Buddha prepared to deliver his last *Dhamma* discourse. Many thousands of *devas* and *Brahmas* assembled to pay homage for the last time. Divine music and songs arose from the sky in homage to the *Thatāgata*. The two *Sāl*-trees were bursting out into an abundance of untimely blossoms. Divine Coral tree flowers and divine sandalwood powder fell down from the sky sprinkling and covering the *Thatāgata*'s body in homage.

The Buddha made the following comment to Bikkhu *Ānanda* about these heavenly offerings of homage:

“Na kho Ānanda ettāvatā Tathāgato sakkato vā hoti garukato vā mānito vā pūjito vā apacito vā. Yo kho Ānanda bhikkhu vā bhikkhunī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā dhammānudhamma-paṭipanno viharati samīci-paṭipanno anudhamma-cārī, so Tathāgatm sakkaroti garukaroti māneti pūjēti paramāya pūjāya. Tasmāt ih’ Ānanda ‘dhammānu-dhamma-paṭipannā viharissāma samīci-paṭipannā anudhamma-cārino’ti, evam hi vo Ānanda sikkhitabban’ti.”

(D. 16, 5, 3)

“*Ānanda*, these *Sāl*-trees have burst forth into an abundance of untimely blossoms ... Divine music and songs sound from the sky in homage to the *Tathāgata*. Never before has the *Tathāgata* been so honoured, revered, esteemed, worshipped and adored. And yet, *Ānanda*, whatever monk, nun, male or female lay-follower dwells in practicing the *Dhamma* properly, and perfectly fulfils the *Dhamma*-way, he or she honours the *Tathāgata*, reveres and esteems him and pays him supreme homage. Therefore, *Ānanda*, “We will dwell practising the *Dhamma* properly and perfectly fulfill the *Dhamma*-way”- this must be your watchword.”

(LD. 16, 5, 3)

To honor, revere, esteem, worship and adore the *Tathāgata* are meritorious acts. These wholesome acts lead towards liberation as an outlet for the noble ones. But, according to the commentary, the Buddha’s position regarding such acts is that that they are not the real expression of honor and respect towards him.

According to the commentary, the Buddha’s attainment of full enlightenment after fulfilling all the necessary perfections (*pārami*) by practicing the noble conduct (*cariyā*) and self-sacrificing generosity (*cāga*) for four-hundred thousands of immeasurable time periods was obtained under immense hardship, for the sole purpose of generating the possibility of liberation for human, *deva* and *Brahma* beings in their present lifetime. It was not for the purpose of entertaining offerings of flowers and other gifts or any kind of worship. By only performing such acts of offering and worship, without developing outlets such as virtue, concentration and wisdom, there won't be any opportunity for liberation from the vicious cycle of rebirth

and death in the present life. Besides that, actions such as offerings and worship, however great in their extent may be of no help in prolonging the Buddha's dispensation even for a day.

To construct a thousand grandiose monasteries or *cetiya*s is beneficial to earning merit through donations to the builder, but it is not sufficient to prolong the duration of the *Sāsana* (the religion and teaching of the Buddha). According to the *Tathāgata*, there is only one suitable form of practice and nothing other than *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* (virtue, concentration and wisdom). This is the best way to pay homage to the *Tathāgata*; and this is the only way to prolong the continuation of the *Sāsana*. The *Tathāgata*'s concern is therefore clearly indicated, namely, the practice of virtue, concentration and wisdom. This is the general idea conveyed in the commentary, but not given as a word-by-word translation.

In the *Dhammadāyāda Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (M. 3), the following admonishment is provided:

*“Dhammadāyādā me bhikkhave bhavatha mā
āmisadāyādā, atthi me tumhesu anukampā: ‘Kinti
me sāvakā Dhammadāyādā bhaveyyum no
āmisadāyādā’ ti.”*

“Bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things. Out of compassion for you I have thought ‘How shall my disciples be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things?’”

(MLD. 3)

Here ‘material things’ means robes, alms food, dwellings and medicines. These are inferior to the practice of

meditation. Those who are already satisfied with only such things are called ‘*āmisadāyādā*’ (the heirs of inferior things). Meritorious actions performed with the aim of worldly reward belong to the most inferior inheritance in this category. Those who are content with only performing such meritorious acts, be they *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunīs*, *upāsakas* or *upāsikās* can only become the most inferior inheritors. Such low and inferior heirs cannot realize liberation by escaping the vicious cycle of rebirth despite their great fortune to support the Buddha’s *Sāsana* in their present lifetime. The *Tathāgata*, knowing that they had to continue endlessly with suffering in this *samsāra* was filled with compassion towards them, as parents are towards their own children. The *Tathāgata* admonished them to not seek after only low and inferior inheritance. The genuine and noble inheritance of the *Dhamma*, according to him is nothing but path and fruition knowledge and final liberation.

The cause for this final liberation is the realization of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* (virtue, concentration, and wisdom). Those who practice in this way are worthy of being called ‘heirs of the *Dhamma*’. Acts of generosity and the observation of moral precepts, even if done with the sole aim of liberation cannot be regarded as the right and genuine inheritance of the *Dhamma*, because such actions can bring the desired final result only in future existence. One should do whatever possible to develop *sīla*, *samādh* and *paññā* to have absolute priority and realize final liberation in this present life time. The admonishment given to Venerable *Potila* also refers to this idea. A brief account of this story is given in chapter four.

The Buddha’s noble intention

The Buddha's intention and compassionate attitude was noble and estimable. He was not satisfied with the achievement of only one or two stages of the paths and fruits in the present lifetime. The Buddha was only fully satisfied when final liberation is realized through diligent striving.

