

"Shwesin Tipitaka"
The Dhammadhipati Vihara
(London Shwe Kyin Kyaung)
Sayadaw Ven Adiccavamsalankara



Maggānga in Daily Life

Translated by Dr Kyaw Thinn,
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**A Brief Biography of
Venerable Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara
Chairman of the Dhammadhipati Vihara**

Venerable Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara (Sasana Registration No. ၅/စကန(သ)/၀၀၂၅၃၁), currently residing at the Shwesin Tipitaka Dhammadhipati Vihara (Shwekyin Kyaung Taik), was born at the village of Ywathitgone, Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Division, the Union of Myanmar, on 02/09/1967 of parents U Chit Thwin and Daw Daw Ei, who are pious Buddhists.

At the age of 9 on 05/07/1976, he ordained as a novice at the monastery in Ywathitgone village. He then went to Mahasubodhayone in Sagaing, a Buddhist teaching centre, where he continued learning Buddhism and later taught other students. On 1st June 1989 he became a monk with Sayadaw Bhaddanta Narada as his preceptor and U Ah Mine and Daw Kyin Yone and their daughter Ma Aye Aye Than as donors of his monk's requisites (Yahan Daka and Dakamas). There he studied under Sayadaws Bhaddanta Narada and Bhaddanta Nyanabala.

On 22nd July 1991, he went to Mahavisuddhayone in Bahan, Yangon to continue his studies. In 1995, he moved again to Thein Daung Kyaung Taik in Taunggyi, Shan States, where he spent three years teaching Buddhism to other students.

Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara has studied widely under various well known scholar monks such Sayadaw Dr Nandamalabhivamsa, Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Sasana University, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Visuddhabhivamsa, the senior-most resident abbot of Mahasubhodhayone, the late Sayadaw U Kondanna, Mahavisuddha-yone (Pali University) Vihara, and Yaw Tipitaka Sayadaw, the current spiritual director and abbot of Mahavisuddhayone Vihara.

In 1998, he also studied and practiced vipassana meditation under the Mahasi Ovadasariya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kundalabhivamsa at the Sadhamma-ramsi (Mahasi) Yeiktha, 8th Mile, Mayangone, Yangon.

During his religious training he gave lectures at Mahasubodha-yone in Sagaing, Mahavisuddhayone in Bahan, Yangon, and Thein Daung Kyaung Taik in Taunggyi, Shan States. For up to 5 years, he gave sermons, lectures and instructions on

meditation at Saddhamma-ramsi Yeiktha (Meditation Centre) and its branch Yeikthas.

Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara has passed the following religious examinations;

- (1) Pariyatti Sasanahita Sasanalankara Samane Kyaw (1989)
- (2) Sasana Dhaja Dhammacariya (1992)
- (3) Vinaya Vidu (1992)
- (4) Anguttara Nikaya Vidu (1996)

In 2002, when Saddhammaramsi Sayadaw travelled to London on a Dhamma Missionary Tour, he accompanied Saddhammaramsi Sayadaw as his Pacchasamana (attendant) to Europe. Then, Sayadaw asked him to remain in London to spread the Buddha's Dhamma (teachings) in the United Kingdom. At present, he resides at the Dhammadhipati Vihara (temple) in London.

He is currently heavily involved in Buddhist spiritual work within the U.K. in the following capacities;

- 1) Member of the Theravada Buddhist Sangha Association in the U.K. (TBSUK)
 - 2) Treasurer of the Buddha Day (Wesak) Organizing Sangha Committee for the Burmese community in the U.K.
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- 3) Secretary of the Abhidhamma Examination Committee, U.K., acting on behalf of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, which organizes and holds these examinations annually
- 4) Providing guidance on vipassana meditation to yogis at the invitation of the Sangha Metta Foundation in Netherland
- 5) Organizing annually, the Lunar New Year Ceremony and the Ceremony at which elders and senior members of the U.K. Burmese community are paid respect by the younger generation, in line with Burmese tradition and culture.

INTRODUCTION

Among all major religions of the world Buddhism is unique in the sense that Buddha is not a God or a messenger of God. Buddhism rejects the notion of a God creating the universe and the living things. Buddhism observes the universe, living things and their cycles of life in a scientific approach based on cause and effect.

Buddha was a human being, and he attained Buddhahood by virtue of meditation and other virtues which he had fulfilled throughout his life cycle. Buddhists understand that Buddha is a person who has attained an unlimited and absolute wisdom and vision. With this unlimited and absolute wisdom Buddha has found a way for liberation from the cycle of life and sufferings. Because of this unlimited and absolute wisdom Buddha could see the sufferings of all living things and so he has shown them the path to liberation from the cycle of life and sufferings.

There are other *arahants* in Buddhism who attain this unlimited wisdom and liberation from the cycle of sufferings. However, Buddha only has the ability to express his wisdom and knowledge of the entire universe into simple terms which can be understood by ordinary lay people. Other *arahants* lack this ability.

Scientists say that Einstein's Relativity Theory is a very beautiful and wonderful set of concepts, if it is fully understood by one. The difficulty lies in one's ability to understand it. While 'Knowing' or 'vision' is a wonderfully quality, being able to share the knowledge with other people, and let them understand it, is an entirely different skill.

Venerable Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara may be at an early stage of his noble endeavour to attain enlightenment like an *arahant*. He may not know the entire universe like an *arahant* yet he is fortunate in that he has the skill to express what knowledge he has of the intricate concepts of Buddhist philosophy in simple and clear terms for lay people to easily understand.

This little book of gems contains simple and easy to understand sermons by Venerable Sayadaw Adiccavamsalankara, setting out the essence of Buddhism such as the '*Maggāṅga*', '*Pāramis*' and '*Vipassanā*' meditation for all to understand. The fundamental building blocks of Buddhist belief and knowledge are explained in this book in so wonderfully simple a language that even young people who are not much conversant in complex Buddhist philosophies will be able to understand them without difficulty.

Furthermore, it is Sayadaw's intention that lay devotee *dayakas* and *dayikamas* who read this book will apply the

precious knowledge they gain from this book to their daily life and follow Buddha's teachings practically in their daily lives so that they become better persons in all aspects of their lives. With this aim in mind Sayadaw has laid out his sermons with an orientation to practical application in their daily lives by his *dayakas and dayikamas*.

Buddhism is not a faith in the sense of its followers being required to have a blind faith in their eternal God. Buddhism is a life science which needs to be tried and practised. This book will help readers to understand basic tenets of Buddhism and to apply the knowledge to practical use in their daily lives.

Montgomery Thomas
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Forward

Venerable Dr Nagasena Bhikkhu

As modern societies enter the digital age people are finding that rather than mechanisation leading to more spare time the opposite is true. They find they have over reached their capacity and have less and less time to engage with spiritual matters. Although material growth is possible in industrialised countries, it comes with undesirable consequences such as depression and stress related diseases. The Buddha's teachings, particularly the teaching of meditation, have proved to be effective and helpful in busy and scientifically innovative societies. This small booklet offers an inspiring and insightful introduction to these teachings for the modern age.

The traditionally educated and dedicated Buddhist monk, Venerable Sayadaw U Adiccavamsalankara has put the essence of this deep subject into a simple guide, using readable and memorable terms that will be useful for moral and spiritual growth. In this booklet, he has explained the importance of the traditional practices of developing and accumulating spiritual skills by the practise of Dana (giving charity) and Sila (morality). He then deals with the practical aspects of meditation and has put substantial effort into explaining the technical terms required accessing the development of meditation. This will be an additional advantage to those who are looking to develop a meditation practice away from the traditional practices of Dana and Sila. The booklet is in four parts, the first, dealing with the path to liberation and practice in daily life, the second with the making of meritorious actions toward the fulfilment of *parami*, the third with relieving mental stress and the last a guide to *vipassana* meditation.

Each chapter in this booklet is associated with further analysis of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the key guide for the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha considered the noble eightfold path to be the foundation of the attainment of enlightenment. Just a few moments before his Parinibbana, (final enlightenment) a wandering ascetic known as Subbhadda approached the Buddha with a burning question, thinking that he would never get the answer if he were to miss this chance. As the Buddha was about to take his last breath, he asked him whether the followers of the teachings of other religious groups had ever achieved the highest attainment (Arahant). The Buddha replied briefly that if a doctrine or discipline contained the Noble Eightfold Path in its entirety there will be found liberated people of the highest degrees of saintliness. As the Buddha said to Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path alone is the foundational truth in the search for perfect wisdom.

This handbook will be of great benefit to both the beginner and the serious practitioner. I am full of admiration and gratitude for the Venerable U Adiccavamsalankara's painstaking work in making the Buddha's teachings accessible to modern society.

Venerable Nagasena Bhikkhu
(MA, PhD, SOAS, University of London)
Founder of Lotus Children's Education Trust
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Dhamma Articles

*by Ashin Adiccavamsalankara
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	TITLE OF ARTICLE	PAGE
1.	<i>Maggānga</i> in Daily Life	1 - 20
2.	<i>Akusala</i> Leading to <i>Apaya</i>	21 – 24
3.	<i>Kusala</i> and Fulfilling <i>Pāramis</i>	25 – 31
4.	Relieving Mental Distress	32 – 39
5.	Guide to Proper <i>Vipassanā</i> Meditation	40 – 74
6.	Pali – English Glossary	i – ix

Maggānga
The Path to Liberation and Practice in Daily Life

By Ashin Adiccalankara
Shwekyin Dhammadhipati Vihara, London
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Introduction

The Noble Eightfold Path to liberation, or ***maggānga*** in Pali, is something that should be practised in daily life. The word ***maggānga*** is a combination of two words; ***magga*** meaning a path (here it denotes a path leading to ***nibbāna*** or liberation from suffering) and ***anga*** meaning essential or principal components. In accordance with the ***dhamma*** or Buddha's teaching, there are eight components combining to form a path that leads to ***nibbāna*** or the cessation of suffering.

The ***dhamma*** and mundane life

There is a misconception by some that the path to ***nibbāna*** can only be practised in isolation in a forest, meditating at the foot of a tree, in a cave or a specified meditation centre. This is, of course, impractical and difficult for the majority because of family and personal commitments. Having been born into this life, our first consideration has to be to feed, clothe and house ourselves and our families and this is only natural for all living creatures. It would be totally wrong to have the attitude that "Life is not important. ***Dhamma*** is only important." It would be totally illogical as well because the ***dhamma*** is something that you have to find in your life or daily living. You cannot find the ***dhamma*** without systematically observing, understanding and modifying your own life, life-style and attitude to life. There is a saying that "***Dhamma*** can be found in your body". Life or living and the ***dhamma*** are inseparably intertwined and if you lose sight of the ***dhamma*** through over-indulgence in the sensual pleasures of life, you will find in the end that you have wasted your life.

There is a Burmese saying, “Although the let-pan (silk cotton tree, *Bombax heptaphyllum*) and nyaung (banyan tree, *Ficus bengalensis*) trees may grow tall and big, and bear leaves and fruit in abundance, both are, in the end, useless as wood except for the purpose of burning”. Likewise, when you grow old with a successful family and wealth, unless you have learnt and practised the ***dhamma***, your life-time achievements would have been in vain. So we all need to try and be successful both in mundane matters as well as in the practice of the ***dhamma***, so that we become valuable members of society, like the kyun (teak) or pyinkadoe (Burmese iron wood, *Xylia xylocarpa*) which will always be useful to society.

The interdependence of life and the ***dhamma***

In addition, we should consider ourselves fortunate; firstly, to have been born in the human world. To be born at a time while the Buddha’s teachings or Buddhist sasana is extant comes second. We should not feel despondent that due to pressures and mundane obligations of life, we are unable to pursue the path to ***nibbāna***. We should bear in mind that none of the buddhas ever taught a philosophy that was not based on life itself. Mundane life and the ***dhamma*** are totally inseparable and interdependent. The ***dhamma*** arises out of and is sustained by life itself, and life is supplemented, supported and ideally should be guided by the ***dhamma***. This article aims to demonstrate that the practice of the ***dhamma*** is something that should take place in daily life.

Practising ***dhamma*** in daily life

This ***maggānga*** path, which always heads toward ***nibbāna*** or liberation, should be followed in our daily activities, no matter what we are doing; while we carry on with our daily routines, having conversations, attending to business, cooking, cleaning, or even when answering the call of nature. So the path that leads to ***nibbāna*** actually starts from our daily life and this path is very simply the eight-fold path of ***maggānga***.

All practicing Buddhists know that whatever we do, whether practising **dāna** (generosity), **sīla** (morality) or **bhāvana** (meditation), the ultimate goal is **nibbāna**. This article is written with the intention that those practising Buddhists will be able to discern for themselves the progress they have made, and how far they still are from their goal of **nibbāna**.

The Noble Eightfold Path to liberation - **maggānga**

The eight **maggānga** can be grouped into 3 categories; **sīla**, **samādhi** (concentration) and **pañña** (wisdom). The **sīla** group is comprised of 1) **sammā vācā** (right speech), 2) **sammā kammanta** (right actions) and 3) **sammā ājīva** (right livelihood); the **samādhi** group of 4) **sammā sati** (right awareness), 5) **sammā samādhi** (right concentration) and 6) **sammā vāyama** (right effort), and the **pañña** group of 7) **sammā diṭṭhi** (right understanding) and 8) **sammā saṅkappa** (right thinking).

Although we usually start theological sermons by talking about **pañña** or wisdom, in practice though, we have to start from **sīla** or the development of morality. This is because the development of wisdom denotes or follows from the full attainment of morality and to reach this level of attainment, regular practice and time are required.

The **sīla maggānga** or the **sīla** group

The **sīla** group is what brings together daily life and the **dhamma**, a proper understanding of life and nature; what is good or bad, and right or wrong. In other words, the mundane aspect places emphasis on what an individual feels good or bad about, whereas the **dhamma** aspect emphasises on whether it is right or wrong.

Sammā vācā

The first component of this group is **sammā vācā** (right speech) and this has to meet both the criteria of being good as viewed from the mundane aspect as well as being right from

the ***dhamma*** aspect. Just being good or just being right is not ***sammā vācā***. This begs the question of how we decide what is good or bad, right or wrong. Simply, we just ask ourselves what we like or dislike. It is natural that we like good things and want good things for ourselves. So when it comes to speech, saying things that we ourselves would like to hear being said to us or can accept is regarded as good from the mundane aspect. The ***dhamma*** aspect deals with what is right or wrong and regarding this, we should say things that show compassion and consideration for others, being truthful, avoiding lies, avoiding speech or gossip that will break up the friendship of others, avoiding flattery to gain approval, and saying things politely and calmly so that it is soothing to the listener. Living in this world, we need to learn to practise these two things together; 1) living a mundane life and being good, and 2) understanding the ***dhamma*** and being right. We should not lose sight of both aspects.

