

**GOING AGAINST  
THE STREAM**

# Going Against the Stream

*Written by*

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## Translator's Preface

This book's author is Phra Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño, the Abbot of Wat Pa Ban Kor, a forest monastery in Udonthani, Thailand. Respectfully and affectionately addressed as Luang Poh Thoon, this revered Theravada Buddhist Monk has lectured on Buddhism and Dhamma practice throughout Thailand, as well as a number of other countries. He has also authored many books on meditation practices, emphasizing the need for the development of wisdom, which goes beyond calm mind meditation. His view is clearly rooted in the teachings of The Lord Buddha.

Luang Poh Thoon has written several books regarding "the stream of the world." In this book, Going Against the Stream, the discussion centers around meditation techniques and their use in removing the attachments we have to the things of this world. The natural inclination of people in this world is to get caught up in the things of this world. To find the truth and enlightenment we must struggle against "the stream of the world."

Unlike some Dhamma teachers, who would have their followers endlessly "sitting like a stump" in tranquil meditation, Luang Poh Thoon provides keen insight into effective meditation methods to develop one's wisdom. Herein lies the key to success in Dhamma practice.

If you want additional information about Luang Poh Thoon, if you wish to seek him out for further information or guidance, or if you wish to attend a retreat for contemplative meditation, (at the time of the writing of this translation) there is a website you can access on the internet: [www.khippapanyo.org](http://www.khippapanyo.org).

The vocabularies of Thai and English, particularly in the realm of philosophical thought, don't always have clearcut and direct word for word translations. As translators, we have tried to stay as close as possible to word by word translation, but at times, from necessity, have paraphrased the writing of Luang Poh to try to best capture the ideas and thoughts expressed. By doing so, we have attempted to maintain the meaning, the tone, and the expressions of the author. This is the third book that we have translated for Luang Poh Thoon, and so if there is any error, we apologize.

The Translator

## Author's Preface

This book provides practical methods for practicing Dhamma. There have been eight previous publications of this book, but the supply has been insufficient to provide enough copies to my followers and to others who are interested. However, because there are many followers who subscribe to my Dhamma teaching and support my efforts to teach others, they have provided the encouragement and the financial support to publish this English language version of the book.

The tranquility meditation methods described are basically the same as those described in the previous versions of this book. The method for developing wisdom, however, may not be exactly the same, because I have added some additional information about the process. The method used for wisdom development is wide ranging in scope and though I have added some information, I have still attempted to narrow the scope, so that it is easier for Dhamma practitioners to comprehend and practice.

In terms of practicing methods, you will learn distinct walking meditation methods for tranquility or “calm mind” meditation, and the method for wisdom development (*vipassanā*). As a result, the comprehension of these distinct methods will eliminate doubt and confusion between tranquility method and method for wisdom development. Otherwise, practitioners might become confused about ending or beginning. Moreover, they might wrongly recognize a tranquility method as being a method for wisdom development. I have asked many Dhamma practitioners, both monks and lay persons, how they practiced Dhamma. They

answer that they develop *vipassanā*. Then I asked further about how they develop *vipassanā*. They answered that they practice *ānāpāna-sati*, focusing on breathing going in and out. Some said that they practice watching inflation going up and deflation going down. Some said they practice reciting the *parikamma* words, “*sammā araham̐.*” Some say that they perceive the condition of emptiness. So, in order to make the correct understanding among Dhamma practitioners, I have developed Dhamma practicing methods in categories of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Dhamma practitioners will be able to discern the correct method as to its use and significance.

Finally, I would like to give thanks to all my supporters who arranged for this book publication. I bless you all to have wisdom enabling you to know and to see all Dhamma and the Truth as a result of your practice and your earnest intention. May this blessing happen.

*Phra Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño*



## Going Against the Stream

Currently, a great number of people are interested in Dhamma practice because they have discovered its importance and benefit. Mental development (*bhāvanā*) is the primary focus and result of Buddhist Dhamma practice. Many people who practice Dhamma by themselves get results. There is equal opportunity to practice Dhamma, regardless of social status, level of education, or where a person is located geographically. The result of Dhamma practice is true happiness in both body and mind to those who practice earnestly.

An important thing for people who wish to practice Dhamma is understanding clearly the practical methods of meditation, such as walking meditation and sitting meditation. People also need to know how to correctly use *parikamma* words while doing tranquility meditation, and how to apply contemplative techniques during wisdom development contemplation (*vipassanā*).

Tranquility, or “calm mind” meditation, goes hand in hand with wisdom development contemplation in Dhamma practice. If people fail to understand the two distinctly different methods, their Dhamma practice is certain to fail in producing the desired result. There are a number of methods to practice both tranquility meditation and wisdom development contemplation. Those who practice Dhamma are free to choose the method that suits their own disposition. Doing so will make it easier for them to practice Dhamma.

One's resolve and the earnestness with which someone practices Dhamma will dictate the results they get in doing so. Resolve is very important in Dhamma practice because it is that inner resolve that is the foundation for mindfulness. If one fails to establish mindfulness, it indicates a lack of real resolve. Without sufficient resolve, it will be difficult or impossible to perform the tasks involved in Dhamma practice. Tasks might be performed, but the results won't be those that are progressive and beautiful.

## Tranquility Methods

### Preparation for Walking Meditation

To prepare a proper walking path, one should create a pathway approximately one meter wide and fifteen meters in length. The pathway should be leveled and smooth so that one may walk without worry of tripping. Before starting to walk, one should stand at one end and face the pathway, place the palms of the hands together between the eyebrows or at the chest level (*wai*), and then inwardly and silently establish a true resolve in the mind while saying, “*Sādhu*, I intend to walk in meditation to revere the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the noble monks. Also, I walk in meditation to revere the virtue of my parents, my Dhamma teachers, and all those who have helped me and been kind to me. May I have a tranquil mindful mind and have the enlightenment of all the noble Truths. May all of the resulting virtue and merit which comes from my walking meditation serve to sustain the lives of all other creatures and spirits. May all of them have no animosity or act against each other. May they receive and rejoice in this merit (*anumodanā*).”

Then, with arms down in front, palms facing inward with the right palm on the back of the left hand, position oneself in the pondering standing position. The mind must be in a neutral state, without being inclined toward a pleasant or unpleasant emotion. Using resolve and mindfulness, without musing, and keeping focused on walking meditation, one should then prepare to use the *parikamma* words, *Buddho*, *Dhammo*, and *Saṅgho* as follows.

## The Method for Using *Parikamma* Words

Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*Bud*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*dho*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*Dham*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*mo*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*Saṅ*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*gho*”

The entire above procedure is considered one reciting cycle. One should repeat the cycle three to seven cycles or more, so that the three *parikamma* words *Buddho*, *Dhammo*, and *Saṅgho* are integrated together into the mind. Then while one performs walking meditation (*caṅkama* walk), only the word “*Buddho*” is recited silently in the mind.

## Walking Meditation - Method One

One must walk with resolve and mindful concentration, taking the first step while silently reciting, “*Bud-*” then taking the second step while simultaneously reciting silently, “*-dho.*” This walking and reciting method is then repeated as one walks the pathway.

One must be mindful to step and recite simultaneously. If focus or mindfulness is lost while one is walking, it shows that there isn't sufficient resolve. If that occurs, one must start again until mindfulness is securely held while one is stepping. One shouldn't walk too quickly, nor too slowly, taking steps as we normally walk. This walking meditation is a tranquility method (*samatha*) using walking as an object to meditate. Its purpose is to practice mindfulness and strengthen resolve. When coming to the end of the pathway, one should always turn around toward the right before proceeding back along the pathway.

## **Walking Meditation - Method Two**

Instead of focusing on steps while walking and silently reciting *parikamma* words, method two focuses on one's breathing going in and out while one is walking, and silently reciting *parikamma* words according to the pace of the breathing. Similarly, one must be mindful and focused while breathing in and simultaneously reciting "Bud" silently in one's mind, and then while completely exhaling, reciting "-dho." One must perform this method while holding mindfulness and reciting the *parikamma* words in the same time frame. Doing this will create a strong sense of tranquility. If weariness from walking occurs, one can stop walking and continue to breathe in and out while reciting the *parikamma* words, remaining still in a standing position.

## Walking Meditation - Method Three

Again, one must be mindful and focused. One then imagines one of the body's organs or parts, holding the image of that organ or part in the mind as a meditative object. The mind "stares" at that image with such focus that it cannot slip away. Even though it may not be seen clearly, the image serves as a boundary to hold the mind still and remain focused on that body part.

At the beginning, because of inexperience at staring at the mental images of organs or body parts, one needs to visualize them based on their current real physical characteristics such as size, location, color, texture, etc. After one continuously stares at a particular body part in the mind, the image of that body part will be imprinted in that person's mind, whether they open or close their eyes. One then stares at other body parts in the same fashion. Being able to visualize the clear image of body parts in the mind is one of the foundations for Dhamma contemplation, which will be explained later.

With this method the focus isn't on walking steps taken, instead, one recites the *parikamma* name of the body part being stared at in the mind. For example, one stares at the skin, and as the image of skin is being visualized, the person recites "*taco*" (pronounced tajo), the *parikamma* word for skin. Similarly, when visualizing a bone or the entire skeletal structure, one recites the *parikamma* word for bone, "*aṭṭhi*." One can do walking meditation, focusing on the skeletal structure and visualize the skeletal structure doing the walking meditation. As mentioned, staring at body parts that are visualized in the mind is one of the foundations

for wisdom contemplation, which I will explain in the last part of this book.

## **Walking Meditation - Method Four**

In this method one must be mindful and focused, and able to perceive emotions in the mind. One perceives any kind of emotion occurring in the mind as a meditative object, without regard at this point as to the source or the cause of that emotion, the focus merely being on the emotion itself. There are many kinds of emotions which can arise in the mind and they can have various natures, such as crude or strong emotion, subtle emotion, worldly emotion, Dhamma emotion, pleasant or unpleasant emotions depending on the source or cause of the emotion being experienced. Unfortunately, we are unable to rid the mind of emotion, so we must be able to observe our emotions. For the purposes of walking meditation, when focusing on the emotions in the mind, be aware that you need to avoid looking at the causes, for doing so may aggravate those emotions.

Let me say parenthetically to this discussion that each emotion in the mind has its cause, and that it is important to learn the causes of emotions that arise and where they dwell. When investigating the source of emotions, one must be aware not to exacerbate them. There is an insatiable germ in the mind that always seems to want more material objects as well as emotion for the mind to occupy itself with. The mind is needy for emotion resulting from the processing of sensing corporeal forms, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (*phoṭṭhabba*). These sensations which produce emotion have been the food for the craving mind for vast

periods of time (*kappa* and *kalp*). People are born with the need for emotion in every rebirth, and in this present life these destructive fire-like emotions burn their hearts. These fire-like emotions, fueled by sensations perceived through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, are called “*Dhammārammaṇa*” and are deeply imprinted in our hearts. Corporeal form, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are just things from which the mind derives and processes emotions. Once the mind touches on the cause of emotion, it clings to that cause and ponders it over and over, resulting in the so-called “implanted emotion.” Whenever such emotion arises, the mind is right there.

In this method of walking meditation we focus on the mind and perceive the presence of emotion. We evaluate the mind and sense the presence of greed, anger, lust, passion, or other emotion. Such emotions arisen in the mind can be controlled by mindfulness and determination. One can quench an emotion or weaken its strength. The important thing in controlling the emotion isn’t to pay attention to the external object that causes the emotion to arise, such as corporeal form, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. One must avoid feeling jealous or hateful towards another person and focus only on the emotion itself. If the mind pays attention to the causes of emotions, the mind will be poisoned. If one focuses solely on the emotions, they will gradually weaken. This is a shrewd method to cope with the emotions in the mind, fighting them with maximum mindfulness, because we cannot run away from emotions. Coping with emotions is the “inner war,” in which we must duel with no backing off. We must use the concentrated mindfulness to grill



down emotions boldly. In that moment of confrontation between mindfulness and emotion, one will know victory or defeat.

Every time before stopping *caṅkama* walk, one stands at one end of the pathway and faces the pathway. The palms of the hands should be placed together in front of the chest (*wai*) and then one makes a sincere wish saying, “*Sādhu*, I have done a *caṅkama* walk to revere the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the noble monks. May this resulting merit cause happiness for myself, my parents, my Dhamma teachers, and those who have helped me and been kind to me. Also, may all seraphs and spirits, all living creatures, and all my adversaries receive and rejoice in this merit.” Then, one mindfully steps out of the *caṅkama* path and finds a place to do sitting meditation, so that meditation continues.

## **Preparation for Sitting Meditation**

One must first clear and tidy up a place, eliminating all concerns for a worry-free sitting meditation. Then according to one’s preference, one chants either completely or in summary fashion while emitting unconditional love and kindness towards oneself and all other living creatures. Laymen must undertake the five moral precepts, because by doing so, one assures self purity at that moment, and it is a means of preventing the mind from experiencing dejection or depression brought about from bad past actions or speech. One makes the clear understanding in the mind, saying to oneself, “I may have committed a bad deed, but it is in the past. At this point I have pure moral precepts.” When people prepare to practice Dhamma meditation, they shouldn’t

recall bad deeds of the past, but focus on merit they have performed, such as contributions made, observing moral precepts, emitting unconditional love and kindness to all, and the like. The mind will rejoice at the goodness committed. One's mindset will be joyful and cheerful throughout the time one meditates.

A person must be able to undertake the five moral precepts by oneself to intentionally abstain from bad actions or speech, because there may be no opportunity or time to acquire the moral precepts from a monk in the traditional way. The five moral precepts are the stated intention to abstain from bad actions or speech.

## **Self-undertaking the Five Moral Precepts**

Using *parikamma* words, one repeats to oneself the following phrase three times,

*“Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa”*

Having completed that, one then repeats the following chant,

*“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”*

If one cannot say or chant the above Pali words, one can repeat their meaning in English as follows,

“I will abstain from killing any living thing.

