

CUTTING OFF THE STREAM

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Translator's Preface

The author, abbot of a forest monastery in northeastern Thailand, has written several books on methods of practice in Buddhism. This one, like his other books, emphasizes the development of wisdom based on Right View and Right Thought, through contemplation of physical and mental processes.

He explains how to make use of memories and imaginations in contemplation, especially on death and the body. He stresses that the objective in meditation is to teach the mind with wisdom to truly accept the Three Characteristics – suffering, impermanence, and no-self of the things one considers. He also describes in considerable detail about the rise of “ultimate wisdom” and what follows, at the verge of transcendent mind.

A number of initial techniques in walking and sitting meditation for use in conjunction with wisdom development are included in the appendix. A concise glossary of Pali terms used in this book has also been included.

The Translators

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The Nature of the Mind

Before discussing methods of wisdom development (*vipassanā*), I would like to make sure that you understand concentration development (*samādhi*), and its consequences. Concentration development is the method of controlling the mind until it attains a state of calmness. Normally, the mind does not stay at one point. It likes to think and to stray from one thought to another, small or large, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant, happy or miserable. Or it is simply engaged in nonsenses without any purpose or even being aware of it. Its nature is to “think of externals,” just like our eyes that see externals only. Therefore, if one does not have any techniques to guard one’s mind, it will never stay calm. Some people may find that recitation of words can keep their minds on those words, but they have to be mindful and conscious all the time to keep the minds and words together. Once mindfulness slips away, the mind wanders off again, just like an active child whose parents must watch closely to make sure that the child rests, sleeps, studies, or eats appropriately. Mindfulness and consciousness will find a way to guard the mind against slipping away from the words recited.

Mindfulness Needs Determination

Where there is a will, there is a way. This saying is true for any worldly task. It is especially true for mental tasks, because Dhamma practice is a major and subtle task aiming at the eradication of the recycling of life. Therefore, it requires a special kind of courage and determination. Strong will is the best quality for Dhamma practice. Where there is a strong will, there is mindfulness. As the will gets weaker, mindfulness does too. If will is lacking, the person tends to lose mindfulness all the time, and the practice is without any good result. Strong will is therefore a prime requirement for good practice. This determination is the way to make the mind concentrate easily, for concentration is determination; if there is determination, the firmness of mind will be there.

Concentration Development Is a Universal Practice

Concentration (*samādhī*) or meditation had existed even before the Lord Buddha was born. At the time the Lord Buddha sought monkhood, before he became Buddha, there were *Uddaka Rāmaputta* and *Ājāra Kālāma* who had mastered concentration practice and could skillfully get in and out of the state of full concentration practice, called *appanā-samādhī*. They could reach the states of the Fine-material Sphere (*rūpa-jhāna*) and the Formless Sphere (*arūpa-jhāna*) in their meditation. The Lord had heard about their reputation and became their student. He practiced meditation and very quickly learned to reach those absorbed states just like his teachers. But then he reflected on those states and came to the conclusion that calmness of the mind itself was not the way to discover the Truth. The meditating mind experienced happiness, but as it withdrew from that state, it drifted along sensual thoughts again, just as before. This shows that the two teachers and the Lord Buddha's full concentration alone could not lead to Enlightenment.

Not only these examples, there are many others in the past lives of the Lord Buddha and the Noble Ones who had been hermits and practiced meditation before. They too did not become enlightened by doing so.

Nowadays there are still many who have practiced concentration on its fullness, just like those in the past, in Buddhism as well as in other religions. Even those who do not have any religion at all can do it. Therefore, concentration or meditation is actually a

universal practice, regardless of race, religion, or social status. Even though methods of practice may differ, they all aim at reaching a calm state of mind.

Consequence of Concentration Practice Alone

The target of concentration practice is to keep the mind from straying elsewhere, into the past, present, or future. Once the mind does so, it is incapable of concentrating on one thing. To practice concentration, one must try to focus the mind in the state of one-pointedness. One must be mindful and conscious all the time to guard the mind against straying thoughts until it can concentrate and be calm. The degree of calmness depends on individual skill. After one withdraws from that state of calmness, one has experienced happiness of body and mind, and wants that kind of happiness to last forever. So, one keeps practicing it over and over again. Some can get only little calmness, some can be very absorbed, and others can only get close to calmness. Those who have had full concentration become attached to the happiness they have experienced and want to be in that state of mind all the time.

This is the result of concentration practice. People long for happiness in the calm state of mind and are trapped in it with no way out.

Result of Misunderstanding Concentration Practice

One trap of concentration comes when one has developed some supernormal power from the practice and becomes attached to it. When this happens to those who do not have wisdom, they tend to be arrogant and unconsciously turn into egocentric persons. This higher psychic power does not happen to everyone. It differs depending on the persons who have it. Some may have clairvoyant eyes that can see angels, beings in the Hell, hungry ghosts, and demons. Some may have clairvoyant ears that can hear them. Others may be able to read people's minds. Nowadays those who have one or two of those abilities are respected as outstanding in Dhamma practice. Many may believe that they have reached the Noble states. In fact, this is only the result of concentration practice.

Fooled by Lack of Wisdom

How we are fooled by our compounded thoughts or mental formations (*saṅkhāra*) is analogous to how people can be fooled by a person who can talk anyone into anything, who knows how to please people, and how to lure them to get what he wants. *Saṅkhāra* resides in the mind. When the mind wants anything, *saṅkhāra* goes along with it and tries to please it by all possible means. For example, if those who practice Dhamma want to see the Lord Buddha or a Buddha image or light, *saṅkhāra* will show it to them. For those who do not have wisdom, they may think that it is a good thing and that they have gained high psychic power, fine knowledge, and higher moral quality. In fact, it is merely *saṅkhāra* that fools the mind. It is the result of concentration practice. I hope that you understand now what concentration practice alone can do to you. Those who think that full concentration of the mind would bring them ultimate wisdom are never going to get it, because this type of wisdom can occur at the end of continued wisdom development practice, to those who have keen wisdom only.

The Foundation of Ultimate Wisdom

From now on I will explain the basic methods of practice for ultimate knowledge (*vipassana-ñāṇa*). Unlike the universality of concentration practice, practice for ultimate knowledge exists only in Buddhism. This is the clear knowledge and sight of the true nature of all things. *Vipassanā-ñāṇa* means “the wisdom of fine perception of the Truth.” It is the end result of wisdom development practice in the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, the first factor, Right View or Right Understanding (*sammā-ditṭhi*), and the second factor, Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*). They are the foundation of wisdom development. Right View about the true nature of all things leads to Right Thought. Whatever one contemplates is right. Right View is like the blueprint of a building, and Right Thought the builder, who works according to the plan. A building is strong because of its foundation. Right View is the foundation of the practice, and even Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration depend on Right View.

Therefore, concentration development must be based on Right View for its foundation. Otherwise, it can turn into wrong concentration easily and unconsciously. “*Samādhi*” is “oneness of the mind.” Whether the oneness is on the right or the wrong track depends on whether one has Right View or not. As one practices *samādhi*, one must be assisted by wisdom of Right View. Otherwise, what one is getting will be wrong or deluding *samādhi* without realizing it. Wisdom will keep a close watch on any knowledge or perception during concentration, and the mind will not be deluded by any vision occurring in *samādhi*. One will understand that what one visualizes during concentration

practice, e.g. his or another person's rotting body, is only the mental image, not the revelation of his understanding of the body's foulness. The body's foulness cannot be seen through a mental image, but it is something revealed by wisdom. Seeing the decaying body in *samādhi* does not result in detachment for the body. To cause detachment one contemplates the body with wisdom. As the mind sees things revealed by wisdom, true detachment occurs in it. Whether the mental image in *samādhi* is the Lord Buddha, Buddha image, crystal ball, or brightness, it is the result of *samādhi*. It is a result of compounded thought, and so is still under the rules of the Three Characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*).

Defilement and Craving Lure the Mind

The mind has been controlled by defilement, craving, and ignorance for so long that it does not know how to get away from them. They have led the mind towards lower thoughts. Their ways revolve around the stream of the world and the mind travels with it. The true nature of the mind is wisdom, but it has been covered up and so left the mind in darkness, unable to find its way out of suffering. The mind is under the control of defilement and craving all the time. Defilements prevent the mind from studying about and searching for the way to get out of the cycle of rebirth by taking the mind away from doing good deeds, especially Dhamma practice. Defilements have very subtle tricks to keep the mind from Dhamma practice. For example, we think that there is plenty of time left since we are not old and will not die young. Or we have accumulated too little merit in the past lives to reach *Nibbāna*, so it is good enough for us to practice at our own speed. As the mind is flooded by these excuses over and over again, it inclines toward such belief and ends up practicing Dhamma in fits and starts.

Wisdom Paves the Way for the Mind

When a follower of Dhamma realizes that he has been fooled by defilement and craving and that this is how they work, he must use wisdom to pave a new way for the mind. All past knowledge and mental activities influenced by defilements are ways toward suffering, and they repeat themselves in cycles. The view of happiness when being born on this earth, from clinging to possessions and never to relinquishing them are against the Truth. We must contemplate with wisdom and try to build up new concepts in the mind to learn things according to the Truth and to know and see things correctly. In short, the mind must be taught Right View. This is basic wisdom, and its development requires rationalization according to the Truth. Everything is contemplated until its Three Characteristics, suffering, impermanence, and no-self, are revealed.

