

Meditations to Soothe the Mind

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1. Basic Facts of Meditation

1.1 Let Us Meditate

Meditation enriches and gives more meaning to life. Meditation is a specialized technique to improve the mind. It was the Buddha who first taught us that the mind could be developed. He developed his mind to the highest level and taught us the way to develop our minds. We call this technique of mind development meditation. If you could practice this technique, you too could improve your mind rapidly. For this, you need the capacity to think and analyse. If you are unable to do this, it is not possible to improve your mind. Only a few people in this world can train and improve their minds. You, too, could count yourself among the select few. Learn and practice this with much commitment and attention. We can show you how to enjoy a new depth to your life.

The initial qualification for a successful meditation is your confidence in the Buddha's knowledge. It is called "*saddhā*". We believe Buddha is the greatest teacher who developed the mind fully. We can only improve our minds when we follow guidelines set by a teacher who himself has improved his mind. The Buddha is the ultimate teacher for this purpose. Therefore, if you have confidence in the Buddha, learn his instructions well and conduct your life according to his guidelines, you too can develop your mind through meditation.

When a person who has the capacity to think meets the "*Dhamma*", the Buddha's teachings, and is impressed by the *Dhamma*, it is called "*khano*" or momentous opportunity. This is very rare. The Buddha and his followers often said those who do not take advantage of this momentous opportunity suffer in hell. This life passes very quickly. We have a life that is subject to sickness. We have a life that is limited by death. Therefore, before we die, before we become terminally ill, before our faculties deteriorate, while we have mental alertness, while we have good hearing, while we still have the capacity to think, and while we are able to understand, we must utilize this momentous opportunity. If you have confidence in the Buddha's teachings and conviction in following his teachings, you have already obtained the opportunity.

Since you have been born into the human world, you have the ability to think. Along with this ability to think, you could enhance your thinking as well. This means you could listen to the Buddha's teachings, the *Dhamma*; if you are impressed by this *Dhamma* and you think, "I must cultivate this *Dhamma*." From that moment on, you have this incredible opportunity to seize this. However, be aware

that it is not the nature of the mind to sustain anything for long. Whether we try to practice virtue, self-control, or mind improvement, it becomes almost impossible after a while, and before we know it we are back to where we started. You must understand this nature and have the determination to internalize the *Dhamma*. Ponder the *Dhamma* to improve your mind accordingly.

The greatest change you will notice from improving your mind is that your virtue will arise. As your mind improves, you develop a certain personality, which then gives birth to a noble quality called "dignity". This quality can only enhance your life; it leads you away from jealousy and envy, and away from anger and revenge. You can be happy for the well-being of others as well as yourself. These are the indicators of an improving mind; they can only be achieved through a developing mind. This is called a developed mind. As your mind improves, you become a person with multiple noble qualities. This means that you take pleasure in the well-being and good fortune of others, do not envy them, take pleasure in others' successes and genuinely pleased with others' skills. These are the characteristics of the mind on the way to improvement. When it starts happening to you, you should understand that inside you is a mind capable of being improved.

There are methods of meditation by which such a mind can be enhanced. These are the methods that the Buddha taught. Meditation is a cause of action conducting the mind. Conducting our minds in a certain orderly fashion is called meditation. This orderly fashion of conducting our mind leads to purification of our inner most selves. That alone can lead to our lives becoming gradually content. You become increasingly more courageous as well as diligent. You prefer to be happy and content. All this will be a result of improving your mind.

We have lived a considerable time but our minds have yet to be improved. This is a huge failure in our lives. This opportunity we have found to avoid such a failure is one we must nurture and protect with our lives.

The ability to think freely is a very unique skill. You need to have confidence that the Buddha's method is a practiced and true way of achieving an evolved mind. Even if someone tries to discourage you from meditating you should be convinced that you are doing the right thing. Therefore, do not let the opinion of another person change your mind. You should have a strong confidence about the fact that you can realize this *Dhamma*. This requires unwavering dedication if you are to reap the benefits of the method. Based on this confidence, you will gradually arrive into the Gautama Buddha's way.

As a result, your life will gradually become strong. You will be spiritually sound and will develop a dignified personality, which includes the ability to thoroughly investigate details in a wise manner without being deterred by wrong opinions. Meditation will provide you with an outstanding chance. In the next section, we will present the methods of meditation and the hindrances to meditation, which a dedicated student must learn to recognize and overcome.

1.2 Let us Identify the Basic Types of Meditation

In the last section, we presented the basic qualifications you need to have in order to practice meditation. These are:

1. The ability to think freely.
2. Understanding the need for improving your mind.
3. The conviction that you need to make use of this rare opportunity you have as a human being by hastening the improvement of your mind before it is too late.
4. The confidence is all the help you need to improve your mind, that is contained in the guidelines that the Buddha taught.

Taking into account these factors, we will now learn the two basic methods of meditation. The first one is "*samatha bhāvanā*" or "*calming meditation*" and the second is "*vipassanā bhāvanā*" or "*insight meditation*". The Buddha very clearly emphasized that both these methods are equally useful to the understanding of life. The Buddha said, "*samatho bhikkhavē bhāvetabbo* [monks, this calming meditation should be developed]"; "*vipassanā bhikkhavē bhāvetabbo* [monks, this insight meditation should be developed.]"

By practicing calming meditation, you settle and strengthen your mind. By practicing insight meditation, wisdom arises in you. When you practice calming meditation, and improve your mind, you lose weaknesses in your mind, and reduce the tendency for the mind to digress. You strengthen your mind and are able to comprehend issues as they really are. This means that through calming meditation, your mind becomes profoundly functional. Such a mind can be used to understand realities in life.

Insight meditation is investigating the truth of something. Wisdom is the ability to see the truth as it is. Again, insight meditation helps you understand the nature of life. This comprehension comes through wisdom. These two methods are essential to each other.

A person who is attempting to understand life through the Buddha's teachings (the *Dhamma*) first practices calming meditation and then progress into *insight meditation*. Alternatively, some start with insight meditation and then calming meditation. There are also some who practice both calming meditation and insight meditation simultaneously. Those who start with calming meditation and then do insight meditation are called "*samatha pubbangamā vipassanā*." Those who start with insight meditation and then do calming meditation are called "*vipassanā pubbangamā samatho*." Those who develop both methods simultaneously are called "*yuganaddha*."

There are no records of any persons who have entered the path to enlightenment by focusing on just one of these two methods of meditation. In another words, it is not possible to enter the path to enlightenment without practicing both these meditations. Thus, it is important to understand calming meditation and insight meditation in greater detail.

Calming meditation prepares the mind by improving and strengthening it. During this method, we overcome *nīvarana*, or hindrances, and calm the mind. The word *samatha* means resolving or exceptions, the total absence of conflict in your mind. When we experience problems in our lives we can resolve them, which *Samatha* is like. *Samatha* is a resolution of all conflicts in the mind. We are then able to calm the mind and come to a resolution of all conflict of the mind. Calming meditation gives us this ability.

The Buddha taught us that there are five factors or hindrances that cause confusion in our minds. In Pāli, the Five Hindrances are called *panca nīvarana*. These hindrances are mental obstacles that impede improvement of the mind and prevent wisdom from arising. They distract us from improving our minds as well as divert us from the path to freedom. The Five Hindrances are:

1. ***Kāmacchanda*** (sense desire): The nature of our minds, which is constantly attracted by pleasing forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations.
2. ***Vyāpāda*** (ill-will): The nature of our minds, which is constantly recalling and in conflict with unpleasant forms seen, sounds heard, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations felt.
3. ***Thīnamiddha*** (Sloth): Laziness and sleepiness
4. ***Uddhaccha kukkuccha*** (Regret and remorse): which means regretting the past and resenting past mistakes. This tends to diffuse the mind.

5. **Vicikicchā** (Doubt): Doubting your course of action in the Dhamma. "Is this the correct path? Can I succeed by following this path? Will I fail by following this path?" And giving into such doubt and losing confidence.

These are the constant forces at work to prevent us from improving our minds. Calming meditation has the ability to subdue these hindrances and focus our minds. So, it is imperative that we spend time on calming meditation.

The other method is *vipassanā*, or insight. This is also a must. Insight meditation is the way to see the basic nature of all things and their fundamental characteristics. As an example; the Buddha said, "anything that arises as a result of a cause is impermanent." What then is the most fundamental nature of all things? It is of course impermanence. If this impermanence is common to all things, we too have this characteristic called impermanence. This is evident throughout our lives. Although we are fascinated with ourselves, we ignore this impermanence, but there is no way we can prevent this from occurring. Until we understand the true nature, we grieve for things we believe last forever and then suddenly show signs of impermanence. All things we base our pleasures on are impermanent. Not understanding this impermanent nature causes us pain misery and suffering. But, when things go wrong, we can stay calm because we understand that this impermanence and change is the true nature of things. Then we have developed the wisdom that enables us to see things as they really are. We cannot control this impermanent nature, we cannot sustain our bodies in a state of constant youthfulness and good health. Which we have no control over. Therefore, we cannot claim ownership of our bodies because there is nothing that is ours.

Not having true control over impermanent things and not truly owning anything is called "*anatta*" or non-self. Seeing impermanence in things, suffering, and non-self is called "*seeing the reality*." When investigating things mindfully and wisely, we will gradually begin to see impermanence, suffering, and non-self inside ourselves. We will then be able to see through most things. This ability to see things in their true light is wisdom. The method of developing this ability to see things in their true light or wisdom is *vipassanā*.

We could be warned that as lay people having a home life, *vipassanā* is detrimental to our lives. We must be able to think independently and realize the Buddha would never teach us anything that could be detrimental to our lives. Detrimental things to our lives are taught by ordinary, unwise people. The Buddha is not an ordinary person, he is the supremely enlightened one, who eradicated all defilements and taught the *Dhamma* to ordinary people to overcome the ordinary state of life. The

noble community of monks or *Sangha* is the community heading towards enlightenment and overcoming ordinary states. I have gone for refuge to this Triple Gem: *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. The doctrine of impermanence, suffering, and non-self belongs to the Triple Gem in which I took refuge. Therefore, if someone says this doctrine of impermanence is not important to our lives, that person does not belong to the Triple Gem. He is an ordinary person who holds wrong view. You must identify that person clearly in this manner, and act with a complete knowledge of mind. The Buddha had infinite compassion towards the world and acted only for the benefit of people. This is where our confidence in the Buddha's words comes in.

In summary: calming meditation is a process that settles the mind, subdues the Five Hindrances, and improves profound concentration. When this settled state of mind, which arises through calming meditation and can be sustained for a long period of time it is called *jhāna*. *Jhāna* can be developed through first, second, and third *jhāna* to a fourth *jhāna*.

Insight meditation is a method of developing wisdom. As our wisdom develops, the unnecessary attachments we have are dropped. Irrelevant complications we create in lives are eliminated, and supernatural concepts that rule our lives are recognized as such. Without these unnecessary complications our vision is cleared to see reality. The mind that becomes settled through calming meditation is open to developing wisdom through insight meditation.

There is a meditation taught by the Buddha that includes both these methods: the mind building *samatha* and the wisdom building *vipassanā*. That is the *satipatṭhāna* or establishment of mindfulness. In the chapters to come, you will learn how to develop meditation methods found within the establishment of mindfulness.

1.3 What is Right Mindfulness?

We have now talked about the qualities one should have to successfully practice meditation. We have also learned two basic meditation methods, *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Calming meditation strengthens your mind while *insight* meditation helps increase your understanding of the way things are. We learned that these two methods can be developed in each of us. In this section, we will discuss the Buddha's discourse about these two types of meditations. The Buddha has taught ways in which we could develop and improve each aspect of our lives. We say the Buddha's teachings are *akālika* or timeless. This means that even today without the Buddha present, we could still follow his instructions

successfully. His instructions are as practical as they were 2500 years ago and should be so in the future as well.

Unlike other subjects the *Dhamma* does not have to be modified to suit a specific time period. The fundamental problems and issues faced by mankind are still the same as they were 2500 years ago. The weaknesses of people that existed then also exist today. The strengths and skills of people that existed then are also evident today. Therefore, these strategies which improve skills and diminish weaknesses are still present today. These teachings in the *Dhamma* help us to look at life openly and freely. The *Dhamma* also gives us a broad view of life. What gives us the necessary basis for this broad view is called *satipatṭhāna*. *Sati* is mindfulness; *Patṭhāna* is establishment.

Establishing mindfulness is a way of looking at life in a clear and profound way. In general, we need mindfulness to do our daily chores. We walk on the edge of the street so that we can avoid being hit by vehicles. We cross the road after checking for oncoming traffic. All these we do with awareness and care. This is our usual mundane mindfulness. If we become absent-minded and lose mindfulness, we lose track of what we are doing. What meditation does is improve this normal mundane mindfulness to a higher plane where we become aware of our inner selves. This improvement to a higher plane is called *sammā sati* or right mindfulness. The four establishments of mindfulness or *cattāro satipatṭhāno* taught by the Buddha elevate our mindfulness to a higher plane. That is called *sammā sati*, or right mindfulness. Again, you must realize our day-to-day mindfulness is somewhat different from *sammā sati*. No matter how much of our daily tasks we do with mindfulness, unless we develop that mindfulness to the level of *sammā sati*, it will not help us understand life. The *satipatṭhāna* or the establishments of mindfulness are entirely composed of *sammā sati* or right mindfulness.

Right mindfulness cannot be established without right view or right understanding "*sammā ditthi*." Therefore, right understanding is an essential aspect of a successful life. The Buddha described right understanding thus: There is deep darkness at night; towards morning this darkness has ended by a pale light that arises in the eastern sky. This pale light is called dawn. When we see this light, we are very certain the sun will follow it. The Buddha said life without understanding is pitch darkness. The sun can only shine on this darkness through *sammā ditthi* or right understanding. If we acquire right understanding, we can then meditate on the establishments of mindfulness.

The terms right view and right understanding are commonly used to mean *sammā ditthi* but are not strictly accurate. The Buddha explained *sammā ditthi* as the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

This life is based on the law of cause and effect. Its nature is that in order to eliminate the effect the cause has to be eliminated. The impermanent nature of this world is founded on the law of cause and effect. To go beyond this impermanence, in order to reach ultimate bliss, one has to follow the Noble Eightfold Path. If someone understands this law of cause and effect, if someone understands the need to go beyond and reach the ultimate bliss following the Noble Eightfold Path, that person can conduct their mindfulness very skillfully. Such a person possesses right mindfulness.

We cannot achieve anything without commitment and dedication. Meditation is the same. It is essential we understand why we meditate, why it is necessary, and how it benefits us. In general, our lives are limited to what we experience externally. So many people think meditation helps to maintain good health, improve memory, lessen stress, and helps us lead an organized life. While they are correct in the surmise, these should be secondary benefits. The number one goal of meditation is to understand the reality of life. The person focused on understanding the reality of life through meditation thus experiences a healthy mind. The person who focuses on understanding the reality of life through meditation thus experiences enhanced memory skills. The person who focuses on understanding reality of life through meditation thus experiences lower stress levels. The person who focuses on understanding reality of life through meditation thus experiences a more organized life. The person who focuses on understanding the reality of life through meditation thus becomes unshaken by the ups and downs of life. So, if you expect such worldly benefits from meditation you will get them as by-products as you focus on understanding the reality of life. Therefore, our aim of meditation should become understanding the reality of life. This understanding can be achieved through the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. You now know that right mindfulness is developed through the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

We have an ordinary mindfulness, which really is no help at all when we want to alleviate pain or sorrow. Mundane mindfulness cannot carry us to an understanding of life or to eradicate sorrow. It cannot calm our restless minds. However right mindfulness or *sammā sati* can do this. This *right mindfulness* is developed within the establishments of mindfulness. The Buddha taught that there are four methods through which mindfulness can be developed. These are called the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

1. *Kāyānupassanā*, which is establishing mindfulness of the body.
2. *Vedanānupassanā*, which is establishing mindfulness of feelings.

3. *Cittānupassanā*, which is establishing mindfulness of thought.
4. *Dhammānupassanā*, which is establishing mindfulness of facts that contribute to understanding the reality of life.

These four establishments of mindfulness lead to an understanding of the reality of life. In the following chapters, we will discuss the Four Establishments of Mindfulness in detail.

2. Mindfulness of Breathing

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

2.1 From the Breath to Nibbāna

In the last section, we talked about *satipaṭṭhāna* or establishment of mindfulness. We now know that right mindfulness can only be established through *sammā ditthi*, or right understanding derived from the initial knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. Inversely, knowledge of the Four Noble Truths gives us *sammā ditthi*, which is necessary for right mindfulness in realizing the true nature of life. The Buddha, with great compassion, clearly shows in *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that the *Establishment of Mindfulness* will result in purification of the mind for all of us; the eradication of grief, sorrow, lamentation, physical and mental pain; and profound understanding of life leading to ultimate bliss ... *Nibbāna*.

Since the Buddha taught the results of practicing *satipaṭṭhāna* at the very beginning of the discourse, we should have no doubts whatsoever about the *satipaṭṭhāna* or its results. It is clear that we will be able to gain tremendous benefits if we practice the *Dhamma* and cultivate our minds. The first *satipaṭṭhāna* we develop is *kāyānupassanā* or mindfulness of the body. In *kāyānupassanā* meditation, the first method is "*ānāpānasati*" or mindfulness of breathing. From the moment we were born we have been breathing in and out. Most of us are not aware that we can use our breathing to establish mindfulness and purify our minds. The Buddha discovered this over 2500 years ago. As millions of people have benefited from this method, it is a proven way that produces successful results. His teachings of the Four Noble Truths are as follows:

1. There is suffering in this life
2. There is a cause for this suffering
3. This suffering can be overcome. The cessation of suffering is called "*Nibbāna*"
4. There is a path leading to the cessation of suffering. This path is the Noble Eightfold Path.

We need to keep this at the forefront of our minds as we learn about meditation.

We must first find an appropriate spot to be seated when beginning meditation of mindfulness of breathing. A spot under a shady tree, an empty space, or a quiet solitary spot where you won't be disturbed is recommended for this. If one plans to meditate with others in a room, everyone should plan

to close their eyes and sit quietly. This will allow the meditators to isolate themselves within the same room. This is suitable as it is in accordance with empty space.

Then the Buddha instructs, "Nisīdati pallankaṃ ābhujitvā," when practicing the mindfulness of breathing meditation, the meditator should sit. "Ujuṃ kāyaṃ panidhāya," the meditator should sit with folded legs, cross-legged with a straight back. For most people this is a very difficult thing to do. There are solutions to this problem. You can make yourself a solid cushion or a little seat about three to four inches high. We should not become accustomed to leaning against the wall. We should not be discouraged if others can sit cross legged with a straight back for a long period but we cannot. With a little practice we will be able to do it in the end. It is very important to have a balanced and stable body posture so that we can sit for a long period without being distracted by our posture. This way, the first requirement to breathing meditation is fulfilled.

"Parimukhaṃ satim upatthapetvā," now, we have to focus on our breathing and meditate. Our breathing is the subject or *nimitta* of this meditation. We don't need to attempt to focus on any other *nimittas* or subjects. Here the Buddha explains the subject of breathing very clearly. "So satova assasati," he breathes in mindfully. "So satova passasati," he breathes out mindfully. The Buddha advised us to be mindful and aware that we breathe in and breathe out.

However, you can contemplate the great qualities of the Buddha as the initial step before starting breathing meditation. Think for a few minutes about the Buddha's great qualities in any language you are comfortable with, recollecting the meaning of each quality: The Buddha is liberated (*araham*), fully enlightened (*sammā sambuddho*), endowed with true knowledge and virtue (*vijjā carana sampanno*), well gone (*sugato*), knower of all worlds (*lokavidū*), incomparable teacher of those to be tamed (*anuttaro purisadamma sārathi*), teacher of gods and humans (*sattha deva manussānam*), the Buddha (*buddho*), the Blessed One (*bhagavā*). In this way, create a pleasant mind by recollecting these great qualities of the Buddha. When you think about the Buddha, your mind clears and settles down as suspended particles in a murky pond settle on the bottom and leave the water clear. You begin to feel content and happy. This contentment and happiness become great aids in the development of meditation.

So, now, you inhale with mindfulness and you exhale with mindfulness. This is all you need to do at this stage. This introductory step is not difficult. You can see for yourself how simple this sounds. However, once you try to stay aware of the breath entering and leaving your body, you should soon

realize how disobedient your ordinary mindfulness is. You will realize it is not that easy to sustain mindfulness on a single subject. This, too, is then *anatta* or non-self because it is not something within your control. You will realize how your thoughts leap from one attraction to another. One moment you are aware of your breath, the next moment your thoughts roll along memory lane, and the next moment building future dreams or your thoughts attach on to external sounds. You will soon understand the nature of this mind. So, what do you do now? The answer is *virīya* or effort. When your mind starts to wander bring it back gently to the breath. You have to keep in mind that the Buddha taught the meditator to shed both attachments and aversions while developing mindfulness. Avoid having conflict with such mind states.

There are three skills to sustain mindfulness of breathing. These are:

1. *Ātāpi*: improving through perseverance the skill of subduing the accumulated weaknesses of your mind.
2. *Sampajañña*: using your intelligence skillfully.
3. *Satimā*: the skill of staying totally aware and mindful.

In summary, the way to build up the establishments of mindfulness is through perseverance with intelligence and profound awareness. When you grasp the importance of these three skills, you are no longer the casual meditator. You are the meditator who understands that if your mind splits from an attraction to attraction or if your mind splits from aversion to aversion, then you are not ready to meditate. So, you create an atmosphere where you can focus on meditating. You can isolate yourself, sit with folded legs and a straight spine, and be mindful of your breathing. Even if your mind wanders to the past or to the future, persevere and gently draw back to your breath. The mind must be totally free of anxiety in order to be successful at this. You must not be discouraged if your thoughts keep splitting to different focus points. Persevere and gently draw it back to your breath. Mindfully you will inhale; mindfully you will exhale. This practice should enhance your life immensely.

2.2 The Way to Cultivate Kāyānupassanā in Ānāpānasati Meditation

So far, we discussed where to sit for mindfulness of breathing meditation, how to sit with folded legs and erect spine, and how to sustain our mindfulness on breathing in and breathing out. We will now teach you how you must not let your mind dwell on things that attract us or repel us but very gently bring our thoughts back to the breath.

Sammā sati or right mindfulness is what leads us to understanding our life. Right mindfulness is essential for this. Sometimes you hear people say that in order to meditate you need to find a teacher, tell them your personal details, and ask them to recommend a meditation method for you, as it could be dangerous to meditate without a teacher. This is not the Buddha's advice. In Buddhist meditation, the teachings or the *Dhamma* is the instructor, not a person. So, we will take instruction from the *Dhamma* the Buddha taught, and the *vinaya* or the behavioural cord he set. The Buddha himself said to venerable Ānanda, who was his personal attendant and who later recited all the *suttās* at the First Council, that when the Buddha was no more, his teachings, the *Dhamma* and the behavioural cord for the *Sangha* should be considered the great instructor. If we go to a teacher, we can soon discover whether they teach in the same manner as the Buddha. Instructions from the *suttās* can be easily verified. If, in addition to the instructions from the *suttās*, there are personal instructions or secret instructions, there is reason to doubt that instructor. The Buddha has stated "*Tathāgathappavedito Dhamma vinayo vivato virocati no paticchanno*," the teachings of the Buddha shine when open, not when hidden in mystery. The facet of the Buddha's *Dhamma* is that it invites people to approach and discover the *Dhamma* for themselves (*ehipassika*). So, by definition there cannot be any secrets in the Buddha's teachings.

You could have another question: if we are to reveal our personal opinions and personal achievements in public, isn't that going to be an obstacle for others? If that is the case, the Buddha should have mentioned it first. In the *Dhamma*, there are no incidents where the Buddha secretly advised a person to meditate and secretly sent him away. All the advice the Buddha gave has been told to Venerable Ānanda and recorded, and all the monks and nuns have heard it. Therefore, there is no secret teaching in the Buddha's *Dhamma*. There is no secret advice in the teaching that invites one to 'come and see.' If secret advice for meditation is given, you should indeed suspect it.

