

**ENTERING THE STREAM  
OF DHAMMA**

# Entering the Stream of Dhamma

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## Translators' 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 Right View and Right Thought, the foundation of the Buddha's path, through contemplation of physical and mental processes.

He explains how to use basic wisdom, that we all already have, to contemplate things like the Five Aggregates which make up body and mind, the Four Elements which constitute body, defilements and cravings which cause rebirth and suffering. He also describes the rise of the "ultimate wisdom" at the verge of transcendent mind.

Included is an appendix which suggests a number of beginning techniques in walking and sitting meditation for use in conjunction with wisdom development discussed in the body of the book.

The Translators

Bangkok, Thailand





## Entering the Stream of Dhamma

I would like to begin by discussing the meaning of the title, “Entering the Stream of Dhamma,” so that we understand it in the same way. All followers of the Dhamma want to enter the stream of Dhamma, but we may be talking about different things. In fact, there is only one true meaning. My explanation is for you to consider, review and contemplate with wisdom before you decide whether or not it is right.

The Noble Ones, from the *sotāpanna* stage on, are those who have entered the stream of Dhamma. Although *sotāpannas*, those reaching the first of the four levels of Noble Ones, have not yet been completely purified, they are enlightened enough to see clearly the right path to *Nibbāna*, the Final Goal or the complete eradication of suffering. In other words, they have undoubtedly entered the stream leading to *Nibbāna* with no turning back, and know this for themselves the first moment they step into this path. At that point they become Stream Enterers, and are regarded as *nitaya-puggala*, people who are advancing toward *Nibbāna* and will never return to the stage of ordinary people. Even though they may be reborn in this world, they will experience no more than seven lives before attaining *Nibbāna*.

The Lord Buddha taught clearly and reasonably how to enter the stream of Dhamma. In his time, his followers practiced in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path and attained the Noble Fruitions. If we want to reach the same goal, we must strictly follow the Lord Buddha’s teachings, and we will enter the stream of Dhamma just like the people in his time. What the Noble

Fruitions were like in the past is still the same now and will continue to be so forever.

Those who attain any level of the Noble Fruitions will know for themselves without any doubt. There will be no need for them to ask anyone. In the Lord Buddha's time, those who had entered the stream of Dhamma did not need to ask the Lord Buddha about what stage or what level they had attained, nor could they describe what they knew to the Lord Buddha, nor become excited about any praise or recognition of their attainments. This is what "entering the stream of Dhamma" means. Stream enterers know for themselves their own Dhamma level and are not delighted by words of praise. Nor are they depressed by any criticism.

At present, stream enterers know, see and comprehend Dhamma just like those in the Lord Buddha's time, regardless of race, language, sex, age or status. The path toward each Dhamma level remains unchanged with time. The teaching of the Lord Buddha has been selected and taught to worldly beings openly and perfectly. It is the only teaching in the world that teaches people to reach the Final Goal of *Nibbāna* or the complete eradication of suffering. It is the teaching that is proven by practice. The Noble Fruitions do not change according to each person's understanding, nor have they ever become obsolete. Anyone saying that the Noble Fruitions do not exist nowadays is blind. Do not let the blind be your teacher. The Noble Fruitions are still possible, but only very few can reach them because the right path towards such a stage is extremely precise. Those whose views deviate from this path lose their chance to reach the Final Goal. Therefore, wrong views distract one from the Noble Fruitions, and prevent one from entering the stream of Dhamma in this life.

A teacher with wrong views can lead tens or hundreds of thousands of followers down the wrong path. So, wrong views are dangerous for the Noble Fruitions. Nowadays wrong views are difficult to correct since there is no Lord Buddha to judge for us which is right or wrong. Thus followers of the Dhamma must decide for themselves. Wrong information results in wrong practice. On the other hand, right information will direct a person to the stream of *Nibbāna* at the rate that depends on that person's dedication to the practice. Which teacher is right or wrong is for you to consider with your own discernment and powers of reason. This is not beyond your ability since right and wrong are not so hidden and mysterious.

## Mental Calm Suppresses Defilements Temporarily

Dhamma students must contemplate things all around with wisdom. They must discern the Lord Buddha's teachings reasonably until understanding them fully. For example, they must understand the relationship between the practice of concentration development (*samatha-kammaṭṭhāna*) and that of wisdom development (*vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna*). They should study the stories of the Buddhists in the Lord Buddha's time who practiced and reached the Noble Fruitions. The two practices support each other, and no one can obtain the Noble Fruitions by practicing only one or the other.

There is evidence showing how good pre-Buddhist hermits were at the practice of concentration. They were skillful in the absorbed states of the Fine-Material Sphere (*rūpa-jhāna*) or that of the Formless Sphere (*arūpa-jhāna*) They could enter and leave those states skillfully, and maintain those calm states as long as they wished. Nevertheless there were no hermits reported to have gained the wisdom enabling them to know and see the Truth. No hermits can reach the Final Goal, *Nibbāna*, in this way. At best, they can gain absorbed state of mental calm or they may gain such extraordinary powers as preternatural sight and hearing, mind-reading or other superhuman powers. But no hermits have ever become Noble Ones by tranquility meditation alone.

The Lord Buddha himself skillfully practiced tranquility meditation under two hermit teachers before his enlightenment, but after

contemplating it reasonably, he knew that tranquility meditation alone was not what he was looking for. This is what happens when a person already has some basic wisdom, which helps him realize that tranquility meditation alone is not the means to get rid of defilements, craving and ignorance. This is why no hermits could free themselves from defilements, craving, passions, delusions and ignorance. Mental calm during meditation, regardless of how great the calm, is merely a temporary means of suppressing defilements and craving. Whenever the mind is agitated, then greed, hatred, delusion, passion and craving return in full strength.

Nowadays when a person says that he is practicing Dhamma, is a student of the Lord Buddha or is following the footsteps of the Lord, in fact he may simply be practicing tranquility meditation like a hermit. How can he develop wisdom if he is practicing only mental calm? Wisdom can be developed only from a process of *yonisomanasikāra*, a wise and comprehensive analytical reflection of things. If you are still confused about the two practices – tranquility meditation and wisdom development – your views and understanding are not aligned with the Truth. Wrong views in the beginning lead to wrong practice and consequently wrong results. Therefore misinterpretation of the Truth can conceal the path toward the Noble Fruitions, which are the goal of the practice.

## Everyone Has Some Basic Wisdom

You may wonder how wisdom can develop if the mind is not in the calm state of concentration (*samādhi*). The answer is that there is indeed a wisdom that arises in the calm mind, termed *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, which results from Dhamma practice. This is the type of wisdom to which every follower of the Dhamma aspires, but it is very difficult for such wisdom to develop. This is the ultimate wisdom that, once developed, is powerful enough to cut off the stream of the world. It is the wisdom that will eradicate all doubts and uncertainties in the mind, and uproot all kinds of attachment (*upādāna*) to one's self. It is the wisdom that arises at the verge of enlightenment. Anyone who gains this type of wisdom is about to reach a certain stage of Noble Fruitions and will become a Noble One, at least at the *sotāpanna* level, in only a few moments.