Sammā kammanta

The second component is ***sammā kammanta*** (right actions) consisting of physical actions that are both good as well as right. This involves doing things that you yourself like and can accept which meets the criteria of being mundanely good. From the ***dhamma*** aspect, right activity means avoiding killing or taking another's life, destroying or stealing another person's household and property, and committing sexual misdemeanours.

Sammā ājīva

The third component, ***sammā ājīva*** (right livelihood) consists of a good and righteous livelihood, or means of earning a living. From the mundane aspect any business transaction that is mutually acceptable can be regarded as good. The Buddha stated that we need to nourish our physical bodies and in order to do so we need to earn a living in a righteous manner, meaning that it has to be compassionate,

mutually acceptable (this includes a reasonable profit margin) and also meets the first two criteria of **sammā vācā** and **sammā kammanta**. **Sammā ājīva** excludes business related to the trade in arms and ammunition, human trafficking, hunting, fishing, buying and selling of animals, meat and fish, and dealing with alcoholic drinks, narcotics and toxic or poisonous material.

The Buddha knows that all humans have to earn a living and if the means of the livelihood meet the two mundane and **dhamma** criteria of being good and right, He has preached that that particular type of livelihood can lead to **nibbāna**. When we are working or running a business, we have to talk and perform things physically. We cannot avoid this. So long as we function within the bounds of **sammā vācā** and **sammā kammanta**, what we are doing is **sammā ājīva**.

The **kamma** path

The above three practices are based on social ethics and morals, and therefore, known as the **sīla maggānga** or the **sīla** group. As they also distinguish between good and bad individuals or draw a distinction between good and bad as well as right and wrong, they have an effect on one's **kamma** (the inescapable consequences of one's mental, verbal and physical actions) and are, therefore, also known as the **kamma** path. All humans wish for good fortune or a good **kamma** that leads to good health and wealth and therefore some may do strange things such as, allow monks to hit them on the head with their staves or spit at them, with the misguided belief that this will bring good **kamma** to them.

What is being taught in this article is the Buddha's advice on how to acquire good **kamma**. The advice states that if you wish your speech to bring you good **kamma** or fortune, make sure that what is emitted from your mouth is **sammā vācā** or right speech. If you want your physical actions to bring you good **kamma**, make sure that whatever you do is **sammā kammanta** and if you want to be successful with what you are

doing for a living, make sure that your work meets the criteria for **sammā ājīva**. Apart from these three methods, there is no other way to improve your **kamma**. In fact, all other means or methods cannot bring you good **kamma** and this is why this group is known as the **kamma** path.

Meaning of **sīla**

The Pali word **sīla** means moral training or practice. When Buddhists pay homage and respect to the Buddha in their shrine-room daily, they are practising. They are practising because they want to develop a habit which they have not yet acquired. What sort of habit? The habit of always producing **sammā vācā** (right speech), **sammā kammanta** (right actions) and **sammā ājīva** (right livelihood). Once this becomes a habit, the qualities of **sīla** or moral practice become strong and pure. As these three components have to be practised to become habitual in nature, they are known as the **sīla maggānga** or the **sīla** group or path.

Avoid bad and do good

Within this practice, there are just two responsibilities you have to take on board; viz. “Avoid the bad and do what is good.” So, simply you have to avoid saying and doing bad things and try to say and do good things. If you can follow this then your practice of **sīla** will be secure; you will not be committing any sins, and this habit will eradicate **vitakkama kilesa** (the mental factor that directs one’s thoughts towards indulging in defilements; see explanation at the end) that leads to bad consequential effects in future lives. The latter process of doing what is good will prevent the development of conflict in the outside world due to erroneous communication and activities. In life, people are judged from the way they speak and what they do. Once a person is secure in **sīla** practice, he will be free from wrongful speech, both his actions and livelihood will be faultless, and he will be seen as a person imbued with the **dhamma**.

Whatever we strive to do, we have to start from the bottom and gradually work our way up. To have a full glass, we have to start by putting things in it first. There is a Burmese saying that if you only have a penny you should not touch the fish's head. What is meant here is that one should not think that one can attain **nibbāna** by just meditation when one has not even habituated to the practice of **sīla**. One needs to develop oneself gradually. One does not need to observe total noble silence right from the start, but first practice on how to speak mindfully, avoiding bad and wrong speech as described earlier on. Neither does one need to sit motionless for hours doing nothing. One can and should continue to do things and work, but being mindful of avoiding the bad and wrong and doing what is good and right. When **sīla** becomes a habit and second nature to you, then the immediate benefit that you will gain is the peace and happiness of leading a sin-free life known in Pali as **anavijjasukha**.

Sammā sati

The fourth component of the Noble Eightfold Path is **sammā sati**, meaning right awareness or mindfulness. The person who is practising this is combining his mind or consciousness with attention on each and every sense object that he is occupied and working with.

Sammā samādhi

The fifth, **sammā samādhi**, is right concentration. The person practising this puts effort into keeping his attention solely on one sense object that he is occupied and working with. This practice can be on two levels; 1) **ārammaṇa upanijjhāna** - concentrating on the object to discern or differentiate clearly the sensory or physical qualities, e.g. between good and bad sensations or black and white, etc., and 2) **lakkhaṇa upanijjhāna** – concentrating on the three characteristics of **anicca** (impermanence) **dukkha** (unsatisfactoriness) and **anatta** (non-self or not being under

one's control). Of these two, when one is practising **samatha** meditation or **sīla sikkhā** (training in morality) and **samādhi sikkhā** (training in concentrating ability), one practises at the first level of **ārammaṇa upanijjhāna**, only focussing on the **sammuti** (conventional) or **paññatti** (virtual truths with conventionally designated names, notions, ideas, etc.) or **kasina** (a form of **samatha** meditation) objects, such as good or bad sensations, man or woman, material property, etc. and one does not practise at the level of **lakkaṇa upanijjhāna** which is practised only when one does **vipassanā** or **paññā sikkhā** (wisdom training), a higher level training or practice that focuses on **paramattha** (ultimate truths).

Sammā vāyama

The sixth, right effort is applied in three ways; 1) in avoiding the bad, 2) in embracing the good and 3) when contemplating on **paramattha** objects, to know clearly the three characteristics of mind and matter or **lakkaṇa**, i.e. **anicca**, **dukkha** and **anatta**.

Sammā sati (right awareness), **sammā samādhi** (right concentration) and **sammā vāyama** (right effort) are known as the **samādhi maggānga** or **sikkhā**, because they are involved in the training and development of a calm and focussed mind, which leads to the development of **jhāna** (a totally absorbed or ecstatic state) when one does **samatha** meditation. Ledi Sayadaw has also described this as the **jhānic** path or **jhāna maggānga** in his treatise on the **paramattha**. The **samādhi maggānga** or **sikkhā** (training) is essential in keeping our minds pure and free from mental defilements and thus, eradicates **pariyutthana kilesā**. (See explanation below)

It is important to note that the three components of **samādhi maggānga** are the foundation of the path to liberation as they play a vital role in every aspect of the **dhamma** practice and the leader of these three components is **sati**. These three components, by themselves, can be used to

develop **indriya saṅvara** (excellent controlling faculties or morally principled and controlled behaviour) or practise **samatha** meditation. They are also used to develop **silā** and **paññā sikkhā**. The development of **indriya saṅvara** can lead to avoidance of sensual pleasures and produce a completely calm and tranquil mind known as **adhi citta sukha**.

The last **paññā** group consists of **sammā diṭṭhi** (right understanding) and **sammā saṅkappa** (right thinking).

Sammā diṭṭhi

The seventh, **sammā diṭṭhi** or right understanding, in turn, contains three aspects;

- 1) **kamassakatā sammā diṭṭhi**, the knowledge or wisdom that there is a cause that leads to an effect for everything, i.e. good deeds will lead to good effects and bad deeds to bad effects. This wisdom is applied in the training of **silā** and **kamma**, as already mentioned above;
- 2) **vipassanā sammā diṭṭhi**, the wisdom that all conditioned things such as mind and matter are subject to the natural law of arising and perishing, and
- 3) **magga phala sammā diṭṭhi**, the knowledge of **nibbāna** which is the complete liberation from **samsāra** or the rounds of rebirths.

Sammā saṅkappa

The last and eighth is **sammā saṅkappa** or right thinking. **Sammā saṅkappa** directs the mind towards or focuses the mind on an object, and in the process of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling or thinking, understanding that they are all transient and impermanent in nature. Although in lay terms we say that **sammā saṅkappa** is making you think in the right way, when one practises **vipassanā** one does not purposely think of visualising **nibbāna**, but just provides the right conditions for one's mind to experience the stage of **magga** wisdom as it develops.

Sammā diṭṭhi and ***sammā saṅkappa*** are collectively called ***paññā maggānga*** as they are involved in acquiring a clear and discriminative understanding of the ***dhamma***. It is with this wisdom that one purifies one's mind and completely eradicates the ***anusaya kilesā*** or internal defilements that lie latent in one. It is also known as the path of wisdom.

During the initial practise of ***vipassanā*** , one utilises the three components of ***samādhi maggānga*** and the two components of ***paññā maggānga***. Only five components are being developed. However, when one approaches the stage of ***magga phala sammā diṭṭhi***, the three habituated components of ***silā maggānga*** also come into play automatically as at this stage, external temptations to indulge in defilements need to be curbed. This is when the ***anusaya kilesā*** are being eradicated from the roots. So now, all the eight components of the noble eight-fold path come into play. And it is for this reason that the ***paññā maggānga*** is also regarded as the final path that completes the development of enlightenment. When this stage is attained, the benefit that one gains is total peace and tranquillity of the mind called ***santi sukha***.

Unless the laws of nature are shown in combination with its practical aspects, no amount of explanation will make it easily understandable. Once it is applied practically, it becomes less complicated. So let us try putting it into practice.

Putting theory into practice

Firstly remember that the three components of ***samādhi maggānga*** are required for the development of understanding of the laws of nature or ***dhamma***. The reason is because these three components are absolutely essential in the development of ***silā*** and ***paññā maggānga***. Next remember that in the training of ***silā sikkhā*** there are just two important obligations, i.e. avoiding bad and doing good.

Sammā vācā

When it comes to talking or having a conversation, what we need to train ourselves is to develop ***sammā vācā*** or right speech as follows;

- 1) as the first step in the process of speech, there is the desire to say something. When this appears, use ***sammā satī*** to be aware that you are about to say something, consider whether the words that you are about to say are good or not, truthful or not, and whether they would be acceptable to you if someone should say these words to you; and whether they are in line with the ***dhamma***, regarding its veracity
- 2) as the second step, use ***sammā samādhi*** to concentrate on what has been made aware by ***sammā satī*** in the previous step to understand or know it clearly
- 3) as the last step, use ***sammā vāyama*** and depending on whether you are thinking of saying something bad or good, right or wrong, you direct your effort towards avoiding saying bad or wrong things and redirect your effort towards saying good and right things. Thus training yourself in ***sammā vācā***

So when you develop ***sammā vācā*** you are working with four components, viz. ***sammā satī***, ***sammā samādhi***, ***sammā vāyama*** and ***sammā vācā***. With repeated practise and training, you will find that the three components of ***satī***, ***samādhi*** and ***vāyama*** (awareness, concentration and effort) become second nature to you, and whatever you say will be ***sammā vācā***. It is only when you reach this stage of being in the habit of using right speech that you can regard yourself as having fully acquired the quality of ***sīla*** with regard to speech (***vācī kamma sīla***). Once you reach this stage, you have developed four out of the eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path, so you may regard yourself as halfway on the road to ***nibbāna***. So you can practise the ***dhamma*** even while

you are talking in daily life or while working. It goes without saying that **sammā vācā** is something to be practised in your daily mundane life.

Sammā kammanta

The practice of **sammā kammanta** is similar to **sammā vācā**.

- 1) The first step is to be aware of the development of the desire to do something; **sammā satī**
- 2) The second is to concentrate on what you are thinking of doing and to understand it well; **sammā samādhi**
- 3) The third step is to direct your effort towards doing what is good and right, **sammā vāyama**.

Thus you train yourself in **sammā kammanta** or right action.

When you have developed the habit of **sammā kammanta** you have fully acquired the quality of **sīla** with regard to actions (**kāya kamma sīla**). By now you have developed five out of the eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Sammā ājīva

The practice of right livelihood follows on the same lines as the two above.

- 1) The first step is awareness of the development of the desire to earn a living; **sammā satī**
- 2) The second is to concentrate on what you are thinking of doing and to understand it well; **sammā samādhi**
- 3) The third step is directing your effort towards doing and saying what is good and right while earning a living, **sammā vāyama**. Thus you train yourself in **sammā ājīva** or right livelihood.

When you have developed the habit of **sammā ājīva** you have fully acquired the quality of **sīla** with regard to both speech and actions (**kāya kamma sīla**). By now you have

developed six out of the eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The development of the above *sīla sikkhā* or *maggānga* is carried out within the environment where you live and work; in your home, your village or town. For this reason, the Yaw Tipitaka Sayadawgyi gave a sermon on it titled “Practice of the Path to Enlightenment within the Home” (အိမ်တွင်းမဂ္ဂင် လူ့ကျင့်စဉ်) This practice is based on developing the three components of *samādhi maggānga* and in doing so strengthening and fulfilling the three components of *sīla maggānga*. This, in effect, leads to the acquisition of a total of six components out of the eight present in the Noble Eightfold Path leading to *nibbāna* or enlightenment. In rural Upper Burma there is even a saying that when you reach this stage of *dhamma* development, you can assume that you have travelled the distance of three quarters of a Kyat (ခရီး သုံးမတ် ပေါက်ပြီ). This is very important because you need to know that you first need to accumulate this three quarters of a Kyat by practising within your home and mundane life, before abandoning it for an ascetic life, practising the *dhamma* under a tree in the forest, in a cave, in a monastery, or within your own home in a specified room in solitude, to develop the remaining two components of the Noble Eightfold Path, viz. *sammā ditṭhi* (right understanding) and *sammā saṅkappa* (right thinking), thus accumulating the remaining quarter of a Kyat, and eventually reaching the goal of envisaging *nibbāna*.