One day, Venerable Ānanda asked the Buddha, 'what are factors that would help the Buddha's path to liberation sustain for a long time? Buddha replied that practicing the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for a long time, talking about them, and following them would sustain the Buddha's path to liberation for long time. The Buddha preached that the path to liberation will vanish from the world if the true *Dhamma* is ignored and not followed. We are in fact learning about the Four Establishments of Mindfulness here.

In the mindfulness of breathing meditation, we learned how to be aware of in breath and out breath. Gradually, our mindfulness tends to remain on the breath. This means that without being

distracted we are able to sustain our attention on our breath. This is the first step of the mindfulness of breathing meditation.

In the next step of *Ānāpānasati* meditation, you will be able to distinguish the differences in your breath. Sometimes you will feel a long inhalation, which means you are having a stretched breathing. Since you were mindful about your breath, you realize that you are taking a lengthy breath in. Other times, there will be lengthy exhales. You will recognize those lengthy exhalations since you are mindful of your breath. Suddenly, breath could be short. Since you are aware of your breath, you will realize that your inhalation is short. When you are breathing out short exhalations, you will realize them since you are mindful of your breathing out being short. You notice this because of your sustained attention on the breath.

The Buddha taught a beautiful simile for this awareness of long and short breaths. There is a clever carpenter planning to carve a piece of wood. He takes the piece of wood in hand and sometimes uses long strokes and other times uses short strokes to smooth the wood. When the stroke is longer, he knows it is long. When the stroke is shorter, he knows it is short. Likewise, you are mindful and aware if your breath is long or short. Now, you can sustain your mindfulness on your breath without external distractions. However, this depends on your perseverance, intelligence, and mindfulness. That is, if you stop persevering, your mind can drop back to the state where it was before you started meditation.

"*Sabbkāya patisaṃvedī*," then as the third step, you direct your attention to the complete breath. That is, you observe when an inhalation starts, continues, and ends. You observe the beginning, continuation, and the end of the exhalation phase of a breath as a certain entity of the body. So, with improving the sensitivity you observe a breath as a certain entity of the body. This entity of entire breath is referred to as *kāya sankhāra* or a fabrication of the body, as a breath is associated with the body. When your mind becomes settled in this way, your breath becomes lighter. "*Passambhayaṃ kāya sankhāraṃ*," as the fourth step, with improving tranquility you experience this lightening of your breath.

Again, in mindfulness of breathing meditation, you first practice sustaining your awareness on your breath, then you observe differences in length of your breath, next you follow the complete breath, and then you observe the inhalation and exhalation as one entity as it becomes light, calm, and tranquil.

2.3 The Way to Cultivate the *Vedanānupassanā* and *Cittānupassanā* in *Ānāpānasati* Meditation

So far, you have learned various stages progressing through mindfulness of breathing meditation towards the stage where the breath becomes very light. As the breath gradually becomes lighter, you could begin to feel a profound happiness or joy. This is called *pīti*. You might be distracted by this joy to the extent that you forget to be mindful of the breath and latch on to the joy instead. This would result in the interruption of our tranquil concentration. Instead of losing that opportunity to develop mindfulness of breathing meditation by latching on to the joy you experienced, you should understand the joy and while experiencing it, continue to focus on your inhalation and exhalation.

One of the main problems meditators face is assuming that the state of tranquil concentration or *samādhi* happens by chance. Actually, this state of tranquil concentration occurs because the causes for it to occur were in place: *Atāpi*, or profound perseverance on purifying our minds, *sampajāno* or profound intellect, and *satimā* or profound mindfulness. This state of tranquil concentration is a result of these causes. Be aware that this state ends when you rise from the meditation sitting.

Another problem meditators face is the urge to rush through the initial stage in order to reach the previously acquired tranquil concentrated state and remain there longer. They pay less attention to the mindfulness of the breath and expect *samādhi* or tranquil concentration stage to come to them. They forget that tranquil concentration stage is a result of causes, which are the initial hard work stages or the mindfulness of the breath. This causes a downward spiral. When they cannot experience the *samādhi* or tranquil concentration stage the second time, they feel disappointment, thinking, "I used to be able to experience *samādhi*, but now I am a failure at this." This sometimes causes diffusion of the mind. Due to this diffusion, the mind cannot settle and the mind becomes restless. Because of this restlessness, we cannot keep our minds on the breath. When we cannot keep our mind on the breath, we cannot sustain awareness on the breath. This means we cannot focus our minds on the breath. Therefore, we are unable to achieve the stage of profound concentration. Then, we feel disappointment and the cycle starts again. So, we must keep in mind that the stage of tranquil concentration is a result of causes and that the causes must be in place for it to occur. This means you need to start from the beginning at each meditation sitting.

When our minds become accustomed to mindfulness of breathing meditation and our minds become settled, we experience profound joy. This profound joy is not the sort of ordinary pleasure we

get from listening to good music, watching a movie, or sharing a delicious meal with loved ones. Those are very coarse pleasures. The joy from tranquil concentration is more refined. It is a kind of light and profound joy that comes from utter contentment, resolution, and freedom from worries. When we start to experience this profound joy and continue to watch our breath, we feel a sense of exultation, which slowly settles, and we then start to feel a sense of profound wellbeing, or *sukha*. This sense of wellbeing is both physical and mental.

We talked about the breath becoming very light. This does not mean it disappears. If we cannot feel the breath, we cannot sustain our attention on it. Sometimes when meditators are meditating with mindfulness of their breaths, after some time they stop being mindful and simply watch their breaths. Then, when the breath becomes very light, they tend to forget what they were doing and become confused. Because of this, we must always stay mindful and aware of the breath. We need to remember that the breath will not disappear just yet. If we are like this, we need to make an affirmation to ourselves as we sit to meditate that we will not let the breath disappear. We will stay aware of the breath and keep our mindfulness on the breath. If we still cannot feel the breath, at that point, we can investigate with awareness and we should be able to find the breath and redirect our awareness towards it. When we continue to sustain our attention on the breath in this manner, we realize the *sukha* or profound joy through the breathing. We recognize the breath well enough to understand that this is an inhalation and exhalation. We breathe in and breathe out while feeling this profound joy and with cognition of each in breath and out breath. This feeling and perception are called "*citta sankhāra*." The term *citta sankhāra* is used because this feeling and perception are associated with the mind.

So, when we continue to breathe in and breathe out with profound understanding of this feeling and cognition associated with the mind, even this feeling and recognition become very light. We should prevent ourselves from being distracted by this lightness. We need to understand this but keep our attention and mindfulness on the breath. In the Buddha's teachings, the word used for this understanding in the preliminary stages of meditation is *pajānāthi*. *Pajānāthi* means understanding with mindfulness. This leads to a greater understanding of the way things are. Later, He uses the word *sikkhathi*, which means practice or training. This means we must train ourselves to prevent the mind from wondering here and there and develop the skill of being mindful on our breath. In other words, understand the lightening of the breath and skillfully maintain mindfulness on it. Gradually, the *citta sankhāra* becomes subdued, and we feel joy, or *pīti*. Knowing and understanding this *pīti*, we maintain mindfulness on the breath. Then, we feel physical and mental lightness. Experiencing this lightness, we

continue to maintain mindfulness on the breath, which enables us to have a feeling of intense comfort or *sukha*. Experiencing and knowing this *sukha* we continue to focus our mindfulness on the breath. We must practice this.

As you increase your skills on being mindful on the breath through these stages, your mind will understand clearly how *kāya sankāra* and *citta sankāra* become subdued while you still keep your mindfulness on the breath. Your mind then achieves a spiritual rapture. You have a sense of clarity, which is used to maintain mindfulness on the breath. The Five Hindrances are totally subdued now. Your mind is now at the stage of the first *jhāna*. The first *jhāna* is relatively easy to achieve through *ānāpāna sati*. When you have practiced the first *jhāna* skillfully, you can achieve a state of *samādhi* without chatter or *vitakka*. This is the second *jhāna*. When you have practiced the second *jhāna* well, you can achieve the third *jhāna*. When you practice the third *jhāna* well, you can achieve the fourth *jhāna*.

When you hear the word *jhāna*, you may become somewhat scared or reluctant to strive for it. You may think, I am a householder, I have responsibilities, so, how can I practice *jhāna*? This happens around us when there are those who do not understand the pure *Dhamma*, when your confidence in *Dhamma* is not strong enough, and you have no experience of its practicality. It is not a shortcoming of the *Dhamma*. There are many people around the world who practice this method and experience *jhāna* and who benefit greatly from it. Therefore, you should place a strong confidence in the Buddha's words and, without any fear, continue with your practice of concentration and improve it.

We are still talking about *samatha* meditation. If you develop your mind in the way we have described up to this point, you will be able to develop the calming meditation, but there are various methods to follow in this world when the concentration is not cultivated. Be careful not to get trapped in those ideas. Some people may tell you it is a simple thing for them and they could put you in a *jhāna* within just ten minutes. Some would also say that if you can stay in concentration for thirty minutes, then, that would push you to the first *jhāna*. They say these things to see how badly you want it. But it just shows their lack of proper knowledge. The very important thing you must be aware of here is that there are no short cuts to *jhāna*. Until you can subdue and eradicate the five hindrances, which take time and effort, you cannot achieve sustained mindfulness on the breath, which leads to *jhāna*. Once the five hindrances are subdued, concentration is naturally achieved.

2.4 The Way to Cultivate the *Dhammānupassanā* in *Ānāpānasati* Meditation

We are now progressing through the mindfulness of breathing meditation. We find a peaceful spot, keep the back straight, and keep our mind on the point of focus that is our breathing. The breath is also called the object of meditation. We improve our mindfulness totally within the inhalation and exhalation. The breath is the object of our meditation. We should not look for nor expect other objects or "*nimitta*." Other than the *Satipatthāna sutta*, further information on mindfulness of breathing meditation can be found in the *Girimānanda sutta*, which is in the chapter of tens in the *Anguttara Nikāya* or the Numerical discourses, and also in the *satipatthāna samyutta* as well as the *ānāpānasati samyutta* of the fifth book of the *Samyutta Nikāya* or Connected Discourses. From these, we can get a comprehensive understanding of breathing meditation. This is not a personal opinion. It is directly the Buddha's words.

We must have total confidence in the Buddha's teachings throughout this meditation, as it was He who originally attained enlightenment through developing mindfulness of breathing meditation. It was He who discovered this method and instructed His followers to attain supreme freedom through this method. It was highly successful then and it will work today as well. If there was a method by which someone could end all suffering and attain *arahantship*, it is explained very clearly by the Buddha in the Discourses. He had total understanding on this subject and if anyone had an equal understanding that person would be a Buddha too. There is no need to edit or modify this method by saying you can try to meditate in other ways. If someone tries to modify, it only shows that individual's lack of confidence in the Buddha and the foolish attempt to go beyond the Buddha's unsurpassed knowledge. We must practice this *Dhamma* not as teachers but as followers of the Buddha.

We learned there are two methods of meditation explained in the *Satipatthāna sutta* by the Buddha, namely *samatha* and *vipassanā*. We are now learning *samatha-calming* meditation. Now, we will explore calming meditation in greater depth as taught by the Buddha. "*Iti ajjhataṃ vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati*," one sustains the mind in the inhalation and exhalation; one understands the nature of the breath and understands how to sustain the mind on the breath. "*Bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati*," as one understands the nature of the breath inside oneself, one understands that in others, too, the breath is of the same nature. We then understand that this is the nature of the breath within ourselves and outside ourselves.

Then the Buddha taught "*samudaya dhammānupassī vā kayasmin viharati*," when we sustain our mind on the breath, it is *kāyānupassanā*. When we see the origination of the breath, it is the *samudaya dhammānupassī va*. This means body is originated from nutriment. Even the continuation of the cycle of rebirth solely depends on nutriment. But in this instance we are considering our bodies. Our bodies exist because of nutriment. Therefore, respiration is composed of the elements of nutriment. Respiration arises due to causes. Therefore, respiration too is impermanent. Realizing the phenomenon that things arise due to causes is *samudaya dhammānupassī vā*.

"*Vaya dhammānupassī vā kāyasmin viharati*," the nature of the breath is that it ceases as well. So, the breath arises and fades away. The nature of the breath is that it arises and ceases.

"*Samudaya vā dhammānupassī vā kāyasmin viharati*" means seen profoundly this arising and cessation. At this point, our meditation turns from *samatha* to *vipassanā-calming to insight*. This is a clear example of how both *calming* and *insight* are included in the *Satipatthāna sutta*. When we see the arising and cessation of each breath with awareness and mindfulness, we have moved to *insight* meditation from the previous *calming* meditation. To progress through this *insight* meditation, we must have practiced *insight* beforehand through learning the *Dhamma* well.

Insight is the ability to realize impermanent things as impermanent, suffering as suffering, and non-self as non-self. We learned in a previous section that *insight* is necessary for cultivating wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to realize certain things. Wisdom is not gained by chance.

The Buddha explained how the wisdom is gained. Once, the Buddha was asked, "*Kathaṃsu labhatē Paññā?*" "How can one gain wisdom?" The Buddha preached "*Saddhāno arahato nibbānapattiya*" "the Buddhas teach the *Dhamma* that leads to ultimate freedom, Nibbāna." "*Sussūsā labhatē paññā appamattā vicakkhanā*" "The one who listens to that *Dhamma* very attentively, placing confidence in the teachings, and investigates it with diligence, gains wisdom." According to the Buddha, it is very obvious that one should listen to the Buddha's teachings in order to gain wisdom. There is a school of thought that if you continue to meditate you will automatically gain wisdom. If this were true, there would have been no need for the Buddhas to expound the *Dhamma*.

The Buddha once said to his liberated disciples, "two monks should not go on one road. Teach the *Dhamma* clearly to everyone you meet along the way." The Buddha continued, "*Assavanato Dhammaṃ parihāyanti*" "If people don't get to hear the *Dhamma*, they will commit unwholesome actions and be born in planes of misery." "*Bhavissanti Dhammassa aññātāro*" "There will be people who

would realize the *Dhamma* if it is preached to them." This clearly shows us that this *Dhamma* can be realized. This clearly shows that learning the *Dhamma* is necessary to realize the true nature of things. So, we need to understand well that we must cultivate wisdom.

First, you understand Impermanence of conditioned things. Then you understand the suffering that is created by the Impermanence. The knowledge of Impermanence and suffering lead to the realization of non-self. This realization does not come automatically. While maintaining a total mindfulness, you must contemplate impermanence and only then will you be able to realize impermanent things as impermanent. If you can practice contemplation of impermanence through mindfulness of breathing, Buddha teaches that you will be able to refrain from being attached to anything (*naca kinci loke upādiyati*). That means the meditator will not grasp a view of I, mine, or myself with regard to breathing and will have a mind of total freedom. This will help us further develop wisdom, further develop awareness, and attain a complete understanding of life.

In the Buddha's teachings, there are no inferior goals. We do not meditate as a memory aid or for health reasons, although they are by-products of meditation. Meditating for health and memory skills is very much a worldly concept. The Buddha's way of meditation is a revolution for freedom of thought. So, if you want to follow this method we must understand our goal, learn and practice the teachings, and meditate. Only then can we achieve a true and honest effort; a genuine need aligns with our conscience and a real desire to understand life.

Now you have learned how to attain concentration or *samādhi* through *ānāpānasati* or mindfulness of breathing meditation and how to cultivate insight through *ānāpānasati*. In developing wisdom, you must keep in mind this is a contemplation of impermanence. Inhalation and exhalation is impermanent; then you feel the breath; the feeling of breath is impermanent. You perceive the breath, that perception is impermanent. In the breath you create a thought, and form volition. These volitions too are impermanent. You are conscious of the breath, that consciousness too is impermanent. When you continue to contemplate impermanent things as impermanent with wisdom, you will be able to see impermanence as impermanent.

3. Mindfulness and Awareness of Daily Activities

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

Living in Awareness

Now you have some knowledge about mindfulness of breathing meditation, *ānāpānasati*. You have gained this knowledge through the Buddha's teachings. When you practice this meditation according to the great teachings, you will develop a heart-felt respect for the Buddha. This respect will help you further develop this *Dhamma*.

Now you will learn another method of meditation. This is called *satisampajāñña*. It is about living with clear mindfulness and awareness. The Buddha has introduced us to "*Sampajānakārī hoti*." What is the advantage of living with clear mindfulness and awareness? One advantage is that when we are conscious of every moment we can prevent unwholesome mental states creeping into our lives and simply let in wholesome mental states. A person who is ready to meditate should already be living a good moral conduct by observing the five precepts. The unwholesome mental states we mean here are the five hindrances or *panca nīvarano*. Now, we will explore how to recognize them in order to avoid or overcome these hindrances. The hindrances are

1. "*Kāmacchanda*" that is the mind being attracted to form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations.
2. "*Vyāpāda*" the mind being repelled by and in conflict with such objects.
3. "*Thīnamiddha*" laziness, sleepiness, or being discouraged from meditation.
4. "*Uddhacca kukkuccha*" regret, remorse, and diffusion of the mind.
5. "*Vicikicchā*" lack of confidence in this process.

These hindrances are always with us in our daily lives. The meditator should be fully aware of these in order to avoid being distracted by these hindrances. The Buddha taught that when the meditator goes forth and when he returns, he must always do so with mindfulness avoiding the hindrances. When he looks around himself, he must do so with mindfulness. Taking care not to let hindrances creep into his mind, he must safeguard his mind from being attached to form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations. He must safeguard his mind from all conflicts. He must safeguard his mind

from laziness and sleepiness. He must safeguard his life from remorse and diffusion of the mind and he must have confidence in this process.

The wise awareness when looking around is called "*ālokite vilokite sampajāna kāri hoti.*" Even when moving the limbs, the skillful meditator does it with mindfulness. He must know why and when he moves his limbs and do it with awareness. This awareness should run through his daily routines. Let us consider dress for instance. "*Saghātipattacīvara dhārane,*" when we dress, we have to be aware about the purpose of the dress. The fundamental purposes of the dress are protection of privacy, protection from insects, and protection from extreme environmental conditions. When we dress, we must be conscious of these purposes and dress accordingly and with awareness.

Now, let us consider our intake of nutrition. When eating, the Buddha has taught us a reflection. It is called "*paccavekkhanā.*" *Paccavekkhanā* means reflecting something to mind over and over again. Buddha taught *Dhamma* practitioners shouldn't be followers of food or servants of food. *Dhamma* practitioners use food only as a means of sustaining their bodies. Buddha instructs us to reflect on food thus, "This food is eaten not for power, not for strength, not to build up our physical strength, not to beautify this body, but to terminate feelings of hunger in order to meditate without distraction."

The Buddha further instructs even when using the washroom, we must maintain this awareness. We need to realize our lives are composed of a series of postures and stances. When we use the washroom we should safeguard our minds from being distracted. The Buddha asked us to maintain our awareness when we are walking, standing, sitting, even when we are awake, and also when we are keeping vigil, which in *Pāli* is called "*jāgarite.*" This constant awareness, by not letting the hindrances creep into our minds, will protect us from much harm. The Buddha explained a beautiful story in "*Sakunaggī sutta*" about awareness. A hawk was flying overhead when it spotted a little brush bird flying in the air below it. The hawk caught the little bird. The little bird screamed out, "Oh this calamity befell me because I tried to fly in an unfamiliar territory. There is a habitat I inherited from my forefathers. If I had only remained there this hawk would never have caught me." This awakened the hawk's interests and hawk asked the little bird "What is the habitat you inherited from your forefathers?" The little bird said, "When this field is ploughed and the earth is turned, under a sod there is a little cave-like place. That is the habitat I inherited from my forefathers". The hawk found this quite amusing. He said to the little bird, "I will let you go now; you can go and hide in the little habitat you inherited that you are so proud of. I will still catch you." The little bird flew directly down to stand on a turned sod of earth and shouted to the hawk "Come and catch me now!" The hawk drove directly down to the sod of earth but

the little bird crept into the little cave-like space under the sod; and the hawk hit his chest hard on the sod of earth and died right there instantly. In this story, it was an analogy that the hawk was Mara, and the little bird was Buddha's disciple. Therefore, the Buddha shows us that awareness is the habitat we inherit from our forefathers. The Buddha said, "Monks, the *Tathāgata* is your father. Your inheritance from the *Tathāgata* is based in your awareness on the four establishments of mindfulness."

This *Dhamma* we have received is complete and fertile. This means it gets results. If anyone says they do not get the results from following this *Dhamma* that means they are not following the profound way. This *Dhamma* when followed truly thus yields results.

To summarize, in *satisampajañña*, the meditator sustains mindfulness when looking around, when moving his limbs, when coming and going, when dressing, when eating, and when going to the toilet. He practices this constantly in order to stay vigilant, so the hindrances do not overcome him. When he is mindful, he needs an object to focus his mind on. That object of mindfulness should be impermanence and this gives him a good opportunity to reflect on impermanence.

When we are doing some tasks, we could be wholly aware of what we are doing and expect the same benefits. For example, while cutting vegetables one could think, I am cutting, cutting, cutting...and expect their wisdom to grow. The awareness while carrying out mundane chores like this would help us complete the chores with care but would not necessarily lead us to the cultivation of wisdom. The way to cultivate wisdom is through mindfully contemplating the impermanence of things and through profound vigilance, which prevent the hindrances taking control of our minds. Through this, the meditator can improve his wisdom, his awareness, skill, and effort.

4. Mindfulness of Postures

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

In this chapter, we will explore mindfulness on postures or "*iriyāpatha*" meditation. There are four main postures identified by the Buddha, namely, standing, walking, sitting, and lying down. We can use any of these postures for meditation.

Walking is a common posture used for meditation. Walking meditation is particularly useful to many meditators for they come to realize *Dhamma* points most often while practicing walking meditation. Therefore, even if at the start we are hampered by the hindrances, we should take care not to be discouraged. We should persevere in this.

At the time of the Buddha, there was a monk who tried to meditate; he was very sleepy. Now think what we would do if we felt sleepy. We would most probably put off meditating and go to bed thinking it would be no use meditating as we would waste time sleeping anyway. This monk was very persevering and did not give up. He decided to try walking meditation. He was walking in the walking meditation area when tiredness overcame him and he fell down. Still, he did not give up. He got up, brushed the sand off himself and resumed his task and was soon able to control his mind. So, we can see that this is the nature of our minds. At one moment, it is sleepy, the next, tired and lazy. However, with skillful effort and mindfulness it can be overcome and our goal of profound awareness can be achieved. This shows that the nature of our mind is such that it follows our inputs. It can be the same for walking meditation as well.

Now, in walking meditation, some meditators suggest you lift your left foot think left, as you lift your right foot, think right, or you may be told as you lift your foot, think lifting. As you set your foot down think setting down. We must be aware that the Buddha's instructions say nothing of the sort. The Buddha's instructions are thus: "*Gacchanto va gacchāmīti pajānāti*," when walking stay profoundly aware that you are walking. When sitting stay profoundly aware that you are sitting. When standing stay profoundly aware that you are standing. When lying down be profoundly aware that you are lying down. In this manner, we should be totally mindful of each posture our body adopts. This profound awareness is not limited to walking meditation. It is true that we can prevent being distracted if we keep our mind on left, right etc. as we raise each foot. However, this was not what our supreme teacher taught. His instructions were to keep attention on this body while it is moving. We only need to sustain our

awareness that this is the posture of our body at the moment, which is walking. There is no need to pay special attention to whether we are lifting our foot or setting it down. We need to keep in mind that the aim of this meditation is to develop wisdom, that is, to understand things as they really are.