This is recorded in the *Dhammapada* as follows:

*Na sīlabbata-mattena*³, *Phusāmi nekkhama-sukham*
Bāhu-saccena vā puna, Aputhujjana-sevitam
Athavā samādhi lābhena Bhikkhu vissāsa'māpādi
Vivicca-sayanena vā. (271), Appatto āsavakkhayam.
(272)

Not only by mere morality and austerities
Nor again by much learning,
Nor even by developing mental concentration,
Nor by secluded lodging,
(Thinking) "I enjoy the bliss of renunciation
Not resorted to by the worldling
(Not with these) should you, O *bhikkhu*, rest content
without the extinction of the corruptions.
(DP-Nā. 271 – 272)

This admonishment specifically addresses the monks who have already fulfilled their virtues. Some of these virtuous monks, becoming too self-confident of their virtues, had believed that they could attain the final goal of liberation at any moment and therefore neglected their meditation practice. Some others thought that they would already be in reach of *arahantship* in light of their ascetic practices, their enjoyable experience of the eight absorptions (*jhānas*) and their life in the solitude of forest monasteries (away from the

³ A comment of the author: Like in the traditional expression 'mā bhāyi' the grammatical usage of 'mā' → '**Mā** sīlabbata-mattena' would be more suitable here, instead of '**Na** sīlabbata-mattena...'

villages and towns). As a result, they had no interest in practising insight meditation. Some other monks with path-knowledge of non-returnee (*anāgāmi*) underestimated the task of meditation to reach the final goal of liberation. They were not striving forward on the path to liberation and the Buddha had to admonish them with the above quoted stanzas. One should not rest in self-confidence and negligence in the practice without achieving *arahantship*. In other words, one should practice with diligence, striving without failure and without relaxing until *arahantship* is realized. This is the Buddha's noble intention and attitude on the celibate life.

This admonishment requires the practice of insight meditation to be the prime task of all. Practicing insight meditation is the highest order of respect for the Buddha. Such a person is the heir of the noble *Dhamma*. Without being content with mere virtues (etc), such a person will be a genuine disciple of the Buddha. That is why one must dedicate oneself to the practice of insight meditation as a priority without wasting a minute or even one second of their time. In doing so, one does not have to worry about other forms of meritorious deeds. When the meditation becomes impossible due to causes such as acute sensuous desire (etc), one should divert one's mind to alternative tactics to remove such hindrances. These tactics are set out in the *Vitakkasanthāna Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (M. 20). A brief explanation to these suggestions and tactics are provided in the following sections of this chapter.

The first method of contemplation

Where lust or sensual desires arise due to sense objects of the opposite sex (etc), one must cultivate the contemplation of *asubha* (repulsiveness). Where hatred arises, one must develop *mettā* (loving kindness). If there is a desire for

material things, then contemplate on impermanence in terms of a lack of ownership; their uncontrollable and transient nature. Where anger predominates, the mind, a contemplation of the elements allows for it to subside. A detailed discussion about these contemplations is provided under the topic of ‘Restraint of faculties’. When ignorance arises in regard to the wandering and unstable mind or due to doubt, one should take time to investigate and listen to relevant *Dhamma* talks (etc), to overcome doubt or ignorance.

As an alternative, where defilements arise, one should become skilful to avoid them, using a *samatha* technique. Where mental and physical discomfort or fatigue arises after a long duration of the *vipassanā* practice, one must apply a well developed *samatha* method to dissolve it. If a *samatha* technique is unavailable, then one must try to overcome the discomfort by continuous noting of the object. This is explained in detail under the topic of ‘Purification of virtue for the laity’ (Chapter 1 of this book). In the event that remorse or doubts arise in a *bhikkhu* in respect of his virtue, if necessary, he should seek relief by listening to a *Dhamma* talk or by appropriate confession. This first method is suitable for learned and experienced people with a well developed *samatha* practice.

The second method of contemplation

One could also consider the disadvantages of the lust or the sensual desires that have arisen, that indulging in them and perpetuating them could lead to a gradual deterioration of their virtue. This could give cause to rebirth in the lower worlds and block the attainment of divine or human pleasures. It could block the outlet for the liberation of noble ones. Aiming towards unrestrained sensual pleasures out of

the five aggregates, would lead to an endless roaming of the vicious cycle of suffering, giving rise to all kinds of torment. One must consider what forms of disadvantages one must undergo due to the arising of lust or sensual desires and try to overcome them. The following stanza, composed by old masters is useful in this regard:

*Nāham dāso bhaṭo tuyham - nāham posemi dāni
tam,
Tvameva posento dukkham - patto vaṭṭo
anappakam.*

“Hey *Khandhā* (aggregates of the life-process, mistakenly taken for one’s self or soul)! No longer am I your slave or servant. No longer will I look after you. Having met the teaching of the Buddha, I no longer bring you up by serving your needs and desires. Because of this I have already suffered enough in this vicious *samsāra*.”

The third method of contemplation

Where one is frequently beset by lustful thoughts in the presence of a particular object, one should simply avoid it and the related consciousness by ignoring it completely. If this difficulty arises throughout, in each moment of noting, it is advisable to stop the contemplation completely for a while. Where one is overborne with extreme lust or excitement, he or she must interrupt the contemplation for two or three hours, half a day, or a whole day or night and associate other people or engage in discussion on another topic to forget the reason for the extreme lust or excitement. Some possible alternatives are going to a temple or any other religious place of worship, make some offerings, have a bath or wash some clothes (etc). Even sleeping for a while

to allow the mind to rest without contemplation is recommended. When the lust subsides, one could recommence the meditation practice. This method offers effective help for *yogis* who have reached the knowledge of equanimity towards all formations for a long duration but remain too enthusiastic or excited, as a result of which the progress towards path-knowledge is hindered. This method is presented in the *Pāli* Canon as: “*Asati amanasikāro āpajjītabbo*”, meaning to not remember it or not to pay attention. The commentary provides the same explanation. If this method does not bring about the desired results, one should recite parts of the *Suttanta* or read a *Dhamma* book.

Another way is to empty out one’s shoulder bag, labeling item by item repeatedly, for example: “this is a fire stone, this is the upper piece of wood for kindling fire by friction (*uttararāni*), this is the lower piece of wood for kindling fire by friction (*adhararāni*), this is a piece of fire wood, this is a needle, this is a barber razor, this is a wet stone, this is a nail cutter” (etc). In the commentary, it is mentioned that old masters in such situations used to direct their disciples to supervise building or construction work in the monastery. The quoted stories show how helpful this has been for the *yogi* to overcome excitement.