This is what is meant by wisdom arising in a calm mind. It is beyond an ordinary person's imagination because it is the highest and most profound wisdom – wisdom that can turn an ordinary person into a Noble One. It is the wisdom of a wise and learned person who comprehends clearly the principles of the Truth, the principles of cause and effect. It is a wisdom beyond the imaginings of an ordinary person, and cannot be forced into being. If you do not practice in line with the principles of Right View, there is no way that this sort of wisdom will arise within you.

If you do not understand how to practice Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) so as to develop the calm mind that supports the occurrence of *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, how can this ultimate wisdom

arise within you? You must be clear about concentration practice and be able to distinguish Right Concentration from wrong or deluded concentration. If your practice falls into the wrong or deluded category, the ultimate wisdom will never arise within you.

A Dhamma student at the “kindergarten” level is stumbling along his way, not knowing what is right or wrong; what is Right View or Wrong View. At this stage, how can one expect the ultimate wisdom to occur? Therefore in the course of practice, a Dhamma student must pay attention to the basics and understand the true meaning of tranquility (*samatha*) and wisdom (*vipassanā*) development.

Which should be practiced first, *samatha* or *vipassanā*? The answer is, either can come first, because each supports the other. You must know the state of your own mind. When your mind does not want to think, then practice concentration. After the mind experiences enough calm, then switch to contemplation. Anytime your mind cannot concentrate no matter how hard you try to fix it on the breath or mental repetitions, then it is time for you to contemplate.

What to contemplate depends on what your mind is interested in at that moment. Contemplate it until you see clearly into its true nature, that is, the Three Characteristics of all things, namely impermanence, suffering and not-selfness. Anything that appears in your mind can be analyzed down to its true nature. When the mind gets tired of contemplation, then let it rest by switching to concentration practice. You can practice *samatha* and *vipassanā* in any posture of the body.

In practicing Dhamma, you must take time to lay a good foundation. You already have some basic wisdom, but you have been using it in the worldly sense with no boundaries and no final aims. This is the kind of wisdom that drifts endlessly along the stream of the world. Those who start to realize that their thoughts have been drifting from one thing to another without end are the ones who are beginning to have some wisdom in Dhamma. So we start with the worldly wisdom we all have, regardless of nationality, language or education. This kind of wisdom needs no teacher. Those who are highly educated can devise things, such as spacecraft to travel to the moon, etc., because of this worldly wisdom, that can be used to create or destroy the world. Everyone has it, to a greater or lesser extent, and one needs not practice concentration to gain it.



## Base Your Basic Wisdom on Right View

Worldly wisdom, however, is the first foundation of Dhamma practice. We need it to understand the Dhamma while listening to sermons or studying basic Dhamma. Basic understanding of Dhamma requires this kind of worldly wisdom. Dhamma practices, such as generosity, observing the moral precepts (the Five-, Eight-, Ten-, or 227-Precepts), cannot be achieved without a basic level of worldly wisdom to start with. Your precepts cannot be pure if you do not have the wisdom to understand them. Concentration practice also requires wisdom to know about the different levels of concentration: momentary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*), proximate concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), full concentration (*appanā-samādhi*), the absorptions of the Fine-Material Sphere (*rūpa-jhāna*) and the Formless Sphere (*arūpa-jhāna*). One must use wisdom to distinguish Right Concentration from wrong or deluded concentration to prevent wrong concentration from arising. One needs wisdom to study and understand things like the Five Hindrances – sensual desire, ill will, drowsiness, anxiety and ignorance – in order to find means to rid them from the mind.

In short, every step in Dhamma practice requires wisdom. Here “wisdom” implies all-around intelligence in Dhamma practice. Those who practice Dhamma must be alert and analyze way of their practice with wisdom at all times. They must be ready to solve any problem arising as they practice, and overcome any obstacle to their mental development. This is what it means to be intelligent in the practice of the Dhamma.

## Conviction Requires Wisdom

Conviction or faith in a person or a statement must come after careful consideration with wisdom. Do not believe in anything blindly, As you read a book, you must think critically to see if there is adequate reason to believe what you read, and then choose only the reasonable parts to follow. Being selective is the process of wisdom, in which “true” is distinguished from “false”. You must select books that contain reasonable principles. This is termed “*saddhā-ñāṇa-sampayutta*,” meaning “conviction based on contemplation”. This use of wisdom by means of critical or analytical reflection about causes and effects in all events will help you gain right insight and avoid misunderstanding and hesitance in Dhamma practice.

In the Lord Buddha’s time, those who attained the noble stages – as Stream-Enterers (*sotāpanna*), Once-Returners (*sakadāgāmī*), Non-Returners (*anāgāmī*) or the Holy Ones (*arahanta*) – all made use of worldly wisdom in the way I have described it here. Without it they could not have understood the Lord Buddha’s teachings in the first stage of their practice. With this wisdom, they contemplated the Lord’s teachings, such as, the Four Elements (*dhātu*), the Five Aggregates (*khandha*) and the Thirty-Two parts of the body, the foulness of the body, etc., until they understood the true nature of these things. By doing this over and over again, they taught their minds to develop Right View in accordance with the Truth and as a result became wiser. Eventually they attained the Noble Stage.

This is how all the Noble Ones in the Lord Buddha's time developed their minds. Without some basic wisdom to begin with, they could never have set their feet on the right track of practice. If anyone would like to argue about this, please inform me about one example of a Noble One who did not start with any basic wisdom in his or her practice.

In mental development, if you use wisdom to plan your practice along the Noble Path towards the Noble Fruitions, your practices will progress without obstacles, worries or doubts. It will be directed straight to the Final Goal just like a driver who has studied the map accurately before setting out on his journey. He can drive at full speed without fear of getting lost. Otherwise, he may drive in circles or back and forth, or have to waste his time by stepping to ask people along the way. If he asks people who also do not know the way, he may end up driving around and around and going nowhere. But if he happens to ask the right person who does know the way and is willing to direct him, it is simply a stroke of good luck. If the right person tells him the way, but he still does not believe him, then it is very unfortunate.

Dhamma practice requires wisdom to contemplate the path carefully to avoid errors: If you set your direction straight, the practice will proceed smoothly, and you can exert full effort on it. Even though defilements and temptations may come in your way, you are already aware of them and can fight them off with perseverance. Your strong determination can defeat them. If you can get past them, you are said to have given your life to `Dhamma.

## The Whisperings of Temptation

There is one trick of temptation that has successfully fooled many people in the past. When other tricks have failed, temptation resorts to one last trick that often works. It whispers to the mind, “You haven’t accumulated sufficient merit in past lives to reach the Final Goal in this lifetime regardless of how hard you try. You must therefore accumulate more merit until it reaches full perfection. Only those who have fully perfected themselves can proceed to the final stage. So you should practice at your own capacity”. For lay people, temptation adds another message, that is, family responsibility: “Who will take care of the children? Who will help them find work? Who will help them with their weddings? How can you practise Dhamma while there is so much housework and office work to do?”

