

U-TURN

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*Original sermon given by
Phra Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño*

*on July 2, 2000
at the KPYUSA retreat facility
in Redwood Valley, CA, USA*

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Introduction

The first time the students of KPYUSA got the opportunity to get together and train in the style of *Dhamma* taught by *Luang Por Thoon Khippapañño (Phra Ācariya Thoon)* was in 2000. This book is a translation of a transcription of a *Dhamma* sermon given to *Ācariya Pasanno*, the Abbott of Wat Abhayagiri, on July 2, 2000 at the KPYUSA mountain in Redwood Valley, California, USA.

The transcribers felt that the information contained within this sermon would be highly beneficial to those who have confusion about proper practice and desire to achieve *Nibbāna* (total enlightenment).

Luang Por Thoon was very concerned for the practitioners of Buddhism in our current day and age. He once said that because many people are dedicated and interested in practicing, if they were provided with the right way of practice, they would become enlightened. Unfortunately, the majority of teachings in this day and age only teach the same thing - that is, how to prevent thinking.

If you become aware that your chosen method of practice is wrong, will you have the courage to abandon it and try a new method? Once you make that U-turn, you might just find that following a new path is not as hard as you might have thought. At the very least, *Luang Por Thoon* has already walked this particular path to completion, to *Nibbāna*.

Students of *Phra Ācariya Thoon*

Translator's Notes

There are many concepts discussed and mentioned in this book that might be confusing for people without much exposure to Buddhism. I hope to explain some of the concepts in brief here in order for the reader to have a better grasp of the information.

In a case where a concept is confusing, please either refer to the Translator's Notes for reference or to the Glossary for further explanations for defined words.

Tranquil meditation as mentioned in this book denotes all the various types of meditation that have tranquility as their goal. This includes chanting mantras, breath focus, object focus and repetition focus.

Paṭipatti as mentioned in this book refers to all the different types of practices that aim for spiritual development. *Paṭipatti* can be either a noun referring to a particular type of practice, or it can also be used as a verb, referring to the action of practicing.

The word meditation is not used here as it is in popular culture. Meditation in this case and throughout the book refers to concentration, not seated meditation. Any focusing of the concentration in any way is considered meditation. For example: you can meditate on your breath, you can meditate on a concept (such as trying to understand karma or even just mathematics), or you can meditate (concentrate) on cooking.

The term *samādhi* can be used interchangeably with meditation. It can refer to tranquility meditation or focused thinking meditation, but is most commonly used with tranquility

meditation. One can have *samādhi* (concentration) or practice *samādhi* (meditation).

In this book, perception and view are interchangeable and refer to *diṭṭhi*.

Saṅkhāra has many definitions and is used in many different cases. *Saṅkhāra* can be one of the Five Aggregates as the aggregate of Volitional Formations or Imaginations. *Saṅkhāra* can represent all things created by the mind, which refers to all things in existence. *Saṅkhāra* is also sometimes used to refer to the physical body as our *saṅkhāra*. *Saṅkhāra* also refers to all of existence.

In Thai, the term *sammuti* is used as a verb. It means “to imagine.” It can also be used as a noun. As a noun it means “that which is imagined.” Something that is a *sammuti* is something that has been arbitrarily created from nothing and agreed upon by some. For example, “we shall call this a tree.” Another good example of a *sammuti* concept is the concept of time zones. This is a supposed convention.

In the book, *Luang Por Thoon* mentions *paññādhika* when referring to the Buddha nature of our Buddha. While cultivating *pāramī* (qualities of character or virtue), each *Bodhis`* (candidate for Buddhahood) will have a predominant factor as to how he cultivates his *pāramī*. This will have a direct effect on how long he needs to remain a *Bodhisattā* before he can become a Buddha. There are three *dhika*: *paññā*, *saddhā* (faith), and *viriyā* (effort), listed in increasing order of time required.

Ānandapañño Bhikkhu

Foundation of *Vipassanā*

In Theravada¹ Buddhism, there are many different modes of practice. The different modes break off into many different methods. Some are similar, while some are different. Most people practice tranquil meditation. How did it end up like this? Many of the books tell us that we must *paṭipatti* (practice). *Paṭipatti* requires using *kammaṭṭhāna* (modes of meditation practice). However, there is only focus on *samatha-kammaṭṭhāna* (Tranquility based meditation mode of practice). As for *vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna* (insight contemplation based meditation mode of practice), it seems that people don't actually understand how to practice it, but they still talk about it as if they do. They take a little of this and a little of that and label the result as *vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna*. That isn't right. There are many people who understand erroneously that if they practice tranquility-based meditation, *paññā* (wisdom) will spontaneously arise (from the tranquil meditation). In general, 99.99% of Theravadins believe that if they practice tranquil meditation, *paññā* will spontaneously occur on its own. The current set of Buddhist writings in the present day teach this. We must go back to the days of the Buddha and pay attention to what he actually taught. If we don't use the teachings from the Buddha's day as a starting point, as a guide, we are going to end up going off-track. We will (mistakenly) think that if we practice tranquility meditation, *paññā* will spontaneously arise. Once the *paññā* arises, this *paññā* will clean our *āsava-kilesa-taṇhā* (mental intoxication, defilements, desires) to a significant degree or even completely eliminate them. Then

1. There are two main types of Buddhism today: Theravada and Mahayana

we will get to be an *Ariya-puggala*² (noble individual, enlightened person) for free. We won't have to do anything. This is how most people currently think. Therefore, people only focus on tranquility meditation so that their *paññā* will spontaneously arise on its own. This is how the majority of people practice in our day and age.

As for the *paññā* that we mentioned, or the concept of *vipassanā* (insight contemplation), it does not come about as easily as people think. *vipassanā* alone has a separate foundation. The foundation of *vipassanā* is not *samatha* (tranquility meditation) or *samādhi* (concentration). The foundation of *vipassanā* is thinking. Where does thinking come from? It comes from the main foundation of perception. Once your view is according to *sammā-diṭṭhi* (Right View), according to that which is Right, according to Truth as it is, your Right View will be the means to link to your thoughts. This is called *sammā-saṅkappa* (Right Thought). *Sammā-saṅkappa* are thoughts. They can also be called *paññā* or in Thai, “Dhumri Chob.” However, the term “Dhumri Chob” is a phrase that can only be used for kings. Regarding regular people, we simply call this thinking.

Thinking refers to deliberating, carefully considering, contemplating, separating, researching, reviewing, and analyzing. This is what we mean when we say “Dhumri.” This merely refers to our thinking. Once our thinking is according to the basis of Truth, our thinking will graduate to *paññā*, which is a higher level (than basic thinking). These thoughts of ours are what changes to *paññā* once they become more refined.

2. There are four levels of enlightened people: *Sotāpanna* (Stream-enterer), *Sakadāgāmi* (Once returner), *Anāgāmi* (Non-returner), *Arahant* (Fully enlightened being)

When children are young, they are in the stage where sometimes they wear clothes and sometimes they do not. Once these children grow into young men and women, their perceptions will change. The perceptions that existed within the same individual will no longer stay the same. The same faculty of thinking will develop and turn into *paññā*. Their perceptions will change upon knowing and experiencing Truths more clearly. Once they have understanding, that *paññā*, once coupled with intelligence and clear understanding of cause and effect, will graduate into *vipassanā*. This is their relationship. When this quality focuses, it will clearly uncover Truths. This is known as *yoniso* (reflection).

Yoniso is contained within *vipassanā*. When you reflect upon something, it will become clearer. You will clearly see a cause. You will clearly see its effect. You will clearly see the present as a result. You will clearly see the past. That past, which in itSelf is a cause, was created further in the past. You will clearly see the steps that led you here. You will see the Truth as it is. This (process) is called *vipassanā*. Once this (*vipassanā*) is utilized in greater amounts, clarity and understanding will arise within us. Clear knowledge and clear experience will both be balanced. This is known as *ñāṇa-dassana* (knowledge followed by experience). This is *vipassanā*. In itSelf, it contains both knowledge and experience. This is not knowledge that is based on (the knowledge possessed by) other people. You will experience it based on your own *paññā*. The starting point is your own mind. You don't need to borrow knowledge from a text; you yourself can make final decisions and judgments. This is known as *yoniso*. You will have the skill of deliberation.

This skill in deliberation does not come from a manual or textbook. You do not develop it by hearing or listening to others. It comes solely from our own experiences. You have to know and experience the Truth the way it is. You will then have a higher degree of clarity. This is intelligence. The determining factor (of intelligence) is the absence of doubt or confusion. You will no longer have doubt in regards to this issue. However, you will not have all (understanding). It is a low to moderate level of understanding. You have not been able to eliminate the detailed aspects from your mind. This is *vipassanā*. From this point, once you develop *ñāṇa-dassana*, what is not clear will become much clearer upon further contemplation. Then, your understanding will become *vipassanā-ñāṇa* (true insight and knowledge obtained insight contemplation).