Wisdom Teaches the Mind To Be Well-Rounded

To contemplate with wisdom in order to understand all compounded states which arise, exist, and perish, one must analyze things all around us. For example, when one sees an old man, a sick person, or a dead body, one must put oneself in that situation and contemplate it. You are subject to old age, sickness, and death just like those you have seen. You will experience the same suffering, impermanence, and no-self just like others. When you see a dead body, look at yourself and see your body as a corpse also. Contemplate the past using memories as the subject of your contemplation. Contemplate the future as well through imagination. Memories and imagination are the seat of wisdom. So, one must choose to remember things that will deter the mind from attachment to worldly things. Anyone born on this earth must have experienced some degree of pain from such attachment. Remembering those painful things prevents the mind from indulging in pleasure. Without wisdom one tends to be drawn to things that induce sensual desire and cravings brought into the mind through the body, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. On the other hand, wisdom arising from memories of harmful things is always ready to teach the mind about how harmful your own or others' bodily senses are. The body is subject to diseases and death in this life, just as it has been in your past lives.

Contemplating the Body

Only those who have wisdom can perceive the foulness of the body according to the truth. The true nature of the body is dirty, not be beauty. Even when it is bathed and cleaned, the dirt is never completely eliminated. If one does not bathe for 10 days, the foulness shows, and it is disgusting to others. Hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendon, and bones are not beautiful objects. Beauty is something dictated by defilements, compounded thoughts, delusion, and ignorance. It is a misconception of the mind. The body seems beautiful because of love, passion, and sexual desire. If the mind does not have love, passion, and sexual desire, nothing about the human body is beautiful. The make-up or decoration covering the skin are only superficial, just like the decoration with colors and design of a coffin which contains a rotting and foul-smelling corpse inside. Our body or other bodies, covered with make-up and perfume to hide their foulness inside, just so that we can tolerate living with it.

Contemplation with wisdom teaches the mind the truth about the body: its birth, its existence, and its death. Even though we cannot see the birth of each part of the body with our own eyes, we must learn through reasoning and imagining. The whole body is not developed in one day. Organs do not occur at the same time. In the beginning, there is a cell, resulting from a fertilization of the mother's, by the father's germ cells. The cell develops further and looks like a clear oil droplet. Then blood begins to circulate, and it becomes an embryo, successively. The lump later on develops five protrusions; the head, the two hands, and the

two legs, and organs are gradually formed. Hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, muscles, tendon, bones, bone marrow, spleen, heart, liver, lungs, ligaments, colon, intestines, bile, mucous, lymph, and blood, including eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and tactile sense, develop from that bloody mass during 9-10 month gestation in the mother's womb. After birth, the helpless baby has to be fed milk and liquid food and tendered by its mother until it grows into a child, then eventually dies.

Once one is born, suffering of the body and the mind is like a shadow of birth. The impermanence reveals itself from the beginning. There are changes through time from an embryo to a baby, then an adult, an old person, an invalid, and a corpse, in that order. After death, the body is naturally decomposed according to the rule of no-self (*anattā*). There is no self, no "I" or "you." The belief that one's self exists is only misunderstanding. There is no truth to it at all. The truth is that the four elements, i.e., earth, water, air, and fire, of which the body is composed, will soon disintegrate and return to their original states. The no-self is revealed through disintegration of these elements in the course of life. There is no such thing as "myself" or "yourself" in reality.

Rational Discernment of the Truth

The dead body, the living body, and the developing body are all *anattā*, or no-self. This is the truth that one must discern with one's own wisdom. Even though wisdom at this level is only worldly wisdom, one must base one's thinking on reason according to the truth. Every part of the body develops from its cause. It functions by a cause, and it dies from a cause. Contemplation according to the truth is to teach the mind and to develop wisdom. It is unreasonable to expect such wisdom to occur automatically, or the mind to perceive the truth by itself. Even though the truth is here all the time, without studying it there is no way of knowing its value. This is like valuable natural resources, such as diamond, gems, or minerals, available in the land, but without studying them they are of no use. The truth is valueless for those who do not study it, just as a valuable gem is meaningless to a chicken. They then see things distorted from the truth, even though the truth is always there. The mind without wisdom tends to attach itself to such distortions. For example, when things do not go the way one wishes, the mind suffers, because it always wants pleasure. If everyone got what he wishes, the world would not be like this. It would be full of rich, famous, and happy people. Or if the world was full of poor and unhappy people, no one would wish to be born again.

But the truth is that there is no such thing as happiness all the time. We may wish for something we like very much to last forever, but it is impossible, and we suffer. We try to go against the truth of nature, but no one can ever succeed. Everyone has to experience aging, illness, and death without exception. So, one

should try to develop wisdom to teach one's mind about it. As you contemplate, focus on the matter until the mind knows and sees the truth with wisdom. Like a flashlight in the dark, the light is wisdom, and the eyes are the mind. Let the mind see the matter as it really is, that is, seeing suffering, impermanence, and no-self as they really are until the mind becomes enlightened by wisdom and perceives things according to the truth.

See the Three Characteristics Through Wisdom

Contemplation with wisdom is different from concentration practice. In practicing concentration, one must focus on only one concept without thinking about other things. One is in the present and is cut off from the past and the future. Contemplation with wisdom, on the other hand, requires wide, expansive knowledge, both inwards and outwards. For example, when one sees an old, sick, or dead man, one should think about and analyze the sight with wisdom until one's mind sees the Three Characteristics, i.e., suffering, impermanence, and no-self, in it.

When one sees an old man, one contemplates aging of the body, which no one can resist at all, regardless of how well he has been nourished, or how excellent his living conditions have been. Aging is not under the control of anything. It comes naturally and disregards anyone's fortune or power. As the body deteriorates, it reveals its suffering and impermanent nature. The eyes that used to see things clearly, both near and far, are now blurred. A person who used to be strong must now be assisted to the toilet. This is the kind of suffering that an old man must experience due to the impermanence of his body. The same old man was once a child just like any child that we see. The child grew up and is now changed to an old man. Aging occurs in all parts of the body, and the strength gradually declines until the old man is completely helpless.

The ears that used to hear things clearly become hard of hearing or even completely deaf in old age. This is a state of impermanence that no one wants, but it comes someday and causes suffering.

The same change occurs to the nose, the tongue, and the tactile sense. So, when we see an old man, we should contemplate aging and imagine that we were that man. We too are aging just like him. We grew out of childhood, but today and tomorrow we are aging, and eventually we will become old just like the man we see today. This is because we are all governed by the rule of the Three Characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*). No matter how well we take care of ourselves or how comfortably we live our lives, aging is something that is beyond our control. Even though we try to put on cosmetics or nourish our skin with all kinds of lotion to look younger, our bodies will not cooperate with our desire. For how much longer can one fool oneself and not admit the true nature of the body? Then why does one go on believing that the body is his and is self? People misunderstand that the body is self, whilst in fact it exists only temporarily. Soon all of us have to leave our bodies. We cannot hang on to them forever. Each of us has been reborn in this World so many times, and each time we aged just as we do in this time and in the future. As long as we still have defilement and craving, we are drifting along the stream of rebirth with no end in sight. This is a guideline for you to practice contemplation with wisdom. Contemplate more often and use your own wisdom. Don't adopt others' wisdom as your own.

When one sees a sick person, one should contemplate his sickness and put oneself in his position, just as one contemplates aging. Contemplate slowly, attentively, and subtly. Do not do it too fast, because you will tend to omit the details, and the mind will not follow. This usually results in a weak will and so a gap for defilement, craving, arrogance, and ignorance to march into the mind. These invaders will make the mind believe that it already

knew all about it, or it could even teach others about it. When the mind is fooled that way, one tends to quit all practice. I myself was fooled like that previously. That is why I would like to warn you and to urge you to work hard and beware of this kind of trick.

Contemplation on Death

Whenever you see a dead body, contemplate death immediately, or remember it and contemplate it later. One must be mindful and contemplate seriously to teach the mind until it becomes awed with death. Do not let the mind get used to death and see it as an ordinary event for anyone. Do not let defilement make you believe that you already know all about death, whereas in fact your mind is not truly afraid of death. Contemplation of death must be in detail, delving into it until the mind sees everything clearly as revealed by wisdom. If the mind does not “see” it with wisdom, it is as useless as a blind man turning on a flashlight. He may pretend as if he sees things, but they are from memories or prior knowledge, not by his own sight. As long as the mind does not “see” what wisdom reveals, there is no way of “knowing and seeing” the Truth. Even though one reads all the books of the *Tipiṭaka* (the Three Divisions of the Buddhist Canon), the mind is still “unchanged” by the read knowledge, which is merely theory. It is like learning how to cook by reading a cookbook. One does not know the taste of the food until one really cooks it. Knowledge merely memorized is not deeply absorbed into the mind unless it is contemplated with wisdom. Even when one accepts the truth through reading, it is recorded as memory which cannot get rid of defilement and craving. To be free from them is the task of the wise mind. Wisdom is the light that lets the mind see the danger of defilement and craving and the harm of birth, aging, illness, and death, and it is the mind that will hurriedly seek the way out of those dangerous things. Once birth is stopped, the other things: aging, sickness, and death which are consequences of

birth are not problems anymore. It is like a person sleeping among wild animals: tigers, elephants, and poisonous snakes. When he wakes up and sees what surrounds him with his own eyes, the scary scene will force him to find the way out of that place as quickly as possible, even though he previously has been used to sleeping in that same place for a long time. Now our minds are asleep. They do not see the danger of birth, aging, illness, and death, so they are satisfied with sleeping. When danger comes, it is usually too close to get away from it. In most cases, one does not want to age, but one does; one does not want to die, but one is dying; one does not want to be born again, but one will. This is because the “fuel” for rebirth to start another cycle still exists.