I will abstain from stealing the belongings of others.

I will abstain from sexual misconduct.

I will abstain from the telling of lies.

I will abstain from drinking or using any intoxicant.”

One must be honest with themselves in their stated intentions to observe these moral precepts because the true resolve that is necessary to be successful must be genuine and truthful.

Upon acquiring the five moral precepts, one chants the following phrase three times, “*Imāni pañca sikkhā-padāni samādiyāmi, cetaṇāhaṃ sīlaṃ vadāmi,*” indicating that these are the five moral precepts that one intends to follow. Finally, one bows down three times. Monks and novice monks in seeking purity must constantly

probe and examine their behavior and discipline relative to the precepts, so they will have no later problems or cause for worry.

Either *caṅkama* walk or sitting meditation may be done first, prior to doing the other, depending on one's preference. If one cannot do the walking meditation, they can do just the sitting meditation. After undertaking the five moral precepts, a person is prepared to do sitting meditation. Men sit and put their right leg over their left leg in front of them. Women may do the same or they may sit with their legs folded under them. Whatever the position selected, one should be comfortable in both body and mind.

Once in a comfortable sitting position, one then puts their palms together at the center of the chest or at the point between the eyebrows and forms true resolve, saying, "*Sādhu*, I intend to sit in meditation to revere the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and the noble monks. Also, I sit in meditation to revere the virtue of my parents, my Dhamma teachers, and all those who have helped me and been kind to me. May I have a tranquil mindful mind and have the enlightenment of all the noble Truths. May all of the resulting virtue and merit which comes from my sitting meditation serve to sustain the lives of all other creatures and spirits. May all of them have no animosity or act against each other. May they receive and rejoice in this merit."

One must stay mindful, sitting upright with the right hand overlapping the left hand, which rests on the lap. The mind must stay focused, not inadvertent or allowed to stray to become involved in random thoughts or emotions. If one lets the mind involve itself in erotic emotion, cruelty emotion, or hatred, these emotions will make the mind dysfunctional and dismal. One must

understand that focusing on meditation requires resolve, deliberateness, and mindfulness. One should be prepared to meditate intently. The person is then ready to meditate in sitting meditation using one of the following methods.

## **Sitting Meditation - Method One**

Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*Bud*”

Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*dho*” Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*Dham*” Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*mo*” Be mindful and focused, breathe in deeply and silently in your mind recite “*San*” Be mindful and focused, breathe out fully and silently in your mind recite “*gho*”

The entire above procedure is considered one reciting cycle. One should repeat the cycle three to seven cycles or more, so that the three *parikamma* words *Buddho*, *Dhammo*, and *Sangho* are integrated together into the mind. Then while one performs sitting meditation, only the word “*Buddho*” is recited silently in the mind. Breathing is done normally as usual.

While breathing in deeply, one stays mindful and focused, silently reciting, “*Bud-*,” then, breathing out fully, again staying mindful and focused, reciting the last part of the word, “*-dho.*” If one should lose the synchronization of breathing in and out while reciting “*Buddho*” in the described manner, it indicates lack of resolve and mindfulness. If this happens, one needs to keep

practicing until one becomes skilled at it. This method trains the mind to be thorough and builds up domineering mindfulness to control the mind. Beginners may find this method difficult, but constant practice will result in gaining skill. This method uses breathing as a meditative object. After one becomes skilled in simultaneously breathing in and out while reciting the *parikamma* word “*Buddho*,” they may omit reciting *parikamma* words. This more advanced step will convert the concentrated mind to a more subtle state.

## **Sitting Meditation - Method Two**

This method is actually the last sequence of the first method. This method leaves out the recitation of *parikamma* words while one intently controls the inhaling and exhaling of the breath. One focuses on their breathing, being mindful of all breaths taken, crude or fine. With this method, one continues to observe their breathing until breathing is well refined to the utmost subtle state. The so-called “*ekaggatārammaṇa*,” which is the sole fine emotion present in the mind carries the mind to a subtle state simultaneously. The fine breaths meet with the subtle state of the mind, resulting in an aureole surrounding one’s mind. While meditating in this state, the meditative feeling of the body may react in various manners to the aureole. For example, one may feel that their body swells up beyond normal size. This abnormal feeling will diminish and eventually vanish if they mindfully observe their fine subtle breathing for about five minutes. While one is holding mindfulness there may be a feeling that their body

is getting shorter or taller, or one might feel that their body is spinning or inclining to the left or right. These various feelings of body actions or conditions during sitting meditation are the resulting plight of the mind. These feelings arise and arrest themselves spontaneously.

One may feel that their breaths are too shallow and small as they inhale and exhale. If one fears they will die, they will withdraw immediately from meditation. Don't be fearful or terrified of this feeling, because it is the result of the mind integrating into the state of full calmness. Stay mindful and focused, watching those small breaths carefully until the breath can no longer be felt. At this point one may not feel their breath or their body. The state of knowing is the only thing that can be noted. Sometimes one feels there is an aureole, either big or small, surrounding the knowing of the mind. One senses the marvelous mind that is lustrous, weightless, and luminous. Nothing in the world is comparable to the amazing mind. The tranquil mind can appear to be luminous for about ten minutes, and will then withdraw itself out of the meditation. Happiness then arises in the mind, which cannot be compared to any other type of happiness. There seems to be weightlessness of body and mind bonded together floating in the air.

If people never contemplate Dhamma with wisdom before experiencing such happiness resulting from tranquility meditation, they will want to be in calmness as long and as often as they can. But those who contemplate Dhamma with wisdom prior to experiencing happiness from tranquility meditation won't

be enthralled by the calmness. But rather, they will wisely utilize this meditative calmness to become the foundation to support contemplation with wisdom.

I want to expound upon the misconception that wisdom can arise from calmness of the mind. Currently, there are many people who meditate to calmness, expecting that wisdom will arise from the calmness. Those who don't know how to contemplate Dhamma using wisdom don't practice using calmness in conjunction with wisdom. So even though they can meditate into absorption, instead of wisdom arising, they get happiness of body and mind. Or perhaps then gain supernatural powers (*abhiññā*) enabling them to know future or past events, using this ability as a toy. They might experience *cakkhu-ñāṇa*, which is the insight through the mind's eyes, or *sota-ñāṇa*, which is the insight through the inner ears. They may gain the ability to read the minds of other people or animals. Those who gain these powers become unwittingly addicted to these powers gained from meditative absorption. They become confident in their insight, and delusively presume they have become Noble Ones (*arahant*). The presumption of becoming *arahant* from tranquility meditation happened in the time of the Lord Buddha, and it can happen now.

During the Lord Buddha's time, there were thirty monks who practiced meditating into full calmness. They were able to gain happiness from their meditation and remain in a state of calmness for many days at a time. On those days they were without craving or feelings of lust. They delusively thought that they had permanently rid their minds of all defilements, becoming



*arahants*, whereupon they went to see the Lord Buddha to get prophecy from him. When they were approaching the temple where the Lord Buddha was, the Lord Buddha sent Phra Ananda to tell those thirty monks to go to a charnel before coming to see the Lord Buddha. (a charnel was a place where dead bodies were deposited.) Phra Ananda did as instructed and sent off the thirty monks accordingly. When the thirty monks arrived at the charnel, they came upon the fresh naked corpse of a young woman. They gathered around in curiosity and looked upon the naked woman. Erotic lust and emotion came upon them rising to an alarming point, and the thirty monks, all presumed to be *arahants*, cried out admitting and acknowledging that they still had lust, craving, and delusion. The thirty monks, however, utilizing their common wisdom, contemplated the naked corpse in *vipassanā* fashion regarding its three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) of impermanence, suffering, and non-self vanishment. Simultaneously, their wisdom arose and their minds came to see and know the Truth. Eventually, the thirty monks attained enlightenment right there in that charnel.

Those that read the story of the thirty monks who had the misunderstanding of arahantship being based on having a calm mind, can see that they can be fooled by the results of tranquility meditation. Even then when the Lord Buddha was around, there were lots of Buddhists who had the same misunderstanding of the results of calm mind meditation. They may wrongly recognize the states of the calm mind as enlightenment and believe they have become a noble one or *arahant*. If there is no competent teacher, who has gotten past the calm mind meditation to

contemplate using wisdom (becoming noble ones themselves) to instruct them in the correct way to practice Dhamma, they could become trapped in states of calm mind with no way out.

Today, if Dhamma practitioners behave themselves like the thirty monks in the story, they shall become “unprocessed *arahants*” until the day they die, because they have no fresh corpse to ponder. Because of their different circumstances, such present-day Dhamma practitioners irrationally wait for their wisdom to arise, but they wait in vain. They keep meditating to calm mind, then grumble with doubt over and over again thinking “how come wisdom has not arisen?” Regardless of the state of calm mind, they are dismayed because wisdom doesn’t arise. Tranquility or calm mind meditation is the only method that they practice and that is why they don’t get the desired result.

I urge readers to research and find proof of anyone who practiced only calm mind meditation and became arahant in the Lord Buddha’s time. According to the noble ones and demonstrated by the story of the thirty monks, one needs to learn how to contemplate with wisdom beforehand. Today there are worthy ones, Dhamma teachers with pure hearts, who in their Dhamma practice contemplate the Truths, the nature of impermanence (*aniccam*), suffering (*dukkham*), and vanishing non-self (*anattā*). After they have done preparatory contemplation with wisdom, they meditate to calm mind. As they withdraw the concentrated mind out of the calmness, they lead their concentrated mind to contemplate things all around them as to their three true characteristics.

There are many Dhamma practitioners today who practice Dhamma opposite to the way pure-hearted Dhamma teachers practice – as opposite as the sky and the ground. Many irrationally wait for wisdom to arise from their tranquility without developing Dhamma thought in their practice. This misconception can be reflected upon metaphorically. For example, to grow a coconut tree or other fruit tree, a farmer digs a hole and then waits for a tree to grow without planting one in the hole. How does one get a tree by doing that? One must do more than just prepare the ground. Buddhists should think on this idea and apply it to their Dhamma practice.

### **Sitting Meditation - Method Three**

One must be mindful and focused. One imagines one of the body's organs or body parts, holding the image of that body part in the mind as a meditative object. The mind "stares" at that image with such focus that it cannot slip away. With this method, although one can do breathing and recitation in conjunction with the "staring," the focus shouldn't be on the breathing and recitation. Doing so will result in the mind losing hold of the image of the body part, causing it to fade away. In staring at a body part, such as a scar, one may stare at the outer or inner part of that scar. It is visualized based on its current real characteristics, such as location, color, and texture. One may not be able to visualize the skin covering the whole body, because they are weak in mindfulness or resolve. A smaller part should be focused upon so that the mind can hold on to that part in one spot. Holding the mind on one spot is like threading a needle. In order to thread a

needle, a person must use their eyes to stare intently at the small hole at the end of the needle, and then mindfully pass a thread through the hole. Otherwise, it is impossible to do.

So in this method, the mind stares intently at the visualized image of a body part. The image serves as a boundary to hold the mind still and remained focused on that body part. One may initially imagine a light shining upon the body part being visualized and stared upon. Once skilled at doing that, the body part can be looked at as to its true nature. In further Dhamma practice when contemplating with wisdom, one is able to stare at body parts or the whole body as it progresses into rottenness, losing flesh, and becoming bones. For now, staring at body parts is the method to hold the mind still in place. When the mind holds still, it gets rest and gains strength as a result. The mind won't randomly think about this and that as it did before. The mind holds still, like a bird holding onto the bough of a tree after becoming wary of flying.

## **Sitting Meditation - Method Four**

Method Four is similar to the perceiving of emotions described in *caṅkama* walking meditation method four. One must be mindful and focused. The focus is directed toward identifying any emotion occurring in the mind, to use it as a meditative object. The perception of emotions while doing sitting meditation allows one to see subtle emotions clearly because the body remains still without moving or receiving stress. In this method, one is able to see various emotions, such as happiness or misery, neutral emotions, or lustful craving. These emotions pivot around as cause and effect. Emotions can spin around in circles from the

past to present and future. The Pali term “*santati*” is for those good and bad emotions which foolishly transform back and forth until one cannot distinguish the beginning or end of each. People are so ignorant that they cannot distinguish old emotion from new emotion, so they always perceive emotions in the mind as being new emotions. This ignorance, or lack of knowledge, is called “*avijjā*” in Pali. This lack of knowledge reflects their unknowing of the route of the wheel of rebirth (*vaṭṭa-cakka*) and shows they are led astray in existences of the three realms (). Such people are in delusion, caused by the emotions in their minds. Defilements and ignorance dwelling in their hearts process these emotions into love and hate. Emotion itself, however, isn’t defilement.

The purpose for perceiving emotions is to observe and investigate the cause of emotions, using wisdom, to learn the route of defilements ingrained in the emotions. One shall later find a way to cut off the bridge for defilements to flow throughout the emotions in the heart. If one is unable to identify emotions in their hearts, they won’t find a way to eradicate the cause of defilements ingrained in those emotions. Cause and effect must be understood clearly. We must figure out a way to create a cause to produce a desired effect. If, for example, we need a sharp-edged knife, we have to sharpen that knife. On the other hand, we must also find a way to eradicate a cause that produces an unwanted effect. For example, if we don’t want heat, we have to extinguish the fire that causes that heat. If the heart suffers, the emotion of suffering exhibits itself and so we have to find a way to extinguish the cause of suffering. Suffering emotions are akin to the suffering in the heat of that fire. Heat comes with fire and

so does the mind come with emotion. The mind is right there when an emotion arises. To locate the mind we need only to perceive emotion.