These tricks are 99.9% effective, and those who try to practice Dhamma tend to surrender to them. They may end up being gratified with doing good deeds to accumulate merit and wait for the right time to come someday in the distant future. They are unknowingly losing the game, and have lost like this in many lifetimes before, falling for these same old tricks.

Doubt and uncertainty are obstacles to one’s practice. For example, if one is doubtful of whether the Noble Fruitions are still possible nowadays, or whether one has enough spiritual perfection for them, one will not be brave enough to put all one’s effort on practice. One will instead tend to practice in fits and starts. Therefore doubt, hesitation and lack of confidence obstruct practice, and the Noble Fruitions as well. Even though a person

may regard himself as a Dhamma student, he may in fact be experimenting with the Dhamma with uncertainty and with no self-confidence. In this way, it is impossible for him to obtain the fruits of practice, because the Truth can occur only to those who practice truly.

Thus uncertainty delays the success of practice. The Dhamma student may become indecisive in observing the precepts. He may constantly question his own morality in word or deed. This is what happens to a person who observes the precepts without wisdom. When it comes to concentration, he does it without confidence and must always check with others about what happens to his mind during the practice. In some cases, he may interpret what happens to him as the achievement of such and such a level of knowledge or insight, or even as the attainment of a noble stage. This is what happens when a person practices concentration without wisdom or any understanding of the nature of the mind.

Such confusion is caused by wrong information about concentration practice. A general misunderstanding is that wisdom arises automatically as the mind concentrates. When concentration becomes wrong or deluded, who or what can help if one does not have one's own wisdom to help oneself out? "One must be one's own mainstay" means, in this case, to rely on one's own wisdom. Other people's wisdom is merely a guideline. It is like a mother lending her helping hand to assist her child in walking. She may give some help, but it is the child who must try to get on his own two feet.

Similarly, wisdom is something each person must develop for him or herself. No one can expect to appropriate the wisdom of others. Whatever we remember from others we must contemplate with reason before it can become our own wisdom. Therefore we must be wise thinkers who investigate and analyze things all the time. In this way we are training ourselves to be our own mainstay in Dhamma practice.

## Rational Discernment

A Dhamma student must train himself to discern things wisely and intelligibly in order to distinguish right from wrong in his mind. He needs right tactics to solve his mind's problems. As a problem arises, he must analyze it until he sees it clearly. Most importantly he must review the problem truthfully until the true cause is unveiled. If he wants to lift his mind from low worldly emotions, he must get his mind to see the truth of the matter, discerning his past mental errors and the sufferings they caused when his mind was not under control. Those mistakes can teach him not to let the same thing happen again. When he is mindful all the time, he becomes skillful in rational discernment and doing so reminds himself not to drift along with the stream of low worldly emotions as previously. He realizes the sources of suffering as he discerns the danger and sorrow that he derived from lustful feeling and sensual desire.

We like to let the mind drift along past memories without any resistance. We have been born on this Earth and still want to be reborn again, overlooking the sufferings that occur in the repeated cycling of life. The mind is so used to crave for and engage in sensual pleasures that it wants to go on experiencing such sensations again and again, and the results are the same old story of pain and suffering. Therefore it is essential that we understand the repeated cycling of life. Take this life as an example for evidence of the truth and force your mind to confess. Although defilement and craving can always come up with excuses for the mind to distort the truth, they will ultimately have to submit to the truth as revealed by wisdom. Birth, aging, illness and death

are sufferings. The Four Elements and the Five Aggregates of self (namely, form, sensation, perception or memory, volitional activities or compounded thoughts and consciousness) are sufferings. Loss of loved ones or belongings is suffering. All these are uncertain and are not self. This is the truth of life that we have to contemplate carefully with wisdom, and sooner or later the mind will have to accept it.



## Understand the Lives of the Noble Ones

As a Dhamma student, you must study the practices of the Noble Ones to know how they attained the noble level, and then follow their ways. While they practiced, they focused on both concentration and wisdom development. Nowadays people practice concentration alright, but most do not understand the development of wisdom. Some still wait for wisdom to occur by itself in the calm mind. Those who think so will die before they ever gain any wisdom. This is what happens when one is misinformed about the practice.

To my knowledge, in the Lord Buddha's time, his followers practiced concentration (*samatha*) together with wisdom (*vipassanā*) in an alternating fashion. Some tended to practice *samatha* more than *vipassanā*, others vice versa, depending on each individual's personal background or traits. By practicing the two together, many became Noble Ones, Thus the Lord Buddha set these two practices with many successful examples as the foundation for all Buddhists at all times.

So after your concentration exercise, contemplate to develop wisdom. When the mind tires of contemplation, return to concentration. These two practices must be shifted back and forth and can be done in any of the four postures (standing, walking, sitting and lying down). This is the original way of Dhamma practice. You can start with either concentration or wisdom development, just like walking, in which you can start with the right or the left foot.

It does not matter with which foot you start to walk. As long as both feet coordinate their steps, they are taking you to where you want to go. In Dhamma practice, it does not matter which practice you start with as long as defilements, craving and ignorance are eliminated from your mind.

There are several methods of concentration development, but they all have the same objective, that is, to focus the mind until it attains calm. Wisdom development is more complex. Here I will suggest some techniques as an introduction for you to pursue in your own wisdom development.

## To Practise Vipassana Is to Use Wisdom

To practice *vipassanā* is to use wisdom to contemplate the principles of the truth. Anything that helps reveal the Truth must be used as one contemplates, investigates, discerns and analyzes things to get to their true nature. One uses wisdom to teach one's mind to know and see the truth and to realize the misunderstandings within itself due to defilements and craving. The procedure is to delve into defilements' nature until the mind catches sight of their tricks and harmful effects, and understands the sufferings they cause. Whichever channel – sight, sound or whatever – that defilements use to attack the mind, by wisdom one knows beforehand its vicious consequences.

Therefore wisdom must be quick enough to spot a rising defilement or craving and must act accordingly. When defilement and craving work in one direction, wisdom must work in the opposite direction. Do not let defilement remain in your mind long enough to ferment and become toxic. Wisdom must thus be the “watchman” responsible for preventing defilement or craving from misleading the mind. Wisdom must expose the evils of defilement and craving completely, so that the mind will be skillful in seeing their harm.

Wisdom is thus the main agent in solving the problems of the mind. Whenever defilements provoke the mind, wisdom calms it down. Defilement and craving have done so much harm to the mind, so why don't you realize this and find the way out? The mind has suffered from defilements for innumerable lives, so why don't you wake up to the fact and fight them back?

The Lord Buddha clearly paved the way to fight back in this way, and many of his followers became Noble Ones by following it. The Lord Buddha devised a variety of teaching methods to suit differing personalities, just as a variety of medicines are used to cure different diseases. You must use the right medicine to cure your particular disease. Other medicines, regardless of how expensive they may be, are useless and unsuitable for your illness. All the Lord Buddha's teachings are of high quality for eliminating defilements, cravings and ignorance, but you need to be wise to select the technique that is right for you. You must know which kind of defilement must be treated with which technique. In this way your practice will make quick progress.