Ārammana and *lakkhana upanijjhāna*

Before going on to the final group of *paññā sikkhā*, composed of *sammā ditṭhi* (right understanding) and *sammā saṅkappa* (right thinking), there are a few important points to note regarding *sīla sikkhā*. *Sīla sikkhā* is a training or practice that is done within one’s home and one’s mundane environment, dealing with and talking about *sammuti/paññatti*

sacca (conventional truths). One is not dealing with **paramattha saccā** (absolute or ultimate truths). In short, when **sīla sikkhā** is being practised in the mundane world, the foci of **sati** (awareness), **samādhi** (concentration) and **virīya** (effort) are on conventional objects or **sammuti/paññatti saccā**. Even when one is practising pure **samādhi**, as in **samatha** meditation or **asubha** meditation, the meditative objects or **kasina** objects are all **sammuti/paññatti saccā**. The next thing to remember is that the level of undivided concentration and understanding solely on the conventional aspects of the meditative object, e.g. black or white, square or round, good or bad, is called **ārammanupanijjhāna** (အာရမ္မဏူပနိဇ္ဈာန်), whereas concentration and understanding on the ultimate or **paramattha** aspects of mind and matter or **nāmarūpa**, viz. the three characteristics of **anicca**, **dukkha** and **anatta**, is called **lakkhanupanijjhāna** (လက္ခဏူပနိဇ္ဈာန်). In summary, when one is developing or training in **sīla** and **samādhi sikkhā**, one meditates at the level of **ārammanupanijjhāna** and not **lakkhanupanijjhāna**.

Paññā sikkhā

It is only when one practises to develop **paññā sikkhā** or **vipassanā** wisdom that one starts from the level of **ārammanupanijjhāna**, i.e. concentrating on the physical and mental aspects of the body and mind, and then progresses on to the higher level of **lakkhanupanijjhāna**, where one concentrates on the three characteristics of **anicca**, **dukkha** and **anatta**. In short, to develop **paññā sikkhā** or **vipassanā** wisdom, one needs to meditate on the body and mind on two levels; the **paññatti** and **paramattha** levels.

Practice on development of **vipassanā** wisdom

Let us now try and practise the development of **vipassanā** wisdom using whatever understanding we have gained. Using the dictum “Search for **dhmma** and find it in

your body” (တရားရှာ ကိုယ်မှာတွေ့) let us use our bodies as our meditation object, but do not concentrate on the **sammuti/paññatti** sensations that arise, but focus on the **paramattha** elements of heat (**tejo**) that you feel at the nostrils or the expanding and deflating sensations (**vāyo**) in your tummy as the air is inhaled and exhaled.

Sammā diṭṭhi

What we are trying to do here is to understand the first component of **paññā maggānga**, which is **sammā diṭṭhi** (right understanding). Using **sammā sati**, make yourself aware of the **paramattha** elements arising all over your body; feelings of heat, cold, hardness, softness, the air movements at the nostril, the rising or expansion of the tummy when air is inhaled and the falling as it is exhaled, etc. Try and be aware of the subtle **paramattha** elements that exist which you may not have taken notice of before. Next use **sammā samādhi** and **sammā vāyama** to direct your attention and concentrate fully on these sensations and know them clearly. Whilst doing this, you will come to fully realise that the three characteristics of **anicca** (impermanence), **dukkha** (unsatisfactoriness or suffering) and **anatta** (non-self or lack of control) are constantly at work on both our minds and bodies. In this way your mind becomes clearer. With this meditative or contemplative practise, you begin to understand the law of nature that all things that arise will fall away or decay in time. Once this understanding becomes strongly entrenched in your mind, then you have begun to develop **sammā diṭṭhi** (right understanding). You may note that in this process also four components of the Noble Eightfold Path are being used. By now, you have developed seven out of the eight components.

Sammā saṅkappa

The way to develop **sammā saṅkappa** (right thinking) is to use **sammā sati**, making yourself aware of the **paramattha** elements arising over your body and then using

sammā samādhi and **sammā vāyama** to direct your attention and concentrate fully on these sensations and understand them clearly. Once you see clearly in your mind that the body is the physical object producing the sensations and your mind is making you aware of these sensations, and both body and mind are under the influence of the three **lakkhaṇa** or characteristics of constantly being in flux or undergoing change (**anicca**), totally beyond your control (**anatta**) and hence, absolutely unsatisfactory or causing distress (**dukkha**), your mind becomes more inclined towards seeing everything as impermanent (**anicca**). This is the beginning of **sammā saṅkappa**. In this process also you will notice that four components of the Noble Eightfold Path are being used. By now, you have developed all eight of the eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Although the whole process has been dissected into various steps and sequences, in actual fact, the development of the various components can occur together in various combinations and may occur at the same time as well as disappear at the same time. This is because there are over thirty mental factors or **cetasikas** at work and although only one thought unit can be present at any one time, the rate at which they form and disappear are indescribably fast that only the significant **cetasikas** get identified, for example, as **sammā diṭṭhi** or **sammā saṅkappa**. One must not lose sight of the fact that many mental factors are involved. An analogy here is when we cook chicken curry we use, pieces of chicken, onions, salt, cooking oil, etc. in various proportions and eventually call it chicken curry purely because the chicken is the main ingredient in it.

The Buddha stated that whatever meditation object you use, be it a physical or mental object, when we use the **vipassanā** meditation technique over and over again, you will observe and discover that all these conditioned objects are subject to the law of **saṅkhāra** or cycles of existence, in

constant flux or change and not being the same at any moment in time. And because they are impermanent, you will reach the conclusion that they are simply useless. This is when you gain the wisdom of **anicca**. In addition, you will also realise that nothing that is subject to the law of **sañkhāra** is worth possessing or being satisfied with; the attainment of the wisdom of **dukkha**. This then leads to the third realisation that all things subject to the law of **sañkhāra** will never be under your control; the attainment of the wisdom of **anatta**. Progressing on from this, with repeated meditation on these objects, you will reach the stage when this realisation of **anicca**, **dukkha** and **anatta** becomes an unshakable belief or conviction. When you reach that stage, all feelings of love and desire for the body that one possesses, as well as the feelings of dislike and hate towards it, will disappear, and this is described as **nibbida ñāṇa** or feeling fed up or disgusted with the body.

Sañkhārupekkhā ñāṇa

This realisation or wisdom is called **sañkhārupekkhā ñāṇa** which means having an equanimous mind or attitude towards the cycles of change or existences. You need to note here that the word **upekkhā** is used to convey the meaning of being bereft of feelings of either like or dislike, love or hatred, which results from understanding the true meaning of life.

When this wisdom is attained, you reach the stage where you are now able to let go of all desires and attachment to the five aggregates, called **virāgāvimuccati** (freedom from passion or emancipation). The freedom or emancipation that you achieve is from the shackles and bondage of **sañkhāra**. This freedom is from the present cycles of life and reaching a realm beyond or **lokuttarā**. This realm is free from desires, passion, dislike, anger, hatred, and therefore, is **nibbāna**.

Completing the development of the Noble Eightfold Path

During the practice of ***vipassanā*** meditation to develop ***paññā maggānga*** (wisdom), there are the three components of ***samādhi maggānga*** and the two of ***paññā maggānga***, making a total of five components at work. With the progress in your meditation, and once you attain a complete understanding of or the vision of ***nibbāna*** as freedom from the impermanent nature of things, this understanding or knowledge is called ***magga citta*** (မင်္ဂလီတိ) and this is almost immediately followed by the appearance of the ***phala citta*** (ဖိုလ်တိ). The latter ***citta*** or mind provides the vision of ***nibbāna*** to the practitioner. At the stage of ***magga citta*** all the verbal and physical defilements associated with the external world are completely eradicated and therefore, the three components of ***silā maggānga*** become fully established as second nature, hence no longer needing to be practised or trained. This is the stage when all the eight components of the Noble Eightfold Path become complete and fully developed.

Vimmutirasa and ***santi sukha***

The meditator who has reached the ultimate stage on ***nibbāna*** or the emancipation from the impermanent nature of ***sañkhāra***, is said to be savouring ***vimmutirasa*** (ဝိမုတ္တိရသာ) or the essence of emancipation and ***santi sukha*** (သန္တိ သုခ) or complete tranquillity being free from all the vicissitudes and tribulations of life.

May you be able to practise and fulfil the Noble Eightfold Path in your daily life.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu

Translated by Dr Kyaw Thinn, Birmingham, U.K.

Explanation

The Pali word “**vitakkama kilesa**” is derived from **vitakka** and **kilesā**.

Vitakka is an unmoral mental factor with no ethical value. But when associated with a **kusala** (wholesome or good) or **akusala** (unwholesome or bad) **citta** (mental state), it becomes moral or immoral. In other words, the **vitakka** directs one’s mind towards a particular focal point and when this direction is towards **kusala** (wholesome, good) thoughts it becomes **sammāsaṅkappa**. But when the direction is towards **akusala** (wrong or evil thoughts) it becomes **micchā vitakka**, such as thoughts of sense desire (**kāma**), thoughts of hatred (**vyāpāda**) and thoughts of cruelty (**vihimsā**).

Kilesās are mental states that torment or distress our minds and act as hindrances to enlightenment and liberation from suffering. The **kilesās** consist of

1. **Lobha** - greed
2. **Dosa** - anger
3. **Moha** - ignorance
4. **Māna** - pride
5. **Diṭṭhi** – wrong belief or understanding
6. **Viccikicchā** - doubt
7. **Thina-Middha** – sloth and torpor
8. **Ahirika-Anottappa** – shamelessness and fearlessness (of doing evil)
9. **Uddhacca** – restlessness
10. **Kukkucca** - brooding

There are three kinds of **kilesā** or defilements based on how they affect and manifest in individuals.

1. **vitakkama kilesā** — defilements of transgression, i.e., over one’s precepts, rights of others and moral principles. They belong to the coarse or gross form manifesting in physical and verbal actions.

2. ***pariyutthana kilesā*** — obsessive defilements which occur at the mental level (thoughts), and not manifested through body and speech. They belong to the medium form.
3. ***anusaya kilesā*** — defilements that lie latent (dormant) and wait for an opportune time to assault us. They belong to the subtle or refined form. They are also called proclivities, inclinations or tendencies.

Akusala Leading to Apāya

by Ashin Adiccavamsalankara

Dhammadhipati Vihara

Lunar New Year Ceremony, 11.04.2015

Now-a-days, the majority of Buddhists may be confused and unsure as to whether their hard work and daily endeavours to earn a living and providing for their household and family in this mundane life are creating more **akusala** (unwholesome actions or deeds) that will lead them to the nether planes of existence or **apāya** (hell or woeful states), rather than **kusala** (wholesome, meritorious deeds) that will help them realise **nibbāna**, the total liberation from **dukkha** (suffering). This question is posing a very distressing and complex problem to many. If asked, almost everyone will be inclined to say that they are accumulating more **akusala** than **kusala**.

To solve this problem, it is necessary, firstly, to understand that there are two types of **akusala**, viz. (1) **kamma akusala** (unwholesome deeds caused by ones actions or initiation ကံအကုသိုလ်) and (2) **kilesa akusala** (unwholesome deeds caused by the mental hindrances ကိလေသာအကုသိုလ်)

1. **Kamma akusala**

Within **kamma akusala**, there are 5 actions that, without exception, lead to **apāya** or hell – known as **pancānantarikā kammāni** (the 5 acts that have immediate retribution in hell ပဉ္စာနန္တရိယကံ). They are;

- i) Matricide – killing one's mother
- ii) Patricide – killing one's father
- iii) Killing an **arahant** or saint
- iv) Causing an injury to a Buddha that draws blood

Akusala Leading to Apāya

v) Causing a schism or rift between the **sangha** or monks' community.

Committing any one of the above crimes will lead to being reborn in **apāya** (woeful states) without exception and, in addition, there is no means of attenuating, lessening or avoiding punishment. They are known in Burmese as ဒုစရိုက်အကုသိုလ်ကံ

In contrast, the remaining forms of **kamma akusala** are unlike the five **pancānantarikā kammāni**. The resulting punishment for these actions or **kamma**, may be attenuated, lessened or avoided, i.e. one may not be reborn in **apāya**. So this form of **kamma akusala** has two possible outcomes.

2. Kilesa akusala

Within **kilesa akusala**, there are two that always lead to **apāya** and they are;

i) **Niyatamicchādittḥi** (နိယတမိစ္ဆာဒိဋ္ဌိ) – the false view that refutes and denies the existence of **kamma** and its consequences (ကံနှင့်ကံ၏အကျိုးကို မယုံခြင်း)

ii) **Vicikicchā** (ဝိစိကိစ္ဆာ) – the doubtful and confused state of mind resulting from the lack of understanding and belief in **paṭṭicasamuppāda** (ပဋိစ္စသမုပ္ပါဒ်) or the law of dependent origination.

Similar to **kamma akusala**, the remaining types of **kilesa akusala** have two possible outcomes.

In the **Anguttara Nikāya, Tikanipatta, Loṇa-kapalla Sutta** the Buddha described how **akusala** may be countered or cured by **kusala**. The Pali word **Loṇa** means “salt” and **kapalla** means “bowl” and in Burmese the whole word means ဆားခွက်. In this **sutta** (discourse), the Buddha

Akusala Leading to Apāya

used a salt bowl and water to explain how ***akusala*** may be attenuated by ***kusala***.

A bowl of salt is so salty that it cannot be consumed on its own. Even by adding a bowl of water, it will remain very salty and will neither be edible nor potable. But if that bowl of salt were to be immersed in a flowing stream or river, will the saltiness remain? When the Buddha asked the ***sangha*** this question, they replied that the volume of water would overcome the quality of the salt and make it lose its saltiness.

In a similar manner, ***akusala*** is like the salt and whether it is great or small in amount, the salt exerts its salty character. A person who indulges in ***akusala***, only that and no ***kusala*** deed at all even though it may be a small amount or a minor offence, may be reborn in ***apāya*** or hell. But when salt becomes diluted in plenty of water, it loses its character and is no longer able to produce the salty taste. Likewise, when the power of ***kusala*** or wholesome deeds become very strong, it overpowers the ***akusala***, thus making it impotent and unable to produce the effect of leading one to be reborn in ***apāya***.

