

Teaching & Training

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

2012 Edition

Bhikkhu Moneyya

A G I F T - N O T F O R S A L E

TEACHING & TRAINING

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Cover Photo (hard copy only): The cover photo was taken at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery and shows the assembled community of bhikkhus (monks) listening to a recitation of the *Pātimokkha*. The *Pātimokkha* is the bhikkhu's code of discipline, which consists of two hundred and twenty-seven monastic training rules. The Buddha advised his bhikkhus to recite this code twice monthly, on every full-moon and new-moon day – a tradition still maintained by many Theravāda monasteries around the world.

In Memory of

David Volk

Physician, Friend, Teacher, Father

*May he come to the end of all suffering
and attain perfect peace.*

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Abbreviations

- A *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Numerical Discourses of the Buddha)
AA *Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Aṅguttara* commentary)
AS *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*
(A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma)
BD *Buddhist Dictionary* by Nyanatiloka
D *Dīgha Nikāya* (Long Discourses of the Buddha)
Wisdom Publications; 1987, 1995
Dhp *Dhammapada* (The Path of Truth)
K&S *Knowing and Seeing (Revised Edition II)* by the
Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw; 2008
M *Majjhima Nikāya* (Middle Length Discourses of the
Buddha) Wisdom Publications; 1995, 2001, 2005
Mil *Milindapañha* (The Questions of King Milinda)
S *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Connected Discourses of the Buddha)
Wisdom Publications; 2000
T *Theragāthā* (Verses of the Elders)
U *Udāna* (Inspired Utterances of the Buddha)
Vis *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification) by
Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa – translated by Bhikkhu
Ñānamoli
WK *The Workings of Kamma* by the Venerable Pa-Auk
Tawya Sayadaw; 2008

Note: Source references to the *Dīgha*, *Majjhima* and *Saṃyutta Nikāyas* are based on Wisdom Publication's listing method.

How to Read Footnote References

Example taken from footnote 3, page 2:

S.56.11

S = abbreviation of title, e.g., *Saṃyutta Nikāya*
56 = chapter number / discourse (*sutta*) number
11 = discourse number / verse number

A Note from the Sayadaw¹

Teaching & Training was written by one of my disciples here at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. I believe that newcomers will find this book especially helpful.

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw
(Abbot of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery)

Preface

I started this book in May of 2004, as a six-page letter to my mother, who currently lives in Armidale, Australia. Earlier that same month, she had received a copy of *Knowing and Seeing* from our Sayadaw, and I was concerned that, without a background in Theravāda² Buddhism, she would have difficulty understanding his book.

As it turned out, my fears were unfounded. My mother read the book twice and found it extremely helpful. On the other hand, I was not totally satisfied with my letter. In retrospect, I felt it glossed over too many important topics; in addition, it did not address the very real need for clear and practical introductory information for foreigners. As a Westerner, I had become aware of this need during my first visit to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery some four years earlier.

I began to revise the letter heavily, detailing the Four Noble Truths in the Introduction and using the threefold training as an outline. I supplemented the text with more than a hundred footnotes, included several appendices dealing specifically with conditions at this monastery and finally added a sixteen-page index.

At this point, I would like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw and other

¹ **Sayadaw:** a Burmese honorific title meaning “respected teacher.”

² **Theravāda:** lit. “Doctrine of the Elders,” is the name of the oldest school of Buddhism, whose teachings are recorded in the Pāli Canon.

senior bhikkhus at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, for their guidance and instruction in the preparation of this book. The teachings presented here are based primarily on material contained in *Knowing and Seeing*, with numerous references to the Pāli Texts and their commentaries. For any possible inaccuracy or misrepresentation of this source material, I beg the reader's forgiveness.

May all who read this book make swift progress on the path to liberation, and may they and my mother¹ experience the peace and bliss of Nibbāna in this lifetime.

Bhikkhu Moneyya

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar
December 2005

Editorial Note to the 2010 Edition

This current edition of *Teaching & Training* contains a number of important updates and revisions that were made after the printing of the second and third editions. These include: more detailed and accurate information on dependent origination, stream-entry, Right View and wrong view, the sixteen insight-knowledges, the thirty-one realms and the practice of *ānāpānasati*; an update to the biography of the Sayadaw; updated listings in the Resource Guide; additional footnotes; revised translations; a new daily schedule, and more. It is my hope that these many small improvements will help to make *Teaching & Training* a more useful and informative handbook.

Bhikkhu Moneyya
December 2009

¹ My mother passed away in her sleep on December 16, 2009, shortly before the 2010 edition went to press.

Introduction

Namo Tassa Bhagavato, Arahato, Sammā-Sambuddhassa

Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths are the central teaching of the Buddha, like the hub of a wheel from which the spokes of all his other teachings radiate. The Buddha first expounded these four truths to a group of five ascetics in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares,¹ in the ninth week after his great enlightenment² under the Bodhi Tree.³ With that single teaching, some 2500 years ago, the Perfectly Enlightened One set the unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma⁴ in motion and established his Dispensation.

The Four Noble Truths are:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering⁵
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

¹ **Benares:** now called Varanasi, a city in northern India, approx. 200 kms from the site of the Buddha's enlightenment in current-day Bodhgaya.

² **Enlightenment** (*bodhi*): awakening, supreme knowledge, knowledge of the Four Noble Truths; for greater detail, please see pp.42-46.

³ **Bodhi Tree:** literally "Enlightenment Tree," the *ficus religiosa*. Descendants of the original Bodhi Tree are preserved in Bodhgaya and in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

⁴ **Dhamma:** literally "that which upholds;" the teaching or doctrine of the Buddha, universal law, ultimate truth, the Four Noble Truths.

⁵ **Suffering** (*dukkha*): unsatisfactoriness, pain, misery, displeasure.

1. **Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus,¹ is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering; ageing is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; [sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering;]² association with the unpleasant is suffering; separation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in short, the five aggregates³ [as objects] of clinging are suffering.”⁴

The five aggregates are the physical aggregate of materiality and the four mental aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations⁵ and consciousness. These five aggregates comprise the materiality and mentality of all living beings, as well as the materiality of all inanimate objects. “Clinging” refers to the mental act of grasping – “its function is to not release.”⁶ But why are these five aggregates subject to clinging? Due to ignorance, we wrongly identify materiality and mentality as “I,” “me” and “mine.” It is this subtle sense of self that distorts our perceptions and gives rise to clinging. As we cling, so we suffer.⁷

There are three kinds of suffering described in the First Noble Truth:

- i. The suffering of physical and mental pain – this is the most obvious kind of suffering. It is the suffering that arises with birth, ageing, sickness and death, with sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

¹ **Bhikkhu:** monk, mendicant; specifically, a member of the community of monks who follow the teachings of the Buddha.

² Bracketed text occurs in D.22.18, M.9.15 and other discourses.

³ **Aggregate** (*khandha*): group or category; in this context, (the five) constituent groups of existence. For details, see BD: *khandha*.

⁴ S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion) – this is the first discourse of the Buddha.

⁵ **Mental formations** (*saikhāra-kkhandha*): the aggregate of mental factors that functions primarily as volition or will.

⁶ Vis.XVII.51

⁷ For more on the relationship between clinging and suffering, see p.32.

- ii.* The suffering connected with change – this means that, due to clinging, even pleasant physical and mental feelings can become a cause for suffering when they cease; in other words, “separation from the pleasant is suffering.”
 - iii.* The suffering inherent within the five aggregates themselves¹ – each of the aggregates is in a state of continuous arising and passing away, never the same from one moment to the next. From the smallest particle and most rudimentary form of consciousness to vast universes and entire realms of existence, all physical and mental phenomena are subject to the same inexorable law of impermanence. This type of suffering is going on in and around us all the time and accounts for the fundamental instability and unsatisfactoriness of all conditioned existence.
2. **The Origin of Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering? It is that craving which leads to rebirth, is accompanied by delight and lust, and seeks pleasure here and there, namely: [*i*] craving for sensual pleasures, [*ii*] craving for existence and [*iii*] craving for non-existence.”²
- i.* Craving for sensual pleasures, we yearn for pleasant sights, pleasant sounds, pleasant smells, pleasant tastes, pleasant touches and pleasant thoughts.³ Wherever and whenever a pleasant thought or pleasant physical sensation arises, we seek it out and attach ourselves to

¹ In this context, suffering includes neutral feelings, or sensations, which are more subtle than painful feelings (*i*) or pleasant feelings (*ii*).

² S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

³ Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts are the objects of the six sense-bases; contact of a sense-object with its corresponding sense-base can give rise to a pleasant, unpleasant (painful) or neutral feeling.

it: in the food we eat, in sex, comfort, wealth, the company of friends and loved ones, and in various forms of entertainment. When we get what we want, the pleasant physical and mental feelings of the moment become a cause for suffering when they cease. When we do not get what we want, that is also suffering. As we suffer, aversion arises; if we blame others, our aversion grows into resentment and hatred. Thus it is that from craving for sensual pleasures, hatred and conflict arise. With the arising of hatred and conflict, our suffering multiplies.¹

- ii. Craving for existence, we yearn for this life, we yearn for our next life (in a heavenly realm) and, ultimately, we yearn for immortality.
- iii. Craving for non-existence, we yearn for self-annihilation and oblivion.

Like moths lured to the flame of a candle, living beings are drawn irresistibly by these three types of craving toward the objects of their desire; this, in turn, gives rise to clinging and the ongoing round of rebirth, called *saṃsāra*:²

¹ In the *Mahādukkhakkhanda Sutta* (Greater Discourse on the Mass of Suffering) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha explains: “Again, with [craving for] sensual pleasures as the cause... kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles... householders with householders; mother quarrels with child, child with mother, father with child, child with father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend... men take swords and shields and buckle on bows and quivers, and they charge slippery bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows and spears and splashed with boiling liquids and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now this too is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures... the cause being simply sensual pleasures (M.13.11-13).”

² *Saṃsāra*: lit. “perpetual wandering;” the ongoing process of being born, ageing and dying, which occurs repeatedly over countless lifetimes.

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“Inconceivable, bhikkhus, is the beginning of this saṃsāra. A first point is not known of beings roaming and wandering the round of rebirth, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. Which do you think, bhikkhus, is more: the stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable – this or the water in the four great oceans? The stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course... this alone is greater than the water in the four great oceans... For such a long time, bhikkhus, you have experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the cemeteries.”¹

Furthermore:

“There will come a time when the mighty ocean will dry up, vanish and be no more... There will come a time when the mighty earth will be devoured by fire, perish and be no more. But yet there will be no end to the suffering of beings roaming and wandering this round of rebirth, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving.”²

Such is the nature of this saṃsāra, that countless world-cycles³ have already arisen and passed away, with no end to the suffering of living beings. Hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, they roam and wander this ever-unfolding round of rebirth, arising through egg, womb, moisture or

¹ S.15.3 *Assu Sutta* (Tears Discourse)

² S.22.99 *Gaddulabaddha Sutta* (The Leash Discourse)

³ **World-cycle** (*kappa*): an immeasurably long period of time; aeon. Each world-cycle is subdivided into four world periods: (1) world-dissolution (decay and destruction of the universe); (2) continuation of chaos; (3) world-formation (formation of the universe); (4) continuation of the formed world. (Definition of *kappa* is taken from BD.) For greater detail, please see S.15.5, A.IV.156 and A.VII.62.

spontaneous generation¹ in as many as thirty-one different realms.² From the lowest of the hells, to the human realm, to the highest of the heavens, these thirty-one realms comprise the totality of all living beings.

When death comes – as it does to every being – and the aggregates break apart, those beings who are still subject to craving will be reborn in one of these thirty-one realms. With every new rebirth, comes a new set of aggregates and another lifetime of suffering.³ One who truly understands this process wants nothing more than to put an end to it.

3. **The Cessation of Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from and non-reliance on it.”⁴

This is the noble truth that frees us from the round of rebirth. It is Nibbāna⁵ – the “sorrowless, undefiled supreme security from bondage.”⁶ In a verse from the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha states, “Only a few men reach the far shore [Nibbāna]; all the rest merely run about on this shore.”⁷

This shore is none other than the five aggregates we call a self. Driven hither and thither by the winds of craving, beings

¹ M.12.32 *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* (Greater Discourse on the Lion’s Roar)

² **The thirty-one realms** (of existence): For description, see Appendix I.6/p.61; also M.Intro/pp.46-48 and AS.V.2-7 (including Table 5.1).

³ In most cases, another lifetime of suffering in the four woeful realms; for details, see footnote 3/p.45, Appendix I.6/p.61 and S.56.102-131.

⁴ S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

⁵ **Nibbāna:** literally “blowing out” (as of a candle) or “extinction.” Descriptions include: “the cessation of craving,” “extinction of greed, hatred and delusion,” “final deliverance” and “the supreme foundation of truth.” For details, please see K&S/p.29, M.140.26 and S.43.14.

⁶ M.26.18 *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* (The Noble Search Discourse)

⁷ Dh.p.85

merely run about on this shore. Unable to fathom the origin of their suffering, they stumble from lifetime to lifetime.

In direct contrast, the far shore (Nibbāna) is “unformed” (absent of aggregates), “unborn,” “unageing,” “undying” and “utterly peaceful.”¹ Therefore, it is called the “unformed element.”² “Here water, earth, fire and air have no footing; here long and short, coarse and fine, fair and foul, mentality and materiality – all are brought to an end.”³

One who has crossed to the far shore is liberated from saṃsāra. Such a person is called an “arahant”⁴ – a fully-enlightened one – one in whom ignorance and craving have been completely destroyed. The Buddha often referred to the attainment of arahantship as the “supreme goal of the holy life.”⁵ He also called it the “highest bliss.”⁶ Even so, as long as the arahant still has a physical body, he or she is not totally free from suffering. Inevitably, the body ages, gets sick and dies – not even an arahant can stop this process. It is only with the attainment of Parinibbāna⁷ at the arahant’s death, that the physical suffering of having a body comes finally to an end.