The fourth method of contemplation

Where the mind is preoccupied with thoughts, one should investigate the cause for the thinking. Before the obvious occurrence of such thinking or imagining, a vague thought appears in the mind as a result of a sense object. Then, gradually, thinking proliferates and gathers momentum if one is not careful enough to note and check the process at an early stage. This problem is overcome, once it is properly diagnosed and systematically noted from the moment of its

arising, onwards. If one tends to entertain these thoughts, then only the thinking process can gather momentum until it becomes uncontrollable. One who, at every moment of their arising, continues to note the thoughts without any desire to entertain them could overcome the thinking at an early stage. If one is too late in recognizing the process of thinking, when it has already gathered momentum, then one should search for the cause of the preceding thought, tracing back the chain of successive thoughts to the primary cause. If this could be successfully investigated, one should take care to prevent a repeated occurrence of such thought proliferation, through careful noting.

The fifth method of contemplation

This method involves an acceleration of the noting process. Whatever form of defilement arises, one should note it continuously without leaving gaps for thinking or for any negligence by maintaining a strong determination such as, “these are just defilements without any special meaning for me. I must succeed with energetic noting”. The Canon mentions this method as follows:

*“Tena bhikkhave bhikkhunā dantehi danta-m-
ādhāya jivhāya tālum āhacca cetasā cittam
abhiniggaṇhitabbam...”*

“... then, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he should beat down, constrain, and crush mind with mind (= unwholesome state of mind with wholesome state of mind).”

(MLD. 2)

A *yogi*, capable of noting all presently arising objects without missing any has the surety of mindfulness and a well

mastered method to deal with thinking and a wandering mind. This fifth method can be recommended for *yogis* with a small amount of knowledge or who practice meditation at short-term retreats. *Vipassanā yogis* should have a high regard for this method. When it is applied, one is able to proceed without leaving any opportunity for the mind to wander away from the object of meditation by thinking or day dreaming. That is why it is called ‘*apañidhāya bhāvanā*’ (undirected way of meditation). If one is able to make use of the other four previously mentioned methods, one could divert one’s attention to another object (suitable for the development of *samatha*) to avoid unwanted thoughts or fantasies. When the defilements subside, one is able to return to the meditation practice.

These methods, where the *yogi* makes use of the *samatha* skills to overcome hindrances that he or she meets on the way are called ‘*pañidhāya bhāvanā*’ (directed way of meditation). This form of *pañidhāya bhāvanā* is more suitable for *yogis* with knowledge and experience and who practice for a long duration of time like months and years. Further details of the two methods of meditation, namely *pañidhāya bhāvanā* and *apañidhāya bhāvanā* could be found in the *Samyutta Nikāya, Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta, Bhikkhunivāsako Sutta* (S. 47, 10). The method of overcoming the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and cultivating the factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) is explained in the commentary to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. These methods are presented under *pañidhāya bhāvanā*.

Short summary of the eighth outlet and obstacle

All skillful actions are an outlet for the noble ones and are therefore recommended to *yogis*. If one is at an intensive meditation retreat, one must strive for the development of

insight without any compromise. One should give priority to the insight meditation practice. If noting is impossible due to thinking or a scattered mind, one should apply a suitable method to divert from the thoughts and return to the practice of insight meditation as soon as possible. If the *yogi* lacks proper knowledge and experience, he or she should request the help of a teacher to select a suitable method or to give some appropriate advice to overcome such difficulties.

Unskillful actions are obstacles to liberation. To give way to unskillful thoughts or to indulge in day dreaming without proper noting is *akusala dhamma*, which becomes an obstacle for insight meditation. Therefore, one must note such hindrances as soon as they arise in order to avoid them from continuing and disturbing the practice.

Distractions of concentration and their remedies

The First and second distractions and remedies

1.) *Atītānudhāvanam cittam vikkhepānupatitam, tam vivajjayitvā ekaṅghāne samādahati; evam pi cittam na vikkhepam gacchati.*

(*Pṭs.* vol. I, p. 166)

“Cognizance that runs after the past (breaths) is attacked by distraction; by avoiding that he concentrates it in one place, thus, cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD. III, 5, p.169)

Everything, which has been seen, heard, felt, thought, or known, belongs to past objects. One succumbs to distraction as soon as one begins to recollect those past objects. Then, the mind becomes dispersed.

In the course of insight meditation, thoughts may arise concerning past (memories) from time to time. The mind could note these thoughts in retrospect, going back and recollecting what has been seen, heard, felt, perceived or known at the time, may be yesterday, last month or last year and then allow for thoughts to proliferate along these memories. The same could occur with one's experiences in meditation, recollecting it as either pleasant or unpleasant. One tends to ponder about the past and judging what had occurred.

After a while, one might become aware of omissions that have occurred in the noting process. One may tend to reconsider that if everything was noted, properly as *nāma* or *rūpa*, it would be possible to ascertain whether it was clear in the mind or not. In such a way, the mind can follow retrospections, imaginations and a wandering away from the present object of awareness. In other words, the mind is distracted. This is not conducive to insight meditation practice. Understanding this fact, one should be careful to note such tendencies immediately and tend the mind back to the primary object of meditation as soon as possible. One must note every object instantly at the moment of its arising. Because this treatise deals with *vipassanā* concentration, the primary object is whatever that arises in the consciousness, from one moment to the next. In *samatha* meditation, on the contrary, the mind has to be fixed on a single *samatha* object. As already mentioned in this chapter, as well as in the following pages, it is referred only to an object, which arises at the present moment. Accordingly, if the *yogi* is careful enough to focus his or her awareness on the presently arising object, distractions by retrospective thoughts are unlikely and the mind will become stabilized, calm and concentrated on the object of meditation.

2.) *Anāgatapaṭīkañkhanam cittam vikampitam, tam vivajjayitvā tatth'eva adhimoceti; evam pi cittam na vikkhepam gacchati.*

(Pfs. vol. I, p. 166)

“Cognizance that looks forward to future (breaths) is shakable; by avoiding that, he composes it there, thus, also cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD. III, 5, p.169)

All objects that could arise in the future by seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking or knowing, belong to future objects. A mind that dwells in expectation hope or wish with regard to future objects is unaware of the present moment. It is distracted, fidgety and moved.