To use another analogy, which may be more easy to understand, especially for those who have some medical knowledge, is to use the example of a person who is suffering from an illness, but in spite of knowing what foods he should avoid to get better continues to eat them, or in spite of knowing that there are medicines that could cure his illness, refuses to take them, then he is sure to hasten his demise. Likewise, if a person only indulges in ***akusala*** (unwholesome deed), never does any ***kusala*** (wholesome deed) and has no inkling or knowledge of what ***kusala*** is, that type of person is sure to be reborn in ***apāya*** even though he may have done only a small amount of ***akusala***.

Akusala Leading to Apāya

For those who have some knowledge and experience of accounting and mathematics, it might be easier to understand if a different analogy is used. Consider this. Even if a person were to do only a small amount of ***akusala***, but had no knowledge of ***kusala*** at all and never did any ***kusala***, what would the net outcome of his activity be? If the net balance is ***akusala***, then he is sure to go to hell, i.e. be reborn in ***apāya***.

However, if one indulges generally and spends most of one's time in ***kusala*** activities, such as developing skilful, wholesome physical actions of ***sīla*** (meritorious practices), ***paññā*** (wisdom) and ***bhāvanā*** (mindfulness, concentration and contemplation), then performing a ***kamma akusala*** activity, even intentionally but unavoidable at the time, will not lead to any adverse effects or punishment either in the present life or be reborn in ***apāya***. Let alone, having to undergo a major punishment, one does not have to endure even a small consequence of that ***akusala***. This is what the Buddha said in the ***sutta***.

Bearing in mind what has been said, I feel that one will now be able to work out the correct answer to the question as to whether the daily activities in one's mundane life, creates more or less ***kusala*** leading to ***nibbāna***, than ***akusala*** leading to ***apāya***.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

Translated by Kyaw Thinn, Birmingham, U.K.

Making All *Kusala* Meritorious Activities Count Toward Fulfilling *Pāramis*

**by Venerable Ashin Adiccavamsalankara
London Dhammadhipati Shwekyin Vihara**

Many meditating Buddhists may have doubts as to whether they possess the necessary *pāramis* to gain enlightenment and may wonder how they can fulfil them. The purpose of this article is to 1) encourage meditators to meditate, 2) boost their confidence and 3) make them understand that in the process of solving their problems of daily life, they are also fulfilling their *pāramis*.

The Ten *Pāramis* or Perfections - *Dasa Pārami*

First we need to understand what *pāramis* are. They are the essential factors to reach completeness, perfection, or the highest and noblest state, in this case, the attainment of liberation from suffering or *nibbāna*. Buddhas-to-be have to fulfil these *pāramis* and inferring from Gotama Buddha's paeon, on gaining complete enlightenment, that he had eradicated *taṇhā* and *lobha* (attachment and greed), it is clear that all His striving and practice, were directed at this. It is important to note that there are ten factors, *dasa pārami* in Pali, and they are *dāna*, *sīla*, *nekkhamma*, *paññā*, *virīya*, *khanti*, *saccā*, *adhiṭṭhāna*, *mettā* and *upekkhā*.

Making *Kusala* Activity Count as *Pārami*

Returning to the main aim of this article, which is to help people understand their reasons for doing merit, their aims and how to make their meritorious deeds count toward fulfilling their *pāramis*, one will have to understand that there are two main

requirements for any *kusala* activity to become a *pārami*, viz. 1) a noble aim (မဟာဗျူတာ) and 2) a noble strategy (နည်းဗျူတာ). The noble aim should be none other than attaining *nibbāna* and the strategy is that the activity is purely and solely intended for the benefit and good of others. More explanation will be provided under the subtitle of *dāna*.

As stated above, *pāramis* may be regarded as striving to eradicate *taṇhā* (attachment) and *lobha* (greed) and so, we need to consider what these two are based on.

The two things that all living creatures have are;

- 1) *kāma taṇhā*, the attachment and craving for sensual pleasures or pleasures derived from the six senses and includes also the attachment to one's material possessions, wealth, status, authority, etc. and
- 2) *Bhava taṇhā*, the attachment to one's life and limb or desire to preserve one's existence and the wish for a better future, be it in the present or next life.

When performing a *kusala* (wholesome) activity like providing *dāna* (donating) to monks, all ten *pāramis* come into play as described below, starting with *nekkhamma*.

1. *Nekkhamma* or Renunciation

The word *nekkhamma* means renunciation or emancipation from worldiness, freedom from lust, craving and desires, or self-abnegation. In other words, it is the struggle to free oneself from *kāma taṇhā* and *bhava taṇhā*. In order to do this, one has to understand fully the consequences of *kāma taṇhā* and *bhava taṇhā*, and then

develop *samvega* (a sense of fear and urgency) to rid oneself of both of these two.

2. *Dāna* or Generosity

Dāna is the giving away of what one owns, free from any form of expectation in return and giving of one's free will without fear of external threats or intimidation. The late Ledi Sayadaw stated that the *dāna* activity should fulfil the following criteria;

- 1) Whatever is given must be one's own and there must be no feelings of attachment to it
- 2) There must be no expectation of something in return for the good deed performed; be it in the form of some reward in the current life or being born again in a better life in terms of wealth, status or existential plane such as a celestial being or *brahma*, and
- 3) The sole aim of one's *dāna* being the facilitation of the attainment of *nibbāna* or total liberation from suffering.

Choice of Beneficiary

In addition to the above three criteria, one must also refrain from adopting the attitude of "Giving to Get". One needs to examine one's *cetanā* (intention) when choosing the beneficiary of one's *dāna* (generosity). If one is giving something to someone superior to oneself with the aim of getting a reward or a promotion in return, then the *dāna* is being influenced by or tinged with *lobha* (greed or desire) and, therefore, unwholesome or impure and will not become a *pārami*. The choice of the beneficiary must be based solely on the desire to pay homage to that person's qualities of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (one-pointed concentration resulting from sustained meditative practice) and *paññā* (wisdom) without

expecting anything in return. The type and quality of the *dāna* which is commensurate with the nobility of the beneficiary does not detract from the quality of the *dāna* becoming a *pārami*. In short, it is all right for the contents of the *dāna* to vary according to the status of the beneficiary, i.e. variation in the type and quality of the *dāna* may depend on whether the beneficiary is a Buddha, an *arahat*, a holy person, a *puthujjana* (ordinary person) or a *tiracchāna* (animal). It is neither necessary nor right to treat them all equally. One must be able to discriminate and choose between those who are of a high moral and intellectual calibre, because only then can one aspire to become such a person. It is not right to treat ordinary people, monks, *arahats* and Buddhas alike.

3. *Upekkhā* or Equanimity

The next requirement when providing *dāna* or doing any *kusala* activity is to perform the activity with the intention of helping others only and being selfless. No consideration is taken into account regarding whether the beneficiary has any faults or blemishes, or is a friend or not. In other words, one must practice *upekkhā* or equanimity and ignore whatever faults or short-comings the other person may have.

4. *Khanti* or Tolerance

Regardless of what the recipient of one's *dāna* has said or done to you, one must have the *khanti* (tolerance) to bear it, forgive the perpetrator and bear no ill-will or desire for revenge, either verbal or physical. The sayadawgyi (eminent monk) who wrote the "*Ottamapurisa Dipani*" stated that in fulfilling one's *pāramis*, *khanti* is like the mother, *upekkhā* is like the father and *nekkhamma* is like the physician. For a

child to grow and mature into a strong, healthy adult, he needs the physical care and emotional support of both parents as well as the medical supervision of a competent physician.

5. *Sīla* or Morality

This is the moral training that one requires to avoid harming others verbally or physically without the fear of or any expectation from others.

6. *Paññā* or Wisdom

Wisdom is having full understanding of what one is doing, one's intentions and aims.

7. *Viriya* or Effort

The effort here refers specifically to the time and work that one puts into helping or improving the life of others in a selfless way and with a pure heart.

8. *Saccā* or Truthfulness

Truthfulness is the quality by which one accepts the truth as it is; saying only what is true; keeping one's word by doing what has been said and also saying as one does.

9. *Adhiṭṭhāna* or Resolution

Here, one makes a mental vow or pledge to do a certain thing and, come rain or shine, keeps the vow without changing one's resolve.

10. *Mettā* or Loving-Kindness

The word *mettā* means the desire for all living creatures to be well and happy at all times.

It is easily understandable that whenever one performs a *kusala* activity or deed, provided it meets the two requirements of being a noble aim and a noble strategy, then all the ten *pārami* factors will be fulfilled.

Here, it is useful to note that the consequences of *Kamma* (activities) and *Pāramis* (perfections) are quite different in that,

- 1) *Kamma* will decide on the plane of existence that one gets reborn in; i.e. *kusala kamma* leads to a good rebirth as a human, celestial being or in the *brahma* world, whereas *akusala kamma* will result in rebirth in *apāya* (the four woeful states), and
- 2) *Pārami* will decide on the status, i.e. if born as a human, one becomes a king or be born into a wealthy family, or if born as an animal, also becomes a king or leader of the pack.

Although it is true that it takes a very long time to attain *nibbāna*, one should not be discouraged by what the canonical texts have said about the Buddha having to spend four eons and a hundred thousand world cycles to fulfil the *pāramis* before gaining enlightenment, because this may be just what past sages have said to impress on people the time it took, which is incomprehensible to the human mind.

One can check if one has inherited the *pāramis* by seeing if one;

- 1) Can listen to and understand what is being explained
- 2) Has *saddhā* or faith in the Triple Gem when one hears monks preaching the *dhamma*

If the answer is “yes” to both, then one already has.

Most people present here today already have sufficient *pāramis* to be able to achieve whatever they wish to strive for. If your main aim in life is to become materially wealthy, you can become wealthy, but if your wish is to become liberated from suffering, you can also achieve this goal. The bottom line is that one must not be disheartened but bear in mind that laziness is the only reason why one cannot attain *nibbāna*.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu

English translation by Kyaw Thinn, Birmingham, U.K.

Relieving Mental Distress

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Introduction

Mental distress needs no explanation as all living beings will experience it at various stages of their lives. Out of the many forms of distress, mental distress is probably the worst and most difficult to deal with, unlike a physical ailment where there is something usually visible, tangible, and more amenable to treatment. And of the many varied forms of mental distress, perhaps, the most frequent and unavoidable type is the one when we are in the final stages of our lives and facing death. This experience is ubiquitous in all families and is an essential part in the lives of people working in the health services. This article is a translation of a sermon delivered by Venerable Ashin Adiccavamsalankara, the abbot of London Dhammadhipati Vihara (The London Shwe Kyin Kyaung), on 11.10.2014 at the 4th Kathina Robe Offering Ceremony held at Whitton Community Centre, Twickenham, London.

Helping the Dying

All humans, especially those professing to be Buddhists, should pay attention to the way we manage death and dying and this is particularly important and relevant in the health services where patients, families and doctors interact with each other. The Buddha's advice in dealing with any form of distress or crisis in life (လောကဝံ့ခိုင်းစုံ) is based on three processes. They consist of;

- 1) Resolving a problem by stopping
- 2) Resolving a problem by dispersing, spreading or diluting
- 3) Resolving a problem by eradicating.

Resolving a Problem by Eradicating all Defilements

The third or last process by eradication, is the most radical and also the most difficult means of removing distress, because it involves the complete or total eradication of all defilements by the development of *magga* and *phala ñāna* wisdom (မင်္ဂလာဏ် ဖိုလ်ဉာဏ်). To achieve this, one requires a great deal of meditative practice and the attainment of arahatship or the highest level of wisdom or enlightenment with total liberation from all *kilesa* (defilements ကိလေသာ).

Resolving a Problem by Stopping

The first two processes, however, are within the endeavours of normal humans (သာမန် ပုထုဇဉ်). The first method of resolving a problem is to stop thinking about it for a period of time. Examples are the stories of Tampadadika, the thief and executioner, and Ashin Angulimāla.

The Story of Tampadadika

Tampadadika was a member of a five hundred strong gang of thieves who was caught and sentenced to death with all the other members of the gang by the King. At that time, there was no formal executioner to carry out the death sentence and no one in the King's realm was willing to carry it out. As a form of plea bargaining, Tampadadika agreed to act as executioner if his life was spared and as a result became the King's executioner. In his lifetime, he executed 999 criminals before retiring due to old age. On the day of his retirement, Tampadadika asked his wife to prepare a sumptuous meal for him and just as he sat down to have his meal, Ashin Sariputtara, Lord Buddha's senior-most and most erudite disciple, who was second only to the Buddha in terms of knowledge and wisdom, came and stood at the home of Tampadadika seeking alms food. Without hesitation,

Tampadadika donated all the food that had been prepared for him and requested a sermon from Ashin Sariputtara, who readily complied. However, while the sermon was being given, Tampadadika was unable to concentrate on the sermon and nodded off. On seeing this, Ashin Sariputtara asked Tampadadika why he was not interested in the sermon. To which Tampadadika replied, “Sire, butchers and fishermen have slaughtered many animals which are merely non-morally conditioned creatures (အဟိတ်တိရစ္ဆာန်များ). Whereas I, over the past fifty years have killed morally conditioned humans (တိဟိတ်လူများ) and thus, have committed serious sins and therefore liable to severe punishment. I have so much ***vipatti ācāra*** (ဝိပဋိသာရ) or failure of morality that I feel unable to concentrate on the sermon.” To this, Ashin Sariputtara replied, “Did you kill any of them because you wanted to?” “No, Sire. I killed them because the King ordered me to do so.” “So, if the King, who ordered the killing, is not at all perturbed and distressed, why should you be feeling so worried and full of ***vipatti ācāra***?” In fact, Ashin Sariputtara was using his diplomatic skill to stop Tampadadika from worrying. On hearing Ashin Sariputtara’s reply, Tampadadika thought to himself, “I had no ***cetana*** (intention စေတနာ) or desire to kill the criminals. I was just carrying out the King’s orders and so I have not committed a sin.” Thinking thus, he was able to stop his feelings of guilt and distress, and requested Ashin Sariputtara to continue with his sermon. Whilst listening attentively to the sermon and contemplating on it Tampadadika attained ***anuloma ñāna*** (အနုလောမဉ္ဇာန်) the level of wisdom preceding the attainment of ***sotāpanna*** or stream-enterer) and on his eventual death, was reborn in Tusita, the realm of celestial beings.