There was one *arahant* named Pārāsariya who said that when the posture is maintained in this manner and the mind is well based on the four establishments of mindfulness, physical movement and posture become very smooth like a stream of fine oil. This means the meditator's movements and posture become superbly refined and fluid. So, if we stand with the intention of doing walking meditation, we look at the path ahead of us and determine a spot in front of us. Then, we affirm to ourselves that we will walk to that spot with mindfulness. We lift the left foot, we carry the left foot forward, we lower the left foot. We do not label these actions as such but carry them out with awareness. Then, we follow through with the right foot until we get to the predetermined spot. Then, we stop. When we stop, we are aware we have stopped. Then, we turn around with awareness, predetermine the next spot to go to, and resume walking meditation with our minds on the movements of our limbs. The whole process is done with total awareness.

Anytime we are travelling by foot, long or short distance, it is a good time to practice walking meditation. When our minds are fully focused on the movements of our limbs, there is no room for unwholesome thoughts to pervade our mind. In fact, the awareness of our movements could be so profound that our mindfulness could develop within this meditation and improve. The Buddha has described walking meditation as a method by which we could sustain our concentration for a long period. Therefore, if we find it difficult to develop our concentration, walking meditation may be a way for us to develop concentration.

We can landscape our backyards to create a path for walking meditation. If there is a stretch of land 70-100 centimeters wide and about 7-10 meters long, we can pave it with sand and use it for walking meditation. It would have to be kept clear of obstructions and clutter. Such a feature would enhance our backyards and our homes.

This close awareness of our posture and movements has many benefits. The most important one is that when we are paying attention to how our bodies move and act, there is no room in our minds for idle thoughts that could lead us astray. Under ordinary circumstances, we waste a lot of energy on letting our minds dwell on the past or the future. But if we act with mindfulness all the time, our minds are bent on cultivating wisdom and that leaves no opportunity to think of mundane things.

Now, most of us are familiar with the story of *Ānanda thero*, who was the personal assistant of the Buddha for 25 years. He had a superior memory and was acknowledged by the Buddha as such, and also retained and recited all of the *suttās* first told by the Buddha. He had only attained the state of stream enterer or *sotapanna* during the Buddha's life time. He wanted to attain *liberation* before the first *Dhamma council*, where the entire teachings of the Buddha were to be recited by *liberated ones*. The night before the council of the *Sangha*, he was doing mindfulness of the body or *kāyānupassanā* meditation using walking as the posture. It was said that when he was about to change the posture from walking to lying down, when he had lifted his feet off the floor but his head had not quite hit the pillow and his body was semi reclined he attained enlightenment. This means he was not in any one of the four postures. However, he has been practicing *kāyānupassanā* meditation developing mindfulness of the body. This is another instance where walking meditation helped someone attained the supreme goal.

Now we understand the value of *walking meditation*, let us develop this meditation to make our lives successful.

5. Mindfulness of Impurities of Body

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

You are now getting basic step-by-step instructions needed in your life to develop mindfulness, effort, and wisdom. You gain such knowledge from the teachings of the Buddha. Therefore, I am teaching you what the Buddha disclosed and not something that I discovered. I teach you these as a follower of the Buddha. This method is wholly attributed to the Buddha, who discovered it.

One day, someone asked arahant *Uttara thero*, "Venerable Sir, you preach the *Dhamma* beautifully. Is this *Dhamma* originated within you? Or do you preach this *Dhamma* by learning from someone else?" Then, arahant *Uttara thero* answered, "Dear friend, if there's anything that's well-said, all of it belongs to the words of the Supreme Buddha. We just abstract those words when we speak." Furthermore, an example was presented to realize the Buddha's *Dhamma*. "Let's say there is a heap of grains, and anyone could get as much as one wants from that pile of grains. Thus, each person takes as much grains that fits in their containers. Likewise, a person learns the *Dhamma* according to one's talent." In the same way, you will penetrate this *Dhamma* that you are learning now according to your own skill.

The meditation method you are about to learn may be somewhat unpleasant to you. It is called *asubha bhāvanā* or mindfulness of impurities of body. It is all about our bodies and individual body parts inside and out. Even though this is an unpleasant subject, when we think about it we would gain a lot of insight from this meditation. However, before we get into it, it would be prudent to talk about a couple of myths surrounding it. There is a common belief that lay people should not meditate on *asubha* or the impurities of body as such meditation would destroy family life and life as a lay person. If that were true, consider what doctors and nurses do for a living. They see this repulsive side daily and still manage to have good family lives. Those who are intoxicated and infatuated by sense pleasure may feel a revulsion towards this meditation and may reject the Buddha's teachings on it, but we must keep in mind that if we lean toward the teachings, we cannot go wrong. "*Dhamma dessī parābhavo*," people who hate Dhamma lose success. "*Dhamma kāmo bhavaṃ hoti*," the followers of Dhamma achieve success.

What is important to note is if you are ready to realize the truth of this life. For this, you must first gain some knowledge about the meditation before you actually start it. *Asubha* meditation is the contemplation of thirty-two impure parts of the body in their true nature.

Let us take hair for example. Let us imagine someone with long hair. They love their hair and stroke it with much affection. When brushing it they do it with much care. Let us take another person who loves her nails. She files them into shape, buffs or polishes them, and admires them. Then, let us consider someone who loves their teeth. This person worries about keeping his or her teeth in top condition, brushing constantly and grinning in front of the mirror to admire the teeth. Then, consider someone who spends a lot of time on the care of his or her skin. To someone who has such a lifestyle, this contemplation of the impurities is indeed something very strange.

But, let us consider the Buddha's words here. If our hair would always remain thick, smooth and lustrous, if our nails would always remain attractive, if we can maintain this beautiful life, then, we have no problem. In reality, our bodies are always deteriorating. With time, we need to accept this truth, and this meditation will help us immensely when realizing this truth.

The Buddha said that skillful contemplation of the impurities of body is like burning a chicken feather. When you hold a chicken feather to a candle it shrivels. It can never be unfolded again. The person who contemplates on the impurities, according to his guidelines, develops a very realistic mind where attachments have shrivelled to never return to their previous states through a clear and comprehensive understanding of the way things really are. This meditation is very helpful for developing *Samadhi*, concentration. Therefore, we must remain fully aware of the validity of concentration gained through this meditation as well. But keep in mind that if we feel revulsion at any point while meditating we have not truly practiced the contemplations of the impurities of body. If we are repulsed, we have really been contemplating body parts in just an attractive manner.

The Buddha advised us to think of a sack containing mixed seeds, which has openings at both ends. A person with good eyesight takes this sack and unties the openings, carefully acknowledging the seeds by type as: this is rice, this is chickpeas, this is mung beans, this is lentils, this is barley, this is corn, and so on. In this manner, the wise meditator begins to look at his body part by part from head to toe.

How does he contemplate? He goes to a calm place and silently thinks about the impure parts of this body. He sees these impure body parts separately, one by one. There is hair in this body. There are nails in this body. There are teeth in this body. There is a skin in this body. There is flesh in this body. There are veins in this body. There are bones in this body. There is bone marrow in this body. There are kidneys in this body. There is a heart in this body. There is a uterus in this body. There are lungs in this body. There is a liver in this body. There are small intestines in this body. There are large intestines

in this body. There are feces in this body, etc. In this manner, that person contemplates the impure parts of this body.

He also sees that there is gallbladder in this body. There is phlegm in this body. There is pus in this body. There is blood in this body. There is sweat in this body. There is a liquid that flows with sweat in this body. There are tears in this body. There is synovial fluid in this body. There is saliva in this body. Also, there is mucus in this body. There is marrow in this body. There is urine in this body. He contemplates on these impure body parts one by one, separately. It is like looking at a sack of grains that has openings on both sides.

Now you can imagine how profoundly and realistically the Buddha contemplated this life and achieved liberation. We should be able to see how looking at life this way can give us freedom. This helps us realize that true happiness and freedom do not lie with attractions. It is freedom from bonds and ties through comprehensive understanding that makes our lives truly beautiful. Therefore, contemplation of these body parts subject to deterioration helps beautify our lives. We envision these body parts through our imagination. Therefore, contemplation of the impurities of the body should not lead to family break-ups. This method of meditation helps us understand that the nature of all things exists in our bodies too. We see this truth; we realize it; and understand it well. We need to practice this gradually and absorb it into our lives. Even for someone who finds it difficult to concentrate, practicing contemplation of the impurities should prepare them for *ānāpānasati* or mindfulness of breathing meditation by reducing attachment to sensual pleasures.

The Buddha didn't instruct that everyone should do mindfulness of breathing meditation, which is more appropriate for people who are naturally skilled in developing mindfulness. Practicing the contemplation of impurities of body for at least 20-30 minutes a day would help us enhance our lives as well as prepare us for other meditation methods like mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Mindfulness of the Impurities of Body

Since head hairs on this body are rotting away, smelling, living on a filthy body, and deteriorating, head hairs are disgusting to see and touch.

Since body hairs...

1. Nails

2. Teeth
3. Skin
4. Flesh
5. Sinews
6. Bones
7. Bone-marrow
8. Kidneys
9. Heart
10. Liver
11. Diaphragm
12. Spleen
13. Lungs
14. Bowels
15. Small Intestines
16. Contents of the Stomach
17. Excrement
18. The Brain
19. Bile
20. Phlegm
21. Pus
22. Blood
23. Sweat
24. Fat
25. Tears
26. Grease

27. Saliva

28. Snot

29. Fluid of the Joints

30. Urine

6. Mindfulness of Elements

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

You have now learned about several methods of meditation and are becoming familiar with the Four Establishments of Mindfulness Meditation. These methods include mindfulness of breathing meditation or *ānāpānasati*, walking meditation, and *satisampajañña* or sustained awareness meditation. We have also learned about *asubha bhāvanā* or the meditation of the impurities of body.

There is another meditation method within the four establishments of mindfulness meditations; that is "*dhātu manasikāra*" meditation or 'mindfulness of elements.' If we consider the different meditation methods, loving-kindness meditation is one we should be doing all the time; mindfulness of breathing meditation can be somewhat difficult for us initially. If this is the case, mindfulness of the impurities of body or mindfulness of the elements would be very beneficial to you as a precursor to mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Once, the little monk *Rāhula* was instructed by the great *arahant Sāriputta thero* to practice mindfulness of breathing meditation. At that point, the monk *Rāhula* did not know how to do mindfulness of breathing meditation. He went to the Buddha and asked him for instructions on practicing mindfulness of breathing meditation. It was at that point that the Buddha told him to start with the mindfulness of the elements. Contemplation of the elements is an accelerated and effective path to understanding life. The elements or *dhātu* is the basic or the fundamental nature of things. The term contemplation here refers to skillful investigation of four fundamental or basic natures of things: "*paṭhavi*" or solidity, "*āpo*" or fluidity, "*tejo*" or heat, and "*vāyo*" or air. *Paṭhavi* is associated with earth, *āpo* is associated with water, *tejo* is associated with fire, and *vāyo* is associated with wind.

In this meditation method, it is crucial we understand the fact that these words are used to contemplate our bodies and not the outside world. The Buddha preached to consider by wisdom *paṭhavi dhātu* like the earth; see it as something similar to earth. The Buddha further preached us to consider *āpo dhātu* like water, *tējo dhātu* like fire, and *vāyo dhātu* like the wind.

From all these methods, the great teacher's intention was always to show us the path for the realisation of truth. He did not want to mislead or deceive us. The Buddha gave an example here. A butcher kills a cow, cuts the meat, and sets up a stall at a crossroads. This butcher does not have a sense

of selling a cow. The buyers of meat have no sense that they are buying a cow. At this point, the usage of the term cow has been transcended and is referred to as meat or in this case beef. This is how we contemplate the elements, which make up our bodies. We can use this example to understand how to separate our body's composition of the basic natures of solidity, liquidity, heat, and air. That which decomposes to become earth is the element of solidity or *paṭhavi*; that which flows or runs is the element of liquidity or *āpo*; that which is warm is the element of heat or *tejo*; and that which moves like the air is the gaseous element or *vāyo*. In us, we can recognize parts, which are solid and would eventually become earth. In us, we can recognize components which are liquids. In us, we can recognize components, which have warmth. In us, we can recognize movement of gas or air.

Your task now is to see these elements separately as the separate cuts of meat in a butcher's stall. You should consider these as follows: you can find a tranquil spot and contemplate separately those parts of your body which are of the earth element. The hair is of the earth element. You can consider the hair thus: up to now, how much hair have I lost from my head? What has happened to that hair? Most of it had already decayed and become part of earth as soil. A part of your life has become part of the earth while you are still living. What has happened to other body hairs and nails you have removed from your body? Consider teeth. By now, you may not have even one tooth in your mouth; all of us have lost at least our baby teeth. What happened to the teeth you lost? They have all become part of the earth. Your skin is constantly regenerating itself. When you scrub your body, you can feel and see the dead skin leave your body to instantly become part of the earth. You consider your flesh as becoming part of the earth. You consider your blood vessels as becoming part of the earth. You consider your bones as a part of the earth element. You consider your bone marrow as becoming part of the earth. You consider your kidneys as becoming part of the earth. You consider your heart as becoming part of the earth. You consider your liver as becoming a part of the earth. You consider your diaphragm as becoming part of the earth. You consider your lungs as becoming part of the earth. You consider your large intestine as being a part of the earth element. You consider your small intestine as a part of the earth element. You consider your undigested food in the stomach as becoming part of the earth. You consider your fecal matter in the intestine as becoming part of the earth. These body parts belong to these four elements of the earth.

It is crucial for us to recall in this way. The Buddha gave these guidelines not for the investigation of the nature of the earth or other universes. They were given to us because we suffer internally, both physically and mentally. And we try to find comfort through material things, which actually takes us

deeper into suffering. The Buddha's instructions were that if we want eternal happiness we must find the point where suffering or unsatisfactoriness arises. That is what we are trying to do. When you consider these things as part of the earth, your humility becomes enhanced. Think of the lords or kings throughout history who killed for thrones, power, or for other gains! All these people became part of the earth element in the end. This shows us there is nothing in this world to seize. Everything we have eventually becomes part of the earth. Those who understand this live with immense freedom, a mind free of meanness, a mind full of compassion, and *mettā*. Such a person does not envy; does not seek revenge; and does not indulge in eye for eye retaliation. Such a person knows this life is made up of parts that become part of the earth in the end. Now, we can see how worthwhile it would be to practice this meditation of contemplation of the elements.

In a similar fashion, you need to consider the parts of the body which flow into the water element or *āpo dhātu*. The body has fluids such as bile which has a nature similar to water; therefore, it is of the water element. Then consider phlegm. This is the frothy liquid, which flows and is of the water element. This body has pus. The body creates pus when there are infections. Pus is of the water element. This body makes blood. Blood flows and is of the water element. This body creates perspiration, this is of the water element and it flows. Along with the perspiration, this body has the stickiness, which is the body fat. This is of the water element too. This body creates tears, which is of the water element. This body has lymph fluids, which is also of the water element. The saliva produced by this body is also of the water element. This body produces mucus, which is of the water element. This body has synovial fluids, which lubricate joints, which can be moved. This fluid is also of the water element. This body creates urine, which is of the water element or *āpo dhātu*.

Similarly, this body has a warm nature. This is made up of the heat element or *tejo dhātu*. There are fluctuations of this warm nature, which are also of the heat element. Then, the food we consume is digested by this heat from the food. That is also the *tejo dhātu*. The aging process of the body is also because of the *tejo dhātu*.

Similarly, this body has components belonging to the wind or gaseous element, which is called *vāyo dhātu*. There is gas created in the stomach. This sometimes comes up through the gullet and is called "*uddhangamo*" or upward wind. The gas created in the intestines escapes from our bottom end, and it is called "*adhogamo*" or the downward wind. Then, this body has gaseous element that circulates throughout the body, which is called "*angamangānusarī*" or circulatory wind. Then, there is the air we breathe in and out. All these components are of the wind element or *vāyo dhātu*.

If you understand this correctly, as you mature in age, you would become somebody who understands life very well indeed. These instructions have been given by the Buddha. So, it is beneficial to practice the contemplation of elements. With complete confidence, we can say that we are following the right path to understanding life.

Mindfulness of Elements Meditation

Pay close attention to your body. In the head, we have **hairs** and they are like leaves on a tree. They fall when they have matured. If all of your hair is detached, it will drop on to the earth. Let's say all of this hair came out from our head and on to our hands. We will not keep it. We will throw it away, and it will gradually decay and transform into soil in the earth. Therefore, hair is something that transforms into soil, and it is *paṭhavi dhātu*.

Body-hairs in this body is also like scalp hairs. They get detached from this body. When all these body hairs are detached from the body, they fall onto earth and decay until they transform into soil. It is like those matured leaves on a tree falling onto the ground and changing into soil after their deterioration.

Nails of this body grow. They get cut at some point. Nails that were cut were thrown away onto the ground. These transform into soil with time, and we don't even notice it. In this way, nails on these fingers and toes mix with soil in earth and vanish forever.

Teeth are also something that transforms into soil. Teeth get decayed when they are still inside our mouths. Teeth rot, decay, and get crushed. Teeth that break from the mouth fall into the ground and decay until they transform into soil. How many teeth of countless people may have fallen onto the ground and transformed into soil? Teeth are something that transforms into soil. They are *paṭhavi dhātu*.

This **skin** is also like that. The skin gets scratched. This skin suffers from various things such as injuries, scabies, and eczema. This skin contracts, wrinkles, and when we grow old, it rubs off. Someday when this skin falls onto the ground, it will disappear into the soil.

Tendons are also like that. These tendons also fall onto the ground and decay, transform into soil, and vanish someday.

We all have **bones** in our bodies. We all have a skeleton. How many countless skeletons we may have had in our past lives? In each life, we thought the skeleton like what we have now is *ours*. There is a skull inside this head. There are neck-bones inside the neck. There are

collar-bones. There are bones inside hands, elbows, and wrists. There are chest-bones, back-bones, waist-bones, thigh-bones, knee-bones, and calf-bones. There are lots of bones inside this body. One day, all these bones will fall onto the ground and decay, transform into soil, and completely vanish.

There is **bone-marrow** inside our bones. This bone-marrow also decays, transforms into soil, and vanishes together with bones.

There will be a day that **kidneys** also fall into the ground. Then, they will decay and transform into the soil.

The heart will also decay and mix with the soil.

The liver will also fall onto the ground. It will also decay and transform into soil.

The lungs expand when we breathe in. They shrink when we breathe out. These also fall onto the earth, decay, and transform into soil.

Then, there is the **small intestine** in this body. It is like a large, coiled rope. There is also a **large intestine**. All of these rot and mix with soil in the earth. They transform into soil by decaying.

What we eat leaves our bodies as **feces**, which also transforms into soil after some time.

In this way, all these things have the nature of transforming into soil. They are *pañhavi dhātu*. There are also things in this body that dissolve.

Bile in this body dissolves in water and vanishes. It is *āpo dhātu*.

There is also **phlegm** in this body. It is a foamy liquid. It also dissolves in water and vanishes. It is *āpo dhātu*.

Pus in this body forms when blood has rotted. It is a yellowish liquid. That pus also dissolves in water and disappears. Pus is also *āpo dhātu*.

There is also **blood** in this body. Blood also dissolves in water and disappears. Blood is *āpo dhātu*.

In this body, there is a liquid that forms throughout this body, from the head to the soles of the feet. It is called **sweat**. It also dissolves in water and disappears. Sweat belongs to *āpo dhātu*.

Fat layers are found around our organs and under skin for protection, insulation, and energy storage. It also dissolves in water. **Fat** belongs to *āpo dhātu*.

There are also **tears** in this body. Tears come out from the eyes and also dissolve in water. Tears are *āpo dhātu*.

In this body, **mucus** also flows and comes out from the nose. Mucus also gets dissolved.

We have **saliva** in this body which flows. Right now, it doesn't come out from our mouths because we swallow it and close our mouths. If we do not swallow, saliva that flows in the mouth will come out. If that is the case, we will have to either wipe it off or wash it away.

Also, there is **urine** in this body. Urine also dissolves in water. It is *āpo dhātu*.

These are the things that belong to *āpo dhātu*. They dissolve in water. All these can be found in this body.

There is also **heat** in this body. This body is created with that heat.

When that heat increases, we sweat and get fever.

When we eat and drink, the internal heat in our body helps with its digestion and absorption of the nutrients. This is done by *tējo dhātu*.

It is also this *tējo dhātu* that ages this body. It also deteriorates this body until it gets destroyed. All these are impermanent things.

Next, this body has things that blow with wind. **Air** that comes to the throat blows away with wind.

Air that comes out from the back also mixes with wind and blows away.

Air we breathe in also blows away with wind. Air that we breathe out is of the same nature.

There is also air that moves here and there inside this body. This belongs to *vāyo dhātu*.

So, you can see these are the things we have in our body. The things that transform into soil and become part of the earth element are *paṭhavi dhātu*. Things that take the form of fluidity and dissolve are *āpo dhātu*. Things with the nature of warmth are *tējo dhātu*. Airy things are *vāyo dhātu*. Therefore, our body is made up of these four elements. Buddha taught us to contemplate well on the fact that all these elements are found in this body. He taught us to divide up this body like a butcher who sells beef after he killed a cow and cut its flesh into pieces. That is when we can see the truth of this body. Then, the attachment we have will become weakened and disappear.

7. Nine Cemetery Contemplations

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

In the last chapter, we learned about *dhātu manasikāra* meditation or the contemplation of elemental nature of things. In that meditation, we learned about things that are of the nature of becoming part of the earth. That was the element of solidity or *paṭhavi dhātu*. We learned about the things of the nature of water or the element of fluidity, or *āpo dhātu*. We learned about the things of heat or *tejo dhātu*. We learned about things that have the nature of air or the element of wind, or *vāyo dhātu*. For the contemplation of these four great elements, too, you should find a secluded spot and with closed eyes contemplate the parts of your body that become earth. Contemplate your hair, which will become part of the earth, your body hair, which will become part of the earth, your nails, which will become part of the earth, and in this manner you should be able to see clearly those parts of your body that will become earth in the end. In the same way, you should try to understand fluid things, which flow or dissolve away. You must also understand the heat of your body as well as the wind elements of your body. When you contemplate the four great elements, your mindfulness improves and your understanding increases. Your life becomes organized in such a way that you can understand life through calming and insight meditations.

Now, we will learn about a new method of meditation. This is called "*navasīvathika*". This means relating the nine stages of deterioration of a dead body. This, too, is a way of realizing the way things are with greater depth. The truth may be unpleasant until we realize it for what it is.

In the time of the Buddha, the common practice was that when a person died, the body would be taken away and thrown into a charnel ground, which was usually located some distance away from human habitation. No one went there at other times. The bodies of the dead would slowly deteriorate. In this meditation, the Buddha teaches us the way to contemplate the nine stages of the deterioration of a dead body.

The first stage of the deterioration of the dead body takes place within a day or two after death. It will bloat, discolour, become blue, and ooze. The first contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate such a dead body with wisdom and mindfulness and relate it to our lives in this way: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a

fate. When one contemplates this, one's mind becomes less obsessed by defilements and easier to calm and settle. This contemplation helps the meditator develop concentration easily.

The second stage of the deterioration of a dead body, which lasts for about a week after the first stage, is that a stench will emanate from it and attract animals. Vultures, dogs, crows, foxes, and other carrion eaters will tear the dead body from limbs and eat it. Then the body becomes food for animals and changes drastically from what it looked like. The second contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom, and with mindfulness relate it to our lives this way: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate.

It is common for people to have a reluctance to think about dead bodies, and even if we have a dream about it we call it a nightmare. There is a valid reason for meditating on these subjects. It helps us accept reality more readily. We may feel this is difficult or unpleasant. We may feel this meditation method is unfair. Why are we being instructed to contemplate such gruesome objects? Looking at life with rose-tinted glasses gets us nowhere. Jealousy, anger, revenge, and other emotions we are used to experiencing will not be expelled by continuing to look at life the old way. We should understand that living in a world of make-believe beauty does not really rid us of jealousy, anger, etc. Therefore, what Buddha taught here must be true. His instructions directly lead to the realization of life. When we are on the track to understand the reality of life, it is a natural result that we become more virtuous. We become patient, we do not experience jealousy, we do not get angry, and we do not seek revenge. These are characteristics of a virtuous life. These virtues are cultivated when we practice this meditation method.