Vipassanā-ñāṇa is *paññā* that will either completely eliminate attachment to *āsava-kilesa* (mental Intoxications, defilements) or at least eliminate it down to a more manageable level. This *paññā* will not last long. It only arises long enough for us to use it to attack our *āsava* (mental intoxications). If anyone has previously developed the *pāramī* (perfections of virtues and character) and *vāsanā*³ (lot in life) of a certain level of attainment, they will attain that level of enlightenment. If you have cultivated the *Dhamma* stage of *arahant* (fully enlightened being), you will become an *arahant*. If you only have the *Dhamma* stage of a *sotāpanna* (stream-enterer), you will become a *sotāpanna*. *vipassanā-ñāṇa* is the *ñāṇa* (Knowledge) that completely

3. *Vāsanā* is refers to your lot. You determine your lot based on your previous actions. Your lot is like a foundation for success. If you create a strong foundation, you will receive the resulting success based on the foundation you created.

eliminates and leads to release from **āsava-kilesa**. This *paññā* is the tool that when used will lead to increased Right View. This is the path.

Meditation for Tranquility

So should we meditate? The term meditate must be interpreted and separated. There are two types of meditation. These are:

1. Concentrated Focus Meditation
2. Tranquil Meditation

Nowadays, (*Dhamma*) practitioners only study tranquil meditation. They have not, however, studied concentrated focus meditation. Everywhere in the world, no matter what practice center you go to, everyone practices tranquil meditation. Does real tranquility actually exist? Is it actually possible to do? It is possible. However, it is only possible for a small group of people. Only people with the *cetovimutti* (liberation by concentration) personality can achieve this. As for tranquility, people of the *paññāvimutti* (liberation through wisdom and insight) personality can't do it. They can try as hard as they want, but they won't be able to do it. You must figure out which meditation type is appropriate for each type of person.

Tranquil meditation is appropriate for those of the *cetovimutti* character. Concentrated *paññāvimutti* (mindfulness, recollection) meditation is appropriate for those of the *paññāvimutti* character. In the Buddha's era, how many people were *cetovimutti* and how many were *paññāvimutti*? Up to 80% of the population was *paññāvimutti*. There were only a few *cetovimutti*. Why are there so few? These people have been (meditating) ascetics of many births, lives, eras and *kalpas* (aeon) in the past. They are accustomed to and well versed in meditation. They enter *jhānas*

(levels of meditation attainment) and *ñāṇas* (knowledge) until it becomes habitual. Once they are born in this life, in this era, they are not ready to come and develop *paññā* (wisdom). This is because they have never trained *paññā* (in any previous lives) before. They only practiced for tranquility. If these people (*cetovimutti*) were to have been born in the Buddha's era, they would have a chance at becoming enlightened peoples. Why? Because the Buddha had the ability to help people like this. He can provide them suitable metaphors (for them to contemplate). For these people (*cetovimutti*), all they have is what they were born with (results of past lives' cultivation). To have them suddenly turn around and practice *paññā* is impossible. It can't be done. This is because they have never done it before. So, the Buddha would have them practice tranquil meditation as was their habit. Once they entered tranquil meditation, from low levels all the way up to extreme focus meditation, they will always revert back to tranquil meditation.

This is for those who practice tranquility with their goal as achieving *jhānas*. As you practice, different *jhānas* will arise and you will fall into *appanā-samādhi* (fixed concentration). Your concentration will pass *upacāra-samādhi* (approaching, proximate concentration) and enter *appanā-samādhi*. At this point, they will enter a *jhāna*. I'm just giving you a quick overview, just so that you have heard it. Your concentration will start with *paṭhama-jhāna* (first *jhāna*) and continue in order to *dutiya-jhāna* (second *jhāna*), *tatiya-jhāna* (third *jhāna*), and then *catuttha-jhāna* (fourth *jhāna*). All these are known together as *rūpa-jhānas* (*jhānas* of the fine-material sphere). However, it doesn't just stop here. The tranquility will get deeper into *arūpa-jhāna* (*jhānas* of

the immaterial sphere). *Arūpa-jhāna* consists of: *ākāsānañcāyatana* (sphere of infinity of space), *viññāṇañcāyatana* (sphere of infinity of consciousness), *ākiñcaññāyatana* (sphere of nothingness) and *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* (sphere of neither perception nor non-perception). Once your meditation gets to a certain point, you will get stuck. Once you get stuck, you will start to wander. You will end up wandering back and forth. Then, you will have to start over at the beginning with *paṭhama-jhāna* and go on until you reach *arūpa-jhāna*. You will keep wandering in circles. This is as if you were paddling a boat in a pool; there is nowhere for you to go. You can achieve temporary *sukha* (happiness; pleasurable feelings) and then proceed to wander in circles.

This is what happens to people who practice only tranquil *samādhi* (concentration, meditation). There can be no graduation to a higher level. You will be wandering in circles with tranquility and comfort as if it were normal. In the case that you are able to achieve *abhiññā* (supernormal knowledge and insight), even just once, you will become attached to your ability. This is what happens to people who are lost in tranquil meditation. This is known as *moha-samādhi* (delusional meditation). They can't get out of it. This is how they practice and once they get to a dead end, they will just continue to wander in circles.

From there, the Buddha will be the one to point them to the way out. He will teach them, "*Bhikkhu* (Buddhist monk), practicing meditation in this manner, I have done this before you all. I have already done it." When did he do this? He did it during the time that he first ordained as an ascetic, while he was studying as an

apprentice to the two hermits: Uddaka and Alara. He practiced with them for a long time, for many months. Once he did this (practiced tranquil meditation) and his mind became still and tranquil, he felt *sukha* and comfortable. It was almost as if his *kilesa* (defilements) and *āsava* (mental intoxications) both big and small would be destroyed. At this moment, he felt no greed, anger or delusion. Once his mind left that state of tranquility for an extended period of time, his feeling of peace deteriorated. Once it had deteriorated, his mind led him to think about *Yasodharā*⁴, *Rāhula*⁵, and *Kapilavastu*⁶. Once he thought about these things, he would feel heat (emotions) arise. In order to combat this, he would have to immediately re-enter *samādhi*. He practiced like this for many months.

4. *Bimba* or *Bimbadevi* is another name of *Princess Yasodharā*. She was the wife of *Prince Siddhattha*. She was the mother of *Prince Rāhula*. She later ordained as a *Bhikkhunī* (Female Buddhist nun) and achieved enlightenment

5. *Prince Siddhattha* and *Princess Yasodharā*'s son. Later ordained as a novice and eventually achieved enlightenment

6. The royal city where *Prince Siddhattha* lived before his Great Renunciation

Against the Stream

During the lives in which the Buddha cultivated his *pāramī* (perfections of virtues and qualities), he did it as a *paññādhika* (wisdom as a predominating factor). He had 100% full *paññāvimutti-paññā* (attentive wisdom). After he was able to practice tranquil meditation to a superior level, why did his high level of *paññā* (wisdom), which he had already cultivated to the highest possible level in previous births, not arise? None arose at all, not even a little. The Buddha then contemplated that merely practicing and doing *samādhi* (concentration, meditation) is not the way to eliminate *kilesa* (defilements), *taṇhā* (desires) and *āsava* (mental intoxication). This is not the way to *Nibbāna* (Nirvana, total enlightenment). This is when he decided that this is not the right method. For this reason, he left both of the hermits. He departed from them so that he could go search for a new method to practice. He was thinking that merely meditating is incorrect, not sufficient, and not complete. Practicing meditation in this tranquil manner is nothing new. It is an ancient method that has been around since before Buddhism. Many people around the world practice meditation. Every religion has access to it. Even people who do not believe in religion can practice it. People who observe the Five Precepts⁷ can practice it. Even people who do not follow the Five Precepts can practice it. If you were to visit India or the Himalayan Mountains, you will find people who meditate. What do they do? Do they follow the

7. Five Precepts: 1. Refrain from killing 2. Refrain from stealing. 3. Refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. Refrain from harmful speech. 5. Refrain from intoxicants.

Five Precepts? They don't even know what one of the precepts is. Even they can meditate. This type of meditation is a mainstream concept that exists all over the world. It does not belong to one country or one religion. Everyone can do it. But it is not the way to eliminate suffering.

So at that point, the Lord Buddha left the two hermits in order to find a new method of practice. He was looking for a method that would lead to freedom from suffering and he found it at the bank of the *Neranjara River*. Where did the Buddha's method come from? It came from a wager dealing with the golden tray. "If I am to become enlightened as the Buddha in this life, may this tray float against the stream." Once he saw the tray float against the stream, he immediately contemplated that anything, no matter what it is, would float according to the stream. But today, the golden tray was floating against the stream. The Buddha then saw and *opanayiko* (internalize, reflect inwards) the golden tray into his mind. He compared it (the golden tray) to his mind. Our minds have floated according to the stream of the world, which is why we have previously been born and have died so many times up until the present.

The Buddha used the method of contemplating **against the stream**. This means not allowing your mind to think in a mainstream manner. This must start with one's own thinking. We must use the Truth as a basis. The Buddha saw that all beings once born are like this. When the Buddha practiced he saw the state of all things that arise: he saw old people, he saw sick people, and he saw dead people. He saw all things: nature, poor people, everything. He saw it all. This is real life. The Buddha then saw

that we are no different than they are. Once we are born, we all must age and get old. We are subject to illness and eventually we must all die. We are all the same. Thus, the Buddha uncovered the Truth. This is the moment when *vipassanā* (insight contemplation) first arose in him. The Buddha utilized this concept to become well-versed and to eliminate doubt. His mind was able to release attachments to a certain level. Thus, he achieved *vipassanā*.