¹ Words in quotation marks come from U.8.3, M.26.18 and Vis.I.159.

² **The unformed element** (*asaṅkhata dhātu*): a synonym for Nibbāna; also called the “deathless element” and sometime referred to as the “unconditioned.” The unformed element is one of the four ultimate realities: (1) consciousness, (2) mental factors, (3) materiality and (4) Nibbāna (the unformed element). 1, 2 and 3 comprise the formed element, which is impermanent and subject to suffering. For details, please see K&S/p.27,72-73 and Vis.XVI.94.

³ D.11.85 *Kevaḷḷa Sutta* (Kevaḷḷa Discourse)

⁴ **Arahant** (*arahatta*): literally “a worthy one;” one who has eradicated all mental defilements “and is fully liberated through final knowledge (M.1.51).” For details, please see pp.46-47.

⁵ A common phrase throughout the suttas; the term “holy life” refers to the life of a bhikkhu or bhikkhunī (the female equivalent of a bhikkhu).

⁶ M.75.19 *Māgandiya Sutta* (Māgandiya Discourse)

⁷ **Parinibbāna**: Also called “final Nibbāna,” this term refers to the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates at the death of an arahant, after which there is no further rebirth (no more materiality or mentality).

Until then, out of innate compassion, the arahant may choose to guide and assist others on the path. One can think of no better example than the Buddha and his two chief disciples, the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, who were good friends¹ to the many and a refuge for those who sought release from this frightful round of rebirth and the bondage of suffering. In the spirit of selflessness and non-attachment, the Venerable Sāriputta once said, “I do not delight in life, I do not delight in death; I await the time [of my Parinibbāna], like a government servant [who waits for] payday.”²

4. **The Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering:** “And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path, namely: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.”³

Another name for the Noble Eightfold Path is the “Middle Way.” In his first discourse at Isipatana, the Buddha explained to the five ascetics that “the Middle Way discovered by the Tathāgata⁴ avoids both extremes.”⁵ The two extremes to which he was referring are the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. One extreme is the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is “low, vulgar, the way of

¹ **Good friend** (*kalyāṇa-mitta*): a wise and virtuous person who is concerned for another’s welfare and can guide that person onto the right path (often used as an epithet for one’s meditation teacher); for details, see Vis.III.61-73.

² T.XVII.2 “*Sāriputtattheragāthā*” (“Verses of the Elder Sāriputta”)

³ S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

⁴ **Tathāgata:** an appellation for the Buddha, meaning “one who has thus come” or “one who has thus gone.”

⁵ S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

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worldlings, ignoble and unbeneficial.”¹ The other extreme is the search for happiness through torturing the body, which is “painful, ignoble and unbeneficial.”¹

Time and again, the Buddha taught that the pursuit of sensual pleasures could never lead to the end of suffering; but neither could self-mortification. Either way, the final outcome is only more suffering. By avoiding these two extremes, the Noble Eightfold Path “leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”¹

Just as a wise physician initially diagnoses a disease, then explains the cause, offers a cure and finally prescribes a course of medicine, in the same way, the Buddha diagnoses our disease (the First Noble Truth), explains the cause (the Second Noble Truth), offers a cure (the Third Noble Truth) and prescribes a course of medicine (the Fourth Noble Truth). Praised by the wise as the best of medicines, “just this Noble Eightfold Path” is the balm that quells the fever of craving and brings release from all suffering.² “Having drunk this Dhamma medicine, you will be ageless and beyond death.”³

¹ S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

² “Medicine” simile is taken from Vis.XVI.87; “balm” and “fever” similes from “*Mahā Jayamaṅgala Gāthā*” (“Great Verses of Joyous Victory”).

³ Mil.II.V.[335] “*Anumānapañho*” (“A Question Solved by Inference”)

The Threefold Training

For training purposes, the individual factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are organized into three main areas of practice: (i) *sīla*, consisting of the training and development in morality; (ii) *samādhi*, consisting of the training and development in concentration; and (iii) *paññā*, consisting of the training and development in wisdom (see table below).

<p>I. <u>Sīla</u> Morality</p>	<p>1. Right Speech 2. Right Action 3. Right Livelihood</p>
<p>II. <u>Samādhi</u> Concentration</p>	<p>4. Right Effort 5. Right Mindfulness 6. Right Concentration</p>
<p>III. <u>Paññā</u> Wisdom</p>	<p>7. Right View 8. Right Intention</p>

Prior to undertaking this threefold training, some initial reading and study may be helpful¹ – at least enough to acquire a basic understanding of the Four Noble Truths, as well as the doctrine of kamma (the law of moral causation).² This is Right View at its most rudimentary level. Without such an understanding, one might find it difficult to gain confidence in the teaching, and there would be little incentive to undertake and sustain the training. One might also undertake the training for the wrong reason or inadvertently stray from the path.

¹ Please see “Recommended Reading List” on p.50.

² For an explanation of kamma, please see footnote 1/p.32 and p.34.

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The training itself is a process of gradual purification, which requires patience, persistence and dedication. As one progresses on the path – from *sīla* through *samādhi* to *paññā* – and begins to see the benefits in his or her daily life, greater confidence in the teaching will naturally arise:

“Such is *sīla* [morality]; such is *samādhi* [concentration]; such is *paññā* [wisdom]. When *sīla* is fully developed, *samādhi* is of great fruit and benefit; when *samādhi* is fully developed, *paññā* is of great fruit and benefit.”¹

I. *Sīla*, the first of the three trainings, encompasses all aspects of moral or virtuous conduct. Its practice facilitates the development of *samādhi* by putting a check on unwholesome behaviour that might disturb the mind or create conflict with others.

II. *Samādhi*, the second training, is the cultivation of deep, uninterrupted concentration, which arises from fixing the mind on a single object during the practice of *samatha* (serenity) meditation. *Samādhi* suppresses the hindrances,² which, by their very nature, are opposed to concentration – thus, the mind becomes calm, penetrating and powerful, a prerequisite for the development of wisdom.

III. *Paññā*, the third training, is the cultivation of wisdom through the practice of *vipassanā* (insight) meditation. Whereas *samādhi* suppresses the hindrances, *paññā* destroys them. “*Vipassanā*” literally means “seeing clearly” or “insight;” it is defined as the experiential knowledge that arises from directly seeing the three characteristics of

¹ D.16.2.4 *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (Great Parinibbāna Discourse)

² **Hindrances** (*nīvaraṇa*): a five-fold classification of mental defilements. They are: (1) sensual desire, (2) ill-will, (3) sloth and torpor, (4) restlessness and remorse, and (5) sceptical doubt. For details, please see K&S/pp.54-55 and BD: *nīvaraṇa*.

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existence in each of the five aggregates. The three characteristics¹ are:

1. Impermanence (*anicca*) – the five aggregates are subject to change; as soon as they arise, they pass away.
2. Suffering (*dukkha*) – the five aggregates are always oppressed by arising and passing away.
3. Non-Self (*anattā*) – the five aggregates are empty of anything that could be called a self, void of any owner or controller; nor is there any enduring substance or essence, either inside or outside the aggregates.

In his second discourse, the Buddha discussed these three characteristics with the same five bhikkhus as before:

“What do you think, bhikkhus, is materiality permanent or impermanent? – *Impermanent, Venerable Sir.* – [Are feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness permanent or impermanent? – *Impermanent, Venerable Sir.*] But that which is impermanent, is it suffering or happiness? – *Suffering, Venerable Sir.* – But of that which is impermanent, suffering and subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’ – *No, Venerable Sir...* Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is disenchanted with materiality, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with mental formations, disenchanted with consciousness. Experiencing disenchantment, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion² [his mind] is liberated.”³

¹ **The three characteristics** (*ti-lakkhaṇa*): For description, please see Vis.XX.45-48 and Vis.XXI.47-48.

² **Dispassion** (*virāga*): the fading away (of lust); detachment; in this context, the ceasing of craving.

³ S.22.59 *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (Discourse on the Characteristic of Non-self)

The term “liberated” here refers to the realization of Nibbāna by arahant fruition knowledge.¹ With that attainment, one “fully awakens to the Four Noble Truths as they really are:”² to suffering, to the origin of suffering, to the cessation of suffering, and to the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This is the great enlightenment that the Buddha experienced under the Bodhi Tree some 2500 years ago. It is a state of supreme peace and happiness, the highest goal to which mankind can aspire. To achieve this state is to receive one’s inheritance from the Buddha and to become a benefactor and protector of the Dispensation, “so that the pure Teaching may long endure, that it may be for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare and happiness of *devas*³ and human beings.”⁴

Teaching & Training at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

The system of meditation taught at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is based on the *Tipiṭaka* (The Three Baskets, or main divisions of the Pāli Canon) and its commentaries. The *Tipiṭaka* includes the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (the Basket of Discipline), the *Sutta*⁵ *Piṭaka* (the Basket of Discourses) and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (the Basket of Higher Dhamma). The Pāli Canon dates back to the time when Pāli was a spoken language, and is thought to contain the original teachings of the Buddha.

¹ **Fruition knowledge** (*phala ñāṇa*): the second of the two insight-knowledges that form the core of the enlightenment experience; for an explanation of fruition knowledge, please see pp.42-44.

² S.56.5 *Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇa Sutta* (First Discourse on Ascetics and Brahmins)

³ **Devas**: deities, heavenly beings.

⁴ D.16.3.50 *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (Great Parinibbāna Discourse)

⁵ **Sutta**: a discourse on the Dhamma, given by the Buddha or one of his close disciples.

INTRODUCTION

For clarity, the subject matter in this book has been organized into an outline format, using the three trainings of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* as its main headings. The three trainings are then further subdivided into seven stages of purification,¹ originally described in the *Rathavinīta Sutta* (Relay Chariots Discourse) of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and later expounded in the *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification), a widely respected commentary, compiled by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa around AD 400.

These seven stages of purification provide a step-by-step formula for systematically purifying one's body (physical actions), speech and mind of defilements in order to realize Nibbāna in this lifetime (see table below).

The Seven Stages of Purification
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sīla</u></p> <p>1. Purification of Virtue</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Samādhi</u></p> <p>2. Purification of Mind</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Paññā</u></p> <p>3. Purification of View 4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt 5. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not the Path 6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way 7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision</p>

¹ A summary of the seven stages can be found at M.24.15.

One

Sīla

(Morality)

Sīla consists of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. These three path factors are the basis for all good conduct, as well as the foundation of all Buddhist training. In describing the benefits of sīla to the Venerable Ānanda,¹ the Buddha states:

“So you see, Ānanda, good conduct [sīla] has freedom from remorse as its destination and benefit; freedom from remorse has gladness; gladness has joy; joy has calm; calm has happiness; happiness has concentration; concentration has seeing things as they really are; seeing things as they really are has disenchantment and dispassion; disenchantment and dispassion have knowing and seeing² as their destination and benefit. So you see, Ānanda, good conduct leads gradually up to the summit.”³

¹ The Venerable Ānanda was the Buddha’s personal attendant, as well as the primary interlocutor in many suttas.

² **Knowing and seeing** (*ñāṇadassana*): knowledge and vision of the Four Noble Truths, or any aspect thereof, including the five aggregates, dependent origination, Nibbāna (in the above quote, in footnote 1/p.27 and on p.42) and path knowledge (in the quote on p.47). For an explanation of path knowledge, please see pp.42-44.

³ A.X.I.1 *Kimatthiya Sutta* (Discourse on What is the Goal)

Stage One

Purification of Virtue

Purification through Wholesome Speech and Action

Observance of sīla can be divided into four main areas of practice, referred to in the *Visuddhimagga* as the “fourfold purification:”

1. Restraint with regard to conduct (Right Speech and Right Action) – the two hundred and twenty-seven rules of the *Pātimokkha* (the disciplinary code for Theravāda monks); the ten precepts and seventy-five *sekhiya* (training) rules for novices; the eight or ten precepts for Theravāda nuns; and the five or eight precepts for laypersons.
2. Restraint of the sense faculties – of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
3. Purification of livelihood (Right Livelihood) – livelihood that accords with the precepts.
4. Reflection on (and moderation in) the use of the four requisites¹ – food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

At Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, all residents are required to observe the monastery rules, listed in Appendix III, on page 71. These rules support a lifestyle that encourages the development of concentration through the observance of appropriate sīla for both monastics and laity. As a minimum, all residents must observe the following eight precepts for laypersons:

1. To refrain from the destruction of life (this includes insects).
2. To refrain from taking what is not given.

¹ **Requisites:** a formal term, which simply refers to the necessities of life; for details, please see Vis.I.42.

STAGE ONE: PURIFICATION OF VIRTUE

3. To refrain from unchastity (any kind of sexual activity).
4. To refrain from untrue speech.
5. To refrain from the use of wines, liquors and other intoxicants (including recreational drugs).
6. To refrain from eating after midday.
7. To refrain from dancing, singing, music and shows (all forms of entertainment), and from bodily adornment – the use of jewellery, perfumes and cosmetics.
8. To refrain from the use of high and large (luxurious) beds.

For monks, novices and ten-precept nuns, rule seven becomes two separate rules; rule eight becomes rule nine; and a tenth rule is added, prohibiting the handling, use, or possession of gold and silver (in effect, all forms of money, including cash, credit cards, cheques, jewellery and other forms of exchange).¹

Reflecting on the various benefits of purification through the practice of *sīla*, the *Visuddhimagga* comments:

“Dare anyone a limit place
On benefits that virtue brings...?
No balm of yellow sandalwood...
Or soft effulgence of moonbeams,
Can here avail to calm and soothe
Men’s fevers in this world; whereas
This noble, this supremely cool,
Well-guarded virtue quells the flame...
Where can such another stair be found
That climbs, as virtue does, to heaven?
Or yet another door that gives
Unto the city of Nibbāna?”