The Story of Ashin Angulimala

In the story of Ashin Angulimala, who was a very intelligent son of Brahmin parents, he had been told to bring back a thousand human index fingers by his teacher if he wanted to learn the ultimate wisdom from him. So Angulimala, in order to complete his education went on a killing spree and had managed to collect 999 fingers when he was stopped on the verge of committing matricide by the Buddha. Following this encounter and after listening to the Buddha's teaching Angulimala became a *bhikkhu* (monk) and stopped killing people. As a *bhikkhu*, he had little success when he went on alms rounds as the villagers knew his past and did not like him. One day, when he was on his alms round, he came across a lady in difficult labour and in dire distress, and felt very sorry for her. So he approached the Buddha and recounted what he had seen to the Buddha and asked how he could help her. So the Buddha instructed him to make a vow by saying that in his life he had not killed or hurt anyone and by virtue of this truth let the lady be free from distress. "But I have killed so many in my life," he protested, to which the Buddha replied, "My son, add the phrase that ever since you became the son of the Buddha and *dhamma*, i.e. becoming a *bhikkhu*, you have not killed or caused harm and distress to anyone, which is the truth." So Ashin Angulimala returned to the house where the lady was in labour and made a vow using the advice given by the Buddha, also stating that "By the truth of the words I have uttered, may the mother be relieved from her distress and have a successful childbirth." With this, the lady successfully gave birth to a healthy child and was relieved of the pain and distress. News of what happened spread through the town and soon, all the citizens of the town who had once abused and hurled stones at Ashin Angulimala started to praise him saying, "Ashin Angulimala, when he was the son of the Brahmin mother Mandani, used to kill our fathers, mothers, brothers and sons. But ever since he became the son of *ariyās* (noble ones) and the Buddha, he has stopped killing and causing suffering. Since he has

stopped, we should also stop our anger and enmity towards him.” Ashin Angulimala, from that time on was able to overcome his feelings of guilt and mental distress, with the confidence that he was now the son of *ariyās* and the Buddha, and no longer the son of Mandani. Free from the thoughts of his past evil deeds, he was able to contemplate properly on the *dhamma*, develop *samādhī* (concentration) and eventually *paññā* (wisdom) and enlightenment.

We should also try and emulate this when we meditate. For example, before we start our meditation practice we should first of all contemplate on our *sīla* (morality) by saying to ourselves, “No matter what sins we may have committed in the past, from now until the end of this meditation, I dedicate myself to being the son or daughter of the Buddha and His noble disciples *ariyās*, and not my biological parents. Henceforth, I am free from sin and fault.” With this declaration we temporarily stop our thoughts of *akusala* (unwholesome or non-meritorious action) and will not be troubled by worry or guilt. This is one way of relieving ourselves of mental distress. This method might be easy for Buddhists to practice, but may prove difficult for non-Buddhists.

One important thing to take note of from the two stories above is that in both, neither Ashin Sariputtara nor the Buddha stated that it was not a sin to kill. Instead, by being diplomatic with their replies, both were able to stop the mental turmoil that was in the hearts of Tampadadika and Ashin Angulimala, and re-orientate their attention on to the *dhamma* and *kusala* (wholesome, meritorious) activities.

Resolving a Problem by Dispersing

The other method of relieving mental distress is by dispersion. How do we disperse it? We need to understand that when we assess the weight of objects we can arrive at two conclusions depending on whether the weighing is done outside our bodies or whether it is done with our bodies. This might sound a bit strange. Weighing done outside our bodies

means using a weighing scale, e.g. a viss (Burmese unit of measurement of weight, roughly equivalent to 3lb 8oz) of cotton wool will be the same as a viss of lead. But if we were to use our bodies to assess the weight, it would be quite different. This has been highlighted and explained by Dr Than Tun, a well known teacher, who was asked by a young man attending one of his talks near Myingyan, as to which was heavier; a viss of cotton wool or a viss of lead. The question might well have been the result of an argument arising between the young students or an attempt to catch their teacher out. Dr Than Tun asked the young man whether he genuinely wanted to know the answer to his question, and the reply was, "Yes sir, I do." Dr Than Tun then gave his answer, "You will know the answer of which is heavier, the cotton wool or the lead, by tossing them both in the air and letting them fall on your head." By assessing it in this manner, using your head (body), you will undoubtedly reach the conclusion that lead is heavier than cotton wool. This is simply because lead has a much greater density than cotton wool. In other words, the cotton wool is more dispersed than lead and as a result when it falls on your head it has less impact and becomes easily bearable. Likewise, mental distress can be relieved by dispersion or spreading or sharing it.

The Story of Kisagotami

The example of this is the well-known story of Kisagotami who was inconsolable when her only son died and rushed about the city in search of someone who could bring her son back to life. She was directed to the Buddha who told her that He would bring her son back to life if she could bring him a handful of mustard seeds, but it had to be obtained from a household to which death was unknown. Kisagotami immediately went off in search for the mustard seeds, encouraged by the knowledge that every home would have some. However, when she asked if anyone in the household had died sometime in the past, the answer invariably was in

the affirmative. Eventually, after visiting several houses, it dawned on her that death was not a unique experience to her only, but was an unavoidable part of life and something that everyone had to face up to. With this knowledge, she accepted the death of her son, buried him and returned to the Buddha, and in time, with the Buddha's teaching, became enlightened and attained arahatship. One thing to note here is that for this method to be effective, according to the Buddha, three criteria are necessary; 1) the person who provides advice must be a person who is known to be truthful and trustworthy, 2) the person must be reliable and dependable and 3) the person must be morally pure and worthy of respect.

Never Dash Anyone's Hopes

It is worth remembering that the Buddha will never dash the hopes of anyone who is feeling despondent and hopeless. That is why He is known as မဟာကရုဏာရှင် in Burmese, meaning the "Possessor of Great Sympathy". People working in the medical profession need to take heed of this, i.e. no matter how hopeless or incurable the condition of the patient, doctors should not dash anyone's hope; even though there is no cure for the illness, at least there must be something the doctor can say or do to help relieve the pain or suffering, either physical or emotional.

Venerable Tipitakadhara Sayadawgyi's Advice

Whenever we are faced with the vicissitudes of life, we should seek relief by using the method of dispersion; i.e. when feeling low and down in the dumps, just look down (at those who are even worse off than you) and try and prop yourself up; and when feeling too self-satisfied and aloof, just look up (at those who are better than you) and try and bring yourself down to earth. This is the advice of the most venerable Tipitakadhara Sayadawgyi who used to say, "In life, when you are faced with disappointment or failure, you must learn how to console and relieve yourself by looking downwards. When we

are here in Taunggyi and faced with the cold, we can still keep warm by wrapping up ourselves in these woolen blankets. In addition, by tomorrow afternoon, we shall be leaving Taunggyi to return to Mingun, and shall be free from this cold weather. If we were to look down at the residents in *apāya* (hell), where it is bitterly cold with nothing to protect or cover yourself; and you also have no idea when you will be freed from that existence; when you compare yourself to that, you realize that the discomfort and cold you are going through is nothing. You can seek relief by doing that. If you are feeling so self-satisfied, you need to be aware that you are feeling this way because of the five sensual pleasures of mundane life, which when indulged in excess becomes *akusala*. In order to avoid this we must look upward and try to dampen our excesses. By looking upwards, we can envisage the deva or celestial and brahma realms (နတ်ဘုံ နဲ့ ဗြဟ္မာဘုံများ), and when compared with the pleasures experienced in those places, the worldly pleasures become insignificant. If we were to consider *lokuttara* (the supramundane existences), what we have learnt theoretically about the *dhamma*, in other words *pariyatti* (accomplishment in the Scriptures), is very small compared to what the *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmin*, *anāgāmin* and *arahat* have accomplished in terms of both *pariyatti* (theory of *dhamma*) and *paṭipatti* (practice of *dhamma*). What we have accomplished is, indeed, comparatively insignificant. So there is nothing worth being satisfied about, attached to or proud of. We need to dispel those attitudes.”

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

Translated by Kyaw Thinn, Birmingham, U.K.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

***The Venerable Sayadaw
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Introduction

Proper consideration should be given before embarking on the practice of *vipassanā* meditation (VM). It can be a waste of time and energy if done incorrectly due to inexperience and poor preparation. It should neither be done in haste.

When travelling, it is better to have a competent guide rather than relying on just a map. Similarly, when endeavouring to attain *nibbāna* (freedom from suffering), it is more effective to have good written instructions as well as an experienced instructor or guide.

Things to Learn First

Yogis (meditation practitioners) wishing to practice VM should first learn the following from their instructors;

1. Choice of correct meditational objects, i.e. *paramatthas*¹ (ultimate truths) such as *nāma* (mind) and *rūpa* (matter)
2. That *paññatti*² (virtual or conventional truths) objects should not be used
3. Basic VM techniques
4. What *citta* (the conscious mind or awareness) is

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Paññatti and *Paramattha*

The Pali word *paññatti* means terms used in conversations that are purely descriptive and conventionally accepted, in order to convey specificity and meaning to others, regarding the topic one is talking about. The *paññatti* refers to both real and virtual objects, and meditating on them will not lead to the arising of *vipassanā ñāna* (enlightenment).

The word *paramatthas* denotes fundamentality, essence and constancy, and something that cannot be realized on hearsay. It has to be personally experienced by using one's intellect and dispelling the *paññatti*. There are four *paramatthas*, viz. *citta* (mind, consciousness), *cetasika* (mental formations), *rūpa* and *nibbāna*. Out of these four, only the first three, and not *nibbāna*, are meditational objects in VM.

(Explanatory notes on *paramattha* and *paññatti* are provided at the end)

Citta and *Cetasika*

Citta and *cetasika* are known collectively as *nāma* (mind). *Nāma* has the characteristics of 1) being attracted towards *ārammaṇa* or *ālambaṇa* (sensory objects) and 2) being conscious or aware of the sensory objects. Within *nāma*, *citta* is responsible for consciousness and the *cetasikas* that arise together with *citta* are responsible for a host of other mental functions.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Rūpa

Rūpa (matter) has the characteristic of change or decay when adverse or opposing forces are present and as a result, changes its form or characteristics and is unable to 1) be attracted by *ārammaṇa* or *ālambaṇa* (sensory objects) and 2) be aware of them. These latter two qualities are known as *anārammaṇa dhamma*.

Before starting VM, one should learn at least the following about *nāma* and *rūpa*. And starting with *rūpa*;

The Four Great Elements of *Rūpa* or *Mahābhūtā*

1. *Paṭhavī* (Earth) – This has the characteristic of hardness and softness
2. *Tejo* (Fire) – This has the characteristic of heat and cold
3. *Vāyo* (Wind) – This has the characteristic of expansion and motion
4. *Āpo* (Water) – This has the characteristic of fluidity and cohesion and is not a tactile but an abstract concept.

Pasāda (sensory receptors)

Now-a-days, technology has advanced to the stage where various types of electromagnetic waves can be harnessed to produce audio-visual results. Similarly, in the human body, there are various receptors that can capture different types of sensory objects or stimuli and they are known in Pali as *pasāda*.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

If we study vision in humans, we know that the eye has the ability to capture external visual stimuli and produce vision or seeing. The retinal layer in the human eye has *cakkhupasāda* (visual or seeing receptors, termed rods and cones) that capture the *rūpa* (external visual object comprised of both form and colour) and cause the arising of *cakkhuvīññāna* (visual consciousness or seeing).

With regard to hearing, there is the cochlea in the human inner ear, where the *sotappasāda* (auditory or hearing receptors) lie. They capture the *sadda* (external auditory objects or sounds) and cause the arising of *sotavīññāna* (auditory consciousness or hearing).

Similarly, the *ghānappasāda* (olfactory or smell receptors in the nose) capture *gandha* (odour) and cause the arising of *ghānavīññāna* (smell consciousness or smelling); the *jīvhāppasāda* (gustatory or taste receptors in the tongue) capture *rasa* (taste) and cause the arising of *jīvhāvīññāna* (taste consciousness or tasting); *kāyāppasāda* (tactile or touch receptors on the skin, apart from very dry areas) capture *phoṭṭhabbārāmmaṇa* (tactile or tangible objects) and cause the arising of *kāyavīññāna* (touching or tactile consciousness) and the *hadayavatthu* (heart-base) captures *dhammārāmmaṇa* (all objects of mental consciousness such as thoughts, virtual mental imagery or eidetic imagery) and cause the arising of *manovīññāna* (consciousness of thoughts, ideas and eidetic imagery)

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

All the above, starting with the four Great Elements of *Rūpa* (matter) and ending with the eighteen sensory elements comprising of six sense receptors, the six sensory objects and the six sense consciousness, should be studied properly in advance. The following five *cetasikas* (mental functions) should also be studied and remembered.

1. ***Saddhā***
Belief, faith and confidence based on wisdom and knowledge; not blind faith
2. ***Sati***
Ability to pay attention on a specific issue or item; unwavering attention on the present moment, awareness of it, registering and remembering it.
3. ***Samādhi***
One-pointed concentration; paying total attention to one thing only
4. ***Viriya***
Full-spirited, energetic, dedicated, sustaining effort. The opposite is idleness or sloth
5. ***Paññā***
To understand fully in detail with the ability to discriminate correctly between good and bad

If time permits, other *dhamma* or natural laws should also be studied. All this accumulation of theoretical knowledge is known as *Paññābhūmi* (the ground or stage of wisdom)

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Sīla and *Samādhi*

The next stage is to develop *sīla* (morality) and *samādhi* (one-pointed concentration). Beginner *yogīs* must concentrate on *santatipaccuppanna* (continuity of the present moment) and try to develop the basic quality of *khaṇika samādhi* (momentary or temporary one-pointed concentration). This practice or training in *sīla* and *samādhi* is the elementary stage of developing *vipassanāñāna* (insight wisdom), in Pali called *paññāmūla*. After this, one has to try and reach the stage of *paññāsarīra* (main body of insight wisdom) which comprises *nāmarūpaparicchedañāna* (wisdom on the composition and differences between mind and matter) up to *sankhārūpekkhāñāna* (wisdom on the equanimity of things).