Unlike *samādhi*, no other religions can copy or duplicate this concept of *vipassanā*. *Samādhi* is universal; all religions can duplicate and copy it. It is just tranquility. *Vipassanā* can only exist within Buddhism. It is the means by which to cross the stream of the world. This is called *Samuccheda-pahāna* (extinction by cutting off). Buddha paid special attention to this. He created this method. He also recognized the importance of *samādhi*, that if you do it, there is some benefit. However, we must know when and how to use it.

The Buddha then saw that some types of *samādhi* are for tranquility, while other types are for concentrated focus. *Paññā* requires the use of concentrated focus with *samādhi* as an ingredient. Tranquil *samādhi* is another story. That is, once you have reached deep tranquility, once you want to use *paññā*, you must pull back from the tranquility and achieve concentrated focus first before it can lead to *paññā*. Nowadays people are teaching that we should just do *samādhi*, and once our minds are tranquil enough, we can contemplate using *paññā*. This is wrong. You won't be able to internalize. This is just like a person who falls asleep. Once you are asleep and snoring, you can't command

yourself to work. Is this possible? It is not possible. You must first wake up from sleeping before you can do any work. Since when do we get work done while sleeping? This is the same thing. While the mind is tranquil, you can't force it to think anything. You must first leave the tranquility. You must be in concentrated focus in order to create *paññā*. This is that to which we must pay attention and understand.

Ñāṇa is a Double-edged Sword

When studying about the practice of *Dhamma* in our current era, if we extract unclear meanings and descriptions, we will encounter much trouble. Will people who practice tranquil meditation in this era achieve tranquility? Yes, they can. If they are people with *cetovimutti* (liberation by concentration) they can do it easily. They will be able to enter tranquil meditation, but will they be able to progress from there? They will end up wandering around in the same place. They will compete (with others) in the achievement of tranquility. Once their minds enter tranquility, phenomena of the mind will interject. This phenomenon is called *ñāṇa* (knowledge). At this point, you will know things that you have not known before. Sometimes *abhiññā* (supernormal knowledge and insight) will arise. Sometimes *cakkhu-ñāṇa* (divine eye) will arise and some other times *dibba-sota* (divine ear) will arise. They (the various *ñāṇa*) will interject themselves. People who experience this will think that the knowledge *ñāṇa* that arises is the same as *paññā-ñāṇa* (knowledge from discernment). This is incorrect. They are not the same. That is just the *ñāṇa* of knowledge that arises. It is not *paññā-ñāṇa*. This *ñāṇa* is a double-edged sword. One will lead to *vipassanū* (imperfections of insight) and the other will lead to *vipassanā* (insight contemplation). If the *ñāṇa* arises from tranquil meditation, then this will lead to *vipassanū*. If the *ñāṇa* arises from *paññā* then it will lead to *vipassanā*. This *ñāṇa* separates into two different categories. It is a very dangerous double-edged sword.

Those who practice *samādhi* can only become tranquil if they are of the *cetovimutti* disposition. As for those who have the

paññāvimutti (liberation through wisdom) disposition, will they be able to do tranquil meditation? They will not be able to. However, they still keep resisting (their nature) and keep trying anyway. No matter how much they try, they will not achieve tranquility. They ignore the fact that their natural disposition is *paññāvimutti* and still strive to achieve tranquility. Once they start meditating, their minds immediately revert to thinking mode. They will want to think about various things. Then they will say, “ok ok, pull it back in.” Then they will go back to chanting or focusing on their mantras. After not too many minutes, their minds automatically revert back to thinking. They will start thinking and imagining again. “Ok, reign it back in again.” They do this all day and all night and nothing seems to ever get any better. It is just a waste of time. People who have the *paññāvimutti* disposition are disposed to thinking. If your mind likes to think, but you don’t let it, it will lead to imagination.

Two Types of Directionless Thinking

What is directionless thinking? It is untrained thinking. It is thinking that doesn't have criteria or boundaries. It is aimless thinking. It leads to annoyance and frustration. These are the characteristics of directionless thinking that come from tranquil meditation. So, how do you fix this directionless thinking? Fight fire with fire. This directionless thinking doesn't have a method. So we set up a method to begin thinking again. You have to use *paññā* (wisdom). Use your thinking to counter your thinking, just like fighting fire with fire. Once we think correctly according to this method, the directionless thinking will immediately lose its footing. Once you continue thinking, it will be according to the *Dhamma – aniccaṃ* (impermanence), *dukkhaṃ* (suffering), and *anattā* (not-Self). It will all be according to this method. Directionless thinking will have direction.

This is how you properly fix it. Normally, when we want to fix directionless thinking, we try to fix it by focusing on mantras. They are completely different topics! The more you do this, the more directionless thinking is generated from your meditation. This is how you (should) practice. Study the history of the Buddha's era. You will see clearly how it was. Nowadays, we get each other to do *kammaṭṭhāna* (modes of meditation practice). However, all we ever end up doing is chanting and reciting mantras. Why doesn't anyone ever talk about *vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna* (insight contemplation mode of meditation practice)? We don't even think about it. Most people like to say, "Refrain from thinking, you are lost in directionless thinking." This is not right. This is the Wrong Understanding.

There are two types of directionless thinking:

1. Directionless in regards to *Dhamma* (Buddha's teachings; Truths)
2. Directionless in regards to *sañkhāra* (imagination)

It is important for you to know whether either of these two types of thinking is any good. They aren't. None of them has value. More importantly, you have to know how to combat and fix each one. Once your mind is directionless in the *Dhamma*, how are you going to fix it? Once your mind is directionless in regards to *sañkhāra*, how are you going to fix it? You have to do the research. There are:

1. Directionless in regards to *Dhamma* - Once your mind has entered a tranquil state, it will want to speak the *Dhamma*. People don't understand this. They think that directionless *Dhamma* is a good thing. So they allow themselves to be aimless. This is not right. Directionless *Dhamma* is dangerous. Some have previously studied *Dhamma* to a decent degree. Once your mind enters tranquility, it will want to think. It will want to think about the *Dhamma* we have listened to from others. It will think according to the *Dhamma* we have studied. As you think, you will recall the *Dhamma* lessons and keep on thinking. This is called directionless *Dhamma*, contemplating based on textbooks. You will be thinking about *Dhamma*, but this is also not good. It also has no boundaries and is directionless, but is not quite annoying to the practitioner.

2. Directionless according to *saṅkhāra*. In general, we will not be annoyed by this. We will mostly be pleased since we are thinking about things that we like. We will imagine something into being. We will fabricate, imagine and daydream about it. In this style of thinking, our *sammuti* (supposed conventions) are what leads and clarifies our thinking. We imagine something that we like and just daydream about it all day and all night.

Paññā takes Sammuti

It is important that practitioners study and understand the concept of *sammuti* (supposed conventions). *Sammuti* is neutral. It is the real *sacca-dhamma* (universal undeniable Truth). If one side can control the *sammuti*, that side wins. Just as if it (*sammuti*) were the only soccer ball. There are two teams that are competing and fighting to wrest control of this one ball. Whichever team has more skill in dribbling; attacking, kicking, defending, and skillful maneuvering can attack the other's goal quite easily and thereby win. That is, if *kilesa* (defilements) take over our *sammuti*, then our *Dhamma* (Truths) will be at a disadvantage in every aspect. If our *Dhamma* gets a hold of *sammuti*, then it can conquer *kilesa*. But as for our own *Sammuti*, our *paññā* (wisdom) can't break through our *saṅkhāra* (imagination).

The Buddha separated the teams as:

1. Team *Saṅkhāra* which includes Team *Kilesa* and Team *Taṇhā* (desires). They are all part of team *Saṅkhāra*.
2. Team *Dhamma* which is the team of *paññāvimutti-paññā* (mindful wisdom).

Both these two teams are fighting over the same *sammuti*. Team *Saṅkhāra* is the national team that plays at a world stage level. They are the bigger team. They have beaten our team for who knows how many *kalpas* (aeons). No one has ever beaten them before. They are very skilled. Our team was only just recently created. Our Buddha created this team so that his *sāvaka* (disciples, followers) would be wise and have well-rounded

knowledge. With that knowledge, we can kick that *sammuti* until we break through. We have to wrest control of *sammuti* to our side. That is the real *sacca-dhamma*. We have to wrest control of the real *Dhamma* states. We have to control and contain it. Don't let *saṅkhāra* gain control. If they gain control, they can use *sammuti* to fool us into believing, "This is mine. This is my Self." Then, there is nothing we can do. We would be lost. Whichever side wins, our mind will go towards that side. If the team with *kilesas* wins, our minds will go over to the *kilesas'* side. This is how our minds work. Our mind is like the prize. Our mind is being held ransom. Our mind is the trophy. Our mind is the final prize and reward. Whichever side wins will gain control of our minds. In the past, the side with *saṅkhāra* has won. They have had our minds under their control. Our minds have been the grand trophy. Now, what are we to do? We have to use our *paññā* to wrest back control of *sammuti*. We have to break it so that we can have control of minds on the side of *paññā*.

