

*The Path to
Peace & Freedom
for the Mind*

by

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INTRODUCTION

This analysis of the Path is intended as a guide to lead practicing Buddhists to peace and well-being in terms both of the world and of the Dhamma. Well-being in terms of the world includes such things as fortune, status, praise, and pleasure. These four things depend on our conducting ourselves properly along the right path. If we follow the wrong path, though, we are bound to meet with loss of fortune, loss of status, censure and criticism, suffering and pain. The fact that we experience these things may well be due to faults in our own conduct. So if our practice of the right path – the Noble Eightfold Path – is to lead us to peace in terms both of the world and of the Dhamma, we will first have to study it so that we understand it rightly and then conduct ourselves in line with its factors. Then, if we have aims in terms of the world, we'll get good results. Our fortune, status, good name, and pleasure will be solid and lasting. Even after we die, they will continue to appear in the world.

If, however, we see that fortune, status, praise, and pleasure are inconstant, undependable, and subject to change, we should immediately start trying to study and develop the qualities that will lead our hearts in the direction of peace. We are then sure to meet with results that parallel those of the world. For example, status – the paths of stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship; fortune – the gaining of the fruition of stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship: These forms of status and fortune don't deteriorate. They stay with us always. At the same time, we'll receive praise and pleasure in full measure, inasmuch as Buddhists chant in praise virtually every night and day that, 'The followers of the Blessed One conduct themselves well, conduct themselves uprightly, conduct themselves for the sake of knowledge, conduct themselves masterfully.' Similarly, our pleasure will be solid and lasting, steeping and refreshing the heart with the Dhamma, not subject to death or decay. This is called *nirāmisā sukha*, pleasure free from the baits of the world. Quiet and cool, genuine and unchanging, this is the pleasure for which people who practice the Buddha's teachings aspire. Like gold: No matter in what land or nation it may fall, it remains gold by its very nature and is bound to be desired by people at large. In the same way, the mental traits of people who follow the right path in terms of the Dhamma are bound to give rise to genuine pleasure and ease. Even when they die from this world, their fortune, status, good name, and pleasure in terms of the Dhamma will not leave them.

Thus, Buddhists who aim at progress and happiness should study, ponder, and put into practice – as far as they can – all eight factors of the Noble Path set out here as a guide to practice. There may be some mistakes in what is written here because I have aimed more at the meaning and practice than at the letter of the scriptures. So wherever there may be mistakes or deficiencies, please forgive me. I feel certain, though, that whoever practices in line with the guidelines given

here is sure to meet – to at least some extent – with ease of body and mind in terms both of the world and of the Dhamma, in accordance with his or her own practice and conduct.

May each and every one of you meet with progress and happiness.

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All of the Buddha's teachings and their practice can be summed up in a mere eight factors –

I. Right View: seeing in line with the truth.

II. Right Resolve: thinking in ways that will lead to well-being.

III. Right Speech: speaking in line with the truth.

IV. Right Action: being correct and upright in one's activities.

V. Right Livelihood: maintaining oneself in ways that are honest and proper.

VI. Right Effort: exerting oneself in line with all that is good.

VII. Right Mindfulness: always being mindful of the person or topic that forms one's point of reference.

VIII. Right Concentration: keeping the mind correctly centered in line with the principles of the truth, not letting it fall into the ways of Wrong Concentration.

DISCUSSION

I. RIGHT VIEW. 'Seeing in line with the truth' means seeing the four Noble Truths –

A. Dukkha: physical and mental stress and discomfort.

B. Samudaya: the origin of physical and mental stress, i.e., ignorance and such forms of craving as sensual desire. Right View sees that these are the causes of all stress.

C. Nirodha: the ending and disbanding of the causes of stress, causing stress to disband as well, leaving only the unequaled ease of *nibbāna*.

D. Magga: the practices that form a path leading to the end of the causes of stress, i.e., ignorance (*avijjā*) – false knowledge, partial and superficial; and craving (*taṇhā*) – struggling that goes out of proportion to the way things are. Both of these factors can be abandoned through the power of the Path, the practices we need to bring to maturity within ourselves through circumspect discernment. Discernment can be either mundane or transcendent, but only through the development of concentration can transcendent discernment or insight arise, seeing profoundly into the underlying truth of all things in the world.

In short, there are two sides to Right View:

– knowing that evil thoughts, words, and deeds lead to stress and suffering for ourselves and others;

– and that good knowing, properly giving rise to good in our thoughts, words, and deeds, leads to ease of body and mind for ourselves and others. In other words, Right View sees that evil is something that good people don't like,

and that evil people don't like it either. This is what is meant by seeing in line with the truth. For this reason, people of discernment should always act in ways that are good and true if they are to qualify as having Right View.

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II. RIGHT RESOLVE. There are three ways of thinking that will lead to well-being –

A. *Nekkhamma-saṅkappa*: resolving to shed the pleasures of the senses – which lie at the essence of the mental hindrances – from the heart and mind.

B. *Abyāpāda-saṅkappa*: resolving to weaken, dismantle, and destroy any evil in our thoughts. In other words, we try to shed from the heart and mind any thoughts of ill will we may have toward people who displease us.

C. *Avihiṃsa-saṅkappa*: resolving not to think in ways that aim at punishing or doing violence to others, or in ways that would lead to harm for other people or living beings. No matter how good or evil other people may be, we don't give rein to thoughts of envy, jealousy, or competitiveness. We can shed these things from the heart because they are harmful to us – and when we can do ourselves harm, there is nothing to keep us from harming others.

In short, there are two sides to Right Resolve:

– the intention at all times to abandon any evil or distressing traits that defile the mind and cause it to suffer; the intention to remove ourselves from this suffering, because traits of this sort are a form of self-punishment in which we do ourselves harm;

– the intention to develop within ourselves whatever will give rise to ease, comfort, and pleasure for the mind, until we reach the point where peace and ease are absolute: This is classed as having goodwill toward ourselves. Only then can we qualify as having Right Resolve.

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III. RIGHT SPEECH. Speaking in line with the truth has four forms –

A. *Not lying*.

B. *Not speaking divisively*, e.g., talking about this person to that person so as to give rise to misunderstandings leading to a falling-out between the two.

C. *Not speaking harsh or vulgar words*, casting aspersions on a person's family, race, or occupation in ways that are considered base by the conventions of the world.

D. *Not speaking idly*, i.e., in ways that are of no benefit to the listener – for instance, criticizing or gossiping about the faults of other people in ways that don't serve to remind our listeners to correct their own faults;

or grumbling, i.e., complaining over and over about something until our listeners can't stand it any longer, the way a drunkard grumbles repeatedly without saying anything worthwhile;

or speaking extravagantly – even if what we say may be good, if it goes over our listeners' heads it serves no purpose;

or babbling, i.e., speaking excessively without any aim. Talking at great length without really saying anything serves no purpose at all and fits the phrase, 'A waste of words, a waste of breath, a waste of time.'

In short:

– Don't say anything bad or untrue.

– Say only things that are true and good, that will give knowledge to our listeners or bring them to their senses. Even then, though, we should have a sense of time, place, and situation for our words to qualify as Right Speech. Don't hope to get by on good words and good intentions alone. If what you say isn't right for the situation, it can cause harm. Suppose, for instance, that another person does something wrong. Even though you may mean well, if what you say strikes that person the wrong way, it can cause harm.

There's a story they tell about a monk who was walking across an open field and happened to meet a farmer carrying a plow over his shoulder and a hoe in his hand, wearing a palm-leaf hat and a waistcloth whose ends weren't tucked in. On seeing the monk, the farmer raised his hands in respect without first putting himself in order. The monk, meaning well, wanted to give the farmer a gentle reminder and so said, 'Now, that's not the way you pay respect to a monk, is it?' 'If it isn't,' the farmer replied, 'then to hell with it.' As a result, the gentle reminder ended up causing harm.

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IV. RIGHT ACTION: being upright in our activities. With reference to our personal actions, this means adhering to the three principles of virtuous conduct –

A. *Not killing*, harming or harassing other people or living beings.

B. *Not stealing*, concealing, embezzling, or misappropriating the belongings of other people.

C. *Not engaging in immoral or illicit sex* with the children or spouses of other people.

With reference to our work in general, Right Action means this: Some of our activities are achieved through bodily action. Before engaging in them, we should first evaluate them to see just how beneficial they will be to ourselves and others, and to see whether or not they are clean and pure. If we see that they will cause suffering or harm, we should refrain from them and choose only those activities that will lead to ease, convenience, and comfort for ourselves and others.

'Action' here, includes every physical action we take: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down; the use of every part of the body, e.g., grasping or taking with our hands; as well as the use of our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feeling. All of this counts as physical activity or action.

External action can be divided into five sorts:

a. Government: undertaking responsibility to aid and assist the citizens of the nation in ways that are honest and fair; giving them protection so that they can all live in happiness and security. For example: (1) protecting their lives and property so that they may live in safety, freedom, and peace; (2) giving them aid, e.g., making grants of movable or immovable property; giving support so that they can improve their financial standing, their knowledge, and their conduct, establishing standards that will lead the country as a whole to prosperity – ‘A civilized people living in a civilized land’ – under the rule of justice, termed *dhammādhipeyya*, making the Dhamma sovereign.

b. Agriculture: putting the land to use, e.g., growing crops, running farms and orchards so as to gain wealth and prosperity from what is termed the wealth in the soil.

c. Industry: extracting and transforming the resources that come from the earth but in their natural state can't give their full measure of ease and convenience, and thus need to be transformed: e.g., making rice into flour or sweets; turning fruits or tubers into liquid – for instance, making orange juice; making solids into liquids – e.g., smelting ore; or liquids into solids. All of these activities have to be conducted in honesty and fairness to qualify as Right Action.

d. Commerce: the buying, selling, and trading of various objects for the convenience of those who desire them, as a way of exchanging ease, convenience, and comfort with one another – on high and low levels, involving high and low-quality goods, between people of high, low, and middling intelligence. This should be conducted in honesty and fairness so that all receive their share of convenience and justice.

e. Labor: working for hire, searching for wealth in line with the level of our abilities, whether low, middling, or high. Our work should be up to the proper standards and worthy – in all honesty and fairness – of the wages we receive.