## Tackle the Problem at the Right Spot

Any Dhamma, regardless of how well you have studied and understand it, is useless if it is not the right one to counteract defilements or cravings as they arise. Using the wrong Dhamma for a particular defilement or craving, is just like using the wrong medicine for a disease. You may ask then if it is right to theorize about Dhamma. The answer is yes, but when the time comes to put it to use you need the right Dhamma, not just any Dhamma, to solve your problems. If defilements and cravings use a particular trick to destroy your mind, but you are using the wrong Dhamma to counteract that trick, there is no way it can possibly solve your problem. You may end up complaining that Dhamma practice is useless. This is like an inexperienced person looking at a blurred X-ray film. He cannot decide where the afflicted area is, and so cannot cure the illness at its cause, either with surgery or medication. All he can do is to treat the patient with general tonics while the illness persists.

Those who practice Dhamma without wisdom cannot see clearly how defilement and craving attack their minds. Most meditators are more expert in theory than they are in practice. When they meet with actual cravings and defilements in their practice, they cannot counteract them at all, for their wisdom is not sharp enough to solve their problems. They are indecisive about how to attack their problems, and so end up practicing in fits and starts, like clumsy fools for defilements and cravings to laugh at.

When one is practising Dhamma, one must use mindfulness and wisdom all the time and be one jump ahead of defilement and

craving. No matter how subtle defilement and craving are, wisdom can obstruct them. Therefore wisdom is the main tool of the Dhamma student. Mindfulness (*sati*), clear consciousness (*sampajañña*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are principles that anyone can study in theory, but whether they really exist in the mind in practice is something each of us should observe in his or her own mind. As stated in the Pali:

*“Natthi paññā samā ābhā”*

Translation: There is no light as bright as wisdom.

We know the basic principles of the practice, and we all have some ordinary wisdom to start with. We must use this wisdom to build up this kind of “bright” wisdom which occurs only to a very few people. Anyone gaining this wisdom or brightness knows the Truth immediately, and all doubt is banished from the mind, which sees and knows things clearly. Once mindfulness, clear consciousness and wisdom come to anyone, there is no more error, and practice is no longer guesswork.

This is like having one’s own flashlight wherever one goes. One can see clearly which side roads lead to the left, which ones lead to the right, which roads should be followed, which ones should not, and what all the signs have to say. When this is the case, how can one lose one’s way? In the same way, when our minds have mindfulness, wisdom and clear comprehension, the practice will have to go smoothly, with no obstacles to prevent us from reaching our desired goal.

## Wisdom Reveals the Truth

The brightness of wisdom leads to the discovery of the stream of Dhamma. When the mind is illuminated with the brightness of wisdom, any contemplation reveals the truth. We will know and see things clearly as they really are – that the things we have been attached to as being our own are actually not so. They are impermanent – subject to change in line with their own nature. Any possessions we once thought to be ours are in fact merely things to rely on temporarily. When the time comes, they as well as we must perish according to the law of impermanence.

There are clear examples for us to consider. When we attend funerals, we must always consider the truth of suffering, impermanence and not-selfness. The Lord Buddha said that we must inevitably depart from our loved ones. We must all depart from one another and experience suffering as a result no matter what our beliefs are, for this is the true nature of existence. Those who know and see the truth understand that all worldly things begin and end. But those who are deluded latch on worldly things which are transient.

Our minds have been lost in this world for a long time. To get them back on the right track we must consider what causes their delusion. For example, greed and hatred reside in the mind and are expressed only when external things provoke the mind into exposing them. Since true greed and hatred are internal, one must teach the mind to see the danger and suffering that they result in. When the mind knows and sees the truth, the mind itself will let go of its own greed and hatred.

The wisdom required to teach the deluded mind must be sharp enough to convince the mind of the causes of suffering until it no longer finds greed and hatred acceptable. The mind comes to perceive greed and hatred as toxins, as poisonous animals or as fire which can harm it. When we know that something is so dangerous, who would ever want to go near it? The point is therefore to let the mind know and see the danger of greed and hatred; and when it does, it will be willing to expel them itself. (This is just a brief explanation for you to take as a guide for using your wisdom to cope with your own greed, hatred and delusion as they arise in response to events).



## **Wisdom Must Always Watch Over the Mind**

If wisdom is always watching over the mind, mental development proceeds smoothly. Whatever we contemplate – within or without, near or far, coarse or fine, liked or disliked – we can know and see it clearly and correctly, discovering its true nature skillfully and with no room for doubt. In analyzing the body into its elements – solidity, fluidity, warmth and motion – so as to see its basically foul nature, we have to start out with our imagination and then use that imagination in line with the true nature of what those elements actually are. Or suppose we see the foul nature of another person’s body: we must realize that the same foulness applies to our own body by using our imagination to see that same foulness within us, and then taking the body apart in our imagination and spreading the parts out for a look – hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones and so forth. What do they look like? What is their color, texture and smell? Get so that you can see this clearly in your imagination. As we do this often, we gain skill to the point that whenever we think about any part of the body, that part will appear clearly in the mind. Whether we are standing, walking, sitting or lying down, if we want to see any part, it will appear clearly in the mind – even more clearly than seeing it with the eyes.

When we are skillful in “seeing” ourselves in the mind, we can also do the same thing for other people’s bodies. Even though this is only an early stage of seeing loathsomeness, we can readily sense how much it reduces sensual desire in the mind.

To contemplate the not-selfness of the body, start with “the self” and break what you think of as “self” down into smaller parts. Ask yourself about each part – hair, nails, teeth, skin, etc. – for example, whether the grey or black hair on your head is really yours. Is it or isn’t it merely a component of your body that sooner or later will be burned in a cremation until the presumption of “hair” is gone? Do the same thing for other parts of the body. Then convince your mind as to the disguise of the “self” that is composed of four elements assembled only as long as the mind resides in it. When the mind leaves the body, it disintegrates into its original elements. The parts cease to exist and there is no more self, neither ours, nor theirs. As soon as breath expires, the body can no longer feel, and that is the end of “self”. It becomes empty in accordance with the law of not-selfness. (This is merely a brief description of the method of contemplation. From here on you can use your wisdom to elaborate.)

To contemplate the four modes of the mind: *vedanā* (feelings, sensation), *saññā* (memory, perception), *saṅkhāra* (compounded thought, volitional activities) and *viññāṇa* (consciousness, knowing), one must study each of them thoroughly. The first mode, *vedanā*, is mostly misunderstood as just bodily pain, and that the way to get beyond pain is to produce concentration so as to feel refreshed again. The happiness in concentration is something that one is longing for without realizing that it too is *vedanā* – *sukha-vedanā* (happy or pleasant feeling). Pleasure is uncertain and will soon decline and turn to suffering again. Those who understand this will not latch onto either pleasure or pain.

*Vedanā* is the mode of the mind and is of three kinds: pleasant,

painful or neutral. At any one moment, the mind is experiencing one of these *vedanā*. The suffering which comes from people's words or deeds, from loss of property or status, or from sensual dissatisfaction are unwanted *vedanā* (termed "*aniṭṭhārammaṇa*," meaning unpleasant or disagreeable emotion). But people seek and are attached to another kind of *vedanā*, that is, pleasure, which is very dangerous, as it most easily obstruct the path to the Noble Fruitions.