¹ For greater detail on rule ten, please see Appendix II (under “Monastics and Money” and “Visa Application/Extension”), plus Appendix III (under “Theravāda Monks and Novices”).

I. SĪLA (MORALITY)

Shine as they might, there are no kings
Adorned with jewellery and pearls
That shine as does a man restrained,
Adorned with virtue's ornament...
From this brief sketch it may be known
How virtue brings reward, and how
This root of all good qualities
Robs of its power every fault.”¹

¹ Vis.I.24

Two

Samādhi (Concentration)

Samādhi consists of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Right Effort is of four kinds:

1. The effort to prevent unwholesome¹ states of mind from arising.
2. The effort to remove unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen.
3. The effort to arouse wholesome² states of mind that have not yet arisen.
4. The effort to increase wholesome states of mind that have already arisen.

Right Mindfulness is also of four kinds:

1. Mindfulness³ of the body – in-and-outbreathing, the four elements, the thirty-two parts of the body,⁴ bodily postures (walking, standing, sitting, lying), etc.

¹ **Unwholesome** (*akusala*): the opposite of wholesome (see below).

² **Wholesome** (*kusala*): profitable, blameless, morally good, skilful, productive of favourable kamma-result; in psychological terms, any kammic volition that is accompanied by non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion, such as generosity, loving-kindness, compassion and tolerance (see BD: *kusala*).

³ **Mindfulness** (*sati*): awareness applied closely to an object(s); it is characterised as “not floating away” (see K&S/pp.31-32,41-42 and AS.II.5).

⁴ For a description of the thirty-two parts practice, please see p.24.

II. SAMĀDHI (CONCENTRATION)

2. Mindfulness of feelings – pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings.
3. Mindfulness of consciousness – any state of consciousness: wholesome, unwholesome or indeterminate.
4. Mindfulness of dhammas¹ – a range of mental and material phenomena, including the five hindrances, the five aggregates, the seven factors of enlightenment,² the Four Noble Truths, etc.³

Right Concentration is defined as the four jhānas⁴ (absorption states). The following description of Right Concentration comes from the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya*:

“And what, bhikkhus, is Right Concentration? Here, bhikkhus, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by initial application [of the mind] and sustained application [of the mind], with joy and happiness born of seclusion. With the subsiding of initial and sustained application, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which is accompanied by inner tranquillity and unification of the mind, with joy and happiness born of concentration. With the fading away of joy, he enters upon and abides in the

¹ Dhammas (with small “d”): in this context, objects of contemplation.

² **The seven factors of enlightenment:** (1) mindfulness (*sati*), (2) investigation of phenomena (*dhamma vicaya*), (3) energy (*vīriya*), (4) joy (*pīti*), (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi*), (6) concentration (*samādhi*) and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*).

³ For details on the four kinds of mindfulness, see D.22 and M.10.

⁴ **Jhāna/four jhānas** (also known as the four fine-material jhānas): concentration, during which there is a complete, though temporary, suspension of fivefold sense activity (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and of the five hindrances; the state of consciousness, however, is one of full alertness and lucidity (definition from BD).

II. SAMĀDHI (CONCENTRATION)

third jhāna, and dwells therein equanimous, mindful and fully aware, experiencing happiness with the body; of this, the noble ones¹ proclaim, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and the previous disappearance of mental pleasure and displeasure, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which is neither painful nor pleasant, and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. This, bhikkhus, is called Right Concentration.”²

In addition to the four jhānas, the *Visuddhimagga* describes another type of concentration called “access concentration.”³ Access concentration is the state of deep concentration that precedes each of the four jhānas. In access concentration, however, the jhāna factors⁴ are not as distinct as in the actual jhāna, and the mind is still subject to occasional distraction. Both types of concentration are attained by practising one of the forty samatha meditation subjects⁵ taught by the Buddha. Some of these subjects lead only to the lower jhānas, some to all four jhānas, and some lead only to access concentration.

¹ **Noble one** (*ariya-puggala*): an individual who has attained any one of the four stages of enlightenment (described on pp.45-46).

² D.22.21 *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness); an expanded version of the same passage can be found in the *Kāyagatāsati Sutta* (Mindfulness of the Body Discourse) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, M.119.18-21.

³ **Access concentration** (*upacāra samādhi*): For details, please see K&S: Answers 3.3-3.5; also Vis.III.5-6,15 and Vis.IV.32-33.

⁴ **Jhāna factors**: specific mental factors associated with each of the four jhānas. These factors include: initial application of the mind, sustained application of the mind, joy, happiness, one-pointedness of mind and equanimity. For a listing of these jhāna factors and their respective jhānas, please see Appendix I.1/p.57; for details, see K&S/pp.43-47.

⁵ For a description of the forty samatha meditation subjects, please see AS.IX.6-12 (including Table 9.1) and Vis.III.104-105; for greater detail, see Vis: Chapters IV-XI. For a listing of samatha subjects taught at Pa-Auk Monastery, please see Appendix I.3/p.58.

Stage Two

Purification of Mind

Developing Concentration

Meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery are free to begin their meditation practice with the samatha subject of their choice. In most cases, however, they are encouraged to choose between two initial samatha practices: mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) and four-elements meditation.

Mindfulness of breathing is the practice commonly recommended to beginners for attaining and mastering¹ each of the four jhānas. Four-elements meditation is recommended to meditators who wish to take a more direct route to the practice of vipassanā, without first developing a foundation in jhāna. Meditators who begin with four-elements, however, have the option of following up with other samatha practices before proceeding on to vipassanā.

To attain the levels of concentration required for mental absorption, continuous practice is necessary. Meditators at Pa-Auk spend an average of seven hours per day in sitting meditation.² Formal group sittings are held in separate meditation halls in both the men's and women's areas of the monastery.

Sitting meditation is properly performed in a comfortable, yet erect, seated posture, with the eyes closed. Between sittings, the practice should be maintained in all bodily postures; this includes walking, standing, sitting, lying down, etc. To promote the development of concentration, meditators are encouraged to keep conversation to a minimum and to maintain silence in and around the meditation hall. Regular interviews with Pa-Auk meditation teachers are also an important aid to practice.

¹ For a listing of the five kinds of jhāna mastery, please see Appendix I.2/p.57; for a detailed description, see K&S/pp.46-48.

² For specific sitting times, please see daily schedule on back cover.

Mindfulness of Breathing (*ānāpānasati*)

This samatha subject can be developed up to all four jhānas. Mastery of the four *ānāpāna* jhānas greatly facilitates the development of all other samatha practices, as well as the subsequent analysis of materiality and mentality. To practise mindfulness of breathing, you focus on the breath at the point where it touches either the nostrils or upper lip. Try to maintain this awareness as you breathe in and out naturally. Every time your mind wanders, you must bring it back to the breath.

As concentration begins to develop, the breath becomes increasingly calm. At this time, you may also begin to experience some of the benefits of samatha meditation, such as joy, tranquillity, happiness and lightness of body and mind. One of the primary signs of deepening concentration is the appearance of light. When this light merges with the breath in the area of the nostrils, it is called the *ānāpāna nimitta*.¹ In its early stages, the nimitta may be grey in colour, unstable and unclear. If you try to shift your attention to it at this time, it will probably disappear. Instead, if you just continue to focus on the breath, the nimitta will eventually stabilize.

Once the nimitta stabilizes, you can go ahead and shift your attention to it. With continued mindfulness, you will be able to concentrate on the nimitta for one, two, three or more hours. If you continue in this manner, the nimitta will gradually become bright and clear. This is because a concentrated mind produces light – the Buddha calls this light “the light of wisdom.”²

As you progress from access concentration into absorption – through each of the four jhānas – the light of wisdom grows brighter and brighter. It is this light that allows you to discern the five aggregates and practice vipassanā in the later stages of meditation.

¹ **Nimitta**: in this context, a sign or image of concentration. Due to differences in perception, the *ānāpāna nimitta* appears differently to different people (see K&S/pp.37-39 & Answer 1.4, and Vis.VIII.204-221).

² **Light of wisdom**: Please see K&S/pp.13-14, including footnotes.

Mastering the Other Samatha Practices

Having mastered the four *ānāpāna* jhānas, you may now continue with the remaining samatha subjects. If one subject, such as mindfulness of breathing, is fully mastered, the other subjects can be mastered easily, even as quickly as one subject per day. These subjects include:

- The Thirty-Two Parts of the Body¹ – seeing the organs and other constituents of your body; seeing the thirty-two parts of the body in other beings.
- The Ten *Kasiṇas* – meditation subjects consisting of certain material qualities, such as earth, water, fire, wind, light, space and various colours.
- The Four Immaterial Jhānas – boundless space, boundless consciousness, nothingness and neither-perception-nor-non-perception.
- The Four Divine Abodes² – loving-kindness meditation (radiating loving-kindness to all living beings); similar meditations in compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity.
- The Four Protective Meditations – loving-kindness meditation (for overcoming anger), recollection of the Buddha (for developing faith), loathsomeness meditation³ (for overcoming sensual desire) and recollection of death (for developing a sense of urgency).

¹ **The Thirty-two Parts of the Body:** This practice is listed as a single samatha subject. For details, please see K&S/pp.57-58.

² **The Four Divine Abodes** (*brahmavihārās*): Loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*) and appreciative joy (*muditā*) are each developed up to the third jhāna; equanimity (*upekkhā*) can be developed and practiced only in the fourth jhāna.

³ **Loathsomeness meditation** (*asubha bhāvanā*): meditation on the mental image of a bloated or decomposing corpse; for a description of this meditation practice, please see Vis: Chapter VI.

After completing your initial samatha practice, the general progression at Pa-Auk is thirty-two parts of the body, followed by skeleton meditation (one of the thirty-two parts) and white *kaṣiṇa*. These, in turn, are followed by the remaining samatha subjects listed above.¹

Whether you wish to complete all, some or none of these samatha practices is a matter of personal preference. Mastery of these practices provides a solid base for the cultivation of insight by strengthening your concentration, intensifying the light of wisdom and assisting in the development of other positive qualities, such as faith, energy, tranquillity, compassion, dispassion and equanimity. With a solid base of samatha practices, you will be able to make swift progress in your practice of vipassanā.² When you feel you have mastered a sufficient number of samatha practices and are ready to make the transition to vipassanā, you may begin the practice of four-elements meditation.

Four-Elements Meditation

This samatha subject can be developed only up to access concentration. It has the distinction, however, of being the gateway to vipassanā, since it is the only one of the forty samatha practices that can be used to analyse materiality. In this practice, you focus on the four elements that compose your physical body: earth, water, fire and wind. Each of these four elements has certain physical characteristics, which you must learn to recognise. Altogether, there are twelve characteristics:

1. Earth Element – hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness, heaviness, lightness

¹ For a complete listing of samatha subjects taught at Pa-Auk (including their respective attainments), please see Appendix I.3/p.58.

² According to the Sayadaw, strong concentration is one of the key factors to success, especially in the later stages of meditation.

II. SAMĀDHI (CONCENTRATION)

2. Water Element – flowing, cohesion
3. Fire Element – heat, coldness
4. Wind Element – supporting, pushing

Your practice begins by discerning each of the twelve characteristics individually, starting with pushing and followed by hardness, roughness, heaviness, and so on.¹ Eventually, you will be able to discern all twelve characteristics together. At that point, you will see only elements, not a person or self. As concentration develops, you will begin to see a smoky grey light.² If you continue to concentrate on the four elements, that light will become whiter and brighter until your entire body appears as if it were a solid block of transparent ice. Maintaining your concentration on the four elements within that “block of ice,” you will see it begin to sparkle and emit light. When you can concentrate on the four elements in that sparkling form for at least half an hour, you have reached access concentration.

With that light, you will be able to penetrate and break down the solid mass of the body into trillions of infinitesimal particles, called *rūpa kalāpas*.³ You will see these particles arise and pass away with tremendous speed. This completes the development of four-elements meditation as a samatha practice. You may now proceed to the next stage of purification, purification of view, by analysing these *rūpa kalāpas*; or, if you have not already done so and would prefer to develop absorption concentration at this time, you may continue with other samatha practices before returning to four-elements meditation and progressing on to the analysis of materiality.⁴

¹ This order is based on ease of discernment; for details, see K&S/p.119.

² Meditators who have developed strong jhāna concentration will pass through this stage very quickly.

³ *Rūpa kalāpa*: literally “materiality-cluster.”

⁴ For an overview of the meditation options at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, please see Appendix I.4/p.59.

Three

Paññā (Wisdom)

Paññā consists of Right View and Right Intention.

- Right View¹ begins with a correct understanding of kamma and rebirth, and culminates in the correct understanding of the Four Noble Truths.
- Right Intention is the correct application of the mind in accordance with Right View. In practical terms, this constitutes thoughts that are free from sensual desire, ill-will and cruelty.

To develop paññā (wisdom) means to replace wrong view² with Right View, and wrong intention with Right Intention.

¹ **Right View** (*sammā diṭṭhi*): AA.I.16.2 describes five kinds of Right View: (1) Kamma-Ownership Right View; (2) Jhāna Right View; (3) Vipassanā Right View; (4) Path Right View and (5) Fruition Right View. Each of these five views offers a progressive level of insight into the Four Noble Truths; only views 4 and 5, however, are able to know and see the Four Noble Truths as they really are (at the level of ultimate reality). For details, see path and fruition knowledge; also M.117.5-9, K&S/p.30 & Answers 7.9-7.10, and WK/pp.58-59,88,129,224.