In short, Right Action means:

- being clean and honest, faithful to our duties at all times;
- improving the objects with which we deal so that they can become clean and honest, too. Clean things – whether many or few – are always good by their very nature. Other people may or may not know, but we can't help knowing each and every time.

So before we engage in any action so as to make it upright and honest, we first have to examine and weigh things carefully, being thoroughly circumspect in using our judgment and intelligence. Only then can our actions be in line with right moral principles.

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V. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD. In maintaining ourselves and supporting our families, expending our wealth for the various articles we use or consume, we must use our earnings – coming from our Right Actions – in ways that are in keeping with moral principles. Only then will they provide safety and security, fostering the freedom and peace in our life that will help lead to inner calm. For

example, there are four ways of using our wealth rightly so as to foster our own livelihood and that of others, providing happiness for all –

A. Charity: expending our wealth so as to be of use to the poor, sick, needy, or helpless who merit the help of people who have wealth, both inner and outer, so that they may live in ease and comfort.

B. Support: expending what wealth we can afford to provide for the ease and comfort of our family and close friends.

C. Aid: expending our wealth or our energies for the sake of the common good – for example, by helping the government either actively or passively. ‘Actively’ means donating a sum of money to a branch of the government, such as setting up a fund to foster any of its various activities. ‘Passively’ means being willing to pay our taxes for the sake of the nation, not trying to be evasive or uncooperative. Our wealth will then benefit both ourselves and others.

D. Offerings (dānapūja): This means making gifts of the four necessities of life to support Buddhism. This is a way of paying homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha that will serve the purposes of the religion. At the same time, it’s a way of earning inner wealth, termed *ariyadhana*. A person observing the principles of Right Livelihood who does this will reap benefits both in this life and in the next.

The wealth we have rightfully earned, though, if we don’t have a sense of how to use it properly, can cause us harm both in this life and in lives to come. Thus, in expending our wealth in the area of charity, we should do so honestly. In the area of support, we should use forethought and care. The same holds true in the areas of aid and offerings. Before making expenditures, we should consider the circumstances carefully, to see whether or not they’re appropriate. If they aren’t, then we shouldn’t provide assistance. Otherwise, our wealth may work to our harm. If we provide help to people who don’t deserve it – for instance, giving assistance to thieves – the returns may be detrimental to our own situation in life. The same holds true in making offerings to the religion. If a monk has no respect for the monastic discipline, doesn’t observe the principles of morality, neglects his proper duties – the threefold training – and instead behaves in ways that are deluded, misguided, and deceitful, then whoever makes offerings to such a monk will suffer for it in the end, as in the saying,

*Make friends with fools and they’ll lead you astray;
Make friends with the wise and they’ll show you the way.
Make friends with the evil and you’ll end up threadbare,
And the fruit of your evil is: No one will care.*

Now, we may think that a monk’s evil is his own business, as long as we’re doing good. This line of thinking ought to be right, but it may turn out to be wrong. Suppose, for instance, that a group of people is playing cards in defiance of the law. You’re not playing with them, you’re just sitting at the table, watching. But if the authorities catch you, they’re sure to take you along with the group, no matter how much you may protest your innocence. In the same way, whoever makes offerings without careful forethought may end up reaping harm, and such a person can’t be classified as maintaining Right Livelihood.

In short, there are two sides to Right Livelihood:

– We should have a sense of how to use our wealth so as to maintain ourselves in line with our station in life, being neither too miserly nor too extravagant.

– We should give help to other people, as we are able, so as to provide them with comfort and well-being. This is what it means to maintain Right Livelihood.

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VI. RIGHT EFFORT. There are four ways of exerting ourselves in line with the Dhamma –

A. Make a persistent effort to abandon whatever evil there is in your conduct. For example, if you've given yourself over to drinking to the point where you've become alcoholic, spoiling your work, wasting your money and yourself, creating problems in your family, this is classed as a kind of evil. Or if you've given yourself over to gambling to the point where you've lost all sense of proportion, blindly gambling your money away, creating trouble for yourself and others, this too is classed as a kind of evil. Or if you've let yourself become promiscuous, going from partner to partner beyond the bounds of propriety, this can be damaging to your spouse and children, wasting your money, ruining your reputation, and so is classed as a kind of evil, too. Or if you've been associating with the wrong kind of people, troublemakers and debauched types who will pull you down to their level, this will cause you to lose your money, your reputation, and whatever virtue you may have. Thus, each of these activities is classed as an evil – a doorway to ruin and to the lower realms – so you should make a persistent effort to abandon them completely.

B. Make a persistent effort to prevent evil from arising, and use restraint to put a halt to whatever evil may be in the process of arising – as when greedy desires that go against the principles of fairness appear within you. For instance, suppose you have a ten-acre plot of land that you haven't utilized fully, and yet you go infringing on other people's property. This is classed as greedy desire, a path to trouble and suffering for yourself and others. Now, this doesn't mean that you aren't allowed to eat and live, or that you aren't allowed to work and search for wealth. Actually, those who have the enterprise to make whatever land or wealth they own bear fruit, or even increasing fruit, were praised by the Buddha as *uṭṭhāna-sampadā*, enterprising, industrious people who will gain a full measure of welfare in this lifetime. Greedy desires, here, mean any desires that go beyond our proper limits and infringe on other people. This sort of desire is bound to cause harm and so is classed as a kind of evil. When such a desire arises in the heart, you should use restraint to put a halt to it. This is what is meant by preventing evil from arising.

Another example is anger, arising from either good or bad intentions that, when unfulfilled, lead to feelings of irritation and dissatisfaction. Such feelings should be stilled. Don't let them flare up and spread, for anger is something you don't like in other people, and they don't like it in you. Thus it's classed as a kind of evil. You should exert restraint and keep your mind on a steady and even keel.

Your anger won't then have a chance to grow and will gradually fade away. This is what's meant by making a persistent effort to keep evil from taking root and sprouting branches.

Or take delusion – knowledge that doesn't fit the truth. You shouldn't jump to conclusions. Restrain yourself from making snap judgments so that you can first examine and consider things carefully. Sometimes, for instance, you understand right to be wrong, and wrong to be right: This is delusion. When right looks wrong to you, then your thoughts, words, and deeds are bound to be wrong, out of line with the truth, and so can cause you to slip into ways that are evil. When wrong looks right to you, your thoughts, words, and deeds are also bound to be wrong and out of line with the truth. Suppose that a black crow looks white to you; or an albino buffalo, black. When people who see the truth meet up with you, disputes can result. This is thus a form of evil. Or suppose that you have good intentions but act out of delusion. If you happen to do wrong – for example, giving food to monks at times when they aren't allowed to eat, all because of your own ignorance and delusion – you'll end up causing harm. So you should be careful to observe events and situations, searching for knowledge so as to keep your thoughts and opinions in line. Delusion then won't have a chance to arise. This is classed as making an effort to exercise restraint so that evil won't arise.

As for whatever evil you've already abandoned, don't let it return. Cut off the evil behind you and fend off the evil before you. Evil will thus have a chance to fade away.

C. Make a persistent effort to give rise to the good within yourself. For example –

1. *Saddhā-sampadā*: Be a person of consummate conviction – conviction in the principle of cause and effect; conviction that if we do good we'll have to meet with good, if we do evil we'll have to meet with evil. Whether or not other people are aware of our actions, the goodness we do is a form of wealth that will stay with us throughout time.

2. *Sīla-sampadā*: Be a person of consummate virtue, whose words and deeds are in proper order, whose behavior is in line with the principles of honesty leading to purity. These are truly human values that we should foster within ourselves.

3. *Cāga-sampadā*: Be magnanimous and generous in making donations and offerings to others, finding reward in the fruits of generosity. For example, we may give material objects to support the comfort and convenience of others in general: The fruits of our generosity are bound to find their way back to us. Or we may be magnanimous in ways that don't involve material objects. For instance, when other people mistreat or insult us through thoughtlessness or carelessness, we forgive them and don't let our thoughts dwell on their faults and errors. This is called the gift of forgiveness (*abhaya-dāna*) or the gift of justice (*dhamma-dāna*). It brings the highest rewards.

4. *Paññā-sampadā*: Be a person of consummate discernment, whose thinking is circumspect and whose sense of reason is in line with the truth.

All four of these qualities are classed as forms of goodness. If they haven't yet arisen within you, you should give rise to them. They will reward you with well-being in body and mind.

D. Make a persistent effort to maintain the good in both of its aspects: cause and effect. In other words, keep up whatever good you have been doing; and as for the results – mental comfort, ease, and light-heartedness – maintain that sense of ease so that it can develop and grow, just as a mother hen guards her eggs until they turn into baby chicks with feathers, tails, sharp beaks, and strong wings, able to fend for themselves.

The results of the good we have done, if we care for them well, are bound to develop until they take us to higher levels of attainment. For instance, when our hearts have had their full measure of mundane happiness, so that we develop a sense of enough, we're bound to search for other forms of happiness in the area of the Dhamma, developing our virtue, concentration, and discernment to full maturity so as to gain release from all suffering and stress, meeting with the peerless ease described in the phrase,

Nibbanam paramam sukham:

Nibbāna is the ultimate ease, invariable and unchanging.

When we have done good in full measure and have maintained it well until it's firmly established within us, we should then make the effort to use that good with discretion so as to benefit people in general. In short: Do what's good, maintain what's good, and have a sense of how to use what's good – in keeping with time, place, and situation – so as to give rise to the greatest benefits and happiness. Whoever can do all of this ranks as a person established in Right Effort.

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VII. RIGHT MINDFULNESS. There are four establishing of mindfulness or frames of reference for establishing the mind in concentration –

A. Contemplation of the body as a frame of reference: Focus on the body as your frame of reference. The word 'body' refers to what is produced from the balance of the elements or properties (*dhātu*): earth – the solid parts, such as hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin; water – the liquid parts, e.g., saliva, catarrh, blood; fire – warmth, e.g., the fires of digestion; wind (motion) – e.g., the breath; space – the empty places between the other elements that allow them to come together in proper proportion; consciousness – the awareness that permeates and brings the other elements together in a balanced way so that they form a body. There are four ways of looking at the body –

1. *Outer bodies:* This refers to the bodies of other people. When you see them, focus on the symptoms of the body that appear externally – as when you see a child suffering pain in the process of being born, or a person suffering a disease that impairs or cripples the body, or a person suffering the pains and

inconveniences of old age, or a dead person, which is something disconcerting to people the world over. When you see these things, be mindful to hold your reactions in check and reflect on your own condition – that you, too, are subject to these things – so that you will feel motivated to start right in developing the virtues that will serve you as a solid mainstay beyond the reach of birth, aging, illness, and death. Then reflect again on your own body – the ‘inner body’ – as your next frame of reference.