It could be that one builds up hope and expectation about certain things or occurrences to be experienced in the future, resulting in day-dreaming or excitement. One indulges in imagination on meeting a particular important person the next day or to create a successful future without any failure. Sometimes, even a future trip to heaven may appear to be real in that very moment. One could expect a change in one's meditation practice, a more successful session of noting (etc) and expectation for special kinds of knowledge or special realizations of the *Dhamma* could also arise. One could start to consider how these realizations could occur in one's meditation practice. Anxiety could arise that one's effort in meditation is in vain. Thus, there are many ways for the mind to become excited about future planning or imagination. Self-amusement with day-dreaming is also common among *yogis*. The result of all of this is that the mind is not tranquil and stable, but distracted, restless and moved. This is a danger for insight concentration. By

understanding these disadvantages, one should avoid them by continuous and exact noting of the object. In other words, the mind must be aware and note whatever that arises in each moment. If one is careful enough to catch and note thoughts immediately (at the moment of their arising), distractions or disturbing excitements are unlikely and the mind could dwell calmly and remain concentrated on the present object of meditation.

The motto should be: "Don't ruminare on the past and don't look forward to the future. Direct your awareness only at the present phenomena and note them continuously, as and when they arise."

Third distraction and remedy

3.) *Līnam cittaṃ kosajjānupatitam, taṃ paḅgaṇhitvā kosajjam pajahati; evaṃ pi cittaṃ na vikkhepaṃ gaḅchati.*

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 167)

“Slack cognizance is attacked by indolence: by exerting it he abandons indolence, thus also cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD.I, 5, p.169)

The mind can become slack and lazy when the noting lacks sufficient energy and continuity or where a *yogi* feels discouraged or disappointed that his or her practice has not developed to a special knowledge or stage of success. This results in less interest or desire for the meditation practice. The result will be a weak and unclear mind. This is a distraction and an enemy for the development of insight concentration. A *yogi* must therefore note such a slack and lazy mind immediately as and when it arises to overcome it.

In the event that this measure is not successful, then, a *yogi* must energize the mind with the help of the eleven methods for the development of *virīya bojjaṅga* (the effort or energy factor of enlightenment) as suggested in the commentary. A few of these methods are explained below.

Contemplation on the danger of the lower world (apāya)

It is said that beings living in hell have bodies, which are the size of three *gāvuta* (equivalent 9.5 miles). They are forced by the torturers of hell to lay flat on the surface of a red-hot iron ground. The torturers then pierce the palms of their right and left hand with red-hot nails, which are the size of palm trees. They are also pierced in their feet and their hips. They have to undergo this painful treatment in a supine position and in a prone position. These beings do not die as long as the force of their *akusala kamma vipāka* (the results of past unwholesome actions) is not exhausted. These tormented hell beings remain in an extreme state of agony. Even facing that red-hot or incandescent iron ground is already a torture for them. They become even more frightened, when they hear the roaring and harsh voices of the torturers. To see, hear and undergo such cruel treatment causes immense mental and bodily suffering. The suffering is continuous and they cry for help and release, but receive no help or pity. Their mother or father, relatives or friends are not able to help them. Under such circumstances, insight meditation is impossible.

Their bodies are then chopped by the torturers with sharp blades, which are as big as a roof, while they continue to suffer from piercing of the five iron nails. Blood flows out of their bodies like a stream. It burns like petrol and covers the whole surrounding. If the suffering beings still do not die, then they are hung head-down and chopped with a big axe. If their *karmic* forces are still not exhausted, then they are

forced to pull big carts like oxen upwards on burning mountain slopes. If they fail to climb up, the torturers hit them with red-hot iron canes. If they succeed in climbing up with all possible effort, they have to pull down the lords again. After that they must immerse themselves in a big metal cauldron filled with boiling water. Some beings start to boil with a rattling noise and froth. Once, in thirty thousand years, they come up to the surface of the cauldron. Some times they float across; some times they rotate up and down just like rice grains in a boiling pot. The untold suffering at that time leaves no opportunity at all for the meditation practice.

If their bad *karmic* fruits still force them to remain in hell, the torturers would haul them out and bring them into the fire hell. This great hell has a dimension of hundred *yojanas* (approximately 950 miles) in length, width and height. It is just like a cubical red-hot iron box. The flames from the eastern wall blow against the western wall and pass it to reach outside - a distance of hundred *yojanas*. Similar dreadful flames come out of all the other walls, from the sides, the bottom, and the top. These unfortunate beings are roasted alive while crying in great pain and running in all directions to seek refuge. After a long time, perhaps after many years, the gate of this hell opens for a moment. These tortured beings run towards this gate to escape. On the way, some get tired and fall down. Some just reach the threshold of the gate and some escape.. Then, the gate closes again for a long period of time. Those who have escaped then fall into the next hell - the 'Hell of Excrements'. There, they float in in excrements, whilst some are eaten by big worms, the size of a boat.

Once they finish their torture in the 'Hell of Excrements', they are taken to the next section filled with burning

charcoal, amber in colour. The burning charcoal is of a size of a house and the hot ashes continue to torture the hell beings. From here, they are transferred to the 'Thorny Hell'. There the trees are full of sharp big thorns of about 16 inches in length. They are red-hot. The torturers force the hell beings to climb up these trees. As they climb up, the thorns turn downwards; and as they climb downwards, the thorns turn upwards, wounding and tormenting them as they climb. Once they finish this torment, they are shifted to the '*Asipattavana*', the forest of the sword-leaves. There, the beings have to pass a forest, where leaf-like swords with sharp double-edged blades torment them, falling down on their bodies, cutting off their ears, noses, hands and legs. When they try to run away, blades arise from the ground like grass. Iron walls with a gate enclose this hell.

Then, these beings fall into another hell, which is a hell-river of boiling iron-liquid full of giant reeds and creepers with sharp edges and lotus leaves like razor blades. The whole ground is covered with a form of grass as sharp as razor blades. The tormented beings wounded by many cuts through these sharp blades fall and drift helplessly in the burning iron liquid. While drifting in the burning melted iron, they receive countless cuts from the sharp edges of the grass, the creepers and the razor blade-like lotus leaves. When they experience such torment and are cut into pieces, it is impossible to undertake the meditation practice.