Death awes everyone. Yet he is pleased with birth which must end in death. Can anyone get away from this fact of life? Of course, no one can. It has been like this for so long. This is the world of birth, aging, illness, and death which occurs in a cycle, and it will be like this, always.

To contemplate death often is to make the mind afraid of it, and when it is, it will find the way out. A man who sees a tiger will find for himself a way to save his life from the tiger. There is no such thing as loitering anymore. Or it is like a gambler who sees a policeman; he will find the quickest exit for himself without asking anyone. In Dhamma practice, contemplation on death will often wake the mind up and make it aware of its danger. The mind becomes weary of repetitive deaths, which gave no substance and no use.

Whenever you see a dead body, contemplate death and think about your own death. Think about the similarity of your own

breathing body to the dead body. Before the person died, he had breathed just like you. His life was just like yours. His body consisted of the Four Elements – earth, water, fire, and air – blended into a form with feeling, memory, perception, and consciousness while he was alive just like yours. Now his breath is gone, and so will yours be. When he lived, he latched on to his body as self and was afraid of dying and did not want to die. He firmly believed that his possessions were really his. After death, can he bring anything with him? All acquired property belongs to the world and is used to ease one's life while one is alive. It is daily necessity until one is no longer breathing. After that, all property returns to the World to be used by those who are still alive.

Contemplation on death of other people must be done in detail and with reflection on your own death. Do not do it hastily. Do it slowly and keep your mind with wisdom all the time. Do it as often as possible, hundred or thousand times a day. Do it for animal deaths in the streets and everywhere as well, and each time refer it to yourself. Always contemplate until you see the Three Characteristics of each life. Contemplate other sufferings as well. For example, when you see handicapped people or animals, think that in some past life you were like them, and you may be like them again in future lives. When you see beggars or poor people, think that you were once like them and may be like them again if you do bad deeds. Contemplation with wisdom like this will reduce arrogance and warn the mind of the consequence of one's acts which one is receiving in one's present life.

Contemplation like this can be done in any posture: standing, walking, sitting, or lying down. You can contemplate before or

after concentration practice. To build up wisdom, one cannot rely on others too much. One must try to develop wisdom by oneself, otherwise what one thinks is wisdom may be only memory from others, not wisdom. To develop one's own wisdom, one needs a lot of practice in search of the Truth by oneself. One must contemplate as often as possible without counting the times. It is like felling a big tree; one does not need to count the number of times the ax hits the tree. Any part of the tree that is in the way is cut until the tree falls down. In contemplation, anything that one perceives through the eyes or the ears, that causes pleasure or pain, that brings about pain in the body and the mind, must be contemplated until one gets down to the cause of that feeling. Use wisdom to contemplate until it is clear and you become weary of the pain. Contemplate things based on the Truth. All imagination must be in line with the Truth. Keep in mind that any happening has a cause. It exists and disappears as a result of a cause also. Contemplation must dig into those causes and their effects. Suffering causes produce suffering effects. Impermanent causes produce impermanent effects. No-self causes produce selfless effects. Let the mind know that a specific cause produces a specific result.

Memory and Imagination Help Develop Initial Wisdom

When contemplating, memory and conventional supposition are used to guide and serve as a base for wisdom. Suppose you have a pen in hand. Without a base upon which the pen can write, the pen will not be able to write on anything. It is useless for a pen to make marks, draw, or write text in the air. Likewise, memory and conventional supposition are the crucial paper-base upon which wisdom writes. Remembrance of external things can be internalized. For example, as one sees an old man, a sick man, or a dead man, one memorizes that picture and imagines oneself in that situation. This is contemplation with wisdom. If there is no memory or no imagination, there is no base for wisdom. Those who are in an absorbed state of meditation do not use memory or imagination in that state. Therefore, they cannot contemplate, and wisdom cannot develop. Their minds are in a calm and empty state. This state is not really the eradication of defilement, craving, and ignorance. It merely suppresses defilement, craving, and ignorance temporarily by the power of mindfulness, an absorbed state of mind, and meditative attainment.

In the Lord Buddha's time, the monks went to practice in cemeteries by memorizing the various appearance of old and new corpses. There were decaying corpses filled with pus, rotting flesh, and skin and becoming food for all kinds of animals. There were tendon-attached bones and bare bones. The monks recorded those scenes in their memory and afterwards projected them onto themselves. They contemplated new corpses, supposed that they had been those corpses, and followed their bodies changing

in the same way they had seen in the real corpses until it was clear to them that things followed the rule of the Three Characteristics. They let their minds know and see the truth of no-self, that is, the disappearance of “self” or “existence.” In doing so, those monks soon attained the state of *arahant*, after which memories and imaginings are not needed anymore. Therefore, memory and imaginings serve well as the bridge leading to wisdom.

Develop Wisdom for the Mind

Wisdom is for each individual to develop in his mind. When there is wisdom in the mind, it lights it up and chases away darkness and blindness. The brightness of wisdom lets the mind know and see things the way they really are, according to the Truth. It knows and sees suffering as suffering. It becomes clear that the cause of suffering is craving. It perceives clearly that all compounded things and conditions (*saṅkhāra*) are impermanent. The body is not self. It is merely a compound of the Four Elements – earth, water, fire, and air – which disintegrate when the mind leaves the body. They cannot remain together when the mind is not there. When the mind knows and sees all of this clearly, its long attachment to the body and its belief in the body as self will change. The mind is then ready to detach itself from this belief and is said to have achieved Right View, the first phase of the Noble Eightfold Path. When the mind perceives things according to Right View, it will detach itself from all external things. Nothing in this world belongs to anyone. Everything we have is only temporary. So, when the elements disintegrate through their normal course, the mind does not suffer at all because it has insight from the fullness of wisdom. There is nothing secret in the world anymore. This knowledge is deep-rooted in the mind, and is the totally bright, perfect knowledge (*ñāṇa-dassana*). Wherever and however one lives one's life, the insight in the mind will know everything around all the time and will fix the mind in concentration and then to the oneness of mind and Dhamma easily.

Wisdom in Concentration Practice

When you practice concentration, do not believe what you know and see in *samādhi* right away. You need wisdom to correct Wrong View. Without wisdom it is very easy to have a wrong view. In *samādhi*, as the mind concentrates and attains a calm state, it is easy for the Evil One to step in and influence the mind with Wrong View. The major trick of defilement and craving is the appearance of a mental image in *samādhi*, that seems so real. Defilement resides in the mind can easily deceive the mind. For example, when the mind is calm, light appears in various forms informing the mind that it is the brightness of wisdom, or *vipassana-ñāṇa* (the ultimate knowledge), or *nirodha-samāpatti* (the meditative attainment at the level of cessation of suffering). Sometimes there are both brightness and mental images (*nimitta*), such as a newborn baby, an old person, a sick person, or a dead body, appearing right in front of you. Or, there may appear bright sky, clouds, stars, rivers, etc. Some may see Buddha's image or a glass ball. These visions must not be taken as *vipassana-ñāṇa*. You cannot interpret them as the enlightenment of the mind, as if you knew all about mental formation, because they are merely mental images which occur in *samādhi*. Those who have wisdom can make use of these mental images by contemplating them to develop more wisdom. For those who have wisdom in the mind this kind of mental image will not occur to them. Mental images themselves are compounded things and follow the rule of impermanence. The mind that is already wise with Right View will not be deceived by them, because it knows the true nature of compounded things. Mental images can fool only mentally

weak people, not wise ones. Before they can fool anyone, they must match the person's desire. If a person craves money, the image will use money as a tool. If a woman wants beauty, images will use cosmetics to fool her. So, defilements and compounded thoughts can deceive the mind because of the mind's own weakness. Since they reside in the mind, it is very easy for them to work. If a person is rough, the mind is fooled with rough images. If a mind is calm and refined, fine things are used to fool the mind. We have been fooled by defilements and compounded thoughts all along. All of us, regardless of sex and status, rich or poor, beggars, orphans, the blind, the deaf, the handicapped, or others, are all subject to the tricks of defilements and compounded thoughts. The mind has to travel recycling in rebirths because of their deception. We have been deceived for uncountable lives in immeasurable time, and we will fall into this pitfall again in the future. How much longer are we going to be deceived? The mind is not even aware that it is deceived, because of the cunning strategy of defilements and compounded thoughts. They are the wisest, because they can direct all beings to circle blindly in the cycle of rebirth without knowing it. We have allowed ourselves to be enslaved by defilements in the past and present lives and will go on being so forever.