We need to know more about *sammuti*. *Sammuti* has many characteristics - narrowly and broadly focused. Let's start with two types of *sammuti*: *sammuti* of the Self and *sammuti* of Self's belongings. What do we imagine or suppose are our Self's belongings? External things. The Self is an internal thing that is comprised of the four basic elements: earth, water, air and fire. These (elements) together are called *rūpa* (form). The form makes up one part of the Self. The formless Self makes up the other part.

There are two Selves: form-based Self and formless Self.

Form-based Self consists of the four basic elements: earth, water, air and fire. Formless-based Self consists of *vedanā* (feeling),

saññā (memory), *saṅkhāra* (mental formations), and *viññāṇa* (consciousness).

How did the four basic elements of earth, water, air and fire come into being? They were set up by the formless part of our Self. There are two Selves; they are both *sammuti*. *Kilesa* and *taṇhā* have taken our two Selves and tricked us with them. They used both of them to trick us. The inner Self tricks us into thinking that this is a pretty form, that this is a beautiful form. We start off by being deluded by our Self through form, sound, smell, taste and tactile touch. We are deluded by the Self into believing that our form is pretty, and our sound is pleasing. Therefore, our minds are lost in the Self. We start off by being lost in our own Selves. Then our mind proceeds to be lost and deluded in other things. It gets lost in external forms and sounds. However, it starts by being lost in our internal form and sound first. We get lost in our internal form, taste, smell, sound and touch first. We believe that they constitute a Self. We believe in this Self first. Then it proceeds to take external things and claim them as the Self's belongings. It's complicated. Then we start saying, "This is my wife, this is my husband. These are my belongings. This is my car." All of these pile up onto us. It is quite heavy. The physical Self is already piled on and packed in tightly. In addition, we bring in the formless Self. Then we bring in the Self's belongings, Self's belongings. *Vedanā* also become setup as Self. *Saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* also get setup as Self. Once it is setup as Self, big and small *kilesas* take up residence in this cramped Self. Both the physical and formless Selves have been overrun by invading and nesting *kilesas*.

Break the *Sammuti* Apart

The problem arises when we as practitioners are not aware that *sammuti* (supposed conventions) is encasing all of our *kilesas* (defilements). *Kilesas*, big or small, rely on *sammuti* as their foundation. *Sammuti* is the sole thing in which we are lost. We are lost in physical form. Because of *ghana* (continuous and connected arising and falling), we are lost in the physical form. We have to break through the concept of *ghana*. That is, we have to see through the *sammuti* of this physical form. This is *paññā* (wisdom). Nothing else is capable of destroying *sammuti*. Only *paññāvimutti-paññā* (mindful wisdom) can destroy *sammuti*.

Can *samādhi* (concentration) destroy *sammuti*? No, it can't. *Samādhi* will go to support *sammuti*. It will make it stickier and harder to remove. It will result in a higher ego. Practicing *samādhi* is equivalent to digging a tunnel for our *kilesas* (defilements), *saṅkhāra* (Imagination) and *taṇhā* (Greed) to live in. Once you have practiced *samādhi* and helped entrench and protect your *kilesa* and *taṇhā*, how are you going to break through the line? You will not be able to penetrate the line and destroy them. Even *paññā* will not be able to get through. Once you try to break through, you get caught on the *jhāna* (meditative attainments) and can't go any further. Once *paññā* tries to break through, if you get caught on tranquil *samādhi*, you will not be able to get through. Are we practicing *samādhi* to protect our *kilesa*? Yes! There does not exist *samādhi* that can go relieve attachment to *kilesa* and *taṇhā*. People don't even know why they are practicing *samādhi*.

We have to critique and review *sammuti* in order to destroy it. Why should we destroy it? We have to destroy it so that *kilesas* can't attach themselves. We have to fully understand the concept of *ghana*. Once you fully understand it, *kilesas* can't exist there. It is just like as if a bunch of criminals were hiding in a cave. In the cave, there is the head bandit and his henchmen. If we were to drop a nuclear bomb in the cave, it would destroy the cave. Where would the bandits go? They would all be scattered about. Now we can capture them. You have to destroy the cave in order to capture the bandits. This is how it works.

All of our *kilesa* rely on *sammuti* for a foundation. We have to destroy this *sammuti*. We will see how *sammuti* protects and supports *kilesa*. Practitioners must study the Buddha's biography and glean understanding. If not, they will be practicing incorrectly.

Samādhi* is a Supporting Force for *Paññā

Nowadays, we all say we are practicing according to the way the Buddha taught. It is an admirable sentiment. However, when it actually gets down to practicing, we are using the methods of ascetics. When we talk about it, we say we will practice the Buddha's method. However, when we actually practice, we use the method of ascetic sects. What we say and what we do are not congruent. We talk like a Buddhist, but practice like an ascetic. So what is it that you really want? It can't be remedied. Ascetics practice solely meditation. This is because ascetics don't know what *sacca-dhamma* (universal undeniable Truth) is. They don't know the Five Precepts. They don't know the Eight Precepts. They don't know the Ten Precepts. They don't know any precepts. They don't know how to conquer their suffering. They only know how to make their minds tranquil through meditation. So is this what we mean when we say "Buddhist"? This is not right. This is a sect of asceticism that has been around since before Buddhism arose. We use *samādhi* (concentration) merely to help support *paññā* (wisdom), not to lead to *paññā*. We have to develop our *paññā* as a technique, and then we practice *samādhi* to support our *paññā*. *Samādhi* is power. Once we practice *samādhi* we will have encouragement. Once we have this encouragement, we must use it to support our *paññā*. Then our *paññā* will have power.

Just like with a bullet. Why is it able to shoot? It can shoot because it has gunpowder as a propellant. Once the gunpowder is lit, the bullets fly. It is the same with a bow. The bowstring and the feathers are the tools that help shoot the arrow. Without the

arrow, you cannot shoot your enemy. Even if you had immense power, you must have an arrow to shoot.

***Micchā* is the Old Way**

Where did *micchā-samādhī* (wrong concentration) come from? *Micchā-samādhī* came from *micchā-diṭṭhī* (Wrong View). *Sammā-samādhī* (right concentration) comes from *sammā-diṭṭhī* (Right View). The Buddha set *sammā-diṭṭhī* and *sammā-saṅkappa* (Right Thought) as the foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path. If you were to read the Noble Eightfold Path, you would see that *sammā-diṭṭhī*, Right View, is the first step. This is the path to *vipassanā* (insight contemplation). And from here, it will lead to *vipassanā-ñāṇa* (true knowledge attained through insight contemplation). This is called *bhāvanā-maya-paññā* (wisdom resulting from mental development). This is the way to the Path and fruit of *Nibbāna* (Nirvana, total enlightenment).

As for the old ways, they were according to *micchā-diṭṭhī*. We have all followed this path for many lives and many rebirths, for many eras and aeons. We have followed the path of *micchā* (wrong). That has led to us having to have been reborn in these three realms for as far back as we can imagine until the present. The Buddha has given the new path of *sammā* (right) to his disciples. Ever since then, 2543 years later (at the time of this sermon), this path is still steadfast and unwavering. This is the new path. A comparison is being made of the new and old paths. The *micchā* way is the old way. The way that we have practiced since ancient times is the *micchā* way. The *sammā* way is the new way. We have to choose correctly. If you don't get in the right way, you will slip and revert back to the old way again. That is why the Buddha gave us the path starting with *sammā-diṭṭhī* and *sammā-saṅkappa*. Right View alone is a central point in starting out.

The Direct Path 1-2-3

If you ever have the question, “How do I start a practice?” or “Where should I start?” The general answer you will hear is that you must recite mantras and practice *samādhi* (concentration). 99.99% of people answer in this way. Actually, the correct answer is that one must first set their foundation on *sammā-diṭṭhi*, the Right View. This is the original way, just as the Blessed One laid out in the Noble Eightfold Path. If you can start the Noble Eightfold Path with *sammā* (right), the following steps will not have any problems. It is the direct path. But can there be detours (on this path)? Of course. Detours do exist. But we still must practice first. Let someone who is knowledgeable lead you. We have not entered the direct path that will lead to *sotāpanna* (stream-enterer), not yet. But it is (a step towards) the right way. There are many possible detours and turns. You have to be observant. There are signs that show which way this road will end up. This road will have signs designating every turn. For example, if we started by heading north along Road 123, we will have to keep going. If the road turns, we turn. We don’t have to talk about other roads. We focus on following Road 123 all the way. Don’t forget the name of the road. You must travel directly, but not blindly. The road number is distinct. It doesn’t change.

Once you deviate from Road 123, you will immediately go off track. If you travel straight, you will travel in the right direction. Make sure that you recognize the markers along the road. Once we get to this marker, what other markers are up ahead? Make sure that the markers remain the same. Follow the markers. Just

keep following them. That is how it works. Be careful; there are many detours along the road. We have to remember the road. This is *sammā*. You must know the Truth. You have to know the Truth as it exists according to the **three (common characteristics)**.