The purpose of perceiving emotions in the mind is to explore their causes and later to contemplate those emotions using wisdom. Be aware that you need not take long to explore emotions. Just as when a soldier patrols, looking for enemies. Once finding them, he must quickly find a vantage point from which to accurately shoot them. Or, to use another metaphor, as those who hunt animals can affirm, once located, one need not take long in pointing the gun at the animal. Once we know of fire being created, we must determine how to extinguish it. Similarly, when we perceive emotion, we must use wisdom to determine how to cut off the route of defilements ingrained in that emotion, such as lustful craving. We perceive emotions and their causes so we may use wisdom to destroy the bridge of defilements and the wheel of rebirth. Seeing the army camp of defilements results from perceiving emotions and their causes. We then use mindfulness, wisdom, faith, and perseverance as a bomb to destroy the army camp of all defilements, resulting in their extinction.

Fighters always look for their opponents' vulnerabilities. Boxers always look for the weak point in the opponents' defense in order to knock them down. Even though the boxers are sometimes defeated, they will continue to work on improving their skills, maintaining their confidence, and will keep fighting until they are victorious. Dhamma practitioners must practice using mindfulness and wisdom earnestly. Otherwise, they will be knocked down by

defilements and unable to fight back. If practitioners don't train to develop wisdom, defilements will defeat them. Dhamma practitioners who are sincere and who earnestly want to destroy defilements, just as they would destroy their enemies, must set up a compass pointing to the emotions in the mind. They must mark those emotions as targets, and plan a method to purge them from the mind.

## **A Perceptive Method for Contemplating with Wisdom**

We derive perceptive knowledge from both walking and sitting meditation described in Methods Three and Four in which tranquility is achieved through contemplation of the body. There are many reasons to contemplate the body. Body contemplation demonstrates to the mind the nature of the body, so the mind clearly understands the body. Body contemplation also eliminates or precludes narcissism. Contemplation of the body demonstrates to the mind the natural suffering of the body and its true condition. As a result, the mind will come to realize that the body isn't "self" and will cut off the attachment that it has for the body. Most people presume that the body is "self" because they don't know how to do contemplation to discover the true nature or condition of the body. There are many aspects of body contemplation for us to consider. We must consider every aspect thoroughly and rationally so that the mind will admit the truth which is seen through wisdom.

Body contemplation has neither boundaries nor limits. Contemplation of the body requires the use of recollection as a passageway through which to travel. One needs to understand how to properly use recollection in conjunction with body contemplation. The use of recollection is like a two-edged sword. If we use it properly, recollections will have significant value. But if recollections aren't used properly, there will be detrimental results. Like fire, its proper use will be of benefit while its improper use can be very harmful. If recollections of corporeal form, sound,



smell, taste, and touch are wrongly contemplated, a poisonous effect will occur in one's heart. The heart will suffer as if burned in a fire. The wrong use of recollections will result in the expansion of defilements dwelling in the mind, and will become a tool for compounded thought to delude the mind and lead the way for continued craving and sensual desire. By contrast, if recollections of corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch are used properly, they will become contemplative objects to be examined as to their nature of impermanence, suffering, and being non-self. The mind will finally come to see the Truth through contemplation using wisdom. The mind will become dispassionate and release itself from the craving of pleasurable lust as a result.

If we let defilements, instead of righteous wisdom, process recollections, defilements will use the recollections to carry the mind along the route of defilements. There shall be all kinds of lovely corporeal forms for the mind to find pleasure through compounded thought. Compounded thought will get stronger in persuading the mind to be pleased and find joy in the corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Compounded thought leads the mind astray and misleads the mind from seeing the true quality of corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Compounded thought has diverted the mind, using the recollection of corporeal forms, day and night since the beginning and throughout eternity. Compounded thought also uses hearing to divert the mind from the truth, causing one to perceive a sound as a delectable thing. Similarly, compounded thought distorts the perception of the truth relating to smell, taste, and touch, creating the false perception of pleasure. For example, compound thought

interprets something rotten as pleasant, something full of suffering as happy, something impermanent as permanent, or something considered vanishing non-self as self.

An ignorant and blind mind is pleased with those misperceived corporeal forms, and misperceived sound, smell, taste, and touch. The mind doesn't discover true happiness in those things, but defiled compounded thought can fool us. The miserable result of the mistaken belief of defiled compound thought, however, doesn't daunt us. Over time, people continue to encounter these recollections of corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, which are referred to as "*saññā*" in Pali. If one allows defilements to process these recollections, only misery can result. As long as the mind is lead by defilements, tears are the reward for the heart.

So, in examining, *saññā*, the recollections in the mind of corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, or touch in past or present events, we must allow wisdom to consider the three characteristics to take charge of in doing Dhamma contemplation. Up until this point, the mind has indulged in defilements. In order to make the mind use wisdom to realize the truth, we must have a method to justify the mind as having a righteous viewpoint. For example, if one reminisces about a corporeal form, one must analyze that form to realize its true characteristics. By doing so, the perception and the viewpoint in the mind will gradually change and become steadfast in the knowledge of the truth.

The three characteristics – impermanence, suffering, and non-self – used in one's Dhamma contemplation, are always so true that they are readily recognized and accepted by the mind as true. The

wrong notion by the mind that the body is “self” has existed for a very long time. To justify to the mind the right view of the character of the body as being vanishing non-self, one must contemplate the body part by part, separately. “Self” is categorized into two parts: the mind and the body. The subtle state of self is the mind, which uses emotions, derived from āyatana, the sensory receptors, and the five aggregates as its food. The crude state of self is the body, which uses rice, fish, and the like for its food. In order to change the viewpoint of the mind, we need to change the food it receives. The mind has the wrong notion that the body is “self” because the mind has a distorted misperception of all physical forms and sensations. The mind has long been fascinated by corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The misperception of the body results in narcissism. The mind becomes fascinated by hearing sounds, interpreting them as pleasurable. Smell is misinterpreted as good or pleasurable. Scent and taste as a savory quality of things eaten. Touch is misperceived as a delightful sensation. People are never far from sensations that are interpreted by their minds as pleasurable. Their minds long for those fascinating five sensations to affect their overall feeling. People who have delusions regarding the physical forms think foolishly that the five senses are more essential than Dhamma. This low-level thinking puts one on a downward spiral and is as foolish as cutting one’s own throat. Having the correct perception of the five senses of the corporeal form, based on the truth, can pivot the mind away from delusion and fascination of the body. This is the concept of “going against the stream.”

The mind is fascinated by these forms, so we contemplate these forms based on their true qualities including earth, water, air, and fire to demonstrate to the mind the true nature of those forms. When dissecting each body part in the mind, one must examine each part and come to see what part has what properties. Body contemplation in tranquility meditation and body contemplation using wisdom are effective methods to accomplish this examination. Body contemplation is a prerequisite capability learned in practicing tranquility meditation. Now, use the body contemplation and apply wisdom to contemplate the true nature of each body part. A person must actually do this contemplation to cause the mind to clearly see the truth about the body. If one merely knows the theory through study, the mind will continue to think about the body without becoming dispassionate about it, because the mind won't be able to see the truth or the correct view. Body contemplation must be done earnestly, in the manner described, for the mind to see the real truth of the body.

While doing the body contemplation, one must take a good look at the hair, nails, teeth, and skin, paying close attention to specific details, so the mind sees the true quality of those body parts. In the same manner, flesh, sinew, and bone are examined for their detailed characteristics and properties. One must ponder these body parts for the mind to see them, and to see them truthfully through the eye of wisdom contemplation. In body contemplation using the three characteristics, one may visualize dissecting the body. As one dissects the body, one contemplates each body part in the context of impermanence, suffering, and vanishing non-self. The mind will see and come to accept the truth that the body

cannot escape the plight of impermanence, suffering, and vanishing non-self. Body contemplation using competent wisdom to examine the three characteristics of the body will provide a clear view of the true nature of the body and the mind will accept the truth. The mind's realization of the truth through body contemplation using wisdom is real knowing and real seeing.

The three characteristics are fundamental for focused thought during contemplation, they are essential for the development of wisdom. There is proof of impermanence, suffering, and vanishing non-self all around. One can see people suffering everywhere, in hospitals, in prisons, and other places. We need to learn about our own suffering because as everyone knows, everyone has suffering. Regardless of one's wealth or social status, it is necessary to learn about the suffering of the body and the suffering of the mind. Everyone experiences headaches, eye, leg, or abdominal pain. Pain and suffering can occur in any part of the body. Sometimes we suffer more, and sometimes we suffer less, but people suffer all the time as they struggle to live. Some suffer to near death, while others do suffer to death because of various illnesses. Suffering and its resulting misery come with birth. It begins in the womb and continues from the first day of our lives until the day we die. When one is reborn, one will eventually meet the same old suffering. People try to find ways to conceal their suffering, but this is in vain because the glowing ember of suffering in the mind still exists and works from the inside out. Yearning and longing in the mind command the body to get whatever they think can relieve or conceal the suffering. The body suffers, and that suffering is transmitted to the mind for the mind to know it,

as the mind is the “knower.” The mind then is the mechanism of craving, oblivious to the truth that those things are the cause of suffering.

The purpose of the body contemplation is, therefore, for the mind to know what “self” is and what belongs to self. By doing this contemplation, the mind shall come to know where suffering is generated and where it is located. Suffering uses elements to sustain itself. Suffering arises from elements and dwells in elements, and will return to its original state of elements. This is shown by the body and how it develops. The body begins at conception and enters the world through nativity. Because all of us have been through this beginning period, all of us are existing in the intermediate period, and death is around the corner. We have but a short time to live, and each body part depends on the others to sustain life day-to-day. Before long, the mind and the body will separate. Nothing is born but suffering and nothing stops but suffering. Only suffering exists in the present, and it began at conception. The initial state is but a drop of fertilized liquid which develops into a lump of blood, which grows to become an embryo, with protuberances of a head to be, two arms to be, and two legs to be. These protuberances grow to become a head, arms, and legs. The body further develops eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, and a trunk. Fingers and toes form. Further development of the body results in the existence of hair, body hair, fingernails, toenails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bones, endogenous bone membrane, spleen, heart, liver, lungs, colon, intestine, bile, phlegm, blood, lymph, sweat, tears, saliva, mucous, urine, and fat. All these things develop from a fertilized egg inside the mother’s womb.

What makes one cling to these body parts as “me?” After living full-term in its mother’s womb, a baby lies down on a padded cushion. The baby doesn’t yet know its parents or language, but immediately after birth it spontaneously knows how to suffer and cry constantly. Suffering began at conception, within the tiny lump of blood in the mother’s womb, and occurring with it is the characteristic of variant impermanence. Where and whenever suffering occurs, so too does impermanence and, as a result, the vanishing non-self characteristic of the body. Because people lack the wisdom to contemplate these natural conditions or universal characteristics of the body, they wrongly presume that the body is “me.” The body’s natural plight acts in opposition to the feeling of “me.” It disavows “me.” It isn’t subservient to “me.” The body acts independently according to its three characteristics, going into decline until it finally perishes. People don’t consider the body’s disavowal of self. When their bodies decline, people become miserable with pain in their hearts because they want their bodies to be forever healthy. The body is, in fact, a lump of suffering, so how can people make their bodies healthy and happy forever? When a lump of suffering, a body, exists, it is necessary to struggle to sustain and support life on a daily basis, but not forever. When the body goes into decline, it is in vain to try to find a remedy to fix the perishable body. This is because without exception everyone will reach the same ultimate destination, death.

The body alone without living energy or spirit is valueless. It is brought to a crematory or charnel to be disposed of. What is the value of a spiritless body? No one wants such a body. Whether if it is offered for free or in exchange for a sum such as ten thousand

baht (Thai currency equivalent) to sleep in the same room with it, no one will accept the offer. Think about the body. Ponder the body from the soles of the feet upward and from the crown of the head downward. See that the body is covered by skin, and filled with all sorts of unclean organic matter. This is the true nature and condition of the body.

The body begins in an unclean place and is formed by unclean organic matter. It stays in that unclean place for several months until the nativity. When it leaves that unclean place, the food which sustains its life is also unclean, but the baby eats it anyway. All food is unclean, and when it is leftover, it rots and finally vanishes. All foods come from the elements and are just elements. Even when we cook our food, the cooked foods are just elements. We eat these “food elements” to sustain and nourish our bodies, which are also just composed of elements. We eat as “a duty” to our bodies. No matter how savory an entree or delicious a dessert, our food intake is merely to create the feeling of a full stomach and to sustain our bodies.

The body isn’t under anyone’s control. Even though the body receives savory food, it doesn’t become younger, nor is there any effect on the aging process. Even though one may have an ample supply of money, jewelry, or property, it is inevitable that one’s body will still age. Regardless of one’s wealth or status, aging occurs and ailments come along with senility. The older one gets, the more illness that person shall meet. As a result of senility and aging, suffering accumulates and arises because one cannot stop senility and ailments from occurring.



The mind doesn't perceive or understand the true characteristics and nature of the body. This is because people don't know how to contemplate the body using wisdom in order to truly know the true nature of the body. Many try to find external ways to conceal the true condition, through beauty enhancements, cosmetic surgery, and the like. But even if one spends millions to prevent aging and illness, it will be in vain because illness and aging are the true nature and condition of the body. Eventually, all people die. People cannot prevent death, despite spending lavishly to avoid it. When the body completes its job, it shall naturally go back to its original elements. No one can keep the body from decline. One cannot stop eventual blindness and deafness. Nor can one control the condition of the hair, body hair, nails, teeth, and skin. No one can maintain these in the same condition over time. The three true characteristics of the body – impermanence, suffering, and non-self – account for the body's change over time. Even if one is reborn into another life, one will again become old, ill, and die in that life. Every rebirth comes with eventual illness and death. One can truly say that the world is “the birth world” and the “death world.”