² **Wrong view** (*micchā diṭṭhi*): literally “wrong seeing;” an erroneous belief, opinion or theory, rooted in identity view – the false belief in a self. There are twenty different kinds of identity view (described in footnote 1/p.45), and from these arise further wrong views, such as those about the nature of the world, kamma and kamma result, God and man, existence and non-existence, etc. When clung to, such views can easily grow into dogmas, belief-systems and ideologies, and thus become a source of great suffering, both for oneself and others. Especially
(Continued on next page)

III. PAÑÑĀ (WISDOM)

One with wrong view “is like a blind man who wanders about the earth, encountering now right and now wrong paths, now heights and now hollows, now even and now uneven ground... Hence this is said:

‘As one born blind, who gropes along
Without assistance from a guide,
Chooses a road that may be right
At one time, at another wrong,
So while the foolish man pursues
The round of births without a guide,
Now to do merit he may choose
And now demerit in such plight.
But when the Law¹ he comes to know
And penetrates the Truths² beside,
Then ignorance is put to flight
At last, and he in peace may go.’³

harmful are those wrong views that deny the workings of kamma, since such views inevitably lead to the performance of unwholesome actions. According to the Buddha, “No other thing than wrong views do I know... whereby to such an extent the unwholesome things not yet arisen arise... and the wholesome things already arisen disappear (A.I.22).” Wrong view is classified as an unwholesome mental factor and is also the first factor of the eightfold wrong path. For details, see D.1.1.29-3.29, M.60.5-9 and WK/pp.120-121.

¹ **Law:** Dhamma; teaching of the Buddha; Ultimate Truth.

² **Truths:** the Four Noble Truths.

³ Vis.XVII.118-119

Stage Three

Purification of View

The Analysis of Ultimate Materiality and Ultimate Mentality

How to Analyse Materiality

Because rūpa kalāpas arise and pass away so quickly, you may find at first that they are difficult to analyse. They appear as extremely small particles, with a definite size and shape, but that is because you have not yet completely penetrated the illusion of compactness.¹ To penetrate that illusion, you should ignore the arising and passing away of kalāpas and focus solely on the four elements in each kalāpa. Once you can discern the four elements, you will be able to analyse additional types of materiality.

Every kalāpa comprises at least eight types of materiality:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Earth Element | 5. Colour |
| 2. Water Element | 6. Odour |
| 3. Fire Element | 7. Flavour |
| 4. Wind Element | 8. Nutritive Essence |

Some kalāpas include a ninth type of materiality: the life-faculty element. And some include a tenth type of materiality (the previous nine, plus one of the following three): a transparent-element;² a heart-element;³ or a male or female

¹ For an explanation of the different kinds of compactness, please see K&S/p.126 & Answer 1.3.

² Distinctive transparent-elements can be found in each of the five physical sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. For a detailed description of the ten types of materiality, please see K&S: Chapter 4.

³ Kalāpas containing a heart-element are found only in the heart, the sixth sense organ, which is the base for the mind faculty (mentality).

III. PAÑÑĀ (WISDOM)

sex-element.¹ These eight to ten types of materiality, found in every kalāpa, are the primary constituent qualities of matter and cannot be broken down any further. They are what define ultimate materiality within your own body.

After completing this analysis of internal materiality, you should follow the same procedure for external materiality – the materiality of other living beings and inanimate objects.

How to Analyse Mentality

To discern mentality, you begin by entering the first jhāna, or access concentration if four-elements meditation has been your exclusive samatha practice. Emerging from jhāna (or access concentration), you then discern the five jhāna factors associated with that state of concentration, and after that, the jhāna consciousness and each of its associated mental factors (in this case, a total of thirty-three mental factors).² The same procedure is repeated with the second, third and fourth jhānas.³

Once you have discerned the four jhāna consciousnesses (and their associated mental factors), you need to discern other types of consciousness, for example, those consciousnesses that arise upon seeing an object, hearing a sound, feeling a touch, etc.

With practice, you will be able to discern and analyse up to eighty-nine different types of consciousness, according to your level of development in meditation, and fifty-two associated mental factors. You will see these consciousnesses and their concomitant mental factors arise and pass away in rapid

¹ Kalāpas containing a male or female sex-element are found throughout the body, in all six sense organs.

² Every consciousness arises with a minimum of seven to a maximum of thirty-three associated mental factors; of these, seven are always present in every mind-moment. They are: (1) contact, (2) feeling, (3) perception, (4) volition, (5) one-pointedness, (6) life-faculty and (7) attention.

³ For a listing of the four jhānas and their associated jhāna factors, please see Appendix I.1/p.57.

succession, in fact, seventeen times faster than rūpa kalāpas. Each type of consciousness falls into one of three broad categories: wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate. Associated mental factors also fall into three broad categories: beautiful (wholesome), unwholesome and ethically variable. All these different types of consciousness, along with their associated mental factors, are what define ultimate mentality in regard to your own mind.

After completing this analysis of internal mentality, you follow the same procedure for external mentality, by analysing the minds of other living beings.¹ You should repeat these two analyses again and again, alternating between internal and external mentality, as you gradually extend your range of perception throughout the infinite universe.

Lastly, you analyse materiality and mentality together, as before, both internally and externally. At this stage, you will not see any beings or persons existing anywhere, only ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality – this insight-knowledge is called the knowledge of analysing mentality-materiality.² To know and see materiality and mentality in this manner is to know and see the five aggregates of clinging, and to know and see the five aggregates of clinging is to know and see the First Noble Truth – the Noble Truth of Suffering.

¹ This procedure does not enable you to discern the minds of other beings individually, only in a general way. The ability to penetrate and know the minds of others individually is one of the five mundane higher powers (called “direct knowledges” in the *Visuddhimagga*). For an explanation of the higher powers, see Vis: Chapters XII-XIII.

² **The knowledge of analysing mentality-materiality:** This is the first of the sixteen insight-knowledges (listed on p.40 and described in detail in K&S: Chapters 4-7). The second insight-knowledge, the knowledge of discerning cause and condition, will be discussed in the next stage of purification, purification by overcoming doubt. After you have developed these two knowledges, you will need to complete them again, according to their individual characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. This will be explained by your teacher at the time of actual practice.

Stage Four

Purification by Overcoming Doubt

Seeing Dependent Origination

Before you can realize Nibbāna, the Third Noble Truth, you need to know and see not only the First Noble Truth, but also the Second Noble Truth – the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. In the *Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha explains the Second Noble Truth as follows:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering?

- (1) With ignorance as condition,
- (2) Volitional formations¹ [come to be];
- (3) With volitional formations as condition, consciousness;
- (4) With consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality;
- (5) With mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense-bases [eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind];
- (6) With the six sense-bases as condition, contact;
- (7) With contact as condition, feeling;
- (8) With feeling as condition, craving;
- (9) With craving as condition, clinging;
- (10) With clinging as condition, existence;
- (11) With existence as condition, birth;
- (12) With birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to be.

¹ **Volitional formations** (*saṅkhāra*): in this context, the active aspect of forming, namely “kamma,” which comprises the wholesome and unwholesome volitional actions of body, speech and mind that condition the future states of living beings. For an explanation of kamma, please see WK/pp.42-43, BD: *saṅkhāra*, AS.V.18-33 and Vis: Chapter XIX.

STAGE FOUR: PURIFICATION BY OVERCOMING DOUBT

Such is the origin of this entire mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.”¹

The twelve underlined links listed above form the cycle of dependent origination, a teaching that explains how materiality and mentality condition one another over the three periods of time: past, present and future. The Buddha considered dependent origination to be one of his most important teachings, without which it is impossible to arrive at a correct understanding of the Four Noble Truths: “One who sees dependent origination sees the Dhamma, and one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination.”²

Through a meditation practice that utilises the framework of dependent origination as its guiding principle, you will be able to analyse the workings of cause and effect on a psycho-physical level. This analysis is not the result of psychic power; rather, it is the result of the power of insight-knowledge, which arises from your previous analysis of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality. Coupled with strong concentration, this insight-knowledge – called the knowledge of discerning cause and condition³ – is able to know and see each of the individual components of dependent origination, as well as the cause-and-effect relationships between them. This analysis will show you exactly how and why suffering is the inevitable result of ignorance and craving.

To begin the practice of seeing dependent origination, you choose a moment in your recent past that allows you to analyse the previous materiality and mentality of your own body and mind. Starting from that point, you trace the causes and conditions back in time, link after link, to your prenatal stage and then to your first moment of consciousness at the time of conception. With the strength of concentration that you

¹ A.III.61 *Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta* (Sectarian Doctrines Discourse)

² M.28.28 *Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta* (The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant’s Footprint)

³ For details on this insight-knowledge, please see K&S: Chapter 6.

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have developed through the practice of samatha, you will then be able to go back and discern your last moments of consciousness at the time of death in your previous life. You will clearly see how your human birth and its circumstances are the direct result of past kamma that matured at that time .

Again, you trace the causes and conditions of that mentality (and materiality) back to the time of death in a second previous life, in a third previous life, and so on, going back as many lives as you can.¹ As you continue to practise in this manner, certain dominant patterns will begin to emerge. You will come to see:

- How the actions that you consciously perform (your kamma) are driven by ignorance and craving.
- How you may experience the result of a particular action in one of three time periods: in the same life that the action is performed; in the following life; or in a subsequent future life.
- How wholesome thoughts, speech and physical actions can produce only wholesome (pleasant) results.
- How unwholesome thoughts, speech and physical actions can produce only unwholesome (painful) results.
- How the kammic force of a particular action can carry over for many lifetimes (even aeons) until it finally produces its wholesome or unwholesome result.

Now you can understand how avoiding unwholesome kamma can prevent future suffering; also, how performing wholesome kamma can lead to a happier life and even rebirth in a higher realm. However, even if you were to observe perfect sīla for a thousand lifetimes, perform numerous good works and cultivate the various jhānas, this alone would not be

¹ Other methods for discerning dependent origination will be explained by your teacher at the time of practice (see K&S/pp.187,197).

enough to destroy ignorance and craving – the root of suffering.¹ Only paññā has the power to do this – and to develop paññā, you must practise vipassanā. When your practice of vipassanā fully matures and you attain arahantship, all your volitional actions of body, speech and mind will become totally pure and cease to produce any new kamma. This attainment leads to the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates at the time of death, final release from the round of rebirth and the cessation of all suffering:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

- (1) With the cessation of ignorance,
- (2) Volitional formations cease;
- (3) With the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness ceases;
- (4) With the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality ceases;
- (5) With the cessation of mentality-materiality, the six sense-bases cease;
- (6) With the cessation of the six sense-bases, contact ceases;
- (7) With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases;
- (8) With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;
- (9) With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;

¹ Jhāna states can temporarily suppress all mental defilements, even ignorance and craving, but these defilements remain as latent tendencies and become operative again as soon as one emerges from jhāna. Mastery of the jhānas can lead to rebirth in the higher fine-material or immaterial realms; however, even rebirth in such blissful realms is no guarantee that in some future life one may not fall back into lower realms of intense suffering. Once one falls into one of these “woeful realms,” in most cases it is extremely difficult to escape; see footnote 3/p.45, Appendix I.6/p.61 and WK: notes A/p.55 & 134/p.245.

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- (10) With the cessation of clinging, existence ceases;
- (11) With the cessation of existence, birth ceases;
- (12) With the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease.”¹

Until such time as these twelve links cease without remainder, you will not be totally free from suffering. Unlike others, however, you now have the means to corroborate these teachings. This is accomplished by discerning your future lives in the same way that you discerned your past lives. You should continue to discern your future lives up to the time of arahantship, when the links of ignorance and craving cease,² and then to your future Parinibbāna at the time of death, when the five aggregates also cease. Depending on various wholesome causes and conditions, it is possible that your future Parinibbāna will occur either in this life, your next life, or in one of your subsequent future lives.³

At this point, you have completed the knowledge of discerning cause and condition. You now understand that materiality and mentality are simply the effect of past causes and will, in turn, become the cause of future effects – that besides these causes and effects, there is neither a person nor a living being. Having purified your mind of doubt about the reality of past and future existences, and the workings of kamma, you may now proceed to the next stage of purification and undertake the practice of vipassanā.

¹ A.III.61 *Tiṭṭhāyatana Sutta* (Sectarian Doctrines Discourse)

² A total of six links – links 1, 2, 8, 9, 10 and 11 – cease at this time, effectively ending the cycle of dependent origination (in this context, link 10 refers primarily to kamma that has the power to produce rebirth). Links 3-7 (the five aggregates of the arahant) continue to function up to the time of death, when they also cease. For details, see K&S/pp.22-25,196; BD: *Karma*; A.IV.118 and WK/pp.106-108,350.

³ However, if you stop meditating or engage in some unwholesome activity, the conditions will have changed, in which case the future results will also be different.

Stage Five

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not the Path

The Practice of Vipassanā

The formal practice of vipassanā begins by discerning the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self in each of the following categories of formations:¹

- Two categories – materiality and mentality
- Five categories – the five aggregates
- Twelve categories – the twelve factors of dependent origination
- Twelve categories – the six sense-bases (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-base), plus the six sense-objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc.)
- Eighteen categories – the six sense-bases, the six sense-objects and their respective six consciousnesses (eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-consciousness)

In the *Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha explains how to examine the five aggregates:

“So too, bhikkhus, whatever kind of materiality there is... whatever kind of feeling... perception... mental formation... [or] consciousness... whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a bhikkhu sees it, contemplates it and carefully investigates it.”²

¹ **Formations** (*saṅkhāra*): in this context, the passive aspect of forming, i.e. anything formed or conditioned; the five aggregates.

² S.22.95 *Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta* (Lump of Foam Discourse)

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This is the standard you should apply in your practice of vipassanā, as you carefully examine each of the categories listed above. For example, you should examine the two categories of materiality and mentality, not only in your present life, but also in your past and future lives, extending your range of perception throughout the infinite universe.