As described in the *Visuddhimagga Atthakathā* (exposition, explanation or commentary on the path of mental purity) text, two types of *santati* are present, viz. *rūpasantatipaccuppanna* and *nāmasantatipaccuppanna*. The former represents the moment in time, between the arising of two continuous *rūpa* (physical) processes (*rūpasantativāra*), whereas the latter represents the moment in time, between the arising of two continuous *nāma* (mental) processes (*nāmasantativāra*). In another commentary, the *samantapāsādikā*, *santatipaccuppanna* has been explained as the time that it takes for a person to cool down in a shade after having been in the open heat, the time taken for the eyes to become adjusted when

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

entering a room from the glaring sunlight outside, or the time taken for the murky waters to become clear again once the riverbed has been disturbed by one's feet.

In actual practice, if we are using the movements of our tummies as the meditational object, the process of the actual rising of the tummy during inspiration; the awareness of the tummy rising as the air enters and expands the lungs from the start of the inspiration until the end, is regarded as *santatipaccuppanna*. Likewise, the process of the actual falling of the tummy during expiration; the awareness of the tummy falling as the air leaves and deflates the lungs from the start of the exhalation until the end, is regarded also as *santatipaccuppanna*. One can use this method to bring close awareness of any bodily process that takes place.

The next step is to get one's mind set right in preparation of the VM practice by imagining that you are in a cool, clean, quiet, peaceful environment where everything is just right with nothing to disturb you. The Mahasi Sayadaw instructs the beginner *yogis* to note the gradual rising of the tummy when breathing in from the beginning to the end of the process, trying to be aware the increasing expansion and tension arising during the process - *santatipaccuppanna*, and making a mental note of it as "rising, rising, rising". Then on exhaling, to note the *santatipaccuppanna* process as the tummy deflates as "falling, falling, falling". It is not necessary to verbalize the process. Just observe carefully, making a mental note. What is important is to be aware of the process at all times.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Using this same principle, the Sayadaw instructs *yogis* to observe all the sensations that arise. Whatever arises and becomes most prominent to you is to be noted; be it a sound, a sight, a smell, a taste, a touch or a thought. In VM, to “observe” means to make one fully aware of the sensation, using one’s concentration, and to “note” also implies directing one’s full attention to the sensory object, applying all the mental faculties and registering it.

For those *yogis* who have practiced *ānāpāna* (breathing) meditation, the instruction is to sit comfortably, in a position that one feels most at ease with, and to breathe, in and out, just normally and regularly, without putting extra effort in it. While doing so, direct your attention to the tip of your nostril where you will feel the rush of air as it enters or leaves the nose, or the cool or warm sensation that arises. The important thing is to note whatever is most prominent at the time and to maintain your attention on it. Then, using the same principle, *yogis* must try to observe all the sensations that arise. Whatever arises and becomes most prominent to you is to be noted; be it a sound, a sight, a smell, a taste, a touch or a thought. This is what the Mahasi Sayadaw instructs.

The aim of this exercise is for the *yogi* to become fully aware of all the six sensations that arise at the six *dvāra* (sense doors) and also to be aware of the *nāmarūpa* (mind and matter) that one is experiencing at that moment in time.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Sammādiṭṭhi and *Yonisomanasikāra*

It is very important to know how to meditate properly and for this, one's observation and awareness must be based on *kusala citta* (a mind imbued with wholesome, good qualities) and *sati*. For this, one requires 1) *Sammādiṭṭhi* (right belief and understanding), and 2) *yoniso-manasikāra* (right mental attitude).

To have the right belief and understanding, one must listen to, learn, collate and take note of the right *dhamma* or natural laws in advance, i.e. to gain *sutamaya ñāna* (knowledge gained from formal teaching or hearing). When this is achieved, one can use this knowledge or wisdom to think things through or deduce correctly, which is known in Pali as *cintāmaya sammāsankappa*. It is only when one possesses this ability that one will be able to understand and deduce correctly the true significance of the *nāmarūpa* (mind and matter) that one observes during VM and reach the correct conclusion, right understanding and right belief, known in Pali as *sammādiṭṭhi*. Lastly, only when one has *sammādiṭṭhi* will one acquire *yonisomanasikāra* (the right mental attitude) and be able to practice VM following the correct *majjhimāpatipadā* ³ path (The Middle Way) and gain *vipassanā ñāna* using *bhāvanāmaya* knowledge (wisdom gained through meditation).

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

How to practice *Majjhimāpatipadā* - The Middle Way

In truth, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and awareness of spontaneously arising thoughts are natural phenomenon and, as such, do not have any ethical or moral value of being either good or bad. It is the *yogi's* personal attitude and opinion of the experience that makes it good, pleasurable, desirable or bad, obnoxious, despicable. When you regard a sensory experience as good and pleasurable, you are veering towards the one extreme of *lobha* (like, attachment and greed). But if you regard it as bad, then you are going to the opposite extreme of *dosa* (dislike and aversion).

One needs to avoid these two extremes of like and dislike toward any arising sensory experience and regard it merely as; 1) a natural phenomenon of cause and effect, occurring as a result of a sensory object coming into contact with its respective sense receptor, 2) the contact between these two, the object and receptor, is again part of nature, and 3) this natural phenomenon is not something one can prevent or stop, and is outside of one's control or influence.

What one can do is to prevent the subsequent arising of *kilesa* (hindrances to wisdom) such as *lobha* (like) and *dosa* (dislike). One does this by reminding oneself that; 1) the sensory experience is purely a natural phenomenon, 2) the sensory experience has not been initiated by you, 3) it does not belong to you, and 4) neither

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

you nor another person, nor a particular individual or creature is responsible for its arising, but that it is just a transient natural process. If one can train one's mind to think of and accept the sensory experiences in this way, one's habitual attitudes and mind sets will gradually change and react less and less with feelings of like or dislike, and develop *upekkhāñāna* (the wisdom of a non-reactionary, balanced mind or equanimity). This avoidance of the two extremes of *lobha* (like) and *dosa* (dislike) is the practice of *majjhimāpatipadā* - The Middle Way, which results from acquiring *sutamaya* (knowledge), *cintāmayañāna* (wisdom of correct deduction) and *yonisomanasikāra* (right mental attitude).

In the same way as one avoids like and dislike, one must also avoid attachment and aversion. Whether one is faced with either *kusala* (wholesome) or *akusala* (unwholesome) sensory experiences, one must retain the attitude and understanding that these are merely natural phenomena of the six senses; it is just seeing, hearing, smelling, etc. and nothing must be taken as personal (I, me, mine) or an individual or animal and no one is to be held accountable and blamed.

In short, the practice or training is for one to regard the sensory experience merely as a natural one, observing it at the moment in time that it occurs, and without allowing the mind to develop additional values to it. Here, one needs to understand clearly that two things are happening in quick succession; 1) the arising of a consciousness to the

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

sensory object and 2) the arising of the understanding of what it is. For example, with regard to seeing a book, 1) the arising of *cakkhuvīññāna* (visual consciousness or seeing) and 2) the knowledge that what one sees is a book. It is understandable that due to the rapid nature of these two processes occurring almost simultaneously and one's habit of seeing, hearing things in its *paññatti* (conventional) sense, one's initial reaction to the sensory object will be, e.g. a brown book.

To take this knowledge a step higher, the arising of seeing or visual consciousness is *paramattha* (real or ultimate truth) whereas the designation of what one has seen, in this case a book, is *paññatti* (conventional or virtual truth). When we see an object, the form and colour are *paramattha* but the actual identification and designation of the object as "a brown book" is *paññatti*. One has to be able to discriminate correctly between *paramattha* and *paññatti*, and this ability is wisdom. Please note also that what is being said here is to be able to distinguish between *paramattha* and *paññatti*, and not to discount or dispose of *paññatti* altogether as one cannot live and communicate in this world with using *paññatti*.

However, with practice and training, one can gradually re-orientate oneself, using the wisdom gained from the *majjhimāpatipadā* process, towards the correct mental attitude, and discriminating between *paramattha* and *paññatti*. By doing so, one avoids the arising of *akusala* (unwholesome) thoughts. It is also through

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

repeated practice that one will be able to confine one's mind to just the first stage when consciousness of the sensory object arises and not allow it to proceed to the next stage where like and dislike arise with the formation of *akusala* thoughts and activities.

Using the same process, one needs to understand very clearly that all the six sensory experiences of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and spontaneous thinking are 1) natural processes or phenomena and 2) be able to discriminate between what is *paramattha* and what is *paññatti*, and avoid further progression to formation of *akusala* thoughts and activities.

A close analogy of what has just been described is when a person has just recovered from an illness and has been advised on which types of food may cause a relapse of his illness and have also been provided with medicine to counteract such types of food should they be ingested. So the patient, armed with this knowledge and medicine is able to eat the food that disagrees with his health, but by consuming the medicine quickly after eating the wrong food, is able to avoid a relapse of his illness. In short, the *majjhimāpatipadā* practice acts as the medicine that prevents *akusala* thoughts and activities from occurring.

The person who practices *majjhimāpatipadā* – the Middle Way, comes to understand the following four characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*:

1) *Lakkhaṇa* – Origin

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

- 2) *Rasa* - Properties
- 3) *Paccupaṭṭhāna* – Phenomenon of arising
- 4) *Padaṭṭhāna* – Proximate cause of arising

To realize the above four characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* one must have a genuine investigative desire and the right mental attitude when meditating.

To study this a bit further in detail, for example when one looks at seeing (visual experience), there are five processes or stages involved and at each stage one can identify the above four characteristics when observed carefully with wisdom. The five stages are as follows;

- A. The four qualities with regard to the *cakkhupasada* (visual receptor) are
 - 1) Knowing that the receptor is good and producing the image clearly, is the *lakkhaṇa*
 - 2) Knowing that the receptor is directed to the visual object and allows it to be seen, is the *rasa*
 - 3) Knowing that the receptor is the base for visual consciousness is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*
 - 4) Knowing it is one's *kamma* (result of past deeds) that has resulted in the formation of the physical matter constituting the visual receptor in the eye is the *padaṭṭhāna*
- B. The four qualities with regard to the *rūpa* (external visual object consisting of both form and colour) are
 - 1) Knowing the formation of the visual image in the

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

eye is the *lakkhana*

2) Knowing that one can see the visual image is the *rasa*

3) Knowing that it is the object of vision is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*

4) Knowing it depends on the four *mahābhutā* (great elements) is the *padaṭṭhāna*

C. The four qualities with regard to the *cakkhuvīññāna* (visual consciousness or seeing) are

1) Knowing it is only a form is the *lakkhana*

2) Knowing that one is conscious of something is the *rasa*

3) Knowing that one is in connection with the object of vision is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*

4) Knowing that it has become a visual experience and is due to registration or acceptance within one's awareness is the *padaṭṭhāna*

D. The four qualities with regard to the *phassa* (contact between visual image and visual receptor) are

1) Knowing contact has been made between the visual image and the receptor is the *lakkhana*

2) Knowing that an impression has been formed is the *rasa*

3) Knowing that the visual image (object), receptor and seeing are together, is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*

4) Knowing that the contact between the visual

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

image and the receptor has produced the visual experience is the *padaṭṭhāna*

E. The four qualities with regard to the *vedanā* (feelings or emotional response to the visual experience) are

E.1 *Sukha vedanā* (Pleasurable or Likeable Feeling)

1) Knowing that what one sees is good is the *lakkhaṇa*

2) Knowing that the visual experience is likeable is the *rasa*

3) Knowing that the visual experience produces a pleasurable feeling is, the *paccupaṭṭhāna*

4) Knowing that one sees what one wishes to see, is the *padaṭṭhāna*

E.2 *Dukkha vedanā* (Unpleasant or Aversive Feeling)

1) Knowing that what one sees is bad is the *lakkhaṇa*

2) Knowing that the visual experience is unpleasant, is the *rasa*

3) Knowing that the visual experience produces an pleasant or aversive feeling, is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*

4) Knowing that one sees what one does not wish to see is the *padaṭṭhāna*

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

E.3 *Upekkhā vedanā* (Neither Like nor Dislike – Equanimous Feeling)

- 1) Knowing that what one sees is neither good nor bad is the *lakkhana*
- 2) Knowing that the visual experience is neutral, i.e. neither likeable nor unpleasant, is the *rasa*
- 3) Knowing that the visual experience produces a neutral feeling or calmness, is the *paccupaṭṭhāna*
- 4) Knowing that what one sees neither provokes pleasure nor aversion, is the *padaṭṭhāna*.

When one has complete understanding and knows all the natural characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* as described above, and has developed *nāmarūpa-paricchedañāna* (wisdom on the composition and differences between mind and matter) and *paccaya-pariggahañāna* (wisdom on the cause of things), then one realizes fully that, in the case of a visual experience, the vision of a particular object did not exist before but has arisen only now, and once arisen it then disappears. With continued meditational practice and on observing the meditational objects with *virīya* (effort) and *samādhi* (one-pointed concentration), *saddhā* (confidence) and *paññā* (wisdom) are gradually developed to the stage when one becomes aware of constant changes taking place within all the *nāma* and *rūpa* that one meditates on, and that nothing is permanent; everything is transient and, therefore, useless and worthless. In time, one develops an understanding of the meaning of *anicca* (impermanence).

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

Similarly, one also realizes that none of the *nāma* and *rūpa* are satisfactory or worthy of being owned due to their transient, impermanent nature, and so one develops a good understanding of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness). In the same manner, one realizes that the *nāma* and *rūpa* are not under one's control as previously thought but are beyond one's control, and once more, there develops a strong understanding of the meaning of *anatta* (non-self).

The realization of the three *lakḥaṇa*, viz. *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, comprises the Three Universal *Lakḥaṇa* of *nāma* and *rūpa*. In this way, using *majjhimāpatipadā* – the Middle Way, one should meditate on the *nāma* and *rūpa* with enthusiasm, continuously regardless of where one is and mindfully with *sati*.

Meditation is deep contemplation

Meditation is neither aimless thinking nor criticizing anything, but contemplating on the sensory experiences of *nāma* and *rūpa*, whatever and whenever it is present, accepting them as merely natural phenomena and observing them just as they are, as they arise in the present moment with *sati* (mindfulness and awareness). One must be careful not to think of what has happened in the past as well as what is likely to happen in the future, but stay focused on the present.