The torturers will pull them out of the river with big iron hooks and ask what they want. If they reply that they are hungry, they are served with plates full of red-hot iron balls. The frightened beings try to run away, their mouth covered with both the hands. Yet the torturers catch them, open their mouths with axes and pour in the red-hot iron. These red-hot iron balls burn their mouth, tongue, throat, gullet, stomach,

small and large intestines and leave the body through the natural exit. If they reply that they are thirsty, the torturers pour melted iron into their mouths. This melted iron burns their digestive canal in the same way and flows out again immediately. These hell-beings have extra large bodies and suffer a terrible pain and misery without being able to move. If the *karmic* forces, which have caused the hellish existence, are still not exhausted, then, they are transferred to the ‘Great Hell’. A description about the Great Hell can be read in the *Bāla-pañcāta Sutta (M 129)* and in the *Devadūta Sutta (M 130)*. What is presented here so far is only a brief description. It shows that there is no opportunity for meditation, but only intense suffering if you fall into the hell realm.

That is why the Buddha admonished as follows:

“O, devoted *yogis!* Don’t be negligent or indolent. If you are unmindful and sluggish, then you won’t be successful in the task of liberation from this vicious cycle of repeated birth and death (*samsāra*). As long as you remain in this *samsāra*, without any doubt, sooner or later you will fall into the *apāya*. There you will have to undergo immeasurable suffering. In the past you already suffered more than enough. In the *apāya*, whatever kind it may be, it is absolutely sure that you won’t get the slightest chance to practice insight meditation, not even if you cry for it. Now is the time to make use of the present opportunity for meditation without being negligent or indolent. Strive hard in meditation!”

The following stanza is an appropriate quotation for that:

Jhāya bhikkhu, mā ca pamādo,

*Mā te kāmagune bhamassu cittam.
Mā lohagulam gilī pamatto,
Mā kandi dukkham idan'ti dayhamāno. (Dhp. 371)*

Meditate, O monk! Do not be heedless.
Do not let your mind whirl in sensual pleasures.
Heedless, do not swallow a red-hot iron ball,
Lest you cry when burning, "Oh, is this painful!"
(DP-SAB. 371)

In the animal world, perhaps caught in a trap or in a cage, there is also no opportunity for the meditation practice. Horses or oxen too do not have the opportunity to meditate, when they are yoked to a heavy cart and urged on by a whip or a stick with an iron thorn.

In the realm of the *Petas*, the hungry and thirsty ghosts, when they suffer from extreme hunger and thirst for a countless number of years (aeons), there is nothing that facilitates meditation. Also, other unseen beings in the *apāya* with a body dimension of seventy or eighty cubits, having to undergo an extremely long time of existence, do not have an opportunity for meditation practice. Their bodies are made from only skin and bones and they suffer hunger and thirst, while they are exposed to strong winds and to the hot sun.

Even if one should get an opportunity to meditate in the sphere of the animals or ghosts, insight knowledge can never be achieved. Therefore, now, in this human existence is the best opportunity for the successful practice of insight meditation. Do not remain unmindful or sluggish! Make use of this human life time and meditate! In this way, encouragement is given to arouse a sense of urgency by reflecting about the fearful circumstances in the lower realms of existence (*apāya bhaya*).

Considering the benefits and advantages

Vipassanā meditation leads towards the realization of the paths and fruits and to final liberation. It brings relief from the suffering of the *samsāric* cycle of rebirths. Such benefits cannot be achieved if your meditation practice is undertaken in a perfunctory and uninterested manner. Even in worldly affairs, if one wants to earn a lot of money, one has to make a serious effort and determination. Why should one not be able to exert oneself with ardent effort and strong determination, if one really could achieve liberation from all possible forms of suffering through this method of meditation? For example, if it were possible to enjoy one complete year by working hard on one single day, this would be a great reward and one had done the best.

Much more, if one is sure that two weeks or one month of intensive insight meditation can bring relief from the whole mass of *samsāric* suffering, why should one not be able to put aside all worldly affairs to give priority to that noble task? Therefore, as a fortunate person with such an opportunity, you should make up your mind to strive along the path of insight meditation towards the noble achievement of final liberation as the first and foremost task! In this way, one should consider the results of the correct practice for one's own encouragement.

Consideration about the way of practice

Insight meditation practice cannot be undertaken by ordinary people and it is not an ordinary way. It is the way to be gone by someone who shares the noble attributes with all the *Buddhas*, *Pacceka Buddhas* (silent *Buddhas*) and *Ariya-sāvakas* (Noble Ones). Slack and half-hearted people surely

cannot proceed with this practice and travel the path of such noble beings. All the *Buddhas*, *Pacceka Buddhas* and Noble Ones developed this way with their special powers and abilities as a result of their previously accomplished perfections. They also completed their balanced qualities, partially with the help of the practice. You must, being so fortunate to have come across this praiseworthy way strive forward to reap the noble results without any compromise or hesitation. This is the way to encourage one self on the way forward by reflecting what the Noble Ones did in the past as they undertook this noble quest.

The way to assure high merit for the donors

This is a way of reflection, especially for renunciants like monks. Lay devotees take care of renunciants day and night and sometimes, even at the risk of their lives. Sometimes they keep only a small part of their earnings for themselves to be able to support the renunciants by serving them with high quality food or the four requisites. They don't perform such charity because the renunciants are their relatives, or in expectation of anything in return, such as material wealth, fame or a high social status. They support the renunciants because they are rich in virtue, concentration and wisdom, so the result will be an assurance of immeasurable human or divine pleasure in future lives and also final liberation from the whole of suffering. To use a simile, the benefit resulting from this charity is as great as a big Banyan tree that will grow from the sowing of a small Banyan seed. Even if one offers just a spoonful of rice, a lump of curry, a fruit, some sweets, a cube of sugar, a small meditation hut, a dose of medicine or a similar small gift, it will result in immeasurable benefits.