Once you have completed a thorough examination of every category, you will clearly see how impermanence, suffering and non-self pervade all aspects of materiality and mentality, including their causes – this insight-knowledge is called the knowledge of comprehension.¹ Now you understand what the Buddha meant when he referred to the three characteristics as “a firm condition, an immutable fact and a fixed law.”² With this understanding, you are now ready to move on to the next insight-knowledge, called the knowledge of arising and passing away.³

The knowledge of arising and passing away actually consists of two knowledges: (i) knowledge of the causal (the causal arising and passing away of formations) and (ii) knowledge of the momentary (the momentary arising and passing away of formations). Knowledge of the causal is developed from your previous analysis of dependent origination, and knowledge of the momentary, from your previous analysis of materiality and mentality.

To proceed, you once again divide formations into categories, and then, according to the appropriate method of insight – either causal or momentary – examine each category as before: in your present, past and future lives, extending your range of perception throughout the infinite universe. As you continue to practise in this manner, it is possible that one or more of the ten imperfections of insight may arise.

¹ For details on how to develop the knowledge of comprehension, please see K&S/pp.213-220.

² A.III.134 *Uppādā Sutta* (Arising Discourse)

³ For details on how to develop the knowledge of arising and passing away, please see K&S/pp.220-226.

The ten imperfections¹ are:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Light | 6. Resolve |
| 2. Knowledge | 7. Exertion |
| 3. Joy | 8. Mindfulness |
| 4. Tranquillity | 9. Equanimity |
| 5. Happiness | 10. Attachment |

With the exception of attachment, these states are not imperfections in themselves, but rather a sign of progress; when they arise, however, there is a temptation for the meditator to think, “Such [powerful] light... knowledge... joy... tranquillity, etc. never arose in me before. I have surely reached the path, reached fruition [i.e., Nibbāna].’ Thus he takes what is not the path to be the path and what is not fruition to be fruition.”²

If this happens to you, your progress will be interrupted – you will “drop [your] basic meditation subject and sit just enjoying the [light, knowledge, joy, tranquillity, etc.]”³ This is where an experienced teacher can help, by pointing out the imperfection when it arises and encouraging you to overcome this attachment by seeing it as impermanent, suffering and without a self.

When you have purified your mind of these ten imperfections, this is called “purification by knowledge and vision of what is and what is not the path.” Therefore, it is said: “The states consisting in light, knowledge, joy, tranquillity, etc. are not the path; but it is insight-knowledge that is free from imperfections and keeps to its course that is the path.”⁴

¹ **The ten imperfections** (of insight): For a detailed explanation, please see Vis.XX.105-129.

² Vis.XX.107,123; for an explanation of path and fruition, see p.44.

³ Vis.XX.123

⁴ Vis.XX.128

Stage Six

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way

Developing the Insight-Knowledges

There are sixteen insight-knowledges¹ that you need to develop progressively in order to realize Nibbāna. They are:

Previously Developed Knowledges

1. Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-Materiality
2. Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition
3. Knowledge of Comprehension
4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (Initial Phase)

Stage Six (the current stage)

4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (Mature Phase)
5. Knowledge of Dissolution
6. Knowledge of Terror
7. Knowledge of Danger
8. Knowledge of Disenchantment
9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance
10. Knowledge of Reflection
11. Knowledge of Equanimity toward Formations
12. Knowledge of Conformity

Stage Seven

13. Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage
14. Knowledge of the Path
15. Knowledge of Fruition
16. Knowledge of Reviewing

¹ For a listing of the sixteen insight-knowledges and their corresponding stages of purification, please see Appendix I.5/p.60; for details on how to develop these knowledges, please see K&S: Chapters 4-7.

STAGE SIX: KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE WAY

At this stage, you have already completed the first three of these insight-knowledges, as well as the initial phase of knowledge 4. Having overcome the ten imperfections of insight, the knowledge of arising and passing away now enters its mature phase. Once you become fully established in this knowledge, your insight concerning formations will be sharp and clear. At this point, you will be able to advance to the next level of insight, called the knowledge of dissolution.

To develop the knowledge of dissolution, you withdraw your attention from the arising of formations and attend only to their momentary passing away. When you become proficient in this practice, you will no longer see women, men, children, animals, or anything else that can be called a being. You will not even see kalāpas – only the continuous passing away of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality.

As you continue to discern the dissolution of formations, you will progress through each of the subsequent insight-knowledges, up through the knowledge of equanimity toward formations (knowledge 11). During this time, your understanding of the inherently painful and terrifying nature of conditioned existence will gradually mature. You will experience a disenchantment with all formations and a growing desire to escape from saṃsāra.

As your concentration continues to improve and your faith grows more resolute, a time comes when you will think, “Now the path [to Nibbāna] will arise.”¹ With that thought, the knowledge of equanimity toward formations comes to an end, and your mind naturally adverts to the next insight-knowledge, called the knowledge of conformity (knowledge 12). This is the last of the insight-knowledges to have formations as its object. Once you reach this point, there is no more turning back. Your mind can go in only one direction now – “to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”²

¹ Vis.XXI.129

² S.56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)

Stage Seven

Purification by Knowledge and Vision

Realizing Nibbāna

At this stage, the process of insight continues to unfold on its own, giving rise, in turn, to each of the remaining insight-knowledges.¹ These knowledges are:

1. Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage
2. Knowledge of the Path
3. Knowledge of Fruition
4. Knowledge of Reviewing

As you go through these final knowledges, your mind will cease to take formations as an object – it directly knows and sees the unformed element, Nibbāna. In that enlightened moment, you will realize the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and your life will be radically transformed. Doubts and delusions that plagued you for countless lifetimes will disappear in an instant. Shackles that bound you to realms of darkness and suffering will be suddenly removed, and you will experience a freedom and joy beyond anything you had ever known. But this is not the goal – it is only the first of four stages that every meditator must pass through in order to reach the final goal of arahantship. At each of these four stages, your understanding of the Four Noble Truths grows clearer and clearer, gradually dispelling the clouds of ignorance that have shrouded your mind in darkness for so many lifetimes.

The Buddha describes this process of gradual purification according to the number of defilements destroyed and the number of lives it will take to reach final liberation. He calls these defilements fetters because they fetter beings to the wheel of existence. There are a total of ten fetters, each of which corresponds to a particular stage of enlightenment.

¹ Knowledges 13-16 from the previous list (p.40).

The ten fetters are:

The Five Lower Fetters¹	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identity View 2. Sceptical Doubt 3. Attachment to Rules and Rituals 4. Sensual Desire 5. Ill-Will
The Five Higher Fetters²	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Craving for Fine-Material Existence² 7. Craving for Immaterial Existence² 8. Conceit 9. Restlessness 10. Ignorance

These ten fetters have been your master since beginningless time. As you progress through each of the four stages of enlightenment, the fetters that correspond to that particular stage will be destroyed, liberating you from the bondage of those defilements. Each stage follows the same basic pattern:

1. Knowledge of conformity prepares the meditator for the transition that will occur during the next four knowledges. Although knowledge of conformity actually belongs to the previous stage of purification, it is included here for its pivotal role in initiating the enlightenment process.
2. Knowledge of change-of-lineage ushers in the transition from worldling³ to noble one. This is the first of the insight-knowledges to take Nibbāna as its object.

¹ The five lower fetters tie beings to the sensual realm of existence. The sensual realm includes the four woeful realms, the human realm and the six *deva* realms. For details, please see Appendix I.6/p.61.

² The five higher fetters tie beings to the fine-material and immaterial realms of existence, where materiality is either extremely subtle (in the fine-material realms) or completely absent (in the immaterial realms, where beings exist as pure mentality). Please see Appendix I.6/p.61.

³ **Worldling** (*puthujjana*): literally “one of the many folk;” one who has yet to attain the state of a noble one.

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3. Knowledge of the path¹ arises as the meditator's consciousness enters absorption in the unformed element. With the force of a "thunderbolt," path knowledge "pierces and explodes the mass of greed, hatred and delusion never pierced and exploded before."² In that moment, the fetters are destroyed.
4. Knowledge of fruition¹ arises as a direct result of knowledge of the path. While path knowledge, however, pierces and destroys, fruition knowledge brings peace and bliss – the peace and bliss of absorption in Nibbāna. Just as a bucket of water cools the embers of a fire, even after that fire has been extinguished, so fruition knowledge completes the task of destroying the fetters, by calming and tranquilising the mind.³
5. Knowledge of reviewing arises at the end of fruition, upon re-entering the life-continuum. The meditator then reviews five things: (1) the path; (2) fruition; (3) Nibbāna; (4) what fetters have been destroyed; and (5) what fetters have yet to be destroyed.⁴

With each repetition of these five final knowledges,⁵ the meditator realizes a successive stage of enlightenment, up to

¹ **Path knowledge** and **fruition knowledge** (*magga ñāṇa* and *phala ñāṇa*): Also called "path and fruition," these are the two insight-knowledges that form the core of the enlightenment experience. Path knowledge arises only once at each stage of enlightenment and gives rise, in turn, to its corresponding fruition. Fruition knowledge denotes those moments of supramundane consciousness that arise immediately after the moment of path consciousness, and which, until the attainment of the next higher path, may reoccur innumerable times during the practice of vipassanā.

² Quotations in this sentence come from Vis.XXIII.2 and Vis.XXII.13.

³ Water simile is from a question-and-answer session with the Sayadaw.

⁴ The process of reviewing the fetters must be performed voluntarily (an arahant has no remaining fetters, therefore does not review item 5).

⁵ For a detailed description of these final insight-knowledges, please see K&S/pp.228-230 and Vis: Chapters XXI and XXII.

and ending with the fourth stage. The four stages of enlightenment are described below:

- i. Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*) path and fruition – At this stage, the three fetters of (1) identity view, (2) sceptical doubt and (3) attachment to rules and rituals are fully destroyed. With the destruction of identity view,¹ the stream-enterer ceases to regard the five aggregates as one’s self. With the destruction of sceptical doubt, he or she gains unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.² With the destruction of attachment to rules and rituals, the stream-enterer understands that such practices in themselves do not purify – rather it is the Noble Eightfold Path that purifies.

Such a person can no longer be reborn in any of the four woeful realms,³ nor can he or she perform the type of unwholesome actions that would lead to such a rebirth, for example: intentionally killing another being, taking what belongs to another, committing adultery, deliberately telling a lie or taking intoxicants. Such are the virtues of the stream-enterer – “unbroken, untorn, unblemished... freeing, praised by the wise.”⁴ One who has achieved this level of realisation will attain final liberation in a maximum of seven lives.

¹ There are twenty kinds of identity view, based on the notion of an ego or self: self (1) is, (2) possesses, (3) contains or (4) is contained in each of the five aggregates (see S.22.1 and M.44.7). Note: when identity view ceases, all other forms of wrong view also cease (see AS.IX.38).

² **Sangha**: the community of bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs; in this context, all those bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs who have attained path and fruition, and become noble ones.

³ **The four woeful realms**: The animal kingdom, the realm of *petas* (hungry ghosts), the realm of *asuras* (titans or demons) and the hells – these are the lowest of the thirty-one realms (see Appendix I.6/p.61).

⁴ S.55.1 *Cakkavattirāja Sutta* (Wheel-Turning Monarch Discourse); for more on the qualities of the stream-enterer, see A.V.47, A.VIII.39, S.12.41, S.55.2,32-33 and WK/pp.337-8.

III. PAÑÑĀ (WISDOM)

- ii. Once-return (*sakadāgāmi*) path and fruition – At this stage, the fourth and fifth fetters of (4) sensual desire and (5) ill-will are greatly weakened, but not fully destroyed. One who has achieved this level of realization will be reborn in the human realm no more than once before attaining final liberation.
- iii. Non-return (*anāgāmi*) path and fruition – At this stage, the two fetters of (4) sensual desire and (5) ill-will are fully destroyed. One who has achieved this level of realisation is no longer bound to the sensual realm of existence by the five lower fetters. With the destruction of sensual desire, the non-returner will never again entertain a thought of lust or craving for any object of the five senses.¹ With the destruction of ill-will, he or she will never again become angry or act out of fear. Such a person will be reborn in a fine-material realm and there attain final Nibbāna, without ever returning to this world.
- iv. Arahant (*arahatta*) path and fruition – At this stage, the remaining five higher fetters of (6) craving for fine-material existence, (7) craving for immaterial existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness and (10) ignorance are fully destroyed. With the complete destruction of all ten fetters, the arahant attains a state of perfect purity, no longer bound to any of the thirty-one realms and cleansed of even the last vestiges of ignorance and craving. With this attainment, the cycle of dependent origination comes to an end. For such a person, “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”²

¹ The five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.

² This description of the arahant’s attainment comes at the end of many suttas throughout the *Nikāyas*.

If a single achievement could be said to embody the essence of the Four Noble Truths, it is undoubtedly the attainment of arahantship. In fact, everything the Buddha taught during his forty-five years as the Perfectly Enlightened One, beginning with his first discourse at Isipatana, was directed toward that single goal: “So this holy life, bhikkhus, does not have gain, honour and renown for its benefit, nor the attainment of virtue for its benefit, nor the attainment of concentration for its benefit, nor knowledge and vision for its benefit. But it is this unshakeable liberation¹ of the mind that is the goal, bhikkhus, of this holy life, its heartwood and its end.”²

Upon his own attainment of arahantship, the Buddha uttered these words of exultation:

“Through many a birth
I wandered in saṃsāra,
Seeking, but not finding
The builder³ of this house.³
Painful it is to be born again and again.

“O house-builder! You are seen.
You shall build no house again.
All your rafters³ are broken.
Your ridgepole³ is shattered.
My mind has attained the unconditioned.⁴
Achieved is the end of craving.”⁵

¹ **Liberation** (*vimutti*): In this context, liberation refers to the realization of Nibbāna by arahant fruition knowledge.

² M.29.7 *Mahāsāropama Sutta* (The Greater Discourse on the Simile of Heartwood)

³ **Builder**: craving; **House**: body (the five aggregates); **Rafters**: defilements; **Ridgepole**: ignorance.

⁴ **Unconditioned**: that which is not formed or conditioned (by a pre-existing cause); the state of release from the cycle of dependent origination; a synonym for the unformed element (Nibbāna).