Now, we move to the third stage of the deterioration of the dead body. It would now be unrecognizable and would be in pieces, and parts of bone would be visible. There would be bits of flesh strewn about and dry pools of blood around the remains. Now you should investigate such a stage. The third contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness and relate it to our lives this way: this body of mine will also become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate. When you contemplate this with wisdom, your mind gradually becomes oriented towards understanding life. When contemplating a dead body on a charnel ground, you must have *atāpi*, *sampajañña*, and *satimā*. We learned about these in a previous chapter and remind ourselves, *atāpi* is improving through perseverance, the skill of subduing the accumulated

weaknesses of our minds. *Sampajañña* is using our intelligence skillfully, and *satimā* is the skill of staying totally aware and mindful.

It is not uncommon for humankind to be easily startled and hold an immature perception about a dead body. If we see a dead body in our dreams, we awaken frightened. All we need to do is realize this is reality and contemplating on this gives us strength to face any calamity that could befall us.

There is a name for *liberated ones* who have understood life. It is "*tādī*." *Tādī* is imperturbability in gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and insult, and wellbeing and suffering, or the eight natures - ups and downs of the world. The *liberated ones* have cultivated imperturbability by contemplating these realities of life.

In the fourth of the nine stages of deterioration in the charnel ground, there would be no flesh and there would be traces of dried blood on bones that are now visible. There are no flies, no worms, no carrion eaters; it is just the skeleton without flesh. Now you should investigate such a stage. The fourth contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and mindfulness, relate it to our lives in this manner: this body of mine, too, will become like this: the dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate. While you contemplate the deteriorating body in the charnel ground, your mind has no room for thinking unwholesome thoughts. This is a benefit we expect from this meditation. This is how our minds prepare to become free of fetters.

Let us investigate the dead body now in its fifth stage. The traces of blood have disappeared now. It is only the partial skeleton with dried sinews here and there. Now you should investigate such a stage. The fifth contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness and relate it to our lives in this way: this body of mine will also become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate. When you practice this, your mindfulness and wisdom are further developed.

In the sixth stage of the deterioration of a dead body on the charnel ground, the meditator contemplates on the scattered skeleton thus: the skull is in one place, the ribs are strewn about, the clavicles are elsewhere, and the bones of arms and fingers are strewn about too. The pelvic bones are to one side and the bones of the legs and feet are in other places. Now, the dead body is reduced to a jumble of bones strewn about. The sixth contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to

investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness and relate it to your life in this way: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate.

In the seventh stage of the deterioration of a dead body on the charnel ground, the meditator contemplates on the scattered bones thus: the bones strewn about become bleached to the colour of a conch shell. The seventh contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness relate it to your life in this manner: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate. The meditator starts thinking, "do I perceive this life as me, mine, and myself?" When the meditator starts to think like this with mindfulness, his attachments are loosened, his mind becomes settled and tends towards the understanding of life. This is a huge gain in his life.

In the eighth stage of deterioration of the dead body on the charnel ground, which is a few years after death, the bones are broken into little pieces and lose any identity. The eighth contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness relate it to your life in this manner: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this brief period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate.

The Buddha once said that in an eon or "*kalpa*", if the skeletons of one person did not deteriorate and instead piled on top of another after each death they would form a huge mountain. This shows us how far we have travelled in this cycle of birth and death. During this very short period of roughly 50-60 years of this life, we struggle to maintain this body because we have no understanding of it. A wise person decides to live this life with understanding.

The ninth stage of deterioration of a dead body on the charnel ground is when the bones are just fragments, have become dust, and are mixed with the earth. The ninth contemplation of the *nine cemetery contemplations* is to investigate this stage with wisdom and with mindfulness relate it to your life in this way: this body of mine, too, will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. This body, too, has not transcended such a fate. The meditator investigates his body through these nine stages of deterioration. Then he must realize that all other bodies, too, have not transcended this fate. So, he contemplates the fact that

nobody has transcended this fate. He relates the nine stages of deterioration of the dead body on the charnel ground to his life in this manner. Everybody will become like this. The dead body on the charnel ground has undergone a massive change in this short period of time. Nobody has transcended such a fate. With the nine stages of deterioration of the dead body on a charnel ground, the Buddha's teachings on *Kāyānupassanā* meditation or the contemplation of the body within the four establishments of mindfulness is complete. There is another term that is used for these meditations methods called "*kāyagatāsati*," mindfulness that must be developed, taking the body as the base.

Kāyānupassanā meditation has fourteen methods. In summary they are,

1. *Ānāpānasati*: the mindfulness of breathing meditation
 2. *Satisampajañña*: mindfulness of actions meditation
 3. *Iriyāpatha*: mindfulness of posture meditation
 4. *Asubha*: the mindfulness of the impurities of the body
 5. *Dhātumanasikāra*: the meditation of the four great elements
- 6-14. *Navasīvathika*: Nine stages of the deterioration of a dead body

We started with mindfulness of in breath and out breath, which is closely connected with the body. We have progressed to a much wider outlook of life. Now, you will understand this *Dhamma* is not one that can be found through prayer or wishing. A life free from deterioration and death is just not possible. This means there is a reality in this life which we cannot evade. This *Dhamma* taught by the Buddha helps us see this reality and gives us the wisdom to face it. The person who realizes this is the path to see the reality will live a worry-free life. Thus, *kāyānupassanā* meditation helps us see and understand the path to reality of life. We see now there is a course of action we must undertake to a worry-free life. We must also realize our lives become cluttered through these courses of actions we undertake. But *kāyānupassanā* is a course of action that purifies our lives.

Therefore, you can see the practicality of the *Dhamma*. When we learn the *Dhamma* in a language we can understand, we can realize how important it is to our lives. We will see the *Dhamma's* *akālika* quality (it can be realized at any time period) when we truly try to make an effort to practice that *Dhamma* little by little. So, you have this rare moment at your fingertips. Don't throw away the *Dhamma* you are learning. Practice this *Dhamma* as best as you can. You will witness the development of your life when you practice the *Dhamma*. You will then understand this *Dhamma* is well preached by the Buddha.

That means the *Dhamma* is *swakkhāto* (well-preached). The *Dhamma* preached by the Buddha is something that needs to be realized in this life, which is known as *sandittiko* (needs to be realized in this life). The Buddha's *Dhamma* can be realized at any time period (*akāliko*). There is nothing hidden in the Buddha's *Dhamma*. It can be spoken about openly. One can invite wise people to 'come and see the *Dhamma*'. This quality of the *Dhamma* is known as *ehipassiko*. The Buddha's *Dhamma* needs to be applied to oneself. That is why the *Dhamma* is called *opanyko*. The Buddha's *Dhamma* is realized by the wise, each for himself. Therefore, the *Dhamma* is called *Paccattam Vēditabbo Viññūhi*.

These qualities are in the *Dhamma* we discussed. We learned about breathing meditation, awareness meditation, postural meditation, impurities of the body meditation, meditation on contemplating elements, and meditation on the nine cemetery contemplations. All these are included in *kāyānupassanā* – contemplations on the body. While doing *Kāyānupassanā* meditation, it is advisable to practice just the *Kāyānupassanā* for a long period. With *Kāyānupassanā*, we can greatly improve our awareness, wisdom, and effort.

In the four establishments of mindfulness, there are three other sections: *Vedanānupassanā* or contemplation of feelings, *Cittānupassanā* or contemplation of thoughts, and *Dhammānupassanā* for the contemplation of nature of things. These will be discussed in the next few chapters.

Nine Cemetery Contemplations Meditation

First, imagine a corpse before starting the *Nava Sīvathika*, or Nine Cemetery Contemplations meditation. Take a look at the corpse a few times from head to toe in your mind. Now, think about how it is left in an empty cemetery. Think about this corpse being left in an empty cemetery for some time.

1. Next, think like this: two days have gone by. The corpse is swollen. Its lips are swollen. It has a darker color. Now, three days are gone. The corpse is swollen more than before. Its lips are swollen. Its face is swollen and distorted. The mouth is open. Its color is darker than before. Now, it has been a few days. The whole corpse is swollen. The lips are swollen. The face is swollen and distorted. The mouth is open. The eyes are open. The legs and hands are also swollen. The stomach is swollen. Now, the corpse is dark blue and pus is coming out from its mouth. Pus is coming out from its nose, ears, eyes, and all the openings of the body. The corpse's skin has cracked, and pus is coming out from those cracks.
2. My body is also like this. Someday, this will happen to my body too. The bodies of others will also reach this state of flowing pus. Everyone's bodies will become like this at one point. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)

3. Next, the corpse in the cemetery is eaten by animals. Crows have landed on the corpse and pecked the flesh out of it and eaten it. They dug out the corpse's eyes. Wolves have come and eaten the corpse's flesh, dragging it by its hands and legs. Dogs have eaten the corpse's flesh, dragging it here and there. There are pieces of flesh around the corpse. Its hands and legs are twisted. Intestines are dragged out from the dead body. Birds drag and eat those intestines.
4. This will happen to my body too. One day, my body will also become like this. Others' bodies will also be eaten by animals like this. Everyone's bodies will be eaten by animals like this.
(Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
5. Next, the corpse's bones can be seen scattered here and there. Some flesh that is left after being eaten by animals can be seen on some parts of the dead body. The whole skeleton is wrapped in tendons. It is smeared with blood.
6. This will happen to my body too. One day, my body will also become like this. Others' bodies also will be reduced to skeletons like this. Everyone's bodies will become like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
7. Next, the skeleton of that corpse is completely open. There is no flesh at all. The entire skeleton is coiled with tendons and smeared with blood.
8. This will happen to my body as well. One day, my body will also become just a skeleton smeared with blood without any flesh. Others' bodies also have the same nature. Everyone's bodies will become like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
9. Next, the corpse only has a skeleton. The skeleton is coiled with tendons, but no flesh is present. Blood and pus is gone. Only the skeleton with tendons is left.
10. This will happen to my body as well. One day, my body will become like this. Others' bodies will also become like this. Everyone's bodies will become like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
11. Next, that corpse's skeleton is scattered here and there. The skull is in one place. The neck bones are in another. Collar bones, shoulder bones, finger bones, back bones, hip bones, thigh bones, calf bones, leg bones, and foot bones are scattered in all other directions. The entire skeleton is now scattered.

This will happen to my body too. The skeleton of my body will also be scattered like this. Others' skeleton will also be scattered like this. Everyone's skeleton will be scattered like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)

1. Next, the color of the skeleton is white, like that of a conch shell. All the bones that have been scattered here and there now have this white color.
2. The skeleton of my body will also turn this white color. The color of skeletons of others' bodies will also transform into this white color, like that of a conch shell. Everyone's skeletons will change to a white color and decay. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
3. There are now bones heaped up here and there. These bones have been aged for a long time now. These bones cannot be identified now as one thing or another. It is only a heap of decayed white bones gathered together.
4. This will happen to the skeleton of my body as well. Someday, this body's skeleton will also get decayed and heaped up. Others' bodies are also like this. The skeletons of everyone's bodies will decay like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)
5. Next, a skeleton cannot be seen. Pieces of bones have deteriorated completely. It has transformed into a white powder. It has become part of soil in the earth. Those bones have deteriorated entirely.

My body will also decay and transform into soil in the earth. Bodies of others will also decay and transform into soil in the earth. Everyone's bodies will also decay and transform into soil in the earth like this. (Contemplate in this manner repeatedly and get that perception established well in your mind.)

8. Mindfulness on Feelings

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

By now, you should be familiar with the *kāyānupassanā* meditation or contemplation of the body within the four establishments of mindfulness as taught by the Buddha. In this chapter, we will learn "*vedanānupassanā*" or the contemplation of feelings within the four establishments of mindfulness as taught by the Buddha.

The Buddha describes the term "*vedanā*" as a feeling, which could be either painful or pleasurable or a feeling that is neither painful nor pleasurable. This feeling arises due to *contact*, which is a result of the six sense bases, which are eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Feeling arises when any of these sense bases are stimulated. Thus, pain, pleasure, and neutral feelings are all associated with these six sense bases. *Contact* is defined as a union of three factors: an internal sense base, the object external to it, and the consciousness. For example, when there is a sound, we hear it because we have the ear, the sound exists itself, and the consciousness. *Contact* is the union of these three factors: the internal sense base, which is the ear, the external object, which is the sound, and the consciousness. We have to be aware that *contact* exists as long as those three conditions exist together. When the *contact* is pleasant, the feeling is pleasant. When the *contact* is unpleasant, the feeling is unpleasant. When the *contact* is neutral, the feeling is neutral. In *Satipatthāna sutta*, the Buddha divided these feelings into two further categories, "*sāmisā vedanā – worldly feelings*" and "*nirāmisā vedanā – spiritual feelings*". Some people practice noticing aches in the body during meditation and reflect on them. But the Buddha hasn't given such instruction. The Buddha teaches, "*Sāmisarṃ vā sukharṃ vedanarṃ vediyamāno sāmisarṃ sukharṃ vediyāmīti pajānāti*," when one feels a worldly pleasant feeling he knows that he feels a worldly pleasant feeling. *Sāmisā vedanā* are feelings that arise through reacting to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations, which can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. *Nirāmisā vedanā* are feelings that arise apart from sense pleasures. *Nirāmisā vedanā* too can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

Let us say that when we are performing a meditation, that meditation does not get cultivated in us as we expected. Then we feel a suffering/sadness. That suffering did not form based on the five sense pleasures. It is a feeling that formed based on something *nirāmisā [spirituality]*. Such feeling is called *nirāmisā* feeling. The feeling we took as an example is a disagreeable *nirāmisā* feeling.

Let us say your mind concentrates when you are performing the meditation. Then you feel a pleasure that is an agreeable *nirāmisā* feeling. Next, you will have times at which you perform mental advertences that do not have agreeable feelings. Let us say there is a meditation objective that forms neither agreeable nor disagreeable feelings in you. That feeling is called a neutral *nirāmisā* feeling.

The Buddha described feeling in the simile of the air bubble in the water. When a raindrop falls into a river it creates an air bubble. As soon as another rain drop falls near the bubble, it bursts, and a new air bubble is created. Likewise, when a particular *contact* exists, a feeling exists, and the moment a new *contact* arises a new feeling arises. *Vedanānupassanā* is the contemplation of feelings.

The Buddha advised us to focus our mindfulness on feeling. That is, we should be aware of whether it is a pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feeling formed based on the five sense pleasures (*sāmisā vedanā*). We contemplate the feeling our his wisdom and establishing our mindfulness on it.

Then, he will realize this unpleasant feeling he feels is based on the five sense pleasures. When he feels a pleasant feeling, he realizes this pleasant feeling he feels is based on the five sense pleasures. Likewise, when he feels a neutral feeling, he realizes it is based on the five sense pleasures. He establishes his mindfulness on *sāmisā* feelings in this manner.

When a person who meditates does not cultivate the meditation and concentration, he feels a sense of sadness or an unpleasant feeling. Then he should understand that he is feeling an unpleasant *nirāmisā* feeling. When he continues his meditation, he feels pleasure. Then, he should understand that he is feeling a pleasant *nirāmisā* feeling. When he further cultivates his meditation, he starts to feel neutral feelings that are not pleasant or unpleasant. He realizes it as neutral *nirāmisā* feeling.

When cultivating this mindfulness of feelings, the meditator becomes proficient at understanding that others, too, have these nine feelings and he realizes this has the same nature within all beings. When he meditates this way, he sees with mindfulness that feeling changes when *contact* changes. The Buddha taught "*Tinnam saṃgati phasso*," *contact* is the coming together of three things: the union of the eye, the form, and the eye consciousness is eye-contact; the union of the ear, the sound, and ear consciousness is the ear-contact; the union of the nose, the smell, and the nose consciousness is nose-contact; the union of the tongue, the taste, and the tongue consciousness is tongue-contact; the union of the body, the tactile sensations, and the body consciousness is the body-contact; the union of the mind, the thought, and mind consciousness is mind-contact.

We need to understand the mind is one thing, the thought is another, and mind consciousness is yet another. These three together make up the mind *contact*. To understand this, when a thought arises the mind knows this. This knowing is the mind consciousness. The mind and the thoughts are not one and the same. We can see this because let us say the mind remembers something. When we remember this, the mind consciousness will know that thing. The mind can choose to retain or replace that thing. We can do that only because the mind and the thought are two different entities.

When the meditator contemplates in this manner he realizes "*Samudaya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu viharati, vāya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu viharati*," [when *contact* exists, feeling exists; when *contact* changes; feeling changes; and when *contact* ceases, feeling ceases.] When we meditate on *vedanānupassanā*, we realize these occurrences have no controller, they are non-self. They are the result of conditions that are in place, and when the conditions no longer exist, the result is eliminated. This is a natural order, which the meditator understands. Thinking of this feeling as me, thinking I am the feeling, thinking I own this feeling or thinking this feeling owns me, the meditator will realize that thinking is faulty and correct himself. He avoids identifying with feeling as me, mine, and under my control. This contemplation helps him to further improve his mindfulness and wisdom. He is heading towards the realization of life. That is how *vedanānupassanā* becomes complete in him.

According to contemplations of feeling sections in *Satipatṭhāna sutta*, it is very clear contemplation of feeling means not reflecting on aches of the body, but being mindful of worldly and spiritual feelings.

Contemplation on Feelings Meditation

Worldly pleasant feeling that arose based on sense pleasures in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly pleasant feeling* that arose based on sense pleasures in the past was not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly pleasant feeling that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly pleasant feeling* that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly pleasant feeling that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent,

impermanent. *Worldly pleasant feeling* that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly unpleasant feeling that arose based on sense pleasures in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly unpleasant feeling* that arose based on sense pleasures in the past was not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly unpleasant feeling that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly unpleasant feeling* that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly unpleasant feeling that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly pleasant feeling* that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly neutral feeling that arose based on sense pleasures in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly neutral feeling* that arose based on sense pleasures in the past was not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly neutral feeling that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly neutral feeling* that has arisen based on sense pleasures in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Worldly neutral feeling that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Worldly neutral feeling* that will arise based on sense pleasures in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual pleasant feeling in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual pleasant feeling* that arose was not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual pleasant feeling that has arisen in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual pleasant feeling* that has arisen in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual pleasant feeling that will arise in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual pleasant feelings* that will arise in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual unpleasant feeling that arose in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual unpleasant feeling* that arose in the past was not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual unpleasant feeling that has arisen in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual unpleasant feeling* that has arisen in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual unpleasant feeling that will arise in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual unpleasant feeling* that will arise in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual neutral feeling that arose in the past arose due to contact and ceased when the contact ceased. Therefore, it was impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual neutral feeling* that arose in the past was not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual neutral feeling that has arisen in the present has arisen due to contact and cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual neutral feeling* that has arisen in the present is not me, not mine, not myself.

Spiritual neutral feeling that will arise in the future will arise due to contact and will cease when the contact ceases. Therefore, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *Spiritual neutral feeling* that will arise in the future is not me, not mine, not myself.

All unpleasant feelings that arise due to causes are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *All unpleasant feelings* that arise due to causes are not me, not mine, not myself.

All pleasant feelings that arise due to causes are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *All pleasant feelings* that arise due to causes are not me, not mine, not myself.

All neutral feelings that arise due to causes are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. *All neutral feelings* that arise due to causes are not me, not mine, not myself.

9. Contemplation on Mind

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

By now, you know lots of details about the *Dhamma* that the Buddha taught us. It is from the *Dhamma* that one can learn how to conduct one's life to establish mindfulness. Any wise person can understand that the inner life is something that needs to be purified. With that realization, the *Dhamma* can be used to help purify the inner life. This is why we need to establish our mindfulness.

In order to establish mindfulness, we have learned the *kāyānupassanā*-contemplation of body meditation and *vedanānupassanā*-contemplation of feeling meditation. There is also something special in our inner life. It is the mind. You are now going to learn about the *cittānupassanā*-contemplation of mind meditation. This meditation focuses on contemplating mind by establishing mindfulness on it. The Buddha preached the *cittānupassanā* meditation as the third section in the *Satipatṭhāna sutta*. First and second parts were the *kāyānupassanā* meditation and *vedanānupassanā* meditation, respectively. The third part is the *cittānupassanā* meditation.

Mind is something that arises due to a cause. It ceases with the cessation of cause. Also, mind is something that can follow evil paths when it is led astray. It follows good paths when it is directed properly. Mind is something that follows whichever path is directed. Therefore, the Buddha preached that the mind is something that needs to be tamed. He also preached that a tamed mind brings pleasure (*cittam dantaṃ sukhā vahaṃ*). The Buddha clearly preached about it because He had already tamed His mind.

Just like a tamed animal is useful in different ways, a tamed mind is also useful. So, *cittānupassanā* is the meditation that helps us to tame the mind and establish mindfulness on it. In the *cittānupassanā* meditation, the Buddha taught us to contemplate the mind in sixteen different ways.

These sixteen different ways are as follows:

1. Contemplate passionate mind as a mind that is passionate. A mind passionate because of causes and not without such causes. These causes help one to identify a passionate mind in the process of acquiring a profound realization about life. One gets to know about it because he is mindful about it.

2. A mind dispassionate also because of causes (*vītarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vītarāgaṃ cittaṃti pajānāti*). A mind also gets tainted or purified due to certain causes. So, one mindfully knows about a dispassionate mind when it is dispassionate.
3. If the mind is angry, one mindfully knows about it as an angry mind. He also mindfully knows the reasons why the mind became angry.
4. When the mind is free of anger, he knows the mind is now free of anger due to reasons that made it free of anger. He understands this mind is free of anger now.
5. When the mind is of suspicion, delusion, and has been deceived, he also understands that nature of the mind. He understands this is a mind of delusion.
6. If the delusion of the mind is gone and attained realization, he is mindful about that nature. He now knows this mind is free of delusion.
7. If this mind is contracted, he also knows about the contracted nature of the mind from his wisdom. (A contracted mind means it is not awakened, lazy to do anything, and it is unable to see the mind's true nature.)
8. If the mind is in a scattered state, he understands the mind is now scattered (mind is contracted inward and dispersed outward). With good mindfulness, he understands both these natures of the mind.
9. If the mind is exalted, he knows it is exalted.
10. If the mind is unexalted, he knows it is unexalted.
11. The meditator understands surpassed mind as surpassed mind.
12. He understands unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind.
13. If the mind is concentrated, he understands it is concentrated. If the mind is developed into a state of *jhāna* he understands that as well.
14. If the mind is not concentrated, he understands it is not concentrated. If a concentration is not cultivated into a state of *jhāna*, he also knows about it.
15. If the mind is free of defilements and has reached liberation, he also understands that as being freed from defilements.
16. If the mind is not freed from defilements, he understands about that as well.

In this manner, the Buddha has taught us the way to cultivate mindfulness, so that one could see the changes that happen in his mind when it transforms from a passionate one to a defilement-free mind. Here, one does not think as passion... passion... passion... when a passion comes into the mind or

thinks as anger... anger... anger... when anger comes into mind. The Buddha hasn't asked the meditators to recollect like that.

In the Supreme Buddha's preaching, it says one should investigate as to what caused the mind to be in such state and establish mindfulness by realizing it as an effect that resulted due to a cause.

Now, you can understand that a disciple of the Buddha does not see his life carelessly. He does not practice a meditation that has been done through an influence of a feeling, or without a realization and understanding of life. It is not a mere meditation that has been practiced without a clear aim. Here, the Buddha is describing a contemplation of mind by one's wisdom and with a properly established mindfulness.

When one is wisely considering the mind in this manner, he realizes his mind's nature very well. He also understands that everyone else's minds are also of this similar nature. He further realizes this mind is something that arises due to causes (*Samudaya dhammānupassī vā cittasmiṃ viharati*).