## **Don't Be Entrapped in Pleasure**

Dhamma students tend to get entrapped in pleasure because they always long for it. They seek anything that gives pleasure even though sometimes they have to suffer for it. Every human being wants pleasure, but what then is pleasure? If I were to describe it in detail, it will fill a very large book. Briefly, a child's pleasure is one thing; a youth's is another. A family's pleasure and that of an old man are not the same. Different as its forms may seem, everyone wants it, and no one wants suffering. Pleasure is the ease and comfort one obtains from the following sources: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations and mental objects.

This ease and comfort is a common pitfall for trapping Dhamma students. We must contemplate it carefully with wisdom. The pleasure we seek is an illusion. It is impermanent and unstable. It cannot remain the same. Instead, it always turns into suffering, and we must put a lot of effort into it to make it last a little longer. Once we are careless, it turns into suffering and we are left struggling to regain it. This happens over and over again in an endless cycle of pleasure and pain.

## The World Conceals the Dhamma

We have been reborn over and over again on this Earth for a very long time. In our past lives we experienced pleasure and pain just as we do in this lifetime. In future lives, we will repeat ourselves again in the same fashion. Why don't we contemplate this fact with wisdom? How much suffering has sensual pleasure brought us? We are blindly fooled by sensual pleasure. We seek and fight for worldly pleasure restlessly and endlessly. The mind that longs for sensual pleasure is like an ocean that is never too full to receive more water. Longing for sensual pleasure is the characteristic of worldly beings. Animals and human beings alike get lost in the world because of this, and thus the teachings of the Lord Buddha are tools for helping us to find the way out of this world.

The world conceals the truth. So we have to use wisdom to fight delusion in the mind in order to unveil the stream of Dhamma. When the mind gets lost in this world, wisdom helps enlighten it. We must use wisdom to contemplate what deludes the mind, until there is nothing in the mind to cause fresh delusion. As stated in the Pali:

*“Natthi loke raho nāma”*

meaning, “There is nothing hidden or secret in the world,” because wisdom has revealed it all. We see clearly that the truth of the world is simply this: All worldly states are impermanent. Everyone in the world must endure suffering. There is nothing in the world that is ours. Worldly treasures are not permanently ours, but we can merely use them temporarily and then leave

them in the world when we go. If the mind is deluded with and attached to worldly pleasant sensation, it is sure to suffer. Therefore we must use wisdom to contemplate and try to uproot from the mind not only suffering but also attachment to pleasure. In this way we will discover the stream of Dhamma.

## Wise Use of Memory

*Saññā*, memory or perception, is the second mode of the mind. It is also impermanent and not-self. Although memory is useful for destroying defilements and cravings, one must learn how to use it wisely. One must be selective about what to remember and what not to. One should not pay attention to anything that will increase defilement and craving and can therefore harm the mind – for example, pictures of persons of opposite sex, sensual objects, such that tempt the mind into losing hold of itself and of the Dhamma.

Wise people will pay attention to the ageing, illness, suffering and death of living beings, for the sake of developing Dhamma in their minds. They will remember those mental images well and recall them every time they open or close their eyes, in whatever position they are, in order to keep themselves constantly reminded of these truths. They will always recall these memories and contemplate them with wisdom until their minds accept that someday they too will suffer the same conditions. No matter how attractive or ugly, rich or poor we are, all of us born on this Earth will have to face these things. This is how one can make use of memory for Dhamma practice.

Before the Prince Siddhattha became a monk, he had seen old people, sick people and dead ones. He fixed those pictures firmly in his memory and contemplated, thinking of himself as being subject to the same conditions until his mind was overwhelmed and saw the danger and harm of being born. He then ran away from his father's palace to seek out the Truth until he became the

Buddha, whose teachings have been passed on to us until now. Therefore for a wise man, memory can function as a means of discovering the stream of Dhamma.



## The Mind Burns Itself With Its Thoughts

*Saṅkhāra*, compounded thoughts or volitional activities, the next mode of the mind, is the concoction and association of thoughts which excite the mind, causing us to become restless in line with our own imaginings. The mind relates past, present and future events through assumptions and memories in whatever way it likes. For example, the mind may make up stories about the person we love, imagining things that it likes as if they really happened. In so doing, the mind gets carried away in the thoughts it concocts. *Saṅkhāra* has its way of adding titillations to the imagination, and the mind becomes besetted and infatuated by these things. Day-dreaming and imagination fool the mind, make deep impressions on it, and create feelings of pleasure and pain.

The work of *saṅkhāra* is supported and propelled by defilements and craving. The deluded and ignorant mind does not realize that it is actually burning itself, and so becomes immersed in the pleasure created by *saṅkhāra*. After its day-dreaming, the mind wants to taste the reality of the things it dreams about. Such a deluded and ignorant mind is so blind that it has no mindfulness or wisdom lurking inside it at all. When this is the case, what will it lead to? Think about this and try to protect yourself from it.

When *saṅkhāra* is at work, it works for the future as well as the present. It works especially well for the future, because the mind always longs for more sensual pleasure. When it is not content with the present, it looks forward to future pleasure. If at present one has only a small house, one dreams about a bigger house in the future. If one is poor in the present, one may become a

millionaire in the future. If at present one's spouse is not good enough, one wishes for a better one in the future. Thoughts about the future enable *saṅkhāra* to work full steam ahead by imagining a future perfect in terms of the greatest wealth, status, popularity and sensual pleasures, in the world. But these plans are nothing but imaginings in which the mind gets lost and loses touch with reality. This is because the mind lacks wisdom. Instead, it is fooled and ravaged by defilements and *saṅkhāra*.

Therefore we must use wisdom for contemplation and find ways to stop our minds from drifting along the worldly stream of defilements, cravings and *saṅkhāra*. We must contemplate often to be aware of the suffering and the harm *saṅkhāra* can bring us, and so be alert to them.

## Perceiving the Parasites in the Minds

*Viññāṇa*, the last mode of the mind, is consciousness or awareness which covers everything in the physical and mental aggregates. As long as one is alive, *viññāṇa* spreads throughout the body and all modes of the mind, namely, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and even *viññāṇa* itself. *Viññāṇa* is the radiance which comes from the mind, like the heat which comes from fire. What *viññāṇa* perceives depends on what we receive through the sensory organs—the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body – and the mind. The Five Aggregates—body, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* – are controlled by *viññāṇa*. These aggregates themselves are not and latch onto them as “me” and “mine.” They have done this for a very long time, and hold firmly to their sense of possession. Even the primal mind has come under the sway of defilement, craving and ignorance to the extent that it has taken on all of their traits – in line with the saying, “Hang around with vultures and you become a vulture, hang around with crows and you become a crow.” The primal mind has associated with defilements for so long that it has become one with them. To separate these things out requires wisdom and discernment. If we make our approach at the right point, the separation becomes easy, if we don’t, it remains hard.