⁵ Dh.153-154 *Udāna Vatthu* (Words of Exultation) spoken by the Buddha after his Great Enlightenment and chanted every morning in the meditation halls at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery.

Conclusion

This book began with a general discussion of the Four Noble Truths, the threefold training and the seven stages of purification. It then touched on some of the primary teaching methods employed at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, as described in *Knowing and Seeing*. Topics covered include: training in morality; mindfulness of breathing; four-elements meditation; the analysis of ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality; dependent origination; the practice of vipassanā; the sixteen insight-knowledges; and the four stages of enlightenment.

Having come to the conclusion of this brief overview, you may be wondering what first steps you can take to get established in a home-based meditation practice. Alternatively, you may have thought about coming to a forest monastery, like this one, where you could pursue the practices of samatha and vipassanā in a more conducive setting, under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

As a householder, a best first step would be to begin with the practice of mindfulness of breathing; start with an hour (or as close to an hour as possible) and try to work up to two or three hours a day. Keep in mind that regular daily meditation is the key to success. To support your practice, you should make a strong effort to observe the five precepts for laypersons.¹ If you are able to attend a Pa-Auk meditation retreat, this would give your practice a tremendous boost. Information on upcoming Pa-Auk retreats can be found at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 81. You may also write directly to the monastery or check with any of the contact persons listed in the Resource Guide.

¹ **The five precepts for laypersons:** (1) to refrain from the destruction of life (this includes insects); (2) to refrain from taking what is not given; (3) to refrain from sexual misconduct; (4) to refrain from untrue speech; (5) to refrain from the use of wines, liquors and other intoxicants (including recreational drugs).

CONCLUSION

During the time of the Buddha, many laypeople were able to successfully practise the threefold training at home, attain path and fruition, and become noble ones. The Buddha, however, spoke time and again about the cares of the householder's life¹. Owing to its many responsibilities and distractions, such a life is inevitably fraught with unforeseen challenges and disappointments. Practising in a traditional forest monastery, on the other hand, has many advantages. It is here that you will find:

- A supportive community of like-minded individuals
- Noble friends and wise teachers
- An environment that encourages the observance of the precepts
- A secluded environment with few distractions
- Few responsibilities
- A culture and laity that support the traditional practice of Theravāda Buddhism and, in particular, the monastic lifestyle

Other than our daily timetable, the monastery does not follow any special retreat schedule. If you plan to come for a retreat, as a general rule, the longer you stay, the greater the benefit. A certain amount of preparatory reading may also be helpful.

Recommended Reading List

- *Knowing and Seeing (Revised Edition II)* by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw; 2008
- *The Workings of Kamma* by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw; 2008

¹ **Householder's life** (cares of): M.13.7-11, M.26.5-14, M.36.12, M.125.23

CONCLUSION

- *Life of the Buddha* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli: Buddhist Publication Society; Kandy, Sri Lanka; 1972, 1992
- *The Word of the Buddha* by Nyanatiloka Mahāthera: B.P.S.; Kandy, Sri Lanka; 1971, 2001
- *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi: Wisdom Publications; Somerville, Massachusetts; USA; 1995, 2001, 2005
- *In the Buddha's Words* by Bhikkhu Bodhi: Wisdom Publications; Somerville, Massachusetts; USA; 2005

For those who wish to ordain, *The Buddhist Monastic Code* by Thanissaro Bhikkhu (or another translation of the monastic disciplinary code) is required reading. This book is available at www.accesstoinsight.org.

For a more detailed description of the Pa-Auk teaching methods, please refer to *Knowing and Seeing* by the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.

Further information on Pa-Auk Forest Monastery and its affiliate centres, including a virtual copy of *Knowing and Seeing* and an international retreat schedule, may be obtained at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 81.

You may also write directly to the monastery or contact any of the contact persons listed in our Resource Guide.

May you be happy.

Biography of the Sayadaw

The Venerable Āciṇṇa, commonly referred to as the “Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw” (and, in less formal circumstances, as “Pa-Auk Sayadaw”), is the current abbot and principal teacher at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. “Sayadaw” is a Burmese honorific title meaning “respected teacher.”

The Sayadaw was born in 1934, in Leigh-Chaung Village, Hinthada Township, in the delta region about one hundred miles northwest of the capital, Yangon. In 1944, at age ten, he ordained as a novice monk (*sāmaṇera*) at a monastery in his village. During the next decade, he pursued the life of a typical scholar-novice, studying the Pāli Texts (including *Vinaya*, *Suttas* and *Abhidhamma*) under various teachers. He passed the three Pāli language examinations while still a novice.

In 1954, at age twenty, the Sayadaw received the higher ordination as a bhikkhu. He continued his studies of the Pāli Texts under the guidance of learned elder monks. In 1956 he passed the prestigious *Dhammācariya* examination. This is equivalent to a BA in Buddhist Pāli Studies and confers the title of “Dhamma Teacher.”

During the next eight years, the Sayadaw continued his investigation into the Dhamma, travelling throughout Myanmar to learn from various well-known teachers. In 1964, during his tenth “rains retreat” (*vassa*), he turned his attention to intensifying his meditation practice and began to practise “forest dwelling.” Although he continued with his study of the Pāli Texts, he now sought out and gained instruction from the revered meditation teachers of those times.

For the next sixteen years, he made forest dwelling his primary practice. He spent these years in the southern part of Myanmar, in Mon State: three years in Mudon Township (just south of Mawlamyine) and thirteen years in Ye Township (approximately one hundred miles down the coast). During this period, he lived a very simple life, devoting his time to meditation and study of the Pāli Texts.

In 1981 the Sayadaw received a message from the abbot of Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, the Venerable Aggapaññā. The abbot was dying and asked the Venerable Āciṇṇa to look after his monastery. Five days later, the Venerable Aggapaññā passed away. As the new abbot of the monastery, the Venerable Āciṇṇa became known as the “Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.” Although he oversaw the running of the monastery, the Sayadaw would spend most of his time in seclusion, meditating in a bamboo hut in the upper forested area, which covered a deserted range of hills running along the base of the Taung Nyo Mountain Range. This area later came to be known as the Upper Monastery.

Since 1983, both monastics and laity have been coming to study meditation with the Sayadaw. Foreign meditators began to arrive at the monastery in the early 1990’s. As the Sayadaw’s reputation steadily grew, the Upper Monastery gradually expanded from a simple bamboo hut and a handful of disciples to more than two hundred and fifty kuṭis (meditators’ huts) in the forest; a large two-storey meditation hall for the men; a library (with office, computer room and men’s dormitory on the lower levels); a clinic; a hospital; an almsgiving hall; a two-storey refectory; and a reception hall and dwelling for the Sayadaw. In the Lower Monastery, facilities include more than one hundred and eighty kutis, a new kitchen and, for the women, a large three-storey meditation hall (with sleeping quarters on the ground floor) and a five-storey dormitory (still under construction).

Currently, there are more than one hundred and thirty foreign monks, nuns and lay practitioners residing at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. During our three-month rains retreat, the total monastic population averages between six and seven hundred. Together with laypeople, the monastery population sometimes tops fifteen hundred during festival times.

In 1997 the Sayadaw published his magnum opus, a massive five-volume work titled *The Practice that Leads to Nibbāna*, explaining the entire course of teaching in detail and

supported by copious quotations from the Pāli Texts – it is currently available only in Burmese and Sinhalese. On January 4, 1999, in public recognition of the Sayadaw’s achievements, the government bestowed upon him the title *Agga Mahā Kammaṭṭhānācariya*, which means “Highly Respected Meditation Teacher.”

The Sayadaw speaks fluent English and has lectured and led retreats outside of Myanmar since 1997. In December of 2006, he travelled to Sri Lanka to undertake a long-term personal retreat, staying in seclusion and suspending his teaching schedule throughout 2007. As of this printing, his teaching schedule for 2008 includes a four-month retreat in the United States, July – October, to be held at the Forest Refuge in Barre, Massachusetts.

Updates on the Sayadaw’s teaching schedule may be obtained at the websites listed in our Resource Guide on page 81.

February 2008

Tables and Charts

1: The Jhāna Factors¹

Jhāna	Jhāna Factors
First Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Application of the Mind (<i>vitakka</i>) 2. Sustained Application of the Mind (<i>vicāra</i>) 3. Joy (<i>pīti</i>) 4. Happiness (<i>sukha</i>) 5. One-Pointedness of Mind (<i>ekaggatā</i>)
Second Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joy 2. Happiness 3. One-Pointedness of Mind
Third Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Happiness 2. One-Pointedness of Mind
Fourth Jhāna	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equanimity (<i>upekkhā</i>) 2. One-Pointedness of Mind

2: The Five Kinds of Jhāna Mastery

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To enter jhāna whenever desired. 2. To resolve to stay in jhāna for a determined length of time, and to carry out that resolve. 3. To emerge from jhāna at the determined time. 4. To advert (bring your attention) to the jhāna factors (after emerging from jhāna). 5. To review the jhāna factors.
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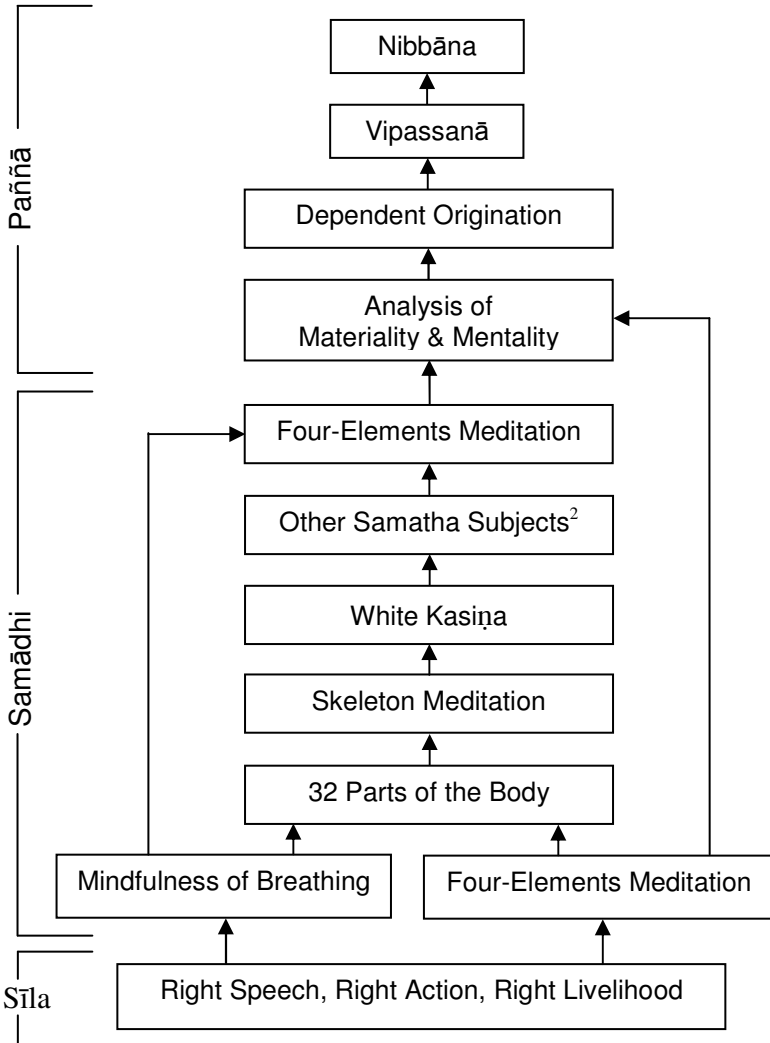
¹ For a detailed description of the jhāna factors, please see K&S/pp.43-47 and Vis.IV.88-101,194-195.

3: Samatha Subjects Taught at Pa-Auk and their Respective Attainments

Subject	Attainment
Mindfulness of Breathing	Up to 4 th Jhāna
Four-Elements Meditation	Up to Access Concentration
Thirty-two Parts of the Body	Up to Access or 1 st Jhāna ¹
Skeleton Meditation	Up to Access or 1 st Jhāna
The Ten Kasīṇas Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Blue, Yellow, Red, White, Space, Light	Up to 4 th Jhāna "
The Four Immaterial Jhānas 1. Boundless Space 2. Boundless Consciousness 3. Nothingness 4. Neither-Perception-Nor- Non-Perception	1 st Immaterial Jhāna 2 nd Immaterial Jhāna 3 rd Immaterial Jhāna 4 th Immaterial Jhāna
The Four Divine Abodes 1. Loving-Kindness 2. Compassion 3. Appreciative Joy 4. Equanimity	Up to 3 rd Jhāna " " 4 th Jhāna only
The Four Protective Meditations 1. Loving-Kindness 2. Recollection of the Buddha 3. Loathsomeness 4. Recollection of Death	Up to 3 rd Jhāna Up to Access Concentration Up to 1 st Jhāna Up to Access Concentration

¹ Although it is possible to attain access concentration or 1st jhāna using thirty-two parts as a meditation subject, neither attainment is required for success in this practice; for a detailed description of the thirty-two parts practice, please see K&S/pp.57-58.

4: Meditation Options at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery¹



¹ This chart illustrates the general course of instruction at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery. Based on the meditator's personal requirements, instruction may vary from case to case.

² These subjects include the nine remaining kasiṇas, the four immaterial jhānas, the four divine abodes and the four protective meditations.