What is the cause for the arising of the mind? The Buddha preached clearly that this mind arises dependent on mentality and materiality. There is a discourse named *Satipatṭhāna Samudaya sutta* in the *Satipatṭhāna* chapter of the book of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. In that discourse, the Buddha clearly taught that with the arising of mentality and materiality, mind arises (*Nāmarūpa samudayā citta samudayo*).

Don't get confused about the word *nāmarūpa*; it is clearly described in the discourses of the Buddha. There are five factors in the mentality. These are *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā* (perception), *cetanā* (volitions), *phasso* (contact), and *manasikāro* (attentiveness). Materiality is the four great elements (earth, water, fire, wind) and things made up of the four great elements. Thus, if the four great elements or something made from them is present together with a feeling, a perception, a volition, a contact, or an attentiveness, then the mind arises there. Thus, minds of both mine and yours are formed as a result of mentality and materiality. All of the above-mentioned states arise in the mind. The state of being passionate, dispassionate, angry, free of anger, in delusion, free of delusion, contracted, scattered, concentrated, not concentrated, in a *jhāna* state, not in a *jhāna* state, with defilements, and free of defilements all arise in a mind formed due to that mentality and materiality.

Therefore, we must understand that those who tamed their minds were the ones who won this world. People who realized this mind were the ones who freed themselves from these physical and

mental sufferings. They were the ones who were released from the wrong notions of I, mine, and myself.

If one really needs to take something as me, mine, and myself, the Buddha preached to consider this body as me, mine, and myself. That is because one can see this body being present for some time, let us say for one year, for ten years, for twenty years, for eighty or ninety years, and it dies after that. Thus, he sees this body existing at least for a short period of time.

The Buddha showed us this mind is like a monkey who jumps from one tree branch to another. A mind jumps from one object into another. The Buddha told us not to take the mind with such character as me, mine, or myself.

When we have the opportunity to achieve such a remarkable realization of the mind, why don't we take this *Dhamma* practice seriously? Please do not miss this esteemed opportunity. It is you who will risk being reborn in planes of misery and suffer if you miss this rare chance. It is you who will have to carry your own Karma with you. Moreover, what is important for us is the *Dhamma* the Buddha preached to us with His great compassion and not something told by someone else. Place confidence in the Buddha. Place confidence in the *Dhamma* preached by the Buddha. Place confidence in the Liberated Ones, who followed the *Dhamma* and attained *Nibbāna*. Only then can you be able to cultivate this mindfulness practice in your mind as well. You can contemplate on your mind mindfully and attain the realization of life.

10. Mindfulness on Five Hindrances

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

You have been learning things that would help you place confidence in the Dhamma, taught by the Buddha. It is not from either a statue or pictures of the Buddha that one should try to identify Him. The Buddha indeed needs to be identified through the Dhamma He preached. When the Buddha was alive, the monk named Vakkali was constantly staring at the Buddha. Then, the Buddha told him, "Dear Vakkali, realize the Dhamma. Then, through the Dhamma, you will see me." This clearly shows that one can see the Buddha only through the Dhamma.

If it were possible to see the Buddha from a statue, it would have been the great disciples (Liberated Disciples) who would have first built the statues of the Buddha. If that was the case, they would have come to a decision to build Buddha statues for future people to see Him, even before the first Dhamma council was carried out. Instead, the Liberated Ones did what was needed to be done; they protected the Noble Dhamma. They organized a Dhamma council, which means they arranged the discourses of the Buddha methodically so that the Dhamma now available to us was handed down by those Liberated Ones.

To this point, you have been learning about the first set of meditations described in the Satipatṭhāna sutta, which is found in the Noble Dhamma preached by the Buddha. You now know a great deal of the Satipatṭhanā sutta. You should have an understanding about how much knowledge you now have about the Dhamma preached by the Buddha. This is a rare knowledge.

We need to discuss the truth of this life and not something that is untruthful. According to the Buddha, life does not end with death. It is an endless trajectory through births and deaths. This journey is fought with much pain and suffering in planes of misery, and very rarely does one come across the teachings of a Buddha along this passage. Therefore, one should place his confidence in the Dhamma, and develop his confidence to an unshakable state.

Therefore, do not miss this rare opportunity. To achieve this end, we need kalyāṇa mittās or noble friends who help us understand the great teachings in its purest form without alternating it with their own viewpoints or sully it in any other way. The Buddha once said to an arahant named Upāli, "If a Dhamma you hear talks about non-adherence; if it talks about eradication of lust and greed; if it talks

about freedom from suffering, Upāli, understand that it is the teaching of the Buddha. If any teaching you hear does not promote non-adherence; if it does not talk about the eradication of the lust and greed; if it does not talk about the freedom from suffering, that is not the teaching of the Buddha." So, we must understand that the teachings of the Buddha are guidelines for gaining freedom from the cycle of birth and death, not for extending the cycle of rebirth.

You are now going to learn the final section of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. It begins with the explanation of the five hindrances. The Buddha advised that one needs to establish his mindfulness in the true nature of the five hindrances properly. If sense desire has arisen, then one should be mindful that the sense desire is present in him. The purpose of mindfulness here is to terminate that sense desire here, and not to reflect on it, thinking, "sense desire...sense desire...." The meditator understands that the sense desire arises because of two factors: pleasant objects and unwise consideration. One who cultivates the dhammānupassanā meditation starts to establish himself in the Dhamma by focusing his mind in getting rid of distorted perception on that pleasant object. Once the sense desire is gone, he realizes the sense desire is not present in him.

Also, when anger arises in his mind, he understands his mind using his wisdom. But, reflecting on anger thinking "Anger... anger..." is not what one should do here. What should be done here is to be mindful and think, 'that anger has arisen due to the Patigha nimitta or the mental image that caused our anger and unwise consideration. Using wise consideration, now, he can develop thoughts of loving kindness. Thus, he realizes the change that occurred in him. The ill will hindrance he had is no longer in him now.

Then, when drowsiness, laziness, dislike, and discontent in practicing the Dhamma have arisen in him, he realizes thīnamiddha [drowsiness and laziness] has arisen in him. When thīnamiddha arises in him, he understands it arises as a result of unwise consideration and heedlessness. He further thinks he should get rid of the laziness and sleepiness. 'I need to overcome this thīnamiddha.' He then gets rid of the laziness and sleepiness based on wise consideration and heedfulness.

He establishes his mind on mindfulness of death thinking 'I could die right now. Who knows if I am going to die today? I could be in an accident today. Who could say what kind of tragedy would come to this life? Therefore, I should practice this Dhamma before something like that happens to me.' In this manner, he establishes his mindfulness and continues it promptly. Thus, he gets rid of laziness and sleepiness and handles his life free of drowsiness and laziness with a great effort.

Now, he's mindful to see if there is any remorse, which means regretting past incidents and distractions. If there is any, he understands they have arisen due to unwise consideration. He further investigates these past incidents that cause regret and remorse by thinking, 'these are impermanent. There's no need to think about these things again. What happened in the past is now in the past. I am a new person now. I am someone who has now come to the Dhamma. I am a person who tries to cultivate my mind. Therefore, it is a hindrance for me to have these things in my effort of developing my mind in this path of the Dhamma.' Reflecting in this manner, he gets rid of being sad about what has happened in the past. Then, when the mind is distracted, he understands this mind is distracted due to unwise consideration. He abandons this unwise consideration and instead of hard effort, he patiently continues to establish mindfulness with an investigation of mind.

Next, a doubt may form in him about this Dhamma, 'Is this meditation I am doing correct? Is this method I am practicing correct? Would I be able to cultivate my mind in this manner? Would I be able to obtain results?' When he keeps thinking like that a doubt arises in him. As long as this doubt is present, he could not focus his mind in practicing the Dhamma. His mind starts to establish in other useless things. This could happen because of doubt. One needs to acquire a proper realization of the Dhamma in order to free from that doubt. The Buddha preached that a person who is in doubt all the time thinking about, 'how this goes and how that goes' should discipline himself in a path that helps attaining wisdom (*Kathaṃ katī ñāyapathāya sikkhe*). Then, he will develop a faith toward the Buddha. It is indeed by developing a faith that one could free himself from doubt.

Faith means placing confidence in the enlightenment of the Supreme Buddha. Most people just state their own views and prevent people from realizing the Dhamma. That shows their unfaithfulness towards the Buddha.

One should think, 'this is the Buddha's Dhamma. Most people freed themselves by practicing this Dhamma. Oh! This Dhamma is also for my refuge, for my liberation!' And, he should thus develop his confidence and free his mind from the five hindrances.

When he continues to discipline his mind in this manner he realizes these five hindrances act in others in a similar manner. He, thus, sees this change by seeing it acting similarly even in the internal life. Afterwards, he uses the knowledge to realize this life. Then, he understands these five hindrances arise due to causes and cease with the cessation of those causes. He, then, understands both arising and cessation of these five hindrances. Therefore, when they arise in him, he does not take the five

hindrances as me, mine, or myself. He becomes mindful about not getting attached to any of those since the five hindrances have the nature of arising and ceasing. That mindfulness helps him to further cultivate wisdom, mindfulness, and effort.

11. Mindfulness on the Five Aggregates of Clinging

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

Now you have learned many techniques of developing mindfulness. In the previous chapters, you learned how to develop (1) mindfulness of breathing meditation, (2) mindfulness of actions meditation, (3) mindfulness of postures meditation, (4) meditation on the impurities of body, (5) meditation on the four great elements, and (6 -14) meditation on the nine stages of the deterioration of a dead body. These fourteen methods are *kāyānupassanā* or mindfulness of the body within the four establishments of mindfulness. In the method for *vedanānupassanā* or mindfulness of feeling within the four establishments of mindfulness, you learned about the nine categories of feelings. In the method for *cittānupassanā* or mindfulness of the state of mind within the four establishments of mindfulness, you learned 16 states of mind you experience when developing your mind. In the last chapter, you learned about the five hindrances under *dhammānupassanā* or mindfulness of the factors of insight within the four establishments of mindfulness.

The Buddha gives a vast realization of life to His disciples. It was the Buddha who showed the path to realize the *Nibbāna*. The Buddha introduced Himself as the arouser of the unarisen path (*Asañjātassa maggassa sañjanetā*), the proclaimer of the unproclaimed path (*Anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā*), the One who perfectly realized the Path (*Maggaññū*), the One who perfectly knows that Path (*Maggavidū*), and the skilled leader who shows the Path (*Maggakovido*). All these names are used to introduce the Buddha. It was the Buddha who showed the path to develop the mind. Therefore, you should place confidence in the Buddha.

There is no one who could show us the path to *Nibbāna* other than the Buddha. He can show us how to develop this mind. This is in fact what is called ‘showing the path’. Our parents showed us a path to get a good education, and we followed that path and became educated. Likewise, the Buddha showed us the path to acquire pleasure in this life by freeing ourselves from suffering. If we follow that path, we will be free from suffering by realizing this truth.

Now, you will learn the meditation on the five aggregates of clinging within the establishment of mind insight factors. In the very first sermon the Buddha gave, the *Dhammacakkappavattana sutta* or

the discourse on the turning of the wheel of the *Dhamma*, he disclosed the noble truth of suffering as follows: Birth is suffering; Aging is suffering; Sickness is suffering; Death is suffering; Separation from loved ones and desirable things is suffering; Association with undesirable people and things is suffering; and not to gain what one desires is suffering. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering. Understanding the five aggregates of clinging is understanding the suffering. The Buddha said, the noble disciple understands this is form, this is how the form arises, and this is how the form ceases; this is feeling, this is how feeling arises, and this is how feeling ceases; this is perception, this is how perception arises, and this is how perception ceases; this is volitional formations, this how volitional formations arise, and this how volitional formation cease; and this is consciousness, this is how consciousness arises, and this is how consciousness ceases.

This meditation involves contemplating on the five aggregates of clinging as follows: what are the five aggregates of clinging, how do the five aggregates of clinging come into existence repeatedly, and how are the five aggregates of clinging fully ceased. It is important to know comprehensively about the five aggregates of clinging. The Buddha teaches that the aggregates are form or *rūpa*, feeling or *vedana*, perception or *sañña*, volitional formations or *saṃkhāra*, and consciousness or *viññāna*. These five aggregates of clinging define a living being. The definition of a being is one who clings to these five aggregates. Should the beings free themselves from clinging to these aggregates through wisdom, they become enlightened and they do not have these five aggregates of clinging. They only have five aggregates without clinging. They are liberated ones.

When there is desire and clinging towards the five aggregates, these aggregates are called clinging aggregates. However, when desire and clinging are released from the aggregates, they are called just aggregates.

As meditators, you first recognize the clinging aggregate of form or *rūpa*. "*Ruppatīti rūpaṃ*," the term form is used to describe things that are subject to destruction. What is this form? Form is things made up of the four great elements: earth, water, fire, and air. These forms deteriorate due to cold, heat, hunger, thirst, accidents and disasters, and sickness. According to this, *rūpa* is another name for this body that is made of the four great elements.

There is a discourse named *Mahāpunnamā* sutta. On one full-moon day, while the Buddha was sitting outside in meditational posture in Pubbārāma Temple with lots of *arahants*, a certain monk asked

the Buddha, "Bhante, may I ask you a question?" The Buddha said, "Monk, be seated and ask your question. I will answer it."

That monk asked, "Bhante, what is the meaning of aggregate? The Buddha answered, "Monk, any form, past, future, or present, whether internal or external, whether gross or subtle, whether inferior or superior, and whether far or near, this is called the aggregate of form." Therefore, the word 'aggregates' does not mean a heap or pile of things. The word 'aggregates' means the existence of something within time and space. This is the extent of form. Past, present, and future are the time dimension. Internal, external, gross, subtle, inferior, superior, far, and near are the space dimensions. Therefore, this is called the form aggregate.

The same definition applies to the aggregate of feeling. Any feeling past, present, or future, , whether internal or external, whether gross or subtle, whether inferior or superior, and whether far or near is called the aggregate of feeling.

Similarly, the same definition applies to the aggregate of perception. Any perception past, present, or future, whether internal or external, whether gross or subtle, whether inferior or superior, and whether far or near is called the aggregate of perception.

The same definition applies to the aggregate of volitional formations. Any mental fabrication past, present, or future, whether internal or external, whether gross or subtle, whether inferior or superior, and whether far or near is called the aggregate of volitional formation.

The same definition applies to the aggregate of consciousness. Any consciousness past, present, or future, whether internal or external, whether gross or subtle, whether inferior or superior, and whether far or near is called the aggregate of consciousness.

These aggregates exist within time and space. The four great elements are the conditions that designate the aggregate of form. *Phassa* or contact is the condition that designates the aggregate of feeling. *Phassa* or contact is the condition that designates the aggregate of perception. *Phassa* or contact is the condition that designates the aggregate of volitional formation. *Nāma-rūpa* or mentality and materiality is the condition that designates the aggregate of consciousness. Understanding the five aggregates of clinging through your own life and contemplating it is the meditation on the five aggregates of clinging within the four establishments of mindfulness.

You are learning something a human being gets to learn very rarely. You might have read many newspapers in your life. You may have watched a lot of television programs. But to get something that helps one realize life is seldom. In fact, we do not get such a rare chance most of the time. Also, you get to learn the pure *Dhamma* of the Buddha without the addition of any personal opinions. That is why you are fortunate. In the last section, you learnt the meditation of five aggregates of clinging within the four establishments of mindfulness. This is the *dharmānupassanā* meditation. In this section, we will further elaborate on our understanding of the meditation of five aggregates of clinging within the four establishments of mindfulness.

Rupa or form is composed of the four great elements. "*Khandha*" or aggregate is that which exists in the time and space continuum. *Vedanā* or feeling also exists within the time and space continuum. *Saññā* or the perception is the same. *Sankhāra* or Volitional formations are the same and *Viññāna* or consciousness is also the same. All of these comprise of suffering, which must be realized.

Vedanā upādānakkhandho or the aggregate of feeling arises when there is contact or *phassa* associated with the six sense bases. The sense bases are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Feeling arises when there is contact or *phassa*. Where there is contact, there we find feeling. When that contact ceases, feeling ceases.

Saññā or perception arises where there is contact or *phassa*. Where there is contact, you will find *saññā*. When that contact ceases the *saññā* ceases. What do you perceive? With your eyes, you perceive sight. Through your ears, you perceive sound. Through your nose, you perceive smell. Through your tongue, you perceive taste. Through your body, you perceive tactile sensations. Through your mind, you perceive mental objects. How do you perceive these?

1. There is an object; it comes to the eye and the eye consciousness arises. The union of these three is eye contact. When this eye contact arises, perception of form arises.
2. There is a sound; it comes to the ear and the ear consciousness arises. The union of these three is ear contact. When this ear contact arises, perception of sound arises.
3. There is an odour, it comes to the nose, and the nose consciousness arises. The union of these three is nose contact. When this nose contact arises, perception of smell arises.
4. There is a taste; it comes to the tongue, and the tongue consciousness arises. The union of these three is tongue contact. When this tongue contact arises, perception of taste arises.

5. There is a tactile sensation; it comes to the body and the body consciousness arises. The union of these three is body contact. When this body contact arises, perception of tangibles arises.
6. There is a mind object; it comes to the mind and the mind consciousness arises. The union of these three is mind contact. When this mind contact arises, perception of thought arises.

Thus, when these six kinds of *phassa* or contact arise, the six kinds of perception also arise.

Now, we look at volitional formations. These are thoughts or volitions. Thoughts or volition arise when we see objects. We react with the mind, with word, or deed. Thoughts or volitions arise when we hear sounds. Then we react with mind, word, or deed. Thoughts or volitions arise when we smell odours. Then we react with mind, word, or deed. Thoughts or volition arise when we taste. Then we react with mind, word, or deed. Thoughts or volitions arise when we feel a tactile sensation. Then we react with mind, word, or deed. Thoughts or volitions arise when mind objects arise. Then we react with mind, word, or deed. What, then, is thought or volition? It is "*karma*" or that which forms a result. Then, every time we see an object with the eye, form a volitional formation, react with mind, word, or deed, *karma* is generated, which will culminate in a result. This is thought or volition or "*cetanā*" and is also known as volitional formations. Thus, volitional formations, too, are formed by *phassa* or contact. If the eye, eye consciousness, and forms do not align, eye contact will not happen. If eye contact does not occur, neither will volitional formation.

What then is consciousness? Consciousness arises, dependent on *mentality and materiality*. Where does consciousness arise? It arises in the six sense bases. The Buddha taught that dependent on eye and form, eye consciousness arises. The reason for that is because consciousness arises dependent on mentality and materiality. *Mentality* is feeling, perception, volitional formations, contact, and attentiveness. *Materiality* is that which is made of four great elements and the four great elements themselves. The eye is made of feeling, perception, volitional formations, contact, attentiveness, and the four great elements. Similarly, the other five sense bases, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are also made of feeling, perception, volitional formations, contact, attentiveness, and the four great elements. Consciousness, too, is made of mentality and materiality.

The Buddha taught this consciousness is not solitary. (*Ahamaññatra rūpāya, aññatra vēdanāya, aññatra saññāya, aññatra saṃkhārehi viññānassa āgatiṃ vā gatiṃ vā cutiṃ vā upapattiṃ vā paññāpessāmīti, nētaṃ thānaṃ vijjati*) "Monks, though someone might say: 'apart from form, apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from volitional formations, I will make known the coming and

going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion, that is impossible.”

Now, it’s very clear that the consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with form, engaged with feeling, engaged with perception, and engaged with volitional formations. The disciple of the Buddha is very clear on this because he has placed confidence on the knowledge of the Buddha. Based on this confidence, he starts to contemplate on the five aggregates of clinging. You need to contemplate on how these five aggregates of clinging arise. This happens according to the phenomenon of cause and effect. The form, which arises from the four great elements, becomes the clinging aggregate of form. The feeling, which arises from contact, becomes the clinging aggregate of feeling. The perception, which arises from contact, becomes the clinging aggregate of perception. The volitional formations that arise from contact become the clinging aggregate of volitional formations. The consciousness that arises from *mentality and materiality* becomes the clinging aggregate of consciousness.

Now, it is obvious all this happens through "*paticcasamuppādo*" or the phenomenon of dependent co-arising. So, we understand that as long as this phenomenon of dependent co-arising is formed within one’s life, the five aggregates of clinging exist. Therefore, the five aggregates of clinging are impermanent. Thus, form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness are all impermanent.

As a simple example, let us take the traditional twelve-month oil lamp found in some places of worship, which burns all year around. In January, when you look at it, it is a lit. When you look at it in mid-year, it is still lit. In December, when you look at it, it is still lit and burning. It may give the impression the flame is a permanent thing. However, it is fueled by impermanent oil, fed through impermanent wicks, and burns with an impermanent flame. If someone thinks, "I saw this flame in January, I saw this flame in July, and I still can see it in December, it is a permanent thing"; they are deluded. If the oil and wicks are not replenished in timely intervals, the flame would be extinguished. Similarly, this consciousness, which co-exists with five aggregates of clinging setting in motion the process for continuous existence, is not something permanent. Due to the continuous formation of dependent co-arising, the five aggregates of clinging continuously come into existence. Once the dependent co-arising is ceased, the continued existence of the five aggregates of clinging is stopped. In other words, the moment ignorance is totally eradicated, when the Four Noble Truths are fully realized, the dependent co-arising is completely eradicated.

Thus, we see the Buddha's followers are serious practitioners of *dharmānupassanā* or the contemplation of the nature of things. They see how the five aggregates of clinging arise through the phenomenon of dependent co-arising. They see how the five aggregates of clinging cease, too. This cessation happens when the disciple fully comprehends the workings of the five aggregates of clinging and eradicates clinging.

If one has understood forms made of the four great elements as froth, feeling that arise from *contact* as a water bubble, perceptions born of *contact* as a mirage, "*puññābhi saṃkhāro, apuññābhi saṃkhāro, āneñjābhi saṃkhāro*," volitional formations born of *contact* as peeling layers of a banana tree trunk when one wants heartwood, and consciousness born of mentality and materiality as illusionary as a magician's trick then the five aggregates of clinging are left alone without the notion of me, mine, and myself. Because one leaves the aggregates alone, there is no clinging. Because there is no clinging, passion is eliminated. When passion is eliminated, arranging of *kamma* to be ripened is ceased. That means rebirth is stopped, dependent co-arising is destroyed, and the disciple becomes liberated.

This is how the Buddha described the contemplation of the five aggregates of clinging. The disciple of the Buddha finds a solitary spot and while he contemplates this profoundly, he realizes the formation of the five aggregates of clinging is non-self or beyond his control. Forms comprising the four great elements will change when the four great elements change. Feeling arising from *contact* will change when contact changes. Perceptions arising from contact will change when *contact* changes. Volitional formations arising from contact will change when contact changes. Consciousness arising from mentality and materiality will change when mentality and materiality changes. Thus, these results that arise due to causes change or cease when the causes are changed.

Through this realization, he understands non-self nature as well. Understanding this non-self nature, he doesn't consider the five aggregates of clinging as "I am, mine, and myself." He becomes liberated from them. It is remarkable how much freedom one can experience by establishing one's mind on the four establishments of mindfulness.