## **Approaching the Problem at the Right Point Makes It Easy to Solve**

The method of solving difficulties is to separate defilements from the mind; the Lord Buddha already said this very clearly. During his time, many of his followers followed his teachings and easily succeeded in tackling their problems. So all the teachings are there. It is up to us to use them rightly. If you tackle the problem correctly, your practice will proceed quickly. If not, you will continue cycling in this world. You all know that the Lord Buddha discovered the ultimate Truth—the Four Noble Truths – and taught that truth to his followers, enabling many of them to become enlightened. Nowadays you learn about the Four Noble Truths just like them, but why are you unable to solve the problems in your mind? Are you serious about your practice? Is it because you are afraid to desert friends and family for fear of how they will suffer without you? Or, are you afraid to abandon the pleasures of this world? What really are you worried about? You see clearly that people end up in the graveyards or crematoria. You only wait for your turn, and that is all there is to it. Why don't you think about this? You already have some wisdom. Why don't you use it now? Why are you so clever in thinking about other things that are actually burning your heart? In Dhamma practice, where is your wisdom? Why do you often think that you do not have it? How can you be pulled to the right track? If someone is pulling you out of a pitfall with a rope, his hands are tired and hurt, and he is losing hope because you resist the pull.

The Four Noble Truths are the important approach in the practice and they exist in everyone of us, but your wisdom has not yet

seen through to their profundity. Your knowledge of them is merely knowledge from books and not yet true realization from within your own mind. Mere theoretical knowledge like this is unable to rid the mind of defilements, cravings and ignorance.

In theory, the Four Noble Truths are grouped in pairs; the first two Noble Truths – suffering (*dukkha*) and the cause of suffering (*samudaya*) – are one group, and the second two – the extinction of suffering (*nirodha*) and the Noble Eightfold Path (*maggā*) to the extinction of suffering are the other. This grouping facilitates the study. But in practice the last Noble Truth – the Noble Eightfold Path – is the principle which covers the whole practice, as in a Thai saying, “The footprint of an elephant covers all other footprints”. This is the main path. If one starts on the right track or set one’s compass straight, the journey is going to head in the right direction. For convenience in studying, the Noble Eightfold Path is condensed into three categories; moral precepts (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). Each of these Dhammas ranges from elementary to middle and high levels. It is up to you whether you want to reach a high level of Dhamma or are just content to remain at an elementary stage. If you want the latter, there is no need to hurry because you are not aiming at the Final Goal. You are satisfied just to accumulate merit and there is no need to eradicate defilements, cravings and ignorance from the mind.

## The Path Begins With Wisdom

Those who want to attain in this life the final result of the Noble Eightfold Path, the Noble Fruitions, must practise according to the Noble Eightfold Path as it was originally stated. The Lord Buddha taught it to his followers, and many obtained the Noble Fruitions. He began with wisdom as the foundation. Those who listened to his Dhamma already had some wisdom and could use it to understand him. If they had had no wisdom at all, how could they have understood the reason behind each of his teachings? This first step is called “Right View.” When one has it, the subsequent contemplation is right as well. This is why the Lord Buddha put Right View as the first item, which is immediately followed by Right Thought. Both are the basis of wisdom, and they are essential for future practice.

The practice of the precepts – the Five-, Eight-, Ten- or 227-precepts – requires wisdom. Those who are observing the precepts must be wise and mindful enough in order to control their thoughts, words and deeds in the right way. They must know how to behave without violating the precepts. If they happen to break a precept, they must be alert enough to realize it and quickly return to the right track. In short, the purity of the precepts depends on wisdom.

To practise concentration you must use wisdom to understand the pros and cons of concentration to prevent yourself from plunging into the wrong type. Wrong or deluded concentration needs wisdom to correct it and to convert it to Right Concentration. After the mind withdraws from calmness in meditation, one need not think about what level of meditation one has attained, for

that would be a waste of time. Instead, one should continue using wisdom to contemplate according to the principles of Truth.

Wisdom in Right View and Right Thought is used to contemplate one's own suffering as well as the suffering of others. This is to impress upon the mind the existence of suffering in all things. When suffering occurs, one usually looks for ways to reduce it, without knowing that they actually bring even more suffering in their wake. Everyone born on this Earth is subject to suffering, and therefore seeks for things to alleviate the sufferings of his body and mind in the day-to-day struggle for existence. Common sufferings are troubles at work, disappointments about things that are not going in the way we want them to, loss of loved ones or possessions, illnesses and suffering from attachment to the aggregates of body and mind.

Use wisdom to contemplate the evil consequences of suffering – even though you may have a lot of assets, money and property – you are not exempted from suffering. Take any suffering you have encountered to teach your mind and to warn it about even worse sufferings lurking in the future. The world is full of suffering. There is no such things as happiness unalloyed with suffering. So you must find ways to relieve suffering. Contemplate suffering often to let the mind accept that the true nature of life is pitiful and loaded with suffering. Gather these facts and analyze them down to the real cause of suffering, that is, birth: no birth, no suffering. Suffering is blatantly felt by everyone born, and so it is easy to get the mind to see it and to develop a dread for its dangers. The mind will then want to look for a way to protect itself from suffering by not being reborn ever again.

## Keen Wisdom Easily Destroys Craving

As wisdom becomes sharper, one knows and sees more clearly the causes of rebirth: craving for sensuality (*kāma-taṇhā*), craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*) and craving for non-existence (*vibhava-taṇhā*). These cravings lead the mind to cycle around and around in the Three Spheres of Existence. If one can destroy these three types of craving from the mind, the cycle of births is broken, and there is no more suffering. Desires are the “fuel” of rebirth. When they latch onto the mind, and the mind latches onto them, this attachment will bring one back to this world endlessly. This attachment has been so strong that craving and the mind seem to be one and the same thing. If wisdom is not subtle and sharp enough, there is no way to separate them. It is like water and alcohol mixed in a beverage. One cannot separate them merely with a piece of filter cloth – no matter how fine its mesh is or how many hundred times we use it. To separate them, one needs a better and finer method. Therefore to separate craving, from the mind, ordinary wisdom is not sufficient. We must use the wisdom at the level of *vipassanā-ñāṇa*.

Craving for sensuality consists of craving for sensual objects and sensual moods. The former includes money, property and physical possessions in either living or nonliving form. The latter is passion, lust, sensual pleasure, attraction to the opposite sex and other sensual moods.

Craving for existence means desire to be born in a certain state of being. For example, some crave to be born as human beings because they wish to be with their friends and relatives again.



They feel warm and happy among their loved ones and do not wish to part from them. If any of them dies, they will feel great torment. This is the state of mind that is attached to one's own state of being. Any loss of loved ones will certainly bring great sorrow. In addition to this, there are other people who would enjoy being in the celestial states. These are all forms of craving for existence.

Craving for non-existence is desire not to be born in certain states of being. For examples those in the heavens or the Formless Sphere are in the happy states of existence, and so do not want to be reborn in the human state. Those in the human state do not want to be reborn in the animal or the *peta* (the hungry ghost) state. These are all forms of craving for non-existence for fear of being born in an undesirable state.