2. *The inner body*: the meeting place of the six elements – earth, water, fire, wind, space, consciousness – the body itself forming the first four. Center your mindfulness in the body, considering it from four angles:

- a. Consider it as a group of elements.
- b. Separate it into its 32 parts (hair of the head, hair of the body, etc.).
- c. Consider how the mingling of the elements leads to such forms of filthiness as saliva, catarrh, blood, lymph, and pus, which permeate throughout the body.
- d. Consider it as inconstant – it’s unstable, always altering and deteriorating; as stressful – it can’t last – no matter what good or evil you may do, it changes with every in-and-out breath; and as not-self – some of its aspects, no matter how you try to prevent them, can’t help following their own inherent nature.

The body, viewed from any of these four aspects, can serve as a frame of reference. But although our frame of reference may be right, if we aren’t circumspect and fully aware, or if we practice in a misguided way, we can come to see wrong as right to the point where our perceptions become skewed. For example, if we see an old person, a sick person, or a dead person, we may become so depressed and despondent that we don’t want to do any work at all, on the level of either the world or the Dhamma, and instead want simply to die so as to get away from it all. Or in examining the elements – earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness – we may come to the conclusion that what’s inside is nothing but elements, what’s outside is nothing but elements, and we can’t see anything above and beyond this, so that our perception of things becomes skewed, seeing that there’s no ‘man,’ no ‘woman.’ This is what can lead monks to sleep with women and abandon their precepts, eating food in the evening and drinking alcohol, thinking that it’s only elements eating elements so there shouldn’t be any harm. Or we may consider the filthy and unattractive aspects of the body until we reach a point where things seem so foul and disgusting that we can’t eat at all and simply want to escape. Some people, on reaching this point, want to jump off a cliff or into the river to drown. Or we may view things as inconstant, stressful, and not-self, but if we act deludedly, without being circumspect in our discernment, the mind can become a turmoil. If our foundation – our concentration – isn’t strong enough for this sort of investigation, it can lead to a distressing sense of alienation, of being trapped in the body. This is called skewed perception, and it can lead to corruptions of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*), all because we aren’t skilled in training the mind. We may feel

that we already know, but knowledge is no match for experience, as in the old saying,

*To know is no match for having done.
A son is no match for his father.*

So in dealing with this frame of reference, if we want our path to be smooth and convenient, with no stumps or thorns, we should focus on the sensation of the body in and of itself, i.e., on one of the elements as experienced in the body, such as the breath.

3. *The body in and of itself*: Focus on a single aspect of the body, such as the in-and-out breath. Don't pay attention to any other aspects of the body. Keep track of just the breath sensations. For example, when the breath comes in long and goes out long, be aware of it. Focus on being aware at all times of whether your breathing feels easy or difficult. If any part of the body feels uncomfortable, adjust your breathing so that all parts of the body feel comfortable with both the in-breath and the out, and so that the mind doesn't loosen its hold and run after any outside perceptions of past or future, which are the sources of the hindrances (*nivaraṇa*). Be intent on looking after the in-and-out breath, adjusting it and letting it spread so as to connect and coordinate with the other aspects of the breath in the body, just as the air stream in a Coleman lantern spreads kerosene throughout the threads of the mantle. One of the preliminary signs (*uggaha nimitta*) of the breath will then appear: a sense of relief-giving brightness filling the heart, or a lump or ball of white, like cotton-wool. The body will feel at peace – refreshed and full. The properties (*dhātu*) of the body will be balanced and won't interfere or conflict with one another. This is termed *kāya-passaddhi*, *kāya-viveka* – serenity and solitude of the body.

As for awareness, it's expanded and broad – *mahaggatam cittam* – sensitive throughout to every part of the body. Mindfulness is also expanded, spreading throughout the body. This is called the great frame of reference, enabling you to know how cause and effect operate within the body. You'll see which kinds of breath create, which kinds maintain, and which kinds destroy. You'll see feelings of breath arising, remaining, and disbanding; liquid feelings arising, remaining, and disbanding; solid feelings arising, remaining, and disbanding; feelings of warmth arising, remaining, and disbanding; feelings of space arising, remaining, and disbanding; you'll see consciousness of these various aspects arising, remaining, and disbanding. All of this you will know without having to drag in any outside knowledge to smother the awareness that exists on its own, by its very nature, within you, and is always there to tell you the truth. This is termed mindful alertness in full measure. It appears as a result of self-training and is called *paccattam*: something that exists on its own, knows on its own, and that each person can know only for him or her self.

4. *The body in the mind*: When the breath is in good order, clean and bright, and the heart is clear, internal visions may appear from the power of thought. Whatever you may think of, you can make appear as an image – near or far, subtle or gross, giving rise to knowledge or completely lacking in knowledge, true or false. If you're circumspect, mindful, and alert, these things can give rise

to knowledge and cognitive skill. If you aren't, you may fall for the images you see. For example, you may think of going somewhere and then see an image of yourself floating in that direction. You center your awareness in the image and float along with your thoughts until you get carried away, losing track of where you originally were. This way you get engrossed in traveling through heaven or hell, meeting with good things and bad, being pleased or upset by what you see. As a result, your concentration degenerates because you aren't wise to the nature of the image of the body in the mind.

If, though, you can think to restrain your train of thought and focus on the image as a phenomenon in the present, the image will return to join your primary sense of the body. You'll then see that they are equal in nature. Neither is superior to the other. The nature of each is to arise, remain, and then dissolve. Awareness is simply awareness, and sensations are simply sensations. Don't fasten onto either. Let go of them and be neutral. Be thoroughly mindful and alert with each mental moment. This level of sensation, if you're adept and knowledgeable, can lead to knowledge of previous lives (*pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*), knowledge of where living beings are reborn after death (*cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*), and knowledge that does away with the fermentations of defilement (*āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*). If you aren't wise to this level of sensation, though, it can lead to ignorance, craving, and attachment, causing the level of your practice to degenerate.

The image or sensation that arises through the power of the mind is sometimes called the rebirth body or the astral body. But even so, you shouldn't become attached to it. Only then can you be said to be keeping track of the body as a frame of reference on this level.

B. Contemplation of feelings as a frame of reference: The mental act of 'tasting' or 'savoring' the objects of the mind – e.g., taking pleasure or displeasure in them – is termed *vedanā*, or feeling. If we class feelings according to flavor, there are three –

1. *Sukha-vedanā*: pleasure and ease for body and mind.
2. *Dukkha-vedanā*: stress and pain for body and mind.
3. *Upekkhā-vedanā*: neutrality, neither pleasure nor pain.

If we class them according to range or source, there are four:

1. *Outer feelings*: feelings that arise by way of the senses – as when the eye meets with a visual object, the ear with a sound, the nose with a smell, the tongue with a taste, the body with a tactile sensation – and a feeling arises in one's awareness: contented (*somanassa-vedanā*), discontented (*domanassa-vedanā*), or neutral (*upekkhā-vedanā*).

2. *Inner feelings*: feelings that arise within the body, as when any of the four properties – earth, water, fire, or wind – change either through our present intentions or through the results of past actions, giving rise to pleasure, pain, or neutral feelings.

3. *Feelings in and of themselves*: feelings regarded simply as part of the stream of feelings. For example, pleasure, pain, and equanimity occur in different mental moments; they don't all arise in the same moment. When one of them, such as

pain, arises, focus right on what is present. If pleasure arises, keep the mind focused in the pleasure. Don't let it stray to other objects that may be better or worse. Stay with the feeling until you know its truth: in other words, until you know whether it's physical pleasure or mental pleasure, whether it results from past actions or from what you are doing in the present. Only when your mindfulness is focused in this way can you be said to be viewing feelings in and of themselves.

4. *Feelings in the mind*: moods that arise in the mind, independent of any object. Simply by thinking we can give rise to pleasure or pain, good or bad, accomplished entirely through the heart.

Each of these four kinds of feelings can serve as an object for tranquility and insight meditation. Each can serve as a basis for knowledge.

C. Contemplation of the mind as a frame of reference: taking as our preoccupation states that arise in the mind. The term 'mind' (*citta*) refers to two conditions – awareness and thinking. Awareness of thinking can cause the mind to take on different states, good or bad. If we classify these states by their characteristics, there are three: good, bad, and neutral.

1. Good mental states (*kusala-citta*) are of three sorts –

a. *Vitarāga-citta*: the mind when it disentangles itself from its desire or fascination with objects it likes or finds pleasing.

b. *Vitadosa-citta*: the mind when it isn't incited or roused to irritation by its objects.

c. *Vitamoha-citta*: the mind when it isn't deluded, intoxicated, or outwitted by its objects.

2. Bad mental states (*akusala-citta*) are also of three sorts –

a. *Sarāga-citta*: the mind engrossed in its affections and desires.

b. *Sadosa-citta*: the mind irritated or aroused to anger.

c. *Samoha-citta*: the mind deluded and ignorant of the truth.

3. Neutral mental states, which arise from being neither pleased nor displeased, or when mental activity (*kiriya*) occurs without affecting the condition of awareness for good or bad – are called *avyākata*: indeterminate.

If we classify mental states according to their range or source, there are three –

1. *Outer mental states*: thoughts that run after perceptions of past or future, and may be either contented (this is termed indulgence in pleasure, *kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) or discontented (this is termed indulgence in self-affliction, *attakilamathānuyoga*).

2. *Inner mental states*: thoughts that arise within us with reference to the present, either right or wrong, good or bad.