When one's mind wanders and idle thoughts intrude one's mind, they should not be dismissed lightly as just

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

“flitting thoughts” or “a wandering mind”, but be carefully acknowledged and registered before redirecting one’s focus back on the primary meditational object⁴. On the other hand, one must also avoid using excessive effort on breathing strongly or rapidly to expel the unwanted thoughts. The wandering mind should not be regarded as an unwanted intruder. The fact that one is fully aware of the wandering thoughts and the frequency of these intrusions is, an indication that one is in full awareness, which is the purpose of the exercise. However, one must guard against losing one’s awareness and being carried along with the wandering thoughts, which is day-dreaming. To sharpen one’s awareness of these thoughts, one may contemplate on questions such as, “What is the nature of these thoughts? Are they good or bad? Are they right or wrong? How and why have they arisen? Are they necessary or not?” However one need not place too much effort on it but may just observe its nature closely with patience and understanding.

When idle thoughts appear, one takes note of it once, then twice, then thrice, but after about four or five times, one becomes wiser and knows that they are not necessary, are wrong and unwanted. This awareness arises spontaneously. Once one gains the wisdom of knowing the characteristics, the properties and causes of thoughts, the chance of *kilesa* (mental hindrances) thoughts arising become much less and are gradually eradicated.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

The aim is not avoiding or suppressing thoughts, but to become aware of the secondary arising of *kilesa* thoughts (*loba, dosa, moha*, etc.) and to avoid them. The primary or initial thought that arises is not important. It is what arises after the primary thought and being aware of that secondary thought or thoughts which are more important.

For beginners, it is usual to feel stiffness, tingling and numbness, or pain in some part of your body after about ten minutes' sitting, whereas those who have been doing meditation regularly for some time, may experience these only after about an hour. If these arising sensations are not too prominent one should continue to focus on the primary meditation object of in and out breaths or the rising and falling of the tummy. However, when the secondary sensations become more prominent or stronger in its intensity, then one moves one's focus of attention to the more prominent sensation of pain or tingling, etc. and this is in accordance with the advice and instructions on VM provided in the Buddhist texts.

It is to be expected that those whose *vipassanāñāna* is not quite developed will still regard the physical parts of the body such as knee, leg, thigh, buttock, etc., which are mere *paññatti* and the sensations experienced, as pain in my knee, my leg, my thigh, my buttock, etc., causing one to suffer the physical pain together with the mental distress caused by the personalization. This compounds the problem and is similar to trying to carry a very heavy 40-50

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

viss load (a viss is equivalent to 3lb.8oz.) all at once, because when one adds one's mental unease to the physical distress by adopting the attitude that "My knee is so painful", that *dukkhavedanā* (the feeling of dissatisfaction or suffering) becomes unbearable.

Understanding *dukkhavedanā*

In general, when one experiences pain, one tends to shut one's eyes, grit one's teeth and just tenses up both mentally and physically. One has to learn to do the opposite by relaxing mentally and physically. It is evident that during these periods of pain, one will have an aversion to and dislike of the pain, a desire for it to disappear quickly if possible, and to have it thrown out of one's system. All this is certainly an intense and strong desire and during this period, it is an overwhelming and overriding wish over everything else. This preoccupation also overrides the awareness of both the *dukkha* itself and the primary meditational object. But, if one has developed a strong ability of awareness or concentration, and thence *khanti-upekkhāñāna* (the wisdom of tolerance), one realizes that "The sensory experience is just a sensory experience that has nothing to do with one; it is neither mine nor me; it is neither another person nor any particular individual or animal causing it, it is merely a natural phenomenon of a sensory experience arising." This proper and correct understanding of *dukkhavedanā* (the feeling of

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

dissatisfaction or suffering), and its acceptance is the most important developmental stage in the practice of VM.

At this stage of development, the desire for getting rid of the pain disappears, and a calm understanding and acceptance replaces it due to the meditational wisdom of *khanti upekkhāñāna*. With the further development of *samādhiñāna* (wisdom of one-pointed concentration) the *paññatti* source of the pain as being the knee, leg, thigh or buttock is no longer seen and *dukkhavedanā* (the physical sensation of pain) and the mental awareness of it are observed separately very clearly as 1) a meditational sensory object, a feeling or an emotion, and 2) an awareness or consciousness of that sensation.

When one loses the perception of the *paññatti* forms and concepts such as “My knee hurts” and gradually loses the personal and *paññatti* aspects that one has habitually identified with as I, me, mine, the other person, that man, woman, animal, etc., the differentiation between *rūpa* (matter) and *nāma* (mind) become more distinct. This indicates the maturing of one’s *vipassanāñāna* and this will lead to the stage where in spite of there being physical pain there will no longer be any mental distress, in short, experience bodily pain without mental pain.

If you split the 40-50 viss burden into smaller loads of 4-5 viss each, the burden becomes much lighter and similarly, when you separate out the personalization from the *dukkhavedanā* and just train yourself to observe the

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

sensation, whatever it may be, that arises at the present moment in time, paying attention to the arising pair of physical sensation and the mental awareness or consciousness of the sensation, you will also become aware of 1) the realization that sensations always arise due to a cause, 2) they disappear after just a short while, arising again when there is still a cause or reason and disappearing yet again and 3) this phenomenon of arising and disappearing continues so long as there is a causation or reason. When you observe the sensation in this way in small chunks or short periods, you will be able to tolerate the sensation and overcome the *dukkhavedanā*.

In general, although the sensation (e.g. pain) may continue you will feel less anxious, worried or fearful of it and this may allow you to continue with the sitting meditation without the need to shift your position and will also enable you to tolerate the pain. It also prevents the desire to seek something pleasurable in the face of pain and be able to accept the sensation (pain) as just the awareness of a sensation and that this is a purely natural phenomenon. When this process of meditation is adopted, you may notice that the sensation (pain) peaks to a certain level and then gradually reduces in intensity until it disappears. Sometimes the disappearance may be quite rapid. As your meditation becomes more established or mature, you may observe the pain arise and disappear almost immediately when you focus your attention on it.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

However, although you are advised to try and observe and tolerate the sensation (pain) as much as you can, you must change your position mindfully if the pain escalates to the point where it becomes intense and unbearable. It is important that the change of position is carried out with the realization that there is a desire to shift your position.

The Two Types of Wisdom

The principal aim of VM is to develop wisdom, of which there are 2 types.

- 1) *Saññā* (memory, perception) – This is the awareness of the *ārammaṇa* (sensory object)
- 2) *Ñāna* (wisdom) – This is the awareness of the *lakḥanā* (characteristics) of the *ārammaṇa* (sensory object)

With the gradual development of a strong *saññā* it is possible to gain *ñāna*, the second type of wisdom. With constant *sati ñāna* (wisdom of alertness and awareness) one can prevent *kilesa* (defilements) from arising, thus gradually eradicating it.

Preventing Arising of *Kilesa*

Kilesa (defilements) can be eradicated in two ways.

- 1) By developing a strong *samādhi* one-pointed concentration one can temporarily suppress the arising of *kilesa*.
- 2) By developing *sati ñāna* (wisdom of alertness and

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

awareness) one develops right understanding and not allow the arising of *kilesa* on a longer term basis.

Cautionary Notes on VM

1. Being aware of one's thoughts

After meditating for some time, the body and mind may both become tired and begin to be in conflict with each other. In such a case, one needs to examine one's mind to find out whether;

- a) one is aimlessly thinking or day dreaming,
- b) one is fully aware
- c) one is focusing internally or externally
- d) one clearly understands what is happening or
- e) understands superficially only

2. The presence of unhelpful thoughts of *lobha* (wants, desires or greed) such as;

- a) expectation of achieving something
- b) restlessness
- c) strong desires

These are a reflection of the underlying *lobha* and are uncondusive to the practice of VM.

3. The presence of unhelpful thoughts of *dosa* (anger) such as;

- a) feeling that something is lacking

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

- b) anxiety
- c) desire for aversive experiences to disappear
- d) dissatisfaction

These are an indication that there is underlying *dosa* which is uncondusive to the practice of VM.

So what should one focus one's mind on and how should one meditate? One must bear in mind that there has to be a balance between *virīya* (effort) and *samādhi* (concentration), *saddhā* (confidence or faith) and *paññā* (wisdom), and when necessary, depending on the situation, some adjustment may be required for both the pairs. One must not forget *majjhīmapatipadā* – the Middle Way when practicing VM. If one practices without *sati* (awareness), but with excessive *virīya* (effort) and *moha* (lack of wisdom), then one is indulging in *akusala* (unwholesome) activity, and so cannot be regarded as practicing VM.

Of all the *dhamma* teachings, the teaching on *paññā* is the noblest and without *sati*, one cannot acquire *paññā*. That is why *sati* is of utmost importance in developing *vipassanāñāna* when practicing VM. To have *sati*, the following are required;

1) Reminding frequently. The Buddha exhorted His followers to have *sati* or *appamādasati* on over 1970 occasions in His sermons. Even on the verge of His *parinibbāna* (complete extinction of *khandā* or death without rebirth) His last advice to the sangha disciples was “*appamādena sampādeṭṭha*” meaning “Strive to accomplish one's aim with constant vigilance and awareness”. This just

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

shows how important it is to have *sati* at all times and the need for frequently reminding oneself.

- 2) When one is reminded to have *sati*, to heed the reminder.
- 3) Make sure that *sati* becomes ingrained in your practice.

The mind with *sati* and the mind without *sati* are direct opposites and as different as black and white. One needs to understand this and the value of a mind with *sati* and treat everything with interest and full awareness.

When one observes the natural phenomena with a sincere, investigative mind and a desire to understand clearly the true nature of things, and also apply constant *sati*, exert unfaltering *viriyā* (effort) and calm *samādhi*, and have *saddhā* (faith and confidence) in meditating, the practice will produce true wisdom and clear understanding.

The aim of meditating is, in fact, to purify one's mind using the sensory experiences of daily life. Based on these sensory experiences the mind;

1. Develops *sati*, by learning how to focus on and contemplate on the sensations,
2. Develops *samādhi* - calmness and concentration,
3. Develops *viriyā* - the enthusiasm and sustained effort in doing things,
4. Develops *paññā* - the wisdom to understand clearly and correctly,
5. Develops *saddhā* - the ability to use *paññā* to decide correctly and build up faith and confidence.

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

These five factors are also known as the Five Leaders, “ဗိုလ်ငါးပါး သို့ . ဗလငါးတန် ” in Burmese, and what VM does is to develop these five factors. As one’s practice of VM progresses and gets stronger, the other qualities of *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karunā* (sympathy), *muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity), collectively known as the *brahmavihāra* (divine states of mind) also become stronger and established.

The nature of *citta* (mind) is that its development is commensurate with the *ārammana* (sensory object) and vice versa, the sensory object that can be detected is also dependent on the quality of the developed *citta*. What this means is that,

1. Only the highly developed *magga phala citta* can capture and envisage *nibbāna* and, *nibbāna* is the highest sensory form that deserves the attention of the *magga phala citta* only.
2. The *kusala citta* (wholesome minds) of *vipassanāñāna* uses only *paramattha* (ultimate truths) as meditational objects. This is because *vipassanāñāna* and *paramattha* objects are deserving of each other.
3. With the exception of *magga phala citta* and the *kusala citta* of *vipassanāñāna*, the focus of attention when one indulges in *dāna. sīla*, some forms of *bhāvanā*, mundane *lokiya kusala citta* and *akusala kilesa citta*, is only on *paññatti* (virtual truths) as they are on a par with *paññatti* and cannot attain the level required to envisage beyond the mundane level, i.e. unable to envisage the *lokuttara* (supra-

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

mundane) concept of *nibbāna*.

In essence, this means that only when one's mental development reaches a certain level will one be able to envisage the higher forms of sensory experiences. One cannot force oneself to experience them. That is why one must remember that when one does VM, it is working with one's mind and not working physically. The aim is to purify one's mind to make it better and better, to reduce *kilesa* (hindrances or defilements) and ultimately eradicate them, promoting the formation of five factors, viz. *sati*, *samādhi*, *virīya*, *paññā*, and *saddhā*, thus making the *citta* stronger.

If the conscious mind continues to be at the level of the mundane *lokiya citta* and *kilesa citta*, it will be only focusing on and preoccupied with *paññatti* meditational objects, whereas if it has reached the level of the *vipassana kusala citta*, it will preoccupy itself solely on *paramattha* meditational objects and when it reaches the peak of its development of *magga phala citta*, it will spontaneously envisage and focus entirely on *nibbāna* as a meditational object.

If one has the correct, basic knowledge, then one will be able to make the correct decision based on *cintāmayā sammā sankappa* (deciding on right thinking), whenever one is faced with a problem. If one has acquired the ability to think through problems correctly, not be influenced by personal likes or dislikes, preferences or discriminations, avoid rash responses and make decisions without *loba*, *dosa* and *moha*, and treat all sensory experiences as just a

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

sensory experience due to natural causes, then only ones understanding and attitude will become correct. With right attitude and a genuine desire to observe and understand, one has to focus completely on the meditational object as and when sensations arise at that present moment or *paccupanna*. One must be careful not to lose awareness and keep reminding oneself frequently so that in time, it becomes a habit to be attentive to every arising sensation.

One's attention should be constant all the time; wherever one is, whatever one is doing and whichever meditative posture one is assuming. Again, in time, one will develop a sustained effort to be mindful and this in turn will produce calmness and equanimity due to the development of *samādhi* (concentration). As *sati* becomes stronger, *virīya* and *samādhi*, *saddhā* and *paññā*, are equally developed in a balanced manner, and eventually the *citta* (mind) will reach the pinnacle of development of *magga phala citta*. Once one reaches that stage, the *yogi* will achieve his or her aim of attaining enlightenment or *nibbāna* spontaneously. *Nibbāna* will be envisaged just as if one were seeing it through one's own eyes vividly.

In conclusion, I sincerely would like to encourage you all to follow the advice given above and practice VM, with right knowledge and understanding, the ability to make right decisions, the correct mental attitude, frequent reminders to be mindful, enthusiasm, interest, vim and vigour, regardless of where you are, what you are doing

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

and which posture you are adopting, so that you eventually reach the ultimate stage of *magga phala ñāna*.

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu

Translated by Kyaw Thinn, Birmingham, U.K.