The mind that is imbued with these three kinds of craving is lost in the Three Spheres of Being. To cope with a craving mind like this, one must use wisdom to demolish the delusion in the mind and detach the mind from craving. The stronger the cravings and the attachment, the more wisdom is required. Wisdom can warn the deluded mind to be watchful and to realize its misunderstanding, the consequent sufferings and the danger of craving. As long as the mind is still infatuated with desire, wisdom must be used continually to convince the mind that the sufferings of birth, ageing, illness and death all come from craving. Teach your mind to understand suffering the way parents teach their children. Parents can suffer if their children do not know what is right or wrong if they misbehave through ignorance and misunderstanding. The parents thus need to teach and guide their

children in the right direction. In this way the children will learn and know how to behave.

Dhamma students must use wisdom to teach their minds to see the delusion of sensual desires that involve sights, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations, to know their harmful effects and to realize that birth is suffering. They must contemplate their own suffering with wisdom. They must remind themselves of the hardships of life they have experienced. All this requires contemplation with wisdom.

You must use your wisdom to contemplate suffering and then teach the mind that, “This is how desire causes suffering for the mind. This is the sort of suffering that comes with the life we are born to.” As you teach your mind often in this way, it will gradually come to understand and accept the reasonings of its wisdom, and will come to gain comprehensive insight into itself. It will make up to the fact that it has been deluded into following its cravings. When the mind knows and sees the suffering, harm and danger caused by craving, the mind itself is what will let go of the cravings and desires within it.

## **Success Is Possible in This Life**

As a follower of the Dhamma, you must be attentive at all times, because you do not know how much time you have left in this life. You must accelerate your efforts to attain Dhamma at the highest level you can. If your conviction to use mindfulness and wisdom to contemplate things is very strong, then the attainment of Dhamma in this lifetime will not be beyond your reach. But you must put full effort into the practice, even if it involves your life. You must not indulge yourself in too much sleeping and eating. You must be organized and alert, Always search for the right strategies to teach your mind with wisdom.

In terms of the Dhamma, your mind is quite blind and you must teach it to know and perceive the truth of suffering, impermanence and not-selfness. Teach your mind about the Four Elements and the Five Aggregates which your mind misunderstands as self. Teach it about attachment to things that you claim to be your own. Use sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations and mental objects which you like, but which in fact can cause suffering, to teach your mind. Any pleasure that the world appreciates you should use for contemplation until you realize that it causes suffering.

Even though it is not easy to detach the mind from such pleasure, inasmuch as the mind has been blind for so long, you must keep at this contemplation over and over again, until you get used to it, and it becomes habitual. There is no way you get rid of the mind's misunderstandings right away. You need to teach your mind often, and the mind will gradually know and see the truth.

Wisdom at this stage is only elementary, not yet entirely effective, being at the level of understanding the nature of cause and effect, which is the beginning of the Noble Eightfold Path: Right View and Right Thought. It is just like surveying before constructing a road. The survey involves marking the route and budgetary planning to make sure that construction can proceed with no problems. Right View and Right Thought pave your way towards the Noble Fruitions and *Nibbāna*. This planning is what sets your direction straight right from the beginning.

Make it clear to yourself what Right View means. What views are right here? What does Right Thought mean? What thoughts are right? You must plan ahead with wisdom. Plan your next step of practice, so that you can proceed straight to *Nibbāna*. In this way, there is no chance of getting lost. If you do not use wisdom as described, you will encounter problems later on, practice will become complicated, and you will lose your way. You will become doubtful about your practice and need to ask people as to what is right and what is wrong. If you are lucky, you may ask the right person and be able to find your way out. But if you ask “the blind” who are also lost just like you, you are again going in circles and will never find your way out for the rest of your life.

## Wisdom Development Is a Rational Process

“*Vipassanā*” is wisdom which arises from within the mind. The mind understands and accepts causality as analyzed by wisdom. It understands the truth of impermanence, suffering and not-selfness as it contemplates with wisdom. When the mind and wisdom work together in this manner, it is called “*vipassanā* practice.” When the mind perceives more and more clearly, wisdom becomes clearer. As wisdom grows brighter, the mind grows brighter as well.

Wisdom is like light. If a room has no light at all, no one can work there. If there is a little light, work can be done but rather slowly. If there is more light, more work gets done, and if the room is fully lit, then the work can be finished quickly.

Those who do not know how to practise and whose wisdom concerning Dhamma is not sharp enough to practise correctly, must study the Dhamma and contemplate it until they are sure of which method is correct. They must learn from other people to make sure which path of practice is right, and then practise it continuously. They will then gradually come to know and see the Truth. If they start with a few good strategies, their wisdom will develop a sense of right reason and the practice will gradually gather momentum. At this level, the practice is concerned with basics, and has a good chance of succeeding because one’s knowledge and wisdom are beginning to find their basis in Right View and Right Thought. In other words, one’s views and contemplation are based in the Noble Eightfold Path. As one speeds up one’s practice, one’s knowledge of the truth expands.

If one learns more strategies, one becomes wiser and more enlightened, and knows and sees more truth with more and more self-confidence.

Make sure that your practice does not go in the wrong direction. If you know how to find ways of solving problems, there will be no misunderstanding. As a result, when you practise concentration, it will be Right Concentration. When you contemplates with wisdom, it will be right in accordance with the Truth. Whatever you want to comprehend your understanding will be reasonable and reflective, and will removes all doubt about the Dhamma.

At this level, the practice has reached true *samatha* (concentration) and *vipassanā* (wisdom), and the person has correctly entered the Noble Path. The more he presses forward with the techniques of concentration and wisdom, the closer the transcendent wisdom will come into reach, enabling him to enter fully into the stream of Dhamma.

## Transcendent Wisdom Occurs at This Stage

Transcendent wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) occurs only to a follower of Dhamma, who is at the brink of the Noble Fruitions. When it occurs, it will last until the person is totally liberated. This is a true knowing and seeing (*ñāṇa-dassana*), with wisdom at its full level of brightness. At this point, the Truth is totally revealed, and the person knows clearly the truths of suffering, impermanence and not-selfness. There is no longer any mystery or barrier to conceal these truths from the mind. There is no more misunderstanding because this is perfect knowledge which dissolves all doubt. The knowledge at the moment of enlightenment is therefore not ordinary knowledge that comes from the *viññāṇa* aggregate. It is a special kind of knowledge that happens only to those who have practised.

This knowledge is called “*buddho*,” meaning, “One who knows, one who is awake, and one who has blossomed.” *Buddho* is knowing (*ñāṇa*) together with seeing (*dassana*). It is thus called *ñāṇa-dassana*: Knowledge together with vision, vision together with knowledge of things as they truly are, seeing how good and evil cycle around in the Three Spheres of Existence – the spheres of sensuality, form and formlessness. It sees how they condition each other inasmuch as good and evil can only circle around in the cycle of rebirth. The fact that people fall for this cycle is because they fall for good and evil. They want the happiness and prosperity that comes as a result of the good. But as the good causes are exhausted, they are driven by defilement and craving into committing evil acts, and so they cycle in the direction of evil.