5: Stages of Purification and the Insight-Knowledges

Purification and Description
<p>I. Purification of Virtue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Fourfold Purification
<p>II. Purification of Mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Forty Samatha Subjects Taught by the Buddha
<p>III. Purification of View</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-Materiality
<p>IV. Purification by Overcoming Doubt</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition
<p>V. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is and What is Not the Path</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Knowledge of Comprehension 4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (Initial Phase)
<p>VI. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (Mature Phase) 5. Knowledge of Dissolution 6. Knowledge of Terror 7. Knowledge of Danger 8. Knowledge of Disenchantment 9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance 10. Knowledge of Reflection 11. Knowledge of Equanimity toward Formations 12. Knowledge of Conformity
<p>VII. Purification by Knowledge and Vision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Knowledge of Change-of-Lineage 14. Knowledge of the Path 15. Knowledge of Fruition 16. Knowledge of Reviewing

6: The Thirty-One Realms of Existence¹

Main Divisions	Realms	Description
<p>4 Immaterial Realms (<i>arūpa-loka</i>)</p>	Realm of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception	These are realms of pure mentality, accessible from any one of the four immaterial jhānas at the time of death. Beings in these realms can live for thousands of aeons and enjoy the highest degree of jhānic bliss. Without path and fruition, however, even the highest levels of concentration are no guarantee that such beings will not eventually fall back into lower realms.
	Realm of Nothingness	
	Realm of Infinite Consciousness	
	Realm of Infinite Space	
<p>16 Fine-Material Realms (<i>rūpa-loka</i>)</p>	4 th Jhāna Plane (7 Realms)	These are realms of subtle materiality, accessible from any one of the four jhānas at the time of death. Beings in these “Brahma Realms” can live for aeons, possess perfect sīla and enjoy varying degrees of jhānic bliss. When they die, their level of jhāna at that time determines the realm of rebirth. Those who lose their jhāna completely will be reborn as humans and devas. Conversely, humans and devas who are able to maintain jhānic absorption at the time of death will be reborn here.
	3 rd Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
	2 nd Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
	1 st Jhāna Plane (3 Realms)	
<p>11 Sensual Realms (<i>kāma-loka</i>)</p>	Deva Realms (6 Realms)	<p>The Sensuous and Blissful Realms</p> Of all thirty-one realms, the human realm provides the greatest range of pleasure and pain, as well as the greatest opportunity for enlightenment. Life as a deva, on the other hand, is extremely pleasant, filled with sensual pleasures far superior to those in the human realm. Many devas become intoxicated by these pleasures, forget to practice sīla and end up being reborn in a woeful realm.
	Human Realm	
	Asura Realm	<p>The Four Woeful Realms</p> These four woeful realms are the home for most living beings. Once one falls into one of these woeful realms, in most cases it is extremely difficult to escape.
	Peta Realm	
	Animal Realm	
	Hell Realm	

¹ Concept and table design adopted from AS.V.3-7 (including Table 5.1).

Information for Foreign Meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

Pa-Auk Forest Monastery (“Pa-Auk Tawya” in Burmese) is a Buddhist monastery in the Theravāda tradition, with emphasis on the teaching and practice of both samatha (tranquillity) and vipassanā (insight) meditation. The number of residents varies seasonally from approximately 700 to 1,500 (during festival times) – this includes more than 130 foreign monks, nuns and lay practitioners, coming from more than twenty different countries. All are here to practise meditation under the guidance of the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, the abbot and principal teacher at this monastery.

This document provides you with an outline of the monastery’s basic requirements and services, plus it tells you how to get here.

Arrival

- Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Monasteries. Upon arrival, foreigners must register at the following locations: male residents – the Registration Office for Foreigners in the Upper Monastery; female residents – the Lower Monastery Office. Please be sure to obtain and read a copy of our “Rules for Foreign Meditators” (Appendix III of this book), which you can pick up at either office.

In General

- Meditators must strictly observe the fourfold purification during their stay here. This purification consists of:
 - (1) The 227 rules of the *Pātimokkha* for Theravāda monks; the 10 precepts and 75 *Sekhiya* (training) rules for novices; and the 5, 8 or 10 precepts for laypersons and nuns.

- (2) Restraint of the six sense faculties – of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.
- (3) Purification of livelihood (Right Livelihood) – livelihood that accords with the precepts.
- (4) Reflection on (and moderation in) the use of the four requisites – food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

Meditation

- Everyone must attend the group sittings at their respective meditation hall. Group sittings are held at the following times: 4:00-5:30 am, 7:30-9:00 am, 1:00-2:30 pm, 3:30-5:00 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm.
- Interviews with Pa-Auk meditation teachers are an important aid to one's practice. New arrivals should come for an interview every day (or make a suitable arrangement that accords with their meditation teacher's schedule).
- Meditators must practise according to the instructions of their meditation teacher.

Smoking, Drinking and Drugs

- Smoking, drinking, chewing tobacco or betel nut, and the use of recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. If you use any of these items, please dispose of them before entering the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you break this rule, you will be asked to leave.

Diet and Piṇḍapāta (receiving of almsfood)

- Meals are offered in the Piṇḍapātasāla (alms hall). Please arrive for piṇḍapāta at the following times:
 - Breakfast – 5:30-6:00 am (depending on the time of dawn)
 - Lunch – 10:00-10:15 am
- The kitchen prepares a vegetarian diet only; no special diets are offered.
- Boiled and filtered drinking water are available at various locations throughout the monastery.

Attire

- Theravāda monks and novices should wear only allowable robes, slippers, etc. Robes must be kept clean. Highly colourful robes (red, bright yellow, etc.) are not acceptable.
- Lay practitioners should dress modestly at all times:
 - Men – no bare shoulders, no bare calves, no bare knees; no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, vests or undershirts; no ripped or otherwise improper attire.
 - Women – no bare shoulders, midriff, calves or knees; no short skirts, no shorts, no sleeveless shirts or blouses; no thin, transparent, tight, revealing, brightly coloured or otherwise improper attire.

Medical Care

- There are quarters for the sick and a clinic, with a resident doctor. A local doctor trained in Western medicine visits once a week; another trained in traditional Burmese medicine visits once a fortnight.

International Mail

- Excessive correspondence can disturb meditation. Please keep your correspondence to a minimum.
- Outgoing mail should be left in the Outgoing Mailbox at the Piṇḍapātasāla; incoming mail can be picked up on the table next to the Outgoing Mailbox. It is best for important incoming and outgoing letters to be registered.
- International parcels must be picked up in Yangon. Please check at the Lower Monastery Office to see if they can suggest someone to do this for you.
- To protect incoming parcels against loss or damage, all international parcels should be insured. Ask the sender to mail you a copy of the insurance form.
- Be aware that parcels are subject to customs formalities, censorship and duties.

International Telephone Calls

- You can receive incoming calls on the telephone in the Lower Monastery Office – service is intermittent and low quality. You will need to go outside the monastery to make outgoing calls; international calls are expensive and must be paid in US dollars.

E-mail/Internet

- Permission to send/receive e-mail is granted on a case-by-case basis.

Monastics and Money

- Theravāda monks, novices and 10-precept nuns are not permitted to use, handle or possess money in any form, including: cash, credit cards, cheques, electronic transactions, gold, silver, jewellery, etc. Monastics who carry their own funds must relinquish them PERMANENTLY before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule. (For those monastics with allowable requisite funds, see below.)
- Monastics with allowable requisite funds must arrange for the proper transfer of requisites from their previous location to the Pa-Auk *kappiyakāraka* (steward; hereafter referred to as “kappiya” for short) or other such person. Transfer of funds MUST follow the prescribed procedure in the *Vinaya* (please refer to the *Pāṭimokkha*, *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* rules 10, 18, 19 & 20).
- If you come to the monastery as a layperson and decide to ordain, you must make proper arrangements for your funds before ordination; this can be done through the monastery kappiya.

Visa Application/Extension, etc.

- If you plan to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for more than one month, you will need a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter in order to apply for the appropriate type of Myanmar visa. You can obtain a Sponsorship Letter through a Pa-Auk Contact Person or by writing to the monastery, attention: U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. Please check with the Myanmar Embassy in your home country for the latest visa policy and be sure to visit the Pa-Auk websites for more information. A listing of Pa-Auk Centres and Websites, international contact persons and Myanmar Embassies can be found in our Resource Guide on page 81.
- Once you get to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, you can apply for a three-month, six-month or one-year visa extension (stay permit). Payment for your extension can be arranged through the monastery kappiya. He will need nine passport photos plus sufficient funds in US dollars. Dollar bills must be in good condition: worn, torn, nicked, marked or questionable bills are unacceptable.
- Current cost of a one-year visa extension is US\$90. The visa extension should be applied for as soon as possible after your arrival in Myanmar. After that, applications for further extensions should be made at least two months before the expiry date of the visa extension. Please be aware that visa extension regulations and costs are subject to change.
- If you are a Theravāda monk, novice or 10-precept nun, the monastery will try to cover your expenses, but if the fees are in US dollars, the monastery's Burmese dāyakas (donors) will be unable to pay. So, to be safe, it is best for a dāyaka of your own to make arrangements with a local kappiya to handle the financial side of the extension fees.
- If you stay longer than three months, you must obtain a Foreigner's Registration Certificate (FRC), and when you leave, a Departure Form. Please apply for the FRC at least one month in advance.

Sponsorship

- A sponsorship letter grants permission for you to reside at this monastery – nothing more. All financial requirements (including medical, dental, transportation, visas, FRC, departure forms and other requisite items) are your personal responsibility. Please arrive with SUFFICIENT FUNDS (IN US DOLLARS) for the duration of your stay.
- If your visa (or visa extension) was obtained with a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter, this means you have agreed to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for the visa's duration. To use an entry/meditation visa for sightseeing and tourism would constitute an abuse of the privilege granted to you by the Sponsorship Letter and could create problems for the monastery.

Suggested Items to Bring

- The following list of suggested items was compiled by foreign meditators here: 10-12 passport photos; vitamin and herbal supplements; herbal teas; light, comfortable, easy-to-wash clothing; dental floss; toiletries; towel; talcum/medicated powder; large umbrella; earplugs; water resistant sandals; torch/flashlight; battery-powered alarm clock; mosquito repellent; yoga mat (if you practice yoga); spare glasses and copy of your prescription; get dental work done before coming. Most everyday-items can be obtained locally, name brands excluded; voltage here is 220V.

Climate

- There are three seasons in Myanmar: a hot season (March-May); a rainy season (June-Oct.); and a cold season (November-February). Temperatures range from 15° to 40° Centigrade (59° to 104° Fahrenheit).

How to Get to Pa-Auk Forest Monastery from Yangon

(Yangon → Mawlamyine → Pa-Auk →Mudon)

- Mawlamyine is 301 kms (187 miles) southeast of Yangon, and the monastery is another 14.5 kms (9 miles) southeast of Mawlamyine. Air-conditioned overnight buses to Mawlamyine/Mudon depart daily from the highway bus station in Yangon. You can buy tickets along the south side of Aung San Stadium, opposite the central train station. Note: If you take the Mudon bus, ask the driver to let you off at “Pa-Auk Tawya” (the bus goes right past the main gate of the monastery on the way to Mudon).
- Travel options include a weekly flight to Mawlamyine and a new train service that goes direct from Yangon to Mawlamyine. If you take the train, be sure to go “upper class.”
- Contact persons in Yangon can help you get to the monastery. For a listing of contact persons, please check our Resource Guide on page 81.

Revised May 16, 2007

Rules for Foreign Meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery

At Pa-Auk Forest Monastery, there is one basic rule of conduct, which embodies the spirit and essence of all the other rules that follow: to act properly at all times, showing respect and consideration for one another. As the Buddha encouraged his followers, let us live “in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”¹

Arrival/Departure

1. Pa-Auk Forest Monastery is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Monasteries. Upon arrival and departure, foreigners must register at the following locations: male residents – the Registration Office for Foreigners in the Upper Monastery; female residents – the Lower Monastery Office.
2. If you plan to be away from your kuṭi (meditator’s hut) for more than one week, you must leave it ready for anyone else to come and occupy: male residents – wash and clean what you have used, lock your kuṭi and return all borrowed items, including your kuṭi key, to the Sangha Office (in the Library building); female residents – wash and clean what you have used, lock your kuṭi and return your kuṭi key to the Lower Monastery Office. (Both male and female residents: You must return your kuṭi key even if the kuṭi is your own offering to the monastery.)
3. Do not leave the grounds overnight with the key to your kuṭi or take any Sangha items with you, such as eating utensils, umbrella, books, or tapes.

¹ M.31.6 *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* (The Shorter Discourse in Gosinga)

4. Do not leave your personal belongings behind. Please make prior arrangements with a fellow resident to store those items that you wish to keep and inform the Sangha Office of those items that you do not wish to keep.

Meditation

1. Everyone must attend the group sittings at their respective meditation hall (unless the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw has given them permission to meditate in their own kuṭi). Group sittings are held at the following times: 4:00-5:30 am, 7:30-9:00 am, 1:00-2:30 pm, 3:30-5:00 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm. A wooden sounding block is struck at 3:30 am, 7:15 am, 12:45 pm and 5:45 pm to notify meditators of the upcoming sitting.
2. Meditators are encouraged to continue their practice during unstructured hours and personal time, whether standing, walking, sitting, lying down, etc. Those who wish to continue sitting in the meditation hall are welcome to do so during this time.
3. New arrivals should come for an interview with their meditation teacher every day (or make a suitable arrangement that accords with their meditation teacher's schedule).
4. Meditators must practise according to the instructions of their meditation teacher.
5. Out of respect to your teacher, please describe your meditation experiences with absolute honesty. The report should be brief and to the point, and should reflect your personal experience.
6. Do not discuss your meditation practice with others or speak about your attainments. Questions about your meditation practice should be directed to your meditation teacher only.
7. Practise mindfulness. Move slowly and quietly when entering and leaving the meditation hall, while going to your seat, sitting down and in making any other

APPENDIX III: RULES FOR FOREIGN MEDITATORS

movements. Please be considerate of others. Do not bring extraneous books, bottles, plastic bags, etc. into the meditation hall. Do not make noise when handling items such as keys or your meditation manual. Although the need for silence applies particularly during scheduled meditation hours, you should make an effort to observe it at all times, as there are meditators who practise beyond the scheduled hours.