People are born to pursue their expectations of pleasure, but instead of being able to admire their own offspring and enjoy lustful pleasure as long as they want, they die without fulfilling their desired expectations. They are never satiated with sensual lust before they die. It isn't wrong to say this is a “disappointing world.” With that view, we should analyze the disappointments we experience so that the mind will come to know the real circumstances and misery of repetitive births, illnesses, and deaths. People have gone through repetitive life cycles for a vast

period of time. They are entrapped to future birth, aging, illness, and death with no knowledge of the end. Why don't people feel they have had enough of these repeating life cycles? Why don't they get tired of rebirth and its unavoidable consequences? With every rebirth, people come into the world having the same natural elements which have their three true characteristics. As an unavoidable consequences, people are doomed to misery in both their bodies and minds.

No matter how much wealth one possesses, eventually, all of one's wealth will be turned back to the world because all possessions existing in this world belong to this world. Although one can take possessions home, he or she can only use them in this world. In previous lives, one has used world treasures to live, and in this life, one uses world treasures to live as well. But before long, one shall die and become separated from these world treasures. Survivors and inheritors will receive those fortunes, and then they, themselves, will die and return to the original elements, leaving those treasures behind.

Before the Lord Buddha, the non-teaching Buddha (*Pacceka**buddha*) and *Phra khīnāsava* (pure Noble Ones) attained enlightenment, they contemplated the body using wisdom. Their minds came to accept the realization that all bodies are born from the elements and were fed by the elements to give energy for their existence. Eventually, the body will die and return to the elements. Therefore, the body has no substantial point for anyone to cling to. When contemplating the body, one can see that it is like a water bubble that before long will break and disappear. Or, it is like sunshine which disappears when night falls. When

contemplating the body, one should compare the bodies of others to their own, or even an animal's body, seeing the same quality of elements that comprise the bodies. When one sees a dead human or animal, they should consider that those bodies are made up of the same elements as their own body. Examining those similarities and compositions, one should draw those images inward and consider that those dead bodies used to be alive. But just as they have died, so too shall you die. All people die and return to the original elements. This is an indisputable and universal truth. Both humans and animals are subject to occurring, existing, and perishing. No body part or thing has any substantial meaning for one to cling to as "me" or "mine". One must contemplate the body and things all around to see the detrimental effects of attachment because all things deteriorate. Issues in the past, present, and future should be considered in contemplation to demonstrate to the mind the detrimental effect of attachment. Our own bodies, bodies of others, and other objects with or without living energy or spirit must be contemplated in a similar fashion. Things all around, near or far, crude or subtle, must be brought to the mind and seen as having the same characteristics: suffering, impermanence, and vanishing disintegration, or becoming void from a state of being. During such contemplation, if one becomes weary, one should stop and engage in tranquility meditation to reenergize the mind. After the mind gains strength from meditation, one can then return to contemplation. This Dhamma contemplation can be done using any sitting body posture or while walking.

All Dhamma contemplation must result in cognitive knowledge and acceptance by the mind. For instance, if one contemplates

suffering, one must understand both sufferings in the body and the mind. Such contemplation about suffering must result in knowledge and an acceptance of that knowledge by the mind. If one contemplates all impermanent things, including the body and the mind, one's mind must come to understand the characteristic of impermanence as a result of that wisdom contemplation. Likewise, when one contemplates the vanishing disintegration of the body as it returns to the original elements, one must come to see the true quality of the body as a result of that contemplation. The mind must know and accept the wisdom contemplation accordingly. When one contemplates the ugliness of body parts, the mind must follow that wisdom contemplation and see the ugly condition of all body parts. As one contemplates the rotten unclean quality of the body, their mind must really see that rotten unclean quality. The mind must see whatever wisdom is contemplating and teaching the mind. Wisdom to mind teaching can be compared to a teacher teaching a student. If students fall asleep while a teacher is teaching, the teacher will become tired of not attaining the desired results. Students must follow what a teacher is teaching in order to understand what is being taught. Although teaching day and night can occur while walking, lying down, or sitting, teaching by wisdom will be futile if the sleeping mind doesn't follow wisdom's teaching. The mind will fail to understand the ugliness of the body and the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and vanishing non-self. If the mind learns nothing about the eventual demise of the body, how can the mind become dispassionate about the body and its quality of suffering, impermanence, and non-self?

The job of wisdom is to teach the mind, making it knowledgeable and wise. Wisdom teaches the mind through contemplation about the detrimental effects of birth, senility, illness, and death. One contemplates these things for the mind to understand. Wisdom contemplation isn't bounded by time or location. Wisdom contemplation can be done freely without the requirement that it be done after sitting or walking meditation. Wisdom contemplation can be done at the critical moment that defilements arise in the mind. Defilements, craving, lust, avarice, fury, or delusion can quickly strike the mind at any time. Whenever these defilements strike, the mind becomes negatively affected. Dhamma practitioners shouldn't make excuses or feel that they have to meditate first after the mind is struck by defilements. It might be too late because defilements readily attack the mind and impact it. If one lets the defilement negatively affect the mind or devastate it, how can one then ponder a way to fight back those defilements? Procrastination or delay in contemplation with wisdom can be compared to the figurative language used in Thai folklore, in the idea that one might string a barbed wire fence around a rice field after the cattle have already invaded the field and begun to chew all the young rice stalks. Defilements invade to gnaw at someone's internal organs and confidence in the mind. After the mind collapses, how can they learn to practice sitting and walking meditation and how to contemplate with wisdom? How can one then overcome the attack by defilements?

Dhamma practice of the enlightened is different from that of most people. Those who are enlightened don't make any excuses. Regardless of the time and place, the Noble Ones always have

their wisdom and mindfulness to guard their minds. Inputs from their sensory perceptors - the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body - become material for their wisdom to contemplate impermanence, suffering, and being non-self. Noble Ones examine and contemplate sound, sweet fragrances, foul odors, soft and hard touch according to the three true characteristics. Likewise, they contemplate all flavors from their food and recognize that food consists of elements used to sustain their own body rather than for beauty or enhancement. They contemplate the happiness that has occurred to them and understand it as a cause for suffering because happiness and suffering go hand in hand.

When contemplating with wisdom and mindfulness, one sees animals and compares the similarities in the composition of those animal bodies with one's own body. Humans and animals have the same necessities for living: finding food to eat and shelter for the protection of their elements. One can see the basic similarities between humans and animals. Both are doomed to birth, senility, illness, and death. Both are subject to occurring, existing, and perishing. When looking at a dead human or animal, one should compare the bodies that used to be alive to one's own body. Both humans and animals work for food and shelter, and both share love and happiness as well as hate and misery. They both occur, exist, and perish, and they are composed of the same elements. They both die and return to the same original elements: earth, water, air, and fire. In diligently comparing dead bodies, taking time to thoroughly compare body parts of each, including the head, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, teeth, hair, and limbs, one can examine in detail the life-filled image of his own body and that of

a dead body. One shouldn't rush through such a comparison or make a general comparison, for to do so will bring an incorrect result. With similar bodies as those that are dead, one must know that death is inevitable and that we all will come to the same condition as those that are dead. Those dead bodies used to be alive, and just as they have died, so too shall we die. Everyone dies. Those just born shall come to die in the same way. One should contemplate these irrefutable facts of life according to the three true characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and vanishing non-self. In doing so, the mind must always be drawn into the contemplation to receive and accept what wisdom teaches. Contemplation must be done every time and everywhere one sees a dead human or animal, regardless of whether it was standing, walking, sitting, or lying down.

One should contemplate with wisdom all of one's possessions. Each possession should be brought into one's mind, to be used as a contemplative object. Do all possessions belong to us? If so, justify this assumption as a result of contemplation. In determining the true quality of one's possessions, one should contemplate the three characteristics which naturally apply to possessions. Select and contemplate one possession at a time. Notice how people tend to become attached to their possessions. If their possessions are ruined, destroyed, or lost due to flood, fire, or theft, that attachment shall cause the person to suffer. According to the Lord Buddha, "Things which one clinches to as 'they are mine' are things that will cause suffering to that person." Suffering begins when possessions are acquired. The continual care or loss of such items causes suffering and suffering further occurs when

one worries about losing these things. If the “possession” is instead a friend or friends, people experience suffering when they aren’t treated fairly.

When contemplating with wisdom, people shouldn’t take events they experience and compare them with Dhamma theory, because Dhamma theory is just a guiding principle. On the other hand, people shouldn’t totally ignore Dhamma theory. People have different everyday life experiences. When contemplating these experiences with wisdom, a person should consider each incident as a contemplative object to determine its true nature. Some people may see others laughing or perhaps crying. Some may see people or animals die right in front of them. Some may see a pit full of feces or a poisonous snake, a tiger, or crocodile. Others may see a whirlpool, water bubbles, sunshine, flood, or fire. One should contemplate whatever one sees in everyday life. In doing so, one should bring those things into one’s mind, to examine and compare them. In order to see equally the quality of both his or her body and mind, one must contemplate the same three true characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

Well-rounded knowledge of objects and incidents that occur around us produces wisdom. Wisdom functions to contemplate things around us to determine their true nature. Thinking and discerning things must be done with irrefutable reasoning. Most of the knowledge that we have is from the memorization of information from sources outside of ourselves. The knowledge that comes from these other sources is merely worldly knowledge. To develop an insightful mind, one must wisely utilize worldly



knowledge and recognize things as contemplative materials for analysis and discernment – in other words, for applying wisdom.

Wisdom is used to thoroughly analyze recollections to gain the revelation of truth, exposing it to the mind. Wisdom collects various accounts and items from recollections to examine them, exposing them during contemplation to the universal and fundamental properties of impermanence, suffering, and being non-self. While wisdom is analyzing and disclosing all accounts of the worldly being, the mind must also be drawn in to have a view of the truth. The mind then accepts the truth about the world and becomes insightful and knowledgeable. The mind comes to have a well-rounded knowledge of the world. Wisdom and the mind shall then know all worldly happenings; the world in the present and the world in the future; and the present life and the future life. Wisdom shall expose to the mind to everything about human beings and creatures, including how they conduct their lives. As a result, the mind gets at the truth. Wisdom follows along and gathers all recollections and worldly knowledge, applies the three universal qualities, and concludes the truth. Regardless of the location, wisdom actively works during the course of contemplation, enlightening the mind.

One can use wisdom to analyze the cause of emotion. Emotion is like a thermometer for measuring the impurity and craving of the mind. For example, the emotion of erotic sensation will occur if the mind thinks a lot about sexual desire. The emotion of craving will appear if the mind indulges in craving. When the mind entertains lust, lustful emotion will arise in the mind. If the mind fixes on anger, angry emotion arises and one becomes irritable.

Emotion, then, is a high-minded pressure or a low-minded pressure mechanism. Through the presence of emotion in the mind, one shall know the mind, whether having low thought of erotic sensation or having vanity and self-conceit. Emotion reflects the defilement in the mind, but the emotion, itself, isn't the defilement. Heat comes from fire, as emotion comes from the mind's defilement. Impurity and craving defile the mind and bring forth emotion as a result. A happy mind or a suffering mind is reflected by emotions.

Perceiving emotion is a reason for wisdom to investigate the cause and the source of defilement and craving. Just as one should know when trying to extinguish a fire, one trying to catch a gang of thieves must locate the thieves and learn about them and their leader. With regard to our mind, there is little self-dependence when it comes to lust. A lustful mind is the source of lust and desire. Lust and desire in the mind shall become aggravated, causing the craving mind to cling to desired forms and favorite sounds to nurture the lust and craving in the mind.

More often than not, if one cannot acquire attractive forms and sounds, one will imagine desirable images dancing or singing to provide amusement and sensual gratification. One's imagination provides for variety and goes on and on making images to divert the mind into the way of defilements and lust. As a result, lust in the mind expands and causes the person to suffer. Therefore, we must develop wisdom in order to find the cause that produces the defilement. This is like finding the gang leader. Lack of knowledge and ignorance dwelling in the mind are like the gang leader causing the mind to be deluded. With a deluded mind,

people indulge their minds in doing things that they seek and have cravings with no boundaries. An ignorant blind mind can be likened to a lost blind man who cannot see adversity heading towards him. He may unknowingly step on a poisonous snake or walk into a tiger's mouth. A blind man cannot see the shore to swim towards, so he may lose proper direction and swim in circles until he drowns, or he may unknowingly risk his life by swimming to an alligator. Similarly, one with a murky, blinded mind lacks knowledge about the true journey of life, where it comes from, and where it is going. We have all lived in this world many rounds, having made repeated appearances over a very long time. But murky, blind-minded people live in darkness in this world because they have the false belief that they live in a new world. This false notion ultimately disappoints the mind. The world that one is in is always the old world. How can people expect to arrive at a desired new world? Every birthplace is an old place. Every circumstance of birth is the same old circumstance, all being delivered from the same source. The integrated body elements are made of the same old earth, water, air, and fire. Food for nourishment is made of the same old elements. The same old genders, female and male, living creatures and humans, again create passionate relationships wherein they "belong" to each other. Corporeal forms, sounds, smell, taste, and touch are the same. Alcoholics become drunk, fight with on other, and strike each other's heads in the same old behavioral disputes. The struggle to eat and live remains the same in this old world. Theft and robbery continue. Invasion of personal privacy continues as it did before. Those who tell lies and speak badly of others continue. Farms are the same old farms. The construction of

houses is also the same. People have been born in past lives and will be reborn into future lives in this same old world. Suffering and misery will be the same in the future as it is in the present. Birth, illness, senility, and death shall occur in the future in this same old world. People unwittingly encounter the same old being and existence in this same old world. Why don't they feel they have had enough of all these same old patterns and suffering? The reason is that people have the wrong notion that the world is new to them. Defilement has pulled a robe through the nose of those who think so, for they have made many, many repeated trips to this world. They have made many journeys to this world without being satisfied or becoming sick of it. Nevertheless, they behave with perversions, showing happiness and boastful pride of owning possessions and dominance over others. They bluff and intimidate, and try to rise above others, even though no one can gain true victory. As for being happy about owning possessions, the reality is that possessions cannot be taken with you when you pass from one life to the next. This perverse behavior is caused by *avijjā* – ignorance and lack of knowledge.