Contemplation on the Five Aggregates of Clinging Meditation

Form aggregate:

Forms that were *in the past*, formed from the four elements and have changed: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Forms that are *in the present*, formed from the four elements and are changing: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Forms that will be *in the future* will be formed from the four elements and will change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Internal forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

External forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Gross forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Subtle forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Inferior forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Superior forms formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Forms that are *far away*, formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Forms that are *nearby*, formed from the four elements and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Feeling aggregate:

Feelings that were *in the past* that arose from contact and have changed: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Feelings that are *in the present* that arise from contact and are changing: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Feelings that will be *in the future* that will arise from contact and will change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Internal feeling that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

External feelings that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Gross feelings that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Subtle feelings that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Inferior feelings that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Superior feelings that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Feelings that are *far away* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Feelings that are *nearby* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Perception aggregate:

Perceptions that were *in the past* that arose from contact and have changed: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Perceptions that are *in the present* that arise from contact and are changing: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Perceptions that will be *in the future* that will arise from contact and will change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Internal perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

External perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Gross perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Subtle perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Inferior perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Superior perceptions that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Perceptions that are *far away* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Perceptions that are *nearby* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Volitional formations aggregate:

Volitional formations that were *in the past* that arose from contact and have changed: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Volitional formations that are *in the present* that arise from contact and are changing: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Volitional formations that will be *in the future* that will arise from contact and will change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Internal volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

External volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Gross volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Subtle volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Inferior volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Superior volitional formations that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Volitional formations that are *far away* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Volitional formations that are *nearby* that arise from contact and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Consciousness aggregate:

Consciousness that was *in the past* that arose from mentality and materiality and have changed: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Consciousness that is *in the present* that arise from mentality and materiality and are changing: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Consciousness that will be *in the future* that will arise from mentality and materiality and will change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Internal consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

External consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Gross consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Subtle consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Inferior consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Superior consciousness that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Consciousness that is *far away* that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

Consciousness that is *nearby* that arises from mentality and materiality and are subject to change: they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. They are not me, not mine, not myself.

12. Mindfulness of Six Sense Bases

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

In the last section, you learned the meditation on the five aggregates of clinging within the four establishments of mindfulness. This is a *dharmānupassanā* meditation. While contemplating on the impermanence of the five aggregates of clinging, you use any comfortable posture.

The clinging aggregates are form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. Each aggregate can be contemplated as past, present, or future; as internal or external; as gross or subtle; as inferior or superior; and as far or near. This contemplation is done through observing of their impermanence, suffering, and non-self nature. You need to remember here that non-self denotes something is beyond one's control. The great benefit of this meditation is that the person who practices this meditation also cultivates the wisdom needed to recognize impermanence as impermanent, suffering as suffering, and non-self as beyond one's control. This contemplation is done thus, these are the five aggregates of clinging, this is how they arise, and this is how they cease.

Next, the Buddha taught about the meditation on the six sense bases. The six sense bases are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the mind. It is through these six sense bases that the entire five aggregates of clinging and the phenomenon of dependent co-arising are formed. The meditations mentioned above have been practiced and many people have achieved the results throughout a long history. The Buddha teaches the obtaining of an eye, an ear, a nose, a tongue, a body, or a mind is the obtaining of suffering. That is the existence of diseases. That is the appearance of aging and death. Therefore, the Buddha taught that these six sense bases are suffering and must be realized as such.

The Buddha taught in the *Satipatṭhāna sutta*: "*Cakkhuṃ ca pajānāti*," the meditator clearly understands the eye. "*Rūpe ca pajānāti*," the meditator clearly understands the visible object or form. "*Yaṃ ca tadubhayā paticca uppajjati saṃyojanaṃ taṃ ca pajānāti*," the meditator clearly understands the bondage of passion and desire owing to the visual object. This bondage arises, dependent on the eye and the visual object. "*Yathā ca anuppanassa saṃyojanassa uppado hoti taṃ ca pajānāti*," the meditator clearly understands how a bondage that had not arisen has arisen. Such bondage arises due to unwise consideration or *ayonisomanasikāro*. The meditator clearly understands how bondage that has now arisen is eradicated. Such bondage is eradicated by seeing things as they truly are through wise

consideration or *yonisomanasikāro*. The meditator clearly understands how bondage that has now been eradicated through right understanding will, in future, never arise.

In order to understand the meditation on the sense bases, there needs to be a better understanding of the workings of these sense bases. Once there was a discussion between the great *arahants Sāriputta* and *Mahākotṭhita*. The *arahant Mahākotṭhita* asked the great *Sāriputta*, "Is the eye fettered by the form or is the form fettered by the eye? Is the ear fettered by sound or is the sound fettered by the ear? Is the nose fettered by smell or is the smell fettered by the nose? Is the tongue fettered by taste or is the taste fettered by the tongue? Is the body fettered by the tangible or is the tangible fettered by the body? Is the mind fettered by thought or is the thought fettered by the mind?"

The reason for this question is it usually seems like the eye and form are bound together, the ear and sound are bound together, the nose and smell are bound together, the tongue and taste are bound together, the body and the tangible are bound together, and the mind and thought are bound together. But the truth is different. These internal objects and external objects are completely separate and independent from each other. The great *arahant Sāriputta* answered, "The eye is not bound to form, neither is form bound to the eye. The ear is not bound to sound, neither is sound bound to the ear. The nose is not bound to smell, neither is smell bound to the nose. The tongue is not bound to taste, neither is taste bound to the tongue. The body is not bound to the tangible, neither is the tangible bound to the body. The mind is not bound to thought, neither is thought bound to the mind." The great *arahant Sāriputta* then said, "Had they been bonded, *Nibbāna* would not be possible through this noble eight-fold path. He then presented a wonderful explanation thus: if there is a length of rope with a white cow at one end and a black cow at the other end. The black cow and the white cow are still quite separate and distinguishable from each other. Where the white cow goes, the black cow goes. Where the black cow goes, the white cow goes. One may say, the white cow goes because of the black cow or one may say the black cow goes because of the white cow. The truth is they both go because of the rope.

What you need to understand from this story is when the rope is broken both cows go free. Likewise the Buddha teaches it is the bondage of desire that holds the internal sense base and the external object together. The person who has such bonds looks at the working of his sense bases with clear mindfulness. Then, he sees the impermanence of the organ called eye. He also sees the impermanence of the form. He realizes the eye exists dependent on *nāma-rūpa* or mentality and materiality. Some believe the eye is composed of just the four great elements. If this were so, it would be possible to create an artificial eye and create a consciousness within that artificial eye. That is

impossible. As the eye arises dependent on mentality and materiality, it is also based on all the characteristics of mentality and materiality. This is true for the other five sense bases as well. That is why in the explanation of the dependent co-arising, the Buddha taught "*Nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatam*," with the arising of mentality and materiality, six sense bases arise.

When contemplating with clear mindfulness the eye that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, the meditator sees the impermanence of the eye. When contemplating with clear mindfulness the ear that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, he sees the impermanence of the ear. When contemplating with clear mindfulness the nose that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, he sees the impermanence of the nose. When contemplating with clear mindfulness, the tongue that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, he sees the impermanence of the tongue. When contemplating with clear mindfulness the body that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, he sees the impermanence of the body. When contemplating with clear mindfulness the mind that arises dependent on mentality and materiality, he sees the impermanence of the mind. He understands that as the mentality and materiality are impermanent, the six sense bases too are impermanent.

In the same way, he understands that forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and thoughts are all impermanent. When contemplating in this manner, if there arises a fetter due to the impermanent eye and the impermanent form, he realizes the nature of the fetter, how it arises and how it ceases. In this manner, he understands the impermanent nature of the six sense bases.

You are now aware these six sense bases are impermanent. Why are they impermanent? They are impermanent because they arise dependent on mentality and materiality, which, too are impermanent.

In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, or the connected discourses of the Buddha, there is a chapter named *Okkanti* chapter. *Okkanti* means being emerged. Here, the emergence is in the *Dhamma* or the phenomenon of the nature. If you want to be emerged in the path to ultimate freedom, the Noble Eightfold Path, you first need *saddhā* or confidence. Without *saddhā* this ultimate freedom is not possible.

When you understand this teaching about reality was taught by the Buddha, you develop confidence in that *Dhamma* as follows: the eye which arises dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent; the ear which arises dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent; the nose which arises dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent; the tongue which arises

dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent; the body which arises dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent, and the mind which arises dependent on mentality and materiality is impermanent.

Similarly, you place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles, and thoughts are impermanent. You also place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness are also impermanent.

Similarly, you place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: eye contact, which is the union of the eye, form, and the eye consciousness, is impermanent. Likewise, the ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact, and mind contact are also impermanent. You establish your confidence in this manner and investigate further with wise consideration.

Then you place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: the feelings born from these six types of contact are impermanent. You also place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: the perception of the form, the sound, the odour, the taste, the tangible, and thought are all impermanent, too.

You place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: volitions based on perceived forms are impermanent, volitions based on the perceived sounds are impermanent, volitions based on the perceived smells are impermanent, volitions based on perceived tastes are impermanent, volitions based on perceived tangibles are impermanent, and volitions based on perceived thoughts are impermanent.

You place confidence in the *Dhamma* as follows: the desires caused by this process within me are also impermanent. If you think of something you liked very much a few years ago, which you are quite indifferent to now, you can then see the truth of this. Similarly, things you dislike as children could now be valued highly. Who knows what your preferences will be in the future? In the future, you will have to relinquish many things you treasure now. So, you know that desires are very transient and impermanent.

The moment you establish confidence within yourself about the impermanence of the impermanent factors, you have emerged into the Noble Eightfold Path. A disciple who has emerged into the Noble Eightfold Path is known as "*saddhānusārī*" or the disciple with confidence. The Buddha teaches that the *saddhānusārī* disciple uses his confidence as a foundation to investigate this process

further. He is then known as "*dhammānusārī*" or a disciple who has partially realized the nature of things but has not yet attained the state of stream enterer. Both *saddhānusārī* disciples and *dhammānusārī* disciples are on the fruit of stream entry. If one continues to tread this path further with diligence, he will become a stream enterer. At some point on his journey, such a person will realize "*Yam kiṃci samudaya dhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha dhammaṃ*," all things that arise due to causes will cease to be once the causes cease to exist, thereby, realizing the impermanent nature of things. This realization arises with the direct goal of realizing the four noble truths. Such a disciple has the *sammāditṭhi* or right view. Such a disciple has recognized the Noble Eightfold Path and is immersed in the path. He is called a noble disciple who is accomplished in view, accomplished in vision, who has arrived at this perfect *Dhamma*, who sees this perfect *Dhamma*, who possesses a trainee's knowledge, a trainee's true knowledge, who has entered the stream of the *Dhamma*, a noble one with penetrative wisdom, one who stands squarely before the door to *Nibbāna*.

When the disciple is mindful of the six sense bases in this meditation, he involuntarily becomes more in command of his senses. That is how he remains unbound to external objects. The moment a fetter is created, the *paticcasamuppādo* or dependent co-arising comes into effect. When the six sense bases arise, contact arises. When contact arises, feeling arises. When feeling arises, craving arises. When craving arises, clinging arises. When clinging arises, formation of *kamma* to be ripened arises. Due to the arranging of *karma*, one takes rebirth. Through this meditation, he will realize how this dependent co-arising arises from the six sense bases. So, he meditates in an effort to prevent bonds, fetters, and defilements from forming by cultivating mindfulness on these sense bases.

When he recognizes these impermanent sense bases within himself, he realizes that other beings, too, have impermanent sense bases. Outside of him, whatever forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles, and thoughts exist, he understands that they are impermanent and it is the same for him and for others, too. Therefore, he remains detached. "*Yathā ca uppannassa saṃyojanassa pahānaṃ hoti taṃca pajānāti*," as he investigates this with insight, when existing fetters are finally destroyed, he understands how that happens. This is done by *yonisomanasikāro* or investigation of this process using wise consideration, as you just learned. It is by applying *yonisomanasikāro* that will enable you to develop the ability to see the true nature of things. Investigating with wise considerations means investigating the way the Buddha taught us. It is through seeing correctly that you can destroy these fetters that bind you to continued existence. If you do not do this, you continue to be attached.

"Rūpaṃ disvā satimuttā," when you perceive a form, you are confounded by it; *"Piya nimittarūpaṃ manasikaroto,"* you build on your imagination and embark on mental journey. You begin to grasp this form and imagine mental formations. Your mind becomes immersed in images and mental adventures. *"Sāratta citto vedeti,"* you keep enjoying signs and features of the visual object with an attached mind. *"Taṃca ajjhosāya tiṭṭhati,"* the mind gets established in the object. *"Tassa vaddhamānā vedanā anekā rūpa sambhavā,"* this creates many sensations based on this form. Your mind becomes plagued by desire and exertion. You are engaged in unwise consideration. In this way, you hold suffering and push away the ultimate freedom of *Nibbāna*. Your usual lifestyle is geared to take you away from this ultimate freedom. Continuing down this mundane road and wishing or hoping for freedom is futile. Therefore, if you want to head for the ultimate freedom, it is imperative you develop mindfulness on the impermanence of these six sense bases. When mindfulness on the impermanence of these six sense bases is developed and the arising and the cessation of the sense bases are seen as impermanent, there will be no perceiving of any of the sense bases as me, mine, or under my control.

You would only consider a course of action that would free you from the eye; a course of action that would free you from the ear; a course of action that would free you from the nose; a course of action that would free you from the tongue; a course of action that would free you from the body; a course of action, which would free you from the mind. This course of action would free you from this world and this course of action would free you from the next world and everything else. At that point, the disciple would comprehensively understand the Buddha's teachings.

Contemplation of the Sense Bases

Eye:

Because the eye arises due to causes and changes quickly, the eye is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Eye is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because forms arise due to causes and change quickly, forms are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Forms are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because eye consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Eye consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of eye, form, and eye consciousness arises due to causes and change quickly, eye contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Eye contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from eye contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from eye contact is not me, not mine, or not myself.

Because the perception of form arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. perception of form is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding form arise due to causes and change quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding form are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for forms arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Desire for forms is not me, not mine, not myself.

Ear:

Because the ear arises due to causes and changes quickly, the ear is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The ear is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because sounds arise due to causes and change quickly, sounds are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Sounds are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because sound consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Sound consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of ear, sound, and ear consciousness arises due to causes and change quickly, ear contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Ear contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from ear contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from ear contact is not me, not mine, or not myself.

Because the perception of sound arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Perception of sound is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding sound arise due to causes and change quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding sounds are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for sound arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Desire for sounds is not me, not mine, not myself.

Nose:

Because the nose arises due to causes and changes quickly, the nose is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The nose is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because smells arise due to causes and change quickly, smells are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Smells are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because nose consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Nose consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of nose, smells, and nose consciousness arise due to causes and change quickly, nose contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Nose contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from nose contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from nose contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the perception of smells arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Perception of smells is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding smells arise due to causes and change quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding smells are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for smells arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. desire for smells is not me, not mine, not myself.

Tongue:

Because the tongue arises due to causes and changes quickly, the tongue is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The tongue is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because tastes arise due to causes and change quickly, tastes are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Tastes are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because tongue consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Tongue consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of tongue, taste, and tongue consciousness arises due to causes and change quickly, tongue contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Tongue contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from tongue contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from tongue contact is not me, not mine, or not myself.

Because the perception of taste arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Perception of taste is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding taste arise due to causes and change quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding taste are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for taste arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Desire for taste is not me, not mine, not myself.

Body:

Because the body arises due to causes and changes quickly, the body is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The body is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because tangibles arise due to causes and change quickly, tangibles are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Tangibles are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because body consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Body consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of body, tangibles, and body consciousness arises due to causes and change quickly, body contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Body contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from body contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from body contact is not me, not mine, or not myself.

Because the perception of tangibles arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Perception of tangibles is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding tangibles arise due to causes and change quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding tangibles are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for tangibles arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Desire for tangibles is not me, not mine, not myself.

Mind:

Because the mind arises due to causes and changes quickly, the mind is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Mind is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because thoughts arise due to causes and change quickly, thoughts are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Thoughts are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because mind consciousness arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Mind consciousness is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the union of mind, thought, and mind consciousness arises due to causes and change quickly, mind contact is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Mind contact is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because feeling born from mind contact arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. The feeling born from mind contact is not me, not mine, or not myself.

Because the perception of thought arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Perception of thought is not me, not mine, not myself.

Because volitions regarding thought arise due to causes and changes quickly, they are impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Volitions regarding thought are not me, not mine, not myself.

Because the desire for forms arises due to causes and changes quickly, it is impermanent, impermanent, impermanent. Desire for forms is not me, not mine, not myself.

13. Seven Aids to Enlightenment

(In the Four Establishments of Mindfulness)

In this chapter, you will learn the last section of *Dhammānupassanā* or the mindfulness of the way things are in the *Satipatṭhāna sutta* as taught by the Buddha. This comprises the seven factors of enlightenment, the *satta bojjhaṅgas*. *Bojjhaṅgas* are the factors that aid to comprehend the Four Noble Truths. There are seven of these:

1. "*Sati*" or mindfulness.
2. "*Dhammavicaya*" or investigation of the way things are.
3. "*Viriya*" or effort.
4. "*Pīti*" or rapture.
5. "*Passaddhi*" or tranquility.
6. "*Samādhi*" or concentration.
7. "*Upekkhā*" or equanimity.

All these can be cultivated within you through cultivation of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. It is only through the cultivation of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness that the seven factors of enlightenment can be cultivated within you. These seven factors cannot grow within you through wishing or prayer. If it were possible, then there would be no need for the appearance of Buddhas into this world; there would be no need to listen to the *Dhamma*. Since the Buddha's teachings are extremely essential for future generations to realize the life, liberated monks preserved this *Dhamma* with utmost dedication.

When the Buddha's life ended, liberated monks each took a section of the *Dhamma* and organized it for posterity. The section of the Long Discourses was memorized by the student monks of liberated monk Ānanda. The section of the Middle Discourses was memorized by the student monks of liberated monk Sāriputta. The section of the Connected Discourses was memorized by the student monks of liberated monk Kassapa. The section of the Numerical Discourses was memorized by the student monks of liberated monk Anuruddha. By doing so, it was passed down through generations of

dedicated *Sangha*. This *Dhamma*, therefore, is still in a very pure form and must be studied in order to gain the knowledge, which would then lead to profound understanding of the way things really are.

There is no practical methodology or experience that leads to ultimate freedom that does not include the *Dhamma*. If there is some truth you comprehend, it is in the *Dhamma*. Whatever is in the *Dhamma* is what you would understand. True realization and the *Dhamma* are the same. Therefore, when one practices the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, it is the seven factors of enlightenment they realize. You should cultivate the four establishments of mindfulness with the aim of developing the seven factors of enlightenment. Then, the factors needed to understand the Four Noble Truths will develop in you. This course of action is very clear, straightforward, and there are no contradictions or unclear instructions.

Sati sambojjhamāṅga is the first factor of enlightenment. This is the four establishments of mindfulness. When the Four Establishments of Mindfulness lead to the realization of the Four Noble Truths, it is called *sati sambojjhamāṅga*. When this factor is developed within you, you will know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

The second factor, *Dhammavicaya sambojjhamāṅga* is the result of investigation of the Buddha's teachings. This is done by seeing impermanence as impermanent; seeing suffering as suffering; seeing things beyond our control as things beyond our control; as well as comprehending the nature of dependent co-arising. When you constantly meditate on these with mindfulness, you will develop *Dhammavicaya sambojjhamāṅga* as a factor leading to the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. When this factor is developed within you, you will know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

The third factor is "*Viriya*" or effort. That means you will make: (1) the effort to eradicate any unwholesome actions that have arisen, (2) the effort to prevent unwholesome actions that have not yet arisen, (3) the effort to develop wholesome actions that have arisen, and (4) the effort to cultivate wholesome actions that have not yet arisen. Unwholesome actions are: desire, anger, envy, revenge, retaliation, resentment, quarrelling, and disobedience. As a meditator, you are aware when these arise within you. The effort you make to eradicate these if they arise in you and the effort you make to prevent these from arising is known as *virīya sambojjhamāṅga*.

Wholesome actions are renunciation, loving kindness, compassion, virtue, tranquil concentration, and wisdom. As a meditator, you are aware when these have not yet arisen in you. The effort you make to cultivate these when they arise in you is *Viriya saṁbojjhaṁgo*. All this effort is made with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths as the goal. When this factor is developed within you, you will know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped in you, you should know that with continued diligence you can develop it. When your *Viriya* is developed in this way with unwholesome actions becoming subdued and wholesome actions becoming enhanced, you will have established *virīya saṁbojjhaṁgo*, or the enlightenment factor of effort.

In this way, when wholesome actions increase and unwholesome actions decrease, the meditator's mind is filled with a spiritual rapture, or *pīti*. You develop this rapture thus, "I am subduing unwholesome actions; I am cultivating wholesome actions." This exultation is a result of the effort from within you. There are two main factors that help to enhance this *Dhamma* lifestyle: the first is humility and the next is dedication. Generally, when we follow the *Dhamma* lifestyle we should practice humility. We must never consider ourselves above others because we follow this path. With humility, we can state that this cause of action is geared to free us from all fetters and with humility step onto the path.

This rapture is geared towards the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. When this factor is developed within you, you will know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

When this rapture grows within you, you develop a sense of physical and mental lightness or tranquility. This lightness is called *kāyaPassaddhi* and *cittapassaddhi*. *Passaddhi* means lightness or calmness of the body and the mind, which is produced by the rapture. This is the fifth factor of enlightenment, *passaddhi saṁbojjhaṁgo*, or tranquility. This tranquility is geared towards the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. When this factor is developed within you, you would know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

When this tranquility grows within you, it leads to concentration. That is the sixth factor of enlightenment. Concentration means the unification of mind on a wholesome object. Without this concentration, there can be no comprehensive understanding of the Four Noble Truths. Liberated ones and non-returners possessed higher levels of concentration. Even once-returners and stream-enterers possess a certain level of concentration. In general, concentration must be developed up to the fourth

jhāna at the stage of non-returning. Concentration of the liberated ones is fully developed. This factor is connected to meditation. Concentration is attaining the first *jhāna*, *second jhāna*, *third jhāna*, and the *fourth jhāna*. This concentration is geared towards the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. When this factor is developed within you, you will know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

When the meditator develops this concentration profoundly, and he sees this as a factor of the Four Noble Truths, he stops clinging to this concentration. Instead of grasping this state of concentration, he begins to see in it too the ever changing five aggregates of clinging. He sees the impermanence of this state of concentration. At this point, his mind reaches equanimity. This is the seventh factor of enlightenment. At this stage, he does not grab this equanimity either. He is not deceived by this equanimity. This equanimity is developed with an aim towards the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths.

What then are the Four Noble Truths? There is a noble truth called suffering. This needs to be comprehensively understood. This suffering is formed because we cling to it. This clinging and craving to suffering is the noble truth of the cause of suffering. This should be eradicated. When clinging and craving are eradicated, he is free from suffering. This freedom is called the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. This truth needs to be realized. The clinging and craving to suffering are not automatically eradicated. It is done by following a certain cause of actions, the Noble Eightfold Path. This path is the fourth noble truth, the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This has to be practiced and developed.

When this factor of equanimity is developed within you, you would know it with mindfulness. When this factor is undeveloped within you, you should know that too and continue with diligence to develop it.

This meditation on the *bojjhaṅgās* is cultivating within you the seven factors geared towards enlightenment. In summary, the seven factors of enlightenment are, "*Sati*" or mindfulness; "*Dhammavicaya*" or investigation of the *Dhamma*; "*Viriya*" or effort; "*Pīti*" or rapture; "*Passaddhi*" or tranquility; "*Samādhi*" or concentration; and "*Upekkhā*" or equanimity. These seven *bojjhaṅgās* are developed profoundly within you and it would lead you to inner purity. For this, it is imperative that we practice the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. Now, it is extremely clear that the Buddha's teachings show us the perfect way to realizing the true nature of life.

14. Anussati Meditations

(Reflections)

14.1 Buddhanussati Meditation

In the following sections, we will explain the recollection meditations or *Anussati bhāvanā*. *Anussati bhāvanā* is practiced on several themes. The themes are ***Buddhānussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on the qualities of the Buddha; ***Dhammanussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on the qualities of the Dhamma; ***Sanghānussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on the qualities of community of Noble Monks; ***Sīlānussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on one's own virtue; ***Chagānussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on one's own generosity; ***Devatānussati bhāvanā*** or meditation on heavenly beings, and ***Maranānussati*** or meditation on death. In the following sections, we will discuss each of these meditation techniques in detail.