We must follow these three:

1. *Aniccaṃ* (Impermanence)
2. *Dukkhaṃ* (Suffering)
3. *Anattā* (Not Self)

Remember these three. If you contemplate according to the **three common characteristics**⁸ you cannot go wrong. You will always be right. Wherever you sit, you will be right. Wherever you walk, you will be right. In order to contemplate according to *aniccaṃ* (impermanence) correctly, you have to develop their wisdom faculty. Our perceptions will have to be according to Truth, that is, *aniccaṃ*. These three oversee all three realms: *kāma-bhava* (the sense-sphere), *rūpa-bhava* (the form-sphere), and *arūpa-bhava* (the formless sphere). These three of *tilakkhaṇa* (the three common characteristics) have always been in control of everything. They are everywhere in the universe. We are one point that is subject to them. Since we are deluded by the world, by *saṃsāra* (cycle of rebirths), we must focus the point to us. You can look outwards, but you will have to make sure all your contemplations are according to *tilakkhaṇa*. From there, *opanayiko* (internalize), that is, internalize the parallel. Our Self is the first point of delusion. We have been delusional about this

8. Also known as *Tilakkhaṇa* - Three Common Characteristics: *Aniccaṃ* (Impermanence), *Dukkhaṃ* (Suffering), *Anattā* (Not Self)

world and this *samsāra* for many countless eras and aeons. The starting point of all of this is our delusion of the Self. If we have delusion of Self, then we will move onto delusion of the world and of the three realms. The important point that we have to focus on is our Self. Don't forget about the body and the mind. If we forget about the body and the mind, then our *bhāvanā* (mental development) is doomed to failure.

Paññā Sīla Samādhī

I will summarize (the teachings) for you according to all the scriptures we have read from the *Tipiṭaka* (Pali Canon). If you were to closely read the *Tipiṭaka* and interpret the meaning clearly, there are some things that you will notice right away. You will realize that there are many points in the canon that contradict with each other. Many things are not accurate regarding what the Buddha originally taught. When the Buddha taught the *Pañcavaggīya*⁹ (five first disciples of the Buddha) for the first time, the Buddha laid out the Buddhist religion. This is where he set the roots and foundations (of Buddhism). This was the key moment; this was the time (of the birth of Buddhism). It was so momentous that the Earth shook all the way down to a depth of 240,000 *yojanas*¹⁰. This all happened at the first instance that the Buddha taught Buddhism - the *Dhammacakkapavattāna Sutta* (The Discourse of Setting the Wheel of the *Dhamma* in Motion). This is the doctrine that encompasses all. The Noble Eightfold Path, starting with the division of *paññā* (wisdom), encompasses all.

The Buddha started his teaching with *paññā*, which include - *sammā-diṭṭhi* and *sammā-saṅkappa* (Right View and Right Thought).

9. First five students of the Buddha, literally, the Five Disciples. Includes the *Venerable Aññā Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma* and *Assaji*

10. A *yojana* is a measure of distance. One *yojana* is about 1 mile. However, many experts argue about the exact distance. It is commonly believed to be between 1 and 3 miles.

As a second division, the Buddha taught *sīla* (morality/restraint), which include - *sammā-vācā*, *sammā-kammanto*, *sammā-ājīvo* (Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood).

As a third division, the Buddha taught *samādhi* (concentration), which include - *sammā-vāyāmo*, *sammā-paññāvimutti*, *sammā-samādhi* (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration)

All together, the Buddha was very clear in setting *paññā*, then *sīla*, and then *samādhi*. This is not something new. If you were to check the scriptures you could determine for yourself if it was old or new. However, there are new teachings injected into the scriptures, such as, *sīla*, then *samādhi*, and then *paññā*. This is a new teaching that has been inserted (into the scriptures). If you are going to insert new teachings, why not make them according to the old teachings? Why have practitioners gone so far off-track? We all started from the same point. *Sīla*, then *samādhi*, and then *paññā* were taken out of the Noble Eightfold Path. *paññā*, then *sīla*, and then *samādhi* were also taken from the Noble Eightfold Path. Which of these two seems more accurate? Which one is more in accordance with the original teaching? *Paññā*, then *sīla*, and then *samādhi*, as I mentioned earlier. This is more congruent to the original scriptures. This is the old way. Now there are new teachings that teach *sīla*, then *samādhi*, and then *paññā*. This is the new way.

Can you actually practice *sīla*, then *samādhi*, and then *paññā*? Try to think about it. Find a way to make it work. It doesn't work. You can say it in theory, but in practice it is impossible. Why? If you wanted to practice *sīla*, how do you do it? You have to have *paññā* to study what *sīla* is first. *Sīla* are the teachings of the

Buddha. They are the words of the Buddha. *Paññā* is needed to study what *sīla* is. This is why *paññā* must come first. So why does *paññā* have to come before *sīla*? Where does *paññā* come from? People have always had *paññā*. People have had *paññā* since the beginning of time. No matter the time or era, *paññā* exists in all of us. However, the *paññā* that exists might be *lokiya-paññā* (worldly wisdom). This *paññā* is according to the stream of worldly thought because we have never trained it according to *Dhamma*.

Train Paññā in a Dhamma Way

All you have to do is take the worldly *paññā* (wisdom) that follows mainstream thoughts that you already have and train it for use in a *Dhamma* (Truth) way. It will then become *Dhamma paññā* (wisdom dealing with Truths). We already have thoughts and views within us. But what we need to do is use them in the right way. *Paññā* is already within us all. However, we have used our *paññā* mostly or completely in a worldly manner. Thus, we should change the directional focus of our perception and our thoughts. We have to change our worldly perception into *Dhamma* perceptions.

It is just like a pen. Previously, we have used that pen to write about worldly issues, writing about this topic or that topic. Why do we only write worldly cases? Because we don't know how to write *Dhamma* issues. Once you know *Dhamma*, you can use the same pen to simply write *Dhamma* issues. Our thoughts work in the same way. Previously, we have been thinking in a mainstream, worldly way. Once we have studied the Truth of the *Dhamma*, all we have to do is simply take our thoughts and use them in a *Dhamma* way. We don't have to completely change all our thoughts. Just change your perception. Previously, our perceptions have been based on mainstream worldly things. We have to change it so that it is according to *aniccam* (impermanence).

We have always thought in one way, that everything is *niccam* (permanent). Change the way you think. Do you know how to think according to *aniccam*? We have always seen the world as *sukham* (pleasurable), which is pleasurable in a *lokiya* (worldly

way). We see forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile touch as such (pleasurable). We have to change the way we think. All you have to do is just change it to *dukkham* (suffering). Previously, we only think of *attā* (Self) - this is my Self, these are my Self's belongings. Just change it to *anattā* (not Self). It is not that hard. Just change your view. We used to only see permanence and certainty. We see pleasure in the *lokiya* ways of all the *kāma-guṇa* (sensual pleasures). We see that all things are *attā* and belonging to the Self. You just have to change it from the front of the hand to the back of the hand. That's it.

Perception is not that hard. Perception is the key point. We have to change our perception as the starting point. It is unacceptable to not change our perceptions. This is the beginning. You can't just know that you should do it because you read it in a textbook. However, have you done it yet? If you haven't, that is unacceptable. That isn't practice. That is all just talk. Can other cults or religions study *dhamma*? Yes, but they just haven't changed any perceptions. Every religion and cult has the opportunity to study Buddhism. After they study Buddhism, do they have knowledge of Buddhism? Yes! But can they change their perceptions? This is the point. It all comes down to changing your viewpoint. Buddhists are no different. We have studied Buddhism together. We know what each *Dhamma* verse says. We can study all of it. But the important question is, can we change our viewpoint?

Sometimes we see the different viewpoint from the books, but ask yourself, have you changed your viewpoint yet? Understanding the texts and practicing are two different things. What they understand is based directly from the scriptures. They are only

correct as far as the scriptures are correct. They understand *pariyatti* (theory), but do not understand *paṭipatti* (practice). It is other people's knowledge. They make the decisions and we just agree along with them. What about our thoughts? What about our views? *Yoniso* (reflection) must be done by us. You can't borrow it from someone else. We have to *yoniso* on our own and we will eliminate our doubt on our own. We can't just let other people tell us what this *Dhamma* text says and what that *Dhamma* text says and just simply agree with them. This is wrong; this is just *pariyatti*. Is the *sammā* (right) that we have in *pariyatti*? Or in *paṭipatti*? We have to make this clear. If it is in *pariyatti*, we will not eliminate doubt or confusion; it (doubt and confusion) will stay the same.

We have to set our *paññā* foundation first. If our *paññā* is sound and firm and can be used as a foundation for our Selves, everything will follow *sammā*. It will not be hard. We can't just sit here and debate the authenticity of each *Dhamma* text. This is just agreeing with what others have written. Deep inside, we are not agreeing with anything. We are just agreeing according to the theory (according to the concept). But *paṭipatti* does not work like that. We shouldn't just agree with theories or concepts. We have to agree with Right View. We must use our own personal *paññā* to experience the Truth as it truly exists. But in general, most of us will just agree with the textbooks that we have. If the textbooks are wrong, then we will be wrong too. If the textbooks are right, then we are right too. We let textbooks be our masters too much; we fail to think and discern.