3. *Mental states in and of themselves*: mental fabrication (*citta-saṅkhāra*) – the act of thinking arising from awareness, the act of awareness arising from thinking, taking such forms as consciousness, intellect, mindfulness, alertness, discernment, knowledge. Whichever one of these mental states may be arising and remaining

in the present moment, focus your attention exclusively on it. For example, knowledge of a certain sort may appear, either on its own or as the result of deliberation; it may or may not be intended. Whatever arises, focus your mindfulness and alertness on it until you know the stages in the workings of the mind; knowing, for instance, which mental state is the intentional act (*kamma*), which the result (*vipāka*), and which mere activity (*kiriya*). Keep focused exclusively on these states until you can see mental states simply as mental states, knowledge simply as knowledge, and intelligence as intelligence. Be thoroughly circumspect, mindful, and discerning at each mental moment until you are able to let go of all mental states without being caught up on what they are supposed to refer to, represent, or mean. Only then can you be said to be keeping track of mental states in and of themselves as a frame of reference.

D. Contemplation of mental qualities as a frame of reference: Mental qualities (*dhamma*) that can serve as bases for mindfulness leading to peace and respite for the mind are of three kinds –

1. *Outer mental qualities*, i.e., the hindrances, which are of five sorts –

(a) *Kāmachanda*: desire for the five types of sensual objects – visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations – which can cause the mind to become restless.

(b) *Byāpāda*: ill-will; stepping into a mood of discontent that arises from certain sorts of individuals or situations that, when we brood on them, cause the mind to focus on what we find displeasing until it becomes irritated and upset.

(c) *Thīna-middha*: drowsiness, torpor, dullness, giving rise to laziness, apathy, and discouragement.

(d) *Uddhacca-kukkucca*: restlessness and anxiety; thinking more than we want to or need; thoughts that go out of control, drifting further and further away until we may even lose sense of our own body. Thinking that has no order or bounds is sure to cause harm.

(e) *Vicikicchā*: doubt, hesitancy, uncertainty about issues dealing with the world or the Dhamma: doubt about certain individuals, about their teachings, about our own conduct and practices. This comes from not having enough mindfulness or alertness to keep the mind in check and from not knowing where the hindrances come from. We should realize that – to put it briefly – the hindrances come from concepts that allude to either the past or the future. So when we want to ward them off, we should let go of these concepts and focus our attention in on the present, and the hindrances will weaken away.

2. *Inner mental qualities*: The skillful mental qualities we should foster within ourselves are five, counting their component factors, and four, counting their levels, in other words –

(a) The first *jhāna*, which has five factors:

– *Vitakka*: directed thought focused on the object of the mind's concentration, such as the breath.

– *Vicāra*: evaluating and adjusting the breath so that it becomes comfortable to the point where it spreads throughout the entire body; coordinating and connecting the various breath-sensations existing within us.

– *Pīti*: rapture, refreshment, fullness of body and mind.

– *Sukha*: pleasure, ease of body and mind.

– *Ekaggatā*: The mind enters into a single object, such as the breath; i.e., all five of these factors deal with a single topic.

(b) The second jhāna has three factors:

– *Pīti*: The sense of refreshment and fullness for body and mind becomes stronger, so that the mind abandons its directed thought (*vitakka*).

– *Sukha*: The sense of ease for body and mind becomes greater, so that it can relieve mental discomfort. This leads the mind to abandon its evaluating and adjusting (*vicāra*).

– *Ekaggatā*: The mind enters into a subtle and gentle level of breath, with a feeling of spaciousness and relief throughout the body. This subtle breath bathes and pervades the entire body, so that the mind becomes absolutely snug with its one object.

(c) The third jhāna: The singleness of the mind's object becomes even more refined, leaving just a feeling of mental and physical ease, the result of steadying the mind in a single object. This is called *ekaggatā-sukha*: All that remains is singleness and ease.

(d) The fourth jhāna: *Upekkhā* – the breath sensations in the body are still, so that we can do without the in-and-out breath. The still breath fills all the various parts of the body. The four physical properties are all quiet and still. The mind is still, having abandoned past and future, entering into its object that forms the present. The mind is firmly focused on one object: This is *ekaggatā*, the second factor of the fourth jhāna. Mindfulness and alertness are present in full measure and thus give rise to mental brightness. When mindfulness is strong, it turns into cognitive skill (*vijjā*); when alertness is strong, it turns into intuitive insight (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), seeing the truth of physical sensations (*rūpa*) and mental acts (*nāma*), whether near or far, gross or subtle, our own or those of others. This knowledge appears exclusively within our own body and mind, and we can realize it on our own: This is what is meant by the word, '*paccattam*.'

3. *Mental qualities in and of themselves*. This refers to mental qualities of another level that appear after the above qualities have been developed. Intuitive knowledge arises, e.g. –

'*Dhamma-cakkhum udapādi*': The eye of the mind, which sees in terms of the Dhamma, arises within one.

'*Ñāṇam udapādi*': deep intuitive sensitivity, thoroughly penetrating. This refers to the three forms of intuitive knowledge beginning with the ability to remember previous lives.

'*Paññā udapādi*': Liberating discernment arises.

'*Vijjā udapādi*': Cognitive skill – clear, open, deep, penetrating, and true – arises within one.

These forms of knowledge arise on their own – not for ordinary people, but for those who have developed concentration. Discernment, here, refers to the

discernment that comes from mental training and development, not to the ordinary discernment coming from concepts we've remembered or thought out. This is discernment that arises right at the heart. Cognitive skill (*vijjā*), here, is a high level of knowledge, termed *pariññāya dhamma*: thorough comprehension that arises within from having explored the four Noble Truths, beginning with stress (*dukkha*), which is the result of such causes (*samudaya*) as ignorance and craving. Knowledge arises, enabling us to cut the tap root of stress by performing the task of abandoning the cause. When this is done, stress disbands and ceases; the cause doesn't flare up again: This is *nirodha*. And the knowledge that steps in to eliminate the cause of stress is the Path (*magga*), the way leading to release from all stress and suffering, made possible by the eye of the mind composed of –

ñāṇa-cakkhu: intuition as a means of vision;
paññā-cakkhu: discernment as a means of vision;
vijjā-cakkhu: cognitive skill as a means of vision.

This is the eye of the mind.

In short, we have: *dukkha*, physical and mental stress; and *samudaya*, the cause of stress. These two are one pair of cause and effect functioning in the world. Another pair is: *nirodha*, the disbanding and cessation of all stress, and *magga-citta*, the mind following the right path, causing the causes of stress – ignorance and craving – to disband. In other words, when the physical and mental stress from which we suffer is ended through the power of the mind on the Path, the mind is freed from all disruptions and fermentations, and doesn't latch onto cause or effect, pleasure or pain, good or evil, the world or the Dhamma. It abandons all supposings, assumptions, wordings, and conventions. This is deathlessness (*amata dhamma*), a quality that doesn't arise, doesn't change, doesn't vanish or disband, and that doesn't fasten onto any quality at all. In other words, it can let go of conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhata dhamma*) and doesn't fasten onto unconditioned phenomena (*asaṅkhata dhamma*). It lets go of each phenomenon in line with that phenomenon's own true nature. Thus the saying: '*Sabbe dhammā anattā*' – No phenomenon is the self; the self isn't any phenomenon. All supposings and assumptions – all meanings – are abandoned. This is *nibbāna*.

All of this is called seeing mental qualities in and of themselves – i.e., seeing the higher aspect of mental qualities that arises from their more common side.

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VIII. RIGHT CONCENTRATION: the way to discernment, knowledge, and release. If we class concentration according to how it's practiced in general, there are two sorts: right and wrong.

A. *Wrong Concentration*: Why is it called wrong? Because it doesn't give rise to the liberating insight that leads to the transcendent qualities. For example, after attaining a certain amount of concentration, we may use it in the wrong way, as in magic – hypnotizing other people or spirits of the dead so as to have them in our power, or exerting magnetic attraction so as to seduce or dupe other people

– all of which causes the heart to become deceitful and dishonest. Or we may use concentration to cast spells and practice sorcery, displaying powers in hopes of material reward. All of these things are based on nothing more than momentary (*khaṇika*) concentration.

Another type of Wrong Concentration is that used to develop types of mental absorption falling outside of the Buddha's teachings and belonging to yogic doctrines and practices: for example, staring at an external object – such as the sun or the moon – or at certain kinds of internal objects. When the mind becomes steady for a moment, you lose your sense of the body and become fastened on the object to the point where your mindfulness and self-awareness lose their moorings. You then drift along in the wake of the object, in whatever direction your thoughts may take you: up to see heaven or down to see hell, seeing true things and false mixed together, liking or disliking what you see, losing your bearings, lacking the mindfulness and alertness that form the present.

Another instance of Wrong Concentration is when – after you've begun practicing to the point where you've attained threshold (*upacāra*) concentration – you then stare down on the present, focusing, say, on the properties of breath, fire, or earth, forbidding the mind to think; staring down, getting into a trance until the property becomes more and more refined, and the mind becomes more and more refined; using force to suppress the mind until awareness becomes so dim that you lose mindfulness and alertness and all sense of body and mind: Everything is absolutely snuffed out and still, with no self-awareness. This is called the plane of non-perception (*asaññi-bhava*), where you have no perception of anything at all. Your awareness isn't well-rounded, your mindfulness lacks circumspection, and as a result discernment has no chance to arise. This is called Wrong Concentration, Wrong Release, a mental blank – no awareness of past, present, or future.

Another instance of Wrong Concentration is when we can give rise to momentary concentration, threshold concentration, all the way to the four jhānas, but aren't adept at entering and leaving these levels, so that we focus in until only the property of consciousness is left, with no sense of the body: This is called *arūpa jhāna*. Bodily processes disappear, leaving only the four types of mental acts (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa*), which form the four levels of *arūpa jhāna*, the first being when we focus on a feeling of space or emptiness. The mind attains such a relaxed sense of pleasure that we may take it to be a transcendent state or *nibbāna*, and so we search no further, becoming idle and lazy, making no further effort because we assume that we've finished our task.

In short, we simply think or focus, without having any finesse in what we're doing – entering, leaving, or staying in place – and as a result our concentration becomes wrong.

B. Right Concentration: This starts with threshold concentration, which acts as the basis for the four jhānas, beginning with the first: *vitakka*, thinking of whichever aspect of the body you choose to take as your object, such as the four physical properties, starting with the in-and-out breath. And then *vicāra*: adjusting, expanding, letting the breath sensations flow throughout the body, and at the same time evaluating the results you obtain. For instance, if the body

feels uncomfortable or constricted, adjust the breath until it feels right throughout the body. The mind then sticks to its single object: This is termed *ekaggatā*. When mindfulness enters into the body, keeping the breath in mind, and alertness is present in full measure, keeping track of the causes that produce results congenial to body and mind, then your sense of the body will benefit. Bathed with mindfulness and alertness, it feels light, malleable, and full – saturated with the power of mindfulness and alertness. The mind also feels full: This is termed *pīti*. When both body and mind are full, they grow quiet like a child who, having eaten his fill, rests quiet and content. This is the cause of pleasure on the level of the Dhamma, termed *sukha*. These factors, taken together, form one stage of Right Concentration.