In *Buddhānussati* meditation, one recollects the **marvellous and unsurpassed qualities of the Buddha**. The Gautama Buddha was the greatest sage who lived on the earth and taught the *Dhamma*, which he himself had realized without anyone's guidance, with compassion to beings, in particular for humans and *gods*, in order to help them understanding the reality of the life. If one recollects the qualities of the Buddha, even for a moment, one is practising *Buddhānussati* meditation. Each moment one recollects the qualities of the Buddha, one purifies, tranquilizes, and settles his mind. By practicing *Buddhānussati* meditation, one begins a new life without even knowing it.

The Buddha had a heart free from all defilements. His mind was free from passion. The Buddha was not furious about anything at all; he was free from hatred. The Buddha was not deceived or charmed by the illusions of the world as he was free from delusion. Therefore, the Buddha is an *arahant*. By thinking about incomparable qualities of the Buddha, you can purify your mind. The Buddha did not commit immoral acts even in secret. As he was free from all defilements, he was free from all suffering. The Buddha realized the Four Noble Truths without any guidance of a teacher. The Buddha fully realized the entire world system and all kinds of living beings in it, as well as their passing away and reappearing. By showing the direct and the right path to end suffering, which is the Noble Eightfold Path, he became the perfect and most capable teacher of gods and humans. In this way, whenever you can recollect the qualities of the Buddha, you think about the supreme sage, the Buddha who introduced the golden era to the world.

In the instant you start to recollect the qualities of the Buddha, from that very moment on, your mind starts to be free from defilements and calms down. A Buddha is born into this world very rarely. You can recognise the Buddha only if you can develop your wisdom. That wisdom must be gained through listening to the Buddha's teachings. You can recognise the Buddha through that *Dhamma*, based on your wise consideration.

The Buddha's purity, marvellous wisdom, great compassion, unsurpassed concentration, and extraordinary energy, all of these incomparable qualities, will illuminate your world.

You can recollect on the qualities of the Buddha, thinking about the meanings of *Araham* quality, *Sammā Sambuddho* quality, *Vijācarana Saṁpanno* quality, *Sugato* quality, *Lokavīdu* quality, *Annutaro Purisadamma Sārathi* quality, *Satthā Devamanusānam* quality, *Buddho* quality, and *Bhagavā* quality. Be familiar with this contemplation by constantly practicing it. This is a very beneficial contemplation.

Human life is like a stream of water that flows; that is being dried out gradually. As a human being, you have the rare opportunity to develop wisdom before you lose human life, by practicing the *Buddhānussati* meditation.

***Buddhānussati* Meditation**

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, was free from all defilements.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not engage in unwholesome acts, even in secret.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, escaped from all evil.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, was worthy of accepting material and spiritual offerings.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by forms seen with the eyes; He eradicated desire for all forms.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by sounds heard with the ears; He eradicated desire for all sounds.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by odours smelled by the nose; He eradicated desire for all odours.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by tastes sensed by the tongue; He eradicated desire for all tastes.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by sensations felt by the body; He eradicated desire for all bodily sensations.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, did not cling to, was not repelled by, and was not deceived by thoughts cognized by the mind; He eradicated desire for all thoughts.

Because of these great qualities, my great teacher, Supreme Buddha is an *Arahant*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, realized "suffering", as the First noble truth, without having guidance from a teacher.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, realized "the origin of suffering", as the Second noble truth, without having guidance from a teacher.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, realized "the cessation of suffering", as the Third noble truth, without having guidance from a teacher.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, realized "the path leading to cessation of suffering", as the Fourth noble truth, without having guidance from a teacher.

Supreme Buddha realized each Noble Truth in three steps making twelve aspects; these steps are, knowledge of truth (*sacca ñāna*), knowledge of what needs to be done (*kruttya ñāna*), and knowledge of fulfillment of what needs to be done (*kruttak ñāna*).

Because of his great achievement my great teacher, Supreme Buddha is *Sammā Sambuddho*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, possessed supernatural powers; He walked in the sky, walked on water, and passed through solid objects.

In this way, my great teacher, Supreme Buddha possessed the knowledge of infinite supernatural powers (*iddhivida ñāna*).

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, acquired the divine eye (*dibba cakkhu ñāna*) which enabled him to see things from any distance.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, acquired the divine ear (*dibba sota ñāna*) which enabled him to listen to sounds from any distance.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, acquired the ability to recollect past lives of beings (*pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna*).

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, acquired the ability to see passing away and arising of beings based on actions (*cutūpapāta ñāna*).

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, acquired the knowledge of eradicating all hidden defilements (*āsavakkhaya ñāna*).

Because of his great knowledge, because of his great virtue, and because of his great concentration, my great teacher, Supreme Buddha is *Vijjācarana Saṁpanno*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, discovered the excellent path to *Nibbāna*, and by following it, reached the supreme bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Because of his great discovery, my great teacher, supreme Buddha is *Sugato*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, understood completely all brahma worlds, all divine worlds, the human world, the ghost world, and the four hells; He escaped from these worlds.

Because of his great comprehension, my great teacher, supreme Buddha is *Lokavidu*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, tamed arrogant divine beings and humans using his superhuman abilities.

The Buddha tamed and directed them to *Nibbāna* with his supernatural powers (*iddhi pātihāriyā*), reading their minds (*ādesanā pātihāriyā*) and preaching *Dhamma* (*anusāsanā pātihāriyā*).

Because of his great talent in taming beings, my great teacher, supreme Buddha is *Anuttaro Purisa Dammasarathi*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, showed the path to cross over the cycle of rebirth and attain *Nibbāna* to wise divine beings and wise humans.

Because He guided gods and humans to *Nibbāna*, my great teacher, supreme Buddha is *Satthā Devamanussanam*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, taught the Four Noble Truths clearly, pleasantly, and meaningfully using clear words and clear definitions helping others realize *Dhamma*.

Because He taught *Dhamma* profoundly, my great teacher, supreme Buddha is *Buddho*.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, was blessed with all of these noble qualities.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, was blessed with the brightest wisdom that surpasses the sun and moon.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, was blessed with a heart full of limitless compassion.

Because of his great fortune, Supreme Buddha is *Bhagavā*.

My great teacher, supreme Buddha, possessed extraordinary qualities.

I pay homage to my great teacher, Supreme Buddha, who possessed incomparable wisdom and great compassion.

14.2 Dhammanussati Meditation

In this section, we will discuss *Dhammānussati bhāvanā* or recollection on the qualities of the *Dhamma*.

If this world is a dry desert, the *Dhamma* proclaimed by the supreme Buddha is a stream of water that flows through the desert. By listening to *Dhamma*, people suffering from sorrow and grief became purified and peaceful. Because of the power of the *Dhamma*, Angulimāla and others who had cruel mindsets and evil habits were transformed into noble ones with extremely kind hearts. The helpless lady Patācārā, who was once out of her mind and went astray, later became a virtuous and courageous *arahant* nun because of the power of the *Dhamma*. The *Dhamma*, taught by the Buddha, can appease your mind. The Four Noble Truths is the essence of the teachings of the Buddha. You are fortunate if you hear, think, or contemplate the Four Noble Truths in the morning as waking up; you are among the few who contemplate this rare phenomenon.

The Buddha is born into the world to achieve one goal, just one. That only goal is to disclose the Four Noble Truths. By realizing the Four Noble Truths, beings who suffer develop joy; beings who wander through in the cycle of rebirth escape from the plane of misery and reach the blissful liberation of *Nibbāna*. Therefore, the realization of the Four Noble Truths is a miracle of mind, an intellectual transformation. The miracle ensues only through the knowledge of *Dhamma* expounded by the Buddha.

Since the Four Noble Truths are well expounded by the Buddha, it is *Swakkhāto*. The *Dhamma* is *Sanditṭhiko* since the *Dhamma* can be realized in this very life. The *Dhamma* is *Akālika* as it can be realized at any time. It is called *Ehipassiko* because anyone can be asked to "come and see (investigate) this *Dhamma*". Because, *Dhamma* needs to be understood and investigated within oneself, it is *Opanyko*. As any wise person can realize this *Dhamma* through wise consideration, it is known as *Paccattam Vēditabbo Viññuhi*. The contemplation of the great qualities of *Dhamma*, as listed above, is *Dhammānussati* meditation. *Dhammānussati* meditation is possible only if you know the teachings of the Buddha well enough. The message of *Dhamma* is pleasant and peaceful; one cannot obtain the same calmness by engaging in mundane tasks such as watching movies and television, reading books,

novels and newspapers, or listening to music and comedy. The mundane sensual pleasures cannot eliminate sorrow and pain you experience.

When you listen to the teachings of the Buddha, when you retain *Dhamma*, when you investigate *Dhamma* within your life, and when you examine the world through *Dhamma*, the serene transformation will happen within you. You will be happy and peaceful. Therefore, determine to contemplate *Dhammānussati*, starting from this very moment; at least for a moment each day.

***Dhammānussati* Meditation**

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, well proclaimed the noble *Dhamma*.

The beginning of that exalted *Dhamma* is excellent because it develops virtue.

The middle of that exalted *Dhamma* is excellent because it develops concentration.

The end of that exalted *Dhamma* is excellent because it develops wisdom.

My great teacher, Supreme Buddha, taught *Dhamma* using clear words and clear definitions.

Through the *Dhamma*, my great teacher, Supreme Buddha, showed the path leading to wholesome and defilement-free life.

Because the *Dhamma* is well expounded by the Supreme Buddha, the *Dhamma* is *swākkhāto*.

I take refuge in the *Dhamma* that is *swākkhāto*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *swākkhāto*.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha with great compassion, can be realized in this very life.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, can be developed as virtue, concentration, and wisdom.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, can be realized by reaching the stage of stream entry (*sotapanno*), the stage of once returning (*sakadāgāmi*), the stage of non-returning (*anāgāmi*), and the stage of *arahant* (*Arahant*).

Because the *Dhamma* can be realized in this very life, the *Dhamma* is *sanditṭhiko*.

I take refuge in *Dhamma* that is *sanditṭhiko*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *sanditṭhiko*.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, can be realized at any time.

The *Dhamma* can be realized in any period of time because virtue, concentration, wisdom, the noble path, noble states, and the Four Noble Truths are eternal truths.

Because the *Dhamma* can be realized any time, whether in the past, present, or future, the *Dhamma* is *akāliko*.

I take refuge in *Dhamma* that is *akāliko*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *akāliko*.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, is open for investigation by gods and humans.

The *Dhamma* does not contain hidden sermons, hidden advices, or hidden discussions.

The *Dhamma* shines openly like the sun and the moon free from clouds.

Because the *Dhamma* is open for investigation, the *Dhamma* is *ehipassiko*.

I take refuge in *Dhamma* that is *ehipassiko*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *ehipassiko*.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, should be applied to one's life by listening, retaining, reciting, investigating wisely, and practicing it.

Because the *Dhamma* should be applied to one's life, the *Dhamma* is *opanyko*.

I take refuge in *Dhamma* that is *opanyko*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *opanyko*.

The *Dhamma*, proclaimed by the Supreme Buddha, can be realized by the wise who are honest and straight, irrespective of their race, cast, and clan.

Because the *Dhamma* can be realized by the wise, each for themselves, the *Dhamma* is *paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*.

I take refuge in *Dhamma* that is *paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*.

I pay homage to the *Dhamma* that is *paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*.

14.3 Sanghānussati Meditation

Sanghānussati bhāvanā is the recollection on the qualities of the community of noble monks. The greatest community in the world is the community of disciples of the Buddha. When a Buddha is born into this world and preaches the *Dhamma*, wise humans listen to that *Dhamma*; follow, investigate, and experience *Dhamma* for themselves. They develop virtue, concentration, and wisdom leading to the realization of the Four Noble Truths. The first critical step in this path is the attainment of right view or *sammā ditṭhi*. Only the disciples of the Buddha, namely, monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers are endowed with *right view*. Having developed *right view*, the disciples follow the Noble Eightfold Path and attain the stage of stream entry. They achieve the initial knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. Stream-enterers will attain *Nibbāna* within seven lives at the most. By practicing the Noble Eightfold Path further, these disciples attain the stage of once-returning; they are born only once and attain *Nibbāna*. By practicing the Noble Eightfold Path further, these disciples attain the stage of non-returning; they are born in a *brahma* world and attain *Nibbāna*. The disciples who attain the stage of *arahantship* will attain final extinguishing in this very life, at the completion of their life-span. There is no more rebirth for them. These disciples exist only in the dispensation of a Buddha. Therefore, the Buddha said, "monks, you may cry a lion's roar (say fearlessly) that the first *recluse* (stream enterer), second *recluse* (once returner), third *recluse* (non-returner), and the fourth *recluse* (arahant) are only seen in a dispensation of the Buddha."

The community of the disciples of the Buddha is unsurpassable in their virtue among various groups of people who practice various teachings. Because these disciples follow the path leading to the eradication of passion, hatred, and delusion, and attainment of *Nibbāna*, the community of noble disciples is known as "*supatipanno*". Since they follow the straight path to *Nibbāna*, which is the Noble Eightfold Path, the community of noble disciples is "*ujupatipanno*". The community of noble disciples is called "*ñāyapatipanno*" since they follow the path for the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Because the community of noble disciples teaches *Dhamma* to gods and humans encouraging them to understand the Four Noble Truths, the community of noble monks is "*sāmīcipatipanno*". Those disciples of the Buddha who follow the Noble Eightfold Path are identified as eight types of individuals and four pairs of persons. (They are: those who are practicing the path to stream-entry and those who have attained the stage of stream-entry; those who are practicing the path to once returning and those who have attained the stage of once returning; those who are practicing the path to non-returning and those who have attained the stage of non-returning, and those who are practicing the path to *arahantship* and

those who have attained the stage of *arahantship*.) The Buddha said that these disciples are worthy of gifts brought from afar; they are worthy of hospitality; they are worthy of offerings given for merit; and they are worthy of reverential salutation by others. The disciples of the Buddha who possess these noble qualities are supreme among worldly beings and are the unsurpassed field of merit. In this way, you can place confidence in the community of noble disciples of the Buddha.

In order to do *sanghānussati* meditation, you need to recollect the noble qualities of the community of disciples who dedicate their lives whole heartedly aspiring utmost purity. By frequently recollecting the qualities of *the community of noble disciples* may you develop confidence in the noble disciples and become a true disciple of the Buddha with the intention of realizing of the Four Noble Truths.

Sanghānussati Meditation

The noble disciples of the Buddha have entered the path of cultivating virtue, concentration, and wisdom in order to eradicate passion, hatred, and delusion.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *supatipanno*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *supatipanno*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha who is *supatipanno*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha follow the straight path to *Nibbāna*, the Noble Eightfold Path.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *ujupatipanno*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *ujupatipanno*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *ujupatipanno*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha follow the path leading to realization of the Four Noble Truths.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *ñāyapatipanno*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *ñāyapatipanno*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *ñāyapatipanno*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha preach the *Dhamma* and propagate it in the world with great reverence to *Dhamma*.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *sāmīcipatipanno*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *sāmīcipatipanno*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *sāṃīcipatipanno*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha are four pairs of persons and eight types of individuals. They consist of those who are in the path and those who reached the stage of stream entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship.

I take refuge in the noble disciples who are four pairs of persons and eight types of individuals.

I pay homage to the noble disciples who are four pairs of persons and eight types of individuals.

The noble disciples of the Buddha, who are on the path and attained the stages of enlightenment, are worthy of offerings of robes, food and drinks, dwellings, and medicine prepared and brought from afar.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *āhuneīyo*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *āhuneīyo*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *āhuneīyo*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha, who are on the path and attained the stages of enlightenment, are worthy of offerings of robes, food and drink, dwellings, and medicine when they arrive as guests.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *pāhuneīyo*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *pāhuneīyo*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *pāhuneīyo*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha, who are on the path and attained the stages of enlightenment, are worthy of offerings of robes, food and drink, dwellings, and medicine given by those aspiring for merit.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *dakkhineīyo*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *dakkhineīyo*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *dakkhineīyo*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha, who are on the path and have attained the stages of enlightenment, are worthy of reverential worship by gods and humans.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *añjalikaraneīyo*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *añjalikaraneīyo*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *añjalikaraneīyo*.

The noble disciples of the Buddha, who are on the path and have attained the stages of enlightenment, are the unsurpassed field of merit that helps gods and humans acquire merit.

Therefore, the community of disciples of the Buddha is *anuttaram puññakkhettaṃ lokassāti*.

I take refuge in the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *anuttaram puññakkhettaṃ lokassāti*.

I pay homage to the community of disciples of the Buddha that is *anuttaram puññakkhettaṃ lokassāti*.

14.4 Sīlānussati Meditation

We will discuss another noble quality that must be developed by a noble disciple who has taken refuge in the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. In contemplation of virtue, also known as "*sīlānussati bhāvanā*", one investigates on one's own virtue developed through disciplining bodily and verbal actions. Having seen the virtue, one exalts and enjoys it. By practicing *sīlānussati*, one gets the opportunity to examine one's strengths and weaknesses with respect to observing the precepts or *sīla*.

A disciple wakes up in the morning and determines to watch bodily actions and verbal actions mindfully, throughout the day and night, to avoid breaking precepts. At the end of the day, by contemplating on the day's endurance pertaining to precepts, one would be happy thinking, "Today, I didn't use my body to commit any transgression; I did not kill or hurt living beings; I did not take what was not given; I did not engage in sexual misconduct; and I did not take intoxicants." Also, the person would be happy thinking, "Today, I did not deceive others with lies; I did not hurt others with harsh words; I did not speak malicious words to break relationships or to hurt others; and I did not speak meaningless idle words to waste time of others and mine." In this way, one will be glad about one's virtue and will clearly identify any blemishes in virtue as seeing impurity on a clean white cloth. Any failure to comply with precepts shall be identified; broken precepts shall be reinstated with a pledge to comply with them from that moment onwards. In this manner, a disciple develops his or her virtue through contemplation.

A disciple cultivates virtue by thinking, "I do not engage in bodily misconduct; I do not engage in verbal misconduct; I am a person committed to observe precepts; and I develop peace and calmness in me." In this manner, gradually, one becomes virtuous, and consequently, others will trust his words and deeds. No society accepts indecent people, corrupted people, liars, or criminals. By investigating one's

own virtue and by contemplating on virtue, a person can uplift bodily and verbal conduct. This process of recollecting one's virtue is known as *sīlānussati*. The disciples of the Buddha frequently practice *sīlānussati*. Recollection on virtue develops peace and eliminates remorse, confusion, and restlessness of mind. Tranquility of mind, thus acquired, will establish concentration (*samādhi*). One easily develops concentration (*samādhi*) through *sīlānussati*, which is a noble gain. We must strive to cultivate *sīlānussati* as the Buddha has taught.

Sīlānussati Meditation

My great teacher, the Supreme Buddha, is virtuous.

The Supreme Buddha disciplined his body and his speech.

The Supreme Buddha led a life free from all defilements.

The Supreme Buddha mindfully investigated and eradicated all defilements of the body.

The Supreme Buddha mindfully investigated and eradicated all defilements of speech.

The Supreme Buddha avoided wrong livelihood and practiced right livelihood.

The Supreme Buddha fulfilled the noble virtue.

Having attained noble virtue, the Supreme Buddha taught about virtue with great compassion for gods and humans.

I will practice virtue as instructed by the Supreme Buddha.

I will practice virtue as a noble disciple of the Supreme Buddha with the intention of realizing the Four Noble Truths.

With the intention of attaining *Nibbāna*, I observe the precept of abstaining from killing beings.

Mindfully, I strive to observe the precept of abstaining from killing beings.

I practice loving kindness to all beings. I do not intentionally hurt beings, large or small.

Because I observe the precept of abstaining from killing beings, I am free from fear.

May all beings be free from fear! May all beings live happily!

I observe the precept of abstaining from killing beings and I encourage others to observe the precept of abstaining from killing beings. In doing so, I experience joy.

This joy will help with the concentration of my mind.

With the intention of attaining *Nibbāna*, I observe the precept of abstaining from taking what is not given.

Mindfully, I strive to observe the precept of abstaining from taking what is not given.

By any means and anywhere, with a mind to steal, I do not take what is not given, big or small.

As I adore my property, valuables, and money, others, too, adore their possessions.

I do not take what is not given by deceiving others through fraud or with a mind to steal.

Because I observe the precept of abstaining from taking what is not given, I am free from fear.

May all beings be free from fear! May all beings live happily!

I observe the precept of abstaining from taking what is not given and I encourage others to observe the precept of abstaining from what is not given. In doing so, I experience joy.

This joy will help with the concentration of my mind.

With the intention of attaining *Nibbāna*, I observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.

Mindfully, I strive to observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.

I do not engage in sexual activity with a man or woman who is not my husband or wife.

I am trustworthy to my spouse.

I am trustworthy to my children.

I develop unblemished conduct.

Because I observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct, I am free from fear.

May all beings be free from fear! May all beings live happily!

I observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct and I encourage others to observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct. In doing so, I experience joy.

This joy will help with the concentration of my mind.

With the intention of attaining *Nibbāna*, I observe the precept of abstaining from lying.

Mindfully, I strive to observe the precept of abstaining from lying.

By any means and anywhere, I do not deceive others by lying. I do not hurt others by lying.

I speak the truth. I stand for the truth.

I speak pleasant and kind words.

Because I observe the precept of abstaining from lying, I am free from fear.

May all beings be free from fear! May all beings live happily!

I observe the precept of abstaining from lying and I encourage others to observe the precept of abstaining from lying. In doing so, I experience joy.

This joy will help with the concentration of my mind.

With the intention of attaining *Nibbāna*, I observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants.

Mindfully, I strive to observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants.

I do not take any intoxicant that leads to impaired mental activity and unwholesome bodily and verbal actions.

I do not take any intoxicant as a way to celebrate my happiness or when I am depressed.

I abstain from taking intoxicants that leads to affliction, that harms my wealth and safety, and that causes diseases.

Because I observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants, I am free from fear.

May all beings be free from fear! May all beings live happily!

I observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants and I encourage others to observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants. In doing so, I experience joy.

This joy will help with the concentration of my mind.

These precepts that I observe diligently and mindfully delight me.

These precepts that I observe diligently and mindfully help my wellbeing here in this life and in future lives.

These precepts, that I observe diligently and mindfully, develop right effort in me.

These precepts, that I observe diligently and mindfully, develop right concentration in me.

These precepts, that I observe diligently and mindfully, will help me to realize the Four Noble Truths.

Mindfully, I maintain these precepts.

May practicing meditation on virtue develop joy, rapture, and concentration in me and help me to realize the Four Noble Truths!

(One may practice *sīlānussati* for eight-precept and ten-precept as well, by appropriately modifying the content.)

14.5 Cāgānussati Meditation

In this section, you will learn "*cāgānussati*" or reflection on one's generosity. A disciple of the Buddha, who practices the *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Sanghānussati*, and *Sīlānussati* and progresses in virtue, considers cultivating generosity and has the ability to donate with a happy mind. Greed is a defilement of the mind. Because of greed, because of thoughts of greed, one engages in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. Donation, with a happy mind, is wholesome and will not lead to unwholesome actions by body, mind, or speech.

One must overcome miserliness in order to be generous. It is comforting to be free from miserliness. It is a gain to be free from miserliness. It is gratifying to be free from miserliness. Miserliness is one's dislike to share what one possesses with another. By being miserly and stingy, one develops rude character; by being generous, one will develop gentleness; by being generous, one will be noble. The Buddha said that one must overcome greed and be ready to donate at anytime and anywhere. For example, possessing two mangoes, one is good and the other is spoilt, to be truly generous, a person must be able to donate the good mango keeping the inferior one. If someone asks for a garment, a generous person will donate a piece of cloth that makes the receiver happy or delight and will not give out rags. A person who donates the best he could, such as excellent food, excellent clothes, and excellent gifts will receive the best for himself. In order to cultivate noble generosity, one should always donate what one likes the most.