Follow the Noble Eightfold Path With Wisdom

When a Dhamma follower realizes that he has been a slave of craving, he must try hard to develop wisdom for his mind to achieve knowledge and acuity in order to encounter defilements and cravings and to get rid of them. To develop wisdom is to pave the way toward the Noble Eightfold Path and to advance along it with a wise and well-rounded mind regarding all compounded things. The Lord Buddha laid down this Path as the foundation of practice for Buddhists to go straight to the Noble Fruition. The Path consists of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. These are for Buddhists to practice. The Path is for each individual to follow. Each has to build up his own Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path starts with the important first factor, Right View, on which the other factors are based. Right View is wisdom itself. One needs wisdom in Dhamma practice. The Noble Eightfold Path is the master plan from which each person must build his own path. It is like a beautiful house, which you must build for yourself if you would like one. By following the same design and plan you will get a house of your own that looks like the one you want. Building the Noble Eightfold Path within you is just like that.

The Noble Eightfold Path has been the route of those who have reached *Nibbāna*. Therefore, they are examples for us to follow. If we construct the same path as theirs and get on our own path, we can also reach the goal. To build the path for the mind, we

must have wisdom as the tool to keep the mind on the right track. If the mind travels by itself, its journey will be just like the one before. Wisdom is the light of the journey to direct the mind along the right track. The old route of the mind is full of danger and harm. Even though we have been born and died in that same old route for so many lives, we are still going nowhere but recycling births and deaths in the same old places. So, let us build a new route for the mind by using wisdom and Right View, the real view of the Truth. Contemplation of the Truth is the mind's new route which it has never used before. It is going against the natural mental stream. It is the opposite direction to which the mind is accustomed. Before, the mind used to drift along the stream. Now wisdom is leading the mind to cut away from the stream. Although it is something totally alien to the mind, we must try because there is a chance to reach the shore if we escape from the stream. If we let ourselves drift along as before, there is no way of getting to the shore at all.

Only wisdom can turn the mind backward, against desire and craving. The mind that does not have the right mentor or leader is blind and does not know how to get away from harm and danger. From now on we must contemplate, reflect, and discern diligently. It is impossible to have wisdom right away at the start of practice. Through frequent practice, the mind gradually develops wisdom, knowing and seeing things according to the guidance of wisdom. It is impossible to move along the Noble Eightfold Path smoothly, because this is an unfamiliar path. It is like a child learning how to walk. He falls and stumbles, but soon he can walk just like a grown-up. The mind has been used to sensual pleasures for a long time. But now to make the mind

reject them, one must use wisdom to teach the mind fully, to know the bad consequences of pleasure with visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile sensations all the time. In the past the mind used to delight in all these sensory pleasures. Of the five sources of sensual pleasure, *rūpa* is the most important because it unifies the four other sources: sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations. So, if there is no body, the other sensation has no place to exist. The body is the origin of sensual pleasures. The mind feels love and pleasure and is attached to self because of the body. Animals are deluded because of the body. All attachments originate from the body. The mind recycles in the wheel of rebirth because of attachment to the body. Therefore, it is important that one must use wisdom to contemplate the body, to explore the truth about the body, and to let the mind know and see the truth of the body in order to detach itself from it. Wisdom analyzes the body and separates it into parts, e.g., hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, and bones. Each part is given a supposed name. No part is really ours. All parts are together as a compound of conditioned things for the mind to reside in temporarily only. The resultant body is under the rule of the Three Characteristics. Even though the formed body looks as if it were self, it is no exception to the rule of the Three Characteristics. Self is the misunderstanding of the mind about the body, and wisdom must teach the mind about the Truth. It is like a teacher who must be patient in teaching students to read and write, until they can do so by themselves. To teach the mind, mindfulness and wisdom always have to control it. Whatever the mind encounters, inside or outside, near or far, fine or coarse, it must be contemplated until its true nature is clear to the mind.

Any compounded thought must be destroyed or overcome by wisdom until the old understanding is replaced and the mind has proper insight. This is the development of Right View and the provision for development of the Noble Eightfold Path in oneself.

Contemplation with wisdom is very important, because it is the basic step towards knowing and seeing the truth of the mind. As the mind knows and sees things according to the Truth, this kind of wisdom is given a new name, “*paññā-ñāṇa*,” the wisdom of knowing and seeing things according to the Truth. When it can know and see all conditions according to the Truth thoroughly, *paññā-ñāṇa* evolves into *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, perfect knowledge or transcendent wisdom. Therefore, Dhamma followers must get started with their ordinary wisdom in alignment with Right View and Right Thought and develop it by contemplation until the mind knows and sees the harm and danger of birth, aging, illness, and death and the harm and danger of sensual pleasures, and finds the way to detach itself from them, as stated in the Pali:

“*Nibbānagamaṃ maggaṃ, khippameva visodhaye*”

“One must hurry to cut short the way to *Nibbāna* by moving from one goal to the next, which will be seen clearly.”

“*Paññāyatthaṃ vipassati*”

“Only wisdom can lead to the true nature of Dhamma.”

“*Paññāya parisujhati*”

“Only one who has wisdom can be purified.”

Therefore, wisdom is a very important thing, and it is an individual's responsibility to develop his own wisdom. It is not something that comes automatically. Do not misunderstand that *vipassanā-ñāṇa* would occur in a completely calm mind. There are different levels of wisdom and different levels of understanding of Right View: rough, medium, and fine.

Wisdom Is the Weapon To Destroy Defilements

For a mind that is not so delicate, one uses one kind of wisdom. For a fine mind, fine wisdom is used accordingly. We must use the right wisdom to teach the mind. This is the strategy for those who are the *dandhābhiññā* type, who have to practice with difficulty and take time before they know and see the Truth, as opposed to the *hippābhiññā* type, who can practice very quickly. So, one must use wisdom to train the mind. Let the mind know circumspectly about compounded things, both outside and inside. The internal compounded conditions are especially difficult to understand, because they are mostly very subtle. Nevertheless, one must identify rough, medium, and fine states of internal mental activity. They are mental associations which are the tools of defilement, craving, and ignorance. They can compose, make up, modify, and expand things under the command of defilement and craving. They exist in the mind. That is why this existence called *saṅkhāra-citta* (*saṅkhāra* = compounded thought or condition; *citta* = mind). Whichever way the mind is directed by defilement and craving, *saṅkhāra* associates things in that direction. Its work depends on memories and supposition just like an engineer's work relies on equipment. If the mind craves for love and pleasure, *saṅkhāra* works to satisfy the mind in loving and pleasurable ways. If hatred is the case, then it works in that direction.

When *saṅkhāra* works, it associates with supposition. If there is no supposition, *saṅkhāra* cannot work. If there are suppositions but *saṅkhāra* does not work, nothing happens also. *Saṅkhāra* is

like a cook: suppositions are like food ingredients; and craving is like an eater. If there is a cook but there are no raw materials nor an eater, the cook is useless. Or if there are ingredients but there is no cook nor an eater; or there is an eater, but there is no food ingredient nor a cook, the component existing is useless. There must be the three components together. Craving, *saṅkhāra*, and supposition are the three related things as in the cook example. As long as there is defilement or craving, *saṅkhāra* is at work. It works on past, present, or even future events. It associates and exaggerates things; a big thing from a small one, a fine matter from a rough one, a long story from a short one. It makes up stories about the past and the future from its own illusion, day-dreaming and imagining, roams more and more deeply into its own emotion and gets lost in them unconsciously, with no way out. One may reminisce and think about the picture of a person for whom one used to feel affection in the past until the mind is trapped in its own thought. Even though the person may have been dead or gone away a long time ago, he or she may still be remembered in great detail, whether it is his or her appearance, complexion, personality, or speech at various places and times. Sometimes the reminiscence goes far beyond truth. The mind imagines totally new things. Once there are raw materials, the mind starts cooking them up and is infatuated with those cooked stories while walking or sitting and does not want to rest or sleep. The mind yields to defilement and craving and becomes miserable. Sometimes it “cooks” up the future, by making plans about job, position, fame, happiness and wealth. It dreams of a perfect husband or wife and children. This is the craving that drives *saṅkhāra* to create stories out of supposition, until the mind craves to be reborn again.

In the present life, one is usually deluded by one's appearance, by putting on things to cover oneself up to conceal the real appearance. One is deluded by one's illusory self as well as external illusions. The mind has been lost in this wheel of rebirth for so long because it has been attached to conventional reality, pleasures, and delusions without knowing it. This is *avijjā* – ignorance, which results in cycling through different states of being for so long. We drift along the stream of the world with no end in sight. Compounded thoughts and supposition are very good tools of defilement, craving, and ignorance, and the mind that slips from mindfulness and wisdom becomes their slave. Defilement, craving, and ignorance come in different forms, rough or delicate, and they reside in the mind. Compounded thoughts and supposition are actors, acting to cover up the Truth. The mind without wisdom gets involved in the acting as if it were real.

Dhamma followers must be mindful and know circumspectly in order to battle defilement and craving, like a boxer who must train himself all the time and study his opponent's weaknesses in order to win. Dhamma students must build up their own strength of confidence, effort, mindfulness concentration, and wisdom. Altogether they uproot and get rid of defilement and craving entirely. Only wise men know the source, the site, and the course of defilement and craving, like an experienced doctor who knows what to do to his patient to cure the disease. Contemplation with wisdom is the search for the definite center of defilements and craving to eradicate them completely.