As you continue practicing for a length of time, the sense of fullness and pleasure in the body becomes greater. *Ekaggatā* – interest and absorption in your one object – becomes more intense because you have seen the results it produces. The mind becomes steady and determined, focused with full mindfulness and alertness, thoroughly aware of both body and mind, and thus you can let go of your thinking and evaluating, entering the second jhāna.

The second jhāna has three factors. *Ekaggatā*: Keep the mind with its one object, the breath, which is now more subtle and refined than before, leaving simply a feeling of *pīti*, fullness of body and mind. The sensations of the body don't clash with one another. The four properties – earth, water, fire, and wind – are properly balanced. The mind and body don't interfere with each other, so both feel full and satisfied. The body feels pleasant (*sukha*) – solitary and quiet. The mind, too, feels pleasant and at ease – solitary and quiet. When you're mindful, alert, and adept at doing this – entering, staying in place, and withdrawing – side-benefits will result. For example, knowledge of certain matters will arise, either on its own or after you've posed a question in the mind. Doubts about certain issues will be put to rest. As the sense of bodily pleasure grows stronger, the sense of mental pleasure and ease grows stronger as well, and thus you can let go of the sense of fullness. Awareness at this point becomes refined and so can detect a subtle level of the breath that feels bright, open, soothing, and spacious. This enables you to go on to the third jhāna.

The third jhāna has two factors, pleasure and singleness of preoccupation. The pleasure you've been experiencing starts to waver in flashes as it reaches saturation point and begins to change. You thus become aware of another, subtler level of sensation, and so the mind shifts to a sense of openness and emptiness. The breath grows still, with no moving in or out, full in every part of the body. This allows you to let go of the sense of pleasure. The mind enters this stage through the power of mindfulness and alertness. Awareness is tranquil and still, bright in the present, steady and independent. It lets go of the breath and is simply observant. The mind is still, with no shifting back and forth. Both breath and mind are independent. The mind can let down its burdens and cares. The heart is solitary and one, infused with mindfulness and alertness. When you reach this stage and stay with it properly, you're practicing the fourth jhāna.

The fourth jhāna has two factors. *Ekaggatā*: Your object becomes absolutely one. *Upekkhā*: You can let go of all thoughts of past and future; the five hindrances

are completely cut away. The mind is solitary, clear, and radiant. The six properties – earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness – become radiant. The heart feels spacious and clear, thoroughly aware all around through the power of mindfulness and alertness. As mindfulness becomes tempered and strong, it turns into intuitive knowledge, enabling you to see the true nature of body and mind, sensations and mental acts, past, present, and future.

When this happens, if you aren't skilled, you can become excited or upset. In other words, you may develop *pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*, the ability to remember previous lives. If what you see is good, you may get pleased, which will cause your mindfulness and alertness to weaken. If what you see is bad or displeasing, you may get upset or distressed, so intent on what you remember that your sense of the present is weakened.

Or you may develop *cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*: The mind focuses on the affairs of other individuals, and you see them as they die and are reborn on differing levels. If you get carried away with what you see, your reference to the present will weaken. If you find this happening, you should take the mind in hand. If anything pleasing arises, hold back and stay firm in your sense of restraint. Don't let yourself fall into *kāmasukhallikānuyoga*, delight. If anything bad or displeasing arises, hold back – because it can lead to *attakilamathānuyoga*, distress. Draw the mind into the present and guard against all thoughts of delight and distress. Keep the mind neutral. This is the middle way, the mental attitude that forms the Path and gives rise to another level of awareness in which you realize, for instance, how inconstant it is to be a living being: When things go well, you're happy and pleased; when things go badly, you're pained and upset. This awareness enables you truly to know the physical sensations and mental acts you're experiencing and leads to a sense of disenchantment, termed *nibbidā-ñāṇa*. You see all fabrications as inconstant, harmful, stressful, and hard to bear, as lying beyond the control of the heart.

At this point, the mind disentangles itself: This is termed *virāga-dhamma*, dispassion. It feels no desire or attraction; it doesn't gulp down or lie fermenting in sensations or mental acts, past, present, or future. It develops a special level of intuition that comes from within. What you never before knew, now you know; what you never before met with, now you see. This happens through the power of mindfulness and alertness gathering in at a single point and turning into *āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*, enabling you to disentangle and free yourself from mundane states of mind – in proportion to the extent of your practice – and so attain the transcendent qualities, beginning with stream entry.

All of this is termed Right Concentration: being skilled at entering, staying in place, and withdrawing, giving rise to –

Right Intuition: correct, profound, and penetrating;

Right View: correct views, in line with the truth;

Right Practice: in which you conduct yourself with full circumspection in all aspects of the triple training, with virtue, concentration, and discernment coming together in the heart.

This, then, is Right Concentration. For the most part, people who have attained true insight have done so in the four jhānas. Although there may be others who have gone wrong in the practice of jhāna, we'll achieve the proper results if we study so as to gain an understanding and adjust our practice so as to bring it into line.

This ends the discussion of Right Concentration.

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All that we have discussed so far can be summarized under three headings: Right View and Right Resolve come under the heading of discernment; Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood under the heading of virtue; and Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration under the heading of concentration. So altogether we have virtue, concentration, and discernment.

THE FIRST HEADING: VIRTUE

There are three levels of virtue –

1. *Heṭṭhima-sīla*: normalcy of word and deed, which consists of three kinds of bodily acts – not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct; and four kinds of speech – not lying, not speaking divisively, not saying anything coarse or abusive, not speaking idly. If we class virtue on this level according to the wording of the precepts and the groups of people who observe them, there are four – the five precepts, the eight, the ten, and the 227 precepts. All of these deal with aspects of behavior that should be abandoned, termed *pahāna-kicca*. At the same time, the Buddha directed us to develop good manners and proper conduct in the use of the four necessities of life – food, clothing, shelter, and medicine – so that our conduct in terms of thought, word, and deed will be orderly and becoming. This aspect is termed *bhāvanā-kicca*, behavior we should work at developing correctly.

Observance of these precepts or rules – dealing merely with words and deeds – forms the lower or preliminary level of virtue, which is what makes us into full-fledged human beings (*manussa-sampatti*).

2. *Majjhima-sīla*: the medium level of virtue, i.e., keeping watch over your words and deeds so that they cause no harm; and, in addition, keeping watch over your thoughts so as to keep your mental kamma upright in three ways –

a. Anabhijjhā-visamalobha: not coveting things that do not belong to you and that lie beyond your scope or powers; not focusing your thoughts on such things; not building what are called castles in the air. The Buddha taught us to tend to the wealth we already have so that it can grow on its own. The wealth we already have, if we use our intelligence and ingenuity, will draw more wealth our way without our having to waste energy by being covetous or greedy. For example, suppose we have a single banana tree: If we water it, give it fertilizer, loosen the soil around its roots, and protect it from dangers, our single banana tree will

eventually give rise to an increase of other banana trees. In other words, if we're intelligent we can turn whatever wealth we have into a basis for a livelihood. But if we lack intelligence – if our hearts simply want to get, without wanting work – then even if we acquire a great deal of wealth, we won't be able to support ourselves. Thus, greed of this sort, in which we focus our desires above and beyond our capacities, is classed as a wrong kind of mental action.

b. Abyāpāda: abandoning thoughts of ill will, hatred, and vengeance, and developing thoughts of goodwill instead; thinking of the good aspects of the people who have angered us. When people make us angry, it comes from the fact that our dealings with them – in which we associate with and assist one another – sometimes lead to disappointment. This gives rise to dislike and irritation, which in turn cause us to brood, so that we develop hurt feelings that grow into anger and thoughts of retaliation. Thus we should regard such people from many angles, for ordinarily as human beings they should have *some* good to them. If they don't act well toward us, they may at least speak well to us. Or if they don't act or speak well to us, perhaps their thoughts may be well-meaning to at least some extent. Thus, when you find your thoughts heading in the direction of anger or dislike, you should sit down and think in two ways –

(1) Try to think of whatever ways that person has been good to you. When these things come to mind, they'll give rise to feelings of affection, love, and goodwill. This is one way.

(2) Anger is something worthless, like the scum floating on the surface of a lake. If we're stupid, we won't get to drink the clean water lying underneath; or if we drink the scum, we may catch a disease. A person who is bad to you is like someone sunk in filth. If you're stupid enough to hate or be angry with such people, it's as if you wanted to go sit in the filth with them. Is that what you want? Think about this until any thoughts of ill will and anger disappear.

c. Sammā-ditṭhi: abandoning wrong views and mental darkness. If our minds lack the proper training and education, we may come to think that we and all other living beings are born simply as accidents of nature; that 'father' and 'mother' have no special meaning; that good and evil don't exist. Such views deviate from the truth. They can dissuade us from restraining the evil that lies within us and from searching for and fostering the good. To believe that there's no good or evil, that death is annihilation, is Wrong View – a product of short-sighted thinking and poor discernment, seeing things for what they aren't. So we should abandon such views and educate ourselves, searching for knowledge of the Dhamma and associating with people wiser than we, so that they can show us the bright path. We'll then be able to reform our views and make them Right, which is one form of mental uprightness.

Virtue on this level, when we can maintain it well, will qualify us to be heavenly beings. The qualities of heavenly beings, which grow out of human values, will turn us into human beings who are divine in our virtues, for to guard our thoughts, words, and deeds means that we qualify for heaven in this lifetime. This is one aspect of the merit developed by a person who observes the middle level of virtue.

3. *Uparima-sīla*: higher virtue, where virtue merges with the Dhamma in the area of mental activity. There are two sides to higher virtue –

a. PAHĀNA-KICCA: qualities to be abandoned, which are of five sorts –

- (1) *Kāmachanda*: affection, desire, laxity, infatuation.
- (2) *Byāpāda*: ill will and hatred.
- (3) *Thīna-middha*: discouragement, drowsiness, sloth.
- (4) *Uddhacca-kukkucca*: restlessness and anxiety.
- (5) *Vicikicchā*: doubt, uncertainty, indecision.