Understanding the potential of such support, devotees readily offer their own property and possessions, which have been considered for their own use and enjoyment. (This refers only to the purified form of donation). From the view point of the donor, such results and benefits could only be expected if the receiver possesses high qualities in virtue, concentration and wisdom. Therefore, a meditating monk should take this fact into consideration and strive as hard as possible to fulfill the accomplishment of virtue, concentration and wisdom to benefit his supporters. A monk, who remains lazy and careless, would be negligent in his duties and also uncompassionate and ungrateful towards his supporters.

Therefore, the Buddha gave the following admonishment in the *Ākañkheyya Sutta*:

*Ākañkheyya ce bhikkhave bhikkhu: yesāham cīvara-
piṇḍapāta-senāsana
gilānapaccayabhesajjaparikkhāram paribhuñjāmi
tesam te kārā mahapphalā assu mahānisamsā ti,
sīlesv-ev’assa paripūrakārī ajjhattam cetosamatham
–anuyutto anirākatajjhāno vipassanāya
samannāgato brūhetā suññāgārānam. (M 6)*

“If a *bhikkhu* should wish: ‘May the services of those whose robes, alms-food, resting place, and medicinal requisites I use bring them great fruit and great benefit,’ let him fulfill the precepts, be devoted to internal serenity of mind, not neglect meditation, be possessed of insight, and dwell in empty huts.” (MLD.6)

In this way, one should reflect on encouraging one’s practice. Dear monk, take into consideration that your

supporters serve you with robes, alms-food, dwelling, and medicinal requisites out of confidence and high esteem towards you! They don't expect anything in return from you. They perform these acts of charity with the sole aim of gaining human or divine pleasure and final *Nibbāna*. By making use of these requisites, you are free from worries on how to appease your hunger and how to ward off cold and heat. You are not troubled with laborious work or any form of business to earn your livelihood. You don't need to worry or regret about it and can meditate without many responsibilities. You have these advantages because of the benevolent donations of the laity. They really deserve much gratitude. After all of that, if you are not going to cultivate virtue, concentration and wisdom diligently, and instead while away your time in vain, it amounts to a disregard of the Buddha's admonishment in failing to fulfill your obligations towards your donors. Therefore, you must practice insight meditation continuously and ardently to reciprocate their faith and goodwill.

Monks in the past practised meditation with great effort by encouraging themselves in various ways and achieved the final goal of liberation. Some are mentioned in the *Pāli scriptures*, for instance *Mahamitta Thero*, who practised with a special kind of energy called '*caturaṅga samannāgata viriya*' (endowed with fourfold effort), or *Piṇḍapatiya Tissa Thera*, who's example is cited in the commentary to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book of One (*A-com. vol. I, p. 276*).

A pertinent record in the *Dutiya-Dasabala-Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* states as follows:

“... *Alam eva saddhā pabbajitena kulaputtana viriyam ārabhitum: 'Kāmam taco ca nahāru ca aṭṭhi ca avasissatu, sarīre upasussatu mamsam*

lohitam, yan tam purisathāmena purisaviriyena purisaparakkamena pattaḅbam na tam apāpuṇitvā viriyassa saṅṅhānam bhavissati. - pe - Na bhikkhave, hīnena aggassa patti hoti. Aggene ca bhikkhave aggassa patti hoti. - pe - Tasmāti ha bhikkhave, viriyam ārabhatha appattassa pattiyā, anadhigatassa adhigamāya, asacchikatassa sacchikiriyāya. ‘Evam no ayam amhākam pabbajjā avabjā bhavissati, saphalā sa-udrayā, yesamhi mayam paribhuñjāma cīvara-piṅdapāta-senāsana-gilāna-paccaya-bhesajja-parikkāram, tesam te kārā amhesu mahapphalā bhavissanti mahānisamsā’ti. Evam hi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbam. Attattham vā hi bhikkhave sampassamānena alameva appamādena sampādetum. Parattham vā hi bhikkhave sampassamānena alameva appamādena sampādetum. Ubhayattham vā hi bhikkhave sampassamānena alameva appamādena sampādetun”ti.

(S. 12, 22)

“... This is enough for a clansman who has gone forth out of faith to arouse his energy thus: ‘Willingly, let only my skin, sinews and bones remain and let the flesh and blood dry up in my body, but I will not relax my energy, so long as I have not attained what can be attained by manly strength, by manly energy, by manly exertion.’ ... It is not by the inferior that the supreme is attained; rather, it is by the supreme that the supreme is attained. ... Therefore, *bhikkhus*, arouse your energy for the attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, (with the

thought): 'In such a way this going forth of ours will not be barren, but fruitful and fertile; and when we use the robes, alms-food, lodging and medicinal requisites (offered to us by others), these services they provide for us will be of great fruit and benefit to them.' Thus, *bhikkhus*, should you train yourselves. Considering your own good, *bhikkhus*, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence; considering the good of others it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence; considering the good of both, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence."

(CD. 12, 22)

This is a shortened version of the quotation. The whole text is available in the text of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book of One and the relevant commentaries.

A person going forth (receiving ordination) out of faith in the Buddha and his teachings should strive with diligent effort called '*caturaṅga samannāgata viriya*' (endowed with fourfold effort) to attain final liberation from suffering. This fourfold effort consists of unshakable determination to persist with one's endeavor with the thought: "Let only my skin, sinews, and bones remain (three aspects), let the flesh and blood dry up in my body (fourth aspect), but I won't give up striving before the noble goal is attained." It is important to develop this '*caturaṅga samannāgata viriya*' in the practice.

"Oh, *bhikkhus*! With poor faith (and devotion), energy, mindfulness, concentration and knowledge one cannot achieve this noble attainment of the paths and fruits. This is only possible with strong and untiring faith (and devotion), energy,

mindfulness, concentration and knowledge. Therefore, you should try to gain what is not yet gained (etc).”

If you strive like this, you will fulfill your duties of monkhood. You will be endowed with the most valuable results and those who are supporting you with the four requisites will enable you to do your noble task and will reap great fruits and benefits from their acts of benevolence. Strive with great effort for your own benefit and for the benefit of others and cultivate virtue, concentration and wisdom. This is the way to strive for one’s own benefits and for the benefit of others in fulfilling the task of insight meditation.