8. Do not talk in or around the meditation hall. If you must talk, then do so quietly, away from the meditation hall or out on the veranda where you cannot be heard. Loud talk, noisy whispering and, in particular, laughter can be distracting to other meditators. Remember that even after the formal meditation period has ended, others may still be meditating. Please be respectful of their efforts.
9. Do not use strong smelling balms, beeping clocks or noisy watches in the meditation hall.

Kuṭis

1. Please accept the kuṭi that has been assigned to you. Any problems with your kuṭi should be addressed to the Registration Office for Foreigners or the Lower Monastery Office. Do not change kuṭis without permission.
2. When you leave your kuṭi during the day, always remember to lock the door and windows. Make sure your valuables are stored in a safe place (or leave them at the Lower Monastery Office).
3. If you wish to repair or renovate your kuṭi (at your own expense and supervision), please discuss this with the Sayadaw, U Kuṇḍadhāna, U Candimā or the monastery kappiya (steward) in the Lower Monastery Office.

General Conduct

1. Smoking, drinking, chewing tobacco or betel nut, and the use of recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. If it is

- discovered that you have been using any of these items, you will be asked to leave.
2. Please be respectful of the environment: do not litter; do not waste water or electricity.
 3. Do not talk while waiting in the piṇḍapāta line for alms.
 4. During almsround, do not accept more food than you expect to eat.
 5. The following items are allowable after midday: hot and cold water; fresh strained fruit juice diluted with cold water; sugar or jaggery diluted with hot or cold water; herbal teas. To counteract sickness/weakness/tiredness, you may take butter, ghee, oil, honey, sugar and allowable medicine.
 6. The following items are not allowable after midday: solid food; boiled or otherwise processed juices made from fruits or vegetables; coffee, tea, Milo, milk, soft drinks, chocolate, cocoa, etc.
 7. If you go barefoot, according to the *Vinaya*, you should wash your feet before entering Sangha buildings.
 8. Between 7:00 and 7:30 am, residents should clean their kuṭīs and sweep the surrounding paths and areas. Those who wish may join the local Sangha between 5:00 and 6:00 pm in cleaning the meditation hall, sweeping public paths and walkways, cleaning public toilets, etc.
 9. Male residents may not receive women in their quarters without direct permission from the Sayadaw, U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. The same rule applies to female residents receiving men. Conversations between men and women must be conducted in public places. A single woman should not approach a monk without another man nearby who understands what is being said. Although two or more women may approach a single monk, they may not do so inside a kuṭī or other enclosed area.
 10. Yoga, Chi Gong and other acceptable forms of exercise may be done in private, but not in public. Do not teach

such exercises to others without permission from the Sayadaw.

11. Speak only when necessary. The rest of the time you should keep noble silence and attend solely to your meditation practice.
12. In General: Please be mindful in thought, speech and action; avoid finding fault with others; practise contentment and tolerance. When misunderstandings or doubts arise, please discuss them with your meditation teacher.

Seclusion

1. Silence and seclusion are important aids in developing concentration. For your own benefit, it is best not to leave the monastery grounds unless it is really necessary. If you need to leave, check first with the Sayadaw or your meditation teacher. If he approves your request, please inform U Kuṇḍadhāna or U Candimā. If you plan to be away overnight or longer, please also inform the appropriate office when, where and how you will be travelling, and when you expect to return.
2. Please avoid mingling with villagers and other local people outside the monastery.

Immigration

1. If your visa (or visa extension) was obtained with a Pa-Auk Sponsorship Letter, this means you have agreed to stay at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery for the visa's duration. To use an entry/meditation visa for sightseeing and tourism would constitute an abuse of the privilege granted to you by the Sponsorship Letter and could create problems for the monastery. (For all other types of travel, please see Rule 1 in the previous section.)

Theravāda Monks, Novices and 10-Precept Nuns

1. Sīla: Monastics must observe their respective *sīla*: for Theravāda monks (bhikkhus) – the 227 rules of the *Pātimokkha* and all other *Vinaya* rules; for novices (sāmaṇeras) – the 10 precepts, 75 *Sekhiya* (training) rules and all other *Vinaya* rules that apply; for Theravāda nuns – the 10 precepts.
2. Unallowable Items: Theravāda monks, novices and 10-precept nuns are not permitted to use, handle or possess money in any form, including: cash, credit cards, cheques, electronic transactions, gold, silver, jewellery, etc. Monastics who carry their own funds must relinquish them PERMANENTLY before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule.
3. Food: No food is to be eaten after midday. If you are sick, you are allowed the five tonics: butter, ghee, oil, honey and sugar, as well as the appropriate medicines.

Theravāda Monks

1. Nissaya: If you have less than 5 *vassa*, you must take *nissaya* with a Theravāda monk who has at least 10 *vassa* and is knowledgeable.
2. Food Storage: Bhikkhus may not store food overnight or keep tonics longer than seven days. Before the eighth dawn, all tonics must be relinquished to a layperson, nun or novice, without expecting to have them returned. To avoid waste, the best procedure is to take the exact amount you need for seven days. Be aware that medicines that contain oil or sugar are also subject to the seven-day rule.
3. Incoming Parcels: If a package arrives for you that might contain food, tonics or medicine, DO NOT TOUCH IT until it has been opened and examined by a layman or novice. He will then personally offer you those items that are allowable (at that time) and keep the remainder (to offer at the appropriate time). Be aware that if you touch any of

the above items BEFORE they have been offered to you, you will have to PERMANENTLY RELINQUISH them.

4. Ordination and Food Storage: This rule applies to both laymen and the novices who are planning to take higher ordination. If food, tonics or medicine are in your possession at the time of ordination, DO NOT TOUCH any of these items until after they have been offered to you by either a layman or novice. See Rule 3 (directly above) for details on how these items should be offered.

Theravāda Monks and Novices

1. Unallowable items: Requisite items obtained from unallowable sources (e.g., items that you or another Theravāda monk has bought) must be permanently relinquished before taking up residence in the monastery. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. Requisites: Do not request requisite items from anyone other than a blood relative or someone who has previously made an invitation to you. An exception to this rule may be made when requesting medicine if you are ill.
3. Piṇḍapāta: Foreign monks must collect piṇḍapāta at the Piṇḍapātasāla. If you want to go for piṇḍapāta in the village, you must first receive permission from the Sayadaw.
4. Piṇḍapāta Etiquette: Foreign monks are privileged guests and are invited to receive alms ahead of even the most senior Myanmar bhikkhus. In order to show respect, please arrive at the Piṇḍapātasāla on time. If you are late, do not rush to the front of the piṇḍapāta line. If the line has already begun to move and you are unable to reach the foreign monk's section, you should enter the Myanmar line according to your *vassa* age. Do not cut in front of senior bhikkhus. If Mahāyāna monks are late, they may not enter the Theravāda line, but should wait until it has passed. ON NO ACCOUNT should anyone enter the line beyond the last turn (at the sign).

5. Ordination: A candidate for ordination as a bhikkhu must study and thoroughly familiarize himself with the 227 rules of the *Pātimokkha* before taking ordination. A Mahāyāna monk must relinquish his Mahāyāna ordination completely before taking Theravāda ordination.

Mahāyāna Bhikshunīs, 8/10-Precept Nuns and Laywomen

1. Pindapāta Etiquette: The queuing order for the piṇḍapāta line is according to *vassa* for Mahāyāna bhikshunīs and according to age for 8/10-precept nuns and laywomen. Once the line has begun to move, bhikshunīs and 8/10-precept nuns may not enter the line in front of other bhikshunīs or nuns, but only at the end of the nun's queue.
2. Walking: Women should not walk alone between the Upper and Lower Monasteries. Please make arrangements to always have at least one female companion with you.
3. Interviews: A single woman should never be alone with a male teacher. If you are alone, please excuse yourself and find a companion or come at another time.
4. Decorum: During interviews, please maintain a proper distance from the male interpreter/teacher and observe modesty in all ways.

Laymen and Laywomen

1. Precepts: For the sake of communal harmony, as well as for your own practice, please memorise the eight precepts and observe them strictly. Everyone is encouraged to take the precepts formally upon arrival, and at the appointed time once a week. For Buddhists, the taking of the precepts is compulsory. Exception to the sixth precept is given by the Sayadaw only in cases of severe gastric problems.
2. Attire: Please dress modestly at all times.
Men – no bare shoulders, no bare calves, no bare knees; no shorts, no sleeveless shirts, vests or

APPENDIX III: RULES FOR FOREIGN MEDITATORS

undershirts; no ripped or otherwise improper attire. Shirts must always be worn.

Women – no bare shoulders, midriff, calves or knees; no short skirts, no shorts, no sleeveless shirts or blouses; no thin, transparent, tight, revealing, brightly coloured or otherwise improper attire.

3. Piṇḍapāta Etiquette: Please do not wear unclean or unsuitable attire (shorts, undershirts, etc.) to piṇḍapāta.
4. Requisites: You are responsible for providing yourself with a bowl, mosquito net, blankets and other necessities. You may go to the market twice a month, after receiving permission from your teacher.
5. Dāna: If you wish to offer a meal, you may arrange it through the Lower Monastery Office.

Revised July 1, 2007

Pa-Auk Resource Guide

Websites

Malaysia – www.Dhamma-s.org (text is in Chinese)

Singapore – www.paaukforestmonastery.org

USA – www.paauk.org

Myanmar Contact Information

Meditation Centres

- Pa-Auk Forest Monastery
Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar
Tel: (95) 57-27853 / (95) 57-27548
- International Buddhasāsana Meditation Centre
(Pa-Auk Tawya Branch)
Thilawar Road (near Kyaik-Khauk Pagoda)
Payargon Village, Than Lyin Township, Yangon
Tel: (95) 56-21927

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Bahan Township, Yangon
Tel: (95) 1-504011 / (95) 1-704314
E-mail: bluestar@mptmail.net.mm
- Daw Amy (Ms. Amy)
66 A, Sayarsan Road, Bahan Township, Yangon
Tel: (95) 1-548129 / (95) 1-556355
E-mail: attbbpp@myanmar.com.mm
- U Aung Pyone (Mr. Aung Pyone)
No (32), Kwet Thit St, Yay Kyaw (7th Qtr, near YMBA)
Pazundaung Township, Yangon
Tel: (95) 1-293847
E-mail: uap@mail4u.com.mm

International Contact Information

China

- Mdm. Liang Xinxin
Attention: Ms Ah Min
Guangzhou, Peoples Republic of China
Tel: (86) 20-84232438
E-mail: kaixinhuanzhaonin@126.com

Japan

- Myanmar Theravāda Buddhist Association
Attention: Ko Ye Tun, Tokyo, Japan
Tel: (81) 90-22209886

Malaysia

- Tusita Hermitage (Monastery)
Bodhivana Buddhist Hermitage (Nunnery)
c/o Kuching Bhagavan Buddhist Society
E-mail: jongjyi@gmail.com
Website: www.bhagavan.com.my
Contact: Sister Subha
52, Lot 3700, Dogan Garden, Jalan Dogan
93250 Kuching, Sarawak
Tel: +6012-8867353
- Nibbinda Forest Monastery
Mukim 5, Tempat Bukit Balik Pulau, Penang
Contact: Lee Hooi Chin
8N, Jalan Tunggal of Jalan Satu
11400 Air Hitam, Penang
Tel: +6012-4811984
E-mail: hcele7319@yahoo.com
- Nandaka Vihara Meditation Society
Lot 1250, Mukim 17, Off Jalan Kolam
Cheruk Tokun, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Penang

Contact: Ng Soon Beng

Tel: +6012-4855770 / +6016-4401250 (Chinese)

Email: nandakavihara@gmail.com

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- Pa-Auk Meditation Centre (Singapore)
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E-mail: paauc.mc07@yahoo.com.sg

Contact: Teoh Soon Seng

E-mail: teohss@singnet.com.sg

- Cakkavala Meditation Centre
E-mail: cakkavala_sg@yahoo.com.sg
Tel: (65) 98488384 – Dr Ng Wai Chong
- Visuddha Meditation Centre
34 Bedok Walk, Singapore 469135
Tel: (65) 90101663
E-mail: visuddha77@yahoo.com.sg

Sri Lanka

- Nā Uyana Āranya (monastery)
Pansiyagama 60554
Tel: (94) 37-3379036
E-mail: nauyana@gmail.com
- Dhammika Ashrama (nunnery)
Angulgamuwa, Pansiyagama 60554
Tel: (94) 37-5671258
E-mail: dhammikashrama@gmail.com

Taiwan

- Taiwandipa Theravada Buddhist College
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Tel: (886) 6-2301406 • Fax: (886) 6-2391563
E-mail: taiwandipa@gmail.com

APPENDIX IV: PA-AUK RESOURCE GUIDE

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Tau-yuan Hsien, Taiwan, 328, R.O.C.
E-mail: hong.shi@msa.hinet.net
Contact: Ven. Shih Shin Kuang
E-mail: 1220ssk@gmail.com

United States of America

- Roland Win
15 Palmdale Ave, Daly City, CA 94015-3708
Tel: (1) 650-994-3750
E-mail: rolandwin15@gmail.com
- Robert Cusick
P.O. Box 151533-1533, San Rafael, CA 94915
Tel: (1) 415-847-1302 (mobile)
Skype ID: robertcusick
Email: robertcusick@gmail.com
- Ching-Der Wang
18525 38th Ave. N., Plymouth, MN 55446
Tel: (1) 763-478-8954
E-mail: USRC4439762@Usfamily.Net

Other Addresses

Bangkok

- Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
132 Sathorn Nua Road, Bangkok, 10500
Tel: (66) 2-233-2237/ (66) 2-234-4698
Open: 9:00-11:30 am and 1:00-3:00 pm, Monday – Friday

Singapore

- Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
15 St Martin's Drive, Singapore 257996
Tel: (65) 67350209 • Fax: (65) 67356236
Open: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, Monday – Friday

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