Don't Believe the Textbooks Yet

The Buddha foretold that in the future, his *Dhamma* (Truth) teachings would be subjected to alterations and changes. This will lead future generations to lack trust in the Buddha's teachings. This is why he preemptively left us the *Kālāmā Sutta* (sermon dealing with free inquiry). Go read the ten points in the *Kālāmā Sutta* regarding belief and faith. In the ten points, one stands out and is clear to see. Do not believe texts or scriptures. Go read it for yourself. Figure out the meaning for yourself. Why did he say this? It is not like we are not arguing with each other based on the scriptures. We use the scriptures as the basis of our arguments. We use the scripture as the criterion and standard. We believe blindly. We don't consider which is Right and which is Wrong. If the scriptures are Wrong, then we are Wrong, if the scriptures are Right, then we are Right too.

The Buddha taught, "Before we believe in scriptures, we need to use critical thinking, logic, and reason according to Truths. We can't use our personal opinion as the deciding factor; we must use the Truth as the deciding factor." That's why the Buddha said, "Don't trust scriptures and texts." Nowadays we take all of *pariyatti* (theory) (as true). We have to investigate where the *pariyatti* came from first. When did it first arrive? *pariyatti* came in the ages of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th *Saṅghāyanā*¹¹ (Buddhist Council). Were there *pariyatti* or scriptures written yet? Not yet. It was the job of *arahants* (fully enlightened beings) to

11. Convened the year following the Buddha's *Parinibbāna* (death and subsequent entering of *Nibbāna*). It happened about three months after the Buddha died. The presiding Elder was *Mahā Kasspa*. It was here that the *Tiṭṭaka* was first compiled.

discuss. They discussed it through word of mouth. They did it for the sake of longevity of the Buddha's teachings. But they did not write it in a textbook. From there, the new *sanghas* (monastic communities) that followed thought that the Buddha's teachings would disappear since there were no more monks with the resourcefulness and ability to memorize all the teachings. They then decided to commit them (the teachings) to writing.

The Pali masters, in their age, are the ones who wrote them (the scriptures and teachings) up. They were afraid that future generations, when there are fewer *arahants*, would be unable to remember all the teachings of the Buddha. So they summarized and attempted to commit the Buddha's teachings to writing. This is where the Buddhist scriptures came from and they have been passed down in this form.

In the following age, the age of the Pali correctional masters, this group took the old scriptures and rearranged them. Whatever they felt needed adjusting, they adjusted. Whatever they felt needed adding, they added. They used their own opinions in organizing the scriptures. These were non-enlightened monks who did this and have been doing this ever since. Buddhism was sitting in the hands of the Chinese for 800 years. The monk Xuan Zang took Buddhism to China for 800 years. There it was translated and passed back and forth. It was translated into Sinhalese and many other languages. It was translated back and forth through many languages. Eventually, it got translated back into Sinhalese and went to Sri Lanka as the main body of scripture. Then the Sinhalese version was translated back into Pali by non-enlightened persons. Thus ended this era.

In the following era, another group of Pali correctional masters organized the scriptures again. Who knows how many times they have been changed? If you practice along with studying theory, you will know what makes sense and what doesn't. The current version of the *Tipiṭaka* (Pali Canon) was written based on the ancient texts, but part of it is based on the opinions of the groups that compiled it. Once I read it, I knew immediately which part was the result of people in this era injecting their opinions into the text. There are a lot of subjective understandings and explanations. The Pali is still there, but the subjective explanations are what cause people to misunderstand. They insert many of their own opinions into it causing other people to also misunderstand. If we don't investigate carefully, we won't know what is what. This is why we shouldn't believe or trust in scriptures and texts. This is what the Buddha taught. It is not only I (*Luang Por Thoon*) who says this. We have to carefully pay attention and restrain from being gullible. The Buddha's teachings in this era have been interpreted in many different ways. We don't even have to talk about the Mahayana (and how they re-interpreted the Buddha's teachings), but this is true even within the Theravada community. Practice has been interpreted in many ways; we all know it. But I guess it's every man for himself. Each person sticks to his or her group. Each group interprets and each group practices. If they interpret in the same way, then they get along. If they have different interpretations, then everything goes sideways. So, who is going to interpret it more accurately? The majority doesn't even interpret; they just simply follow whatever the books say.

For example, try to interpret the concept of *vipassanā* (insight contemplation). Nowadays there are so many different interpretations of *vipassanā* and *vipassanā-ñāṇa* (true knowledge obtained from insight contemplation). Currently, the interpretations are wildly different. This is what happens when people interpret the meaning (of *vipassanā*) without ever having experienced it (the results of proper *vipassanā* practice). Nowadays, unenlightened people have the audacity to explain and interpret the Path to *Nibbāna* (Nirvana, total enlightenment). They even write a map on how to get there. They explain what will happen in each step of practice all the way to obtaining *Nibbāna*. The ones writing the Path do it while still filled with hundreds of defilements still swimming around in their minds. Yet this doesn't stop them from writing about the Path to *Nibbāna*. When you look at it this way, it is worthy of humor, worthy of a laugh. But people who do not know any better believe them. Many people lay out plans for how they will get to *Nibbāna*, to the city of *Nibbāna*. Many people organize tours to *Nibbāna*. There are Theravada groups who setup tours of *Nibbāna*. Another group goes and visits the Buddha. They lead groups to go pay their respects to the Buddha. They are able to offer rice to the Buddha and get tremendous amounts of merit. Look at that! People have somehow actually gotten to this point.

Pick the Leader of the Herd

People actually interpret it (the Buddha's teachings) in this way. Laypeople have no idea what is going on, but just have faith in the leader of the herd. The leader of the herd is vitally important. The entire herd is looking for a suitable leader. The herd needs him to lead them across the ocean or the stream of the world. But will the herd get the real leader? If they get the real leader, they are lucky and will remain safe. If they are unlucky, they will get a fake leader. Now they are in trouble. Which leader will the herd choose to lead them across the stream? If the leader has crossed the stream before, he will know which the most direct path is and how to cross safely. He will know where the reef is. He will know where the sand is. He will know where the strong currents lie. He will know where there are sharks, alligators and whirlpools. The leader of the herd has experience and can bring the entire herd across to the other side. If you get a herd leader like this, you will stay safe. The only thing the herd leader cannot guarantee is that you will stay in line. If you step out of line, an alligator could eat you. But if you stay in the herd, all will arrive safely. The only exceptions are those that do not stay in line.

As for the leader of the herd that has never crossed the stream before, this presents a major risk. He also wants to lead his herd across. However, he himself has never crossed. He doesn't know the safest zones. He lacks knowledge, but has the desire to lead others across. Once the herd follows him into the water, where will they end up? Ever heard of a great reef? Boom, you run into one. What will happen? What will happen to the cows that float

right by the mouth of an alligator? If the herd leader takes them past a whirlpool, what will happen then? The leader of the herd, along with the rest, will all go down. All finished. This is why the leader of the herd is a vital point.

When we choose our herd leader, will we get the real one? In this era, choose at your own risk. Search at your own risk. If you get the real herd leader, you are lucky. If you get one that is not real, then it is *evam*¹² (Thus; in this way). It is simply *evam*. This is the age of risk. Practicing must rely on logic and reasoning. You can't just expect that all people who shaved their heads and wear saffron robes to be of good quality. Where are all the real monks? Have you seen the real monks yet? Shaved heads and saffron robes are only the uniform of a monk. But that is not their real Self. This is *sammuti* (supposed conventions). Monks according to *sammuti* are not 100% real. You have to know what makes these monks 100% real. We all search for *arahants* (fully enlightened beings) nowadays. We run around the whole country searching for them, looking for enlightened ones, looking for *arahants*. We search from the south to the north (of Thailand). We search from the Isaarn region to the middle region. We search from Thailand to the USA. We are searching for our real herd leader. Have you found him yet? You aren't sure if you have. Even if you did, you wouldn't know. You just have to risk it. It's like running from the mouth of an alligator into the mouth of a tiger. Don't be like that.

12. *Evam* is used in Thailand by monks as a formal closing to a sermon.

How to Observe a Noble Individual

It is not easy to identify a Noble Individual. It is very difficult and confusing. The Noble Individuals are separated into four groupings:

1. Deep water, deep shadow

This means, people who have high level of *Dhamma* (Truth) in their minds and also the outer habits and mannerisms of one who is refined. This person is worthy of reverence. He is refined in speech and actions. This is the meaning of deep water, deep shadow. This is the way to see a true Noble Individual.

2. Deep water, shallow shadow

This means that this person is a true Noble Individual, but they have a shallow shadow. To what does a shadow refer? This refers to manners and behaviors through speech and actions that seem to not be refined. They are not as refined as they might be. They do or say what they want. They are not guarded. They do not present a good image. But inside their minds, they have a high level of *Dhamma*. This one still looks acceptable. But people nowadays judge Noble Individuals based on speech, actions and manners. If the manners seem good, then everything is good. This is all they look at.