Further, one can reflect on one’s own inspiration that one is an inheritor of the supramundane *Dhamma*, one who follows the supreme qualities of the Buddha. To be aware of these inspiring facts help to encourage and promote the practice of meditation. The texts also contain a reflection about the noble attributes of the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha* to arouse *pīti-sambojjhaṅga* (the enlightenment factor of rapture). There is also the example of the Venerable *Sona Mahāthera* who developed unremitting effort in his meditation practice, considering his own virtue and by listening to encouraging discourses on the *Suttas* (etc), so that he became highly inspired. If one is able to inspire and encourage one’s mind in the practice of meditation with the help of one or more of these methods, then the practice will develop steadily and in an accelerated manner, while the mind dwells calm and concentrated on the object of meditation.

Fourth distraction and remedy

4.) *Atipaggahitam cittam uddhaccānupatitam, tam viniggaṇhitvā uddhaccam pajahati; evam pi cittam na vikkhepam gacchati.*

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 167)

“Over-exerted cognizance is attacked by agitation: by curbing it he abandons agitation, thus also cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD. III, 5, p.169)

Sometimes the mind is overactive and impatient with too much energy. The mind tends to be anxious, querying whether the noting was correct and if every object of consciousness was noted continuously and properly. Thinking can arise in the mind to be distracted by impatience. For example, one could ponder: “Did I really note that object or not? What did I miss? Hereafter, I must note continuously without a failure” and so forth. Sometimes, the *yogi* may commence self-assessment: “My meditation power is completed now, there is nothing more to do”. A *yogi* could exert excessive effort with clenched teeth and tensed limbs. When these circumstances are present, the mind is unstable and tends towards dispersion. This indicates that the noting mind has a tendency to divert from the object of meditation, resulting in the mind being rather superficial and floating in nature. Therefore, such thoughts and considerations are not at all conducive for the practice of insight meditation.

Dispersion could be caused by two kinds of hindrances, namely *vikkhepa* and *uddhacca*.. Functionally, they are equal in the mind states that they develop. If the mind wanders away from the present object to past incidents, it experiences

‘*vikkhepa*’. Wandering away from the present moment due to thoughts concerning the meditation object is called ‘*uddhacca*’. Such thoughts and considerations during the meditation practice should be recognized and noted. Thinking and considering can lead to omissions in noting. Even if one notes the object of meditation, but not with full awareness, the noted object will appear vague and unclear. It will not be prominent and the noting may appear to be unsuccessful.

Under such circumstances, one should relax one’s mind. One can find the following reason for it: “There is no self to control things to happen according to one’s desires. Things are ungovernable. Whatever amount of energy one exerts during the practice of insight meditation, one cannot force insight knowledge to arise. It will develop at the right time. It is enough to continue with noting, while applying an indifferent attitude towards all kinds of results, whether insight knowledge arises or not.” Whatever object was left out in noting, never mind! Let it be so and keep on noting in a normal intensity, but without interruption. This will help reduce the momentum of the stream of discursive thoughts and to appease restlessness. The process of noting may regain its momentum and sometimes very quickly after relaxation, when the meditating mind becomes calm and unified. This is stated in the scriptures as follows:

*“Accāraddha cittassa viniggaṇhena,
sithilikaraṇena vā cittam avikkhittam
samādhīyatī”ti.*

“The excessive energy must be reduced and the mind must be relaxed, so that this dispersed mind will be calm and unified.”

In the case of a lack of energy in meditation, one should energize and stimulate oneself to increase one's energy or effort. Yet, one should relax in case of excessive energy. If the energy is balanced, this will lead to a calm, concentrated and stable mind.

Fifth and sixth distraction and remedy

5.) *Abhiñatam cittam rāgānupatitam, tam sampajāno hutvā rāgam pajahati; evam pi cittam na vikkhepam gacchati.*

(Pṭs. vol. I, p. 167)

“Enticed cognizance is attacked by greed: by being fully aware of that he abandons greed, thus also cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD. III, 5, p.169)

When the noting is continuous, the mind becomes elated with rapture. This is called ‘*abhiñatam cittam* (enticed cognizance). A mind which anticipates insight knowledge as well as path and fruition knowledge is also called ‘enticed cognizance’. It usually arises, accompanied with rapture and expectations. This hinders the concentration of the mind during insight meditation. One must recognize it clearly and note it as soon as it arises. If one is able to clearly recognize it with skillful noting, it results in an abandonment of *rāga* (passionate desire), preventing a repeated appearance of it. The mechanism of weakening such defilements by this method is explained in chapter four with the assistance of quotations found in the commentaries to the *Majjhima* and the *Samyutta Nikāya*.

6.) *Apaṇatam cittam byāpādānupatitam, tam sampajāno hutvā byāpādam pajahati; evam pi cittam na vikkhepam gacchati.* (Pṛs. Vol. I, p. 167)

“Repelled cognizance is attacked by ill-will: by being fully aware of that he abandons ill-will, thus also cognizance does not become distracted.”

(PD. III, 5, p.169)

A *yogi* who is not skillful enough to note and without satisfactory results after practicing for many days, weeks or months, may lose hope and become discouraged with ill-will arising in his or her mind. This weakens the practice and destroys the opportunity to develop liberating insight knowledge. Thinking proliferates in the mind when this occurs. The mind becomes dispersed and it may even lead one to run away from the meditation centre and to abandon the meditation practice. Such a mind is infested with ill-will or repulsion. In this state of mind, one cannot expect serenity or concentration. Whatever way of noting one tries to apply will end up with failure. The main danger in such circumstances is that one really follows one’s desire to leave the meditation centre or to abandon the practice. If this occurs, one must recognize the situation and note the mental state.

In other words, one should note the ill-will or the repelling mood of the mind. If, after one or two efforts of noting, the expected result still does not appear, then one should be patient and continue to note the ill-will and the disappointment of the mind to overcome them and revert back to the object of meditation, noting whatever object that arises in one’s consciousness. Eventually, this disappointment will fade away and the mind will become enthusiastic with the ability to note the object of meditation

in a calm and concentrated state of mind. That is why it is said that, “by being fully aware of that he abandons ill-will, thus, also cognizance does not become distracted.”