DISCUSSION

(1) Ill will (*byāpāda*) lies at the essence of killing (*pāṇātipāta*), for it causes us to destroy our own goodness and that of others – and when our mind can kill off our own goodness, what's to keep us from killing other people and animals as well?

(2) Restlessness (*uddhacca*) lies at the essence of taking what isn't given (*adinnādāna*). The mind wanders about, taking hold of other people's affairs, sometimes their good points, sometimes their bad. To fasten onto their good points isn't too serious, for it can give us at least *some* nourishment. As long as we're going to steal other people's business and make it our own, we might as well take their silver and gold. Their bad points, though, are like trash they've thrown away – scraps and bones with nothing of any substance – and yet even so we let the mind feed on them. When we know that other people are possessive of their bad points and guard them well and yet we still take hold of these things to think about, it should be classed as a form of taking what isn't given.

(3) Sensual desires (*kāmachanda*) lie at the essence of sensual misconduct. The mind feels an attraction for sensual objects – thoughts of past or future sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or tactile sensations – or for sensual defilements – passion, aversion, or delusion – to the point where we forget ourselves. Mental states such as these can be said to overstep the bounds of propriety in sensual matters.

(4) Doubt (*vicikicchā*) lies at the essence of lying. In other words, our minds are unsure, with nothing reliable or true to them. We have no firm principles and so drift along under the influence of all kinds of thoughts and preoccupations.

(5) Drowsiness (*thīna-middha*) is intoxication – discouragement, dullness, forgetfulness, with no mindfulness or restraint watching over the mind. This is what it means to be drugged or drunk.

All of these unskillful qualities are things we should eliminate by training the heart along the lines of:

b. BHĀVANĀ-KICCA: qualities to be developed –

(1) Mindfulness (*sati*): Start out by directing your thoughts to an object, such as your in-and-out breathing. Use mindfulness to steady the mind in its object throughout both the in-breath and the out-. *Vitakka*, thinking in this way, is what kills off sensual desires, in that the discipline of mindfulness keeps the mind from slipping off into external objects.

(2) *Vicāra*: Evaluate and be observant. Make yourself aware of whether or not you've received a sense of comfort and relaxation from your in- and out-breathing. If not, tend to the breath and adjust it in a variety of ways: e.g., in long and out long, in long and out short, in short and out short, in short and out long, in slow and out slow, in fast and out fast, in gently and out gently, in strong and out strong, in throughout the body and out throughout the body. Adjust the breath until it gives good results to both body and mind, and you'll be able to kill off feelings of ill will and hatred.

(3) *Pīti*: When you get good results – for instance, when the subtle breath sensations in the body merge and flow together, permeating the entire sense of the body – the breath is like an electric wire; the various parts of the body, such as the bones, are like electricity poles; mindfulness and alertness are like a power source; and awareness is thus bright and radiant. Both body and mind feel satisfied and full. This is *pīti*, or rapture, which can kill off feelings of drowsiness.

(4) *Sukha*: Now that feelings of restlessness and anxiety have disappeared, a sense of pleasure and ease arises for both body and mind. This pleasure is what kills off restlessness.

(5) *Ekaggatā*: Doubts and uncertainty fade into the distance. The mind reaches singleness of preoccupation in a state of normalcy and equilibrium. This normalcy of mind, which is maintained through the power of the discipline of mindfulness (*sati-vinaya*), forms the essence of virtue: firmness, steadiness, stability. And the resulting flavor or nourishment of virtue is a solitary sense of calm for the mind. When freedom of this sort arises within us, this is called the development of *silānussati*, the mindfulness of virtue. This is virtue that attains excellence – leading to the paths, their fruitions, and *nibbāna* – and thus can be called *uparima-sīla*, higher virtue.

To summarize, there are three levels of virtue: external, intermediate, and internal. In ultimate terms, however, there are two –

1. Mundane virtue: virtue connected with the world, in which we maintain the principles of ordinary human morality but are as yet unable to reach the transcendent levels: stream entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship. We can't yet cut the fetters (*sañyojana*) that tie the heart to the influences of all the worlds. This is thus called mundane virtue.

2. Transcendent virtue: virtue that's constant and sure, going straight to the heart, bathing the heart with its nourishment. This arises from the practice of tranquility meditation and insight meditation. Tranquility meditation forms the cause, and insight meditation the result: discovering the true nature of the properties, aggregates (*khandhas*), and senses; seeing clearly the four Noble Truths, in proportion to our practice of the Path, and abandoning the first three of the fetters –

a. Sakkāya-diṭṭhi (self-identity views): views that see the body or the aggregates as in the self or as belonging to the self. Ordinarily, we may be convinced that views of this sort are mistaken, yet we can't really abandon them. But when we clearly see that they're wrong for sure, this is called Right View – seeing things as they truly are – which can eliminate such wrong views as seeing the body as

belonging to the self, or the self as the five aggregates, or the five aggregates as in the self.

b. Vicikicchā: doubt about what's genuine and true, and what's counterfeit and false. The power of Right View allows us to see that the quality to which we awaken exists at all times and that the true qualities enabling us to awaken also exist and are made effective through the power of the practices we're following. Our knowledge is definite and true. Our doubts about the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are cleared up for good. This is called becoming a *niyata-puggala*, a person who is certain and sure.

c. Silabbata-parāmāsa: When the heart abandons this fetter, it no longer fondles theories concerning moral virtue; it's no longer stuck merely on the level of manners and activities. *Good and evil are accomplished through the heart; activities are something separate.* Even though people who reach this level do good – taking the precepts, making gifts and offerings, or meditating in line with the good customs of the world – they're not caught up on any of these things, because their hearts have reached the nourishment of virtue. They aren't stuck on the particulars (*byañjana*), i.e., their activities; nor are they stuck on the purpose (*attha*), i.e., the meaning or intent of their various good manners. Their hearts dwell in the nourishment of virtue: tranquility, stability, normalcy of mind. Just as a person who has felt the nourishment that comes from food permeating his body isn't stuck on either the food or its flavor – because he's received the benefits of the nourishment it provides – in the same way, the hearts of people who have reached the essence of virtue are no longer stuck on activities or manners, particulars or purposes, because they've tasted virtue's nourishment.

This is thus classed as transcendent virtue, the first stage of *nibbāna*. Even though such people may be destined for further rebirth, they're special people, apart from the ordinary. Anyone whose practice reaches this level can be counted as fortunate, as having received dependable wealth, like ingots of gold. Just as gold can be used as currency all over the world because it has special value for all human beings – unlike paper currency, whose use is limited to specific countries – in the same way, a heart that has truly attained virtue has a value in this life that will remain constant in lives to come. Thus, a person who has reached this level has received part of the Noble Wealth of those who practice the religion.

THE SECOND HEADING: CONCENTRATION

Concentration has three levels –

1. *Kāmāvacara-khaṇika-samādhi:* (momentary concentration in the sensory realm): The mind keeps thinking, coming to rest, and running along after skillful preoccupations – either internal or external – on the sensory level (*kāmāvacara-kusala*): sights, sounds, smells, flavors, tactile sensations, or ideas. An example of this is when the mind becomes quiet and rested for a moment as we sit chanting or listening to a sermon. In other words, the mind grows still for momentary periods in the same way that a person walks: One foot takes a step while the other foot rests on the ground, providing the energy needed to reach one's goal.

This is thus called momentary concentration, something possessed by people all over the world. Whether or not we practice concentration, the mind is always behaving this way by its very nature. This is called the *bhavaṅga-citta* or *bhavaṅga-pāda*: The mind stops for a moment and then moves on. In developing higher levels of concentration, we have to start out with this ordinary level as our basis. Otherwise, the higher levels probably wouldn't be possible. Still, this level of concentration can't be used as a basis for discernment, which is why we have to go further in our practice.

2. Rūpāvacara-upacāra-samādhi (threshold concentration in the realm of form): This refers to the first jhāna, in which the mind comes inward to rest on a single preoccupation within the body, fixing its attention, for example, on the in-and-out breath. When the mind stays with its one object, this is called *ekaggatā*. At the same time, there's mindfulness keeping the breath in mind: This is called *vitakka*. The mind then adjusts and expands the various aspects of the breath throughout the entire body, evaluating them mindfully with complete circumspection: This is called alertness (*sampajañña*) or *vicāra*, which is the factor aware of causes and results. Mindfulness, the cause, is what does the work. Thus *vitakka* and *vicāra* cooperate in focusing on the same topic. We are then aware of the results as they arise – feelings of fullness, pleasure, and ease (*pīti* and *sukha*) for body and mind. At this point, the mind lets down its burdens to rest for a while, like a person walking along who meets with something pleasing and attractive, and so stops to look: Both feet are standing still, stepping neither forward nor back.

If we aren't skilled enough to go on any further, we'll then retreat. If we see results – such as signs and visions – arising in the mind, we may get excited and so cause our original preoccupation to waver or fade. Like a person sitting on a chair: If he sees something appealing in front of him, he may become so interested that he leans forward and reaches out his hand; he may even begin to budge a bit from his seat or stand up completely. In the same way, if we get engrossed in visions, thoughts, or views while we're engaged in threshold concentration, we can become excited and pleased – we may even think that we've reached the transcendent – and this can cause our concentration to degenerate. If we try to do it again and can't, we may then seize the opportunity to say that we've gone beyond the practice of concentration, so that we can now take the way of discernment – thinking, pondering, and letting go in line with nothing more than our own views and ideas. This, though, is not likely to succeed, because our knowledge has no firm basis or core, like a wheel with no axle or hub: How can it get anywhere? The power of threshold concentration, if we don't watch after it well, is bound to deteriorate, and we'll be left with nothing but old, left-over concepts.

3. Rūpāvacara-appanā-samādhi (fixed penetration in the realm of form): This refers to the practice of all four levels of rūpa jhāna. The first jhāna has five factors: directed thought, evaluation, fullness, pleasure, and singleness of preoccupation. The second jhāna has three: fullness, pleasure, and singleness of

preoccupation. The third has two: pleasure and singleness of preoccupation; and the fourth has two: equanimity and singleness of preoccupation.