Defilements and craving are in the mind. One must watch the mind closely with wisdom and must not yield to any defilement

or craving. Whenever it “cooks up” any supposition, one must use wisdom to destroy it immediately. Do not let *sankhāra* work too long. Wipe as soon as they get dirty. When the mind is sad, one must contemplate and find a way to get rid of that feeling right away. Destroy all carriers of defilement and craving. Know their hiding place and do not let them fool the mind again. Form, sound, smell, taste, tactile receptors – that is, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin – and the mind, are hiding places of defilements and cravings. The Five Aggregates, namely corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness, are fooled by defilement and craving. The mind is deluded that there is self, but in the wise mind, wisdom destroys the delusion right away where it arises and reveals its Three Characteristics: suffering, impermanence, and no-self. Every component of the Five Aggregates that the five sense receptors perceive as self must be analyzed until the mind accepts its Three Characteristics. The belief that form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensation are beauty is the work of defilement and craving and must be contemplated until the mind sees them as filth and accepts their true nature. Our own bodies as well as those of others must be contemplated until the mind sees no difference in them.

Contemplation in this way is to let the mind know and see things according to the Truth. Once it does, defilement and craving can no longer use their old tricks to fool the mind in seeing things as beauty or self. They become like musicians or actors who only perform in front of us. Once we know that it is only a performance and it is harmful, we would not want to watch it anymore, or not even allow them to act. Therefore, there is no stage for the actors. Once the mind knows and sees things according to the Truth, any

defilement and craving can no longer “act” or fool the mind with its performance. The mind becomes *anālayo*, having no attachment to anything. Contemplation with wisdom is to train the mind to distinguish between real and false things. If the mind knows that it has been attached to fake and harmful things, it will detach itself from them. The body that the mind once believed to be self is merely a troublesome aggregate. The mind resides in it during its limited life. When one knows the beginning and the end of things and their causes clearly according to the Truth until there is no doubt, the knowledge becomes *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, the ultimate knowledge of the Three Characteristics, from which all things reveal themselves in their entirety. Nothing in this world is secret anymore. Perfect knowledge clears up the past, the present, and the future and they all fall into the Three Characteristics. There is no more doubt or hesitation on this point.

If a Dhamma follower reaches this stage, he or she will not turn back anymore but will proceed to the end of the Path. From here on, there is calmness and cessation. This type of calmness and cessation occurs only to the person on the verge of transcended mind. Calmness alone can occur to anyone who practices meditation. It can be calmness at the levels of the Form or Formless. But the cessation or extinction described here is something new, that is not experienced in meditation. The meditative calmness suppresses defilement and craving, but the cessation here is *nirodha*, which occurs once and for all at the end of Dhamma practice. It is the extinction of suffering that has occurred in so many lives. Suffering due to birth, aging, illness, and death all come to an end. All factors and causes of suffering are terminated. They become *asāṅkhatadhātu*,

asaṅkhatadhamma, and *asaṅkhatapaccaya* which can no longer find connections. There is no “fuel” for greed, hatred, and delusion. Defilement, craving, and ignorance are extinguished all at once. There is no cause for mental formation because *saṅkhāra* is terminated. There is no consciousness because *viññāṇa* is terminated. There is no mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*) to cause the existence of sense receptors (*āyatana*). There is no *āyatana* to cause any sense reception (*phassa*). There is no *phassa*, to cause any feeling (*vedanā*). There is no *vedanā* to cause any craving (*taṇhā*), there is no *taṇhā* to cause any attachment (*upādāna*). There is no *upādāna* to cause existence (*bhava*). There is no *bhava* to cause birth (*jāti*). When there is no birth, there is no aging, illness, and death, and there is no more sorrow because its true cause, craving, has been extinguished. *Saṅkhāra* that used to associate things has been cut off. It is like the death of the engineer which ends construction even though all the equipment is present. Since ignorance and craving are gone, there is nothing to create new existence and birth. The business of rebirth is over.

The Cycle Ceases, the Fire Is Extinguished

The cessation of suffering is known and experienced only by the one who is becoming a noble one. The Noble Path or the sublime path of holy life reaches its fruition at this point. The cessation occurs both inwards and outwards. It is as if the power generator was turned off and all electricity in the system is gone. The inward cessation involves the termination of greed, hatred, and delusion. There is nothing to generate electric current and heat, because the source is gone. Even though the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind are still there, they stop functioning at that moment. The eyes exist, but since there is no *viññāṇa* (consciousness), there is no sight. The ears exist, but since there is no *viññāṇa*, the ears cannot hear. The nose exists, but since there is no *viññāṇa*, the nose cannot smell. The tongue exists, but since there is no *viññāṇa*, the tongue cannot taste. The body exists, but since there is no *viññāṇa*, the body cannot feel any tactile sensation. The mind exists, but since there is no *viññāṇa*, the mind cannot perceive happiness, suffering, or any emotion.

This is *nirodha*, the complete cessation of all inward and outward sufferings at their causes. Form, feeling, memory, mental formation, and consciousness comprising the Five Aggregates are all gone. There is nothing in the Five Aggregates since the consciousness which controls all others has been cut off by *nirodha*. Form exists as merely form with no feeling, memory, or any perception. *Saṅkhāra* that used to associate things cannot do so now. *Viññāṇa* which perceives things now stops doing so. As a consequence of the non-functioning of *viññāṇa*, the actions

of the other aggregates (form, feeling, memory, and mental formation) and the sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body) also stop. In short, the mind stops working. It is like a system of machines connected by a single belt. The whole system stops working when the prime mover is turned off. The “prime mover” is ignorance. When *nirodha* extinguishes ignorance, the cycle of births stops. The ultimate wisdom cuts it off and destroys ignorance completely. There is no way to recover, it is as if the fuel and the fire were removed and so there was no more heat. Lust, hatred, and delusion, like heat, are gone as the “fuel” (ignorance) and the “fire” (wheel of births) are completely destroyed. The “water” of *nirodha* extinguishes the “fire.” Where can “heat” (suffering) come from then?

The Knowledge Free From Imaginings and Conceptual Signs

After the cessation of the Five Aggregates and the sense organs as described above, there is no connection with anything because *viññāṇa* (the knowing component of the Five Aggregates) has ceased. The Five Aggregates are merely aggregates. Internal and external sense receptors are not associated because the consciousness or the associate of senses has already stopped functioning. There is no self in corporeality, no corporeality in self. That self is not body and body is not self becomes clear at this point. Feeling is not self and self is not feeling. Feeling does not exist in self, and self does not exist in feeling. Memory is not self, and self is not memory. Memory does not exist in self, and self does not exist in memory. Compounded condition is not self, and self is not compounded condition. Compounded condition does not exist in self, and self does not exist in compounded condition. Consciousness is not self, and self is not consciousness. Consciousness does not exist in self, and self does not exist in consciousness. As self does not exist in anything and nothing is self, it is like zero, a state of nothingness or valuelessness. It is *asaṅkhatadhātu*, *asaṅkhatadhamma*, and *asaṅkhatapaccaya*. There is no “fuel” to continue the fire. It is *akuppadhamma*, in which there is no cause for a condition to drift along the stream of the world any longer. *Nirodha* has cut off the route of rebirth totally, and the factors that cause one to float along the stream of the world have come to an end.

At this point arises a special kind of knowledge. This is not knowledge in the Five Aggregates, nor that derived from sensory

experience. It is beyond any worldly conventional knowledge. It has no foundation, no limit and no control. It is beyond worldly description. It reveals the entire world and is unique.

A Dhamma follower will reach this point after the continued practice of initial wisdom development described in this book. He needs Right View and Right Thought to contemplate things until he attains perfect wisdom and ultimate knowledge, which make his mind transcend to the crystal clear stage of Truth, the true condition of everything, which results in *nirodha*, the cessation of suffering as described.

Not long after the cessation, there is an abrupt turn in the mind. It is one quick moment right after the cessation, in which there is a sudden feeling of extraordinary bravery in the mind. It is the kind of boldness that one has never experienced before. It is so powerful that it destroys defilements and craving and cuts off the rebirth cycle to put an end to it entirely and immediately. This occurs only to those who reach the last stage of practice. At this stage mindfulness is very strong and wisdom is very sharp. It is the extraordinary mindfulness and wisdom, so powerful that it could destroy a whole mountain in one moment. This is because worldly business is cut off from the mind, and there is no imaginings or convention in the mind anymore. Everything is well perceived as nothing. Worldly matters are nothing when the mind is free from arrogance and attachment to self. The no-self is the nothingness which is free from the mind completely since everything is destroyed. The brave mind at this stage enables one to sit in one posture for days as if it was one short moment. One can be still until blood dries out and this body rots. This is the kind

of bravery described here. It is clear to him that āsavakkhayañāṇa, the knowledge to destroy defilements and craving will be demolished at this moment. Āsavakkhayañāṇa occurs simultaneously with the extraordinary bravery and once it arises it continues until the mind is liberated. There is no need for any commitment because the process proceeds anyway until defilements are destroyed completely in a split second, in less than a blink of the eyes. One knows for oneself that the defilements are all gone, and feels as if the whole world is shaking, as stated in Pali:

“Vimuttasmim̐ vimuttamiti ñāṇam̐ hoti”

“The liberation occurring at any moment is known fully at that moment.”

“Khīṇā jāti,”

“One knows right away that the cycle of births has come to an end.”