Thus we must cut off attachment to both sides, for if we try to hold on to the good, evil cannot help but follow in its wake.

At this moment, contemplation reflects on the suffering of all beings. There is really nowhere in the cycle that is free from suffering. As long as the mind has cravings, it has the fuel for the suffering that comes with birth. The knowledge at this point clearly sees the cause of suffering which leads to birth, and at this particular point, the abandonment of craving is no longer a problem. It is just like darkness being dispelled by light. This knowledge clearly sees how beings have been cycling in the Three Spheres of Existence. The primary cause is *avijjā* (ignorance), causing *saṅkhāra* (volitional factor). From *saṅkhāra* springs *viññāṇa* (consciousness, spiritual factor). From *viññāṇa* arises *nāma-rūpa* (mind and body). *Nāma-rūpa* houses *āyatana* (senses). *Āyatana* is the “door” of *phassa* (contact). *Phassa* causes *vedanā* (feeling). *Vedanā* invites *taṇhā* (cravings). *Taṇhā* stimulates *upādāna* (attachment). *Upādāna* causes *bhava* (states of being). *Bhava* brings out *jāti* (birth). *Jāti* leads to illness and ageing which cause death. This is all there is to the way we are born and die repeatedly in the Three Spheres. We circle around through birth and death, birth and death, in the cycle of suffering because of just these sorts of things. There is nothing of any worth that we can lay claim to from this cycle as being really ours. Even our bodies we have to leave behind in this world to rot and return to their original elements. There is no substance to this cycling through birth and death at all. When we know and see the truth clearly in this way, we are ready to discard all attachment, and no attachment can survive in the world anymore. This is the true



transcendent wisdom which is the result of the practice, and the phrase, “the full realization of cessation” becomes clear at this point.

There is no longer anything secret in the world, because this transcendent wisdom is powerful enough to demolish all wrong knowledge and erroneous views in the primal mind. When this occurs to anyone, it removes all doubts from the heart. Even if the Lord Buddha were there, one would not have to ask him about it, because one knows so thoroughly what is what. Even though this sort of result from the practice has never happened to one before, one knows for oneself when it does arise just what it is, without having to ask anyone else to pass judgement. The phrase, “One is one’s own mainstay” at this point means that no one else can have the final word.

When transcendent wisdom has spread its total comprehension to cover all compounded things in the world, its next stage is to turn to cessation.

## The Stream of the World Is Cut off Completely

This kind of cessation has never been expected before. It is a gentle cessation. One can know clearly only for oneself how this cessation takes place. It occurs both internally and externally. Internal is the cessation of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). External is the cessation of all the sense media – the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and tactile sensation. As *viññāṇa* departs, all communication through those senses are cut off from the outside world. At this point, there is no sensation, and no contact with outside stimuli – no sights, sounds, smells, tastes or tactile sensations. The mind has no link with any perception. There is no movement of the body, no speech and no mental activity, because there is no *viññāṇa* to coordinate body and mind. This is the total cessation of *viññāṇa*, and therefore there can be no such thing as physical or mental pleasure or pain. This is *nirodha*, the cessation of suffering.

Those who have practised Dhamma until they reached this stage know for themselves how transcendent wisdom as described above proceeds without pause to cessation. From then on there is only progress toward absolute purity of mind.

## Total Awareness

During the cessation of mental and sensory activity, the awareness of the mind is still there. It is “awareness” that is free from *viññāṇa*, because the latter perceives through the senses. This is “awareness” that is beyond any conventional knowledge. It is unique in itself, and it has no inclination toward either worldly or Dhamma knowledge. There are no suppositions in this “awareness” and no words to describe it. All I can say is that the saying, “The primal mind is lustrous,” is evident at this point.

Do not waste your time guessing about what the primal mind is like, because even in the most absorbed meditation, the stage in which the mind becomes exceedingly refined and tranquil, it is still not the “lustrous” mind in this sense. Any mind that has not yet been detached from the filth caused by lust and desire cannot experience this. No matter how subtle the mind becomes in concentration it still has the “fuel” for rebirth.

## Courage Arises, Impurities Are Eradicated From the Mind

After a considerably long moment, the cessation is replaced by an extraordinary boldness of the mind, It involves an incredible strength of mindfulness and wisdom. The mind is so mighty that it can destroy anything in its way immediately. During this boldness, consciousness and sensation resume. One knows how powerful and destructive his mind is and that it can cut off the stream of the world, the stream of rebirth, the stream of causes of birth, the stream of the cycle of existence, the stream of ignorance and the stream of the Three Spheres of Being. All of these streams have been bringing one back to this world innumerable times. The courage arising at this point can do anything. One can do sitting meditation for days and nights. Nothing is as powerful as this boldness of mind.

At this stage, the person knows that *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, the comprehension of the cessation of mental intoxicants, is happening to him and mental impurities are being wiped out. For the person reaching this stage, standing, walking, sitting or lying down is no obstacle for his reaching the Final Goal, *Nibbāna*. It occurs in a split second, and he knows thoroughly that all impurities have disappeared from his mind.

This is the result of practice that all Dhamma students want.

## 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 sīlam 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 “*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. 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

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

<b><i>caṅkama</i></b>	walking up and down as a method of concentration development
<b><i>citta</i></b>	thought; mind; a state of consciousness
<b><i>dhamma</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. the Doctrine; the teachings of the Lord Buddha</li><li>2. the Norm; the Law; nature</li><li>3. the Truth; Ultimate Reality</li><li>4. the supermundane, esp. <i>Nibbāna</i></li><li>5. righteousness; virtue; morality; good conduct; right behavior</li><li>6. tradition; practice; principle; rule; duty</li><li>7. justice; impartiality</li><li>8. thing; phenomenon</li><li>9. a cognizable object; mind-object; idea</li><li>10. mental state; mental factor; mental activities</li><li>11. condition; cause; causal antecedent</li></ol>
<b><i>dhātu</i></b>	an element; natural condition; that which carries its own characteristic mark
<b><i>dukkha</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. suffering; misery; woe; pain; ill; sorrow; trouble; discomfort; unsatisfactoriness; problematic situation; stress; conflict</li><li>2. physical or bodily pain</li></ol>

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

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



<b><i>saṅkhāra</i></b>	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
<b><i>sati</i></b>	mindfulness; attentiveness; detached watching; awareness
<b><i>sotāpanna</i></b>	a stream-enterer; one who has attained the first stage of holiness
<b><i>taṇhā</i></b>	craving; desire; thirst
<b><i>tilakkhaṇa</i></b>	Three Characteristics; the Three Signs of Being; also called the Common Characteristics
<b><i>Tipiṭaka</i></b>	lit. the Three baskets; the Three Divisions of the Buddhist Canon, viz., Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma (generally known as the Pali Canon)
<b><i>vaṭṭa</i></b>	the round of rebirth; the of existences; the cycle of rebirth
<b><i>vibhava-taṇhā</i></b>	craving for non-existence
<b><i>vipassanā</i></b>	insight; contemplation; insight development
<b><i>yogāvacara</i></b>	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.