Therefore, we must contemplate with wisdom. Contemplating with wisdom about things all around us will provide well-rounded knowledge so the mind will become lucid and knowledgeable. Dhamma contemplation will provide a clear view of things existing in this world, our own worldly being, and how things happen in this world. With wisdom's lead, the mind shall become perceptive and lucid. Contemplation to determine the truthfulness of how things occur in the world allows wisdom to teach the mind to be knowledgeable. Knowledge and lucidity of the mind do not happen randomly without cause or reason. If one sits in a dark

room and wants a light, but doesn't try to find a lamp to light the room, one shall remain in the dark. Likewise, we may want to cultivate wisdom, but if we don't practice Dhamma thought training to discover the truth of things around us, such as the condition and plight of all of our body parts, wisdom won't suddenly develop. Thought training must include the four elements of the body and other objects and consideration of the three true characteristics. Without such contemplation, wisdom shall not arise in anyone. One should also compare one's own body to those of others to see the similarities. Doing body contemplation, as described, triggers the arising of wisdom and the elimination of darkness. If the wisdom is lucid, the mind will be lucid. If the mind is blind and dark, the subsequent view shall be blind and dark as well. Thoughts from a dark mind will generate dark ideas. Such a person doesn't listen to others' opinions but acts upon one's self-indulgent impulses. Such people also flaunt their own false knowledge. They disregard reason or righteousness, in order not to lose their "advantage" over others. This is analogous to a blind-minded person who has fallen into a pit of feces but is too proud to ask a knowing person how to get out. Regardless of the reality, they will dispute the reasons they suffered such a situation. Such people like to experiment and challenge, but when things go wrong, they maintain their opinions and give excuses to support their false beliefs, often becoming bitter in the process. Blind-minded people often experience bitterness because they like to challenge things until they come to the situation like an ant experimenting with honey. The ant keeps moving around the honey until its legs get stuck to the honey. Eventually, the ant will die in the honey. The same thing

with the ignorant, blind-minded person who goes everywhere in darkness and cannot see a thing. Even if a king cobra snake lies across his path, that blind-minded person will continue to walk towards it. Even if they walk into an area with thorns, become lost in a forest, or fall into a pit, these blind-minded people don't want to end their lost journey or change their ways.

Without true knowing and true seeing, one will misunderstand right and wrong. This ignorance and lack of knowledge is termed "*avijjā*" in Pali. This lack of knowledge includes not understanding the cause and effect of things that bring one to tears now and then and will continue to bring tears without end. *Avijjā* exists, boldly raising its head in people's hearts. In order to understand *avijjā*, one must mindfully perceive his or her emotions. While coming to understand *avijjā*, one needs to contemplate with wisdom the cause of the emotion and how people misunderstand it. Perceiving emotion to make *avijjā* visible and available for contemplation can be compared to one who wants to kill a tiger. One must first see it in order to locate it and gain victory. If we want to end the repetitive cycles of suffering, we have to know the cause of suffering. In order to cut off things we must clearly see and know them and their causes first.

Hence, Dhamma practitioners should put intellect training into their practice. Intellect training doesn't require speech since some clever speech may just be words of another. It isn't necessary for the intellectual mind to speak out because it is well-equipped within. It knows what is happening in the heart and wisely and competently solves its own problems without the need for help from others. When people with intellect listen to Dhamma and

guidance for their practice, they practice Dhamma accordingly and improve themselves. They are able to derive shrewd methods to exercise their intelligence to rid their minds of defilement. Those who have intellect, possess it everywhere they go, and this is consistent whether they are alone or with others. They are able to recognize what to ponder and apply Dhamma contemplation with wisdom to all those things around them. As a result, they can see Dhamma all the time. As the Pali axiom states, “*Yo dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati,*” meaning that whoever sees Dhamma, knows the *tathāgata* – the Lord Buddha. Here the word “sees” refers to the vision resulting from capable wisdom, and the word “know” refers to the knowing through the use of capable wisdom.

Capable wisdom used in contemplating Dhamma makes the mind clear-sighted, knowledgeable, keen, and intellectual. The mind is enabled by capable wisdom to relinquish defilements and lust. Murkiness, blindness, and the lost circumstances of the mind will disappear because of the lucid cognizance given to the mind by capable wisdom. The mind is led by capable wisdom to know the detrimental effects of the wheel of rebirth in the three realms. Capable wisdom brings the mind, withdrawing it out of all big and small defilements. The mind shall become purified because of wisdom, as indicated in the Pali phrase, “*Paññāya parisujjhati.*” The cycles of repetitive birth shall be brought to an end because of wisdom.

Without wisdom, even if one watches the Lord Buddha constantly until one’s death, one will be unable to see the Lord Buddha. Even though one holds on to the Lord Buddha’s frilled robe, one cannot

see the Lord Buddha at all. Even though one eats and sleeps while holding close to the *Tipiṭaka* cabinet, one will not see Dhamma because craving, lust, defilement, and lack of knowledge don't dwell on paper. Avarice, anger, and delusion aren't on paper. Happiness and misery aren't on paper either. The actual Dhamma path, Dhamma fruition, purity, and *Nibbāna* aren't in the books. The Dhamma books merely list the names of craving lust, defilement, ignorance, greediness, and anger. The names of defilements in the books are merely the Dhamma name, but the real defilements dwell within one's body and mind. Defilements influence thinking and action, forming the decency and indecency of bodily action, speech, and thoughts. The Dhamma books aren't about the real touch of Dhamma. The names of defilements in the books are like names of persons, Mr. A or Mr. B, whose names only represent, but aren't actually the persons themselves.

Like a world map, from which people can learn the names and locations of countries, Dhamma books are like a roadmap for Dhamma. Some may only wish to learn the world map for the sake of knowledge but don't actually want to go to the countries on the map. Similarly, Dhamma books contain all the information needed and list the consequences of having defilements, lust, ignorance, anger, avarice, and delusion. They outline the consequences of suffering that comes with rebirth, senility, ailments, and death. They include information about how to avoid such suffering. Dhamma books also describe the progression in Dhamma practice, from the preparatory method to the ultimate goal of Dhamma practice, and all the paths one should take and those to avoid. Dhamma books provide a thorough step-by-step approach to Dhamma practice, right up to the ultimate goal, until



“*katam karanīyam*” meaning, “there’s no further to go on the path.”

Learning the Dhamma map from the books is fine, but one needs hands-on Dhamma practice which includes observance of the precepts, meditation, and development of wisdom to purify the mind. Learning the Dhamma map alone is like reading the *Tiṭṭaka* without hands-on Dhamma practice. This has happened to highly-learned monks. In the Lord Buddha’s time, *Phra Poṭhila* was a well-learned monk, but eventually he had to surrender himself to a seven-year-old novice monk in order to learn hands-on Dhamma practice. Why didn’t he apply those theories of Dhamma in practice by contemplating the Four Noble Truths, suffering, the cause of suffering, the extinguishing of suffering (*nirodha*), and the means of practicing to extinguish suffering (*magga*)? Why couldn’t he help himself by applying Dhamma theory, theory of practice, and knowledge of the resulting fruition which he had studied to attain purity of mind? Studying every step of Dhamma practice thoroughly, yet not actually practicing it is like giving a mirror to a blind person. Theoretical knowledge given to a witless one is futile. There is no wisdom in thoughtless ones, and there is no discernment in dull-minded ones. *Phra Poṭhila* learned Dhamma theory well, but with no hands-on practice, he had to allow himself to learn how to practice from a young novice.

Practicing Dhamma is like eating food. The resulting fruition of Dhamma practice is like the body becoming satiated by food. Learning Dhamma theory is an essential part of Dhamma practice, but needs to be bounded to an adequate state. Be careful not to overly learn theory, so that it becomes destructive to the learner. Once overly learned theory expands, it cannot be shrunk or

compressed, and it may damage one beyond being curable. For some reason, excessive education in Dhamma theory may result in one becoming self-absorbed and conceited like *Phra Poṭhila*.

Those who practice Dhamma and expect progression in doing that shouldn't make the assumption that because of a young age, death is far off, for such false confidence may result in procrastination in practicing Dhamma. Having such false confidence may cause one to indulge in erotic lust, losing control, and allowing their minds to wander elsewhere. Minds attracted to a favorite erotic emotion will fail to pursue mind development. Dhamma practitioners should be faithful to practice Dhamma and strive for its result because it leads practitioners to growing goodness and progressing in the Dhamma. Dhamma brings to one's heart true happiness. Continual practice of Dhamma is essential, yet still gives one the flexibility to make a living while obtaining sufficient material possessions to sustain one's life. One who practices Dhamma and values wealth rather than Dhamma cannot develop Dhamma in their mind. Such a person hardly dedicates themselves to Dhamma practice, so continuous practice is unlikely. Such a person is prone to forget about contemplating Dhamma because they have a lack of real resolve. Practicing Dhamma without real resolve and dedication causes one to come to a standstill and not progress, so the desired result is unattainable. Sufficient resolve is the key to successful Dhamma practice.

Every syllabus of Dhamma contemplation that one practices must be considered in relation to the three true characteristics of impermanence and uncertainty, suffering, and vanishing non-self.

For example, contemplation of loathsomeness and contemplation of birth, senility, ailment, and death are considered in regard to these three characteristics. For one to understand how the mind and the body relate to each other, one visualizes dissection of the body and contemplates each part of the body as it is when it is alive. One contemplates with wisdom to understand the suffering of the body and mind as well as the causes of that suffering. Suffering doesn't only occur to the body, but also occurs in the mind. Attachment (*upādāna*) to the body by the mind causes one to have either happiness or suffering in the mind. Dead bodies and living bodies both consist of the same elements, but dead bodies, without living spirit, don't have suffering or happiness. The emotions in the mind cause happiness or suffering in the mind. The emotion that comes from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and touch aren't happiness or suffering. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and touch are just the bridge for the corporeal form to connect with the mind, which then processes these sensations to produce happy or suffering emotions in the mind. These resulting emotions are deeply imprinted in our hearts. These are the so called "*dhammārammaṇa*."

The eyes, ears, nose tongue, and body aren't the knower. When we look at a dead body that has the same features of eyes, ears, nose and tongue, we see that these features don't perceive. They aren't the knower. The fact is that the mind is the knower. When the living spirit referred to as the mind, leaves the body, the body's features have no perception or knowing. Only the mind can receive all Dhamma. Only the mind is the knower. Only the mind can accomplish knowing. As long as one is alive, emotions will be with that person. When love, passion, or erotic lust arises

in the mind, those emotions come from the mind. When greediness, anger, delusion, defilement, craving or passionate lust arise in the mind, *dhammārammaṇa*, the emotion shown coming from the mind shall result.

Emotion emitted from the mind is like the heat emitted from a fire. If the mind becomes inflamed, a fire-like emotion arises. When the mind senses an unpleasant feeling, it begins to suffer, sending out the feeling of suffering to the entire body. In contrast, when the mind is happy, a happy emotion arises and is sent out, causing the body to be joyful as a result. Emotion is generated in the mind and is a mind-measuring implement, similar to a medical instrument used to check the condition of the body, just as a thermometer is used to measure body temperature or a sphygmomanometer that is used to measure blood pressure. In checking blood or urine, a doctor uses specific instruments to check for a possible illness of the body. Emotions are like built-in instruments which indicate a normal or abnormal condition of the mind. The mind undergoes happiness, misery, gladness, sadness, or disturbances about all kinds of things. The mind undergoes love and hatred, caused by perception through the five sense receptors which send objective form, sounds, smells, taste, and touch to the mind for processing. The emotions that arise from the mind reflect what is going on in the mind, and the mind's emotion (*ārammaṇa*).

The emotional delusion of the mind is caused by the lack of knowledge of the truth, called "*niyānika-dhamma*" in Pali. This is a state or condition of the mind, indicating the mind lacks the knowledge of suffering and its cause. This kind of mind doesn't

know how to practice to extinguish the cause of suffering. In summary, the mind with no knowledge doesn't know the true character of live or lifeless objects. Instead, this mind's knowledge will result in one burying or burning oneself. This mind is adept at drifting along the stream of the world, clenching onto the things of this world, not wanting to let go even until both ears are pulled apart. Such people are only concerned about their own desires, unable to let go even if the Lord Buddha himself or the noble ones implored them to

Dhamma practice in the Lord Buddha's time and Dhamma practice in the present time produce the same result because both have the same method of precept observance, meditation, and wisdom development to follow. Righteous perception (*sammā-ditṭhi*) is the main fundamental guiding principle, leading the other seven subjects of the array of the Noble Path. If one fails to have the right view in Dhamma practice, the other seven subjects of the Noble Path shall collapse like a herd of swimming cows. If the head of a herd swims straight on the right track, the rest of the cows will swim on the right track too. But if the head of the herd swims in figure eight, the rest of the herd won't swim straight either. If the head of the herd strands the herd in a whirlpool, the followers will be stranded and drawn in as a consequence.

One who practices Dhamma needs to establish the right view toward the Noble Path in his practice and strive for Dhamma fruition. One must be consistent, relentless, and bold, with a firm resolve to practice Dhamma and eliminate foolishness in the mind and develop keen wisdom. Wisdom is like a bright light in the mind, and it is used to propel darkness from the mind. To enlighten

the mind, one uses wisdom to light it up, spot, down to the very depths and to the deepest part of the mind, so the mind will be able to see and know the real view of things all around. This is the result of the bright light given to the mind by wisdom, in Pali terms, “*vijjā*.” Wisdom shines its bright light in the mind for the mind to become knowledgeable and intellectual, able to distinguish clearly between what is right and what is wrong. Wisdom eliminates those things which have concealed the truth, making it possible for the mind to see the truth of everything from the inside out. “Bright-minded” is an appropriate term for this character of the mind. Insight arises simultaneously with the character of bright-mindedness. This mind is lustrous with lucid knowledge, and nothing can conceal such a mind or keep it from knowing. This mind can clearly see whatever it wants to know.