“Vusitam̐ brahmacariyam̐,”

“The purification of virtue is complete.”

“Kataṃ karaṇīyam̐”

“The work of Dhamma practice to reach liberation has come to an end. There is no need for further practice. This is the end of practice. Purity is complete, and the mind is independent of all worldly things. It is unique in itself, and the boldness subsides.”

Shortly afterwards, there is a natural and unintentional thought of how subtle, profound, and difficult it is for an individual to reach this purity. Therefore, there is a natural feeling of unwillingness to teach anyone. Nevertheless, anyone who has reached this stage was also once a blind man, who cycled in the wheel of births before. If he can reach it, why can some others who have practiced hard not reach it too? There is also a chance for them to succeed. Those who have attained the Fruition also had teachers to guide them. So, those who have reached the goal must also lead the way for others too. The thought subsides, and the next feeling is that of missing the Lord Buddha very much. Even though the Lord Buddha died a long time ago, there is an extremely strong feeling to pay respect to the Lord. If the Lord were still alive, no matter how long it took or how far he was, the person would have to see the Lord, not to tell him about what has happened but only to be with him as a gesture of gratitude. This feeling also dies down shortly, and there is full realization of the Dhamma stated in Pali:

“Yo dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati”

“Anyone who sees Dhamma sees the Lord.”

From that moment on, there is extraordinary strength in the mind. It is so strong that if physical strength is commensurate, it could lift up or crush the whole mountain. This mental strength lasts for several days.

At this time, the purity of Dhamma and the mental strength expand to the body. The elements comprising the body are washed by this purity and strength until they become pure. It

washes every bone in the body until the bone is transformed from coarse to pure matter. When all rough elements have been cleaned and changed to pure elements, the mental strength gradually declines until it is normal.

Although the mental strength becomes normal, the purity remains. This is the point of no decline and no turning back. It is “*ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*,” knowing and seeing purity all the time. It is “*ekarattim*,” everlasting knowing without deterioration and suffering. It is purity beyond the world. It is incomparable with the darkness or brightness of the sun, the moon, or the stars. It is timeless purity, which is not changing with anything. It is therefore “*diṭṭhivisuddhi-ñāṇa-dassana*,” knowing and seeing purity all the time. There is no need for prediction or confirmation. Even though there are the former Noble Ones around, there is no need to ask whether the knowing and seeing is correct. Instead, he is willing to describe it, if asked to do so, because it is so clear. Even the Lord Buddha were there, there would be no question to ask the Lord either. It is like drinking a glass of water. The drinker knows for himself whether or not he has drunk the water. One knows for oneself that the purity he has attained is complete. There is no more doubt and no need to ask about it anymore.

The purity attained now has the same nature as that in the Lord Buddha’s time. It is the same in the Lord Buddha, Silent Buddhas, or *arahants*. It is complete after the defilement, craving, and ignorance are destroyed. This is equal in all who have reached *Nibbāna*. The next Buddha or future *arahants* will all reach

Nibbāna in the same manner. A Dhamma follower who knows and sees purity for himself is said to be a perfect *asekha-puggala*, one who does not require further training.

I have described the means and the consequence of Dhamma practice from the beginning to the end of the process. I hope that this will be useful to Dhamma students. The practice as described in this book emphasizes wisdom development according to Right View and Right Thought in the Noble Eightfold Path. It involves teaching the mind about the Truth revealed by wisdom.

Appendix: Methods of Concentration Development

Walking Meditation (*Caṅkama*)

Preparation for *Caṅkama* Walk

The path for *caṅkama* walk should be about 1 meter wide and 15 meters long. It should be smooth so that the walker is not worried about stumbling while walking. To get started, stand at one end of the path facing the other end; the two palms are joined at the chest or forehead as a token of reverence to the Lord Buddha. Then make the following commitment:

“I now intend to practice a *caṅkama* walk as a tribute to the purity of the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the Noble Ones; also to the virtues of my parents, teachers, and those who have been kind to me. May I be able to develop mindfulness, calmness, and the ability to know and see the Truth clearly. May the wholesomeness of my act inspire all beings to forgive one another and be happy.”

Then put your hands down, the right hand grasping the back of the left in front of the body as when one stands in a solemn manner. Keep the mind in a neutral mood. Do not let it incline to any pleasant or unpleasant thought. Think, “From this moment on I will set aside all other thoughts but the intention to practice a *caṅkama* walk.” Then follow these steps:

1. Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*Bud*”

Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*dho*”

Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*Dham*”

Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*mo*”

Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*Saṅ*”

Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*gho*”

2. Do 1. 3-7 times or more to bring *Buddho, Dhammo, Saṅgho* together into the mind.
3. Then do only the “*Bud*” – “*dho*” part and start walking according to one of the following methods.

First Method of *Caṅkama* Walk

Mindfully take a step, thinking “*Bud*” then another, thinking “*dho.*” Do this over and over as you walk along the path. At any time, your attention is not on your step, you know that you have lost *sati* or mindfulness, and you must start again until your mind is fixed firmly on every step. Do not walk too fast or too slow. Walk at your regular speed.

This is a method of concentration development in which the act of walking is used as the object of attention. When you reach one end of the walking path, turn around by always making a right turn, and walk back and forth.

Second Method of *Caṅkama* Walk

In this method, one uses breathing instead of walking as the object of attention. Think “*Bud*” as you breathe in, and “*dho*” as

you breathe out. In this way, you concentrate on your breath and *parikamma* word – “*Bud*” – “*dho*” as a practice of concentration. When you get tired of walking, simply stand still, but continue fixing your mind on “*Bud*” – “*dho*” as before.

Third Method of *Caṅkama* Walk

In this method, one concentrates on a part of one’s body. Pick any part that you feel is easy for you to concentrate on. This body part will be used as the object of attention, at which mindfulness and the “knowing” nature of the mind will stay together.

For a beginner, first practice by imagining the physical appearance of the body part: for example, its color, texture and location. By doing this over and over again, you can fix your mind on that part more quickly, either with or without closing your eyes. When you gain enough skill for one part, you can then move on to do the same for other parts. Seeing all body parts as having the same basic characteristics by this method provides a good foundation for wisdom or insight development (*vipassanā*). This method does not depend on walking steps as the object of attention. Instead, it uses the name of the body part – for example, “*taco*” meaning “skin,” “*aṭṭhi*” meaning “bone” – as the *parikamma* word.

Fourth Method of *Caṅkama* Walk

In this method, one concentrates on the mental objects – crude or delicate, pleasant or unpleasant – that arise in one’s mind. Just be mindful of the arising of mental objects, but do not think about

their source, because in doing so you will intensify that feeling even more. Any mental object has its cause. Therefore, you must be mindful enough to know and see clearly the cause of a mental object and watch how it can expand.

The cause here means the inner cause that already resides in the mind. There is fuel ready in the mind; that is, craving for more sensual objects and sensual moods. The mind has been craving for its food in terms of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations for a long, long time – for innumerable past lives. Similarly, in one’s present life it craves for “hot” mental objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. This has been impressed profoundly in the mind and serves as the inner cause of all mental objects. Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations merely trigger the inner cause. When one perceives anything from the senses, one’s mind tends to hold onto the perception and think about it until it is fastened in the mind.

The mental object is where the mind is. Therefore, when one concentrates on a mental object, one is actually watching one’s mind. While watching it, one should be aware when greed, anger, passion, or delusion occur in the mind. One must be mindful enough to spot any “invader” of the mind and tone it down until it fades away. It is important, however, that you not let the mind think about the source of the mental object, which could be form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or jealousy, because the feeling will be more intensified and can do more harm to the mind. The right way is to concentrate exclusively on the mental object as it arises in the mind. Fix your attention on it until you see clearly what it

is really like. Soon it will lose strength and die down. This is the “inner war” or the confrontation between mindfulness and mental objects. Whether you will win or lose depends on the strength of your mindfulness.

At the end of a *caṅkama* walk, stand at one end of the path facing the other end. Again, put the two palms together to pay respect to the Lord Buddha as when you start, and say:

“I have finished a *caṅkama* walk as a tribute to the purity of the Lord Buddha, Dhamma and the Noble Ones. May this practice of mine be a blessing to myself as well as my parents, my teachers, and all who have been kind to me. May heavenly beings, small and large animals, and those who dislike me also be blessed by this wholesome act.”

Then walk away from the path mindfully to continue concentration practice by sitting.

Sitting Meditation

Preparation for Sitting

The seat for sitting practice should be neat and clean so that one has no worry about it while sitting. To start, one pays respect to the Lord Buddha by repeating some chants, either briefly or lengthily as one wishes. At the end of the chants, bless oneself and other beings. For a layman, make a commitment to observe the Five Moral Precepts. This is to assure the purity of one's mind during concentration practice. It is a means of removing worry about physical or verbal unwholesome deeds in the past.

At this moment, one should be confident about the purity of one's precepts and forget about evil acts in the past. Instead, one should recall one's past wholesomeness, such as giving, precept observance, thoughts of benevolence for others, etc., to put the mind in a happy mood.

If one cannot formally make a resolution to a monk to observe the Five Moral Precepts, one can make his own commitment anywhere, because essentially the intent to relinquish physical and verbal misconduct is what counts in precept observance.