The disciples of the Supreme Buddha have excelled in generosity. When donating, a donor should not consider the social status or weaknesses of the receiver; instead, one should donate with an unblemished mind. A donor who recollects his or her own generosity will experience joy; will be joyous; both his body and mind will be relaxed and tranquil. The joy he thus develops will lead to concentration. Knowing thus, the disciples of the Buddha practice *cāgānussati*; excel in *cāgānussati*. You should strive to practice *cāgānussati* regularly as part of the daily meditation. Human lifespan is short; indeed very short. In this brief time, one should practice generosity, subdue stinginess, and develop wholesome qualities and a tranquil mind, which in turn will help with the realization of *Dhamma*.

Cāgānussati Meditation

I have taken refuge in the Supreme Buddha, I have taken refuge in the Supreme *Dhamma*, and I have taken refuge in the Supreme *Sangha*.

I practice generosity in order to realize the Four Noble Truths and end suffering.

I donate and offer alms food to monks and nuns using my hard earned and honestly earned money.

I am glad to see others using what I have donated.

I am glad to see that virtuous monks and nuns who strive to end suffering have gained physical strength and mental strength because of food and drink I have donated.

I am delighted thinking my contributions would help them in realizing the Four Noble Truths.

I am joyous to offer food and drinks to virtuous monks who are the unsurpassed field of merit as stated by the Supreme Buddha.

I am a person donating without miserliness.

I am a person who maintains a happy mind before giving, while giving, and after giving.

I am glad to donate the best I have.

Regularly, I donate and I am committed to donating.

I am glad to prepare alms food purely and with consideration.

I am glad to offer alms food that suits the needs of virtuous monks and nuns.

I do not wish for worldly gains by offering alms food and donations.

I do not wish for beauty by offering alms food and donations.

I do not wish for long life by offering alms food and donations.

I do not wish for honour and praise by offering alms food and donations.

I do not wish for recognition or status by offering alms food and donations.

I do not wish for heavenly pleasures after death by offering alms food and donations.

I offer alms food and donations only as a way for cleansing my mind.

I offer alms food and donations only for the development of my wisdom and to end suffering.

Because I offer alms food and donations, I am delighted. My body and mind are relaxed.

With a relaxed body and mind and with delight, I will develop concentration.

My donations and offerings will help me in the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

I know that one who trains in the Noble Eightfold Path practices generosity as a power of a trainee.

I am a trainee in the Noble Eightfold Path in order to end suffering.

In this way, I develop generosity as a power of a trainee.

May my generosity help me in the realization of the Four Noble Truths!

I will strive to eradicate passion, hatred and delusion.

By practicing generosity, I will attain arahantship.

Because I practice generosity I am delighted, my body and mind are relaxed.

With a relaxed body and mind and with delight, I will develop concentration.

My donations and offerings will help me in the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

The Supreme Buddha said generosity is the wealth of a noble disciple.

The generosity I practice is my wealth. In this way, I own noble wealth.

I will practice generosity by spending my wealth. I always grow with the wealth of generosity.

I will practice generosity until I attain arahantship.

I know generosity is the noble wealth I possess.

Generosity provides me protection and security.

I will practice generosity knowing it is a gain not a loss.

I will train for generosity in different ways.

I am glad to know generosity is a noble wealth.

Because I practice generosity I am delighted. My body and mind are relaxed.

With a relaxed body and mind and with delight, I will develop concentration.

My donations and offerings will help me in the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

14.6 Devatānussati Meditation

Next, we will introduce you to the *Devatānussati bhāvanā*, a new technique of meditation, which you have not known before. *Devatānussati bhāvanā* is the contemplation on gods, the heavenly beings. The Buddha teaches *Dhamma* not only to humans, but also to gods and *brahmās*. The Buddha is the teacher of *gods* and humans (*satthādevamanussānam*). Heavenly beings also listen to the Buddha's *Dhamma* and practice it. The Buddha is the knower of the world. With the Blessed One's divine eye, the Buddha saw many heavenly worlds. The Buddha said there are six heavenly worlds, namely, *Cātummahārājika*, *Tāvātimsa*, *Yāma*, *Tusita*, *Nimmānarati*, and *Paranimmita wasavatti*. In addition, there are *brahma* worlds. The Buddha said gods and *brahmās* were born in those worlds because they cultivated five noble qualities when they were in the human world. These qualities are:

Saddhā, which is the confidence in the Buddha

Sīla or virtue, which is disciplining body and speech

Suta, which is the knowledge of *Dhamma*

Cāga, which is generosity

Paññā is the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths

These are collectively known as *sekha bala*, or powers of a trainee. The humans who develop *sekha bala* will be reborn in the heavenly worlds, having ended their lifespan in the human world.

The disciple recollects thus: "Supreme Buddha, my teacher, made aware there are six heavenly worlds; they are, *Cātummahārājika*, *Tāvātimsa*, *Yāma*, *Tusita*, *Nimmānarati*, and *Paranimmita wasavatti*. Supreme Buddha, my teacher, made aware that heavenly beings possess five noble qualities; they are *Saddhā*, *Sīla*, *Suta*, *Cāga*, and *Paññā*. Supreme Buddha, my teacher, made aware that heavenly beings developed these noble qualities when they were in the human world. I also possess *Saddhā*, *Sīla*, *Suta*, *Cāga*, and *Paññā*, the noble qualities heavenly beings possess. Whatever noble qualities the gods have, I also have those noble qualities."

In this manner, one contemplates thinking one possesses the same noble qualities of gods. One's ability to see qualities of heavenly beings in himself or herself and one's ability to see one's noble qualities in *gods* is the *devatānussati* meditation. During the time of the Buddha, disciples practiced *devatānussati*. There is a recent myth that people say one cannot make merit in heavenly worlds, which is untrue. Many disciples of the Buddha were born in the heavenly worlds. You, too, have the

opportunity to cultivate this divinity in your life. By practicing *devatānussati*, one develops equanimity on the pleasures of the human world. Thus, one establishes his or her mind in heaven. At the breakup of the body, one who practices *devatānussati* will be reborn in the heavenly worlds. Having been born in heaven, one continues to practice *Saddhā*, *Sīla*, *Suta*, *Cāga*, and *Paññā* and develop the noble path leading to *Nibbāna*. Hence, *devatānussati* meditation helps with the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

***Devatanussati* Meditation**

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had developed great confidence (*saddhā*) in the Supreme Buddha, Supreme *Dhamma*, and Supreme *Sangha* when they were in the human world.

Because of their great confidence in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, at the breakup of the body, they were born in heaven.

I have also developed great confidence in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* similar to the confidence of gods.

The great confidence I have in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* is a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had abstained from killing beings, abstained from stealing, abstained from sexual misconduct, abstained from lying, and abstained from taking intoxicants when they were in the human world.

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had observed five precepts and eight precepts (*sīla*) when they were in the human world.

Having practiced precepts, at the breakup of the body, they were born in the *Cātummahārājika* heaven.

I also observe the five precepts regularly and eight precepts four times a month on *uposatha* [on the four phases of the moon] days.

My virtue is a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had developed knowledge of the *Dhamma* (*suta*) when they were in the human world by listening to *Dhamma*, by remembering *Dhamma* and by wise-consideration of *Dhamma*.

Having developed knowledge of the *Dhamma*, at the breakup of the body they were born in the *Cātummahārājika* heaven.

I also develop knowledge of the *Dhamma* by listening to *Dhamma*, by remembering *Dhamma*, and by wise-consideration of *Dhamma*.

My knowledge of the *Dhamma* is a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had abandoned stinginess when they were in the human world, joyfully donated to the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, joyfully belived in *kamma* and its results.

Having practiced generosity (*cāga*), at the breakup of the body, they were born in the *Cātummahārājika* heaven.

Regularly, abandoning stinginess, I also donate to the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*.

My generosity is a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* had understood impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) as well as the arising and cessation of body as taught by the Supreme Buddha, when they were in the human world.

In this way, having developed knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (*paññā*), at the breakup of the body, they were born in the *Cātummahārājika* heaven.

I also live with the understanding of arising and cessation of body in relation to the four great elements (*dhātu*), the six sense faculties (*salāyatano*), and five aggregates of clinging (*panca upādānakkhandō*).

My knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

In this manner, a disciple practices the *devatānussati* meditation considering devas of other heavenly worlds, namely, *Tāvātimsa*, *Yāma*, *Tusita*, *Nimmānarati*, and *Paranimmita wasavatti*. He further considers that,

Gods of the *Cātummahārājika* ... *Tāvātimsa*... *Yāma* ... *Tusita* ... *Nimmānarati* ... and *Paranimmita wasavatti* were born in these heavenly worlds by developing the powers of a trainee (*sekha bala: saddhā, sīla, suta, cāga, and paññā*).

I too possess the same powers of a trainee.

My powers of a trainee are a great gain for me, a great protection, and my true refuge.

15. Mindfulness of Death

In this section, we will introduce you to the *Maranānussati bhāvanā* or contemplation on death. The Buddha once said that footprints of all animals, despite them being two-legged, four-legged, or multi-legged, could be placed within the footprint of an elephant. Similarly, all wholesome qualities can be assembled under "*Appamādo*", that is heedfulness or diligence. The Buddha said a disciple should be heedful in order to generate merit and to end suffering.

The Buddha said, "*mā bhikkhave punnānaṃ bhāyittha*," monks, you should not be afraid of generating merit; "*kattabbāṃ kusalaṃ bahurū*," do wholesome deeds frequently. The merits we gather in this life will ripen in lives to come. In this life, we are born as human beings because of merit from past lives. To be born in the human world and in the heavenly world, one needs merit. Nonetheless, merit generates the right conditions for the realization of noble *Dhamma*. The Buddha said he would never, not for a moment, appreciate the continuation of this cycle of rebirth. Therefore, the disciple should be heedful to end suffering.

Many postpone practicing *Dhamma* because of their engagements of the mundane life. Ordinary human beings consider employment, housing, and good education for their children as great challenges of life; but they are unable to recognize the grave crisis of mankind which is, aging, sickness, and death. Many consider retirement the best time to practice *Dhamma*; this is because they do not realize that death can occur at any moment, without warning. They are preoccupied with planning for the future and often die before realizing their dreams for the future. The Buddha said wise people should practice *mindfulness of death* to develop heedfulness. One who practices *mindfulness of death* is keen to practice *calming and insight* meditations for the realization of the noble *Dhamma*.

Mindfulness of Death

All beings that are born are subject to death.

Beings in heaven, beings in the Brahma world, beings in the animal world, and beings in the planes of misery are subject to death.

No being escapes death.

No one knows when and where death occurs.

Death comes in the womb. Death comes in infancy. Death comes in youth. Death comes in middle age; and death comes in old age. Death is independent from age.

No one predicts when, where, and how one will die.

Death comes to the rich. Death comes to the poor. Death comes to the learned. Death comes to the unlearned. Death comes to the highborn. Death comes to the lowborn. Death comes to the noble. Death comes to the ignoble. Death comes to the beautiful. Death comes to the ugly. Death comes to the skilled; and death comes to the unskilled.

Death does not discriminate.

Death comes in the morning. Death comes in the day. Death comes in the evening; and death comes in the night.

Men and women die independent of time.

Death occurs from drowning. Death occurs from fire. Death occurs from poisoning. Death occurs from sickness. Death occurs from earthquakes. Death occurs from flooding. Death occurs from natural disasters. Death occurs from accidents. Death occurs from biting. Death occurs from callous actions. Death occurs from suffocation. Death occurs from choking. Death occurs from stumbling; and death occurs from the completion of lifespan.

Beings die in multitude of causes and circumstances.

Death comes to a Supreme Buddha. Death comes to a Private Buddha. Death comes to an enlightened one; and death comes to those who are on the noble path.

Death comes closer as day and night pass.

One may die between an inhalation and an exhalation.

Death occurs in an instant.

All who are born inherit death.

Knowing this, I will engage in wholesome activities.

Knowing this, I will practice Calm and Insight meditation.

Knowing this, I will work to end suffering like one trying to put out a fire on their head.

16. Four Divine Dwellings

Cattāro Brahma Vihāro or the four divine dwellings are four methods of meditation you will learn in this chapter. These four divine dwellings are expounded by the Buddha; they are *mettā* or loving kindness, *muditā* or appreciative joy, *karunā* or compassion, and *upekkhā* or equanimity. They are called *divine dwellings* because the *Mahā Brahma* possesses these dwellings. If one practices the four divine dwellings habitually, at the breakup of the body, he or she will be born in a *Brahma* world. In the following paragraphs, we will explain each of these meditation techniques in detail.

16.1 *Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)*

Mettā is the genuine friendship one extends to himself or herself and to others. One who is friendly to oneself will not harm himself or herself. One who is friendly to others will not harm others. The friendship that brings benefits to both oneself and others is *mettā*. According to the *Anuruddha sutta* of the Middle-length Discourses, the *arahant* Anuruddha explained two methods of developing Loving Kindness meditation: they are *appamāna ceto vimutti* or infinite- mental-emancipation and *mahaggata ceto vimutti* or great-mental-emancipation.

The spread of loving kindness to beings on the four main directions (North, East, South, and West), four intermediate directions (Northeast, Southeast, Northwest and Southwest) and above and below, infinitely (*appamāna*) is known as *appamāna ceto vimutti*. Thus, in this meditation, one spreads loving kindness towards ten directions. This is the way to practice *appamāna ceto vimutti*, if one prefers spreading loving kindness to beings infinitely:

1. May all beings in the North be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
2. May all beings in the Northeast be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
3. May all beings in the East be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
4. May all beings in the Southeast be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.

5. May all beings in the South be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
6. May all beings in the Southwest be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
7. May all beings in the West be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
8. May all beings in the Northwest be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
9. May all beings in the direction above be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
10. May all beings in the direction below be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.

Mahaggata ceto vimutti is the spreading of loving kindness to beings, progressively expanding the land area covered. In this meditation, one first develops loving kindness to oneself. Then, expand the land area of spreading loving kindness to include the beings in the village where he or she resides; next, include all beings in the city; then, include the beings in the province; then, include the beings in the country; next, include beings in this world; and finally, include all living beings. If one prefers spreading loving kindness to beings progressively based on land area covered, this is the way to practice *mahaggata ceto vimutti*.

1. May I be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may I live in peace; may I live happily.
2. As I wish for me, may all beings in the village be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
3. As I wish for me, may all beings in the city be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.

4. As I wish for me, may all beings in the province be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
5. As I wish for me, may all beings in this country be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
6. As I wish for me, may all beings in this world be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.
7. As I wish for me, may all beings be free from anger; be free from ill-will; be free from jealousy; be free from mental and physical suffering; may they live in peace; may they live happily.

The Buddha said that one may develop the mind to reach the third *jhāna* through practicing Loving Kindness meditation. One who wishes to develop *jhāna* through Loving Kindness meditation must practice as the Buddha had instructed. When one develops Loving Kindness meditation as instructed by the Buddha, the mind gets concentrated suppressing the five hindrances. By practicing Loving Kindness meditation in that concentrated mind, one develops the first *jhāna* experiencing *vitakka* (applied thought), *vicāra* (sustained thought), *nirāmiṣa pīti* (non-sensual rapture), *sukha* (gladness), and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness or unification-of-mind). Having developed the first *jhāna*, one may continue to practice Loving Kindness meditation in the same manner to develop up to the third *jhāna*.

The benefits of practicing Loving Kindness meditation are enormous. The Buddha expounded the gains of the Loving Kindness meditation in the *Mettānisaṃsa sutta*. Accordingly, one who practices Loving Kindness meditation will experience the following benefits here in this very life.

1. One sleeps peacefully.
2. One wakes up peacefully.
3. One does not have nightmares.
4. One becomes dear to humans.
5. One becomes dear to non-humans.
6. Gods protect one.

7. One is unharmed by fire, poison, and weapons.
8. One develops concentration easily.
9. One has a beautiful face.
10. One passes away mindfully.
11. One is born in a *brahma* world, if one does not attain higher stages of enlightenment.

16.2 Muditā Bhāvanā (Contemplation on Appreciative Joy)

Muditā is the genuine happiness one experiences seeing others' success. Having seeing others righteously collect wealth and properties, if one does not develop envy and instead develops appreciative joy, he or she is said to be in *muditā*. When others around us gain fame and praise, succeed in education, or grow in beauty, we should be happy about their gains. If one develops envy having seen beauty of another, having heard success in education of another, or having heard fame and praise of another, then he or she must suppress such evil thoughts, eradicate such defiled thoughts and develop sympathetic joy.

The Buddha said that developing appreciative joy helps eliminate *arati*, which is the mental phenomenon of developing displeasure in wholesome activities. In order to develop concentration, *Muditā* meditation can be practiced as *appamāna* (infinite) and *mahaggata* (great) following the same approach as explained under *Mettā* meditation. As explained below, one may practice *Muditā* meditation based on *mahaggata ceto vimutti*:

1. May I grow in lifespan; may I grow in power; may I grow in beauty; may I grow in pleasure; may I grow in fame; may I grow in praise; and may I grow in wisdom.
2. As I wish for me, may everyone in this house grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
3. As I wish for me, may everyone in this village grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.

4. As I wish for me, may everyone in this city grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
5. As I wish for me, may everyone in this province grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
6. As I wish for me, may everyone in this country grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
7. As I wish for me, may everyone in this world grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
8. As I wish for me, may all beings grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.

Below is the way to practice *Muditā* meditation based on *appamāna ceto vimutti*.

1. May I grow in lifespan; may I grow in power; may I grow in beauty; may I grow in pleasure; may I grow in fame; may I grow in praise; and may I grow in wisdom.
2. May all beings in the North grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
3. May all beings in the Northeast grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
4. May all beings in the East grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.

5. May all beings in the Southeast grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
6. May all beings in the South grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
7. May all beings in the Southwest grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
8. May all beings in the West grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
9. May all beings in the Northwest grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
10. May all beings in the direction above grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.
11. May all beings in the direction below grow in lifespan; may they grow in power; may they grow in beauty; may they grow in pleasure; may they grow in fame; may they grow in praise; and may they grow in wisdom.

16.3 Karunā Bhāvanā (Contemplation on Compassion)

Karunā is the compassion towards others when seeing their bodily and mental afflictions. We who live in the human world suffer from one or another form of affliction every moment; physically and mentally people suffer due to sickness, natural disasters etc. One may practice karunā ceto vimutti (compassion based mental-emancipation) either as mahaggata (great) or as appamāna (infinite) by following the same approach as explained under *Mettā* and *Muditā* meditation. One may develop the

ability to eradicate taints through practicing insight within *karunā ceto vimutti*. *Karunā* meditation is developed contemplating as follows:

1. May I be free from bodily afflictions; may I be free from mental afflictions; may I be healthy, physically; may I be healthy, mentally; and may I live happily.
2. As I wish for me... (Apply the same pattern as mentioned in the *mettā* meditation) may all beings be free from bodily afflictions; may they be free from mental afflictions; may they be healthy, physically and mentally; and may they live happily.

16.4 Upekkhā Bhāvanā (Contemplation on Equanimity)

Daily we grieve on painful encounters; we exhilarate with pleasurable encounters. In contrast, equanimity is one's neutral stance in facing both good and bad experiences of life. One who develops equanimity will not grieve in pain and will not elate in gain but experience life with neutrality and calmness. It is a must for human beings to face eight vicissitudes (ups and downs) of life or *aṭṭha loka dhamma*. By practicing equanimity, one develops the mind and face vicissitudes of life with a neutral attitude. Concentration that develops through practicing equanimity is known as *upekkhā ceto vimutti* (equanimity based mental-emancipation). *Upekkhā* meditation may be practiced as *appamāna* (infinite) or *mahaggatha* (great). By practicing insight through *upekkhā ceto vimutti*, one may develop the ability to eradicate taints. Given below is the way to contemplate on equanimity.

1. May I not be elated by gain, may I not be grieved by loss; may I not be elated by praise, may I not be grieved by blame; may I not be elated by fame, may I not be grieved by disrepute; may I not be elated by bodily pleasures, may I not be grieved by bodily displeasures; may I not be elated by mental pleasures, may I not be grieved by mental displeasures; and may I be peaceful.
2. As I wish for me... (Apply the same pattern as mentioned in the *mettā* meditation) may all beings not be elated by gain, may they not be grieved by loss; may they not be elated by praise, may they not be grieved by blame; may they not be elated by fame, may they not be grieved by disrepute; may they not be elated by bodily pleasures, may they not be grieved by bodily displeasures; may they not be elated by mental pleasures, may they not be grieved by mental displeasures; and may they be peaceful.

3. In the same way as we have discussed for *Mettā*, *Muditā*, and *Karunā* meditations, *Upekkhā* meditation can be developed as *mahaggata* (great) and *appamāna* (infinite) following the same approach.

17. Perception of the Skeleton

Atṭhika saññā bhāvanā is the contemplation on the parts of a skeleton. By practicing *atṭhika saññā* frequently, one may advance the meditation for the cessation of defilements. One develops passion, hatred, and delusion because of the unrestrained eye, which is attracted to the details of forms seen. The eye can be disciplined by practicing *atṭhika saññā*, which avoids the eye attracting to details of forms.

In ancient Sri Lanka, a Buddhist monk named Tissa was travelling on foot from Mihintale, a small town, to Anuradhapura, a big city, to venerate the *Sri Mahā Bodhi* tree, which was a sapling of the sacred *Bodhi* tree of India. The monk met a woman on the way when she was running away from her husband. She smiled at the monk and walked away. Her husband, who followed the woman met with the monk and inquired whether the monk had seen a woman. The monk replied saying, "I saw a skeleton; did not know whether a man or a woman." This incident, reported in the ancient writings, illustrates disciplining the eye by practicing *atṭhika saññā*.

One may improve the mind to eradicate defilements by practicing insight within the concentration developed through *atṭhika saññā*. In order to practice *atṭhika saññā*, one sits in front of a skeleton or a picture of a skeleton and focuses attention on the skeleton. By carefully observing the details of the skeleton, from head to toe, one develops a mental image of the skeleton. Once the image of the skeleton is well established in the mind, he or she contemplates on the skeleton while sitting at the same place or after moving to an appropriate location.

Meditation of the Skeleton

Find a suitable place for meditation and sit comfortably. Close your eyes and reflect on the image of a skeleton. Continue reflecting on a skeleton until a clear image of the complete skeleton is visualized.

1. Now, look at the skull. Instead of eyes, there are two large holes where the eyes were. Beautifully painted eyebrows are no longer there. Instead of nose there is a hole. Teeth are exposed. Beautifully painted lips are missing. Earlobes decorated with earrings are no longer there. Cheeks embellished with makeup and perfumes are missing. What remains is only the skull, which is like a dried out pumpkin. Because it is a conditioned thing, arising out of causes, this skeleton made of the four great elements is impermanent, impermanent. This skeleton is not mine, not myself, I am not.

2. Collarbones are connected to sternum and ribs. Ribs are arranged like a bird-cage. Ribs resemble bamboo strips. Along the skeleton run the vertebrae resembling pearls on a string. My body too will become a skeleton. Because it is a conditioned thing, arising out of causes, this skeleton made of the four great elements is impermanent, impermanent. This skeleton is not mine, not myself, I am not.
3. Vertebrae end by attaching to the pelvis. The pelvis resembles the wings of a butterfly. The pelvis supports the hips. Leg bones are connected to the pelvis. Leg bones are like dried out bamboo canes. Leg bones end by connecting to foot bones. Foot bones are hooked to toes. Because it is a conditioned thing, arising out of causes, this skeleton made of the four great elements is impermanent, impermanent. This skeleton is not mine, not myself, I am not.
4. My body, too, will become a skeleton. On top of this skeleton, muscles are fastened, bound with blood vessels, and covered with skin. I call this structure my body and cling to it. When skin is peeled off, flesh is taken off, and vessels are pulled out, only the skeleton will remain. This skeleton helps to bear the weight of the body. It helps with flexibility and movements of the body. The body I protect always, the body I clean and beautify always is only a skeleton. Because it is a conditioned thing, arising out of causes, this skeleton made of the four great elements is impermanent, impermanent. This skeleton is not mine, not myself, I am not.

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