3. Shallow water, deep shadow

They have no quality of *Dhamma* in their minds, but they have superior refined manners. That is, their shadow is refined.

4. Shallow water, shallow water

They lack both quality of *Dhamma* in the mind and lack manners and outward mannerisms. They do not look good at all.

Let us start with the first group. They consist of deep water and deep shadow, and shallow water and deep shadow. If you put these two groups together, what will happen? They will have the same manners and refinement. They will not be different in tranquility and in guarding themselves appropriately. But only one of the two is a true Noble Individual; the other is a regular person. However, their manners will be identical. Their level of guardedness, refinement and caution will all be the same. They will be indistinguishable. How can we, as normal people, distinguish them apart? There are not signs designating one or the other. There are no signs designating one as a Noble Individual and one as a normal person. There are no signs; it is very hard to distinguish.

The second group consists of deep water and shallow shadow, and shallow water and shallow shadow. Both the cases in this group have shallow shadows. They both lack (outward) refinement. They both lack manners and guardedness. You can't tell which person is the Noble Individual and which person is the regular person. You cannot distinguish once again.

A Noble Individual will not necessarily have manner and refinement. A Noble Individual's prior cultivation of virtue might not be enough to eliminate old habits. The *Venerable Sāriputta* is a good example. There are plenty of stories that cover this. He had the habit of jumping and hopping over small puddles and

obstacles. He did so to the point that other monks went to accuse him of being improper to the Buddha. Even at his level, he was an example of shallow shadow.

We can't determine a noble individual based on his level of shadow. We can't distinguish him based on his outer behavior. One like this actually has deep water. This is an important point. Who is going to come out and declare it? Who will dare declare it? Looking for a noble individual is quite difficult nowadays. This is why finding a herd leader is so difficult. But you may ask if they are still out there. Do they still exist? Yes. But who will tell you there still are? Personally, I believe that there are. But I don't know which ones are. I believe that they have yet to be absent from the world (since the Buddha's time). Because, the Buddha said, "*Ime ca, subhadda, bhikkhū sammā vihareyyurū, asuñño loko arahantehi assāti.*" This means, as long as there are still ones who follow the *Dhamma* and the *vinaya* (monastic code of discipline), and practice according to the *Dhamma-vinaya*, there will be noble individuals in this world.

So are there any in this day and age? Yes, there are. There are those that maintain morality, *Dhamma* and *vinaya*. They still practice according to the *Dhamma-vinaya*. That is why I believe that there are still *arahants*. But I do not know if they are in America or Thailand or somewhere else in the world. But they must definitely exist. So, we should all search. If we are lucky, we might encounter the real ones and follow the herd leader and easily cross the stream so that we can finally eliminate rebirths, dangers and perils, and that we don't drift aimlessly being food for alligators as we have been in the past.

Glossary of Terms

Ākāśānañcāyatana Sphere of Infinity of Space

Ākiñcaññāyatana Sphere of Nothingness

Āsava Mental Intoxication. All defilements fall under this category. This is the summation of all things that one must eliminate in order to reach full enlightenment.

Abhiññā Supernormal knowledge and insight. Refers to the ability of those who have obtained a high level of concentration to be able to do things that are beyond the spectrum of normal humans. *Abhiññā* includes supernormal powers, divine ear, telepathy, the ability to recall past lives, divine eye and knowledge that your mental intoxicants are about to be extinguished. These abilities are achieved through the practice of tranquil meditation.

Anattā No Self. Owing to the state of impermanence in all things, nothing stays constant or in one form or state for long enough to maintain one sense of Self long enough. A seed once grown into a small plant no longer exists. The small plant once it grows into a tree no longer exists. A tree once it dies and deteriorates no longer exists. We have no absolute control over anything, nor do we have the ability to truly own anything. Therefore, we say that there is no Self for us to control or own.

- Aniccam** Impermanence. Everything in the world is subject to change and physical deterioration. However, impermanence also controls the non-physical world. Impermanence pertains to all things, physical and mental. Our beliefs are impermanent. They are subject to change due to many reasons. Our assumptions are impermanent. Our feelings are impermanent.
- Appanā-samādhi** Fixed concentration. This is a level of meditation attainment.
- Arahant** Fully enlightened being. This is the highest level of spiritual attainment. One can become an **arahant** through contemplation and destruction of one's defilements and mental cankers. An *arahant* no longer is slave to the Five Aggregates: form, feeling, memory, volitional formations and consciousness. There are many levels of *arahant* ranging from Buddha, *Pacceka*buddha (silent, non-teaching Buddha), *arahanta-sāvaka* (disciple *Arahants*; such as *Sāriputta* and Ananda) to regular *Arahants*.
- Ariya** Pertaining to nobility. Noble through being enlightened.
- Ariya-puggala** Noble individual, enlightened being. All beings who have achieved any level of enlightenment, starting from *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi* to *arahant*, are all considered *ariya*.
- Arūpa-bhava** The Formless-Sphere

- Arūpa-Jhāna** *Jhānas* of immaterial sphere. This is a higher level of meditative absorption.
- Attā** Self. Identity. Sense of ownership. Sense of having control.
- Bhāvanā** Mental cultivation; mental development. Often mistakenly understood to mean tranquil meditation. Any striving for improvement of spiritual and mental cultivation is considered ***bhāvanā***.
- Bhāvanā-maya-paññā** Wisdom resulting from mental development. After contemplating upon our understanding and perceptions, the wisdom that we come to develop is known as ***bhāvanā-maya-paññā***.
- Bhikkhu** Male Buddhist monk. Uniquely different from an ascetic.
- Bhikkhunī** Female Buddhist nun. Uniquely different from an ascetic.
- Bodhisatta** Candidate for Buddhahood; Buddha-to-be, future Buddha. An individual who has aspired to become a future Buddha and has received an official prediction and affirmation from a living Buddha. Once he/she receives the prediction from a living Buddha, he/she will spend every life trying to perfect the 30 levels of ***pāramī***.

- Dibba-cakkhu*** Divine Eye. The ability to see, understand and comprehend things beyond the normal human's scope of understanding.
- Catuttha-jhāna*** Fourth *jhāna*
- Cetovimutti*** Liberation by concentration. For these particular individuals, they have a natural knack for tranquil meditation. Once they attempt it, they seamlessly slip into deep meditation quite easily. This is due to having practiced tranquil meditation for many lives as ascetics.
- Dassana*** Experience. For example, a person grieving over the death of a parent has the experience of what it feels like to lose a parent. A person who has tasted a spicy papaya salad has experience of how that salad tastes. This is different from knowledge.
- Dhamma*** Buddha's Teachings, Truths. Natural Truths. Undeniable universal Truths. The Buddha uncovered and became aware of the Natural Truths that have always existed and will always exist in this world. The teachings he gave us were all based on these Natural Truths.
- Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*** the discourse of setting the Wheel of the Doctrine; the First Sermon. This was the first time the *Dhamma* was preached in our world.
- Dukkham* or *Dukkha*** Suffering; Undesirable states. Includes both physical and emotional suffering.

<i>Dutiya-jhāna</i>	Second <i>jhāna</i>
<i>Evaṃ</i>	Thus; in this way; used by monks in Thailand as a formal closing to a sermon. Most sutras that refer to the Buddha's teachings start with " <i>Evaṃ me Suttam</i> " meaning "Thus I have heard."
<i>Jhāna</i>	Levels of concentration attainment. Through cultivation of concentration, one may achieve various levels of <i>jhāna</i> .
<i>Kālāmā Sutta</i>	The Kalama Sutta was a teaching the Buddha gave to the Kalama people. They asked for his advice on which holy men and ascetics they should trust. He taught that people should practice the teachings themselves and see the validity of them through personal practice. The main message was for people to not trust textbooks, teachers, preachers and scriptures without contemplation and discernment. One should test, examine and determine through their own merit whether a teaching is Right or Wrong.
<i>Kāma-bhava</i>	The Sense-Sphere
<i>Kāma-guṇa</i>	Sensual pleasures; sensual objects. Pleasures that stem from sight, hearing, taste, tactile touch and smell.
<i>Kammaṭṭhāna</i>	Modes of meditation practice. Often mistakenly understood to mean tranquil meditation. There are two types of <i>Kammaṭṭhāna</i> : <i>samatha</i> (tranquil based) and <i>vipassanā</i> (insight based).

- Kalpa** An aeon. A *kalpa* is not used to designate a finite amount of time. It is commonly used to denote an incalculable period of time. Imagine the time it takes the world to create itSelf, destroy itSelf and recreate itSelf, which would be one *kalpa*. This time period is not constant, it can range from many hundred million years to many billion years.
- Ghana** Continuous and seemingly connected arising and falling. As one thing arises and comes into being, it deteriorates and falls out of existence in that form. After falling, it arises into a new state so fast that most cannot perceive the rising and falling. For example, a seed grows into a small plant. Each step during the growth is the birth of a new step, but the death of the old step. Each death is so close to each birth that it is almost imperceptible.
- Kilesa** Defilements. *Kilesa* encompasses all of our defilements. For example, wanting to be rich, wanting to have a fancy car and wanting to be better looking than your friend are all *kilesas*.
- Lokiya Paññā** Worldly Wisdom. Wisdom that one develops regarding worldly things. For example, learning how to best cook a steak is worldly wisdom. Learning how to drive a car safely is worldly wisdom. Learning how to speak to get people to listen is worldly wisdom. Learning how to manipulate stocks to maximize profits is worldly wisdom.