Commitment to Observe the Five Moral Precepts

One commits oneself to observe the Five Moral Precepts by reciting the following Pali:

*Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa
Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa*

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyam-pi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyam-pi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyam-pi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatīyam-pi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatīyam-pi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatīyam-pi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhā-padaṃ samādiyāmi

Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhā-padaṃ samādiyāmi

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhā-padaṃ

samādiyāmi

Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhā-padaṃ samādiyāmi

Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhā-

padaṃ samādiyāmi

Those who cannot recite the above Pali can simply say the following:

1. I shall not kill any life.
2. I shall not steal.
3. I shall not commit adultery.
4. I shall not lie.

5. I shall not take alcohol or other intoxicants.

You must be true to yourself and your own commitment, and this is the correct way to observe the precepts.

After that, say the following Pali three times:

Imāni pañca sikkhā-padāni samādiyāmi, cetanāhaṃ sīlaṃ vadāmi

Then bow to the ground three times to pay respect to the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the Noble Ones. For monks and novices, make sure about the purity of your precepts and *vinaya*. Do not let this point worry you while practicing concentration.

Now you are ready for the sitting. Remember that *samādhi* sitting can come either before or after a *caṅkama* walk. Or, if it is inconvenient to practice *caṅkama* walking, you can practice concentration simply by sitting.

For men, put your right leg over the left as you sit. For women, sit in the same way as men, or you can sit with both legs folded to one side (a typical posture for a Thai lady sitting on the floor). The important point is to choose a comfortable sitting position. Now relax and join both palms in front of your chest or forehead as a token of reverence to the Lord Buddha, and make the following commitment:

“I now intend to practise *samādhi* sitting as a tribute to the purity of the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the Noble Ones; ... etc.” just as in a *caṅkama* walk.

Then put your hands on your lap, the right hand on top of the left, both palms up. Keep the upper body straight up. Be mindful

inside. Do not let your mind wander outwards, for it will invite sensual desires, resentment and ill will, etc., into the mind, causing depression, frustration, and restlessness. Think instead, “At this moment, I shall stop thinking about external things and keep my mind with the present only.”

First Method of *Samādhī* Sitting

1. Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*Bud*”
Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*dho*”
Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*Dham*”
Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*mo*”
Mindfully breathe in slowly, thinking “*San*”
Mindfully breathe out slowly, thinking “*gho*”
2. Do 1. 3-7 times or more to bring *Buddho*, *Dhammo*, *Sangho* together into the mind.
3. Then do only the “*Bud*” – “*dho*” part. Breathe normally. Fix your attention on the *parikamma* words and your breath. Be mindful all the time. Do not let your attention slip away. Remember this: breathe in thinking “*Bud*,” breathe out thinking “*dho*.”

At any moment you do not breathe attentively – for example, you think “*Bud*,” ahead of an in-breath – you lost mindfulness. At any time you do not exhale together with “*dho*” with full attention,

your mindfulness has been disrupted. Therefore, you must fix your mind firmly on breathing with the appropriate *parikamma* word. Repeat this until you become skilled. A skilled meditator can keep his mind on breathing and *parikamma* words for a long time. This is a good method. One knows when one loses mindfulness. It is difficult in the beginning, but will get easier as one practices often. This is a means of strengthening mindfulness and the “knowing” nature of the mind, using breathing as the object of attention. A skilled meditator can omit the *parikamma* words and keep mindful of breathing along. The mind trained in this way will experience more and more tranquility, and mindfulness will get stronger and stronger.

Second Method of *Samādhi* Sitting

In this method the *parikamma* words “*Bud*” – “*dho*” are omitted. Fix your mind on breathing alone. Know when breathing is heavy and watch it until it gets softer. Know when breathing is soft and watch it still until it gets even softer – extremely soft. At this point one has attained *ekaggatārammaṇa*, one-pointedness of mind. The soft breath is a sign of a subtle mind. When the mind reaches this stage, one may experience many manifestations of the calm mind: for example, the body, the limbs, or the head may seem enlarged. If this happens, don’t be frightened. Keep on being mindful of your soft breath – nothing else but the soft breath. In about 5 minutes, the sensation of the enlarged body will disappear. In other cases, some meditators may feel taller, some shorter, some spinning around, some bending towards one side or another. Just be mindful of the breath. Ignore various

expressions of the mind. These arise and will soon go away.

Sometimes your breath may be so soft that it seems to disappear. Those who are afraid of dying will withdraw from *samādhi* at this point. Actually, this is an indication that the mind is fully concentrated. Don't be afraid. Just keep on watching the soft breath – nothing else – until finally you do not breathe at all. Here is the point at which the body does not seem to exist. There remains only the “knowing” nature of the mind. Sometimes a little or a lot of brightness appears all around even without the body. This brightness reveals the true nature of the “knowing” mind. The brightness and lightness of mind at this moment will be the most miraculous experience in one's life. There is nothing in the world to compare. Such tranquility lasts for about 10 minutes, and then breathing resumes. The happiness and lightness of the body and mind that one has experienced have no ordinary things to compare. The tranquility is so great that those who do not have enough wisdom will tend to long for it again. But those who have had enough discernment training before will contemplate it with wisdom and use it as a basis to develop more and more wisdom. They do not attach to the happiness of the tranquil mind in *samādhi*, but use *samādhi* as a tool for more efficient wisdom development.

I would like to suggest one point to readers who have practiced concentration with firm intent, hoping that wisdom will occur in the tranquil mind. If you have never developed discernment into various aspects of the Dhamma, even though your concentration is developed to the absorbed state of *samādhi-samāpatti* or meditative attainment – it merely results in happiness of the body

and mind. As concentration progresses, some may develop supernormal powers (*abhiññā*): for example, the power to know past and future events, the ability to see things at distance with “inner eyes” or to hear with “inner ears” from afar, the power to do extraordinary things or to read peoples’ or even animals’ minds. Having gained such supernormal powers, they may easily claim that they have become arahants.

In the Lord Buddha’s time, there were 30 monks who had practiced concentration until their minds reached full tranquility. They experienced happiness of the body and mind that lasted for several days, until they were certain that they had demolished their defilements, craving, and ignorance, and become arahants. They then wanted to tell the Lord Buddha about it. When the Lord knew about their coming, he sent *Phra Ānanda* to meet them at the entrance to tell them not to see the Lord yet, but to remain in the cemetery first. Getting the Lord’s message, the 30 monks entered the cemetery. At that time, in the cemetery lay a naked body of a beautiful lady who had just died. The dead body looked like a woman asleep. The monks looked at it, first with curiosity, but then they were filled with passion and sexual desire! At this point they realized with embarrassment that they were not yet *arahants*, for their minds still had passion, desire and ignorance. They then contemplated what happened over and over again until they all became enlightened right there in the cemetery.

You can see how tranquility in *samādhi* can deceive you. In the Lord Buddha’s time, there were many cases similar to the 30 monks. If it happened nowadays, the 30 monks would have had no chance of correcting their mistake, and would have been false

arahants all their lives. Today there are no fresh corpses lying in the cemetery for the same thing to happen. So, those who patiently practise concentration waiting for wisdom to occur by itself from the tranquil mind should pause to think a little. Was there any monk in the Lord Buddha's time who became an arahant by practicing concentration alone? The fact is that all *arahants* in the past had first practiced contemplation for the sake of wisdom development.

Nowadays some good teachers are still around. They practice contemplation alternating with concentration. After withdrawing from tranquility, they investigate things down to the Truth of all things: that is, suffering, impermanence, and not-selfness. They do not wait for wisdom to occur by itself. So, you must realize the difference and practise accordingly. Without a coconut seed it is impossible to grow a coconut tree, regardless of how well you have prepared the soil for it. One gets the right tree only from the right seed.

Third Method of *Samādhi* Sitting

In this method, one fixes attention on a part of the body. Choose any part that is easy to visualize. This will be used as the site where mindfulness and the "knowing" nature of the mind will rest. The breath and *parikamma* words play only supporting roles. The focus is on the body part until one sees that part clearly and closely with one's mind. If one is worried about breathing and *parikamma* words, the attention will be distracted, and one cannot see the body part clearly. The chosen part can be a scar. It can be in front or at the back of your body. Or it can be any part

at all that feels right to focus on. At first think about its location, color, and texture. If you cannot see it clearly, that shows that your intent and mindfulness are not firm enough. It is best to choose a small part so that one can focus on only a small area, similar to when one concentrates on a needle hole to thread a needle.

You first imagine the picture of the small area of your body. Do it over and over until your mind can see that part instantly and naturally. Now you can reflect on it in any way you like: for example, seeing it rot, separating it from the bone, etc. This is a good basis for contemplation to develop wisdom. The method of fixing the mind on a body part is to give the mind a place to rest. It is just like a bird that needs a branch to rest on after flying. A body part is taken as a resting place for a straying mind.

Fourth Method of *Samādhi* Sitting

In this method the mind concentrates on mental objects arising in the mind, just as in the fourth method of *caṅkama* walk, only this time it is done in a sitting position, which is better because there is no movement of the body. The mind can concentrate on mental objects much better. Be aware when the mind is happy, suffering, or in a neutral mood. Know when passion and desire arise. Know the rise and fall of feelings. Know which are causes and which are results. Notice that all continue in cycles, from past to present to future. They alternate in being causes and results and continue to roll on endlessly. Some old feelings are mistaken for new ones because of one's unawareness of the on-going cycle. Thus, one is actually driven in the wheel of the world by these

deluding mental objects. Defilements, craving, and ignorance are the causes of the love and hatred that arise and persist in the mind.