Explanatory Notes

1. *Paramattha*

It is usually translated as ultimate truth and is that which cannot be further subdivided. The atomic theory prevailed in India in the time of the Buddha. *Paramāṇu* was the ancient term for the modern atom. To put things into perspective, a dust particle seen dancing in the sunbeam is called a *rathareṇu* and it is composed of 16 *tajjāris*; one *tajjāri* = 16 *aṇus*, one *aṇu* = 16 *paramāṇus*. So, one *paramāṇu* is, therefore, 4096th part of a *rathareṇu*. The Buddha analyzed this so-called *paramāṇu* and declared that it consists of *paramattha* – ultimate entities that cannot be further subdivided.

There are only four types of *paramattha*; *rūpa* (matter), *citta* (mind), *cetasika* (mental formations or functions) and *nibbāna* (an abstract entity of the end of *dukkha* or suffering)

2. *Paññatti*

It is usually translated as virtual truth and is that which is made manifest or known. It consists of two types, 1) *nāma paññatti* (a name or term such as table, chair, man, dog, house, tree, etc.) and 2) *attha paññatti* (the object or idea conveyed thereby, e.g. direction, time, past, present, future, beauty, slow, fast, etc.).

Paññatti may be classified according to; 1) *saṅghāna paññatti* such as land, mountain, etc, corresponding to the form of things, 2) *samūha paññatti* such as chariot, village, etc, corresponding to a collection or group of things, 3) *disā paññatti* such as east, west, etc, corresponding to locality, 4) *kāla paññatti* such as

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

morning, noon, etc, corresponding to time, 5) *ākāsa paññatti* such as well, cave, etc, corresponding to space-concepts and 6) *nimitta paññatti* such as visualized and conceptualized images corresponding to signs gained by mental developments.

Paññatti may also be described in the following six ways;

- i) Existing in an ultimate sense – matter, feelings, etc
- ii) Terms given to things that do not exist in an ultimate sense – land, mountain, etc
- iii) “Possessor of the six-fold supernormal vision” – Here, both the former (possessor) and the latter (six-fold supernormal vision), do exist in the ultimate (*but abstract*) sense.
- iv) “A woman’s voice”. Here, the former does not exist in the ultimate sense but the latter does
- v) Eye-consciousness – Here, the sensitive eye exists in the ultimate sense (*physical object*) and so does the consciousness (*abstract or mental object*) that depends on it
- vi) King’s son – Here, neither the King nor the son exists in an ultimate sense.

3. *Majjhimāpatipadā*

This Pali word is usually translated as the Middle Way or the Noble Eightfold Path consisting of eight components which make up one path that leads to liberation from *dukkha* (suffering) or enlightenment and *nibbāna*.

The Middle Way is mentioned in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, the Buddha’s first sermon, and described as the avoidance of the two extreme practices of *kāmesukāmasukhālikānuayo* (indulgence in

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

sensual pleasures) and *attakilamathānuyogo* (self-mortification). These two practices were in vogue prior to and during the Buddha's time and practised by various holy men in India claiming that these practices would cleanse one's sins and lead to enlightenment and sainthood.

The eight components of the Middle Way being;

- 1) *sammā sati* (right attention),
- 2) *sammā samādhi* (right concentration),
- 3) *sammā vāyāma* (right effort),

The first three are collectively known as *samādhi magganga* or the Path of Concentration

- 4) *sammā vācā* (right speech),
- 5) *sammā kammanta* (right actions),
- 6) *sammā ājīva* (right livelihood),

The second three are collectively known as *sīla magganga*, or the Path of Morality

- 7) *sammā sarīkappa* (right thoughts), and
- 8) *sammā diṭṭhi* (right understanding).

The last two are collectively known as *paññā magganga*, or the Path of Wisdom.

4. Primary Meditational Object

In VM practice the *yogi* has to choose a primary meditational object (PMO) which is used as a base. This may be using the awareness of breathing at the nostrils (*ānāpānasati*) or the arising and falling of the tummy during breathing. Unlike *samatha* meditation where one is supposed to focus one's mind only on one chosen meditation object, such as a white dot or just the breathing in and out to develop *samādhi* (one-pointed concentration), in VM one has to be aware of all the sensory experiences that may appear, and paying attention to the one most

Guide To Proper *Vipassanā* Meditation

prominent sensation that arises at any one time, be it a pain, an itch, a sound, a smell, a taste, a mental image, etc. This becomes the secondary meditational object (SMO). The focus on the SMO should last just a few seconds during which focused attention is given to it and noted by mentally saying “pain, pain, pain” or “hearing, hearing, hearing” depending on what the SMO is. After registering it in one’s mind, then one returns one’s attention back to the PMO.

References

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PALI - ENGLISH GLOSSARY

wr = wood root

<i>ācāra</i>	way of behaving, conduct, practice
<i>adhi</i>	many meanings; above, over, excellent, superior, base
<i>adhiṭṭhāna</i>	resolution, decision, will, self-determination
<i>ājīva</i>	livelihood
<i>akusala</i>	unwholesome, immoral, bad
<i>ālambaṇa</i>	sensory objects
<i>ānā</i>	breathing out
<i>anāgāmin</i>	non-returner
<i>ānantarik(y)a</i>	without an interval, immediately following
<i>ānāpāna</i>	breathing
<i>anatta</i>	non-self, not under one's control
<i>anavijjasukha</i>	peace and happiness of a sin-free life
<i>anga</i>	meaning essential or principal components
<i>anicca</i>	impermanence
<i>anulomañāna</i>	the level of wisdom preceding the attainment of <i>sotāpanna</i> or stream-enterer
<i>anusaya</i>	dormant or latent disposition, tendency
<i>apāya</i>	woeful states, viz. viz. the four specified places; <i>niraya</i> or purgatory (hell), rebirth as a <i>tiracchāna</i> (animal), a <i>peta</i> (ghost), or as an <i>asura</i> (titan)
<i>āpo</i>	water element

<i>appamāda</i>	watchfulness, thoughtfulness, vigilance, carefulness
<i>arahat, arahant</i>	a person who has attained the state of final, absolute emancipation
<i>ārammaṇa</i>	sensory objects
<i>ariyās</i>	noble ones
<i>atthakathā</i>	exposition, explanation or commentary
<i>bhāva</i>	existence
<i>bhāvanā</i>	meditation
<i>bhāvanāmayañāna</i>	wisdom gained through meditation
<i>bhikkhu</i>	monk
<i>bhuta</i>	root, element
<i>brahma</i>	holy pious person, person residing in the higher realms of existence
<i>cakkhu</i>	eye
<i>cakkhupasāda</i>	visual receptor
<i>cakkhuvīññāna</i>	visual consciousness or seeing
<i>cetanā</i>	intention
<i>cetasika</i>	mental formations
<i>cintāmayañāna</i>	knowledge gained from deduction
<i>citta</i>	mind, consciousness (meaning depends on context)
<i>dāna</i>	generosity
<i>dasa</i>	ten
<i>dhamma</i>	law of nature, Buddha's teachings

<i>dhammārāmaṇa</i>	all objects of mental consciousness such as thoughts, virtual mental imagery or eidetic imagery
<i>diṭṭhi</i>	belief, view, understanding
<i>dosa</i>	anger, dislike and aversion
<i>dukkha</i>	unsatisfactory, unpleasant, suffering
<i>gandha</i>	odour
<i>ghānappasāda</i>	olfactory or smell receptor
<i>ghānaviññāna</i>	smell consciousness or smelling
<i>hadayavatthu</i>	heart-base
<i>indriya</i>	controlling faculties, morally principled and controlled behaviour
<i>jhāna</i>	ecstasy, totally absorbed state
<i>jīvhāppasāda</i>	gustatory or taste receptor
<i>jīvhāviññāna</i>	taste consciousness or tasting
<i>kāma</i>	either subjective sensual craving or sensuous object
<i>kamma</i>	result of past deeds
<i>kammanta</i>	actions
<i>kapalla</i>	bowl
<i>karunā</i>	sympathy
<i>kasiṇa</i>	a form of <i>samatha</i> meditation
<i>kāyāppasāda</i>	tactile or touch receptor
<i>kāyaviññāna</i>	tactile consciousness or touching
<i>khaṇika samādhi</i>	momentary or temporary concentration

<i>khanti</i>	tolerance
<i>khantiupekkhāñāna</i>	the wisdom of tolerance
<i>kilesa</i>	hindrances to wisdom, defilements
<i>kusala</i>	wholesome. Meritorious, morally good
<i>lakkhaṇa</i>	character, origin
<i>loba</i>	greed, wanting
<i>lokiya</i>	mundane, worldly
<i>lokuttara</i>	supramundane, sublime, e.g. <i>nibbāna</i> , <i>vr loka + uttara</i>
<i>loṇa</i>	salt, salty
<i>magga, magganga</i>	path or way
<i>mahā</i>	great
<i>mahābhutā</i>	great elements
<i>majjhimā</i>	middle, medium
<i>majjhimāpatipadā</i>	The Middle Way
<i>manoviññāna</i>	consciousness of thoughts, ideas and eidetic imagery
<i>mettā</i>	loving-kindness, goodwill
<i>muditā</i>	sympathetic joy
<i>nibbāna</i>	an abstract supra-mundane concept of freedom from suffering
<i>nibbidā</i>	weariness, disgust with worldly life, tedium, aversion, disenchantment
<i>nāma</i>	mind
<i>nāmarūpa-</i> <i>paricchedañāna</i>	wisdom on composition and differentiation between mind

	and matter
<i>pariyutthana</i>	mental defilement
<i>nāmasantativāra</i>	continuation of <i>nāma</i> (mental) processes
<i>ñāna</i>	wisdom, intellect
<i>nekkhamma, nikkhamati</i>	leaving the household life behind
<i>niyati</i>	to be led or guided
<i>niyatamicchādiṭṭhi</i>	wrong views with fixed destiny
<i>paccuppanna</i>	the present moment
<i>paccupaṭṭhāna</i>	phenomenon of arising
<i>padaṭṭhāna</i>	proximate cause of arising
<i>pāna</i>	breathing in
<i>pancānan tarika kamma</i>	the five heinous crimes with immediate results
<i>paññā</i>	understanding, wisdom
<i>paññābhūmi</i>	the ground or stage of wisdom
<i>paññāmūla</i>	the elementary stage of wisdom
<i>paññāsarīra</i>	main body of wisdom
<i>paññatti</i>	virtual or conventional truth
<i>paramattha</i>	ultimate truth
<i>pāramī</i>	perfections, completeness, highest state
<i>parinibbāna</i>	complete extinction of <i>khandā</i> or death without rebirth
<i>pariyatti</i>	studying the scriptures
<i>pasāda</i>	sensory receptor

<i>paṭhavī</i>	earth element
<i>paṭiccasamuppāda</i>	the cycle of dependent origination, <i>wr paṭicca + samuppāda</i>
<i>patipadā</i>	means of reaching a goal, way, path, means, method
<i>phala</i>	fruition, consequence, result, stage immediately preceding <i>nibbāna</i>
<i>phassa</i>	contact
<i>phoṭṭhabbārāmmaṇa</i>	tactile or tangible object
<i>puthujjana</i>	ordinary person
<i>rasa</i>	taste, property
<i>rūpa</i>	matter
<i>rūpasantativāra</i>	continuation of <i>rūpa</i> (physical) processes
<i>tejo</i>	fire element
<i>tiracchāna</i>	animal
<i>sadda</i>	external auditory object or sound
<i>saddhā</i>	belief, faith and confidence based on wisdom
<i>sāddhu</i>	well done
<i>sakadāgāmin</i>	a once-returner
<i>samādhī</i>	one-pointed concentration
<i>samādhīñāna</i>	wisdom of one-pointed concentration
<i>sammā</i>	right
<i>sammādiṭṭhi</i>	right belief and understanding
<i>sammāsankappa</i>	right thoughts or thinking

<i>sampādeti</i>	to strive to accomplish one's aim
<i>samvega</i>	a sense of fear and urgency
<i>saṅ</i>	prefix – together, intensifying thoroughly
<i>sangha</i>	community of monks
<i>sankappa</i>	thoughts or thinking
<i>sankhārūpekkhāñāna</i>	wisdom on the equanimity of things, having an equanimous mind or attitude towards the cycles of change or existences
<i>saññā</i>	memory, perception
<i>santati</i>	continuation
<i>santatipaccuppanna</i>	continuity of the present moment
<i>santi</i>	tranquillity
<i>saṅvara</i>	excellent; wr <i>saṅ</i> + <i>vara</i>
<i>sati</i>	attention, awareness, mindfulness
<i>sati ñāna</i>	wisdom of alertness and awareness
<i>sikkhā</i>	belonging to training
<i>sīla</i>	morality
<i>sotāpanna</i>	a stream enterer or non-returner; a person who has gained the first level of enlightenment
<i>sotappasāda</i>	auditory receptor
<i>sotaviññāna</i>	auditory consciousness or hearing
<i>sukha</i>	pleasurable, pleasant, likeable
<i>sutamaya</i>	knowledge from reading and hearing
<i>sutamaya ñāna</i>	wisdom gained from formal teaching or

	hearing
<i>sutta, suttanta</i>	Buddhist scriptures, discourses or texts
<i>taṇhā</i>	attachment, desire, greed
<i>upanijjhāna</i>	meditation, consideration only in two phases: <i>ārammana</i> and <i>lakkhaṇa</i>
<i>upekkhā</i>	non-reactionary, balanced mind or equanimity
<i>upekkhāñāna</i>	wisdom of a non-reactionary, balanced mind or equanimity
<i>vācā, vācī</i>	speech
<i>vara</i>	excellent
<i>vāyama</i>	effort
<i>vāyo</i>	wind element
<i>vedanā</i>	feelings or emotions
<i>vicikicchā</i>	scepticism, to doubt, hesitate
<i>vimutti</i>	release, emancipation, deliverance, liberation
<i>viññāna</i>	consciousness, awareness
<i>vipassanā</i>	insight meditation
<i>vipassanā ñāna</i>	wisdom gained from insight meditation, enlightenment
<i>vipatti</i>	failure, wrong state, false manifestation, misfortune
<i>virāgāvimuccati</i>	freedom or emancipation from passion
<i>virīya</i>	effort
<i>visuddhimagga</i>	the path of mental purity
<i>vitakkamma</i>	activity directed by one's consciousness;

vr vitakka + kamma

yogi meditation practitioner

yonisomanasikāra right mental attitude

1. Maggānga in Daily Life
2. Akusala Leading to Apaya
3. Kusala and Fulfilling Pāramis
4. Relieving Mental Distress
5. Guide to Proper Vipassanā Meditation

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