- Micchā** Wrong; Against Truths. All things *micchā* are contrary to the natural truths and *Dhamma* as they exist in the world. Examples of *micchā* include and are not limited to not believing in Karma, hurting others, stealing, killing, believing in things that do not exist and not seeing things that are suffering as suffering.
- Micchā-diṭṭhi** Wrong View; Wrong Perception. Having perceptions that are not congruent with the Truth. For example, believing that things are permanent when they are actually impermanent. Another example is perceiving something that is suffering as pleasurable and worthy of rebirth.
- Micchā-samādhī** Wrong Concentration; Wrong meditation. This refers to practicing concentration and/or meditation for the wrong reasons, with the wrong intentions, with the Wrong Understanding, or with the wrong expectations. Since meditation is merely an amplifier of our perception, if we have wrong perceptions, our meditation will amplify our wrong perceptions. If we have right perceptions, then our meditation will amplify our right perceptions.
- Moha** Delusion. Delusion is one of the highest levels of defilements.
- Moha-samādhī** Delusional meditation. Practicing meditation or concentration in delusion. For example, we are delusional that we can achieve transcendental knowledge through tranquil meditation.

- Ñāṇa** Knowledge. *Ñāṇa* refers to knowledge that we acquire during our practice. For example, one can practice and develop the *ñāṇa* that tells us that we are all subject to aging, subject to sickness and subject to death. Understanding this knowledge conceptually is considered *ñāṇa*.
- Ñāṇa-dassana** Knowledge followed by experience. Having knowledge of the Truth and then achieving actual experience that serves as evidence of that Truth. Through these two things, knowledge and experience, we have complete and unadulterated understanding of the Truth.
- Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana** Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception
- Nibbāna ; nirvana** Total Enlightenment. *Nibbāna* is the total elimination of defilements. After death, one is no longer subject to any rebirths or existences since the cause for rebirth and existence has been eliminated.
- Niccaṃ** Permanence; opposite of *aniccaṃ*
- Opanayiko** Internalization; leading inwards; comparing what is seen to that which has been personally experienced. Applying the concept or example to yourself. For example, when you read an Aesop's fable, internalization is when you substitute yourself as one of the characters.
- Paññā** Wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, understanding.

The wisdom faculty.

- Pañcavaggīya*** literally - Five Disciples; the name given to the Buddha's first five students: *Venerable Aññā Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma* and *Assaji*.
- Paññādhika*** Person with wisdom as a predominating factor. This is usually used in reference to each Buddha's strongest dominating characteristic of virtue. Each Buddha will have a different foremost virtue.
- Paññā-Ñāṇa*** Knowledge that comes directly from thorough investigation and contemplation and insight. ***Paññā-ñāṇa*** is different than the other *ñāṇas*. *Paññā-ñāṇa* comes from contemplation, discernment and deliberation. The knowledge that is gained from deep study is known and *paññā-ñāṇa*.
- Paññāvimutti*** Liberation through wisdom. For these particular individuals, they have a natural knack for contemplative meditation. For these people, questions, observations, analyzing and speculation come as second nature. When these people try to quiet their minds, questions and observations arise in their minds. These people like to figure things out, see how things work and understand. These people will achieve liberation through contemplation and wisdom.
- Pāramī*** Perfections of virtue and character. There are ten separate virtues with three levels of attainment each. In total, there are 30 *pāramīs*. The ten *pāramīs*

include: *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (morality), *nekkhamma* (renunciation), *paññā* (wisdom), *virīya* (effort), *khanti* (forbearance), *sacca* (truthfulness), *adhiṭṭhāna* (goal-setting), *mettā* (compassion) and *upekkhā* (acceptance). There are three levels to each.

Pariyatti Textual or scriptural teaching. Teaching contained in textbooks, scriptures or generalized knowledge can all be called *pariyatti*.

Paṭhama-jhāna First *jhāna*

Paṭipatti Practice. You can practice morality, *Dhamma*, skills, concentration, *pāramīs* and pretty much anything. *Paṭipatti* can be either a noun referring to a particular type of practice. It can also be used as a verb, referring to the action of practicing.

Puggala Person, individual

Rūpa Form. Made up of the four main elements: earth, wind, water and air.

Rūpa-bhava the form-sphere. The physical space where all physical things exist.

Rūpa-jhāna *jhānas* of fine-material sphere

Sacca-dhamma Universal Truth. All things that are universally known and seen as Truths. Things that cannot be argued by any sane and rational person. Things that all people and things are subject to. Laws of nature.

- Saddhā** Faith, belief
- Samādhi** Concentration. Through misuse and injection in the mainstream, this term has become synonymous with seated tranquil meditation. However, this term encompasses all forms of concentration in all positions and situations.
- Samatha** Tranquility meditation
- Samatha-kammaṭṭhāna** Tranquility based meditation mode of practice. Meditation with the purpose of obtaining tranquility through emptying the mind of thought. Usually obtained through focusing on a singularity such as breathing, color, fire, water and so on.
- Sammā** Right according to the Truth. Opposite of *micchā*.
- Sammā-ājīva** Right Livelihood. Fifth step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Part of the *sīla* group of the Noble Eightfold Path. Is a result of having the Right View and Right Discernment.
- Sammā-Diṭṭhi** Right View. First and most important step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Part of the *paññā* group of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Sammā-kammanta** Right Action. Fourth step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Part of the *sīla* group of the Noble Eightfold Path. Is a result of having the Right View and Right Discernment.
- Sammā-samādhi** Right Concentration; Right Meditation. The Eight (last) step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Is part of the

samādhi group. Is the result of having Right Wisdom and Right Actions.

Sammā-saṅkappa; Sammā-Saṅkappa Right Thought, Right Discernment, thinking in a way that is aligned with universal Truths. Second step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Is part of the *paññā* group.

Sammā-paññāvimutti Right Mindfulness. Is the seventh step on the Noble Eightfold Path. Is the result of having Right Wisdom and Right Action.

Sammā-vācā Right Speech. Is the third step on the Noble Eightfold Path. Part of the *sīla* group of the Noble Eightfold Path. Is a result of having the Right View and Right Discernment.

Sammā-vāyāma Right Effort. Is the sixth step on the Noble Eightfold Path. Is the result of having Right Wisdom and Right Action.

Sammuti Convention; imagination; supposed convention. In Thai, the term *sammuti* is used as a verb. It means imagined. It can also be used as a noun. Something that is a *sammuti* is something is has been arbitrarily created from nothing and agreed upon by some. For example, “we shall call this a tree.” Another good example of a *Sammuti* concept is the concept of time zones. This is a supposed convention.

Samsāra The cycle of rebirths

<i>Samuccheda-pahāna</i>	Extinction by cutting off
<i>Saṅghāyanā</i>	The Buddhist Council.
<i>Saṅkhāra</i>	Conditioned Things, phenomena, formations, conditioned states, mental formations; imagination. <i>Saṅkhāra</i> has many definitions and is used in many different cases. <i>Saṅkhāra</i> can be one of the five aggregates as the aggregate of volitional formations or imaginations. <i>Saṅkhāra</i> can represent all things created by the mind, which refers to all things in existence. <i>Saṅkhāra</i> is also sometimes used to refer to the physical body as our <i>Saṅkhāra</i> . <i>Saṅkhāra</i> also refers to all existence.
<i>Saññā</i>	Memory
<i>Paññāvimutti</i>	Mindfulness
<i>Paññāvimutti-paññā</i>	Mindful wisdom; attentive discernment; attentive wisdom
<i>Sāvaka</i>	Follower, disciple
<i>Sīla</i>	Morality; restraint
<i>Dibba-sota</i>	Divine Ear
<i>Sotāpanna</i>	Stream-enterer. First level of Enlightenment.
<i>Sukha ; Sukhaṃ</i>	Happiness, Bliss, Pleasurable Feelings.
<i>Taṇhā</i>	Greed, desire
<i>Tatiya-jhāna</i>	Third <i>jhāna</i>

Tilakkhaṇa	The Three Universal Characteristics (<i>annicam, dukkham, anattā</i>)
Upacāra-samādhi	Approaching, proximate concentration
Vāsanā	Lot in life. You determine your lot based on your previous actions. Your lot is like a foundation for success. If you create a strong foundation, you will receive the resulting success based on the foundation you created.
Vedanā	Feeling. One of the five aggregates.
Vinaya	Monastic Code of Discipline
Viññāṇa	Consciousness. One of the five aggregates.
Viññāṇañcāyatana	Sphere of Infinity of Consciousness
Vipassanā	Insight contemplation
Vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna	Insight contemplation based meditation mode of practice
Vipassanā-ñāṇa	True knowledge obtained from insight contemplation.
Viriya	Effort, striving
Yojana	Measure of distance; approx. 1 mile.
Yoniso	Reflection



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.