Defilement and craving lust cannot fool or lie to the keen intellectual mind because the mind has discernment and knowledge about the wiles of defilement and craving. Since the mind has dealt with defilement and craving for a very long time, it knows well the worthless work resulting from defilement and craving, and how defilement and craving maneuvers to produce that work. The mind, when influenced by defilement and craving, has gotten only misfortune and misery. In taking a look at what defilement has done to us, we see that it results in uncertainty and impermanence. Defilement creates things that come to exist, but then become ill, old, and eventually die. There is nothing which we can claim to be permanently “me” or “mine.” All of the possessions that we gain, no matter how large or small, are only used for sustaining our livers day to day. Before long, we have to part from them. The mind having wisdom realizes the truthful

nature of all things, so it will withdraw itself from the deep sinkhole of defilement. It will cut off its association with defilement. Indulging in defilement and craving will be put to an end.

The contemplation of body parts and emotions, at this level, is done with basic ordinary wisdom. Though ordinary wisdom is used, because one contemplates things as they really are, this wisdom will reach the truth. Though one presupposes while contemplating, that presupposition will be based on the truth. Though one assumes while contemplating, that assumption will be based on the truth. And though one supposes while contemplating, that supposition will be based on the truth. It shall be a true supposition. The wisdom used to contemplate things, to clarify the view of things, is basic wisdom. This basic wisdom is the required connecting bridge to “*vipassanā-ñāṇa*,” the insight of knowing. Such refined knowing comes from the progressively developed basic wisdom.

Crude wisdom and crude meditation are mutually supportive. They support each other. Together they are like a mature tree. If someone wants to use that tree to build a house, they must first cut down that tree and saw it into various pieces of wood. The total volume of wood is calculated, and the tree is divided into parts from which structural parts of the house will be made. A calculation is made in planning what part of the tree will be used for what purpose, for example, pillars, poles, beams, walls, floorboards, etc. In the sawmill, after accurate calculations are made, one acts as a carpenter and saws the tree into pieces of building materials and smoothes them out. The design of the house to produce the desired model is also made. In producing

a house, one makes his own blueprint and then builds the house in which he will live. Depending on the use of someone else's house may be possible, but only for the short term. A homeless person may stay at somebody's house for a while, but not permanently. As with depending on a cloud to produce protective shade, one uses that cloud to shield the heat from the sun, but soon the cloud naturally moves away. Then one must suffer in the hot sun because there is no more shade from the passing cloud. Dhamma knowledge by one who has no wisdom for himself to develop his mind, uses Dhamma narration from someone else, getting merely theory or superficial knowledge. It leaves him when the narration ends because that person isn't wise enough to absorb Dhamma deeply into his own heart.

If the mind is arid and wisdom is deficient and incapable of clarifying Dhamma to the mind, even if a person listens to a Dhamma teaching, he won't have sufficient wisdom to keep that Dhamma information and make it grow in his heart. Storing Dhamma information is like storing rainwater. Rainwater is useless to a person unless there is a place to store it. Even if there is a place to store it, but it isn't used, then it is still worthless to the person.

Crude wisdom is the foundation upon which subtle and more refined wisdom is based. To lay a foundation of wisdom, one has to come across or experience goodness and badness, fighting and sometimes running away from whatever is being dealt with. Sometimes when endeavoring to cope with basic wisdom, a person stumbles and falls, or lurches ahead momentarily and then flounders. That person will struggle to develop wisdom, but can do so if he is relentless. It is impossible to hope to have an instantly



smooth path of wisdom development. Like highway construction, first, the contractors must survey the path through the thick forest, using big trucks and bulldozers to do it. They clear the path and break ground to construct a highway. They then bring in truckloads of dirt and rocks, compressing it with rollers to make a way. After all that preparatory work, they pave the highway with concrete or asphalt, smoothing it all out. Likewise with building wisdom, building up crude wisdom so that it will develop from being the foundation to becoming subtle wisdom is a struggle and difficult job, but it is a critical one. This is like a police officer who endeavors to enforce the law and suppress crime by doing outstanding work. He will progress and be promoted to sergeant, lieutenant, captain, or colonel. Likewise, one can use and develop basic wisdom based upon rational discernment and contemplation of things relative to the three true characteristics by beginning with basic wisdom. The work can be done.

Contemplating with basic wisdom should be done as often as possible. Basic wisdom will develop progressively to become more refined and subtle as a result. If we often practice our handwriting, our penmanship will improve and we will become more skillful. Likewise, frequent contemplation with wisdom will enable one to see and understand the true nature of the existence of all beings in regard to their three true qualities. A person will be able to see a more subtle state of all existences, expanding their view like a small young mango. A young mango is only as big as the head of a match in its initial state. It grows to a mature sour mango. Over time it ripens and develops a natural sweetness. As is a young mango, so is basic wisdom. When developing basic wisdom, one actually must deal with hardship and cope with

troubles, stumbling and floundering through. Although meditation and contemplation ability isn't yet developed and stable at this point, one can patiently cope with those problems, by being self-supportive and taking care of themselves.

Building skillful wisdom can be compared to a toddler learning how to walk. A toddler has to struggle to stand up and keep its body balanced while taking its first unsteady steps. In learning how to walk, a toddler often stumbles and falls, but with persistence and repetition, it continues its efforts until it can walk well. One who practices developing skillful wisdom and stable meditation will stumble and fall when beginning to practice. Prior to attaining enlightenment, the Lord Buddha and most of the noble ones had to cope with difficulty in building skillful wisdom, and some nearly lost their lives trying. When developing skillful wisdom in the beginning, they used ordinary wisdom and earnest concentration with focused intent and mindful awareness. Their practice, based on the right view and right contemplation, was to contemplate all elements and existences without regard for time, using the three true characteristics of suffering, impermanence and uncertainty, and vanishing non-self as a contemplative guide. They used their capable wisdom to probe and consider the facts from the inside out of all lives, elements, and objects, far or near, crude or subtle. From that contemplation, their minds came to see the truth as revealed by wisdom. Eventually, the Lord Buddha and the Noble Ones were able to gain purity of mind, establishing the Buddhist quintessence for all of us since that time.

Beginners should practice initially with ordinary wisdom, step by step, with the goal of moving progressively toward greater wisdom. Through contemplation, the mind is taught, using ordinary wisdom, to realize the delusions held in the past. Gradually, the mind accepts the truth revealed through wisdom and develops increased wisdom from further contemplation. Through this process, the mind becomes highly knowledgeable and keen, and able to rid itself of delusive perceptions and vulgar images. Gaining a more realistic view of the truth from wisdom contemplation, the mind will increase in wisdom from basic to intermediate level, enabling it to become more intense in tranquility and intent. Wisdom plays the influential role of convincing the mind of the real cause of suffering and the variable state of all existence. The mind will come to realize the absence of wholesomeness in passion and attachment to bodily forms, their own or those of others, because there is no substance or good result in doing that. The mind and wisdom join together to see the same true view accordingly. Wisdom and the mind see things in the dark like a good-sighted one with a flashlight in hand. Even though there may be a poisonous snake, an elephant, or a tiger in his path, he will have a way to scare them away. One travels with a pistol or a knife to protect himself from possible attack by a harmful perpetrator. This is akin to a mind traveling along with wisdom. Together, an active mind with wisdom are alert and prepared to confront all defilements and craving, anytime, anywhere, and with any surrounding circumstances. Being earnest and mindful all the time, one analyzes the cause and effect of suffering and where suffering takes place.

While basic wisdom teaches the basic mind, intermediate wisdom teaches the more developed or “intermediate” mind. After the mind accepts the true reasons of cause and effect from the teaching of wisdom, the mind will understand the cause and effect of things and those of adversity and suffering. If the mind is still attracted to things, wisdom will expose the thought and give advice to the mind as to why it is bad thinking. Wisdom shall demonstrate to the mind the cause and negative effect of being fascinated with sensuality and keep the mind from indulging itself in erotic thought. Wisdom supervises the mind like a cow herd owner watches his cows. If a cow strays towards a forest, he leads it back to where it belongs. If a cow is about to chew on field crops, the owner will strike it, making it obedient. Wisdom teaches and directs the type of thinking done by the mind. When the mind begins to think in a destructive way, wisdom warns it and leads it back to proper thinking. When the mind fascinates about erotic sensuality, wisdom will rebuke the mind. Wisdom supports good thought produced by the mind, such as doing meditation and contemplating things as they really are. Wisdom is an element of well-rounded knowledge, able to scrutinize the mind closely, and know what direction the mind is going with its thoughts, and if they are right or wrong, good or bad. Wisdom knows well the story the mind is thinking, and what good or bad impressions the mind has. It uses the story to teach the mind the detrimental effect of pondering that particular story.

Subtle wisdom teaches the subtle mind. The subtle mind is that deeply engaged in the heart is able to think low thoughts, such as those of corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, or touch. Subtle low thought is held deeply within, and there is no outward sign

of it in the form of bodily action or speech. To observe subtle low thought in the mind, one must meditate to a deep calm state, exposing one's happiness in mind and body. Someone who is adept at meditative absorption or being able to attain the deep level of meditation is more likely to expose himself to body and mind happiness in everyday life. The happiness experienced in calm mind meditation is from the subtle mind, involved in the subtle form, sound, smell, taste, and touch deep in the heart. The happiness resulting from full calm mind meditation is powerful enough to temporarily repress defilement and craving, like a stone pressing on the grass. The grass cannot grow because the stone is pressing on it. But when the stone is removed, the grass grows again. Those who wish for meditative calmness, or calmness in meditative absorption, intentionally meditate to suppress and cover up their expanding cravings and lust, using meditative happiness as an all-night diversion. Over time that person will get the wrong notion that craving, lust, ignorance, and defilement are no longer present in his or her mind. That person won't want to ponder the truth and will forget about contemplating things because they are pleased with the subtle happiness. Such a person will have their wisdom go black and won't be able to think discerningly. Similar to the body, if the disease has no outward symptoms, one doesn't think anything about the cure.

The mind is inert in calm mind meditation, making it impossible for wisdom to function. An inert and subtle mind unwittingly allows defilement and craving to imprint themselves deep in one's heart. Tigers or snakes living in a deep cave are likely to hunt for their food when people or other animals are unobservant. Similarly, when meditative calmness regresses in the mind,

defilement and craving appear and will catch corporeal form, sound, smell, taste, and touch to eat as their food. Therefore when the mind is in a subtle state, subtle wisdom must be used to search for and locate where defilement and craving are hiding. Capable wisdom and the knowing element are used to track down defilement and craving. Calmness in meditative absorption cloaks defilement and craving. The calmness must be temporarily withdrawn to allow the mind to contemplate with capable wisdom the cause and effect of defilement and craving. Withdrawing from the calmness which cloaks the defiled mind is like cleaning a wound. The gauze must be removed so that the wound can be seen and purged.

When capturing a monitor lizard from a six-hole termite mound, five holes must be closed or covered, leaving only one hole open. When the lizard sticks its head out through the hole to seek food, one can grab the lizard by the neck, secure it with a rope, and pull it from the hole while covering the hole to prevent it from going back in. Capturing a monitor lizard is like capturing defilement and craving in the subtle mind. One uses wisdom to stare at the mind. If the mind cannot be seen, then one should stare at the emotion in the mind, for emotion reflects the plight of the mind. After the emotion in the mind is identified, then one moves forward to the mind. The “mind” is the ability to know or the element of knowing. This is the core focus and concern that people who contemplate want to know about. The mind is the element wherein defilement, craving, and ignorance originally take place. This is where the cause is produced for future rebirth and existences. It is also the element to receive resulting suffering and happiness in the future. Elevating to heaven and the high

celestial world, or going down to hell, becoming a lost spirit ghost, being a devil, a monster or animal is dependent on this element of knowing. People go to a movie theatre, opera, nightclub, beer bar, or disco based on this influential element of knowing.

If people who practice mind development come to see the root of ignorance and the lack of knowledge of the deluded mind, they will edify the mind with wisdom. Wisdom teaches the mind to understand the mistakes it has made and see the resulting detrimental effects. When wisdom teaches the mind, the mind releases its willful obstinance. Wisdom teaches the mind to cease uncultivated wildness and to stop jumping along the stream of the world. Wisdom teaches the mind, getting it out of delusion, just as fierce lions or tigers can be tamed and made to become useful. Without cultivation, the mind can reach absurd and extreme boldness and this can destroy the world. If wisdom puts forth the effort to train the mind to direct its focus to do good, the mind can avail the world of a great deal of benefit. People should edify the mind with wisdom to increase its intellect and rationality. Wisdom brings in all substantial information for the mind to consider in order to understand things, permitting the mind to see and know the truth. The mind will come to attain “*ñāṇa-dassana*,” the Pali term for the state of mind in which the mind can simultaneously see and know the truth of things as they really are. In this state, the mind has wisdom indelibly imprinted on it.

Contemplating the body to see it as composed of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, wisdom and the mind will together simultaneously see and know the elements. When doing

body contemplation by visualizing the dissection of the body into parts, such as hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendon, bones, bone membrane, spleen, heart, liver, lungs, colon, intestine, fresh food, digested food, bile, phlegm, lymph, and blood, the mind together with wisdom will see and know those body parts as to their true nature. When contemplating the loathsomeness and rottenness of the body, the mind, together with wisdom, will manage to see and know the real quality of the body, causing one to understand how meaningless it is to have an attachment to the body. As a result of body contemplation, one comes to understand the suffering of the mind and body, as well as the variable condition of body parts. After one has thoroughly and properly contemplated the body, he can clearly understand that there is no “their own” or “my own” body, because all bodies eventually vanish. Once one clearly understands the true nature of the body from doing body contemplation, he will release any existing attachment to the body. He or she will, at that instant, know that the body is merely a temporary shelter for the mind.