Do not allow greed and ill-will to hinder the mind. If at all ill-will arises in the mind, do not abandon your effort in meditation or leave the meditation centre. Instead, be careful to note the ill-will that has arisen in the mind. Both the enticed mind as well as the repelled mind should be noted accordingly, without interrupting the meditation practice.

Unification of the vipassanā mind

*Imehi chahi ṭhānehi parisuddham cittam
pariyodātam ekattagatam hoti. Katame te ekattā?*

*Dānavossaggupaṭṭhānekattamsamathanimittupaṭṭhā
n-ekattam vayalakkhaṇupaṭṭhānekattam
nirodhupaṭṭhān-ekattam.*

*Dānavossaggupaṭṭhānekattam cāgādhimuttānam,
samathanimittupaṭṭhānekattañ ca
adhicittamanuyuttānam,
vayalakkhaṇupaṭṭhānekattañ ca vipassakānam,
nirodh-upaṭṭhānekattañ ca ariyapuggalānam.*

(Pfs. vol. I, p. 167)

“In these six aspects, cognizance becomes purified and bright and arrives at the unities. What are these unities? They are:

- The unity consisting in establishing the will-to-relinquish a gift [in the act of giving].
- The unity consisting in establishing the sign of serenity [in concentration].
- The unity consisting in establishing the characteristic of fall [in insight].

- The unity consisting in establishing cessation [in the path].

The unity consisting in establishing the will-to-relinquish a gift belongs to those resolute in giving up. The unity consisting in establishing the sign of serenity belongs to those devoted to the higher cognizance. The unity consisting in establishing the characteristic of fall, belongs to those practicing insight. The unity consisting in establishing cessation belongs to noble persons.” (PD. III, 5, p.169)

This text speaks of a mind that becomes purified and clean in every aspect; a mind that remains in solitude without interference of any kind of defilements. There are four types of such unity (*ekattam*).

The first is that of a person practising the recollection of generosity (*cāgānussati*), appearing as the will-to-relinquish. Other external objects are not prominent in such a state of mind. Under such circumstances, the mind is free of defilements and become unified. Because the generosity of this person is attended by the will-to-relinquish, his or her mind becomes stable and concentrated. This is called ‘*dānavossaggupaṭṭhānekattam*’.

The second type of unity occurs to *yogis* who cultivate concentration meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*). When the concentration is firmly established, the object of meditation is fully prominent. Other objects are no longer prominent in the mind. The meditative mind is centred calmly and unified on the object of meditation. This is called ‘*samathanimittupaṭṭhānekattam*’. The mind is concentrated only on the sign of serenity (*samatha-nimitta*), which is fully prominent. This unity therefore, belongs to access concentration or to absorption concentration. When *samatha-nimitta* is prominent and the mind is calm, stable

and centred on it, one experiences ‘the stage of purification of the mind of those devoted to the higher cognizance’ (*adhicittamanuyuttānam*), according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Path of Discrimination). Some express the opinion that there is no higher form of meditation than the appearance of a Buddha-image for *yogis* practising the recollection of the Buddha’s virtues and that all other kinds of meditation are inferior. Such statements should be reconsidered in connection with the above quotation of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

Once the distractions of the *yogi*’s mind are cleared with the help of the above-mentioned six methods, then the mind will no longer hanker for past experiences or desire for the future. The mind will not be slack or over-exerted, not enticed or repelled. Instead, it will remain undisturbed and continue with noting. Such a state of mind, especially a mind endowed with insight is clean, purified, and bright. In this manner, as the practice matures, the mind becomes serene and unified. If the concentration is steadfast, defilements cannot encroach on the mind. A mind, which is tenacious and effective in noting, allows no space for the arising of defilements and becomes unified and collected. This is called ‘*ekattam*’, which is an epithet for *samatha* (concentration).

When practising insight meditation, from the development of *nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* (the knowledge of discerning mentality and materiality) onwards, whenever the concentration is powerful only the object to be noted (i.e. mentality and materiality) becomes prominent. Therefore, the noting mind continues undisturbed without wandering away or engaging in discursive thoughts, provoked by the hindrances. From this stage of meditation onwards, the noting mind becomes unified without any hindrance or disturbance. Especially from the time of the arising of *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* (knowledge of dissolution) to a stage of

anuloma-ñāṇa (knowledge of conformity) the nature of dissolution of *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter) will be evidently prominent in each noting. The third type of unity is called ‘*vaya-lakkhaṇupaṭṭhānekattam*’ (the unity consisting in establishing the characteristic of fall or decay). Here, the mind becomes unified on the observation of the disappearance of mentality and materiality. This is named ‘momentary concentration’ (*khaṇika-samādhi*). According to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, as stated previously in this chapter, “from the knowledge of dissolution onwards, a superior kind of momentary concentration (*ukkaṭṭha khaṇika-samādhi*) arises.” Observing only the sign of fall or decay (*vaya-lakkhaṇa*), the noting mind becomes unified. This will be clear for *yogis*, who have experienced *bhaṅga-ñāṇa* (knowledge of dissolution) in the practice.

The series of insight knowledge eventually leads to path and fruition knowledge (*magga-phala-ñāṇa*). Noble meditators who complete the practice of *vipassanā* meditation up to this stage will experience the complete cessation of all the aggregates, the whole of mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) and realize *Nibbāna*. There are no other objects present. Therefore, path and fruition knowledge is called ‘*nirodhupaṭṭhānekattam*’ (the unity consisting in establishing cessation), which is the fourth type of unity presented in this text. When this type of concentration or unity is present only is *Nibbāna* present. Any other kind of object, the whole of mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*) ceases to exist and the knowledge of fruition (*phala-ñāṇa*) arises. The experience of this kind of unity is quite obvious to those who reach this stage of meditation. The explanations given in this illustration should enable one to understand the requisite concentration or purification of mind that is necessary to successfully practice insight meditation.

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