Therefore, developing mindfulness by using mental objects as the object of attention is a good practice for promoting discernment into the causality of all events. Knowing how a mental object arises, one can find ways to cut off the stream or the bridge of defilements or craving. If one does not know the causes, one does not know how to prevent the results. To get a sharp knife, one sharpens it. To eliminate heat, one extinguishes the fire. So, to get rid of suffering, one must demolish its causes.

The mind is where the mental object is, as heat is with fire. So, if you want to see your mind, see it through mental objects. Be mindful of an arising mental object. Keep watching it long enough until its cause is revealed. Then stop watching, and analyze it instead. Just as in a battle – when a soldier is able to spot his enemy, he stops searching and quickly fires at him. When a hunter finds game, he shoots it right away. When one sees that something is on fire, one puts it out immediately.

This is a method of discernment in trying to kill defilements and desires causing craving for sensuality. It allows wisdom to destroy the vicious cycle. This practice enables one to discover the “headquarters” of defilements and desires. Wisdom, conviction, and effort can then be pooled to bombard and destroy the headquarters completely. In boxing, a boxer looks for a target to knock the other out. If he loses this time, he will try to win next time. In Dhamma practice you must have firm intent to develop wisdom; otherwise, defilements and desires will be perpetual winners.

To be a strong Dhamma student, you must aim at the destruction of your chief enemy – the defilements. Direct your practice inwardly towards mental objects, and plan to clean all impurities out of your mind.

Glossary of Terms

<i>ācariya</i>	a teacher; regular instructor
<i>anāgāmi</i>	non-returner; one who has attained the third stage of holiness
<i>anattā</i>	adj. no soul; soulless; not-self; not-self
<i>anicca</i>	impermanent; transient
<i>apāyabhūmi</i>	(the four) states of loss and woe; (the four) states of misery; (the four) lower worlds; unhappy existence
<i>arahant</i>	worthy one; perfected one; one who has attained <i>Nibbāna</i>
<i>ārammaṇa</i>	sense-objects; an object of consciousness; preoccupation
<i>ariya-sacca</i>	Noble Truth
<i>arūpa-jhāna</i>	the (four) Absorptions of the Formless Sphere
<i>asurakāya</i>	demons
<i>attā</i>	self; soul; ego; personal entity
<i>bhava</i>	becoming; existence; process of becoming; state of existence
<i>bhava-taṇhā</i>	craving for existence; craving for rebirth
<i>brahma</i>	a divine being of the Form Sphere or of the Formless Sphere

<i>caṅkama</i>	walking up and down as a method of concentration development
<i>citta</i>	thought; mind; a state of consciousness
<i>dhamma</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the Doctrine; the teachings of the Lord Buddha2. the Norm; the Law; nature3. the Truth; Ultimate Reality4. the supermundane, esp. <i>Nibbāna</i>5. righteousness; virtue; morality; good conduct; right behavior6. tradition; practice; principle; rule; duty7. justice; impartiality8. thing; phenomenon9. a cognizable object; mind-object; idea10. mental state; mental factor; mental activities11. condition; cause; causal antecedent
<i>dhātu</i>	an element; natural condition; that which carries its own characteristic mark
<i>dukkha</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. suffering; misery; woe; pain; ill; sorrow; trouble; discomfort; unsatisfactoriness; problematic situation; stress; conflict2. physical or bodily pain

<i>ekaggatā</i>	one-pointedness of mind
<i>jhāna</i>	meditation; absorption; a state of serene contemplation attained by meditation
<i>kāma</i>	sense-desire; desire; sensuality; an object of sensual enjoyment; sensual pleasures
<i>kāma-taṇhā</i>	sensual craving; craving for sensual pleasures
<i>kāmāvacara</i>	belonging to the Sense Sphere
<i>khandha</i>	aggregate; category
<i>kilesa</i>	defilements; impurities; impairments
<i>magga</i>	the Path; the Way; the Noble Path; the Noble Eightfold Path; the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering
<i>micchā-diṭṭhi</i>	wrong view; false view
<i>ñāṇa</i>	knowledge; real knowledge; wisdom; insight
<i>nibbāna</i>	<i>Nirvāṇa</i> ; the extinction of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance; the unconditioned; the final goal; the supreme goal of Buddhism
<i>nirodha</i>	the cessation or extinction of suffering
<i>paññā</i>	wisdom; knowledge; intelligence; insight; discernment; reason
<i>parikamma</i>	recitation; mental repetition

<i>pariyatti</i>	the scriptures; study of the scriptures; the teachings to be studied
<i>peta</i>	the ghost of the departed
<i>rūpa-jhāna</i>	absorption of the Fine-Material Sphere
<i>sikkhāpada</i>	the Threefold Learning
<i>sīla</i>	1. morality; moral conduct 2. a precept; rule of morality; training rule
<i>sacca</i>	the Truth; truth
<i>sakadāgāmī</i>	a once-returner; one who has attained the second stage of the Path and will be reborn on the earth only once before attaining final emancipation
<i>samādhi</i>	concentration; one-pointedness of mind
<i>samatha</i>	calm; tranquility; quietude of heart
<i>sammuti</i>	convention; agreement; supposition; conventional truth
<i>saṃsāra</i>	lit. faring on; the Round of Rebirth; the Round of Existence; the Wheel of Rebirth; the Wheel of Life
<i>samudaya</i>	the cause of suffering; the origin of suffering
<i>saṅgha</i>	Buddhist monks; Noble disciples

<i>saṅkhāra</i>	1. compounded things; component things; conditioned things; the world of phenomena; all things which have been made up by pre-existing causes 2. volitional activities; mental formations; mental predispositions; volitional impulses; impulses and emotions; volition; all the mental factors except feeling and perception having volition as the constant factor
<i>sati</i>	mindfulness; attentiveness; detached watching; awareness
<i>sotāpanna</i>	a stream-enterer; one who has attained the first stage of holiness
<i>taṇhā</i>	craving; desire; thirst
<i>tilakkhaṇa</i>	Three Characteristics; the Three Signs of Being; also called the Common Characteristics
<i>Tipiṭaka</i>	lit. the Three baskets; the Three Divisions of the Buddhist Canon, viz., Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma (generally known as the Pali Canon)
<i>vaṭṭa</i>	the round of rebirth; the of existences; the cycle of rebirth
<i>vibhava-taṇhā</i>	craving for non-existence
<i>vipassanā</i>	insight; contemplation; insight development
<i>yogāvacara</i>	one who practices spiritual exercise; meditate



About the Author

Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño (Thoon Nonruecha) was born May 20, 1935 at Nong Kho village, Bua Kho sub-district, Mueang district, Maha Salakam province, Thailand. He was the fifth of Uddha and Chan Nonruecha's ten children.

At the age of twenty-seven, Thoon Nonruecha left his family to ordain as a monk in the Dhammayut Order. On July 27, 1961, he took ordination at Wat Photisomporn in Udon Thani, with *Ācariya Dhammachedi* (Joom Bandhulo) serving as his preceptor.

In his early years, *Venerable Ācariya Thoon* set out on *dhūtaṅga* to various forest destinations and practiced Dhamma until he profoundly realized and understood according to the truth. He studied under *Venerable Ācariya Khao Analayo* of Wat Tham Klong Pen in Nong Bua Lam Phu province. In his eighth vassa, *Ācariya Thoon* attained arahantship at Wat Aranya Wiwek in Pa Lan village, Doi Luang district of Chiang Rai.

Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño dedicated his life to the proliferation of the Buddha's original teachings, both in Thailand and abroad. *Ācariya Thoon's* teachings were distinctive in that he emphasized the importance of starting Dhamma practice with right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). His style of Dhamma practice was also unique in that it enabled laypeople to effectively practice in everyday settings and achieve a level of enlightenment, as he himself had attained the first level (*sotāpanna*) as a layperson. *Ācariya Thoon* also stressed the importance of developing both a comprehensive understanding

and a true realization of the suffering, harmful consequences, and perils associated with each issue.

In 1975, *Ācariya Thoon* established Wat Pa Ban Koh in Ban Phue district, Udon Thani province. Today, the temple serves as a Buddhist landmark for devotees to honor and venerate the Buddha's teachings and holy relics housed in the majestic pagoda. The temples founded in *Ācariya Thoon's* name in the metropolitan cities San Francisco, New York, Hong Kong, as well as the countless Dhamma retreat centers in America and throughout Thailand that train in *Ācariya Thoon's* style of cultivating wisdom (*paññā*) continue to grow, to this day.

Over the course of his lifetime, *Ācariya Thoon* authored over twenty books, including his own autobiography, and produced various forms of media (mp3, VCD, DVD, etc.) so that Dhamma practitioners from any walk of life could easily access Dhamma. In 1990, the Thai Royal Princess Phra Thep Ratanarachasuda honored *Ācariya Thoon* with the *Saema Dhammacakra* award for his outstanding literary contributions to the Buddhist religion.

On November 11, 2008, *Venerable Ācariya Thoon* passed away at the age of seventy-three due to pneumonia and lung tumor complications. Unique to only the greatest arahants, *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño's* relics formed the day of his cremation ceremony.