In addition to body contemplation, it is beneficial for developing knowledge of the mind to contemplate the Five Aggregates (*khandha*) which are: corporeal form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), memory (*saññā*), compounded thought (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). As we consider the true nature of the corporeal form aggregate, we see and know that all corporeal forms are composed of components consisting of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire. The other four aggregates, which are feeling, memory, compounded thought, and



consciousness, are the plight of the mind. Light is generated from an electric bulb. Feeling, memory, compounded thought, and consciousness are the “light-like” reflection of the mind, generated by the mind.

*Vedanā* (feeling) is an emotion produced by the mind when contacting pleasant or unpleasant things and is a happy emotion, unhappy emotion, or neutral emotion. A pleasant emotion is generated in the mind by the functioning of memory, which has taken in corporeal form, sounds, smells, taste, and touch, and uses them as materials to formulate a happy emotion. When formulating happy emotion, *saññā* muses a variety of favorite images, making the mind happy in those images it produces. Actually viewing favorite images through the eyes can also create a happy emotion in the mind. Actually hearing favorite sounds with one’s own ears likewise can create a happy emotion as well. But there are a lot of happy emotions created by the functioning of *saññā*. Thus, we should consider and contemplate the nature of “happiness” and what causes it. How many days does happiness last? Happiness will go away before long because it is impermanent. When it fades away, suffering replaces it in the mind.

Memorizing is a function of *saññā*, and is more likely to be of favorite things. *Saññā* uses things in its recollection to formulate alluring thoughts and to embellish those thoughts as they are tossed back and forth in the mind. The mind is pleased with fascinating thoughts which divert the mind. The more enthralling the account produced by *saññā*, the more defilement intensifies and embellishes the account, which may at its initial stage have

been trivial. The pleasure from past emotions that aren't cleared from the mind is reprocessed by the defiled mind to become enthralled again by these pleasurable emotions. The mind visualizes fascinating images in a variety of forms. Defilements dwelling in the mind influence *saññā* to recall appearance, color, and texture of things as pleasurable in this way or that. Defilement influences the mind to visualize images to be desirable in this way or that. The images and stories produced by defilement are perfect illusions, and as good as any of the top cinema productions of the world. They are as good as any of the notable theater productions of the world, and as good as any of the famous nightclubs or discotheques of the world.

Producing delusive images in the mind, defilement knows about the language of a person's heart and how to use it to divert the mind. Defilement provides all the necessary characters for its production, including lead male and female characters, a comedian or clown, unsavory and unscrupulous characters, and others to perform the perfect show for people. Because of the irresistible show produced by defilement, people become addicted to such productions in the mind and cannot tell an old show from a new one. Defilement can arouse the mind to respond by becoming thrilled or excited by almost every scene in the show. Since the mind has indulged itself in defilement for a long time, defilement, craving, ignorance, and the mind have built a bonding relationship together into what might even be considered a friendship. However, we can manage to edify the mind with wisdom, so that the mind can get a perception of the truth and see things as they really are. The mind can become sufficiently cogent to understand worldly suffering and happiness with which

people are involved. After coming to understand that suffering is caused by happiness, the mind won't attach to happiness any longer. The more the mind contemplates the cause of suffering, the more the mind becomes dispassionate or concerned about worldly happiness.

Happiness isn't worth the resulting suffering which follows it later. Material enrichment, including monetary wealth, social status, public praise, and other "happiness" are acquisitions that most people in the world consider wonderful. Most place great value on worldly acquisitions. Therefore people put forth great effort to obtain things. If they are able to obtain these things, they believe that they have gained happiness. If they are unable to get these things, they consider themselves to experience suffering. When people lose their acquisitions, receive public ridicule, or are dispraised/ridiculed or gossiped about by others, they experience considerable suffering.

The fact is that happiness is neither certain nor permanent. Happiness is a matter which is likely mixed with poisonous things. There is no one who in the final event fulfills their wishes. Most of what we want nullifies itself. We want happiness to last forever, but does it go the way we want? We want acquisitions, social status and social praise to flourish in abundance all the time. Does that happen? As we know, senility, ailment, and death are the consequences of being born. We want birth, but not the consequences. We don't want aging, illness, or death. Neither do we want the suffering of the body or mind to happen to us. We don't want to face any penalty imposed for possible wrongdoing, sinful consequence, or revengeful act to happen to us. People

strive to attain things, but do things provide the desired result? Do things make their dreams come true? The truth is that in this mundane world there is no absolute happiness for anyone to possess. We delusively assume that this or that will give us happiness, but after we have it, we find suffering again.

We have been looking for happiness for a very long time, but thus far permanent happiness has not yet been found. Regardless, we will continue to seek happiness in the future life as we have in the present life. There is the worldly adage that says if we initially have happiness, we will face suffering in the end. If things are convenient and comfortable at the start, eventually bad things will occur that we must face. Dhamma thought adds to this idea, that if we want happiness, we must use the trail of suffering as the walking path. If we want to grow and prosper, we must get to know suffering, for eternal happiness will occur as a result.

No matter what aspect one contemplates, a refined mind with capable wisdom can ponder and consider all things, gaining a realistic view of everything. One can contemplate to see the true view of happiness and suffering, its occurrence in oneself, others, and other animals. When contemplating with wisdom, one can see through all time periods; the past, the present, and the future, coming to a clear understanding that all beings have the same process of existence, from initial occurrence to an eventual ending state. Additionally, there is no certainty or permanence in anything, including those with living spirit or those without, all mundane beings (*saṅkhāra-loka*), or Dhamma beings (*saṅkhāra-dhamma*), because all of these things consist of factors which result from cause and effect. The truthful nature of things all around always disavows the status of persons or animals of

worldly supposition. No matter how big or small an animal, there is nothing of it that will last.

One with a refined mind has the ability to simultaneously see and know the truth of things all around from the inside out, simple or profound, near or far, including all elements, all existences, and all Dhamma beings. This is because his mind has full comprehension of the three true characteristics. The Pali term “*ñāṇa-dassana*” describes such a mind and the state of the mind’s simultaneous seeing and knowing. As a result of the ability to understand things all around as they really are, all big and small defilements, craving, and ignorance, because they are in awe of such capable wisdom. They have no place to shroud themselves from such wisdom. Such wisdom equips the cognitive mind to cut off its association with defilement, closing off the channel to the mind for defilement’s use. Once accomplished, the mind soon cuts off the connection to all the elements, states of being, and all causes and effects, including that of suffering. The mind is then ready to exterminate all defilements causing attachment to the world. The mind is ready to burn defilement’s connecting bridge which cohesively connects to the world. All fire and its causes, including its embers are about to be quenched.

## Vipassanā-ñāṇa Arises and the Cause of *Vaṭṭa* Spinning is Revealed

Such keen wisdom and the cognitive intellectual mind have the capability to clearly understand the reality of all things, and this is called “*vipassanā-ñāṇa*.” One with (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) knows and understands the consequences of existence, which is mundane happiness and suffering which occurs within the wheel of rebirth in the three realms. This knowing is true knowing which grows from the mind. *Vipassanā-ñāṇa* is specific knowledge that is pointed, penetrating, and decisive, without conjecture or guessing. *Vipassanā-ñāṇa* doesn’t depend on Dhamma theory as a device for knowing. With *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, the more one knows, the more one becomes dispassionate and dreadful of existence, which is caused by ignorance. However, to stop the wheel of rebirth (*vaṭṭa*), one must capture ignorance as a hostage because it is ignorance (*avijjā*) that is the perpetrator who causes the wheel of rebirth to spin. *Avijjā* causes compounded thought (*saṅkhāra*). *Saṅkhāra* causes consciousness (*viññāṇa*). *Viññāṇa* causes the occurrence of corporeal form and mental factors (*nāma* and *rūpa*). *Nāma* and *rūpa* cause the sensory receptors (*āyatana*). *Āyatana* causes contact (*phassa*). *Phassa* causes feeling (*vedanā*). *Vedanā* causes craving (*taṇhā*). *Taṇhā* causes attachment (*upādāna*). *Upādāna* causes occurring (*bhava*). *Bhava* causes existence (*jāti*). *Jāti* causes birth.

Attachment and craving in our minds put into motion the longing and seeking for desired things. If we get what we want, we assume that we gain happiness. If we don’t get what we want, we feel unhappy and suffering. Happiness and suffering, laughing and

crying, birth and death spin around repetitiously in our lives. There is no true substantial essence on which our minds can subsist. There is no ultimate improvement or prosperity. Take a look at past lives, all living circumstances appear the same as those in the present, including all big and small animals whether ground or aquatic animals, as well as our own. The same living circumstances repeatedly spin in circles. Although people live with inevitable misery and death, spinning in the same repetitive pattern, people still live with the intent to scoop the world's treasures and gain wealth to provide themselves happiness. People everywhere eagerly leap into this world and attempt to obtain happiness. Throughout time, throughout many past lives, they have looked for happiness. But permanent mundane happiness cannot be found. From the first day of birth to the final day of their lives, all they can get is supposed happiness.

Show someone who can take their children or grandchildren with them when they leave this world, or who can take their treasures or wealth that they have earned. Eventually, people must die and have their bodies cremated or lie in a grave with dirt covering their faces. Even though they have not yet found happiness, regrettably, death rushes to return them to the original elements of earth, water, air, and fire. Everyone leaves disappointed. In life after death, some may elevate to heaven and the high celestial world, but when their term in heaven runs out, they return to this world to be reborn and then die again with dirt covering their graves. In considering how worldly creatures go through this cycle, one can feel dismal and pitiful. Unfortunately, regardless of how hard one struggles to try to find happiness in this world, they won't succeed.

## No Secret in This World

Dhamma practitioners who contemplate with wisdom coming to clearly understand the circle of repetitive rounds of rebirth (*vaṭṭa-cakka*) will become dispassionate and detached from the connecting bridge to the three spheres of being, which are the Sense Sphere, the Fine Material Sphere, and the Immaterial Sphere. Their minds will wittingly fall into tranquility. Wisdom at this level isn't ordinary wisdom. The mind at this level is extraordinary, being able to distinctively understand everything. Wherever the brightness of wisdom shines through, the mind goes along seeing the same things. There is nothing in the three realms that can be concealed from wisdom and the mind. Wisdom reveals and the mind knows about everything, so there are no secrets in this world. The brightness of wisdom is powerful enough to exhibit to the mind this entire world, the next world, and the three spheres of being. Wisdom has adequate brightness to allow the mind to see clearly and know about all existences. Wisdom's illumination shows the mind the knowledge of the vanishing supposition of animals and people. At this point, the mind doesn't become non-self, but the mind will release attachment and clear itself from all things which aren't the condition of being void or non-self.



## **It is Calmness and Cessation**

From this point forward the mind remains in full calmness and will then go to the state of extinguishment. Calmness at this state is different from the calmness of any level of meditation previously experienced. This calmness is distinctive from that derived from meditative absorption. This full calmness is the foundation for the extinguishing of self. This state has no latent mundane circumstance because all attachment has been removed from the five aggregates and the sensory receptors.

## **The Wheel of Rebirth Stops Spinning**

The wheel of rebirth ceases movement as ignorance ceases. When ignorance ceases, compounded thought ceases, and as a result consciousness ceases, causing corporeal form and mental factors to cease. Sequentially the sense receptors cease, and then contact ceases. After contact ceases, feeling ceases, which causes craving to cease. When craving ceases, attachment ceases. The circumstance of becoming ceases due to the cessation of attachment. Once attachment ceases, existence ceases. Without existence, the final cessation of suffering happens.

## No More Embers

The extinguishing of suffering occurs at this state. All of the factors and the aggregates, the becoming, existence, attachment, craving, feeling, contact, the sensory perceptors, corporeal form, mental factors, consciousness, compounded thought, and ignorance cease. Nothing can make any of these things return or become active again. The functioning of organs which are part of everyday life, which are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, can never be the same as before. If consciousness ceases, how can eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or body perceive? Feeling ceases. Since perceptive consciousness ceases, one isn't able to perceive anything. Although one still has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, one cannot contact or feel any contact because there is no connection. Both have ceased. Even the mind cannot think at that moment. The five aggregates don't function because of their cessation. Consciousness ceases, causing the cessation of corporeal form, feeling, memory, and compounded thought. One who practices to this state will know that the five aggregates are just utensils for our everyday life.

## **Insightful Knowing Encompasses the World**

When consciousness ceases, the solitary mind knows by itself. This knowing is neither knowing from perceptions of consciousness or that knowing from the five aggregates or sensory perceptors. This insightful knowing is unique. It has no attachment or following along with anything in this world or in the next world. This unique knowing has the quality of absolute knowing with no presupposition. This knowing is seemingly small, but on the other hand, it is vast enough to cover beyond the three worlds. When this full calmness and cessation has gone on for a while, the mind pulls out a little bit.

## **Extraordinary Boldness**

At this state, the mind is bolder than one can imagine. Mindfulness and wisdom are equally as bold as the mind. The mind is so bold it can pound and flatten a whole mountain in the blink of an eye. Such boldness is without equal. With such extraordinary boldness, one can sit and with the insightful mind practice for months and years.

## **Āsavakkhayañāṇa Arises**

From this extraordinary boldness, āsavakkhayañāṇa arises, giving one the realization that all impurity and defilement are about to be completely cleared out at that moment. No matter what one is doing or what body posture they are in, one shall attain noble fruition following the arising of āsavakkhayañāṇa.