DISCUSSION

Fixed penetration in the realm of form means that the mind focuses on the internal sense of the body, remaining steadily with a single object – such as the in-and-out breath – until it reaches jhāna, beginning with the first level, which is composed of directed thought, evaluation, fullness, pleasure, and singleness of preoccupation.

When you see results arising, focus in on those results and they will then turn into the second jhāna, which has three factors: fullness, pleasure and singleness of preoccupation.

As your focus becomes stronger, it causes the sense of fullness to waver, so you can now let go of that sense of fullness, and your concentration turns into the third jhāna, in which only two factors are left: pleasure and singleness of preoccupation. The mind has few burdens; its focus is strong and the sense of inner light is radiant.

This causes the feeling of pleasure to waver, so that you can let go of that sense of pleasure, and the mind attains oneness in a very subtle preoccupation. The preoccupation doesn't waver and neither does the mind. It stands firm in its freedom. This is called equanimity and singleness of preoccupation, which form the fourth jhāna. Mindfulness is powerful; alertness, complete. Both are centered on a single preoccupation without getting snagged on any other allusions or perceptions. This mental state is called the fourth jhāna, which has two factors: Equanimity is the external attitude of the mind; as for the real factors, they're mindfulness and singleness, steady and firm.

The mind experiences a sense of brightness, the radiance that comes from its state of fixed penetration. Mindfulness and alertness are circumspect and all-round, and so give rise to skill and proficiency in practicing jhāna – in focusing, staying in place, stepping through the various levels, withdrawing, going back and forth. When the mind behaves as you want it to, no matter when you practice, only then does this truly qualify as fixed penetration, the basis for the arising of three qualities: intuitive knowledge (*ñāṇa*), discernment (*paññā*), and cognitive skill (*vijjā*).

Intuitive knowledge here refers to knowledge or sensitivity of an extraordinary sort. For example –

Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa: the ability to remember previous lives.

Cutūpapāta-ñāṇa: the ability to focus on the death and rebirth of other living beings – sometimes in good destinations, sometimes in bad – together with the causes that lead them to be reborn in such ways. This gives rise to a sense of weariness and disenchantment with sensations and mental acts, body and mind.

Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa: knowing how to put an end to the defilements of the heart in accordance with the knowledge – the clear vision of the four Noble Truths – that accompanies the particular transcendent path reached. And there

are still other forms of extraordinary knowledge, such as *iddhividhi*, the ability to display supernormal powers, to make an image of oneself appear to other people; *dibbasota*, clairaudience; *dibbacakkhu*, clairvoyance – i.e., the ability to see objects at tremendous distances.

Discernment refers to discriminating knowledge, clear comprehension, knowledge in line with the truth. For example –

Attha-pañisambhidā: acumen with regard to aims and results; thorough-going comprehension of cause and effect; knowing, for example, how stress is caused by ignorance and craving, and how the disbanding of stress is caused by the intuitive discernment that forms the Path; comprehending the meaning and aims of the Buddha's various teachings and knowing how to explain them so that other people will understand – being able, for instance, to summarize a long passage without distorting its meaning.

Dhamma-pañisambhidā: acumen with regard to mental qualities; knowing how to explain deep and subtle points so that other people will understand.

Nirutti-pañisambhidā: acumen with regard to different languages. According to the texts, this includes knowing foreign languages and the languages of various other living beings by means of the eye of discernment (*paññā cakkhu*).

Paṭibhāṇa-pañisambhidā: acumen with regard to expression; being fluent in making explanations and quick-witted in debate; knowing the most strategic way to express things.

All of these forms of discernment can arise from training the mind to attain fixed penetration. *Vijjā* – clear, open knowledge, free from any further concealments; and *āloka* – brilliance, radiance streaming out in all directions – enable us to see the true nature of sensations and mental acts, in accordance with our powers of intuitive discernment.

Cognitive skill refers to clear, uncanny knowledge that arises from the mind's being firmly fixed in jhāna. There are eight sorts –

(1) *Vipassanā-ñāṇa*: clear comprehension of physical sensations and mental acts (*rūpa, nāma*).

(2) *Manomayiddhi*: psychic powers, influencing events through the power of thought.

(3) *Iddhividhi*: the ability to display powers, making one's body appear in a variety of ways.

(4) *Dibba-cakkhu*: clairvoyance.

(5) *Dibba-sota*: clairaudience.

(6) *Cetopariya-ñāṇa*: the ability to know the mental states of other people.

(7) *Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*: the ability to remember previous lives.

(8) *Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*: the ability to put an end to the fermentations that defile the heart.

Thus, jhāna on the level of fixed penetration is extremely important. It can give us support on all sides – on the level of the world and of the Dhamma – and can bring success in our various activities, both in our worldly affairs and in our Dhamma duties, leading us on to the transcendent.

To summarize, there are two kinds of concentration:

1. That which gives rise to mundane knowledge: This is termed mundane concentration.
2. That which helps us to fulfill our duties on the level of the Dhamma, leading to *vipassanā-ñāṇa* or *āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*, the knowledge that enables us – in accordance with the discernment and cognitive skills that arise – to abandon or cut off completely the mental currents tending in the direction of the fetters: This is termed transcendent concentration.

THE THIRD HEADING: DISCERNMENT

Discernment is of three kinds –

1. *Sutamaya-paññā*: discernment that comes from studying.
2. *Cintāmaya-paññā*: discernment that comes from reflecting.
3. *Bhāvanāmaya-paññā*: discernment that comes from developing the mind.

DISCUSSION

1. *Sutamaya-paññā* is the discernment that comes from having listened a great deal, like the Venerable Ānanda. Listening here, though, includes studying and taking interest in a variety of ways: paying attention, taking notes, asking questions, and taking part in discussions so as to become quick-witted and astute.

Education of all kinds comes down to two sorts: (a) learning the basic units, such as the letters of the alphabet, their sound and pronunciation, so as to understand their accepted usage; and (b) learning how to put them together – for instance, how to combine the letters so as to give rise to words and meanings – as when we complete our elementary education so that we won't be at a loss when we're called on to read and write in the course of making a living.

In the area of the religion, we have to study the letters of the Pali alphabet, their combinations, their meanings, and their pronunciation. If we don't understand clearly, we should take an interest in asking questions. If we have trouble memorizing, we should jot down notes as a way of aiding our memory and expanding our concepts. In addition, we have to study by means of our senses. For example, when we see a visual object, we should find out its truth. When we hear sounds or words, we should find out their truth. When we smell an aroma, we should consider it to see what it comes from. We should take an interest in flavors so that we know what they come from, and in tactile sensations – the heat and cold that touch the body – by studying such things as the way weather behaves.

All of these forms of education are ways of giving rise to astuteness – both in the area of the world and in the area of the Dhamma – because they constitute a basic level of knowledge, like the primary education offered in schools.

2. *Cintāmaya-paññā* refers to thinking and evaluating so as to learn the meaning and truth of one's beginning education. This level of education draws

out the meaning of the knowledge we have gained through studying. When we gain information, we should reflect on it until we understand it so that we will be led by our sense of reason and not by gullibility or ignorance. This is like a person who has used his knowledge of the alphabet to gain knowledge from books to complete his secondary education. Such a person has reached the level where he can think things through clearly.

In the area of the Dhamma, the same holds true. Once we have learned the basics, we should research and think through the content of the Teaching until we give rise to an understanding so that we can conduct ourselves correctly in line with the methods and aims taught by the sages of the past. This level of discernment is what prepares us to conduct ourselves properly in line with the truths of the Doctrine and Discipline. This is classed as an aspect of *pariyatti dhamma*, Dhamma on the level of theory. By learning the language and meaning of the Teaching, we can become astute as far as theory is concerned; but if we don't use that knowledge to train ourselves, it's as if we studied a profession – such as law – but then went out to become bandits, so that our knowledge wouldn't give its proper results. For this reason, we've been taught still another method, which is the well-spring of discernment or mastery – i.e., the mental activity termed *bhāvanāmaya-paññā*.

3. *Bhāvanāmaya-paññā*: discernment that arises exclusively from training the mind in concentration. In other words, this level of discernment isn't related to the old observations we've gained from the past, because our old observations are bound to obscure the new observations, endowed with the truth, that can arise only right at the mind. When you engage in this form of practice, focus exclusively on the present, taking note of a single thing, not getting involved with past or future. Steady the mind, bringing it into the present. Gather virtue, concentration, and discernment all into the present. Think of your meditation object and bring your powers of evaluation to bear on it – say, by immersing mindfulness in the body, focusing on such objects as the in-and-out breath. When you do this, knowledge will arise.

'*Nāṇam udapādi*': Intuitive knowledge of things we have never before studied or known will appear. For example: *pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa* – the ability to remember our present life and past lives; *cutūpapāta-ñāṇa* – the ability to know living beings as they die and are reborn – well or poorly, happily or miserably – knowing the causes and results of how they fare; *āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa* – the ability to cleanse ourselves of the fermentations that defile the mind, thinning them out or eliminating them altogether, as we are able. These three forms of knowledge don't arise for people who simply study or think things through in ordinary ways. They form a mental skill that arises from the practice of concentration and are an aspect of Dhamma on the level of practice (*paṭipatti-dhamma*).

Another aspect – '*paññā udapādi*': Clear discernment of the true nature of the properties (*dhātu*), aggregates, and sense media arises. We can focus on these things by way of the mind and know them in terms of the four Noble Truths: stress (*dukkha*), which arises from a cause (*samudaya*), i.e., ignorance and craving; and then *nirodha*, the ceasing and disbanding of stress, which occurs as the result of a cause, i.e., the Path (*magga*), composed of practices for the mind. These things

can be known by means of the discernment that arises exclusively and directly within us and is termed the eye of discernment or the eye of Dhamma: the eye of the mind, awakening from its slumbers.

'Vijjā udapādi': The eight forms of cognitive skill, which follow the laws of cause and effect – means of practice that bring us results – can arise in a quiet mind.

'Āloko udapādi': Brightness, clarity, relief, and emptiness arise in such a mind.