## The World Detaches From the Mind and the Fire is Out

Within an acute mental moment, the pure knowledge arises from the pure mind. In just that second, one knows that he has attained noble fruition. At that moment it seems that the whole world shakes. That pure knowledge is free from any inclination or bounds to anything in the world, and as a result, the wheel of rebirth breaks its bounds to one's existence.

Continuous contemplating boldly with wisdom from the beginning is just the stepping stone to deliver one to the state of purity. From a pure heart, one pronounces the Pali phrase, "*Nibbindaṃ virajjati; virāgā vimuccati. vimuttasmim̃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ hoti. khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ.*" One comes to have a clear knowing of purity within with no doubt. The knowing of purity is the nature of the unique knowing. The knowing is unforeseen. There is no presupposition or cause to make him know.

The portion of that Pali phrase, "*vimuttasmim̃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ hoti*" describes the release and the knowing of it in that moment as it occurs. The portion "*khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*" refers to the fact that one knows his status at that time. And, "*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*" means that the job of finding contemplative thoughts to consider for extracting the cause of suffering in the mind has been concluded. All Dhamma contemplations to know the truth and relinquish attachment are accomplished. All big and small virtuous benevolence one has performed has delivered him to the ultimate state.

Wherever he is, he has no fire in his heart, so there is no job to find water to extinguish the fire. The fire is out. Some try to create Pali phrases to describe the purity of Dhamma one attains in the mind. Some may wish to make whatever assumption suitable for the purity; they are free to do so. Some may say, “*akuppadhamma, virāgadhamma, pārisuddhidhamma, diṭṭhivissuddhidhamma, visuddhi-ñāṇa-dassana, vimutti-ñāṇa-dassana, nibbānaṃ paramaṃ suññam or nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ.*”

Meanwhile, one thinks of the Lord Buddha, although aware that the Lord Buddha has gone to *Nibbāna* a long time ago. To have the gratification of seeing the Lord Buddha, he wants to see and be bound to the Lord Buddha, and if the Lord Buddha was around, he would travel to see him no matter the distance. He has no intention to see the Lord Buddha in order to show his purity of mind to him, nor does he want a prophecy from the Lord Buddha. One doesn't intend to check his Dhamma fruition attainment, whether it is correct, or what level of Noble fruition he has attained. He doesn't compare his level of Dhamma attainment with the purity of the Lord Buddha, nor does one compare his own purity with that of the Lord Buddha. He doesn't check his insightful knowledge and purity against that of Dhamma theory. If the Lord Buddha was to ask about his attainment of purity, in person or in the presence of gathered monks, he would certainly tell the Lord Buddha. He would not be afraid to say, but rather, he would be confident and bold. But if the Lord Buddha didn't ask him, he would have no reason to tell him. He clearly knows about the purity of others and his own purity because purity is purity regardless of time. No matter who attains purity, the Lord



Buddha or the Noble Ones, who are far from impurity and defilement, purity has the same quality. With the extinguishing comes the extinction of all causes of impurity and attachment, which are the same causes for all people. So, the Lord Buddha and those Noble Ones who attained perfect purity have reached the same *Nibbāna*. Most wise persons, therefore, don't ask about the Dhamma status or level of purity they have attained. It is like everyone having the same lunch meal. Everyone has the same food and dessert, which has the same flavor for each one. Why would we then ask about the flavor and the quality of the food? However, each individual should know without question that he or she comes away with a full stomach.

During the Lord Buddha's time, when Noble Ones reached the ultimate goal with pure appreciation for him, they wanted to travel to be with the Lord Buddha regardless of how far they had to travel. Presumably, most of the Noble Ones knew that the wish to be joined with the Lord Buddha arises in a moment, but soon passes. Those who have attained perfect purity also respectfully think about their own Dhamma masters with sincere appreciation. If they are able to visit their masters after attaining enlightenment, they do so without the intention to get any prophecy from their Dhamma master. They know how to conduct themselves among disciples and others. Even if asked about Dhamma attainment, they are able to avoid answering such questions. Generally, most wise people with active mindfulness know the appropriate time and persons to engage in such discussion. In the Lord Buddha's time, Venerable *Phra Mahā Kaccāyana* said, "Although one is good sighted, he makes as though he is blind. Although one has

good hearing, he makes as though he is deaf.” One wisely conducts himself normally without standing out, like water without a ripple. There is no reason to create a ripple as an effect.

Meanwhile, one knows that the Dhamma status he has attained is too profound and difficult for ordinary people to understand. One thinks that he doesn’t want to teach others about this Dhamma. But on the other hand, one has conflicting thoughts, and says to himself, “I was born from my mother’s womb, like everyone else was born from their mothers’ wombs. My body is composed of the four elements like everyone else. I have the same living requirements like everyone else. Other people also perform benevolent acts, wishing to attain the ultimate goal. So they have the right to learn Dhamma principles and practices to attain enlightenment too. Since I can do it, they can do it too. If I don’t teach them, they won’t know. This could lead to a world void of arahants, Noble Ones with perfect purity. When I feel discouraged to teach fellow human beings, I ask myself, “Do you imitate the temporary thoughts the Lord Buddha had before?” After much consideration, the thought of not teaching was nullified. Most of the wise ones shall know well this kind of thought.

The mind gains potency and enormous strength in the following moments after reaching purity. This potency of the mind is unique because it comes from the purity of the mind. If this potency was likened to body strength, it would be such that one could toss a whole mountain back and forth the same way people throw a woven rattan ball back and forth to each other. This powerful mind could flatten a whole mountain in the blink of an eye. At

that special moment, this unique strength of the mind enhances body strength, which lasts several days. This unique mental strength will gradually fade over a period of days, returning to its normal state, but even then the mind will remain perfectly pure, having the feeling of remaining in one sole night, constantly aware of its pureness. This unique and perfect purity doesn't fluctuate up and down. There is no regression or cessation, no inclination to mundane supposition, and no mundane sadness or gratification. There is the complete and perfect cessation of the fire. The three worlds are closed off. There shall be no more elements, no more states of being, no more cause and effect. The connection for rebirth has been completely broken off.

Regardless of where they go, those who have practiced Dhamma and have attained the ultimate goal always have this unique virtuous Dhamma quality with them. If others look upon them with suspicion or doubt, that is up to them. The perfect pure mind is still with them. Wherever Noble Ones go, they conduct themselves well in manner and purpose, and are able to fit in with groups with which they associate. Their lives remain the same, and their nature and personality aren't changed, as such disposition isn't naturally abandoned. Those who are outwardly amusing don't change since such disposition is merely manners of body and speech. The Lord Buddha is the only exception as he had a uniquely refined and profound character of composed disposition.

## Conclusion

Now, in conclusion, is provided a synopsis to clarify and solidify the major points previously presented. Earnest concentration and calm mind meditation are different. The earnest concentration used while practicing contemplation has wisdom and mindfulness involved. Wherever one is, whatever body posture or position one is in, his mindfulness consistently supports what he does. When talking with the opposite gender or after they depart, he maintains mindfulness. His manner remains appropriate, as the Lord Buddha's statement to *Venerable Phra Ānanda*, "Behold, Ānanda, if you have an issue when talking to a woman, you must hold mindfulness while talking."

Dhamma practice is based on earnest concentration. One can begin contemplating with wisdom using this earnest concentration. Suffering in birth, senility, ailment, and death of oneself or others can be brought into contemplation, seeing that these common things occur to everyone equally. One can contemplate the four elements of the body or the five aggregates. Also, contemplating the loathsomeness of the body, exposing its part to the three true characteristics is good practice. One can also contemplate any object of attachment with regard to the three true characteristics. Contemplation using wisdom can be done without regard to time, body posture, or location. Always be aware and mindful that defilement dwells in the mind, and we shouldn't trust the unstable mind. We must stay alert. If the enemy of defilement invades or attacks us, we must be able to suppress and conquer it. Being vigilant, alert, and prepared, if

defilement arises in the mind, wisdom and mindfulness together will know it immediately.

At the beginning, when meditating to full calmness, one may want to recite a Pali word or phrase until the mind integrates into full calmness. Then, when one withdraws the mind from that full calmness, they contemplate using preparatory wisdom. Some examples of the type of contemplative thought have been provided. If one cannot meditate to full calmness but only to momentary calmness, one can at that moment of calmness begin to contemplate with wisdom, for wisdom will work sufficiently well at this stage. If one cannot meditate at all, he or she should focus on watching their mind and its emotion. That is done by investigating what it is that causes the mind to be uncalm. Determine the problem. Sometimes the mind is attracted to erotic pleasures, such as provocative images. Or, the mind might be attached to some material object. If one determines this, the object is brought into contemplation using wisdom. One discerns, using wisdom, the bad effect of the object and his attachment to it, so the mind comes to understand the truth of it.

If wisdom contemplation wearies the mind, then one returns to calm mind meditation, and when rested and ready, returns to contemplation. Continue this process repeatedly, alternating between meditation and contemplation with wisdom. Be aware that wisdom doesn't arise from calm mind meditation, so don't wait for it. No matter how deep in calmness one can meditate, nor how long one can meditate, wisdom doesn't arise from such meditation. Be aware that the more your mind is calm, the more

comfortable you feel, and as a result, you will want to remain in that calmness as long as possible, not wanting to withdraw it in order to do contemplation with wisdom. The deeper the calm, the less use of wisdom is possible. The mind becomes attracted to the pleasurable calmness in meditation until it forgets about contemplating with wisdom.

There are three levels of wisdom:

1. *Suta-maya-paññā*. This is wisdom gained from learning Dhamma theory.
2. *Cintā-maya-paññā*. This is wisdom gained from wisdom contemplation, using the guideline from theory.
3. *Bhāvanā-maya-paññā*. This is wisdom gained from contemplation and development of the mind.

Most people interpret the latter type of wisdom as coming from calm mind meditation, thinking that wisdom arises from such meditation. So they meditate to calm mind, waiting for wisdom to arise, but it doesn't. Those who interpret it this way are urged to reinterpret *bhāvanā-maya-paññā* because its meaning is "making it happen." Why doesn't wisdom happen in you? You already have a calm mind from meditation. Why doesn't that produce wisdom in you? If wisdom has not happened, we must start to develop it, using a contemplative approach to how things really are. The idea of "making it happen" indicates contemplation, for example doing contemplation of the loathsomeness of the body or body parts using your own pondering thoughts. That pondering thought is applicable to *bhāvanā-maya-paññā*, gaining

wisdom from mind development and contemplation. Developing wisdom is developing your knowledgeable mind.

We can teach a child how to speak. We can train wild animals to be obedient, doing things upon our command. We have our own minds, our own body with ears to hear, and eyes to see things all around. Why don't we use them to ponder them with our own thinking? Why don't you know how to think about these things? Most people are good at thinking of things that are fire-like and can burn them. If they know how to think in self-destructive ways to burn themselves, they ought to find a way to extinguish that fire-like thought. If you know how to do arithmetical addition, then you should know how to arithmetical subtraction. If you know how to tighten up a knot on a string, then you should know how to untighten it as well.

You are metaphorically urged to be a cook, cooking your own food for your own meals. Feed yourself until your stomach is full. As a result of that process, you will be the one who is happy. Practicers should depend on their own ability. Depending on someone else to contemplate and think for you is like having ready made food from another cook, and could cause problems later. Be your own physician, performing self-examinations and self x-rays. Perform self-surgery and remove harmful tumors from your own body. Make your own medicines. As a result of curing your own illnesses, you will become free from the ailment of repetitive birth, aging, senility, illness, and death. You can develop and build up your own capable wisdom to help yourself. If you cannot help yourself, who else can help you in practicing?

*Vipassanā*, or wisdom development, the process involving practice methods to reach the ultimate goal, result in the attainment of four stages of noble fruition. The four stages of noble fruition are: Stream Enterer; Once-Returner; No-Returner; and Arahant – the perfectly pure one who doesn't return, or the no-returner who attains *Nibbāna*. When attaining each stage of noble fruition, pure Dhamma is harmoniously integrated. This integration is referred to as the rising of *maggasamaṅgī* and *vipassanā-ñāṇa*. In those who are about to attain enlightenment, the ultimate state of noble fruition, *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, the insightful knowing that all impurity and defilement are about to be cleared from the mind, also arises. In attaining a state of noble fruition, one comes from the brilliant keen insight of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* as *maggasamaṅgī* rises. The stage of noble fruition attained depends on the supportive strength of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* and *maggasamaṅgī*. Anyone who attains a state of noble fruition will know their status and the stage attained. There is no pronouncement or advertising about noble status, nor is there any need for such.

Once one has developed his mind, attaining the state of brilliant keen insight from wisdom contemplation, that *vipassanā-ñāṇa* never regresses. Following with the arising of *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, *maggasamaṅgī* arises, and then *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. When this occurs, the person knows in a moment they are about to attain liberation and enlightenment. All three must consecutively arise together for the person to attain the ultimate state of noble fruition. If there is no arising of *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, there can be no integration and rising of *maggasamaṅgī*, and without *maggasamaṅgī*, there can be no attainment of noble fruition.



After attaining a state of noble fruition, some people rest at their particular level of attainment, remaining there until they pass away, whether a Stream-Enterer, Once-Returner, Non-Returner, or *arahant*. One need not progress step by step, or level by level in order to reach *arahant* status. Some have attained the stage of Stream-Enterer, resting many years, and later becoming *arahant*, without resting at either Once-Returner or No-Returner stages. A few can even practice to attain *arahant* and *Nibbāna* in one step, without progressing through the other sub levels. Body position or posture for reaching enlightenment isn't important. It includes standing, sitting, walking, or lying down. Some may attain enlightenment while walking. Some may attain enlightenment while standing. And some may attain enlightenment while sitting or lying down. Regardless of whether a person is a lay person or a monk, regardless of race, regardless of social status, if one attains a state of noble fruition, regardless of the stage or level attained, he is truly a Noble One.



## 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  |

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| <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>  |

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| <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  |

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| <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<br>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  |

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| <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<br><br>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.