Thus, the discernment that results from developing the mind differs from the beginning stages of discernment that come from studying and reflecting. Study and reflection are classed as Dhamma on the level of theory, and can give only a preliminary level of knowledge. They're like a person who has awakened but has yet to open his eyes. The discernment that comes from developing the mind, though, is like waking up and seeing the truth – past, present, and future – in all four directions. We can clearly see stress, its cause, its disbanding, and the Path to its disbanding, and so can absolutely abandon the first set of fetters. Our hearts will then flow to *nibbāna*, just as the water in a mountain cataract is sure to flow to the sea. They will flow to their natural truth: the mental fullness and completeness of a person who has practiced mental development until discernment arises within. We will meet with a special form of skill – transcendent skill – whose power will stay with us always, a quality that's certain and sure, termed certain truth, certain wisdom, making us people certain for *nibbāna*.

So this level of discernment – termed the discernment of liberating insight – is especially important. It arises on its own, not from cogitating along the lines of old concepts we've learned, but from abandoning them. Old concepts are what obscure the new knowledge ready to arise.

The nature of liberating insight is like an electric light: Simply press the switch once, and things all around are made bright. In the same way, when the mind reaches a stage of readiness, insight will arise in a single mental instant, and everything will become clear: properties, aggregates, and the sense media. We'll know, on the one hand, what's inconstant (*aniccam*), stressful (*dukkham*), and not-self (*anattā*); and on the other hand, what's uncommon, i.e., *niccam* – what's constant and true; *sukham* – true happiness, termed *nirāmisā-sukha*; and *attā* – the self. The eye of the mind can know both sides and let go both ways. It's attached neither to what's inconstant, stressful, and not-self; nor to what's constant (*niccam*), good (*sukham*), and right (*attā*). It can let these things go, in line with their true nature.

The knowledge that comes from discernment, cognitive skill, and intuitive insight, it can let go as well. It isn't attached to views – for there's yet another, separate sort of reality that has no 'this' or 'that.' In other words, it doesn't have the view or conceit that 'I am.' It lets go of the assumptions that, 'That's the self,' 'That's not-self,' 'That's constant,' 'That's inconstant,' 'That arises,' 'That doesn't arise.' It can let go of these things completely. *That's* the Dhamma, and yet it doesn't hold onto the Dhamma, which is why we say that the Dhamma is not-self. It also doesn't hold on to the view that says, 'not-self.' It lets go of views, causes, and effects, and isn't attached to anything at all dealing with wordings or meanings, conventions or practices.

This, then, is discernment that arises from the development of the mind.

To summarize: The discernment that comes from studying and reflecting is classed as Dhamma on the level of theory. The discernment that comes from developing the mind is classed as Dhamma on the level of practice. The results that arise are two –

1. Mundane discernment: comprehension – of the world and the Dhamma – falling under mundane influences and subject to change.
2. Transcendent discernment: awareness that goes beyond the ordinary, giving rise to clear realization within. People who reach this level are said to have awakened and opened their eyes, which is what is meant by ‘Buddho.’

* * *

To summarize everything, there are three main points –

1. Virtue, which in terms of where its principles are found is the Vinaya Piṭaka.
2. Concentration, which in terms of where its principles are found is the Suttanta Piṭaka.
3. Discernment, which in terms of where its principles are found is the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

Expressed in terms of their meaning, they refer to three modes of behavior to be developed –

1. Virtue: keeping our words and deeds honest and in good order. This is a means of killing off one of the causes of stress, i.e., *kāma-taṇhā* (sensual craving), mental states that take pleasure in growing attached and involved in sights, sounds, smells, flavors, tactile sensations, and ideas, known through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, and ideation.

2. Concentration: steadying the mind in a single preoccupation, holding fast to the present, not latching onto thoughts of past or future. Concentration is a means of killing off *bhava-taṇhā* (craving to be what one isn’t), i.e., mental states that stray off into thoughts of past and future. The act of straying is craving for becoming, looking for a new place to take birth. This is what is meant by ‘*sambhavesin.*’ When concentration arises, the mind can let go of such craving.

3. Discernment: circumspect knowledge that guards over the mind to keep it from being influenced, involved, and attached. Discernment is what enables us to abandon *vibhava-taṇhā* (craving not to be what one is), in that the characteristic of this form of craving is the wavering that occurs in the mental moment arising in the present. This we can perceive through intuitive discernment. Discernment knows stress; intuitive knowledge cuts the root of stress; cognitive skill – clear knowledge of past, future, and present – distinguishes cause, result, and release, without being attached: This is what’s meant by the skill of release.

And *that* is the heart of the Buddha’s teachings.

(*Etam buddhāna-sāsanam*)

GLOSSARY

Abhidhamma (Piṭaka): The third of the three collections forming the Pali Canon, composed of systematic treatises based on lists of categories drawn from the Buddha's teachings.

Arahant: A 'Worthy one' or 'Pure one,' i.e., a person whose heart no longer has any defilements and is thus not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his Noble Disciples.

Ariyadhana: Noble Wealth, i.e., qualities that serve as capital in the quest for liberation: conviction, virtue, conscience, fear of evil, erudition, generosity, and discernment.

Āyatana: Sense medium. The six inner sense media are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect. The six outer sense media are their respective objects.

Dhamma: Event; phenomenon; the way things are in and of themselves; quality – both in its neutral and in its positive senses: (1) the basic qualities into which natural phenomena – mental and physical – can be analyzed; the terms in which things are known by the sense of ideation. Also, any teaching that analyzes phenomena into their basic terms. This is one sense in which the Buddha's doctrine is his 'Dhamma.' (2) The quality of one's heart and mind, as manifest by the rectitude, fairness, compassion, composure, discernment, etc., revealed in one's actions. The manifestations can be enumerated and prescribed as principles (again, 'dhamma' – another sense in which the Buddha's doctrine is his Dhamma) that can then be put into practice and developed as means of removing shoddiness from the heart so that its genuine, unchanging quality can become fully apparent from within: This is the Buddha's Dhamma in its ultimate sense.

Dhātu: Element, property, potential. Basic forces that, when aroused out of their latent state, cause activity on the physical or psychological level. In traditional Thai physics, which is based on the physics of the Pali Canon, the four dhātu of earth, water, fire, and wind are said to permeate all matter in latent or potential form. To become manifest, they have to be aroused. Thus, for example, the act of starting a fire is explained as the arousal of the fire-dhātu (*tejas*), which already exists in the air and in the object to be ignited. Once this is 'seized,' it clings to the fuel, and the object will be on fire. The fire will continue burning as long as *tejas* has sustenance to cling to. When it runs out of sustenance or is forced to let go, it will grow quiet – returning to its normal, latent state – and the individual fire will go out.

On the level of the human body, diseases are explained as resulting from the aggravation or imbalance of any of these four physical properties. Diseases are classified by how they feel: Fevers are attributed to the fire property, dizziness and faintness to the wind property, constipation to the earth property, etc. Well-

being is defined as a state in which none of these properties is dominant. All are quiet, unaroused, balanced and still.

There are a number of lists of dhātus given in the Pali Canon. The six dhātus are the four physical properties plus space and consciousness. The 18 dhātus are the six senses, their respective objects, and the acts of consciousness associated with each.

Jhāna: Absorption in a single object or preoccupation. *Rūpa-jhāna* refers to absorption in a physical sensation; *arūpa-jhāna*, to absorption in a mental notion or state. When Ajaan Lee uses the term ‘jhāna’ by itself, he is usually referring to rūpa-jhāna.

Kamma: Acts of intention resulting in states of becoming and birth.

Kammaṭṭhāna: Ten guidelines for moral conduct – not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not lying, not speaking divisively, not using hurtful language, not speaking idly, not coveting, not harboring ill will, holding right views.

Khandha: Aggregate – the component parts of sensory perception; physical and mental phenomena as they are directly experienced: *rūpa* – appearances, physical sensations, sense data; *vedanā* – feelings of pleasure, pain, and indifference that result from the mind’s savoring of its objects; *saññā* – labels, names, allusions; *saṅkhāra* – thought-formations (see below); *viññāṇa* – sensory consciousness.

Nibbāna: The ‘unbinding’ of the mind from sensations and mental acts, preoccupations and suppositions. As this term is also used to refer to the extinguishing of a fire, it carries the connotations of stilling, cooling, and peace. (The use of the word ‘unbinding’ to refer to the extinguishing of a fire is best understood in light of the way fire was viewed at the time of the Buddha. See ‘dhātu.’)

Nirāmisa-sukha: Literally, ‘un-raw’ pleasure, or pleasure ‘not of the flesh.’ The bliss and ease of nibbāna, a pleasure independent of sensations or mental acts.

Nivarāṇa: Hindrances; mental qualities that hinder the mind from attaining concentration and discernment: sensual desire, ill will, torpor & lethargy, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty.

Pāli: The name of the most ancient recension of the Buddhist scriptures now extant and – by extension – of the language in which it was composed.

Sambhavesin: Usually, this term is used to describe a being seeking a place to be born; generally regarded as an abject state. Here, Ajaan Lee uses the term to describe the mind when it is searching for an object to fasten onto.

Saṅkhāra: Fabrication – the forces and factors that fabricate things, the process of fabrication, and the fabricated things that result. As the fourth *khandha*, this refers to the act of fabricating thoughts, urges, etc. within the mind. As a

blanket term for all five *khandhas*, it refers to all things, physical or psychological, fabricated by nature.

Suttanta (Piṭaka): The second of the three collections forming the Pali Canon, composed of discourses and other literary pieces related to the Dhamma.

Tejas: See *dhātu*.

Vinaya (Piṭaka): The first of the three collections forming the Pali Canon, dealing with the disciplinary rules of the monastic order. The Buddha's own name for the religion he founded was, 'this Dhamma-Vinaya' – this doctrine and discipline.

Vipassanūpakilesa: Corruption of insight; intense experiences that can happen in the course of meditation and can lead one to believe that one has completed the path. The standard list includes ten: light, psychic knowledge, rapture, serenity, pleasure, extreme conviction, excessive effort, obsession, indifference, contentment.

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If this translation is in any way inaccurate or misleading, I ask forgiveness of the author and reader for having unwittingly stood in their way. As for whatever may be accurate – conducive to the aims intended by the author – I hope the reader will make the best use of it, translating it a few steps further, into the heart, so as to attain those aims.

The translator

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*Sabbe satta sada hontu
avera sukha-jivino.
Katam puñña-phalam mayham
sabbe bhagi bhavantu te.*

May all living beings always live happily,
free from animosity.
May all share in the blessings
springing from the good I have done.